In this Episode

A trip to Snowy River, a bright white crystalline formation found deep within Fort Stanton Cave in New Mexico, reveals a lot about life and energy in unexpected places. Host Lisa Van Pay meets Diana Northup and Monica Moya, researchers who study life in caves. As they explore the cave they ask questions, think of possible answers and ways to test them, and discuss how to share their findings with the community.

Together, science and engineering have resulted in advancements that have changed our lives dramatically. Now more than ever, the boundaries between science, technology and engineering blur together to extend our knowledge even further—but where does something completely new begin? Exploration and discovery, along with the acts of asking questions and pursuing answers, are at the heart of innovation. This episode serves as an example of the many ways curiosity-driven research can lead to new ways of thinking or new technologies.

The Subsurface Life in Mineral Environments (SLIME) Team

As part of the SLIME team, Diana and Monica have studied life in lots of different places, from the lab to deserts to caves. Check out some of their adventures here.

Snowy River

In 2001, cave explorers discovered miles of new cave passage within the Fort Stanton Cave in Lincoln County, N.M. The discovery was one of the largest and most important American cave discoveries in decades. The area is currently maintained by the Bureau of Land Management.

*Based on Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Curriculum Framework, October 2006