

Minutes

March 6, 2022 10:00 AM

HRP Associates, and Online via Videoconference

Meeting called to order at 10:18am

1. Introduction and greetings – Robert Simmons

2. Attendance

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

Trustees: D. Hedges(*), R. Armen, M. Ingalls(*), K. Dumont(*), E. Nieman, J. Morris-Siegel,

R. Drake(*), P. Rubin, L. Hatfield

(*) - Attended the meeting via videoconference

3. Absent with proxy: None

4. Absent without designated proxy: None

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 Morris-Siegel

For: Rest

Against: Engel

[The Committee of the Whole is opened]

Topics:

6.1 Speleothem dating scientific research proposal (Rubin)

[We've received a final version of the speleothem dating proposal that has been discussed in various e-mail threads and at previous meetings for consideration. We've been asked to place this discussion early in the agenda. However; note that this proposal being up for Board approval is contingent on approval of the amendments proposed to the Science Policy that will be discussed below in Item 6.7, and which will be voted on in Item 12. Should those amendments not pass, the proposal will need to be voted on by the per-preserve ad-hoc committees called for in the Science Policy rather than the Board. If the Science Policy amendments are approved, this proposal will be voted on in Item 13.]

[Drake departed for travel partway through this discussion.]

[REDACTED]



6.2. New York State Conservation Partnership Program (NYSCPP) scientific research project and other grant updates (Simmons)

[This is the usual followup topic on progress with the grant project and equipment loans/rentals.]

Simmons tells us that we have put in applications for the last two acquisitions, and are now waiting for results (he also notes that last year, news of the decisions was significantly delayed).

6.3. Bensons Cave Preserve Management Plan review (Mazza)

[This is the periodic review of this preserve's management plan. A draft of the Management Plan with the proposed revisions was circulated by the Preserve Manager and is also included in the meeting materials. Approval will be voted on in Item 11.]

Morris-Siegel reported that Mazza (who wasn't able to make the meeting) had made an update to the proposed plan based on feedback received after the last revision was sent out, all of which was minor, and that there didn't seem to be any disagreement among any of the people who'd provided feedback along the way.

He also tells us that this was the first time we've used Google Docs to work on a plan's revisions, and that he was happy with how it worked, and would like to continue doing reviews this way. There are, of course, a small number of folks who don't have Google accounts, but they're able to participate in the review process with the link even without an account. Berger says that he thinks this can work fine, but that we'll need to tackle an issue not seen before presented by a "live" document - cutoff points where static snapshots of the document are taken for the Board to all review the same version of it for discussion. Morris-Siegel suggested his desired schedule for people to get preliminary comments in, and then that the document can be locked after that point.

6.4. Fundraising efforts (Hatfield)

[There are multiple fundraising initiatives. We can discuss and update on these here.]

Hatfield informs us that we unfortunately did not receive the Mtn Dew grant we'd applied for, but that we might try again next year. She sent some Preserve Managers information about the Bender Family Foundation Grant, which gives awards up to \$10k. One challenge with this grant program is that of schedule - they make decisions in August, and you cannot apply for funding of anything that's already been completed, so any projects we consider for it wouldn't be able to start until then. The best target for this grant is probably the Knox sinkhole trail

restoration project. She also notes that they have a related program - the Bender Scientific Fund - which could fund work such as the acoustic study that had been undertaken for the Human Influences on Caves project. There's also a grant of about \$1k that she's looking into for succession planning. Spring NRO is coming up, with all the associated fundraising opportunities there. We'd like to run the Give & Gear Up raffle again this year, although Drake will be in Alaska for much of that period, but since we've now seen how to do it once, hopefully others can fill the gap and we can still run the event. Hatfield also tells us about the investigations into the Dip Jar she'd previously described to us - it seems like a nice idea, but the costs associated with it make it too expensive an option for us at this time. Finally, she tells us about having seen fundraising folks at other events wearing a shirt with a QR code on the back that others can scan to make a donation to the hosting organization.

6.5. Reporting of conservation efforts (Berger)

[Berger has acquired a new role that requires him to periodically report on cave and karst conservation efforts in our region, and would like to make everyone aware of what he's looking for, and to seek input on others he should be polling for relevant developments.]

Berger explains that he recently agreed to take on the role of reporting to the NSS Conservation Division various cave and karst conservation efforts undertaken in our region of the country. These reports get distributed at NSS BOG meetings. So, he asks that anyone aware of efforts we'd like to share with the broader caving world get included in NCC preserve reports when they relate to our preserves, as that's the most obvious source of info for this upstream report, and that people send him notes about any other efforts worth reporting. He'd also appreciate anyone telling him of other groups or people he should be periodically polling for bullet points to include in that report.

6.6. The Surprise Cave Committee's continued existence (Engel)

[In light of [REDACTED] and the fact that we have an engaged contact in DEC's central office external to this Committee, the question of whether this Committee should continue to exist has been raised. See the Surprise Cave Committee report in Attachment B.]

Engel reviewed the dual-track relationship we have with Surprise Cave where there's some coordination via the DEC's Central Office through the Wildlife Diversity Unit, and then this committee. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and asking whether we should seek to fill the vacancy or allow the committee to dissolve. Simmons notes that he's been the frontline person interacting with the landowner of the other entrance to the cave, and that our stewardship agreement with the DEC for the cave will expire in 2023, and so he thinks it would be good for us to continue to have someone in the role. Folsom points out that we can leave the committee here with the position open rather than have someone immediately jump into it - we can wait for there to be progress leading to work for the committee to take on. Armen agrees that we should keep the committee. Engel thinks that's fine.

6.7. Science Policy amendment proposal (Engel)

[Engel has proposed some revisions to the NCC's Science Policy, both to bring it into sync with the changes we made to the boilerplate research proposal language in preserve management plans recently, and to address the suggestion that the Board may consider proposals that involve multiple preserves as an alternative to having separate ad-hoc committees for each involved preserve consider those. See discussion in Item 10 in the EC Meeting Minutes in Attachment D. Approval will be voted on in Item 12.]

Berger begins with a procedural note that Engel had submitted a motion appearing later in the agenda with a document up for discussion here, and that as it's his motion, others cannot replace the document that his motion seeks to approve, so what's up for discussion presently is the set of amendments received from Engel and included in the official meeting materials. Rubin notes that he and L. Davis were also involved in reviewing the drafted amendments, and suggests that we can consider one set of amendments and then the other. Berger explains that the point of having a Committee of the Whole discussion on a draft document is to be able to collaboratively reach consensus on adjustments to it, and that since the set of differences Rubin and Davis seek are fairly self-contained, the process calls for discussing each of those proposed changes and either making them or not in this discussion, rather than having this discussion, and then considering a competing version of the document.

Engel explains that one of the changes Rubin wanted was to add historical and cultural research to the policy. He opposes this because it's a science policy, and he's also not sure why researching history and culture would even require a special permit. However, he points out that if there's a strong desire among the group to include those additional categories in the policy, we could dissolve the Science Committee and reformulate it as the Research Committee. Rubin continues to feel that including historical and cultural research here would be a positive thing, and some mention was made of the possible issue of collecting and studying artifacts in the cave, which might not be handled all that differently from speleothems as in the scientific proposal also being discussed today.

Rubin also points out the change that he and Davis sought to ensure that the Board consider multi-cave proposals, and which Armen suggested a wording change to which would give the Science Coordinators the choice

about whether to bring the proposal to the Board rather than the preserve-based ad-hoc review committees. Rubin further seeks to adjust that wording to also allow such approval to happen at Zoom meetings. Morris-Siegel feels that the Stewardship Coordinator should also be somehow tied into the approval process. Berger vehemently insists that the word “Zoom” not appear in this policy - the ways in which the Board is allowed to conduct business and have meetings are specified elsewhere in our Bylaws and Acts, and do not belong in a Science (or other) Research Policy. Further, he points out that as Rubin notes, the goal of those wording changes is “to make science move,” which was the precise reason that the current policy came into existence - the approval process was moved from the Board to the preserve-based ad-hoc review committees to decouple them from the Board’s quarterly schedule and allow approvals to happen on their own schedule. Despite that, Berger points out that the Board already has the flexibility to conduct urgent business by electronic vote (difficult though that can be for issues which may be contentious), and to hold special meetings outside of the regular quarterly schedule, and that any of those meetings can happen in person or via teleconference or videoconference. He also reminds us that the Board currently schedules its quarterly meetings six months out because scheduling them three months out was resulting in people having too many surprise conflicts; he believes that we’re kidding ourselves if we think we’ll be able to arrange for everyone to have the same time block free on short notice for anything other than the most earth-shattering events. Finally, in response to Morris-Siegel’s comment about wanting to tie in the Stewardship Coordinator, Berger notes that Engel’s proposed revisions provide for the President to be able to select a designee to serve in his place on preserve-based ad-hoc review committees, and it seems likely that the most suitable designee would often be the Stewardship Coordinator. In summary, he believes that both the NCC’s existing rules and Engel’s proposed revisions are seeking to offer all of the desired flexibility, and succeeding at doing so. Armen notes that in order to be able to take advantage of Special Meetings of the Board, we should strike the “regularly scheduled” language from the sentence that he had proposed; Berger concurs.

