

Northeastern Cave Conservancy News

Volume 15, Number 3/4

December 2013

The Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. (NCC) is a not-for-profit corporation committed to the conservation, study, management, and acquisition of caves and karst areas having significant geological, hydrological, biological, recreational, historical, or aesthetic features. To these ends, the NCC combines the resources and expertise of affiliated cave explorers, educators, scientists, landowners, and conservation officials.



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The *Northeastern Cave Conservancy News* is published quarterly by the Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. The Northeastern Cave Conservancy promotes the study and preservation of speleologically significant properties in the northeastern United States. Annual membership is \$15 (Regular), \$5 additional (Family), \$10 (student), \$50 (Benefactor), \$100 (Institutional), and \$300 (Lifetime). All checks made payable and sent to:

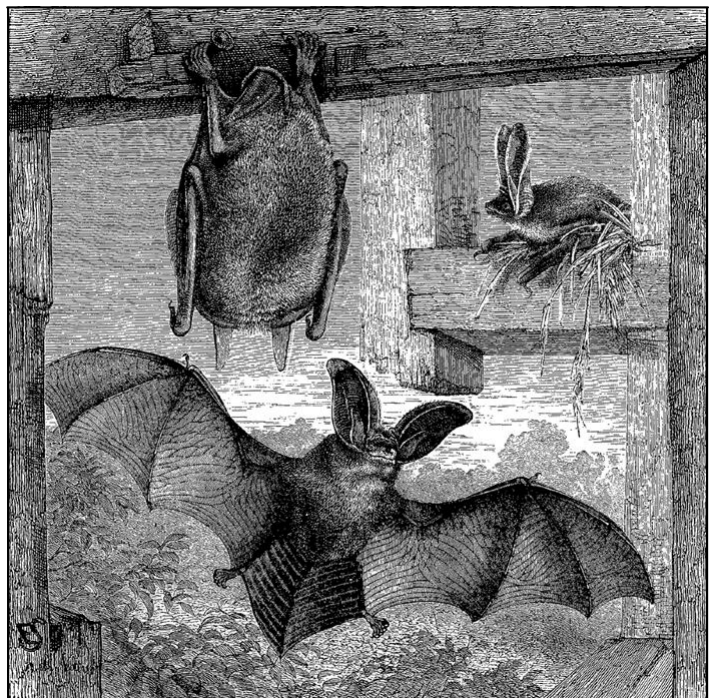
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Next Board Meeting
Sunday, December 8, 10:00 am at Speleobooks
Schoharie, NY



LETTER TO THE NCC MEMBERSHIP

— Danny A. Brass —

Hello All,

In June, Michael Chu stepped down as editor of the *NCC News* although he continues to devote considerable efforts on behalf of the Northeastern Cave Conservancy. I am honored to have been asked to take over this responsibility and happy to be able to make a contribution to the Northeastern Cave Conservancy. At first glance, I can see that my biggest stumbling block in communicating about the *NCC News* will be not accidentally calling it the *NSS News*. So I am apologizing in advance for any future slips. I hope I can produce a quality newsletter in the spirit of that produced by previous editors. Of course, the quality and content will primarily be a reflection of submissions of material from NCC members and friends of the Northeastern Cave Conservancy. Ultimately, it is only through such submissions that a viable newsletter can be maintained.

Pending availability of suitable submissions, I will try to produce a quarterly newsletter in early March, June, September, and December to coincide with meeting dates of the NCC Board of Directors. As some of you may know, I am juggling multiple email accounts in an attempt to keep some semblance of order to various endeavors. I have established a separate account for correspondence related to the *NCC News*: ncc_news@yahoo.com. Please send all emails, including photographs and articles for submission to the newsletter or general newsletter correspondence related to the Northeastern Cave Conservancy to this email address.

Although I did produce a newsletter for June, the September newsletter appears to have gotten lost in the shuffle. I will take responsibility for this, as it appears that not everyone in the NCC was aware of this change in editorship and so requisite material had not been forwarded to me. I hope that this message will provide a permanent reference for those who need to send me material for future newsletters.

Since formatting a newsletter is a time-consuming process, I am hopeful that material will be sent in a timely fashion. In order to adhere to the BOD meeting deadlines, last-minute submissions may or may not be incorporated into the newsletter, depending primarily on time availability. In this regard, I will send out an announcement and call for submissions approximately four to six weeks prior to an upcoming BOD meeting and hope that material will be forwarded soon after, so I can produce a newsletter in a timely fashion.



Please send articles as word documents with minimal formatting (as this must be removed for formatting into the publishing program used to create the newsletter). Submissions may be lightly edited, if needed. Photographs should be sent as tiffs or jpegs in as high a resolution as can be conveniently emailed. I will chop them down as needed so the newsletter file size remains manageable. Please include any relevant information, including at least the cave, subject, and photographer. If there are too many photographs to send via email, you can submit them through dropbox or one of the many other file-transfer programs suitable for this purpose. However, please do not send photographs through any program that requires me to sign up as an account user, as this will not be done. Note: Please make certain to spellcheck all documents prior to submitting.

I am looking forward to working with the many NCC members in order to produce a newsletter that is both enjoyable and informative and to receiving submissions for upcoming issues.

NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY, INC.
Minutes from Board Meeting - September 29, 2013
Octagon Barn, Knox, NY
Meeting called to order at 10:00 am

Introduction and Greetings – President Bob Addis

Attendance:

Officers: B. Addis, V. Kappler, and B. Folsom

Trustees: M. Chu, K. Dumont, T. Engel, A. Traino, P. Youngbaer, M. Berger, P. Woodell, and M. Ingalls

Absent with Proxy

Christa Hay – Emily Davis proxy

Absent without Proxy

Alan Traino, Al Hicks

President’s Report – Bob Addis (see Attachment A)

Vice President’s Report – Vince Kappler (see Attachment B)

Treasurer’s Report – Bill Folsom

Secretary’s Report – Christa Hay

Status quo

August EC meeting minutes (see Attachment C)

Science Committee – Larry Davis

Nothing to report

Acquisitions Committee – Open

Bylaws Committee Report – Joe Levinson

Nothing to report

Publications/Publicity Committee Report – Christa Hay

Nothing to report

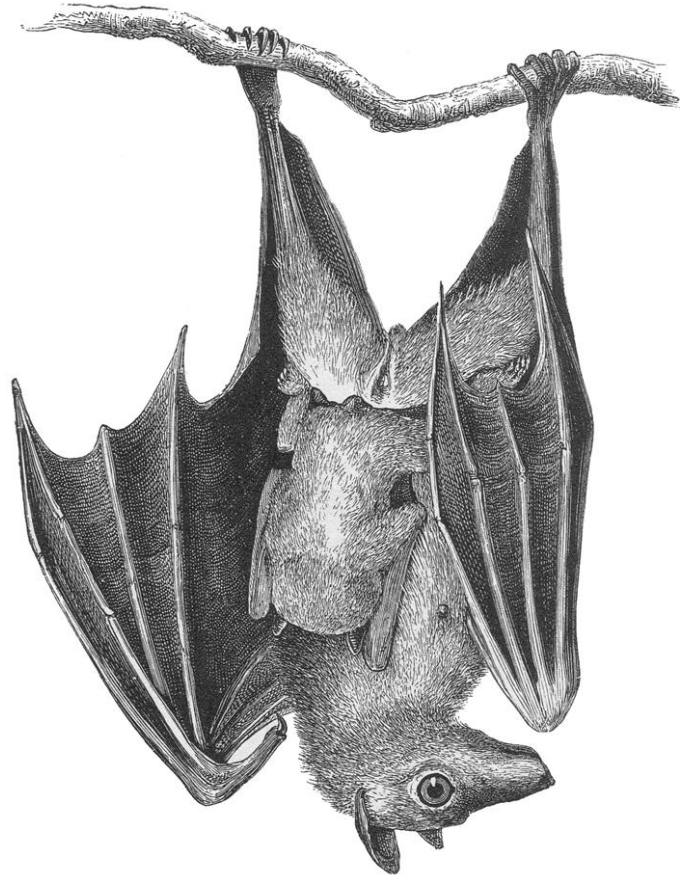
Fundraising Committee – Open

Office Committee Report – Emily Davis, Mike Warner

- Problems: None
- Progress: We managed to keep up-to-date even through a summer of travel. Thanks to Thom Engel for picking up and keeping an eye on the mail. Speleobooks shared the NCC tent space at a flooded OTR, which ended up benefiting the NCC as the Office committee was there to pick up dues, donations, and purchase money.
- Plans: No changes unless some are suggested.

