

NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY, INC

**Minutes**

September 29, 2019 10:00 AM  
Knox, NY

Meeting called to order at 10:10am

1. Introduction and greetings – Robert Simmons

2. Attendance

Officers: R. Simmons, T. Engel, M. Berger, B. Folsom

Trustees: M. Chu, D. Hedges, W. Russell, K. Dumont, L. Hatfield

3. Absent with proxy: M. Ingalls - M. Warner as proxy

4. Absent without designated proxy: E. Nieman, J. Morris-Siegel, R. Armen

The board may appoint proxies from the members in attendance.

[No proxies were appointed]

[The regular order of business was suspended and the floor given to C. Herzog (Wildlife Biologist for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation {NYSDEC})]

5. Eagle Cave management challenges (C. Herzog)

Herzog was present in his personal capacity (not officially speaking for the DEC) to seek input from the caving and cave management communities on difficulties with Eagle Cave. There are a large number of bats present there in recent years (order of 3,000, though that's way down from years ago), and the population isn't doing very well. Most of the bats are little browns; there are also some small-footed and a few tricolored. It's known that this is a very popular cave, and that between April and November, people are visiting virtually every weekend, even when it's closed, despite signage. There have been a couple mid-winter visits here and there, but not much (the difficulty of getting to the cave in wintry conditions tends to limit it). Due to the damage that visitation during hibernation season is causing to the bat population, there's a push toward gating the cave, although they have no interest in keeping people out during the summer months. Herzog is surprised that there's been approval for this project, as constructing artificial structures in wilderness areas such as the one where Eagle is located is normally forbidden, and even getting permission to fly helicopters over the area to deliver the materials that would be required to gate the cave is a big deal. Jim "Crash" Kennedy has already looked at the site. They're looking to place a gate in the "shelter" entrance to the cave (the reasonable entrance people usually use) with a bar that can be removed for the summer to allow entry, and locked in place for hibernation season. Topics the Board and guests were asked to provide input on include whether gating the shelter entrance would result in pushing people to use the more inhospitable crevice or other entrances, whether those should be gated (with the note that gates on the other entrances would be permanent rather than openable gates, unlike the shelter gate), whether the caving community might provide volunteers to work on the gating project, and on opening/closing the gate for each season, etc.

Davis indicated that from a rescue perspective, having permanent gates on the other entrances would be undesirable as it would limit options if a rescue had to occur (we learned that the reason gates on the other entrances would be permanent had to do with Kennedy's assessment of what was possible, though there's a chance that with vertical caver rather than DEC maintenance, we could discuss a removable bar). It was generally thought that most people would not use the crevice or other entrances upon finding the shelter entrance gated, and that it would be awfully difficult to do so during much of the winter anyhow due to how icy and slick it would be. Engel asked if the closure signage in use was similar to the signs provided by the DEC for our caves, and Herzog indicated it was very similar. Engel then told of an interaction with a group he encountered at Clarksville which had seen the signs, decided that they probably had to do with White Nose, and did not actually read enough of the printed words to understand that the cave was closed, suggesting that simpler signs with fewer and bigger words may sadly be necessary to actually communicate successfully. Davis planned to put Herzog in touch with G. Moore, as he uses Eagle more often, and has perspective to share as rescue team co-captain. Hedges and Berger indicated belief that the caving community would happily provide volunteer effort for the project, especially if it involved the seasonal opening of the gate(s), and described the dissatisfaction the NCC regularly hears from some members about our stewardship arrangement with Surprise Cave because it doesn't involve responsible cavers being allowed access to the cave (yet). Davis suggested that gating just the shelter entrance, then studying the results for a year and reassessing whether the other entrances require action might be best; Herzog agreed that was a possibility, but noted that the DEC has a strong desire not to disrupt the area twice (especially with helicopters - people like their tranquility in the wilderness). Engel suggested that Herzog write an article for the Northeastern Caver to get the word out. Herzog indicated that the likely timeline for whatever action ends up being taken is between next June and August.

6. Other topics related to the DEC or Herzog's knowledge (C. Herzog)

Herzog asked if there were other topics attendees wished to discuss while he was there, noting again that he'd only be speaking in his personal capacity. He was asked about Surprise Cave, and noted that the gate there seems to be useless for keeping people out (Russell explained that it used to be sturdy, and is now ineffectual because of irreparable damage done to it by a fire department during the well-known rescue many years ago), and that the idea of opening it during part of the year primarily as a tool to discourage break-ins is possible. He does want to work on opening one of the other old entrances to cool the cave as it's currently too warm for most bats to use. Most break-ins don't extend to mid-late winter, as the gated entrance freezes solid usually by mid-January. We also discussed the plan to exclude bats at Onesquethaw so that it could be opened to cavers year-round, as any bats that try to hibernate there are doomed to drown in a flood. Herzog has been in support of this plan for some time, and simply can't seem to get the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to respond. Engel asked if that agency would be at the Northeast Bat Working Group (NEBWG) meeting, and Herzog indicated that though they would, he's sure they won't engage with us about it at the conference. He did indicate who one of the relevant people to approach at the USFWS office in Hadley, MA. Lastly, Herzog mentioned to us that he expected an announcement to be published shortly about plans to list the tricolored bat as endangered in New York.

[The regular order of business was resumed at approximately 11:20am]

7. Officer reviews (D. Hedges)

The Trustees may choose to go into Executive Session at this time

*[Note: Though we haven't heard plans to use this time, we omit a Management Plan review at the September meeting to reserve this space for officer reviews so that these discussions can occur prior to officer elections in December. This effort is driven by the Governance ad-hoc Committee.]*

We were told that nothing had been prepared for this review, and more coordination would happen offline. The trustees did go outside to talk for a couple minutes, and reported back that there weren't major problems they wished to discuss at this time. Berger inquired whether it was still desired to block out this time in September instead of conducting a Management Plan review, as we've not successfully used it for this two years in a row (last year, reviews occurred, but were postponed until December). We made no changes to the plan at this time, but the Secretary was asked to send reminders next time this is coming up.

8. Officers' Reports

President: Attachment A

Vice President: Attachment B

Treasurer: Attachment C

Secretary: Attachment D

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

Second by Chu

For: All

[The Committee of the Whole is opened]

Topics:

1. National Cave and Karst Management Symposium (NCKMS) 2019 (Berger)

*[I don't have specific things to discuss here, but it's our final opportunity to discuss anything before the event, hence this placeholder.]*

The attendees will work out other logistics outside of the meeting, but we concluded that Simmons will produce and bring more copies of the Planned Giving brochure, Speleobooks will bring the roll-up poster, and Berger will send a reminder about these items to pack.

2. Fall Northeastern Regional Organization meeting (NRO) wrap-up (many who attended)

Berger noted that though Folsom set up the tent and Engel arrived early Saturday, the NCC presence wasn't particularly visible because our tent was taken over by the group serving breakfast (with permission, as we didn't have easy access to electricity, and lights weren't packed with the tent anyhow, so visibility Friday night wouldn't have been feasible). Simmons arrived later due to illness. The auction brought in a bit over \$800, which was less than we'd hoped, but good given low NRO attendance.

