

Next Meeting

Saturday, June 8th, 2002, 2PM
at the Schoharie Cabin

Notes from the Last Meeting

- 1) Bob Addis, Bill Folsom, Joe Levinson, Christa Hay, Jon Allison, Craig Cantello, Vince Kappler, Ed Lucas, Paul Murphy, and Tom Rider were in attendance.
- 2) We raised a total \$15,353.77 towards the purchase of the Sellecks Karst Preserve. The final cost of the purchase was \$13,600.33. It was voted to return \$2000 to the NSS Cave Acquisition Fund due to the great fund raising and donation efforts.
- 3) Christa Hay reported that advertising for the 2002 NSS Convention program has been submitted. She will be updating the brochure and the display.
- 4) Chuck Porter revised the draft agreement for South Bethlehem Cave based on comments received and discussions from the last Executive Committee meeting. The revised agreement was sent back to Callahan.
- 5) The official name of Sellecks is the Sellecks Karst Preserve (even though we have been calling it that we had to wait until we owned it to officially vote on the name)
- 6) Jon Allison was voted as the Manager of the Sellecks Karst Preserve.
- 7) Money was allocated to purchase materials for a changing station and parking lot at Onesquethaw Cave.
- 8) Money was allocated to purchase NCC lanyards to be sold.
- 9) We are very close to an online donation / membership payment format. See discussion later in the newsletter.

NCC Store

The NCC now has lanyards available for \$4 ea. The lanyards say "NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY" in light blue letters on a black background. They're great for hanging a key around your neck, a badge at caving events or work, etc. To my knowledge, these are the first caving-related lanyards out there!

And don't forget our other promotional items... NCC stickers are available for \$2 ea. or free with a \$50 donation and NCC t-shirts are available in tan or light blue for \$12 ea (M to XL) and \$14 ea (XXL and larger). Please send check payable to: The Northeastern Cave Conservancy, P.O. Box 254, Schoharie, N.Y. 12157.

Over 50% of our membership expires in July so check your expiration date and renew your memberships today!

Network for Good

by Bill Folsom

I found an interesting alternative to the NCC becoming a credit card merchant online, Networkforgood.org. I believe this is a legitimate organization, supported by some of our favorite corporate entities. From their website:

About Network for Good

Network for Good, an independent, 501(c)(3) organization, was founded by the AOL Time Warner Foundation and AOL, Inc.; the Cisco Foundation and Cisco Systems, Inc.; and Yahoo! Inc., in partnership with over 20 nonprofit foundations and associations who share the desire to foster the informed use of the Internet for civic participation and philanthropy. The website aggregates content and resources from these leaders, organizes them and makes them available in one comprehensive, easy-to-use destination, which also helps to expand the reach, effectiveness and pervasiveness of all of Network for Good's nonprofit partners.

Network for Good is the first coalition of its kind to help nonprofit organizations become more effective and efficient. Network for Good will help them further their mission by integrating the full power of the online medium into their own operations such as fundraising, recruitment and advocacy. This new ePhilanthropy portal also incorporates many of the tools and resources of Helping.org, which pioneered online giving and volunteering.

- Charities receive 100% of the donations.
- Non-profits pay no fees or costs.

- Donors receive records of contributions for tax purposes.

NCC at NRO *by Christa Hay*

Once again the NCC put on a great meal - if I do say so myself. Emily Davis and myself co-chaired the event and even with the snow the NCC came out ahead. The meal consisted of sausage (hot or sweet) with peppers and onions, veggie burger, choice of potato or macaroni salad, green salad, brownie and lemonade. I think this meal filled up most people and if not there was the ability to purchase extra sausages and brownies.

The weather was not very cooperative which I believe led to the fact that we did not sell all the meals. But with good teamwork we were able to track down the best prices on the food items. It took some running around but in the end this helped a lot with the final profit. We also received a \$25 gift certificate from Price Chopper for the NCC (thanks to the Office Committee) which was used towards the meal. The final profit on the meal was \$354.29 - not bad for a barbecue on a snowy day.

During the day Bob Addis led a morning and afternoon group on a tour of the Sellecks Karst Preserve. A few people went into Sellecks Cave but for the most part it was an above ground tour.

The auction was a fun time with Bob Addis as the auctioneer looking good in his cowboy hat. Oh! Sorry I mean a Stetson, I guess you are never to call a Stetson a cowboy hat. Items ranged from small items like drink bottles all the way up to a cow skull! The total monies from the auction totaled \$391.50.