Knox Cave Preserve Report – Emily Davis

- Problems: Mitch Berger caught and talked with a group of trespassing teens a number of weeks ago. Emily found six cars at the cave with no permit. Went to entrance and had trip leader come out and put permit on windshield.
- Progress: Emily brought Mitch up to speed on management of the preserve. Peter Haberland did some Knox trail clearing before NCRC. The NCRC used the preserve extensively—two days for Level 1 plus the mock rescue. Mitch stood in for Emily while she was away. Peter Haberland and Mitch had a small workday there the day of the last



HHG meeting (cut a fallen tree, trimmed the Knox trail, started to trim the jungle of the Crossbones trail, took down the disgusting Posted sign and tried to replace it (Peter has since replaced it). Mitch Issued permits and answered various other e-mail inquiries. The detail and information he provided was excellent.

- Plans: I would like the Board to seat Mitch Berger as co-chair of the Knox Cave Committee. He is already doing more than half of the work and doing it very well.

Onesquethaw Cave Preserve – Thom Engel
Nothing to Report

Sellecks Karst Preserve – Alan Traino
Status quo

Clarksville Preserve – Mike Chu, Thom Engel, Chuck Porter
Issue raised regarding complaint to town about bathroom habits of preserve visitors. County health visited and town visited. At this time, no revisit or action. There was discussion regarding concerns to avoid situation in future and of telling special groups that there are no facilities on site and to plan accordingly. Steve Crooks will do Osborn work free after Oct 20.

Bentleys Preserve Report – Jonah Spivak
Nothing to report

Ella Armstrong Preserve – Alan Traino
Status quo

Merlins Cave Preserve – Morgan Ingalls
Deed of Conservation Easement sent by email

Education Committee – Thom Engel

- Fall Festival well attended
- Club Day next week
- Halloween at Hollyhock hollow
- New gate photos shown at Fall Fest

Membership Committee – Peter Youngbaer

- Updated totals - 162 members, 37 new members recently (since April 2012). Lapsed members need a nudge. Many NSS members in Northeast are not NCC members.
- All renewals and new memberships have been acknowledged and entered into the database. All memberships maturing in July, August, and September had renewal notices sent earlier this summer. Second notices were sent on September 22. All October, November, and December notices were sent on September 22.
- We provided complete printouts for the Old Timers Reunion and NRO of everyone who has ever been in our database and whose membership had lapsed, as well as for those folks whose renewal notices were sent out this summer. I noted that several folks have rejoined. We offered them an incentive of being able to forgive past lapses and reset their membership renewal date to coincide with the OTR. This seemed to work well.
- As of information reported to me by September 22, 2013, our current membership stands as follows, compared to the baseline of April 22, 2012. Note: These numbers do not include renewals at the Fall NRO.

Sept. 22, 2013		April 22, 2012	
Life:	29	Life:	18
Family Life:	0	Family Life:	0
Benefactor:	11	Benefactor:	10
Regular:	86	Regular:	88
Family:	18	Family:	16
Student:	3	Student:	0
Institutional:	7	Institutional:	3
TOTAL:	154	TOTAL:	135

Website Subcommittee – Mike Chu
Status quo

Legal Committee Report – Open

Special and Group Use Coordinators – Thom Engel
226 group permits since last meeting, including 122 for Clarksville and 37 for Knox.

Financial and Investments Committee – Joe Levinson
Nothing to report

Volunteer Value Committee – Vince Kappler
Year-to-date totals: 1065.5 hours of volunteer work have been reported and members drove 11,852 miles for a total value of \$39,373. Based on reports updated at the meeting, these totals will be pushed above \$45,000. Hours will be collected for volunteers from Thacher gate work.

Nominating Committee – Bob Simmons
Candidates wanted

Thacher Park Committee – Thom Engel
Scientific research permit expires in November. Renew? Ask for longer permit? Should we cave after Sept 1? Gate project Monday through Wednesday. Built gate. Several NCC members volunteered.

**COMMENTS FROM THE NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY, INC.
August 23, 2013**

Facilities and Operations – Action Step 8 (Spelling): Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. (NCC), not the Northeast Caving Conservancy.

Recreation Development: Why isn't Cave Management included as an Action Step under Recreation Development rather than under Facilities and Operations? Noting what is included under Recreation Development like challenge courses, rock climbing, mountain biking, and a high-ropes adventure course, this seems to make little sense.

Timeline for Implementation: There is no mention of cave access, whereas other activities under Recreation Development are included. A bat gate at Hailes Cave and the opening Helmes Crevice are mentioned, but caves and cave access aren't in the Timeline.

Guided Tours: What is meant by “guided cave exploration” or a “guided tour?” Who would lead such a trip?

Cave Exploration in Hailes Cave: It is the opinion of the NCC that objective criteria can be developed to permit caving groups access to Hailes Cave without the need for a guide. If necessary, a separate set of criteria can be developed for trip leaders. However, the cave has no features of a technical nature that should necessitate trip leaders. If Hailes Cave was not in Thacher Park, it would be considered a beginner's cave.

Cave Management Plan(s): While it may seem counter-intuitive, a cave-management plan can be developed before a cave is entirely mapped. In fact, the NCC requires that a management plan be approved by the Board before a cave is acquired. We have done this with our most recent acquisition: Merlins Cave. Management plans are intended to be living documents that are updated and changed as more is learned about the resources. The NCC reviews its management plans every five years and makes changes, as necessary. Check out the many cave management plans on the NCC website.

Cave Closure for Bats: We agree with the winter closure of Hailes Cave and other caves used by bats as hibernacula from October 1 to May 15, or such dates designated by NYSDEC's Endangered Species unit.

Recreation Development, Action Step 9: One cannot go very far north of the existing camping loops at Thompson's Lake without getting on to the Onondaga limestone. Due to thin soils, solutionally-enlarged joints, and other karst features, it is not wise to locate a large number of campsites on the limestone.

With 35 years of experience, the NCC stands ready to assist in the management of caves in the Park or to manage the caves by agreement with OPRHP. Reference: www.necaveconservancy.org

Ad Hoc Committee (Surprise Cave) – Bob Simmons
Quiet over summer

Ad Hoc Committee (Tory's Cave) – Bob Simmons
Written report submitted (see Attachment D)

Ad Hoc Risk Management Committee – Bob Addis, Peter Youngbaer, Vince Kappler

We support releasing both memos to the Board...the June 18th one on liability to refresh memories and the latest on additionally insured. We also agree that these two documents should be considered internal communications and not be publicized.

Recommended Board Action:

- The Board should accept the reports and authorize the Risk Committee to implement the recommendations consistent with our insurance carrier's requirements.
- Acts 45-6 and 45-80, additionally insured policies, are worded such that self-insured state agencies—like J. Mylroie's request—can be considered exempt from the policy. So no Board action is required on COAL.

Act 45-6 Group Insurance Requirement 06/26/99

Any Commercial group including, but not limited to, summer camps and commercial ventures, making use of Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. properties will continue to provide insurance certificates naming The Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. as additional insured.