3. Convention wrap-up (Berger, Engel, Folsom, Armen)

*[Perspectives from the Executive Committee (EC) members who attended are presented in detail in the EC meeting minutes in Attachment D. This topic is here so that anyone else who attended can add information that may be of interest to the Board, and so that anyone can ask about the insights discussed from Convention at the EC meeting.]*

Russell noted that at these events (OTR included), he's seen Berger often busily rushing off to one meeting or another, referred to him as a socialite, and suggested that this is what we need, and he should keep it up. Berger is pretty sure he's never been called a socialite before, but expressed thanks for the encouragement.

#### 4. Old Timers Reunion (OTR) wrap-up (Berger)

*[The EC meeting included discussion of some issues that impeded our ability to be officially present at OTR this year. Berger will report on progress made on those issues and changes expected in the future.]*

Berger told the group that prior to OTR, Warner had sent a letter to Norma Dee (OTR's Vendor Coordinator) suggesting that some of the terms in the Memorandum of Understanding might not really fit conservancies. At the event, Berger sat in on The Robertson Association's long-range planning meeting, and was able to speak with Norma Dee at length once that meeting wrapped up. The conversation was productive, and though a new document hasn't been provided yet, we are expecting to be able to satisfy the new requirements by setting up a booth and keeping it open for a number of hours, but not being required to have it staffed. We'll be asked not to leave saleable and stealable merchandise at the booth when it's not staffed (a box of merchandise can be locked up in a car, for example, when nobody is working at the booth).

We've also been asked to downsize our footprint to 10'x10', as our existing very deep space will likely be given to CaveSim next year, and we'll be moved around the corner next to the Appalachian Karst Conservancy near where Highline Ropes usually is. Davis expresses concern that that area gets no foot traffic; this doesn't match Berger's observations (especially when Highline is around), but also notes that since we're not trying to make serious sales out of the booth, this isn't a major problem. Folsom was asked which budget line-item we placed money in this year for a new tent (as our current one is viewed by all who've had to assemble it as somewhere between "hated" and "despised"), and he said it's the "Promotion" line. Davis warned that many 10'x10' tents bend and collapse in on themselves in heavy rain (this may be tempered by the OTR site generally not having high winds even if it rains, and we discussed other mitigation strategies involving properly staking tents and bracing the top covering with "pool noodles" to make rain run off instead of pooling). Provided that we're not in a big rush to make the purchase, Warner agreed to help select a model that's likely to meet our needs without angering everyone who has to touch it. We also discussed the possibility of getting one with our logo screened onto it, or getting a non-anniversary banner (our existing one is apparently showing its age... such irony, given that the anniversary one *explicitly* states its age).

#### 5. New York State (NYS) Cave Protection Law proposal (Engel)

*[There is some discussion of Engel taking on this initiative in the EC meeting minutes in Attachment D. He had a meeting scheduled for September 26 on this topic with NYS Assembly staff. See also the handout at this meeting with the proposed text of the law.]*

Engel recounted that the first of approximately three attempts to date to get a cave protection law passed in NY was in the late 80s, and the most recent was around 1991. Each time, the mining and/or hunting industries beat it down. With the same party now in control of both of the state congressional chambers, he believes this might be the right time to try again, and is pursuing this initiative as a personal project. He wrote to his assemblywoman, who responded surprisingly quickly, and recently had a good meeting with her chief of staff and legislative director. Engel showed us a draft of proposed text for the law, largely copied from the most recent attempt to get it passed and lightly edited to avoid duplicating issues covered by the "sportsman's law" and to avoid preventing sales of "herkimer diamonds." He doesn't believe it's time to ask for our endorsement of a particular bill until it's been through the editing process that happens before it's placed on the floor of a congressional chamber, but would like to ask the NCC Board to endorse the general idea of New York having such a law today; an item will appear in New Business to this effect.

#### 6. Checklist of expectations for Board members (Engel)

Engel explained that this item came about because we nearly failed to have quorum for this meeting, and only learned that this might be the case a couple days before the meeting, despite that we schedule them six months in advance, and so he wondered if we needed a checklist about what's expected of Trustees or Board members in general. He also searched the Board Manual for bylaws and acts enumerating such requirements, and provided a handout with the text of relevant bylaws and acts. Berger noted that several times over the past handful of years, he'd heard multiple comments from different people lamenting that the same small core of people seems to be conducting much of the Conservancy's work, and wishing that everyone on the Board were doing more than just attending quarterly meetings, and that though it may be hard to articulate what constitutes "sufficient" non-meeting contribution from a Board member (he and Dumont both dislike the idea of saying "must participate on N committees"), this may be an opportunity to try to figure out what "sufficient" means to us.

Simmons opined that there are really two things missing from our current practices that would go a long way to solving this issue: one is "onboarding" - the process of welcoming a new person to an organization, showing them the way typical things are done, explaining a bunch of the basic expectations, etc. The other is a set of job descriptions - explanations at a deeper level than the bylaws cover of what each officer position really entails, what being a Trustee entails, and the same for various committee chairs. Hatfield noted that early in the meeting, the Trustees were asked about evaluating the Officers, and that this seemed like the Officers evaluating the Trustees. While Folsom thought that was an insightful observation, Berger disagreed strongly that it was an accurate

description of the intent, and explained that when mention of this topic first came up, he had noted that as our organization is structured, the Officers are accountable to the Trustees rather than the other way around, and that Trustee involvement, buy-in, and approval would be necessary if we were to establish a set of expectations. He also noted that his personal views on this topic date from his time as a Trustee and haven't really changed, and thinks that this should be about what standard the Board, as a group, wants to hold itself to.

Hedges pointed out that some of what the Governance Committee was actually able to accomplish before it became harder for them to have meetings (due to a combination of loss of Young as a Trustee, Ingalls's fieldwork schedule, the time demands the New York State Conservation Partnership Program (NYSCPP) scientific research project and other responsibilities have placed on Hedges, and probably other challenges) was an inventory of the NCC's documentary infrastructure, and that such things as the job descriptions Simmons mentioned fit well with their committee's charter. He also mentioned that one of the things they wanted to work on was Board development, and that Trustees very likely come onto the Board with questions about what other than the meetings they're supposed to do. Russell noted that the handout provided by Engel was the first opportunity he'd had to see some of the bylaws and acts. Simmons asked if the Governance Committee needed more members, as we'd just noted that it's down by one, and offered to participate more actively, as he's an ex-officio member. The upshot of this discussion is that the Governance Committee would like to run with this topic.

*[Russell departed at this point for another commitment; no proxy was appointed.]*

#### 7. NYSCPP scientific research project grant (Simmons)

Simmons reminded us that we've received our one-year extension of time on the project. Earlier in the meeting during the President's Report, Berger had raised the point that we'd planned to redo the light-detection data collection during the one-year extension since this data from the first year wasn't usable, and asked what we were going to do about this plan given that we hadn't acquired new equipment and the winter closure begins in under two days. Herzog had mentioned light collection data in his discussion of the amount of visitation at Eagle and Surprise caves earlier in the meeting, and it was asked what equipment the DEC was using. Warner and Davis stated that the DEC has old Hobos that are no longer on the market. Simmons says we plan to use game cameras, and he's been looking at some models that use lithium batteries which can last all winter for approximately \$100. We discussed where we might be able to find the money for those, whether we might be able to resell them after data collection as they're much less niche equipment than the acoustic monitors, etc. Hatfield has some Reconyx cameras that take "C" batteries that were acquired for a project at the high school she taught at; they may be usable for our project if we involve the high school students.

