

NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY, INC.

Minutes

March 29, 2009, Gallupville, NY 10:00 AM

Meeting called to order at 10:24

1. Introduction and greetings – President Bob Addis
2. Attendance:
Officers: B. Addis . P. Youngbaer, B. Folsom, C. Hay
Trustees: J. Armstrong, C. Cantello (10:39), M Chu, A. Hicks, D. Lyons, B. Simmons, M. Warner.
3. Absent with Proxy
 - C. Porter for V. Kappler
4. Absent without proxy
 - Peter Haberland – board did not fill the seat
5. President's Report – Bob Addis- Attachment A
6. Vice President's Report –Peter Youngbaer
 - WNS issues
7. Treasurer's Report –Bill Folsom - Attachment B
8. Secretary's Report – Christa Hay – Attachment C
9. Science Committee – Larry Davis – See Attachment D
10. Acquisitions Committee Report –Chuck Porter
 - Working with president – see Attachment A
 - Bob A and Chuck went to speak to owner...went well....discussed parking lot.
11. Bylaws Committee Report – Joe Levinson
 - Updating the board manual. I need copies of the minutes from the last two meetings, they are not on the web. If there are any mistakes, please forward them to me.
12. Conservation Committee Report - Joe Armstrong – no report
13. Publications/Publicity Committee Report - Christa Hay
 - Status quo
14. Fundraising Committee Report - Alan Traino- no report
15. Office Committee Report – Emily Davis / Mike Warner
 - **Problems:** none
 - **Progress:** sent out a bunch of dues notices through March 1, 2009. Quite a few back in.
 - **Plans:** no changes in work methods.
16. Knox Cave Preserve Report –Emily Davis/Jay Siemion
 - **Problems:** none
 - **Progress:** no changes called for at this time.
 - **Plans:** Still plan to get up the border markers. We need to find a day that will work for both of us before the leaves are out and after the worst of the mud is gone.
17. Onesquethaw Cave Preserve Report – Thom Engel
 - It has been a busier winter than usual as it has been one of the few open caves. The ice storm in December brought down some sumac which Mike Chu was kind enough to chain-saw up.

18. Sellecks Karst Preserve Report – Jason Siemion

- **Sellecks Preserve Visitation** : In past years reports on visitation to properties owned by the NCC have not been compiled as part of the management strategy. While visitation reports show numbers that may be of interest to the board and membership, they are also useful tools to be used when applying for grants. The ability to identify the number and frequency of visitors to each property can strongly illustrate the value these preserves bring to the community. As the NCC grows, visitation reports can also be used to allocate resources to the properties which have been determined to have the highest visibility and use by the public. Below is a brief summary of visitation to the Sellecks Preserve from summer 2002 to the end of 2008. The numbers presented are minimum estimates as visitation to the preserve is monitored by a self registration process.

Between the summer of 2002 and the end of 2008 324 individuals visited the property in 78 recorded visits. The annual number of group visits and the number of individuals in those groups over time are shown in the accompanying figures. During those visits Levy's Cave was visited 50% of the time; Selleck's Cave 50% of the time; Cave 575 35% of the time; and all three caves were entered during the same visit 30% of the time. Thirty-eight percent of the total visits to the preserve were surface walks. Most visits were between April and November with little to no visitation during the winter months. Minimum caving group size was 2 with a maximum of 9, while surface groups varied between 1 and 27 people. The year 2004 saw the fewest visits (6) while 2006 and 2008 saw the most (18). Many of the caving groups were lead by people familiar to the preserve manager with many repeat visits by the same groups. Local people were also noted to have visited for surface walks on a somewhat regular basis. There were 40 management visits during the last 7 years, with most during the early summer months to mow the parking area.

It would be a worthwhile goal to have an annual report on usage from each property to document the visitation for both institutional knowledge and to assist in future grant proposals.

19. Clarksville Preserve Report – Mike Chu, Thom Engel, Chuck Porter

- Visitation has proceeded as one of the few open caves. We had reports of bats near the entrance and one bat with apparent WNS. The December ice storm brought down some stuff, most notably a cherry tree near the kiosk. Mike Chu removed that.
- From Norm Berg: In January 2008, Ray Keeler, Jansen Cardy, and the Central Connecticut Grotto presented a proposal titled "Cave Visitation Monitoring – Clarksville Cave, New York". Our report along with analysis of four deployments is in the attached zip (compressed) file.

