

Minutes

June 3, 2023 10:00 AM

Chu Residence, and Online via Videoconference

Meeting called to order at 10:19am

1. Introduction and greetings – Robert Simmons
2. Attendance
Officers: R. Simmons, T. Engel, B. Folsom
Trustees: M. Ingalls, K. Dumont, J. Morris-Siegel, P. Rubin, L. Hatfield
3. Absent: M. Berger, R. Armen, D. Hedges, R. Drake, L. Davis
4. Nominating Committee Report on Trustee Elections (N. Berg)
See Attachment E
5. Simmons moves to thank Riley Drake for her service to the NCC.
Second by Morris-Siegel
For: Rest
Abstain: Engel, Hatfield
[Riley Drake has the NCC's thanks for her years of service on the Board.]
6. New Trustees are seated
Welcome back to Erik Nieman
7. Officers' Reports
President: Attachment A
Vice President: Attachment B
Treasurer: Attachment C
Secretary: Attachment D
8. Simmons moves to open the Committee of the Whole (CotW). The Vice President will preside. Items may be entered as new business.
Second by Hatfield
For: Rest
Against: Morris-Siegel, Engel
[The Committee of the Whole is opened]

Topics:

- 8.1. Clarksville Cave Preserve Management Plan review (Engel, Chu)
[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 Managers and Stewardship Coordinator, and an updated draft is included in the meeting materials. Approval will be voted on in Item 11.]
There were no substantive additional comments about the proposed plan modifications which were discussed by Engel.
- 8.2. Recap from Board Development and Executive Succession Planning session (Attendees)
[Most of the Board, along with N. Berg, participated in this day-long session facilitated by R. Knott, where we both found willing prospective successors for Simmons and Berger when they reach their term limits at the end of this year and engaged in a process to identify priorities, constituent groups, and plans to accomplish our goals. Those who attended will convey more about what happened and what we learned for the folks who were unable to join us, and we'll discuss next steps to continue the process.]
Dumont provided a detailed and succinct recap of the day-long intensive with Ray Knott of SCCi. Main takeaways were interim officer succession plans, looking at our core constituencies, and future planning. Discussions of how/when to continue the process were had. The consensus was to keep the issue as a regular topic for meetings, and set up the next go-around of internal discussions. Folsom noted that the setting up of the internal *Workplace* system had been accomplished, but not all of the Board was "on board" as of yet, and also that we haven't settled on how we go about adding non-Board members into groups.

8.3. NRO (Folsom)

[NRO is coming up next weekend, and we'd like to have a strong presence. This is the time to plan who'll be there, how we'll be staffing our booth and the auction, and what we'll be offering the community.]

Folsom notes that NRO is next weekend. He wants to know who else may be going and what logistical support is needed for the NCC presence and auction. Members who committed to attending included: Engel, Simmons, Berger, Folsom, Nieman, Hatfield, and Schultz.

8.4. Members Day and the NSS Gage Cabin Dedication (Simmons)

[This is coming up on July 15, and this meeting is our last major chance to make group plans together.]

The joint celebration is planned for July 15th. A call for volunteers to assist and Board members to be present, particularly for set-up and takedown is made by Hatfield who is creating a list to ensure sufficient staffing. The planned duration of the event is from 11:00 AM until 3:00 PM. Logistics for this year are made easier by access to the site and proximity to the food preparation facilities.

8.5. OTR (Simmons, for Berger)

[While OTR is a ways off, it will be well before the next Board meeting. The EC discussed this at our meeting last week. Berger plans to attend, and we'd like to have a presence there. He often ends up mostly being the sole representative, and while he can do that again, we get more exposure and the booth is open more when there are other NCC representatives (Board or otherwise). Some of the interactions that have happened at past OTRs have been very worthwhile. We're looking to figure out who else will go, and what we can offer in terms of a fundraising initiative at the event.]

Berger plans to attend, and he often ends up being the sole NCC representative. No one else on the Board was planning on attending OTR this year. Berger should be named NCC Representative to OTR this year (see later motion).

8.6. NCKMS (Simmons, for Berger)

[NCKMS is being hosted this year by SCCi in Chattanooga, TN from November 6-10. Unfortunately, both we and they seem to be behind in planning - their additional info isn't posted yet, and we don't have a delegation or planned talks and/or posters. Berger would like to attend and is happy to coordinate the delegation again, but needs to know who else is interested in attending (and how committed they are), and is looking for suggestions about what to present on. We have also sponsored the last two NCKMS conferences at a level that has gotten us booth space and a couple of complimentary registrations. At the EC meeting, the sense was that we'd like the Board to consider doing this again, though the sponsor levels aren't published yet.]

Berger indicated he would like to attend and is happy to coordinate the delegation again, but needs to know who else is interested in attending. Simmons indicated that he may attend if work and other issues allow, but would not be able to commit until very close to the event. Berger is also looking for suggestions about what to present. The NCC has sponsored the last two NCKMS conferences at a level that has gotten us booth space and a couple of complimentary registrations. However, the sponsor levels aren't published yet. (see motion)

8.7. Volunteer Value (Folsom)

[Kappler has noted that our Volunteer Value reporting has dropped off markedly, and he's hoping for the Board to help address that problem. Reporting our volunteer hours and mileage translates into a dollar figure of the value we've contributed to the NCC through non-financial effort, and aside from simply telling the world about how much our volunteers care about the organization and conservation in general, that dollar figure is able to be used to help us obtain grants. Many of us, including those who discussed the issue at the recent EC meeting, are guilty of failing to report the work we do to be included in that calculation. This is an opportunity to discuss what may be causing us not to report our hours and how to help get everyone to do so.]

