

NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY, INC

Minutes

December 3, 2017 10:00 AM

Speleobooks

Schoharie, NY

Meeting called to order at 10:18am

1. Introduction and greetings – Robert Simmons
2. Attendance
Officers: R. Simmons, V. Kappler, B. Folsom
Trustees: M. Berger, T. Engel, M. Ingalls, J. Morris-Siegel, C. Young
3. Absent with proxy: P. Rubin – C. Porter proxy, M. Chu – C. Cantello proxy
4. Absent without designated proxy: W. Russell, A. Traino
The Board unanimously chose to appoint D. Hedges as proxy for W. Russell at this time.
5. Nominating Committee Report: Attachment E
6. Simmons moves to convene a meeting of the trustees to elect officers. Young will preside over the meeting as Chairman of the Trustees and will report. *The trustees may decide to go into Executive Session. Officers and visitors may be asked to leave the room.*
Second by Ingalls
For: All
Motion passes

Trustees go into special session at 10:28am and exit special session at 10:32am. Young

reports:

Trustees Report: President: Bob Simmons (2 year term)
 Vice President: Thom Engel (1 year term)
 Treasurer: Bill Folsom (1 year term)
 Secretary: Mitch Berger (2 year term)

Officers are seated and the meeting resumes at 10:32am.

7. Morris-Siegel moves to fill the Board of Trustees seat newly vacated as a result of Berger's election as Secretary by appointing D. Hedges to serve until the completion of the next Trustee election.
Second by Young
For: Rest
Abstain: Hedges
Motion passes
[Ed: This motion requires a vote of only the Trustees. However, at the meeting, this was forgotten and the entire Board voted; the votes of the officers did not alter the outcome, and have been omitted from the tally above.]
8. Morris-Siegel moves to appoint V. Kappler as proxy for W. Russell at this meeting.
[Ed: Hedges had been appointed as proxy for Russell for this meeting, but then was appointed to fill a vacant Trustee seat, thus leaving Russell without proxy once again.]
Second by Engel
For: Rest
Absent: Folsom
Motion passes
9. Officers' Reports
President: Attachment A

Vice President: Attachment B
Treasurer: Attachment C
Secretary: Attachment D

10. Porter moves to approve the minutes of the September Board meeting
Second by Young
For: Rest
Abstain: Morris-Siegel, Kappler
Motion passes

11. Simmons moves to open the Committee of the Whole. The Vice President will preside. Items may be entered as new business.

Second by Morris-Siegel
For: All
Motion passes

Topics:

1. Waivers (topic continued from 9/24/17 meeting): Engel has drafted new waiver guidelines that were sent to the board on 11/17/17.

Brief discussion ensued. General approval of the new paperwork and process was expressed, and it was concluded that no motions to alter any of our acts or policies are necessary to move forward.

2. Should the NCC establish committee to review and update job descriptions and board member expectations?

The group endorsed a plan to establish a new Governance Committee (see New

Business).

12. Porter moves to close the Committee of the Whole.

Second by Morris-Siegel
For: Rest
Against: Cantello
Motion passes

13. Berger moves to appoint N. Berg as proxy for A. Traino for the remainder of this meeting.

Second by Morris-Siegel
For: All
Motion passes

New Business

14. Folsom moves: The NCC will donate \$100.00 to the Land Trust Alliance for the New York Land Trust Challenge.

Second by Engel
For: All
Motion passes

15. Young moves: The Board of Trustees of the Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. approves and authorizes \$6,000 to be set aside from the organization's 2018 general operating funds to be used towards a cash match for the New York State Conservation Partnership Program Stewardship and Resource Management Grant application for the project entitled "Outside Influences on Caves Project" should the Wildlife Acoustics grant application not be funded.

Second by Morris-Siegel

As M. Warner and E. Davis operate a business that is a dealer for Wildlife Acoustics, an apparent conflict of interest was identified and fully disclosed prior to discussion of this motion.

