



JUN 18 2021

BMB Technical Bulletin

No. 2021 - 02

SUBJECT : PROTOCOL ON THE USE OF CAVES AS PRACTICUM SITES FOR CAVE-RELATED TRAININGS

Pursuant to Republic Act (RA) No. 9072 “*National Caves and Cave Management and Protection Act*”, RA No. 7586 “*National Integrated Protected Areas System Act*” as amended by RA No. 11038 “*Expanded NIPAS Act of 2018*”, and RA No. 9147 “*Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act*” and Section 13 of DENR Administrative Order No. 2003-29 “*Implementing Rules and Regulations of the National Caves and Cave Resources Management and Protection Act*”, and in order to ensure adherence to the cave classification system prescribed under DENR Memorandum Circular No. 2007-04 “*Procedure in Cave Classification*”, this Technical Bulletin is hereby issued for the information and guidance of all concerned.

SECTION 1. Objectives

This Technical Bulletin aims to provide guidance to the DENR and other concerned agencies responsible for the management of caves on the proper protocols to be followed in using a cave as practicum site for cave-related trainings. These protocols are set to ensure protection and conservation of caves and cave resources found therein, as well as to ensure the safety of cave training participants.

SECTION 2. Scope and Coverage

This Bulletin shall cover all trainings in caves to be conducted by the DENR, and those DENR-assisted trainings which are organized by other National Government Agencies, Local Government Units, Non-government Organizations, People’s Organizations, private sector, academe and other institutions/individuals.

SECTION 3. Protocols on the Use of Caves for Cave-Related Trainings

The following protocols shall be considered in the use of caves as practicum site for any cave-related training:

- 1) Only caves classified as Class II or III, with corresponding Regional Cave Committee (RCC)/Provincial Cave Committee (PCC)/Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD)/Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) Resolution (as the case maybe) classifying the cave as such, may be used as practicum site. For Class II cave, the activities

shall be limited only to the open sections of the cave. Outright disapproval of the request shall be issued upon verification that the subject cave is not yet classified or classified as Class I.

- 2) The features of the cave are suitable for the conduct of proposed activity/ies and shall not pose risk to participants.
- 3) The proposed activity in the cave shall not have impacts that will cause degradation of the cave or the resources within.
- 4) The cave is relatively accessible to proposed participants. Travel to and from the site will not impede the conduct of the training.
- 5) The cave is large enough to accommodate the proposed number of participants at a given time. The number of participants to enter the cave at a given time should be limited to the extent that will not affect the cave resources and pose possible damage to the cave.
- 6) The timing or schedule of the proposed activity will not pose risk to participants while inside the cave, nor to the cave resources (i.e. rainy season when caves may be flooded with water) or will not interfere with bat breeding or hibernating season when bats are active.
- 7) Health safety protocols shall be observed inside and outside of the cave in accordance with national and/or local safety guidelines.
- 8) The use of the cave for training purposes must be covered by an area clearance issued by the DENR Regional Executive Director (RED)
- 9) In case of managed cave, the proponent, prior to the conduct of the training, shall coordinate with and secure consent of the local management authority (i.e., from the Protected Area Superintendent, if located within a Protected Area [PA]; from the private land owner, if located within a titled private property; from the Indigenous People community, if located within an ancestral land/domain; or from the local management council)

SECTION 4. Area Clearance for a Cave Practicum Site

The use of caves for training purposes requires the issuance of an area clearance by the RED concerned. The steps for the evaluation and processing of application for an area clearance shall be as follows:

Step 1. Submission of Documentary Requirements. The proponent training organizer, whether from a DENR Office or its partner organization, shall submit the following documentary requirements to the nearest CENRO with management jurisdiction over the potential cave practicum site:

- 1) Letter of intent of the proponent, including their contact information
- 2) Project description or training/activity design with the following information:
 - a) Name and specific location of the cave/s proposed as practicum site
 - b) Purpose of the learning event/cave-related training
 - c) Total number of expected participants
 - d) Number of participants to enter the cave at a time
 - e) Specific activity/ies that will be conducted inside the cave

- f) Possible impacts of the activity/ies
- g) Mitigation measures to be implemented for the identified impacts

Step 2. Verification of the cave classification.

The concerned CENRO shall review the classification of the cave proposed as practicum site to ensure that the cave being applied for is classified as either Class II or Class III.

