

NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY, INC

Minutes

December 8, 2019 10:00 AM
Schoharie, 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, R. Armen, M. Ingalls, K. Dumont, L. Hatfield, E. Nieman, J. Morris-Siegel

3. Absent with proxy: None

4. Absent without designated proxy: W. Russell

The board may appoint proxies from the members in attendance.

Berger moves to appoint K. Moore as proxy for W. Russell

Second by Dumont

For: Rest

Against: Morris-Siegel, Folsom

Abstain: Armen

[K. Moore is appointed as proxy for W. Russell]

5. Nominating Committee Report: See “Nominating” subsection of Attachment A

6. Simmons moves to convene a meeting of the Trustees to hold elections for the officer positions with terms that expire this year (President and Secretary). Ingalls will preside over the meeting as Chairman of the Trustees and will report.

The Trustees may decide to go into Executive Session. Officers and visitors may be asked to leave the room.

Second by Berger

For: All

[Motion passes - Trustees go into special session at 10:14am and exit special session at 10:17am.]

Ingalls reports:

Trustees’ Report: President: R. Simmons (2 year term)

Secretary: M. Berger (2 year term)

Officers are seated and the meeting resumes at 10:18am.

[Time was provided to catch up on reading through and asking questions about meeting materials from 10:19am until 10:28am.]

7. Officers’ Reports

President: Attachment A

Vice President: Attachment B

Treasurer: Attachment C

Secretary: Attachment D

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

Second by Hedges

For: Rest

Abstain: Moore

[The Committee of the Whole is opened]

Topics:

8.1. National Cave and Karst Management Symposium (NCKMS) recap 2019 (Berger, Simmons, Engel)

[The attendees compared notes and filled Folsom in on some key learnings at the Executive Committee (EC) meeting (see topic #1 in the EC Meeting Minutes in Attachment D). We’ll do the same for you here.]

The attendees reported that the conference was a great event. They presented four talks that were well-received (Berger has since been contacted by multiple people wishing to discuss risk management topics, and Ingalls heard through external channels positive reviews of the talk she wrote for Simmons to present about preliminary results of the NYSCPP scientific project). They had lunch with a US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

representative and were able to discuss the ongoing effort to get Onesquethaw reopened over the winter. A novel and inexpensive bat call counter alternative to the acoustic recorders presented by Wil Orndorff was discussed (Davis notes that more data is always better because you may be able to answer questions not originally posed, but Berger notes that potential for longer battery life might solve volunteer labor difficulties). The existence of the Cave Conservancy Foundation (a sister organization to the Cave Conservancy of the Virginias) and its desire to make grants was discussed. The experience that the Indiana Karst Conservancy underwent after a lawsuit was described. Finally, mention was made of a conversation with a New Mexico caver who recently testified at his state legislature in support of a Cave Protection Law, relevant to the personal endeavor Engel is current pursuing (and it turns out that Ingalls happens to know this caver).

Multiple of the Trustees thanked the attendees for representing the Conservancy well, and Berger encouraged everyone to think of topic we might present two years from now at the conference in Texas.

8.2. Volunteer Workers Accident insurance policy (Berger)

[This coverage was offered to us at the time we switched insurers in the middle of 2017, and we decided to pass on it at the time, believing that it unnecessarily duplicated protections we were already obtaining. Events external to the NCC this year have caused Berger to learn more about this type of policy, and he believes it may be worth reconsidering for our next renewal. The EC discussed this at their November meeting, and is strongly in favor (see topic #6 in the EC Meeting Minutes in Attachment D). It appears here in CotW and not immediately as a motion, because the sense of the Board on this topic will affect numbers in the 2020 budget proposal to be discussed next.]

Berger explained that damages in the form of medical expenses could only be paid out to someone who got injured volunteering for us from the General Liability insurance policy if they sued us and won, but that this type of additional policy allows us to put in a claim on behalf of an injured volunteer without a lawsuit or a judgment against us. He also described some other cave organizations' thinking on such issues. Several Trustees posed questions trying to understand what scenarios likely would and wouldn't be covered by this type of policy, and in general were enthusiastic about pursuing coverage.

Hatfield inquired whether we have a form or procedure for documenting incidents involving injury at a work day, and we currently don't. The idea of developing those seemed agreeable to everyone, and mention was made that information about such procedures should become part of onboarding orientation for preserve managers.

8.3. 2020 Budget discussion (Folsom)

[Budgets for the coming fiscal year are supposed to be approved at the December Board meeting. This is our opportunity to discuss and revise the proposal before it is voted on in New Business. The proposal can be found at the beginning of the Treasurer's Report in Attachment C. Some additional discussion about changes in this year's proposal can be found in topic #25 in the EC Meeting Minutes in Attachment D.]

Folsom followed up on Berger's question from a previous meeting about why the Bensons Preserve had a higher budgeted amount than the others - the reason was that there are plans to install a gate to block vehicles near the entrance to the property. Berger noted that the new insurance policy discussed in the previous topic was reflected in the proposed budget's insurance number for next year. No other major questions were raised.

8.4. Onesquethaw Cave Preserve Management Plan review (Engel)

[This is the regularly-scheduled Management Plan review for Onesquethaw. A draft has been circulated to the Board in advance of the meeting, and will be provided as a separate handout at the meeting. Also see topic #4 in the EC Meeting Minutes in Attachment D.]

Engel explained that the version of this plan circulated was accidentally out of date; it is the same version that was circulated earlier to the EC, and some further changes were made in response to comments and suggestions from Berger (mostly minor, but a couple substantial). There was some miscommunication between Engel and Berger about whether there was a new draft to circulate. As a result, we decided that we would not vote on the plan today, and would do so at the next meeting with the up-to-date draft.

Morris-Siegel raised some concerns about farming of the land, and feels that it shouldn't be done, and that instead, we should plant some native seed mix to revegetate the land that has been farmed to date. Engel mentioned that the farmer is supposedly using the "no-till" farming method, and Morris-Siegel explained that that typically involves lots of herbicides, which we're obviously not fans of for protection of the karst environment.

Simmons noted that when he and Hatfield were working on upgrading the game camera we're using for the NYSCPP project, they noticed that someone else had placed a camera on our property. Berger thinks we should remove it, lest it appear that we're not defending our land; Morris-Siegel says this sort of thing is a common occurrence and he often doesn't bother removing them from land he manages. Engel will ask our neighbor if they placed it (and ask them to remove it, if so), and will remove it if it does not belong to them.

8.5. Alan Traino Karst Preserve Management Plan revisions (Engel)

[Now that the acquisition has occurred, certain parts of the accepted draft Management Plan that were written speculatively are in need of updating. A draft has been circulated to the Board in advance of the meeting, and will be provided as a separate handout at the meeting. Also see topic #8 in the EC Meeting Minutes in Attachment D.]

Berger brought up the topic of nomenclature - calling this property the "Alan Traino Cave Preserve" is likely to cause confusion about whether there is an Alan Traino Cave (which there isn't). He asked if there were reasons not to consistently call it the "Alan Traino Karst Preserve," and nobody had any, so we decided to do that.

