

Minutes

December 4, 2022 10:00 AM
Speleobooks, and Online via Videoconference

Meeting called to order at 10:02am

1. Introduction and greetings – Robert Simmons

2. Attendance

Officers: R. Simmons, T. Engel, M. Berger, B. Folsom(*)

Trustees: R. Armen(*), M. Ingalls(*), K. Dumont, J. Morris-Siegel, R. Drake(*), P. Rubin, L. Hatfield, L. Davis | D. Hedges
(*) - Attended the meeting via videoconference

3. Absent with proxy: None

4. Absent without designated proxy: None

5. Officer Reviews (D. Hedges)

The Trustees may choose to go into Executive Session at this time

[Note: This is traditionally handled at the September Board Meeting, but as the Governance Committee was running behind schedule, the Trustees chose to postpone it to December this year.]

It was decided that these reviews would be conducted during the Trustees' Executive Session in Item 7 below.

6. Nominating Committee Report: See "Nominating" subsection of Attachment A

7. Simmons moves to convene a meeting of the Trustees to hold elections for the officer positions with terms that expire this year (Vice President and Treasurer). Dumont will preside over the meeting as Chair of the Trustees and will report.

[The Trustees may decide to go into Executive Session. Officers and visitors may be asked to remain in a different room.]

Second by Hatfield

For: All

[Motion passes - Trustees go into special session at 10:44am and exit special session at 11:48am.]

Dumont reports:

Trustees' Report: Vice President: T. Engel (2 year term)

Treasurer: B. Folsom (2 year term)

Officers are seated and the meeting resumes at 11:49am.

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 Hedges

For: Rest

Against: Engel

[The Committee of the Whole is opened]

Topics:

9.1. Onesquethaw Cave Preserve Management Plan review (Engel)

[This is the periodic review of this preserve's management plan. A draft of the Management Plan with the proposed revisions was circulated by the Preserve Manager and Stewardship Coordinator, and an updated draft is included in the meeting materials. Approval will be voted on in Item 12.]

Engel notes that one of the comments he received questioned whether the field should be allowed to go fallow, but that he hasn't made changes to address that concern because it has already occurred as a result of earlier management decisions. L. Davis suggests that it should be managed to encourage native vegetational regrowth, and that this ought to be our policy in general. Morris-Siegel gave us an overview of the management plan review

process as a reminder: the preserve managers send around a draft with suggestions for what they feel should be revised, the Stewardship Coordinator makes a first pass at reviewing the document, then circulates it to the Board for comments. The managers then look over the received comments, and either make further adjustments in response or don't, explaining how they've handled the feedback at the meeting. So, major new suggestions are better handled when they come up prior to the meeting. However, looking at the current suggestion about restoring native vegetation, an estimate is that it would cost about \$20k to restore the field at Onesquethaw (at \$2k-\$4k per acre), and it doesn't seem feasible to invest that amount now. Dumont believes that this idea may be worth discussing, though not as part of this management plan's review. As it's a proposal for a general surface management policy, Berger suggests that it may be a project we could take on with grant money. Hedges inquires whether there's a difference between "fallow" and "run wild"; Morris-Siegel explains that one is just the formal word for the other. Rubin asks whether there's a target date for installation of the bat protection device; Engel reports that there isn't yet. Hatfield wonders whether we need further Board discussion here on the native vegetation topic. Berger points out that the main reason for the Committee of the Whole discussion for a management plan review is to hash out anything remaining from the submitted comments where disagreements about what to do remain. The conclusion is that the EC should discuss taking up native vegetation restoration as a project at one of their future meetings.

9.2. 2023 Budget discussion (Folsom)

[Our 2023 budget needs to be approved at the December meeting. The Treasurer has provided a proposed budget in Attachment C, and it will be voted on in Item 13.]

The proposed budget was discussed. Key adjustments were a decrease in the management allocation for Knox (as we don't expect the trail restoration project to be executed until the following year), an increase in the Acquisitions budget, and adding Jack Packers management money. E. Davis also raised discussion topics about costs for "swag," Members' Day, and an update to our brochure.

9.3. Executive succession planning (Dumont, Simmons)

[This is our periodic check-in point to discuss how the effort is going, what we're doing, etc.]

Dumont tells us that he will talk with [REDACTED] about having our development retreat sometime between April and June of 2023. Simmons thanks him and Berger for making the connection, and also asks about the intended audience for the retreat. He asks whether it should involve just the Board, or all volunteer positions, and whether we should include former holders of these positions (he'd like to do that, and everyone seemed agreeable). We don't yet have a venue, though there's a plan to reach out to SUNY Cortland. L. Davis notes that he won't be able to participate if it gets scheduled on or after May 2.

9.4. NCC swag (Hatfield, Davis, Berger, et. al)

[The EC has been discussing swag somewhat extensively over the past few meetings, and at our last meeting, Hatfield indicated that she had thoughts to share and would like this to be a discussion topic at this meeting. Additionally, Davis and Warner have recently returned from a major vendor trade show at which they were shopping for potential swag items. See Item 15 in the EC Meeting Minutes in Attachment D.]

E. Davis tells us that she and Warner found a number of possibilities on their recent trip to a trade show, and that Hay would like to know which items the Board is interested in. They found patches and pins that could be bought in quantities as small as 100 (many items require orders of at least 250) for \$240 plus mockup costs (around \$265 total). Thermal water bottles/mugs with our logo engraved would cost about \$9 if we order at least two dozen. Same individual cost for ceramic coffee mugs with bats on the inside and our logo on the outside, but we'd have to order at least six dozen of those. T-shirts with something like our logo on the front and "20 reasons to donate" on the back would be \$8 each for at least six dozen. They found a manufacturer from Florida who can put our logo on caps that would cost \$11 each for at least two dozen (plus physical mockup costs). One possibility is that we look at these as items available to contributors for certain levels of donation. Another is to allow members or contributors to purchase them at half the retail cost. Berger notes that our increased presence at conferences and caving events outside of our area has repeatedly led him to feel that we should not only have our for-purchase swag items, but also a selection of things that can be treated as booth handouts at these events. Simmons notes that the inexpensive cups he'd been thinking of getting (had we more time) for our OTR booth would've likely cost only \$0.90-\$2.50 each. Hatfield asks what we'd treat as a "loss leader" and what would be on the items. It's noted that we can put a QR code, whether it be for our website or a donation page, which gets some free advertising out in exchange for discounted or free gear. Berger also notes that what he's seen at places like OTR and TAG Fall Cave-In is that many other groups (including some smaller than ours) have an impressive array of different items to buy, sometimes themed for each of their preserves, or for individual fundraisers, or just different designs that come out each year. He thinks that it would behoove us to follow that pattern, because once someone has "the" NCC shirt, they're not likely to keep buying more, but if we had different designs available from time to time, many people likely would purchase a t-shirt that they don't have, for example. Engel echoes this sentiment, and Hatfield likes it as well. She also suggests a "12 Days of Christmas" sort of theme to help come up with a series of different designs. Simmons

notes that we may be able to do something in terms of a design this coming year to commemorate the milestone of it being 45 years since we acquired Knox.

