

NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY, INC.

Minutes

Submitted by Christa Hay

09/25/05 Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Delmar, NY 11:00 am

Meeting called to order at 11:10 am.

1. Introduction and greetings – President Bob Addis
2. Attendance:
Officers: B. Addis, B. Folsom, J. Levinson, C. Hay
Trustees: J. Allison, J. Armstrong (1:45), M. Chu, V. Kappler, B. Simmons, P. Youngbaer
3. Absent with Proxy
 - Mike Martuscello will be proxy for J. DeGross
4. Absent without Proxy
 - Norm Berg proxy for P. Murphy
 - Sean Ryan proxy for J. Siemion
 - Thom Engel for J. Armstrong until 1:45pm
5. President's Report – Bob Addis- Attachment A- (attachments follow)
6. Vice President's Report –Bill Folsom – Attachment B

6a. Pompeys ad hoc Committee - Attachment B
7. Treasurer's Report – Joe Levinson – Attachment C
8. Secretary's Report – Christa Hay
 - NCC was present at OTR. Sold some plates donated by Jack Middleton and books donated by Tony Hopkins. Also had a silent auction for several of the more valuable books. 50/50 was won by Bill Liebman. See office report for numbers.
 - Designed an embroidery pattern for hat and Howie (Howies Harnesses) stitched a hat for me right at OTR. Placed an order for 25 hats. Working on polo shirts now with local company.
 - NCC annual BBQ at Schoharie cabin – was held after the EC meeting. It was lightly attended but we had a good time
9. Acquisitions Committee Report –Chuck Porter
 - Nothing to report
10. Conservation Committee Report - Joe Armstrong
 - The clean-up at Baugh Cave has been going along. The top has been removed, and we are now doing the best we can removing the trash from lower in the cave. Help is still needed. The clean-up will not stop because some won't help, only to complain.
11. Publications/Publicity Committee Report - Christa Hay
 - Status quo
12. Fundraising Committee Report - Alan Traino
 - Nothing to report
13. Office Committee Report – Emily Davis / Mike Warner
 - Plans: no changes
 - Progress: We seem to be in a good flow with few problems and mail and banking being taken care of in a timely fashion. The plates donated by Jack Middleton. \$61 were sold at OTR/NRO The books donated by Tony Hopkins \$386 total at OTR/NRO Total for the two

events including auction, 50/50, renewals, donations, new members, Howe Caverns coin drop etc. \$2707.75

- Problems: None that we know of.

14. Knox Cave Preserve Report – Emily Davis

- Plans: I am interested in discussing if the board thinks that this is the time to make Knox a park and cave for all but special use caving? Jay will present a proposal to the board to discuss at the December meeting that will include some changes to the management plan.
- Progress: Jay has gotten a beautiful kiosk up and completed. This is the first step to changes in management if we decide to move in that direction. If not it is a good reflection on the NCC and helps with general management.
- Problems: We have had some trespassing at Knox this year. I would love to have others help keep an eye on the property if they pass it at any time.

15. Onesquethaw Cave Preserve Report – Thom Engel

- Not much to report. Our neighbor removed the log across the stream which was fine. Quiet is good.

16. Sellecks Karst Preserve Report – Jason Siemion

- Only two visits were logged in to the register since last meeting other than preserve maintenance visits. With the help of Folsom and Armstrong I put up trail markers and a new poster. Planning on putting up a very small Sellecks Preserve sign to indicate which driveway is ours so people will not pull into the neighbors driveway (small problem in past). I would like to do a little remediation of the Levy's sinkhole next spring/summer with a new path to the cave and planting of native vegetation to prevent continuing erosion on the walls of the sink.

