

Northeastern Cave Conservancy News



The Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. (NCC) is a not-for-profit corporation committed to the conservation, study, management, and acquisition of caves and karst areas having significant geological, hydrological, biological, recreational, historical or aesthetic features. To these ends, the NCC combines the resources and expertise of affiliated cave explorers, educators, scientists, landowners, and conservation officials.

Next Board Meeting

Sunday, December 5th, 2004, 10:00AM
at Howe Caverns, Cobleskill, NY

Notes from the Board Last Meeting

- 1) Clarksville Fundraising team of Alan Traino and Bill Folsom worked on getting pledges of \$48,360 and have so far received \$45,000 - Way to go guys!
- 2) The management plan for Ella Armstrong was approved. Thanks to Ed Lucas for a good first time shot at writing management plans!
- 3) Joe Armstrong was voted in as the Manager of the Ella Armstrong Cave Preserve.
- 4) Clarksville Cave Preserve now has a management team consisting of Mike Chu, Thom Engel and Chuck Porter. It was decided that since Clarksville has so many visitors, a team that is always in the area would be the best for Clarksville. Thanks to Mike Warner who was the Proposed Manager in getting us to this point.
- 5) Thanks to Mike Bourgeois for his professional licensed survey of the Ella Armstrong property. Helped to save the NCC a survey fee and thanks to Chuck Porter for helping.
- 6) The NCC would be willing to manage Surprise/Mystery Cave, Sullivan County NY on behalf of the NYS DEC if requested.
- 7) The coin drop at Howe Caverns has brought in over \$1000 for the 2 summer months since it was installed. Thanks to Jay Siemion and Jeff DeGroff for rolling all those

coins and to Howe Caverns for allowing the NCC to have the coin drop.

Next Executive Committee Meeting

Saturday, November 14th, 2004, 11:00AM
at, Kerhonkson, NY

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Deadline for next issue – 1/31/2005

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<p>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 addtl. (Family), \$10 (student), \$50 (Benefactor), and \$100 (Institutional). All checks made payable and sent to:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. P.O. Box 254 Schoharie, N.Y. 12157</p> <p style="text-align: center;">www.caves.org/conservancy/ncc/</p>		

Three New Cave Properties

By Jon Allison

The NCC has been extremely busy since the last newsletter went out! We closed on the 11 acre parcel containing the Ward Entrance to Clarksville on 9/23/2004. Three weeks later the Albany County legislature voted to convey the 0.6 acre parcel containing the Gregory Entrance to Clarksville to the NCC free of charge. The official closing for this piece of land should be in the next few weeks. Finally, only a week after the Albany County vote, the NCC closed on a 1 acre parcel in Knox containing the entrance to Ella Armstrong Cave on October 21st.

With these three major projects completed, the NCC needs to set its sights on what our next projects will be. See Chuck Porter's article for more on the future.

Cave Conservancy Buys New York State's Most Popular "Wild" Cave

Press Release

(Clarksville, NY – October 7, 2004) The Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. (NCC) has purchased 11 acres of land containing Clarksville Cave. This purchase is in keeping with the NCC's mission to protect caves, underground wilderness, and to provide a safe and environmentally educational experience to the many who visit the cave.

Clarksville cave was owned by the Alberts-McNab family for over 50 years, who faithfully maintained the long tradition of keeping the cave open to the public since it was discovered in the early 1800's. Thousands now visit Clarksville Cave each year. With liability concerns growing the owners approached the NCC about buying the cave. Bob Addis, President of the NCC, stated that "the NCC will continue to allow visitation, while emphasizing caving safety and protection of these unique underground resources and still have an enjoyable trip" To help with this, the NCC will post trained volunteers on the property during peak visitation hours.

In conjunction with the purchase, the Albany County Legislature will vote in October to turn over the Gregory Entrance and about 0.6 acres

surrounding it to the NCC. The Gregory Entrance is one of three entrances to Clarksville Cave. The County acquired the land 25 years ago and it had been used by the Onesquethaw Fire Department to fill fire trucks. With the advent of a piped water system in Clarksville in recent years, this fluctuating source of water had been abandoned. "The NCC is a natural protector of this cave entrance" says Addis. "Also by controlling several acres in the watershed, the NCC can improve the water quality of the stream flowing through Clarksville Cave and coming out the Gregory Entrance".

