

## ▶ TAKE A LOOK

- **Curious About Keto?**
- **12x Better Than Solar Panels? Prepper's Invention Takes Country by Storm!**
- **Diabetes Will Kill You (Do This To Stop It)**
- **Gut Doctor Begs US "Throw Out This Vegetable Now"**
- **Keto Trend: Everyone is Trying it, But What is it?**
- **You'll Never Think About Solar Panels After Seeing This**
- **The Highest Paying Cashback Card Has Hit The Market**
- **1 Trick Kills Erectile Dysfunction - Wives Are Speechless**
- **See Her Transformation! Bride Transforms Body**
- **Bride Loses lbs of Fat Month Using This Simple Diet**

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## ▶ RECOMMENDED

**See Her Transformation**

**Men Don't Need Viagra If You Do This Once Daily**

**Viagra Obsolete: New Replacement Cheaper, Safer, Faster**

**Do This Immediately to Get Rid of Nail Fungus (Try It)**

**1 Trick Kills Erectile Dysfunction - Wives Are Speechless**

**One Cup of This (Before Bed) Burns Belly Fat Like Crazy!**

**Top Gut Doctor: I Beg All Americans To Throw Out This Vegetable**

**Bride Loses lbs of Fat Month Using This Simple Diet**

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## **Weather Alert**

**Winter Weather Advisory from 5PM CST FRI until 6AM CST SAT**



[https://www.bgdailynews.com/news/good-science-destroyed-during-shutdown/article\\_2ac4653b-aa33-5235-8d0e-f34244861144.html](https://www.bgdailynews.com/news/good-science-destroyed-during-shutdown/article_2ac4653b-aa33-5235-8d0e-f34244861144.html)

## ‘Good science’ destroyed during shutdown

CAROLINE EGGERS [ceggers@bgdailynews.com](mailto:ceggers@bgdailynews.com) 1 hr ago



River Styx Spring flows out of Mammoth Cave National Park and connects to the Green River. Western Kentucky University graduate students are monitoring how flooding affects both the cave and the surrounding ecosystem. Contributed.

Jason Polk, a geoscientist and Western Kentucky University professor, prepares for the unexpected. He studies the natural world and understands that rain, snow and sometimes squirrels can postpone research.

But he wasn't prepared for the longest U.S. government shutdown in history, or the consequential closing of Mammoth Cave National Park – his outdoor laboratory.

Polk and several graduate students are studying how the flooding of Green River into Mammoth Cave affects rivers inside the cave. For six months leading up to the shutdown, the team traveled to multiple sites within the park each week to collect water samples, secure the water data-recording equipment and download the data.

"We had continuous data for every week since June of last year," Polk said.

In January, the team lost more than a month of measurements, "thousands of dollars a piece" of equipment and a prime opportunity to monitor flood activity.

The project goal, set last year, was to measure flooding activity throughout every season. Now, "there's a big gap in data," Polk said.

The research isn't just helping students develop master's theses – it might present a new perspective to better protect the cave.

"This is good science, and this is important science," Polk said.

Unique to this project, the student researchers have been monitoring the impact of the removal of Lock and Dam No. 6 from Green River on the cave's hydrology.

"It's much more complex and dynamic than we thought," Polk said. "The data will help us better understand the resource and better manage it."

Other community-important research was affected during the shutdown. Some WKU graduate students measuring Bowling Green's water quality were cut off from utilizing the local U.S. Department of Agriculture's laboratory and analysis sites.

While the students had access to water sources, they didn't have the ability to test the samples – which are only preserved for a certain period of time. Their project also involved weekly sampling, according to Polk, who is overseeing the research.

However, with lab-based work, researchers can sometimes find another lab.

That's not usually the case for field research.

"There's only one Mammoth Cave, that's the only longest cave we have in the world," Polk said. "We can't just move somewhere else and do the same kind of study."

Despite the loss of time, money and scientific research, there was a silver lining. Both Mammoth Cave staff and the local science community banded together to begin tackling the new challenges, according to Polk.

For future fledgling scientists, Polk hopes to create arrangements where they won't lose access to sites or labs.

As to the current graduate students developing theses based on incomplete data, "hopefully we can keep them on time to graduate," he said.

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**Caroline Eggers**

News reporter.