

NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY, INC.

Board Minutes

Submitted by Christa Hay

09/30/06 Cave House, Howe Cave, NY 1:00 PM

There was a cleanup of Baugh Cave and a potluck lunch. There were approximately 18 volunteers.

Meeting called to order at 1:20 PM

1. Introduction and greetings – President Bob Addis
2. Attendance:
Officers: B. Addis, B. Folsom, C. Hay
Trustees: J. Armstrong, M. Chu, V. Kappler, B. Simmons, J. Siemion, A. Hicks, M. Warner, P. Youngbaer
3. Absent with Proxy
 - Emily Davis proxy for Joe Levinson
 - Chuck Porter proxy for Jon Allison
4. President's Report – Bob Addis- Attachment A
5. Vice President's Report –Bill Folsom
 - Status quo
- 5a. Pompeys ad hoc Committee
Progress/Problems: Now wants \$25,000 and we pay all costs. Pace of negotiations
Plans: Continue following up with owner.
6. Treasurer's Report – Joe Levinson
 - As of Sep-06 we had \$24,045.84 in our bank accounts. In addition, at the last accounting, we had assets of \$28,900 being held by the National Speleological Foundation. I have re-filed a portion of our tax return with the IRS, since there was a question about one filing schedule A for the 990-EZ form.
 - The Board has requested that the Treasurer will now send copies of 990EZ to all Trustees/Officers.
7. Secretary's Report – Christa Hay
 - NCC tent was at Old Timers in WV.
 - Continuing to updating on-line membership list when office report is available
 - Electronic Vote: Addis moved to allot \$25.00 to the Conservation Committee for the completion of a purchase of debris-collecting bags.
 - 2nd by Hay
 - For – Rest
 - No response- Allison

Passed
8. Acquisitions Committee Report –Chuck Porter
 - Several of us are keeping the fires going on potential acquisitions of Beckers, Jack Patricks, Barrack Zourie, Two Second Pit, Church and Wagon Wheel, Tunnel, and Single X caves. Nothing concrete to report on any of these -- mostly keeping landowners aware of our interest.
 - Bob Addis reports on the possibility of adding some acreage to the McFails property, including Wicks Hole. Fred Stone has generously offered to match donations for this. Although McFails is an NSS-owned property, the scuttlebutt is that they wish to unload their cave preserves to local groups such as the NCC.
 - Roland Vinyard has learned that the land with Mitchells Cave is for sale. Much e-mail discussion ensued while I was away on vacation. It would be a large and expensive property but some have suggested we might sell all but 10 acres around the entrance. I'm rather skeptical of that.

9. Bylaws Committee Report – Joe Levinson
 - Nothing to report
10. Conservation Committee Report - Joe Armstrong
 - There has been some work done @ Baugh Cave, at least 16 cavers showed -up to help clean it during an impromptu call-out. Trying to put a good dent in it before the clean-up before the board meeting.
 - Hoping to shortly put together a report on the biota living in 37 area caves that I found last winter.
 - There was a really good amount of work done during this cleanup – thanks.
 - Created “An Inventory of Things Living in Caves (and mines) in NY State”
11. Publications/Publicity Committee Report - Christa Hay
 - Ordered and received NCC outdoor color banner.
 - Status quo on rest.
12. Fundraising Committee Report - Alan Traino
 - Started fund raising for Pompeys at the Fall NRO meeting with \$500 donation from the NRO once there is a signed contract.
13. Office Committee Report – Emily Davis / Mike Warner
 - Status Quo. Continuing to run errands for the President and pick up mail. Nothing new.
 - Have the new check list for visiting area caves.
14. Knox Cave Preserve Report – Emily Davis/Jay Siemion
 - *Progress:* New poster is up on the Kiosk.
Plans: We plan to put a notice up October 15 that the cave is closed for the winter.
Problems: None, The new access system actually takes more work for the managers but seems to please our visitors. It is accomplishing what we set out to do.
 - Management Plan Review: We do not feel we need to make any changes to the management plan as some were made quite recently.
15. Onesquethaw Cave Preserve Report – Thom Engel
 - Nothing to report
 - Management Plan Review: At this time there are no issues with the management plan. Once the MHLC transfers the preserve to us, I would foresee some changes then.
16. Sellecks Karst Preserve Report – Jason Siemion
 - Status quo
 - Accident in Levys. Person fell off ladder into the pit- they are ok.
17. Clarksville Preserve Report – Mike Chu, Thom Engel, Chuck Porter
 - *Problems:* Stolen car was left in the parking lot other than that there are no significant problems.
Progress: Lower parking area has been leveled and fencing has been installed to distinguish the edge of our parking lot from the road leading to the quarry and to help steer visitors onto the trail that runs by the kiosk.
 -Flat stones have been placed along certain parts the trail between the kiosk and Wards entrance to minimize mud problems.
 -We may have finally turned the corner with these camp groups, though the last time Camp Sternberg (a source of on-going problems all summer) was there they disposed of their permit in the weeds.
Plans: Gravel needs to be brought in to finalize the new parking lot and prevent it from becoming a mud-trap during wet weather. The lot may need to be smoothed out again before the application of the top layer gravel. We hope to have the lot completed sometime this year.