Simmons also reminds us that there are upcoming hour-long calls and in-person sessions about the grant process. He will be participating in one of the calls and attending the session in Saratoga. He also reminded us that in a rush at the end of last year, we'd attempted to vote on a motion that would've allowed us to apply for a transaction grant for the Salamander acquisition, but didn't get the necessary wording quite right, and alerted us that there'll be an upcoming e-vote to get the requirements in order for this year (in large part, they have to do with setting aside money into a stewardship fund).

Simmons also described a program managed in New York by Ducks Unlimited to help acquire vast amounts of wetland areas via compensatory funds. Asked whether the area of the Traino Preserve might qualify, he indicated that it's too small, and this program seems to be looking for areas that are 40+ acres.

#### 8. Future NCKMS (Warner)

Warner told us that the 2021 NCKMS is likely to be in the Austin, TX area, and that he'd been in touch with Jim Kennedy, who chairs the NCKMS Steering Committee. They've expressed interest in seeing Vermont caves at the 2023 conference. When Warner reached out to the usual suspects in VT, they indicated that they'd be happy to arrange field trips to caves there, but definitely don't want to deal with the other aspects of hosting. Thus, Warner and Davis are likely to work on hosting the conference in the Albany area with field trips to Vermont caves (evidently travel time isn't all that much longer than the conference sometimes experiences). They've been clear that they don't wish to simply repeat the previous field trip from the last time it was in NY. Berger noted that his reading of the field trip plans for the upcoming NCKMS indicate that they're generally easy non-strenuous trips, and asked if the Steering Committee realizes how much hiking up mountains will likely be involved if they cave in Vermont. Warner indicated that this question wasn't off-base, but that they seem fairly insistent about which karst they want to experience.

The primary reason for raising this topic was to feel out interest in the NCC being the organizational host, as it was when NCKMS was last in NY. The idea seemed generally agreeable, and Berger indicated a strong desire for the NCC to be the host, as given the sorts of things we're working on in the grant world these days, keeping our name out there with the sorts of agencies that attend NCKMS is an important thing to do. As a proposal for NCKMS to come here four years from now isn't even ready for NCKMS to approve yet, there's no formal action for the NCC to take at this time to agree to be the hosting organization.

9. Press release about Bob Addis's receipt of the NSS Conservation Award (Berger)

Hay asked in her Publicity Committee report whether the Board was interested in having a press release go out about our past President receiving this prestigious award (it has already been written about in our newsletter). There is indeed such interest, and Folsom will respond to indicate this.

It was also asked whether we wanted to simultaneously send out a press release about the winter cave closures as they're imminent. There seemed to be some confusion about whether we'd published such a release in the past (we've put notices up on our website and in the Northeastern Caver, but not published in newspapers, which was what was being discussed for the release about Addis's award). Additionally, Berger objected to us hastily putting together a notice of the cave closures that would very likely be partially inaccurate and perpetuate the confusion that's been caused by our other similar notices. This discussion became far more stressful and lengthy than was appropriate to spend meeting time on, and was terminated. While we likely will end up posting information on our website, we do not plan to publish a press release about cave closures in the media (in fact, we generally avoid publishing much of anything about our caves in the media).

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

Second by Dumont

For: All

[The Committee of the Whole is closed]

Old Business

[None]

New Business

11. Berger moves: The minutes of the June 2, 2019 Board Meeting are approved.

Second by Hatfield

*[The Secretary would like to thank Folsom, Dumont, and Nieman for sending in their reviews.]*

For: All

[The minutes of the June 2, 2019 Board Meeting are approved]

12. Folsom moves: The NCC will sponsor the Northeast Bat Working Group (NEBWG)'s 2020 meeting at the \$250 level.

*[At the December 2018 meeting, the Board voted to sponsor the NEBWG meeting at the \$200 level. When the sponsorship details were released, it turned out that the lowest sponsorship level is \$250 this year. While the Board's intent to sponsor at that lowest level was clear, since we specified an exact number, the Office Committee asked the Treasurer what to do, so we've put this item on the agenda to formalize the correction. When the EC discussed the question, Berger noted that this only would've put us roughly 6% over the amount we budgeted for sponsorships, which is generally considered acceptable without explicit permission, and we might have saved some time by indicating the non-numeric level we intended to sponsor the conference at in the motion, and only putting the expected dollar amount in the budget line-item so that small discrepancies wouldn't require Board action to address.]*

Second by Berger

For: All

[The NCC will sponsor the Northeast Bat Working Group (NEBWG)'s 2020 meeting at the \$250 level]

13. Engel moves: The NCC supports the concept of New York having a cave protection law.

Second by Hedges

For: All

[The NCC supports the concept of New York having a cave protection law]

Informational point: Next EC meeting will be Sunday, November 3, 2019 at 10 AM at Simmons's home.

Informational point: the Winter Board meeting will be Sunday, December 8, 2019 at 10 AM at Speleobooks.

Informational point: the late Winter EC meeting will be Sunday, February 2, 2020 at 10 AM at Folsom's home in NYC.

14. Simmons moves: The NCC Spring meeting will be Sunday, March 8, 2019 at 10 AM in the Saugerties area.

Second by Hedges

For: Rest

Abstain: Warner

[The NCC Spring meeting will be Sunday, March 8, 2019 at 10 AM in the Saugerties area]

15. Simmons moves to thank Amy and Russ Pokorny for providing the venue for this NCC meeting and the Barn Dance.

Second by Hedges

For: All

[The NCC thanks Amy and Russ Pokorny for providing the venue for this NCC meeting and the Barn Dance]

16. Engel moves to adjourn.

Second by Berger

For: All

[The meeting is adjourned]

Meeting adjourned at 2:58pm

**Attachment A  
President's Report**

1. Thanks to all for the coordination and execution of the Members Appreciation Day in July. The event went very well and I think we learned a lot about doing such an event. Next year's event should be even better!
2. Still looking for candidates for fund raising chair. We have a number of expenses coming up with the Salamander and Traino acquisitions and need to restore the balance.
3. A great job done by all at the recent NRO, thank you everyone. The auction raised over \$800.
4. We were not at OTR this year due to the organization's staffing requirements. Our comments and others may have tempered these requirements and the NCC will likely be back next year, in a different, smaller space than previously.
5. Still having issues getting timely submittals for the various committees for completion of the President's Report. This was possibly due in part this go round by my vacation schedule and subsequent illness in early September and my not getting the reports requests out sooner. Looking into ways to automate this process so notice goes out without my intervention.
6. Three of the Officers will be presenting a total of four presentations at the upcoming NCKMS in Virginia (10-5 to 10-8).