We are continuing to use data loggers to monitor visitation in Clarksville Cave. Your comments and suggestions are welcome.

20. Ella Armstrong Preserve Report – Joe Armstrong – no report

21. Education Committee Report – David Lyons

- Nothing to report

22. Membership Committee – open

23. Website Subcommittee Report – Mike Chu

- Nothing to report

24. Legal Committee Report – Mark Seltzer

- work with ad hoc planned giving

25. Special and Group Use Coordinators –Amy Cox

- I have begun to receive reservations for summer groups. Current usage is the 1-2 groups per month, but will pick up in May. I will draft a letter to all known organized groups based on the outcome of the meeting.

26. Financial and Investments Committee – Joe Levinson

- Nothing to Report

27. Volunteer Value Committee – Vince Kappler

Progress: VV totals for 2008: 14,143 miles, and 1,680.5 hours of work for a total value of \$36,926.00.

I closed the books in mid February for VV for 2008. The total volunteer hours and dollar value for 2008 shows a slight increase over 2007, which is partially due to the time members spent working on the WNS project. The chart below compares some statistics for the years the NCC have been tracking members' work to benefit the organization.

VOLUNTEER VALUE STATS

| | Hours | Miles | Dollar Value |
|------|--------------|--------------|---------------------|
| 2006 | 1389.5 | 20,862 | \$29,955.00 |
| 2007 | 1571.5 | 14,607 | \$35,542.00 |
| 2008 | 1680.5 | 14,143 | \$36,926.00 |

The web page to submit hours, http://www.necaveconservancy.org/add_vv.php is working very well and some members are using it regularly. I encourage all Officers, Committee Chairs and Property Managers to check it out.

Plans: The dollar value of volunteer hours is closely tracked by governmental and independent agencies. A quick internet search shows that the average prevailing rate in the NE is somewhat higher than the figure I used in 2008. Therefore, beginning with January 1, 2009, the dollar value of volunteer work will be set at \$20.00 per hour. The mileage rate will remain at 58.5 cents per mile.

I will continue to collect data and maintain totals of the hours, mileage, and expenses members contribute to NCC projects.

I will send periodic VV reminders to the membership, monitor data collection, and try to answer questions as they come up.

Problems: None at this time

28. Ad hoc Committee – Surprise Cave – Bob Simmons – no report

29. Ad hoc Committee- Tory's Cave – Bob Simmons – no report

30. Ad hoc Committee -Merlins Cave - Chuck Porter

- Working with president – see attachment A

31. Ad hoc Bentley Cave Preserve Committee – Chuck Porter

- Working with president – see attachment A

32. Ad hoc for Planned Giving – Bill Folsom (Chair), Youngbaer, Seltzer, Traino.

- Treasurers report – Attachment B

33. Ad hoc committee- 30th Anniversary – Bob Addis

- Scaled backed and will be considered for this summer.

34. Addis moved to open the Committee of the Whole. The Vice President will preside. Items can be entered as new business.

2nd by Chu

Passed unanimously

- From Bill Folsom - This progress report/thanks in from Ross & Jay Anderson, who visited the NE a while back:

"We are going to have our first meeting of our conservancy this weekend! We have 6 people lined up as the initial committee and have a bunch of ideas for fundraising and getting memberships. We have been lucky and linked up with the National Trust of Western Australia, see <http://www.ntwa.com.au/> So here we go on another adventure!! I must say we have some pretty big plans even now.

If you could mention our thanks at the next NCC meeting for sharing insights into running a conservancy that would be appreciated, I'm sure we will be enquiring even more in the near future!"

