

NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY, INC.

Minutes

June 6, 2010, 1:00 pm Berlin Central Schools, Berlin, NY

Bentleys Dedication Ceremony was celebrated at noon. Thanks to Jonah Spivak for setting up a nice ceremony and to Emily Davis/Christa Hay for the refreshments.

Meeting called to order at 1:08

1. Introduction and greetings – President Bob Addis
2. The Nominating Committee Chairman has stepped down from the position. Thanks to Mike Martuscello for his time on this committee.
3. The Secretary announces the results of the Trustees' election. The new/returning trustees are seated at this time. – Attachment A-1
4. Thanks to Peter Haberland for his position as trustee.
5. Attendance:
Officers: B. Addis, P. Youngbaer, B. Folsom, C. Hay
Trustees: M Chu, K. Dumont, T. Engel, V. Kappler, B. Simmons, A. Traino, M. Warner, P. Woodell,
6. Absent without proxy - A. Hicks
7. The board voted Peter Haberland as proxy for A. Hicks.
8. Rensselaer Land Trust – Christine Young – working on new policy concerning conservancy groups and stewardship.
9. President's Report – Bob Addis- Attachment A
10. Vice President's Report –Peter Youngbaer – Attachment B
11. Treasurer's Report –Bill Folsom - Attachment C
12. Secretary's Report – Christa Hay
 - EC minutes are in Attachment D
 - Primarily worked on the Spring NRO. Main duties – campground, registration and dinner. The dinner netted \$1042.00! Thanks to Emily Davis, Linda Lawrence, Sue Warzek and Kristin Woodell for all their help as wenches and to all the purchased and enjoyed the meal. Thanks to Schoharie Valley Carrot Barn for using their ovens for the event.
13. Science Committee – Larry Davis – no report
14. Acquisitions Committee Report –Chuck Porter – see Presidents report.
15. Bylaws Committee Report – Joe Levinson
 - I am currently working with Vince Kappler and the EC to propose a change to how voting for new trustees will be conducted.
16. Publications/Publicity Committee Report - Christa Hay
 - Press release sent out for Bentleys Cave Preserve
 - Status quo
17. Fundraising Committee Report - Alan Traino – no report
18. Office Committee Report – Emily Davis / Mike Warner
 - **Problems:** None
 - **Progress:** Dues notices were sent out to everyone due before June 15. Many people paid dues at the NRO. 6 Life members so far.

- **Plans:** Will send out dues notices again in mid June.
19. Knox Cave Preserve Report –Emily Davis/Jay Siemion
 - **Problems:** Some evidence of trespassing when the property was checked before the NRO
 - **Progress:** Property checked by Jay Siemion and Bill Folsom before the NRO. No ice in sinkhole.
 - **Plans:** Cut back brush on the trail in early June. See if we can get one of the old lawn mowers working and cut grass on trail.
 20. Onesquethaw Cave Preserve Report – Thom Engel
 - Not much to report. Visitors have reported that considerable fill has appeared in the Barnyard and in places the sandy fill must be pushed aside to continue into the cave.
 21. Sellecks Karst Preserve Report – Jason Siemion
 - Nothing to report on Sellecks other than a few of us went in before the NRO to check things out. All is well.
 22. Clarksville Preserve Report – Mike Chu, Thom Engel, Chuck Porter
 - The ladder has been removed from the Ladder dig and the wood was removed by Ellen Schwartz and Leslie Hatfield and family. The cable was recycled by Art Rafferty.
 - The fire pit has been cleaned up.
 - Sarah Hunter (daughter of Dean & Eva) and friends have removed a pile of old metal from the property. This was in the woods WNW of the Ladder Dig. The clean-up was part of a senior class service project. They removed it to the upper lot and Buster Tyron (son of Bill and Jill, cave owners) picked it up for recycling.
 - Last September, there was a group at the cave overnight without permission. Three groups reported, after the fact, that this overnight group had left the cave a mess. Not knowing this, I had merely told them not to visit the cave overnight. On May 1, they were back, again overnight without permission. This time there were 12 individuals, all from Long Island. I gave them 20 minutes to leave or the police would be called. After 30 minutes, I called the Albany Co. Sheriffs Patrol. The sheriff deputies showed up. Names were taken and the group was told not to visit the cave between 11PM and 7AM. I told them that the cave was for caving, not for partying. (They were in the Big Room playing music, drinking beer, and smoking.) The group claimed they left the cave cleaner than they found it. However, a Cornell group entering the cave immediately after found the cave a mess and spent some time cleaning up.
 - Emily and Mike going to a grotto meeting, found a group from Michigan Central University at the cave. They'd had parked in the lower lot and walked to the cave via the gravel pit. They did not have group permission. More worrying is that this group had no knowledge of WNS or the need to decontaminate. They have been formally contacted and made aware of rules for groups and issues involving WNS.
 23. Bentleys Preserve Report - Jonah Spivak
 - Property boundary markers have been set. Kiosk signage is up. Cap to come (probably prior to June 6 meeting). Driveway improvements complete.
 24. Ella Armstrong Preserve - open
 25. Education Committee Report – David Lyons
 - Thom Engel participated in the Earth Day event at Clarksville Elementary School on April 16. I was there the entire day set up in the gym with the "ant farm." We were fed lunch in the school library and I noticed they had one cave book and one bat book. I contacted the school librarian and asked if they wanted more cave books and they did, so with help from Emily I purchased 4 books and donated them in the name of the NCC to the school.
 26. Membership Committee – open
 27. Website Subcommittee Report – Mike Chu – no report
 28. Legal Committee Report – Mark Seltzer – no report
 29. Special and Group Use Coordinators –Amy Cox – no report