**Cave Preserve Management Plan (MP) Review Schedule**

| Year | June        | December           | March             |
|------|-------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 2019 | Merlins     | <b>Onesquethaw</b> | Bensons           |
| 2020 | Clarksville | Bentleys           | Spider            |
| 2021 | Knox        | Sellecks           | Ella<br>Armstrong |
| 2022 | Merlins     | Onesquethaw        | Bensons           |
| 2023 | Clarksville | Bentleys           | Spider            |
| 2024 | Knox        | Sellecks           | Ella<br>Armstrong |

Note: The Onesquethaw MP will be up for review at the December meeting.

**CAVE PRESERVE REPORTS:**

**1. Bensons (Luke Mazza)**

Progress: Right of way was maintained over the summer. We are up to 13 permits issued this year, which is already a record, and there will likely be some requests before the caving season closes out. A good portion of the use of the preserve this season was to conduct vertical training sessions in the Walk-in Entrance. Over NRO weekend John Dunham was scheduled to install temperature and humidity data logger(s) in the cave for the overwinter monitoring project.

Issues: There are no issues that need immediate attention.

Plans: No immediate plans other than to post the closed cave signs at the end of the month.

[Ed: *Berger noted that the preserve maintenance budget for Bensons is higher this year than for the other preserves, and as yet unused, and inquired what we'd been planning to do and whether it's been forgotten. Folsom couldn't recall what the specific reason was, but is fairly sure there was something planned.*]

**2. Bentleys (Devon Hedges)**

Progress: Not a lot since June. Wasn't able to get out much this season, especially not compared to during the NYS Conservation Partnership Program (NYSCPP) project.

Problems: Vendor never produced a bid [Ed: *for grading the driveway*] despite two repeated solicitations. Grotto leadership for Boston, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI), Shawangunk Catskill Area Grotto (SCAG), Helderberg Hudson Grotto (HHG) were contacted about work day scheduling but yielded no responses.

Plans: Site visit is well overdue; plan to check the visitor log, see about trail upkeep before December. Board display documents should be reproduced and installed before next season. Ensure brochure stock. Will reach out to neighbors to inform them about the ownership issues for permission to hunt.

### **3. Clarksville (Thom Engel)**

NYS Department Of Transportation (NYSDOT) constructed a guiderail across the front of the Gregory Parcel. The entrance is still accessible via the new trail and the guiderail is not much of an impediment to accessing the trail from the road. A large tree fell blocking the trail from the NW corner of the upper lot. It does not block any of our trails. The tree, which is not on our property, will be left as is. Cave Closed signs will go up 10/1.

[Ed: Berger mentioned that on a recent trip into the cave, he'd been surprised at interior graffiti, and asked if it was known. The managers present hadn't been aware of it. A work day to remove it is now planned for Saturday, May 2.]

### **4. Ella Armstrong (Erik Neiman)**

Progress: Cleared and maintained trail. Working on reclaiming parking area from weed growth.

There were 7 known visits to the cave during this season.

Issues: Property boundaries are not currently marked that I am able to see from walking the preserve.

Plans: Attempting to acquire property survey and/or locate survey pins in order to mark boundaries. Periodic trail and parking maintenance.

A sign-in log will be placed at the kiosk for 2020.

### **5. Knox (Mitch Berger)**

Progress: Trail checkups (for both trails) occurred 9/14, with no problems evident.

Knox was used for the National Cave Rescue Commission (NCRC) Small Party Assisted Rescue (SPAR) class taught in our region in July - Mark Dickey was the lead instructor, and was very proactive in working to make sure their plans for the special use case of the course would meet with the NCC's approval. He and Jessica Van Ord also did significant work on grooming the trail and eliminating much poison ivy prior to the course, and I've told them that we greatly appreciate their help.

Knox was also used for the Orientation to Cave Rescue (OCR) sponsored by the Albany-Schoharie Cave Rescue Team last weekend, with the involvement of the Knox Volunteer Fire Department and some media coverage. The event went well, and the NCC volunteer presence at the OCR (students in the course, staff helping to run the event, and specialists helping with instruction) is something for our organization to be proud of.

The webbing of unknown age/origin at the Great Divide was handed to me by Nieman at the last meeting, so it's no longer of concern.

33 permits for Knox have been issued with dates since the last meeting (possibly one or two more generic ones I mailed out from OTR or Convention as well). This looks like an increase from last year, though part of that is due to how early in June our last meeting was. Two of them were also permits for special projects that I issued without requiring that the applicants go through the Special Use coordinator - one for the SPAR instructors to do trail work and assess suitability of some in-cave areas for the exercises they planned to work on with the class, and one for Dunham to install instrumentation for the NYSCPP project. It's still a slight increase, though.

2 permits for Crossbones were issued this quarter (both to the same tripleader, and both trips happened). We received a report that there were no signs of problems in the cave.

Issues: Still need to obtain the results of the winter NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) bat count.

The Great Divide rope is still there.

Engel and Berger still need to investigate what may be poison parsnip plants.

I expect we're still going to have confusion over the Knox opening date at the end of the winter. Also, for what it's worth, bats were observed in Crossbones on the recent trips.

Plans: Periodic property inspection and trail maintenance.

Possible graffiti removal in Knox and investigation of methods.

Addition of trail markers and reposting of property.

Boundary marking.

Removal of the Great Divide rope.

Investigation of troublesome plant species.

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



Since the last NCC meeting there has been five permitted trips to Merlins Cave but only two trips actually went to the cave. There is a cave steward training trip scheduled to happen on the 22nd and 2-3 other trips are scheduled to happen on the 21st & 28th. The temperature/humidity monitors for Merlins and Dragonbones Caves are to be installed on the 22nd. The hope is to resume digging at the Dome 12 sink this fall.

**7. Onesquethaw (Thom Engel)**

After a couple of years not farming, the land is now being farmed. I need to track down the farmer and explain to him that he's farming NCC property and that we (as opposed to our neighbors, the Mattesons) should be paid the rent for use of our land. For the year to date we've had 17 permitted trips with 115 people. Cave Closed signs will go up 10/1 or thereabouts.

[Ed: *There was a discussion about the implications of collecting rent on our liability. Engel clarified that he doesn't actually care about the NCC receiving money or formalizing a rental agreement, but assumes that the farmer is paying for the acreage being farmed, and Engel does object to our neighbor collecting rent for our land, which is probably about half an acre. Hatfield will attempt to figure out who the farmer is so that we can get in touch.*]

**8. Sellecks (Joey O'Reilly) No Report**

**9. Spider (Kevin Dumont)**

Progress: The property was visited on August 19, 2019. The integrity of the bedrock in the vicinity of the entrance was assessed and the determination was made that the best and safest course of action is to leave the bedrock as it is. One tree with a basal diameter of approximately 8" was observed to be leaning against other trees above and to the right of the entrance; this tree was cut sufficiently to move it away from the entrance area.

We also walked the perimeter of the property and options for trail development were discussed. A sketch of proposed plans was created; contact me if you'd like to see it.

Problems: None to report.

Plans: Creation of a trail along both the base and the top of the escarpment is planned for 2020.