A roll-call vote was taken on this motion as required by the rules of this grant program:

Simmons: Yes	Engel: Yes	Berger: Yes
Folsom: Yes	Cantello (proxy for Chu): Yes	Ingalls: Yes
Morris-Siegel: Yes	Porter (proxy for Rubin): Yes	Kappler (proxy for Russell): Yes
Berg (proxy for Traino): Yes	Hedges: Yes	Young: Yes

Minutes – December 3, 2017

Page 2

Motion passes

16. Young moves: The Board of Trustees of the Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. has considered and reviewed the proposed "Outside Influences on Caves Project" grant applications and budgets and herewith acknowledge and recognize the inherent conflict of interest created by contracting with Trustee Morgan Ingalls for the project. The conflict has been fully disclosed and the Board of Trustees has determined to proceed with hiring Board Trustee Morgan Ingalls for the project as it is in the best interests of the organization, provided that she abstain from voting on the project and recuse herself from the discussion about it other than to answer questions.

Second by Berg

For: Rest

Abstain: Ingalls

Motion passes

17. Kappler moves that the Bentleys Management Plan revisions proposed by Preserve Manager Hedges are approved.

Second by Engel

For: Rest

Abstain: Berg

18. Rubin moves: Long-term conservation, preservation, species protection, land use and NCC Preserve management decisions are best made when based on current empirical data. The NCC shall formally conduct or request bat counts in all preserve caves on a three-year rotational basis, with the goal of completing at least three per year. The first three should be within Clarksville, Onesquethaw and Spider caves, starting in the winter hibernation of 2017-2018.

Second by Cantello

Engel moves to refer this matter to the Hibernaculum Committee.

Second by Kappler

For: Rest

Abstain: Cantello

Motion passes

The matter was referred to the Hibernaculum Committee.

19. Simmons announces that the Ad-hoc Governance Committee is established. Hedges will serve as chair, and Young, Berg, and Ingalls will serve as members.

20. Folsom moves that the Board approves the 2018 Budget as presented in the Treasurer's Report.

Second by Young

For: Rest

Abstain: Berg

Motion passes

Informational point: Next EC meeting will be February 4, 2018 at 10 AM – Folsom's home, NYC.

Informational point: the Spring Board meeting will be March 18, 2018 at 10 AM in Dalton, MA.

Informational point: the late Spring EC meeting will be May 6 somewhere in the Albany/Delmar area.

21. Simmons moves: The NCC Spring meeting will be June 3 at 10am at Chu's home.

Second by Hedges

For: Rest

Abstain: Cantello, Ingalls

Motion passes

22. Simmons moves to go into Executive Session to discuss acquisitions.

Second by Folsom

For: All

Motion passes

Executive Session starts 1:45pm. Executive Session ends 2:55pm.

23. Simmons moves to thank Speleobooks for hosting this NCC meeting.

Second by Porter
For: All
Motion passes

24. Simmons moves that the Board offers a hearty thanks to Kappler for his many years of service on the Board.

Second by Berger
For: All
Motion passes

25. Simmons moves to adjourn.

Second by Morris-Siegel
For: All
Motion passes

Meeting adjourned at 2:58pm

**Attachment A
President’s Report (by Vice President)**

Since the September meeting a number of folks have been very busy on behalf of the NCC, some of whom I’ll mention below:

1. Christine Young has been working hard on getting our next LTA Grant application ready for submittal and a number of folks (Morgan, Jacob, Norm) have lent a hand in the process. I think the final product is great and that we stand a pretty good chance of getting funded once again. We were also working on some other grant applications but came to the realization (not soon enough), that we were not likely to be awarded such grants. Unfortunately a lot of time was spent on these efforts which could have been directed elsewhere. Lessons learned in that we need to fully vet each opportunity with a go/no go decision process before we spend too much time and effort going forward on low probability of success applications.
2. Chuck Porter (and Thom Engel) have been hard at work on the potential project in Clarksville and making great progress, which we will discuss at the meeting
3. Kudos to Devon Hedges for taking on the Bentleys Preserve and getting through his first Management Plan re-write shortly thereafter.
4. Thom Engel has been busy reworking the old liability waivers into something a bit more manageable for the future
5. And everyone else that’s working away at so many projects.

Looking ahead to 2018.

Cave Preserves: Preserve Management Plan Review Schedule

Year	March	June	September	December
2017	Spider	Clarksville		Bentleys
2018	Ella Armstrong	Knox		Sellecks
2019	Bensons	Merlins		Onesquethaw
2020	Spider	Clarksville		Bentleys
2021	Ella Armstrong	Knox		Sellecks
2022	Bensons	Merlins		Onesquethaw

CAVE PRESERVE REPORTS:

1. Bensons (Luke Mazza)

Progress: Visited the property on 11/27 to walk the trail and boundary. No issues with trail markers or any other signage. The poster is getting a little faded but is still serviceable.