9.5. Logging at preserves (Engel, Folsom, Simmons)

[The NCC was recently contacted by a logger who will be working on the land adjoining the Bentleys Preserve, and is interested in potentially logging on our land as well. The EC felt that this topic was worth a general discussion about our feelings on whether logging is always inappropriate or can sometimes be viewed as part of responsible land management, keeping in mind that if allowed, it may also bring in funds that can be used on other initiatives.]

Engel feels that logging is shortsighted, and that the trees should be preserved, as even the dead ones have value, for example as homes to insects. Simmons notes that there's a monetary incentive to allow logging of the dead ash trees, and asks whether our feelings are changed if there's a substantial amount of money we could use for other conservation projects. Morris-Siegel isn't opposed to considering this, if done properly with a licensed logger, though that may only bring in half the money it would if the lumber were bid out. L. Davis agrees, and Ingalls notes that Merlins actually has a forest management plan that discusses logging considerations. Simmons notes that the area in question at Bentleys is only 5-6 acres, which wouldn't draw much if we put it out to bid. The general consensus is that we should say "no, thank you" to the current offer, but could discuss other offers elsewhere if they make sense.

9.6. US Fish and Wildlife Service listing of the Northern Long-Eared Bat as endangered, etc. (Ingalls, Simmons)

[The USFWS changed the NLEB's designation from threatened to endangered. Since NYS treats both the same way, this doesn't operationally affect us as all of our preserves are in New York. However, they hosted two meetings this past week attended by a couple of our members, at which they may have gained other insights to share.]

Simmons wanted to make sure that everyone was aware of this change, although the fact that all of our existing preserves are in New York means that in practice, nothing will change significantly for us. There may, however, be significant changes to cave access in other states. There's a bit of wondering about whether we should promote the knowledge that we're involved in protecting endangered species. Berger asks what the practical difference is between the "4d rule" and an "endangered" designation. Ingalls explains that the 4d rules apply per project, and get written in consultation with USFWS field offices. She also tells us that we'll likely know whether the designation of the Tricolored Bat is going to change around September 2023.

9.7. Board Manual updates (Hatfield)

Hatfield notes that we keep coming back to this, and wonders how we can help. Berger isn't really sure that there's a way to help, or what it would look like. Hedges proposes the idea of having someone do editing for Berger, though Berger notes that most of the hurdle to get over is converting the prior manual format into something he can maintain moving forward, and that the actual task of ticking through each set of minutes to make the corresponding updates in the manual becomes relatively mechanical beyond that point, much as was the case with redaction of sensitive parts of the minutes. Hatfield suggests that we think a bit on who may be able to provide some help.

9.8. New member orientation (L. Davis)

L. Davis suggests that it would be very helpful to have something along the lines of a new member orientation for people coming onto the Board. He notes that even though he's a life member and one of the Science Coordinators, and has been for quite some time, if he'd known, for example, how our typical meeting process works with respect to Committee of the Whole discussions, he feels he'd have made fewer missteps early on. Engel agrees that he's highlighted a problem, and Berger feels that the issue Davis is describing is actually broader than just something applicable to the Board. Berger notes that there's been an effort in the past (interrupted by the pandemic) to have a get-together for all of the preserve managers to compare notes and discuss that job, because people land in that sort of volunteer role without much guidance fairly regularly as well; we don't tend to do orientation for many of our positions, and they could likely all benefit from it. Engel notes that part of how the NSS handles this is that their new Board of Governors members stay behind after the regular portions of their meetings for additional orientation. Dumont wonders whether this is one of the intended uses for the Board Manual, and also points out that it might be a valuable discussion to have at our retreat. Hatfield wonders if we should consider "buddying up" new people with experienced ones. As an example, she notes (and Berger echoes) how much effort Folsom put into making sure that when each of them came onto the Board, appropriate pauses were made to bring them up to speed on longstanding topics so that they could meaningfully participate in discussions without feeling lost.

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

Second by Hatfield

For: All

[The Committee of the Whole is closed]

Old Business

[None]

New Business

11. Berger moves: The minutes of the September 24, 2022 Board Meeting are approved.
[*The Secretary would like to thank Dumont and Folsom for sending in their reviews.*]
Second by Dumont
For: All
[The minutes of the September 24, 2022 Board Meeting are approved]

12. Engel moves: The revisions to the Onesquethaw Cave Preserve Management Plan, as amended during Committee of the Whole, are approved.
[*The proposed revisions will have been discussed in Item 9.1 during Committee of the Whole.*]
Second by Berger
For: All
[The revisions to the Onesquethaw Cave Preserve Management Plan are approved]

13. Folsom moves: The NCC budget for 2023, as presented in Attachment C and amended during Committee of the Whole, is approved.
[*The proposed budget will have been discussed in Item 9.2 during Committee of the Whole.*]
Second by Hatfield
For: All
[The 2023 budget is approved]

14. Simmons moves: The Constitution and Bylaws of the Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. are amended as follows:

In Article VI (Officers), a new section is added which reads as follows:

6. Immediate Past Officers. The position of Immediate Past Officer (IPO) shall exist for each Officer enumerated in Section 1 (Titles) of this Article. The immediate previous holder of the Officer position in question is the only person eligible to hold the corresponding IPO position. The IPO, if appointed, shall serve in a confidential advisory role to the newly elected Officer and shall have no additional power, responsibilities, or votes. The IPO shall only be appointed provided:

- a. The individual wishes to accept the position of IPO,
- b. The newly elected Officer accepts the individual as the IPO, and
- c. The individual is confirmed by a two thirds vote of the Trustees present at the annual meeting.

The IPO shall serve a one-year term, beginning concurrent with the start of the corresponding newly elected Officer's term. Either the Officer or the IPO may discontinue the position without cause, provided each party informs the other and copies such notice to the Secretary.

[*A common practice in organizations for business continuity purposes is a position such as this. Some organizations use an Officer-Elect position where the incoming officer shadows the outgoing Officer for a period of time to learn the job. This codifies the concept we have been discussing on how to make a smoother transition such as when the President's and Secretary's terms expire in December 2023.*

[*I tried to make it simple enough so that someone who wanted to be "done" could simply opt out, so an Officer who did not want or need an IPO or didn't want the specific individual to take that position had a veto, and so that the Board needed to be comfortable with the person taking on the role. The one year time frame is arbitrary.*]

[***This item was introduced at the September Board meeting, and not acted on at that time, as it was neither a Special Meeting nor the Annual Meeting, and 21 days notice of the proposed change to the bylaws had not been provided to the membership, which may vote on it by attending the meeting at which it is considered. At the time, it had also not been reviewed by the Bylaws Committee. As both of those requirements have now been met, the motion will be taken up at this meeting.***]

Second by Morris-Siegel
For: All

[Article VI (Officers) Section 6 (Immediate Past Officers) is added to the Bylaws]

15. Berger moves: The Constitution and Bylaws of the Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. are amended as follows:

In Article IX (Meetings), Section 6 (Proxies) is deleted.