30. Financial and Investments Committee – Joe Levinson
- Nothing to report
31. Volunteer Value Committee – Vince Kappler
- **Progress:** VV totals so far for 2010: 450 hours of work and 1861 miles drive time to/from projects for a total value of \$1300.00. At the request of a preserve manager, I created a new VV tally sheet that managers could use over an extended period. It should be less cumbersome to use as the managers visit the properties for routine maintenance and inspections. 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:** 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
32. Ad hoc Committee – Surprise Cave – Bob Simmons
- All previous communications from Bob to the State have been sent to Al Hicks.
33. Ad hoc Committee- Tory's Cave – Bob Simmons
- Nothing to report
34. Ad hoc Committee -Merlins Cave - Chuck Porter - see Presidents report
35. Addis moved to open the Committee of the Whole. The Vice President will preside. Items can be entered as new business.
2nd by Traino
Passed Unanimously
- Entertainment in Clarksville cave by Boston Grotto as fundraising for Merlins – managers agreed it was ok
 - Year End summary will now be produced in the spring.
 - Combine Ella Armstrong and Knox preserves – discussion as of now will stay separate.
 - Alan Traino volunteered to manage the Ella Armstrong Preserve
 - ESCOT – Bob needs to get back in touch as they have not responded to recent letter
 - RTL Conservation easement
 - Merlins – we have signed the purchase agreement and now the owner needs to sign.
36. Youngbaer moved to close the Committee of the Whole.
2nd by Engel
Passed Unanimously
37. Hay moved to accept the minutes of the March 14, 2010 meeting.
2nd by Folsom
For – Rest Abstained – Haberland, Hay, Simmons, Traino
Passed
38. Kappler moved: Bylaw V.6 is amended to read -
6. Elections. Trustees shall be elected by all eligible members in an election held before the second quarterly meeting. The Board shall establish procedures and timelines to conduct the election.
and Bylaw V.6.a is deleted.

The current Bylaws are:

6. Elections. Elections of Trustees shall be by written ballot sent to eligible members at least three weeks prior to the second quarterly meeting.

a. An election tie shall be broken at the meeting following the election by a written ballot of those current officers, continuing trustees and newly elected trustees, excluding any trustee who is involved in the voting tie.

Discussion

The time constraints in the original Bylaw present hardships for the Nominating Committee as well as the EC as they struggle to recruit candidates and prepare a ballot for the membership. A mail ballot is expensive to conduct thus siphoning funds that can be put toward conservation projects. The technology is available to conduct a secure, secret election on our web site and those few members who do not have email would still be sent a ballot by mail. Procedures to conduct Trustee elections would be established by the Board and would be board policy thus easily amended as the election process warrants.

Reference

The NSS Directors election is by mail ballot but the rules by which an election is conducted and held are very similar to what I propose. NSS Bylaws determine who is eligible to vote (1. B.10) and the basic voting process is outlined (IV.A.1&2), but the actual mechanics of conducting an election is spelled out in Board Acts Section 03 - Elections and Appendix X. The board has amended the Acts Section and the Appendix about 13 times over the years as the election process evolved.

This motion went through several amendments with the final motion below

Traino moved to refer the Bylaw V6 amended motion back to the committee.

2nd by Warner

For – Rest, Against: Chu, Hay, Kappler Abstained: Dumont

Passed

39. Youngbaer moved Alan Traino serve as the Manager of the Ella Armstrong Preserve.

2nd by Engel

Passed Unanimously

40. Informational Point: Executive committee meeting will be held August 22, 2010 at 10:00am in Cohoes, NY.

41. Addis moved that the next NCC Board meeting will be held September 9, 2010 at Sam's Point if that space is not available October 3, 2010 will be the meeting.

