

NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY, INC.

Minutes

Submitted by Christa Hay
3/12/06 Southern Vermont College, Bennington. VT 12:00 pm

There was a cleanup of Everett Cave before and a potluck lunch. There were approximately 18 volunteers.

Meeting called to order at 12:35

1. Introduction and greetings – President Bob Addis
 - The NCC received an "Albany Ambassador" award from the Albany County Convention and Visitors Bureau which was presented to Mike Warner / Emily Davis for their work on the NCKMS.
2. Attendance:
Officers: B. Addis, B. Folsom, J. Levinson, C. Hay
Trustees: J. Allison, J. Armstrong, M. Chu, J. DeGroff, V. Kappler, J. Siemion, B. Simmons, P. Youngbaer
3. Allison moved to fill vacant trustee position with Chuck Porter.
2nd by Chu
Passed unanimously
4. President's Report – Bob Addis- Attachment A (reports are found at end of minutes)
 - 4a. Land Use Advisory ad hoc Committee – nothing to report.
 - 4b. Becker's Cave ad hoc Committee – 1)Tom Wright, owner of the cave, is out of the country until mid-April. His associate says that the sale is progressing but will not be to closing until some time after that. I will call back late April. 2). DEC Stamford Office to check status of EIS and its hearing dates.
5. Vice President's Report –Bill Folsom – Attachment B
 - 5a.Pompeys ad hoc Committee – Attachment B
6. Treasurer's Report – Joe Levinson – Attachment C
7. Secretary's Report – Christa Hay
 - Status quo
 - Updating the on-line database. This is now working and will be the official database for membership.
 - VCA will be sharing the NCC tent for registration at the Spring NRO.
8. Acquisitions Committee Report –Chuck Porter
 - Nothing to report
 - Youngbaer brought up that he had just communicated with Peter Grant concerning The Cobbles Caves, near Bristol & Middlebury, VT – the place is still for sale.
9. Bylaws Committee Report – Joe Levinson
 - Reviewed and commented on proposed bylaw changes. See proposed amendment in the motions.
10. Conservation Committee Report - Joe Armstrong – no report received
 - Computer problems reason for no report. Oral at meeting – there is no new news and will be continuing to clean Baugh Cave.
 - Informational point: The cash to cover drinks and some food items came from Conservation Committee. This was informal vote of Board with Ok from Conservation Chair.

11. Publications/Publicity Committee Report - Christa Hay
 - Putting together another order for polo shirts.
 - Researching all-season banner – ex. 13oz, 6 ft., 34" is \$83 – many colors, grommets, \$6 shipping. There are other options but this is just an example.
12. Fundraising Committee Report - Alan Traino
 - End of year fundraising plea was very good with about 2000.00 dollars brought in.
 - We should be installing the coin drop at this years spring NRO.
 - All other fundraising is on hold. Waiting for or next cave purchase.
13. Office Committee Report – Emily Davis / Mike Warner
 - Problems: Minor -I had a request from Jon Allison for the Gregory deed and I had temporarily misplaced it. I got it out to him about a week late. The Data base has not been working as well as we had hoped so I am continuing to keep an office copy up to date for now.
 - Progress: Standard distribution of information.
 - Plans: None.
14. Knox Cave Preserve Report – Emily Davis/Jay Siemion
 - The management plan has been updated and will be presented to the board during this meeting. The update consisted of a general update of information with some significant proposed changes to the access policy.
15. Onesquethaw Cave Preserve Report – Thom Engel – no report received
16. Sellecks Karst Preserve Report – Jason Siemion
 - Nothing to report.
17. Clarksville Preserve Report – Mike Chu, Thom Engel, Chuck Porter
 - Problems: No significant problems. Some sort of beer party took place in the cave around the middle of February and was reported to the managers by Joe Armstrong on 2/22/06. Three caving groups (led by Amy & Aaron Cox, Dave Hubelbank & Scott Stepenuck, and one from Colgate) removed at least 30 beer cans and associated trash from the Lake Room and Main Room on 2/25/06. New etchings were found in the main room (subsequently covered with mud), and some new spray paint was reported in the lake room.
 - Kiosk and changing areas remain free of vandalism.
 - Plans: Work to complete the parking lot this year, including:
 - Digging a trench to drain the occasional spring on the western edge of the lot.
 - Gravel needs to be brought in to even out the new parking lot and prevent it from becoming a mud-trap during wet weather.
 - Fencing should be installed to distinguish the edge of our parking lot from the road leading to the quarry and to help steer visitors onto the trail that runs by the kiosk.
 - Improving the path from the lower lot to the kiosk.
 - Hoping to make nature/geology trails thru the preserve this year.
 - Hold a cleanup @ Clarksville with hopes to complete the removal of the small trash pile NW of the ladder dig. (Neal Lieberman/MET offered to organize a C'ville cleanup during the spring)
18. Ella Armstrong Preserve Report – Joe Armstrong – no report received
 - Computer problems reason for no report. Oral at meeting – materials for kiosk are there but not built yet, deciding where it should go.
19. Membership Report – Sean Ryan
 - Renewal emails are going out, preparing for the big surge of member renewals come the summer. The NSS recently sent out a one-page ad for grotto newsletters to get non-NSS members to join; we could take a similar approach. This could be done on a yearly basis, updating what the conservancy's done over the past 12 months, keeping our name in people's minds, and letting them know the value of supporting us.