- Youngbaer - WNS – cave closure? Bill Folsom ran this part of the discussion:
 - Peter discussed the issues
 - Al Hicks discussed the bat mortality issue. USF&W believe if this continues there is the possibility of at least 5 species of bats will be extinct.
 - Point that Al wants to take to USF&W
 - Movement of people from infected to infected caves only
 - Put our energy into protecting the "clean" caves
 - FEDs should be providing the funding.
 - Emily – EC should write an outline so the NCC members can send to their congress/senator
 - What we do here will be watched by others. We are used to this issue of WNS other parts of the country are not familiar and going thru the same things we did the first year
 - Perception of the response outside the region
 - Art Rafferty- what to tell the members/new members. Work on education and helping with the "science"

35. Youngbaer moved to close the Committee of the Whole.

2nd by Simmons

Passed unanimously

36. Hay moved to accept the minutes of the September 21, 2008 meeting.

2nd by Simmons

For – rest, Abstained – Hay

Passed

37. Hay moved to accept the minutes of the December 7, 2008 meeting.

2nd by Cantello

For – rest, Abstained – Hay

Passed

38. Kappler moved: ACT 10-28 is amended to read: <delete> <<insert>>

ACT 10-28

The Executive Committee is authorized to negotiate with institutions and/or individuals to secure funding for <Clarksville property> <<NCC approved projects and purchases>>. Terms and conditions of all loan<s> contracts must be reviewed and approved by a 2/3rds majority of the Board. (12-Sep-04)

2nd by Folsom

For – Rest, Abstained- Porter, Warner

Passed

39. Kappler moved the editor of the NCC Board Manual will create a short descriptive title for each Act in the manual.

Examples: <<insert short title>>

ACT 21-7 <<Cross-Bones Gate>>

Cross-Bones Cave on the Knox Cave Preserve shall be gated. Up to \$300.00 will be allotted for materials. The Board recommends that the gate be completed by Dec. 31, 1999. This action will be under the Knox Cave Preserve subcommittee. (26-Jun-99)

ACT 21-40 <<Sellecks Management Plan>>

The Northeastern Cave Conservancy will adopt the management plan in Appendix IV for the Sellecks Karst Preserve. (12-Dec-05)

2nd by Hay

Cantello moved to amend to take the "editor" out
Dies for lack of second

Simmons move to table
2nd by Cantello
Failed

Original motion

For – rest, Abstained – Porter, Simmons

Passed

40. Youngbaer moved that the NCC appropriate \$17,000 of its current general funds toward the purchase of Merlin's Cave, to be returned to the general fund if the purchase is unsuccessful.

2nd by Chu

Warner moved to postpone this motion until after the other motion

2nd by Hicks

Warner withdraws his motions, Hicks agrees.

2nd by Chu to put in \$17,000.00

For – rest, Abstained – Porter

Passed

Vote for main motion

For – rest, Opposed – Cantello

Passed

41. Armstrong moved to clarify the position of the Conservation Chair, to make clear the duties of the Conservation Chair.

2nd by Simmons

Simmons moved to amend that we establish an ad hoc conservation to formulate a conservation policy draft. (Bob Simmons (Chair), David Lyons, Joe Armstrong)

2nd by Cantello

For – Rest

Abstained, Lyons, Armstrong

Vote for motion as amended

For – Rest, Abstained: Lyons, Armstrong

Passed

42. Youngbaer moved that the NCC immediately close all its caves to any visitation, and that they remain closed until the threat of the spread of White Nose Syndrome has passed. Implicit in this motion is that the NCC immediately notify all known groups and organizations that typically visit its caves about the closure, and issue a press release informing the media and public and taking the opportunity to educate about why this measure is being taken, and that we encourage all cavers, recreational or otherwise, to adhere to a moratorium on all caving activity within the northeast during this period. Also implicit in this motion is that the NCC caves may be visited for the purpose of White Nose Syndrome research under conditions to be determined by the Executive Committee, which

may include consultation with the NCC Science Chair, the NCC Conservation Chair, and the appropriate NCC Cave Managers.

2nd by Cantello

Warner moved to amend effective March 29, 2009 the NCC immediately close all its caves to any visitation until May 15th, 2009.

2nd by Folsom

For – rest, Opposed – Armstrong

Amendment Passed

Warner moved to amend and in the interim work with USF&W service to improve the efficacy of their cave advisory of March 26, 2009 towards our common goal of limiting the spread of WNS.