The NCC display was set up with Speleobooks. Between selling memberships, lanyards, decals and donations the NCC received \$295.00. And one happy person - John Evans won the 50/50, his share being \$99.50. The final tally for the weekend was \$1140.29!

Thanks to everyone that helped on all these activities, donated goods for the auction and spent/donated money!

List of helpers - sorry if I missed anyone. I had a participation sign up sheet but not sure if everyone got on it. If your name is not here contact me and I will do a revised list.

Robin Strashun, Bill Folsom, Anne Tocker, Tom Rider, Steve Carley, Deb Dudek, Vince Kappler, Kevin Flanagan, Mike Warner, Clare Anderson, Chuck Porter, Isabel Velez, Ian Baren Patty (last name?).

Other Newsworthy Items?

- Courtesy of Karst Sports, the NCC gets 5% of all sales via the following link: <http://st18.yahoo.com/cgi-bin/clink?karst+nVVjvT+index.html>
- Watch the NCC newsletter & website for future announcements of events. In particular, in the summer we will do more cleanup at the Levy's Cave sinkhole as a continuation of the May 4 start.
- A note of thanks also goes out to the Outing Clubs of Syracuse & RPI for their excellent trail building at Sellecks this spring. Thanks are also due to Aaron Jarvis and his employer, Allegheny Energy. Aaron really started the Levy's cleanup idea and got several generous material donations from his employer to assist in trash collection. This is all from a member who lives 600 miles away in WV!

Cave Conservancies Round Table *[from <http://www.caves.org/committee/ccc/>]*

The Fifth Annual Cave Conservancy Round-table will be held at the 2002 NSS Convention in Camden Maine on Wednesday, June 26, 2002 from 2PM to 5PM.

The session will have three parts:

The appointed representative from each conservancy may make a short presentation on one or two successes they have had related to cave management or cave conservancy administration. Presentations will be limited to seven minutes for each representative.

Attendees may ask representatives for suggestions on solving specific cave conservancy problems.

A general discussion of cave conservancies will conclude the session. This meeting is primarily a networking session for people interested in cave management and cave conservancies.

Conservancy Representatives:

- Butler Cave Conservation Society and Perkins Cave Conservation and Management Society - John Wilson
- Indiana Karst Conservancy - Keith Dunlap
- Great Saltpetre Cave Preserve - Bob Yuellig
- Northeastern Cave Conservancy - Bob Addis
- Southeastern Cave Conservancy - Diane Cousineau
- Texas Cave Management Association - Linda Palit
- Mid-Atlantic Karst Conservancy - Tom Metzgar

Saving and Managing Cave Lands with Nonprofit Conservancies

[from <http://www.caves.org/committee/ccc/>]

The Saving and Managing Cave Lands with Nonprofit Conservancies will be held at the 2002 NSS Convention in Camden Maine on Wednesday, June 26, 2002 from 9AM to 12PM.

The schedule is as follows:

- 9:00 a.m. - Welcome
- 9:10 a.m. - Corporate Standards and Practices of the Land Trust Alliance; Rane Curl
- 9:45 a.m. - Volunteers and Conservation: A Valuable Partnership; Heather Garland and Nancy Sferra
- 10:20 a.m. - TBA
- 10:55 a.m. - Agencies as Partners in Karst Conservation; Kriste Lindberg; Bob Vandeventer.
- 11:30 a.m. - Techniques for Leveraging Effectiveness of Cave Conservancies; John Wilson.

Corporate Standards and Practices of the Land Trust Alliance; Rane Curl, Michigan Karst Conservancy and Michigan Natural Areas Council -

Incorporated cave and karst conservancies arose from the desire of cavers and cave scientists to ensure access to caves and to protect the natural features of caves. They have the knowledge and enthusiasm necessary to set reasonable protective policies for management of caves owned, leased or only managed. But they seldom start with knowledge and experience in incorporating and managing a non-profit, charitable, corporation. The foremost source of support and guidance in those respects is the Land Trust Alliance (LTA, www.lta.org), an umbrella organization for over 1,200 conservancies nationwide. In order to try to ensure a high standard of corporate responsibility and management, which helps maintain corporate health, effectiveness and reputations of land trusts everywhere, LTA recommends the adoption of corporate Standards and Practices (S&P). LTA S&Ps concern such topics as incorporation, board development and board member training, financial and asset management, fundraising, training and recognizing volunteers, and much more.