Kappler has informed us that our Volunteer Value reporting has dropped off markedly, and he's hoping the Board can help address that problem. Reporting our volunteer hours and mileage translates into a dollar figure of the value we've contributed to the NCC through non-financial effort. That dollar figure is able to be used to help us obtain grants. Many of us, including those who discussed the issue at the recent EC meeting, are guilty of failing to report the work we do to be included in that calculation. Those present expressed a willingness to revisit their own VV and report to Kappler. Folsom reiterates that such reporting is best handled via email at this time, per Kappler.

8.8. NSS Convention (Simmons, for Berger)

[Convention is later this month, and several members are expected to attend. We'll discuss plans for representation and visibility here, and designate representatives in Item 15 below. Berger notes that he'll be there and is staff at the Convention and is happy to represent us at the Roundtable. However, since he's assisting with the pre-camp at WVACS, he'll be departing over a week early, so if there's anything for us to bring that won't be going with Speleobooks, there will be a very narrow window to get items to him after NRO and before he leaves.]

The NSS Convention is later this month, and several members are planning on attending. Berger notes that he will be leaving for pre-Convention field camp a week prior to the Convention and needs assistance with logistics. We will coordinate with Speleobooks to transport the small display. Berger will attend the Conservancies Roundtable on behalf of the NCC.

8.9. Website Updates (Hatfield)

We discussed the website issues and related items (members database, Project Guestbook, etc.) as they relate to the current “static” nature of our web presence. It was noted that J. Schultz (Membership Chair) has potential input on this from his position and his work experience. The possibility of looking for grants to fund a professional reconstruction of the site was discussed. As many of the principals for this discussion were not present at the meeting, discussion was limited.

8.10. Northeastern Caver Deadline (Ingalls, Dunham)

As a point of information, the Board was advised that the next issue of the Caver was nearing completion and if any issues, information, announcements, etc. were to be included from the NCC, they should be submitted that day to make the next issue.

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

Second by Morris-Siegel

For: All

[The Committee of the Whole is closed]

Old Business

[None]

New Business

10. Engel moves: The minutes of the March 4, 2023 Board Meeting are approved.

[Simmons and Armen took minutes at this meeting.]

Second by Dumont

For: All

[The minutes of the March 4, 2023 Board Meeting are approved]

11. Engel moves: The revisions to the Clarksville Cave Preserve Management Plan, as amended during Committee of the Whole, are approved.

[The proposed revisions will have been discussed in Item 8.1 during Committee of the Whole.]

Second by Hatfield

For: Rest

Against: Rubin

[The revised Clarksville Cave Preserve Management Plan is approved]

12. Simmons moves: The NCC will sponsor the 2023 NCKMS conference at a level that entitles us to booth space and one or two complimentary registrations, provided the cost is no more than \$600.

[We sponsored at the “silver” level which came with a booth and two registrations for \$500 in 2021.]

Second by Engel

For: All

[The NCC will sponsor NCKMS 2023 at a level up to \$600 that includes booth space and complimentary registration(s)]

13. Simmons moves: Josh Schultz is appointed as Membership Chair.

[See discussion of the results of our search for a candidate for this position in the President’s Report in Attachment A.]

Second by Folsom

For: All

[Josh Schultz is appointed Membership Chair]

14. Simmons moves: Chuck Porter is thanked for his long-term service and dedication to the Conservancy as Acquisitions Chair.

[Porter is stepping down after many years in this position; see discussion in the Acquisitions Committee Report in Attachment A.]

Second by Engel

For: All (plus M. Chu)

[Chuck Porter has the NCC’s gratitude for his many years of dedicated service as Acquisitions Chair]

15. Simmons moves: Berger is appointed to represent the NCC at the 2023 NSS Convention.

[This will have been discussed in Item 8.8 during Committee of the Whole.]

Second by Hatfield

For: All

[Berger is appointed the NCC's representative at the 2023 NSS Convention]

Informational point: Next EC meeting will be Sunday, August 20, 2023 at 10AM at the Folsom residence in Kerhonkson, NY or 9AM if entirely via videoconference.

Informational point: the Fall Board meeting will be Saturday, September 23, 2023 at 10AM at the Knox Octagon Barn or 9AM if entirely via videoconference.

Informational point: the late Fall EC meeting will be Saturday, October 28, 2023 at 10AM at a location to-be-determined (Engel will investigate possibilities) or 9AM if entirely via videoconference.

16. Simmons moves: The NCC Winter meeting will be Sunday, December 3, 2023 at 10AM at Speleobooks in Schoharie, NY or 9AM if entirely via videoconference.

Second by Folsom

For: All

[The NCC Winter meeting will be Sunday, December 3, 2023 at 10AM at Speleobooks or 9AM if entirely via videoconference.]

17. Simmons moves: The NCC thanks Mike and Cristina Chu for hosting for this meeting.

Second by Folsom

For: All

[Mike and Cristina Chu have the NCC's thanks for hosting this meeting]

18. Simmons moves: The Board shall enter Executive Session to discuss acquisitions and any other sensitive topics, and to approve recipients of this year's NCC Certificate of Merit awards as recommended by the Executive Committee.

[Each year, the Executive Committee is tasked with recommending recipients of the Certificate of Merit award to be presented at the Members Day event. The Board must approve the recipients, and as the announcement of winners is intended to be a surprise at the event, this discussion and approval needs to occur in Executive Session.]

