

NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY, INC.

Minutes

June 8, 2014, 10:00 am at Mike Chu's house, Melrose, NY

Meeting called to order at 10:14

1. Introduction and greetings – President Bob Addis
2. Attendance:
Officers: B. Addis, V. Kappler, B. Folsom, C. Hay
Trustees: M Chu, T. Engel, P. Youngbaer, M. Berger, P. Woodell, M. Ingalls, A. Traino, K. Dumont (10:23)
3. Absent with Proxy
4. Absent without Proxy – Woodell, Hicks, Dumont
5. Nominating Committee Report on Elections- Bob Simmons
6. Addis moves that Al Hicks be thanked for his continual service on the Board since 2006. Al's professional expertise with bats and his unfaltering guidance through governmental channels has greatly assisted the NCC to cope with White Nose Syndrome issues.
2nd by Ingalls
Passed unanimously
7. New and returning trustees will be seated. Welcome Tom Rider.
8. President's Report – Bob Addis- Attachment A
9. Vice President's Report –Vince Kappler – Attachment B
10. Treasurer's Report –Bill Folsom - Attachment C
11. Secretary's Report – Christa Hay
 - Status quo
 - I am working on possible acquisition of South Bethlehem cave. Have started talks with a personal contact.
 - March EC meeting minutes – Attachment D
12. Science Committee – Larry Davis
13. Acquisitions Committee –Chuck Porter
14. Bylaws Committee Report – Joe Levinson
 - Nothing to report
15. Publications/Publicity Committee Report - Christa Hay
 - Would like to have a new t-shirt design. Maybe have a contest.
16. Fundraising Committee – Open
17. Office Committee Report – Emily Davis / Mike Warner
 - **Plans** :Keep on keepin on
 - **Problems**; None
 - **Progress**: Have largely been able to keep up with mail, bill payments and deposits.
18. Knox Cave Preserve Report –Emily Davis , Mitch Berger
 - **Progress**:
The research group did data collection at Knox on March 20.
Volunteers from MIT helped Mitch and Emily clear the trail to Crossbones for the first time in a while on May 4.
Emily and Mike checked the preserve on May 23 for damage from the storm; none was found.
The old keyed padlock on Crossbones has been replaced with a combination lock to simplify access arrangements and avoid worries about folks losing (or copying) the key.
Jay checked on the Crossbones bolting on June 1, tightened one, and plans to replace another.
Mitch has been issuing permits. The season is starting off slowly; aside from NRO, we've issued three permits so far.
Problems: None.
Plans:
Jay plans to replace one of the lower bolts in Crossbones.
Investigation into whether Crossbones and Two Second Pit are connected may occur this season.

19. Onesquethaw Cave Preserve – Thom Engel

- Not much to report. Only 6 permits were issued in the period. With the rains and snow-melt, the cave was not safely enterable for much of the reporting period. The heavy rain the night before the NRO didn't help. Clean up in the fall.

20. Sellecks Karst Preserve – Alan Traino

- **Problems:** All trail markers as well as property markers need to be replaced. Most are gone. Trail need to be groomed. All Cave signs need to be rehung. Parking lot needs to be mowed as well as have a few more railroad ties removed. Most have been. I would like to have approve a clean-up at the preserve

Levy's Cave entrance needs to be reopened. And the sink hole needs to be cleaned up.

Natural Stone Bridge has begun to open up on its own. And has the potential to become a very good dig

21. Clarksville Preserve – Mike Chu, Thom Engel, Chuck Porter

- Chuck's article on the restoration of the Gregory entrance was published in the annual conservation issue of the NSS News. My report on use of the preserve representing 2 years of data has been attached under a separate cover.

There is a newly developing problem with ATVs. They seem determined to make new trails leading from our parking area.

We need to get the backhoe in there at Gregory entrance to clean out the debris from the storms a few years ago

22. Bentleys Preserve Report - Jonah Spivak

- I did a cleanup of the parking area, hiked the trail, and checked the cave on May 4, 2014. The parking lot is in good shape and will not need maintenance this season. The Kiosk is in good shape, though the sign is showing some wear. I have a spare sign and will install it later this summer. The trail will need some weed eating to help keep it clear, and two trees are down over the trail. Trail blazes are mostly still in place. I will schedule a trail maintenance day later this summer.

