

Minutes

June 6, 2021 10:00 AM
Online via Videoconference

Meeting called to order at 10:05am

1. Introduction and greetings – Robert Simmons
2. Attendance
Officers: R. Simmons, T. Engel, M. Berger, B. Folsom
Trustees: D. Hedges, R. Armen, M. Ingalls, K. Dumont, E. Nieman, J. Morris-Siegel,
R. Drake, P. Rubin
3. Absent with proxy: L. Hatfield (proxy M. Chu)
4. Absent without designated proxy: None
5. Nominating Committee Report on Trustee Elections (N.Berg)
See Attachment E
6. [Reserved for motion to thank departing Trustees for their service to the NCC; none are departing this year]
7. [Reserved for seating of new Trustees; no new Trustees were elected this year]
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 (CotW). The Vice President will preside. Items may be entered as new business.
Second by Armen
For: Rest
Abstain: Engel
[The Committee of the Whole is opened]

Topics:

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

[This is the usual followup topic on progress with the grant project and equipment loans/rentals.]

Simmons tells us that there are currently no tasks outstanding on the Human Influences on Caves project. He also states that there's been talk of potentially partnering with the Kingston Land Trust on a future grant application, and that we should expect an update on the possibility in September. And he reminds us that under the terms of the Transaction Grant we received for the acquisition of the Traino Preserve, we're obligated to build out infrastructure (e.g. trail, kiosk) and to conduct a survey of the biota at the preserve this year.

Ingalls advertised availability of the acoustic detectors at the Northeast Bat Working Group. There was a brief flurry of e-mail about potential terms, pricing, international shipping logistics, etc., but then nothing really happened for about a month (in part, some of the challenge came from the known upcoming unavailability of the Office Committee, which ordinarily handles shipping logistics), and ultimately, the interested party bought their own detectors. We can try again in the future, but should decide in advance how much we'd charge per night, etc. And there's a real question about whether the headache is worth the money. Currently, several of the detectors are being stored by Hedges. When Ingalls did some research into others offering detector rentals, she found that not a whole lot of researchers end up renting, because the nightly rentals tend to be priced high enough that after three nights, the rental cost is more than the cost to purchase the instrument outright. Purchasing one also comes with more guarantee that the equipment will work. Rubin inquires whether there's value in us keeping them, and Folsom likewise asks whether we should try to sell them. Berger believes there's value in us keeping *some* but not all of them, as we may well be involved in research projects that benefit from recorded bat data in the future, but it's unlikely that we'll have another unplanned and unfunded need to deploy at eleven simultaneous sites again.

Simmons reminds us that a previous suggestion to sell the devices had been shot down, but notes that technological

advances will obsolete the instruments we have, and are already beginning to do so, so our window of opportunity to change our minds and sell them is finite. Ingalls feels that either keeping or selling them as kits, rather than renting them out, makes the most sense. She also notes that doing work with the data they can collect is not inexpensive due to the need for specialized licensed software (like Kaleidoscope).

9.2. Knox Cave Preserve Management Plan review (Berger)

[This is the periodic review of this preserve's management plan; proposed updates from the Manager are included in the meeting materials, and will be voted on in agenda item 15 below.]

The proposed updates to the Knox plan were discussed, and nothing that was proposed was contentious. A few topics that had not been proposed changes were also brought up. The most substantial of these resulted in a consensus that we should de-codify the specific number of hunting permits that the Manager(s) may issue and leave it up to their discretion, that we should remove all references to the "Knox Trail" potentially crossing our land (as that project is a long-abandoned idea at this point), and that we should remove mention of NCC preferences about potential acquisition opportunities to expand the preserve.

9.3. Positions needing to be filled (Simmons, Armen)

[As noted in Item 7 of the EC Meeting Minutes in Attachment D, we've been searching for a Vermont Representative, a Fundraising Chair, and a Stewardship Coordinator. We'll hear of any progress.]

Simmons reports that thus far, there haven't been any responses to the Stewardship Coordinator advertisement. He also notes that given Folsom's report about where we currently stand with respect to some of our fundraising initiatives (hard hit by the pandemic-induced cessation of activity), he will be pivoting much of his recruitment attention towards the Fundraising Chair position. Berger, recalling Hatfield's prior expressed potential interest, asks if there's any reason we shouldn't encourage her to consider taking it on despite the likelihood of being less local, noting that much of the involved coordination work for the position doesn't necessarily require physical presence anywhere, and also noting that remote meetings have enabled more participation from long-term Board member Ingalls, whose fieldwork schedule had previously limited her ability to attend meetings, despite that she has moved further away. There was also a joking attempt to convince Chu, as Hatfield's designated proxy, to agree to sign her up for the role. Armen has agreed to take on the Vermont Representative role, and has been conducting some outreach. Morris-Siegel expresses tentative interest in the Stewardship Coordinator role, though that would practically require him to transition his management role at Merlins to someone else, potentially Armen. Another suggestion was made of someone we might approach about interest in the Stewardship Coordinator role.

9.4. New York Land Conservation Conference (LTA) wrap-up (Hatfield, Simmons)

[The conference ran online May 5-26; we'll find out what our representatives brought back to share.]

Simmons ended up not attending, and Hatfield couldn't make the meeting, so we weren't sure whether she attended and if there's anything to report. Focuses of the conference this year included climate change and environmental justice. We'll check in with Hatfield for a future update.

9.5. Northeast Bat Working Group wrap-up (Ingalls)

[The conference happened shortly after the last Board meeting; we'll hear of any interesting developments.]

Ingalls tells us that it was online this year, and that though the format was decent, it caused attendees to miss out on the traditional networking benefits. There was not a whole lot discussed at the conference of major relevance to the NCC. Berger inquired whether there were any updates on the listing process for the Little Brown bat (which we'd heard some time back from the DEC via Engel that New York planned to list as endangered). Ingalls says that there wasn't anything immediate, and most of the potential listings seem to have been pushed back by about a year. We also learned that there is a possibility of a federal listing of the Little Brown and the Tricolored Bat - the public determination date on them is expected to be in September 2022.

9.6. National Cave and Karst Management Symposium (NCKMS) conference participation (Berger)

[Information on registration, presentations, sponsorships, etc. is now available.]

