

Minutes

March 3, 2019 10:00 AM
Dalton, MA

Meeting called to order at 10:04am

1. Introduction and greetings – Robert Simmons
2. Attendance
Officers: R. Simmons, T. Engel, M. Berger, B. Folsom
Trustees: M. Chu, D. Hedges, J. Morris-Siegel, P. Rubin, E. Nieman, M. Ingalls, R. Armen
3. Absent with proxy: None
4. Absent without designated proxy: W. Russell
The board may appoint proxies from the members in attendance.
Hedges moves to appoint J. Moore as proxy for W. Russell
For: Rest
Abstain: Morris-Siegel
Absent: Folsom
[J. Moore is appointed as proxy for W. Russell]
Berger moves to appoint L. Hatfield to fill A. Traino's seat at this meeting
For: Rest
Abstain: Morris-Siegel
[L. Hatfield is appointed to fill A. Traino's seat at this meeting]
5. Officers' Reports
President: Attachment A
Vice President: Attachment B
Treasurer: Attachment C
Secretary: Attachment D
6. Simmons moves to open the Committee of the Whole. The Vice president will preside. Items may be entered as new business.
Second by Hedges
For: Rest
Abstain: Engel
[The Committee of the Whole is opened]

Topics:
 1. Slack for coordination? (Morris-Siegel)
Morris-Siegel reminded us that a few years ago, Folsom had brought up the idea of using Slack for coordination and planning of various committees. Having recently used it with a different group to coordinate plans for a trip to Cuba, he'd like to revive the discussion and encourage us to use it. Folsom did indeed set up a free Slack workspace for us, which the Technology Committee tried out a bit, but it sort of fell into disuse. There was a bit of discussion about just what Slack is, how it compares with e-mail, etc. The basic conclusion was that Folsom would send out invites to join the workspace to any of the NCC's volunteers who'd like one, and that groups or committees that would like to use Slack should make use of the tool, but that we won't force it on groups that would prefer to carry out their activities through other means of communications - in essence, use the tools that work best for your group and make them happiest.
 2. NCKMS 2019 (Berger)
This topic was brought up to try to get some decisions made about who's going to present what and who's going. Berger, Simmons, and Engel are more or less committed, Morris-Siegel may be interested, and Ingalls would be interested, but may or may not be free of work commitments by that point and is likely attending a different conference that same month, so she plans to prepare a presentation about the NYSCPP project, likely to be presented by Simmons. Berger has caught himself planning part of a Risk Management talk, so it seems likely that's what he'll present. Engel may present a talk on his usage study at the Clarksville Preserve. [We have since learned that abstracts are due early June, and talks are 15 minutes long.] We also discussed the two registrations that are included at the NCC's sponsorship level, and there was general agreement that it seemed reasonable to split the

benefit across all of our attendees. [We have since learned that camping is not included, and a hotel stay will be involved, not compensated by the sponsorship.]

3. Appreciating members (Engel)

Engel brought up this topic via e-mail with the EC, and felt it would be appropriate for the group to discuss. There are a number of parties deserving of the NCC's recognition, be it for donations of caves, major specific contributions, long-term commitment, etc., and it seems like the annual Member Appreciation Day would be a good time to present such awards. Major questions include how many of those to give, how to decide upon recipients, etc. Hatfield asked how recipients would be determined, and Engel suggested that any member would be allowed to nominate, and perhaps the officers would act as an award committee - Folsom agreed to coordinate this. Berger suggested that while landowners who donate land should indeed be recognized, that seems like it should perhaps be a separate category from awards for long-term service to the NCC. He also noted that while we have numerous folks who ought to be recognized accumulated over the years, we want to be able to give meaningful awards each year, and so should probably limit how many of these we give out to a couple a year rather than catching up all at once now and having only folks relatively new to the NCC to consider the following year. He also notes that spreading recognition of the many accumulated deserving folks over the next several years may avoid the impression that the couple/few who receive it this year are "ranked" higher than those who receive it in any other year.

4. Draft Management Plan for the Alan Traino Cave Preserve (Engel)

The draft Management Plan was circulated separately as a handout. Engel envisions that we will revisit the plan in the fall to update at least the Surface Management section. There was a bit of discussion about the caves' flooding risks and what's worth investigating upstream, but the plan as a whole was unobjectionable and not modified during the discussion.

5. Catskill Great Outdoor Expo (Berger)

See item 13 in the EC Minutes in Attachment D for a general explanation. Paul has expressed interest, and the other suggested folks weren't at the meeting. Mitch will forward the relevant mail to them.

6. State Land Trust meeting attendance (Berger)

This topic was placed here to try to firm up our plans for who will attend each state's land trust conference. Morris-Siegel will attend the MA one, as his employer sends him to it anyhow. He indicated that it likely wasn't worth someone else on our Board foregoing attendance at a different state conference to attend the MA one with him, although it was the conference that first made us aware of TerraFirma, and noted that he doesn't believe he'll have a problem keeping an ear out for our interests while simultaneously attending on behalf of his employer. Simmons and Engel will attend the NY (LTA) conference - Folsom and Berger briefly recapped their experience attending it a couple years back along with C. Young. Simmons will also likely attend the CT conference.

