

**NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY, INC.**

**Minutes**

Christa Hay

6/3/06 Onesquethaw Fire House, NY 1:00 pm

There was a cleanup of Clarksville Cave Preserve and a potluck lunch. There were approximately 15 volunteers.

Meeting called to order at 1:15 pm

1. Introduction and greetings – President Bob Addis
2. Nominating Committee Chairman Mike Martuscello announced the results of the Trustees' election - Attachment A-1. The new and returning trustees were seated at this time.
3. Addis moved to thank the retiring Trustee, Jeff DeGross, for his service.  
2<sup>nd</sup> by Hay  
**Passed unanimously**
4. Attendance:  
Officers: B. Addis, B. Folsom, C. Hay  
Trustees: J. Armstrong, M. Chu, V. Kappler, B. Simmons, J. Allison, J. Siemion, A. Hicks, M. Warner
5. Absent without Proxy -Peter Youngbaer (family emergency)
6. Absent with Proxy – Joe Levinson appointed Sean Ryan, Mike Warner appointed Emily Davis.
7. Allison moved that Ken Moore be appointed proxy for P. Youngbaer.  
2<sup>nd</sup> by Siemion  
**Passed unanimously**
8. President's Report – Bob Addis- Attachment A
  - 4a. Land Use Advisory ad hoc Committee – nothing to report.
  - 4b. Becker's Cave ad hoc Committee – I have been talking to the current owner, Tom Wright, for several months now. He and his company are in the process of selling the apartment complex and he promises to put me in touch with the new buyers as the sale gets finalized. It is a HUD sale and more complicated than any that Tom has done in the previous 30 years. I will be calling him just before the 6/3 meeting for an update.
9. Vice President's Report –Bill Folsom
  - Nothing to report

5a. Pompeys ad hoc Committee  
Plans: Continue following up with owner  
Progress: None  
Problems: Pace of negotiations
10. Treasurer's Report – Joe Levinson
  - As of May-06 we had \$19,919.14 in our bank accounts. In the last accounting we had assets of \$25,432 being held by the National Speleological Foundation.
11. Secretary's Report – Christa Hay
  - Status quo
  - Booth supplies for Earth Day and Spring NRO
  - Announced the next preserves for management review in the fall will be Knox, Onesquethaw and Clarksville.

12. Acquisitions Committee Report –Chuck Porter – no report received
  - Folsom stated that everyone should keep their eyes and ears open for any possible acquisitions.
13. Bylaws Committee Report – Joe Levinson
  - Nothing to report
14. Conservation Committee Report - Joe Armstrong
  - Baugh cave is almost complete – 3 more full days should finish it. Will set up dates and send out information.
15. Publications/Publicity Committee Report - Christa Hay
  - Polo shirt order was placed and shirts received.
  - Newsletter sent out.
16. Fundraising Committee Report - Alan Traino
  - Nothing to report
17. Office Committee Report – Emily Davis / Mike Warner
  - Progress: We purchased a fireproof lock box for important papers at a cost of \$25.00
  - Plans: None
  - Problems: None
18. Knox Cave Preserve Report – Emily Davis/Jay Siemion
  - Progress: Jay is putting the Knox window permit on line so we can institute the new visitation rules. He is also producing a new poster for the kiosk which will be up in the next two weeks.
  - Plans: I would like to try to re fence the sinkhole this summer if we have time and volunteers.
  - Problems: None
19. Onesquethaw Cave Preserve Report – Thom Engel
  - There was an incident a few weeks ago – county removed the beaver dam without communicating it to the manager. At least no one was in the cave at the time.
20. Sellecks Karst Preserve Report – Jason Siemion
  - Status quo
21. Clarksville Preserve Report – Mike Chu, Thom Engel, Chuck Porter
  - Status quo
  - Good start on the parking lot, trail clearing, fencing and graffiti cleanup.
  - Thook owners have requested no BSA use that entrance.
22. Ella Armstrong Preserve Report – Joe Armstrong
  - Status quo
23. Membership Report – Sean Ryan
  - Status quo
24. Website Subcommittee Report – Mike Chu
  - Progress:
    - Added volunteer value submission form
    - Updated Knox Management Plan, publications.
    - Status Quo for remainder of site.
  