Berger presented the information they've published about sponsorships. Essentially, the sponsorship levels available are multiples of the individual attendee registration cost, and the number of complimentary registrations included with a sponsorship tracks with how many registrations would've been paid for with the same amount of money as the sponsorship. So, there's no savings in cost of attendance. Berger inquired about our history of sponsorships of this conference. Folsom reports that we've only sponsored the previous conference (as several of us were attending and presenting, and the theme was well-tuned to us), and the one that was hosted in our area. Morris-Siegel suggested that given this information, perhaps we should not sponsor it this year, and Folsom was hesitant to do so given the significant cost and the status of our unmet fundraising goals. Berger noted his planned commitment to attend, and polled for other potential attendees. Simmons indicated that he's unsure if he could attend this time, Rubin was interested (and has a potential presentation in line with this year's theme), and Drake was strongly leaning towards attending. Given that it sounds like at least Berger and Drake will attend, and that the

cost of a sponsorship that earns two complimentary registrations is the same as the cost of those registrations, Berger suggested that he might as well front the money for two registrations as a donation to the NCC so that the NCC can sponsor the conference and gain the associated benefits without any additional cost. The group found this idea agreeable.

9.7. NSS Convention (Simmons)

[It's online July 24-30. We can discuss representation and attendance plans.]

Simmons tells us that it's easier for him to participate online at the sorts of meetings relevant for him (mostly the Cave Conservancies Roundtable (CCR) and the Preserves meeting). Berger, Simmons, Morris-Siegel, and Armen plan to represent us at the CCR. Simmons will also inquire of M. Sandone whether his Clarksville video is being entered in the Salon.

9.8. Old Timers Reunion (Berger)

[It has been announced as happening in-person; we need to plan our presence.]

Berger will be attending, as will Davis and Warner. So, we should plan our presence and what swag is being brought. Simmons reminded us of the lowered staffing commitments that had been agreed to after prior discussions that Berger and Warner had with the vendor coordinator following a request that we agree to a contract that would've required us to agree to staff our booth for more hours than is feasible for most conservancies (as opposed to retailers). Berger also reminded us that during the same discussions, we'd been asked to agree to downsizing our space footprint by half, and had agreed to do so. Berger will talk with Davis about our plans to attend as a vendor, and also an interest in finding another way to fundraise at the event beyond simply selling swag.

9.9. Members' Day (Berger)

[Our intended schedule has obviously slipped; this is here to check in.]

Berger apologized for not having yet found the time to call together the group of volunteers who'd agreed to plan this as a remote event, and thus for the timeline slipping. Drake notes that there seemed to be a lot of energy around the idea months ago at the last meeting, but that in the interim, the pandemic situation seems to have changed for the better, and virtual events are still not among people's favorite things, so this may be for the best, since we may have an opportunity to hold it in-person. The suggestion is to have it sometime mid-July. Conversation then turned to potential venues. Engel offered to talk with a community church or with our neighbor Crookes. Morris-Siegel asked about the possibility of holding it at the Hatfield/Schwartz property. Berger mentioned his oft-stated wish that someday, we'd be able to host events on our own property. Clarksville, of course, has a better parking situation than all of our other preserves, but there's always been the belief that it wouldn't have a suitable area for the event itself where we could set up the large tents, chairs, etc. Expressing some skepticism that there really isn't anywhere at Clarksville meeting the requirements, he noted that he was going to be in the area for the NCRC event later in the week, and he and Engel planned to meet up at the preserve, look around, and take some measurements on Thursday. Proposed dates are July 17 and 18, with a preference for the 18th. Engel will talk with the chef at Jake Moon to see if they have any interest in participating in the event. Berger will discuss availability for the event with Davis when he sees her later in the week.

9.10. NRO (Folsom)

[We'll hear about options that have been investigated.]

Folsom talked with the Cobleskill Fairgrounds staff, which turned us down for two proposed weekends (and didn't make alternative suggestions). He also sent an inquiry to the Altamont Fairgrounds staff, and they didn't respond. Morris-Siegel suggests looking into the Harley Rendezvous site where the previous joint NRO/MAR was held. Hedges asks about potentially holding it at Natural Stone Bridge and Caves. The Helderberg Workshop was also suggested, as we have M. Nardacci as a contact there, but Engel points out that there's no water or electricity available there. Simmons will discuss possibilities with V. Sassu-Laviero when he sees her on June 15.

9.11. Barn Dance (Folsom)

[Again, this item is here to check in, as the pandemic situation appears to be improving.]

Folsom asked Davis for a report to offer at this meeting. She tells us that the event has been pre-approved by the Octagon Barn owners for the Saturday preceding the September Board Meeting (i.e. September 25). Folsom also tells us that Tamarak (the band) has tentatively agreed to participate as usual, pending band member availability. As a side note, Davis also tells us that the annual Choco-Mexican party is on, with the usual offer to host a Board meeting the following day.

9.12. Electronic voting process (EC)

[See discussion in Item 3 of the EC Meeting Minutes in Attachment D.]

We briefly rehashed the discussion presented in Item 3 of the EC Meeting Minutes. Though Simmons still believes that we can and should improve codification of our practice and policy, there wasn't any significant new

content added to the suggested small adjustment to our existing policy that came out of the EC meeting. Morris-Siegel notes that for the last several years, the policy we've been working with has served us well about 99% of the time.

9.13. Minimum group size ("Rule of Three") (Engel)

[See discussion in Item 1 of the EC Meeting Minutes in Attachment D.]

Engel was approached last season by someone wanting to visit a cave with kids, which led to a real question about whether simply stating a number of people required to be in a party addressed the actual underlying motivation for the minimum party size rules we and many other cave conservancies impose - specifically, young kids are quite likely not to be able to safely and successfully go for help on their own if someone gets injured. Engel also notes that many other sources he can find specify minimum group sizes of four rather than three. Berger suspects that the explanation for many other groups listing four rather than three has to do with areas having significantly larger caves where exiting the cave alone for help in an emergency would be a far more significant, demanding, and risky undertaking than at our caves. Morris-Siegel says that though we'd like for parties to have two people who could get out of the cave independently, we don't want to end up in the position of trying to judge qualifications. Hedges doesn't feel that we need to make changes to the rules. Simmons suggests that we provide an explanation of why a minimum party size of three is specified so that groups can understand the purpose of the requirement and whether their group will in fact need more resources to satisfy the need to be able to safely seek help in an emergency without leaving an injured party alone. Neiman agrees that there's no need for us to specify ages, and Engel notes that he's seen some minors who he would trust to handle an emergency better than some "adults."

9.14. Pandemic visitation policies (Berger)

[See discussion in Item 5 of the EC Meeting Minutes in Attachment D.]

Berger recapped the policy he's been following at Knox this season so far (if a second party asks for a permit on a date one has already been issued for, he asks their permission to give their contact info to the party already holding a permit, and see if they're willing to discuss whether the groups are okay with being at the preserve together or can stagger their times to avoid contact) and asked for any feedback. He also reminded the group of the small wording change that was made to the fairly dynamic pandemic visitation policy on our website to no longer imply that caving is something that groups should only be doing if they really must. On both fronts, the group expressed that they thought what was currently being done at Knox and what's currently posted on the website were appropriate.