7. Preserve Managers (Simmons)

We put out a call for volunteers to fill the vacancies left at the Ella Armstrong and Sellecks Preserves with our loss of A. Traino, and received a very reassuring number of responses. We will place items in New Business to appoint new managers.

8. Communications and Triage (Berger)

We discussed the topic mentioned in the Membership Report in Attachment C where we received a complaint from a member who discovered his personal contact info posted in a years-old set of meeting minutes on the web. The focus of the topic here was that we had a series of communication failures that caused us to take the better part of a month to address this complaint, though the actual immediate actions necessary to ameliorate the problem took under an hour once we realized how the issue had gotten dropped on the floor. A major part of the problem was folks incorrectly believing that others who needed to take action had been copied on the relevant messages, and that when no response was received, the next time it was noted was in a report received for the meeting. Berger urged everyone, upon becoming aware of an issue, to do a little bit of triage and decide whether the issue is something that can wait until the next meeting, or something that must be handled right away, and if it's the latter, to expect one of us to follow up and to get in touch with us more aggressively if such a response isn't received in a timely fashion.

9. Standardizing stewardship (Morris-Siegel)

Morris-Siegel notes that we have 9 separate preserves with their own Management Plans, and that the NCC gives its managers a lot of freedom. He suggests that perhaps we should standardize our practices with respect to things like boundary markings, surveys, and other standards. Simmons suggests that this might include a prescribed frequency for visiting our neighbors to check in with them. Other topics that came up as potential things to

standardize on included how to deal with encroachments (and the value of defending land, such as avoiding “adverse possession” issues, though we’re not certain whether they apply to us in some of the jurisdictions we own preserves in). Ingalls reminds us that she worked on a template for Management Plans a while back, and that Addis wrote an initial Preserve Managers Manual. Both will be circulated around as starting points to move further on this project.

10. NSF Contract (Folsom)

A recap of where we are with the NSF contract was provided, along with an update on new info learned in the past year and what we’re working on to try to get closer to resolving this loose end.

7. Simmons moves to close the Committee of the Whole.

Second by Armen

For: All

[The Committee of the Whole is closed]

Old Business

8. Simmons moves: The March 2019 NCC Board meeting is moved from 3/17/19 to 3/3/19 at the same venue.

Second by Berger

For: Rest

Abstain: Engel, Folsom

[Electronic vote conducted February 6-14, 2019. Motion passes.]

New Business

9. Berger moves: The minutes of the December 9, 2018 Board Meeting are approved.

Second by Morris-Siegel

For: Rest

Abstain: Hatfield

[The minutes of the December 9, 2018 Board Meeting are approved]

10. Engel moves: The Draft Management Plan for the Alan Traino Cave Preserve is approved.

Second by Folsom

For: All

[The Draft Management Plan for the Alan Traino Cave Preserve is approved]

11. Folsom moves: The Acquisition Committee’s proposal to acquire [REDACTED] is approved.

Second by Berger

For: All

[The Acquisition Committee’s proposal to acquire [REDACTED]

is approved]

12. Simmons moves: The NCC will purchase [REDACTED] for [REDACTED] contingent on a clear title search and approval by our attorney.

Second by Folsom

For: All

[The NCC will purchase [REDACTED] for [REDACTED] contingent on

a clear title search and approval by our attorney.]

13. Informational point: The Ad-hoc Alan Traino Preserve Committee is created with D. Hedges as Chairman.

14. Simmons moves: Erik Nieman is appointed Manager of the Ella Armstrong Preserve.

Second by Folsom

For: Rest

Abstain: Nieman

[Erik Nieman is appointed Manager of the Ella Armstrong Preserve]

15. Simmons moves: Joey O’Reilly is appointed Manager of the Sellecks Preserve.

Second by Berger

For: All

[Joey O'Reilly is appointed Manage of the Sellecks Preserve]

Informational point: Next EC meeting will be Sunday, April 28, 2019 at 10 AM at the Thacher Park Visitor Center; there will be a Clarksville Preserve work day on the preceding day.

Informational point: the Summer Board meeting will be Sunday June 2, 2019 at 10 AM at the Chu residence.

Informational point: the late Summer EC meeting will be Sunday August 25, 2019 at 10 AM, location TBD, but we will inquire about the MHLC offices.

16. Simmons moves: The NCC Fall meeting will be Sunday September 29, 2019 at 10 AM location TBD (pending the Barn Dance schedule; we will likely inquire about either the Octagon Barn or the Onesquethaw Firehouse).