20. Website Subcommittee Report – Norm Berg (Report written by Mike Chu)

- Progress: The NCC website, web database, and email aliases have been consolidated and are now hosted by Brinkster Communications. The domain name, is in the process of being transferred from EasyDNS to an account at GoDaddy.com. (Brinkster does not have the capability of accepting existing domain name transfers at this time)

This change allows the website to have much greater capacity and flexibility including:

- increasing the web space from 25MB to 3000MB
- availability of MS Access and MySQL Databases
- ability to create up to 400 email accounts in addition to the email aliases
- full support of all the modern web technologies for the website (asp, php, .net, etc)

Thanks to Norm for researching the hosting companies.

- Problems: None with the main NCC website. There were some unexpected problems with the web database interface and the new account initially, but all known problems have been worked out as of late February. I'd like to thank Christa, Emily, and Sean for being patient with me while I worked to fix the new problems from the account switch.

Some additional content has been added to each of the preserve pages, and a new landowner information page has been created. The "About" page has been reformatted to fit the original design framework of the website as well.

- Plans: With the availability of a database, Norm suggested that it might be useful to add the ability to join/renew the NCC via the internet. Members can enter their info on-line (if they want to). This way the info goes into the database, or can be put into a holding database, without having the NCC staff take the time to enter it, and typos are eliminated. They can still send in their check/cash to the NCC, but since the NCC has NetworkForGood and PayPal, dues could be accepted that way as well. This eliminates a lot of volunteer data entry. (What are your opinions on this idea?)

21. Land Trust Liaison Committee Report – Jon Allison

- After a bit of procrastination, I have gotten the conservation easement on the Gregory Entrance moving again. With some photographic assistance from Mike Chu I completed the baseline data report and worked through the last couple open items on the easement. MHLC is working with me to finish granting this easement. My goal is to have it placed by the NRO this spring. MHLC wants a survey done – will talk with them and pass along the information.

22. Legal Committee Report – Dan Werner – no report received

23. Special and Group Use Coordinators – Aaron and Amy Cox – no report received

24. Financial and Investments Committee – Vacant.

25. Ad hoc Committee - Volunteer Value – Vince Kappler

- Progress: The VV reporting forms and an article about VV were posted on the NCC web site. Many thanks to Mike Chu and Norm Berg for all the help creating PDF files and posting the materials to the web.
 - A job description for the Volunteer Value Committee Chairperson was submitted to the NCC President.
 - An article on VV was submitted to the *Northeastern Cave Conservancy News*.
 - I contacted all committee chairs and property managers via email and discussed implementing VV beginning in January 2006.
- Plans: I will work to make the transition for the new VV committee chairperson as easy as possible. Until the permanent chairperson is approved, I will track the VV data that is submitted to me and I will make periodic inquiries of the property managers on their progress or any problems they may encounter.
- Problems: None at this time