9.15. Assumption of Risk Statement (Armen)

Armen reminds us that seven years ago, the Board approved specific language for an Assumption of Risk Statement to be posted at all the preserves and included in all the management plans. Unfortunately, that statement contains a link to an NSS brochure on safe caving that's now a broken link. About half of our management plans actually contain it as a link. He proposes that we entertain a motion to update the link, and that we seek permission from the NSS to "re-host" the brochure on our own site to avoid this issue recurring if their site is reorganized again. Simmons suggests that we simply reference the document on the NSS site without giving the direct link to the brochure, so that readers can look for the document even if it's moved around again. Berger notes that if we don't "re-host" a copy of the brochure we've seen and approve of and agree with the content of, there is also the concern that the NSS could revise the brochure without us being aware of the changes. While it seems extremely unlikely that the NSS would put forth safety guidelines that we'd disagree with and that we wouldn't wish to adopt, Armen points out (and Berger agrees) that it seems inappropriate for another organization (the NSS) to effectively have the ability to unilaterally alter an NCC policy (and potentially without us knowing that it's happened in the first place).

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

Second by Berger

For: Rest

Against: Morris-Siegel

[The Committee of the Whole is closed]

Old Business

11. Simmons moves: The Acquisitions Committee, under the President, is hereby authorized to undertake actions necessary to transfer ██████████. Such necessary actions may include, but shall not be limited to, ██████████ negotiations and contracts, survey updates and filing, interaction with and applications to local land use boards, filing necessary documents with local and county agencies, and associated fees.

Second by Berger

[Background: While the potential addition has been discussed during Board meetings, a formal vote to move forward with the [REDACTED] has not been formally made.]

For: Rest

[The Acquisitions Committee is authorized to [REDACTED] and execute associated tasks.]

[This motion was handled via electronic vote conducted between 3/30/2021 8:36pm and 4/1/2021 12:29am.]

12. Simmons moves: The survey quote from C.T. Male Associates dated March 1, 2021 for the monumenting, survey, and lot line adjustment services for the [REDACTED], in the sum of \$9,550.00, is hereby approved.

Second by Berger

[Background: This quote was previously provided (and was attached to the e-mail putting forth this motion), and while three quotes were solicited, only this one firm was responsive. C.T. Male has performed well for us in previous projects.]

For: Rest

[The quote from C.T. Male for surveying and associated work for the Clarksville Preserve addition is approved.]

[This motion was handled via electronic vote conducted between 3/30/2021 8:36pm and 4/1/2021 12:29am.]

13. Simmons moves: The Interim Access to Property Agreement with the Kingston Land Trust is approved and may be signed by the President on behalf of the Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc.

Second by Folsom

[Background: Extensive background information was provided as an attachment to the e-mail putting forth this motion.]

For: Rest

Against: Engel

Abstain: Berger, Hatfield

[The Interim Access to Property Agreement with the Kingston Land Trust is approved.]

[This motion was handled via electronic vote conducted between 5/14/2021 9:48pm and 5/22/2021 6:58am.]

New Business

14. Berger moves: The minutes of the March 7, 2021 Board Meeting are approved.

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

Second by Hedges

For: All

[The minutes of the March 7, 2021 Board Meeting are approved]

15. Berger moves: The revisions to the Knox Cave Preserve Management Plan, as amended during Committee of the Whole, are approved.

Second by Morris-Siegel

For: All

[The revisions to the Knox Cave Preserve Management Plan are approved]

16. Simmons moves: The NCC will sponsor the 2021 NCKMS at the "Silver" level (\$500).

Second by Drake

For: All

[The NCC will sponsor the 2021 NCKMS at the \$500 level]

Informational point: Next EC meeting will be Sunday, August 22, 2021 at 10AM if in person (most likely in the Albany/Schoharie area) or 9AM if via videoconference.

Informational point: the Fall Board meeting will be Sunday, September 26, 2021 at 10 AM if in person (most likely at the Octagon Barn) or 9AM if via videoconference.

[There was some discussion of Zoom availability at an in-person meeting for folks who are away]

Informational point: the late Fall EC meeting will tentatively be Sunday, November 7, 2021 at 10AM. This date may be adjusted due to NCKMS-related travel schedules.

17. Simmons moves: The NCC Winter meeting will be Sunday, December 5, 2021 at 10AM at Speleobooks.

Second by Morris-Siegel

For: All

[The NCC Winter meeting will be Sunday, December 5, 2021 at 10AM at Speleobooks]

18. Dumont moves to adjourn.
Second by Nieman
For: Rest
Against: Morris-Siegel
[The meeting is adjourned]

Meeting adjourned at 3:08pm

**Attachment A
President's Report**

1. Please take a long hard look at Bill's Report, please. We are seriously behind on our income and have several irons in the fire that will cost more. Let's redouble our efforts to start getting some cash in the door. This will be my highest priority in the near term.
2. There still have been no announcements of availability for a 2021 round for the NYSCPP grants for which we have been planning to re-submit for the Salamander donation. I sent an inquiry to our contact at LTA to see if there are any rumors or actual news about additional grant rounds.
3. With no grants available at this time, if we are to continue the "human influences on caves" project in some meaningful way, we will need to find alternative sources of funding. I will work with the Hibernation Committee to see if we can generate income through rentals, or otherwise from our existing equipment cache.
4. The ad for the Stewardship Coordinator position has been advertised in the latest Newsletter. No bites yet.
5. As part of the preserves reporting process, I have asked each preserve manager to review outstanding items from their MP "to do" lists and to start scheduling workdays to get those done. Still a work in progress. Several preserves have had workdays over the Spring months, thanks to all who have participated in those! Let's get some more scheduled and advertised to increase membership participation. As a side note, I have also asked all Managers to check and see if their latest management plan revisions have been posted to the website, as some had not been updated for two revision cycles. Still haven't heard back from a number of managers on this issue.
6. There has been progress on several fronts under acquisitions recently: including [REDACTED], etc. as described under the Acquisitions report.
7. Moving ahead with some planning for hosting the Fall NRO, mostly looking at potential venues, rates and availabilities for the mid-September time frame. No clear leading candidates yet and some have indicated they are already booked up for the period. If possible, a live event would be a great thing to help us reconnect with the membership, cavers in general and do some face-to-face fundraising!
8. The Interim Access Agreement for Salamander Cave is signed. Now we will start in earnest on the Easement language. Obviously, the process for the on-line voting for this question showed that we need to update our policy and practices. This will be a topic of discussion at the meeting.
9. Kudos to Mitch Berger for thinking outside our typical box. Berger is fleshing out a passive donation system based on what other Conservancies have implemented. He has a rather simple, low-cost way of securing donations, getting feedback, and better interacting with our preserve visitors.