Second by Engel

For: All

[The Board enters Executive Session, then exits Executive Session at 2:45pm]

19. Engel moves to adjourn.

Second by Ingalls

For: All

[The meeting is adjourned]

Meeting adjourned at 2:48pm

Attachment A President's Report

General

1. I'm beyond happy with the progress made on transition of leadership and forward looking momentum coming out of our meeting with Ray Knott. Thanks to all who participated, to Kevin for getting it up and running and special thanks to Norm Berg for hosting Ray and providing transport while he was in town! As noted by Dumont, with the upcoming changes in the leadership, there will be a shifting of roles that needs to be considered in addition to just the two officer positions.
2. I am continuing work on the proposed Conservation Easement for the site in Connecticut. Hope to have that to the Board for consideration by the the September meeting.
3. I want to thank (and introduce) Josh Schultz as a candidate for the Membership Chair position. (See motion later in the agenda.)
4. I have resubmitted our Volunteer Stewardship Agreement with the NYS DEC for Surprise Cave. I have discussed this with the DEC Representative, and he indicates he has everything he needs to process (though date given). On a related note, I have continued the dialogue with the cave owners. I would like to have someone more local to the cave take the lead on gate inspections, lock replacements, etc.
5. I walked a potential karst area in CT with the owner and Ramon. There are some potential dig possibilities that we will try to organize a crew to take a look at later this year.
6. I attended the Connecticut Land Conservation Council conference on March 25, 2023 in Middletown, CT but was unable to attend the New York Land Conservation conference May 10 & 11 in Saratoga Springs, NY.
7. Members appreciation day has been scheduled for July 15, 2023 to be held concurrently with the opening ceremony for the new Gage cabin. There will be events and caving all weekend and it looks like we will have a number of NSS officials present with whom we can interact. Please save the date and plan to attend if at all possible. I'd like to have a significant NCC presence at this event.

Management Plan Reviews and Schedule

The Clarksville MP is up for review. The management team has taken Board comments and is proposing a few changes to the existing MP at this time. The plan review schedule as presently laid out is provided in the table below.

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

Cave Preserve Reports

Alan Traino (Devon Hedges)

Progress: None.

Problems: Parking area needs excavation, weed-blocking landscape fabric, and gravel.

Plans: Work with excavation contractors now that spring soft ground conditions are not a barrier to work.

Bensons (Luke Mazza)

Progress: Property inspection and maintenance on May 13th. Right of way was mowed and removed half of an apple tree that had fallen across the trail. Also sectioned up and removed a few trees that had fallen across the walk-in entrance area. 3 permits have already been issued for this year.

Issues: Brush is starting to encroach on the right of way and will need to be cleared at some point. This is something that should be done this year or in 2024.

Plans: No future plans as of this time report received.

Bentleys (Devon Hedges, Jonah Spivak)

Progress: None, Bat count conducted 3/23, finding 28 bats including 1 unidentified species.

Problems: Poorly drained areas along the trail provide unnecessary obstacles; driveway gravel gets washed out, making the approach unsafe.

Plans: Re-establish water bar drainage above poorly drained areas.

Clarksville (Thom Engel, Mike Chu, Chuck Porter)

Progress: The DEC restricted area signs on the changing area and the kiosk have been taken down. The CAVE CLOSED sign has been taken down. A May 6 trip reported 7 bats: one in Thook, one in the Ward-Gregory connection area, and 5 in the Slickenside Block Room. This info was passed on to DEC staff. A cleanup was done on 5/20. Much of the in-cave graffiti was removed. No garbage was reported. A dead tree by the parking area was cut down and removed. The parking area was weed-whacked. Eight volunteers attended.

Issues: There has been considerable visitation to the cave despite the cave closed signs and the DEC signs. There is some graffiti remaining in the Ward sink. More extreme measures may be needed to remove it.

Plans: None at this time.

Ella Armstrong (Erik Nieman)

Progress: Half of the 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: A bat count was conducted in the cave on February 26, 2023, resulting in the observation of several bats. As a result, the cave will remain on our list of those closed for the winter and available for visitation from May 1 to September 30.

Issues: The preserve is still missing from our website. This should be easy to remedy as all the necessary documents and information have been assembled and passed along.

Plans: A kiosk similar to the one present at Onesquethaw will be installed close to the trailhead, to be constructed during the summer of 2023. The landowner has also let us know that he has a large amount of wood chips that can be used as mulch for trail improvement as well as vehicles (four-wheelers) to help deliver it to the site.

Knox (Mitch Berger)

Progress: Hatfield's efforts to collect pledges for the trail restoration project have been fairly successful, and we're well on our way to reaching the point where if we obtain the Bender Family Foundation Grant, the project would be fully funded. We've been invited to apply for the final round of the Bender Family Foundation Grant, and are gathering information (the application is due next week). The equipment for the "Fat Bat" research project has been installed again for the Spring bat emergence data collection. Discussed some desired uses of the cave for the Caving Academy course that will be underway at the time of the meeting with M. Dickey, and researched some historical questions for him with Engel. Preserve checkup happened on May 28 and trail maintenance was done on the main trail that day. 10 regular permits have been issued for the season so far (2 of which subsequently had their trips cancelled).