2nd by Kappler

Passed Unanimously

42. Addis moved to thank the Berlin Central School for the meeting space.

2nd by Engel

Passed Unanimously

43. Addis moved to adjourn.

2nd by Traino

Passed Unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 3:18 pm

Attachment A
PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Three topics prevail this quarter:

1. **Bentleys.** April 17 Chuck Porter and I took a group from the Easements Committee of the Rensselaer Land Trust (RLT) on a trip to view the property and the caves. It was well received and paperwork has commenced to have the RLT take an easement on Bentleys with the intent of lessening property value and thus giving the NCC another chance of lessening or eliminating lawsuits over liability. More information about the RLT easement will be offered at the Board meeting.

There will be a dedication ceremony honoring the Bentley family and officially opening the Preserve at the parking lot on Sunday, June 6 at 12 noon. A press release prepared by the NCC Secretary has gone out to the local media. Jonah Spivak, Preserve Manager, has taken several initiatives so far and has planned the dedication ceremony, including inviting several local officials as guests. We are using the Berlin High School for an NSS 010 Convention meeting in the AM and the NCC Board meeting following the dedication so community involvement has commenced. It is our understanding that the normal school room usage fees have been traded for an NCC school presentation at a later date: it's a win-win situation.

Saturday, July 10 the NCC will be leading a field trip for RLT membership to the cave and can use assistance. Contact Jonah Spivak.

2. **Merlins.** Spring NRO at the Hideaway Campground in Central Bridge, NY netted nearly \$6,000 for the Merlins Fund, a remarkable sum that lessens the amount that the NCC must borrow. The financial breakdown is available in the Treasurer's Report, but special thanks go out to Thom Engel and his matching \$1,000 grant. His money wasn't safe that weekend and we quickly matched his offer!

I believe we mentioned earlier that the Purchase Contract has been signed by the NCC and forwarded to the owners and that they are working on it. Recently we heard that the surveying costs necessary for the subdivision came in high and the owner wants to shop around. The NCC shares about 27% of that cost based on acreage proposed in the purchase, so we share the owners' concerns. The owners have also suggested that we approach the local planning board to discuss this subdivision and the NCC Executive Committee agrees.

Attachment B
Vice President's Report

It's been another very busy winter as far as White Nose Syndrome is concerned. WNS has now spread to Tennessee and Missouri, and possibly Oklahoma. In Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Virginia, WNS is now widespread, with many bat mortalities. Tennessee, Missouri, and Oklahoma are just on the leading edge. Delaware reported bats with the fungus in a summer roost.

I just returned from the third WNS Science and Management Symposium in Pittsburgh – also attended by Al Hicks. My take away message was that there is no breakthrough news regarding WNS. There are numerous research nuances, but still large holes in what is known about WNS. In my opinion, we need to invest a lot more research on the fungus, rather than the bats, if we are to learn how to stop it. Personally, I think we need to be looking at developing a vaccine, as other attempted interventions haven't proven successful.

The Western U.S. is clearly anxious about what may come their way. The Oklahoma bat represents a new species with WNS– *Myotis velifer*, or Cave Myotis, and a couple of the Missouri bats are the first Grey Bats (*Myotis grisescens*) to be confirmed with the fungus. This bat is on the endangered species list, and its hibernating habits and microclimate preferences would lead us to be very concerned about large levels of mortalities if WNS spreads through its range. With a much higher percentage of western U.S. lands owned by the federal government (Dept. of Defense, BLM, National Forests, etc.), those entities'

management decisions will potentially affect caving and cave conservation efforts far more drastically than in the East.

As a cave conservancy, we ought to be very concerned about the health, vibrancy, and effectiveness of our fellow conservancies across the country as WNS could cause serious declines in membership, donations, and the ability of conservancies to acquire and protect caves – including those with significant bat populations. We need to be vocal in solidarity with these conservancies.

On other matters, as VP I participated in the EC meeting last month via conference call. We focused on the Merlin's efforts, including planning for the NRO, working on the contract and easements, and getting prepared for the final negotiations. We've also been actively planning for the ceremonial dedication of Bentley's Preserve. Some bylaws changes are being discussed relating to elections – in particular switching to electronic ballots for Trustee elections, something currently prohibited under our bylaws. We have also discussed recruiting a new manager for the Ella Armstrong Preserve, responses to another "partying" incident at Clarksville, and general office affairs.