Hatfield thinks that the Board should probably stay out of the decision about whether a particular proposal should come to it versus the preserve-based ad-hoc committees, and that the Stewardship Coordinator should probably make that decision. Engel believes that if a proposal needs to be handled quickly, it should stick to the preserve-based procedure rather than coming to the Board. He also thinks that we’re getting ourselves all wrapped up in the speleothem dating proposal that’s under current discussion, despite that it’s exceptionally rare to receive a proposal of such broad scope (this is the first time it’s happened), and that we’re not looking at the general case. He feels that the EC can decide which way to send a proposal for approval.

Coming back to the issue of whether to include “cultural and historic,” Davis points out that nearly any anthropologist would tell you that, for example, pottery is a cultural artifact, which would have the same sorts of concerns about collection that speleothems do, and so he thinks “cultural and historic” should be included in the policy. He also reaffirms that as far as multi-preserve proposals go, this is, as Engel believed, the first we’ve handled, and by far the most complex. Rubin agrees with Davis. Berger believes that it’s appropriate for it to be the Science Committee’s decision about which path to send a proposal down for review rather than the ECs. He feels that the EC’s job description of running the day-to-day business of the Conservancy in between the Board meetings and ensuring that all of the things the Board decides should be done get taken care of includes providing assistance to any committees (including Science or Research) which find themselves stuck and unable to make headway on something. So, he thinks that if the Science Committee is trying the preserve route for approval of a proposal and it’s not working out, they should make use of the EC to see whether they’re able to get things unstuck prior to a Board meeting. Armen reminds us that it’s not necessarily required that a separate proposal be written for each preserve in a multi-preserve project - the same proposal can simply be handed to multiple of the ad-hoc committees if it describes enough of the project to be evaluated for more than one preserve. And he reminds us that we’ve been told during earlier discussion today that the speleothem proposal would already have received approval from both Clarksville’s and Knox’s Managers had it been submitted to them in its current form before today (and the same is likely true of other preserves).

Simmons is troubled that there are some significant structural flaws in the proposed policy, severe enough that he doesn’t feel this set of policy amendments is in a state where it can be ready for approval today. Chief among the flaws he sees is that it’s entirely unclear how the ad-hoc preserve-based committees are to take a vote. He notes that when the proposal from BCI to install an acoustic monitor at Knox was received, things were much more clear because there was one President, one Science Committee Chair, and one Preserve Manager, so if two of them voted to approve, the outcome was known. But there are now two Science Committee Co-Chairs, and preserves with anywhere between one and three Managers, and we haven’t accounted for how a vote of the ad-hoc committees works under these variable conditions. He’s also unsettled about the organization of the policy, which is doing things such as discussing mechanics of approval in the section that describes how to propose the project. At this point, Berger mentions that in the course of reviewing the policies and Manual while folding this item into the agenda for this meeting, he had noted that just as Engel brought up the policy revisions when he realized it was now out of sync with the research boilerplate language in our management plans, we’ve missed something else that will require further work - the template research permit in the Manual that follows the policy is also out of sync with both the boilerplate language and the current policy. He had decided that it was too late to throw that into the mix, and planned to raise updating that template permit at the next Board meeting to bring everything into alignment.

Engel agrees that there's a bunch of cleanup that should be done to address Simmons's concerns, and says that he'll draft a fixed-up version of it and circulate it for the next meeting. Rubin asks why the Science Committee shouldn't be the ones to draft it. Berger begs that the same thing that happened today not happen again - that two competing documents get sent to the Board, causing confusion, and he attempts to insist that if Engel and the Science Coordinators aren't in agreement about something, they try to sort out the differences, and if they can't, they put forth a document as a baseline containing what they can agree on and then discuss the differences of opinion they have when the document comes up in CotW so that the group can reach consensus on which way to go on each topic. He reminds everyone that it's possible to simply bring a document up for approval in a motion, and then hash out amendments to it during motion discussion, but that the reason we typically choose to instead open the document to discussion during Committee of the Whole is that discussing it at a time when motions are not on the floor prevents people from trying to "out-Robert's-Rules" each other and allows everyone (including our guests who are not on the Board) to have a say and reach a group consensus about what we can all live with, in order to make the actual business portion of the meeting smooth and non-contentious. Simmons believes that explanation was well-stated. Engel confirms that he'd appreciate if Berger took the first crack at drafting the necessary fixes for the template permit, while he works with the Science Committee on another attempt at cleaning up the policy itself.

6.8. Chronolog (Engel)

[We've been contacted about this citizen science project that enables long-term monitoring at various sites. See discussion in the Science Committee report in Attachment B and in Item 8 of the EC Meeting Minutes in Attachment D.]

Engel had been under the impression that we'd handed off seeking input about whether to participate in this project to Morris-Siegel in his Stewardship Coordinator role. Berger had placed it here because he thought the discussion at the EC meeting ended with thinking that it should probably be a CotW topic. In any case, Engel reviewed the background about this project that places fixed posts at sites to be monitored for changes over time, and visitors place their phones on the posts, take a picture, and upload it to the project's site, ultimately resulting in a time-lapse video of what's changed. Berger had wondered whether this might be of interest at the sites where we have or will have interpretive surface trails (e.g. Merlins and Clarksville), or whether it'd be useful for observing changes to water bars. Simmons also notes that there are significant trails to be constructed at Salamander. Morris-Siegel questions whether our preserves are really visited enough to end up with meaningful time-lapse images, but will pursue input from the various Preserve Managers.

6.9. Memorandum of Understanding with the NSS (Simmons)

[We've discussed planning to ensure that in the event that the Conservancy becomes insolvent or otherwise ceases to exist, our preserves will end up in the hands of another qualified cave conservation organization, such as the NSS, as specified in our Certificate of Incorporation. Simmons has drafted a Memorandum of Understanding to this effect, modeled after one that the NSS recently entered into with another cave conservancy. See discussion in Item 31 in the EC Meeting Minutes in Attachment D. Approval will be voted on in Item 15.]

Simmons tells us that the document he's drafted was modeled after the Cave Conservancy of Hawai'i's MoU with the NSS. There's some question about why we need this document given that our Articles specify what happens to our land if the NCC fails. Berger explains that this is all about planning - the fact that our Articles say that the NSS (if it still exists and is qualified) will get our properties doesn't automatically mean that they'd be prepared to be in a position to accept them, and might either decline entirely or have to sell them off if they weren't prepared to steward the preserves. He notes that this topic had come up multiple years in a row at the Cave Conservancies Roundtable at Convention, and that it's all about planning to make sure everyone's on the same page about what will happen in the event of a disaster to make sure our preserves are protected forever. Morris-Siegel provides another example of where the need for this kind of MoU has been demonstrated - he tells us of another group whose founding documents specified that their properties would go to the Berkshire Natural Resources Council if they were to fail. BNRC was unaware of this, and unprepared for it, and when the other organization did fail, were not in a position to accept the properties.

6.10. 2022 Members Day (Simmons)

[The 2021 Members Day was very successful, and it's time to figure out what this year's will look like. See discussion in Item 34 in the EC Meeting Minutes in Attachment D.]

Simmons reminds us of the fantastic event that was held last year, and that it's definitely something we want to do again. We briefly thought about whether we could hold it at another preserve, and especially given the issue of parking, there really isn't another suitable one at the moment, so we'd be looking to hold it at Clarksville again. The EC had decided to list July 23 as a tentative date for it. Essentially whenever we hold it this summer, Drake will be away, so we'll need a stand-in for Membership, which Hatfield is willing to do. It's pointed out that the tentative date is at the end of NCRC, which may or may not be an issue for a couple of people, and Berger points out that as the world is opening back up, pretty much every weekend in the summer is likely to conflict with something or other. Then someone else pointed out that it conflicts with the International Congress of Speleology.

