

NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY, INC

Minutes

October 29, 2023 9:00 AM

Online via Videoconference

Meeting called to order at 9:07am

1. Introduction and greetings – Robert Simmons

2. Attendance

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

Trustees: D. Hedges, M. Ingalls, K. Dumont, J. Morris-Siegel, E. Nieman, P. Rubin, L. Hatfield

3. Absent: L. Davis, R. Armen

4. Officer Reviews (D. Hedges)

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

[Note: Though we haven't heard plans to use this time, we traditionally schedule time at the September meeting for officer reviews so that these discussions can occur prior to officer elections in December. Also of note is that this year, the incumbent officers whose terms expire in December cannot stand for reelection, as they've both reached their term limit. This effort is driven by the Governance ad-hoc Committee.]

Hedges indicated that the Governance Committee was not prepared to conduct officer reviews at this time.

5. Officers' Reports

President: Attachment A

Vice President: Attachment B

Treasurer: Attachment C

Secretary: Attachment D

6. Simmons moves to open the Committee of the Whole (CotW). The Vice President will preside. Items may be entered as new business.

Second by Ingalls

For: Rest

Against: Engel, Morris-Siegel

[The Committee of the Whole is opened]

Topics:

6.1. Salamander Cave Preserve Management Plan review (Simmons)

[This is the periodic review of this preserve's management plan. A draft of the Management Plan with the proposed revisions is included in the meeting materials. Approval will be voted on in Item 9.]

Simmons notes that he's received written comments from Berger regarding the draft's rewording of the first paragraph of the Introduction. That rewording mainly was an attempt to clarify that even though there are two chunks of land in the Preserve separated by the railroad right-of-way, they were conveyed as a single parcel. Berger's comments noted that after the proposed edits, there were further inconsistencies about whether the pieces of land are referred to as parcels, and he provided suggested text to clean those up, which Simmons will need to work into the draft.

Rubin is concerned about the discussion of digging projects in the Exploration Rules, and feels that we should do something to avoid the loss of historical records from sediments of interest as a result of digging. He proposes that we add this sentence: "Digging projects should be conditioned on detailed stratigraphic description and measurements with photographic documentation so that important geological information is preserved." Engel and Simmons believe that the language in that section is part of the "boilerplate" that's required to be consistent across our Management Plans and can't be edited piecemeal in a plan review. Berger did not recall that language being fixed, but upon searching, found that Act 21-93 does set the language required to be present in all Management Plans about digging projects (though it does not prescribe the rest of the Exploration Rules section, which does differ among the various preserves). So, we cannot adjust the digging rules as part of this Management Plan review, but will take up a motion to adjust the global wording of Act 21-93 in New Business.

Dumont cautions us that we should be careful about referring to "varves" in the Underground Resources section unless the things being referred to are actually alternating layers that correspond to yearly cycles of deposition; otherwise we should just refer to them as "clay deposits."

6.2. Publicity Policy for Management Plans (Simmons)

[Our current language regarding publicity as presented in our management plans is archaic and needs significant updating to reflect our current practice and acknowledge such things as the internet and social media, as well as what other organizations may include in their own publicity. The concept of keeping our preserve and caves secretive has long since flown the coop and this policy needs to reflect a modern understanding. This issue came up during the most recent review of the Salamander Preserve MP.]

Our present stock statement is:

“Regarding publicity about the cave itself, except as noted below, the cave is not to be publicized in magazines or newspapers of general circulation nor on radio or television. Cavers’ publications like The Northeastern Caver and the NSS News may contain information on the latest discoveries. Some grotto publications may also have information, but again these have limited circulation and usually do not give locations.”]

Simmons explains that interest in this topic came out of the recent regular review of the Salamander Cave Preserve Management Plan. He explains that it feels very “last century,” and its attempt at secrecy about cave locations may be self-defeating given what a 12-year-old can find by searching for the caves on the web, and, quite frankly, what various “adventure tourism” sites post. On the latter front, Hatfield forwarded the Board a link to a particular tourism company making its sales pitch on knowing where the caves are and being willing to take people to see them, unlike “them” (i.e. the caving community in general or the cave managers/owners in specific) who want to keep their locations secret. Berger notes [to various people’s amusement, given the previous Committee of the Whole topic] that the Publicity Policy language is actually not fixed boilerplate that’s required to be uniform across the plans, even though it does match across most of them. He suspects that this may be due to the early days of the Clarksville Preserve when the NCC sought volunteers from among its ranks to act as stewards greeting visitors at the Preserve, asking questions, and sharing information as part of a public relations campaign at the new “flagship” preserve; he looks to Engel for a more authoritative recollection of whether that explanation is accurate, but Engel isn’t sure it was intentional. Engel suggests that perhaps we should address this the same way we handle the Exploration Rules. That is, we could have some boilerplate language that appears in all the Management Plans following a customizable paragraph to serve the needs of each individual Preserve. Engel also feels that there’s value in avoiding stating the locations of the caves up-front, because when an inquiry comes in asking for the location of a cave, it provides the managers with an opportunity to discuss White Nose Syndrome, gear requirements, etc. with prospective visitors. Simmons reminds us that he brought it up because what’s written now seems fairly ancient, and because we’re not in complete control of what publicity will happen at Salamander, because we’re not sure of the Kingston Land Trust’s publicity plans for the adjacent property where we’ll have trails crossing between the preserves. Berger notes that we’re in a very similar situation already with the Columbia Land Conservancy at the Merlins Preserve - CLC advertises the property, which is open to people wanting to hike. He also notes that in his experience, the caving community in this part of the country is far less secretive about where its caves are than, for example, on the west coast.

6.3. Recap of NRO (Folsom, Simmons, Berger, Engel, E. Davis, Warner, etc.)

[NRO happened at Natural Stone Bridge and Caves; we’ll hear any updates or interesting developments from the event from those who attended.]

Simmons tells everyone that NRO took place on a gorgeous weekend, and that the event was well-attended for an NRO held up north of our typical area. He also reports that the NCC auction went well, and was particularly pleased that we didn’t need to chase anyone down to collect their bids. The auction took in \$750. He thanked those who staffed the NCC tent, handled the boxes of swag, and helped educate anyone stopping by on whatever they asked about. Folsom notes that we need to follow up with the owner of Natural Stone Bridge and Caves - we’ve had an “antique” mailbox there to collect donations for quite some time, though there’s no signage pointing to it (it does have a sticker on it, but that’s all). We should provide some signage pointing at it to encourage donations. Berger adds that it might be a good idea to attach one of our kiosk brochure holders to it, and that he was glad to see that the NCC tent was well-staffed throughout the event. Folsom also reports that he met someone who’s interested in helping out with the website technology issues at the event. He introduced a very sleepy Berger to this volunteer late Saturday night; Berger followed up with him when he was more awake at TAG Fall Cave-In.

6.4. Qualifications / Vetting for Trustees and the Elections Process (Berg, Simmons)

[Our Nominating Committee Chair has pointed out an issue with our elections process which needs some updating. At present, it is possible for someone to join the NCC and submit a platform for the Trustee election essentially the same day. Then, if there were a situation where we did not have more candidates than we had open seats, could vote for themselves, and get a seat on the Board. Discussions should be had on the process, the qualifications, and the vetting system. The end result would be a motion to alter the current system for the

December meeting, notice of the proposed changes to the membership, and hopefully a vote at the March Board meeting to ratify the changes, well in advance of the Annual elections cycle in May. N. Berg also points out that the current Bylaws don't specify when newly-elected Trustees are seated, even though we have consistently done so early in the agenda of each June Board Meeting.]

Berg provided an overview of how the usual election cycle works, and then noted that he has serious concerns about the fact that someone can simply join the NCC and immediately run for its Board. To his surprise upon reviewing the rules, it's not even necessary for them to send in any sort of biography to be a candidate. Berger added that this isn't simply a farfetched hypothetical concern, and shared a story from the history of his alma mater (and several others) where decades ago, an organization with chapters across the country sought out student groups with weaknesses similar to this in their governing documents that would allow them to join and in short order take over these groups and then appropriate their funds for the aims of this national group. The most common way he's seen groups mitigate this kind of risk is by imposing a requirement that someone must be a member in good standing for some period of time (often a year) before they're eligible to be a candidate for the organization's Board. Berg sought volunteers to work on a proposal for adjustments we should make. Berger and Hatfield expressed interest, and Engel volunteered Levinson (in the latter's absence). Simmons expresses some concern that we might not have been able to have some of our current or former valuable Board members if there had been a requirement that they be a member for a year before running for a position. Morris-Siegel suggests that one way to address this concern is to allow the requirement to be waived by the Board. Hatfield notes a specific recent case of a current Board member having needed to renew a lapsed membership in order to run. Berger points out that we're all aware of some issues where renewal notices didn't go out during a long period of time that resulted in a large number of memberships lapsing that otherwise would not have. Hatfield believes that the particular membership in question here lapsed after that problem was corrected.

6.5. Recap of Members Day and the NSS Gage Cabin Dedication (Attendees)

[The joint event happened on July 15, and we'll hear updates and interesting developments from those in attendance.]

Simmons tells us that the event went well, with several of our volunteers arriving early and staying late for setup and teardown. Holding the two events together brought in a lot of people who wouldn't otherwise have attended, the weather cooperated, and it was a very successful day. Hatfield had wanted an article about the event to go into our newsletter, but that went out before the article was ready. She did manage to get something into the "NSS News," however. She still plans to try to get it into another issue.