Engel walked through the gist of the updates made to the plan to reflect that we own the land, update lengths from in-progress survey work, and update the surface management section. No major questions were raised.

[The Board had a brief conversation in Executive Session (the conversation was not specifically about any of the topics listed on the agenda or in Committee of the Whole) followed by a lunch break from 12:18pm-12:30pm]

8.6. Request by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) to use Clarksville Cave for their Subterranean (SubT) Challenge (Chu)

[This past Tuesday, the Clarksville Preserve Managers received an inquiry from DARPA about the possibility of "renting" the cave for three weeks in or around August 2020 for their SubT Challenge. This raises a number of obvious issues, questions, and concerns, but at the same time is a rare opportunity that may be beneficial in a number of ways. Chu has been pursuing a dialog with the planners from DARPA to understand more about their needs, expectations, and flexibilities, and to make them more aware of how our cave and circumstances may or may not be a good match. He's also been sharing his learnings with the EC, which quickly identified some of the obvious issues, but has mostly held off on real discussion as it's better addressed at the Board meeting.]

[Engel requested that another officer moderate this topic's discussion due to his desire to participate; Berger did so]

Chu brought the group up to speed on the conversations he's had so far with the organizers, much of which he's participated in while wearing his "knowledgeable caver" hat rather than representing the NCC.

Engel is against allowing our caves' use for the contest because he doesn't believe it's in line with our mission. Berger believes that since much of what the Challenge is working on is developing mapping technology, it's easy to say that this does fit our mission, so long as we would get to have some of the output of the contest. Folsom pointed out that with a significant amount of money, we'd be able to pursue several more of our goals, and that if the offer were large enough, it seems likely that anyone could be persuaded that it's in our interests.

Hatfield inquired if there are properties other than Clarksville, as it's our most heavily used preserve, and blocking it out for three contiguous weeks would be a serious use conflict for the caver community, and based on what Berger learned from Chu about what the organizers would have ideally liked (in particular, ability for the robots to enter the cave on their own, which doesn't work so well with holes in the ground for the non-flying robots), he thinks Onesquethaw might be more suitable than Clarksville (though obviously only up to the climb, so the robots wouldn't be doing the second half of the cave). Engel asked about using Spider. There was much amusement about both the possibility of getting the tiny-but-absurdly-long section of the cave actually mapped, and the reality that if something happened to a robot in there, it would be basically irretrievable. Chu also noted that the activity the robots are expected to participate in in-cave involves searching for and retrieving an object, and our inability to get terribly far down that passage to place an object probably makes that idea a non-starter.

Regarding money, and concerns about "renting" the cave and implications for either our insurance or nonprofit obligations, Davis noted that the Cave Conservancy of Hawai'i has accepted donations from National Geographic. Berger asked if we knew of government agencies being able to do something like that rather than be billed rent, and nobody was quite sure. Morris-Siegel likes the idea of being involved even without the money. Armen doesn't think we should be motivated by the possibility of money, as participating in something like this isn't our actual business.

Simmons indicated that he's opposed to Clarksville being used for this. Dumont thinks it's worth keeping the dialog open. Engel does like the idea of mapper infrastructure being developed. Berger also noted that Cantello, a member and frequent volunteer for the Conservancy, is participating on a team in the contest, and that his desire for the Conservancy to seriously consider participating should carry some weight. Chu indicated that Cantello has indicated a strong desire for the NCC to be involved if the organizers want to choose one of our sites.

Berger also mentioned that Chu had proposed the idea of trying to get the organizer or one of their colleagues onto the planned bat count trip in Clarksville this winter so they can learn about what they're looking at during the timeframe they have for planning. There was some discussion about whether that's appropriate, how it differs from inviting recreational groups to visit during the bat count, the fact that we'd planned to combine NYSCPP instrumentation placement with a bat count in Knox last winter with the DEC's blessing, etc. Despite some initial questions, the idea of connecting the organizers with the DEC to see if they were amenable to taking them on the bat count trip didn't seem particularly objectionable.

A straw poll was taken. Engel and Armen are flat-out opposed to allowing any of our caves to be used. Ingalls abstained, and everyone else was interested in at least having Chu continue the dialog. When the same

question was posed specifically about allowing Clarksville to be used, a majority of those present were opposed to it. We concluded that no formal action was needed at this time, so Chu will continue discussions with the understanding that Clarksville won't be viable (although they may be allowed to see it for educational purposes during the bat count), though other caves such as Onesquethaw and Spider could be discussed.

8.7. Preserve managers: vacancies and meeting (Simmons)

[See item 4 in the preamble to the President's Report in Attachment A]

Simmons noted that he had to cancel the get-together that had been planned for the end of last month due to lack of time to prepare materials for it to be a successful and productive event, and he's now looking at perhaps having this gathering towards the end of January.

Berger noted that though we agreed at the EC meeting that the permanent position for Chair of the Traino Preserve Committee should be advertised in the December newsletter, it didn't make it in, and so we're not in a position to appoint the permanent Chair today. Since Hedges is the interim Chair and intends to apply for the permanent position, and is also presently the Bentleys Preserve Manager, he and Simmons agree that advertising for a co-Chair at Bentleys (ideally one more local to that region) is appropriate; Hedges is likely to step down from the Bentleys position if he ends up with the permanent Traino position and someone else is ready to step up at Bentleys.

Likewise, Engel is coming up on his 30th anniversary managing Onesquethaw at the end of 2021, and is looking for a co-manager now with an eye towards them taking over by that time. This should be advertised as well.

8.8. 2020 Members Day date and venue (Simmons)

[See topic #19 in the EC Meeting Minutes in Attachment D]

This is likely to happen either at Thatcher similarly to last year (in which case, we should be selecting a date to get on the calendar by early in the new year), or at the new Traino Preserve if our neighbor would like to participate and is willing to allow use of some of his land for parking and perhaps the barn in case of inclement weather. Like Berger, Davis would love to see it hosted at one of our properties, and it would be a great opportunity to get people into our new caves. Berger mentioned the possibility of trying to make friends with our other neighbors across the way in the hopes of having the other caves in the Chatter-Stone-Hole system open for the event, and Folsom was enthusiastic about the idea. Davis mentioned that the Michigan group does something similar and calls it the "friends and neighbors" event. Morris-Siegel suggested that we tell people we'll be bringing spare caving gear so that neighbors might be able to go caving even if they don't have their own gear; Davis also volunteered that she and Warner have an extensive amount of spare gear. Davis notes that if we're going to have it be a bigger event like that, RSVPs are more important for food-planning purposes, and Berger expects that this year people will be more likely to RSVP, both because it's no longer a first-time event, and because we expect to advertise an actual program at some specific time during the day (to present awards, etc.)