At this point, we looked more seriously at other dates and landed on Saturday July 9th. Berger points out that there's only one more Board meeting before then, and so if we wish to award the Certificate of Merit this year, we'll need to get our act in gear to have a slate of awardees for the Board to approve at the June meeting. Simmons appreciates the reminder, and thinks we should be able to work on this at the next EC meeting ahead of the June Board meeting.

6.11. Parks and Preserves layer in the Albany County GIS (Engel)

[Albany County's GIS has a layer showing parks and preserves, including e.g. Thacher Park and some of the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy's preserves. None of ours currently are shown on that layer, and the question has been posed of whether we might be interested in having some or all of our preserves there. See discussion in Item 7 in the EC Meeting Minutes in Attachment D.]

Engel tells us that parks and preserves in this layer light up in green when you turn it on, and none of ours are currently included, and he asks whether we want some or all of them to be. He also points out that the State Environmental Review Act has some standards for events that are happening adjacent to a park or preserve. Morris-Siegel tells us that in Massachusetts, most open spaces are added automatically to those layers, and that while privately owned preserves can be added, in most cases, the things you'd expect to be in those layers are there even if you don't ask for them to be put in. Armen feels that it seems disingenuous for us to ask others (like the county in this layer) to list what we don't - we don't put preserve locations on our website, and we forbid sharing their locations in the management plans. Hedges agrees with this sentiment. Engel is neutral on the topic, but notes that it could help with our community visibility.

6.12. E-mail newsletter (Folsom)

[There is interest in trying to put out a periodic HTML e-mail newsletter as some other cave conservancies and many other nonprofits do, to try to reach our members better than the quarterly PDF newsletters do. See discussion in Item 33 in the EC Meeting Minutes in Attachment D.]

Folsom believes everyone is basically familiar with this initiative from prior discussions and some examples that have been circulated from other organizations. Armen asks what would be changed from the current newsletter content. The main difference would be that the content wouldn't be in an attachment that we know many people don't bother to open. Engel asks about how we advertise positions - specifically, whether it's required that they appear in the formal newsletter document. Berger replies that sending e-mail to the membership list also suffices (and has been encouraged of late). Dumont reminds us that at the last meeting, an ad-hoc Conservancy Communications Committee was established, and cautions us against doing something that might then have to change fairly soon thereafter. Engel suggests that we'd have each a quarterly e-mail and a PDF newsletter, but with different content. Folsom asks what the call to action is here, and whether it should be to put out a solicitation to the membership for someone interested in working on this. While that does seem to be what the group thinks is next, Berger points out that someone should loop in D. Brass to make sure that he understands what we're working on, and that he's not being pushed out as the Newsletter Editor. Simmons will make that contact.

6.13. NRO (Folsom)

Folsom reminds the group that there are a number of things that go on at NRO from which we can potentially earn some money to put in our savings - the registrations, the auction, a raffle, meals, etc. He also briefly described the event for everyone. However, while we formed an ad-hoc committee last time to be able to handle an emergency that would require cancellation of the event, he recently noted that there didn't seem to be a planning committee actually working on *running* the event. Engel offers that he could go up there Friday to help with registration. Folsom's plan at this point is to continue along the path of planning the event as usual, and to twist the arms of folks he needs to take care of various pieces of it, and he thanks us in advance for our assistance when called upon. Cantello discussed some concerns and suggestions for mitigating risks at the event in light of the pandemic. Simmons confirmed that we plan to hold the event in largely the traditional manner, without omitting major components of it, and that we expect that people will take the degree of precautions they feel appropriate at the time of the event.

6.14. Membership Committee help (Drake)

Drake has outlined in the Membership Committee report a period of approximately four months beginning in April where her availability will be unreliable, and has asked for help filling in. Hatfield has agreed to do this at some events, such as Members' Day. Morris-Siegel suggests that we ask P. Youngbaer if he'd be willing to fill in for a short stint, and Simmons agreed to check with him.

6.15. Convention representation (Berger)

Berger notes that Convention is coming up in the next few months, and is likely to actually happen in-person this time. We asked who among us is likely to go and could be designated as representatives of the NCC. It looks like the most probable attendees are Ingalls, Morris-Siegel, Armen, and Berger. Fortunately, Convention will

happen a short time after the June Board meeting, so we have a bit of time for plans to solidify, and will include an item of New Business in June to designate our formal representatives.

6.16. NYS Land Conservation Conference (Hatfield)

Hatfield tells us that this is coming up in Saratoga on May 5-6 (a Thursday and Friday). Registration is \$140, and there's a hotel block rate of \$149/night if booked by April 6. Berger asks Engel about the field trip that he'd been working on planning the last time it was going to be in Saratoga, and Engel says that it really doesn't work because of travel time - upon reaching Clarksville, the bus would have to look out the window as they turned around to head back! Berger says he'd think about going. Morris-Siegel asks what we have in the budget for this. It appears that we have \$300 for conference attendees, which would allow two people to register. Hatfield is interested. Engel says he could go for the day on the 6th. Simmons is likely to go, but would pay his own way. We'll plan to designate Hatfield as the NCC representative in New Business.

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

Second by Hatfield

For: Rest

Against: Morris-Siegel

Absent: Drake

[The Committee of the Whole is closed]

Old Business

8. Simmons moves: The Board of the Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. hereby authorizes up to \$1,802.70 for the Cash Match portion of the New York State Conservation Partnership Program Grant for the Salamander Preserve Acquisition that are not covered by direct individual donations. Further, the Board directs that \$2,500.00 shall be placed into a dedicated stewardship fund for the Salamander Cave Preserve.

Second by Berger

For: Ingalls, Hatfield, Folsom, Rubin, Morris-Siegel, Drake, Armen, Nieman, Berger, Simmons, Dumont, Hedges, Engel

[\$1,802.70 is authorized for the NYSCPP Acquisition Grant Cash Match for Salamander, and \$2,500 is set aside for its stewardship]

[This motion was handled via electronic vote conducted between 12/13/2021 8:32am and 12/14/2021 6:08am.]

9. Simmons moves: The Board of the Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. hereby authorizes up to \$2,620.00 for the Cash Match portions of the New York State Conservation Partnership Program Grant for the Clarksville Preserve Acquisition that are not covered by direct individual donations. Further, the Board directs that \$1,610.00 of that amount shall be placed into a dedicated stewardship fund for the Clarksville Cave Preserve.

Second by Berger

For: Hatfield, Morris-Siegel, Engel, Hedges, Folsom, Dumont, Nieman, Rubin, Armen, Ingalls, Simmons, Drake, Berger

[\$2,620.00 is authorized for the NYSCPP Acquisition Grant Cash Match for Clarksville, and \$1,610 is set aside for its stewardship]

[This motion was handled via electronic vote conducted between 12/14/2021 6:17am and 12/14/2021 4:47pm.]

New Business

10. Berger moves: The minutes of the December 5, 2021 Board Meeting are approved.

[The Secretary would like to thank Morris-Siegel, Folsom, Hatfield, and Dumont for sending in their reviews.]

Second by Hatfield

For: Rest

Absent: Drake

[The minutes of the December 5, 2021 Board Meeting are approved]

11. Morris-Siegel moves: The revisions to the Bensons Cave Preserve Management Plan, as amended during Committee of the Whole, are approved.

[The proposed revisions will have been discussed in Item 6.3 during Committee of the Whole.]

Second by Engel

For: Rest

Absent: Drake

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

12. Engel moves: The amendments to the Science Research Policy and Procedures (Appendix C in the NCC Board Manual), as discussed and amended during Committee of the Whole, are approved. Further, Act 67-32 (Research Policy and Procedures), which is

the Act which requires that the policies and procedures in Appendix C be followed, is renamed “Science Research Policy and Procedures” and “Research Policy” is replaced with “Science Research Policy” each time it appears in that Act.

[The proposed amendments were circulated with the meeting materials, and discussed in Item 6.7 during Committee of the Whole.]