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

- This year has proven a learning curve for all. It seems in the summer we get much more weekday camp traffic than I ever imagined. Following the rules has been tough for some of these camps. Most of the groups seemed to get it by the end of the season. (As an aside, there is still a misconception that the area is public land, was told just the other day, that it was state land.)
- Some industrious individuals built a fire ring by the old one. This will be remediated by this weekend. Other than an occasional incident, the property seems cleaner than it ever has.
- Visitation seems very spotty. Certain non-3-day weekends seem to generate an awful lot of visits. We've been lucky to have had only this one recent fire ring incident in a year of ownership.
- Clean up needed at Ladder Cave

18. Ella Armstrong Preserve Report – Joe Armstrong - no report received

19. Membership Report – Sean Ryan

- Plans: Get members to renew, and continue to attract new members.
- Progress: Members are renewing, although not as many as ideally should be renewing. The NCC data is online, so everyone can theoretically access one continually updated list - although the online list is currently out of date.
- Problems: Reports from one NCC member said he found my email message in their spam filter; presumably non-NCC members have had the same problem. I can do a lot of the member updates from the online page, but there are still enough problems so some entries from months ago haven't been added. Without access to an updated list, it's been difficult to follow up on emails with mailed letters.

20. Website Subcommittee Report – Norm Berg

- The conversion of the NCC website to the new design developed by Seth Perlman and Bill Folsom is estimated to be 95% complete. I would like to thank Mike Chu for doing the initial conversion.

- I can set up email alias addresses such as webmaster@necaveconservancy.org for any officer, trustee, or committee chair that requests it. Those officers currently using email forwarding provided by the NSS will be switched to this addresses notation.
- Mike Chu has provided a summary of the NCC web-based membership database: "The basic functions of the NCC web database are up and running, and are being tested by Sean. This includes forms to add/renew/delete/update members, as well as automatic pages that summarize donation information (how much money has been donated to each fund, etc) and a way to export database contents for mailing label generation. Work still progresses on the donation section of the web interface; forms to handle that information are still being finished. Once we are confident that the interface is adequately bug free, an announcement will be made and a demonstration of the database will be held so that all who will be using it can be familiarized with it."

21. Land Trust Liaison Committee Report – Jon Allison – no report received

22. NCKMS 2005 Report - Mike Warner - no report received

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

24. Special and Group Use Coordinators – Aaron and Amy Cox – no report received

25. Financial and Investments Committee – Paul Murphy

- Status quo

26. Ad hoc Committee - General Liability Insurance Report – Peter Youngbaer -Attachment D

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

2nd by Simmons

Passed unanimously

- E. Davis – encourage Board members to come to Thursday night NCKMS banquet as NCC is a sponsor.
- T. Engel – Mountain bikes on preserves- should address this issue at some time. J. Allison – doesn't see a problem with mt bikes- our preserves do not have enough trails to attract riders. M. Martuscello – does bike and questions whether it is a problem. B. Simmons – what do management plans say? Motorized vehicles are prohibited.
- E. Davis – Thook entrance owners do not want motorized vehicles on their property.
- C. Hay – invite to NSS Board of Governors meeting/dinner hosted by Helderberg-Hudson Grotto.
- B. Simmons – preserve visitations – can a NCC board member get covers all the paperwork? Regional access proxies? All the forms are available on-line.
- B. Folsom – need more acquisitions – spoke with acquisitions chair. Caves: Single X, Diddley, Church & Wagonwheel, Surprise (DEC not responding), Bensons (progress is moving – need to have stockholders meeting), Eldon French
- T. Engel – time to revisit list of caves that are endangerment- will look at the list of caves.
- R. Simmons – what is process for acquisitions? More outreach needed.
- M. Martuscello – officer elections coming up. Call for nominations going out.

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

2nd by Levinson

Passed unanimously

29. Hay moved to accept the minutes of the June 12, 2005 meeting.

2nd by Youngbaer

Passed unanimously

30. Addis established the Land Use Advisory ad hoc committee for the purposes of assisting municipalities in dealing with construction in karst areas. The President will serve as chairperson and Members are: P. Youngbaer, B. Simmons, T. Engel, E., Davis (*Addis to ask A. Lehmann*).

31. Addis moved _____ and _____ be given the complimentary registrations to the National Cave and Karst Management Symposium to be held in Albany, NY Oct. 31 to Nov. 4, 2005. These registrations were given to all sponsoring organizations.
2nd by Kappler

Folsom moved to postpone the filling of the blanks until October 7, 2005.

