

Northeastern Cave Conservancy News

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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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<p>The <i>Northeastern Cave Conservancy News</i> 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), \$100 (Family Life Membership), and \$300 (Life Membership). All checks should be made payable and sent to:</p> <p>Northeastern Cave Conservancy Inc. · P.O. Box 254 · Schoharie, N.Y. 12157</p> <p>www.necaveconservancy.org</p>		

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Next Board Meeting

March Board Meeting
Sunday, March 6, 10:00 a.m.
Mahoney-Hewat Science & Technology Center
Housatonic Valley Regional High School

Spring Board Meeting
Saturday, June 4, 2016 10:00 a.m.
Mike Chu's Home

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To these ends, the NCC combines the resources and expertise of affiliated cave explorers, educators, scientists, landowners, and conservation officials.

The NCC programs are focused mainly on the preservation of caves and karst. Outreach includes education in schools and local communities, establishment of park spaces on karstlands, and educational messages about the significance of groundwater pollution on this sensitive underground ecosystem.

NCC members assist in the exploration, survey, and protection of these natural resources, and manage them so you can explore them yourself.



NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY, INC.

December Minutes - Summary

December 6, 2015 Board meeting held at Speleobooks, Schoharie, NY

Nominating Committee Officers Elections for 2016 Officers Search - No new candidates have been put forward. Existing Officers Slate is nominated.

Woodell moved to convene a meeting of the Trustees to elect Officers. A. Traino will preside over the elections as Chairman of the Trustees and will report.

Officers were seated and thanked for their service.

Electronic Votes

NCC accepts the surveying proposal from Lawson to survey the Onesquethaw parcel for \$1,800.00.

2nd by Folsom

NCC accepts CT Male's proposal to survey the Spider parcel for \$3,675.00.

Committee of the Whole

Knox Management Plan was reviewed.

Caves Closure - We need to be responsible as a board/committees and say something to the folks going into caves. Educate them if no signs are there and can also call in if sign is there and they are still trespassing.

Caves to Acquire - We should update the list. Need to reprioritize the list now and then.

Preserve Manager Involvement - Cave preserve managers request involvement in all situations. For the past year, there has been a strong role in having the managers involved by the EC and Board.

Working Time Frames - Updates on projects, more communication between meetings with the trustees. Reminded people there are EC meetings that all can attend. Share all relevant EC communications with the Trustees. People want transparency.

Spider Cave Acquisition Moving Forward - Public Hearing was scheduled for December 17, 2015 at 7:00 p.m., at the Town of Wright Town Hall, to offer the public an opportunity to review and comment on a proposed one-lot subdivision being reviewed for approval by the Town of Wright Planning Board.

"Cave Closed" and "Endangered Species Critical Area" signs were posted on cave properties.

Mitch Berger was appointed Chairman of the Risk Management Committee.

Ella Armstrong Management Plan - Approved as discussed and amended at the December 6, 2015 meeting.

Knox Management P - Approved as discussed and amended at the December 6, 2015 meeting.

Jacob Morris-Siegel was appointed the Co-Chair of Merlins.

Kevin Dumont was appointed as the interim chairman of Spider Cave.

NCC budget was passed for 2016.

Education Committee will be at the SAGE (Shenendahowa Advocates for Great Education), a STEM event, is scheduled for 15 April 2016.

March Board meeting will be March 6th at 10:00 a.m. in Connecticut.

Executive Committee meeting will be February 7th at 10:00 a.m. in Kerhonkson, NY.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE SEEKS BOARD CANDIDATES

The Nominating Committee is continuously soliciting nominations for candidates for the NCC Board of Directors. Each spring, three of the nine board seats come up for election to be seated at the June meeting. If you would like to be considered for candidacy, know of someone who would make a good candidate, or are simply curious about the process, please contact Bob Simmons, Nominating Committee Chair, at rwsimmons1@gmail.com or call 860-620-2055. You can also speak to any NCC board member or officer with no obligations.

NCC VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

Cavers can get involved with many volunteer opportunities offered by the NCC. These include work on various committees or assisting with one of the cave-preserve management teams. Volunteers contribute to the maintenance and preservation of unique underground environments and help to support various NCC educational and outreach activities. To learn more about volunteer opportunities, please contact Vince Kappler at vicepresident@necaveconservancy.org. You can also speak to any NCC board member or officer. Don't pass up the chance to give something back to the caves that are so important to us all.



MERLINS PRESERVE UPDATE — Morgan Ingalls —

It's been a quiet couple of months at the Merlins Preserve. We closed both Merlins and Dragon Bones Caves back in October for the winter hibernation season, and both our bats and the preserve manager have been hibernating soundly. However, a new bat has moved into the manager's cave! Jacob Morris-Siegel has agreed to come on board as co-manager for the Merlins Preserve!

For those of you who don't know Jacob already, he joined the NCC board this past spring (2015), and is an active caver, digger, and surveyor from Dalton, MA. Jacob is a great addition as co-manager, since he currently works for the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife as a

Stewardship Biologist. He lives much closer to the preserve than I do.

So once the weather starts to warm up, and we all come out of hibernation, we have lots of fun projects planned. After walking the property boundary back in November, we found a few boundary signs that the red squirrels found tasty and that will need to be replaced. We also hope to finish marking the new loop trail that we cut last spring, and make some trail maps of the property. Finally, the cave will reopen for the summer starting May 1st.

See you in the spring,



Our new perverse manager enjoys the mud in Merlins Cave. Photo by John Dunham.



Yum! Boundary Markers at the Merlins Preserve. Photo by Morgan Ingalls.

THACHER STATE PARK VISITOR CENTER — Thom Engel —

In 2013, New York finalized a master plan for John Boyd Thacher State Park (Thacher Park). The plan calls for the construction of a Visitor Center near the west end of the Indian Ladder Trail. The new Visitor Center is now under construction, and I have been asked by the state to serve on a committee to develop content for interactive exhibits and permanent displays. The Park is particularly interested in a “kids cave” and an adult-themed karst interpretive display. Currently, there is a fund-raising effort for the exhibits, spearheaded by the Open Space Institute.

Education is an important mission of the NCC. Indeed, it is the reason we are a non-profit. Helping to fund the cave and karst exhibits at the visitor center would further our mission and will, in my opinion, reach more people than we do at our preserves. To that end, between now and April 2016, I will match each dollar up to \$5,000.00 raised by the NCC for the Visitor Center displays. Please send your tax deductible contribution earmarked for the Visitor Center to the NCC Office.



Artist's conception of the completed Thacher Park Visitor Center.

THE KIOSK AT ONESQUETHAW — Thom Engel —

On October 10, Vince Kappler and Mike Chu, with a little assistance from me, built and installed a kiosk at the Onesquethaw Cave Preserve. This is the last of the current NCC preserves to get a kiosk.



Vince and Mike discussing how to proceed with the roof. Photo by Thom Engel.



The finished kiosk. Photo by Thom Engel.