Congratulations to all for a great NRO – one of the best in many years! I worked with Norm Berg et al at CCG in a trial run on the gear borrowing and decon station for the Vermont Convention, and helped with the vegetarian fare for the Saturday feast. But the best was leading an after-midnight trip to Schoharie with a small group of NJ cavers – returning at 4:15 AM. That was a lot of fun. Sunday, it was cool to help out with the underground portion of the Schoharie cave location surveying headed up by Brian Pease.

Finally, after the Pittsburgh symposium, I headed down to Speleofest, in Kentucky, hosted by the Louisville Grotto on their Lone Star Preserve. A great set up, with all facilities on site, great camping, and several caves. Friday night, I was the keynote speaker on WNS. We spent a good deal of time talking about the NCC's work here in New York and our collaborations with AI et al at NYDEC as examples of how cavers in other areas of the country can be working with their state and federal agencies on WNS.

I did get to visit three Kentucky caves (with regionally dedicated gear, of course), including an extraordinary 7 ½ hour trip into the Roppel section of Mammoth Cave, led by the owner of several of the Roppel entrances. Certainly made all that driving worthwhile.

Attachment C
Treasurer's Report

June 6th, 2010

May 28, 2010

ASSETS

Current Assets

Checking/Savings

Checking

1,786.64

Money Market

86,022.73

PayPal Checking

197.56

NSF Account (as of March 31)

39,548.00

Total Checking/Savings

127,554.93

Total Current Assets

\$127,554.93

1. As of May 28, the Merlins Cave Fund stood at \$69,005.97. Note the Board previously approved a self-loan from our NSF account of an additional \$15,000 for a total allocated of \$84,005.97.
2. A huge thanks to everyone who helped make the Spring NRO successful (181 attendees).
3. 2010 Budget vs. Actual YTD:

Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual				05/28/2010
January 1 through May 28, 2010				
			Jan 1 - May 28, 10	Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense				
Income				
Donations				
		NCC Contributions	0.00	0.00
		Donations - Other	388.00	3,585.00
		Total Donations	388.00	3,585.00
Donations Restricted				
		Merlin's Cave Fund	10,735.40	0.00
		NCC White Nose Fund	0.00	0.00
		NSS White Nose Fund	0.00	0.00
		Donations Restricted - Other	0.00	0.00
		Total Donations Restricted	10,735.40	0.00
		Auction Proceeds	1,616.50	1,000.00
		Interest Earned	156.86	180.00
		Membership	3,580.00	4,000.00
		Promotional Items	0.00	215.00
		Total Income	16,476.76	8,980.00
Expense				
		Development	0.00	1,200.00
		Sponsorships	0.00	100.00
		Meeting Expense	0.00	100.00
		Acquisitions	0.00	1,000.00
		Bank Charges	3.15	15.00
		Donations-outgoing	100.00	200.00

		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
		Executive - Other	0.00	0.00
		Total Executive	0.00	500.00
		Legal Fees	500.00	2,000.00
		Licenses & Permits	167.00	150.00
		Mailings	0.00	0.00
		Miscellaneous	0.00	100.00
		Office Expense	0.00	100.00
		Postage	66.40	200.00
		Preserves-Maintenance		
		Bentleys	0.00	500.00
		Clarksville	0.00	200.00
		Ella Armstrong	0.00	1,100.00
		Knox	0.00	25.00
		Onesquethaw	0.00	25.00
		Sellecks	0.00	25.00
		Total Preserves-Maintenance	0.00	1,875.00
		Promotion/Fundraising		
		Other	0.00	500.00
		Advertising	0.00	30.00
		Printing	0.00	200.00
		Promotional Items	461.10	250.00
		Total Promotion/Fundraising	461.10	980.00
		Publishing		
		Website	0.00	60.00
		Mailings	0.00	200.00
		Publishing - Other	0.00	0.00
		Total Publishing	0.00	260.00
		Taxes on Properties	14.77	100.00
		Total Expense	1,312.42	8,980.00
		Net Ordinary Income	15,164.34	0.00
		Other Income/Expense		
		Other Income		
		In Kind donations	0.00	0.00
		Volunteer Value	2,773.00	0.00
		Total Other Income	2,773.00	0.00
		Other Expense		
		In Kind Out	0.00	0.00
		Volunteer Value Exp	2,773.00	0.00
		Total Other Expense	2,773.00	0.00
		Net Other Income	0.00	0.00
		Net Income	15,164.34	0.00
		Net Gain or Loss from NSF Fund (as of 3/31)	699.00	
		NET Income after NSF Fund Gain/Loss	15,863.34	