2nd by Allison

Passed unanimously

Postponed until October 7

32. Youngbaer moved that the Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc adopt the Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices, and send a copy of the following resolution to the LTA:

WHEREAS, the Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. has reviewed Land Trust Standards and Practices published by the Land Trust Alliance in 2004; and,

WHEREAS, the Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. agrees that Land Trust Standards and Practices are the ethical and technical guidelines for the responsible operation of a land trust;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Trustees of the Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. hereby adopts Land Trust Standards and Practices as guidelines for the organization's operations and commits to making continual progress toward implementation of these standards and practices. September 25, 2005 date adopted.

2nd by Folsom

Passed unanimously

33. Youngbaer moved that the Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. join the Land Trust Alliance.

2nd by Folsom

Engel moved to postpone until December meeting.

2nd by Allison

For – Rest, Against – Simmons

Passed

Postponed until December

Armstrong takes over for Engel

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

2nd by Simmons

Levinson moved to postpone until December meeting.

2nd by Allison

Passed unanimously

Postponed until December

35. Kappler moved that Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. committees are organized such that committee chairpersons report to an officer.

2nd by Levinson

For – Rest, Opposed – Allison

Passed

36. Folsom moved that the NCC enter into a contract to purchase Pompeys Cave Ulster County, NY. The intended purchase will start at the highway and basically include all of the streambed up to and including the sinkhole and burn area. Survey costs up to \$5,000.00 are authorized and will be funded from the Acquisitions fund.

2nd by Allison

For – Rest, Opposed – Simmons, Levinson, Abstained – Berg, Chu, Ryan.

Allison moved to amend by adding the phrase “not to include the burn area”

2nd by Levinson

For – Simmons, Levinson, Opposed – Rest, Abstain- Berg, Ryan, Hay

Failed

Original motion passed

37. Addis moved the NCC sponsor up to three workshops, one field trip, and one banquet ticket to the NCKMS to be given to any NCC member indicating interest. Selection will be done by an electronic board vote on October 7, 2005.

2nd by Youngbaer

For – Rest, Against – Levinson

Passed

38. Addis moved that the Officers will conduct an Executive Committee meeting on November 12 at 4:00pm at the Cave house.

2nd by Levinson

Passed unanimously

39. Addis moved that the next NCC Board meeting will be held on December 4 at 11:00 am at Speleobooks, Schoharie NY.

2nd by Levinson

Passed unanimously

40. Addis moved to thank the Five Rivers Environmental Education Center for providing meeting place.

2nd by Hay

Passed unanimously

41. Addis moved to adjourn.

2nd by Levinson

Passed unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 3:05 pm.

Attachment A
THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Bob Addis 9/15/05

