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RC&D HOSTS COLDWATER CAVE PRESENTATION

It may be surprising for many to learn that below our communities and countrysides exists an extensive and complex cave system. Coldwater Cave, Iowa's longest and most spectacular cave, has been the site of extensive research since its discovery 30 years ago. Pat Kambesis, Assistant Director of the Hoffman Institute at Western Kentucky University, has spent considerable time in the Coldwater Cave System and will share the results of her research on Wednesday, April 7th. The presentation is free and open to the public, and will take place at Luther College, Olin 102, beginning at 7:00pm.

The goal of Kambesis' research has been to develop an understanding of the relationship between surface and ground water in this unique geographic region. The topography of Northeast Iowa is characterized by a number of sinkholes and streams that lose water through various entry points to the underground water system. This karst landscape allows surface water to enter and move very quickly through the groundwater system. The speed and distance of water traveling through these underground channels adds to the complexity of measuring and analyzing water quality. Therefore, as part of her research, Kambesis performed a number of dye traces, which involved placing dye in certain locations and determining how it traveled through the ground water system, and at what speed.

Kambesis' research will be utilized by the Northeast Iowa RC&D and the Upper Iowa River Watershed Alliance to help identify projects that can reduce the contaminants entering into our ground water system.

The presentation will be held at Luther College and is free and open to the public. It is co-sponsored by the Northeast Iowa RC&D, Inc. and Luther College Environmental Studies in support of the Upper Iowa River Watershed Project. This project has been funded in part by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the Federal Nonpoint Source Management Program (Section 319 of the Clean Water Act).

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Photo Caption: Researchers in the Coldwater Cave Complex have identified over 16 miles of passages since its discovery in the late 1960's. (Photo Credit: Pat Kambesis)