Step 3. Checklist evaluation for area clearance. The concerned CENRO shall review the submitted information of the training organizer based on the Checklist of Criteria for the Issuance of an Area Clearance for Cave Practicum Sites (**Annex A**). All Criteria 1-8 of the Checklist must be satisfied before recommending for approval of an Area Clearance. The CENRO shall immediately inform the proponent, if the application did not meet the evaluation criteria.

Step 4. Recommendation for approval of the Area Clearance. Should the application meet the criteria on the Checklist, the concerned CENRO shall submit the draft Area Clearance to the RED, through channel, for approval. **Annex B** provides the template form for the Area Clearance. Processing of the application for Area Clearance, at the CENRO level, shall not exceed five (5) working days upon receipt of complete documentary requirements.

Step 5. Issuance of the Area Clearance. The concerned DENR Regional Office, through its Conservation and Development Division (CDD), shall review the application and facilitate the approval of the Area Clearance by the RED. The review and approval of the Area Clearance shall not exceed three (3) working days upon receipt of the recommendation from the CENRO.

The CDD shall then inform the proponent of the approval of the Area Clearance.

The whole process flow in using a cave as practicum site is shown in **Annex C**.

SECTION 4. Post-activity Reporting

As part of the conditions of the Area Clearance, the training organizer shall be required to submit a post-activity report (**Annex D**) indicating the activities conducted inside and around the cave, observed impacts, and mitigation measures made. This report shall be submitted to the nearest CENRO, with copy furnished to the DENR Regional Office with jurisdiction to the said cave, after 15 working days upon completion of the training activity.

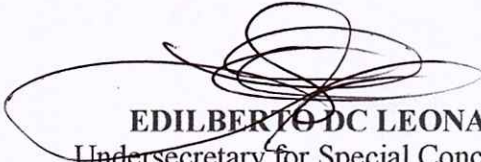
SECTION 5. Monitoring and Damage Assessment

Representative/s from the CENRO, the concerned LGUs (barangay and municipal level) and the concerned PA Management Office, if within a protected area, shall be present on-site to monitor the use of the cave during the training.

The same team/representatives shall conduct a rapid damage assessment of the site to verify any damage that might have been incurred, immediately after the training activity. The rapid assessment will check the immediate impacts of the activity to the cave resources, based on the profile used during cave classification and the submitted information of the organizer. Implementation of proposed mitigating measures will also be verified. Should there be any damage found resulting from the activity, the organizer shall be held accountable, in line with Section 7 of Republic Act No. 9072 "*National Caves and Cave Resources Management and Protection Act*" and other relevant laws, rules and regulations.

Section 6. Effectivity

This Technical Bulletin shall take effect immediately and shall be circulated for the information and guidance of all concerned.


EDILBERTO DC LEONARDO
Undersecretary for Special Concerns and
OIC, Director



ANNEX A. Checklist of Criteria for the Issuance of an Area Clearance for a Cave Practicum Site

Proponent: _____

Title of Activity: _____

Proposed/Tentative Date of Activity: _____

Name of Cave Proposed as Practicum Site: _____

<i>Evaluation criteria</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1) Cave is classified as either Class II or III			
2) If Class II cave, proposed activity will not affect the closed portion/s of the cave			
3) Cave contain features suitable for the conduct of proposed activity/ies			
4) Possible impacts of proposed activity will not pose risk to participants			
5) Possible impacts of proposed activity will not cause degradation of the cave nor the resources within			
6) Cave is relatively accessible to proposed participants			
7) Cave can accommodate the proposed number of participants at a given time			
8) Timing of the proposed activity will not pose risk to participants while inside the cave, or to the cave resources therein			

Location of cave: _____

Note: This Checklist should be accomplished for each cave being proposed as practicum site. All Criteria 1-8 must be satisfied before issuance of an Area Clearance. Justification may be provided if some item cannot be immediately fulfilled.

Evaluated by:

Date evaluated: _____

Noted by:

ANNEX B. Area clearance form for cave/s to be used as practicum site for cave-related trainings

AREA CLEARANCE FORM FOR CAVE PRACTICUM SITE

After a thorough review of the requirements submitted and evaluation of the information provided, the PROPONENT, _____ (NGA /LGU /NGO /PO /Academe), represented by its _____ (POSITION/DESIGNATION, if applicable), _____ (NAME), is hereby granted this Area Clearance for the proposed learning activity entitled _____, to be conducted in _____ (NAME OF CAVE) located at _____ (LOCATION) by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

This Area Clearance is issued with the following details:

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
This Clearance covers the learning event, _____, to be conducted in _____ (NAME OF CAVE) on _____ (DURATION) at _____ (LOCATION) with the purpose of _____.