On 10/7 Emily Davis, Craig Cantello, and I got together at the preserve and disposed of the bagged trash from this past spring’s sinkhole cleanup effort, utilizing the MOSA waste transfer station right around the corner. Total weight was recorded as 880 lbs. not including a few tires!

One permit was issued since the last report in September for a total of 10 permits issued in 2017 with 4 of those not being used. This is close to the average since the NCC acquired the preserve in 2014.

Issues: A medium sized tree has fallen across the trail right after the kiosk, making it a little harder to see where to go. With the frequency that trees fall on the preserve it's a wonder there are any left standing. A few more pretty large trees came down right beside the trail but luckily fell *away* from it.

Plans: I'll plan to take care of the fallen tree before caving season gets going next year.

2. Bentleys (Devon Hedges)

Progress: 92 logged visitors since 4/1/17. Trail cleared, driveway re-graded, trail markings improved.

Problems: Haven't visited beyond trailhead in the past 2 months; see plans.

Plans: Investigate costs/prognosis for adding gravel to driveway, re-grading driveway before winter/spring, fording for wet trail sections, rock cairns for trail junctions near old logging paths and areas with sparse overhead foliage, brochure bin for kiosk, new signage to replace water-damaged copy and removing jonah@sover.net as contact for PDF copies of poster.

Reference preserve Management Plan.

3. Clarksville (Thom Engel)

The Restricted Area (cave closed) signs were put up October 1. There is one on the changing area, one on the kiosk, one just before Ward, and one by the Gregory entrance. Sometime after 10/31 the sign on the kiosk and by the Ward entrance were ripped down. (The screws were still in place). These have been replaced. If this happens again, I suggest putting up a trail-cam.

We will be repairing/rebuilding the Clarksville changing area. The work day is 21 April 2018. The rain date will be 28 April.

Paul Rubin reports newly chiseled/scratched initials in Colvin Ave. He photographed them and then covered them with mud. The initials are M?M, JW, FW, and LV.

4. Ella Armstrong (Alan Traino)

5. Knox (Mitch Berger)

Progress:

Preserve checkups, and a perimeter check have happened; no signs of trouble.
4 final permits issued for the final weekend of the season (3 of them used).

Issues:

Over the course of the entire open season, less than half a dispenser's worth of brochures were taken.

There's still a rope at the Great Divide of unknown age/origin.

There's a bunch of poison ivy, and possibly poison parsnip along the trail.

Several weeks away during the last month of the open season allowed some overgrowth of the trail.

Plans:

Periodic property inspection.

Possible graffiti removal in Knox, and investigation of methods.

Addition of trail markers and re-posting of property.

Boundary marking.

Removal of the Great Divide rope.

Investigation of troublesome plant species.

6. Merlins (Morgan Ingalls & Jacob Morris-Siegel)

Problems:

We still need to clear the parking area as it's still full of vegetation.

Progress:

Merlins and Dragon Bones both closed Oct. 1st for the bat hibernation season. There were two trips into Merlins during the Fall NRO. For the year there were only four permitted trips into Merlins.

Digging at Dome 12 continued- we've made a bucket rail to move spoils out of the dig more easily. We discussed rerouting the trail a bit so that it doesn't run right next to the dig.

Plans:

Since there's currently interest in the Dome 12 dig, we'll likely dig there a few more times until we get snow or the ground freezes.

The preserve managers hope to blaze the boundary (or at least part of it), in the coming weeks.

7. Onesquethaw (Thom Engel)

The Restricted Area (cave closed) signs were put up October 1 on the kiosk. For CY 2017 we had 23 permitted groups.

(Three trespassers were intercepted before entering the cave.) Mean group size was 5.2. Median group size was 4.5.

8. Sellecks (Alan Traino)

9. Spider (Kevin Dumont)

Progress: In late August of 2017, a sign was installed along the trail a little more than halfway from the road to the cave entrance. I was assisted by Chuck Porter and Jack Dumont. Some minor trail maintenance was also conducted and some large bedrock blocks were moved down the streambed to more stable configurations.

Problems: None to report.

Plans: Creation of a trail along both the base and the top of the escarpment is planned for 2018.