[The practice of allowing designated or appointed proxies to vote on behalf of absent Board members at meetings is not allowed by New York State Non-Profit Corporation Law, and thus our bylaws need to be brought into compliance. Until now, the affected Section allowed a member of the Board of Directors (an Officer or Trustee) who could not attend a meeting to designate any other member of the NCC as their proxy to participate and vote for them at the meeting. If a Board member was absent and had not designated a proxy, the rest of the Board could choose to appoint any other member in attendance as the proxy.]

[As with the previous item, this motion was suggested at the September Board meeting, but not taken up at that time because the requirements for amending the Bylaws had not yet been met. The motion will be taken up at this meeting.]

Second by Engel

For: All

[Article IX (Meetings) Section 6 (Proxies) is deleted from the Bylaws]

16. Simmons moves: Any and all actions taken by the Board of Directors prior to adoption of this motion that are within the authority conferred to them are hereby ratified, confirmed, and approved.

[As discussed at the previous meeting, since there were various points in the past at which proxies were allowed to vote on behalf of absent Directors, and this was impermissible according to New York State Non-Profit Corporation Law, the Board (without proxies) needs to confirm that it approves of all motions that passed during its history, even if proxies had improperly been allowed to vote on those motions.]

Second by Berger

For: All

[All prior Board of Directors actions are ratified, confirmed, and approved]

17. Folsom moves: The NCC will sponsor the January 2023 Northeast Bat Working Group (NEBWG) meeting at the \$300 level.

[We traditionally sponsor this conference at the lowest tier, which this year has increased by \$50 to \$300.]

Second by L. Davis

For: Rest

Abstain: Ingalls

[The NCC will sponsor the 2023 NEBWG meeting at the \$300 level]

18. Simmons moves: Hatfield is designated as the NCC representative to the 2023 NEBWG meeting.

[Our sponsorship of the NEBWG meeting includes a complimentary registration.]

Second by Hedges

For: Rest

Abstain: Hatfield

[Hatfield is the NCC representative to the 2023 NEBWG meeting]

Informational point: Next EC meeting will be Sunday, January 22, 2023 at 9AM via videoconference.

Informational point: the Spring Board meeting will be Saturday, March 4, 2023 at 10 AM in Saugerties, NY (pending confirmation of venue availability) or 9AM if entirely via videoconference.

Informational point: the late Spring EC meeting will be Saturday May 6, 2023 at 10AM at a location to be determined or 9AM if entirely via videoconference.

19. Simmons moves: The NCC Summer meeting will be Saturday June 3, 2023 at 10AM at the Chu residence (pending confirmation) or 9AM if entirely via videoconference.

Second by Morris-Siegel

For: All

[The NCC Summer meeting will be Saturday June 3, 2023 at 10AM if in person or 9AM if entirely via videoconference]

20. Hatfield moves: The NCC thanks Emily Davis and Mike Warner for hosting this meeting and providing food.

Second by Morris-Siegel

For: All

[Emily Davis and Mike Warner have the NCC's thanks]

21. Simmons moves: The Board shall enter Executive Session to discuss acquisitions.

Second by Hedges

For: All

[Motion passes - the Board enters Executive Session at 3:25pm and exits Executive Session at 3:45pm]

22.

[Redacted]

23. [Redacted]

24. [Redacted]

25. Engel moves to adjourn.
Second by Morris-Siegel
For: All
[The meeting is adjourned]

Meeting adjourned at 3:49pm

**Attachment A
President's Report**

1. Apologies that I was somewhat preoccupied over much of the time since the September meeting on the NSS Gage Preserve cabin building project. Many of you lent a hand and/or contributed financially to the project and I wish to thank everyone for the help and understanding.
2. We are making some headway on the planning retreat. We have confirmation of a facilitator and are still researching venues and dates.
3. We really need to push for replacements for the President and Secretary. The motion on today's agenda for the Immediate Past Officers positions should go a long way towards easing the transitions. It is imperative, however, that we find serious candidates for these positions as the future of the organization is at stake. Please talk it up and see if there are people in your circles of influence that should be approached.
4. I attended a "Green Drinks" mixer hosted by the Roxbury (CT) Land Trust in early November. RLT owns an old iron mine (Mine Hill Preserve) which is a significant bat hibernaculum as well as the best "cave" in CT. Opened the possibility for a joint NCC-CCG clean up in the mine which has multiple drops and several thousand feet of passages. Oh, and did I mention that the mixer was held at the Mine Hill Distillery next door?
5. The NSS-NCC MOU was signed by NSS President Kristine Ebrey on October 15, 2022. I have a scanned copy, but NSS will send us a signed original for our records.
6. There has been some movement on the acquisitions front on a few properties, two of which we will be discussing at the meeting. We are also poised to execute our first Conservation Easement as well as establishing our first preserve outside of New York, exciting times! I hope to have updates on some of these as we have meetings set for between now and the Board Meeting. Updates to follow.
7. We are actively looking for a new Membership Chair. If you have anyone in mind we can contact, please let us know. We are placing notices by email to the membership and on the Facebook site. Please spread the word to your contacts.
8. Cara Gentry notes that the Wallkill Valley Land Trust where she works is using Landscape software and has started to expand on fully utilizing its versatility. She states that if the NCC starts using it too, she could set up the Salamander Cave Preserve and would also be willing to help other cave managers get their properties set up in the system if needed.

Management Plan Review Schedule

Thom has circulated the Onesquethaw MP for comments with a few updates and additions, and has addressed all provided comments. A vote to approve will be on the agenda for today's meeting. The plan review schedule as presently laid out is provided in the table below.

Year	March	June	September	December
2022				Onesquethaw
2023	Spider	Clarksville	Salamander	Bentleys
2024	Ella Armstrong	Knox	Traino	Sellecks
2025	Bensons	Merlins	Jack Packers	Onesquethaw

Cave Preserve Reports

Alan Traino (Devon Hedges)

Progress: Visit log being used.

Issues: Parking still not completed, although there's no problems with the current setup.

Bensons (Luke Mazza)

Progress: Visited the property on 10/29. Gave the r.o.w. a final mow for the season, cleared some fallen branches from the trail, and replaced some fallen/misplaced property boundary markers. All looks well otherwise. 11 permits issued in the 2022 season.

Issues: none to report

Plans: No future plans as of this time.

Bentleys (Devon Hedges, Jonah Spivak)

Progress: Driveway is still navigable, visit log being used

Clarksville (Thom Engel, Mike Chu, Chuck Porter)

Progress: The DEC restricted area signs have been put up at the changing area, the kiosk, and all three entrances.

Issues: Nothing additional at this time.

Plans: I have not heard directly but I believe this will be a DEC bat count year

Ella Armstrong (Erik Nieman)

Progress: Half of parking area has been cleared of overgrowth. Sign-in register installed at kiosk

Issues: Overgrowth in parking area

Plans: ongoing project to clear weeds overtaking the parking area

Jack Packers (Kevin Dumont)

Progress: The preserve was visited on November 5, 2022. The trail was marked with NCC markers, with all other markers (flagging, Ball jar lids, etc.) removed. A large blow-down was repositioned and brush was positioned in a few areas to reduce confusion over the position of the trail. The proposed location of the kiosk was marked with a steel fence post and yellow flagging.

Issues: Updated literature about closure related to the presence of bats may be necessary (the landowner is agreeable to whatever the NCC decides on this matter).