2nd by Folsom

For – Rest, Opposed – Armstrong

Amendment Passed

Youngbaer moved effective March 29, 2009 the NCC immediately close all its caves to any visitation until May 15th, 2009 and in the interim work with USF&W service to improve the efficacy of their cave advisory of March 26, 2009 towards our common goal of limiting the spread of White Nose Syndrome . Implicit in this motion is that the NCC immediately notify all known groups and organizations that typically visit its caves about the closure, and issue a press release informing the media and public and taking the opportunity to educate about why this measure is being taken. Also implicit in this motion is that the NCC caves may be visited for the purpose of White Nose Syndrome research under conditions to be determined by the Executive Committee, which may include consultation with the NCC Science Chair, the NCC Conservation Chair, and the appropriate NCC Cave Managers.

Motion voted on as amended

Passed unanimously

43. Cantello moved that for 2009 and 2010, 30% of the cash reserves of the NCC be reserved for White Nose Syndrome expenses. , including research supplies, trespassing enforcement equipment, and publication expenses for White Nose Syndrome education purposes.

2nd by Hicks

Warner call the question

2nd by Porter

Failed

Cantello moved to amend the motion – remove 2010 – friendly amendment

Opposed – Rest, Abstained –Hay, Cantello, Simmons

Failed

44. Hay moved that the NCC donate \$ 50.00 to the Mid-Atlantic Karst Conservancy for the project "Conserve our Caving Heritage."

2nd by Youngbaer

Folsom moved to put in \$50

For – Rest, Opposed – Cantello, Simmons, Abstained - Hicks

Passed

45. Kappler moved to substitute for the last sentence of Item 45 of the 12/09/2007 meeting: "A deposit of \$1,000 may be made at the time of the signing of the purchase contract by both parties and additional deposit \$7,500 may be made at the time of the approval by the local planning board." The remaining monies remain the same.

2nd by Youngbaer

For – rest, Abstained – Porter (Lyons – out of room)

Passed

46. Youngbaer moved to send \$303.20 and future monies received by the NCC for WNS research to the Rapid Response Fund.
2nd by Warner
Passed unanimously
47. Lyons moved that the education committee chair contact Novak@earthlink.org
2nd by Cantello
For – Rest, (Folsom – out of room)
Passed
48. Informational Point: Executive committee meeting will be held Spring 2009 , Friday May 15th at 7pm.
49. Addis moved that the next NCC Board meeting will be held Sunday June 7, 2009 at 10:00am location to be determined.
2nd by Simmons
Passed unanimously
50. Addis moved to thank the Gallupville house for use of building for the meeting.
2nd by Chu
Passed unanimously
51. Addis moved to adjourn.
2nd by Porter
Passed unanimously
- Meeting adjourned at 3:14

Attachment A
President's Report

Well, it's a mixed bag of news and information that I have to report.

On the bright side, we not one, but two cave acquisitions coming in the near future. Bentleys will be a donation and two important steps are next here in the spring. NCC member Mike Bourgeois is a licensed surveyor and he will be doing the partial survey that the planning board of the local town require. This will be followed by the formal application to the planning board, a modest amount of legal work and we will own it.

Merlins Cave will be more of a challenge but certainly worthy of the NCC in all respects. It's a new and important cave and the final fund raising will be interesting. There are various estimates, but I recall that we are about halfway there in fund raising. The Acquisitions Chair has done an excellent job in promoting the effort. The Acquisition chair and myself will, in the very near future, meet with the friendly adjacent landowner.

White Nose Syndrome was leaped to the front in caver and national news with its apparent wide spread to state south of the Northeast. Cavers and managers down there are taking the precautions they deem necessary, often under the guidance of Fish & Wildlife and/or the NSS, and this will affect caving in the eastern United States. On a more hopeful side, the bat population increased slightly this year in Schoharie Caverns, one of the first sites from 2006 to witness WNS.

In other news, the Clarksville Heritage Day will be Saturday, August 1 and the NCC will have a presence there. In the past we have led surface geology tours, had a poster display and took out an ad in their publication. Volunteers are needed for this important community interaction event that builds a good image for us.