Act 45-80 Certificate of Additionally Insured 10/03/10

All Certificates of Additionally Insured naming the Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. must verify a minimum of one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence liability coverage.

Mohawk River Basin Karst Ad Hoc Committee – Chuck Porter, Art Palmer
Nothing to report

Transmission Pipeline Karst Impact Ad Hoc Committee – Thom Engel
Committee deactivated by President

Bob Addis moved to open the Committee of the Whole. The Vice President will preside. Items can be entered as new business. Second by Dumont. All in favor.

- Engel – Bathroom facility issue at Clarksville discussed by committee. Managers will monitor. No action item reported out of committee.
- Addis/Engel – NCC Project Concept. Need to formalize project status for ongoing projects? Including Thacher and other karst-conservation projects not related to preserves. Provide reliable information about projects beyond volunteer value statistics. Also, basis for newsletter fodder and for designation as official NCC activity. EC to review designation of projects.
- Youngbaer – PTNY capacity grants coming soon. Watch for the September edition of PTNY's E-News for information on Growing the Grassroots capacity-building grants. PTNY's Growing the Grassroots grants enhance the long-term sustainability of park and trail not-for-profit organizations by helping them better fulfill their missions; improve their reach, effectiveness, and impact; leverage resources; and increase community support for and involvement in park and trail planning, development, and/or stewardship. EC working on review of process and documents and online application. Input from committee for \$3,000 possible grant. Leverage provided and other factors discussed. P. Youngbaer will communicate with EC regarding ongoing progress and attend review of application form on Oct 16 webinar. Information to be circulated to Board.

The Vice President moved to close the Committee of the Whole. Second by Dumont. All in favor.

Hay moved to accept the minutes of the June 2013 meeting. Indicates that she has to recreate the minutes due to a laptop crash. Youngbaer moved to postpone. Second by Dumont. All in favor.

Kappler moved The NCC Board accepts the reports on Cave Liability and Certificates of Additionally Insured prepared by Daniel Richardson, Esq. The Ad Hoc Risk Management Committee is authorized to implement the recommendations made in the reports, consistent with our insurance carrier’s policies. The reports contain proprietary legal advice and will not be available to the general public. Second by Folsom. Discussion. All in favor except Engel who voted against, and Chu and Woodell who abstained.

Discussion:

- The attorney’s report of our liability exposure and his recommendations were discussed at the June meeting. A separate report on Certificates of Additionally Insured was circulated via email in July. Peter released a formal report from the Risk Committee in late July. Moving forward, the Board should formally accept the recommendations and begin to implement them. Some will be easy and only require volunteers and time (e.g., updating the website to clarify cautionary advisories and accessibility requirement), while others will require financial resources and professional help (e.g., better quality and more informative posters for the kiosks). Meanwhile, any changes in the way we grant access to our preserves must not violate the provisions of our liability insurance policy. The Risk Committee is ready to work on the recommendations and seeks Board approval to do so.
- The reports prepared by Mr. Richardson contain legal strategies as well as specific recommendations to reduce our liability exposure. The Board commissioned the legal review to better understand our exposure and how to minimize it. We should consider the recommendations as proprietary legal advice and not make them available to the general public for obvious reasons.

Kappler moved Act 21-42, Clarksville Conservation Easement, is repealed. Second by Folsom. All in favor.

Act 21-42 Clarksville Conservation Easement 03/12/06

The Northeastern Cave Conservancy will grant the conservation easement in Appendix XII to the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy subject to legal review.

Discussion:

- This is a “housekeeping” issue to align Board policy with actual events and does not repudiate our effort to enter an agreement with Mohawk Hudson at that time.

New Business:

- Davis moved Berger appointed co-chair Knox. Second by Folsom. All in favor, except Berger who abstains.
- Engel moved to remove Thacher Park research permit. Second by Berger. All in favor.
- Addis moved Chuck Porter appointed chair Acquisition Committee. All in favor, except Porter who abstains.
- Youngbaer moves that Nominating Committee duties include filling vacant committee slots. All in favor, except Engel, Berger, and Simmons who abstain.

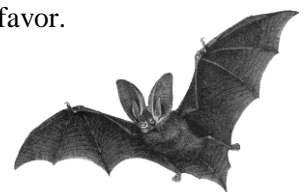
Informational point: Executive Committee meeting will be on 11/13. NCC Conference Call: 605-475-6111, Access Code: 814008.

Addis moved that the next NCC Board meeting will be December at the Warner/Davis residence at 10:00 am. Second by Folsom. All in favor.

Addis moved to thank the town of Clarksville for the meeting space. Second by Folsom. All in favor.

Addis moved to adjourn. Second by Folsom. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 1:03 pm.



**Attachment A
PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

We will have a closing in Chatham, NY, for the Merlins Cave Conservation Easement on 9/25 at 8:00 am. This is the conclusion of a very long process and represents, we believe, one additional form of protection to one of our cave preserves, as well as fulfills an obligation to the seller of the property. Total cost: \$4,166.

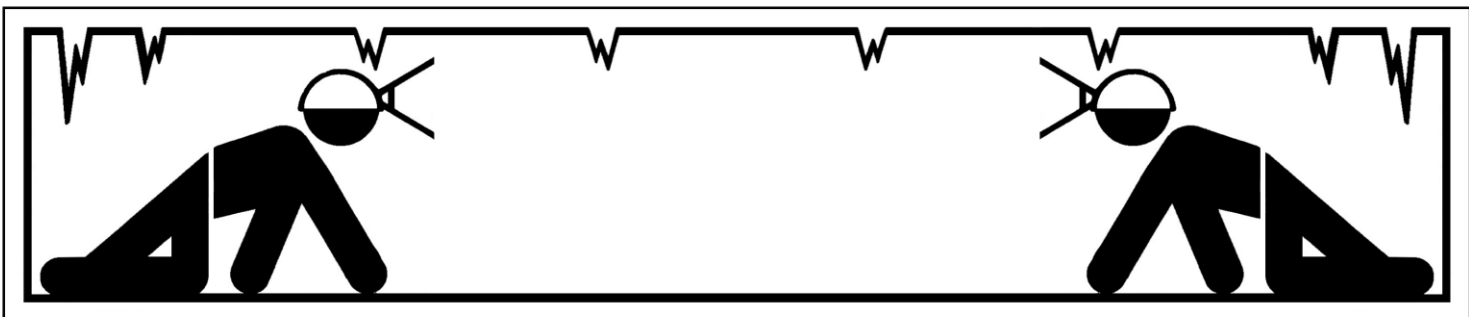
Of course, the 5th Annual Barn Dance, our annual fund raiser, will be history by the time most of you read this. This event represents one more community interaction where we have cave preserves. And it’s fun! Reflecting on the total event, community involvement in terms of community-wide donations has continued to be strong.

I am also beginning to introduce the concept of NCC Projects without a clear understanding of what either the NCC or I expect of this. I think of the many things that the NCC has done and is being invited to do in the future as “Projects”—a running list is below. I encourage all members to think along these lines and outside the lines, as well. Do we have to codify projects? Get Board approval? Obviously, a good project might turn into a committee, if long-term commitment was involved. Right now, I like the way they are being handling: someone gets an idea or an invitation and the NCC gathers to accomplish one or more goals.

Thacher Park Project – Two sessions over the summer proved its popularity, no doubt due to the freedom to inventory, survey, and study caves in the Park. The September 14 workday was well attended, with Hailes and Fool’s Crawl Caves being mapped.

Horn’s Cave, Remsen, Oneida County, NY – NCC member Matt O’Donnell, who lives out that way, discovered a storm-drainage problem related to a cave in the tiny hamlet. Several factors appear to have contributed to many basements being flooded on an increasingly regular basis, and government money to mitigate the situation may not be charted for the best solution. Matt enticed the NCC out with the promise of opening a cave that has been closed by the owners since long before WW II. Thom Engel wrote an insightful letter concerning regulatory steps that must be taken by the Town. Matt and the owners ran the dye tracing with coaching from others, and Art and Peggy Palmer proved the resurgences to the system were 1.1 miles away. Our three digging efforts over the summer, tested by an instant 3.2” rain on July 2, proved that we were definitely having a positive effect on the runoff. The NCC is being looked at very favorably in Remsen as efforts and solutions continue.

