

Northeastern Cave Conservancy News

Volume 1, Number 2, June 1999

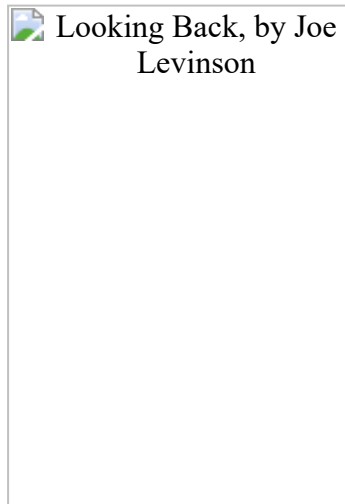
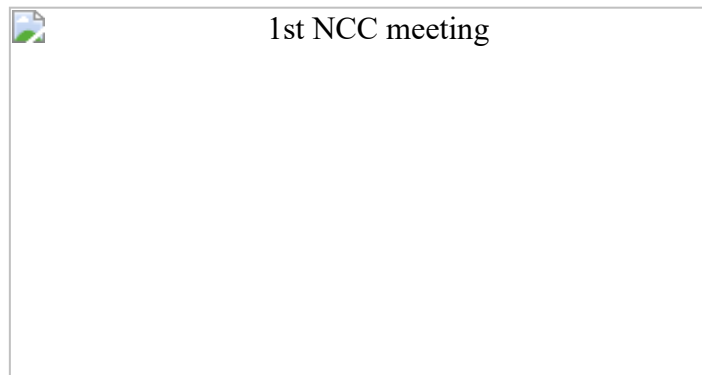


Photo by Joe Levinson, used by permission

The first meeting of the NCC was held at the Fox Creek Nature Center in [Gallupville, NY](#) on 10-April-1999. First and foremost was the announcement of officers and trustees. The Officers are: President -- Bob Addis (HHG), Vice President -- Peter Haberland (MET), and Treasurer -- Joe Levinson (HHG). The Secretary position is vacant. The Trustees are: Vince Kappler (NNJG), Dana Atwood (NFG) (who was proxied by Jim Harbison), Susan Loden from the Town of Wright, Steve McLuckie (SCAG), Kevin O'Classen (VCA), and Michael Warner (HHG).



Several of the board members at the last NCC meeting. From left to right: Joe Levinson, Bill Folsom (proxy for Peter Haberland), Bob Addis, Emily Davis Mobley (acting Secretary), Mike Warner, Vince Kappler, Kevin O'Classen and Steve McLuckie. Photo by Christa Hay.

The officer's will remain in place until the 2000 annual meeting where there will be an election by the trustees then and annually thereafter. The trustees terms were determined by random drawing with Atwood serving 1 yr., Kappler serving 3 years, Loden serving 1 year, McLuckie serving 2 years, O'Classen serving 2 years, and Warner serving 3 years. Following each of their terms, the general membership will hold an election.

The next order of business was the announcement of the committee chairs. Chuck Porter will be the chair of Acquisitions. Rane Curl will be the chair of the Bylaws Committee. Larry Southam will be the chair of the Finance and Investments Committee. Mike Warner and Thom Engel will be co-chairs of the Land Trusts Liaison Committee. Mike Warner and Emily Davis Mobley will be co-chairs of the Office Committee. Thom Engel and Emily Davis Mobley will be co-chairs of the Preserves Committee. Kevin O'Classen will be chair of the Publications committee with Tom Rider as the newsletter editor, Christa Hay as the newsletter publisher and Bill Folsom as the website director. A draft of the website can be found at <http://www.caves.org/member/ncc>. Larry

Davis will be chair of the Science Coordinator Committee. The Nominating, Legal, Fund-Raising, and Membership positions are still vacant and need volunteers.

The next meeting of the NCC will be held at the Fox Creek Nature Center in [Gallupville, NY](#) on June 26th at 1PM.

