

Northeastern Cave Conservancy News

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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
Sunday, December 4, 2016 at 10:00 am
Speleobooks - Schoharie, New York

Spring Board Meeting
March 5, 2017 at 10:00 am (location TBD)

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.

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.



NCC cover logo design by Christa Hay

END-OF-YEAR LETTER FROM THE NCC PRESIDENT

— Bob Addis —

Another year has passed, with the Northeastern Cave Conservancy (NCC) accomplishing several important tasks. Our growth and accomplishments are only possible because of the support of the membership. As an NCC member, you have demonstrated your commitment to the NCC in a substantial manner, and the Board sincerely appreciates your dedication to the NCC's mission.

Without a doubt, the biggest accomplishment of the Northeastern Cave Conservancy in 2016 is the development of our close relationship with Thacher State Park's new Visitor Center, enabling us to position ourselves for a major revitalization in cave conservancy. Many of us, even the locals who have watched its construction, have not realized the full potential of the new Visitor Center, which is scheduled for completion in the spring of 2017.

And what can we expect? The NCC has played a key role in advising the interior subcontractor (a caver from Toronto, Canada) on the development of two cave-related displays. On the main floor will be a geology display—an interpretation of limestone, caves and karst. But the real fun begins below the stairway on the lower level, where a kid's cave (including a realistic section of cliff with an opening leading into the cave) is being created! A video display will make the cave seem to continue and a cluster of bats will appear to move. More space has been allocated to this exhibit, as well as to the NCC's overall presence, than originally planned. Both will be prominent attractions. More information about this exhibit will appear in future issues of the NCC newsletter.

So how will this affect the NCC? As of this writing, we have tentative approval to place the new NCC brochure in a rack on the main floor of the exhibit, where visitors first come into the building. Literally tens of thousands of people will be walking past this rack containing park-related material, and many will be curious enough to pick up our brochure. In addition, Thacher is interested in developing ongoing educational programs in the Park, particularly those related to caves. As of yet, we don't know what forms these programs will take. Certainly, some will entail walking tours. There will also need to be a smooth, well-planned transition to hand off requests for recreational caving to appropriate groups.

As NCC President, I can't sing the praises of Thom Engel enough. On behalf of the NCC, I would like to extend thanks for his long and continuing efforts at Thacher.

- Thom put up \$5,000 as a matching grant to help fund

the two cave displays in the Visitor Center, and when our fundraiser went over our share, he added more money to round off the NCC's contribution to \$11,000.

- He continues to serve as our point of contact with the Park. He also serves on the Friends of Thacher Board.
- Thom has monitored the Visitor Center's construction since its inception, and has recently taken on the role of informal inspector and mentor.
- He starts his third year administrating the NCC's Memorandum of Understanding with Thacher State Park, enabling us to inventory and survey the caves and karst of the Park. This has been a very successful venture for both parties, and has opened the park to legitimate speleology.
- Thom has been the mainstay of our Education Committee for many years, visiting schools and presenting speleological programs. Recently, he expressed an interest in adapting his educational experiences to development of the Park's various educational programs.

But Thom Engel and the NCC Board can't do this alone. We need volunteers, and we need financial donations. Keep watching the NCC newsletter and email blasts for ongoing details of how you can help. We are on the brink of a major change in the history of the Northeastern Cave Conservancy, and we need you to be part of it.

Other Accomplishments of the NCC in 2016

The Northeastern Cave Conservancy had several other notable accomplishments during 2016, which included the following.

- Spider Cave - We closed on Spider Cave, Preserve #9. In March, we did trail work and a roadside clean-up along Route 443. We now manage approximately 87 acres and 16 known caves. Last year, I failed to mention that much of Spider's acquisition was due to Kevin Dumont's long-term efforts with the landowners.
- Partnership with the Rensselaer Land Trust - January and November saw us attending meetings and discussing issues of mutual interest. In August, there was a joint RLT/NCC cave trip to Bentleys Cavern.
- Partnership with the Columbia Land Conservancy - In June and October, the NCC attended an awards ceremony and a regional groundwater workshop with CLC. A joint surface trip to Merlins Cave Preserve was postponed in October due to weather. However,

because over 30 people signed up for it, we hope to offer the trip sometime this fall or winter.