Hollyhock Hollow, Southern Albany County, NY – Working in partnership with the owners, the Audubon Society, and the Appalachian Mountain Club, we first met last year at their “Halloween Fest” gathering with a booth manned by Thom Engel. We pursued the possibility of replacing the ineffective orange snow fence around the cave dig in the rear of the property, a definite safety improvement. We were delayed this year in fence building because there is no easy way to get the materials on-site. So if volunteers want to help in late October, we have a job. ATVs may be able to drag the boards. Other ideas will also be considered.



Your Secret Caving Project

Attachment B
VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

NCC Manual – Edits were made to the manual to reflect actions taken by the Board at the June meeting. The updated version of the manual was sent to Mike C. on June 24 and was posted on the website.

EC Conference Call 8/21 – Multiple topics were discussed including webpage revisions, the conservancy's presence at OTR, the NRO auction, and the Barn Dance. My primary input was a progress report on the Merlins CE.

Merlins Conservation Easement – On September 4, after multiple phone conversations with our attorney Lawrence Howard and at least 20 email exchanges, we reached a verbal agreement on the conservation easement language. A few days later, the complete easement contract was available and circulated among the EC, Morgan, and Chuck for final NCC review. Mr. Howard approved the agreement stating, in part, “that the proposed CE should serve to protect your property from development activities that would interfere with the traditional caving activities that the Northeastern Cave Conservancy promotes.”

While NCC President Addis negotiated a closing date and time, I contacted the Treasurer, Secretary, and Office Staff to collect the documents we would need prior to closing: our Certificate of Incorporation, tax exemption number, and certification that the NCC Board had approved granting the easement. If everything goes as planned, the President should be able to report on the actual closing at the meeting. Moving forward, the NCC has a year from closing to make some minor revisions to the Merlins Management Plan regarding goals and objectives for the surface of the property.

Liability Insurance – Our liability policy was renewed and the premium was paid before the due date. There was no increase in cost for renewal.

Attachment C
MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING - AUGUSTS 2013

EC Meeting
08/21/2013
Conference Call

Conference call: Bob, Bill, Vince, Christa

Lawyer Fees – Bob will send check out tomorrow. Discussion on budget and balance...we are ok. Need to go through the website and clean up the wording, waivers, etc. as recommended by the lawyer. Vince will submit a motion for next Board meeting...basically, the Board will accept the lawyer's recommendation.

PMG Grant – Brochure, kiosks updates, table skirt or display...can we ask for \$1000 for education/training on the PMG grant?

Barn Dance – We need to get more prizes. We are not at the \$500 level.

NRO – Alan will be auctioneer. Bill will do the treasurer auction work.

OTR – Tent will be down there. I will contact Peter for updated membership list.

Thacher Park – Public hearing comments by Bob and Thom.

Attachment D

ADDENDUM TO AGENDA, NCC BOARD MEETING SEPTEMBER 29, 2013

Nominating Committee – Seeking candidates for Board seats for next year and for any officer’s nominations for next meetings election.

Tory’s Cave Ad Hoc – Met with land trust ED earlier this summer, very productive and will be helping assemble a management plan for the cave and a stewardship-type agreement to manage. Currently, the concept of transferring ownership is off the table, but may be a future option. WHLT has numerous properties in western CT, some of which are located in potential karst areas and so I will be reviewing their properties for speleologic potential. Interestingly, there was a rescue callout at the cave earlier this summer. A spelunker got stuck in a part of the cave that she couldn’t climb out of. Local fire department responded and assisted with extrication. Local cavers were put on notice to assist, but were not needed.

Surprise Cave Committee – Productive summer overall. Made several visits to cave and gate was intact all summer, at least until early September. Cave clean-up, trail work, and gate assessment done during NRO. Cave gate was open (since secured by DEC Ranger) and lots of trash and graffiti observed (Alan and Bill led in-cave efforts). Will need another clean-up trip to finish; I have notified DEC that we will do another in-cave this fall, preferably weekend of October 5th (Volunteers?). New trail laid out and mostly cut (a few hours work left to do). Has been OK’d by local ranger but am awaiting DEC R3 approval. Jim Kennedy visited entrance area and will assemble a conceptual plan for new, bat-friendly gate over the entrance. Once we have proposal, will need to assess availability of funding from state and caver sources. Tentative construction date late summer-ish of 2014, if all the stars align. Will need to have access for ATVs etc. from adjacent property owners.

The NSS WNS Rapid Response Fund
 Timely, direct, and much-needed support for WNS research.

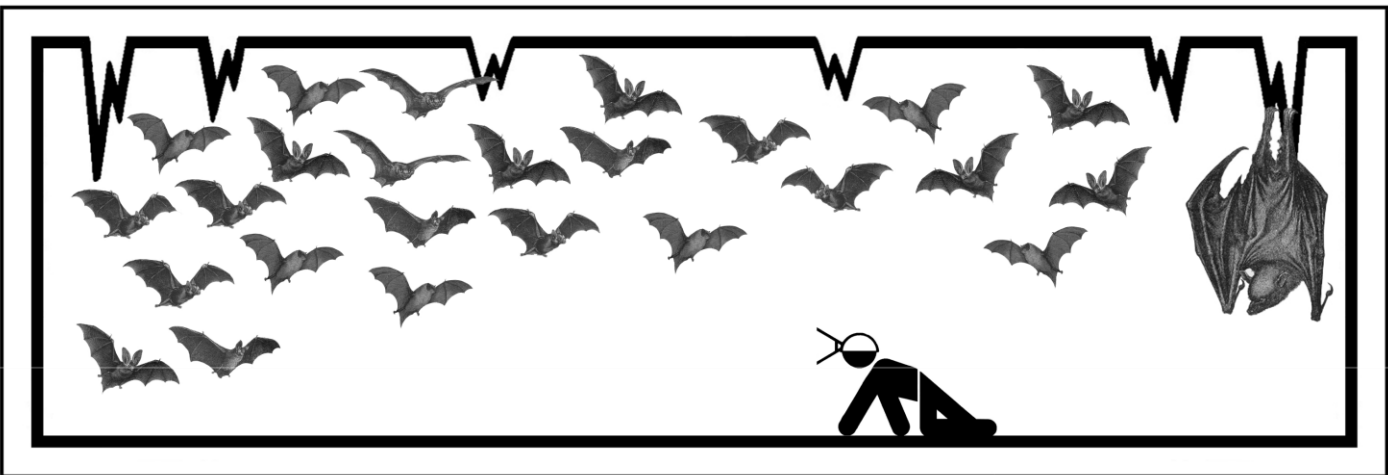


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WNS Research
Needs YOUR help!





NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY BOARD ADOPTS NEW FAMILY LIFE MEMBERSHIP LEVEL

At their June quarterly Board of Trustees meeting, the NCC Board adopted a new Family Life membership level. This level is intended as a complement to the current Life membership level, and was suggested by Life member Steve Millett.

Family Life memberships are available to family members of a Life member joined by marriage or civil union, and to children of a Life member until the age of 18. Family Life members pay a onetime membership fee. If the Life member dies, the Family Life member shall automatically be converted to regular Life membership. If the marriage or civil union is dissolved, the Family Life member may convert to full Life by paying the difference in dues currently in force.

The new Family Life membership level costs just \$100. NCC Membership Chair Peter Youngbaer said he hoped a good number of our current Family members would take advantage of this opportunity and benefit. "Dues renewal notices up through the end of September have been sent to the membership, so it's a perfect time to make the change," Youngbaer noted.