  - Problems: One glitch in April with the web host's servers; website and database corrupted. Had to contact the web host and have them restore the site from their backup tapes—after this, some files were still corrupted so website was restored my personal copy.
25. Land Trust Liaison Committee Report – Jon Allison
  - Placing the easement on the Gregory entrance continues at a painstakingly slow pace. At the board's request I have solicited a review by our legal chair Dan Werner. I have not heard

back from him since sending the info last month. Mike Bourgeois has agreed to do the survey of the property for free, but makes no promises on schedule. Beggars can't be choosers, and I appreciate his willingness to help out.

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

27. Special and Group Use Coordinators – Aaron and Amy Cox – Attachment B

28. Financial and Investments Committee – Vacant.

29. Volunteer Value Committee – Vince Kappler

- Progress: VV is off to a great start! Officially launched Jan. 1, 2006, the NCC has documented over \$ 3100. of VV donated by the membership. The Everett cave cleanup day alone netted 120 hours of work for an equivalent value of \$1952.

A web page, [http://www.necaveconservancy.org/add\\_vv.php](http://www.necaveconservancy.org/add_vv.php), has been created that allows members to enter volunteer hours for on going projects. This page is working very well and I encourage Officers, Committee Chairs and Property Managers to check it out. Many thanks to Mike Chu for creating the page.

An article on VV was submitted to the *Northeastern Cave Conservancy News*.

Plans: I will continue to collect data and maintain totals of the hours 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

30. Ad hoc Committee - General Liability Insurance Report – Peter Youngbaer – Attachment C

31. Ad hoc Committee – Everett's Cave- Peter Youngbaer

- I have sent a preliminary report to Southern Vermont College and am working on a more formal booklet for them. I would appreciate any suggestions, comments, etc. about how SVC should manage Everett's Cave for visitation. I am including a map, photos (mine and Mike Chu's - thanks, Mike) description of the cave and of cleanup activities. I am also including the Vermont landowner liability protection law. Clearly, the cave is not difficult, but does present some safety concerns if people try to climb the vertical reaches. There are also some nice decorations in the highest chamber worthy of respect and protection. The old handline should go, but whether or not SVC or any other entity should formally replace it (or if it's better just to have a replacement magically show up) is certainly a matter of differences of opinion. What SVC has said to me is that they are open to visitation by "professional" cavers (i.e. organized groups - that might include scouts). They are trying to balance protecting the resource from over-visitation, vandalism, and "unqualified" visitors. Any suggestions you have for written copy, whether we should include sample waiver forms or not, or any other approach would be most welcome.

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

2<sup>nd</sup> by Hay

**Passed unanimously**

- Davis – there was a problem with the Pay Pal account –the email used was the old one so we were not getting notified when there was money in the account. Has been fixed.
- Davis – brought in and idea for membership renewal and promotional items for membership levels. Information was passed to Membership Chair.
- Aeolis cave – moving slowly. A. Hicks will see if he can contact the Vermont DEC.
- Surprise cave – nothing happening. A. Hicks will try to make contact.
- Allison – do we still need a treasurer? J. Levinson is now planning on remaining treasurer for awhile. What we do need is a bookkeeper. Norm Berg has link to software that is inexpensive/free to non-profits. Will forward link to B. Folsom.
- Folsom – we need a grant writer.

- Folsom – what about State DEC projects discussed earlier? A. Hicks is still working on this, several of the projects are in progress, might be some next summer,
- Simmons – Roxbury Iron Mines – would like a co-sponsor CCG/NCC cleanup – looking at the end of July.
- Mike Chu will take photos of Board members for the website. Board should also submit a bio,

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

2<sup>nd</sup> by Davis

**Passed unanimously**

34. Hay moved to accept the minutes of the March 12, 2006 meeting.

2<sup>nd</sup> by Moore

**Passed unanimously**

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

2<sup>nd</sup> by Simmons

*Postponed from September board meeting*

Allison moved to postpone until June meeting.

2<sup>nd</sup> by Levinson

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

2<sup>nd</sup> by Folsom

*Postponed from September board meeting*

Levinson moved to postpone until June meeting.

2<sup>nd</sup> by Allison

37. Davis moved to postpone items 35 and 36 until information is available.

2<sup>nd</sup> by Allison

**Passed unanimously**

38. Armstrong moved to accept the Ella Armstrong management plan as attached. Attachment D (postponed from the March 2006 meeting)

2<sup>nd</sup> by Siemion

**Passed unanimously**

39. Chu moved to restructure the website fees from \$60 year to \$120 every two years.

2<sup>nd</sup> by Allison

**Passed unanimously**

40. Kappler moved to appoint \_\_\_\_\_ as the NCC representative to the 2006 NSS Convention. \_\_\_\_\_ shall present a report at the Fall meeting of the NCC on important issues/topics covered in the convention conservation and conservancies sessions. The President shall fill in the blanks up to convention time.