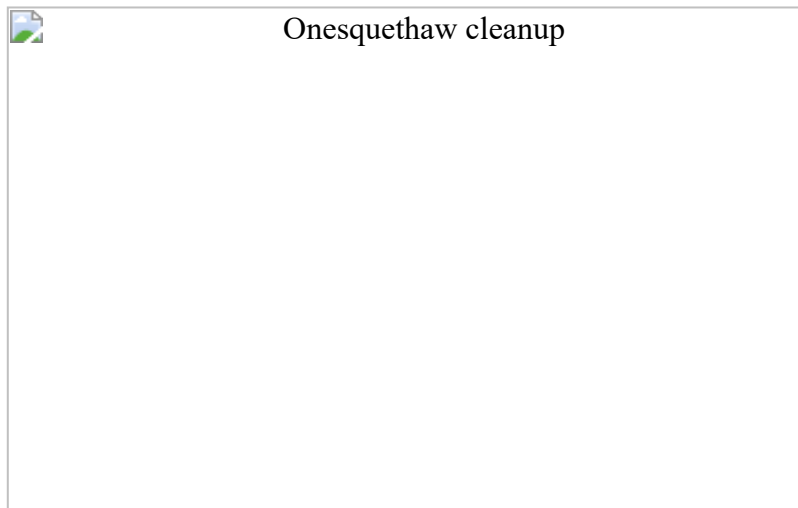
Knox Cave Preserve

The [Northeast Diggers](#) dug into a new cave on the Knox Property. For several weeks now they've been working at New Sink and with their usual skill they broke into a 50-ft. dome and several hundred feet of passage. The new cave is called Crossbones Cave. If you'd like to help out on the dig, contact [Tom Barton](#).

In the near future, an Eagle Scout candidate will be doing his Eagle Scout project on the Knox property. The project involves trail improvement as well as providing a narrative brochure for the property.

Onesquethaw Cave Preserve

There was a clean up of the Onesquethaw Cave Preserve on Saturday, May 8th. Members of the Helderberg Hudson Grotto and the Albany County Land Conservancy helped out. A new trail was cut into the sinkhole. Visitors should use this trail and not the old access. The old danger signs were removed and replaced with new posted signs. Much debris was removed including the snow fence. Groups visiting the cave should bring a couple of trash bags and spend a few minutes picking up trash on the south side of the sink.



Christa Hay at the entrance of Onesquethaw Cave prior to the cleanup. Photo by Bob Addis.

Endangered Caves List

by [Chuck Porter](#)

At the April 10th NCC meeting I was appointed chair of the cave acquisition committee and charged with generating a list of caves for possible acquisition. As Pete Johnson wrote in the BOC Newsletter, this should be a "prioritized list of caves that are endangered in one way or another. They can be in danger of being physically closed (blasted shut), closed by decree (posted), or endangered (e.g., hydrology, biota) by nearby development. Also to be considered are caves that the landowner wants to get rid of."

Since the meeting there have been several developments along these lines. First, two landowners have approached us about caves they are interested in transferring to the NCC - one in New Jersey and another in Albany County, NY. Each cave meets one or more of the criteria above. Whether we will be able to accept these properties will also depend on the speed with which our lawyer handles the NCC's application for 501(c)3 tax-exempt status.

I've asked several committee members and others for preliminary nominations to this list of endangered caves the NCC should go after, and here are some of their suggestions:

- Barytes Cave (Thom Engel) - Callanan Industries, the owner, has a valid NYS mining permit that would allow them to quarry away the remaining limestone peninsula in which the cave lies.
- Browns Depression (Bill Folsom, Tim Marlett) - for obvious reasons, four miles of cave would be an excellent acquisition.
- Church and Wagonwheel Caves (Thom Engel) - closed since the early 90's, the owner would like to see the caves and surface protected. Hydrologically significant. One of two main sources for Pitcher Farm Spring, the source of Fox Creek.
- Devil's Den (Jonah Spivak).
- Eldon French Cave (Jim Moore) - obviously close to - or at the top - of the list of caves in Massachusetts that should be considered, simply for the reason of it's "value" as a cave, in combination with access problems.
- Everetts Cave (Jonah Spivak, Pete Johnson) - is not holding up well to the traffic, nor is there any responsible or natural access control most of the year. Part-year access to rear of cave is slowly deteriorating that decorated area.
- Jack Patricks Cave (Tom Rider) -- attractive resurgence to a possible significant cave system.
- Joober Hole (Emily Davis Mobley) - significant recharge for water supplies and excellent karst teaching resource.
- Kent Cave (Jonah Spivak).
- Lodens Sink (Thom Engel, Tony Hopkins) - a significant karst feature, could end up being an entrance to the Thunder Hole / Loden / Bogardus system.
- Mitchells Cave (Roland Vinyard) - may be able to talk to the owner, a professional in Schenectady, about a tax write-off donation or easement.
- Pompeys Cave (Bill Folsom) - endangered by garbage dumping, stream contains carp, longest cave in Ulster County.
- Purgatory Karst (Jonah Spivak, Kevin O'Classen, Pete Johnson).
- Single X (Emily Davis Mobley) - lengthy, water supply, speleothems.
- Everetts Cave, Bennington, Vt. (Pete Johnson) - part-year access to rear of cave is slowly deteriorating that decorated area.
- Red Mountain Pit (Jonah Spivak, Kevin O'Classen, Pete Johnson).
- Skull Cave (Thom Engel) - closed by unpleasant owners who may be using the entrance for disposal. Access and an elimination of dumping threat would be a plus.
- South Bethlehem Cave (Thom Engel) - Yet more caves owned by Callanan Industries. There are rumors that they may wish to unload the cave. Throw in Mayos and Brads Caves (both filled in), Waterfall Pit, and two springs and you could have a nice little preserve.