OTHER COMMITTEES (PRESIDENT):

Acquisitions (Chuck Porter)

Met with the Town of New Scotland official 11/28/17:

An agreement has been reached with [REDACTED], owner of the land [REDACTED]. In addition to the agreed sale price of [REDACTED] as [REDACTED]. This should be done as [REDACTED]. Also, [REDACTED] wants to remove several cherry trees before the sale is finalized (he's a woodworker).

Four other possibilities are in the works. Two fairly promising and two less so; will discuss further at meeting and in Executive Session, as necessary.

Nominating (Norm Berg)

(See Nominating Committee report – Attachment E)

Risk Management (Mitch Berger)

Progress:

Completed investigation of the question about the Fiduciary Liability section of our D&O insurance described at the last meeting; we've been assured in writing that our coverage includes the risks we were concerned about.

The NCC voted for Michelle Smith in TerraFirma's Membership Committee election after soliciting input from the Board. She won the race.

Discussed some risk management and other topics with SCCi's Executive Director at TAG Fall Cave-In.

Corresponded with Thom and Emily about Thom's proposal to move forward with changes to Special Use paperwork that allow us to discontinue collecting waivers.

Issues:

None.

Plans:

Work on our Terrafirma renewal after December 1.
Assemble the rest of the Committee membership.
Pick up other issues that were in-progress with the former ad-hoc committee.

Torys Ad hoc committee (Bob Simmons)

Tory's is closed (Gated) for the winter. I will be working with the Weatinoge Heritage Land Trust over the winter to update the preserve management plan.

40th Anniversary Ad hoc committee (Alan Traino)**Bat Hibernation Ad hoc committee (Emily Davis, Mike Warner, Morgan Ingalls)**

Problems: We cannot get a report from DEC concerning Onesquethaw because of Federal Endangered Species laws concerning location issues. Carl may report this information directly to the EC or board.

Plans: Continue working with DEC concerning opening of Onesquethaw year round. Go on a count in Onesquethaw in January 2018.

Progress: We are moving forward with a plan for Onesquethaw.

Attachment B Vice President's Report

VP Committee Reports**Bylaws Committee (Joe Levinson)**

Nothing to report this quarter.

Education (Thom Engel)

I was contact by a student at Hudson Falls High School. She was looking for the final paper on one of the science projects, the Fungal Biocontrol Study. I contacted Larry Davis. We have not gotten any feedback on the study we approved in 2012. This led to a discussion of our need to 1) get some kind of follow-up from the researchers and 2) to make the finished paper somehow available via our website.

The SAGE STEM event in Clifton Park, NY is scheduled for 20 April 2018.

Science Committee (Larry Davis)

We have not had any requests for research permits in the last six months.
There are two projects outstanding:

1) Knox Cave White Nose Syndrome (2012)

This is a piece of a larger project. I have attempted to contact (via email) David Blehert of the USGS without success. I will shortly be trying to contact him by other means and also to attempt to contact other members of the research team. I have not heard anything from them since they completed their field work in Knox. During the field work, they were very good about filing regular reports.

2) Clarksville Cave Crustaceans (2015 on-going).

This work is being done by Dr. Luis Espinaza and his students. A paper (previously reported) was published in 2016. I know that he wanted to continue the work, but was blocked by the closure of Clarksville due to endangered species. I have not heard from him since this happened. I will contact him and see if he wants to close this out or keep it open.

Engel adds that we've received recognition from OSI for our partnership with Thacher Park.

Special Use (Thom Engel)

Next year I plan to institute a new rule. I will be requiring needed COIs be submitted at least three (3) days prior to the planned trip. I ended up jumping through a bunch of hoops to get a permit for a school group that waited until the late afternoon the day before the trip to try and send the COI. (Despite me telling the person I'd not be on-line till the morning.) Despite three attempts no COI was received. I finally allowed them to hand-deliver it.