Second by Engel

For: All

[The NCC Fall meeting will be Sunday September 29, 2019 at 10 AM location TBD]

17. Simmons moves to thank Jacob Morris-Siegel and MassWildlife for hosting this NCC meeting.

Second by Ingalls

For: Rest

Abstain: Morris-Siegel

[The NCC thanks Jacob Morris-Siegel and MassWildlife for hosting this NCC meeting]

18. Hedges moves to adjourn.

Second by Ingalls

For: Rest

Against: Morris-Siegel

[The meeting is adjourned]

Meeting adjourned at 1:24pm

**Attachment A
President's Report**

1. Please get any nominations for the Board into Norm as soon as you can, even if they are just suggestions, he (or we) can run them down and see if people are interested.
2. We have received several volunteer inquiries for open Preserve Manager slots, which is very encouraging.
3. On a personal note, I was quite ill over the Christmas/New Year's Holidays and fell way behind in both my day job and NCC duties. I appreciate everyone's understanding if some issues have not moved along more smoothly or in a timelier manner. Hope we are getting things back under control. I'd like to thank my fellow Officers and everyone else that has kept things moving along!
4. We have some significant acquisitions potentials coming up in the near future. These require that we make some significant monetary investments, even for donated properties. We have long been in need of a Fund Raising Chair/Development Director that can help us bring in the financial resources we need to continue our mission. Please think about who could staff this position from your circles of friends, acquaintances, etc. We are presently OK financially, but need to start recouping some of our expenses and plan for being able to do an even bigger deal, if and when one comes along.

Cave Preserve Management Plan Review Schedule

Year	March	June	September	December
2019	Bensons	Merlins		Onesquethaw
2020	Spider	Clarksville		Bentleys
2021	Ella Armstrong	Knox		Sellecks
2022	Bensons	Merlins		Onesquethaw
2023	Spider	Clarksville		Bentleys
2024	Ella Armstrong	Knox		Sellecks

Note: Luke indicates that he has no substantive changes to the Benson's Management Plan. There are a few items in the recommendations/future issues section that have been accomplished and he will be removing them or modifying as appropriate and submitting to the Board an edited version. He did note that he is not sure if there have been any programmatic insertions or updates that need to be incorporated.

CAVE PRESERVE REPORTS:

1. Bensons (Luke Mazza)

Progress: Have been on the property a number of times recently to perform maintenance on the bat detectors. No additional issues have been experienced with the two detectors after the one defective microphone was replaced. Everything else is in good shape and no signs of visitation other than for the bat detectors.

Issues: There aren't currently any issues that need addressing on the property.

Plans: Will continue to maintain the bat detectors where I'm available. Other than that things are on hold until Spring thaw and caving season.

2. Bentleys (Devon Hedges)

Plans: Replacing signage at kiosk, rock cairns for trail junctions near old logging paths and areas with sparse overhead foliage, driveway gravel project. Potentially clearing out plastic siding debris

Problems: Driveway ruts from drainage are negotiable but may be significant for some visitors. Determination on historical interest of plastic siding debris should precede removal. Signage includes out-of-date contact information, also shows moisture damage.

Progress: Driveway isn't manageable with snow/ice. Consultation in spring will hopefully determine whether adding stone will be of any benefit for winter visitation or help the spring runoff ruts. Visits every other week for CPP project show no meaningful visitation. Lots of wildlife tracks.

3. Clarksville (Thom Engel)

Nothing to report. There will be a work day on Saturday April 27 starting at 10AM to do trail work and to mark boundaries. There have been some footprints in the snow at the parking area, but none of them have been muddy.

4. Ella Armstrong (Open)

5. Knox (Mitch Berger)

Progress: DEC bat count occurred on January 3; Berger and Davis were invited to participate, but weren't able to due to Alan Traino's funeral and other commitments, respectively - we still need to find out the results. Trail check has occurred without signs of trouble, and volunteer visitation is more frequent than usual for the winter due to the bat monitoring project.

Issues: Nothing new - the Great Divide rope is still there, and Engel and Berger still haven't found time in-season to investigate the poison ivy and possibly parsnip plants.

Plans: Periodic property inspection and trail maintenance, 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, and investigation of troublesome plant species.

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

Problems: None.

Progress: The caves (Merlins and Dragon Bones) have been closed for the winter. We had one request to hunt on the property during the 2018 deer hunting season in New York, and while the hunter did scout the property, he did not actually come hunt on the property. Overwinter acoustic monitoring is the only other activity that's been happening on the property this winter.

Plans: Overwinter monitoring will continue and the caves will reopen in the spring.

Addition for Merlins by Devon: during CPP work, noted sparse trail signage on return trip; particularly tough route finding at night with snow cover. Consulted with preserve managers, added about a dozen trail markers. Return trip is now comparable with trip out in terms of trail signage.

7. Onesquethaw (Thom Engel)

Nothing to report.

8. Sellecks (Open)

9. Spider (Kevin Dumont) No Report

OTHER COMMITTEES (PRESIDENT):

Acquisitions (Chuck Porter)

[REDACTED] An Acquisition Proposal has been submitted to the Board and the next step would be preparation of a Management Plan.