Cave Preserve Management Plan Review Schedule

Year	March	June	September	December
2021	Ella Armstrong	Knox	Traino	Sellecks
2022	Bensons	Merlins	[REDACTED]	Onesquethaw
2023	Spider	Clarksville	Salamander	Bentleys
2024	Ella Armstrong	Knox	Traino	Sellecks

Note: Berger noted that there would be some minor revisions to the Knox MP this go round and will distribute those proposed changes before the meeting.

CAVE PRESERVE REPORTS:

1. Bensons (Luke Mazza)

Progress: Visited the property on April 17 to assess Spring readiness and perform some property maintenance. The trunk of an apple tree had snapped and dropped its limbs across the ROW. Removed the offending limbs by chainsaw to make the path accessible again. Cleaned off debris from the rest of the path to the entrances; no other maintenance needed for Spring reopening. Returned a few weeks later to pull the closure signs down.

Issues: Nothing noted other than still a need to replace the fading kiosk posters.

Plans: Starting to look into local poster printing options. Also, may replace the protective acrylic panels at the same time since they've been cracked since day one.

2. Bentleys (Devon Hedges, Jonah Spivak)

Problems: A few persistently wet areas along trail could use some steppingstones. Haven't made time to visit more than cursory checks on parking area & logbook.

Progress: Boundary marking completed with Jonah Spivak in late winter. Kiosk & signage materials are being developed.

Plans: Improve by spring, early summer 2021: trails (corduroy, stones)' driveway (broad based dip, water bar, additional stone), kiosk & signage.

3. Clarksville (Thom Engel, Chuck Porter & Mike Chu)

Progress: Cave closed signs have been removed.

Issues: We need to check the kiosk to see if it needs replacement. Some of our neighbor's posted signs have been placed on our property. I have had e-mail communications with him.

Plans: Chuck, Mike, and I plan to mark our eastern boundary with boundary markers once we get a copy of the new survey from CT Male.

4. Ella Armstrong (Erik Nieman)

Progress: Trail maintenance/trees cleared

Issues: Several dead trees in the vicinity of cave entrance.

Plans: Clear dead trees.

5. Knox (Mitch Berger)

Progress: Inspected the property, walked the perimeter of both parcels, and checked out the new surveying work on March 21 with no problems found. Did some trail maintenance on May 2 at which time the impending failure of the kiosk was discovered. Kiosk was repaired by Chu, Porter, Davis, and Warner on May 11, at which time a newly fallen tree was discovered in the sinkhole. Trees were broken down and mostly cleared by G. Moore, Nieman, Davis, Warner, and Berger on May 15; a visiting group from RPI removed the remaining pieces on May 20. Facilitated a visit shortly before opening date by NYS DEC to remove their acoustic equipment.

Discussed a significant trail restoration project suggested by Nieman with him and Davis. Discussed visitation policy in light of the pandemic with the EC. Have issued 10 permits so far this season (not counting the one for the DEC).

Issues: The rear support leg of the kiosk rotted out such that the kiosk could've fallen on anyone; subsequently repaired (see above). A large tree broke and fell into the sinkhole blocking the path very shortly before opening day (and other at-risk trees were identified); subsequently cleared (see above). The Great Divide rope is [presumably] still there. Engel and Berger still need to investigate what may be poison parsnip plants. A visiting group on opening day reported a bunch of trash (mostly glass) in the cave, some of which they removed; requested and received highlights on a map showing affected areas suggesting widespread trash - had subsequent visiting groups investigate, and have since concluded it's mostly localized to the entrance area, likely washed in by snowmelt, and has been mostly cleaned up. We've concluded that the path down the sinkhole is in fact degrading over time and warrants restoration work.

Plans: Periodic property inspections. Addition of trail markers and reposting of property. Boundary marking. Removal of the Great Divide rope. Investigation of troublesome plant species. Further attempts at removal of ancient graffiti. Planning for sinkhole path restoration project.

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

Progress: The new culvert at Dome 12 survived the winter and is accessible again now that the ice has melted out. John Dunham, Ramon Armen, and Bill Folsom bolted to the top of a lead near the formation area in the Big Room of Merlins on May 23rd, 2021. Unfortunately, it led to a dead end. John reports that the Dome 12 dig still looks good and nothing new has washed out.

Issues: None.

Plans: Continued digging, exploration, and survey of Dome 12. The boundary should be walked and any missing signs replaced, similarly, trail signs should be checked and replaced. We are unable to plan a specific date for this work at the time of writing. An updated copy of the Management Plan will be posted to the website shortly. We will continue to work on new signage for the kiosk, including a surface trail map.

7. Onesquethaw (Thom Engel, Christa Hay & Ellen Schwartz)

Progress: Cave closed sign has been removed.

Issues: Nothing to report.

Plans: Complete a spring vegetation survey.

8. Sellecks (Erik Nieman, Tony Vasile)

Progress: Temporary sign with updated contact info placed at kiosk, along with a QR code that leads directly to the Sellecks Preserve page on the NCC website. (following the Onesquethaw Preserve example). Trees blocking the trail have been cleared. Remaining treetops and branches in Levys Cave sinkhole remain to be cleared.

Issues: Contact information at kiosk is out of date (ie. Jason Siemion was listed as preserve manager with private email address). Recent large storm knocked down many trees at Levys Cave. They are blocking the trail and overlie the sinkhole and the cave entrance.

Plans: Update contact info for preserve. New informational poster? Clear remaining trees in the Levy's Cave sinkhole

9. Salamander (Cara Gentry, Erik Richards)

Progress: Interim access agreement with KLT has been completed and signed.

Issues: Build out infrastructure (kiosk/changing area). Negotiate and complete proposed mutual access easement.

Plans: Need to schedule a meeting with KLT to discuss easement. Plan and build preserve infrastructure. Update the Management Plan based on agreement particulars. Drafting a web page mockup for eventual posting on the website, based on other preserve examples.

10. Spider (Kevin Dumont)

Progress: A visit to the preserve on May 6, 2021 found everything to be in order and as expected. No inquiries about visitation were received this quarter.

Issues: None to report.

Plans: Trash collection and creation of a trail along both the base and the top of the escarpment is tentatively planned for summer 2021.

11. Traino Preserve (Devon Hedges)

Progress: Current ends of George's and Slingerland's have been visited for comparison Field neighbors Stanton have been contacted and concurred on plans to keep field portion of property clear, untilled, unplanted, etc. Surface cleanup brought lots of litter large and small out of the area. Property boundaries posted with NCC markers Kiosk materials are being developed. Significant clearing of storm debris

Problems: Planning and coordination of NCC benefit auction of Alan's trailer has not moved along much although some effort has been put to the task.