Attachment B
Treasurer's Report

March 29, 2009

| | <u>Feb 28, 09</u> |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| ASSETS | |
| Current Assets | |
| Checking/Savings | |
| Checking | 4,926.37 |
| Money Market | 39,211.79 |
| PayPal Checking | 148.93 |
| NSF Account (12/31/08) | <u>33,466.00</u> |
| Total Checking/Savings | <u>77,753.09</u> |
| Total Current Assets | <u>77,753.09</u> |
| TOTAL ASSETS | <u><u>77,753.09</u></u> |

NSF Fund investment stabilizing

NSF Treasurer Ted Kayes wrote on March 16th:

“The Investment Committee reduced the equities in many accounts in mid January, and that has proved to be a prudent move.”

The NSF's fiscal year ends on March 31st, so we should receive an update by the end of April.

Merlins Cave Fund update

\$13,741 has been donated to the Merlins Cave Fund as of March 20th, not including a pending matching donation from Dick Blenz for \$10,000. Note we may borrow up to 50% of our current NSF Fund balance and pay interest to ourselves if the NCC Board passes a motion to that effect. Virginia Karstlands also offered to loan the NCC up to \$35,000 to purchase karst property, but this would need to be revisited due to the change in economic conditions since the offer was made back in August 2008.

NY Charities Bureau Registration update

Upon receiving a copy of the NCC's IRS Form 1023 (application for 501(c)3 status) from the IRS in December, this was forwarded to the New York Office of the Attorney General along with CHAR500 (yearly update form) for FY2007 and a check for \$60. The NCC's registration is now complete (note they assigned an ID # to us previously, pending the missing registration info referenced here), but must report yearly by May 15th. Recall this is a prerequisite to apply for any state grants, including federal grants managed by the State of New York.

Planned Giving Ad Hoc Committee update

A draft of proposed language to add to the NCC's Donation webpage was emailed to the committee members for their input on 3/19.

Northeastern Cave Conservancy Inc

Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual

03/20/2009

January through February 2009

| | Jan - Feb 09 | Budget |
|-----------------------------|--------------|----------|
| Ordinary Income/Expense | | |
| Income | | |
| Donations | 1,135.00 | 3,000.00 |
| Donations Restricted | 378.20 | |
| Auction Proceeds | 0.00 | 1,000.00 |
| Interest Earned | 20.54 | 200.00 |
| Membership | 60.00 | 3,500.00 |
| Promotional Items | 0.00 | 215.00 |
| Total Income | 1,593.74 | 7,915.00 |
| Expense | | |
| Sponsorships | 0.00 | 100.00 |
| Meeting Expense | 0.00 | 100.00 |
| Acquisitions | 0.00 | 1,000.00 |
| Bank Charges | 3.42 | 15.00 |
| Conservation | 0.00 | 300.00 |
| Donations -outgoing | 0.00 | 350.00 |
| Education | 0.00 | 100.00 |
| Executive | | |
| President | 0.00 | 200.00 |
| VP | 0.00 | 100.00 |
| Treasurer | 0.00 | 100.00 |
| Secretary | 0.00 | 100.00 |
| Total Executive | 0.00 | 500.00 |
| Legal Fees | 0.00 | 2,000.00 |
| Licenses & Permits | 60.00 | 50.00 |
| Miscellaneous | 0.00 | 100.00 |
| Office Expense | 25.20 | 150.00 |
| Postage | 0.00 | 50.00 |
| Preserves-Maintenance | | |
| Bentleys | 0.00 | 500.00 |
| Clarksville | 0.00 | 200.00 |
| Ella Armstrong | 0.00 | 1,100.00 |
| Knox | 0.00 | 25.00 |
| Sellecks | 0.00 | 25.00 |
| Total Preserves-Maintenance | 0.00 | 1,850.00 |
| Promotion/Fundraising | | |
| Advertising | 0.00 | 30.00 |
| Printing | 0.00 | 50.00 |
| Promotional Items | 0.00 | 900.00 |
| Total Promotion/Fundraising | 0.00 | 980.00 |
| Publishing | | |
| Website | 0.00 | 60.00 |