2<sup>nd</sup> by Simmons

**Passed unanimously**

41. Informational Point: The Officers will conduct an Executive Committee meeting on August 13 at 10:00 am in Kerhonkson.

42. Addis moved that the next NCC Board meeting will be held on September 30 at 1:00 pm at the Cave House. There will be a Baugh Cave cleanup before the meeting.

2<sup>nd</sup> by Armstrong

**Passed unanimously**

43. Addis moved to thank the Onesquethaw Fire Department for hosting the meeting. Also thanks to all who helped with the Clarksville cleanup.

2<sup>nd</sup> by Moore

**Passed unanimously**

44. Addis moved to adjourn.  
2<sup>nd</sup> by Allison  
**Passed unanimously**

Meeting adjourned at 3:10 pm.

### **Attachment A-1: Report of the Nominating Committee, June 3, 2006**

To the Board:

Since the last Board meeting in March, there has been an election held for the four open Board of Trustee positions. Three of these positions are for a three year term, and one for a one year term. The winners of the election have been notified prior to this meeting, and are as follows:

3 Year Term:

Jon Allison (returning)  
Alan Hicks  
Jason Siemion (returning)

1 Year Term:

Mike Warner

I would like to especially thank all of the candidates for their participation, making for a great competition in this election.

Sincerely,

Mike Martuscello  
NCC Nominating Committee Chair

### **Attachment A**

#### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

5/24/06

1. NRO Auction netted the NCC \$999! Very impressive considering that we had 110 attendees. Thanks to all of the generous donors and bidders, and I had announced that it was to be used for Preserves maintenance and upgrades.
2. Tying in with this is \$500 that late Peter Johnson's sister sent us recently earmarked for Clarksville. Since we are in the midst of building our new parking lot and need gravel, we'll use Sarah's money first then fill in with auction proceeds. One thing about gravel is that you always seem to need more to get the minimum amount covered.
3. Dr. DeLisa passed away recently. He was the individual who donated the 8 acres of land to us in 1978 and essentially jump-started the NCC. I have written a letter to his family (it may be viewed on the guest book of the funeral home), and the NCC voted electronically to send \$100 to the Schenectady Community hospice in his memory.
4. The income taxes have been filed in time for the May 15th deadline.

A few members have asked me what will be our next acquisition, and I don't have a clear answer. The Acquisitions Committee had several prospects and a few are being worked on currently. But I can't name one or even three possibilities because of so many factors. Historically it seems that our caves sometimes come to us at the most unexpected times despite our planning. But that's good, too. So I'll answer by saying that we are planning and hoping! Members - You all talk to cave owners and hear things that might even miss the 13 people on our Board. Please take it upon yourselves to mention even the tiniest lead to the Acquisitions Chair for follow-up. Thank you

## Attachment B

### Group Use Coordinators Report to the NCC Board June 3, 2006

#### Notes:

- Aaron Cox has been handling the reservations from January – June. At this time, Amy will be taking over for the next 6 months as Aaron has an out-of-state job on weekdays from June - November.
- If the board would like the information presented differently, please let Amy know.
- We encountered one group, a small private school that actually did not have liability insurance. They ended up canceling their proposed trip when this fact was discovered, and are working to obtain insurance.
- Unless otherwise noted, all trips listed below were within group size limits (15 people for most groups, 10 people for BSA groups) Double-sized groups are noted. They were instructed to have only one group in the cave at a time.
- We are starting to get summer camp reservations. We anticipate a significant increase in reservations in the next month.
- Amy Cox will be presenting a caving workshop to the CT Yankee BSA Council's Powderhorn adult leader training program on June 17<sup>th</sup>. Proper group use procedures for NCC and NSS caves will be included.