Plans: Write up content for the Traino Preserve web page; plan, construct kiosk & changing area; NCC benefit auction of remaining Traino digging equipment and supplies, gear, etc.; Potential connection between Slingerland's Hellhole and George's Surprise will be further explored via acoustic probing; survey completion in Slingerland's and approved digging.

OTHER COMMITTEES (PRESIDENT):

Acquisitions (Chuck Porter, Bob Simmons)

Vermont Land Trust: Still need a lead person to push ahead the MOU between organizations and be the "Front Person" on this. Armen was going to be reaching out to [REDACTED] to see if he might be interested.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Nominating (Norm Berg)

Norm's report has been emailed to the Board already, and appears as Attachment E to this meeting's agenda. Congratulations to the three incumbents on their reelection! Thank you to P. Woodell for running.

Risk Management (Mitch Berger)

Progress: Have received renewal policies for our General Liability, Directors & Officers, and Volunteer Accident coverage. The premiums are well within the margins we budgeted for.

Issues: The provider of our Directors & Officers coverage is no longer offering two-year terms, which means our rates for that coverage may vary each year; that rate did not increase for this coming year from the two-year term that is about to expire. Our invoices for all three renewals have not yet materialized.

Plans: Add insurance coverage (G/L and Terrafirma) for the likely upcoming addition if/when we close. Make sure the renewal invoices show up and are processed. Assemble the rest of the committee membership. Pick up other issues that were in-progress with the former ad-hoc committee. Collect annual Conflict of Interest Disclosure forms at this meeting.

Tory's Cave ad hoc committee (Bob Simmons)

I have reached out to the Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy (formerly Weantinoge Heritage LT). I will work with them to update the Cave Management Plan and negotiate limited summer visitation as soon as this year, which they seem amenable to reinstating (with appropriate controls).

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

We had a live lead for renting our equipment to a consulting firm in Canada this spring that did not ultimately materialize. We also had not actually thought out how we would do this (rates, shipping, what we provide, warranty, etc.), but the interest seemed genuine and we could/should get our ducks in a row to be ready for the Fall season. Still no announcements concerning possible additional rounds of grant funding through NYSCPP.

Governance ad hoc (Devon Hedges)

Progress: None

Problems: Attrition? Prioritization? Excuses?

Plans: Revisit committee goals, outline areas of interest and share with Board

Attachment B Vice President's Report

Bylaws Committee (Joe Levinson)

Nothing to report.

Education (Thom Engel)

Nothing to report.

Science Committee (Larry Davis)

We have received a proposal, "Developing A Speleothem Growth History in the Northeastern United States" for paleo-climate studies in our caves (not yet specified which but likely Knox and Clarksville) from Dr. Jeremy Shakun, Associate Professor of Earth and Environmental Sciences at Boston College and Dr. David McGee, Associate Professor of Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary Sciences at MIT. They propose to extend the climate record for our area back 500,000 years using U-Th dating on very small (~100mg) speleothem samples, which may include (or be limited to) previously broken and fallen speleothems. The results will "... tell us more about the geologic history of the caves, as well as improve understanding of past changes in climate and sea level, [which are] critical for better predicting how they may change in the future."

I have carefully read their proposal and returned it to them (on 23 May 2021) with questions and suggestions for revisions. When I receive a new version, I will send it on to property managers for comments and suggestions and anticipate another revision following that. They are also sending a similar proposal to NSS for use of their caves (likely Schoharie and perhaps Gage).

Special Use (Thom Engel)

Fifteen permits issued as of this writing. We currently have 55 total reservations. Clarksville represents 71% of the total. I do expect more camp reservations as Covid restrictions are eased.

Surprise Cave Committee (Al DeMaria)

Nothing to report.

Interest Earned	3.00	25.00
Membership Income	825.00	2,700.00
Total Income	5,610.29	15,278.00
Expense		
Acquisitions	1,405.50	2,000.00
Bank Charges	17.20	75.00
Donations-outgoing	0.00	200.00
Dues	0.00	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
Total Executive	0.00	250.00
Grant Expense	3,000.00	0.00
Insurance	870.00	2,548.00
Legal Fees	1,472.20	1,000.00
Licenses & Permits	0.00	125.00
Meeting Expense	0.00	100.00
Meetings & Conferences	0.00	300.00
Membership Expenses	0.00	125.00
Miscellaneous	0.00	100.00
Office Expense	76.00	100.00
Postage	0.00	100.00
Preserves-Maintenance		
Bensons	0.00	200.00
Bentleys	0.00	200.00
Clarksville	0.00	100.00
Ella Armstrong	0.00	100.00
Knox	960.00	2,060.00
Merlins	0.00	100.00
Onesquethaw	0.00	50.00

Salamander	0.00	600.00
Sellecks	0.00	100.00
Spider	0.00	100.00
Traino	785.00	1,585.00
Total Preserves-Maintenance	1,745.00	5,195.00
Promotion	0.00	1,500.00
Publishing		
Mailings	0.00	50.00
Website	0.00	60.00
Total Publishing	0.00	110.00
Science	0.00	500.00
Sponsorships	0.00	250.00
Taxes on Properties	524.65	300.00
Total Expense	9,110.55	15,278.00
Net Ordinary Income	-3,500.26	0.00
Other Income/Expense		
Other Income		
Net Gain or Loss from NSF Fund	-183.92	0.00
Total Other Income	-183.92	0.00
Net Other Income	-183.92	0.00
Net Income	-\$3,684.18	0.00

Barn Dance Subcommittee - Emily Davis & Mike Warner:

Plans: See if it will be safe for September or early October dance

Problems: Covid

Progress: None

Membership Committee – Riley Drake:

Membership Renewals and New Members: The numbers seem to be coming back up! We have a handful of brand new members (4). However, the increase in membership numbers is largely due to members renewing their memberships that had expired. To that end, I've sent personalized "missing you" emails to individuals who were members for a number of years and then lapsed-- so far these have been received very positively. All renewal notices for memberships up through the end of May have been sent. The database is current as of today, May 28th.

Current Membership Numbers (Change since Feb 20th, 2021)

Life: 62 (-1)

Family Life: 9 (no change)

Benefactor: 14 (+1)

Regular Membership: 73 (+15, 4 new members and 11 renewals)

Institutional: 6 (+1)

Total: 164 (+16)

The above numbers are accurate to the best of my current understanding according to the membership database on April 27th, 2021.

Future directions/plans:

(1) Despite a long discussion about it at the last meeting, I have not been involved in the planning of a "Members Day" this summer. New and renewing members continue to ask me about volunteering opportunities and in-person events. Even if it is not a full-on members day, I am hoping that those comfortable with the covid situation can plan a few community events to help build cohesion among the membership. Please tell me if you are planning these and I can reach out to the people who expressed interest.