26. Ad hoc Committee - General Liability Insurance Report – Peter Youngbaer -Attachment D

27. Addis moved to open the Committee of the Whole. The Vice President will preside.

2nd by DeGroff

Passed unanimously

- Folsom – CSP letter - any more information? - We are only offering our help if they want it.
- Davis – Cave Conservancy Forum- has asked if we would like to co-sponsor the event.
- DeGroff – CSP recently had a blast (first since the mid 1970's) will be continuing to blast. Howe Caverns has a seismometer.
- Addis – asked Al Hicks of NY DEC to introduce himself – he spoke of the numerous projects that the NCC could help with – very good for Volunteer Value.
- Pingree – asked about status of Aeolis – Youngbaer had spoken to Thom Engel and has finished the management plan – now waiting for the Nature Conservancy to accept it.
- Youngbaer- advertised the spring NRO at Natural Stone Bridge and Caves – will be a T-shirt.
- Simmons – management of caves is our strong point – can we volunteer for more management at Surprise Cave?
- Levinson- are people willing to do 3 meetings as to 4? Discussion followed with main outcome to keep at 4 meetings.
- Addis – do we need to follow up with Southern Vermont College concerning Everett's? Youngbaer – they would like some guidance on managing the cave – are looking to only allow experienced cavers in.
- Cantello – NCC consider contacting Mike for the survey at Gregory Entrance?
- Folsom – 3 trustees are up for election – 1 previous trustee position is still open. People should contact Mike Martuscello.

28. Folsom moved to close the Committee of the Whole.

2nd by Youngbaer

Passed unanimously

29. Hay moved to accept the minutes of the December 4, 2005 meeting.

2nd by Youngbaer

Passed unanimously

30. Youngbaer moves that the Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. purchase basic liability insurance and volunteer accident coverage through the Conserve-a-Nation program.

2nd by Simmons

Postponed from September board meeting

Allison moved to postpone until June meeting.

2nd by Levinson

31. Youngbaer moves that the Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. join the Land Trust Alliance.

2nd by Folsom

Postponed from September board meeting

Levinson moved to postpone until June meeting.

2nd by Allison

32. Siemion moves to postpone Ella Armstrong management plan changes until June meeting.

2nd by Folsom

Motion postponed from December board meeting.

33. Siemion moved to accept the revised Knox Management plan.

2nd by Levinson

For – Rest, Abstained – Allison

Passed

The following are Bylaws changes requiring a 21 days' notice to the membership and a 2/3's vote of those members attending the March 2006 meeting.

34. Addis moved to SUBSTITUTE. Article V, Section 5, Rotation and terms of Trustees. All subsequent elections will be to fill vacant offices with three-year terms. If more than three

vacancies exist, the winning top three shall fill the three year terms, and the top runners up shall fill the remaining vacant position(s) for either one or two years to complete the appropriate term remaining.

ADD NEW SECTION. Article V, Section 9, Vacancies.

The Trustees shall appoint a temporary Trustee(s) to fill the vacancy(ies) until the next scheduled election of Trustees.

2nd by Folsom

Passed unanimously

35. Levinson moved to DELETE. Art III, Section 2.f, Life membership.

2nd by Simmons

For – Rest, Against – Folsom

Passed

36. Allison moved that the board grant the attached conservation easement to the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy subject to legal review. This easement is a revision of a previously voted on version which has not been placed.

2nd by Simmons

Passed unanimously

37. Addis moved that Vince Kappler be appointed as Volunteer Value Committee Chair, reporting to the Treasurer.

2nd by Levinson

For – Rest, Abstained – Kappler

Passed

38. Addis moved Mike Chu be appointed as Chairman of the Website Subcommittee.

2nd by Folsom

For – Rest, Abstained – Chu

Passed

39. Hay moved to thank Norm Berg for his service as the Website Chairman.

2nd by Simmons

Passed unanimously

40. Addis moved that the NCC so-sponsor the 2006 Cave and Karst Conservancies Forum to be held September 20 – 22, 2006 in Lewisburg, West Virginia.

2nd by Kappler

Passed unanimously

41. Allison moved that C. Porter fill the Trustee vacancy until the June 2006 meeting.

2nd by Chu

Passed unanimously

42. Simmons moved that up to \$1,000.00 be allocated for the survey of the Gregory Entrance parcel.

2nd by Allison

Passed unanimously

43. Chu moved that up to \$1,000.00 be allocated for the new Clarksville parking lot.

2nd by Armstrong

Passed unanimously

44. Informational Point: The President established the Everett's Cave Ad hoc committee with Peter Youngbaer as the Chairman.