6.6. Upcoming Temporary Vacancies on the Board (Simmons)

[With the upcoming changes in the President and Secretary's position, it's likely that two Trustees will stepping into those roles, thereby creating two temporary vacancies (until the next scheduled election), which will need to be filled by the remaining Trustees at the December meeting. We need to approach potential candidates for these seats so we have some names for the Trustees to consider at that meeting for appointment to serve out the remainder of the terms of any Trustees who vacate their seats. This should be coordinated with the Nominating Committee.]

Simmons notes that this topic is being raised because the likely candidates we're aware of for the two Officer positions to be elected in December are both currently serving as Trustees, so we may find ourselves in need of filling two Trustee vacancies. He points out that while a 3-year commitment may be a hard sale for some potential Trustees, some might want to try out the leadership role for a shorter time. Hatfield asks Simmons and Berger whether they'd be interested in serving as Trustees when they've completed their Officerships. Berger indicates that he'd be happy to. Simmons feels that it might pose a conflict of interest for him as an Immediate Past Officer. Berger also points out that, even though we're aware of likely candidates for the Officer positions, the election hasn't occurred yet, other candidates may still present themselves for consideration, and this will be an issue for the Trustees rather than the Board to address if/when the vacancies occur.

6.7. Recap of OTR (Berger, E. Davis, Warner)

[OTR happened. The attendees will share updates and interesting developments. One of these involves a Memorandum of Understanding which we have so far declined to sign pending discussion with the Board.]

Berger reports that the event went well. Due to him having a bunch of work to do during the event (much of it relating to NCC minutes), he spent a good number of hours at our booth, more often than usual, the first couple of days. During one of those days, Haberland was also working from the booth. We were also on the opposite side of Vendors' Row from our usual space due to rearrangements that happened as a result of flooding just before OTR opened. Some combination of these things attracted much more traffic than usual to our booth. Several folks stopped by to renew their membership at the booth rather than just heading to Speleobooks. We also got a new membership signup there, and sold some of each type of swag we brought (stickers, patches, hats, shirts, and guidebooks). Between the NCC tent and Speleobooks, we did better than we usually do at OTR, taking in over \$400.



6.8. Restarting “The Process” (Simmons)

[I would like the Board to consider the issues we discussed with Ray Knott (and ones we didn't get to) and rank them in some order of importance. Following that, we should start with the items which most people feel are the most important and set out a schedule for discussing each in turn over the winter months so as to regain momentum and begin addressing issues piecemeal. I believe trying to jump back in to the process in its entirety may be proving to be a daunting prospect and keeping very busy people from getting to the tasks that need to be completed.]

Simmons is hoping that what's proposed in the explanatory text can help us overcome the inertia we seem to have on this project, which has a large list of ideas to work on, some of which haven't been workshoped yet. Dumont feels that the strategy seems to make sense, and notes that he's also happy to take on leadership of this project next year, as was suggested at the last Executive Committee meeting. Berger suggests that it might be more enjoyable to work on this sort of thing at an event that isn't simply an all-day meeting. As an example, he points out that each year, SCCi's Preserve Managers have a get-together at TAG Fall Cave-In. Though he doesn't get to attend that event, he's led to understand that they do address some business at a meeting, and following that, there's a semi-private barbecue event they have behind the SCCi tent. There's some general agreement that something other than just a meeting might be nice, though no solid plans came out of the discussion. Dumont suggests that we should formalize our process for moving forward on this at the December Board meeting. Hatfield notes that she hasn't yet

completed combining the notes that were taken at the day-long intensive session, but will do so before the December meeting.

6.9. NCKMS (Berger)

[NCKMS is coming up in a bit over a week. Berger will share some updates. There is a related motion that will be voted on in Item 12.]

Berger reports that his abstract for a talk on our collaboration with Thacher Park was accepted, and that he'll be presenting on Thursday morning of the conference. He also notes that his understanding from the previous meeting's notes is that Simmons was hoping to attend but expecting that not to pan out, and that nobody else had been convinced to attend. Asking whether anyone has thought more about it, Simmons tells him that he'll be supporting the effort from 1,000 miles away. Hatfield briefly talked with Schwartz about potentially attending, but it seemed unlikely to happen. Thus it seems that Berger will be the designated representative.

On a related topic, Engel reports that [REDACTED], and that HHG will be hosting the Spring NRO at Thompson's Lake Campground at Thacher.

As it doesn't seem that anyone else from the NCC is going to attend the conference, Berger notes that he wasn't able to do what he usually does and find a nearby motel appreciably less expensive than the conference room block, and asks whether it's appropriate to seek reimbursement for part of his hotel cost from the remaining funds that were approved for our sponsorship of the conference but not used. There was a lengthy discussion about whether this would be setting a precedent, whether that precedent would necessarily be a bad thing, whether we have the funds to support it, etc. Of note, Berger points out that this kind of discussion hasn't happened previously because we're usually aware of the sponsorship levels before approving funds to cosponsor a conference; for this NCKMS, the levels were announced so late that the Board had to approve a number before their publication, and this left some excess approved funds that we don't usually have. Simmons posited that helping to defray travel costs for conferences where volunteers regularly represent the NCC at significant personal expense might help to improve our ability to convince more people to participate in these conferences. Folsom believes that we have the money to support this at this time, and the consensus is that we should address a motion in New Business to use the remaining \$250 of approved NCKMS funding to defray a portion of Berger's hotel cost.

6.10. 2024 NEBWG Sponsorship (Simmons)

[We typically sponsor at the lowest rate available (this year, it is \$385). Sponsorship at this level comes with one complimentary registration for the conference. Typically, we designate someone from the NCC who wants to attend and have them use the "free" registration. These items will be voted on in Items 10 and 11.]

Engel inquires where the conference is; it's in Saratoga Springs. Hatfield is interested in attending. Ingalls notes that she's attending, and has already paid for her registration (in the past, her employer had funded her attendance, but that job has wrapped up), so the NCC's complimentary cosponsor registration should go to Hatfield. Berger notes that we can separate the declaration of our designated representative(s) and who receives the complimentary registration. The consensus is to designate both Ingalls and Hatfield as our representatives, and to have Hatfield use the complimentary registration.

6.11. Recap of the NSS Convention (Berger, Hatfield, Warner, E. Davis, Simmons)

[Convention happened; those who were in attendance will tell us about it.]

Hatfield reported that, as a "newbie" Convention attendee, she was blown away by the event. She attended the NCRC meeting (which almost immediately turned into an actual large-scale rescue), and the Cave Conservancies Roundtable (along with Berger in person, and Simmons via Zoom). At that meeting, SCCi gave a presentation about game cameras, gates, etc. They look at certain things a bit differently than we do by necessity due to a history that unfortunately includes some fatalities at their preserves. Berger noted that though he's attended several Conventions, this was the first time he served as staff at one (he was in charge of signage), and also gave a brief overview of an uncharacteristic series of rescues that occurred before and during the event. Simmons also attended the Nature Preserves meeting. He noted that there appears to be a new cadre that wants to make the Cave Conservancies Roundtable into a more useful working group. There was some brief discussion on what's historically happened at that meeting. Hatfield also pointed out that we got good reviews on multiple of our new swag items that were submitted to the salons, two of which won ribbons! She also had a good discussion with B. Stringfellow of SCCi about membership databases and fundraising options. Berger was glad to hear this, as he and Stringfellow have had several valuable discussions on various topics over the years, and he was also the person who introduced Berger to R. Knott at TAG Fall Cave-In several years ago.

6.12. 2025 NSS Convention (Simmons)

[As most know, a local group will be submitting a bid to host the NSS Convention in Cobleskill in 2025. Many of you are already a part of this bid, will be part of it, or will be asked to support it and Convention itself. We should understand that some of our staff and "regulars" will be very busy over the next year and a half and can use all of our support, understanding, and assistance.]

Simmons notes that a lot of our “regulars” will be very busy over the next year. Rubin shares that he’s working on the Geology Field Trip (to be discussed later at this meeting). Berger is serving as the Convention’s Treasurer. Nieman is the Trip Coordinator. Morris-Siegel also hopes to work on organizing trips. Ingalls will most likely seek some role as well. Simmons would like to write a letter of support from the NCC for the New York Convention bid, and there seems to be broad support for this.

6.13. 2024 Members Day (Hatfield)

[It’s time to begin thinking about what we’re going to do (and when) for next year’s Members Day event. See discussion in Item 3 in the EC Meeting Minutes in Attachment D.]

Hatfield notes that she ought to have reached out to Schultz about this, but hasn’t gotten around to it yet. She asks about potential dates. Simmons suggests that we should be looking for something around the middle of July, and that the first weekend of July is “off-limits.” The proposed location that Engel will look into is Horseshoe II at Thacher Park. Engel suggests that we try for July 20. We’d also hope to coordinate access to Hailes Cave that day.

6.14. Officer Transitions (Dumont)

[We’re getting very close. This is really our last opportunity as an entire Board to discuss transition plans. The EC had a discussion about this at its last meeting (see Item 22 in the EC Meeting Minutes in Attachment D.) Additionally, N. Berg has suggested to the EC that the NCC should amend its Bylaws to state that officers elected in December take office at the beginning of the new fiscal year (the current Bylaws don’t specify when the change occurs, and we have almost no experience with a routine change of officers not instigated by a sudden departure, but the current officers had expected the change to occur at the conclusion of the December meeting.) We can use this opportunity to discuss what everyone involved would like to occur in December, and what changes (if any) we should work on making to the Bylaws.]

