

Important Information for Galena 2013 Tour Participants

“White Nose Syndrome” (WNS) is a largely lethal affliction responsible for the recent nearly total destruction of important bat populations in many areas of the United States and Canada. To date, Wisconsin is believed to remain WNS free. In an effort to slow or stop the spread of the fungus which causes WNS in bats, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has issued decontamination rules which – in part – impact mine tourism. Under those rules, the department also circulated the following simplified protocol for visitors to commercial caves and tour mines within the state:

Cave or Mine Tourists

All persons entering a tourist cave or mine shall comply with the following decision tree for decontamination:

1. Have you been in a cave or mine for any reason since 2005?

No: Proceed to the tour

Yes: Continue to question #2

2. Are the caves or mines you visited outside Wisconsin?

No: Proceed to the tour

Yes: Continue to question #3

3. Are you wearing or carrying anything that you took into the cave or mine (e.g. clothing, footwear, jewelry, watches, flashlights, cell phones, cameras, etc.)?

No: Proceed to the tour

Yes: Please remove and bag those items or return the items to your car. If your footwear has been inside a cave or mine outside Wisconsin, the tour operator will spray your footwear with a disinfectant.

Although footwear can be disinfected, it is often very difficult to safely and effectively treat other articles of clothing, cameras and other personal possessions. Therefore, to minimize delays and inconvenience when visiting the Bevans and Badger mines during the 2013 Conference field trips, please try to avoid wearing or carrying *anything* that has previously been worn or used underground elsewhere.