The cave continues to suffer from new graffiti. I would like to ask if including a sign INSIDE the entrance room regarding "leave no trace caving ethics" might be a good idea. I welcome other suggestions on how to deal with this issue.

I've been in regular contact with visitors via email. I've asked all who contact me to report back with any issues and help with trash removal. A few people have reported back and removed trash. Overall, the trash does keep coming, but is kept in check by helpful cavers. On my visit there was only a small amount of trash that was removed.

Here are access numbers from the register:

From 5/12/12 (date of placement of register) to 12/31/12
102 visitors to preserve/cave

From 1/1/13 to 12/31/13
125 visitors to preserve/cave

From 1/1/14 to 5/4/14
35 visitors to date.

NOTES: A couple of people in August could not follow trail. In one case they saw no blazes, and I think they took a wrong turn right by the parking lot and simply missed the trail. The other complained of the trail being overgrown (in August, prior to trail maintenance). Numerous people report that the porcupine in Dry Valley Cave is still in residence.

23. Ella Armstrong Preserve – Alan Traino

Progress: All maintenance is up to date. Mowing will have to be done over the summer June 1 a group went and cleaned out the entrance (removed steel bars and grate)

Plans: I plan to replace the bolts in the cave over the summer. I would like to have a load of stone dropped in the parking lot.

Problems: None to report.

24. Merlins Cave Preserve – Morgan Ingalls

- **Plans:** John and I flagged a loop trail extending from the Merlins cave entrance across the property past Dome 12 and some of the other karst features. The trail was checked in early spring by some

botanists from the Hawthorne Valley Farmscape Program to insure that we won't be damaging any rare plants. A work day to cut the trail will be scheduled for later this summer.

Problems: Our currently flagged loop trail does affect some fragile plant species, especially right at the Merlins entrance. I'll have to walk the property again to determine where we can reroute the trail to avoid these species.

Progress: N/A, need to walk property again.

- **Plans:** I've been working on a new draft of the management plan that will update the language in the "Access" section, as well as adding some language that the CCLC wanted added.

Problems: none

Progress: The new plan has been drafted with some input from Vince and Chuck. I plan to send it to Tony at CCLC soon, and have a new draft for approval at the September board meeting.

- **Plans:** A Cave Steward training should be offered this summer.

Problems: none

Progress: I'll schedule it when I find the time.

- **Plans:** Changes should be made to the kiosk so that the plexiglass doesn't leak. Once this change is made, a new poster should be printed, keeping in mind people who are visiting the surface only. Similarly, a Merlins surface brochure needs to be written and printed so it can be available at the kiosk. (These are all changes that will make CCLC especially happy).

Problems: I've been busy and unable to start these projects. Suggestions for a non-leaking plexiglass set up would be appreciated, as would anyone willing to help out on a brochure.

Progress: N/A, see above.

25. Bensons Cave Preserve Committee -Luke Mazza ,interim

- We did get on the call list for when blasting will be happening at CSP.

26. Education Committee – Thom Engel

- On 4/25, I participated in the STEM event at Shenendehowa in Clifton Park, NY put on by SAGE (Shen Advocates for Great Education). It is a 2½ hour event. In that time I spoke with 129 students and 85 parents. These are all little 5-minute demos using the "ant farm" and discussing karst and karst protection.

27. Membership Committee – Peter Youngbaer

- In terms of the usual membership outreach and renewal activities, all renewal notices for memberships up by June 30 have been sent, and new memberships and renewals have been acknowledged and entered into the data base. It is current as of June 3. Second reminders were sent to those February and March maturing memberships who had not yet replied.

We also did a special solicitation of all Life Members, as they don't normally get dues renewal notices. We informed them of the new Family Life membership category.

Thanks to all who nudged people they knew who were on the list of lapsed memberships we circulated last quarter – a number have responded.