Dumont notes that he’d been expecting the discussion in the EC Meeting Minutes to name him as the person expected to sort all of this out, and was relieved that instead of now being asked “why haven’t you figured this out?” that discussion mentioned some other people who could be resources. A question arose about how many Trustee positions are expected to be up for election come June. The answer appears to be 4, as one of the candidates likely to become an Officer is currently a Trustee whose term would have been up for election this coming June anyway. Berger notes that we should also discuss N. Berg’s question about when the new Officers assume their responsibilities, and his suggestion that this happen at the change of the fiscal year. Folsom believes we’ve always seated the new officers mid-meeting immediately after they’re elected, and asks whether that’s the case. Berger doesn’t think it is; though that certainly has happened when a previous officer departed right after the election, he recalls Kappler serving through the end of the meeting where he was elected as Kappler’s successor. He points out that, as Berg states, the Bylaws lack any clarity on this issue, and should be improved, but we can separate the task of updating the Bylaws from deciding by consensus how we’d like to handle the transition coming up this December. He also notes that he doesn’t think it makes much sense to dump the running of a meeting, the content and agenda of which the old Officers will have planned, onto the new Officers mid-meeting. Hatfield expresses a feeling that the official change of power should happen at the end of the meeting. Berger also brings up the point that one of Berg’s stated reasons for believing the change should happen when the fiscal year rolls over is that this would mean the outgoing Treasurer is responsible for the finances through the end of an FY and would then give the final fiscal year report. Berger explains that causing the Officer change to happen at the FY change wouldn’t actually accomplish this goal, because the fact that our Board meetings happen (usually) during the third month of a quarter means that we never actually get reports for the end of an FY (or a quarter) because they’d be two months out of date each time. Folsom adds that we vote on the next FY’s budget at the December meeting. Berg still feels that the change should happen concurrent with the FY rollover. Simmons recalls that when he was first elected Vice President, he took over at that point during the meeting. Hatfield proposes that for this December, we go with the plan of having the Officer position change happen at the end of the fiscal year, and legislate what the Bylaws say about future transitions later. Berger asks Hatfield if, assuming she’s elected President, having to wait for the end of the fiscal year would hamper any of her plans by not allowing her to “hit the ground running.” She responds that she doesn’t really know that she’d be hampered by the date, and Simmons thinks it would probably be a win-win situation if Hatfield were nagging him to get things finished up. One thing Berger notes is that Simmons and Hatfield had already discussed putting out a joint end-of-year appeal right after the December Board meeting if she’s elected his successor. Folsom also notes that the new President will need to have authority to write checks for the NCC, and this arrangement would allow paperwork to be handled in December. Engel will talk with Levinson to begin work on codifying a Bylaws amendment to address this. Berger will send an updated copy of the Bylaws to them and Hatfield.

6.15. Shingle Gully Survey Project Permit (Folsom)

[Folsom has been working on how to obtain a permit for permission to continue work on surveying the Shingle Gully caves in Minnewaska State Park and is seeking the Board’s approval to apply for a research permit

from the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). See discussion in Item 23 of the EC Meeting Minutes in Attachment D. This will be voted on in Item 14.]

Folsom explains that for roughly seven years, he and J. Dunham have been doing a bunch of surveying work on the caves at the park, and recently, the park has decided that it wants them to obtain a research permit to continue the work, even though they only have a few caves left to finish to close out the project. Following the approach we took with the research permit at Thacher Park, the EC discussed this and concluded that we should bring the topic up for Board approval so that Folsom can file the application for a permit. There wasn't substantial discussion; everyone seemed in agreement that it was appropriate to move forward in this manner.

6.16. The Ant Farm (i.e. Our Groundwater Model) (Engel)

[*This one came in without background text; we can all be excited and surprised together!*]

Engel explains that he's had this model for quite a while, but that he doesn't actually end up using it when he goes to give presentations at educational events. The reasons it doesn't tend to meet his needs are: 1) It's a pain in the neck to carry around because it's heavy, and 2) It's designed for conducting longer (30-45 minute) demonstrations, which isn't so much what we tend to do at the STEM events the NCC is typically invited to, where it's much more common to see groups of people for 2-5 minutes each. Thus, he's not sure if it's useful for us to keep the model. He notes that there's a caver in Utah who's looking for such a model, and Engel would like to see it go to a good home. Folsom recalls that the Ant Farm was something we paid for, and Engel confirms that it was, and that we might have spent \$700-\$800 on it. So, he says we could look to either sell it or seek a donation. Simmons says that in his 20 years as a hydrogeologist, he's never seen it, and asks whether it's operational. Engel says that it largely is working, although there's a bit of a leak between its two halves (the karst and the sand aquifer). Rubin asks whether it's a step up from what they have at Thacher Park. Engel says it isn't really a step up from that. Hatfield proposes that we send it to the fellow who can put it to good use for the cost of shipping. Folsom agrees that that's reasonable, once Simmons has had a chance to see it. Engel will send out pictures of it.

6.17. Clarksville and the 2025 NSS Convention's Geology Fieldtrip (Rubin)

Rubin says that he's planning to run the Geology Field Trip, and that we need to do a good job of it. He wants to include the Clarksville Preserve, and incorporate the geological interpretive trip through the woods that he's been working on for a while. Engel notes that there's discussion of that in the Management Plan for the Preserve. Simmons asks whether this is something the management team should take on, or if Rubin should spearhead it. Engel responds that there's a difference of opinion about what should go into the interpretive trail. He explains that Rubin has done a lot of Clarksville-specific work (e.g. on glacial melt), but Engel would like to see the trail include more generically interesting items. One possibility is for there to be two available interpretive walks at the preserve - an entry-level one, and a more technical one. Nieman believes that the proposal with the more Clarksville-specific content is probably more valuable for the Convention Geology Field Trip. He also notes that this debate between Engel and Rubin has been going on for years, and it's easy enough to present different content for visitors with an interest in a different focus via QR codes they can scan. Hatfield points out that this sounds so simple when we say it, and yet the QR codes need to go somewhere, and the webpages we're supposed to create for Project Guestbook aren't getting done, despite that we've wanted to produce them for well over a year. Berger notes that, while true, the challenge for Project Guestbook is somewhat different because those pages need to have some interactive content to collect information and display updated guestbook signatures; the interpretive trail only needs some pages with static content.

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

Second by Berger

For: All

[The Committee of the Whole is closed]

Old Business

[None]

New Business

8. Simmons moves: The minutes of the June 3, 2023 Board Meeting are approved.

[*Simmons took minutes at this meeting. Thanks to Folsom for reviewing them.*]

Second by Engel

For: Rest

Abstain: Berger, Hatfield

[The minutes of the June 3, 2023 Board Meeting are approved]

[Morris-Siegel departed at this point]

9. Simmons moves: The revisions to the Salamander Cave Preserve Management Plan, as amended during Committee of the Whole, are approved.

[The proposed revisions will have been discussed in Item 6.1 during Committee of the Whole.]

Second by Folsom

For: All

[The revisions to the Salamander Cave Preserve Management Plan are approved]

10. Simmons moves: The NCC shall sponsor the Northeast Bat Working Group (NEBWG) Conference in January of 2024 at the lowest sponsorship rate of \$385.00.

[This will have been discussed in Item 6.10 during Committee of the Whole.]

Second by Berger

For: Rest

Abstain: Ingalls

[The NCC will sponsor NEBWG 2024 at the \$385 level]

11. Simmons moves: Ingalls and Hatfield shall attend the Northeast Bat Working Group (NEBWG) Conference in January of 2024 as the NCC Representatives. Hatfield shall use the complimentary registration for the event that comes with the NCC sponsorship.

[This will have been discussed in Item 6.10 during Committee of the Whole.]

Second by Engel

For: Rest

Abstain: Ingalls

[Ingalls and Hatfield are the NCC's representatives to NEBWG 2024, and the NCC's complimentary sponsor registration is assigned to Hatfield]

12. Simmons moves: Berger is appointed to represent the NCC at the 2023 National Cave and Karst Management Symposium (NCKMS) and shall use the complimentary registration for the event that comes with the NCC sponsorship.

[This will have been discussed in Item 6.9 during Committee of the Whole.]

Second by Hatfield

For: Rest

Abstain: Berger

[Berger is the NCC's representative to NCKMS 2023, and receives the NCC's complimentary sponsor registration]

13. Simmons moves: The President is hereby directed to write a letter of support to the NSS BOG for the bid to host the 2025 NSS Convention in Cobleskill, NY and submit same to the NSS BOG and local bid committee in time for consideration at the NSS BOG meeting on November 11, 2023.

[This will have been discussed in Item 6.12 during Committee of the Whole.]

Second by Engel

For: Rest

Abstain: Berger, Folsom

[The President will write and send to the NSS Board of Governors a letter stating the NCC's support for the bid to host the 2025 NSS Convention in Cobleskill, NY for consideration at their November 11, 2023 meeting]

14. Folsom moves: The NCC shall apply for a research permit from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (NYS OPRHP) to complete the surveying of caves in the Minnewaska State Park Preserve.

[This will have been discussed in Item 6.15 during Committee of the Whole.]

Second by Dumont

For: All

[The NCC will apply to NYS OPRHP for a research permit to complete surveying of caves in Minnewaska State Park]

15. Rubin moves: Act 21-93 (Management Plan Language) is amended to insert the following sentence as the second sentence of the Exploration Rules regarding digging: "Digging projects should be conditioned on detailed stratigraphic description and measurements with photographic documentation so that important geological information is preserved."