8.9. Scenic Hudson, Kingston outreach (Simmons)

Scenic Hudson just made a 500+ acre purchase of land that contains some karst and some limestone cement mines. Rubin is helping them out, but one of the real questions they have is about bats in the Lost Lake Mine, and what kind of buffer they might need for the bats if this property is to join the Empire State Trail. As Rubin is really a hydrogeologist and not a bat biologist, he's not the right resource for that inquiry. Davis was engaged and has steered them towards the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

8.10. Hosting the Spring 2020 Northeastern Regional Organization (NRO) meeting (Berger)

[The NRO is in a fairly difficult position with respect to finding a host for the upcoming NRO, and it is at risk of not happening. The NCC has hosted quite successfully a couple times in the past, but has been reluctant to do it for some time. The last time we hosted, it was part of a major fundraising push for the Merlins acquisition. Simmons suggested that we discuss the possibility of hosting again at this meeting, and Folsom noted that given the recent Traino acquisition, fundraising might make it a good idea to consider.]

Davis doesn't feel that NROs are great big fundraising events, due to only taking in \$3/person. Folsom reminded us that when we hosted at the Cobleskill Fairgrounds in Spring 2010, we had 235 attendees and the fundraising effort raised almost \$6k for Merlins. However, that was because we didn't simply run registration - we basically went the whole 9 yards by handling all of the meals, selling Merlins-focused swag, etc. Folsom also points out that he can't make the same level of personal commitment that he did last time, though he would help. Davis brought up the insurance question, and Berger indicated that our present coverage is likely to include events of this sort, though possibly not for as many attendees as an NRO is likely to get; he doesn't expect the added cost to cover the event to be exorbitant. Natural Stone Bridge and Caves was brought up as a possible venue, and we were told that it wouldn't work out in the Spring.

We asked for a show of hands of people who'd be willing to help work on hosting an NRO and concluded that we do have enough people to field a team. Veronica Sassu-Laviero also agreed to help us run it. A motion will appear in New Business to agree to host.

8.11. New York State Conservation Partnership Program (NYSCPP) scientific research project grant update (Simmons, Hatfield, Ingalls)

A presentation was made on the progress so far at NCKMS. The light detectors ended up being completely unsatisfactory and yielded no usable data. As a result, the cameras that Hatfield offered last time were installed at additional sites beyond Clarksville on November 10 and upgraded with larger memory cards and lithium batteries. The Clarksville data so far is interesting - over three dozen groups were spotted in the Wards sinkhole in a one month period after the cave closed for the season.

Our report on phase 1 of the project is now due by the end of July 2020. Ingalls needs to retrieve the data that's been collected so far from the cameras. Hedges is happy to help with over-winter maintenance of equipment again.

Ingalls has submitted an abstract to NEBWG for a talk similar to the one given at NCKMS. Berger asked if the camera data is actually going to be usable, because he thought the intent had been to correlate it with evidence of bat disturbance detected by the acoustic recorders, which haven't been redeployed this winter. Ingalls indicated that his understanding was correct, but that we didn't redeploy them due to the amount of volunteer labor that would be necessary to run that part of the data collection again. She and Simmons believe that it will be acceptable for the grant if that correlation isn't able to be established due to the difficulties we've had collecting data. Just the same, Hatfield agreed to redeploy the acoustic detectors at the Clarksville and Onesquethaw sites so that we'll be able to attempt correlation for at least one site that's believed to be heavily violated when it's closed, and Davis agreed to supply her with the necessary equipment before she departs from the meeting.

8.12. Interim Traino Preserve visitation policy (Simmons)

[As this is a open-for-the-winter preserve, there's great interest in having it open as soon as possible. However, the fact that the trail, kiosk, and changing area don't exist yet require a bit more planning than simply having it be a free-for-all; hopefully we will leave this meeting knowing what's going to happen when and what we can tell eager cavers.]

Berger suggested that difficulties stemming from the fact that the trail, kiosk, and changing area don't yet exist could be mitigated by preparing a one-sheet Google Maps image with dotted lines where visitors should pretend the trail is and a marker where cars should be parked, and Simmons notes that people can be asked to change in the streambed entrance to Slingerlands Hellhole to avoid visibility to the neighbors. There's also a possibility that our neighbor (the former owner) might be amenable to allowing people to change in the barn. Hedges will inquire about that, then prepare a one-sheet, and when it's ready, will offer a message to be sent out to the membership announcing that we're ready for visitors, ideally kept in small groups until the real infrastructure is ready. Armen notes that we'll also need a webpage for the preserve. Berger asked if there's already an e-mail alias for it (there isn't) and what it should be called (wondering if `traino@` would be awkward given that recently, `a.traino@` was an individual's address). We concluded that it should be called `trainokarst@`.

Hedges also raised uncertainty about the flooding situation and what we should tell people. Engel says that with Onesquethaw, we tell visitors that it's up to them to make the call. We should caution people and suggest checking the weather, but shouldn't make assertions about when it is or isn't safe. Since visitors will be contacting Hedges to get the one-sheet until the infrastructure is ready, he might also ask them to report back about water conditions they found so that we can learn (Berger notes that he does something similar in asking the very few visitors to Crossbones to tell us if they believe anything has shifted, how the rigging equipment is, etc.)

[Dumont departed at this point, naming E. Davis as proxy]

8.13. Land Trust Alliance (LTA) New York Land Conservation Conference (Simmons, Engel)

[Also see item #11 in the EC Meeting Minutes in Attachment D]

This will be May 7-8 in Saratoga at the site Folsom, Young, and Berger attended a few years ago. The EC decided that we should propose a field trip to our preserves to the conference, and Engel has done so. They're enthusiastic. However, it seems that they only get 3 hours for the trip (including travel time), which may mean that they get 80 minutes of time at the preserves. Engel is still in discussions to see if anything can be worked out on that front, but it may end up meaning they don't get to go underground. They might be able to visit the Clarksville, Onesquethaw, and Traino Preserves in the time allotted without going underground.

Berger reminded folks that our assessment when we went a couple years ago was that the conference sessions weren't overly relevant to us (they focused much more on groups that owned conservation easements), but the networking potential is good. Folsom reminded us that two registrations are included in our budget for the year, so people should attend.

8.14. International Year of Caves and Karst (Berger)

Berger shared a letter from George Veni of the National Cave and Karst Research Institute and the International Union of Speleology (UIS) about plans for 2021 to be the International Year of Caves and Karst, and seeking organizations to participate by having events throughout the year. When this was brought up to the EC,

Engel suggested that not only does it make sense for us to participate, but that we may want to get Thacher Park, the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, and perhaps even The Nature Conservancy involved with us.

Berger suspects that the kinds of events likely to make sense are many of the same sorts of things that Engel has done over the years with his Education Coordinator hat on. Davis thinks a day of talks would work well, Hatfield suggests this could happen at a museum. Everyone seemed to think it's a good idea for us to participate, so Berger will get in touch with the organizers to get our name and logo listed, and we'll plan some events over the course of the next year that we can advertise.

8.15. Northeast Bat Working Group meeting (Davis)

The NCC is a sponsor of the upcoming conference (which is local to Albany this time around), and gets one complimentary registration as a result. Speleobooks is also a sponsor, and that will cover Warner and Davis's registrations. Ingalls's registration will be covered by her employer. This topic was brought up to see if anyone else would like to attend. Hatfield expressed interest; a motion will appear in New Business to designate her as our representative.