[REDACTED]

The Salamander Cave in Kingston survey was completed and the easement area has been delineated. In order to facilitate the closing, we have retained Counsel Maryann McGovern Kenyon. Maryann has discovered that we are actually dealing with additional lands than what we had surveyed. I am getting a quote for the remaining survey work (other side of rail road tracks) so we can continue the process without a subdivision. In the process we are also getting some additional road frontage. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Nominating (Norm Berg)

An announcement for Trustee candidates was sent to NCC members in February and was including in the March NCC News.

President's Note: please forward any names to Norm for possible candidacy for the Board.

Risk Management (Mitch Berger)

Progress:

The paperwork we were waiting on for our property insurance arrived the day of the last Board meeting. I completed LTA's annual risk-management training program (required for Terraforma discounts). The new Clarksville land has been added to our General Liability policy (no additional cost this year). I completed and submitted our annual Terraforma application, and our coverage has been renewed.

Issues:

None!

Plans:

Add insurance coverage (G/L and Terraforma) for Salamander and our other pending acquisition if/when we close. Ensure that our General Liability and Directors and Officers policies are renewed in June. Collect information and "interviews" for a possible NCKMS presentation. Assemble the rest of the committee membership. Pick up other issues that were in-progress with the former ad-hoc committee.

Tory's Cave ad hoc committee (Bob Simmons)

Nothing new since last meeting

Bat Hibernation Ad hoc committee (Mitch Berger, Emily Davis, Mike Warner, Morgan Ingalls)

Temperature and Humidity

These loggers continue to be stored at the office as we are unable to enter the caves to place the loggers.

Light Sensors

The light sensors have been in place in caves since the end of September. We won't have any new information about these sensors until we retrieve them when the caves reopen in May.

Bat Acoustic Detectors

Detector SD card and battery swaps have been happening fortnightly. The office (Mike, Emily, and Peter) has been indispensable with making sure that SD cards and batteries go out to all the volunteers and making sure SD cards with data are sent to me. Everything has been going more smoothly now that volunteers are familiar with the process. I have been working through the acoustic data as it comes in, but have slowed down in the past two weeks since I've started working remotely for the NPS. I had intended to write an article for the most recent NCC newsletter, but was unable to due to time constraints.

Other

I attended the Northeastern Bat Working Group (NEBWG) meeting in January and many people were excited to hear about the project. I certainly plan to give a talk at NEBWG next year (2020). I also hope we'll be able to give a preliminary talk at NCKMS this fall- I won't be able to attend, but I'd be happy to put together a Power Point for someone else to present.

Governance ad hoc (Devon Hedges)

Committee hasn't convened.

**Attachment B
Vice President's Report**

Bylaws Committee (Joe Levinson)

Nothing to report.

Education (Thom Engel)

The Shenendehowa Science and Health Discovery Night has been scheduled for 12 April 2019 from 6:30PM to 9PM. In the past this was a very vigorous event with considerable student interaction because the teachers posed questions that required asking us to get the answers. Last year, there was no event, but the year before the questions we gone and the bulk of the interaction was telling people where the flight simulator was. For this reason, we will not be participating this year.

Science Committee (Larry Davis)

No report received.

Special Use (Thom Engel)

I already have 33 reservations for CY 2019. Clarksville accounts for 30 (91%) of these.

Surprise Cave Committee (Al DeMaria)

No report received.

Thacher Park (Thom Engel)

I have applied to renew the NCC research permit. I have also had informal discussions with the new assistant park manager. He would like to have an ingterpretive sign at Twin Fissure Sink about karst.

Tentative dates for workdays will be: June 1, July 6, Aug 3, Aug 31, and Sept 21. As with last year groups wishing to map in Hailes or Uhl1 Be Cold on other dates may do so by contacting me 96 hours before the scheduled surveying trip. (Our permit requires a 72 heads up to the park.)

**Attachment C
Treasurer's Report**



Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual
January 1 through February 25, 2019

