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Botetourt County's "murder hole"--a
massive, privately owned hole in the ground-(ROLL FILM)

MAY not have trapped its last victim--despite the the long and determined efforts of its owners (TAKE FILM)

to keep the public from climbing -- or falling -- in. Last weekend, five cave explorers entered "murder hole," and three were unable to get out until rescue squadmen were summoned to the scene. Eight years ago, a VPI student fell to his death as a rope broke as he descended into the hole, in the rugged Catawba section of Rounwka County, 15 miles north of Roanoke. Three of the five owners contacted today said they knew of no plan to physically close the entrance of the hole by dynamiting, which one estimated wxxx would cost 3 thousand dollars, due to the frequent incidence of fissures. And, although much consideration was given w to the possibilities of constructing a safe entrance so that tourists might see the natural cavern (FILM ROLLING)

this idea was abandoned as impractical, and no efforts at promotion have ever been made. One owner complains that everytime "no trespassing" signs are posted on the property--along the log road leading to the hole -- they are torn down by vandals. "Six or Seven" signs were put up three months ago, an owner reports. Not one was visible today as a Channel 10 news team made its way to "murder hole," up a slope honeycombed with sink holes. The owners plan to erect some sort of a barrier soon, in yet another attempt to warn the NAM unwary. But caves and other dangerous natural formations have charmed adventurers since the days of Tom Sawyer and before, and attempts to keep "murder hole" safe will be an uphill fight.

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