

NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY, INC.

Minutes

August 24, 2014, 10:00 am at Speleobooks, Schoharie, NY

Bensons opening ceremony thanks to Emily for making cake!

Meeting called to order at 10:14

1. Introduction and greetings – Vice President Vince Kappler (Bob was not able to attend)
2. Attendance:
Officers: V. Kappler, B. Folsom, C. Hay
Trustees: M Chu, T. Engel, P. Youngbaer, M. Berger, P. Woodell, M. Ingalls, A. Traino, K. Dumont, T. Rider
3. President's Report – Bob Addis- Attachment A
4. Vice President's Report –Vince Kappler – Attachment B
5. Treasurer's Report –Bill Folsom - Attachment C
6. Secretary's Report – Christa Hay
 - Status quo
 - Minutes updated on website,
 - I have asked for opinion and quote on slumping at Clarksville.
 - Still trying on South Bethlehem. Correspondence is light on their part. I will keep trying.
 - July EC meeting minutes – Attachment D
7. Science Committee – Larry Davis
 - I will do my best to get a report to you, but I will have to contact all the researchers. I have very, very limited internet access here in New Hampshire and very, very limited time here at camp. I'll do my best.
8. Acquisitions Committee –Chuck Porter
9. Bylaws Committee Report – Joe Levinson
10. Publications/Publicity Committee Report - Christa Hay
 - Discussions have been and are ongoing with respect to the newsletter. Preserves will be highlighted in each newsletter, possibly highlight a person in volunteer section. I will remind the board that a few years ago the board was approached with reducing the number of newsletters going out due to lack of content. That was turned down but at the same time when Danny sends out requests for articles nothing comes in. NOW maybe some of that is due to the emailing issues and that issue is also being worked on and hopefully resolved soon.
 - Whispering Pines Design for brochures
 - Hats and new t-shirts are in the works.
11. Fundraising Committee – Open
12. Legal Committee Report – Open
13. Office Committee Report – Emily Davis / Mike Warner
 - **Progress:** We have been coordinating with the Special use Group Chair during this busy time of year. Waivers are picked up at the post office, checked and reported daily.
 - **Problems:** None
 - **Plans:** None unless the board has suggestions of changes in our methods
14. Knox Cave Preserve Report –Emily Davis , Mitch Berger
 - **Progress:**
 - We've issued 13 Knox permits since the last report.
 - We received one very nice note of appreciation for the volunteer work and time that went into the ladder and other maintenance of the preserve. Aside from replying, we shared the note with the Boston Grotto, as it was involved with the ladder project.
 - Jay replaced the second of the lower bolts in Crossbones on the weekend of June 28.
 - Mitch did a bunch of trimming of overgrowth along the Knox trail and relocated a fallen tree on July 26.
 - Mitch and John Dunham discussed thoughts about where the lower level of Crossbones might go.
 - A reporter from DnalInfo wrote to inquire about Knox and caving. After we had some conversation (and perhaps a breakdown in communication) with the EC, Emily told the reporter they could talk by phone. She wasn't home when the call came in, but the questions left as a message were rather more probing.
 - The Wildlife Health Center research project is wrapping up, and the final visit to remove the data loggers may

have occurred by the time of the meeting (currently planned for August 20).

Problems:

- We denied one Crossbones permit to a group containing first-time cavers that did not have appropriate experience. Because the phrasing of the request appeared to be obscuring or omitting details about the group's experience, we discussed the event with other preserve managers, and this raised questions about a permit the same group had requested for Bensons.
- The reporter mentioned above, who had initially seemed to be inquiring about the amount of passage and a description of the Gunbarrel and caving in general, went on to seek information about insurance and specific named guides. Responses were not given on these topics.

Plans:

- John Dunham may help investigate where the lower level of Crossbones goes..

15. Onesquethaw Cave Preserve – Thom Engel

- **Progress:** Mike Bourgeois, Alan Traino, Bill Folsom, and I tried to find the four corners of the property without success. We did find one pin but it was not in the ground so the accuracy of the location is unclear.
- **Problems:** see above
- **Plans:** I would recommend that the NCC pay for a formal survey of the property. There seems to be encroachment by the neighbors on both sides.