Issues: We haven't secured the major grant for the trail restoration project yet, and don't have quite enough pledges to fill in the gap to fund the project if we do get the grant. The research equipment was removed at the end of last season and installed at the beginning of this season without the knowledge of the Preserve Manager - in other words, the researchers have not been requesting permits and scheduling their visits properly. Upon arriving to conduct trail maintenance on May 28, Berger found that the trail had been completely cut off by a cluster of trees that had fallen over with their upper sections fully blocking the path. The only apparent way to reach the cave would've been to cross our neighbor's land to get around the blockage. Despite this, none of the groups that had visited in the first two weeks the cave was open mentioned any issues to the manager. (The upper parts of the fallen trees were cut up and dragged away.). There's been an odd pattern of permit requests we've had to deny when the cave was closed: 1 requesting a date in March, and 2 requesting dates in the first half of May. Of the May ones, one was a person from a grotto that should know better requesting a permit for a different person to lead a trip, and the other was someone asking for a permit for two continuous weeks to lead an unknown number of trips. We never managed to connect with our neighbor and determine whether the tree stand spotted by Simmons and Berger last winter was his. The Great Divide rope is still there. Engel and Berger need to investigate poison parsnip plants present on the preserve. Most of the "No Hunting" signs still need replacement.

Plans: Continue to assist Hatfield with information for fundraising efforts, and to talk up the project when given the opportunity. Contact the "Fat Bat" researchers about acquiring permits to visit the property. Periodic property inspections. Keep tabs on the status of the surrounding land. 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 graffiti. Replace "No Hunting" signs.

Merlins (Morgan Ingalls, Ramon Armen)

Progress: None. I don't believe the preserve has been visited since the last report. There was one trip planned for 5/20, but I have not heard how it went.

Issues: Trail markers and boundary markers are still needed for remarking the trail and boundary. We're still looking for an extension for the Dome 12 culvert.

Plans: A work day (with chainsaw) is needed to clear the trail to the cave, which still has many large trees down across it. Additionally, the culvert into Dome 12 will need to be dug out after slumping in over the winter.

Onesquethaw (Thom Engel, Christa Hay)

Progress: The DEC restricted area sign has been taken down. Seven permits have already been issued this season.

Issues: Nothing to report.

Plans: I plan to mark and weed whack a trail across the field from the parking area to the current trail.

Salamander (Cara Gentry)

See attached report in Landscape format.

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 May 16, 2023 by Adriane Hectus. No major issues/changes to report. Trash cleanup is done along the roadway and in the brush where visitors would walk to reach the cave from the parking area. Branches/debris from water flow cleared from walking path.

Issues: Fallen tree in the woods above the cave has been cut with chainsaw to clear a path. This was not done by the preserve manager but likely by the individual that uses the tree stand (previously documented) for hunting. Tree had landed across an old farm road that runs through the back part of the property. It appears they may be using an ATV to access the stand via this route. This is not necessarily an issue but making note in the event any other "unauthorized" changes and/or resulting hazards are seen in future visits.

Plans: At least 4-5 missing/fallen boundary markers to be replaced in 2023.

Other Committees under the President

Acquisitions (Chuck Porter, Bob Simmons)

Chuck Porter is stepping down as Acquisitions Chair effective pending the Board finding/naming a replacement. The position will be advertised with the hope of filling the slot in an expeditious manner.

Acquisitions activities have been modest, all active projects are stalled or unlikely. A few ongoing projects are as follows; overall progress is summarized in the acquisitions table provided under separate cover.

The conservation easement process for the [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] continues to move ahead. I have received comments on the draft easement and continue cordial relations with the owners who are very much in favor of our easement. Hoping to have a negotiated final product before the September meeting in 2023 for Board approval.

Nothing new with [REDACTED], just continuing friendly conversations, mostly about their upcoming barn project.

I have not heard anything back on [REDACTED].

I have continued a dialogue with the owners of [REDACTED] and will be sitting down with them later this Spring to see if we can work something out with respect to their lands and the majority of the cave which lies underneath.

Ramon and I walked the property in [REDACTED] on Sunday May 28th, to get a better sense of what might be the best approach to evaluate the potential for caves. We decided that we should try preliminary digs at the two most promising sinks as we can get that scheduled. Simmons will also seek permission to sample the two area springs for water chemistry to better assess the flow system.

Nominating Committee (Norm Berg)

See attached Nominating Committee Report of elections.

Risk Management (Mitch Berger)

Progress: Received confirmation that all paperwork and payment for our 2023 Terrafirma policy is in order. Also received renewal policies for our General Liability, Directors & Officers, and Volunteer Accident Insurance plans, which all roll over later this month. Their premiums are in line with our budgeted amounts.

Issues: The EC learned this past week of some serious incursions at Salamander which will require filing placeholders with Terrafirma, and possibly pursuing further. As another year has rolled over, it's time for all Board members to file their annual Conflict of Interest disclosure forms.

Plans: Collect Conflict of Interest Disclosure forms from all Board members. Assemble the rest of the committee membership. Pick up other issues that were in-progress with the former ad-hoc committee. Address insurance needs if any of the pending acquisition or conservation easement projects move forward.

Tory's Cave ad hoc (Bob Simmons)

Nothing new to report.

Bat Hibernation

No updates for this meeting.

Governance (Devon Hedges)

Progress: Not under Governance accomplishments, but the Board conducted a strategic planning session with a facilitator for a full-day workshop.

Problems: Succession and development within Trustees and Executive Committee.

Plans: Coordinate with new Executive Committee candidates and current EC on developing those new roles.

Vermont Land Trust (Ramon Armen)

No report for this meeting.