#### Past Clarksville Trips

##### March Trips Registered

18 Mohawk Trail Regional High School  
25 Girl Scouts, Eva Hunter contact  
26 Girl Scouts, Eva Hunter contact

##### April Trips Registered:

1 Colgate University Outing Club – they were registered with us for this date  
7 Colgate University Outing Club, Friday evening trip – we met them in the cave, they had registered at Speleobooks earlier in the day.  
7 Newtown, CT Venturing Crew 70 (Amy & Aaron's Crew), Friday evening trip  
8 Vasser College  
8 Mike Nardachi's Group  
22 BSA Troop 410 from CT, afternoon trip  
22 Cornell University

##### May Trips Registered

6 BSA Troop, contact Mark Lucas  
12 Lincoln Sudbury High School, Allison Sanders-Flemming contact – 2 groups  
13 BSA Troop  
13 BSA Troop  
19(?) Heard from Cave mgt committee about unauthorized, oversized trip by Winchester Middle School.  
20 BSA Troop 417, NY  
29 Fairfield High School, Walter Young contact

#### Other Past Caves/Trips Registered

##### March

24 Girl Scouts, Eva Hunter contact, Schoharie Cave

##### April

9 Newtown, CT Troop 70, Gage Cave  
16 Cornell University, Gage Cave  
22 BSA Troop from NY, contact Andy Buckler, McFail's surface walk

##### May

21 Outing Club, contact Phil Luesser, Gage cave

#### Future Trips on Schedule (as of June 1, 2006)

##### June

7 Adventure In, Adventure Out, Clarksville  
10 BSA Troop 325, Fairport, NY, Clarksville  
12 Tecumseah High School, Russ Steele, Knox and Clarksville  
12 Roger Ludlow Middle School, Walter Young contact, Clarksville  
19 Christa McAuliffe Region Public Charter School, Framingham, MA, Clarksville  
24 BSA Troop 440, CT, Clarksville  
30 Indian Head Camp, contact M Tjaden, Clarksville

July

5 Indian Head Camp, Clarksville  
10 Indian Head Camp, Clarksville, 2 groups  
13 Skidmore College, Clarksville  
14 Indian Head Camp, Clarksville, 2 groups  
21 Skidmore College, Clarksville  
25 Indian Head Camp, Clarksville, 2 groups  
27 Camp Scatico, Chris Nicola contact, Clarksville

August

5 Camp Scatico, Chris Nicola contact, Clarksville

**Attachment C**

General Liability Insurance Report  
Peter Youngbaer

As you know, the NCC submitted an application for general liability insurance coverage late last fall. The Insurance agency is Franey, Muha and Alliant, which is the designated agency used by the Land Trust Alliance for discounted rates. The actual insurer would be Chubb.

Joe Levinson sent the narrative, along with copies of the management plans for two of our caves and copies of both the NY and VT landowner liability protection laws. We have been waiting for the underwriters to get back to us with a price quote.

In the interim, Chubb sent a separate follow-up questionnaire with a host of questions related to commercial cave operations (e.g. how many guides do you have, how often are the tours, and, most intriguing to me, how many square feet is your cave?). I sent a lengthy and detailed response about how we differed from commercial cave operations, including selections from our management plans. I also included a link to the NCC website with specific references to the full management plans for all our properties. I asked them to get back to me with any further requests for information.

Also in the interim, Bob Addis had requested to see actual contract language, given the history of insurance at Knox Cave some years ago where the insurer tried (unsuccessfully) to weasel out of paying for the claim. I requested and received and forwarded electronic versions to Bob of the language. This came from FMA, who, I must say, has been quite responsive on their end.

As we have gotten closer to the June meeting, I have sent several inquiries to our contact at FMA. She, in turn, has bugged the underwriters at Chubb for a response and price quote. Over the Memorial Day weekend, she sent a message saying she had spoken with the chief underwriter and we would have a quote by May 30. I have not received anything yet - but still may before the meeting.

Just to refresh everyone's memory, the application is for a basic \$1 million general liability insurance policy, which includes some other coverages, such as hired and non-owned automobile, and a few other standard basic package items. These have been detailed in earlier reports, so I won't re-state them here, but will have that detail at the Board meeting on June 3. We also asked them to include volunteer coverage, for a stated number of volunteers. We did not ask them to include director's and officers coverage, as we concluded this was unnecessary - based on previous legal analysis of NY law and experience. Again, I can reiterate that detail at the meeting.

The two pending motions we have relate to purchasing a policy, and paying the requisite dues to the Land Trust Alliance in order to gain the price discounts available to LTA members. We have already previously adopted a third related motion and resolution regarding adhering to LTA principles.

Hopefully, I will have a price quote by the meeting and we can decide whether or not to move forward.

**Attachment D**

(This is the Ella Armstrong management plan which can be found on-line.)