- NCC Displays at caver events - These include the spring and fall Northeastern Regional Organization gatherings in Massachusetts and New York, the annual NSS Convention (Nevada), and the Old Timers Reunion (West Virginia).

The NCC needs your continued financial support and

your volunteer time in order to continue its mission. Please remember the NCC in this season of giving.

Thank you and Best Wishes for enjoyable holiday,

Bob Addis

President
Northeastern Cave Conservancy



Recent views of the Thatcher State Park Visitor Center, which is nearing completion. Photos by Thom Engel.



THE EIGHTH ANNUAL NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY BARN DANCE

— Mike Warner —

The 8th Annual Northeastern Cave Conservancy Barn Dance was held on Saturday, October 1. Seventy-five people were in attendance, enjoying seasonable weather and the lively music and dance-calling of Paul Rosenberg & Tamarack (<http://www.tamarack-band.com>). An added feature this year was a special exhibit of advertising and memorabilia, photographs, and other objects from the history of Knox Cave. Attendees were able to enjoy the music, social mixing, and the historical exhibit, as well as the usual raffles and light snacks that made for a relaxed evening benefiting both the community and the Northeastern Cave Conservancy (NCC).

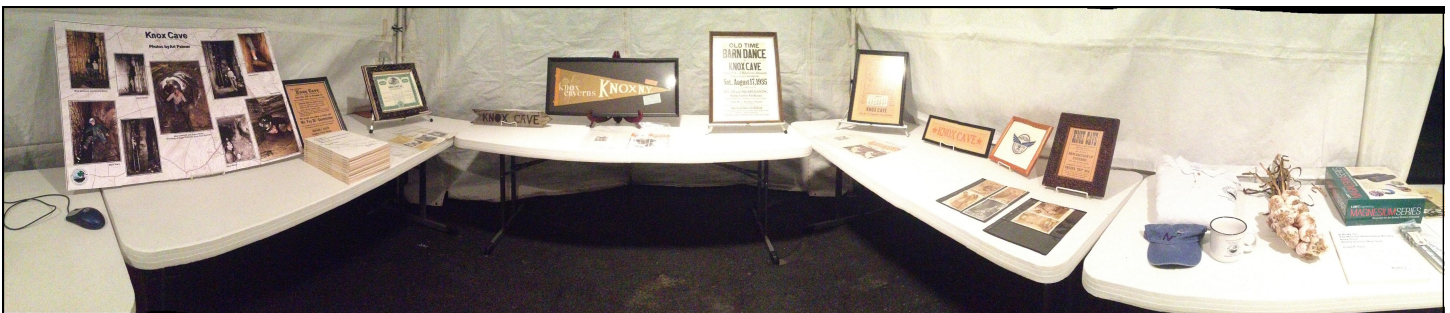
In all, the Conservancy raised just over six hundred dollars...but that was hardly the point. The big success for the NCC was continued good relations within its rural community near our flagship preserve. Promotion in local newspapers and websites helped the event have a very high percentage of local attendees (about 75%).

Thanks to Bill Folsom, Christa Hay, Leslie Hatfield, Tom Rider, Alan Traino, Mitch Berger, and Christine Young

for gathering various donations to support the event. Donors included Price Chopper, Stewart's Shops, NBT Bank, Honest Weight Food Co-op, Schoharie Valley Farms, The Apple Barrel, Fox Creek Farm, Your Way Cafe, West Virginia Speleological Survey, BMS Rescue Equipment, Wolf Hollow Brewing, Alan Traino, Christine Young, the Pokorny Family, the Kappler Family, Sue Warzek, the Davis/Warner family, the Hay/Addis Family, and the Simmons Family.