NCC Membership levels are:

Regular: \$15.00 per year

Family: \$5.00 (non-voting, same household)

Student: \$10.00 (non-voting, no periodicals)

Benefactor: \$50.00

Life: \$300.00 one time, or may be paid over three (3) years in equal installments in addition to paying the regular dues fee, i.e. \$115 per year x 3.

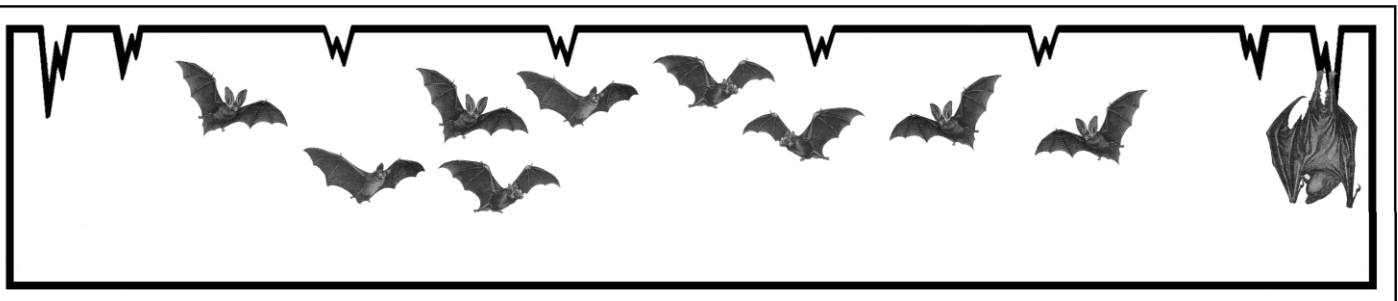
NEW Family Life: \$100

Checks should be made payable to the Northeastern Cave Conservancy and mailed to:

Northeastern Cave Conservancy
P.O. Box 254
Schoharie, N.Y. 12157

You may also renew via PayPal by going online to <http://www.necaveconservancy.org/donate.php> and clicking on the PayPal logo. Please consider adding an additional 2.9% + \$.30 to cover processing.

The Northeastern Cave Conservancy is a 501c3, non-profit, tax-exempt charitable organization. Your dues and donations are tax-deductible.



NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY BAT HIBERNACULA CLOSED FOR THE WINTER

In response to the continuing crisis posed by white-nose syndrome crisis, the Northeastern Cave Conservancy (NCC) announced that it is closing those caves that serve as bat hibernacula, effective October 1. Closing these caves in the winter is done to help protect hibernating bats.

The affected caves are Knox Cave and Merlin's Cave, both in New York State. Cavers will have access after May 15, 2014, when these caves are returned to their summer status.

The other caves owned and managed by the NCC will remain open for visitation under regular visitation policies. Please note: at the Ella Armstrong Preserve, use the new parking area at the preserve instead of the Knox parking lot.

Action by the NCC parallels that of the National Speleological Society, which also closed its three New York State cave preserves on October 1. These include Schoharie Caverns, Gage Cave (Barton Hill Preserve), and McFail's Cave.

The NCC advises all cavers to clean and decontaminate their gear and clothing according to the protocols found on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's website (www.fws.gov/northeast/whitenosemessage.html). In addition, any gear and clothing used in the Northeast should not be taken out of the region, in an effort to contain the disease.

The Northeastern Cave Conservancy is committed to the conservation, study, management, and acquisition of caves and karst areas having significant geological, hydrological, biological, recreational, historical, or aesthetic features. The NCC owns and manages nine non-commercial caves in the Northeast.

NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY APPOINTS NEW WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME LIAISON

The NSS has recently appointed Jennifer Foote, NSS 45211, of Santa Fe, New Mexico, as its new WNS Liaison. Foote replaces Peter Youngbaer, NSS 16161 CM, FE, who had served in the position since April of 2008.

In 2012, the NSS had appointed Foote to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's WNS Stakeholder Committee, an advisory group to the WNS National Plan activities. She attended her first WNS National Symposium in 2012 along with Youngbaer, and in September attended her second.

Jennifer is a caver based in the Southwest Region, notably involved in the Fort Stanton Cave exploration and research. She is a former member of the NSS Board of Governors and has been a member of the Western Bat Working Group for many years.

Peter Youngbaer said, "I couldn't be more pleased with the NSS' choice of Jennifer as the new WNS Liaison. She has been a hard-working member of the WNS Liaison Committee for many years, providing me with advice and regional input to help me do my work. Her connections to the bat research community in the Western U.S. are most valuable, as that is an area as-yet-unaffected by WNS. She has been a part of the development of western WNS strategies and the collection of baseline information on bat populations in an area where knowledge of bats and their habits and habitats lags far behind that in the eastern part of the country. She has longstanding relationships with federal agencies, such as the National Parks Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Forest Service, all of which are major land managers in the West. As an extremely active caver, she will represent the caving community well to state and federal agencies and academic researchers, and, in turn, will be able to explain agency and research work to the caving community. That's really what being a liaison is all about. Please give Jennifer the support she deserves."



STATE OF NEW YORK | EXECUTIVE CHAMBER

ANDREW M. CUOMO | GOVERNOR

Andrew M. Cuomo | Governor

State of New York | Executive Chamber

For Immediate Release: November 19, 2013

GOVERNOR CUOMO ANNOUNCES PLAN TO REVITALIZE THACHER STATE PARK

Plan Envisions Exciting Destination for Outdoor Recreation and Exploration

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced the completion of a new master plan designed to enhance John Boyd Thacher State Park as a four-season destination for adventurous outdoor recreation, exploration, and fitness in the Capital District. The plan was designed by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, with input from park stakeholders and members of the surrounding communities.

“Thacher State Park is one of the Capital District’s most popular destinations for mountain biking, trail running and cross-country skiing, for outdoor adventure, and exploration. The State is putting forward a plan to make this great Park even better by adding more hiking trails, creating a new mountain bike park, and much more,” Governor Cuomo said. “Generations of New Yorkers and their families have enjoyed everything the Park has to offer. With these improvements, we are making sure future generations can do the same.”

“The master plan recommends new facilities and new partnerships to build on the Park’s tradition of outdoor recreation, encourage healthy physical activity, and open the park to more diverse activities, such as rock climbing and caving,” State Parks Commissioner Rose Harvey said. “Governor Cuomo continues to provide the resources that are allowing us to revitalize our parks in a way that we haven’t seen in generations and for that we are so excited and thankful.”

The master plan outlines State Parks’ vision for potential capital improvements, operational enhancements, and natural and cultural resource stewardship within Thacher and Thompson Lake State Parks for the next ten to fifteen years, dependent on the availability of funding. The plan was developed with comments received by park stakeholders and input received at several public information meetings in the community.

Specific recommendations of the plan include:

- Expand and improve the trail network, one of the park’s most popular features, including the creation of a new Tory Cave Trail extending north from the Indian Ladder Trail, developing a new trail to provide visual access to the Hailes Cave opening, and creating a 4.6 mile bike path connecting the Escarpment Trails to Thompson’s Lake.
- Develop a rock-climbing management plan with a rock-climbing group to safely permit the activity in select areas of the Park.
- Solicit proposals from concessionaires to develop a high-ropes adventure course in the Park.
- Design and install a mountain-biking skills park in cooperation with mountain-biking groups to provide technical facilities that pose multiple levels of difficulty and a series of looped trails where riders can practice their skills.
- Develop a management plan with the Northeastern Cave Conservancy to permit cave exploration.
- Install a new “challenge course” recreation area at the former pool site, incorporating elements such as swinging balance beam, triangle traverse, rope bridges, and tire swings to test physical strength, stamina, agility, balance, and flexibility.