Second by Engel

Dumont inquires what the verb is in the proposed sentence, and how to make it clear what is to be done by whom. Engel points out that as this is language in a management plan, the instructions are directed at the preserve managers. Ingalls, who is a preserve manager, notes that she's a digger but not a geologist, and doesn't know how she ought to proceed according to this language if presented with a proposal for a dig project at her preserve. Simmons indicates that the right way to proceed, if the diggers proposing a project don't know how to conduct the needed stratigraphic documentation, would be for them to bring someone along who could

advise them and help with the documentation. Rubin explains that the sorts of things that would be of interest include thin beds evident at the dig site, or that become exposed during digging. Berger notes that while providing such an explanation here at this meeting is helpful, it's unclear how other managers not participating in the present discussion would know what to do when faced with a dig proposal after this management plan language addition. Ingalls notes that there's added complication because nobody would necessarily know what would need to be done in terms of documentation for a dig project before getting to the actual dig site. J. Dunham goes further by suggesting that this rule would create an impossible situation by requiring someone to have already dug at a site in order to figure out what would be needed in order to obtain a permit to dig in the first place. Berger doesn't believe that such a circular complication exists; he believes that the way a manager would follow this rule would be to add a condition to the dig permit stating that if the diggers encounter any of the things defined as "interesting and needing documentation," they are to stop and take the required photos and measurements before continuing to dig, just as we add conditions to research permits on a regular basis that describe what must be done in various circumstances. Engel concurs, and notes that this practice is used all over in permits. Simmons also points out that some evidence of interesting stratigraphy is exposed in such a way that prospective diggers can see it well in advance of beginning their project; only sometimes is it hidden and discovered once digging has begun. Berger recalls that the NCC has approved the concept of an advisory board and stated that it ought to include scientists in such fields as geology, hydrology, biology, etc., and he suggests that because the NCC should be supporting various projects rather than simply erecting obstacles to them, the most helpful thing to do when a preserve manager is faced with a dig proposal made by a group that doesn't have geological expertise sufficient to identify and document what this proposed rule considers to be "interesting" would be to connect the diggers with a scientist on the advisory board who can give them guidance on how to do what's required. Engel thinks the proper place to explain what this rule's wording means and how to comply with it is in the Preserve Manager's Manual. Simmons notes that Morris-Siegel had been working on that document, but has already departed this meeting. Simmons also notes that in each preserve's management plan, we can and should identify some of the items that would likely be of stratigraphic interest relevant to possible dig projects in the "Underground Resources" section. Hatfield expresses concern that the suggested wording might have a different meaning to a geologist than a non-geologist. Berger asks whether she has a suggestion for how to resolve the possible difference in how geologists and non-geologists would read it. She doesn't at this time, but would like some time to review the wording more in context, and asks whether we could postpone making this change. Rubin and Engel are okay with this, and Berger is to send out the proposed wording as it would appear with the rest of the policy prior to the next meeting.

[Motion withdrawn]

16. Engel moves: The NCC will defray \$250 of Berger's NCKMS hotel cost.

Second by Folsom

For: Rest

Abstain: Berger

[The NCC will defray \$250 of Berger's NCKMS hotel cost]

Informational point: Next EC meeting was scheduled for Saturday, October 28, 2023 at 10AM at a location to be determined or 9AM if entirely via videoconference. Because the current Board meeting was rescheduled for the following day, that EC meeting did not occur. The EC will hold an abbreviated meeting from 7pm-8pm on Tuesday, November 14, 2023 to address issues that would ordinarily have had forward motion prior to the next Board meeting.

Informational point: the Winter Board meeting will be Sunday, December 3, 2023 at 10AM at Speleobooks or 9AM if entirely via videoconference.

Informational point: the late Winter EC meeting will be Saturday, January 27, 2024 via videoconference, pending availability of the new officers.

17. Simmons moves: The NCC Spring meeting will be Saturday, March 2, 2024 at 10AM tentatively in Saugerties, NY or 9AM if entirely via videoconference.

Second by Folsom

Hatfield asks whether we should be budgeting for and acquiring video equipment for hybrid in-person meetings, as we've discussed in the past. Hedges notes that his workplace acquired a Meeting Owl for approximately \$1,000. Berger also notes that he's been utilizing the Zoom account he has access to for this, and there's no guarantee that he'll always have it, plus his Board position is wrapping up and he may not be on the Board. Though he may be willing to continue hosting if able, the NCC may want to budget for a Zoom account, which is in the \$100-\$200 range per year.

For: Rest

Abstain: Dumont, Berger

[The NCC Spring meeting will be Saturday, March 2, 2024 at 10AM tentatively in Saugerties, NY or 9AM if entirely via videoconference]

18. Folsom moves: The NCC thanks Amy and Russ Pokorny for making the Knox Octagon Barn available to host this meeting on both its originally-scheduled date, and the date we previously tried to reschedule the meeting to.

Second by Hatfield

For: All

[Amy and Russ Pokorny have the NCC's thanks for their willingness to host this meeting]

19. Engel moves to adjourn.

Second by Dumont

For: All

[The meeting is adjourned]

Meeting adjourned at 2:40pm

**Attachment A
President's Report**

General

1. Thanks to all for their flexibility in rescheduling the September meeting which needed to be postponed. I'm still working with my doctors to try and figure out the cause/trigger. So I have been playing catch up at work (and with NCC stuff) for the last month.
2. We have finally received the renewal of our Volunteer Stewardship Agreement with the NYS DEC for Surprise Cave (see attached agreement and Volunteer form). If you intend to participate in on-site conservation activities, please fill out the form and return it to me. I will certify the forms and forward them to DEC as per the VSA. Over the winter, I would like to start a semi-regular program of site inspections and lock-check/replacements.

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.

3. Members appreciation day on July 15, 2023 was held concurrently with the opening ceremony for the new NSS Gage cabin. We had a number of NSS officials present with whom we got to interact. The NCC Board was very well represented this year, thank you all for your labors and attendance, including the early and late crews that set up and knocked down the infrastructure for the event. Big kudos to the food team for the shopping, donations, prep, serving, and cleanup.
4. Fall NRO was well attended and I'd like to thank everyone that transported the NCC tent and swag and staffed the booth all weekend. For a Fall NRO, the NCC Auction was well attended and surprisingly lucrative. Hat's off to our amazing auctioneer, our fluffer, our top notch runners, and the money collectors at the end. This may be a first, but we did not have to chase anyone down for their bids after the auction ended. I also need to give a well-deserved shout-out to the folks at Natural Stone Bridge and Caves for their help and hospitality over the weekend!
5. You will note that there has not been much movement in the way of acquisitions since our June meeting. That is a direct reflection of my lack of availability to run things down and do drive-bys. Thanks to those who have made visits to cave properties or contacted cave owners over the last few months: Bill at [REDACTED], Paul at [REDACTED], Erik at a possible new location near [REDACTED].
6. We need to restart the process that began so well with the all-day intensive with Ray Knott. We need to make good on this investment in the Conservancy and continue to make steady progress on the issues and concepts raised.

7. [REDACTED]

8. Grants update:
 - a. The next round of NYSCPP grants is open and applications are due by close of business on December 22, 2023. We do not have any acquisitions presently in play which would qualify. It is possible that we could qualify for funding for the Knox Sinkhole project under the Stewardship and Resource Management Grants.

Stewardship grants are described by the LTA as:

Stewardship Grants: Funding to support "shovel ready" projects that will result in resilient and durable, on-the-ground impacts. For example, proposals to build universal public access trails and facilities, add amenities such as parking and outdoor gathering areas, improve signage or otherwise improve the visitor experience are encouraged. Successful applications may include planning, provided the on-the-ground improvements can be completed by the end of the grant period. Projects that require a more extensive planning period should submit a Capacity & Excellence Grant proposal and consider a Stewardship Grant only once the project is ready to proceed.

- b. Our last grants were audited and additional back up information was requested by LTA. These included the Salamander and the Clarksville donations. Clarksville was easy and has been closed out. There are questions on Salamander that I am still working on. A big issue is that a lot of the survey work was done before the grant look back period and may not qualify. You may recall we had submitted an application for this previously but were not funded as the deal had not closed before the grant applications were due. We were encouraged to resubmit the following year, however, thanks to the delay, some of our expenses which I included in the second application may have timed-out. I'm working with the LTA reps to see where we stand. The worst case is we have to give back some of the money we received; I don't have a total on that as yet but will provide an update to the Board once it is definitive.
- 9. Many thanks to Mitch for submitting a paper to and attending the NCKMS in Chattanooga, TN in early November. This is an important meeting for us to have visibility at and show the flag of the NCC amongst our Conservancy peers.
- 10. NSS Convention 2025. A local group is submitting a bid to host the 2025 National Speleological Society Convention in Cobleskill (on the SUNY campus). I believe this will be presented at the NSS Board of Governors meeting immediately following the NCKMS on Saturday, November 11th. I'm sure the NCC and our staff will be asked to support the Convention, and I'm aware that many of you have already been approached and/or volunteered already to assist with the various tasks. It should be another great event for showcasing the NCC, our people, and our preserves.

Management Plan Reviews and Schedule

The Salamander MP is up for review. The management team has taken comments and is proposing a number of changes to the existing MP at this time. The last iteration of the MP was when we had accepted the donation, so a major rewrite was needed to bring the MP up to date. The latest draft version is attached for review and comment.

The plan review schedule as presently laid out is provided in the table below.