Helping with set up, food service, display interpretation, money handling, and the Knox display were Christa Hay, Sue Warzek, Bob and Terri Simmons, Bob Addis, Mitch Berger, Christine Young, The Mintel Family, Bill Folsom, Mike Nardacci and the Knox Museum, the Pokorny Family, and the Dumont Family.

The NCC Barn Dance has become a welcome tradition at The Octagon Barn, owned by Russ and Amy Pokorny. Add in the reliably entertaining Paul Rosenberg & Tamarack and a perfect evening is assured! A special thanks for our hosts and musicians. Let's do it again next year.





All barn-dance photos on pages 5 and 6 by Mike Warner.

NCC MEMBERSHIP DUES
— Peter Youngbaer —

NCC membership dues are going up in 2017! Join, renew, or upgrade now and save!

Why the increase? Earlier this year, the NCC did an extensive survey of the membership. With a growing number of preserves, which require maintenance, and other increased costs, we polled members on a variety of fundraising ideas. Overwhelming support came for a modest increase in membership dues, and the NCC Board approved the increase at their September meeting, the first since we became a membership organization in 1999.

Regular membership, our largest group, will increase \$5, from \$15 up to \$20. Life Memberships, our second-largest group, will increase by \$100, from \$300 up to \$400 (or 20 times a Regular membership, just as now). Family Life memberships will see a \$25 increase. Note: for those doing the installment plan on Life Memberships, you're already locked in at the lower rate.

It's easy to join, renew, or upgrade by mail or PayPal:

Mail to: Northeastern Cave Conservancy, P.O. Box 254, Schoharie, NY 12157.

PayPal: at <http://www.necaveconservancy.org/donate.php>. Click on the PayPal logo. Please consider adding an additional 2.2% + \$.30 to cover processing.

Membership levels are:

Regular: \$15.00 per year (going up to \$20 on January 1, 2017)

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

Benefactor: \$50.00

Life: \$300.00 one time, or paid over 3 years in equal installments in addition to paying the regular dues fee (\$115 per year x 3). (Going up to \$400 with the installment option of \$133 plus 20 [\$153] x 3)

Family Life: \$100 (Going up to \$125)