As of information reported to me by June 3, 2014, our current membership stands as follows, compared to the baseline of April 22, 2012:

June 3, 2014	Feb. 28, 2014	April 22, 2012
Life: 31	Life: 29	Life: 18
Family Life: 3	Family Life: 0	Family Life: 0
Benefactor: 15	Benefactor: 15	Benefactor: 10
Regular: 92	Regular: 99	Regular: 88
Family: 15	Family: 17	Family: 16
Student: 3	Student: 3	Student: 0
Institutional: 5	Institutional: 7	Institutional: 3
TOTAL: 164	TOTAL: 170 (162 in Dec.)	TOTAL: 135

Observations: There were 12-15 people who normally renew at the spring NRO who did not attend or didn't renew at the event, and another half dozen who lapsed in March. This lowered our overall membership total, despite having several new Life, Family Life, and Regular members. Two Institutional members also dropped off the current list: Camp Scatico and Metropolitan Grotto. All will be dunned again, which should regain some, if not most.

This incremental approach seems to work OK within the caving community, but we are still leaving untapped the general public who uses our preserves, primarily for surface visitation. For both membership and liability reasons, we need to get our membership brochure updated and out in the public – on the kiosks, on the website, and at events. I remind you that our budget assumed the brochures would be out there this season, and our numbers growing. Without the brochures and the people they would attract, we will fall short of our fiscal and membership goals.

28. Website Subcommittee – Mike Chu

29. Legal Committee Report – Open

30. Special and Group Use Coordinator – Thom Engel

- I have issued 32 permits for the period. Additionally, we already have 62 reservations for the summer.

I have set a new rule for those groups with problems completing the waivers. They must submit the waivers by at least a week before the trip or risk losing a slot. It seems unfair to make groups wait-listed to have to wait to the last minute.

31. Financial and Investments Committee – Joe Levinson

- Nothing to report

32. Volunteer Value Committee – Vince Kappler

- Progress: Year to date totals: 613.5 hours of volunteer work and drive time for NCC projects for a total value of \$18,793.00. Volunteer hours were accumulated by cavers working on the Bensons, Merlins, and Knox Preserves in addition to the hours reported by the Office and Membership Committees.
Plans: I will send periodic VV reminders to the membership and monitor data collection.
Problems: None at this time.

33. Nominating Committee – Bob Simmons

34. Thacher Park Committee – Thom Engel

- I would like to plan a session of mapping etc 6/28 or 6/29 or 7/5 or 7/6 and a second one in mid-August. July 5th August 23rd dates set at meeting

35. Surprise Cave Committee – Bob Simmons

36. Ad hoc Committee- Tory's Cave – Bob Simmons

37. Ad hoc Risk Management Committee - Bob Addis, Peter Youngbaer, Vince Kappler

- task of wording that will be standard thru out all our signage and brochures etc

38. Mohawk River Basin Karst Ad hoc committee- Chuck Porter and Art Palmer

- this committee has been dissolved

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

2nd by Dumont

Passed Unanimously

- I attended the NYS Land Summit at the Hotel Thayer at West Point on April 11. A list of participating conservancies is below. I attended 3 talks: one on conservation easements, one on trails and trail values, and one on building the membership base.

Adirondack Land Trust AgricuLand Trustural Stewardship Association American Farmland Trust
Battenkill Conservancy Brooklyn Queens Land Trust Buzzards Bay Coalition Catskill Center for Conservation &
Development Cazenovia Preservation Foundation Champlain Area Trails Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy
Columbia Land Conservancy The Conservation Fund Cragmoor Conservancy Delaware Highlands Conservancy
Ducks Unlimited Dutchess Land Conservancy Empire State Future Finger Lands Land Trust French & Pickering
Creeks Conservation Trust Genesee Land Trust Grassroots Gardens of Buffalo Green Guerillas Greene Land Trust
Hike New York Hudson Highlands Land Trust Indian River Lakes Conservancy John Burroughs Association
Kestral Land Trust Lake George Land Conservancy Lake Placid Land Conservancy Land Trust Accreditation
Commission

Land Trust Alliance Lowland Farm Mianus River Gorge Inc Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy Mohonk Preserve
Inc The Nature Conservancy New York–New Jersey Trail Conference North Branch Land Trust North Shore Land
Alliance Northeastern Cave Conservancy NW CT Land Trusts Oblong Land Conservancy Open Space Institute Inc
Orange County Land Trust Otsego Land Trust Pconic Land Trust Inc Pound Ridge Land Conservancy Inc Reber
Rock Farm Rensselaer Land Trust Rockland Farm Alliance Saratoga PLAN Scenic Hudson Inc Seneca White
Deer Inc Seven Madison Heritage Trust Thousand Islands Land Trust Three Village Community Trust Inc Trust for
Public Land Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust Walkkill Valley Land Trust Watershed AgricuLand Trusteral Council

