



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Headquarters

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ROBERT L. ZIEHMER, Director

REPLY TO:



September 13, 2010

Mr. Jim Sherrell
Middle Mississippi Valley Grotto



Dear Mr. Sherrell:

Thank you for your interest in the biodiversity of Berome Moore Cave. Berome Moore Cave combined with Tom Moore Cave make up the Moore Cave system. The Moore Cave system is over 18 miles long and is one of the longest caves in Perry County. In addition to several caves of considerable length, the Perry County caves have a fairly species rich cave fauna. To determine how biologically diverse the caves are in the state, the Missouri Department of Conservation has developed a Cave Biodiversity Ranking system. This ranking system shows that several caves within Perry County are ranked in the top 50 for biodiversity.

Even though Berome Moore and Tom Moore Caves combine make up the Moore Cave system these two caves are ranked separately when it comes to biodiversity. Berome Moore Cave is ranked #4 in the state and Tom Moore Cave is ranked #8. Berome Moore Cave also contains an endemic cave-dwelling fish called the grotto sculpin, *Cottus cf. carolinae*. This fish is only found in five cave systems in Perry County and was listed as a federal candidate species in 2002 and assigned a priority number of 2, indicating an imminent threat to the existence of the species.

Berome Moore cave is a very biologically diverse cave. The Missouri Department of Conservation commends the Middle Mississippi Valley Grotto for their work in mapping and protecting this cave for future generations and research. I hope that we can continue to work together to protect this unique resource.

Sincerely,

Brad Pobst
Missouri Department of Conservation

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