	Jan 1 - Feb 25, 19	Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense		

Income		
Donations		
Auction Donations	0.00	2,000.00
Donations - Other	7,454.37	9,670.00
Total Donations	<u>7,454.37</u>	<u>11,670.00</u>
Grants		
Grants	0.00	1,500.00
Interest Earned	1.16	15.00
Membership Income	210.00	2,930.00
Total Income	<u>7,665.53</u>	<u>16,115.00</u>
Expense		
Acquisitions		
Acquisitions	592.00	2,000.00
Bank Charges		
Bank Charges	7.33	75.00
Donations-outgoing		
Donations-outgoing	0.00	200.00
Dues		
Dues	0.00	350.00
Education		
Education	0.00	50.00
Executive		
President	0.00	100.00
Secretary	0.00	50.00
Treasurer	0.00	50.00
VP	0.00	50.00
Total Executive	<u>0.00</u>	<u>250.00</u>
Grant Expense		
Grant Expense	243.66	1,500.00
Insurance		
Insurance	754.00	2,280.00
Legal Fees		
Legal Fees	0.00	1,000.00
Licenses & Permits		
Licenses & Permits	0.00	500.00
Meeting Expense		
Meeting Expense	0.00	100.00
Meetings & Conferences		
Meetings & Conferences	0.00	200.00
Membership Expenses		
Membership Expenses	0.00	100.00
Miscellaneous		
Miscellaneous	0.00	100.00
Office Expense		
Office Expense	0.00	100.00
Postage		
Postage	0.00	100.00
Preserves-Maintenance		
Bensons	0.00	250.00
Bentleys	0.00	100.00
Clarksville	0.00	100.00
Ella Armstrong	0.00	100.00
Knox	0.00	100.00
Merlins	0.00	100.00
Onesquethaw	0.00	50.00
Sellecks	0.00	100.00
Spider	0.00	100.00
Total Preserves-Maintenance	<u>0.00</u>	<u>1,000.00</u>
Promotion		
Promotion	0.00	2,000.00
Publishing		
Mailings	0.00	50.00
Website	0.00	60.00
Total Publishing	<u>0.00</u>	<u>110.00</u>
Science		
Science	0.00	3,000.00

Sponsorships	0.00	800.00
Taxes on Properties	387.00	300.00
Total Expense	<u>1,983.99</u>	<u>16,115.00</u>
Net Ordinary Income	5,681.54	0.00
Other Income/Expense		
Other Income		
Net Gain or Loss from NSF Fund	0.00	0.00
Net Gain or Loss Vanguard Life	44.03	0.00
Volunteer Value	<u>54,393.00</u>	<u> </u>
Total Other Income	54,437.03	0.00
Other Expense		
In Kind Out	0.00	0.00
Volunteer Value Exp	<u>54,393.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Total Other Expense	<u>54,393.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Net Other Income	<u>44.03</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Net Income	<u>5,725.57</u>	<u>0.00</u>

The grant application to Dogwood City Grotto was approved in the amount of \$1,000, which is earmarked for Salamander Cave. Currently \$1,750 has been raised for Salamander. Donations made in Alan Traino's memory total \$1,175. Note that the NSF Fund took a hit in the fourth quarter of 2018, decreasing about 8%.

Barn Dance Subcommittee - Emily Davis & Mike Warner:

No update at this time.

Investment Committee - John Fioroni:

As of 2/26/19 the NCC has an account balance of \$19,003.75, an increase of \$168.75 since 11/7/18. IBDK and VMFXX have yields of 2.75% and 1.86%, respectively; which is a small decrease from the Nov 2018 yields. After I have been granted access to the Vanguard account, I will be looking for one or two stock funds to purchase. Roughly 10%-20% of the entire account balance will be moved into stocks, with an ultimate goal of roughly 50% in stocks.

Membership Committee - Peter Youngbaer:

Membership Renewals and New Members: All renewal notices for memberships up through the end of February have been sent, a second and third notices, as appropriate. The database is current as of today, February 26.

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

November 19, 2018	April 22, 2012 (baseline)
Life: 63	Life: 18
Family Life: 9	Family Life: 0
Benefactor: 10	Benefactor: 10
Regular: 71	Regular: 88
Family: 17	Family: 16
Institutional: 8	Institutional: 3
Total: 178	Total: 135

Note: Total in November was 173; September was 180. High point was 209 in March, 2017.

Institutional Members: We slipped one with **Met Grotto** missing their Feb. 7 renewal. The rest are: *Boston Grotto, Central Connecticut Grotto, Northern New Jersey Grotto, Helderberg-Hudson Grotto, Vermont Cavers Association, New Jersey Initial Response Team, Camp Echo Lake, and Cornell University*. If your grotto or organization isn't listed here, please urge them to renew or join. Thank you.

Problems: The database went down for a few days, but Mike Chu was able to quickly do some updating and it's been up and operating. The look is a little different, but the format and functions are the same, so no big deal.

We had a mystery donation or membership via PayPal, with only an address that Bill Folsom tracked through PayPal. It's an apartment building that a former NCC member lived in, but he dropped membership. Another moved and re-upped from elsewhere, so this remains a mystery. I am also trying to track down contact information for several others who only either had an email address on their PayPal transaction (no response to emails), and two people who were given memberships by a long-time NCC member who promised to get me their contact info, but hasn't done so yet, despite a couple of emails.

I received a complaint about contact information for a member appearing in the minutes of a past meeting. I replied that since the posting was in a pdf format, I could not go in and edit it and sent a request to the officers. I do not know if that was followed up on, as I received no reply. In the future, if I sent lists with member contact info as in the past of this report, please do not publish the contact information. Thank you.

We continue to see lapsed memberships, especially from people who are active cavers. I welcome any and all ideas about how to change up how we are soliciting members.