45. Informational Point: The Officers will conduct an Executive Committee meeting on April 30, 2006 at 10:00 am in Cohoes, NY – Addis/Hay House.

46. Addis moved that the next NCC Board meeting will be held June 3, 2006 at Onesquethaw Fire Department. Cleanup at Clarksville Preserve 9:00 am – 1:00pm Board Meeting to begin at 1:00pm.

2nd by Armstrong

Passed unanimously

47. Addis moved to thank Southern Vermont College and Peter Youngbaer for hosting and organizing the meeting. Also thanks to all who helped with the Everett Cave cleanup.

2nd by Levinson

Passed unanimously

48. Addis moved to adjourn.

2nd by Levinson

Passed unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 2:33 pm.

Attachment A
PRESIDENT'S REPORT
3/12/06

1. Green Berkshires. There has been considerable discussion on email and the discussion group as well as some personal contact with this Massachusetts-based group who opposes the development of wind farms in the Berkshires and by extension, the Green Mountains of Vermont. GB had sought the NCC's help in gathering a bat inventory of the area since it is apparent that some windmills kill bats. Their cause would be strengthened if the bats were of an endangered species. The bat research is very preliminary and no conclusions can be drawn at this time, although the leading bat researchers consider this an important challenge. It is not my intention to take this time and space to either debate the topic or expand its many issues. I refer you to the most recent issue of the Northeastern Caver for excellent coverage, and I encourage you to search the Internet. What I would like to point out is how careful the NCC, its officers and members, and cavers in general have to be when approached by a group seeking something. They want information, assistance in caving, maybe access to caves (NCC as well as privately owned), political support, perhaps even money. It is human nature to help when asked, and some of these groups may appear very "green", i.e. ecological or conservation-minded. When approached, all of us have to be very careful in responding. We have to ask the question, "Does this request fall within the scope of the NCC's Mission Statement?"

I personally believe that every problem is an opportunity, so what has the NCC learned or gained from Green Berkshire's requests? What we have learned is that we, as a community of cavers, must communicate. This must be immediate and thorough; we must contact as many cavers as they do with emails and phone calls. Naturally some cavers will research the issues and communicate their findings, but we can count on the NCC to take a leading role and to be a clearinghouse for information. I say to all cavers in the Northeast, contact any officer or trustee of the NCC when approached with a cave-related request other than to take them caving. Even a request to take the news media, a journalists or an author onto NCC property should be discussed beforehand.

2. Beckers Cave - Cobleskill Stone Products: The letter offering our help on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), if needed, was circulated to the board and sent out.
3. DEC: I have recently been approached by Al Hicks, bat specialist of the DEC, about directing some revenue to the NCC in trade for assistance on bat-related work that his department wants to get done. Although it sounds like caving for pay, it is more complicated than that. I don't have a clear understanding of all the details, but it sounds like our Volunteer Value on projects will be matched by state funds. DEC has requested an organization that has the structure of the NCC to better track the Volunteer Value.

Specifically, Al was discussing several projects entitling such services as:

- Preventing flooding in a hibernaculum by studying its inflow & outfall. It might be surveying & modifying cave passages or a solution at the insurgence(s).
- Cleaning up and shoring up dangerous rock fall areas that the hibernaculums prefer.
- Helping to attach transmitters to bats who are otherwise unaccounted for in the warmer months.
- Other projects are being considered.

Al is researching the liability/workman's comp issue, and he hopes to have some answers by our 3/12 Board meeting. If he can make the meeting, most likely he will make a presentation on the projects and the NCC's involvement.

This appears to be a very positive direction for the NCC, and I am excited to lead these discussions. At the present, its scope is statewide so we may be organizing and recruiting members in different locations to help with the work. I can see this leading to more creditability with the agencies and an enhanced reputation with other organizations.

4. Spring NRO. The NCC will be running an auction, so you and your caving pals should look through your closets and bookshelves for items to donate.
5. Albany Ambassadors. Christa Hay and I were awarded that title at the February 28 dinner meeting of the Albany County Convention & Visitors Bureau. The National Cave & Karst Management Symposium, hosted by the NCC and others, brought over 100 attendee nights to the Capital District and that netted two free dinners and a photo opportunity. Since the NCKMS organizers, Mike Warner and Emily Davis, were out of town, Christa & I accepted graciously on their behalf. A good time was had by all.
6. Personal Note. Christa and I during the recent warm spell did surface tours of Sellecks, McFail's and the Schoharie Cabin. All looked good.

