

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

Saturday, March 3th, 2007, 1:00PM
at the Gallupville House.

Notes from the Last Board Meeting

- 1) The recent NCC Board meeting took place on Sunday, December 10th at Howe Caverns at 10:00AM.
- 2) Bill Folsom was elected as Treasurer of the NCC.
- 3) Peter Youngbaer was elected as Vice President of the NCC.
- 4) Joe Armstrong reports that a culvert has been installed at Westfalls Spring.
- 5) Mike Bourgeois has completed the survey of the Gregory parcel at Clarksville. (Many thanks to Mike)
- 6) Joe Levinson was appointed chair of the Financial and Investments Committee.
- 7) Jay Siemion will be ordering generic NCC property boundary markers for the preserves.
- 8) A quote of \$7000/yr was received for basic liability and accident coverage insurance from Chubb. The motion to get basic liability was rejected due to the high price.
- 9) Motions were passed to increase the hourly rate for volunteer work to \$15.00 and that NCC follow the guidelines published in Appendix AN of the *NSS Board of Governors Manual* in calculating Volunteer Value for NCC projects.

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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:		
Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. P.O. Box 254 Schoharie, N.Y. 12157		
www.necaveconservancy.org		

Report on the interagency mock rescue practice at Clarksville Cave

by John Layton, Albany Sheriff's Department

Four Agencies were involved:

Albany County Sheriff's Department

Albany-Schoharie Cave Rescue Team

Onesquathaw Fire / Ambulance

Knox Fire Dept.

Total of 45 Participants

The exercise was very successful. Unified Command was established between Sgt. Dave Scoons (ACSD) and Onesquathaw Chief Fred Spaulding. 1st Sgt Gennaro Appell did planning (documentation, accountability, situation status, resource unit, etc.) Three search teams were established each consisting of a caver, firefighter and deputy. The teams were deployed to specific divisions established within the cave. Three of the four missing persons were quickly located and walked out. One required EMS assistance for hypoglycemia. This too was quickly determined and treated with candy bars and food. All three were interviewed to gather further information on the fourth person. The second search team was redeployed to assist the third team in their search for the fourth missing person. The fourth person was located. After discovering he was injured, they delivered a written request for appropriate equipment such as a Sked stretcher and an additional team for rescue assistance. This was done. Teams two, three and four worked together to transport the injured party out of the cave. During this evacuation they requested additional manpower, but it was denied by the facilitators due to the time.

This exercise began at 7:30PM and was completed by 10:00PM. If the injured person was an actual person instead of a dummy I believe it would have taken only slightly longer. One of the big things that we are critiqued on is speed of rescue. I believe they accomplished their tasks very quickly and in the case of the two lost person, much more quickly than expected. This was due to the command decision to divide the cave into three separate search areas with three separate teams. I believe the previous training and true events that most of these responders have done

truly showed in this drill. Every unusual event always has three stumbling blocks that occur. They are communication, coordination and cooperation. Except for one minor confusion in communication. It was text book. They used runners with notes when ever needed and portable radios to the firehouse/staging area and the other entrance location. Having persons staged at the firehouse was an excellent idea considering the extreme cold weather. Having a person at the other (Gregory) entrance not only offered a communication link, but established incident containment/perimeter. Coordination was smooth. Teams were developed with assignments and objectives determined prior to anyone leaving the firehouse. ICS was used. Over the past two years there has been a strong training and exercise push towards proper ICS use among emergency responders. This exercise positively reflected that training initiative. Cooperation was the best that I have ever seen among such a group of mixed modalities. I believe this was a direct reflection of these teams previous training efforts as well as the encouragement of the facilitators. We explained the benefits of having a variety of expertise and purposely grouped responders in a mixed group for them. This is how we always train for cave rescues in our area and we reap the benefits.