- Advisory Committee – not losing some of the brain power that has been part of the NCC in the past. Retain association with someone that has been part. have a mini bio on each. Or just Advisors to the Board. And not have a true committee. Bob will ask the ones in question.
- Lodens Sink – Thom – conversation with the current owner he expressed and interest in cleaning it out. Good project for the NCC. Owner will contact Thom when ready .Owner would like to get an excavator and start digging.
- Thacher Centennial – Thom – September 13th big celebration. Would like to have some people guide them to Hailes cave (not into the cave though) BUT NRO is that weekend.
- Representatives to NSS Convention – Peter Youngbaer is interested.
- Club Day – Thom – July 11-12 Club day at EMS.

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

2nd by Engel

Passed unanimously

41. Hay moved to accept the minutes of the March 2014 meeting.

2nd by Berger

For -Rest Abstained -Hay

Passed

42. Kappler appointed Peter Youngbaer as NCC representatives to the 2014 NSS Convention in Huntsville, Al.

2nd by Ingalls

For- Rest Abstained –Youngbaer

Passed

43. Informational Point: Executive committee meeting will be July 23rd at 7pm. NCC Conference Call: 605-475-6111, Access Code: 814008

44. Addis moved that the next NCC Board meeting will be at 10:00 on August 24, 2104 with Bensons Opening Ceremony at 3:00.

2nd by Chu

For – Rest, Abstained: Engle, Traino

Passed

45. Addis moved to thank Mike Chu hosting the meeting.

2nd by Berger

Passed unanimously

46. Addis moved to adjourn

2nd by Youngbaer

For -Rest Opposed – Traino

Passed

Meeting adjourned at 12:44

**President's Report
Attachment A**

The Spring 2014 NRO started out with a wet Friday night but proved to be a beautiful weekend with good attendance. Saturday witnessed the third day of cleanup on the newly acquired Bensons Cave Preserve with the complete filling of a sizeable roll-off trash container. By Saturday afternoon, the property was looking much better with the right of way trimmed, boundary and trail markers mostly in place, and the three posts for the new kiosk in the ground. Thanks, volunteers! Future cleanups will focus on trash dumped in the sinkholes and fissures.

The NCC Auction at the NRO netted \$1,543.

Bensons: On Sunday, 6/1/14 I met with the adjacent (actually surrounding) landowner Howard Cornwell of Central Bridge. As it turned out, we had been tour guides together at Howe Caverns in the mid-1960's and had catching up to do. I pointed out what the NCC and its surveyor feels is a previous surveying error on the north boundary and stated that the previous surveyor would not admit that it was an error; it was a "difference of opinions". Howard and I walked the entire boundary line and I gave him copies of the NCC's newest revised land survey as well as five property deeds of transfer since 1940. He wanted to discuss them with his lawyer, so it will be some time before we gets back to us with his position on the ownership along the northern boundary.

N. American Symposium on Bat Research will be held at the Albany Hilton October 22-25, 2014 with the NCC partially hosting events. The NCC President and Secretary have been invited to the opening ceremonies as well as the closing banquet. Probably the NCC will have a display there.

**Attachment B
Vice President's Report**

NCC Manual

Ten pages of the manual were updated after the March meeting and posted to the web a few days later.

Liability

The Bensons Preserve was added to our liability policy on March 12 for an additional premium of \$80.79. The total cost of the \$2,000,000 policy to cover all eight preserves for 2014-2015 is \$1,285.66. This is \$86.00 more than I anticipated when we prepared the 2014 budget but at that time I did not have a firm estimate for adding the Bensons Preserve. We will renew the policy for next year before the June 19th deadline.

Other

I received and responded to over 325 emails since the March meeting. (I only know this because I was forced to change my ISP and then figure out how to merge into a new email system.) I had never realized the volume of mail and the range of topics that come up between meetings. The majority were about Bensons: the survey, closing on the property, work details pre and during NRO, and the dedication ceremony. The May conference call enables us to more easily discuss and review all the details of the Benson topics. Non Bensons email related to the Merlins MP revision, insurance renewal, research projects on NCC properties, and Volunteer Value. I also reviewed and offered comments on the Merlins MP and the insurance policy renewal required additional exchanges to clarify points on renewal forms as well as printing and organizing the return documents.