Attachment B
Vice President's Report
3/12/06

Pompey's Cave acquisition update

No progress to report other than a 2nd hand report via Mark Folsom that the burn area is larger than ever. Mr. Neff was to discuss our offer with family over the holidays and I have not followed up with other than sending an email 3 weeks ago, to which I have not received a reply. I plan an in-person visit sometime this Spring.

Once again I implore those of you taking point on an acquisition or management opportunity for the NCC to move it forward as this particular acquisition may not happen for a while, if then.

Jack Packer's Cave (Greene County)

Chuck Porter, Mike Chu, Alan Traino and I visited this Greene County gem on 2/1 after making appropriate arrangements with the owner (emailed them a signed waiver). Ellen Mann, the owner, was interested to hear our recommendations for the cave, and OK'd us returning in the Spring to do a clean-up inside and outside of the cave, including setting up a screen to keep debris from washing in the insurgence. The North entrance is close to the Thruway and receives trash from passing vehicles.

Green Berkshires

See the recent NCC newsletter for my article regarding Green Berkshires bat counts inspired by their opposition to wind power generation in the Berkshires.

NCC Board & Committee openings

Several folks have inquired about the Education Chair position, but none have committed. More importantly, the search continues to replace our outgoing Treasurer. I believe most cavers in the Northeast are aware of the opening via mailing lists and the recent NE Caver posting, and we are reaching out to the Open Space Institute as well as posting ads on Craigslist.org and volunteermatch.org. Neither of the latter postings mentioned has produced any candidates thus far.

Attachment C
Treasurers Report
For
The Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc.
12- Mar-06

As of March -06 we had \$19,122.85 in our bank accounts. In the last accounting we had assets of \$25,432 being held by the National Speleological Foundation. I have filed our yearly paperwork to keep Knox, Ella Armstrong and Clarksville off the tax rolls. I have also submitted and application to remove the Gregory entrance off the tax rolls.

Respectively submitted,

Joe E. Levinson

Attachment D

LIABILITY INSURANCE REPORT

At the request of Bob Addis, I have agreed to take back responsibility for following this up. I spoke with Sara Allen at Franey Muha Alliant (FMA). She is the person who is handling our application (previously, it had been John Mashanko). FMA is the insurance agent who acts on behalf of the Land Trust Alliance (LTA) and entities like us (NCC) who are looking to come in under the Conserve-A-Nation insurance program. Our conversation took place late Thursday afternoon (March 2). We will have more conversations between now and the March 12 meeting.

She said she will pull our file and copy me on everything that has been submitted so that we have a complete record. At my request, she also will be contacting CHUB, the insurance carrier, to see what they have received and if they need anything else. We did specifically discuss the additional form that Joe had e-mailed out (Cave Exposures - Supplemental Application). This is a series of 24 questions, many of which are not on point, in my opinion. They come from a mindset that assumes we are offering paid guided cave tours. They don't understand wild caves. They want to know things like how many square feet our caves have! Seriously! And, taken literally, we would have to fill out a separate 24-question form for each cave. Hopefully, through some dialogue among Chub, FMA, and us over the next several days, we'll be able to hone down these questions to give them the critical information they need, and not superficial stuff.

I also talked with Sara about the need for all the management plans and accident reports going back three years. Again, she is going to speak with CHUB about that. Indeed, the management plans themselves contain most of the critical information they ask for in their questionnaire.

Bob also gave me a list of questions to ask of FMA and Chub, which will help us make a better informed decision. I hope to have more of an update by the March 12 meeting, but we will not have a quote back from FMA in time for action on March 12.

I have still heard nothing that would substantially change any of the original cost estimates that I provided in my earlier reports. That said, just as a reminder to the trustees, in order to benefit from the LTA negotiated rates, we do need to join the LTA. Originally, I had proposed three motions. We adopted the first, that being to adopt the LTA standards. We have appropriately postponed the second two: joining the LTA, and purchasing insurance.

If anyone has any other questions they would like me to ask, please contact me ASAP. Thanks.