Year	March	June	September	December
2023			Salamander	Bentleys
2024	Ella Armstrong	Knox	Traino	Sellecks
2025	Bensons	Merlins	Jack Packers	Onesquethaw
2026	Spider	Clarksville	Salamander	Bentleys

Cave Preserve Reports

Alan Traino (Devon Hedges)

Plans: Do more work on the kiosk to improve the roof. Excavate and fill parking area with crusher run stone

Problems: Too wet for excavators

Bensons (Luke Mazza)

Progress: Inspected the property on 09/16. Walked the trail and boundary. Fallen branches were cleared from the trail. Mike and Emily already have, or are about to, install two bat detectors on the property. 6 permits have been issued since the June report, with likely around 4 of those actually representing trips into the cave.

Issues: The right-of-way is due for another mowing and some brush clearing along the edges. It looks like either some trail markers are missing or my judgement has changed since I originally posted them - either way some more are needed.

Plans: Will return, possibly the weekend of the Board Meeting, to mow the right-of-way, clip some encroaching brush, and put up a few more trail markers. Attempting to arrange a training session with Mitch to understand the maintenance needs of the two bat detectors.

Bentleys (Devon Hedges, Jonah Spivak)

Problems: Erosion continues to be an issue with the entrance parking area, but it is still serviceable. A quote is needed to add gravel. Jonah will pursue that.

Issues: Trails have not been checked since the recent storm which knocked over a lot of trees. A trip is planned for the 30th of September to clear fallen debris as needed.

Plans: I'll have more to report next time after that work!

Clarksville (Thom Engel, Mike Chu, Chuck Porter)

Progress: People have been coming and going as is typical.

Issues: Graffiti – Someone left graffiti in the Ward sinkhole and on the west side of the changing area. Someone also dumped a dead cat just off the parking area. Engel continues to be concerned with groups of 3 where two of the 3 are young children (under 10 years old). He does not feel this is safe caving. Perhaps, it is none of our business, but from an educational POV it might be addressed.

(Bear in mind, the NSS requires a minimum group size of four.) Nieman saw a group of people rock climbing at Clarksville. The preserve managers and the EC discussed this, and after noticing that that isn't an activity covered under New York's General Obligations Law, concluded that the NCC does not want to allow this at the property. A group was also encountered at the preserve this week that admitted to having been in the cave.

Plans: I would like to put up a camera near the Ward entrance to get a better idea of illegal winter visitation. I might also put one near the parking area to see if we can ascertain the identities of the violators.

Ella Armstrong (Erik Nieman)

Progress: Parking cleared; Sign-in up and running – Shows more visitation to cave than thought.

Issues: Kiosk banner could be replaced due to aging.

Plans: Create new banner for kiosk.

Jack Packers (Kevin Dumont)

Progress: The preserve was visited several times over the summer and some trail maintenance was conducted. A photo trip led by Erik Nieman in July resulted in some excellent photographs. Coordination with the landowner regarding the trail and signs has been ongoing; the owner has offered use of equipment to move mulch and their service to deliver mulch to the trailhead.

Issues: The preserve continues to be missing from our website. All the necessary documents and information have been assembled and passed along.

Plans: Plans for a kiosk have now changed and a sign similar to the one present at Spider will be installed instead. A suitable tree close to the trailhead has been identified. The owner is agreeable to both the change to a sign from a kiosk as well as the specific location. A resurvey of the cave is underway, hopefully to be completed this fall. The sign mentioned in the previous paragraph will not be created until the map is finalized so it can be included on the sign.

Knox (Mitch Berger)

Progress: Hatfield has been reconfirming that prior pledges made for the sinkhole restoration project will still be honored despite that we didn't win the Bender grant. She's also discussed a couple of ideas for how to fill the gap. The equipment for the "Fat Bat" research project has been installed again. Permission was given for use of Knox at the September OCR, though only with the warning that it would likely be unsuitable due to water pouring down the ladder. Preserve checkup happened on July 15 and September 9, and trail maintenance was done on the main trail on August 16. The kiosk brochure holder was replaced on August 16. 37 regular permits were issued for the season (2 of which subsequently had their trips cancelled). Our neighbor who holds a hunting permit for the season when Knox is closed has confirmed that the deer blind seen by Simmons and Berger last December belongs to him, and is not cause for concern. Berger has corresponded with the Fat Bat researchers about the need to coordinate dates of their visits with the preserve manager.

Issues: We didn't receive the Bender Family Foundation Grant and need to secure alternate funding for the sinkhole restoration project. During a trail checkup on July 15, the top of the kiosk brochure holder was found to have torn off. A Canadian visiting group that we reluctantly issued a weekend-long permit to without knowing how many trips would go to the cave never reported back on their number of trips as they'd promised to. The unbelievably wet season caused a major drop in visitation – only 9 permits were issued in July and August – and groups began to bunch up as the season came to a close as a result. One grotto had multiple people request permits for the last day of the season in the week leading up to it, and because of the number of other groups trying to visit that day, we only issued them one. 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. Work with Simmons and Hatfield on how to coordinate with Tahawus before their 2024 schedule fills up. 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)

Problems: We're looking to schedule a stewards training, but haven't yet found a time that would work. The trail to the cave needs maintenance and the boundary needs to be remarked. The parking lot needs to be cleared over vegetation. Culvert extension is still needed for Dome 12.

Progress: There were two trips to Merlin's during NRO in the spring and an additional trip in August.

Plans: Schedule a stewards training (likely next spring since the cave will be closing for hibernation soon). Plan a trail maintenance day and parking lot clean up, possibly in November 2023. Check Dome 12 culvert and clean it off (if necessary) before it freezes over for the winter.

Onesquethaw (Thom Engel, Christa Hay)

Progress: I have issued 26 permits this year. This is the greatest number since 2016. It might have been higher had it not been so wet.

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 starting this coming spring. (I will do the marking in the fall before the ground freezes.).

Salamander (Cara Gentry)

Pending

Sellecks (Erik Nieman, Tony Vasile)

Progress: Old kiosk has been removed. New sign-in cabinet installed. New informational poster is currently in the works.

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 September 4, 2023 by Adriane Hectus. No issues/changes to report.

Issues: No issues at this time.

Plans: Ongoing trash/debris collection along route 146 and replacement of missing/fallen boundary markers needed.

Email received on September 1, 2023 from Boston College geologist Jeremy Shakun. He advised Paul Rubin, assigned as representative for the project, will be visiting Spider Cave within the next month to collect samples for uranium-thorium analysis per a previously approved permit. No concerns.

Other Committees under the President

Acquisitions (Bob Simmons)

With Chuck Porter stepping down, the position remains open until a replacement is named. The position will be advertised with the hope of filling the slot in an expeditious manner. In the interim, the President will continue to cover these duties.

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 Connecticut continues to move ahead, though slowly. I have addressed 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 December meeting in 2023 for Board approval.

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

I have not heard anything back on [REDACTED]. It has not been listed or subdivided. I intend to stop by next time I am in the area. The adjacent 5-plus acre property is still for sale at a reduced price.

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

The karst property in [REDACTED] needs revisiting and preliminary digs at the two most promising sinks if we can get that scheduled this Fall.

The [REDACTED] property is back for sale at a listing price of \$210K.

The [REDACTED] property in [REDACTED] is listed for sale at \$180K. This is the resurgence spring for [REDACTED].

The [REDACTED] property in [REDACTED] which [REDACTED] is listed for sale and contains 159 acres, a house and multiple out buildings. The asking price has recently been reduced from \$2.95 to \$2.50 million. The property [REDACTED].

We continue to stay in touch with the [REDACTED]. Latest news indicates that the cave parcel is likely tied up for some time due to inheritance issues.

With the help of Paul Rubin, we have been trying to ascertain the current status of [REDACTED] and their current plans for the [REDACTED] property. Progress is slow and may require a personal visit to [REDACTED], who lives nearby.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Morris-Siegel was at a meeting with several land trusts including RLT, RPA, CLC, and VLT. He told the group that if any of them have or may acquire caves, they should talk with us.

Nominating Committee (Norm Berg)

In early October an email will go to NCC members to solicit candidates for President and Secretary.

In the report for the June 2023 meeting, I brought up the following issue:

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'll plan to work with the Board on this potential problem.

I'm looking for Board members who can assist in making a vetting system. Please contact me if you are interested.

Risk Management (Mitch Berger)

Progress: Simmons filed placeholder reports with Terraforma for the incursions at Salamander.

Issues: Several Board members have failed to submit their required annual Conflict of Interest Disclosure forms, despite reminders from the Secretary and the President. As this is a legal requirement, to protect the NCC, we will have to take action to remove those who continue not to comply from the Board.

Plans: Receive Conflict of Interest Disclosure forms from all remaining Board members without delay. 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. Arrange for periodic updates to our Terraforma placeholder claims. Participate in annual Risk Management training required for Terraforma discounts.

Tory's Cave ad hoc (Bob Simmons)

Nothing new to report. Had hoped to attend annual NCLC Picnic to discuss but was ill at the time.

Bat Hibernation

No updates for this meeting.

Governance (Devon Hedges)

No report for this meeting.

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)

The landowner of Jack Packers (actually, an employee of his) has provided wording for acknowledgement that they would like to have included on the sign at the preserve, (see below). Note that the sign is yet to be drafted. Once it has been, the landowner will be given the chance to review it before ordering the actual sign. This sign will be separate from the NCC preserve kiosk, and it will be clear that it expresses the landowner's perspective, as it discusses proceeds of land-based enterprises and donations to be made that relate to his commercial business at the property, but do not relate to any of the NCC's preserve operations.