Plans: A kiosk similar to the one present at Onesquethaw will be installed close to the trailhead, to be constructed in the spring of 2023. Continued improvement of the trail will take place in the fall of 2022 or spring/summer of 2023. The owner has also expressed desire for informational displays at the kiosk and/or along the trail, which will be investigated and tentatively installed in 2023. A resurvey of the cave is in process, to be completed by mid-2023.

Knox (Mitch Berger)

Progress: A couple of preserve checkups happened on weekends where the Gage Cabin was being constructed, with no major activity to report. The scientific equipment for the “Fat Bat” research project has been installed off to the side of the trail near the sinkhole. Bob Simmons and I met with one of the principals from Tahawus Trails on November 28 at the preserve. We discussed the history of sinkhole access, our desires for the restoration project, and possibilities. He took several photos and measurements, and plans to get back to us with a “menu” of options sometime during January; he understands that we’ll be fundraising and applying for grants to fund the project, and that we don’t know whether we’ll have the funds to carry out the work in 2023.

Issues: A deer stand was found near the sinkhole during our site visit with the trail builders; an inquiry has been sent to our neighbor with a hunting permit to see whether he owns or knows about it. We still haven’t succeeded at obtaining a grant for the sinkhole trail restoration. The Great Divide rope is still there. Engel and Berger need to investigate poison parsnip plants present on the preserve. Much of the surrounding land is for sale. Most of the “No Hunting” signs still need replacement.

Plans: Periodic property inspections. Keep tabs on the sale of the surrounding land. Review proposals for the trail restoration project when they arrive next month. Work on funding sources for trail restoration. Addition of trail markers and reposting of the property. Boundary marking. Removal of the Great Divide rope. Investigation of troublesome plant species. Further attempts at removal of ancient graffiti. Replace “No Hunting” signs.

Merlins (Morgan Ingalls, Ramon Armen)

Progress: We replaced the traverse line going up to the big room and added an additional bolt at the beginning so people can clip in earlier. There were four trips to Merlin’s since the last NCC meeting, including one with Emily Davis and [REDACTED] lives nearby and works for the State of New York and is active in search and rescue. We talked about possible rescues at Merlin’s and he’s certainly a good resource in the area that we should make use of.

There was a dig at Dome 12 on 11/20/22, and while it wasn’t dry, it wasn’t as wet as expected. The dig has stayed open, and continues through a muddy “lagoon” where we’re pulling mud and gravel out of the floor ahead (there is some air, and it’s not completely sumped).

Issues: Still need to replace the trail and property markers and paint the boundary. Many trees need to be cut and cleared from the trail. Dome 12 continues to slump and needs a second culvert.

Plans: Clear trees from the trail (chainsaw needed), re-mark with new trail makers. Buy an additional piece of culvert to extend the current Dome 12 culvert. Reach out to [REDACTED] as local contact (might also have a chainsaw)

Onesquethaw (Thom Engel, Christa Hay)

Progress: The DEC restricted area signs have been put up. The management plan has been updated and has been available for review. It should be voted on at this meeting.

Issues: I had a discussion with the “land manager” for the property to the southeast of the preserve. I have had no reports of him harassing visitors since then. I need to call the person at USF&WS regarding a bat-exclusion device for the cave. E-mail doesn’t seem effective.

Plans: I plan to put up additional signage to discourage cavers from going on our neighbor’s property before May 1, 2023.

Salamander (Cara Gentry)

Progress: The last visit to Salamander Cave was on August 11th. I took a couple of interested friends into the cave and did an inspection.

Issues: There is still graffiti in the back but nothing obviously new.

Plans: Need plans or photos of an approved free standing changing area and kiosk combo unit. Steve McLuckie is willing to build it for us, but we need approved plans as his initial ideas were not approved.

Sellecks (Erik Nieman, Tony Vasile)

Progress: Old kiosk has been removed. New sign-in cabinet installed.

Issues: New informational poster needed. New display cabinet needed.

Plans: Design and print new poster. Build and install new display cabinet

Spider (Adriane Hectus)

Progress: The preserve was most recently visited on November 14, 2022 by Adriane Hectus. No issues/changes to report.

Issues: During the July visit it was discovered that a hunting stand and trail camera had been installed at the top of the escarpment. The equipment is situated on NCC property. On November 14, 2022 Adriane spoke with previous landowner, [REDACTED], who also owns the surrounding parcels of land. She has given permission for a neighbor to hunt in the wooded area of her property. As the hunting stand is just on the NCC side of the property line and faces her property, there are no concerns of encroachment, and it is believed there is no further action required in this matter. Email has been sent to Jacob Morris-Siegel and Mitch Berger to close the Terrafirma form.

Plans: Clearing of fallen trees from the stream way, trash collection along route 146 and replacement of missing/fallen boundary markers hold priority for spring 2023.

Other Committees under the President

Acquisitions (Chuck Porter, Bob Simmons)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Nominating (Norm Berg)

The request for candidates for positions of Vice President and Treasurer resulted in these submissions: Vice President: Thom Engel, currently the NCC Vice President and Treasurer: Bill Folsom, currently the NCC Treasurer
The solicitation for Trustee candidates to be seated in June 2023 will begin in February 2023.

Risk Management (Mitch Berger)

Progress: Spider Preserve Manager identified where the deer stand came from, and does not believe it will be a problem. No other recent activity.

Issues: A deer stand was found at Knox during a recent site visit.

Plans: Follow up about the deer stand at Knox. Participate in annual risk management training (which makes us eligible for a discount with Terrafirma). Work on our 2023 Terrafirma application. Assemble the rest of the committee membership. Pick up other issues that were in-progress with the former ad-hoc committee.

Tory's Cave ad hoc (Bob Simmons)

Nothing new to report, hope to meet with NCLC over the winter to discuss possible limited visitation over the summer. Still looking for someone local in CT to take the lead on this initiative.

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

No updates for this meeting.

Governance ad hoc (Devon Hedges)

Nothing to report for this meeting.

Vermont Land Trust ad hoc (Ramon Armen)

No report for this meeting.

Communications ad hoc (Kevin Dumont)

Nothing new to report.

Native American Recognition ad hoc (Kevin Dumont)

Nothing new to report

Officer Succession ad hoc (Kevin Dumont)

Mitch has made preliminary contact with a person who has expressed interest and willingness to serve as a facilitator for a retreat of some kind in the spring of 2023 (tentatively).

Attachment B Vice President's Report

Bylaws Committee (Joe Levinson)

Two bylaws were initially read at the last meeting. The vote to approve or not will be of all NCC members present at the 12/4 meeting. The proposed changes are as follows:

A.) The Constitution and Bylaws of the Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. are amended as follows:

In Article VI (Officers), a new section is added which reads as follows:

6. Immediate Past Officers. The position of Immediate Past Officer (IPO) shall exist for each Officer enumerated in Section 1 (Titles) of this Article. The immediate previous holder of the Officer position in question is the only person eligible to hold the corresponding IPO position. The IPO, if appointed, shall serve in a confidential advisory role to the newly elected Officer and shall have no additional power, responsibilities, or votes. The IPO shall only be appointed provided:

- a. The individual wishes to accept the position of IPO,
- b. The newly elected Officer accepts the individual as the IPO, and
- c. The individual is confirmed by a two thirds vote of the Trustees present at the annual meeting.