8.16. Preserve documentation (Morris-Siegel)

Morris-Siegel has thought about this topic a great deal since we seem to have trouble finding all of our documents, and at present, a collection of them is kept in a couple of small safes at the Office. He likes the features offered by Landscape land conservation software, which is a cloud provider. For \$600/year, they offer 100GB of storage with organized features to track tasks, info about preserves, a mobile app, etc. Multiple people at the meeting indicated a feeling that \$600 is actually fairly reasonable.

Hedges asked what sort of storage comes with our website. Chu and Armen looked into it, but the reality is that regardless of the number, it doesn't provide the same organizational structure and front-end usability that a piece of software designed for land conservation organizations would. This becomes even more important if we ever end up holding a conservation easement, which we've discussed a couple of times and does seem likely to happen down the road. Simmons mentioned the Environmental Management System that his employer (HRP) uses, which he might be able to get us access to gratis. Berger inquired about perpetuity (as in, what happens when he retires).

We concluded that this is a real need, and trying it for \$600 for a year is reasonable - we'll learn something, and it'll provide a place to collect and organize documents. If after a year, we don't think it's worth sticking with, we know that at present the amount of stuff we have is not enormous, so we'd be able to manually download everything and close out the account to go with some other solution. Folsom adjusted the preserve management budgets to add \$60 to each of them for FY2020 for this purpose (we might add a technology budget line item for this kind of thing in the future).

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

Second by Hatfield

For: All

[The Committee of the Whole is closed]

[Moore departed at this point. No proxy was appointed.]

Old Business

[None]

New Business

10. Berger moves: The minutes of the September 29, 2019 Board Meeting are approved.

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

Second by Hatfield

For: Rest

Abstain: Ingalls, Morris-Siegel, Davis

[The minutes of the September 29, 2019 Board Meeting are approved]

11. Berger moves: The NCC's Insurance Liaison is directed to obtain a Volunteer Workers Accident policy at our next regular insurance renewal, provided it is available under similar terms as were offered in 2017 and at a premium that is in line with the approved 2020 budget.

[See topic #2 in Committee of the Whole]

Second by Engel

For: All

[The NCC's Insurance Liaison is directed to obtain a Volunteer Workers Accident policy at our next regular insurance renewal, provided it is available under similar terms as were offered in 2017 and at a premium that is in line with the approved 2020 budget]

12. Folsom moves: The proposed FY2020 budget as submitted in the December 2019 Treasurer Report and amended during the Committee of the Whole is approved.

[See topic #3 in Committee of the Whole]

Second by Morris-Siegel

For: Rest

Abstain: Davis

[The FY2020 budget is approved]

13. Engel moves: The proposed revisions to the Alan Traino Karst Preserve Management Plan as discussed and amended during the Committee of the Whole are approved.

[See topic #5 in Committee of the Whole]

Second by Hedges

For: All

[The revised Alan Traino Karst Preserve Management Plan is approved]

14. Simmons moves: The NCC will dedicate 12.5% of the NYSCPP Transaction Grant amount for the Salamander Cave Preserve to the Stewardship Fund for the Salamander Cave Preserve.

[This action modifies the action taken at the December 2018 meeting when \$750 was dedicated to the Stewardship Fund for the Salamander Preserve, to reflect the change in the project budget.]

Second by Hatfield

Roll call vote:

Simmons: Yes

Folsom: Yes

Berger: Yes

Engel: Yes

Hedges: Yes

Nieman: Yes

Davis: Yes

Morris-Siegel: Yes

Ingalls: Yes

Chu: Yes

Armen: Yes

Hatfield: Yes

[The NCC will dedicate 12.5% of the NYSCPP Transaction Grant amount for the Salamander Cave Preserve to the Stewardship Fund for the Salamander Cave Preserve]

15. Simmons moves: The NCC will apply for a New York State Conservation Partnership Program Transaction Grant funded by the Environmental Protection Fund and administered by the Land Trust Alliance for costs associated with the acquisition of the Alan Traino Preserve.

Second by Berger

Roll call vote:

Simmons: Yes

Folsom: Yes

Berger: Yes

Engel: Yes

Hedges: Yes

Nieman: Yes

Davis: Yes

Morris-Siegel: Yes

Ingalls: Yes

Chu: Yes

Armen: Yes

Hatfield: Yes

[The NCC will apply for a New York State Conservation Partnership Program Transaction Grant funded by the Environmental Protection Fund and administered by the Land Trust Alliance for costs associated with the acquisition of the Alan Traino Preserve.]

16. Simmons moves: The NCC will dedicate 12.5% of the NYSCPP Transaction Grant amount for the Alan Traino Preserve to the Stewardship Fund for the Alan Traino Preserve.

Second by Morris-Siegel

Roll call vote:

Simmons: Yes

Folsom: Yes

Berger: Yes

Engel: Yes

Hedges: Yes

Nieman: Yes

Davis: Yes

Morris-Siegel: Yes

Ingalls: Yes

Chu: Yes

Armen: Yes

Hatfield: Yes

[The NCC will dedicate 12.5% of the NYSCPP Transaction Grant amount for the Alan Traino Preserve to the Stewardship Fund for the Alan Traino Preserve.]

17. Armen moves: The NCC will host the Spring 2020 NRO.

Second by Chu

For: Rest

Abstain: Ingalls, Engel

[The NCC will host the Spring 2020 NRO]

18. Davis moves: The NCC will participate in the International Year of Caves and Karst.

Second by Hedges

For: All
[The NCC will participate in the International Year of Caves and Karst]

19. Berger moves: Hatfield is named the NCC's designee to NEBWG 2020.
Second by Folsom
For: Rest
Abstain: Hatfield
[Hatfield is named the NCC's designee to NEBWG 2020]

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

Informational point: the Spring Board meeting will be Sunday, March 8, 2020 at 10 AM in the Saugerties area. Dumont will update us on location specifics before Christmas.

Informational point: the late Spring EC meeting will be Sunday, April 26, 2020 at 10 AM possibly at the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy offices, pending availability.

21. Simmons moves: The NCC Summer meeting will be Sunday, June 7, 2020 at 10am at the Chu residence.
Second by Chu
For: Rest
Abstain: Ingalls
[The NCC Summer meeting will be Sunday, June 7, 2020 at 10am at the Chu residence]

22. Simmons moves to thank Mike Warner and Emily Davis for hosting this NCC meeting at their home.
Second by Hatfield
For: Rest
Abstain: Davis
[Warner and Davis have the NCC's thanks for hosting yet another winter Board meeting]

23. Hatfield moves to adjourn.
Second by Ingalls
For: Rest
Against: Morris-Siegel
[The meeting is adjourned]

Meeting adjourned at 3:11pm

**Attachment A
President's Report**

1. Sorry to start with sad news, but as has been reported, Dennis Connors, owner and donator of Salamander Cave, has passed away on Friday the 29th of November. This will likely delay the overall transition of the property to the NCC, details to follow.
2. On an upbeat note, we now have our 10th preserve; having signed the closing paperwork for the Alan Traino Preserve, it is now ours! What a great tribute for our friend Alan.
3. A great job done by your Officers presenting a total of five presentations at the NCKMS in Virginia (10-5 to 10-8). Mitch's presentations on Risk Management were especially well received by our counterparts in other conservancies.
4. Preserve management opportunities: With Devon taking on the Traino Preserve, I'd like to find someone to take on the management duties at Bentleys. Also, Thom has asked us to find a person to come on board as the co-manager at Onesquethaw with the intent for them to take it over in the future.
5. I will be applying for NYSCPP Grants for both the Traino Preserve purchase and the Salamander Preserve donation.