-Changes to the management plan that would allow for selectively posting the property boundary. This would be aimed at individuals coming to the property on ATVs from the east—visitors coming up the trail would not see the signs.
-Trail between the lower parking lot and the kiosk needs to be smoothed out and better defined. It is on the list of things to do next spring.

- Management Plan Review: See Clarksville Management Plan Attachment

18. Ella Armstrong Preserve Report – Joe Armstrong

- The driveway/culvert issue- I have called 2 different contractors and neither has returned the call or has met me at the property.
- The kiosk is still up but unfinished.

19. Membership Report – Sean Ryan

- The July membership, which is the largest group, many of these renewed at Fall NRO.

20. Website Subcommittee Report – Mike Chu

- Status quo

21. Land Trust Liaison Committee Report – Jon Allison

- No progress. Gregory Entrance - No action as of yet by Mike B on the survey. No response from Dan Werner on legal review. I would give our chance of giving the MHLC this easement anytime soon 20:1 odds.

22. NCKMS 05 Report – Mike Warner

- Status: The NCKMS has about 8,000 dollars waiting for final expenses to be cleared. This amount will cover any expenses due from printing and mailing the proceedings. Money is turned over.

Problems/Progress: The publication of the Proceedings for the 2005 NCKMS run by the NCC is finally pending. This has taken about 6 months longer than anticipated. No publication date has been set but final material is in the hands of Editor Tom Rea.

Future Plans: Once the Proceedings are mailed, the remaining funds will be returned to the NCKMS steering committee. This amount should exceed the total of grants and scholarships received from the NCKMS Steering Committee, leaving the Symposium in as good or better shape than we received it.

- The next meeting is in October 2007, Chaired by Bill Elliot from the Missouri Department of Conservation. Staff from the 2005 NCKMS are giving support and advice.

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

24. Special and Group Use Coordinators – Aaron and Amy Cox

- Worked on the combined waiver - ready for use.

25. Financial and Investments Committee – Vacant.

26. Volunteer Value Committee – Vince Kappler

- *Progress:* It has been a busy summer in the NE. VV totals increased by over \$10,000 (as of September 6) since my last report! We now document over \$13,000 and 700 hours of labor to NCC projects. The web page to submit hours, 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