The IPO shall serve a one-year term, beginning concurrent with the start of the corresponding newly elected Officers term. Either the Officer or the IPO may discontinue the position without cause, provided each party informs the other and copies such notice to the Secretary.

B.) The second item came out of a review of whether an appointed proxy could be a sitting Board member. Larry Davis could not attend the meeting and so named Paul Rubin as his Proxy and Paul is already a Trustee. In researching whether or not this was allowable, it was discovered that while a Member can name a proxy to represent them at a meeting of the members, proxies for directors (in our case Trustees and Officers) are specifically not allowed (based on New York Non-Profit Law). Therefore we intend to make the following change:

The Constitution and Bylaws of the Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. are amended as follows:

In Article IX (Meetings), Section 6 (Proxies) is removed in its entirety.

Education (Thom Engel)

Shenendehowa Science and Health Discovery Night has been scheduled for Friday, April 21, 2023. (Just a "save-the-date" contact so far.)

Science Committee (Larry Davis & Paul Rubin)

We received the "Fat Bat" research proposal from a group at Bat Conservation International (BCI) to do research on the possibility of improving the health of the bat population at Knox Cave by improving foraging conditions ("fattening the bats") prior to hibernation with a goal of helping increase survival rates from White Nose Syndrome. The Knox Cave study would be part of a long-term, geographically diverse project that would involve work at many other caves. Knox would be the only one in our region. The study protocols would not require anyone to enter the cave; all work would be on the surface.

A preliminary proposal was received from Sarah Stankavich at BCI on 11 August 2022. The Science Coordinators responded to her on 18 August requesting that she reformat the proposal so that it conformed with NCC's research policies and procedures. A revised proposal was received from Ms. Stankavich on 23 August. After review by the science coordinators, it was forwarded to Morgan Ingalls, Mitchell Berger, Bob Simmons, and Jacob Morris-Siegel for review. All agreed that the proposal met our requirements and that we should move forward and grant a permit. The permit with copies sent to the Secretary, the Knox Property Manager, the Vice President, and the President, was issued on 30 August 2022.

While we have not heard directly from the investigators, we have heard from members of the EC that work is proceeding. There was no other Science Coordinator activity during the quarter, beyond this project.

Special Use (Thom Engel)

Budgets, Approved vs Actual, 2023 Proposed

	Approved FY21	Actual FY21	Approved FY22	Actual FY22 YTD	Proposed FY23
Ordinary Income/Expense					
Income					
Donations					
Auction Donations	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	1,816.72	2,000.00
Donations - Other	10,553.00	20,021.50	15,300.00	6,859.93	19,075.00
Total Donations	12,553.00	20,021.50	17,300.00	8,676.65	21,075.00
Grants		3,161.00	0.00	19,829.00	0.00
Interest Earned	25.00	4.43	10.00	9.29	10.00
Membership Income	2,700.00	2,910.00	2,583.00	3,935.00	3,000.00
NRO Income	0.00	0.00	0.00	8,988.63	0.00
Total Income	15,278.00	26,096.93	19,893.00	41,438.57	24,085.00
Expense					
Acquisitions	2,000.00	11,320.50	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00
Bank Charges	75.00	92.51	75.00	120.50	100.00
Donations-outgoing	200.00	0.00	200.00	5,000.00	200.00
Development					5,000.00
Dues	350.00	300.00	350.00	425.00	450.00
Education	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	50.00
Executive					
President	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
Secretary	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	50.00
Treasurer	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	50.00
VP	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	50.00
Total Executive	250.00	0.00	250.00	0.00	250.00
Fundraising			750.00	0.00	750.00
Grant Expense	0.00	3,000.00	0.00	1,150.00	0.00
Insurance	2,548.00	2,506.06	2,683.00	2,559.06	2,700.00
Legal Fees	1,000.00	1,472.20	1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00
Licenses & Permits	125.00	150.00	200.00	175.00	200.00

Meeting Expense	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	500.00
Meetings & Conferences	300.00	0.00	300.00	0.00	300.00
Membership Expenses	125.00	0.00	125.00	0.00	125.00
Miscellaneous	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
NRO expenses		500.00	0.00	3,838.04	0.00
Office Expense	100.00	76.00	100.00	62.00	100.00
Postage	100.00	7.79	100.00	0.00	100.00
Preserves-Administration			1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00
Preserves-Maintenance					
Bensons	200.00	156.48	100.00	0.00	100.00
Bentleys	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00	200.00
Clarksville	100.00	0.00	1,000.00	640.00	100.00
Ella Armstrong	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
Jack Packers					600.00
Knox	2,060.00	960.00	3,200.00	0.00	100.00
Merlins	100.00	0.00	400.00	0.00	400.00
Onesquethaw	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	50.00
Salamander	600.00	0.00	600.00	0.00	600.00
Sellecks	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
Spider	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
Traino	1,585.00	811.35	800.00	0.00	800.00
Total Preserves-Maintenance	5,195.00	1,927.83	6,650.00	640.00	3,250.00
Promotion	1,500.00	781.12	1,000.00	682.91	3,000.00
Publishing					
Mailings	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	50.00
Website	60.00	0.00	210.00	0.00	210.00
Total Publishing	110.00	0.00	260.00	0.00	260.00
Science	500.00	0.00	500.00	0.00	500.00
Sponsorships	250.00	750.00	800.00	0.00	850.00
Taxes on Properties	300.00	524.65	300.00	45.04	300.00
Total Expense	15,278.00	23,408.66	19,893.00	14,697.55	24,085.00
Net Ordinary Income	0.00	2,688.27	0.00	26,741.02	0.00

The 2021 tax forms were submitted to the IRS and the annual registration with the NY State Charities Bureau was completed before 11/15/22.

Barn Dance Subcommittee - Emily Davis & Mike Warner:

Plans: Try and do it again next year

Progress: We did it!

Very successful dance. A fantastic turnout and lots of help from the board, EC and long-time volunteers. The RPI students carrying all of the furniture back up to the barn after the dance made the clean up so easy.

Special thanks to:

Leslie for the work on the raffle and auctions

Christa for the shopping and prep and serving of food

Bob and Mitch for staying the evening and helping in many ways

Bill Folsom for making all the pre arrangements with the band and Amy and Russ.

Amy and Russ for continuing to allow us to use their facility.

And all those who donated to the raffle and auction

(did I forget anyone?)

Expenses

Band \$350.

Food \$129.

Total \$479.00

Income

Support check from Vince \$300.

Raffle \$271.

20 adults \$200

55 students \$275.

5 families (13 people) \$100.

Silent auction \$208.

\$1354.00

Profit this year is \$875.00

There is a chance we will get a donation from the Bank but it is still in the works.