Cave Preserve Management Plan (MP) Review Schedule

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

Note: The Onesquethaw MP has been circulated for comments, note that it includes the wording for a "bat protection device" to preclude wayward bats from trying to hibernate in the cave and so perish during the winter/spring flooding.

I have added the Traino Preserve MP review into the schedule as noted above, more as a placeholder than anything else. We could do it in September as shown, or simply add it to the end of the list and shift everyone else back a quarter.

CAVE PRESERVE REPORTS:

1. Bensons (Luke Mazza)

Progress: In total 13 permits were issued during the 2019 caving season. The closed cave signage has been posted for the season, and as of this writing game cameras have likely already been installed as part of the winter monitoring grant project.

A new neighbor to the Bensons preserve recently reached out because it was their impression that tree stands had recently been erected on preserve property. They also reported having had signage removed and trees taken out along their property line. Fortunately, they were mistaken about where the preserve property extended, but it was encouraging to see we have a new neighbor keeping an eye on things.

Issues: There are no issues needing attention at this time.

Plans: Will plan to assist with game camera upkeep/maintenance as I'm able to over the Winter.

2. Bentleys (Devon Hedges)

Progress: Preserve visited three times since September. Trails in good condition other than swampy areas. Trail camera installed with Bob Simmons and Shirley Madewell. Brochures restocked, visitor log recorded.

Problems: Nothing New

Plans: Board display documents should be reproduced and installed before next season. Will reach out to neighbors to inform them about contacting property owners for hunting permission.

3. Clarksville (Mike Chu)

[See discussion topic #6 in Committee of the Whole]

4. Ella Armstrong (Erik Nieman)

Progress: Cleared and maintained trail. Working on reclaiming parking area from weed growth. Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Cave area closure sign put up at kiosk for the closure period.

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. EC currently looking into obtaining a replacement copy of property survey to re-establish boundaries at preserve. Periodic trail and parking maintenance. A sign-in log will be placed at the kiosk for 2020.

5. Knox (Mitch Berger)

Progress: Trail checkup occurred 11/23, with no problems evident.

DEC closure signs remain up for the winter (they were up all year this year).

Trail camera was installed by Simmons, Hedges, and Madewell on 11/16.

Friendly relations with our neighbor to the south were renewed somewhat unexpectedly (see Issues section).

Issues: On 11/23, I found a large commercial pickup backed up to the trail without indications that it belonged to cavers, and was unable to find anyone on the Preserve. After conferring with Davis by phone, since it was near sunset and we expected hunters to return to their vehicles at dark, I waited around in my car. Some time later, our neighbor noticed vehicles at the preserve and came by to check if things were okay. While we were chatting, the owner of the trespassing vehicle arrived in another person's vehicle to retrieve it - they were hunting nearby on what they state is a friend's land, and had used our lot as parking. They stated that they knew they couldn't hunt on our land because of the Posted signs, but thought the parking lot was just a public highway pulloff. Our neighbor and I spoke with them for a bit, cleared things up, and we all went our separate ways.

The Great Divide rope is [presumably] 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.

Plans: Periodic property inspection over the winter and trail maintenance once the plants start to flower.

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)

With the caves closed for the season there is not much to report. Digging resumed at the Dome 12 Sink in October and will continue until the dig is inaccessible due to ice.

Simmons installed a trail camera at Merlins in Cave in November.

7. Onesquethaw (Thom Engel)

Researching the farming going on at the preserve and how to address it. Management plan updates have been submitted for review and comment.

8. Sellecks (Joey O'Reilly)

Progress: Preserve and trail have been trimmed and mowed regularly. Not much use this summer according to register.

Problems: A tree has fallen across the trail during a big storm.

Plans: Getting someone to assist to cut and move the tree off the trail before winter.

[Ed: Berger confirmed that Haberland is willing to help. Nieman also volunteered. Berger will get in touch with O'Reilly.]

9. Spider (Kevin Dumont)

Progress: Nothing to report.

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

The preserve is ours, #10. Will need to discuss interim visitation policy until infrastructure is completed (parking, kiosk, changing area, etc.).

Salamander Preserve

We now have all of the parts ready to submit to the planning board to append the small section to the Connor's residential parcel; unfortunately we missed the last submittal deadline, but intend to have it in for the next cycle. Sadly Dennis Connors passed away last week. We may need to wait some time for his wife, Valerie, to be able to complete the transaction. May wish to name preserve in memory of Dennis if okay with Valerie.

[REDACTED]

Nominating (Norm Berg)

The request for candidates for positions of President and Secretary resulted in these submissions:

President: Bob Simmons, currently the NCC President
Secretary: Mitch Berger, currently the NCC Secretary

Over the winter I'll be working on the voting system for the spring 2020 trustee elections. The solicitation for trustee candidates will begin around February 2020.

Risk Management (Mitch Berger)

Progress: Finished preparing and presented "Risk Management Strategies for Cave Conservancies" talk at NCKMS.
Represented the NCC along with Simmons and Engel at NCKMS, did much networking.
Added insurance coverage (General Liability {G/L} and Terrafirma) for the Alan Traino Preserve.
Learned about Volunteer Workers Accident protection (see Committee of the Whole topic)

Issues: Still have to write a paper for the NCKMS proceedings.

Plans: Write the paper from my talk at NCKMS for the proceedings.
Participate in annual Land Trust Alliance (LTA) risk management training program (eligibility for Terrafirma discounts).
Add insurance coverage (G/L and Terrafirma) for Salamander if/when we close.
Prepare and file our 2020 Terrafirma application.
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, discussed cave at local Green Drinks meeting with Weantinogue Heritage Land Trust (WHLT).

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

Game cameras (9) deployed at preserves (Clarksville (3), Onesquethaw, Bentleys, Bensons, Knox, Ella & Merlins. Using the cameras in lieu of the proposed light detection devices to assess visitation in the off season.

Governance ad hoc (Devon Hedges)

Progress: None

**Attachment B
Vice President's Report**

Bylaws Committee (Joe Levinson)
Nothing to report.

Education (Thom Engel)
Nothing to report.

Science Committee (Larry Davis)
No report received.

Special Use (Thom Engel)
Numbers are way down this year. Year end report is attached separately.

Surprise Cave Committee (Al DeMaria)
Nothing to report.

Thacher Park (Thom Engel)

I was requested by the park to do a site evaluation on 33 acres adjacent to the Thompsons Lake Campground. I accompanied the park manager and assistant manager, the head of the nature center, and Chuck VerStraeten Site has a cave and a small sinking stream.