The text they have provided, which we may want to use or adapt for our other preserves/literature, follows:

"It is with gratitude and humility that we acknowledge that we are learning, living, gathering and growing on the ancestral homelands of the Muhheaconneok or Mohican people, who are the indigenous peoples of this land. Despite tremendous hardship in being forced from here, today their community resides in Wisconsin and is known as the Stockbridge-Munsee Community. We pay honor and respect to their ancestors past and present as we commit to building a more inclusive and equitable space for all.

We commit to amplifying and centering the history and current experience of the Stockbridge Munsee community. We invite and welcome Stockbridge-Munsee community members to this land to hold and engage in spiritual, cultural and social gatherings. We will donate 5% of all net proceeds from land-based enterprises to the construction of their new cultural center. We will work with community farmers and herbalists to plant, tend, save and exchange seed of culturally significant varieties of plants. We will lend our voices in efforts to reclaim ancestral land and to assert the sovereignty of their people."

Officer Succession (Kevin Dumont)

To the best of my knowledge, Ramon Armen is still planning to assume the role of Secretary at the end of the year. For President, Leslie Hatfield has agreed to serve when the time comes later this 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. The roles of Vice President and Treasurer will reach term limits at the end of 2024 and there is ongoing effort to identify candidates for both.

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 – The researchers report, "Our spring fat bat research concluded in May 2023 and no work has been done at the site since that time. We anticipate starting the fall 2023 season (which will be the final sampling) at the end of August/early September. We are still working on processing the collected data, but will share results with you when we are able!"

Speleothem Research – Graduate student, Calen Rubin, working under Professor Jeremy Shakun is advancing uranium-thorium processing of speleothem fragments both from the earlier specimens of Stein-Erik Lauritzen and John Mylroie (Journal of Cave and Karst Studies, April 2000), as well as of samples collected from Clarksville Cave. Dates from the earlier dataset have been determined, while Clarksville Cave sample processing is underway.

The NCC is helping to coordinate cave access and speleothem sample collection. Jeremy Shakun, Paul Rubin, and a few others conducted a scientific trip into Clarksville Cave as part of ongoing research in June (with Preserve Manager permit). Emails

have been sent to three NCC preserve managers seeking to fulfill sample collection objectives within caves if found to be suitable (Onesquethaw, Spider, Salamander). Recent reconnaissance indicates that Spider Cave is too young to provide speleothem fragments suitably old to warrant U/Th dating.

Because of the significant scientific value of Shakun (Boston College) and McGee's (MIT) paleoclimate research in both the US and abroad, efforts are currently underway to obtain speleothem samples and flowstone cores from non-NCC caves to bolster data obtained from NCC caves. Positive responses have been obtained from Howe Caverns, the National Speleological Society, and the mayor of Kingston. Initial data obtained under the Ignite grant will soon be incorporated into a proposal seeking National Science Foundation funding to expand on work now underway. The addition of additional caves will greatly strengthen the case for funding.

Tree Species Identification – Scientific investigation within Clarksville Cave is ongoing by Paul Rubin. This work entails sediment sequence characterization, as well as structural and geomorphic interpretation. Radiocarbon dating of very small in-cave charcoal fragments present within a clay matrix revealed dates in excess of the method dating limit (43,500 yrs BP). These ancient charcoal related samples may represent some of the oldest surviving wood fragments on the planet. A few very thin, charcoal fragments, smaller than a pinky fingernail, have been provided to Professor Mike Kudish who may possibly be able to identify tree species microscopically. Dr. Kudish is a professor emeritus in the Division of Forestry at Paul Smith's College who has authored books on forest history and vegetation.

A Trek Through Geologic Time (Saturday Sept. 23, 2023 pm) – If time permits following the Sept. 23 NCC meeting in Knox, Paul Rubin has volunteered to lead a short trip through the Colvin Avenue segment of Gregory Cave for NCC Board members. Scientific investigation in and around Clarksville Cave has revealed a geologic history spanning an ancient sea, multiple glaciations, and cave enlargement by the invasion of massive quantities of glacial meltwaters. The cave's and region's geomorphic history are written in stone, flowstone, and sediments. Join Paul, examine telltale geologic clues, envision raging torrents coursing through the cave's conduits under thick glacier ice, touch calcite crystals along a thrust fault, and imagine the soft glow of D.C. Gould's oil lamp as he chiseled his name on the cave wall in 1864.

Special Use (Thom Engel)

We have reserved 125 slots this year to date. 76 or 61% are for Clarksville. There have been no denials yet this year.

Surprise Cave Committee (vacant)

Thacher Park (Thom Engel)

Due to the wet summer not much has happened this year. Wynd Cave was remapped. I am not sure about Livingston. Daddy Longlegs Cave has been remapped.

Cave Protection (Thom Engel)

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

**Attachment C
Treasurer's Report**



*NSF Account total as of 6/30/23



2023 Budget: Approved vs Actual

	Approved FY23	Actual FY23 YTD
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Donations		
Auction Donations	2,000.00	1,017.00
Donations - Other	19,075.00	20,753.61
Total Donations	21,075.00	21,770.61
Grants	0.00	100.00
Interest Earned	10.00	17.31
Membership Income	3,000.00	3,055.00
NRO Income	0.00	0.00
Total Income	24,085.00	24,942.92
Expense		
Acquisitions	2,000.00	0.00
Bank Charges	100.00	107.55
Donations-outgoing	200.00	250.00
Development	5,000.00	913.67
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	2,631.06
Legal Fees	1,500.00	0.00
Licenses & Permits	200.00	50.00
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	557.00
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	2,182.59
Publishing		
Mailings	50.00	0.00
Website	210.00	0.00

Total Publishing	260.00	0.00
Science	500.00	0.00
Sponsorships	850.00	0.00
Taxes on Properties	300.00	40.82
Total Expense	24,085.00	6,732.69
Net Ordinary Income	0.00	18,210.23

Barn Dance Subcommittee - Emily Davis & Mike Warner

Status Quo:

Plans: Try again next year

Progress: None

Problems: Getting Paul to lock in a date so we can proceed. Need to discuss this further with both Paul and our committee.

Fundraising Committee – Leslie Hatfield

Bank of Greene County Grant

- Received \$100 - Jack Packers - kiosk
- Need to provide evidence, receipts, photos of completed work

Knox Access Trail Appeal - \$36K needed

- \$20,950 pledged - for the math challenged - still need \$15,050
- Reached out to folks who pledged support
 - All who responded are still pledging/donating toward the total
 - Have not heard from a few.
- Targeted emails to members will begin week of 9/10
- General appeal to membership will begin - 9/17

The Bender Family Foundation Grant

- NCC did not receive this grant

Project Guestbook - Still a work in progress

12 Reasons to Join/Donate

- Ran out of steam after #3
- This has not rolled out as planned - a work in progress

Membership Committee – Josh Schultz

Total Members: 212 (breakdown by type below)

Many thanks to Mitch, Emily and everyone else who helped collect dues and donations at OTR.

Other Updates

Resubmitted approval for the Google Ads grant on Sunday (9/10). We'll use this to help drive new visitors to the website and hopefully select the "volunteer" and "donate" buttons.

Working through testing Airtable to organize member data and past payments captured by PayPal. More to come here next month.

Family	10
Family Life	9
Institutional	9
Life	67
Regular	101

Office Committee Report - Emily Davis & Mike Warner

Status Quo

Publications – Christa Hay

Problems: No change in issues.

Progress: Sent out email blasts as they are requested; primarily NCC Membership Day.

Publicity: Still doing some research on the water bottles. I’ve received some samples I was hoping would work. Price is a factor. I believe it is not a priority to order the water bottles but I will continue to check and watch for deals and any coupons I receive. I used to order for state conferences for decades so still get some price cuts.

Technology Committee Report – Mike Chu

Website remains as a static site for now. New Volunteer Value form that Norm Berg is working on is not ready yet (Mike to follow up with Norm). Added some code to the home page for Josh, who is working on relaunching the NCC's paid search grant.

Ramon and Mike are both quite busy at this stage in our lives, with not much time to give towards the website. If anyone knows of someone who is interested in helping with the website (fixing, improving, relaunching, etc.) please have them contact us.

Volunteer Value Committee – Vince Kappler

973-579-2116

volunteervalue@necaveconservancy.org

Progress:

Year to date totals: 536.5 hours of volunteer work for the NCC with a total value of \$26,773.00. This total includes the value of hours driving and miles driven calculated at the prevailing IRS rate of .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 direct email), IT is looking into a fix and it will hopefully be operational for the next reporting period.

**Attachment D
Secretary’s Report**

**EC Meeting Minutes
August 20, 2023, 9:00am
Kerhonkson, NY**

Called to order: 9:08am

Present: B. Simmons, M. Berger, B. Folsom, T. Engel, L. Hatfield

1) OTR

Berger asked to confirm that we'd heard from the vendor coordinator and informed them that we're planning to attend. In fact, it turns out that Simmons doesn't recall hearing anything from them. Berger hunted down the contact info, and Simmons will get in touch to ensure that we have a space. Davis and Warner will be bringing the pop-up tent and rollup. Berger was at Speleobooks last week and

picked up the boxes of swag. Hatfield mentioned that she'd asked Schultz for a list of whose memberships need renewal to provide Davis and Warner. Berger reminded her that he needs this as well. Berger will inventory the t-shirts he has, as Davis suspects we're running low and it may be time to reorder the new design. We also discussed the odd slightly oval shape our logo came out in on the most recent batch, and Hatfield will ask that we look into this with the vendor before another run.