1. My biggest concern, and one which I hope to impart to the Board and the members, is the reality that 65 members out of 184 have **not** renewed their NCC memberships (5/1 to 9/15/05). We are **down 35%** of our membership and therefore down 35% of our projected 2005 dues income. This may be due to a number of factors. We can't hide behind excuses; all of us need to turn this around by getting renewals and yes, new memberships. Generous donors and grants may be nice, but the NCC needs grassroots support through a strong and broad-based membership. Just as important is the institutional membership - renewal and seeking the new ones.
2. Lawton Subdivision, Sagendorf Corners Rd. Jim Harbison of the US Cave Conservancy called me to ask if we could issue a statement at a public hearing for the Town of Cobleskill Planning Board hearing on 9/14/05. The USCC owns Benson's Cave on Robinson Rd. and were contacted because they are within 500 ft. of this proposed subdivision. I whipped up a statement to be read and entered into their minutes, and Emily Davis read it at the meeting. Apparently our statement, which our Board has a copy, was well received by the Planning Board. Cavers have for some time been working on the Town of Cobleskill to adopt regulations on construction in a karst area, similar to that in the Towns of Schoharie & Knox. It is now obvious that the NCC should be more proactive in this direction. The subdivision passed with septic systems being approved. It is interesting to note that the septic systems must be raised bed sand filtration type, added perhaps \$10,000 to the price of each home. This is the identical technology used in the past few years on Barton Hill Rd., Schoharie, and the new house closest to the Knox Cave parking lot, so somebody is getting the message. I plan on forming an ad hoc committee to address local zoning codes, starting with the Town of Cobleskill.
3. Members of the NCC participated in a cleanup of the Baugh Cave sinkhole on 8/27 at the request of our Conservation Chair, Joe Armstrong. There was a favorable write-up in the Cobleskill Times Journal, although the writer missed the fact that Joe is a Trustee to the NCC and that the NCC helped that day. It is interesting to note that Baugh sinkhole is reasonably close to the Lawton subdivision, and that there is rumored to be a dump in another sinkhole on the Lawton property. NCC cleanup efforts at Baugh and at the Levy's sinkhole were put forth in the statement to the Planning Board to demonstrate our commitment.
4. On 9/14, I attended the last planning meeting for Plum Day in Clarksville. By the time that you read this, Plum Day, 9/24, will be history, but the village is very aware of the NCC's efforts in the community. I believe that all of this involvement with the Clarksville community is time well spent, as well as that of the Clarksville Committee. The NCC is being perceived as a new and helpful neighbor, one that cares about THEIR CAVE. Clarksville Cave is a source of local pride. Generous thanks went out to Christa Hay for all of the Plum Day signage that she supplied.
5. We recently received \$100 in the matching corporate grants from United Technologies. Please encourage anyone who has these grants at work to remember the NCC.
6. Check out the website for the National Cave and Karst Management Symposium (nckms.org/2005/) to be held in Albany on Oct. 31- Nov. 4. As sponsors, the NCC has 2 complimentary registrations, and these will be distributed by vote at our Board meeting. Of particular interest should be the Friday morning forum for cave conservancies led by Jeff Bray of the West Virginia CC. Can you attend?
7. Saturday night's NRO Auction to benefit the NCC was quite a success. With Yours Truly as auctioneer and a nice mix of donated items ranging from an unfired Justrite carbide lamp to a portable toilet (unused!) we raised over \$900 for cave conservation. Helpers included runners Steve McLuckie, Chuck Porter, Peter Youngbaer, and cashier Emily Davis.

Attachment B
Vice President's Report

9/25/05

Pompey's Cave acquisition update

Since our last meeting a couple of things of note:

1. The owner has continued allowing dumping at the burn area.
2. The parcel has been marked with flagging tape informally.
[REDACTED]
4. Advice was solicited from the NSS Conservancy Roundtable in July at the NSS Convention.
5. I have not been successful in locating a pro-bono land surveyor. The Board should be prepared to approve paying for a survey once we have a signed contract.

Upon direction from the Board, I will connect Mr. Neff's lawyer with our pro-bono lawyer in order to get the written contract drawn up.

New website design update

The new design is now live on the site. Several pages need to be created still to complete the planned improvements to the site:

- Landowners (See CCH site for example)
- Group Use Policy
- BSA Caving Guidelines
- Volunteers
- Calendar
- Site Map

Kudos to Mike Chu and Norm Berg for their hard work on getting this up over the summer! Thanks again to Seth Perlman for the new design.

Going forward

Given the unpredictable pace of any given potential acquisition (Pompey's being the current example), I would implore any NCC member/trustee/director to keep up the pace on their "pet project" acquisition(s) so that we have more than one acquisition in process concurrently. Continually having new acquisitions shows the community we are active, vital and worthy of support.

Attachment C
Treasurers Report
For
The Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc.
25-Sep-05

As of Sep-05 we had \$25,180.29 in our bank accounts. In addition, at the last accounting, we had assets of \$15,432 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 of the schedules for the 990-EZ form.

Respectively submitted,

Joe E. Levinson

Attachment D

GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE REPORT

As a follow-up to my report and action at the last NCC meeting, I was asked to investigate further the issue of general liability insurance, including prices, and report back. I am pleased to report the following information and make the motions below.

BACKGROUND PROCESS: I followed up with Rane Curl, who, as you may recall, has been looking into what the various cave conservancies have done vis a vis insurance. He continues to advise that the best way to go is through policies offered through the Land Trust Alliance and the Conserve-a-Nation insurance policies. I then spoke with the membership coordinator at the Land Trust Alliance, and with Jim Mechanko, agent with Franey, Parr and Muha, Inc., the LTA link to the Conserve-a-Nation insurance.