Communications (Kevin Dumont)

During the one-day intensive with Ray Knott, Ray shared a short demo of Workplace, which is the communication platform used by SCCi. The product is owned by Meta and is best described as a private version of Facebook for nonprofits.

I am reasonably certain that we would qualify for the service at no monetary cost. The NCC should consider the possibility of making use of Workplace (or a similar platform) for most of our internal communications as a way to improve efficiency and clarity.

Native American Recognition (Kevin Dumont)

Nothing new to report.

Officer Succession (Kevin Dumont)

At the one-day intensive with Ray Knott, the people in attendance brainstormed, leading to viable candidates for President and Secretary being identified.

For Secretary, Ramon Armen has agreed to assume the role at the end of the year. For President, Leslie Hatfield and Kevin Dumont have agreed to shadow Bob and will decide which of them will agree to assume the role at the end of the year.

Of course, other candidates may present themselves in the meantime and all candidates are subject to approval by the Trustees through voting in December, but the consensus seemed to be a feeling of relief. The group also discussed the roles of Vice President and Treasurer, which will reach term limits at the end of 2024, with some possible candidates identified.

Attachment B Vice President's Report

Bylaws Committee (Joe Levinson)
Nothing to report.

Education (Thom Engel)
Nothing to report.

Science Committee (Larry Davis & Paul Rubin)

Fat Bat Research – Sarah Stankovich, project coordinator, reports that: “We started sampling [again] in late March. Our tech worked with Sam Hoff to get equipment set up and running. We’ll be wrapping up collection in the next two weeks and will be done until August. No changes to our protocol this season. Unfortunately I don’t have any data ready yet, but will share when I do!”

Speleothem Research – “The speleothem research project is proceeding well. Initial uranium thorium dating calibration is largely complete. This was conducted by correlating speleothem sample dates obtained via modern analytical equipment with numerous U/Th dates determined by Lauritzen and Mylroie (2000) for the same samples. These included samples from Schoharie Caverns, Caboose Cave, Barrack Zourie, Onesquethaw Cave, and flowstone samples collected from a Hollyhock Hollow sinkhole. The results of both dating methods closely agree, albeit Shakun’s date uncertainties are smaller stemming from improved modern techniques. Sample dates from initial sample analyses range from Holocene to near the limit of U/Th dating at 550 ka. One Clarksville Cave sample has been run to date, with a Holocene date. U/Th dates from the initial phase of this research project will be used to support a National Science Foundation proposal planned for October 2023 seeking funding for additional work.

“Numerous Clarksville Cave speleothem fragments will be dated as research proceeds. Also, requests will be forthcoming to NCC cave managers seeking approval to collect and sample speleothem fragments from other NCC caves. Information derived from the speleothem research will provide information on paleoclimatic evolution over the time intervals represented.”

Special Use (Thom Engel)
We have 74 slots reserved. We have issued 13 permits and denied 2. Of the 74, 43 are for Clarksville.

Surprise Cave Committee (vacant)

Thacher Park (Thom Engel)

The permit has been renewed.

Bill Hein has moved on to another position in OPRHP. Carley Keiman is the current acting park manager. I met with her and verified that cave access rules developed with Bill will remain in Effect.

John Dunham et al have started remapping Wynd and Livingston Caves.

No one has come forth yet to volunteer to map or remap the following: Tory House, the small caves in the Becraft near Hop Field, Outlet falls cave, Yellow Rocks Cave & spring, Dynamite Hollow Cave, Forgotten Cave, Uhll Be Cold Cave, Daddy Longlegs Cave, Stal Cave, and Danny's Cave.

Cave Protection (Thom Engel)

No action. With redistricting I will be starting over, but not until 2024, when the district line will change again.

**Attachment C
Treasurer’s Report**



[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

*NSF Account total as of 3/31/23

2023 Budget: Approved vs Actual

	Approved	Actual
	FY23	FY23 YTD
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Donations		
Auction Donations	2,000.00	0.00
Donations - Other	19,075.00	8,758.58
Total Donations	<u>21,075.00</u>	<u>8,758.58</u>
Grants	0.00	0.00
Interest Earned	10.00	8.39
Membership Income	3,000.00	730.00
NRO Income	0.00	0.00
Total Income	<u>24,085.00</u>	<u>9,496.97</u>
Expense		
Acquisitions	2,000.00	0.00
Bank Charges	100.00	32.42
Donations-outgoing	200.00	0.00
Development	5,000.00	0.00
Dues	450.00	0.00
Education	50.00	0.00
Executive		
President	100.00	0.00
Secretary	50.00	0.00
Treasurer	50.00	0.00
VP	50.00	0.00
Total Executive	<u>250.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>

Fundraising	750.00	0.00
Grant Expense	0.00	0.00
Insurance	2,700.00	1,955.07
Legal Fees	1,500.00	0.00
Licenses & Permits	200.00	0.00
Meeting Expense	500.00	0.00
Meetings & Conferences	300.00	0.00
Membership Expenses	125.00	0.00
Miscellaneous	100.00	0.00
NRO expenses	0.00	0.00
Office Expense	100.00	489.00
Postage	100.00	0.00
Preserves-Administration	1,500.00	0.00
Preserves-Maintenance		
Bensons	100.00	0.00
Bentleys	200.00	0.00
Clarksville	100.00	0.00
Ella Armstrong	100.00	0.00
Jack Packers	600.00	0.00
Knox	100.00	0.00
Merlins	400.00	0.00
Onesquethaw	50.00	0.00
Salamander	600.00	0.00
Sellecks	100.00	0.00
Spider	100.00	0.00
Traino	800.00	0.00
Total Preserves-Maintenance	<u>3,250.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Promotion	3,000.00	526.56
Publishing		
Mailings	50.00	0.00
Website	210.00	0.00
Total Publishing	<u>260.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Science	500.00	0.00

Sponsorships	850.00	0.00
Taxes on Properties	300.00	40.82
Total Expense	<u>24,085.00</u>	<u>3,043.87</u>
Net Ordinary Income	<u>0.00</u>	<u>\$6,453.10</u>

Barn Dance Subcommittee - Emily Davis & Mike Warner:

Status Quo:

Plans: Have Bill check on dates for next year. The September dates are better as the weather is often better.

