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Phytoliths (Plant-Derived Mineral Bodies) as Geobiological and Climatic Indicators in Arid Environments
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Cover Photo

To begin the new era for New Mexico Geology journal as an electronic-only publication we thought it would be nice to mark it by using a composite image, something that has not been used in the past. This cover photo shows the Snowy River Passage in Ft. Stanton Cave, Lincoln County, NM and is photographed by Dr. Kenneth Ingham. Insets of phytoliths (plant biominerals) contained in cave sediments, and in the calcite deposit that gives Snowy River its name are by K.D. Morgan-Edel and M.N. Spilde. The sparkling crystalline formation is 18.5 km long so far and is still being explored. The cave is part of the Bureau of Land

Management's National Conservation Landscape System, named to that status in 2009.

Dr. Kenneth Ingham is a multiple award-winning photographer specializing in caves and science in action in the field and in the lab and whose work has appeared in many venues including a cover of the journal *Astrobiology*. His flash assistants, one of whom is also in the photo, were David Worthington and Kyle Uckert. Samples of his work can be viewed at <http://keninghamphoto.com/> Dr. Ingham is also a computer scientist in private consulting practice.

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