**OTHER COMMITTEES (PRESIDENT):**

**Acquisitions (Chuck Porter, Bob Simmons)**

**Traino Preserve**

We have received the long-awaited DRAFT Purchase and Sales Agreement for the Alan Traino Preserve. It has been reviewed by the President and then sent along to our attorney for approval. We hope to be able to have this potentially signed prior to the Board meeting; will update at that time.

[Ed: *We were told that this hasn't happened yet, but that our lawyer had made a few comments (nothing insurmountable) which should be resolved fairly quickly.*]

**Salamander Preserve**

We have received and approved the updated, expanded survey. Chuck and I visited and walked the new area to assess possibility of parking and access trail from the northern property and to confirm the metes and bounds with the surveyor. Parking looks good, hillside very steep but doable and better than coming up the cliff from the river. Using this as the access will require crossing over the tunnel on the railroad property. I have sent an email to CSX, but have yet to hear back about access.

[Ed: *We were told that our lawyer now has the draft purchase agreement for this parcel as well.*]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Nothing else new to report.

## Nominating (Norm Berg)

The table presented in the June 2, 2019 report had errors in the end dates for the last three trustees. Below is the corrected table.

The NCC Trustees, effective at the June meeting, are:

| Trustee             | Start | End  | Notes   |
|---------------------|-------|------|---|
| Mike Chu            | 2005  | 2020 |   |
| Morgan Ingalls      | 2011  | 2020 |   |
| Wayne Russell       | 2017  | 2020 |   |
| Jacob Morris-Siegel | 2015  | 2021 |   |
| Devon Hedges        | 2017  | 2021 |   |
| Ramon Armen         | 2018  | 2021 |   |
| Erik Nieman         | 2018  | 2022 | started Dec 2018, filling rest of C. Young term |
| Kevin Dumont        | 2019  | 2022 |   |
| Leslie Hatfield     | 2019  | 2022 |   |

Soon I'll begin the process of finding candidates for President and Secretary positions, which are voted on by the board at the December 2019 NCC board meeting.

## Risk Management (Mitch Berger)

Progress: Represented us at the Cave Conservancies Roundtable at Convention.

Proposed talk for NCKMS on Risk Management Strategies for Cave Conservancies was accepted.

Received the invoice we were looking for last quarter for our General Liability (G/L) and Directors & Officers (D&O) insurance renewals.

Issues: None!

Plans: Finish preparing NCKMS talk.

Attend NCKMS!

Participate in annual Land Trust Alliance (LTA) risk management training program (eligibility for Terraforma discounts).

Add insurance coverage (G/L and Terraforma) for Salamander and our other pending acquisition if/when we close.

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)

No report.

## Governance ad hoc (Devon Hedges)

There has been no meeting, no report from Governance at this time.

## Barn Dance Subcommittee (Emily Davis)

Will look for verbal update as Dance is evening before meeting.

## Attachment B Vice President's Report

**Bylaws Committee** (Joe Levinson)

Nothing to report.

**Education** (Thom Engel)

Regarding the Knox issue reported last time, I'd asked the individual for more background. I have been ambushed at too many town board meetings to go in blind. He did not respond and I consider the issue dead.

**Science Committee** (Larry Davis)

(Thom Engel) We were contacted by Peter Lenahan to request permits for Onesquethaw to look for and collect troglotic snails. The request was made two weeks prior to the trip. I explained that collecting requires a science permit and that two weeks was not enough lead time. I explained that this applied to all NCC caves and that no collecting was permitted.

**Special Use** (Thom Engel)

Numbers are way down this year. Last year saw a large number of reservations on spec that were subsequently released. For all caves we have 129 reservations of which 106 (82%) are for Clarksville. Last year we had 184. The mean for 2012 through 2018 is 230.

[Ed: The Board asked why there was such a decrease, and Engel replied that it was mostly a decrease in Boy Scout trips, likely as a result of the Scouts' new caving rules. There was some discussion about what it took to comply with these rules.]

**Surprise Cave Committee** (Al DeMaria)

Nothing to report.

**Thacher Park** (Thom Engel)

Much of Hailes has now been resurveyed to Grade 5 standards. This was necessary as there were no notes for the section done by DEC and for the old R survey. I estimate about 550 feet of known cave remain to be resurveyed. It is interesting to note that by the time one gets to the north end of the Comfort Loop one is more than 50 feet above the entrance.

Permit will be renewed.

**Attachment C  
Treasurer's Report**



**Northeastern Cave Conservancy Inc  
Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual  
January 1 through September 21, 2019**

09/21/2019

|                                | <u>Jan 1 - Sep 21, 19</u> | <u>Budget</u>    |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b> |                           |                  |
| <b>Income</b>                  |                           |                  |
| <b>Donations</b>               |                           |                  |
| <b>Auction Donations</b>       | 1,770.00                  | 2,000.00         |
| <b>Donations - Other</b>       | 9,931.36                  | 9,670.00         |
| <b>Total Donations</b>         | <u>11,701.36</u>          | <u>11,670.00</u> |

Minutes - December 6, 2019

|                                    |                  |                  |
|------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Grants                             | 0.00             | 1,500.00         |
| Interest Earned                    | 9.10             | 15.00            |
| Membership Income                  | 2,525.00         | 2,930.00         |
| <b>Total Income</b>                | <b>14,235.46</b> | <b>16,115.00</b> |
| <b>Expense</b>                     |                  |                  |
| Acquisitions                       | 3,392.00         | 2,000.00         |
| Bank Charges                       | 44.27            | 75.00            |
| Donations-outgoing                 | 0.00             | 200.00           |
| Dues                               | 300.00           | 350.00           |
| 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            |
| <b>Total Executive</b>             | <b>0.00</b>      | <b>250.00</b>    |
| Grant Expense                      | 303.66           | 1,500.00         |
| Insurance                          | 2,139.06         | 2,280.00         |
| Legal Fees                         | 0.00             | 1,000.00         |
| Licenses & Permits                 | 0.00             | 500.00           |
| Meeting Expense                    | 0.00             | 100.00           |
| Meetings & Conferences             | 0.00             | 200.00           |
| Membership Expenses                | 0.00             | 100.00           |
| Miscellaneous                      | 0.00             | 100.00           |
| Office Expense                     | 64.48            | 100.00           |
| 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           |
| <b>Total Preserves-Maintenance</b> | <b>0.00</b>      | <b>1,000.00</b>  |
| Promotion                          | 256.60           | 2,000.00         |
| Publishing                         |                  |                  |
| Mailings                           | 0.00             | 50.00            |
| Website                            | 0.00             | 60.00            |
| <b>Total Publishing</b>            | <b>0.00</b>      | <b>110.00</b>    |
| Science                            | 0.00             | 3,000.00         |
| Sponsorships                       | 0.00             | 800.00           |
| Taxes on Properties                | 398.57           | 300.00           |
| <b>Total Expense</b>               | <b>6,898.64</b>  | <b>16,115.00</b> |

|                                       |                  |             |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| <b>Net Ordinary Income</b>            | <b>7,336.82</b>  | <b>0.00</b> |
| <b>Other Income/Expense</b>           |                  |             |
| <b>Other Income</b>                   |                  |             |
| <b>Net Gain or Loss from NSF Fund</b> | <b>6,355.64</b>  | <b>0.00</b> |
| <b>Net Gain or Loss Vanguard Life</b> | <b>304.58</b>    | <b>0.00</b> |
| <b>Volunteer Value</b>                | <b>0.00</b>      | <b>0.00</b> |
| <b>Total Other Income</b>             | <b>6,660.22</b>  | <b>0.00</b> |
| <b>Other Expense</b>                  |                  |             |
| <b>In Kind Out</b>                    | <b>0.00</b>      | <b>0.00</b> |
| <b>Volunteer Value Exp</b>            | <b>0.00</b>      | <b>0.00</b> |
| <b>Total Other Expense</b>            | <b>0.00</b>      | <b>0.00</b> |
| <b>Net Other Income</b>               | <b>6,660.22</b>  | <b>0.00</b> |
| <b>Net Income</b>                     | <b>13,997.04</b> | <b>0.00</b> |