Problems: The barn is getting too small

Fundraising Committee – Leslie Hatfield

Barn Dance - The Barn Dance, after a two-year break, was a great success. A special thank you to the Trustee and EC members, along with Emily, who were able to secure such great donations. Thanks to all Board members who assisted in the set-up and break-down of the event, as well as to Mike, Emily, Bill, and Christa for all they did to put together such a great event. Thank-you letters were sent to all raffle/door prize donors as well as a Thank You to the Kapplers for their generous, \$300 donation, as well as one to the Pokorny's for use of their Octagon Barn. **Profit - \$875.00**

Giving Tuesday - An email will be sent to active members, as well as those with lapsed memberships, with an appeal for donations for Giving Tuesday. The email will contain a link for donations as well as a brief summation of what the NCC does and why monetary support is an ongoing need. (Hopefully we will have some feedback on this initiative in time for the December meeting.)

Bank of Greene County Charitable Foundation Grant - grant, up to \$2500 (December application, monies awarded in 2023) -

The Grant Guidelines were provided to Engel and Simmons for consideration. Hatfield has the cover letter and related required information ready to submit once a purposal and amount are decided upon.

Year-End Appeal - Hatfield will work with Simmons to construct an **irresistible** email to be sent to active members with a briefly detailed summary of what has been happening within the NCC over the last 12 months, to justify an appeal for year-end donations to support the NCC's ongoing efforts to support our mission of "...conservation, study, management, and acquisition of caves and karst areas..."

Bender Family Foundation Grant - No change from September - \$5K to \$10K - The NCC should see if this would work for any upcoming projects. We should look into reaching out to the membership for matching donations to give a little more support to our application. Property managers should let me know if they have a major project coming up that would work for this grant. Note - we did apply last year for funding for trail work at Knox and did not make it past the first round. Other applications were more “compelling”.

- “The Bender Family Foundation was established in 1997 and works to foster, preserve and fund the arts, culture, education, history and environment of New York State’s Capital Region. Preference is given to projects in: (1) the city of Albany; and (2) the county of Albany; however, the area within a radius of no more than 30 miles measured from the site of the present New York State Capitol Building (State Street, Albany) will also be considered.”

Project Guest Book - A work in progress

Membership Committee – Leslie Hatfield:

As of 11/15/2022: Life 69, Family Life 9; Regular 78, Family Regular 10; Benefactor 15; Institutional 6

If someone renewed with an additional donation that bumped them to the Benefactor level, I updated their membership and the spreadsheet accordingly.

I think the NCC should look into getting advertising/membership recruitment space in some of the grotto newsletters, the Northeastern Caver, as well as the NSS. (Just starting to look into this and will update as I go along.)

Still working on alternate membership platforms (if that's the correct terminology) to remove the redundancy in manual data entry around renewals, renewal reminders, and “thank you for renewing” emails to membership.

Office Committee Report - Emily Davis & Mike Warner:

Status Quo

Publications – Christa Hay:

Problems: Lack of content

Progress: As of this report the newsletter has not gone as due date for articles is the 21st. Sent email blasts for bylaw changes and help needed for Gage cabin work weekends.

Publicity: Meeting with Emily before Board meeting to go over items she was checking out at a large vendors’ convention.

The EC has discussed the need for an updated brochure. They reached out to ask a member if they were able to help; they were not. I let the President and VP know I could start checking on costs but have not heard back. I will need to know numbers etc. to get a quote.

Technology Committee Report – Mike Chu:

Status quo. Fixed broken volunteer value submission form on website.

Volunteer Value Committee – Vince Kappler:

Progress: On July 1, 2022, the IRS increased the mileage rate for business travel from 58.5 cents to 62.5 cents per mile. Members who reported mileage in their VV reports after July 1 have been credited the new rate.

Year to date totals: 1,101.25 hours of volunteer work on NCC projects for a total value of \$31,080. This total includes the value of hours driving and miles driven calculated at the then prevailing IRS rate. Although volunteer hours have increased since Covid we appear to be below the overall annual average of VV. The spring 2023 report will have a table showing the extent at which members have supported the mission of the NCC over the years.

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

Problems: There was a problem with the online VV report form, but it was fixed quickly (thank you Mike C.) and a notice was sent (thank you Bill F.) to committee chairs advising the form was operational. There are no other issues at this time.

**Attachment D
Secretary’s Report**

EC Meeting Minutes

Called to order: 9:06am

Present: B. Simmons, M. Berger, B. Folsom, T. Engel, L. Hatfield, J. Morris-Siegel

1) NEBWG January 2023 sponsorship

Simmons reminds us that this was on our radar as something coming up that we've sponsored in the past, and Hatfield has just recently sent us information about this year's sponsorship levels. Typically, we've sponsored at the lowest level each year. We should have a motion on the December Board agenda to approve this. Simmons asks if we know who might want to make use of the complimentary registration, as some who regularly attend are funded by their organizations. Folsom suggests Hatfield. Berger wonders whether there's a publishing deadline they need to make to list the sponsors in programs. Engel asks to confirm that we have money set aside for this. Berger recalls Folsom telling us that \$800 is in the year's budget for sponsorships, though that doesn't tell us which things to spend it on, so the EC can't skip getting Board permission. Folsom, looking through our records, sees that last year we sponsored them for \$250, paid on December 13. This year, it looks like the lowest level is \$300. Simmons suggests that we might want to increase the sponsorship budget line by \$50 for next year. Folsom asks whether we formalize who gets the complimentary registration, and Simmons responds that we usually offer it at the December meeting.

2) Members Day & Gage Cabin Dedication

Simmons reminds us that it's set for July 15th, 2023, and that various NSS dignitaries are being invited to it. He asks whether the budget has a line item for it. Folsom tells us that it's recorded under the Promotion line item, and asks whether the inquiry is because we expect it to cost more than usual next year. Simmons doesn't think it will cost significantly more; there'll just be greater attendance, and thus more food.

3) Bylaws revisions

Simmons apologizes for having forgotten that he previously sent the to-be-proposed amendments to J. Levinson (Chair of the Bylaws Committee) for review, and had received a reply that didn't get passed along. He believes the questions and concerns raised by Levinson have been addressed and we're set to go with the proposals as they stood at the end of the last Board meeting without further alteration. Berger says that just leaves the remaining question of what to put in the membership announcement about this, as he's never put one of these out before – do we just provide the proposed text changes, the discussion/explanation given to the Board with the previous agenda, a more brief explanation, etc.? Simmons will rework the explanatory text, then Berger will send the announcement on to C. Hay.

4) Jack Packers lease renewal

Simmons put this here as a reminder that we only have the property leased one year at a time (for \$1/year). We'll have to look up the date and take care of the renewal formality.

5) Knox sinkhole trail restoration / Tahawus Trails

Berger notes that we're running out of time this year before frost/snow make a site assessment infeasible. Simmons hasn't been able to spend time considering this topic since the last Board meeting, but will try to get in touch with his contacts at Tahawus to arrange for them to come out here.

6) Surprise Cave stewardship agreement

This Volunteer Stewardship Agreement's renewal proposal is due in March. Simmons wants to get somebody back into the coordinator position to assist with the proposal and take over the project and run with it. He believes this program is renewed for 5-year periods.

7) Fat Bat research project

Berger reports that, though he hasn't heard from the researchers since they were given approval to install their equipment, he's seen it at the site. It's not where he imagined it'd be in or at the top of the sinkhole, and is instead off in the woods to the north of the trail a short while before it reaches the sinkhole. So, he imagines the study is proceeding. Simmons also heard of the equipment's presence via another channel.