16. Sellecks Karst Preserve – Alan Traino

- **Progress:** NA
- **Problems:** Property needs some attention: Trail markers and property boundary markers need to be posted. Who has the trail markers? .
- **Plans:** Looking to schedule work day late September or early October

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

- **Progress:** ATVers have moved away
- **Problems:** There are reports of large, red painted arrows in the cave that need to be cleaned up.
- **Plans:** clean up arrows

18. Bentleys Preserve Report - Jonah Spivak

- **Progress:** There was no follow-up on the filming to my latest email to the person involved. I assume the plan was scrapped?
- **Problems:** I did get a notice from Ken Moore via Peter Youngbaer about graffiti in the cave. I am going this Saturday (August 23) to assess. I will report back if the graffiti noted by Ken is new or old... there was some new back in May when I checked, but not significantly more
- **Plans:** I like the idea of a "leave no trace" sign outside the entrance. I'm also leading the NRO trip to the cave, so I might make it also be a work trip to clean up.

19. Ella Armstrong Preserve – Alan Traino

- **Progress:** All maintenance is up to date.
- **Plans:** None to report.
- **Problems:** None to report.

20. Merlins Cave Preserve – Morgan Ingalls

- **Plans:** Merlins MP up for approval. An addendum may be added in December or March (if the CLC wishes) with maps, possibly including the following features: kiosk, trails, cave entrances, interpretive structures, wildlife habitats, ecological communities, and threatened plants.
- **Problems:** N/A. I recommend approval of the new MP.
- **Progress:** N/A
- **Plans:** Cave Steward training should be offered this fall.
- **Problems:** I will be away, but John Dunham may be able to do it in my place.
- **Progress:** N/A

Other:

- 1.) John Dunham, Ramon Armen, and Jacob Morris-Siegel visited the property on July 3rd. Ramon and I climbed up to the Dome 4 infeeder and found a new dome room beyond. While the room itself is decent sized (maybe 9 by 20 feet long, and 15 feet high), there are no doable passages off the room.
- 2.) On the same trip, we discovered the "shelter" near the entrance of Dragon Bones had been rebuilt. We disassembled it (lots of duct tape was used) and carried out a large bag of trash. Jacob walked up again in mid-July and reported that no new structures had been built.

21. Bensons Cave Preserve Committee -Luke Mazza ,interim

- **Progress:** Mowed the ROW and inspected the property on 7/13. On 8/3 I spent some time adjusting and extending the marked trail to reach the walk-in entrance. Started to plan out more trail with my GPS. On 8/11 Craig Cantello spent some time cleaning trash from the trailside sinkhole and filled a 42 gallon bag which he disposed of.

On 8/9 Mike Chu, Vince Kappler, and Bob Addis assembled the kiosk, parts of which Mike had pre-assembled at his house. The posters for the kiosk are in the works and should be printed by Christa and hung in advance of the 8/24 opening ceremony.

A reporter from the Times Union plans to write an article about the Bensons acquisition and will be meeting me at the property on the 20th to get the scoop and be shown around.

Met with RJ Mallory (of Secret Caverns) to invite him to the opening ceremony. We discussed rescue logistics and he was very much in favor of us using Secret Caverns as an exit point if it was deemed the better option. He also stressed that the local Sheriffs are there to lend logistical and surface support in case of a rescue but are willing to leave the specific cave rescue operations up to the cavers. He brought up the topic of trespassing himself and was not concerned because he hasn't had any issues with that in ages, but appreciates our actively discouraging people from going into Secret.

Plans: The kiosk will be finished soon. I'm considering the possibility of a visitor register to not only get specific caver counts but also record people just visiting. Any thoughts would be appreciated.

I've extended the current marked trail and would like to continue doing this to form a loop covering much of the property and major karst features. This will require a few volunteers at some point. When done I estimate the trail(s) would total about a 1/2 mile.

More boundary markers need to go up on the North and East sides of property.

A chain gate should go in at some point to discourage vehicles from using the ROW. I haven't seen any evidence of that being a problem thus far. Depending on the ROW agreement it may be a good idea to create a parking area a few cars deep to get people off the shoulder of the road.

Trash cleanup in the one sinkhole will continue, with some larger volunteer efforts possible later this year.

Problems: None so far.

I've issued 9 permits since the cave opened this spring. 7 of these were actually used for trips. One of these was HHG conducting a vert practice in the walk in entrance on 7/19.