Donations made in Alan Traino's memory now total \$2,045. I put together a mobile office of sorts to be used at events, including a cash box and small portable file case. The NCC needs to purchase a couple of portable tables and lights for the booth. Plastic storage bins clearly labeled that are weatherproof make sense also.

**Barn Dance Subcommittee - Emily Davis & Mike Warner:**

**Problems:** Board members had not stepped up and found donation as we asked. EC has. No suggestions from anyone on how to use the check in tent this year.

**Progress:** Christa on board for food, plan to make cider next week, band set, some prizes in hand.

**Plans:** move forward as we have the last 11 years.

**Investment Committee - John Fioroni:**

Status quo

**Membership Committee - Peter Youngbaer:**

**Progress:**

**Membership Renewals and New Members:**

Membership is remaining constant. Thanks to the Office Committee for a very productive OTR. All renewal notices for memberships up through the end of September have been sent, and second and third notices, as appropriate. The data base is current as of today, September 17. Special thanks to Christa and Mike for updating the coordination of the NCC Member 1 database with the MailChimp email list. This meant that the NCC Newsletter that was just sent went to all current (and only current) members for whom we have emails, which is most. I noted that my notice came to my gmail account, and not my old one, so that should now be all set for everyone else, as well.

I've also created a "Current Member" list, which is attached for your convenience. This is in addition to the usual membership renewal dunning lists created for the Old Timers Reunion and the NRO, which are a quick reference tool for anyone working the NCC tent/station at these events. By having a complete "Current Member" list, it will be easier for the NCC Officers, Trustees, and Volunteers to know who is NOT currently a member and to invite them to join (or re-join, as the case may be).

Our current membership (not including deceased) stands as follows, compared to the baseline of April 22, 2012:

|                           |                                  |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>September 17, 2019</b> | <b>April 22, 2012 (baseline)</b> |
| Life: 62                  | Life: 18                         |
| Family Life: 9            | Family Life: 0                   |

|                |     |                |     |
|----------------|-----|----------------|-----|
| Benefactor:    | 9   | Benefactor:    | 10  |
| Regular:       | 73  | Regular:       | 88  |
| Family:        | 15  | Family:        | 16  |
| Institutional: | 7   | Institutional: | 3   |
| Total:         | 175 | Total:         | 135 |

Note: Total in June was 176; March was 178; November, 2018 was 173; September, 2018 was 180. High point was 209 in March, 2017.

**Institutional Members:** Boston Grotto, Central Connecticut Grotto, Helderberg-Hudson Grotto, Metropolitan Grotto, Vermont Cavers Association, New Jersey Initial Response Team, and Camp Echo Lake. *If your grotto or organization isn't listed here, please urge them to renew or join. Thank you.*

**Problems:**

None.

**Plans:**

**Normal Operations:** Will continue to send renewal notices, as well as second and third notices, as applicable. I still need to create a template for a new Life Member certificate and circulate to the officers for approval.

I would also like to reiterate what I said last time, that I am more than willing to step aside and let someone else be the Membership Chair, having done this for coming up on 8 years now. New blood might mean new energy and new approaches to the members and potential members. If there is anyone interested in taking over, I am happy to train. Thank you.

*Peter Youngbaer, Membership Chair      Reminder: email address: [pyoungbaer@gmail.com](mailto:pyoungbaer@gmail.com)*

**Office Committee Report - Emily Davis & Mike Warner:**

**Problems:** Really cannot help at NRO because of family issue.

**Progress:** Have sorted out everything owned by the NCC in our warehouse.

**Plans:** No specific plans.

**Publications – Christa Hay:**

Newsletter was sent out this week. I received a clean copy of the membership database and uploaded into MailChimp. There were 161 emails added to MailChimp. I removed duplicates and anyone not a current member.

If there are any needs for publicity please let me know. A press release for our previous president winning a very prestigious award in the caving world could be a start but I need to hear if the Board is interested.

I am working on the food for up coming Barn Dance.

**Technology Committee Report – Mike Chu:**

Status Quo. Several small updates have been made to the website to reflect new board member bios, new preserve managers, events, and to fix some incorrect references to waivers, but no structural changes have been made.

**Volunteer Value (VV) Committee – Vince Kappler:**

Vince Kappler  
[volunteervalue@necaveconservancy.org](mailto:volunteervalue@necaveconservancy.org)

**Progress:** Year to date totals: 1119.5 hours of volunteer work for NCC projects for a total value of \$49,479. Members also reported traveling a total of 9,632 miles to work on projects.

The Treasurer, EC, and Office committees reported this cycle as well as John and Erik who reported time/miles working on the NYSCFP Grant. An additional “thanks” is directed to John for also reporting on a special project in Thacher.

I suspect managers spent considerable time tending the preserves but I had only one report (Ella) from a manager. *If it's the NCC's goal to document the volunteer hours members contribute toward our mission (especially the maintenance of our properties), the officers should encourage all committees to submit their VV information.*

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

**Problems:** None at this time.

#### **Attachment D Secretary's Report**

Much of my time between meetings this quarter has been spent representing the NCC at various meetings and discussions at Convention and OTR (as you'll see in the EC meeting minutes as well as in the Committee of the Whole discussions), as well as helping to instruct at two OCRs (one of which used our Knox preserve), handling my NRO responsibilities, and communicating with the NCKMS organizers (as well as preparing to give a talk at the conference). Having a negative amount of time remaining has thwarted my efforts to finish updating the Board Manual and to get minutes and agendas to the Board more expeditiously, despite that the other officers' attachments arrived at the requested time (for which I'm very grateful). You have my apologies, and I hope that the next quarter proves to be quieter (my calendar suggests that it should be).

#### **EC Meeting Minutes August 25, 2019, 9:00am Elm Avenue Park, Bethlehem, NY**

Called to order 9:10am

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

#### **1) Various learnings from Convention**

Berger reported that he attended the National Speleological Foundation (NSF) meeting and expressed the NCC's thanks to them for the Vehslage Grant they awarded us to assist with the Clarksville acquisition. He also learned that the trials and tribulations we've experienced in getting our Vanguard account set up as desired are not unique, as the NSF has also gone through similar difficulty and ended up choosing to work with a different investment firm. Davis also made a presentation at the NSF meeting requesting a grant for the cabin on the National Speleological Society's (NSS) Gage preserve. Unfortunately, because the room signage for the meeting didn't match the published schedule, Davis and Berger arrived at different times and missed each others' presentations, but positive feedback was heard for both.