Second by Berger

Rubin reminds us that during Committee of the Whole, we agreed to revisit this Policy to make some further revisions at the next meeting. Armen requests that the sentence under the “Procedure for Proposing a Research Project” section that gives the Board the option to “review the project” be adjusted to replace that phrase with “review and make a decision on the project.” Engel and Berger accept this as a friendly amendment.

For: Rest

Absent: Drake

[The proposed amendments to the Science Research Policy and Procedures are approved, and Act 67-32 is amended]

13. Simmons moves: The scientific research project proposal “Developing a speleothem growth history in upstate New York” submitted by Jeremy Shakun and David McGee is approved with the following conditions:

a) The investigators will contact and coordinate with Preserve Managers prior to any sampling.

b) The investigators will follow the proposal received March 1, 2022.

c) To the extent possible, all speleothem fragments will be returned to the cave, in the approximate location they were collected from, by the ending date of the proposal.

[This proposal has been circulated to the Board along with a letter of endorsement from the Science Committee Chairs, and was discussed during Committee of the Whole in Item 6.1, as well as at several other meetings and via e-mail.]

Second by Rubin

For: Rest

Against: Engel

Absent: Drake

[The “Developing a speleothem growth history in upstate New York” scientific research proposal is approved with the stipulated conditions]

14. Simmons moves: The President is hereby authorized to effect the sale of up to 9 of the NCC’s Wildlife Acoustics SM4Bat acoustic monitoring units to Stantec for the approximate price of \$650 each.

[We have been seeking to find a better home for a reasonable price for these units for some time since the conclusion of the portion of the research project they were purchased for. See discussion in the Bat Hibernation ad-hoc Committee report in Attachment A.]

Second by Engel

For: Rest

Absent: Drake

[The President may arrange to sell up to 9 acoustic detectors for approximately \$650 each]

15. Simmons moves: The draft Memorandum of Understanding between the Northeastern Cave Conservancy (NCC) and the National Speleological Society (NSS), as discussed and amended during Committee of the Whole, is approved and the President is directed to forward the draft to the NSS Administrative Vice President for consideration and discussion by the NSS.

[This draft MoU is included with the meeting materials, and was discussed in Item 6.9 during Committee of the Whole.]

Second by Morris-Siegel

For: Rest

Absent: Drake

[The MoU between the NCC and NSS is approved, and the President shall forward it to the NSS AVP for NSS consideration]

16. Simmons moves: Hatfield is appointed as the NCC representative to the New York State Land Conservation Conference.

Second by Engel

For: Rest

Absent: Drake

[Hatfield is the NCC’s representative to the NYS Land Conservation Conference]

Informational point: The NCC will be hosting the NRO the weekend of May 20-22. We will need volunteers to assist, auction items, etc.

Informational point: The 2022 NCC Members Day will be Saturday, July 9, 2022 at the Clarksville Cave Preserve.

Informational point: Next EC meeting will be Saturday, April 30, 2022 at 10AM in the conference room at the Thacher Park Visitor Center or 9AM if entirely via videoconference.

Informational point: the Summer Board meeting will be Sunday, June 5, 2022 at 10AM at the Chu residence or 9AM if entirely via videoconference.

Informational point: the late Summer EC meeting will be Sunday, August 28, 2022 at 10AM at a location to-be-determined or 9AM if entirely via videoconference.

17. Simmons moves: The NCC Fall meeting will be Saturday, September 24, 2022 at 10AM at HRP Associates or 9AM if entirely via videoconference.

Second by Armen

For: Rest

Absent: Drake

[The NCC Fall meeting will be Saturday, September 24, 2022 at 10AM at HRP Associates or 9AM if entirely via videoconference]

18. Hatfield moves: The NCC thanks Bob Simmons and HRP Associates for hosting this meeting.

Second by Morris-Siegel

For: Rest

Abstain: Simmons

Absent: Drake

[Bob Simmons and HRP Associates have the NCC's thanks for hosting this meeting]

19. Engel moves to adjourn.

Second by Berger

For: Rest

Against: Morris-Siegel, Hatfield

Absent: Drake

[The meeting is adjourned]

Meeting adjourned at 2:42pm

Attachment A President's Report

1. Can you say Preserve number 12? I signed the lease agreement for the Jack Packers property this weekend and we are officially in control of the property. Let the infrastructure build out planning commence.
2. I submitted NYSCPP grants for the Salamander donation and the Thook donation costs. I also filed the grant closeout report for the Traino Preserve grant, which was due in January. I provided a letter of support for the KLT Acquisition Grant for the adjacent property, and they also provided a similar letter to us for our grant application.
3. I have a hot lead for selling off most of the bat acoustic detector units to an Environmental Consulting firm at a decent price. See motion on agenda.
4. The Access Easement for Salamander Cave has been signed. I hope to have the agreement filed on the county records this week. Planning for infrastructure build out, web page presence, opening ceremony, etc. are underway.
5. I would like the Governance Committee discussions to begin focusing on succession planning in a serious manner as Mitch and I are in our final terms and the same will happen this coming year to Thom and Bill.
6. Kudos to Morgan for getting us some academic help on the data we collected for the monitoring project (see report below).
7. I have drafted an MOU between the NCC and the NSS for the disposition of our properties should either organization become insolvent in the future. This was modeled after the recent MOU between the Cave Conservancy of Hawaii and the NSS.
8. Spring NRO will be upon us before you know it. The team could use a few more volunteers, plus we need to start accumulating items for the Saturday night auctions. We should also solicit meal proposals from the Grottos, with the thought that the funds raised would go to a specific project or projects.

Cave Preserve Management Plan Review Schedule

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

Luke has circulated the Bensons MP and several have provided comments. Will be up for approval at this meeting.

With the signing of the Jack Packers lease, I have removed the highlights from it on the schedule.

CAVE PRESERVE REPORTS.

Bentleys Cave Preserve (Devon Hedges, Jonah Spivak)

Progress: Kiosk & signage materials are being developed.

Issues: A few persistently wet areas along trail could use some steppingstones. Visits since last report found no significant changes.

Plans : Improve trails (corduroy, stones), work with Jonah Spivak on driveway (broad based dip, water bar, additional stone), kiosk & signage improvements

Bensons Cave Preserve (Luke Mazza)

Progress: 2022 brings newly printed and partially redesigned kiosk posters to the preserve. They feature more professional-looking photos courtesy of Erik Nieman and are printed on polyfilm, which was advertised as “Outdoor Poster” material from VistaPrint. There was much discussion among the preserve managers about the best materials or printing services to use for this purpose, and I ultimately settled on this option primarily due to a much lower cost than the alternatives. All my pricing research was shared with the group. I’m hopeful that they will last a good long while mounted under the existing acrylic sheets already on the kiosk. There was also discussion among the preserve managers about better standardizing the kiosk posters among the preserves, on which there was mixed opinions, but it merits further discussion. Property was inspected on 2/13.

Issues: Winter storms have accumulated various fallen limbs on the trails which will need to be dealt with.

Plans: Once the weather warms up a bit the new posters will get mounted, and the tree debris will be dealt with.

Clarksville Cave Preserve (Mike Chu, Thom Engel, & Chuck Porter)

Progress: Nothing to report

Issues: People continued to enter the cave after closure. It was not until the first significant snowfall that this ceased. Thom Engel thinks we should seriously consider having a seasonal gate.

Plans: We plan to rebuild the changing area. Current scheduled work date is 23 April 2022

Ella Armstrong Cave Preserve (Erik Nieman)

Progress: Trail maintenance/trees cleared

Issues: Weeds in parking area.

Plans: Ongoing project to clear the weeds overtaking the parking area

Merlins Cave Preserve (Morgan Ingalls and Ramon Armen)

Progress: There have been no known trips into Dragon Bones and Merlins as they have been closed for the winter. The data from the temperature and humidity logger was given to students at University of Maryland for analysis. A temporary lid was built and put in place at Dome 12 to protect the culvert during the winter. There was one dig trip to Dome 12 since the last report, digging on the dry side of the cave. A significant amount of material had washed out of that side as a result of the heavy rains over the summer, and digging is expected to continue on both sides of the cave in 2022. However, it is likely currently inaccessible due to ice buildup at the top of the culvert.

Problems: The kiosk sign is in bad shape and needs replacing. Some property boundary markers need replacing. Dome 12 culvert still needs to be extended.