State Senator Cecilia Tkaczyk said, “New York’s state park system draws visitors and tourist dollars from all across the nation. The improvements announced by Governor Cuomo for John Boyd Thacher State Park will attract rock climbers, mountain bikers, snow mobilers, and families looking for fun and recreation in the great outdoors. This is a great day for Thacher Park and all of us who love it!”

Assembly member Patricia Fahy said, “Thacher Park is a precious jewel that is treasured by New York residents both

near and far. It is a special place to visit for its beautiful vistas, hiking trails, and many opportunities for relaxation and recreation. Its value to those of us who live in the Capital Region is immeasurable and its proper stewardship is essential. The many who gave input and worked on the master plan are to be congratulated. Their efforts, resulting in the plan's completion, will enable us to both protect the park and maximize its use long into the future."

Albany County Executive Dan McCoy said, "When I talk about the jewels of Albany County, John Boyd Thacher State Park is one of them. I applaud Governor Cuomo's holistic vision of improving New York State not only through economic development and educational opportunities but also through recreation."

John Kilroy, President of the Friends of Thacher Park, said, "The Friends of Thacher and Thompson's Lake State Parks are very happy with the master plan for the parks. We appreciate the work by everyone who has been part of this process. We look forward to working with the Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation in the implementation of the plan. We believe the plan will benefit the people of the Capital Region for many years to come. John Boyd Thacher State Park is the crown jewel of the area and the plan ensures that it will continue to shine."

Gabriel Miani of the Thacher Climbing Coalition said, "The Thacher Climbing Coalition is excited for the consideration and addition of climbing at Thacher State Park. We look forward to working with New York State Parks to establish this activity in a thoughtful, sustainable, and responsible manner for the mutual benefit of the Park, the surrounding communities, and the East Coast climbing community. The hard work starts now!"

Robert Addis, President of the Northeastern Cave Conservancy, said, "The NCC is both grateful and enthusiastic to be offered opportunities in cave management within the Park boundaries. We started a cave location and survey project under a permit system in 2012 and had 40 NCC members donate over 329 volunteer hours so far to both the survey and the installation of the bat-friendly gate in Hailes Cave. The NCC felt privileged to be heard at the public hearings and to be given a section in the final Master Plan for Thacher Park. It will be this partnership between the State and a nonprofit organization which will allow the Northeastern Cave Conservancy to implement its mission of the conservation of the unique underground resource and to offer meaningful interpretation to the Park's visitors."

Chris Morris, Vice President of Saratoga Mountain Bike Association, said, "SMBA is very excited by the addition of a skills park and bike-specific trails at John Boyd Thacher State Park! The trails and skills area will be a great recreational opportunity for riders of all ages throughout the Capital Region."

Chad Saddlemire, President of Frontier Sno-Riders, said, "The Frontier Sno-Riders Snowmobile Club operating in Albany, Montgomery, Schenectady, and Schoharie counties have worked closely with the NYS OPR & HP to connect the statewide snowmobile trail system with John Boyd Thacher State Park. FSR looks forward to providing safe and well-groomed trail access to the state park for winter recreation enjoyment."

Chris Fallon, Thacher Park Manager, said, "We are truly excited about this wonderful new plan. As we approach the 100th anniversary of the Park in 2014, what better time than [now] to adopt a plan that will guide the Park into a bright, new future? We are grateful for the input and comments from our many partner organizations throughout this process. As we move forward with implementation of the plan, we look forward to working with these partners as we strive to provide the best stewardship possible for this spectacular resource."

The plan also calls for unifying the Thacher State Park with the neighboring Thompson Lake campground, expanding the Thompson Lake beach, and building a new visitor's center to provide rentable gathering space, educational exhibit space, and visitor orientation and information.

The plan is posted on State Parks' website: <http://www.nysparks.com/inside-our-agency/master-plans.aspx>. Copies are also available at the Regional Office, the Park Office, the agency office, and at the following libraries: Voorheesville Public Library, 51 School Road, Voorheesville, NY 12186; Berne Public Library, 1656 Helderberg Trail, Berne, NY 12023; and Guilderland Public Library, 2228 Western Ave., Guilderland, NY 12084.

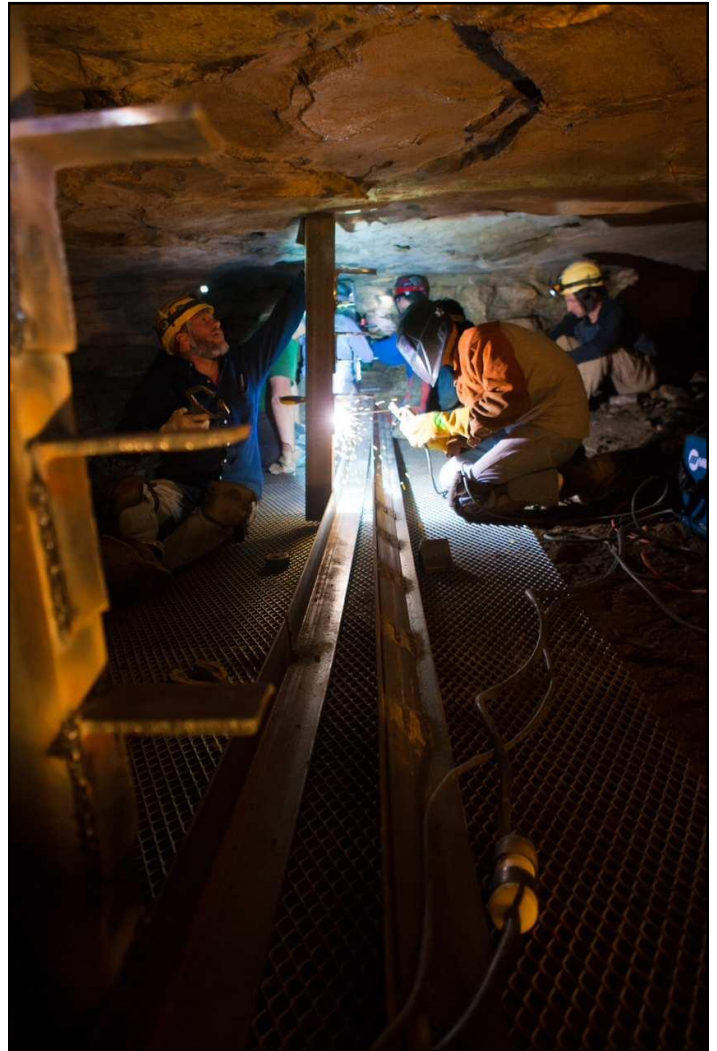
CONSTRUCTION OF A CAVE GATE AT HAILES CAVE (THACHER PARK)