The Gage cabin fundraising “thermometer” display shared our booth space. Gaylene Speaect (NSS Treasurer) thanked a couple of our members for generous donations made for the cabin, and indicated that funds may have been found for the short-term needs to build the cabin. Berger shared what he learned with Davis and Simmons.

Berger also attended the NSS Preserve Managers meeting, as requested by the NY NSS preserve managers at the NCC's last Board meeting to discuss the waiver issue. Prior to the session, Davis had spoken with one of the NSS lawyers as well. There was some discussion about the tone of previous communications on the topic, followed by productive talk of what might be workable. Berger agreed to send Tom Griffin a copy of the shared waiver the NCC and NSS had been using for many years so that the NSS can assess whether it wishes to request that we use the same language. Engel notes that an important key here is state-specific context in any waiver that gets used.

As he's done for a few years, Berger represented the NCC at the Cave Conservancies Roundtable, where he distributed copies of our Planned Giving brochure (producing such a document was one of the major topics of last year's session). Several of the other conservancies thanked us for sharing this with them. Lots of the usual sort of risk management and insurance questions came up during the session, and NCC knowledge was shared. The group also learned that the Butler Cave Conservation Society (BCCS) is expanding and has recently purchased additional land with some karst features on it, and is now managing it as a preserve that may even join the Virginia Cave and Karst Trail at some point. After a prior Convention, we shared with them the proprietary risk

assessment documents our lawyer had prepared for us, and they may have been helpful in some of the decisions BCCS has been able to make since then in preparing for their expansion.

In an out-of-session conversation, Bill Stringfellow told Berger of some new developments for the Southeastern Cave Conservancy (SCCi). Aside from the new headquarters they opened up a year or so ago, they've received a capacity-building grant that will be funding two full-time positions. One of those will be addressing education and outreach, and as a result, SCCi has recently taken over Project Underground. The other position they've created is a land manager, and this person will (in part) be dealing with a 2,300 acre donation they've received. While that land does contain some 30 caves, instead of selling off the bulk of the land not covered in caves, they've decided to retain all of it and steward it as a more traditional land trust would. We also learned that SCCi is in the middle of making a structural change to their Board such that most of it is elected by the membership, but a small number of seats are instead filled by the remainder of the Board. It sounds like the motivation here is to be able to have people with critically important experience and expertise, who may not be well-enough known across their vast membership region to win a popular vote, still sit on their Board; this sounds similar to the reason we've envisioned having an Advisory Board, except that they'll be putting those people on their actual Board of Directors.

Engel reports that one of his major learnings from the week is that Tennessee folks like cold rooms.

Folsom went caving for five days with Porter. They took care of setting up and taking down the kiosk, and he reports that he did CaveSim and went to the lightning talk on it and was impressed (as noted at previous meetings, Berger has been working with CaveSim's inventor on an effort to get it to OTR). Folsom also had a good conversation with Bert Ashbrook (NSF Treasurer) before the photo salon.

## **2) Old Timers Reunion**

During Convention, vendors (including conservancies) received a Memorandum of Understanding from the OTR Vendor Coordinator asking them to agree to various conditions and sign a contract in order to be allowed to continue having a booth at OTR. Some of the conditions seemed quite onerous, and we weren't convinced that we could commit to meeting them (as examples, they required that our booth be open at least 8 hours a day, that we be set up by noon on Thursday, not tear down before Monday morning, have a fire extinguisher, agree to forfeit our historical space if we don't attend two years in a row, etc.).

Simmons inquired about flexibility, as much of this seemed targeted at an actual retail vendor (we have other information from such vendors that very little differed between what they were sent and what we were sent), and didn't make much sense for a conservancy not really selling much and from a different region. Keep in mind that, as discussed in prior OTR wrapups, much of the benefit we get from our presence at OTR falls into two categories: obtaining membership renewals (which Davis and Warner are able to accomplish regardless of our booth's presence), and valuable conversations we have with people at the booth, which have led to such successes as ending up with new preserve managers. The response seemed fairly rigid, and so Simmons responded to them saying that we're unable to fulfill the staffing requirement and won't be attending this year.

We discussed why they might be pushing these requirements and what to do. Part of it seems targeted at a certain vendor that usually departs the night before the end of the event, and some of it may be to forbid that because contest winners receive OTRbucks that they can only use if the vendors are still there. Engel suggested that we might ask The Robertson Association's (TRA) Board to help; Berger does have contacts with the TRA Board and said he could feel out whether that would be a productive avenue before formally asking for action. Initially, Berger agreed to try to find some time to discuss the issue directly with Norma Dee (the Vendor Coordinator), and the EC discussed what our talking points should be. In the interim, we have our membership renewal list from Youngbaer, and the Office will handle it as usual from the Speleobooks tent. We also considered whether there was anything Berger should bring, given that we're "not attending" the event, and we decided that other than the membership list, there wasn't.

## **3) NCKMS**

As most of the EC is attending and presenting at NCKMS, we used this time to nail down some of the final logistical details of the NCC's presence and sponsorship. Simmons has arranged an Airbnb from Sunday through Thursday nights. Berger will be spending the preceding Friday and Saturday with BCCS at their annual event, and arriving Sunday morning to go on two days of the NCKMS pre-conference caving trips. Simmons will be arriving Sunday, and Engel will arrive Monday.

The conference organizers asked if we could be convinced to turn in an additional abstract (our fourth) about the NCC in general. Berger noted that this sounds like an appropriate talk for the President to give, but also sounds pretty similar to something Engel often does in his role as our Education Coordinator, and could be supported pretty easily by a slightly tweaked copy of the slide deck that Folsom compiled to run on our kiosk at events, and that even if he's not attending, this may provide a way for the entire EC to be involved. Simmons agreed to submit the additional abstract.

We're entitled to a full-page ad in the program due to our sponsorship level, and it's due the day after this meeting. Folsom put it together for us during the meeting for Berger to submit. We discussed when slides for our various talks are due and that we weren't sure about that. We also realized that Ingalls might not have been told that the talk on the NYSCPP project was accepted – Simmons



took care of ensuring that during the meeting as well. We also resolved that we do indeed want to use the booth space we're allowed, and would like a table with it (Berger will let the coordinators know). We plan to take the rollup poster, Engel will bring a pile of our normal brochures, we should print some more Planned Giving brochures, and we should bring swag (Simmons has some, and the Office has the rest). We also noted that the deadline for papers to be included in the proceedings was pushed back to November to allow incorporation of feedback from the conference.

#### 4) Acquisitions

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Salamander** – They finally got the survey done. We have a hardcopy, and have asked for electronic copies, but haven't received those yet. The surveyors had thoughts on “scrambleable” access (we have 108' of frontage north of the tracks on Dewitt with flat parking already available there, but when you get up to the top, you're separated from the rest of our property by train tracks, and would need permission to cross them). The involved railroad is Norfolk Southern (CSX system). We still need a map putting the north and south pieces together and the metes and bounds, and we need to figure out whether to do a lot line adjustment before or after we take the land, then we'll file the survey. Engel suggests that when we have the formal ceremony at Salamander, we should invite the owners of the Tree Cave parcel, the mayor, etc. Simmons states that Connors has already seen to that - everyone's coming.