Grants	0.00	0.00	4,700.00	6,000.00
Interest Earned	14.39	10.00	15.13	10.00
Membership Income	7,615.00	4,300.00	3,520.00	3,500.00
Total Income	25,716.42	12,515.00	16,921.52	19,080.00
Expense				
40th Anniversary				2,000.00
Acquisitions	4,297.27	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00
Bank Charges	113.30	85.00	25.65	50.00
Donations-outgoing	11,000.00	200.00	0.00	200.00
Dues	350.00	350.00	350.00	350.00
Education	0.00	50.00	0.00	50.00
Executive				
President	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
Secretary	0.00	50.00	0.00	50.00
Treasurer	0.00	50.00	0.00	50.00
VP	0.00	50.00	0.00	50.00
Total Executive	0.00	250.00	0.00	250.00
Insurance	1,441.13	3,025.00	2,536.00	2,000.00
Legal Fees	400.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
Licenses & Permits	0.00	100.00	50.00	50.00
Meetings & Conferences	0.00	170.00	170.00	170.00
Meeting Expense	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
Membership Expenses	92.50	50.00	100.00	100.00
Miscellaneous	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
Office Expense	46.44	100.00	0.00	100.00
Postage	122.53	100.00	195.37	100.00
Preserves-Maintenance				
Bensons	50.00	250.00	62.05	1,000.00
Bentleys	50.00	600.00	20.00	1,100.00
Clarksville	50.00	300.00	20.00	1,350.00
Ella Armstrong	0.00	100.00	20.00	500.00
Knox	50.00	100.00	20.00	1,100.00
Merlins	50.00	100.00	20.00	600.00
Onesquethaw	1,800.00	100.00	20.00	600.00
Sellecks	40.00	100.00	20.00	700.00
Spider	0.00	175.00	9.23	600.00
Total Preserves-Maintenance	2,090.00	1,825.00	211.28	7,550.00
Printing	134.80	1,000.00	984.31	1,000.00
Promotion/Fundraising	1,392.00	1,300.00	1,384.53	1,300.00
Publishing				
Mailings	0.00	50.00	0.00	50.00
Website	0.00	60.00	1,400.00	60.00
Total Publishing	0.00	110.00	1,400.00	110.00
Sponsorships	0.00	300.00	0.00	300.00
Taxes on Properties	169.20	300.00	112.64	200.00
Total Expense	21,649.17	12,515.00	7,519.78	19,080.00
Net Ordinary Income	4,067.25	0.00	9,401.74	0.00

Barn Dance Subcommittee - Emily Davis & Mike Warner:

Expenses
Band \$350
Food \$118.60
Total expenses \$468.60

Raffle income \$145 .00
Gate Income \$575.00 (total of 68 including kids)
\$300 Kappler family
\$50 NBT bank
Total income 1060.00

Profit from event \$561.40

This is in line with our plan of community involvement. A very good mix of both cavers and community attended.

Donors
Price Chopper (cups and napkins)
Stewart's Shops
NBT Bank
Schoharie Valley Farms
The Apple Barrel
Fox Creek Farm
Your Way Cafe
Window Box Cafe
BMS
Alan Traino
Christine Young
Pokorny Family
Kappler Family
Davis/Warner
Mike Chu
Paul Rubin
Bill Folsom
Wayne Russell
Bob Simmons

Thanks to the following for helping with Set up, tear down, food service and money handling.

Christa Hay
Bob and Terry Simmons
Mitch Berger
The Pokorny Family
The Dumont Family and friends
Peter and Jane Youngbaer
Devon Hedges

Membership Committee – Peter Youngbaer:

Progress:

Membership Renewals and New Members:

All renewal notices for memberships up through the end of the year have been sent. Second notices for fall and third notices for spring and summer lapsed memberships have also been sent. All new memberships and renewals have been acknowledged and entered into the data base. I've been adding a line in the renewal notices and the thank yous about our upcoming 40th Anniversary to help light a fire. The data base is current as of today, Nov. 26.

Our current membership stands as follows, compared to the baseline of April 22, 2012:

November 26, 2017	April 22, 2012 (baseline)
Life: 62	Life: 18
Family Life: 9	Family Life: 0
Benefactor: 6	Benefactor: 10
Regular: 64	Regular: 88
Family: 15	Family: 16
Institutional: 4	Institutional: 3
Total: 160	Total: 135

Institutional Members: *Our current four are VCA, CCG, NNJG, and Camp Echo Lake. If your grotto or organization isn't listed here, please urge them to renew or join. Thank you.*

Problems:

Membership: Membership has continued to decline, most notably in the Regular member category. We dropped from 174 in the September report to just 160 today. We peaked at over 200 about a year ago. I sent membership status lists to the EC and Office Committee going back to January 1, and put together extra lists for the Old Timers Reunion over Labor Day and for the Fall NRO. A fair amount of renewals came in, but there are lots of active cavers who are not up to date. I can dun them by email, but it is most helpful when other NCC Board members and officers take note and nudge their caving friends to re-up.