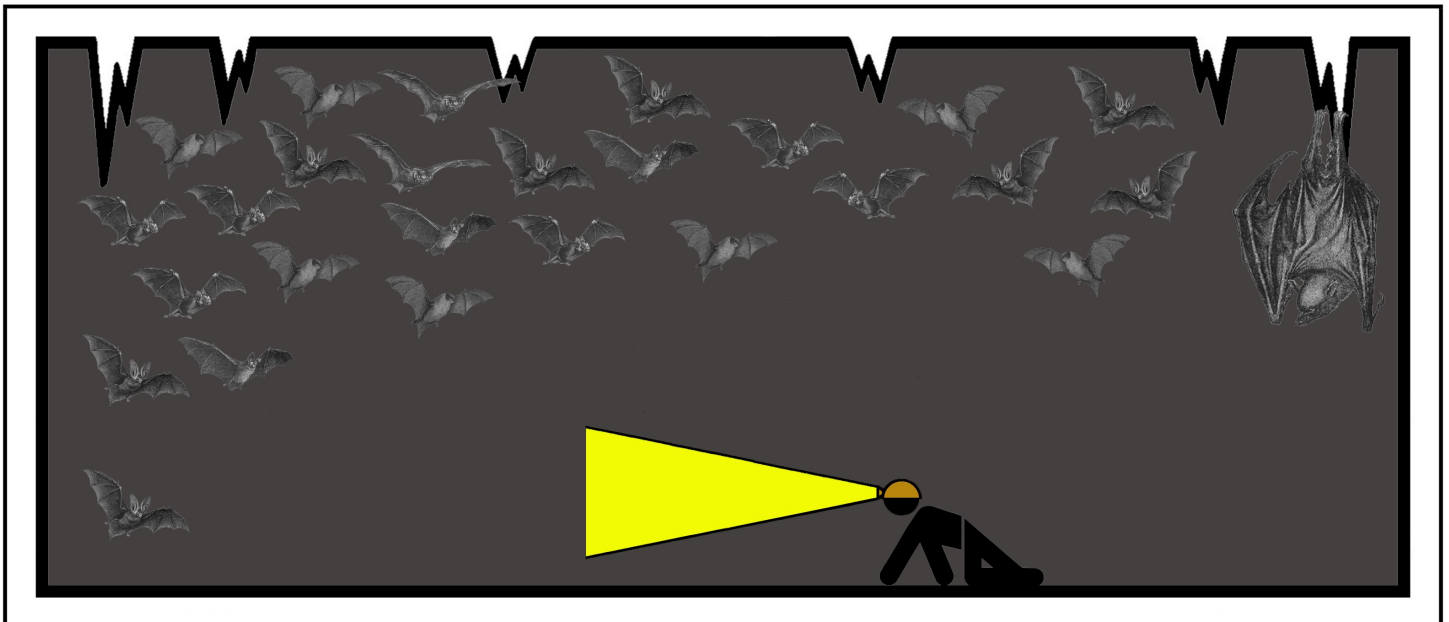
Family Life memberships are available to family members of a Life member joined by marriage or civil union, and to children of a Life member until the age of 18. Family Life members pay a one-time membership fee. If the Life member dies, the Family Life member shall automatically be converted to regular 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.

Institutional: \$100 (for grottos, camps, schools, etc.)

So, take advantage of the year-end incentives to save and to support cave and karst access and conservation in the Northeast.

If you have any questions, please contact me at: membership@necaveconservancy.org.

Peter Youngbaer, NCC Membership Chair



NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY, INC.
October 2, 2016 Minutes - Summary
 Mass Wildlife District Office, Massachusetts

All NCC members present voted on the following bylaw change.

Kappler moved: Bylaw VI.4 – Removal of Officers is amended by <<inserting>> new text:

4. Removal of Officers. Any Officer that fails to attend two consecutive meetings, excluding special meetings, without notice or fails to execute the duties of office may be removed by a two-thirds vote <<of the Trustees>> at any Board of Directors meeting provided that the Officer to be removed is notified of the intention to take such action at least 21 days prior to the vote on removal.

Original:

Removal of Officers. Any Officer that fails to attend two consecutive meetings, excluding special meetings, without notice or fails to execute the duties of office may be removed by a two-thirds vote at any Board of Directors meeting provided that the Officer to be removed is notified of the intention to take such action at least 21 days prior to the vote on removal.

Passed

Hay moved to accept the minutes of the June 4, 2016 board meeting.

Passed

Addis moved to accept the minutes of the March 2016 board meeting.

Passed

Engel moved: All science permits shall be given a specific expiration date. Unless otherwise requested by the investigator, this term shall be no more than two years from the date of issuance. The investigator may renew the permit. Such a request shall list those items in the original proposal that remain to be completed. After consulting with the Science Committee and preserve manager(s), renewal of the permit shall be by a vote of the board.

Passed unanimously

Engel moved: All currently issued science permits shall be deemed expired one year from the date this is passed. The Science Committee shall notify all current permit holders.

Passed unanimously

Folsom moved that the organization apply for a New York State Conservation Partnership Program Transaction Grant, funded by the Environmental Protection Fund and administered by the Land Trust Alliance.

Passed unanimously

Folsom moved that the organization create a stewardship fund dedicated for ongoing stewardship needs of the organization's preserves.

Passed unanimously

Traino moved the Sellecks Management plan is approved as submitted to the Board on September 21, 2016.