I will be suggesting several modifications to the management plan at this 8/24 meeting.

22. Education Committee – Thom Engel

- Nothing to report. Had a brief contact with an environmental studies teacher at Doane Stewart School.

23. Membership Committee – Peter Youngbaer

- In terms of the usual membership outreach and renewal activities, all renewal notices for memberships up by Oct. 1 have been sent, and new memberships and renewals have been acknowledged and entered into the data base. It is current as of August 18. Second reminders were sent to those whose memberships were due May through July, but had not responded yet. Lapsed notices (third notices) have also been sent to those who expired since the beginning of the year and have not replied to two notices.

As of information reported to me by August 18, our current membership stands as follows, compared to the baseline of April 22, 2012, and our high point of Feb. 2014:

August 18, 2014	Feb. 28, 2014	April 22, 2012
Life: 32	Life: 29	Life: 18
Family Life: 3	Family Life: 0	Family Life: 0
Benefactor: 12	Benefactor: 15	Benefactor: 10
Regular: 90	Regular: 99	Regular: 88
Family: 13	Family: 17	Family: 16
Student: 2	Student: 3	Student: 0
Institutional: 4	Institutional: 7	Institutional: 3
TOTAL: 156	TOTAL: 170	TOTAL: 135

Observations: We are suffering from a lack of renewals. As noted in my last report, 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 trend continued over the summer, as many July renewals did not take place. Some of this could be attributable to the timing of the NSS Convention.

The timing of this NCC Board meeting is nearly a month earlier than usual, so we have not had the benefit of either the Old Timers' Reunion nor the Fall NRO. We need a good presence at both to beef up our normal caving community numbers. I will be providing renewal and lapsed member lists to Bob, Christa, Emily, and

Mike for those events, but really need all Board members to spread the word to colleagues, and will have lists at the meeting to assist in this endeavor.

Finally, we desperately need a new brochure. We need to broaden our reach to the general public who uses our preserves, as well as update the preserve and membership information, not to mention things like liability and WNS. Thank you.

24. Website Subcommittee – Mike Chu
 - Updated minutes on website
25. Special and Group Use Coordinator – Thom Engel
 - I have issued 145 permits for the period. Five of these I revoked. The camp in question, despite 3 back and forth with them couldn't seem to get the waivers filled out correctly. (in the past years they have been fine, but they have a new person who couldn't seem to rise to the occasion) this same group sent waiver with no postage and no return address which resulted in the NCC paying \$1.40 in postage due. Despite assurance, we were not reimbursed for the money.
 - I denied 13 permits. 12 of these were for Camp Sternberg. The other was for the Connecticut Wilderness School. Interestingly, for Sternberg's next trips they got the waivers completely right.
26. Financial and Investments Committee – Joe Levinson
27. Volunteer Value Committee – Vince Kappler
 - **Progress:** Year to date totals: Members reported 781 hours of volunteer work and 212 hours of drive time for NCC projects for a total value of \$32,425.00. Volunteer hours were accumulated by cavers working on the Bensons and Knox Preserves in addition to the hours reported by the treasurer, Office, and Membership Committees.
 - **Plans:** I will send periodic VV reminders to the membership and monitor data collection.
 - **Problems:** None at this time.
28. Nominating Committee – Bob Simmons
 - Officer election coming up
29. Thacher Park Committee – Thom Engel
 - Planned session for August 23, 2014
30. Surprise Cave Committee – Bob Simmons
31. Ad hoc Committee- Tory's Cave – Bob Simmons
32. Ad hoc Risk Management Committee - Bob Addis, Peter Youngbaer, Vince Kappler
 - The Ad Hoc Risk Management Committee plans to review all NCC materials to ensure uniformity and compliance with our attorney's recommendations. Available committee members will meet, and with the assistance of our webmaster, will begin a systematic review and update of the web pages. The committee will also review NCC brochures and prepare recommendations for new brochures to be printed before the 2015 caving season
33. Convention Conservancy Meeting- Peter Youngbaer
34. article in newsletter, Thom Engel attend the conservancy round table as well 8 conservancies were present. Peter spoke about liability, also lots of conversation about communication and networking., LTA discussions
35. Barn Dance Emily Davis
 - After much work, we finally locked down the date of the annual Barn Dance. The dance will be September 27. We have contracted our caller Paul Rosenberg. We have our experienced team working on the dance again this year. Christa Hay in food service, Bill Folsom in promotion, Leslie Hatfield managing the auction and raffle prizes. Mike Warner and Bob Addis in tent set up. Emily Davis in ticket sales and general coordination. We already have about \$200 in raffle and auction items and Leslie is working on more. The dance will be the same weekend as an Orientation to Cave Rescue and we will coordinate with Greg Moore to make sure that the students at that class will be able to come to the dance.
36. Kappler moved to open the Committee of the Whole. The Treasurer will preside. Items can be entered as new business.
 - 2nd by Berger
 - Passed unanimously**
 - Berger: Policy on waivers and consistent information- do we have waivers or not?? Risk Management ad hoc is having a meeting on September 20th.

