

Common Terms Used in Cave/Karst Assessments in BC		
Term	Meaning	Source
Aven	A vertical cavity leading upwards from a cave passage. When an aven collapses due to close proximity to the surface, the resulting depression is called a sinkhole or pit.	Common
Bacon Strip	Similar to a stalactite, forms in thin bands	Common
Calcium Carbonate	A solid CaCO ₃ , mainly as calcite or aragonite	Dictionary of Geological Terms
Carbon-14 dating	A method which measures carbon-14 in organic material. Used in determining ages between 500-30,000 years	Dictionary of Geological Terms
Cave	A natural cavity large enough for a person to enter. In British Columbia on lands covered under the Forest Act, there must also be a zone of total darkness. The space and eco system between the rock.	Common
Cave Cricket	Vancouver Island variety. Hadenoeucus Subterraneus, a troglophile	Common
Caver	A person who regularly explores caves (Trogloxene)	Common
Cenote	Water filled sinkhole	Common
Column	The joining of a stalactite to a stalagmite	Common
Contact	The surface between two types of rock or ages of rock	Dictionary of Geological Terms
Decorations	Speleothems	Common
Dip	The slope angle measured for a fault from the horizontal, joint, vein or rock unit.	Common
Doline	Sinkhole, sink	Common
Dolomitic Limestone	10-50% dolomite, 50-90% calcite	Dictionary of Geological Terms
Dolomitization	Process - Limestone partly or wholly changed to dolomite or dolomitic limestone	Dictionary of Geological Terms
Epikarst	The top surface of a weathered limestone bed, comprising of a matrix of irregular fractures and shapes in varying dimensions	Common
Grike	Small vertical cracks, solution worn rounding edges. Found in the millions on some limestone ridges	Common
Helictite	Similar to a stalactite but forms off vertical, generally has a small central opening for water travel	Common
Hummock	A knoll or mound above level ground	Dictionary of Geological Terms
Intake	Swallet	Common
Karren	High frequency of small ridges, separated by parallel depressions	Common
Karst	The weathered state of limestone. Characterized by grikes, sinkholes, caves and the like.	Common
Karst spring	Resurgence, exsurgence	Common
Limestone	A sedimentary rock mainly comprising of CaCO ₃ may contain magnesium carbonate. Common impurities are chert and clay.	Common
Marble	Metamorphic state of limestone which was subjected to heat and pressure, recrystallized into a harder form.	Common
Moon Milk	Looks like white spray on foam. Found on cave walls. Comprises of fine calcite crystals	Common
Pit	A vertical shaft	Common
Resurgence	An opening in the ground producing a stream of water	Common
Sinkhole	A collapsed underground cavity creating a depression on the surface	Common
Sinkhole active	A sinkhole with exposed organic or mineral soils, moving water or conductivity to the subsurface	Common
Sinkhole inactive	A sinkhole with no exposed soils or evidence of standing or moving water	Common
Sinkhole Probing	Generally performed on steep sided sinks, where a 3/4" aluminum pipe at least 7' in length is inserted at the sides of the sink near the bottom. Voids found are further investigated with a larger diameter pipe and probe camera.	KSABC
Spelunker	A person who visits caves	Common

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Stalactite	Icicle like formation on the ceiling of caves. Composing mainly of calcium carbonate and various impurities	Common
Stalagmite	The receiving end from the drips from a stalactite. Located on the floor of a cave. Generally larger in diameter.	Common
Strike	The surface direction of a fault, joint, vein.	Common
Suffosion Sinkholes	The leaching away of small particles of overburden by ground water, causing surface depressions (most sinkholes)	Common
Swallet	An opening in the ground which takes all or part of a stream, generally in a vertical fashion	Common
Troglobite	Permanent cave dweller, living outside of daylight, cannot survive on the surface (Similar to a 40 year old gamer living in his moms basement:))	Common
Troglofib	A person making false statements about karst for personal gain	KSABC
Troglophile	Cave dwelling animal with above ground habitat	Common
Trogloxene	An animal using a cave but does not live there (Caver :))	Common
Window	A visible hole connecting the surface to an underground passage. Able to view the daylight from the passage.	Common