Volunteers and Conservation: A Valuable Partnership; Heather Garland, Cave Program Coordinator, The Nature Conservancy of Tennessee and Nancy Sferra, Director of Science and Stewardship, The Nature Conservancy of Maine -

Non-profit conservation organizations are often faced with financial limitations when planning and implementing protection projects. Volunteer help is essential to the success of conservation efforts, often "making or breaking" a project. The Nature Conservancy has long relied on volunteers for many functions, including cave and karst protection projects. In a general capacity, volunteers routinely offer help with office and fundraising event functions. Volunteer groups, such as boy or girl scouts and corporate volunteer programs, are critical to larger projects. These activities might include trail development and maintenance at preserves, removing exotic plants, or reforesting riparian areas. In Tennessee, volunteers from the caving community have given countless hours in a variety of ways to support conservation of the state's magnificent cave resources. Projects such as sinkhole and cave clean-ups and entrance barrier construction require much volunteer labor. These projects can be incredibly time-consuming, financially draining, and physically exhausting; and would be virtually impossible to accomplish without the many members of Tennessee's caving community volunteering their time. In addition, the caving community in Tennessee also provides assistance with both the management of biologically significant caves and biological surveys at these sites. Partnerships between volunteer groups and The Nature Conservancy play an important role in the conservation of caves.

Agencies as Partners in Karst Conservation; Kriste Lindberg and Bob, Vandeventer, Indiana Karst Conservancy -

Various agencies can be deployed to assist you in cave and karst conservation. They range from government organizations to a variety of other non-profits, land trusts, etc. The IKC currently works with all three and more and they have been instrumental in helping us with our mission - each one bringing a new angle and more individuals to draw from, usually creating a win/win situation for all. For example, we have been working with various federal, state, municipal, and private organizations to help protect karstlands and their occupants, further our education and outreach efforts, network and reduce redundancy, and so on. It is especially timely now as there are so many threats to our underground resources. For example, we are working on a collaboration between city and county government to work on education, drainage, and ordinance issues. Our caves and karst could use the help!

Techniques for Leveraging Effectiveness of Cave Conservancies; John Wilson, Chair NSS Cave Conservancies Committee -

The Conservancies Committee serves as a means for cave conservancies to access NSS services and NSS member expertise. The NSS can provide information that is useful to cave managers and assist conservancies as needed. It encourages all cave conservancies and other groups responsibly managing caves to affiliate with the NSS. Cave conservancies are classified into seven types depending on their structure and their relationship with the NSS. The model for encouraging small and new cave conservancies uses attribution psychology and other techniques to help cave conservationists leverage their effectiveness.

Snail Shell Cave

by Bill Putnam

Chairman, SCCi Snail Shell Task Force

Member of the Board, SCCi

putnam@scci.org

We are pleased to announce that the Southeastern Cave Conservancy Inc. has completed its purchase of Snail Shell Cave and 88 acres of surrounding karst land and cedar glade near Murfreesboro, Tennessee. The \$132,000 purchase was closed earlier this week, marking the successful conclusion of an effort that began in 1999.

Snail Shell Cave is one of the most biologically significant cave sites in the Southeastern United States. In 1999, the cave was named one of the Top Ten Most Endangered Karst Communities by the Karst Waters Institute following its nomination by The Nature Conservancy of Tennessee. Primary threats to the cave include trespassing and vandalism, logging, and factors related to the encroaching sprawl and development from the nearby city of Murfreesboro.

Snail Shell is the longest continuous cave in the Tennessee Central Basin region, with more than 9 miles of surveyed passages. It is part of a system of caves comprising more than 13 miles of known passages. The main entrance, which is located on the SCCi property, is a huge sink about 100 feet wide and 200 feet long. The sink is a microhabitat containing an extraordinary number of rare and endangered plant and animal species.

Snail Shell Cave is an important natural resource. It is the intention of the SCCi that it be available to responsible and qualified individuals for exploration, recreation, education, and scientific study, and that SCCi and NSS members, area residents, and members of the caving and scientific communities interact and work together within the larger community of speleology to preserve, enjoy, study, and protect the cave and its ecosystem.

The SCCi Snail Shell Cave Preserve is being managed according to a comprehensive management plan developed by the Snail Shell Working Group and approved by the SCCi Board at its January meeting in Chattanooga. The Working Group, which had more than 30 participants, was comprised of cavers, conservationists, scientists, and land managers experienced in cave and karst management issues. Key support and assistance were provided by The Nature Conservancy and the State of Tennessee.