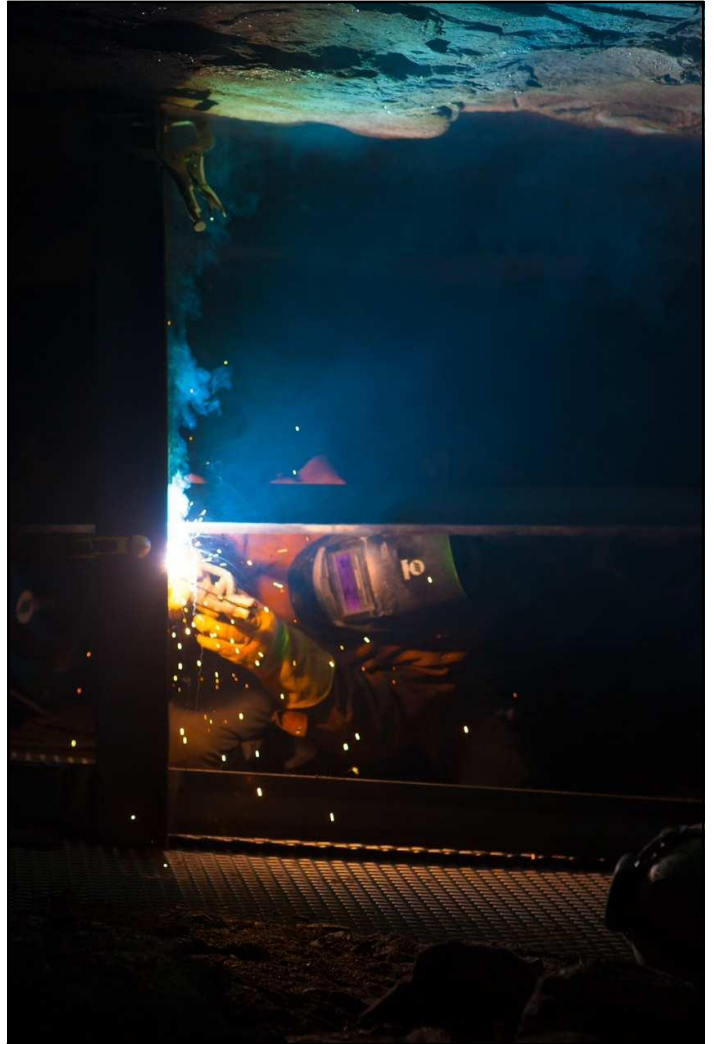
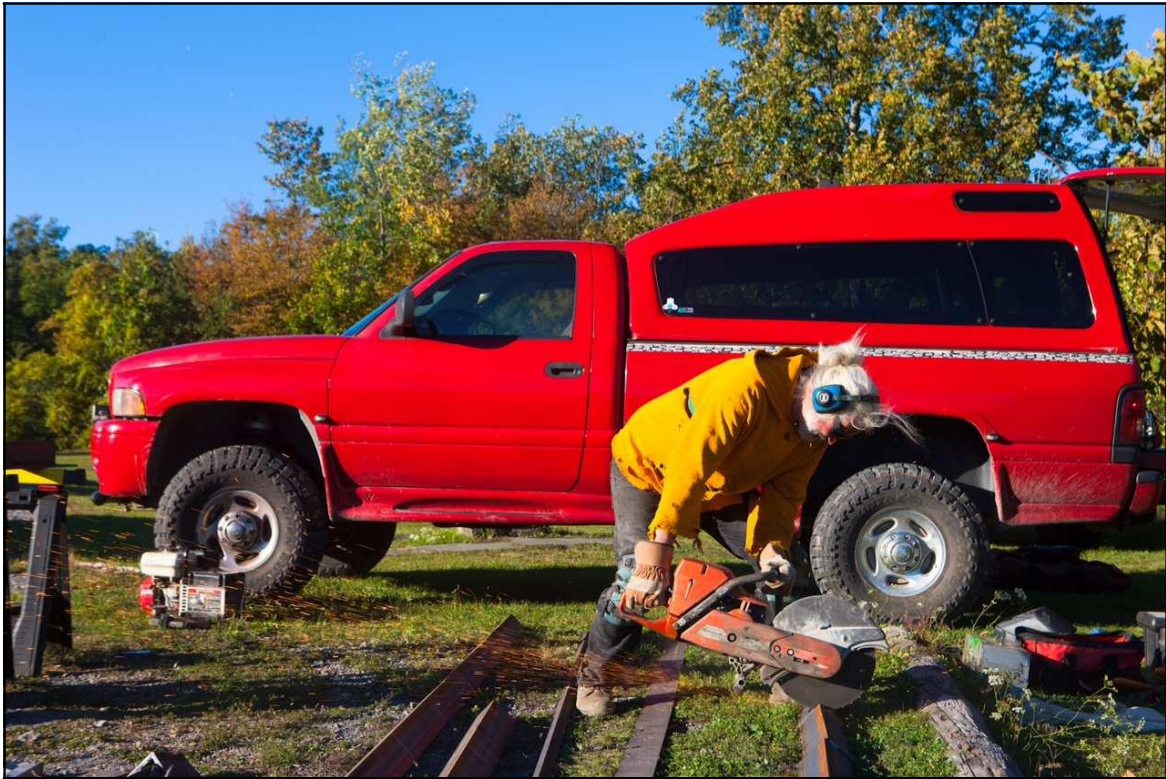
— Michael Warner —

Working in conjunction with environmental consultant Jim Kennedy from Austin, Texas, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, New York Parks and Recreation, and Thacher State Park, the Northeastern Cave Conservancy (NCC) played a major role in construction and installation of a "bat-friendly" cave gate at Hailes Cave in Thacher Park. Work began on Monday, September 23 and continued for three consecutive days.

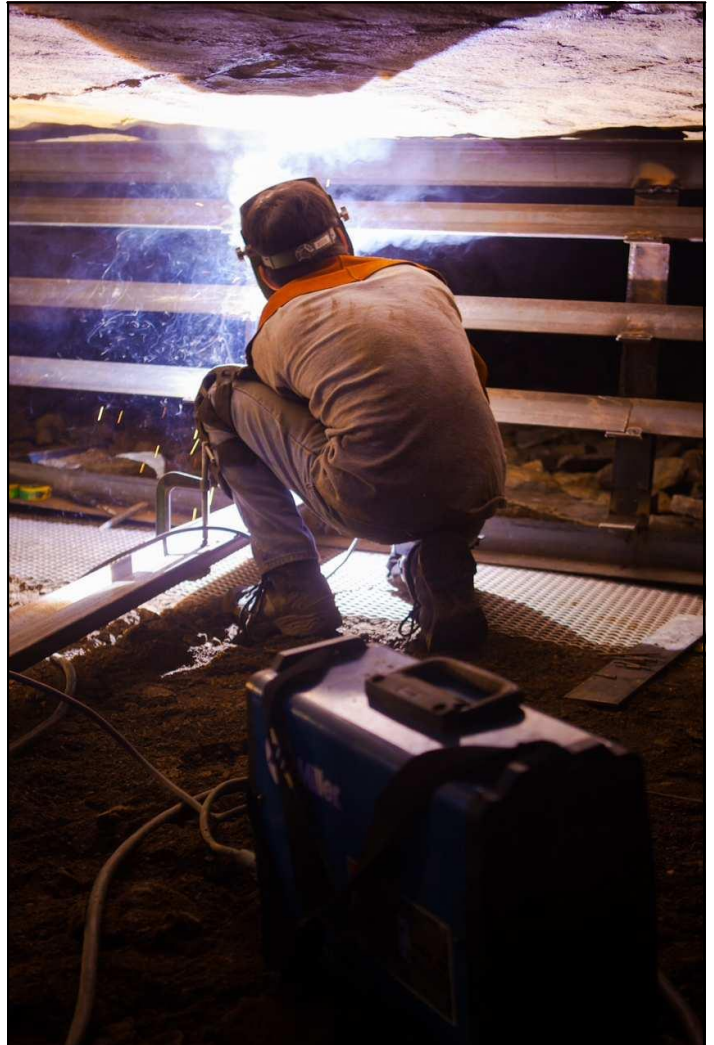
NCC members joined the work crew, which moved more than a ton of steel components to the gate site. Gate material was staged at the cliff edge, with parts being custom cut for assembly and welding in the cave. Following initial trail improvement, NCC members joined teams preparing and moving gate parts, coordinating traffic and assembly requests, and working to assemble the gate. The project was completed on schedule in three days. NCC member Michael Chu served as lead welder. NCC members Thom Engel, Emily Davis, Chuck Porter, Bill Folsom, Peter Haberland, and Mike Warner were major players in these tasks.