Passed unanimously

Folsom moved to alter the membership categories as follows, taking effect as of January 1, 2017.

Life: go from \$300 to \$400

Family Life: go from \$100 to \$125

Benefactor: keep at \$50

Passed unanimously

Regular: go from \$15 to \$20

Family: keep at \$5

Institutional: keep at \$100

Student: drop entirely

Berger moved that the NCC join the Terrafirma Risk Retention Group, LLC at its next enrollment period. The Treasurer is directed to budget for fiscal year 2017 a registration fee of up to \$600 and for fiscal year 2017 and all subsequent years a fee of up to \$60 per preserve. The Risk Management Committee is directed to prepare all necessary motions, working with other committees as necessary, to meet the Terrafirma membership and Best Practices discount requirements for consideration at the next board meeting.

Passed unanimously

Traino moved for WVCC donation of an NCC hat and polo shirt for their annual banquet.

Passed

Informational Point: Executive committee meeting will be November 6, 2016 at 10:00 am in Kerhonkson.

Informational Point: Executive committee meeting will be January 21, 2017 in Kerhonkson.

Informational Point: Next board meeting will be December 4, 2016 at 10:00 am at Speleobooks.

Addis moved the NCC spring board meeting will be March 5, 2017 at 10:00 am (location TBD).

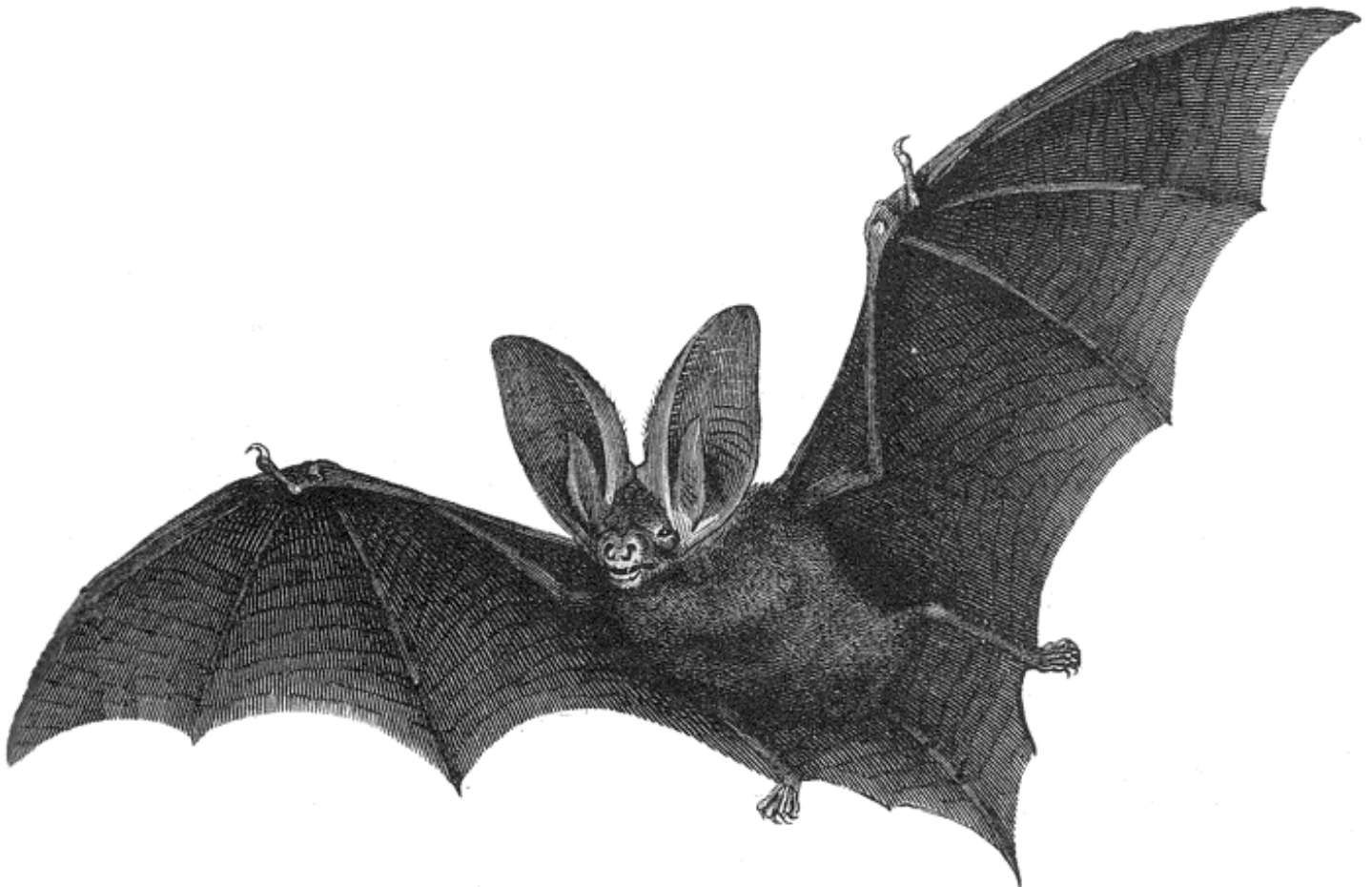
Passed

Informational Point: Bob Simmons thanks Thom Engel for his time managing the NSS Gage Preserve.

Addis moved to thank Jacob Morris-Siegel and the MASS Wildlife for hosting the meeting.

Passed

Meeting adjourned at 3:16 pm.



— WHO RUNS THIS JOINT —

NOMINATING COMMITTEE SEEKING CANDIDATES FOR OFFICER POSITIONS

Each year at the Annual Meeting in December, the Trustees elect the four Organization Officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer). Each year, the Nominating Committee presents a slate of candidates for these four positions for consideration by the Trustees. Nominations are also solicited from the Trustees. The Nominating Committee is looking for potential candidates for the Officer positions at this time. If you would like to be considered for a position, would like to nominate someone for a position, or would just like more information on the process and requirements, please contact Bob Simmons at nominating@necaveconservancy.org. For reference, the general duties and responsibilities of the four Officer positions are described below.