Much of the development of the management plan occurred during a three-month period of discussion and interaction facilitated by an email list and a special Snail Shell web page on the SCCi internet server. The group then held an open meeting in Murfreesboro to review and consolidate several draft proposals into a final draft plan which was submitted to the SCCi Board for approval.

At its January 26, 2002 meeting, the SCCi Board approved the proposed plan and established the Snail Shell Preserve Management Committee to implement the plan and manage the preserve. Bob Biddix was appointed Chairman of the management committee.

Management of the cave and the surface area of the preserve is governed by the management plan, which can be found on the SCCi web site at

www.scci.org/preserves/snailshell. For information or access arrangements, contact the management committee at snailshell@scci.org.

Due to a history of abuse of the cave and preserve, and to preserve good relations with our neighbors, the management plan requires advance notification before visiting the cave, and requires that at least one member of any group entering the cave be an SCCi or NSS member. Access is via a gated drive and the only designated parking area is inside the gate. The combination will be provided to visitors when they contact the management committee as required by the plan.

The SCCi is proud of its newest acquisition, and is counting on the help and support of the caving community in meeting the stewardship responsibilities that come with ownership of this important cave system. We would like to express our deepest appreciation to all the people who have helped with this acquisition. They are too numerous to name here, but we could not have succeeded without their faith and support.

Both the Snail Shell purchase and the recent Valhalla purchase have been in the works for more than two years. Acquisitions like

these are often complex, involving many months of research, negotiation, legal work, fundraising, and financial analysis. Most of this work must be done discreetly and quietly behind the scenes, and can not be reported at grotto meetings, on TAG-Net, or in newsletters until the acquisition is completed.

The SCCi aggressively pursues the acquisition of significant caves throughout the southeast, and has a well-defined mission and plan for cave protection and management. Cave acquisition is our business. Your support, both financial and through volunteer efforts, makes it possible for cavers to acquire, manage, protect, and enjoy southeastern caves.

The SCCi acquisitions committee is currently involved in more than a dozen other pending or potential cave acquisition projects. Our main limitation in pursuing these projects is financial - we have to be sure we can pay for them. We have at present a debt load of more than \$230,000, which we service through monthly mortgage payments. Unless we can raise more money, we can not buy more caves until we reduce or pay off that debt. The cold hard truth is that the Conservancy's greatest need is financial, and that you can best help the Conservancy acquire caves by contributing according to your means and ability.

About 60% to 70% of the money that we use to make our mortgage payments comes from monthly donations by SCCi Sustaining Members. The rest is raised through the SCCi booth at caving events, or by special grants from individuals or organizations.

Please consider joining us as a Sustaining Member, and helping us pay for the caves we all love and enjoy, so that they will be protected forever. For as little as \$10 a month you can be a cave owner. For information on SCCi Sustaining Membership, see our web page at www.scci.org/sustaining or contact Sustaining Membership manager Bill Stringfellow at sustaining@scci.org. Regular memberships are also available for \$15 per year. See www.scci.org/membership.html for details.

Once again, we thank you for your support. We look forward to making more exciting announcements very soon.

Sellecks Clean Up *by Christa Hay*

The weather was perfect for the clean up day at Sellecks. Tasks included marking out the parking area, hanging signs for the caves and cleaning the garbage out of the sink hole by Levys. This part of the sink hole is not actually on the Sellecks Karst Preserve property but it has been used as a farm dump for many years and the garbage does end up in and around the cave.

Aaron Jarvis and family, Sarah and Austin came up from West Virginia to help. Aaron's employer, Allegheny Energy, donated large, heavy-duty garbage bags and leather work gloves for the clean up. These were greatly appreciated, especially the gloves. We were able to get a good start on the sinkhole but there is more to do. Future clean up dates will be scheduled. And unfortunately no one found any Spanish Armor - so far that is.

The parking lot was out lined with poles donated by Al Lehman. These were cut to size and placed in the parking area. The cave signs (made by Mike Chu of RPI) were hung near the caves and some minimal trail clearing was done. The outing clubs of RPI and Syracuse have done a wonderful job on trail building. Everyone should get out to the Preserve if even to just take a walk along the trail.

Thanks go to all the workers that day: Jon Allison, Joan Gitnick, Bob Addis, Christa Hay, Paul Murphy, Al Lehman, Chuck Porter, Aaron Jarvis, Sarah Jarvis and son Austin. We also had some special "helpers". Two of the Rogers dogs stayed with us all day long, the little gray mop and the large black dog. They also enjoyed having a picnic with us after the work was done.

Austin hard at work. Photo by Christa Hay.