WILDERNESS IMAGE

On Rope Looking Up. View looking up while on rope approximately 70 m on descent below the forest floor at Morro Redondo Cave ($19^{\circ}32' \text{ S}$, $44^{\circ}02' \text{ W}$), north of Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil. Joshua Lane, MD, and Rodrigo Ribeiro-Rodrigues, PhD, descended to the underground caverns and waterways to explore. Danish paleontologist Peter Lund first described the Morro Redondo Cave (circa 1837). It is located at 800 m altitude in a karstic (limestone) region near the archaeological and paleontological site of Cerca Grande and is composed of 2 morphologically distinct cave levels separated by a drop of 52 m (170 ft), which adds to the cave's total depth of 75 m (246 ft), and puts it at 16th place among the deepest cave drops in Brazil. The lower cavern level follows an underground stream course.

Rack and/or self-braking descending belay devices were used and were cooled by water on faster descents. Ascent was performed via ratcheted frog-style ascending systems. Multipoint rope transfers were required due to the tortuous vertical path of the descent and ascent. Photograph by Joshua Lane, MD.