[REDACTED]

There's nothing else making real progress right now.

[REDACTED]

**Surprise** - [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

#### 5) Status update on the current NYSCPP grant

Simmons reports that we got our extension for a year. He contacted the LTA managers about a week out and went through the whole spiel about why it's impossible to finish this year. They were thankful that we gave them a heads-up. There was one hiccup; technically our annual report was due on the 31st. If you get an extension, you don't have to file an annual report, but nobody told us about that, so Simmons went to work on it, and found that the link was gone. It turns out that it's actually a report on the grant, rather than an “annual” report. So, now it's not due until a year from now. He told the LTA folks that we would present early parts of our progress at NCKMS. We discussed whether the moving of acoustic data analysis from year 2 into year 1 (since we don't have usable

light data nor any temp/humidity data yet) would create an issue with the funds to pay Ingalls for that work. We plan to redo the light data collection during this extension, and also collect temp/humidity data. Simmons also notes that the paper trail for some of the expenses is difficult to reconcile; it's good we have more time.

#### **6) Upcoming grants**

We can't get a transactional grant for Slingerlands because we're buying it, but can get one for Salamander because it's a donation. There are webinars and in-person meetings about the grant process coming up on September 9 (general info for potential applicants), September 12 (for applicants interested in staffing grants), and regional roundtables in the Lower Hudson Valley at OCLT, the Capital Region in Saratoga, one in Saranac Lake, and one in Casanovia, later this month and early into October. Grant applications are due December 16. Young has told us that these seminars are a must.

#### **7) Members Day wrap-up**

So far as we're aware, nobody got a good set of photos. The weather was unfortunate as well, and led to the group breaking up earlier than might have otherwise happened. There was a great food spread, and it looked like we had good attendance. The event went well, especially for the first attempt at it. We learned some lessons, like that we need to get more advertising out, push it earlier, and add more "features." Simmons will send an e-mail to people who came asking for Publicity Chairs. For next year, perhaps we should have a schedule of activities, so we can schedule awards and have people be there. Berger notes that it would be really nice if at some point we had a property suitable for hosting an event on. Folsom notes that [REDACTED] might be nice for this.

#### **8) NSF (regarding the proposed investment contract)**

Folsom e-mailed and spoke to the lawyers Ingalls suggested. The one in the Adirondacs (the less expensive one) never replied, so he went to the second person in Jersey City. She called back and said that this isn't really the right topic for her, but that she'd give us a better referral, but hasn't yet. That was in June. So, we still need to plod along with this. Engel will e-mail his brother (he's an attorney specializing in environmental law).

#### **9) Certificate of Merit redux**

This didn't end up getting done; Berger and Engel discussed it at Convention (and likely could have pulled Folsom into the conversation), but Engel felt it was better to wait. We should move forward, get proposed recipients' names to propose to the Board at the Board Meeting before the event (maybe in March) to make sure the recipients will be there to receive their award with some lead time. We need two deliverables – a slate of recommended recipients and an articulated set of criteria - by March. Engel will work on it.

#### **10) Open letter with unified info on our cave closures**

This item was followup from the last EC meeting where we discussed putting together and sending out a letter trying to clear up all the confusion and subtly different info published in various places. It seems not to have happened, but the reminder was appreciated. While we were on the topic of closures, Berger inquired of Engel what had happened to the news we'd heard that the little brown and tricolored bats were in the pipeline to be listed as endangered in New York? He said that this was a good question, and he'd heard nothing further since the last time we discussed it, but would ask.

#### **11) Advisory Board**

This, too, was followup from the last EC meeting. We went through many names and fields, and discussed what you might want out of an advisor.

#### **12) Fall NRO**

Central Connecticut Grotto (CCG) will be hosting it September 13-15 at Hide-a-way. Berger noted that the info page for the event referred to Merlins stewards incorrectly as "certified trip leaders." We discussed plans for the auction – since there's a 60s Batman theme, Folsom could be the Joker, but would need to buy a wig and rent a tux, and doesn't really have the funds for that. Engel will be there Saturday much of the day to man the NCC tent. Should we be fundraising for [REDACTED]? We think this depends on whether we have a signed contract.

#### **13) Barn Dance**

We have a date and the venue. Davis is very frustrated about raffle gifts. Simmons will send out another reminder to the Board and take care of nagging people to secure prizes.

#### **15) Updates on things at Clarksville**

Engel reports that the DOT installed a guide rail across the front of the Gregory parcel where emergency vehicle access would have been. He talked with the construction engineer, who said if we want part of the guide rail removed, we could request it, but he's not

sure what would happen if we did. The managers note that it's not that far from Gregory to the road, and if you can't get over the rail, you shouldn't be in the cave. Berger notes that the cave gets people who have no business being in a cave, and they're the ones who might need rescue. There is the other trail now, and since it exists, we sort of want to discourage people from using the access from the road now anyhow as it's always been dangerous due to traffic. Engel also reported that one can no longer get directly from the upper lot onto the trail because a huge tree fell across that access point, and since we don't own that land anyhow, the managers don't plan to remove the tree.

#### **16) Sample collection request from Peter Lenahan**

We received a request to a bunch of NCC addresses for permits intending to collect samples (including in NSS caves, and including mention of collecting in caves that don't normally require permits). Engel replied that collection was forbidden in NCC caves without going through the scientific project proposal process, and that there was insufficient time to do that given the tiny lead time before the proposed trip dates (roughly a week out from the e-mail). Engel asked if we need to put a statement out that you can't collect from the caves. Berger pointed out that "Take nothing but pictures" seems pretty clear, and that given the addresses the request was sent to, it's not evident that any place we could put such a statement would be seen by someone considering doing this anyway.

#### **17) NY Cave Protection Law**

Engel reminds us that there isn't one. Years ago, one was passed by the Assembly, but it couldn't get through the State Senate. Now Democrats control both houses, so he wonders if it's worth pursuing again. Berger had been interested personally in pursuing this a few years back, and Davis stated that she had a box full of documents from the first attempt, but he never ended up with it. Engel is willing to pursue this, and Davis probably would, too. Berger mentioned that he heard that last time, the quarry lobby managed to get it killed, but Engel says that makes no sense, because it was worded so that the landowner could screw up the cave if they wanted to. The NCC can't lobby, but likely can send a letter of support.

#### **18) NCC Event Office**

Folsom was thinking that we need a mini file box thing with cash forms, a cash box, business cards, a current membership list, brochures, tax exempt certificates, pens, clipboards, etc. so that we don't have to continually borrow from Speleobooks, and has been working on putting this together. There's a question of who deals with restocking the supplies.

#### **19) Onesquethaw in the winter**

We've already lost the battle for the year (we would've needed the bat exclusion device in place 6 weeks before hibernation season). Berger asked about the possibility of installing it during a flood when any bats inside have all been killed. Not much came of this idea.

End: 2:41pm