- Berger: :Mailing lists - maybe we can have board@necave etc maybe use Google groups, official communication between, NCC has been signed up with Mail Chimp, Mike will close the yahoo group. Mike and Mitch will work on internal email xx@necave....org
- Missing minutes and confidential information- Emily we are a 501c3 – we have to be an open book., we could do an executive session – discussion is not public just action. Vince – members can get access have to login for NSS.. Mike Chu will set up a login system and report.
- Berger: Management plan reviews – suppose to be every two years but discussion about changing to four years.
- Newsletter – what are we going to do with newsletter?

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

2nd by Traino

Passed unanimously

38. Hay moved to accept the minutes of the June 8, 2014 meeting.

2nd by Engel

For: Rest Abstained: Hay

Passed

39. This has been postponed to change the notification act- Addis move to appoint Luke Mazza as the Bensons Cave Preserve Manager.

2nd by

Vice president has suspended the order.

40. Hay moved: The Executive Committee may recruit qualified persons to serve as advisors to the NCC. Individuals willing to offer their expertise to the NCC will be identified as an NCC Advisor on our web site and in print where appropriate. The EC may occasionally rotate advisors as additional individuals agree to offer their services.

2nd by Traino

Passed Unanimously

41. Ingalls moved to approve the revised Merlins Management plan and adopt the forest management plan as an appendix.

2nd by Youngbaer

For: Rest Abstained: Ingalls

Passed

42. Kappler moved to approve the revised Bensons Management plan as submitted.

2nd by Berger

Passed Unanimously

43. ? moved to Amend act 35-36 from

Act 35-36 Filling Vacant Committee Positions

The Northeastern Cave Conservancy shall advertise all vacant positions for chairmen of permanent committees in the NCC newsletter prior to making a permanent appointment. The position may also be advertised through other media such as e-mail and postings on the web.

To

Act 35-36 Filling Vacant Committee Positions

The Northeastern Cave Conservancy shall advertise to all members any vacant positions for chairmen of permanent committees prior to making a permanent appointment.

2nd by Engel

Passed Unanimously

44. Addis moved to appoint Luke Mazza as Bensons preserve manager

2nd by Engel

Passed unanimously

45. Traino moved that the NCC congratulates Mike Warner for the amazing work with National Geographic on their recent photo essay of the caves of China.

2nd by Chu

Passed unanimously

46. Informational Point: Executive committee meeting will be November 5th at 7pm NCC Conference Call: 605-475-6111, Access Code: 814008

47. Kappler moved that the next NCC Board meeting will be December 7th at 10:00 am at Speleobooks.
2nd by Chu
Passed unanimously
48. Addis moved to thank Speleobooks to thank Emily and Mike Warner for hosting the meeting.
2nd by Hay
Passed unanimously
49. Traino moved to congratulate Mike Warner for his work with USGS in China.
2nd by Ingalls
Passed unanimously
50. Kappler moved to adjourn 1:01pm
2nd by hay
Passed unanimously

Meeting adjourned

President's Report Attachment A

Bensons Cave Preserve

1. Kiosk work – I assisted (goferred) Vince Kappler and Mike Chu on 8/9/14 in getting it built. Mike had done extensive pre-assembly ahead of time following his computer drawings, and any modifications were dealt with the help of Mike's table saw and generator. I believe that Mike & Vince agreed that this was their 8th effort together at building NCC kiosks and the teamwork shows. Much thanks to all who have helped.
2. Opening Ceremony, Sunday 8/24, 3 PM. Cake and long speeches in the rain? I don't think so this time! But Emily Davis is baking the cake and Luke Mazza and I are preparing our notes. A long list including the news media and Town of Cobleskill officials were invited and some will show.
3. Howe Caverns Casino Development. (What is the President talking about?) The odds favoring Howe Caverns as an upstate site for a new casino have apparently increased from 10 to 1 up to 4 to 1 presently. The preliminary drawings indicate that it might be sited along or on the present Sagendorf Corners Road north of the quarry and that the road will be relocated on top of Robinson Road. Still very much in the selection stage, the NCC should monitor this situation and be prepared to comment if development moves closer to Bensons.