| | | |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Mailings | 0.00 | 200.00 |
| Total Publishing | <u>0.00</u> | <u>260.00</u> |
| Taxes on Properties | 14.72 | 10.00 |
| Uncategorized Expenses (NSS WNS) | 2,370.62 | |
| Total Expense | <u>2,473.96</u> | <u>7,915.00</u> |
| Net Ordinary Income | <u>-880.22</u> | <u>0.00</u> |
| Other Income/Expense | | |
| Other Income | | |
| In Kind donations | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Volunteer Value | <u>0.00</u> | <u>0.00</u> |
| Total Other Income | <u>0.00</u> | <u>0.00</u> |
| Other Expense | | |
| In Kind Out | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Volunteer Value Exp | <u>0.00</u> | <u>0.00</u> |
| Total Other Expense | <u>0.00</u> | <u>0.00</u> |
| Net Other Income | <u>0.00</u> | <u>0.00</u> |
| Net Income | <u>-880.22</u> | <u>0.00</u> |
| Net Gain or Loss from NSF Fund (12/31/08) | <u>447.00</u> | <u>0.00</u> |
| NET Income after NSF Fund Gain/Loss | <u>-433.22</u> | <u>0.00</u> |

Attachment C
Secretary's Report

- Bat counts - The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) once again asked the NCC for help with bat counts this year. It was decided at the December board meeting that I would help to coordinate these bat count trips. Al Hicks sent out an informational email with the list of caves, survey form and a very good link to a Power Point to help with bat identification which was forwarded on to the caving community. <ftp://ftp.dec.state.ny.us/dfwmr/wildlife/bats>.

The caves visited or set up to be visited (at the time of this writing) are the following:

- Knox – Ed Lucas, Mike Bourgeois, Craig Cantello, David Newman (DEC)
- Gage – Mike Chu, Mark Whittemore, Ryan Vonlinden (DEC)
- Schoharie – Bill Nettleton, Sue Warzek, Kate Langwig (DEC)
- Barytes Mine – Joe Armstrong, Al Hicks (DEC)
- Howe Cave Mine – Joe Armstrong, Al Hicks (DEC)
- McFails – Joe Armstrong
- Merlins – John Dunham, Bob Dion, Michael Chu, Corey Hackley, Dennis Wischman (DEC)
- Surprise – Bill Folsom, Mark Folsom, Alan Traino, David Newman (DEC) – unfortunately the cave was iced shut when they got there but they happened to find Tom and Brian Barton at the parking lot across from Rhodes Cave (also iced shut) and then went to the Bull Mine.
- Bull Mine – Tom Barton, Brian Barton, Alan Traino, David Newman (DEC)

Many of the cave community across the state offered their help as well as the above people in this endeavor. Unfortunately not all caves were accessible. Thanks to all that helped.

- Soil sampling - Status of soil samples. One box went to Judy Marshall (western NY) and they have since sent in the samples. The second box went to David Lyons (central NY) which has also been sent to the lab. The third box Mike Chu took as he is going to go to Eagle Cave with the DEC.
- Board Manual has been converted from PDF to Word so it can be updated and posted on the NCC website. Once all past edits are updated – the Bylaws Committee will continue to update after receiving minutes from the Secretary.
- Sent in stating our agreement with the variance application #414, Schwartz & Hatfield – Clarksville neighbors
- Electronic vote for setting date of this board meeting.
 - Sunday March 29th at 10:00am at the Gallupville house - Warner, Haberland (rest are either date)
 - April 5th same time place - Armstrong
- Cleanup last summer at Paul Murphy/Al Lehmann – they were very happy with the work and donated \$1000.00 to the NCC along with a \$25 gas reimbursement for all that helped.

EC Meeting
Sunday February 8, 2009
Cohoes, NY 12047
10:00 am

Bob, Christa, Chuck, Bill and Peter (conference call)

- WNS – soil sample packs have come in. I will need to coordinate with Al.
 - Issue with MassHole and Morris Cave – VT Fish and Wildlife. There was an over reaction to cavers. Possibility to have all the caves closed – they might talk to Al for NY. (Maybe do not put in final minutes)
 - Soil samples – at least two from western NY. Bat count and soil survey at same time. Check with Al if he did any soil samples before duplicate work. Needs to be done in February.
- Youngbaer moves that money given to NCC be forwarded to the NSS for wns fund.
- Banquet- will not be doing a full blown one. Looking into just having a day event and picnic etc.
- Board Elections – David Lyons, Al Hicks, open spot for Jay Siemion. They need to be seated in June.
- Acquisitions – Chuck. Merlins still no response from the owner. Bob and Chuck will try to get to the owner to get a purchase contract before we move on with fundraising. Bentleys survey in spring. Chuck found the original deed from 1787 and gave to Mike B.
- Bensons – really needs to be finalized.
- Planned giving – bill has been in contact with Mark Seltzer...will have report at boar meeting. *Bill will draft some suggested comments* for the website and give to Mark.
- I need to send Emily an email about getting the \$10K from Dick Blenz. rblenz@indiana.edu cc Bill Folsom.