(2) Paypal continues to be a tricky way to receive payment, because (in the current configuration) we have to guess what the donated money is intended for based on the amount. This ongoing issue creates a lot of work for Bill and also makes the NCC look very unprofessional and deeply disorganized when our first communication with a new or renewing members is "so why did you pay us again?". I would like help fixing this.

(3) In the next few months I will do a major database cleanup. I will save a copy of the database as it exists now. Additionally, I am considering migrating the membership database to a more manageable format and welcome any input.

(4) I will make email banners at some point for the membership emails. Thank you to several people (Erik Nieman, Kevin Dumont and Bill Folsom) for sending so many gorgeous photos. I hope to have time to choose a few soon.

(5) Tell your caving friends that they can join the NCC! I have run into several longtime northeast cavers in the past few months that were not aware they could join the NCC.

Office Committee Report - Emily Davis & Mike Warner:

Problems: None

Progress: Status Quo

Plans: None specifically

Publications – Christa Hay:

Problems: Same as last report. Did the Board make a decision on going back to the rotating schedule of preserves so we have something in our newsletter?? Or to drop the number of newsletters per year?

[**Note:** The Treasurer responded "no" to the above questions.]

Progress: At time of report not sure if we will receive articles for a newsletter [update: yes, we did]

Plans: Thinking of ways to improve newsletter

Technology Committee Report – Mike Chu:

Ramon Armen reports:

Progress: Made several small adjustments to the website. Added additional form fields to the annual membership form to better identify who is becoming a member.

Plans: There are several PayPal forms with very slight differences in different parts of the website. Even with the addition of the new fields, the differences between these forms mean that we do not always know as much as we would like about who is sending money and for what purpose, depending on how they sign up and what sort of membership they want. We plan to consolidate these forms and reduce the clutter on the signup and donation pages. There is also some missing or incorrect information in some of the older meeting minutes and newsletters as posted on the website. Some of this information is easily correctable, though some articles may

need to be tracked back to the original source, or labeled as unavailable. We will also continue working with preserve managers to ensure the preserve pages and management plans are accurate and up to date.

Volunteer Value Committee – Vince Kappler:

Progress: Year to date totals: 196.5 hours of volunteer work on NCC projects for a total value of \$5680. Members also reported traveling a total of 306 miles to work on projects. Although coronavirus restrictions have eased, I only received reports from the Office, Surprise Cave, and Science committees and the Treasurer. Hopefully VV reporting will pick up as the caving season progresses.

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 April 25, 2021, 10:00am Online via Videoconference

Called to order: 10:04am

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

1) Minimum group size (“rule of three”)

Engel explained that this topic was inspired by an e-mail exchange he had during the winter with a person who contacted him about a proposed trip to Clarksville. This person wanted to take a 9 year old and a 7 year old into the cave. Engel was able to answer that the cave is closed, but all that really did was put off dealing with the trickier issue – the proposed group technically meets the minimum size requirement, and yet likely isn't an appropriate caving group. He points out that if the party members haven't been caving before, it seems that it'd be better to have another adult in the group. So, he asks, when we talk about a group requiring 3 people, are we talking about any three? Three including at least two adults? Three including at least two with underground experience? When Engel pointed out the possible issue of an injury, the trip leader responded that if anything happens to the kids, he could just carry them out. When asked what would happen if something happened to him, the trip leader said he hadn't thought of that, and agreed that he'd get another adult to go on the trip. And so Engel asks if we need to clarify our policy. Simmons notes that he believes the “rule of 3” came from the NSS, and wasn't our creation. The idea, as we're hopefully all aware, is that there should be someone to go for help and someone to remain with an injured party. Berger worries that if we clarify our policy to specify things like underground experience, we're getting dangerously close to judging groups' qualifications, which isn't our place and is a risk exposure. Simmons suggests that perhaps we can crib the NSS's info. Berger notes that we do allow some 2-person trips by special request. He and Engel discussed the occasions where they've granted 2-person permits, and they have by and large been either extremely experienced groups conducting scientific work, often only installing or retrieving equipment near the entrance to the cave. Folsom asks if the thing we often refer to as the “Snyder graphic” covers this. It sort of has the outline of an additional person, but doesn't make it clear that there's a minimum of three, and certainly doesn't explain the rationale.

2) Potential science permit request

Engel reports that we've been contacted by a researcher from one of the Boston area colleges who was pointed our way by John Mylroie. He's looking to sample speleothems in northeastern caves for dating and climatological work. Engel put him in touch with L. Davis, which may have been a tactical error as it seems to have resulted in Engel being cut out of the process. He did indicate to the researcher that they'd have to work through the science process with each cave he desires to collect in. L. Davis also connected the researcher with E. Davis for the NSS caves. So, we may have more than one science proposal coming down the pipeline for this project; the researcher didn't yet know which caves he wanted to select.

3) Electronic vote process

Berger placed this topic here because there seemed to be desire to discuss whether it's meeting our needs in light of the currently ongoing electronic vote. He expressed surprise that Simmons seemed to think it wasn't working because it wasn't going fast enough. Berger points out that before we instituted this process, most times that a motion was presented for electronic consideration, Board members would trip over each other casting votes, only to then discover that others had questions or things to say, effectively preventing an informed vote from happening. He also notes that since we began using this process, he wasn't aware of anyone feeling that they hadn't been able to speak their mind and resolve questions before the vote, which makes it seem like the process is working. Because e-mail isn't a realtime communication medium, when a topic is contentious, this essentially guarantees that it won't go quickly. Engel thinks that perhaps we should get rid of the electronic vote process as it was written into the bylaws some 20 years ago when technology was different, and that these days we have better ways to accomplish the goal of being able to have a discussion –

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notably by videoconference just as we've been having Board and EC meetings during the pandemic. Simmons points out that that involves timing issues with finding a common time where everyone can be at a meeting, and Berger reinforces that note by reminding us that we had to start scheduling the normal Board meetings six months in advance to avoid conflicts, and that going through that work for a motion that's likely to be an uncontentious rubber stamp seems excessive. Engel suggests that we ask the Board what they wish to do as a topic during the next Committee of the Whole. Berger agrees that we should discuss there, but that since we end up with the logistical responsibility of running whatever process is used, there should be some guidance offered by the EC about what we think we can do. Simmons acknowledges that the current process hasn't really kept up with technology. Berger suggests that the current process is actually well-suited to "simple" motions where there's not expected to be much need for deep background explanation nor much disagreement, but that it's a poor match for more complicated issues or issues that require extremely quick action (time for discussion and casting ballots has to be parceled out over e-mail, but following a live discussion, a vote can take place immediately as it's easy to tell when the discussion has reached its conclusion and everyone is already present to vote), and that a special meeting would be the easier way to handle those. We settled on suggesting to the Board that the current process remain in place with one modification – we add an easy way for any Board member to object to the electronic vote and request that we change venue to a special meeting (likely via videoconference). If it's evident to the person making the motion that a special meeting is the right way to handle the topic at hand, we should facilitate that from the outset as well.