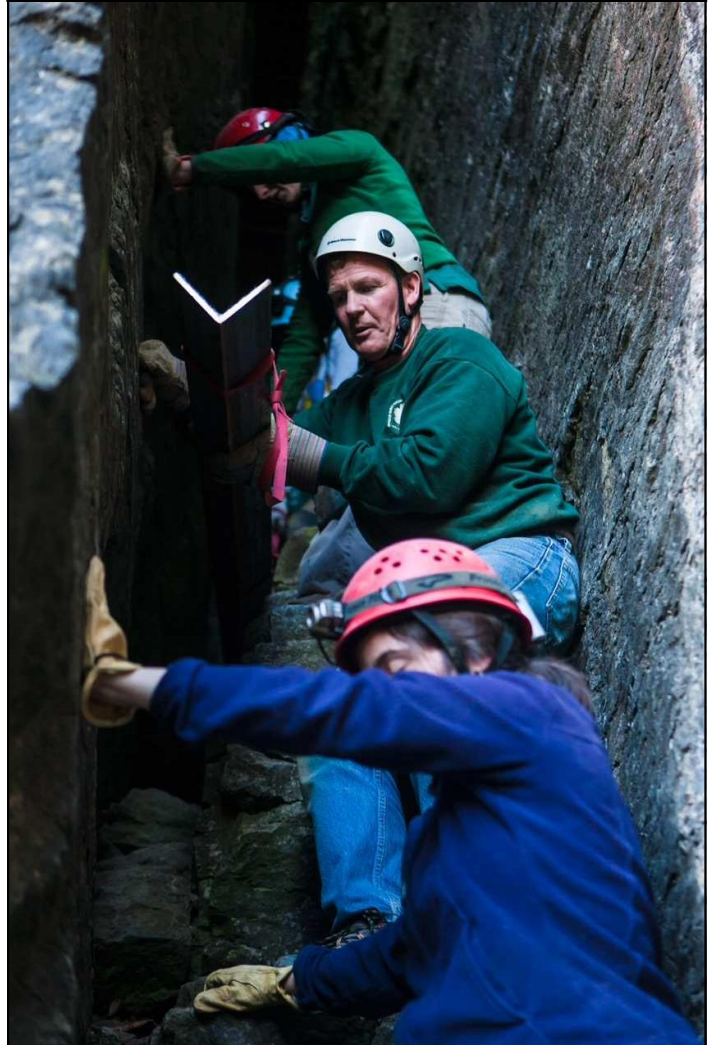
New management strategies for Thacher Park include opening resources to the public that were original factors in creation of the park, including the geology of the escarpment and caves in the park. Potential plans to open trails and access to Hailes Cave created the need for a gate to protect the population of bats using the cave seasonally and the general public from risks in the cave.

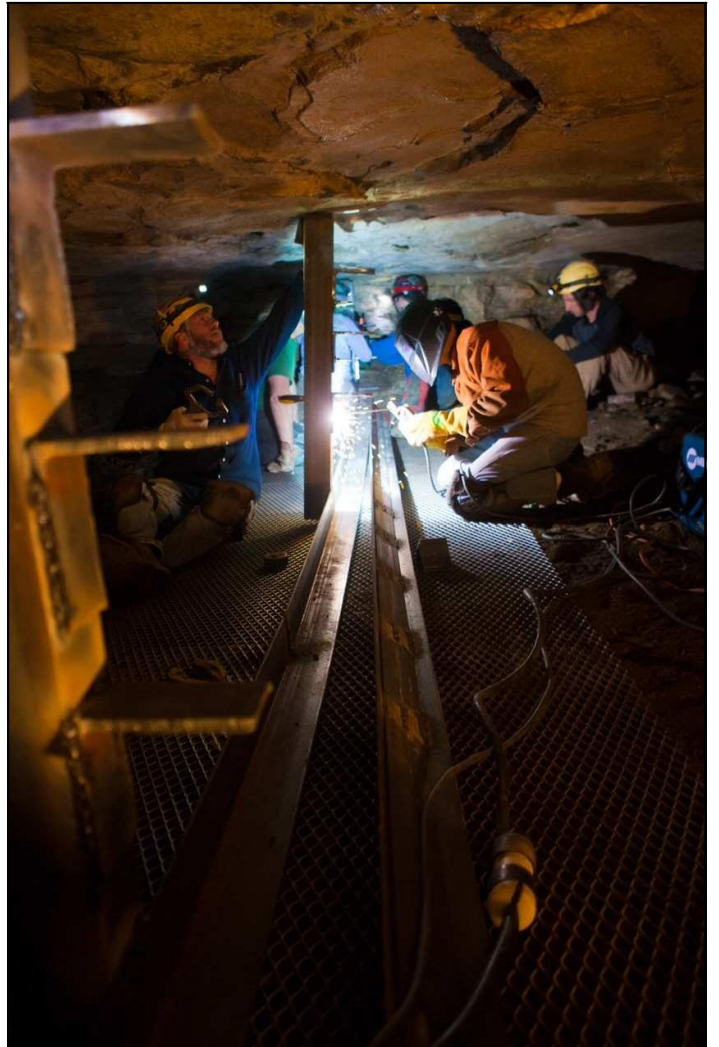


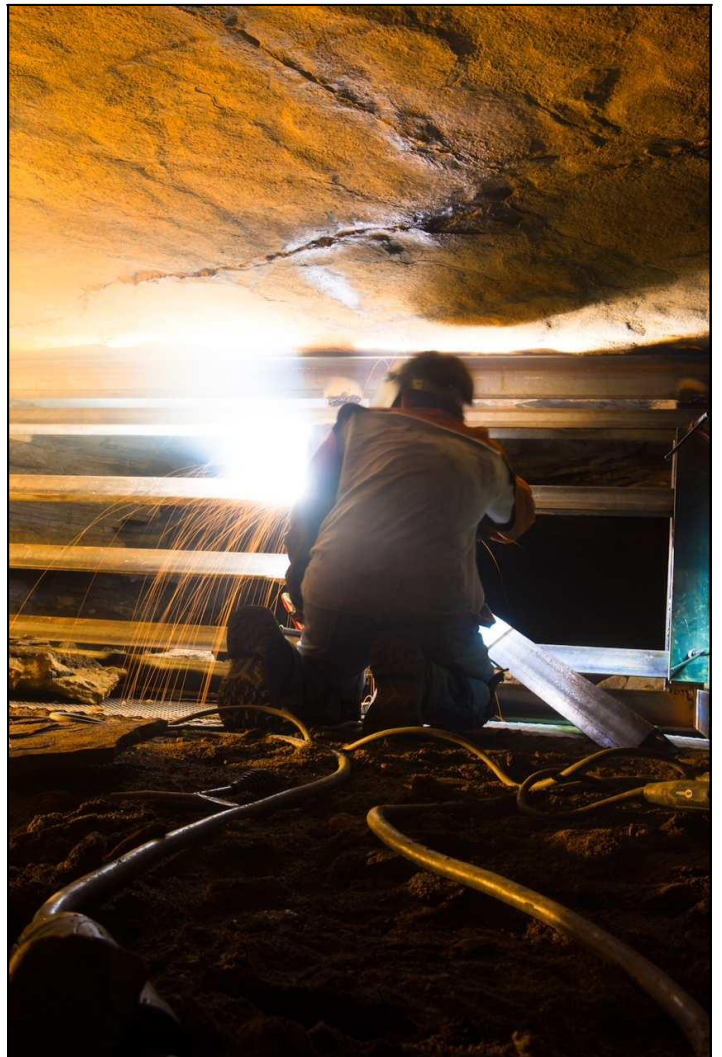














Northeastern Cave Conservancy members and guests Dosey Doe to the music of the band Tamarack and caller Paul Rosenberg at the 5th Annual NCC Barn Dance. Photo by Peter Youngbaer.



NCC quarterly Board of Trustees meeting. L to R Vince Kappler, NCC Vice President; Emily Davis, NCC Office Manager; Bob Addis, NCC President; and Bill Folsom, NCC Treasurer. Photo by Peter Youngbaer.



Northeastern Cave Conservancy members and guests at the 5th Annual NCC Barn Dance. Photo by Peter Youngbaer.