356 sites to do a bat count survey throughout NYS. I will be contacting Al Hicks. I am doing NCC and NSS caves.

Attachment D
Science Coordinator

Dear Board Members - I am very sorry that I will be unable to attend the Board meeting on March 29 to participate in the discussion of Peter Youngbear's motion. I have to be in Washington, DC to attend another meeting that has been scheduled since October. However, I would like to offer my thoughts on this motion and our access policy for the coming season. In the interest of full disclosure, I will state that I am a "group" leader who normally uses both NCC and NSS caves. In the summer, in my capacity of Director of Nature Programs and Teaching at Camp Pemigewassett, I use Knox, Clarksville, Schoharie, Onesquethaw, and Gages. Every other autumn (including 2009) I use Clarksville and Schoharie as part of a field trip for my graduate course in Geomorphology at the University of New Haven.

I have read, very carefully, Peter's recent summary of the research and the published scientific literature. Peter's summary is very thorough and I thank him for all of the work that he has done. Based on my reading and discussions that I have had with some of the scientists involved, I do not believe that the scientific evidence justifies the complete closure of the caves, as Peter has proposed. These caves are already "infected". There is no evidence that supports the idea that conditions will be made worse by visitation. There are very few bats present in the caves during the summer and those that are there are almost certainly resistant to whatever is causing the syndrome. It is clear that all the infected caves in our area have the same "disease" (whatever it turns out to be) and so visitation cannot result in transferring anything new from one infected cave to another. Because a very large number of caves are now infected, closing ours will not prevent visitation to other infected caves that are not closed. Indeed, it might actually increase it, thus increasing the potential for disease transfer to uninfected caves elsewhere.

What is important is that we do everything that we can to limit spread, through human vectors (although there is, as yet, no evidence supporting humans as vectors), to uninfected caves and uninfected regions. Consequently, the real risk is if people visit our (NSS/NCC) caves or other infected caves and then visit uninfected caves without proper decontamination. I believe strongly that we have a better chance of preventing this if we keep our caves open, under the same policy as last year, and conduct an intensive education campaign that includes the need for effective decontamination, or better yet, a complete change of clothing, equipment, and boots, if caving outside already infected caves. As has been suggested elsewhere, we might even provide decontamination materials at each of our caves and keep a supply of equipment/clothing for use by cavers from uninfected areas.

If our caves are open, then we have some control of who goes in there and we are viewed as being "reasonable". This will mean a much more receptive audience when it comes to our educational message. If we close our caves, then we are "unreasonable". People will visit them anyway (we can't police them 24/7) and the ones who do so will be the ones most likely to ignore any educational message that we put out to justify the closure. This would be counterproductive.

Here is my recommendation. NCC caves should be reopened to visitation after the bats have left for the season (May 15?). We should be sure that our sign boards at the caves include information on White Nose Syndrome and on proper decontamination procedures. Groups that book reservations through Amy Cox should also receive this information and the materials should include statements about reading and agreeing with WNS procedures for all participants to sign. We should continue our efforts to publicize both the problem (and its possible consequences) and the need to decontaminate. As I understand it, the current protocol calls for decontamination of all clothing and equipment with 10% bleach following visits to infected caves and before visits to uninfected caves or areas. Unfortunately, this is not suitable for ropes and some other equipment and we will need to develop a policy that addresses the issue. Decontamination between infected caves in New York, is not necessary if they are visited within a day or two. Otherwise, as a precaution, all clothing and equipment should be decontaminated. This recommended policy seems to me to be both scientifically justified and "reasonable". It should be a much easier "sell" if our caves are open under these conditions. In the end, I think that this policy is far more likely to engender behavior that might reduce the spread of WNS than one that attempts to rely on complete closure.

Respectfully submitted,

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