KEY POINTS:

* In order to access the Conserve-a-Nation policies, the NCC must become an LTA member (as a land trust). Dues are based on a sliding scale (size of organization, assets - not including held land, etc.). The NCC is the smallest category of member. Our annual dues would be \$225, based on operating expenses of \$10,000 or under (It's \$325 for OE between \$10k and \$30k).

* In order to be an LTA member, we need to include a copy of an NCC Board Resolution documenting adoption of the LTA standards and practices of a land trust. I have included these as an attachment. My preliminary review would indicate that we would have no problem adopting them. However, I would ask that other trustees review them carefully, particularly the financial management pieces. There may be some minor tweaks to our current procedures that we may need to enact. That said, the LTA liaison said that they recognize all sizes of land trusts, and that we are expected to abide and work by the standards and practices to the best of our ability.

* In order to access the insurance, we need to fill out an application, specifying the coverage we seek. Action on the application takes about five - ten business days, according to the agent. I've also attached a copy of the application for your review. Much of it does not apply to the NCC, as we don't operate many of the kinds of properties this general application covers.

GENERAL DISCUSSION: In my previous report, you may recall that my strong recommendation was that Directors and Officers coverage was not necessary, but that we should have general liability coverage.

The Conserva-a-Nation program offers a number of options. The basic "package" offers a general \$1 million bodily injury and property damage coverage against third party claims. It also includes personal property in the organization's office, coverage for hired and non-owned automobiles, and a liquor liability (to cover, for example, if we hold a fundraiser where alcohol is served). This basic package was \$650 in 2004 (down from \$1000 in 2003).

An Umbrella option is also offered. For an additional \$600 per year, the liability coverage is increased to \$2 million.

Finally, a Volunteer Accident coverage is also offered. This covers accidental death and dismemberment. As it was explained to me, generally people have their own health insurance, which is first in line for claims, and would generally cover anyone injured volunteering for NCC activities. The VA coverage would come into play for anyone who doesn't have other coverage, or to fill in gaps in their policy. It's cost is \$175 annually.

For information purposes only, the D&O coverage is an additional \$900 per year - but, again, I don't believe we need this at all.

In terms of the application, I had a lengthy discussion with the agent about how to present it. He was quite helpful in relating how skittish some of the underwriters have been about caves (they have visions of all these people bouncing around on bungee cords), and how to present information. For example, he suggested we include copies of the landowner liability statutes from the various states in which the NCC operates. I would want our NCC Legal Committee to provide that to ensure the most up-to-date enactments. One suggestion I have is to include just NY and VT at this point, as these are the only states in which we are legally incorporated at this time. We may want to discuss this further.

A second piece of advice was to stress the entire land that we own/manage, not just the caves. Strong wording about land management should be included. He also advised that we included some of the cave management restrictions (e.g. permits for certain caves, equipment requirements, etc.) as demonstration of how we manage and mitigate against risk. Assuming we go forward with this, I would be happy to work with a small subcommittee to prepare the application and wording.

CONCLUSION:

Peter Youngbaer MOVES that the NCC obtain general liability insurance coverage through the Conserve-a-Nation program. I would specifically suggest we go with the basic liability package and the volunteer accident coverage, but forego the umbrella and D&O. Estimated total cost is \$825 annually (\$650 for general liability; \$175 for volunteer accident).

Peter Youngbaer MOVES that the NCC join the Land Trust Alliance (\$225 annually).

Peter Youngbaer MOVES that the NCC adopt the Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices, and send a copy of the following resolution to the LTA, along with our membership check:

WHEREAS, the Northeastern Cave Conservancy has reviewed Land Trust Standards and Practices published by the Land Trust Alliance in 2004; and,

WHEREAS, the Northeastern Cave Conservancy agrees that Land Trust Standards and Practices are the ethical and technical guidelines for the responsible operation of a land trust;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Trustees of the Northeastern Cave Conservancy hereby adopts Land Trust Standards and Practices as guidelines for the organization's operations and commits to making continual progress toward implementation of these standards and practices.

_____ date adopted

I trust that this report and the attachments will provide sufficient information for decision-making at the upcoming meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter Youngbaer