Plans: Normal Operations: Will continue to send renewal notices, as well as second and third notices, as applicable. I am more than willing to step aside and let someone else be the Membership Chair, having done this for a little more than 7 years now. New blood might mean new energy and new approaches to the members and potential members. I am also willing to continue, but wanted to put that on the table, especially if there is anyone interested in taking over. Thank you.

Reminder: new email address: pyoungbaer@gmail.com

Office Committee Report - Emily Davis & Mike Warner:

Problems: Some stress with project coordination and added work load.

Progress: Finding success with project coordination and keeping it moving forward.

Plans: Continue with above for the next year plus.

Publications – Christa Hay:

newsletter will be going out this week and added to the newsletter. waiting on articles past the due date.

several emails sent out to members for newsletters and board nominations. i took a screen shot of the stats of the last email which was the board nominations. i believe more people do see them but only in the view panel in email. im also going to try and set the emails to names, that will help with possible spam issue.

Successful deliveries	176	100.0%
Total opens		97
Last opened	2/22/19 11:50AM	
Forwarded		0
Clicks per unique opens		5.3%
Total clicks		6
Last clicked	2/12/19 4:12PM	
Abuse reports		0

I contacted the Bensons Preserve manager about their write up for the next newsletter.

at the time of submitting this report, still no minutes on the website. it took me over a week to even find out when the next board meeting was being held, last meeting posted on our website was for September.

i was contacted by the Catskill Great Outdoor Expo and thought it could be a good idea to attend and showcase the NCC and have local grottos. information was passed along to EC. waiting to hear back.

Technology Committee Report – Mike Chu/Ramon:

Progress: Checked and updated all email aliases; redirecting managerless preserves to Bob Simmons for now. Reviewed individual preserve pages on the website for accuracy in conjunction with the preserve managers, and made updates where necessary - some management plans had been updated, and open/closed dates were adjusted to be more accurate and consistent. Added the previously missing board minutes from December 2017 through September 2018 to the website, as well as some other miscellaneous updates. Work was started on creating an events page on the website, however limited progress was made and that project is ongoing.

Plans: Addition of an events page to the website, for both recurring and special events. Beyond that, would like to solicit additional photos of the NCC preserves for use throughout the website, instead of using the stock cave images from non-NCC preserves that are currently in place.

Problems: Limited time availability translated into limited progress being made on the events page and other website changes. There should be more bandwidth in the coming months for this. Besides that, no problems.

Volunteer Value Committee – Vince Kappler:

Vince Kappler
 volunteervalue@necaveconservancy.org

Progress: The below table shows that NCC volunteers continue to support the mission of the organization. Special projects and a new acquisition tend to boost a specific year’s stats but overall members generally contribute almost the same year over year.

VOLUNTEER VALUE STATS

Year	Hours	Miles	Dollar Value
2006	1389.5	20,862	\$29,955.00
2007	1571.5	14,607	\$35,542.00
2008	1680.5	14,143	\$36,926.00
2009	1440.5	10,442	\$39,564.00
2010	1234.0	10,949	\$42,211.00
2011	1546.0	14,118	\$54,684.00
2012	1483.5	13,951	\$51,605.00
2013	1916.5	20,522	\$70,268.00
2014	1481.0	18,621	\$48,757.00
2015	1634.75	15,664	\$58,450.00
2016	1563.25	12,303	\$52,341.00
2017	2106.5	10,234	\$64,058.00
2018	1533.5	13,899	\$54,393.00
			\$638,754.00

2019 VV to date: \$8,268.00

Plans: The IRS has increased the business mileage rate from \$.545 to \$.58 for 2019. Note that this is not the rate that can be deducted from your personal taxes. The NCC adopted the use of the prevailing business rate when it modeled its VV program after the original NSS-USFS VV agreement which permitted the use of the higher rate.

Independent Sector, the national membership organization that tracks VV trends, reports that the 2017 NE average VV was worth in excess of \$27.00 per hour. (2017 is the latest year info is available.) I will use the \$27 amount to calculate VV during 2019.

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 Minutes
February 17, 2019, 10:00am
Bill Folsom's Home in NYC**

Called to order 10:05am

Present: B. Simmons, B. Folsom, T. Engel, M. Berger, W. Russell

1) Town of Bethlehem / Town of New Scotland “Meeting the People Making Conservation Happen” update

Thom attended this event and reported that it was interesting. He brought the program from the event for us to look at. We had a booth, and Thom might present at the event again next year if they ask.

Thom had the opportunity to talk with Mark King about a couple of things. He got a brochure of the MHLC preserve. We discussed the Albany County Land Bank – where foreclosed-upon land goes, and much is auctioned off later, or transferred to other groups, etc. (Onesquethaw was in the Land Bank at one point, and then was given to MHLC).

Bill inquired whether there was anything actionable that came out of the event, or any other benefit we got from it. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Thom and Mark also talked about another property MHLC already owns straddling the intersection of Bushendorf Rd. and County Road 102 (north of Joralemon) – 100 acres, all limestone, and containing at least 4 caves (The Four Little Indians). Thom reported that for the most part, the benefit we obtained was from networking at the event.