27. Ad hoc Committee - General Liability Insurance Report – Peter Youngbaer – Attachment B

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

2nd by Davis

Passed unanimously

- Siemion – thoughts on purchasing lawn mower and weed whacker for NCC properties. There is a weed whacker and lawn mower that was purchased years ago with the NSS. The lawn mower recently died. Need to contact NSS and see about purchasing another lawn mover together.
- Siemion - Can we get permission from the owners (Mohawk-Hudson LC) to put down some gravel for a parking area along the road at Onesquethaw?
- Chu –thoughts on hidden cameras on NCC properties. These were put up after vandalism at Clarksville – also gives an idea on visitation. The managers will put up on the kiosk a sign that says “Under Electronic Surveillance”
- Changing area at Onesquethaw – Thom Engel has drawn up plans and will get together a group of volunteers to put it up. He will schedule a time.
- Hay – Toilets at Clarksville, we need an outhouse like at Gage and Schoharie – Thom Engel will check with Albany County on their regulations for outhouses. Chuck Porter will check on the solar powered composting toilets.
- Mitchells – 135 acres – owner is exploring possibility of selling \$270K – barn on property, owner will only sell whole parcel. Someone from the NCC need to walk the property with Roland Vineyard - Chuck will go with him if owner approves of walk-thru.
- Ethics – need an ad hoc committee for Code of ethics and conflict of interest.
- Closed sessions - does the NCC need a policy on this? Roberts Rules of Order does cover this but might want to write policy.
- Bat Tracking – NYSERDA wants to track bats to determine bat habitats for windmill farms in NY. Craig Cantello will send this information he found on to Al Hicks and the board.
- Hailes – no discovery in the back of cave – ran into water.
- Surprise – Al Hicks has emailed the person but still no answer.

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

2nd by Armstrong

Passed unanimously

30. Informational Point: Addis established the Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest ad hoc committee for the purpose of researching and establishing a policy. Peter Youngbaer and Vince Kappler are the committee members.

31. Hay moved to accept the minutes of June 3, 2006 meeting.

2nd by Kappler

Passed – Rest, Abstained – Davis

Passed

32. Hay moved to thank Jon Allison for his services as Editor.

2nd by Chu

Passed unanimously

33. Addis moved the NCC spend up to \$650 for a groundwater model, the money coming from the General Fund.

2nd by Simmons

Passed unanimously

34. Hay moved to accept the updated (9/28/06) Clarksville Management Plan.

2nd by Simmons

Youngbaer moved to postpone motion until December Board meeting.

2nd by Folsom

For Youngbaer, Folsom, Opposed – Rest

Failed

For – Rest, Abstained - Youngbaer, Folsom

Passed

35. Warner moved to cover 2/3 of the cost of a lawn mower up to \$300.00. This will in the 2007 budget. The remaining 1/3 will be requested from the NSS. Mike Chu will make the purchase.
2nd by Armstrong
Passed unanimously

36. Informational Point: The Officers will conduct an Executive Committee meeting on November 18 at 10:00 AM in Essex Junction, VT. Location to be announced later. .

37. Addis moved that the next NCC Board meeting will be held on December 10 at 10:00 AM at Howe Caverns.
2nd by Simmons
Passed unanimously

38. Addis moved to thank the Cave House for hosting the meeting, the volunteers for the cleanup and J. Armstrong for organizing cleanup and meeting room arrangements.
2nd by Hay
Passed unanimously

39. Youngbaer moved for closed discussion.
2nd by Kappler
Passed unanimously

Davis left at 4:40 PM

40. Warner moved the Board authorizes the President to explore all available options concerning the future disposition of Howe Caverns in order to preserve the cave and maintain public access to it.
2nd by Youngbaer
For – Rest, Abstained – Porter, Absent - Davis
Passed

41. Information Point- The President formed the Howe Caverns ad hoc Committee. Members are Addis, Folsom, Hay, Warner, and Youngbaer.

42. Simmons moved to come out of the closed session.
2nd by Hicks
For – Rest, Absent - Davis
Passed

43. Addis moved to adjourn.
2nd by Simmons
Passed unanimously

Meeting adjourned 4:50 PM.

Attachment A
Presidents Report
Bob Addis

1. Becker's. I spoke to the current owner, Tom Wright on 7/28, and he feels that they will be going to closing with the new owners soon. He has been a long term friend of mine, and he will put in a good word for the NCC so we can hopefully open a dialogue this fall. I'm calling Tom back mid-August.

2. Jack Patrick's. Another little pet project of mine with the owner and literally life-long friend, Arnie Fancher. On 7/23, we took the owner's wife, Noreen and a neighbor on a brief geology tour of the ravine and the cave entrances (or where they were 10 years ago!). Arnie had to work on the farm that day and Paul Woodell could not give the full tour as he had planned because the wetness and slipperiness of slopes. We had a chance to look around and appreciate the magnitude and splendor of the ravine once again, and we had a nice conversation with Noreen. There is nothing in the works presently concerning acquisition, but we have reminded the owners of our interest and our ability to preserve their special place. I'll check back with them periodically.