Plans: Investigate kiosk sign replacement. Continue to look for 36" diameter by 8' long culvert to protect Dome 12 from future flooding. Continue the dig project in Dome 12 once it warms up enough for comfortable digging. Analyze the data from the data logger. Replace the boundary and trail markers where needed. There also needs to be some surface work to clear up trees that fell across the trail during the storms over the summer and fall. Some of these trees are very large and will require a chainsaw to remove.

Knox Cave Preserve (Mitch Berger)

Progress: Preserve checkup happened on 2/20/22. Simmons has gotten us in touch with the folks from Tahawus who are working on the trails for KLT at Salamander to discuss the sinkhole restoration project, and Hatfield has identified another prospect for a grant to fund the project.

Issues: I still owe Hatfield some verbiage for a questionnaire that's part of the grant pre-application process. There's a small tree that's fallen across part of the trail that will need either a saw or chainsaw to clear. We don't yet have a final plan or budget for the trail restoration project. The Great Divide rope is [presumably] still there. Engel and Berger still need to investigate what may be poison parsnip plants. The path down the sinkhole is degrading and in need of restoration work (in the process of consultation for planning).

Plans: Periodic property inspections. Get Hatfield what she needs for the grant pre-application. Cut and remove the fallen tree from the trail. Continue to consult with trail experts on restoration planning. Addition of trail markers and reposting of property. Boundary marking. Removal of the Great Divide rope. Investigation of troublesome plant species. Further attempts at removal of ancient graffiti.

Onesquethaw Cave Preserve (Thom Engel, Christa Hay, & Ellen Schwartz)

Progress: Nothing to report. There has been no sign of visitation.

Issues: Nothing to report

Plans: I have contacted Noelle Raymann-Metcalf at USF&WS regarding a bat-exclusion device for the cave and am awaiting hearing from her. (I will update as appropriate.) This might allow winter access. Should we achieve this, we should consider doing some plowing. In the winter it is hard to park entirely off the road.

Salamander Cave Preserve (Cara Gentry, Erik Richards, Bob Simmons)

Progress: Easement signed.

Issues: Trail designs under consideration by KLT based on Tahawus Trails consultation. Kiosk needs to be constructed, along with changing area. A design similar to the Merlins Preserve where the two are combined might make the most sense. Need to get the preserve up on the web site with its own page. Update Management Plan to reflect Easement, etc.

Plans: Schedule a workday for trail improvement (temporary) and kiosk/changing area construction. Complete web page mockup and get it up on the site. Schedule a formal "Opening" ceremony day for the preserve for this summer. Record Easement on County Records. Review Management Plan and have an updated version ready for June Board meeting.

Sellecks Cave Preserve (Erik Nieman, Tony Vasile)

Progress: Temporary sign with updated contact info placed at kiosk, along with a QR code that leads directly to the Sellecks Preserve page on the NCC website. (following the Onesquethaw Preserve example)

Issues: Kiosk is irreparably broken. Kiosk needs new poster with updated information.

Plans: Replace kiosk with one stored at Mike Chu's house? (if available). Update contact info for preserve. New informational poster?

Spider Cave Preserve (Kevin Dumont & Adriane Hectus)

Progress: The preserve was visited on February 16, 2022. The parking area hasn't been plowed by the town all winter, reflecting the apparent fact that they no longer use it as a turn-around. Some large branches were cleared from the trail and away from the entrance.

Issues: None to report.

Plans: Clearing of fallen trees from the stream way, trash collection along route 146, replacement of missing/fallen boundary markers, and creation of a trail along both the base and the top of the escarpment are tentatively planned for the spring/summer of 2022.

Traino Karst Preserve (Devon Hedges)

Progress: Kiosk construction and installation completed.

Problems: ice all over, winter, another contractor added to the plan

Plans: Find excavation contractors, Order and install landscaping fabric and crusher run stone for parking area; Plan and construct changing area; survey completion in Slingerland's and approved digging.

Jack Packers Preserve (Kevin Dumont)

No Report at this time, but added this to the list as the lease agreement is now signed!

Stewardship Coordinator (Jacob Morris-Siegel)

April and early May will be a good time for workdays. Preserve Managers should coordinate with me to avoid having 2 workdays on the same day. Currently only the Clarksville changing area replacement is scheduled.

OTHER COMMITTEES (PRESIDENT):

Acquisitions (Chuck Porter, Bob Simmons)

Trying something new here. I've created a table for current, possible, and potential acquisitions projects. This is to better help us track projects and look ahead to other projects that may need longer term planning. The acquisitions table should be considered privileged information, and so will not become part of the minutes, and so will not need redacting every quarter. Specific projects that are in play or issues that require discussion/action at the meeting are discussed below.

Vermont Land Trust, going to move this out of Acquisitions and make it an ad hoc for now.

Jack Packers, the lease is signed, and it is now NCC Preserve #12. Thanks everyone.

Property was just listed with an asking price of . Includes,

, the owner of the has it, and the both listed for sale.

and the residence are for sale. The real estate ad includes a description of the that is currently run there.

We have been contacted by the [REDACTED] concerning their planned acquisition of the [REDACTED]. They are looking to acquire the property from the [REDACTED] family using a grant. They would be looking at using, expanding the existing parking, and essentially doing a joint/cooperative management of the preserves. We have sent them documents and links to assist with their grant proposal.

Nominating (Norm Berg)

The search is on for Trustee candidates to run in the Spring 2022 election. An announcement for Trustee candidates was in the March NCC News. Below is the schedule, using June 5 as the next Board meeting date:

- May 13 (Friday): Last day to submit candidate bio/platforms. (Allows 2 days to get the ballot system ready.)
- May 14-15 (Saturday - Sunday): Ballots and bios/platforms are emailed to the membership. (Allows for 13 full days of voting.)
- May 17 (Tuesday): Post on NCC Facebook that voting is underway.
- May 28 (Saturday): Voting closes at the end of day ET.

Risk Management (Mitch Berger)

Progress: Filed our Terraforma application for the 2022 policy year. Added Terraforma coverage for the Thook addition and the KLT property adjacent to Salamander.

Issues: Waiting on details needed to request the Certificates of Additionally Insured that we're required to provide to KLT and to the Jack Packers owners, and to update our G/L policy to include those.

Plans: Add insurance coverage (G/L) for the Thook addition, the KLT property adjacent to Salamander, and Jack Packers. Assemble the rest of the committee membership. Pick up other issues that were in-progress with the former ad-hoc committee.

Tory's Cave ad hoc committee (Bob Simmons)

In limbo at present, probably needs someone else to take the lead. I will ask CCG folks for interest.

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

Via Morgan: Dr. Shannon Browne and her undergraduate class at University of Maryland have agreed to take a look at the 2019-2020 overwinter monitoring data. I've made all three datasets (bat acoustics, temp/humidity, trail camera) from that winter available to them, and they'll be taking a look at it this semester. I don't yet know what analysis they'll be doing, but it seemed like a good fit for an undergraduate class, since I wasn't able to sell any graduate students on the project. I'll certainly report back to the Board when I know more. Additionally, thanks to Bob and Jacob for getting me the data I was missing!

Via Bob: I have contacted the primary bat consultant at the consulting firm Stantec. He and I are quite sure they will purchase nine of our acoustic units at \$650 each, a little above half their replacement cost. As discussed previously, this technology is starting to get a bit dated, so their value will not increase over time. I have a motion to approve the President selling the units on the agenda.

Governance ad hoc (Devon Hedges)

Progress: None

Problems: Attrition? Prioritization? Excuses?