2) Acquisitions

Salamander - Bob retained an attorney, and they're talking with the owners' attorney. The piece of land downstream of the railroad crossing may be part of the same tax lot; without doing a subdivision, we may end up with both parts and not be able to take just the cave, and that other part wasn't on the survey because everyone thought it was part of a different tax lot. The attorney is on it, and seems to be doing a good job. She was already familiar with the NCC and enthusiastic about helping us out with stuff. She was formerly involved with Scenic Hudson.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

We also had a conversation about fundraising after we buy this, how much money would be left afterwards, and what happens if another deal comes through while we're working on rebuilding our reserves. Bill noted that prior to reaching the point where we have sufficient reserves to handle the possibility of multiple large deals coming through close together, we do have the possibility of applying for loans financed by other conservancies, as he's seen some other groups do.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]


[REDACTED]

3) Requests for past meeting minutes

We're all well aware of how behind Mitch got on preparing these for publication with nonpublic information properly redacted. However, since he completed that part of the work, their posting has been backlogged waiting for one of our other overcommitted folks to have time. The topic is being mentioned because we've received another few requests for the minutes recently, yet Mitch is sensitive to everyone being a volunteer and doesn't want to give anyone grief, especially on this topic. Bob indicated that he'd ask how to help get the next step done.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



5) SEFA and NYSCPP grant applications status

The SEFA application period ended January 19; we missed it. Going forward, Bob's son Tom will handle that application. He will be doing the NYSCPP one as well. Actions won't come around until next winter, though – we did try to scramble to meet the requirements for the NYSCPP application at the last Board meeting, but we had the wrong Board resolution (we approved a resolution appropriate for one of their other types of grants), and there were not enough days remaining to fix it.

6) Recruiting Board candidates from outside the NCC (maybe CLC or MHLC?)

Thom's sense is that having a couple of Trustees who aren't necessarily part of the caving community would be good for cross-pollination and out of the box ideas (look, for example, at what Christine Young brought to the table). Bill noted that Norm Berg is doing the nuts and bolts of seeking and working with candidates and elections, but not as much on outreach and Bob says the same was true of him when he was in that role. We briefly discussed the issue of attempts to “pack the Board” and the possibility that that leads to distorting the organization if too many folks not connected to caving end up on its governing body. One note that was made is that some groups guard against that risk by having a requirement of membership for some number of years before one can serve on its Board, but we didn't think suggesting that we make a change along those lines was necessary or would be particularly palatable at the moment. Thom's interest is in having some (not many, perhaps two) crosspollinating people on the Board. Mitch notes that since it's almost entirely in the general membership's hands (save for appointing people to fill vacancies), if several non-caver candidates run, we don't really know how many seats they'd end up with; Bill points out that appropriate caver Board candidates likely have strong enough histories that the membership seems unlikely to replace all of them. Bill also suggested that we ask Christine if she knows people who might be appropriate?

7) How to deal with “non-vacant vacancies” (where a committee chair is not available or is incapable of carrying out his or her duties for some defined period)

Thom raised this topic in light of our recent experiences where a Preserve Manager was unable to perform his regular duties due to health issues, but very much wanted to continue serving and hoped he'd be able to resume normal duties in the foreseeable future. Thom suggested that perhaps the answer was to empower the President to appoint a temporary assistant. We all agree (and have discussed the general idea before) that planning for continuity is important, and if any of us gets hit by a bus, the organization should be able to survive such a tragedy. Bob thinks the answer is to encourage/insist that all committees have co-chairs or assistant chairs, and plans to start top-down on that effort with Preserve committees, paralleling recent action by the NSS with their preserve committees.

8) Finding an assistant Special Use Coordinator, expecting a transition after 2021

Thom doesn't want to do this position forever. He started in 2011, and after 2021, will have been 11 seasons, and he would like to step away from it. He notes that there are lots of moving parts to this role, and someone really needs to ramp up in advance in order to be able to smoothly take over. Bill asked how Thom felt about writing an article for the newsletter, and Thom indicated that given a bunch of the items already submitted for this issue, he doesn't want to do it for this one, but will write an article sometime in the next year.

9) Filling positions and roles previously held by Alan Traino

Alan held various positions: Sellecks Preserve Manager, Ella Armstrong Preserve Manager, Board Trustee, and was working on purchasing Slingerlands Hellhole which he'd have owned and managed. There are several people who've expressed interest in helping out in various of these roles, to the point that there might actually be choices to make. Bob has talked with these folks, and there are another couple we identified yet to discuss with, but it seems that there is enthusiasm, and this is on the right track.