As for identified areas of improvement or comment. No one requested hot packs for any of the patients even though we reviewed their use prior to the exercise. It should be noted that other than the injured dummy, all others were quickly escorted out of the cave faster than hot packs could have been requested. It would have been a good idea for each search team to bring hot packs in with them from the start.

As for the minor communication confusion. When a note requesting candy bars for the patient suffering from hypoglycemia was given and complied, no one relayed the information that one of the missing persons was located. Command was never told nor did they ask if the candy was for a rescuer or patient. Other than that everything went very smoothly and I believe represented a fine example of how to conduct a cave rescue. We should be proud and confident to have such resources in our area.

Westfall's Spring Cave the re-opening

by Joe Armstrong

March 6, 7, 8—Steve Millett and I work about 10 hrs trying to open the cave. The drains are clogged and no water is flowing through them. The only drain is the one through the pile, one that drained the cave when we first saw Westfall's. We were unable to open-up the entrance, which had been opened and the cave used last year (Brandon, Bilby and I)

Thanksgiving 2006 (a time for giving (caves))—Matt Smith, Jay Simeon, Scott Sala, Alan Traino, Brandon Taylor and I spend the day doing the lion's share of the work. The water once again is flowing and the cave is opened. The trench will still need some work before the culvert will fit.

End of Nov 2006—I go to Stock Bldg Supply to tell them of our plans, and ask their help. They sell us the two - 20 foot sections of 12 inch plastic culvert for \$100.00 each (normally ~\$140) for a savings of nearly \$100.00. Thanks, Stock. I put them on the roof of one of my painting vans, and drive the long/slow route home.

Dec. 2, 2006—Jay Simeon, Chuck Porter and I tie the pipes to the roof of my 4x4 van and drive them up to the top of the cliff. From there, we set up a rope with a rappel-rack to lower the culverts one at a time. I was at the top lowering, to Jay on the first ledge, then he would make sure all was well on the way to Chuck, at the bottom. We also used the rope to bring up the old curtain drains that had been the drains set-up in the 90's. Trying to clean our mess and leave it nicer than before. We had a good deal of work to fit the pipes into the trench, without the end sticking-up too much and us trying to get the first pipe in as deep as we could to help it drain. It was a long day, but the weather was beautiful though. Props out to Jay for hauling the wheelbarrow up the slope.

Dec. 9, 2006—Alan Traino, Bill Folsom, Mike Bourgeois and I go back to install two more culverts, to act as the entrance for bats and cavers. We work for a while on the design, with some teamwork it comes together well. A seamless flow into the entrance comfy enough for all. This acts as a "protector" for the drain, as well

as a way to keep the entrance from being subject to collapse, which will continue.

NCC Project Activity

by Bob Addis

1. A Lawnmower?

Discussion at the last meeting centered on improving maintenance at our Preserves, and a couple of members said that they would be willing to mow the Preserves if we had a lawnmower. In the past, we have had some hand-me-downs, but none had much life left in them. A motion was passed that the NCC would pay up to \$300 if the NSS would pay up to \$150 for a new mower. Since the same group of volunteers work on both NCC and NSS Preserves, I approached the NSS with this arrangement and they agreed. Mike Chu said that he would purchase the mower after details and desires are finalized at the March meeting.

Presently we don't have enough money to purchase a lawnmower and a sickle bar mower, but we would like our members to keep an eye out for a good used sickle bar mower for the future. The sickle bar is very useful in taller and thicker vegetation and helps us to maintain the perimeters of our "lawns" as well as cut new trails.