Plans: Revisit committee goals, outline areas of interest and share with Board, commit time

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)

Speleothem dating: During this quarter there have been two areas of activity. The first involved the revision and recent (yesterday-February 13) submission of a major proposal "Developing a Speleothem Growth History in Upstate New York." with

Minutes - June 7, 2022

Page 14

Northeastern Cave Conservancy Inc

Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual

January 1 through February 13, 2022

	Jan 1 - Feb 13, 22	Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Donations		
Auction Donations	0.00	2,000.00
Donations - Other	480.00	15,300.00
Total Donations	480.00	17,300.00
Interest Earned	0.33	10.00
Membership Income	120.00	2,583.00
Total Income	600.33	19,893.00
Expense		
Acquisitions	0.00	2,000.00
Bank Charges	3.37	75.00
Donations-outgoing	5,000.00	200.00
Dues	0.00	350.00
Education	0.00	50.00
Executive		
President	0.00	100.00
Secretary	0.00	50.00
Treasurer	0.00	50.00
VP	0.00	50.00
Total Executive	0.00	250.00

Fundraising	0.00	750.00
Insurance	928.00	2,683.00
Legal Fees	0.00	1,500.00
Licenses & Permits	0.00	200.00
Meeting Expense	0.00	100.00
Meetings & Conferences	0.00	300.00
Membership Expenses	0.00	125.00
Miscellaneous	0.00	100.00
Office Expense	0.00	100.00
Postage	0.00	100.00
Preserves-Administration	0.00	1,500.00
Preserves-Maintenance		
Bensons	0.00	100.00
Bentleys	0.00	200.00
Clarksville	0.00	1,000.00
Ella Armstrong	0.00	100.00
Knox	0.00	3,200.00
Merlins	0.00	400.00
Onesquethaw	0.00	50.00
Salamander	0.00	600.00
Sellecks	0.00	100.00
Spider	0.00	100.00
Traino	0.00	800.00
Total Preserves-Maintenance	0.00	6,650.00
Promotion	0.00	1,000.00
Publishing		
Mailings	0.00	50.00
Website	0.00	210.00
Total Publishing	0.00	260.00
Science	0.00	500.00

Sponsorships	0.00	800.00
Taxes on Properties	45.04	300.00
Total Expense	5,976.41	19,893.00
Net Ordinary Income	(-5,376.08)	0.00
Other Income/Expense		
Other Income		
Net Gain or Loss Vanguard Life	0.51	0.00
Total Other Income	0.51	0.00
Net Other Income	0.51	0.00
Net Income	\$(-5,375.57)	0.00

The 2020 IRS forms were submitted before 11/15/21, as was the 2020 NY Charities Bureau annual re-registration. On December 13, 2021 we received notice that the IRS finally acknowledged that the 2019 IRS forms had been filed in a timely manner during 2020. This was a huge relief to all who were involved. Due to COVID, the 2019 due dates had been pushed back, and the IRS erroneously attempted to charge us over \$1,200 in late penalties for non-submission.

Barn Dance Subcommittee - Emily Davis & Mike Warner:

Progress: Status quo

Plans: Plan for 2022. Hopefully have a barn dance. Will try to set a date summer 2022.

Problems: none

Membership Committee – Riley Drake:

Membership Renewals and New Members: The database is current as of today, March 5th.

Current Membership Numbers (Change since September December 4th 2021)

Life: 63 (no change)

Family Life: 9 (no change)

Benefactor: 14 (no change)

Regular Membership: 82 (net +3, +5 new members, -2 non-renewals)

Institutional: 7 (no change)

Total: 175 (+3)

The above numbers are accurate to the best of my current understanding according to the membership database on March 5th 2022

Future directions/updates:

1. Norm Berg migrated the membership database to a google sheet, thanks very much to Norm for doing this!
2. As a reminder, Riley will be without consistent internet from 4/15-8/15 and need someone to help support the membership chair position. I will need support during this time.
3. Do we want to plan a membership day this coming summer? Who wants to take this up? (Riley will be in Alaska)

Office Committee Report - Emily Davis & Mike Warner:

Progress: Status quo

Plans: none specifically

Problems: None

Publications – Christa Hay:

Problems: None

Progress: Newsletter article request sent. As of this report the Newsletter editor still has a day to receive articles. Final newsletter will go out in about a week. Mailchimp sent out on nominations for trustees.

Plans: Does the board need any promotional items?

Bill replied: We purchased undated NRO t-shirts for Fall NRO that we will be merchandising at the Spring NRO, assuming we can hold it as planned. Emily is getting new ball caps manufactured, using the official NCC logo.

Technology Committee Report – Mike Chu:

Problems: None

Progress: In process of moving membership table from the web/phpMyAdmin interface to a shared Google Drive spreadsheet. (Request made to do this by those who use it)

Plans: Fix a few minor compatibility issues with updated PHP software in the near future.

Volunteer Value Committee – Vince Kappler:

Progress: The below table shows that NCC volunteers continued to support the mission of the organization during the pandemic that curtailed most caving activities.

VOLUNTEER VALUE STATS

	Hours	Miles	Dollar Value
2006	1389.5	20,862	\$29,955.00
2007	1571.5	14,607	\$35,542.00
2008	1680.5	14,143	\$36,926.00
2009	1440.5	10,442	\$39,564.00
2010	1234.0	10,949	\$42,211.00
2011	1546.0	14,118	\$54,684.00
2012	1483.5	13,951	\$51,605.00
2013	1916.5	20,522	\$70,268.00
2014	1481.0	18,621	\$48,757.00
2015	1634.75	15,664	\$58,450.00
2016	1563.25	12,303	\$52,341.00

2017	2106.5	10,234	\$64,058.00
2018	1533.5	13,899	\$54,393.00
2019	1480.5	13,284	\$64,394.00
2020	646	4036	\$22,415.00
2021	825.9	2097	\$25,941.00
			\$751,504.00

Note: 2021 values are increased from what was reported in December 2021 because several members were a little late in reporting.

2022 VV to date: \$586.00.

Plans: INDEPENDENT SECTOR (IS) tracks the value of volunteer time. For calendar 2020, the latest year available, IS determined that the rate in our area averaged 29.75. I will calculate reported NCC's VV at \$29.00 per hour for 2022.

The IRS has increased the business mileage rate from \$.56 to \$.585 for 2022. Note that this is not the rate that can be deducted from your personal taxes. The NCC adopted the use of the prevailing business rate when it modeled its VV program after the original NSS-USFS VV agreement which permitted the use of the business rate instead of the charitable donation rate.

Problems: None at this time

Attachment D Secretary's Report

EC Meeting Minutes February 6, 2022, 9:00am Online via Videoconference

Called to order: 9:07am

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

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

Simmons had previously informed us that Governor Hochul has signed the bill, despite some cautionary feedback we know had been sent in. Engel asks about insight we have on the next phase. As it's an addition to the Environmental Conservation Law, rulemaking would come out of the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), and he's not sure who within DEC is responsible – this sort of thing used to be handled by the bureau he worked in, and reaching the right people then would've been easy, but things have changed. He suggests that we need to contact the General Counsel's Office at the DEC, find out which unit is responsible for the rulemaking, and make them aware that we're interested in being kept in the loop. Engel will take this task on. Berger reminds us that Rubin had managed to get the ear of one of the bill's cosponsors, and asks whether we should coordinate further with him. Engel responds that now that it's become law, it's out of the legislators' hands, as there are a whole bunch of laws that prescribe how agencies go about regulating.

2) [REDACTED] acquisition of [REDACTED] property

Simmons had circulated a copy of an e-mail thread with [REDACTED] to the EC.

They're in the process of starting a conversation with [REDACTED] about acquiring about [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] They'd reached out to Porter asking whether the NCC would be willing to do things such as [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Simmons replied to [REDACTED] indicating that he was sure we'd [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He hasn't heard back from [REDACTED] yet about preliminary discussions of [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Morris-Siegel should be involved in the conversations as well. There's a lot of [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Morris-Siegel points out that if [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] so we might discuss [REDACTED] He also notes that [REDACTED]

Berger asks about whether their acquisition might be an opportunity for us to do something about [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Simmons wasn't aware of such incidents, and it has been a long while [REDACTED]

Minutes - June 7, 2022

Page 20

since Berger recalls hearing such a story; Engel suspects it may not be relevant anymore because of our caves' closures due to the Northern Long-Eared Bat listing. Morris-Siegel will e-mail [REDACTED] to ask for coordinates of things of interest [REDACTED] and try to figure out [REDACTED]. Simmons asks whether we have the [REDACTED], and Morris-Siegel indicates that he acquired a copy of it from one of the bags of miscellaneous documents he purchased at an NRO auction.

3) NCC speleothem sampling proposal

4) NSS Conservation Division regional report

Berger shares that in a moment of struggling to keep his eyes open on a van ride back from one of the field trips at NCKMS, he somehow agreed to be the regional representative to report on conservation efforts in our region as part of the NSS Conservation Division's periodic report to their Board. This position was previously held by M. Warner, who stepped back from it some time ago. As his first report in this new role is due this coming week, he's seeking both input on things worth reporting, and others to reach out to about the fact that he's acquired this new role and would like to be kept in the loop about what others would like reported. Once Simmons recomposed himself after failing to suppress his urge to laugh at Berger ending up with another position in the way that this so often happens to many of us in that organization, a few suggestions were made. Engel points out that we can note that the closure of most of our caves due to the Northern Long-eared Bat's listing limits how much activity has been happening, but that we can mention the Clarksville work day in November where boundaries were marked and the addition to the preserve. Simmons adds the partnership with the Kingston Land Trust at Salamander, our possible 12th preserve at Jack Packers, and the cleanup day at Traino. And, of course, there's the planning for trail restoration at Knox. Berger indicates that he can easily enough comb through the NCC's meeting minutes for preserve reports, but is also wondering about suggestions of others to contact. Engel suggests that he may want to contact the Niagara Frontier Grotto about work in Watertown.