The NCC is a nonprofit organization which owns and manages several cave preserves in the state of New York and has been operating since 1978. "We are in the process of obtaining nonprofit corporate status in Vermont and are also considering other caves throughout the Northeast as the need for cave conservation increases", says Addis.

To welcome the community the NCC is hosting Clarksville Cave Community Day on October 16, 2004 from 10:00 am until 4:00 pm. Our volunteers will be there to answer questions and serve light refreshments.

Venture Crew 105 Donates towards Clarksville Cave

By Jim Hasse

"Venture Crew 105 has enjoyed and benefited from our experiences in Clarksville Cave over the years and would like to support your efforts to preserve the resource. Please accept the enclosed check for \$500 towards the purchase and ongoing operation of the cave.

The crew teamed up with Boy Scout Troop 1 for a clean up of Cayuta Creek in Bradford County last fall, collection more than 7 tons of trash and 122 tires. The project was supported by a state grant and the \$500 represents the crew's portion of that grant, plus additional proceeds from a garage sale held by the crew this spring.

A letter from Earth Day in Troy

Letter from Alice Hallaran

I read online yesterday the NCC was trying to raise the funds to buy Wards & Gregory's Caves. I was delighted. I have run an outdoor program

at Westover School for over 30 years and have made good use of these two caves in this time. You all are doing great work and now I'm inspired to pick up even more trash outside the cave area than in the past! Thanks for all your hard work-this will only help a little in the big picture but here it is!!

The Gregory Entrance

By Jon Allison

The NCC has been pursuing the prospect of obtaining the small parcel of land that contains the Gregory Entrance of the Clarksville Cave system for about a year now. The 0.6 acre parcel has been owned by Albany County since the late 1960's when it was claimed for back taxes. The county recognized the significance of the property and kept it from the public auctions over the years, but lacked a method of preserving and managing the land.

In addition to the Gregory Entrance, the property also contains the Osborne Entrance. This is the small hole just downstream of the Gregory Entrance where the water flows from in the spring or after heavy rains. The connection from Osborne to the rest of the cave is submerged and was dove by John Schweyen back in 1985. Aside from the entrances, the property sports a significant accumulation of trash which needs to be cleaned up.

When I approached the county on behalf of the NCC, they were receptive to the idea of transferring the property to the NCC. To ensure the property remained protected for the long term, the county set a condition that the NCC would give a conservation easement on the property to the local land conservancy. This would guarantee that the property could not be developed in the event that the NCC ever lost control of the property in the future.

Together Mark Fitzsimmons from Albany County, Dan Driscoll from the Albany County Land Conservancy, and myself developed an easement which recognized the significance of the property and ensured its long term protection. This easement will likely be the model for future cave properties.

What Next?

By Chuck Porter

Having just acquired the Clarksville, Gregory and Ella Armstrong properties, the NCC is now looking for additional caves to protect. We still have some money left in the bank and can expect substantial donations to come in from Clarksville visitors in the future. As Acquisitions Chair I'll continue to do what I can to find additional caves to obtain, but can't do it all myself. I'm not able to get to more distant locations such as northern Vermont, downstate NY, etc. often enough to be very effective at landing new preserves there. In fact, negotiations for the cave properties we now have or are working on were instigated by NCC members like Bob Addis, Thom Engel, Jon Allison, Roland Vinyard, Emily Davis and others.

When I first took over as Acquisitions Chair five years ago I attempted to set up a committee with members responsible for different areas of the Northeast but no one seemed to want to bother with such a formal structure. So it's up to all individual NCC members to keep an eye out for desirable cave acquisitions and start the ball rolling. Talk with the landowners at your favorite caves and pass on the ideas below to them, and please keep me informed of your results. There are lots of caves worthy of NCC protection and together we can provide a lasting legacy for northeastern caving.

Suggestions for Landowners about Why the NCC Should Acquire Their Cave:

The land will remain wild and no one will build on it. It will remain aesthetically pleasing and water supplies, wildlife, etc. will benefit. The owner will have the satisfaction of knowing a unique natural resource has been saved for future generations. (A cave preserve could be named after a donor.)

The owner will no longer face potential liability problems and special insurance surcharges.