2) NCKMS

The deadline for abstract submissions is September 15. The low- and mid-level co-sponsorship tiers start at \$350 and \$700, respectively. The Board approved co-sponsoring at the mid-level so long as the cost didn't exceed \$600 (last time it cost \$500). The cost of a registration is \$295. Thus, co-sponsoring at the low tier and reimbursing another representative for their registration fee would be less expensive. Given how much the price rose, we'll have to co-sponsor at the lower tier for \$350 and reserve the rest of what we'd planned to contribute to help defray registration for anyone beyond the one complimentary registration we get. Berger is still looking for ideas of what he might put together a talk on. Some ideas presented were a talk about our offsite development day, something about the likelihood of a "non-caver" being our likely next President, something on Project Guestbook, and something on how our relationship with Thacher State Park has developed over the years. Berger has some concerns about most of those, but thinks the Thacher partnership could potentially turn into an interesting talk, and will pursue that. It didn't sound like anyone else at the June Board meeting signed up to attend the conference. Simmons hopes he can go, but it's not looking likely to work out. Berger will proceed to contact the organizers and tell them we'd like to co-sponsor at the low tier, and we may consider asking the Board to increase our allocation by \$45 to cover a second registration if there's another interested attendee at the September Board meeting.

3) Members Day

Hatfield thought the event went well. We had our founders there. The only thing Berger was disappointed about was that most of the NSS's award recipients were present, and most of ours weren't, though there were extenuating circumstances that caused this. Folsom asks whether we've talked about what to do for next year's Members Day. Hatfield would also like someone who was there to write something up for the newsletter, perhaps including something about the awards that Kappler, Youngbaer, and Chu won. A historical perspective on the NCC from its founders might also be nice, looking at what they started and where it is today. We haven't done a post-mortem yet. Berger shared some comments about what the NSS representatives saw while they were here, from an e-mail exchange he had with E. P. Davis. We'll add a Committee of the Whole topic to discuss next year's event. Hatfield asks about the possibility of holding it at Thacher then; Engel will inquire about their Horseshoe II area. Hatfield notes that we need to collect input from the Board about potential dates, because one of the recurring complaints has been about how few Board members attend the event. Next year, Convention appears to be the week of July 4th, so we're looking at July 13th or 20th.

4) New brochure

Nieman had a draft of the new brochure that he was showing around at Members Day. Various people among us thought it looked great. He's going to make a couple of changes, and noted that the verbiage hadn't really been hammered out yet, and he was mostly focusing on layout. Berger inquired how many of the old ones we still have, as the stash he uses to replenish the dispenser at Knox is running low, and he worries about whether we might run out of them and have to reprint the old ones before the new ones are ready if we don't work quickly. Others assure him that we're not in danger of running out of the old ones quickly enough for that to happen. Hatfield asks how the new brochure would get approved, and we recalled that certain feedback about corrections to the current brochure wasn't incorporated before it went to print. Berger points out that our ad-hoc Communications Committee really ought to be the ones to answer the meta-question of how things that will be published or otherwise end up in mass communication from the NCC get checked/vetted/approved. However, since that guidance hasn't yet been produced, we conclude that when it's believed the wording on the new brochure is ready to be reviewed, we should circulate a draft to the Board not to nitpick and attempt to redesign it, but to note needed corrections and perhaps discuss high-level feedback.

5) News on Clarksville neighbor changes

Son's Deli has been put up for sale, and the sign is still posted, so it doesn't look like anyone has bought it yet. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We note that the fact that they aren't open on Sundays means they're missing half of the caver business they could have. Berger expresses the usual concern about not knowing whether the new neighbors we'll eventually get are going to be caver-friendly. Engel reminds us of the odd arrangement regarding use and ownership of the two parking areas there, which can help to encourage friendly relations between us and our neighbor.

6) Convention

Simmons, Berger, and Hatfield attended the Cave Conservancies Roundtable. NSS management is working on making that a more structured event and group. This year, there was a presentation by SCCi on their permitting system and monitoring with game cameras. It was an interesting and well-done presentation, though we don't think there's much we can do with what was presented at this time, since we don't have the resources to put in the infrastructure (mostly wireless connectivity) that would be required at all of our preserves to follow their pattern and make regular monitoring of camera data feasible. There was also a less on-topic presentation that largely looked more like a trip report exploring another conservancy's cave. Hatfield attended and enjoyed the Convention, was introduced to many people by Davis and Warner, and reports that she had a long and productive conversation with B. Stringfellow about membership databases. Berger notes that "String" has been a great resource to him as well over the years, and among other

things was the person who introduced him to R. Knott several years ago at TAG Fall Cave-In. Hatfield also managed to acquire some donations from vendors for a future fundraiser event.

7) Resuming the Board development work

Hatfield is in the process of trying to go through her notes from that day to make them comprehensible by someone else. Berger explains that he added this item on the list because we had a good deal of momentum at the meeting, and we need to do something and pick the project back up before that has all died down. Folsom asks what's left to do, and Berger reminds us that Knott had introduced us to a 4-step process that involves identifying the organization's stakeholding groups, goals, steps for accomplishing them, etc., and that we only worked through the first two steps at the day-long intensive session, which might have been better able to complete its work at a multi-day event. He notes that having identified some goals has extremely limited value if we don't take the next steps of identifying tactical steps to work towards accomplishing them, and he also points out that our crop of officers' leadership time is nearing an end, and we really ought not to leave all the responsibility to move forward with what we began to the next group. Folsom suggests that if the way things work out is that Hatfield ends up taking on the Presidency next year, Dumont might then have enough bandwidth to take on leadership of this development project, especially given that he drove organization of its first steps. Hatfield concurs that the idea might work out well. She and Simmons will reach out to Dumont to discuss his thoughts on the topic.

8) Review for R. Knott

Berger passes along a report for Dumont that he's already written a review to share on LinkedIn about the great job Knott did facilitating our development intensive session. Simmons believes that it's in good shape and ready to submit, and has been working with Folsom on questions about how to have it appear as coming from our organization rather than just one individual, although Simmons has also written and posted his own individual review commending Knott's skill and contributions.

9) Caving Academy class recap

Berger mentions that he'd been involved in an early e-mail thread when the Caving Academy organizers were beginning to plan out cave access permissions for the recent course, and had quickly passed the part of the discussion that didn't focus on Knox-specific questions off to Engel as the Special Use Coordinator, and wasn't sure how things ended up panning out afterwards. However, he thought it would be of interest to the group to know that the structure of the Caving Academy program is rather different from an NCRC program in that it's dynamic with different parallel skill tracks being offered and with students being able to pick which tracks to pursue and, at various points, whether to switch their focus from day to day. Their course also moves at the progress level of the individual students, and so they don't actually know which locations will be useful for each day of the course in advance in the way that NCRC plans to bring Level 1 to cave X on day Y well in advance. As things turned out, zero of our caves ended up being used during the course; there was one day where a handful of students in one of the tracks visited the smaller pits on the NSS McFail's property, but it was the only cave preserve visited all week, and somewhat to the surprise of everyone involved, most of the students were at the Camp Pinnacle cliffs every day.

10) Upcoming OCR

There's one coming up from September 9-10. Berger received a notice about it from G. Moore, but isn't certain which cave will end up being used. Engel hadn't received a request yet.

11) Barn Dance

Difficulties in scheduling the band have led to the organizers deciding that we're going to take a year off from holding it, with the expectation that the event will probably resume next year.

12) Website

Hatfield asks whether we could get a grant to address the issues with getting it updated and modernized. Berger, after struggling to organize his thoughts, expresses the strong view that while we might be able to get a grant, it wouldn't end up getting us the results we actually want. He describes our needs and desires here as essentially being three nearly completely separate things: choosing a platform for the website (as in its software selection), having design layout work done to make it look the way we'd like and be responsive for both normal computers and mobile devices, and having the content continually updated to keep us looking alive and active. He points out that while you can hire any number of people to make a website for you, the vast majority of them will simply set up WordPress if you don't have very specific specs and find people with the actual skills to do something different (plus such people will almost certainly charge far more for their services). If we just have another WordPress, we will end up with exactly the same problem that happened this time (and Berger notes the reservations he expressed about this at the time, based on his experience running a large webhost in one of his other volunteer commitments). He also notes that we have multiple people in our group who are able to set up something else as volunteers. Designing layout for a website is a different skill set, and there are probably others in our community who could do that without contracting out some expensive job, too. Folsom asks Hatfield to describe what she wants from our website. She responds that she wants it to look good to people considering giving us money, etc. Folsom suggests that Berger, Chu, and Armen should discuss the technology and security issues to work towards choosing a platform other than WordPress.

13) Canadian visiting group

Simmons had a somewhat lengthy exchange with the contacts for this large Canadian group visiting our area over Labor Day weekend that has seemingly been e-mailing every cave management related list we're aware of, asking more or less the same questions (the answers to some of which are plainly available on our website), and asking questions about caves that aren't ours. Engel has also had some extensive communication with them. We're told that they've been informed that they need permits for certain caves and not others, that we don't have waivers, but some other landowners do, redirected to other people for information about caves that aren't ours, etc. Their group has had a different contact person take over, and there's more recently been another round of questions... including ones about caves that aren't ours.

14) Spring NRO

There was nothing major to recap from the last NRO.