4) Kingston Land Trust agreement

[REDACTED]

5) Pandemic visitation policies

Berger explained that last year, when people requested Knox permits, he was only giving out one on any given day, so as to avoid groups encountering each other in-cave or at the preserve, give air time to settle, etc. due to the pandemic. As this season starts, the pandemic isn't over, but the situation is different and seems to call for more flexibility, and he had meant to seek guidance at the last Board meeting. Since that didn't happen, he's looking for input about what he's currently doing. At the moment, if a second group requests a permit for a day where one has already been issued, he's asking the group leaders to get in touch with each other to see if they can either agree on timing that will avoid them encountering each other, or to determine that their vaccination and risk situations are such that they're unconcerned with being at the preserve at the same time. If they reach an agreement, they both get a permit; if they can't, the second group needs to pick a different date. The rest of the EC seemed to think this was a reasonable approach to being cautious but not overly restrictive. Berger will e-mail Engel a list of dates he's already issued Knox permits for, and Engel will update Berger when he receives Special Use requests for Knox so that they can arrange any needed group coordination. Engel notes that he's had somewhat of the opposite experience from Berger – there is a person he hasn't heard from recently, but was previously receiving multiple messages a day from seeking a specific reserved timeslot to visit Clarksville and have the cave just for his group. Engel explained to him that the cave doesn't have permits, and that people come and go as they please, but that it's a cave where it's possible to social distance, or to wait for another day if there are others there.

Engel notes that we've given general trip guidance on our website and should probably tweak it for this year. Berger agreed that it's worth looking carefully at the wording, but recalls being careful about making it "dynamic" to adjust to whatever the current situation is by essentially having it tell people to follow whatever state guidance is in effect. After carefully looking it over, the conclusion we reached is that the wording is good enough to continue to apply and lets us be as flexible as the current public health guidelines – all the way from "you can't be in a non-family group" down to "unlimited gatherings without precautions are allowed." The one thing we think it's time to soften is the suggestion that going caving isn't really a great idea in general right now – we wish to change "If you must go caving" to "If you do go caving." Berger will ask Armen to update it on the website, and Folsom will update it on our Facebook group.

5a) Fundraising

This topic occurred as part of the discussion about pandemic visitation policies, but took a very exciting and promising right turn, and so is being listed here as its own topic. In response to the desire for Berger and Engel to facilitate group coordination for same-day

permits to Knox, Simmons suggested that maybe a calendaring tool for permit preserves and Special Use would be nice to have. Engel reminded the group that he'd asked Chu about such a thing long ago with the desire to use it at Onesquethaw. Berger then reminded the group that in response to that desire expressed by Engel years ago, he'd spent a bunch of time at one TAG Fall Cave-In with SCCi's Executive Director showing him around their electronic permitting system, wondering if its calendaring capabilities provide what we'd want, whether it'd be available to us, and whether we could make use of it without the components that we don't want (all of their caves require a permit and a waiver). The conclusion at the time was that there was a lot of interesting stuff to learn from what they do, but that it probably wasn't a good fit for us because while they were willing to make it available to us, the deal they had with their developer makes it an expensive (but one-time) proposition to offer it to another group, permitting and waivers are fairly integral to its operation, and (the kicker) while it does track and can limit how many permits it issues on a given day, it doesn't really do scheduling of time blocks.

What became relevant here is that Berger lamented the fact that universal permitting and waivers don't mesh with our way of operating preserves, because one thing it does really well that we'd get for free is fundraising – since every trip leader has to sign up for a permit, and then everyone going on their trip needs to respond to an e-mail invitation to sign their electronic waiver, they end up with contact info for everyone visiting any of their preserves. During the process, it asks people if they're members, if they want to become members, or if they want to contribute. And after the trip, it follows up with them with a “hope you enjoyed your visit” e-mail that evangelizes the volunteer nature of the organization and gives them another opportunity to offer support. This works – it generates thousands of dollars of passive donation income annually (when last Berger discussed it with them). But it only works because they end up with contact information for everyone, which doesn't really happen with non-permit caves. In fact, it doesn't even happen with our permit caves, because we only generally interact with the trip leaders, not the rest of their groups, because we don't require or want to require waivers. Since we often have difficulty reaching our goals with directed fundraisers for specific projects, and with finding a Fundraising Chair to drive the program, this kind of passive donation program would be a great thing to have, and Berger initially lamented that he doesn't know how to get there without permits and waivers everywhere and using a system like SCCi's. And then a lightbulb lit up! Folsom asked if we could have some sort of online reservation system; Berger pointed out that that still only puts you in touch with the group leader, and Engel pointed out that this tends to give people the false impression that they have exclusive use of the cave. What we can do is, recognizing that nearly everyone who visits has a smartphone these days, put a QR code on each of our kiosks that takes you to a per-preserve page where you can sign a visitor guestbook. This gets us contact information for many of our visitors, and we can use that to (after a couple days, perhaps on a weekly basis) send a followup e-mail thanking them for signing the guestbook, expressing hope that they enjoyed their visit, telling them about the NCC, **and providing a way for them to make a contribution**. By handling this as a followup message separated by some days from the trip, it's clear that there's no financial requirement to be able to visit, but it gives visitors the ability to make a contribution that they might have anyway but for lack of an easy way to do so without remembering to look us up on their own. This gets us the passive income stream without having to resort to permits, waivers, or any sort of complicated automation system – we have to do a nice job putting together the landing pages for the visitor guestbooks and the followup e-mail message, and those will require some design work. But once they're ready, the followup e-mails (at least initially) can simply be sent manually, once a week or so – no expensive system necessary to start! Berger is particularly excited about this novel idea for us, and will contact Armen, Chu, and Drake about it; Folsom also wants to be kept in the loop.

6) NYSCPP research project / scientific equipment loan program update Simmons reports that Ingalls reached out to the Canadian researchers who had expressed interest in renting the acoustic detectors with our various questions, but hasn't heard back. He wonders if, since the work involved in loaning them out seemed like so much to take on, maybe we should sell them off instead. Berger asks if we're not going to want them for future parts of our research project. Simmons thinks that any followup data collection involving them won't require nearly as many as we have – it's not as if we're going to deploy them simultaneously to all the sites again. At any rate, since we've largely missed the window to get them into other hands for this season's various research projects, it will be a project for the hibernaculum committee to have them ready for potential use in the Fall.