8) March Board meeting location

Simmons recalls that Dumont was going to look into the Saugerties site we were at in March of 2020, but hasn't heard back from him yet. There was a brief moment of wondering whether going to that place would be bad luck, as it was the last in-person meeting many of us had before the pandemic shut everything down.

9) Budget

Folsom says he doesn't think there's a whole lot to say about it. He notes that Berger sent him a placeholder at Simmons's request to budget some funding for redoing our main brochure to bring it up to date, given how many new preserves we've acquired since it was

published. He asks whether the Promotions Director is on-board. Engel suggests that we shouldn't try to list every preserve on it, nor to keep that list up to date, though perhaps it should mention some of the better-known ones. Berger opines that from what he's seen of publicity materials for other groups, even if we weren't going to keep the preserve list printed and up-to-date in the brochure, it's usually worthwhile to give it a facelift every few years. Folsom asks what number we should put in the budget. Before deciding on that, Berger points out that if we're going to have publicity materials published, it's probably time to actually have the Planned Giving brochure printed on nice stock rather than the printer paper we've been using since it was designed; there's general agreement on that. Engel also thinks we might want to produce a brochure possibly called something like "You and Your Cave" for landowners. Folsom says he's going to guess that we should budget \$2k for Publications for this. A couple years ago, the budget was \$1k, and \$682 was spent (\$203 of it for Members Day, and the rest for the Barn Dance food and band). Morris-Siegel notes that Vista Print can produce 500 brochures for \$200. Folsom explains that part of the cost is for design effort – last time we had the brochure designed, we paid someone who'd done work for RLT, and the cost was significant enough that we had to issue them a 1099.

10) Membership (and renewals)

Berger had run into Drake at TAG Fall Cave-In, and passed along via e-mail the part of their conversation that had to do with her desires about the Membership Chair position. Hatfield sent an e-mail checking in with her, though we haven't heard back. Hatfield notes that, as Dumont explained at the last meeting, it's not really about the \$20 we get when someone renews so much as it's about tapping into the resources of our membership, so someone needs to be tackling this. She's willing to jump back in to do things like update the spreadsheet, remind people about expired memberships, etc. But she doesn't want to do this job and Fundraising Chair together permanently, and maintains that she's not the right person to be the face of membership – she thinks it should be someone who's both a caver (which she asserts she is not, despite some evidence to the contrary) and younger. Folsom asks whether she's heard back from [REDACTED], who'd been suggested at the last meeting. She hasn't, but will reach out again. Folsom suggests that instead of taking over the Chairship, Hatfield could ask to serve on the Committee. Berger worries that this might continue to leave her with uncertainty about which actions are okay to be taking as initiatives. So, Folsom asks whether someone should write back to Drake – perhaps Simmons. Hatfield believes that Drake doesn't want to abandon the commitment she made, so if someone else is ready and willing to take it on, we need to directly have that conversation. Simmons asks if we have thoughts on who might be a good person to pitch this to longer-term. Berger suggests [REDACTED] (this idea receives strong support). Folsom confirms that Hatfield would like him to send her the renewal info she's missed from the past couple of months. Simmons reminds us that getting the list up to date is especially important because there's going to be a vote open to all members (about the Bylaws amendments) at the December meeting. Berger points out that since this is a committee chair position, we'll need to advertise it, so we should get confirmation from Drake that she wants us to do so. Simmons doesn't think we want to rush it, and that perhaps we should appoint an interim Chair in December and advertise it for March. Hatfield isn't sure why we'd wait. Simmons had thought there was a requirement on the number of days a posting is made before an appointment. Berger explains that, unlike Bylaw amendments, the rules aren't specific about how long an advertisement for a vacant position needs to be out to the membership before an appointment is made, and we're expected to be reasonable about giving members a chance to see and consider it, and then fill it when someone seems right for the position.

11) Onesequethaw neighbor relation update

Engel had a discussion with our neighbor on-site about the letter he'd sent to us previously and the conversation he had with one of the Preserve's visitors, but hasn't heard from him since. [REDACTED]

! Engel plans to put up the trail sign he promised before the Preserve opens in the spring. [REDACTED]

12) Update on encroachment by Clarksville neighbor

Engel hasn't seen any sign of them for a long while. [REDACTED]

13) Update on deer stand at Spider

We haven't heard any updates from the Preserve Manager on this.

14) Clarksville restaurant update

Engel thinks they're getting close to opening – they've been there almost every day gutting and rebuilding (there's new drywall, etc.). When Engel talked with the new owner, he got the suggestion that they might open sometime in November. He also had a chance to meet the owner's son and wife, and suggested that if they were interested in a trip into the cave, arrangements could be made for that. Berger also mentions that he had a chance to patronize Maple on the Lake (same owner) between the last Board meeting and the Barn Dance, and is now disappointed that they'll only mostly be doing take-out sandwiches and such in Clarksville.

15) NCC swag

Berger is rather frustrated at how long we've been making efforts to replenish and expand our collection of swag, having not been able to pull it off for several events we'd have liked to be able to sell or give out items this year (dating back to July for Members Day, as well as OTR and NRO), and we just learned before the Office folks left for the Gatlinburg souvenir trade show that the simplified logo file we'd understood was being worked on for embroidery on caps in fact had not been worked on. He's been surprised at the assortment of swag items others have on offer at major events (including some of the smaller conservancies), and thinks that we're missing out on opportunities both by not having free hand-out items for our booths at conferences/events, and by not doing things like producing an array of shirts (e.g. for each of the preserves, as the NSS does). It seems like we spin our wheels trying to get a shirt and a cap produced. He's fairly sure that over time, those things would sell, and that it's unsurprising that if someone has a shirt, they don't buy more of the same shirt when we bring them to things like NRO, but that if we had several to choose from, and occasionally new designs, many people would pick one up at each event. Simmons notes that part of the problem is that we were paying way too much for stuff, and sometimes selling them for less than it cost to have them made. There are two reasons, he says, to have swag items: one is advertising and getting our name out, and the other is to make some extra change. Davis and Warner go to the trade show in Gatlinburg, where they can walk around with ideas and images of whatever we want to different vendors and ask questions. Hay is on-board with them doing that. Swag isn't just t-shirts; we're also looking at things like beer mugs, car stickers, etc. that can be produced inexpensively. He agrees it's been frustrating, but thinks we're finally getting into a position where we have a good strategy. Folsom explains that the original logo images exist in about four different format files, he has them, as does Hay, and he believes Simmons does as well. Hatfield has some thoughts to share, but thinks we should make this a CotW topic at the next meeting.