Media Requests

1. Dnainfo, Sybille Penhirin. The EC chose to ignore this request for random data or statistics on Knox Cave. We could see no positive action coming from an article targeted to a neighborhood (s) of New York City, which is apparently what they write.
2. Albany Times Union, Cathleen Crowley. Since she couldn't attend on 8/24, Luke Mazza has walked her around the preserve and answered questions with information prepped by the President. I have made myself available for phone call follow-ups if needed.

NCC Advisory Committee – See the motion on the agenda.

Thacher Project – July 5 witnessed another survey and inventory day in the park. Thom Engel coordinated the event. There was good attendance and progress made.

**Attachment B
Vice President's Report**

NCC Manual

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

Liability

At the June meeting during the Committee of the Whole discussion, a comment (and ensuing discussion) asked whether our liability policy would cover a leased property. Other cave conservancies have been very successful in negotiating access and management agreements with karst landowners by providing the owner with liability protection through a comprehensive insurance policy and is that an option for the NCC? I contacted our insurance agent about adding a leased property to our policy and quickly received confirmation that we can add leased property to our policy and it would be priced using the same rating factor as an owned property.

EC Conference Call

The conference call was held on July 23. We discussed progress on several initiatives:

- Identifying cavers willing to serve as advisors to the NCC
- Request for more data from managers in their quarterly reports
- The invitation list for Bensons dedication

Other

I received and responded to numerous emails since the June meeting. The majority fell into several distinct categories including: Bensons' kiosk and dedication; the CLC site visit to Merlins (a requirement of the conservation easement) and revised management plan; risk management; and volunteer value entries.

Mike Chu organized a work detail to construct the Bensons kiosk on August 9. He designed, purchased, pre-assembled, and staged materials at the site ahead of time and I joined Mike and Bob Addis to assemble it.

**Attachment C
Treasurer's Report
August 18, 2014**

Balance Sheet

As of August 18, 2014

	Aug 18, 14
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Checking	1,948.97
Money Market	20,005.03
NSF Account	54,234.80
PayPal Checking	115.73
Total Checking/Savings	76,304.53
Total Current Assets	76,304.53
TOTAL ASSETS	76,304.53

Northeastern Cave Conservancy Inc

Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual
January 1 through August 18, 2014

08/18/2014

Jan 1 - Aug 18, 14

Budget

Ordinary Income/Expense

Income

Donations

Auction Donations

1,563.00

2,000.00

Donations - Other

3,842.42

4,000.00

Total Donations

5,405.42

6,000.00

Interest Earned

5.71

5.00

Membership Income

2,375.00

4,260.00

Total Income

7,786.13

10,265.00

Expense

Acquisitions

1,213.21

855.00

Bank Charges

16.38

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

1,366.63

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	<u>4,736.09</u>	<u>10,265.00</u>
Net Ordinary Income	3,050.04	0.00
Other Income/Expense		
Other Income		
In Kind donations	0.00	0.00
Volunteer Value	<u>18,793.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Total Other Income	18,793.00	0.00
Other Expense		
In Kind Out	0.00	0.00
Volunteer Value Exp	<u>18,793.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Total Other Expense	<u>18,793.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Net Other Income	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Net Income	<u>3,050.04</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Net Gain or Loss from NSF Fund	3,592.53	
NET Income after NSF Fund Gain/Loss	<u>6,642.57</u>	

**Attachment D
EC Meeting**

Bob Addis, Vince Kappler, Bill Folsom, Luke Mazza (Bob called each individually)

Bensons was the only topic

- was the position advertized? Luke to contact Christa about poster, Poster wording on surface visits (public land use), Changes to management from Luke – ready for next meeting, gathering names and contacts for opening ceremony.