So there are a few ideas to get things started. Please let me know the caves you think we should be seeking to acquire and protect, along with brief reasons why those particular caves are endangered. You don't need to send in a complete ordered list. My job is to put that together. But please try to name at least one or two caves - that will be a great help. I need your input so this will be a balanced and comprehensive list of caves, and not just my favorites.

Help Protect Movile Cave in Romania

The following message was received from [Art Palmer](#)...

Researchers from the "E. Racovitza" Speleological Institute in Bucharest, Romania have recently asked the committee of custodians responsible for the protection of Movile Cave to grant access into Movile Cave to a team of surveyors. A precise map of the cave is needed to dig a shaft that will intercept the remote air-bells in Movile Cave.

The decision to dig this shaft was taken unilaterally, without consulting the researchers involved in the study of this unique ecosystem. It is our responsibility as custodians of Movile Cave, to point out that a shaft intercepting the remote air-bells is likely to destroy vast sections of the unique chemoautotrophically based groundwater ecosystem for which Movile Cave represents a window of access.

Immense efforts are being made all over the world to protect caves that have been isolated from the surface for extended periods of time, and to minimize the human impact while exploring and while performing scientific investigations. It is a surprise that the Romanian Cave Research Institute is planning to do the opposite!

We are very concerned and all we want is to save this unique ecosystem. Please help us! We would appreciate if you could send a letter to the Speleological Institute and to the Romanian Academy of Sciences (see addresses below) asking them not to dig the shaft which will destroy one of the most interesting subterranean ecosystems in the world.

Signed by the custodians of Movile Cave:

Serban Sarbu, Ph.D., University of Cincinnati and G.E.S.S. -- Romania
Radu Popa, Ph.D., University of Cincinnati and G.E.S.S. -- Romania
Cristian Lascu, "E. Racovitza" Speleological Institute, Bucharest and G.E.S.S. -- Romania
and Dumitru Pegulescu, "E. Racovitza" Speleological Institute, Bucharest and G.E.S.S. -- Romania

Addresses:

E. Racovitza" Speleological Institute
Att: Acad. Dr. Costin Radulescu, Director
Str Frumoasa 11
Bucuresti 78114, Romania

Romanian Academy of Sciences
Att: Acad. Prof. Dr. Nicolae Botnariuc, Head of the Biology Section
Calea Victoriei - sector 1
Bucuresti, Romania

For more information regarding this unique chemoautotrophically based groundwater ecosystem, please consult: <http://www.geocities.com/RainForest/Vines/5771>

Treasurer's Report from Joe Levinson

As of 27-May-1999 the NCC account had \$1856.11. In addition, the National Speleological Foundation general fund is holding over \$5500 for us.

The Northeastern Cave Conservancy News is published quarterly by the Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. The Northeastern Cave Conservancy promotes the study and preservation of speleologically significant properties in the Northeastern United States. Annual membership is \$15 (Regular), \$5 add'l. (Family), \$10 (student), \$50 (Benefactor), and \$100 (Institutional). All checks made payable and sent to:

The Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc.
P.O. Box 254
Schoharie, NY 12157