Progress: An additional \$50 donation from NBT bank for the 2022 dance brings the profit to \$925.

Problems: Should we continue with the crowded venue or try and find a new one? Hate to change the location.

Fundraising Committee – Leslie Hatfield

Bank of Greene County Grant

- We will be receiving \$100 toward the construction of the kiosk at Jack Packers
- Must provide a letter to the President of the Foundation on the manner in which grant funds were spent
- As far as I know, the money has not been disbursed

Knox Access Trail Appeal - money needed \$30K - \$40K

- Email appeals sent out to targeted group, to include EC/board (pledged \$3,900)
- Targeted group - pledges currently at \$11,600
 - Sending more emails - awaiting replies from others
- Target - \$21,000 by June 6th - Bender grant submission date

Community Impact Grant - Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region

- Notified that we were **NOT** chosen

Project Guestbook - Still a work in progress – creating a timeline - targeting our four most visited Preserves to start - this will allow us to work through any issues before expanding to all 12 preserves

12 Reasons to Join/Donate - 12 emails/posts highlighting a preserve a week.

- Goal - increase membership and donations
- This has not rolled out as planned - a work in progress

The Bender Family Foundation Grant - Knox Access Trail - Woohoo! We have made it to the second round! **Final submission date - Tuesday, June 6th**

- Letters of support - Asks have gone out to: Amy and Russ Pokorny, owners of the Octagon Barn; Dan McCoy, Albany County Executive; Chief Vinson, Knox Fire Department
- As of 5/25/2023 - matching donations/pledges = \$15,500
- Still reaching out to potential donors - would like \$21,000 in donations/pledges prior to final grant submission
- Completing Part II of the application.

Membership Committee – Leslie Hatfield:

Life - 66
 Family Life - 9
 Regular - 84
 Family Regular - 9
 Benefactor - 15
 Institutional - 7
 Total – 186

Additional:

- HELP with Grotto renewals: MET, NNJG, Boston - email??
- Attempting to reach out to previous institutional members for renewal
- – SUOC, Cornell, RPI, Camp Echo Lake

- Reaching out to longtime members whose membership expired in the last three years to encourage renewing their membership.
- Would like to eliminate family level
- Sustaining membership – let’s look into this
- In discussion with two members regarding taking on Membership Chair position – more later

SWAG Update

- Stickers - many thanks to Stacey Fonas for getting the bulk of the cost donated from Sticker Mule, Stacey picked up the balance.
- Expenses - I do not have all the \$ totals, nor which account expenditures will be coming from (membership, fundraising, community...) - more later
- Pricing - donation
 - Stickers - \$1
 - Patches - \$5
 - Short sleeved t-shirts - \$20, + \$2 xxl
 - Long sleeved t-shirts - \$22, + \$2 xxl
- Mugs have arrived

Office Committee Report - Emily Davis & Mike Warner:

Status Quo

Publications – Christa Hay:

Problems: Same as last report as I have not received response from Board.

Progress: Sent out email blasts as they are requested such as another for nominations.

Publicity: Working with Office Committee and Leslie to research and order items for NCC. I’m currently researching water bottles (Nalgene, stainless, etc) which have a big range of prices. We want good quality for active use. Once I finalize a few options, will provide cost to Board for making a decision if we actually want to get some or to at least have information for a possible next round of promotional items.

Technology Committee Report – Mike Chu:

Website remains as a static site for now. When Vince sent out the email to submit volunteer value hours, we realized that form was broken because of this. Norm Berg graciously volunteered to help make a new Google-based form and is actively working with Vince Kappler on this.

Volunteer Value Committee – Vince Kappler:

973-579-2116

volunteervalue@necaveconservancy.org

Progress:

Year to date totals: 137.5 hours of volunteer work for the NCC with a total value of \$6,168.00. This total includes the value of hours driving and miles driven calculated at the prevailing IRS rate of \$0.655 per mile.

Plans:

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

Problems:

There is a problem with the online VV report form. Although I only receive 1-2 reports via the website per cycle (the majority arriving via email), IT is working on a fix and it will hopefully be operational for the next reporting period. Folsom tells us that Kappler is requesting that VV reporting be done by e-mail due to the issues with the form on the webpage.

VV reporting by individual committees has significantly dropped off compared to previous years. I believe the Board should make a concerted effort to have committee chairs report the hours/miles they volunteer or reconsider the value of tracking the information. The increase in the number of preserves and complexity of the work volunteers do to support the organization is not being reflected in the data submitted.