10) What to do at Onesquethaw now that the area in front is no longer being farmed

Thom explained that the fellow who was farming it had a significant stroke, and has given up farming. All he was doing there anyway was getting feed for his cattle. When we started managing (and then acquired) the land, it had been mostly corn and occasionally alfalfa, but it's now being left fallow. Do we want to just let it grow up, or if approached by someone else who wants to farm it, should we allow that? Bill asked if we want to make some money, and Mitch inquired if we could in fact do that without jeopardizing our nonprofit status, or if Bill was kidding. We believe we could legitimately earn money that way, but our land is 1.3 acres, and only 0.5 acres of it was being farmed previously, so it really isn't a viable revenue stream. Thom is inclined to let it grow on its own, and says that we don't need to address this now, but should do so the next time the Onesquethaw MP comes up for review. He

also notes that we have a broad sink area in the middle of the land, and a subsidence on the edge of it, which drives his expectation that this isn't going to get better, but will get worse in terms of driving farm equipment over it - do we really want to have someone lose a wheel in a sink? Bob wondered if we should let it go to weeds or whatever invasives find their way in, or make it butterfly or pollinator friendly and do some managed reforestation.

Bob also asked if there's an update on the bat exclusion concept that would allow us to leave the cave open next winter. Thom sent a note to Carl, but hasn't heard back, though this is the DEC's busy season.

11) Participating in the Shen Science Fair?

Thom's been going to this for the last several years. Shenendehowa is a school district near Albany – it's a campus where they have all of their schools. The event used to be called SAGE, and students used to be required to go around asking questions of certain people. Two years ago, they introduced a new format without those questions, and didn't require students to go. Thom was there as usual, set up, and the question he got asked most was “which way is it to the flight simulator?” Thom doesn't think it's worth his while to go anymore. He realizes that he could ask himself (as the Education Committee reports to the VP), but figured he'd run it by us. We told him to use his own discretion, and that if he didn't feel our attendance was valuable, he shouldn't feel obligated to continue.

12) Database and other IT issues

There was an issue with the webapp we use to access our membership database, which caused some concern for Peter that we'd lost our DB, and Bob wanted a better understanding of what had happened. Bill and Mitch expanded on Mike's explanation (short story: nothing was lost, and the database is fine, though we're sort of at the whim of a company's software upgrades because of our current hosting arrangement).

Bob also noted that every time we send our mass e-mails, we get a notice from one of our members that he's changing his address, and despite making changes in our database, they don't seem to reliably get carried over to Mailchimp. Bob was going to get access to Mailchimp, though it hasn't happened yet. There's certainly a technical issue here, but it's perhaps a more systemic data synchronization issue that we should work on.

13) Catskill Great Outdoor Expo 3/30/19 in Kingston

We received via Christa a suggestion that we might want to participate in this event. She received solicitation to participate in her role as an NSS preserve manager, but didn't think it was a good fit for the NSS. Bill doesn't really think it's worth doing this event, and Thom can't get excited enough to go. However, he suggests asking Cara, Erik, and Paul Rubin if any of them are interested due to some combination of proximity to the event, involvement in other activities, or venues to present research.

14) Members' Day 2019

Thom researched booking space at Thacher for the event. Convention is in late June, and we noted that we should check with Mike & Emily about availability [now confirmed]. We're aiming for sometime in July, and Bill suggested that despite it sounding odd, the weekend after the 4th might actually be good for lots of people. The Hailes area has limited parking, which is shared with climbers. A more isolated area is probably better, perhaps Horseshoe 2 [now reserved]. It would cost \$120 for the day, has electricity, and is a short walk to the cliff. There is still a cost of \$6/car. At Horseshoe, Hailes, and some other areas, there's a booth attendant, and we could provide a guest list to give tickets to and bill us later. We would need to obtain a liquor permit (which is free). We have \$500 in the budget for this event. People who come at the last minute instead of RSVP'ing would have to pay for their parking, but would be welcome. Based on schedules we know of, we're aiming for July 6th with a backup of July 23rd? The event would feature a cookout, short guided walks, trips to Hailes (we could arrange for it to coincide with one of our Thacher project days, which might actually make parking free for us... Thom will have to discuss with staff). Maybe we can talk with Emily and Mike about running the event.

15) State Land Trust meetings (NY, CT, MA)

Bob will go to the CT and NY events, but MA and CT are the same day. Jacob will go to MA as a state rep. Someone else should ideally also go to MA. Erik expressed interest in NY. The LTA event (NY) is May 2-3. Matt Decker wanted us to have a cave event last year when it was in Albany, but it was in April when everything was closed. This year, the caves would be open, but the event is in Saratoga. Bill or Thom would be willing to go.

16) NCKMS attendance/presentations

It's in Bristol, VA Oct 7-11. We're a sponsor, and at our level, get a booth and 2 complementary admissions. Bob mailed Wil about the deadline for presentations. Thom has presented the results of the Clarksville usage study at Convention, but not yet at an NCKMS and is considering doing that. Bob talked with Morgan about preliminary results of the NYSCPP project, but she can't be there; she might put together stuff for someone else to present. Mitch might do something on risk management, or could present NYSCPP stuff.

17) NRO

The Boston Grotto asked if we'd like to run our usual auction? The answer's yes. [REDACTED]

End: 3:17pm