7) Update on filling positions (VT representative, Fundraising Chair, Stewardship Coordinator)

Simmons tells us that Armen has asked to take over and coordinate pushing the Vermont representative project through. He will likely contact ██████████, and might be willing to do it himself if that doesn't pan out. The Stewardship Coordinator position advertisement is going to be in the newsletter and on Facebook shortly. There's nothing new on the Fundraising Chair front. Berger asked if something happened to Hatfield's interest, and Simmons reminded us that she'll be leaving the area soon. Given how much the world has learned to do remotely in the past year, and that chairing the committee doesn't necessarily mean running each in-person event, Berger's unsure that leaving the area is a disqualifying issue; he notes that Ingalls has been able to increase participation in Board meetings as a result of how much we've had to do remotely, where fieldwork often prevented her attendance, despite that she worried last time her seat came up for election, her upcoming move would effectively prevent her from being able to serve. Berger also notes that, in light of the new fundraising project we've outlined above, there's much to do that doesn't involve physically being anywhere in particular. Simmons noted that this was a good point and said he'd discuss further.

8) Events

NEBWG: It already happened, and Simmons tells us there's no news he has to report from Ingalls.

LTA: It runs May 5-26 online. Hatfield is supposed to “attend,” and Simmons is considering it.

Convention: It's July 24-30 online. Simmons and Berger will attend the Cave Conservancies Roundtable, and we're not sure what else.

There hasn't been word yet about whether there'll be a charge to attend, but we sort of doubt it, as that seems likely to tank attendance. OTR: It's September 2-6. Nothing has been formally said yet, but Berger and Davis will be very surprised if it doesn't happen. We should plan to have our usual presence there. The NCRC weeklong has managed to schedule itself to conflict with OTR, to both of their frustration.

TAG: It's October 7-10. Berger is planning to attend.

NCKMS: It's November 1-5. Still far off, further planning to come at a later date.

ICS: It's been moved to July 24-31, 2022 at the same place. Berger, Warner, and Davis are interested in attending, and there hasn't yet been word on openings for additional papers.

9) NCRC Regional June 11-19 and Weeklong August 27 – Sep 4

Engel reports that we've so far been asked about use of Clarksville and Knox, and told that the Mock will most likely take place on Friday. Berger explained why the day of the Mock is now sometimes less obvious than in the past – it always used to be the final full day of the program. Since the NCRC now offers certification, nearly an entire day is devoted to the associated testing, and certification and the Mock can happen in either order, and sometimes circumstances cause a last-minute swap of days.

10) Members Day

Berger reports that nothing has happened on this front yet, but that he hasn't forgotten, and will convene the committee that agreed to work on it.

11) NRO

Simmons was talking with Sassu-Laviero about it, but hasn't really heard anything major to report. Folsom asked about the possibility of doing it in-person, and told us about J. Martinez's "No-VAR VAR". Berger reminded us of the frustration everyone had at the previous Board Meeting's discussion each time we reopened the discussion with more "what if..." proposals, which lead us to continually kicking the can down the road because they require waiting to see what the situation is like later. Simmons notes that the Sunshine Fair (at the Cobleskill Fairgrounds) is happening mid-August. Berger points out that he's spoken with a different (non-cave-related) group about a large event they hold at a different county fairground which is also being advertised as happening (in October), and that just because it's being advertised as happening doesn't necessarily mean the group is really committed – the group he's spoken with has a very generous term in their contract with the venue that allows them to pull out with absolutely no penalty two weeks ahead. They need to advertise as if it's definitely happening to avoid killing their prospects for attendance, but they really don't know if it will happen. Folsom volunteered to contact the Cobleskill Fairgrounds to inquire about holding NRO there in September, pending their COVID policies and what happens if we decide to cancel should the situation merit that.

12) Barn Dance

Simmons says he thinks it's neither particularly likely to happen, nor cancelled, and that we're going to have to continue playing it by ear.

13) Preserve Managers Handbook

Simmons reports that he's seen a couple of drafts go back and forth. Engel says that he did some drafting, but hasn't heard back lately from Morris-Siegel, who's quite busy.

14) Acquisitions

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

15) Surprise Cave

Simmons talked with [REDACTED], and was planning to meet with him in March, but that was postponed pending vaccinations. Simmons is now vaccinated, and needs to schedule time for the meeting. The DEC is in a holding pattern waiting for Simmons to open the discussion with [REDACTED]. We could potentially seek an easement or a subdivision for the land over the cave. The relationship between the state and the owners was strained, historically. We're in a better position to try to make a deal as an independent organization.

16) Insurance renewals

Berger reports that he received our new Commercial policy (which includes General Liability and Property Insurance) and the premium quote for it. It renews on June 19, and has increased by the few dollars we expected it to as a result of adding the Salamander property, but no further. We had budgetted for a potential 3% increase beyond that, so we're in great shape so far.

17) Filing of surveys for Knox and Traino

Simmons reports that there was a misunderstanding in what we had received – we ended up with two sets of mylar maps for the Traino Preserve, but none for Knox. After corresponding with CT Male, we're now waiting for the new mylar Knox maps to arrive, and then the documents can be filed.

18) News on the [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

19) NSF contract

[REDACTED]

20) Report scheduling and June meeting venue

The meeting is June 6, so reports should be requested on May 16, to the officers by May 23, and to Berger by May 30.

End: 3:42pm

**Attachment E
Nominating Committee Report**

The following three candidates received the most votes in this year's election, and begin their three year term on June 6; alphabetically by last name:

Ramon Armen
Devon Hedges
Jacob Morris-Siegel

This year four candidates ran for the three trustee positions; these are the results, sorted by votes:

Jacob Morris-Siegel .. 39
Devon Hedges 31
Ramon Armen 31
Paul Woodell 26

All ballots were distributed by email, as all eligible had an email address.

A total of 150 ballots were sent and 47 returned, yielding a 31% return rate. Checks were done for reuse of the voting ID and for invalid voting IDs.

The ballot had a question which asked to recommend future candidates. These are the entries:

The person who didn't get in
Christine Young
Steve Severance

This year the order of candidates was randomized on the ballots. This was done to avoid a possible "ballot order effect".

This is the second year that election emails and ballots were distributed, collected, and processed using Google productivity apps. This worked well and the plan is to use it for next year's trustee election.

I have notified all candidates of the full results, and encouraged those who didn't make the top three to continue being active with the NCC, attend board meetings, and run in next year's election. I will notify those that were recommended as a future candidate, and ask them to consider running in 2022.

Norm Berg

NCC Nominating Committee Chair

nominating@necaveconservancy.org