5) Knox Conservation Advisory Committee

Berger inquires whether there was any further followup on what they were seeking from Engel when they invited him to participate, and whether it was intended to be personal or representation from the NCC. Engel says that, though he e-mailed them for clarification, he never heard back, and is thus considering the issue dead unless he hears from them again.

6) Clarksville water bill issue

The Office received not just the annual nominal bill we've long received because we own land in the Town, but also a substantial utility bill that appeared to be related to the home Hatfield and Schwartz have moved out of. Engel visited the Town's offices and got it sorted out, and requested a letter which we've been given stating that we don't owe money for the utility bill.

7) Albany County GIS

Engel tells us that one of the layers available to view as an overlay on the Albany County online GIS site is the "Parks and Preserves" layer, and it highlights such things as Thacher Park, the various Mohawk-Hudson Land Conservancy preserves, town parks, etc., but none of our preserves. He's wondering whether we want it to. Hatfield points out that her experience has been that everyone tries to hide the locations of the various cave preserves and caver events unless you're a caver, and that having lived next to the Clarksville

Preserve, she understands why this is. She notes that it seems like were we to have our preserves highlighted in that layer, it would contradict the norm, and asks whether this is an exercise in balancing goals. Engel believes that ship has sailed, pointing out that a Google search for Clarksville will get you to the parking area for the preserve. He also notes that there's another issue in that the Environmental Review Act lays out various standards if events are going on next to a park or preserve, and reminds us that if we decided we'd like some places listed, we wouldn't have to list all of our properties. Berger inquires whether the County simply adds you to the layer just for asking, and Engel doesn't know (but he'd also like some additional layers, like boundaries of water districts). Simmons asks whether there's an action item here, and Engel says the action item is to think about whether we want some or all of our preserves to show up in the layer. It seems like this should be a Committee of the Whole topic.

8) Chronolog Citizen Science Project

Engel tells us about this large project that engages regular citizens in long-term monitoring studies of various nature sites. They do this by walking up to a fixed location with a stand, placing their cellphone on it, snapping a photo, and uploading it to the Chronolog project, which strings all of the submitted photos for a site together and produces a time-lapse video of how things have changed over time. While Engel is unenthusiastic about the idea of having people participate in this sort of project *in* our caves, and the only one that gets enough traffic to potentially make it interesting is Clarksville, he thought it might be interesting for us to participate at the Salamander Preserve, as it's going to be open to both cavers and the general public, and thus potentially many people will be walking by. He wonders if it would be useful or interesting to see how trails and surroundings evolve as more and more people visit the area. He sent info about the project to L. Davis and Rubin. He's heard nothing back from Davis, but Rubin asked whether video documentation would end up attracting more people than we want, and he had some other questions as well. If we want our preserves to have public value for more than just cave visits, then these Chronolog studies could serve as a positive thing. Berger asks whether we're talking about, for example, studying erosion of water bars at the preserves. Engel says that that would be a possible application, although the water bars would likely not be on our property at most preserves. Simmons asks whether we're trying to invite more traffic onto the preserves, and Engel doesn't think that would be the purpose. Berger suspects that the answer about whether we're interested will differ at different preserves – given that Clarksville and Merlins are intended to have interpretive historical and geological trails, the answer might be “yes” for those preserves, and “no” for most others. Engel suggests that we ask the Stewardship Coordinator to check with the various preserve managers whether they see value to participating in such a study at their preserves. The fellow organizing the Chronolog studies had e-mailed Simmons inquiring about our interest.

9) NCC website contacts

Engel tells us that he's encountered a significant number of people at Clarksville who claim that they've been unable to figure out how to reach the preserve managers, and he notes that the “Contact” page on the website only offers one option (the general NCC contact). He wonders whether we should perhaps add some checkboxes to that page to offer additional contact points. Folsom is against this, because he suspects that it would simply attract more spam to lists that other volunteers are on. Berger points out that figuring out things like this seems to fall under the charter of the ad-hoc committee that's modernizing the website (despite that they haven't yet had time to meet).

10) Science Policy

Engel says that he made the mistake of looking at the policy, and found that in September, when we made the change to the wording of the research policy used as boilerplate in the preserve management plans, we should have changed the actual policy to match it at the same time. However, some parts had been left inconsistent, so he has worked with L. Davis and Rubin on drafting some updates to it, which will also provide an option for multi-preserve proposals to be handled by the Board rather than the per-preserve ad-hoc committees. Engel has included nearly all suggestions from the Science Committee chairs in his drafted amendments, with the exception of a suggestion to expand the policy to apply to historical and cultural research proposals rather than only scientific ones. Berger has some basic edits to suggest on the draft and will get them to Engel, who would like to advance this proposal for amendment at the next Board meeting.

11) Bender Family Foundation Grant

Hatfield is interested in pursuing obtaining funding from this grant program that's seeking proposals from organizations whose Directors are active as volunteers, donors, etc. The program generally gives awards in the \$5-\$10k range to organizations in the NYS Capital Region. She thinks the Knox trail restoration project and some work at Onesquethaw are good candidates for the grant. Decisions about it won't be made until August, so it's somewhat of a lengthy process. There's a pre-application stage before the formal application. The deadline for the pre-applications is March 17. Simmons agrees that we should give it a shot.

12) Spring 2022 NRO ad-hoc Committee update

Folsom thinks we're going to be able to move forward, and wants to contact the people who were already involved in our previous attempt to host it around early March. We were asked what we think the percentage likelihood is that we'll be able to hold NRO, and we seemed to think it was about 80% likely given the way the pandemic situation is looking now.

13) Native American Acknowledgment ad-hoc Committee update

Simmons tells us that he put Dumont in contact with the fellow spearheading this effort for the Kingston Land Trust, though he hasn't heard back. Hatfield had been trying to reach out to someone she used to work with who was involved in Native American

Acknowledgment, but hasn't yet been successful. She's let Dumont know that her attempts at contact haven't yet worked out. Simmons asks whether we should try contacting the Iroquois Museum on the road up to Howe Caverns. Engel thinks it's worth giving them a call, and that they could probably point us to an appropriate person. However, he cautions us to remember that one tribe may not have a solution that works for all tribes. Morris-Siegel volunteers that he can figure out who the Berkshire Natural Resource Council has been working with for the Indian group in Stockbridge.

14) Executive Succession ad-hoc Committee update

Simmons says that there's no update at this time. Hatfield notes that she saw a grant that would help work towards succession planning, and says that she'll look for it again. Berger reminds us that years ago, there was some planning for the Board to go on a retreat with a facilitator, and he's under the impression that at such events, the organization gets to choose what goals it wants to work on, and he believes that continuity seems like a goal that's right up that alley. Hatfield has been to The Rensselaerville Institute for grant writing workshops, and tells us that it's a nice place for this sort of thing, with a restaurant, and in response to an inquiry from Simmons, she also confirms that they have good cell service and internet.

15) Conservancy Communications ad-hoc Committee update

Simmons hasn't heard any updates lately from this committee.

16) Northeast Bat Working Group recap

Berger visited the conference briefly the night before it opened to get the NCC standing banner and some swag to Warner, and was able to briefly reconnect with a couple of the NCKMS attendees he'd met in November. Ingalls made a connection with a professor from the University of Maryland, who is willing to have his students work on analysis of some of our data from the NYSCPP Human Influences on Caves project as part of a class!

17) NYSCPP grant updates

Simmons tells us that we've put in applications for the last two acquisitions. We expect that they'll give us their decisions in late February or early March, and make announcements to the public in April. So, the current status is that we're waiting. The closeout report for the Traino acquisition grant was submitted at the end of January - this report shows our budget detailing where the money went. Berger asks when we would apply for a grant with funding to continue the Human Influences on Caves project, and Simmons indicates that he expects the project to be finished before the next invitation to submit applications. So, Berger asks if it's in fact the case that the UMD professor and students won't need any additional funding. Simmons isn't sure whether they have access to the Kaleidoscope software, but other than that, doesn't think they'd need grant money.

