

Three saved from cave southeast of Harrisburg

Following an eight-hour rescue effort, three teenagers made it safely out of a cave at Cave Hill, just west of Glen O. Jones Lake southeast of Harrisburg.

Working together on the rescue were personnel from the Saline County Sheriff's Department, Illinois Department of Mines and Minerals Mine Rescue, Illinois State Police, U.S. Forest Service and many concerned private citizens.

The rescue went underway immediately following a parent's call to the sheriff's department at 10:25 p.m. Monday. He reported that his son and some friends had planned to visit the cave and had left about 3:30 p.m.

At 6:30 a.m. on Monday morning, Josh Myogeto, 15 of Herrin, Garrett J. Mousey, 19 of Carterville, and Garrett R. Decoursy, 18 of Herrin were relieved to see their rescuers.

The three boys told deputies they had been walking, apparently in circles, in the cave between 4 p.m. Monday and 3:30 a.m. Tuesday. Once out of the cave the boys were thirsty, tired, cold and shivering, but none were injured.

After walking in circles, they determined they weren't going to get out, and sat down to wait and save batteries in their flashlights. In the beginning of the journey, the boys had used string to find the way back out, but had decided to journey farther than the string could reach.

The three were on the brink of falling asleep when they heard the voices of rescuers calling their names, and they immediately yelled back.

Once getting word of the rescue, Danny Miles of Herold, a local coal miner who is trained in mine search and rescue wanted to help. He was very familiar with the cave and even had maps to help decipher where the boys may have been.

Miles was in the cave and searching for the three when a rescue team from Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Department of Mines and Minerals from Springfield. The team arrived about 3:13 a.m. and split up to spread the search out.

Finally, at 6:32 a.m., a mine rescuer radioed out they had found the three and were coming out.

The relieved boys emerged to see a large crowd outside the cave. An Illinois State Police search plane was overhead casting a bright spotlight, and on the way from Springfield was an ISP mobile command unit along with two telecommunicators. A Miller Ambulance crew was also on hand.

The parents of the wet, muddy boys were just a relieved to see them above ground as they boys were to be there.

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