15) Fall NRO

Engel is going and has volunteered to staff our booth. Folsom will head up there Saturday night as usual for the auction, and has already been planning his costume. Simmons asked whether we'd been cleared to run the auction, and Folsom reports that he'd been asked to do so by K. Moore. Berger mentions that the following NRO has not yet been claimed by a potential host, and asks whether we have any major fundraising push that we'd like to pursue by potentially hosting. Simmons notes that our "regime" will be out of office by that time, so we should discuss this at Committee of the Whole rather than here.

16) TAG

Berger hopes to attend, and notes that even though we don't set up a presence there as an organization, it's a good networking opportunity that has yielded some great information and possibilities in the past. He asks whether there are any specific topics we'd like him to investigate while there this year. There don't seem to be any.

17) Conflict of Interest Forms

Berger is still missing submissions from five Board members. Simmons will send a more forceful request that they be turned in.

18) Minutes from the past two Board meetings

Simmons tells Berger that the minutes from the March meeting were approved at the June meeting, with no alterations. And he owes the minutes from June.

19) Where we turn after not getting the Bender grant

Hatfield would like to make a fundraising appeal to try to replace the \$15k that the Bender Family Foundation Grant would've given us had our application been successful with donations. She reports that we already had \$20.5k pledged or donated towards the project when we learned that we had not been selected as a grant recipient. She points out that if the project involved building 71 steps, we can figure out how much the project will cost per step, and then run a drive asking people to buy a step, much like the NSS has their "buy a brick" program. We'd advertise it on Facebook, our mailing list, etc. She believes we can succeed at rounding up sufficient donations this way to bridge the gap between what's already been committed and what we'd have gotten with the Bender grant. She hopes to get this appeal out ahead of the Board meeting. There's also the possibility of setting up a raffle to draw in donations with some of the items that have already been given to us for fundraiser prizes. Berger recalls understanding that a bunch of the pledged money was contingent on us receiving the Bender grant, and that we'd need to ask whether we may still receive those funds in order to fund the project without the Bender grant. Hatfield confirms that this is accurate, though it seems likely that most of the pledged donors would be willing to make the same contribution as long as the same project is getting funded, regardless of whether the grant is involved.

20)



21) Workplace

Folsom tells us that Knott suggested that we set up our Workplace with mostly closed groups, aside from the open ones that we're all in together. Berger points out that while he realizes the desire was for the Board to get used to it a bit first, nobody other than the

Board is on Workplace, which means that it's hard to realistically have some of the groups that have been created actually function – the Technology Committee is missing its Chair, for example, and the Preserves aren't all managed by Board members. Folsom laments that until we start using it, nothing's really going to happen. Berger also reminds us that while this may be a good tool to encourage active communication, there are other more generic technology needs that we have and aren't going to really address even with full adoption of Workplace: document storage, conservation reporting, CRM.

22) Officer transitions

Given that we now have the Immediate Previous Officer positions, and that Simmons plans to be available to his successor to show them everything (and that President will be less of a monstrous position given that it'll be less involved with Acquisitions than it has been in the past), there's some confusion about what else needs to happen and why this topic was on the agenda. Berger explains that what he meant for this topic to be about was discussing what we need to do to safeguard things in case future officers aren't available to help make the transition smooth (either because they part on less than ideal terms, or because some major life event takes them away from us, and he notes that there's also no guarantee that between now and next year, nothing unfortunate will interfere with his and Simmons' ability to assist their successors). Engel suggests that we should perhaps have a more formalized way of keeping track of what each of the officers is doing. Berger mentions that he had hoped other Board members would've worked on producing some specifications for what the outgoing officers should do so that we could have started doing it already, rather than both figuring out what the best things to do would be and also executing on those tasks. Folsom inquires who might have worked on those specs. Berger responds that there are others in the NCC (both on and off the Board) who have a wealth of experience running other nonprofits, and mentions [REDACTED] as examples. Simmons thinks we might begin with an annotated outline of what our duties are, and expand on them as time permits in a sort of living document. We discussed when a goal for a first draft of these documents would be reasonable. We acknowledged that it would be hard to produce something useful of this type before the September Board meeting, but we also realized how short time will be after that meeting before we're out of office, and that these documents will probably need to be reviewed and go through additional drafts. Thus, Simmons and Berger will try to have something as a first pass to show at the September Board meeting.

23) Shingle Gully survey project permit

Folsom tells us that this is sort of stuck in the water. He'd been having a conversation with the Palisades Interstate Park Commission about filling out the permit application. Two of the three representatives were okay with the plan that had been under discussion, but one of them hasn't replied yet. Berger had been expecting a motion to approve filing the application to be on the September Board agenda, but given this news, expresses uncertainty about what he should place on the agenda. The conclusion is that Folsom will send Berger wording for a motion to apply for a research permit from the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) to complete the survey of caves in the Shingle Gully area of the Minnewaska State Park Preserve.

24) Boy Scout group requirements

Engel had posed some questions on this topic to the EC recently, and this topic was here to try to resolve what had seemed like an uncompleted topic. He informs us that the comments received had actually been sufficient for him to move forward, and he didn't need any further input.

25) Church & Wagon Wheel

Engel reports that the educational event he helped the owners out with went very well. [REDACTED] has a number of students there in a program that's like an informal home-schooled day camp. Engel spoke with the kids about caves at a picnic table in their yard. He also chatted with [REDACTED] about some other things. It seemed like a positive interaction.

26) Conservation bullet items to report to the NSS

Berger asked for items that could be contributed as content for his next report to the Conservation Section. The only item the group was able to think of was the talk Engel gave to some kids in the item above.

27) Property that Nieman has been helping to investigate near [REDACTED]

Back in May, Berger received an inquiry from someone requesting a Knox permit about whether the NCC could assist with investigating a potential cave on his property near [REDACTED]. After consulting with Engel, Berger connected the landowner with Nieman, who agreed to meet the landowner and check out the prospects. Later in June, this initial investigation happened, and Nieman agreed that it looks very promising and there appears to be some passage. Other commitments have been getting in the way of followup, but in response to this meeting's agenda, Nieman tells us that he's just reached back out to the landowner to try to schedule further work.

28) NEBWG 2024 sponsorship

Hatfield tells us that the cost of sponsorship for this conference has also gone up, as has its registration price. She believes the cost is now somewhere between \$300 and \$350, and entitles the sponsor to two complimentary registrations and an exhibit table. We'll proceed with sponsorship at the low tier, as planned.

29) Surprise Cave Volunteer Steward Agreement

Simmons tells us that we put in our renewal application in January for the agreement which expired in March, and the DEC still hasn't gotten back to him. As far as committee leadership on our end, we currently have a vacancy, and it looks likely that it may remain this way for a little while, but it is likely that Simmons will have interest in resuming chairing that committee when he's no longer President.

30) Update on Membership Committee transition

Folsom reports that Schultz has started doing the job, is looking into automating systems, and investigating CRMs.

31) Guide for landowners

Nothing to report on this topic.

32) Native American Acknowledgment ad-hoc Committee update

Nothing to report on this topic.

33) Onesquethaw winter bat protection device

Engel is going to try placing a phone call. He'll ask the new DEC staffer who their contact at the USFWS is.

34) Opportunity to collaborate with Secret Caverns

Engel needs to contact Mallory to discuss what we can do.

35) Preserve infrastructure buildouts

KLT has awarded a contract for the beginning of construction of the parking area after having succeeded in their applications for a couple of grants. We need that and a mini-trail to be completed before we can put our kiosk in. At Jack Packers, work is being done on a trail, and our proposed kiosk arrangement has been approved by the landowner, so it will be going in soon.

36) Salamander grand opening and website presence

We can't have the grand opening yet because we're waiting on KLT to have the parking lot constructed and to install the beginning of a trail. Then we can construct our portion of the trail and install our kiosk, which is the basic set of prerequisites for us to hold a grand opening ceremony. Our website still doesn't have a basic page about the preserve up.

37) Jack Packers grand opening

Simmons will light a fire under Dumont. This would be a nice thing to have happen this fall as an event since we're not going to be holding the Barn Dance. We also plan to invite representatives from the Bank of Greene County, which gave us a grant for some of the infrastructure.

38) Updates on the Rensselaer Land Trust / Rensselaer Plateau Alliance merger

There isn't very much development here in terms of our relationship with them. The merger has occurred. Simmons's primary contact there for the [REDACTED] is still the lead person.

39) Fundraising

We discussed a good deal about this earlier in the meeting (when discussing how to move forward without the Bender Family Foundation Grant). We also acknowledged the possibility that there may be a vacancy we'll need to fill in this position, depending on how Officer elections turn out at the December meeting.

40) Project Guestbook

As above, we discussed some of this earlier in the meeting.

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

No news has been heard on this front.

42) E-mail newsletter

The arrival of this topic elicited a sigh from Engel.

43) End of year appeal

Simmons thinks this will happen this year and will be likely to take the form of a "co-letter" from him and his successor. For that to work, as far as timing, it would need to go out pretty close to immediately after the December 3 Board meeting in order to arrive in time for recipients to consider end-of-year donations in response to it. Thus, it'll need to be drafted before the meeting.

44) Conservancy Communications ad-hoc Committee update

Nothing new on this topic.

45) Board Manual updates

The arrival of this topic elicited a sigh from Berger. He did, however, note a somewhat extensive discussion he had with N. Berg about the project recently.

46) Acquisitions

[REDACTED]

47) Report scheduling

The meeting is on Saturday, September 23.
First reminder e-mail to committees Monday, August 28th
Reports due to officers Monday, September 11th
Officer attachments due to the Secretary Monday, September 18th

End: 4:28pm