Attachment C
Treasurer's Report
 May 28, 2014

Balance Sheet 05/28/2014
 As of May 28, 2014

May 28, 14

ASSETS

Current Assets

Checking/Savings

Checking 2,607.20

Money Market 20,002.51

NSF Account 51,880.76

Total Checking/Savings 74,490.47

I have contacted the Tax Assessor for the Town of Cobleskill, Alan Danforth, and have confirmed/downloaded the correct forms to submit to ensure elimination of the Bensons property from the tax rolls. Forms are due by March 1st.

Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual
 January 1 through May 28, 2014

05/28/2014

	Jan 1 - Mar 3, 14	Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Donations		
Auction Donations	1,543.00	2,000.00
Donations - Other	3,606.78	4,000.00
Total Donations	5,149.78	6,000.00
Interest Earned	3.14	5.00
Membership Income	1,795.00	4,260.00
Total Income	6,947.92	10,265.00
Expense		
Acquisitions	1,127.00	855.00
Bank Charges	10.06	25.00
Development	0.00	1,000.00
Donations-outgoing	0.00	200.00
Easements	0.00	0.00
Education	0.00	100.00
Executive		
President	0.00	150.00
Secretary	0.00	75.00
Treasurer	0.00	275.00
VP	0.00	75.00
Total Executive	0.00	575.00
Insurance	80.97	1,200.00
Legal Fees	400.00	2,000.00
Licenses & Permits	0.00	150.00
Meeting Expense	0.00	100.00
Membership Expenses	0.00	100.00
Miscellaneous	0.00	100.00

Office Expense	0.00	100.00
Postage	48.00	100.00
Preserves-Maintenance		
Bentleys	0.00	100.00
Clarksville	0.00	300.00
Ella Armstrong	0.00	100.00
Knox	0.00	100.00
Merlins	0.00	100.00
Onesquethaw	0.00	100.00
Sellecks	0.00	100.00
Total Preserves-Maintenance	0.00	900.00
Printing	0.00	100.00
Promotion/Fundraising	30.00	800.00
Publishing		
Mailings	0.00	100.00
Website	0.00	60.00
Total Publishing	0.00	160.00
Sponsorships	1,000.00	1,000.00
Taxes on Properties	661.87	700.00
Total Expense	3,357.90	10,265.00
Net Ordinary Income	3,590.02	0.00
Other Income/Expense		
Other Income		
In Kind donations	0.00	0.00
Volunteer Value	3,974.00	0.00
Total Other Income	3,974.00	0.00
Other Expense		
In Kind Out	0.00	0.00
Volunteer Value Exp	3,974.00	0.00
Total Other Expense	3,974.00	0.00
Net Other Income	0.00	0.00
Net Income	3,590.02	0.00
Net Gain or Loss from NSF Fund	1,238.49	
NET Income after NSF Fund Gain/Loss	4,828.51	

Attachment D

EC Meeting
05/01/2014
Conference Call

Conference call: Bob, Bill, Vince, Christa

Money to Bat Symposium. Do we need to clean up the motion? Vince will send around.

Brochure- Christa to get quotes on brochure. Got names from Mohawk and RLT One general brochure / or individual for preserves (that could be cost prohibitive)/ market non-cavers as well. Point to our website for current.

Bensons – JA Darcey Crumb has been out of country, will have information hopefully by NRO or at least by the next board meeting. Cleanup – easement cleaned out. Shed down, barbed wire pulled out. 16 people there, NCC provided food. NRO cleanup – Luke to pick day. When the kiosk is up we can have an opening ceremony.

Maybe have the ceremony and board meeting in June on the Sunday in Schoharie. Talk to Mike Chu

Next board meeting we will vote Luke in as preserve manager. He is currently the interim preserve.

Have Luke say a neighborly hi to Cobleskill stone. Just ask for a friendly blast notice so caving permits are not issued for that day. Bob will talk to him.

NRO Auction – send out an email to ask for auction donations. Also bring the tent for NCC to NRO. Bob to contact Emily.

Need to get some hats and shirts. Clear out the stock.

Education Committee – was at several events and going to Clarksville Heritage