18) Salamander grand opening and website presence

Simmons has just started working with Gentry on planning for the grand opening and mocking up a webpage based on the ones we have for the other preserves. Hatfield points out that it would be great if we could have the Project Guestbook up and running at that preserve for the grand opening. Berger indicates that we're hoping to have it up and running everywhere for the coming season, so we'd be rather behind if it weren't ready in time for this ceremony.

19) Jack Packers lease

Berger has been periodically nagging about whether the final signature is on the lease, as we were told some time ago that Simmons and one of the owners had already signed it and expected the last signature to be added later that day. His particular interest in this getting finished is that updates to our insurance policy are gating on it. Simmons tells us that

[REDACTED] We also had a brief discussion about the different types of insurance policies, how they do and don't apply to leased properties, and what effect adding umbrella coverage might have.

20) Onesquethaw winter bat protection device

Engel says that he'll get on this, starting by having another conversation with C. Herzog at the DEC.

21) NYSCPP project acoustic detectors

There were unfortunately no leads on people or organizations who might want to buy these at NEBWG. Simmons hasn't heard back from the other company he'd reached out to which he knows does work with these units.

22) Vermont Land Trust Memorandum of Understanding

Simmons hasn't heard anything from Armen on this topic of late, though he also hasn't asked for an update.

23) Website modernization

Berger tells us that the ad-hoc committee hasn't met, and also that he's hesitant to nag about it, because he also needs several of the same people for Project Guestbook.

24) Board Manual updates, public link

As we've previously concluded, because of the amount of sensitive information we redact that would be contained in a current version of the manual, it can't be on the public website. Simmons asks for a reminder about what we decided on this topic. Engel wonders whether perhaps we can avoid the sensitive info issue by concluding that the manual doesn't need to contain all of our Acts. Berger points out that if we were to follow that thought, it would take us in a different direction from the way the NSS manages their Manual, and of course, ours was modeled after the NSS Board Manual. Folsom can't think of any other nonprofits that do as we do and publicly post their Board Manuals. Berger is of the strong opinion that the purpose of the Board Manual is to be a convenient reference for the Board, and that it only seems to serve that purpose if it's a fairly complete repository of everything current we've decided on, which naturally includes the information we redact from publicly-posted copies of our minutes. He does, however, acknowledge that N. Berg also uses the Manual as a tool to help recruit new Board members by showing them how the NCC runs and what the Board does, and Berger wonders if we take down the Manual from the website, how we'll replace this recruiting resource that's needed by Berg. Engel suggests that we may be able to do this by having detailed job descriptions. Folsom recalls that something like 23 years ago, there was a meeting where putting it on the website was discussed, and that's how we've ended up where we are today.

25) Knox sinkhole trail restoration / Mtn Dew grant / Tahawus Trails

Hatfield informs us that we didn't get the Mtn Dew grant - there were two awardees in New York: one for cleaning a harbor in Long Island, and another helping handicapped groups get outdoors in the western part of the state. Berger notes that Simmons got us in touch with the folks from Tahawus Trails who've been working on the trail project for KLT at their preserve and Salamander, but that he's been hesitant to reach out, as their introductory e-mail indicated that they generally charge \$1,500 for an initial site visit. Simmons was under the impression that that fee included the design study and a proposal, but that it's likely we could get them to come take a look and indicate whether they think they would or wouldn't be able to help us without incurring that fee. Folsom also reminds us about the Jolly Rovers trail crew. Simmons will reach out to those two groups.

26) Project Guestbook

The group hasn't met since the last time we talked, though Berger knows that they need to. Hatfield is trying to get together a timeline.

27) International Year of Caves and Karst

Engel has contacted Thacher Park about the possibility of running some program with them once the season gets going. Their indoor programs are shut down for the winter, but they think we may be able to do something once the weather is warmer.

28) Jake Moon landowner update

The new owners don't seem to have had much activity at the restaurant this year. Engel tells us that the whole parking area is full of snow. Simmons suggests that we may want to discuss snowplowing, etc. with them. Berger notes that the previous owners didn't really seem enthused about partnering with us for community events, but that this may be an opportunity for us to work on a new relationship where that can happen. Simmons will make contact with them.

29) Acquisitions

[REDACTED]

Jack Packers: We've already talked about the lease at this meeting. We'll then have to talk about infrastructure and get a trail built. We don't expect to do much until the snow goes away. Maybe we can plan work days at the March meeting.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

30) NCC swag

Berger talked with Davis about some possibilities, though they concluded that they'd need to connect again at a later date. Unfortunately, NEBWG was earlier than we'd expected this year, so there was no time to have new items for that conference. At this point, we'll need to have new items for NRO. Hatfield points out that anything people order is delayed, and so we should get on this sooner rather than later. Unless we're buying things made in America, things coming from overseas end up getting stuck on ships that can't get into ports. Folsom reminds us that we have t-shirts for NRO already, and Simmons excitedly adds that they're undated. We're also getting caps with the NCC logo.

31) Plans for our properties to turn over to the NSS should we fail

Simmons took the Cave Conservancy of Hawai'i Memorandum of Understanding with the NSS, used it as a model, and put together a draft of an MoU for us, but he went one step further. The CCH one is fairly typical of most other conservancies' MoUs and essentially says that if they go bankrupt, they desire the NSS to take over their caves. Simmons has added to our draft a provision that if, instead, the NSS fails, we'd agree to take over their New York caves. It's not quite ready for prime-time yet, but he'll get it out before the Board meeting so people can see how it looks.

32) Report scheduling and March meeting venue

We had previously talked about holding the meeting at HRP Associates, which has a large meeting space that would allow people to spread out, has advanced A/V capabilities, and would allow everyone to log in on computers as well. The meeting is Sunday, March 6, so Officers should get their reports to Berger by Monday February 28, and committees should get their reports to the Officers by Monday February 21. We should put out an early reminder soon.

33) More informative e-mails

We were forwarded one of the periodic e-mail updates that SCCi sends out to its members by Folsom, applauding what they do and noting that he wishes we could do something much more like that to keep in touch with our members. Simmons asks how they do it, and whether they have paid staff. Berger indicates that they have a few - their Executive Director and a couple of folks funded by grants for specific projects, like Project Underground. He's not sure whether any of the paid staff put those e-mails together, but notes that they do have impressive publicity machinery. Engel points out that MAKC and others without employees also manage to do this. Folsom believes that a bunch of it is about format, and that Mailchimp could do this for us. Berger says that most nonprofits he knows of send periodic e-mails with teaser blurbs that have links to full stories on their webpages. Hatfield raises the concern of archiving all of the content, and Engel thinks perhaps that issue could be solved by having both formats - these periodic e-mails sent out in between PDF newsletters. Simmons asks whether PayPal is able to handle recurring donations. Folsom confirms that it can and notes that

there are buttons on the website for that now. Berger believes that in order to make recurring donations an appealing thing to prospective donors, you need a membership class such as the commonly-used “sustaining member” - he points out that in most organizations he sees do this (including SCCi), there’s some exclusive swag like a shirt or a jacket that lets you show off your ongoing contribution to the organization. Engel sees these e-mails as a way for us to raise the flag. Hatfield may reach out to Hay about investigating Mailchimp, and perhaps we’ll end up opening an organizational account.

34) 2022 Members Day

Simmons reminds us that we had great success with this at Clarksville, and that it was the right preserve to do it at. He wonders whether it would be redundant to hold it there again. Folsom doesn’t think so, and points out that we already have logistics for that site set up. Berger adds that we also have the real possibility of having food and/or beverage for the event partnered with the new dining establishment. Folsom and Hatfield think that we could advertise people being available for activities at other local preserves, but coordinate a meal together at a specific time at Clarksville. As for timing, last year we held it on July 17, and the previous time when it was at Thatcher, it was just after July 4th. Folsom believes that there will be a major event several of our members will be otherwise occupied with on Saturday July 16, so he suggests perhaps July 23. Berger points out that NCRC overlaps with that. We also suspect that Drake will be less available this time around, but perhaps Hatfield will be able to be more involved. We should formalize plans at the March meeting.

End: 12:52pm