Casey Holzworth, my contact for the permit has left the Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). Replacement has not yet been hired.

**Attachment C
Treasurer's Report**



Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual as of 11/24/19

	Approved	Actual	Approved	Actual	*Proposed*
	FY18	FY18	FY19	FY19 YTD	FY20
Ordinary Income/Expense					
Income					
Donations					
Auction Donations	2,400.00	3,106.61	2,000.00	1,770.00	1,800.00
Donations - Other	7,170.00	22,590.90	9,670.00	10,818.69	7,741.00
Total Donations	9,570.00	25,697.51	11,670.00	12,588.69	9,541.00
Grants	6,000.00	26,000.00	1,500.00	0.00	0.00
Interest Earned	10.00	145.93	15.00	11.17	10.00
Membership Income	3,500.00	3,620.00	2,930.00	2,920.00	2,700.00
Total Income	19,080.00	55,463.44	16,115.00	15,519.86	12,251.00
Expense					
40th Anniversary	2,000.00	2,394.90			
Acquisitions	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	29,447.00	2,000.00
Bank Charges	50.00	104.39	75.00	48.00	75.00
Donations-outgoing	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00	200.00
Dues	350.00	250.00	350.00	300.00	350.00
Education	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	50.00
Executive					
President	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
Secretary	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	50.00
Treasurer	50.00	0.00	50.00	49.65	50.00
VP	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	50.00
Total Executive	250.00	0.00	250.00	49.65	250.00
Grant Expense	0.00	21,004.51	1,500.00	303.66	0.00
Insurance	2,000.00	2,111.00	2,280.00	2,197.06	2,516.00
Legal Fees	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
Licenses & Permits	50.00	100.00	500.00	125.00	125.00
Meeting Expense	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
Meetings & Conferences	170.00	0.00	200.00	0.00	300.00
Membership Expenses	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	125.00
Miscellaneous	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
Office Expense	100.00	54.00	100.00	64.48	100.00
Postage	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
Preserves-Maintenance					
Bensons	1,150.00	0.00	250.00	0.00	310.00
Bentleys	1,300.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	160.00
Clarksville	1,350.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	160.00
Ella Armstrong	600.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	160.00
Knox	1,100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	160.00
Merlins	900.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	460.00
Onesquethaw	950.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	110.00
Sellecks	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	160.00
Spider	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	160.00
Traino					360.00
Total Preserves-Maintenance	7,550.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00	2,200.00
Promotion	2,300.00	955.50	2,000.00	805.14	1,500.00

Publishing					
Mailings	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	50.00
Website	60.00	0.00	60.00	0.00	60.00
Total Publishing	110.00	0.00	110.00	0.00	110.00
Science			3,000.00	0.00	500.00
Sponsorships	300.00	800.00	800.00	250.00	250.00
Taxes on Properties	200.00	11.24	300.00	625.57	300.00
Total Expense	19,080.00	27,785.54	16,115.00	34,215.56	12,251.00
Net Ordinary Income	0.00	27,677.90	0.00	-18,696.91	0.00

The 2018 federal tax forms (990EZ etc.) and NY Charities Bureau re-registration (CHAR-500) were prepared and submitted before the 11/15/19 deadline. 250 Planned Giving brochures have been printed, some of which will be mailed out to Life Members in 2020. Please note the "Proposed" budget column above, which will be voted upon at this (December) meeting.

Barn Dance Subcommittee - Emily Davis & Mike Warner:

Below find the information for the 2019 barn dance. Let me know if I have forgotten anyone who helped with set up and running of the event.

Expenses:

Band	\$350.00
Food	\$86.05
Total expense	\$436.05

Income:

Donation from Vince and Sue Kappler	\$300.00
Donation from Russ and Amy Pokorny	\$50.00
Raffle Tickets	\$231.00
Entry fees	\$420.00
Total income	\$1001.00

Dance profit \$564.95

Additional income at event:

1 hat	\$25.00
1 sticker	\$1.00
Greg Moore Dues	\$20.00

The total attendees included 30 adults, 24 students and 4 family members

Assisting with the event:

Bob Simmons
Mike Warner
Christa Hay
Leslie Hatfield
Russ and Amy Pokorny
Mitch Berger

Donors:

Mike Chu
Bill Folsom
Bob Simmons
Thom Engel
Leslie Hatfield

Mitch Berger - Carroll Bassett BMS
 Kevin Dumont - BC's New Paltz Climbing Gym
 Sharon Vrooman
 Your Way Cafe
 Carrot Barn @ Schoharie Valley Farms
 Apple Barrel
 Luhrman's Fox Creek Farm
 I Love Books
 The Stewart's Shops
 Mad Dog Bicycles
 The Windowbox Cafe
 The Roasted Garlic
 The Real McCoy Beer Co.
 Helderberg Mountain Brewing Co.
 Ragonese Italian Imports
 West Wind Acres
 Paul Rosenberg
 Vince and Sue Kappler
 Russ and Amy Pokorny

Investment Committee - John Fioroni:

No report received

Membership Committee - Peter Youngbaer:

Progress:

Membership Renewals and New Members:

Membership is remaining constant. There is a fairly good-sized batch of October/November renewals that haven't come in to the Office or PayPal yet. Hopefully, they will come in prior to the December meeting. All renewal notices for memberships up through the end of the year (through December) have been sent. The database is current as of today, November 18. I also wrote an article for this issue of the NCC Newsletter, updating our Life Member roster and pitching others to upgrade. Personally, I was impressed that our number of Life Members, including Family Life, grew by 30 over the past four years – from 43 to 73.

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

December 8, 2019		April 22, 2012 (baseline)	
Life:	63	Life:	18
Family Life:	9	Family Life:	0
Benefactor:	8	Benefactor:	10
Regular:	75	Regular:	88
Family:	15	Family:	16
Institutional:	7	Institutional:	3
Total:	177	Total:	135

Note: Total in December was 177; 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. For 2020, my plan is to create a template for a new Life Member certificate and circulate to the officers for approval. Once we have that template, I can start producing them and have a batch for Simmons to sign, hopefully sometime this winter.

I would also like to reiterate what I've said before, 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

Office Committee Report - Emily Davis & Mike Warner:

Problems: None
Progress: Status Quo
Plans: none specifically

Publications – Christa Hay:

Sent numerous email campaigns thru Mailchimp: nominations, Traino Preserve, newsletter request, and newsletter. I contact Peter Youngbaer for any new members and add them to the subscribers. One member requested to unsubscribe.

I'm looking for photos of any NCC swag over the years for a newsletter article in the future.

Technology Committee Report – Mike Chu:

Status Quo. Added email aliases as requested and fixed newsletter glitch (not able to view link since it was in a draft state).

Volunteer Value (VV) Committee – Vince Kappler:

Vince Kappler
volunteervalue@necaveconservancy.org

Progress: Year to date totals: 1340.5 hours of volunteer work for NCC projects for a total value of \$58,518. Members also reported traveling a total of 11,474 miles to work on projects. The Treasurer, EC, and Office committees reported this cycle as well as Luke who reported time/miles for preserve inspection.