President: The President is the Chief Executive Officer of the NCC, and supervises the activities of the NCC within the scope provided by the bylaws. The President presides at meetings of the Board of Directors. The following committees report to the President: Acquisitions, Preserves, Nominating, and Risk Management, as well as any ad hoc committees established for specific purposes.

Vice President: The Vice President assumes the duties of the President in the event of absence, incapacity, or resignation of the President, and presides when the Board meets as a Committee of the Whole. The following committees report to the Vice President: Bylaws, Education, Science, Special Use, Surprise Cave, and Thacher Park.

Secretary: The Secretary keeps the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors and of the Executive Committee, and maintains the membership roll. The Secretary also carries on all organizational correspondence as delegated by the President and sends out notices of meetings. The Secretary is responsible for editing and publishing the Board Manual. The secretary may appoint assistants, as required.

Treasurer: The Treasurer is responsible for the safekeeping of organizational funds; maintaining and reporting financial records and statements to the Board of Directors; and filing all financial documents required by local, state, or federal regulations. The following committees report to the Treasurer: Technology, Fundraising, Membership, Office, Publications, and Volunteer Value.

CURRENTLY OPEN COMMITTEE CHAIR POSITION:

Fundraising Committee Chair: The Fundraising Committee Chair coordinates all fundraising activities for the NCC. The fundraising committee may be authorized by the board to research and apply for grants to generate funds for specific projects, including cave acquisitions. If interested in this position, please contact Vince Kappler at vicepresident@necaveconservancy.org.

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. If interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities with the NCC, 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.