**Attachment D
Secretary’s Report**

**EC Meeting Minutes
May 30, 2023, 6:30pm**

Online via Videoconference

Called to order: 6:45pm

Present: B. Simmons, R. Armen, M. Berger, L. Hatfield, B. Folsom, T. Engel (for the first half of the meeting)

1) LTA leadership transition series

This has come and gone, and sadly nobody was able to attend. Berger mentions that there's an upcoming LTA seminar on advanced legal topics that he'd have liked to attend, but it's on June 8 and 9, conflicting with the Caving Academy class he's taking and the start of NRO. He asks whether anyone else is interested and potentially able to attend. It doesn't really sound like it, though Hatfield is wondering what the hours for it are.

3) Jack Packers lease renewal?

Simmons tells us that the lease renewal has occurred.

4) Knox sinkhole trail restoration / Tahawus Trails

Hatfield tells us that the fundraising efforts continue, and that we're in the second round of the application process for the Bender Family Foundation Grant. The full application is due on June 6th, and she's in the process of filling out responses to the new questions. We'd like to reach \$21k in pledges from our fundraising appeal to add to the \$15k that the grant would provide if it were awarded to us. We were notified that we didn't receive the Community Impact Grant we applied for. Berger notes that any information needed from him for the grant application will need to be obtained in the next two days, as he'll then be unavailable until after the deadline due to the Caving Academy course.

5) Surprise Cave Volunteer Stewardship Agreement

Simmons has submitted the renewal application, but has yet to receive a new permit back. He also notes that we're still looking for someone to take on the day-to-day role of chairing this committee. He also needs to get back to [REDACTED] about the [REDACTED]

6) March Board meeting date

That meeting is over and done with.

7) Membership (and renewals)

We have a likely volunteer to take over the Membership Chair role: Josh Schultz. According to Hatfield, he'll be at NRO all day on Saturday to talk with us.

8) NCC swag

New swag cups, t-shirts, hats, stickers, etc. are in!

9) Brochure update

There was no update on this topic.

10) Guide for landowners

No progress as yet since the last meeting.

11) Executive Succession ad-hoc Committee update

Our one-day Intensive facilitated by R. Knott happened, and we have next steps to follow up. We also have willing prospective successor officers who are beginning to shadow.

12) Native American Acknowledgment ad-hoc Committee update

No update at this meeting.

13) Onesquethaw winter bat protection device

There hasn't been any news. Simmons asked Engel to reach out again, and he's agreed to do so.

14) Opportunity to collaborate with Secret Caverns

Engel took another note to try to produce a one-sheet for Mallory.

15) Preserve infrastructure buildouts

There are updates on this topic in the preserve reports to be presented at the meeting.

16) Salamander grand opening and website presence

The grand opening isn't scheduled yet. The last Armen heard was that Gentry was pulling stuff together for the webpage.

17) Jack Packers grand opening

This grand opening is also not scheduled yet. Armen says that he has everything he needs for the website, but that Dumont wanted us to wait to publish until the bats were no longer an issue.

Berger reminded us that we seem to be turning blue in the face discussing the fact that the webpages for the preserves mentioned in this and the previous item need to be up, and needed to be up eons ago. We've long since all agreed that it's not acceptable for us to not have a webpage published when we announce that we've acquired a preserve and put out a press release. Despite this, somehow the sentiment that the pages need to be live seems not to make it out of this meeting and into action. Armen isn't sure what to do about being told by the EC that the pages need to be up and then being told by the preserve managers to wait. Everyone agrees that the webmaster shouldn't be put in that position. Engel thinks we need to adjust the Acquisitions policies to make explicit that a webpage must be prepared before the acquisition closes, but Berger is of the belief that the reason this keeps failing to be executed on doesn't have to do with the policy failing to say it, although he agrees that it might as well say it. There is also a question of who's supposed to produce this page, and Berger points out that having sections of the page say "more information to come" in spaces where we don't have complete info ready is acceptable, whereas lacking a page is not. Hatfield reinforces that it's a fundraising problem as well for us to be making statements about the numbers of preserves and amount of acreage we conserve, and then for our webpage to suggest that we don't have all the things we claim to. The suggestion is made that the interim Preserve Manager(s) during the Acquisition process should be responsible for putting together a webpage. Simmons says that it'll be the Acquisitions Committee's responsibility to make sure it happens. As for the pages for the two preserves missing them right now, Berger asks whether they're going to be up before NRO such that people won't be able to embarrass us by asking where they are at the event in a week and a half.

18) Update on [redacted] acquisition of additional [redacted] property

There's no new movement here. However, [redacted]

On the topic of the [redacted]

19) Fundraising

We received \$100 from the Bank of Greene County for a kiosk at Jack Packers. We decided at the one-day Intensive that we're not ready to try to hire an Executive Director, and so we won't be pursuing an LTA grant to fund that position this year. The Bender Family Foundation Grant for the Knox access trail was discussed a bit earlier in the meeting. Hatfield tells us that there are no other active grant applications at the moment. She was thinking about re-running the Give and Gear Up raffle, but hasn't gotten information about it that she's sought from Drake yet. At the moment, she reports that we have \$15.5k in pledges for the matching portion of the Bender Family Foundation Grant.

20) Project Guestbook

Hatfield was thinking of starting with just a few of the most popular preserves to get us going. Signage requires having a link to print on the signs for each of the guestbooks. Simmons asks whether we can generate the links now, even though they'd be dead until the rest of the backend is implemented, in order to be able to move forward producing signage, and Armen confirms that we could do that. Clarksville and Knox end up having the greatest number of Special Use permits issued, so they seem like the best early targets for this program.

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

Nothing new has happened on this topic.