Dues Revenue: I've been trading emails with NCC Treasurer Bill Folsom over projecting membership revenues for the coming year. Barring a small explosion in renewals in December, we're not likely to hit this year's revenue projection. As of Nov. 8, membership revenue stood at \$3,520, toward a budget target of \$4,300. For 2018, If all our current members renew at their current levels, revenue will be \$1695. That figure does not include any revenues from the NCC Life Member investments. Bill and I spoke about that, and the goal there would be to get about 5% per year return, which is based on that being 1/20 of a Life Membership. However, the bulk of the funds in that account were at the \$300 Life Member level, not the current \$400. I also see that the NCC has decided to take a different tack on investment than the use of the National Speleological Foundation in the past, I have no issue with that. I leave it to the Treasurer and the Board to estimate how much return from the Life Member Investment to expect each year as revenue, then add that number to the current member projection for a more realistic expectation for revenue for 2018. For example, if the amount of the fund is @\$15,000, then 5% would net \$750. Add that to the projected \$1695, and you would get \$2445 – well under this year's \$4,300.

NCC Swag: I would still like to have the NCC window stickers to send to Regular members and new members. The NCC Board should decide on what is appropriate to recognize those who give at the Benefactor level; right now, we do nothing, which is not much of an incentive.

Plans:

Normal Operations: Will continue to send renewal notices, as well as second and third notices, as applicable.

Life Member Certificates: Hopefully, the December meeting will elect a new NCC President, and we can create a new Life Member Certificate template to replace the out-of-date one. We were unable to determine exactly when these stopped being sent, so I'll probably pick up at # 21. Some members may receive duplicates, but it won't be many, and we can include an explanatory note. The plan would be for me to generate these when a new Life Member or Family Life Member joins, then send the certificate and addressed envelope to the NCC President for signature and mailing. Other than a fairly large batch to start with, the volume is likely to be low.

NCC 40th Anniversary: I have not heard what the plans are yet to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the NCC, but we should be taking every opportunity to promote it, celebrate it, mark it, and use it to build our membership. There should be a tag or logo on everything that goes out from the NCC – our newsletter, our social media posts, our membership notices, etc. I would hope that the Board is thinking beyond just a single event, such as a dinner – maybe a series of open houses at each of our preserves? Basically, a full calendar of things to generate excitement. Whatever the Board decides, I would appreciate knowing, so that I can include upcoming items in the membership notices.

Office Committee Report - Emily Davis & Mike Warner:

Problems: None

Plans: status quo

Progress: status quo

Publications – Christa Hay:

Progress: Newsletter sent out November 20th.

Plans: Will be working on promotional items for the 40th anniversary. Possible design contest for general NCC tshirt. I will speak with Eva for helping with 40th design.

Problems: Still need more article for the newsletter. The board wanted to have one of the NCC properties in each edition but I have been having a hard time getting those articles. So once again I would like the board to start thinking about producing some articles.

Technology Committee Report – Mike Chu:

Status quo

Volunteer Value Committee – Vince Kappler:

Progress:

The problems with the on-line VV reporting form reported last cycle have been fixed. Many thanks to the webmaster for getting the form operational so quickly. Year to date totals: 1930 hours of volunteer work for NCC projects for a total value of \$57,768.00. Members also reported traveling a total of 8496 miles to work on NCC projects.

Plans:

I will send periodic VV reminders to the membership and monitor data collection.

Problems:

None at this time.

**Attachment D
Secretary's Report**

EC Meeting Notes
November 5, 2017

10:00 AM – 2:30 PM
Simmons, Folsom, Kappler, Engel
Berger, Ingalls, Morris-Siegel called in

The agenda was rearranged to accommodate members on the conference call.