2. Public Comments on the Schoharie Mine Expansion – Beckers Cave & Parsonage Spring

On February 20, 2007 an estimated 200 people packed the large banquet room of the Schoharie Holiday Inn for a public hearing on the ninth revision of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). If you think this has something to do with all of those "Stop the Mine" signs that you have seen in the village for nearly two years, then you're right! Sitting in the front row were NCC members Bob Addis, Craig Cantello, Emily Davis, Al Lehmann, Ed Lucus, Paul Murphy, and Paul Rubin. Representing the DEC were Bill Clark and Mike Higgins, Region 4 Permits Administrator and his Deputy from Stanford. Cobleskill Stone Products (CSP) President, Emil Galasso spoke for about 5 minutes followed by a 30 minute PowerPoint presentation from CSP's consultant, Paul Griggs. This was followed by 3 hours of public comment, some for and some against, some passionate & heartfelt and some rather technical. It soon became apparent that a

majority of those attending were opposed to the limestone quarry expanding 69 acres to the south behind the downtown section of the village. This would run all the way south to the road by Lasell Park and encompass roughly half of the known passage in Beckers Cave. The citizens' group, Save Our Schoharie, had several good speakers making strong points for a much more careful analysis in the DEIS in the areas of air quality, noise pollution, heavy truck traffic, blasting science, groundwater and well protection, historic preservation, and viewsheds. Several called for an extension of the review period.. Supporters of the expansion cited CSP's many contributions to the community, their unblemished reputation as an employer, that CSP had some of the last good jobs in the county, and that private enterprise shouldn't be burdened with an apparently non-ending list of rules and regulations.

I spoke late in the session as signed-in speakers were drawn off the list, and I briefly covered two of the areas of NCC concern - Beckers Cave and the Parsonage Spring. I said that the buffer zones of limestone to be left in place were inadequate for the cave's protection, and that I would be citing testimony in a federal hearing for a similar case where the expert witness stated that 500 feet might be adequate protection – 500 ft. left and 500 ft. right of a linear passage. I also said that it looked like the surface water recharge area for those two karst features would be eliminated, this drying them up and killing any cave life that depended on water. I also said that their hydrogeology appeared to be flawed and incomplete, reinforcing what other speakers had mentioned before me.

I then deviated on a personal note to say the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation were remiss in stating that there would be "no impact on registered or eligible archeological sites or historic structures". I had a copy of the thirty-five year old National Landmarks application for the Lutheran Parsonage and by mention, the Spring Park. I pointed out that the 10 page application with only one photograph would not make the muster today and that much more explanation of the importance of the Parsonage Spring in the earliest settlers' lives should have been included. Middleburgh settled on the banks of the Schoharie Creek while Schoharie settled some distance away at the base of the limestone ledges in order to have good water supplies. Under this expansion plan, the very reason for

Schoharie's existence where it is today would be lost and gone forever.

In November, 2005 the NCC had submitted written comments on the DEIS as it then existed. The NCC will now put their comments in writing before the March 5 deadline, and barring an extension of the review period, the DEC will be either issuing a mining permit for the expansion (with restrictions?) or not.

3. A groundwater model. We have ordered a karst groundwater model from the U of Nebraska and have asked for a delivery date of April 16, just in time for Earth Day. We anticipate that this model will be very suitable to loan to earth science teachers and that it will make an impressive display at any public functions – Carlisle Bicentennial? Besides, it's fun to play with, running the hand pump behind the scenes while magical things happen out front!

4. Nominations for Trustees. It's not too early to think about the May elections for seats on the Board. Whether you are considering it or can suggest someone to run, contact Mike Martuscello, Nominations Chair.

Announcements

If anyone has not gotten a tax/donation letter and expected one to please contact the office committee as soon as possible.

Upcoming Events

March 3rd 2007: NCC Board meeting at the Gallupville House, starting at 1PM.

May 18-20th 2007: Spring NRO hosted by MET grotto in Schoharie, NY.

June 16-23, 2007: NCRC 2007 Cave Rescue Operations and Management Seminar, in Salem, Virginia.

July 23-27, 2007: NSS Convention in Marengo, Indiana.

October 8-12, 2007: NCKMS 2007, hosted by Missouri Department of Conservation and the Missouri Caves & Karst Conservancy in St Louis, Missouri.



Patient transport during the Clarksville mock rescue on 2/6/07



Culvert installation at Westfall Spring.