PROCEDURE IN CAVE CLASSIFICATION

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Pursuant to Republic Act No. 9072, otherwise known as the National Caves and Cave Resources Management and Protection Act of 2001, and Sections 10, 12 and 13 of its Implementing Rules and Regulations, (DAO 2003-29), a Manual on Cave Classification is hereby prescribed and adopted for all caves within public domain and private lands, including those found within protected areas for the guidance of all concerned.

SECTION 1. Process in Cave Classification. The following are the general steps in cave classification.

- Identification of caves, including their location and general description through available topographic and cave maps and field reconnaissance surveys;

- Assessment of bio-physical, socio-economic and cultural status of identified caves;

- Recommendation of classification by the cave assessment team;

- Review of recommended classification by the Regional Cave Management Committee or the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB), in the case of protected areas; and

- Approval of classification by the Regional Executive Director.

SECTION 2. Cave Assessment Team. Cave assessment team shall be created in each CENRO by the Regional Executive Director to be composed of the following disciplines: biology, geology, socio-economics, and other relevant fields of expertise. The team shall include representatives from the other sectors concerned.

SECTION 3. Cave Classification. The caves after assessment may be classified as follows:

Class I. Caves with delicate and fragile geological formations, threatened species, gical and paleontological values, and extremely hazardous conditions. Allowable activities are limited to mapping, photography, educational and scientific purposes.

Class II. Caves with areas or portions which have hazardous conditions and com sensitive geological, archeoiogical, cultural, historical, and biological values or high quality ecosystem. It may be necessary to close sections of these caves seasonally permanently. It is open to experienced cavers or guided educational tours/visits.

Class III. Caves generally safe to inexperienced visitors with no known threatened see and archeoiogical, geological, natural history, cultural and historical values. These caves may also be utilized for economic purposes such as guano extraction and edible nest collection.

SECTION 4. Annual list of classified caves. All Regions are required to submit t PAWB their list of classified caves. PAWB shall consolidate and prepare list of classified caves. DENR shall publish a consolidated list of classified caves annually.

SECTION 5. Transitory provisions. Caves with existing utilization permits such as guano and edible bird's nest, (except water rights permit), ecotourism, and research and development activities, may be temporarily suspended, canceled or terminated, when a cave is recommended for temporary closure, after consultation with local government units (LGUs) and concerned parties.

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SECTION 6. Repealing Clause. All circulars and memoranda which are inconsistent herewith are hereby revoked or amended accordingly.

SECTION 7. Effectivity. This Circular takes effect immediately.

Adopted: 28 Feb. 2007

(SGD.) ANGELO T.REYES
Secretary

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