1. Terrafirma election: Mitch has not received any responses on his email regarding the candidates seeking to be elected to the Terrafirma Board. He will delay casting NCC's vote for a few additional days to allow any board member additional time to comment.
2. Officer Elections: Norm will be sending out a notice soliciting candidates. If a current Trustee is elected to an Officer position, the Board shall appoint a member to the vacant trustee position(s) until the next regularly scheduled election (Bylaw V.9). As one or more of the current Trustees may elect to run for an officer's position, one or more vacancies may be created on the Board until the June meeting. This is a good opportunity to identify potential members who are hesitant to run for a position but might consider a "temporary" assignment in order to learn the ropes. The EC urges the board to help identify members willing to take on the assignment.
3. Merlins: The EC and Merlins managers have been working with Christine on a response to a neighbor. If the proposal is accepted a motion to act will be prepared for the board.
4. Grant: Christine and Morgan have been working on the grant to acquire funding for cave monitoring equipment. They have some additional research to do on light monitors but they expect to have the application completed before the deadline. We expect to receive a letter of support from NY DEC and there is a possibility of an e-vote before the December meeting to approve submission of the grant.
5. Length of meetings: The EC will implement some new guidelines that should help streamline meetings.
6. EC interviews: The EC reviewed the summary of officer interviews (prepared by Christine) and will be making suggestions to address some of the areas of concern while some items (example - job descriptions, training) will require more of a team effort and possible ad hoc committee.
7. LTA donation: A motion will be prepared by the Treasurer.
8. Investment Committee: Bill will prepare an announcement soliciting committee members with some financial background. The application to establish an investment account will be completed and an initial deposit will be sent. When the Investment Committee is staffed, the remaining LM Funds will be invested per their recommendations. The NSF contract is still under review and the Treasurer will continue discussion with them concerning potential investment of our LM monies as well as our established account. VP to informally contact other conservancies with NSF investments.
9. Budget: The EC reviewed current line items and potential new categories.
10. 40th Anniversary: The EC will urge the ad hoc committee to finalize location and select a date.
11. Research Projects: Thom suggested we review and update as necessary, the guidelines for NCC access to and use of final published reports.

Other Items:

1. There will be a work day at Clarksville on April 21, 2018 to rebuild the changing area.
2. Please review the Bentleys MP and get any thoughts, suggestions, etc. to Devon as soon as possible. Would like to have any issues addressed before the meeting, so we only need to vote to approve revised plans.

Additional items:

9/26/17 Final 6/2017 minutes sent to web
9/27/17 Draft minutes to the board
9/28/17 Manual set to web – 12 pages updated
9/30/17 9/17 draft minutes sent to web

11/06/17 prepared and sent EC statement on Meeting Management (below)
11/10/17 EC notes sent to board
11/17/17 First call for agenda items and CotW topics

NCC statement on Meeting Management sent to the Board on 11/06/17

NCC Board,

September's meeting (9/24/17) was productive but we'd all agree, needlessly long. Meeting length was addressed several years ago when we asked all committees to submit their quarterly reports ahead of time and then only providing pertinent additional comments at the meetings. We also implemented the current timeline for reviewing management plans where the board is encouraged to address MP edits on line and then being prepared to approve (or not approve) the final document at the meeting with minimal discussion. These process changes have helped streamline meetings but more needs to be done.

The Committee of the Whole (CotW) is often the source of protracted and repeated discussion. Beginning with the December meeting, the EC proposes the following guidelines for the CotW:

1. All topics for the CotW should be submitted to the Secretary to be and included on the draft agenda circulated before the meeting. Each topic will include a 2-3 sentence "discussion" describing the author's concern and reason for submitting. Board members should share they thoughts on the topic via email prior to the meeting. At the meeting discussion will be limited to final points to bring the subject to closure.
2. Only emergency items from board members and topics from the audience will be added to the agenda at the meeting.

The EC offers some additional thoughts on how we might keep the meetings' length more manageable going forward.

1. Stay on topic: There tends to be some drift on topics and the chair will seek to keep things more focused. Also, we may designate someone to catch new topics as they arise, so as to come back to them in a more coherent fashion. The Officer presiding over the meeting or the "Committee of the Whole," may cut off discussion on topics which stray, or redirect the discussion to the topic.
2. Extended committee level discussions: We seem to get way too far into the details on some topics, where we should already have an understanding of the issues. We need to endeavor to work out the issues as much as can be accomplished ahead of time, get that information into our individual reports, get those reports out to everyone in a timelier fashion, and read the reports/interact with the committees ahead of time as best we can. Spending too much of the Board's time is inappropriate and not an optimal use of our quality time together.
3. Maintain civility and tone at all times: Inside voices from here forward should be the norm. We need to be respectful and more courteous when responding to colleagues' statements. We are all here for the same purposes.

Respectfully,

Executive Committee

Attachment E Nominating Committee report

I've heard from the following people listed below with the position they will be a candidate for:

1. Bob Simmons – President
2. Thom Engel – Vice President
3. Mitch Berger – Secretary
4. Bill Folsom – Treasurer
5. Devon Hedges – Trustee (term end at the Spring Trustee election)