3. Church & Wagon Wheel. On 7/16 I followed up on a 6/18 visit to the owner, Pat Walker in a continuing dialogue. Her Mother has recently passed away and Pat is the executrix of the estate. She requested that we wait at least a year for her to settle matters, and she said that she would contact us if something changed before then. Many issues are involved - will she want to stay in the house, will she sell the house, and if so, what parcels of land will be packaged with the house's smaller 3 acre lot. I'll check back.

4. Haile's. The Endangered Species Unit of NYS DEC has requested the assistance of the NCC in solving a bat hibernaculum problem at Haile's, that of sudden flooding of the cave which can literally wipe out as much as 70% of the bat population. I believe that it was seven years ago when flooding killed 16,000 bats, many of them on the Endangered List. The NCC will head a study which will investigate and then recommend solutions possibly at the resurgence(s), possibly in cave modifications, and whatever is discovered. We have several expert volunteers - hydro geologists, surveyors, engineers knowledgeable in hydraulics, etc. On 8/5 the DEC has made arrangements with JB Thatcher State Park for the NCC to continue and hopefully conclude the survey of Haile's with particular emphasis on accurate cross sections and pushing all leads. On the same day another NCC survey crew will tie Haile's entrance into the entrance of Novemberkill Cave, a smaller cave further north along the base of the escarpment that has been shown to be Haile's low flow resurgence. We may also try to survey Novemberkill Cave as well as any other pertinent karst features, time permitting. We think that this is an ongoing study and that the NCC will be invited back for more work on the issue.

The 8/5 survey trip had Mike Chu, Peter Haberland, and Paul Rubin attempted to push leads off the current map, but apparently sumping foiled them. The surface survey crew of Al Hicks, Bob Addis, Thom Engel, Tom Rider, and Rebecca Woo first assisted Al in photographing the hibernaculum in Haile's and then ran the traverse to Novemberkill and on to Eft Cave, the one furthest north. Novemberkill had the majority of the resurgence and Eft seemed not to be part of the Haile's system since it was higher in the limestone and had no water. The suggested next step in the project would be to down trench the entrance to Novemberkill in order to lower the water and gain better access to the next obstacle(s).

5. McFail's Surface Property. Yes this is NSS property, but two significant factors have brought it in front of the NCC. Fred Stone of Hawaii was the discoverer of most of McFail's, the gentleman who purchased the first parcel, and the man who convinced the NSS to accept it as their first cave preserve, all back in the mid-1960's. He was in town this summer for family business, and he once again expressed his love for the property by offering a matching grant to purchase the surrounding woods with either the NSS or NCC. Fred spent considerable time researching deeds, tax maps, aerial

photos and walking the woods, and we met with one of the farming brothers, Stu Tillapaugh on 7/16. There are three brothers and spouses involved in the ownership, but our preliminary discussions went well with a promise to meet again in mid-August after they have had a chance to talk it over. When we initially contacted Stu, we were expressing concern over the recent opening up (collapse?) of Wicke's Hole, but Fred envisions a much larger acquisition. Therefore the preliminary talks are about buying anywhere from a few acres up to 40-50 acres, with Fred's preference for buying all of the woods between Hall's Hole and Ack's Shack.

The second event is the talk by the NSS that they will turn over their preserves to local cave conservancies on a case by case basis. This is beyond a rumor yet not formal NSS Board discussion. Emily Davis talked to the NSS Officers at the Washington Convention and they are in agreement to turn McFails over to the NCC. This will require board approval by both the NCC and the NSS.

A matching grant is an exciting prospect and one that usually goes quite well. I personally believe that thanks to Fred Stone, the Northeast cavers have a wonderful opportunity in front of them.

6. Paperwork Reduction. This is a cooperative effort between the NCC and the NSS to streamline and clarify that whole liability waiver, minors' waivers, insurance certificate thing. We expect to post new rules in the Schoharie & Gage Cabins, possibly a check list for youth groups, an article in the Caver and on the discussion group, and so forth.

7. New Accounting Procedures in the Office Committee. Emily started in July running a manual spreadsheet that tracks budget spending, and the EC should decide how we wish to disseminate the information - emails to the EC, Board, website? I have already found it to be useful.