If the entrance is a hazard, he no longer needs to be bothered with building and maintaining fences and gates, posting the property, etc.

The NCC will assume responsibility for

managing access. The owner need no longer be bothered with this.

His assessment may be reduced, thus lowering property taxes.

Income tax benefits. The NCC is a 501(c)(3) organization. Assuming the owner is in the 25% tax bracket, each thousand dollars of appraised value of donated property will reduce his federal income tax by \$250. An additional point is that if he sells the property he'll have to pay income taxes -- both federal and state -- at his bracket rate on whatever he gets for it. So selling -- say to the NCC -- isn't all that good a deal. The NCC would, subject to Board of Trustees approval of purchasing the property, pay all transfer fees (survey and title, legal expenses, etc.).

Let's say a 25% bracket cave owner sells a property to the NCC for \$10,000. After federal taxes he gets \$7500. If he donates the property he gets \$2500 off his federal income tax. The donation actually costs him less than \$5000 (\$7500 minus \$2500 minus his state income tax on the sale plus an appraiser's fee). So the difference between donating and selling can start to get insignificant, especially for those in the higher tax brackets. (The landowner has to pay for his appraisal; we are forbidden to provide this since it would be a conflict of interest.)

In all cases, the owner should consult with his own tax advisor on these matters. The above examples are just for illustration.

NCKMS 2005

The web page for the National Cave and Karst Management Symposium is up.

The NCC is the host and a co-sponsor. Email me if you have any questions, want to volunteer for a staff assignment or to help in any way.

<http://www.nckms.org/2005/>

Mike Warner mike@speleobooks.com
2005 NCKMS Chair

October 31 - November 4, 2005 Albany, NY

Clarksville Cave Donors

Compiled by Alan Traino and Bill Folsom

The NCC would like to extend its thanks to the many individuals and groups who contributed to the purchase of Clarksville Cave.

\$1-99

Bald Eagle Grotto
 Steve Buer
 Gordon Burritt
 Carl Carmony
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 Nigel Dyson-Hudson
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 Mike Warner
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 Mountain Workshop
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 Jonah Spivak & Elizabeth Granger
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 Jack Middleton
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Syracuse Outing Club
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Amy & Aaron Cox
Bob Matusik
Simeon Warner
Walter Young & Alice Knapp
Jane & Peter Youngbaer

\$500- 999

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Central Connecticut Grotto
Bill Folsom
Christa Hay
Intercollegiate Outing Club Association
Northern New Jersey Grotto
Art & Peg Palmer
Scott & Cynthia Stepenuck
Robin Strashun
Tom Rider
Vermont Cavers Association
Venture Crew 105

Pete Johnson Fund \$500- \$999

Steve Adams

\$1000 - \$4999

Thom Engel
Jim Harbison
MET Grotto
National Speleological Foundation
Northeastern Regional Organization
Brian & Bonnie Pease
Miriam Schwartz
Paul St. John
Alan Traino

Pete Johnson Fund \$1000- \$4999

Emily Davis and Mike Warner
Chuck Porter

\$5000 and over

Richard Blenz
Beverly Schwartz

Donations to the 2004 NCC Auctions

Carmen Abbott
Bob Addis
Alex Argiro
Norman Berg
John and Marge Brennan
Carl Carmony
Steve Martin Cohen
Bill Folsom
Steve Hazelton
Steve McLuckie
Natural Stone Bridge and Caverns
Brian Pease
Chuck Porter
Tom Rider
Scott Sala
Robert Simmons
Tonya Smothers
Alan Traino
Vermont Cavers Association
Mike Warner

Upcoming Events

NCC Exec. Committee Meeting

Saturday, November 14th, 2004, 11:00AM
Kerhonkson, NY

NCC Board Meeting

Sunday, December 5th, 2004, 10:00AM
at Howe Caverns, Cobleskill, NY



Inside Clarksville Cave –view of the bathtub from downstream, Photo by Mike Chu



The HHG holds a grotto meeting at the Clarksville Community Day on October 16th, Photo by Mike Warner.



Vince Kappler and Mike Chu work on the kiosk at Clarksville, Photo by Mike Warner



Chris Wicker enjoying Noisy Cave at the Fall NRO, Photo by Mike Chu