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

Problems: None at this time.

**Attachment D
Secretary's Report**

**EC Meeting Minutes
November 3, 2019, 10:00am
Winchester Center, CT**

Note: Prior to the beginning of the meeting, Russell noted that he had an opportunity to speak with a Goodyear Blimp pilot, who might be interested in assisting the DEC with the gating project at Eagle Cave if it occurs (recall that noise from the helicopter that would likely be required to bring material and equipment up there was noted as an issue when we were consulted at the previous Board meeting). Due to phone connection quality, Russell did not remain on the line for the formal meeting.

Called to order 10:20am
Present: T. Engel, B. Simmons, M. Berger, B. Folsom

1) NCKMS wrap-up

A great many things happened and were learned throughout the week we were at NCKMS. We presented 4 talks (one of them in two parts), which was the greatest amount of the conservancies present. We'll summarize some of the highlights at the Board Meeting, but some things of note included various risk management contacts that were made, discussing Onesquethaw with someone from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, a novel bat call counter that might be of interest for our scientific study, grants from the Cave Conservancy Foundation, fallout from a lawsuit against the Indiana Karst Conservancy, and folks in other states pursuing cave protection laws. We also discussed the imminent deadline for the papers we need to write for inclusion in the published proceedings from the conference. [Ed note: That deadline was pushed back the night after our meeting.]

2) Thacher Land acquisition (Engel)

Engel was contacted by the park to help assess a lot of land for sale by a private party adjacent to (on the west side of) the lake in the Thompson's Lake Campground part of the park. The hill is coral reef, and the park is interested in acquiring it. There's at least one cave on the property. Engel is advising the park.

3) [REDACTED] (Engel)

4) Onesquethaw Management Plan revisions (Engel)

Engel shared his draft revisions for the Management Plan with the EC prior to the meeting for suggestions and discussion prior to sending to the rest of the Board for consideration at the meeting. Berger provided him with some marked-up questions and suggestions.

Engel also informed us that he had gone to talk with the farmer who's believed to be farming the land (Hatfield was able to provide likely contact info). The farmer wasn't there when Engel stopped by, but he left a card along with a copy of the survey and a note that they're farming our land. He is also writing up a list of some expectations along the lines of us not minding the land being farmed, and that we don't want to be paid for it, but we also don't think anyone else should be paid for it either, that we don't want manure spread on our land or fertilizer washing into the cave. There was some discussion about whether we really want machinery running around the land given the developing sinkholes, and Simmons asked if we should just be telling the farmer that it's our land, and he needs to contact us if he wishes to farm it, otherwise he's trespassing.

5) Ella Armstrong survey copy, Knox survey filing status

Simmons received a box of documents from Addis and has gone through its contents. He found nothing on Ella or Knox. We've recently had cause to believe that the surveys we had done might not be on file, even though Engel is fairly sure he remembers being the one to make the filings. There's no explanation we could come up with for why Ella's wouldn't have been filed. However, there are two possible explanations related to Knox - first, at the time the survey was done, the expectation was that the pin in the southwest corner would have to be placed again after remediation of the damage to that corner of the property as it was not expected to survive the heavy equipment work in that corner of the preserve. Second, pins were not placed at the corners of the northern strip of land, and filing may have been postponed pending figuring out whether to pursue that. Our conclusion was that we shouldn't rely on what we're seeing online related to the filing status (particularly with Onesquethaw, where the online records for our deed can only be found by searching for a misspelled version of our name), and should first send Engel to the Albany County Clerk's office to double-check whether they're on file. If not, then we should approach Bourgeois (who surveyed Ella) and CT Male (which surveyed Knox) for mylar copies. And we should consider discussing what would be involved in getting the northern pins done for Knox with CT Male.

6) Volunteer Workers Accident protection insurance

Berger reminded us that a quote for this insurance was included along with the G/L quote we requested when we switched to the Conserve-A-Nation program (along with a couple other things, such as Umbrella Insurance). At the time, we didn't take them up on it, as it sounded like it covered things we would be protected against liability for by the G/L policy. In the past year, Berger has learned of another cave conservancy that joined the same insurance program deciding to acquire the volunteer accident policy. This caused him to ask for more information about it as he was working on acquiring insurance for yet another cave-related organization.

If a volunteer sustains a serious injury, the G/L insurance does protect us against liability, and if we're somehow found liable, it would pay for the injured party's damages (medical expenses, mostly). However, in order for that to occur, the injured party would have to sue us... and they would have to win (which in most cases isn't likely to begin with) - this is unpleasant and expensive all around. This volunteer accident protection policy is referred to by some as a "good guy" policy - if we had a volunteer get seriously injured and their medical insurance either didn't exist or wouldn't cover their expenses, this policy would allow us to put in a claim on the volunteer's behalf (without a lawsuit or judgment being involved) and if they deem it to be covered, the policy would pay out up to a certain limit for the medical expenses. The rest of the EC seemed even more enthusiastic than Berger expected about picking up this coverage if it's available at a similar price as was offered to us in 2017, and told the story of how someone volunteering at another caving organization's convention ended up having to sue that other caving organization after an injury, which obviously led to unpleasantness.

7) Future NCKMS

Warner attended the NCKMS Steering Committee’s meeting during this year’s conference and presented a pitch for the 2023 NCKMS to be hosted in the Albany area, with field trips in Vermont. Due to conflicting commitments, the Chair of the Steering Committee (Kennedy) had to leave early, so no final decision was made; it is expected to be decided at NSS Convention. However, Berger spoke with others on the Steering Committee, and was told that Warner’s presentation went over well, and that at the time, there were not other serious competing bids, so it’s quite likely that we’ll be involved in hosting. We should ask Warner if it’s time for our Board to have the formal motion to agree to sponsor it that we put on the back burner at the last meeting.

8) Traino closing scheduling, adding insurance, advertising permanent Chair position

Simmons indicated that if the \$25k agreed upon as the purchase price was in our bank account, we could schedule the closing as soon as the lawyers have the deed ready. Folsom indicated that the necessary funds had already been transferred into the checking account. Engel volunteered that he would contribute \$5k to handle however the Board wishes (either as a straight donation, a match challenge, etc.). We need to check on the title search progress - after this was last discussed, our attorney was away on vacation. Engel has been working on the Management Plan, and to that end has visited the property and talked with Palange (the owner) on the phone. We can have the Management Plan revisions on the agenda for next month.

We also learned from Simmons that it seems we’ve been confused about what a Transaction Grant from NYSCPP can cover. Until now, we’d been under the impression that we could only apply for them to cover transactional costs of acquiring donated land. Simmons has since learned that these grants can actually fund things such as changing booths, kiosks, parking improvement, etc. for properties that we purchase - they just can’t help fund the purchase price. Berger described some impressive infrastructure along those lines that he’s seen recently at an SCCi preserve, and wonders if this revelation should cause us to dream bigger than we have before.

Berger asked Simmons to keep in touch about closing date selection for the purposes of adding insurance coverage. We also concluded that we should advertise for the permanent Chair of the Traino Preserve Management Committee ASAP and get it into the December newsletter.