8. Carlisle Bicentennial, July 20-21, 2007. I have been attending organizational meetings. Chuck Porter will be writing a chapter for their history book on the history of the caves and Jay Siemion will be adding a roadmap with cave locations as dots and a legend. The NCC will also add a paragraph on safe caving practices and how to contact caving groups. The NCC (Me? Anyone else want to do it?) will give a talk on the history of the Town's caves on Friday night, 7/20/07. Sat. we will have the NCC booth on the Town's 23 acre parcel set aside for the celebration. We might offer guided surface tours of the McFail's Preserve. Additional attractions: There might be a walk up Barracks Zouire and to nearby Rockhouse, a karst feature that played an important part in the Town's history by providing hiding spots during the various wars in the 1700's. Fun stuff to do.

9. Clarksville Heritage Day, Sat, 8/26/06. We had an NCC display at the church and Thom Engel led an afternoon surface walk.

10. Thatcher Park Day, Sat, 10/14/06. The NCC has been asked for a display and Thom Engel will be leading a geology walk.

11. Mitchell's Cave. The owner has recently expressed interest in selling the 135 acre parcel surrounding the cave, and spoke to NCC member and realtor Roland Vinyard. The owner then clarified his intentions by stating he wanted to sell the entire parcel and would not consider subdividing the cave separately. We will talk about this under the Committee of the Whole during the meeting, but it does seem to be too ambitious or widespread a project for the NCC. I think it does, however, deserve some property investigation at this time so we know better what is out there for the future.

12. Cave Conservancies Forum, Lewisburg, WV, 9/20-22/06. Several NCC members attended and presented papers.

Attachment B
General Liability Insurance Committee Report
by Peter Youngbaer

As you know, I was asked prior to the last Board meeting to re-assume responsibility for negotiations with Franey Muha Alliant, the agency representing the Land Trust Alliance Conserve-A-Nation program with the insurance underwriter, Chubb. As you also know, a family emergency called me back to Vermont the day of the Board meeting, so I could not give you an update at that time. Here it is now:

There was quite a flurry of activity just prior to the June meeting, and we sincerely hoped for a quote at that time. The FMA agent had gotten a commitment from the Chubb underwriters that we would have a quote prior to the meeting. At the last minute, Chubb again sent out a Supplemental Application asking nearly 25 questions. All of these questions had been priorly answered one way or another, but they insisted on having their form completed.

To refresh your memories, many of these questions were framed for commercial caves (e.g. how many tours, what price, how many guides, hours of operation etc.). Others were simply stupid or ignorant, to be quite blunt (e.g. How many square feet is your cave? Has a geologist ever looked at your cave?).

The agent at FMA had been very helpful and was equally frustrated with the underwriters - so much so that she, herself, took a crack at filling out the supplemental form. Her limited knowledge of our properties and management plans, however, caused me to tell her to hold up until I could do a comprehensive job on the supplemental. Quite frankly, because we have so many caves on several properties, I essentially had to answer 25 questions 10 different times, with significant cross-references to the management plans.

That took me most of the summer, quite frankly, but the final materials were submitted Labor Day weekend. And so we wait again for a response - hopefully we will hear something soon.

In the meantime, the National Cave Conservancies Forum is taking place Sept. 20 - 22 in Lewisburg, WVA, co-sponsored by the NCC. I mention this is particular because I have been asked to moderate a session on liability insurance.

In the process of preparing for that session, I've been conversing with Rane Curl. Rane, you may recall, has been involved for the NSS in pursuing insurance for cave conservancies for some time, and is in contact with many of them, and with insurers.

Interestingly, he had made a proposal early this spring/summer to Chubb underwriters (through separate channels in FMA) to ask them to consider a collaborative application of cave conservancies, rather than separate applications. This went nowhere. I told Rane that it was particularly interesting that nowhere in my own discussions with FMA and Chubb was this group application even mentioned.

Rane and I both remain highly concerned that conservancies, their properties and their resources remain exposed, and that we continue to work to find a way to insure them - and do so affordably.

So, perhaps we will have more to report at the Sept. 30 Board meeting from the Cave Conservancies workshop. Or we may even have a quote.