16) Brochure update

Simmons has and wants some good ideas about a better quality brochure, and is wondering who can run with this. Folsom isn't entirely certain who all the people involved last time were, but recalls that it was a less than collaborative process where a lot of feedback wasn't taken. Berger also recalls pointing out a handful of issues, and that they mostly ended up in the printed product anyhow. Engel inquires why Hay was in charge of it last time, and Folsom explains that the brochure falls under Publicity and Promotion. Folsom notes that Nieman did web publishing, is a photographer, and is also a detail person who may be able to help. Engel points out that having someone else do it will leave the problem of conveying that news to Hay. Folsom suggests that Nieman could be the designer, and points out that last time, Hay hired a designer (and we paid them a significant amount). Hatfield suggests forming a committee with the two of them on it. Simmons recaps that we're thinking about having an updated regular brochure along with turning the Planned Giving handout into an actual brochure, as well as producing a generic handout for landowners. Folsom thinks there may be efficiencies if we work on them at the same time (shared templates, pool of photos, etc.). He inquires who will ask/tell potentially involved folks. Engel asks whose department this falls under. As Publicity is one of the Treasurer's committees, Folsom e-mailed all during the meeting to start the discussions.

17) Alternative energy developer contact

Simmons was contacted by a company that's looking for places to work on alternative power projects (e.g. wind, solar, storage). They're mostly looking at an area north of the karst in our area (above I-88 and US20, basically from Sharon west to Jordanville), though there is a little bit of overlap with karst. They're in the early planning stages and wanted someone to give them insight about where the karst areas are so that they could plan appropriately. Engel gave them a map with general karst areas highlighted, but not specific locations of caves.

18) Guide for landowners

Hatfield reports that rather than reinventing the wheel, she realized we could look at what other land trusts have done in this space. She hasn't put anything together formally so far, and is mostly just looking around on the internet. Simmons says that this is something that he and Porter have been talking about on the Acquisitions side, but with Hatfield having just gone through the process from the landowner side, they very much want to know what we got right and wrong. It seems that things like guidance about navigating tax deductions, etc. would be helpful. Engel would like to see us produce something we can give to landowners who aren't necessarily going to give or sell their caves to us, but which can speak to why they shouldn't be worried about people going under their property. Hatfield notes that long ago, Engel had given her a copy of the old legal opinion we used to have on our website. Berger thinks that that opinion probably isn't what we should be putting out anymore, since it's quite old and has been superseded in advice we're operating with, through the comprehensive legal exposure studies we had done a handful of years back (which the Board decided to keep confidential). Morris-Siegel says that he thinks Hatfield has it more or less covered, but that he can check with the local land trust near him for materials they may have. Berger had originally thought this was going to be the same "product" as the "You and Your Cave" brochure mentioned earlier, but that if the guide for landowners is going to delve into tax deduction advice, etc., that's probably not a brochure. Yet he thinks that the sort of thing Engel just mentioned might well be one, and that brochure could do things like outlining the array of ways the NCC could help someone with their cave, from donation to purchase to leasing to managing to surveying etc., etc., and could do things like highlight our partnerships with Thacher and the DEC. So, it sounds like we have two potential publications we want to work on for landowners. Simmons thinks the guide might also cut down on misconceptions. For example, he's encountered cases where someone is interested in subdividing a karst property that's still under a mortgage with terms precluding subdivision.

19) Certificate of Merit Awards for 2023

Hatfield has been behind on fundraising stuff, but keeping an eye on grants that are coming up. The Mtn Dew grant isn't in play this year. She recalls that Engel had an interest in the Bank of Greene County grant, so she could send info on that. She's in the process of coming up with a timeline for Project Guestbook so that we have some manufactured deadlines to adhere to. She's getting notecards printed to send thank-you notes to large donors. Simmons reports that for this round of LTA grants, we don't have any acquisitions that we can put in for reimbursement for, though he's looking at grants that would help fund a part-time Executive Director, though for that we'd have to have a real concrete proposal, so this would have to wait for next year. The deadlines are usually around the second week of December. He also notes that we could possibly get 75% of matching costs for something like the Knox trail, especially if it's ADA-compliant, from an LTA grant. Hatfield recalls that at one point, we'd talked about trying to redo the website, and wonders if we might want to apply for a Bender Family Foundation Grant to get that done rather than relying on our volunteers doing other web stuff for us. Those are available within a 30 mile radius of downtown Albany... our "Office" is approximately 28 miles away.

29) Project Guestbook

Berger reports that, sadly, for the same reasons as so many other things on our topic list, nothing's happened on this lately.

30) Barn Dance recap

Simmons reports that it was a good time, people had lots of fun, and there was a large crowd – almost too large because of the influx of RPI students! Their other major event (Fall Lake George) that shares the same band and caller seems to have fallen through this year. We made a small bit of money on the event. There weren't any issues of note, save for one person who showed up extremely early with kids and was wondering how the kids would be fed. Hatfield notes that without RPI, we'd have had very low attendance. Folsom asks whether people felt it was good having the meeting the same day as the dance. Simmons thinks it worked well, and was nice not to have to sleep over. He also thought it was more relaxing to not have to do teardown from the dance when tired in the dark and then immediately have to work on setting up for the Board meeting. Berger agrees with those sentiments, though he notes that we need to work on acquiring proper telepresence equipment, as the VoIP setup he cobbled together by borrowing equipment from work was functional, but may not always be available and certainly caused a bit of difficulty because folks couldn't really see our remote participants. Folsom asks if we should put it in the budget for next year. Berger thinks that would be great, though we need to work out which items to buy and wouldn't want to spend a bunch of money on a setup we don't like.

31) NYS unique geological features and NYS geological travel map update

Engel hasn't heard anything new on this topic.

32) Check in on Science Policy updates

Engel reports that there's nothing new, and that the Science Committee says they're happy with the policy as it currently stands. Berger is quite confused by this, as it had been insisted when the Board approved the current edition of the policy that it was with the understanding that we'd be making major updates to it at the following meeting.

33) E-mail newsletter

Engel asks if there's a schedule when the regular newsletters come out. Simmons responds, "yes and no," and explains that though there aren't fixed dates, it generally comes out shortly before each Board meeting. Engel supposes that the ideal schedule for an e-mail newsletter would be halfway between each traditional one. Folsom is skeptical that there's a point to worrying about that, since we barely manage to have enough content to send out a traditional newsletter sometimes (and, in fact, some have been skipped for that reason). Engel is mostly just worried about stepping on any toes. Simmons thinks this just requires a small bit of coordination, and that maybe it should come out around a month after a Board meeting. Folsom reminds Engel that he's offered to connect him with [REDACTED].

34) Conservancy Communications ad-hoc Committee update

Simmons had heard nothing new on this topic.

35) Vermont Land Trust Memorandum of Understanding

Simmons needs to follow up with Armen.

36) Website modernization

Berger reports that that committee also hasn't met.

37) Board Manual updates

Berger has started looking at what needs to be done here, but has been drowned lately. Engel asks if, when it's finally updated, we really want it on the webpage. Berger reminds us that we've decided that if it's going to be the comprehensive current resource containing all our policies and Acts, it can't be on the public webpage, though if we had a restricted section of the website, it could perhaps be there. He also reminds us that a document sharing/organizing system is one of those things we really ought to let the Technology Committee know we'd like, as they're unlikely to work on getting us anything that we don't tell them we're looking for.

38) Acquisitions

[REDACTED]



39) Report scheduling

First reminder e-mail to committees Monday, November 7th

Reports due to officers Monday, November 21st

Officer attachments due to the Secretary Monday, November 28th

End: 12:53pm