22) E-mail newsletter

Hatfield has been making regular posts, but we really still need a regular membership mailing. Engel had agreed to produce content for the first newsletter, and has taken another note.

23) End of year appeal

Simmons says it's going to happen.

24) Conservancy Communications ad-hoc Committee update

There's no news on this topic, though it was discussed during the one-day Intensive as a follow-up item. There's some discussion of that in Dumont's report.

[Engel was disconnected from the meeting at this time due to loss of connectivity at his home.]

25) Vermont Land Trust Memorandum of Understanding

[Redacted]

26) Website modernization

There's no update on this topic.

27) Board Manual updates

No news on this topic since the last meeting.

28) Acquisitions

[Redacted]

Porter has notified us that he is stepping down from his role as Acquisitions Chair, as he is no longer able to be an active caver and is concentrating his energies on trail maintenance on surface preserves.

29) Report scheduling

This already happened for the upcoming Board meeting.

30)

[Redacted]

31) Certificate of Merit Awards for 2023

The EC discussed candidates for this year's awards in executive session. A slate will be presented to the Board for approval at the June meeting.

32) Followup from the one-day intensive

R. Knott sent us some information with which to start the rest of the process, and we'll discuss it at the Board meeting.

33) Event page(s) for the joint Members Day and Gage Cabin Dedication

Folsom tells us that E. Davis has suggested that we have two event pages on Facebook - one for the NSS and one for the NCC. He doesn't know what to do with this request, since that's not a thing you can do with Facebook. We're going to have one event page. Folsom inquires whether we can share it with the NSS's community page. Simmons, speaking for the cave management group, says: yes.

34) Board elections

Ingalls, Rubin, and Nieman ran, and we've recently been made aware of the results.

35) Incursions at Salamander

Simmons showed us Gentry's preserve report in the format produced by Landscape. There's a bunch of excitement about what Landscape manages to capture and how it presents it. Important findings on her May 23 property inspection, however, reveal that there've been several significant incursions.

36) NCKMS

It's being hosted by SCCi in Chattanooga from November 6-10, though further information (about abstract deadlines, sponsorship levels, etc.) doesn't appear to be posted on their website or Facebook at this time. It seems a bit late for that, and late for us to be planning, though that seems to mean that we're in the same boat. The general feeling is that we should continue to show a strong presence there, which would involve sending a delegation, presenting on some topics, staffing a booth, and sponsoring at an appropriate level. Berger hopes to go and is happy to coordinate a delegation again, though he doesn't yet have a topic (and is looking for suggestions), and will need others to discuss the topic, recruit interest, take presentation suggestions, and try to get support for sponsorship at the meeting, as he won't be present.

37) OTR

It's coming up before the next Board meeting. Berger plans to go. Folsom reminds the group that he usually ends up having to represent us alone, deal with the tent, booth, etc. and that it would be much better for us (and easier for him) if others helped out. Some recruiting will be attempted at the Board meeting. Berger also notes that it would be nice to have some fundraise-y thing to offer at OTR to try to bring in a bit more money. The plan had been to launch Give and Gear Up in-person there two years ago, but then the event was cancelled. Since it sound like we're not doing that this year, he wonders what else we can do. He also notes that we brought the Give and Gear Up signage to our NCKMS booth, because it wasn't long after OTR. So, if we find something suitable, we could leverage a booth at two close-in-time events (one of which we pay a good deal to sponsor) to get visibility and participation. Hatfield asks whether a raffle for some specific piece of gear would be more popular and successful than a raffle where you might win one of a number of prizes. Berger suspects that the answer is different based on event attendees, and that such a thing would likely work better at OTR where there are lots of active cavers, including many who are young and not able to buy lots of expensive gear, whereas NCKMS is a conference with many academic and research folks, government staff, etc., most of whom are probably not looking to buy one specific piece of cave gear for their kit. Simmons agrees.

38) NRO

Folsom asks about our presence at NRO, as it's coming up in a bit over a week. He'd like to see more Board participation, and feels that this is a thing to make a big deal about on Saturday at the meeting. Simmons notes that since we're not hosting, the only other "event" we have to handle aside from having a presence is the auction. It's noted that D. Brass made two wooden plaques that could be given to the auction, but he thought they might be better as raffle prizes. Hatfield will be there. Folsom asks whether we're going to be sharing tent space with Speleobooks or having our own pop-up. Simmons hopes that we'll be using the pop-up. There's some brief discussion of the logistics of getting it there. It's currently at Speleobooks.

End: 9:46pm

Attachment E

Nominating Committee Report

This year there were three candidates running for the three open trustee positions. All received at least one vote, and will begin their three-year terms on June 3.

Votes received and candidate:

41 Erik Nieman

41 Morgan Ingalls

36 Paul Rubin

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

166 ballots were emailed, 43 voted, which is a return rate of 36%

The ballot had an optional question which asked to recommend future candidates. These are the submissions in random order: Cara Gentry, Bob Hyden, Bob Simmons, Mitch Berger, Daniel Peluso, Paul Woodell, Jeremy Weremeichik, Norm Berg, Adriane Hectus.

I have notified all candidates of the full results.

I'd like to bring your attention to a possible problem:

Under the system that's been in effect for many years, anyone who is a NCC member and sends in bio/platform prior to the deadline would be listed on the ballot. In a scenario where the number of candidates is equal to or less than the number of board openings (typically three), it would only take one vote for a candidate to be elected. There is currently, to my knowledge, no candidate vetting process. I plan to work with the board on this potential problem.