

Kings Caverns

Thursday, March 30, 2017 12:01 PM

I wonder how many of you are familiar with the nearby “Kings River Geological Area”. It is only 4 miles due South of Cliff Camp – beyond Rancheria and Fish Creeks.

It was originally called Kings Caverns and is one the rare marble roof-pendants scattered among the granite plutons throughout the Sierra. These are remnants of the thick layer of sedimentary rock (limestone now metamorphosed into marble) that once covered the granite of the Sierra to a depth of several thousand feet. Marble is very soluble in acid and rain water is faintly acidic. Thus, cracks and crevices are slowly widened into caverns and special cave formation begin to form. Crystal, Boyden, & Moaning Caverns are popular examples of the more than 100 known caves in the Sierra.

The area exemplifies Karst Topography when one suddenly comes across anomalous low places with no outlet where one would normally expect to see either a pond or a dried mud puddle. Instead the center is a sinkhole. In forested terrain, this is often choked and camouflaged with forest duff.

However, the most interesting area is along Mule Creek where the creek simply disappears into a rock wall (a swallow). About ½ mile downstream it suddenly reappears (a resurgence). In between are a series of caverns that can be explored with flashlights and occasionally rope.

This is a very interesting side trip and well worth the hike (for the younger set). Check it out and give us all an update.

Be sure to take several flashlights and plan on crawling. Rope and other tackle is necessary for some caves.

Kings River Geological Area: 36° 55.313'N, 118° 59.048'W

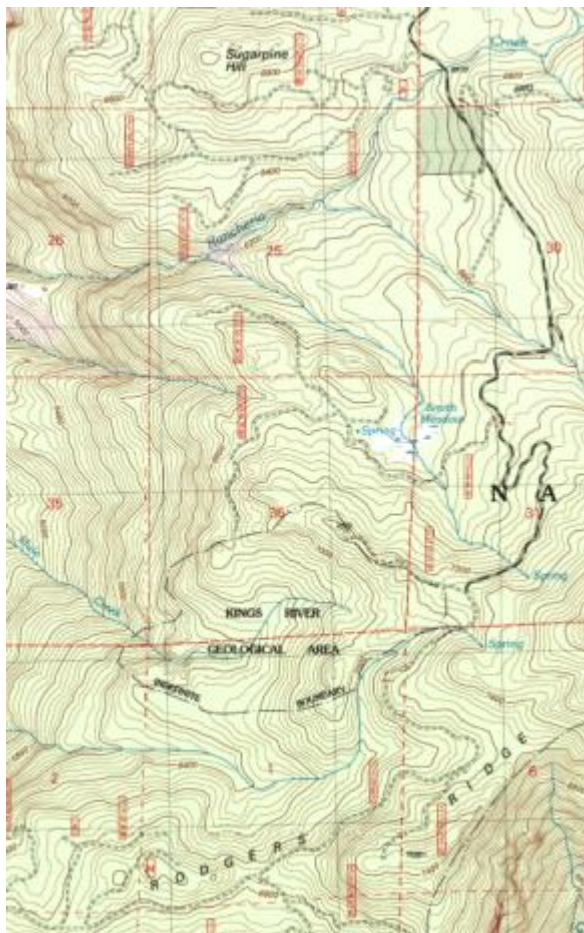
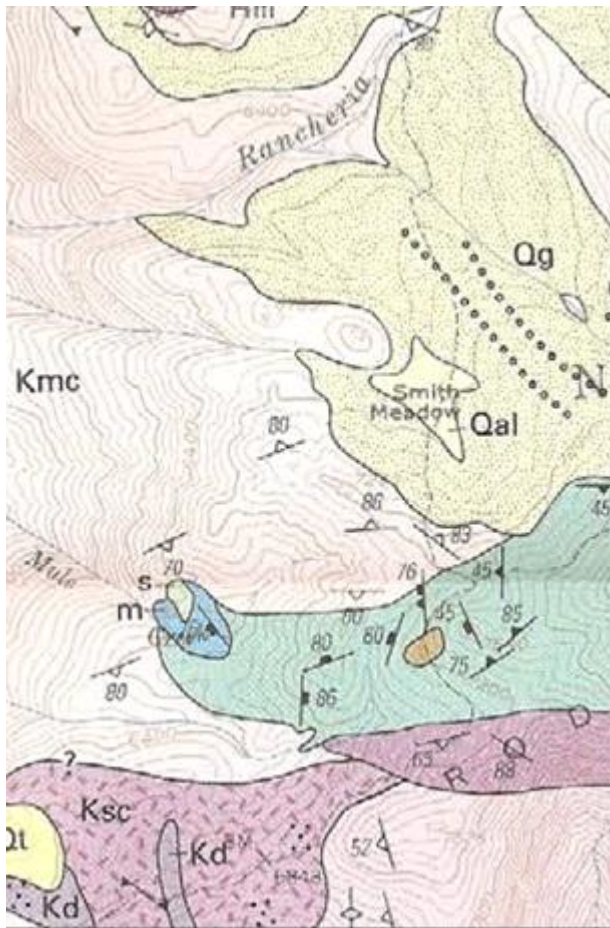
Drive across Rancheria Bridge, across Fish Creek, through the gate (usually closed until July). Two alternative routes:

- 1) Drive 0.5 miles to road junction, take right leg, Drive 1.0 miles to junction, take left leg, Drive 1.0 miles to end of road overlooking caves. Hike crosscountry to caves. Caves re 0.4 miles, 15 deg W of S and 480 ft lower.
- 2) Drive 2.4 miles from Fish Creek bridge slowly rising to a slight crest at 7300'. Park at campsite on top of crest Then hike cross country to the West - to follow Mule Creek. Caves are 1.0 miles, 24 deg S of W, and 1000 ft lower.

http://biohere.com/natural_areas/california/Fresno_County/kings_cavern_geological_area.php

Kings Caverns Geological Area

Mule Creek



Qal, Qg	Quaternary	alluvial, glacial
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Tb Pliocene Volcanic Rocks (basalt)

Ksc, Kmc, Kd Cretaceous Granitic (Spring Creek, McKinley Grove, Diorite)

m, s Jurassic/Triassic Metasedimentary (marble, schist)