9) Salamander closing

Simmons explained that we had done a bunch of paperwork and sent it to Connors’s attorney attempting to beat the deadline for the monthly planning board meeting. The attorney didn’t reply and we missed the deadline. Another drive here was a desire to close in time for the NYSCPP December grant deadline; this isn’t strictly necessary, but it does increase the odds of receiving a grant. After Simmons spoke with the Connors about the lack of response from the attorneys, the Connors went to their attorney and called Simmons from the attorney’s office. This past week, we were asked some clarification questions by the attorney, and have provided responses - the ball is back in her court now. We could wait to get the lot line adjustment done and then transfer the property, or we could close now and then do the lot line adjustment between neighbors instead of between two properties with the same owner.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Simmons will check in with Connors’s attorney later this week.

10) Other acquisitions

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

11) LTA New York Land Conservation Conference

Next year’s conference is Thursday-Friday, May 7-8, 2020 at the Gideon Putnam in Saratoga Springs, NY - this is the same place as when Folsom, Young, and Berger attended. The question was posed about whether we were interested in sponsoring or giving a talk. We noted that it’s going to be after our caves are open (except Knox), and that we could potentially do something like a walk or a field

trip, possibly with an underground component. Simmons attended one of the grant Q&A sessions and his name was recognized by Meme Handley. Engel will contact them to offer a field trip. Matt Decker had inquired about this possibility the last time it was in Albany, but the caves were still closed during that conference. This one is further away, but still a reasonable distance for a field trip. We should drum up interest in attending at the Board Meeting.

12) National Speleological Foundation (NSF) contract

Folsom inquired about whether Engel has asked his brother (who's an attorney) if he can provide advice. Engel hasn't done so yet, but plans to do so at Thanksgiving.

13) Preserve Manager get-together

Simmons reported that he's still waiting on schedules from the Sellecks, Spider, and Knox managers in order to be able to pick a date.

14) Reminder that Certificate of Merit stuff needs to be hammered out for the March meeting

Berger placed this on the agenda simply as a reminder that we still haven't completed this, and its deadline is one meeting away.

15) Cave closure info

Berger placed this on the agenda as a reminder that last year, we said we were going to put together something like a letter to the community apologizing for the confusion caused by different things said in different places, and setting out a comprehensive list of the situation, and we still haven't done so (and our website still contains some incorrect info). Simmons noted that this is a logical point at which to work on fixing it, because two preserves will be coming on board very soon. Engel agreed to take a stab at a document and run it by Berger.

16) Advisory Board

Simmons brought up the topic in passing with Rubin, but didn't reach a conclusion as they ended up on some other tangent.

17) NYSCPP science grant update (re: cameras)

One of the cameras that Hatfield had wasn't operational. She has others working and installed at Clarksville already. Simmons has acquired lithium batteries and bigger data cards and plans to replace the consumables in the already-deployed cameras with those soon.

18) Salamander transaction grant (and maybe Traino)

The grant deadline is December 14. The applications have already been started, and Simmons will have motions ready for the December meeting. We'll be applying for grants for both preserves. It helps if the projects are complete before the application deadline.

19) Member Appreciation Day

We should pick a date shortly after the first of the year, especially if we want to hold it at Thacher. Berger noted that it would be really nice if we were able to hold this event at one of our own properties, and that we have a friendly neighbor at the upcoming Traino Preserve. Folsom notes that if Palange allows us to use his land, there'd be plenty of parking, and the neighbors might even let us camp there.

20) Addis press release

It hasn't happened yet. Simmons last heard a couple weeks ago that Hay had been very sick, and she asked if we still wanted it to go out. Simmons replied that it's better late than never.

21) Cave Protection Law

Davis was contacted, and then Engel was as well, by a man talking about a small cave in the Adirondacks near Cascade Pass that rockhounds have been going into to collect blue calcite. Engel told the man that he could go to the DEC about it, but that there's not much else you can do. Then Engel forwarded the e-mail to his assemblywoman's aide as a concrete example of why the bill is needed. He'll be following up this week.

22) Board meeting logistics

Folsom brought this topic up to see if there's anything obvious to be done about meeting lengths, noting that so much info is packed into our agendas, and that his realization that this may be an issue in itself came to a head at the meeting where Berger described the process he goes through to consolidate data from numerous different sources in compiling the agenda and trying to keep things on track. Folsom asked Berger about what other conservancies do. Berger, while somewhat flattered at the expectation that he knew what other organizations do about this, noted that he's only attended a couple Board meetings of one other conservancy.

Folsom asked about the idea of having a 10-15 minute reading period at the start of the meeting to let people read documents and ask questions. Berger noted that our most recent meeting had been a bit of an outlier of late, since a full hour of it was spent consulting with a guest, and that the prior two meetings had been significantly down in length from the ones last year that were lasting 5+ hours.

Simmons agreed that things did seem to be getting better at the 2019 meetings. Berger supported the idea of providing a small block of time at the beginning of the meeting, but suggests that we strongly assert that it's time for review of the agenda or asking questions of folks to prevent derailments or side conversations that would otherwise go on mid-meeting, rather than presenting this as time for reading the material, because if we present it as reading time, it's likely to be taken as an ongoing invitation not to read the material in advance of the meeting by progressively more people.

23) Terrafirma legal defense fund

Folsom reported that it's up to \$3k now, and that we contribute each year, but that it's currently recorded as a "class" in QuickBooks, not as a temporary restricted fund. He inquired whether it needs to be tracked as the latter, and Berger wasn't really sure.

24) Planned giving form mailing

Youngbaer gave us a membership list. We discussed that it might be a good idea to send planned giving brochures out to all of our life members, and that perhaps this would be better presented if it accompanied life member certificates. Berger also pointed out that we'd printed the original runs of these brochures on printer paper because we were quite short on time, but that it might be time to print a run of them on nice stock.

25) Budget

Folsom reported that he got feedback from just about everyone. Last year we put \$1,500 in for grant income and expense, and asked if we should be doing that for the coming year. Simmons said that he wouldn't have information on grants for a couple of weeks. Ingalls inquired about whether we'd ever get the second part of the grant money (the second year funding was the portion that, according to the plan, would include funding for the data scientist). We can't apply for the second year funding until we've reported on the first year, and since we got a one-year extension on that, everything else in the timeline is shoved down by a year. We'll also be applying for Traino and Salamander transaction grants. We put \$3,000 in the Science budget for ancillary equipment last year in case we needed to purchase more items for the NYSCPP scientific study, but haven't spent any, and Folsom asked what to do. We decided to budget a non-zero, but significantly smaller amount for next year.

26) Ducks Unlimited

Berger mentioned that, following Simmons's mention of the In Lieu Fee program that they manage in much of New York, one of the folks he was camping adjacent to at TAG Fall Cave-In had a Ducks Unlimited license plate, and this sparked an interesting conversation. The fellow is a hunter and associated with SCCi, and seemed to think there was promise in the idea that Simmons had described to us of attempting to partner with them if a large wetland area with karst comes into view that we can't afford on our own.

End: 3:50pm