The following conditions should be met:

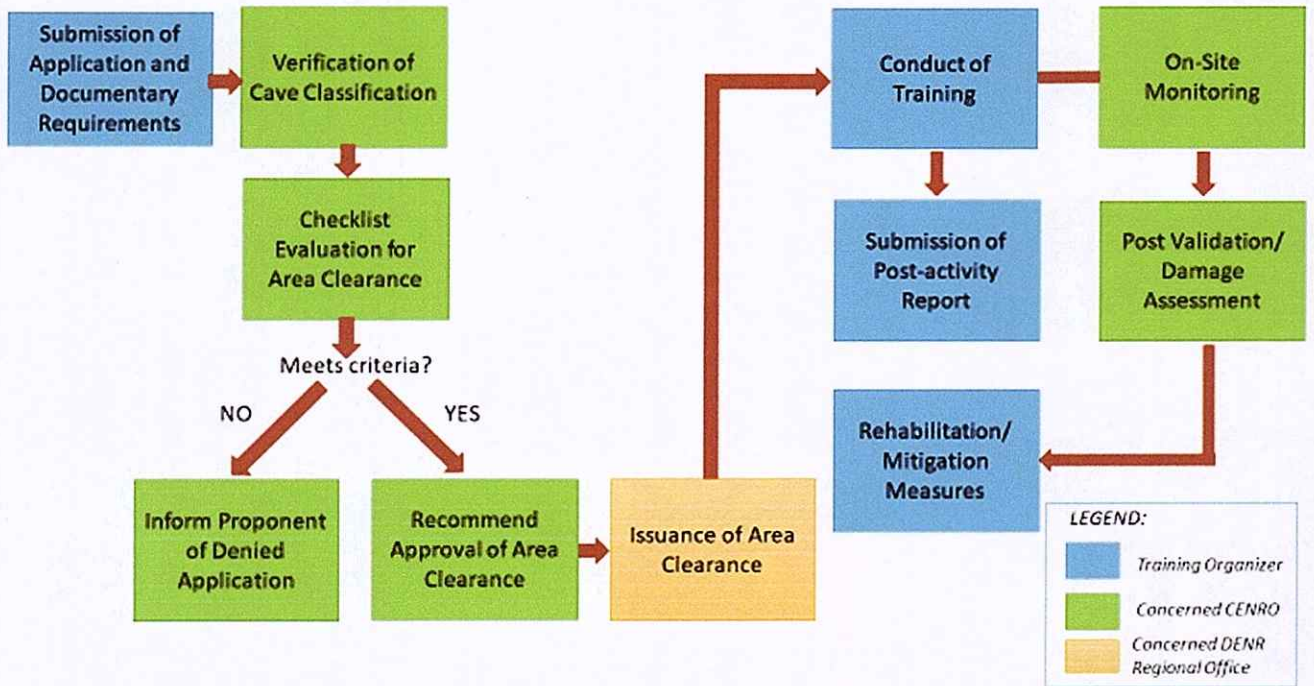
1. Post-activity report indicating the activities conducted inside and around the subject cave should be submitted to the nearest DENR office copy furnished the DENR Regional Office with jurisdiction on the subject cave.
2. The Proponent shall not cause disturbance nor damage to the cave and its resources. In case any damage is found by the DENR monitoring team after the activity, the Proponent and his/her organization should be made liable, in accordance with Section 7 of Republic Act No. 9072 "*National Caves and Cave Resources Management and Protection Act*".
3. The Proponent shall abide by existing rules, regulations and protocols set by the local cave management body.
4. Depending on the size of the subject cave, entry to the cave should be done by batch of _____ (NO. OF PERSONS ALLOWED AT A TIME).

Issued at the _____ (DENR OFFICE), Philippines, this _____ (DATE).

Approved:

(Signature over printed name)
DENR Regional Executive Director

ANNEX C: Process Flow for Using a Cave as Practicum Site



ANNEX D. Post activity report outline

Title of the Activity

Date and Venue

Organizers

- A. Brief Cave profile
 - 1) Name of cave used as practicum site
 - 2) Location
 - 3) Cave classification and corresponding DMC issuance
- B. Highlights of the Practicum
 - 1) Total number of participants
 - 2) Activities conducted inside and/or around the cave
 - 3) Impacts of the activity to the cave
 - 4) Mitigation measures made
 - 5) Summary of the result of the practicum
- C. Additional remarks on the cave (if any)

Prepared by:

Noted by:
