

National Speleological Society
Administrative Vice President's Report
Board of Governors Meeting
Bend, Oregon
July 15, 2016

Prepared by:
Katherine L Crispin, Ph.D.
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Department of the Administrative Vice President Committees and Personnel:

Cave Management Division	John M. Wilson	jmwgeo@gmail.com
Cave Conservancies Committee	John M. Wilson	jmwgeo@gmail.com
Cave & Karst Acquisition Committee	Pat Kambesis	pk249@msstate.edu
Cave Conservancy Roundtable	Jonathan B. Beard	mokanman@att.net
Contemporary Cave Use Study	vacant	
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White Nose Syndrome Liaison		wsliaison@caves.org
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Brochures Coordinator	Cheryl Jones	cs.jones@verizon.net
Conservation Grants Sub-Committee	Julia Germany	germanyj@aol.com

Geocaching Committee	David Irving	daveirving@earthlink.net
Liaison for Int'l Spleothem Protection	Thomas Lera	frontier2@erols.com
Mammoth Cave Restoration Committee	William Copeland	boogercaver71@yahoo.com
Resource Preservation Committee	David Joaquim	caveconservation@hotmail.com
Vandalism Deterrence Reward Commission	Vacant	
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Southeastern Region	John Hoffelt	mossyguy@comcast.net
Virginia Area Region	Janet Tinkham	janete@shentel.net
Western Region	Joel Despain	
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Hawai'i Cave Conservation Task Force	Jonathan Beard	monkanman@att.net
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Twin Lakes Conservation Task Force	Kathy Kriska	katcntrygrl@sbcglobal.net
	John Durall	twinlakesccstf1@aol.com
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Webinar Committee	Debbie Spoons	webinars@caves.org
NSS Convention Division		
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Convention Development Committee	Carol Tideman	ctider@us.ibm.com
Convention 2016 – Ely NV	Matt Bowers	matt.bowers@caves.org
Convention 2017	Blake Jordan	
Convention 2018 – Whitefish MT	Doug Warner	
NSS Salons		
	Cady Soukup	salonschair@caves.org
	David Lester	d.lester@usa.net
Cartographic Salon	Dwight Livingston	cartsalon@caves.org
Cave Ballad Salon	Roland Vinyard	balladsalon@caves.org
Fine Arts Salon	Carolina Shrewsbury	fineartsalon@caves.org
Multimedia Program Salon	Dave Bunnell	multimediasalon@caves.org
Cover Art Salon	Blake Jordan	coverartsalon@caves.org
Print Salon	Wm Shrewsbury	printsalon@caves.org
Photo Salon	Dean Wiseman & Cady Soukup	photosalon@caves.org
T-Shirt Salon	Dave Decker	tshirtsalon@caves.org
Symbolic Emblems Salon		emblemsalon@caves.org
Video Salon	David Socky	videosalon@caves.org

INTRODUCTION / SUMMARY

The Department of the AVP consists of 4 Divisions (Cave Management, Conservation, Conventions, and Education) and two Commissions (National Cave Rescue and Vandalism Deterrence). Contained within are 19 committees and various subcommittees.

Here are some of the highlights of the Department of the Administrative Vice President:

- This Convention is the 75th Anniversary Convention and the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service – a flag has been flown over the Capitol and then delivered to Ely for presentation to the NSS
- Possible bid for the 2020 Convention.
- In the final stages of acquiring a new preserve in South Dakota
- Current vacancies:
 - Contemporary Cave Use Study Committee chair
 - Vandalism Deterrence Commission chair
 - Northeastern Region representative
 - Shelta and Stephenson preserve managers
- James Gage Preserve and Schoharie Preserve have completed multiple projects that were in the approved current budget, with a bit more work to do. They are much better preserves with the improvements.
- We funded a WNS Rapid Response grant to BCI for \$650
- NSS will be taking a leadership role for NCKMS going forward
- New revised edition of *A Guide to Responsible Caving* is out
- CaveSim traveled to 11 locations since the last report – many more are scheduled. Visit CaveSim here at convention! Donations of old caving helmets would be much appreciated.
- Dozens of regional conservation and cleanup activities on public and private caves, including Mammoth Cave, Wind Cave, Jewel Cave, Endless Cavers, Crystal Cave (PA), Grand Caverns (VA), and many more!

CAVE MANAGEMENT DIVISION REPORT SUMMARY

Prepared by John Wilson - Division Chair - jmwgeo@gmail.com

October 2015

Cave and Karst Acquisition Committee – Pat Kambesis, Chair [-pk249@msstate.edu](mailto:pk249@msstate.edu)

It is a widely accepted principle that most real-estate negotiations are done in private. Occasionally, someone will offer to sell or give a cave property to the NSS. Our policy is to evaluate and analyze these offers discreetly, especially since some of the offers may not be right for the NSS and complications could arise from premature publicity that might adversely affect the negotiations. At the appropriate time, the Board of Governors will authorize the announcement of cave properties that will be acquired pending any negotiated requirements. At this time, there are several cave properties under consideration by the NSS.

Cave Conservancies Committee - John M. Wilson - jmwgeo@gmail.com

In the last three years cave conservancies have divided roughly into two groups, those with active cave acquisitions and management programs and those with decreased levels of activity. I have asked the Cave Conservancy Roundtable to discuss these manifestations and make recommendations. Cave conservancies are encouraged to post appropriate notices at the Facebook Cave Conservation site, which now has more than 1140 members. Its address is www.facebook.com/groups/257740784385806

Cave Conservancy Roundtable - Jonathan B. Beard – mokanman@att.net

The Nineteenth Annual Cave Conservancy Roundtable is scheduled at the 2016 NSS Convention on 22 July 2016, Friday starting at 1:00 PM. It will be followed in the same room at 3:00 PM by a meeting of the NSS Nature preserves. The discussion will start with intros, short descriptions of each organization, which cave/property is being conserved, then we can move onto the topic. This is an important topic—unlike a public agency, the typical conservancy doesn't have a paid, appointed staff that is replaced in perpetuity (as long as there is funding for the agency), so what if the person or persons who volunteer to manage a property move away, move on or pass on? Is there a process in place to insure that a next generation of managers will continue to conserve the property? Since many cave conservancies have become well-established institutions, what do we do now to build permanent legacy and extend the concept in perpetuity? A few cave conservancies have reduced activities in recent years. What is the appropriate response to these two phenomena? Everyone interested in cave management is welcome to attend and share ideas so we can all learn from each other. Check the NSS Convention website updates for exact time and place: nss2016.caves.org/

Contemporary Cave Use Study -

The position of chair of the Contemporary Cave Use Study Chair is now open. The Chair of this committee is also a management research position that has considerable latitude in the research design and in establishing methods. The results from the work of this committee will help the

NSS leadership better understand how caves in the United States are being used by cavers and the public. Historically, this study used cave registers as one of its primary tools; however, other research methods are encouraged. I am interested in hearing about alternative research proposals. Please contact me by email jmwgeo@gmail.com or phone [808-929-8256](tel:808-929-8256). The previous chair, Lisa Hall resigned recently after about seven years. Her efforts have been very much appreciated. John M. Wilson, Cave Management Division Chief in the Department of the Administrative Vice President.

NSS Nature Preserves - Tom Griffin - a1topcatdesign@aol.com

- Updates to the preserves website is ongoing. Tom plans to add information packets such as who to contact, emergency contacts, special needs (ropes, ladders, etc), basic cave conditions (wet, dry, vertical, etc). He also plans to add connections to social media like Facebook.
- Bill Torode would like someone to step up to take over or assist with Shelta and William Stephenson Preserves.
- Guilday: Earl Suitor is working closely with the new owner of Sites Cave and Cave Rat Cave. NSS members should have access in the near future with strict guidelines to be followed. A memorandum of understanding is being developed.
- Full preserve reports at the end of the AVP report.

CONSERVATION DIVISION REPORT SUMMARY

Prepared by Val Hildreth-Werker and Jim C. Werker, Division Chiefs

werks@cunacueva.com werks@zianet.com

Conservation Division Summary/ Highlights

- Conservation Tuesday, 2016 NSS Convention in Ely, NV!!
- New Conservation Task Force – Washington Cascades Bat Conservation Task Force, Bill Halliday, Founder
- March 2016 – a bat with White Nose Syndrome found in Washington state
- Kudos and thank you to InnerMountain Outfitters for again sponsoring a new revision of *A Guide to Responsible Caving*, which allows us to print about twice as many copies!

Conservation Committee – Val Hildreth Werker & Jim Werker (werks@cunacueva.com)

- Continuing interaction with international contacts. Other activity listed within highlights above & reports below.
- No new actions moving forward with USDA-FS and New Mexico State University to prosecute vandals with repeat offenses in local caves. Western fires are priority right now

- June 2016, continued repair work in the famed Floyd Collin's Crystal Cave as well as Great Onyx Cave at Mammoth Cave National Park and attended Art Palmer's Karst Geology Course. Oct 2015, conducted NCKMS Restoration Workshop Cave City KY; presented talks on 'Cave Conservation Course in Brazil' and Repairing Gypsum Vandalism in Floyd Collins' Crystal Cave. Please remember to budget NSS Sponsorship again for October 2017 NCKMS slated for Arkansas (FY2017-18).

Biological Response Committee/ White Nose Syndrome Liaison Report - Jennifer Foote - wnsliaison@caves.org BiologicalResponse@caves.org www.caves.org/WNS

- WNS is currently in 29 states and the fungus has been found in three more.
- We just awarded BCI a \$650 WNS Rapid Response grant
- The revised USFWS cave advisory and decontamination protocol were both published in spring. In March a WNS-infected bat was discovered in Washington state. The bat was a western subspecies of a little brown bat and the Pd strain will be published in the next few months. Though the bat was not found at a cave, it is a sharp reminder on the importance of decontamination.
- I attended the 2016 White Nose Syndrome Workshop in Denver and learned about new potential treatments and worked on building relationships with biologists and managers.
- Requests for research funding have slowed down now that federal funding is available. We plan to start funding more WNS education.
- We are planning to have competing decontamination trailers at Convention in Nevada. Eastern cavers need to leave their caving gear at home and can borrow local gear. We will have presentations on Conservation Tuesday on "Bats for Cavers", a USFWS update, and decontamination made easier.
- I am burned out and am looking for a replacement. I am willing to continue to contribute, but I don't have enough time to get everything done. Please contact me at WNSLiaison@caves.org or the AVP if you can help.
- We have an email list where we send out WNS information among cavers, you can sign up at <http://lists.caves.org/mailman/listinfo/wns> There is also a Facebook page for NSS WNS Liaison where I am posting news.
- The White Nose Syndrome Rapid Response Fund is still an important funding source for researchers as much federal funding is limited to federal or state agencies. So far the NSS has provided over \$115,000 of funding for 22 research grants. Due to some limits on federal grants, there are still places where our funds can fill in gaps.

Conservation Group and Grotto Awards - Kathleen Lavoie - lavoiekh@plattsburgh.edu

- **Progress:** We have at least one group award to present during the 2016 NV Convention. The G&G Awards are promoted in NSSNews April Conservation Issue. We also sent promo material to NSS Social Media, and we followed up with posting on various venues and forums. I wrote directly to Grottos in Nevada and adjoining locations to invite nominations.
- **Plans:** Need to get the word out about the awards more effectively. Need to get Nominate Your Group/Nominate Your Grotto encouragement out through NSS Social Media venues.
- **Problems:** There's plenty of conservation work across the country, but nominations for G&G Awards are far and few between.

NSS Conservation Website Coordinator - Thank you Alex Sproul for working with us in recent cooperative efforts in shaping The Conservation Pages.

NSS Conservation Network - Steve Smith - stevenlsmith@usa.net

- Promoting email address updates in April NSSNews Conservation issue and on the Conservation webpages.

KIP/USF Cave Conservation and Restoration - Jacqueline M. Sampson, Coordinator

No report received.

Cave Conservation and Restoration Index - Rachel Bosch

- Nothing new

Brochures Coordinator - Cheryl Jones - cs.jones@verizon.net

- **Progress:** *Guide to Responsible Caving* revision is out!
- InnerMountain Outfitters again sponsored the booklet, allowing us to print about twice as many copies.

Conservation Grants - Val Hildreth-Werker werks@zianet.com

- **Maya Riviera Karst Documentary Project** (Save the Caves Grant in 2015 to supplement final colorization for completing production steps.)
 - Article in 2016 NSSNews April Conservation issue
- **Caves of Cyprus Project Report** (Save the Caves Grant in 2014 to supplement Lauren's Fulbright Scholarship Award for establishing cave and karst protection awareness partnerships in Cyprus)
 - Still awaiting funding from the EU

Grant Search & Writing - Julia Germany - germanyj@aol.com

Follow-up on potential grants.

Conservation Outreach-Ed with Cave Simulators - Dave Jackson jacksondmit@cavesim.com

Don't throw out your old caving helmet! We can use it. Contact Dave if you'd like to donate your old helmet or other gear to help us teach kids about cave conservation. Kids sizes are especially helpful.

Plans, progress, problems:

- PLEASE visit CaveSim at Convention in Ely! Generous sponsors make our trip possible, so please take advantage of this free activity. Volunteers needed, too.
- Looking for regional events to bring the mobile cave simulator to. Contact Dave if you have a regional event and some funding to pay for fuel.
- Received donation from ElSpeleo of two excellent caving lights, currently in use for events. Also received donation of a ceiling burner (for demonstrations) from Jeff Polk. If you have lights you would like to donate, contact Dave.
- Adding more helictites to the mobile cave simulator. Completed new sensor design for helictites.

Upcoming events with CaveSim trailer (www.cavesim.com/calendar):

- Convention (with early arrival for general-public event on 7/16). Sponsoring Grottos: Willamette Valley, Pajarito, and Blue Ridge. Other sponsoring organizations: Nevada Humanities and the National Endowment for the Humanities.
- Girl Scout Troop 1983 summer program.
- 4th of July celebration, Woodland Park, CO. Free public event.
- Program for Profoundly Gifted children, Glen Eyrie Retreat Center, Colorado Springs.
- REACH summer program, The Colorado Springs School.

Completed 11 events with CaveSim trailer (photos: www.cavesim.com/news):

- Catamount Institute 4th & 5th grade science club program, CO, 1/30/16. 100 students & parents attended a free event made possible by generous donation of fuel money by Barb Bentzin & Bob Montgomery.
- Legacy Academy 5th grade, CO, 2/24/16. 3 hour program for 46 students.
- STEM Night, Patriot Elementary School, Fort Carson Army Base, CO, 2/25/16. 700 people attended!
- US Air Force Academy Youth Center, CO, 3/21/16. 50 K-12 students during Spring Break. Sponsored by Dick Blenz.
- Bliss Climbing Complex, Wichita, KS, 4/24/16. Free public event.

- Grove Lower Elementary School, OK, 4/25-4/26/16. 180 3rd graders and 20+ YMCA kids learned all about caves with help from cavers Lauren Satterfield and Donna Frazier. Organized by caver and teacher Deitra Biely.
- Orientation to Cave Rescue, CO, 4/31/16. 50 cavers and agency folks learned about cave fragility by exploring the CaveSim trailer prior to a mock rescue in Huccacove Cave.
- STEM Night, Abrams Elementary School, Fort Carson Army Base, CO, 5/10/16. Several hundred students, parents and teachers explored CaveSim and learned about cave conservation.
- Outdoor Skills Day, Mueller State Park, CO, 5/21/16. 600+ people attended and most visited CaveSim.
- Falcon Middle School, CO, 5/24/16. 120 6th graders learned all about caves, conservation and geology with help from cavers Patricia Malone and Jesse Rochette.
- Cresson Elementary School, CO, 5/26/16. About 100 Pre-K – 6th grade kids saw carbide demos, explored CaveSim, and learned about mines vs. caves (Cripple Creek has many mines).

NSS Mammoth Cave Restoration Project - Bill Copeland, Director boogercaver71@yahoo.com

22 volunteers accomplished the following during our May 2016 Mammoth Cave Restoration Camp:

- Saturday May 7, we worked on the Historic Entrance side. Our main goal was to finish lining the newly poured concrete trail with rock we gathered out of Pensacola Ave from Bottomless Pit to the start of Fat Man's Misery. A 4-person group, went off to retrieve a dye receptacle at River Achelon.
- Sunday May 8, we went in the Carmichael Entrance to locate and photograph a CCC-era cart handle that needs to be preserved. After that was accomplished, we went to Marion Ave past the Elevator to collect cricket eggs for a genetic study.
- 165 caver hours of NSS volunteer were donated to Mammoth Cave National Park

Cave Vandalism Deterrence Reward Commission - vacant

AVP approved potential reward for information on the graffit vandals at New River Preserve

REGIONAL CONSERVATION REPRESENTATIVES

Arizona Regional Association – Steve Smith stevenlsmith@usa.net

- **Escabrosa Grotto (Tuscon)** –
 - Escabrosa manages access to Onyx Cave, which is used by Fringed myotis bats (*Myotis thysanodes*) as a summer maternity colony. To better understand this colony's maternity usage of Onyx, since 2010 Escabrosa

members conduct twice monthly trips between June and October to set up infrared cameras outside the entrance at twilight and count emerging bats.

- An initial camera 'reconnaissance' trip in late May revealed that the initial cohort of mother bats has already arrived in Onyx, so the summer series of formal monitoring trips kicked-off on May 28th.

- **Cochise County Cavers (Sierra Vista) –**

- CCC cavers expended 12 caver-hours removing trash from a cave in the Huachuca Mountains.
- At the close of a University of Arizona hydrological study in several caves in the Huachuca Mountains, cavers expended 36 caver-hours removing hydrological sampling equipment and restoring the affected areas back to an original appearance.
- Expended 3 man-hours doing cave gate maintenance for the Coronado National Forest.

- **Southern Arizona Grotto (Tucson)**

- SAG cavers expended 10 man-hours working with a local Boy Scout troop cleaning up trash in a popular southern Arizona 'Party' cave.

- **Central Arizona Grotto (Phoenix)**

- Accomplished a closure order for a cave on the Mogollon Rim known to host a maternity colony of *Myotis Thysanodes*. This involved fabrication of a locking bar, generation of new signage, and removal of silt from the existing gate structure. CAG provided \$4041 of volunteer value to the Tonto NF for this effort, and Tonto personnel added another \$8573.
- A project was initiated in the Tonto NF to monitor cave usage via register entries for the 8 most common caves. This will provide Tonto NF with valuable usage data as they begin their forest plan revision process.
- In the Coronado NF, graffiti was removed from the interpretative sign outside a very popular cave, as well as some graffiti inside the cave.

Southeastern Region – John Hoffelt (TN) MossyGuy@comcast.net, Allen Padgett (GA) on_rope@windstream.net, Sean Roberts – (FL) citraman@yahoo.com, VACANT (AL)

- No reports received for 2 BOG meetings

Southwestern Region – Janice Tucker (NM) janice.tucker@live.com

- **Carlsbad Caverns CRF** project led by William and Tammy Tucker - nothing to report
- **Sandia Cave Project** – ABQ Sandia Grotto (Sandia Cave Project).
 - Ongoing Sandia Cave Project. Significant inventory and and potential ID of cultural markings plus layers of graffiti cleanup in famed historically and culturally significant archeological cave site. Site is open to free public recreation 24/7 and receives more than 100 visitors each week. See

[\[http://caves.org/grotto/sandia/Sandia_Cave/\]](http://caves.org/grotto/sandia/Sandia_Cave/)

- Much data on these Web pages describe months of site survey/inventory work in preparation for 10 days of tedious graffiti clean up under the supervision of archeologist/rock art specialist, Dr. Jannie Loubser. Follow-up includes educational conservation kiosk and continuing monitoring with volunteers visiting the cave during the first part of each week to alert us to take care of any new graffiti that appears over the weekends.
- See article in April NSSNews Conservation Issue. Val will present talk at 2016 Convention.

Mid Atlantic Region – Douglas Soroka (PA) snowshoe7@verizon.net

- **Greater Allentown Grotto** continues to work restoring Crystal Cave in Kutztown PA.
 - During the closed months of Dec to Feb the grotto works three days per week.
 - Due to past cleaning and restoration efforts crickets have returned this past fall in large numbers! Never seen before by the staff, owners, or grotto members. We consider this an unforeseen habitat resto success! Soroko and Kathy Lavoie will present during Conservation Tuesday talks.
 - Two Grotto members who went to Cuba on the Dwight Deal and Mary Fletcher 2015 trip looked at conservation and resto methods with Cuban Cavers in an important cultural cave, leading to two special talks by Esteban Grau from Sociedad Espeleológica de Cuba at the NV 2016 NSS Convention where he will interact with NSS cavers on conservation issues. See 2016 Convention Program - Protecting Cuevas de Bellamar, Cuba: A Conservation Success Story.

Northeast Region – VACANT POSITION

Ohio Valley Region – Bill Walden wdwalden@windstream.net

No report received.

Rocky Mountain Region - Camille Pullham McKinney (UT) cami_mckinney@nps.gov, Chloe Beck (CO) chloebeck@utexas.edu

- May 22: Colorado's White River National Forest proposes entrance gate for popular Spring Cave (a bat roosting site and winter hibernaculum) to protect bats
- May 22: Members of the Colorado Grotto visited the Bow and Arrow climb in Breezeway Cave of Williams Canyon in order to remove many moldy digging tools left at the top of the climb. One large bag was carried out of the cave but a long hoe and broken shovel shaft were deemed too large to safely repel with (and no safe way to bag and avoid further mold spore dispersal) were left at the top of the climb to be removed at a further date.
- May 21: More than 30 volunteers plant seedling trees on the burned slopes above Colorado's Cave of the Winds following Waldo Canyon Fire

- May 10: Colorado biologist Dave Steinmann studies cave worms in Deadly Sulphur Cave
- May 9: Wyoming's Natural Trap Cave reveals bones of rare Ice Age Beringian wolves; previously unknown in lower 48 states
- May 1: Colorado's Cave of the Winds hosts cave rescue training seminar
- May 1: Cave tours at Montana's Lewis and Clark Cavers State Park begin
- April 29: Cavers working in Persistence Cave at Wind Cave National Park come across a rattlesnake at their tight underground dig site.
- April 15: Colorado Glenwood Caverns was named in the top 10 best Caves in the US
- April 12: Idaho cavers are assisting with state biological efforts to learn more about bats and watch for White Nose Syndrome
- April 8: Montana's Northern Rocky Mountain Grotto completed their 4th annual Cave Cleanup at Lewis and Clark Caverns State Park. Thirteen grotto volunteers spent 4 hours vacuuming, brushing, and removing lint from various cave formations. Volunteers used ladders, backpack powered vacuums, brushes, buckets, and good old fashioned elbow grease to leave the caverns nicer than they found them.
- April 8: 1,895 acre Cold Fire in South Dakota's Black Hills have burned 316 acres in Wind Cave National Park.
- Montana bat biologists are working with Northern Rocky Mountain Grotto of the NSS to prepare for White-Nose Syndrome
- April 7: The Colorado Springs Gazette includes Cave of the Winds as a top destination to increase out-of-town guests to the park
- April 1: Center for Biological Diversity again calls for closure of all public caves in US owing to WNS found in North Bend, in Washington State. This concerns cavers throughout the country and biologists in many states are bracing for the possibility of WNS spreading into previously untouched states. UPDATE: May 30th – CBC stands by this call.
- March 31: the Center for Biological Diversity claims Washington bat infected with white-nose syndrome to be proof of a human-vector
- March 24: Caver and University of Colorado graduate Dr. Penny Boston named new Director for NASA Astrobiology Institute. Boston founded and directed the Cave and Karst Studies program at New Mexico Tech and was the associate director of the National Cave and Karst Research Institute for 14 years.
- March 3rd: Colorado State University Biology Professor Colleen Webb talks about bats and the threat of WNS in a CSU newspaper to reflect on her research and work with bats
- Enhanced Safety measure at South Dakota's Jewel Cave NM allows children under 5 years along commercial tour route
- January 18: Strange worms living in Sulphur Caves of Steam Springs, CO have been identified and named *Limnodrilus sulphurens*
- January 14: Cave visitation up 9.8% at Wind Cave National Park – the most people since 1971 with a total of 109,335 people touring the world's sixth-longest cave.

Virginia Area Region – Janet Tinkham janete@shentel.net

- March 26, 2016- [GRAND CAVERNS EASTER RESTORATION CAMP](#) an annual conservation event sponsored by VAR. While some volunteers were inside Grand Caverns, (located in Grottoes, VA) removing algae around light fixtures and spreading gravel on the trails, others took advantage of the nice weather and worked above ground to clear a wooded area along the entrance road. Eventually the area will be cleared to open up a scenic view of the river and park, and for placement of picnic tables.
- April 2, 2016- VPI Caving Club and VAR cavers volunteered at New River Cave Preserve in Giles, Co, VA picking up trash and maintenance of trail to cave and information kiosk.
- April 9, 2016-Tri State Grotto worked on gate repair and graffiti removal for Baker Quarry Cave in Hardy, Co, WV
- April 17-23, 2016- VA Cave Week sponsored by the VA Cave Board. Theme for 2016 was The “HOLE” Truth About Sinkholes. A Sinkhole Tab was added to the VA Cave Week website to promote education and resources for management of sinkholes (vacaveweek.com). Efforts were made to encourage identification of sinkhole cleanout projects to be scheduled not only during VA Cave week, but as an ongoing conservation effort.
- April 23, 2016-During Spring Meeting of the VA Area Region (VAR) a group of eight volunteers performed conservation work in Endless Caverns, a commercial cave located in New Market, VA. Work entailed; covering newly replaced visible wiring with mud, rocks etc. to enhance the natural look of the cave, picking up trash which included old flashbulbs, light bulbs, gum wrappers, beer and drink cans, and changing light bulbs.
- April 21-23, 2016-Prior to and during Spring Meeting of the VA Area Region (VAR) volunteers worked on a sinkhole cleanout project. The sinkhole was located in Rockingham Co, VA and was brought to the attention of conservation groups by a landowner who had recently purchased the property. The sinkhole had been used for many years as a dumping ground for farm debris, concrete foundation pieces, remains of an old dwelling and who knows what else. Volunteers worked tirelessly for these three days and made great progress, but ended up concluding that machinery would need to be used for what was remaining in the sinkhole. This will continue as an ongoing project with the landowner working with conservation agencies to establish additional sinkhole protection such as planting a vegetation buffer, building chicken houses in areas where run off would not affect the sinkhole etc. A successful

collaboration between landowner, VA Area Region (VAR), Cave Conservancy of the Virginias and wonderful volunteers took place.

- May 22, 2016- Front Royal Grotto guided a group of six students and their teacher from the Mountain Vista Governors School (Middletown VA campus) into Front Royal Caverns in Warren Co, VA. The trip was to document the presence of any bats, explain the process of confirming the presence of the Madison Cave Isopod, and to collect the trash that had been thrown into the entrance sinkhole.

Western Region – Joel Despain – joeldespaincaves@gmail.com, jddespain@fs.fed.us

- We are beginning a long process to bring cave and lava tube restoration and project work to our California national forests. If all goes well, we will be recruiting lots of cave volunteers for this work in the years ahead.
- We hope to partner with caver organizations such as the Western Cave Conservancy, the Western Region, Grottos, Conservation Task Forces, etc. as this program develops.

NSS CONSERVATION TASK FORCES - Jonathan Beard - monkanman@att.net

We welcome aboard the new Washington Cascade Mountains Bat Conservation Task Force, founded Dr. William R. (Bill) Halliday.

Washington Cascade Mountains Bat Conservation Task Force –

Dr. William R. (Bill) Halliday, Founder wrbna@bellsouth.net

- Along with Dr. Clyde Senger (retired zoologist at Western Washington University and a leading authority on bats of western Washington) and other concerned NSS members I am looking forward to an organizational meeting of this new group in the SeaTac area on the afternoon of Saturday June 25. This is before the next NSS BOG meeting, and it should be a good time for election of regular officers, adoption of by-laws, dues, communications, etc. Agency personnel are invited to give short presentations.
- The purposes of this proposed CTF are (1) to endorse and promote recent conclusions and recommendations by Dr. Merlin Tuttle for a new nationwide approach to management of WNS following the identification of a new primary focus of WNS near North Bend, WA, and (2) their implementation in the Cascade Mountains of Washington.
- Merlin is world-famous for effective years of protection of bats through his Bat Conservation International and cooperating organizations including the NSS. He is a long-standing Honorary Member of the NSS. Merlin's conclusions and recommendations dated 1 May 2016 are specified in "Attachment A" which was to

have been attached to this Meeting Notice. Appendices A and B are being e-mailed separately. "Attachment B" is a reprint of a highly relevant article by the late Dr. Denny Constantine on bats as accidental travelers. In 1948, Denny was a founding member of the NSS' Southern California Grotto. Later, he became a world authority on bat rabies.

- We need this CTF urgently because the presence of a WNS bat in the western foothills of this mountain range suddenly revealed an imminent threat that is beyond the scope of the NSS' present WNS project. The karsts and karstic caves of the Cascade Mountains are about as different from those of the mega-karsts of KY, TN, VA, NY etc. as can be imagined. Mostly they are in subducted, metamorphosed and re-elevated remains of ancient oceanic carbonate islands now at elevations of about 5000 feet. Large adjacent expanses of ocean floor underwent the same process and were converted into dense crystalline non-calcareous rock, much of which commonly fractures into blocky masses with intervening cavities of various sizes, a process enhanced by occurrence of cavernous rock fall and rock slides. Very few of these pseudokarstic cavities are large enough to admit humans and be called caves.
- We hope to partner with caver organizations such as the Western Cave Conservancy, the Western Region, Grottos, Conservation Task Forces, etc. as this program develops.
- Further, the biogeography of these mountains must be considered differently from that of the mega-karsts. Overwhelmingly, the cavities of the Cascade Range are bat-sized, not human-sized. Most of the bats of these mountains (and adjacent foothills) appear to be forest bats, not cave bats, but many others may roost where their presence is not even suspected. Some definitely live in crevices of sub-human size. Many of the karstic caves are in alpine terrain, at or above the tree line in areas of heavy snow pack. Those of Cave Ridge adjacent to Snoqualmie Pass (about 15 miles farther up Interstate I-90 from North Bend) have been described well in the guidebook of the 2006 NSS Convention.
- Lava tube caves large enough for humans to enter and investigate are located at lower elevations farther south, near the Columbia River. Some of the lava tube caves especially contain significant habitats of other animal (and plant) life. I recorded the presence of several types of salamanders in my 1963 "Caves of Washington". Especially in the lava tube caves, pikas (cute little furry rodents somewhat like baby chinchillas) build nests, but are shy and are rarely seen. Cave-dwelling invertebrates here include grylloblattids and the beautiful little Oregon

pseudoscorpion (*Microcreagris oregonensis*), and the little-known ice worm has been observed in glacier caves in Mount Rainier National Park.

- In some of the low elevation lava tube caves, winter caving threatens bats during parts of their vulnerable hibernation period.
- Farther north, little winter caving is possible. Instead, the primary threat is to female bats and their pre-volant pups during the maternity season in late Spring.
- The statement of 1 May 2016 by Dr. Merlin Tuttle dealt with many of these concerns. I am confident that it will be especially useful to both the BOG and the new CTF in dealing with these complex issues.

Hawai'i Cave Conservation Task Force - Fred Stone fred@hawaii.edu

- Nothing new on conservation of Pahoia Cave, except that the stick map was spared by the recent lava flow. The new lava is now flowing closer to the P'o'o vent, and is not currently threatening the cave.

Klamath Mountains CTF - Steve Knutson - SssKnutson@aol.com

- Region 5 USFS cave specialist, Joel Despain, invited Johanna Kovarik, the national cave and karst specialist, to visit the Region and look at a few cave situations and give a phone conference. In the Klamaths area she visited Ancient Palace (a cave by Shasta Reservoir) and Manzanita Ridge Cave west of Weaverville, actually in the Klamaths.
- I asked several questions and got answers that didn't seem to be replies where one understood the question.
- The Klamath Forest is still silent about a new MOU for the Marble Mtn cave situation. No word about on actual cave management plan
- In Region 6 (the NW, right?) the regional cave and karst person is Joceline Biro. She is in Portland and I have never seen her anywhere. She seems quite insulated from cave, karst, lavatube, or psuedokarst issues.
- The Ape Cave issue develops, albeit slowly. I now have a signed Volunteer Agreement with the monument (Mt St Helens) and the focus is to remap Ape Cave with the installation of permanent stations, followed by inventory and placement of all inventory items on a digital map of the cave, thus generating a cave GIS for future cave management by the Gifford Pinchot. I couldn't get any environmental lawyers to legally pound on them with the FCRPA, so I will move them toward more cave management by leading them a hand.
- The legal opinion on the FCRPA should be a good subject for an article in the next conservation issue of the NEWS. Something like "FCRPA deemed useless

for the legal protection of significant caves by environmental lawyers". Very disappointing.

- Meanwhile, the WNS issue exploded locally with the discovery of a sick Little Brown at North Bend, 30 miles east of Seattle. It was totally infected, according to the FWS, so it had been sick for a year or two. DNA shows it a species native to Washington state, so it didn't hitch in from elsewhere. Thus, it seems it caught WNS from an infected source locally. Possibly an infection nexus is near Seattle, been there at least a couple years.
- Rangers at the MSHNM got on the stick and swabbed a bunch of bats and a dirt sample from Ape and didn't find the fungus. They say they are not into cave closures, but will work on education and clean caving decon procedures.
- Bill Halliday then jumped in with both feet and wants to start a CTF called the Washington Cascades Bat CTF. He plans an organizational meeting for June 26 near Puget Sound. His thesis seems to be to head off the "hysteria" being generated regarding this WNS appearance. He has Merlin Tuttle and Clyde Senger (retired cave biologist) on board, and wants me to take over when his health prevents him, which seems to be predicted to be right away. I am begging off, being too tied up with the Ape VA and remapping, but I don't actually see what needs to be done, unless some actual hysteria rears up.
- It may sound like I am not in favor of what Bill is setting up, but I am. Any voice putting down cave closures as a remedy for the spread of WNS, is a good voice. And it potentially saves me lawyer fees, since any fed closures out here are going to get enjoined, and fast. I want to see the actual evidence that humans are a vector.
- Still, I guess closures in the case of the St Helens monument are extremely unlikely, because closing Ape Cave would start a user revolution, since there are 150,000 such a season.
- The FWS are doing DNA analyses of the fungus sample and then can tell if it came from back east or from Asia, which seems to be what is suspected. Downwind of a huge port facility, anecdotes about bats flying out of cargo containers, and WNS all over Asia. Similar I guess to the Howe Cave occurrence, near a Hudson River port?
- This WNS is 20 years ahead of the bat biologists projection (FWS) for Washington state, if it had spread naturally, by bat interaction. It is projected to be all over the US eventually, you know.
- It is a lively topic of discussion. More fireworks to come!

High Guads Restoration Project (HGRP) CTF - Jennifer Foote - highguads@yahoo.com,

- Things are pretty much in limbo, there is an interim USFS Cave Specialist. I am still hoping to figure out how to reinvigorate the project and will hopefully have more to report next time.

Ozark CTF - Kathy Kriska - katcntrygrl@sbcglobal.net

- We planned to work on waterways, but rain has left them too murky to see well.
- Onondaga – 6 cavers worked 8 hours uncovering flowstone floor under concrete we started removing last year. Total 48 caver hours.
- A nighttime off-hours bucket brigade is planned for the last week of June

Twin Lakes CTF - John Durall - TwinLakesCCSTF1@aol.com, Steve Gentry, Lead Advisor SGentry177@aol.com

- Nothing new

CONVENTION DIVISION REPORT SUMMARY

Prepared by Carol Tideman - ctider@ymail.com

HIGHLIGHTS

- The 2016 Convention will celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the NSS & 100th Anniversary of the Park Service

Convention Division

PROGRESS:

- Communicating with the confirmed groups. Checking on their progress and passing along new information, filling requests for data, history and other materials and answering any question.
- Working with the Ely, NV group hosting the 2016 Convention.
- Working with group proposing to host the 2017 Convention
- Working with the Whitefish, MT group hosting the 2018 Convention

PLANS

- Attend convention committee planning meetings (any year's) whenever possible,
- Continue working with confirmed groups
- Continue working with groups interested in hosting a convention

- Continue to solicit new host groups.
- Chair the Convention Planning and Debrief meeting at the convention

PROBLEMS

- No one is showing interest in hosting the 2019 Convention.

2016 NSS Convention – Matt Bowers

- No report submitted

2017 NSS Convention – Blake Jordan

PROGRESS

- We had a committee meeting recently
- I have submitted the Final Budget and am waiting for discussion and approval.
- We are currently working on the Website to later house online registration
- We are on track to having registration on Monday of the 2016 Convention

PLANS

- A committee meeting is planed for July 10th at 3pm.
- After the convention in Ely, we will start having more frequent meetings, at the least monthly.
- The event video will be sent to Dave Socky a week prior to convention.

PROBLEMS Currently none

2018 NSS Convention – Doug Warner

PROGRESS

- Further discussion with Whitefish School District
- No final dates or prices yet. Waiting on better discussion on sq. ft. of space and number of rooms needed.
- US portion of the guidebook is nearly complete (final formatting pending). Handing off to the Canadians so they can follow the general approach.
- Waiting to hear back about some price options for various sizes and options on publication so formatting can be finalized to work within budget.
- Most major roles are currently covered.
- Duty descriptions were sent to each party that had some associated task covered in the convention manual.
- Video for 2016 convention showing at video salon is complete.

PLANS

- Zero in on final dates and prices for school rental.
- Begin working with property owner for camp site to get to a price for rental.
- Get some initial deadlines in place and begin tracking with the project manager.
- Re-start the regular Exec virtual meetings.
- Organize a short all-hands 2018 crew at 2016 convention.

PROBLEMS

- Need to get a better communication path (and contact spreadsheet) for the various key people. Some of the Canadian volunteers have been difficult to contact (via bounced email, lack of email, etc)

Salon Committee – Cady Soukup

- The Salons committee is moving forward with the details of the Display Salons and Salons Awards Show set-up requirements.
- There have been some small surprises (stage depth is shallow so it looks as though we may need to set our projectors out front; we await details) but everyone is moving forward and planning with what we have.

EDUCATION DIVISION REPORT SUMMARY

Chris Lafferty, Education Division Chief – chris.lafferty2@gmail.com

Education Grants and Scholarships Committee - Pamela Tegelman Malabad

No report received.

Junior Speleological Society - Zach Schudrowitz

No report received.

Webinar Committee - Debbie Spoons

Webinars are still very popular and the statistics for downloads are robust. Geary Schindel is assisting Debbie with this committee and they have had some dynamic speakers recently.

Safety and Techniques Committee - Scott McCrea
No report received.

Environmental Education Committee – Kyle Mills
No report received.

National Cave Rescue Committee - Anmar Mirza
No report received.

NATURE PRESERVE COMMITTEE SUMMARY

October 2015

Prepared by Tom Griffin – Preserves@caves.org – Preserve Chairman
a1topcatdesign@aol.com

The NSS Preserves committee has 15 Preserves. In general there are no major problems with the preserves; however some do have some repairs that will cost some money. Some preserves have just minor maintenance activities while other are involved in many projects.

A suggest was made by several preserve managers that we provide signage along the surveyed boundaries (especially for those that are new!). Or, at least at the entrances to the cave and the kiosk. Possible verbiage: *“Welcome to _____, a nature preserve of the National Speleological Society.”*

A very quick summery of most of the preserves is below. For more detail see the full Preserves committee report.

Donald R. Russell Preserve: no new report.

Great X Preserve: some problems with gates left open, but otherwise quiet

James Gage Preserve: Many problems/repairs have already been addressed. Further work is to be done this year. Remaining items on the to-do list are already contained in the approved preserve budget for the year.

John Guilday Preserve: Minor repairs. Earl is negotiating with the new owner of the nearby Sites Cave and Cave Rat Cave.

Kingston Saltpeter Preserve: All is well. No major problems.

McFails Preserve: Some trail work needs to be undertaken.

Mill Creek Preserve: The lawsuit brought by the NSS and Alachua City against Alachua County and Wal-Mart has been successfully resolved. Strict conservation regulations have been put in place and building plans that would have affected the groundwater and springs have been altered to protect the cave system. One of the neighbors is in the process of gifting several acres surrounding the preserve over to us to further protect this resource.

New River Cave Preserve: Improvements continue. Visitation is still high. Graffiti was discovered and the AVP authorized a reward for information leading to the vandals, but no progress – an attempt has since been made to remove the graffiti.

Richard Blenz Nature Preserve: No report last two BOG meetings

Schoharie Caverns Nature Preserve: Survey is complete!! Purchase of a heavy duty weed trimmer will occur soon.

Shelta Preserve: New manager needed. Bill Torode continues to look after property.

Tytoona Cave Nature Preserve: No report sent.

Warren Cave Nature Preserve: Proposed restructuring of the description of the preserve in the NSS information pages.

Wells Cave Nature Preserve: Downed trees in the parking lot – Bill is cutting them up. Minor graffiti. Bill is planning to install a guide rail with reflectors at the entrance to the drive to prevent people getting stuck – to truly fix the problem would require a backhoe and gravel.

William J. Stephenson Nature Preserve: New manager needed. Bill Torode continues to look after property.

DONALD R. RUSSELL NATURE PRESERVE
Clayton Russell – drussellcommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: Donald R. Russell Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION: Adair County, Oklahoma
3. ACQUISITION DATE: September 1, 1991
4. DEED LOCATION: NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS: Donated by Mr. Donald Russell
6. ACREAGE: 20 ACRES
7. LIABILITY RELEASE: YES
8. AREAS OF INTEREST: Biology and Ecology

No report sent.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS NATURE PRESERVE
Bob Montgomery – greatxcommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: Great Expectations Cave Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION: Gray Bull, Wyoming
3. ACQUISITION DATE: January 30, 2003
4. DEED LOCATION: NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS: Yes
6. ACREAGE: 40 ACRES
7. LIABILITY RELEASE: YES
8. AREAS OF INTEREST: Recreation, Hydrology, Mineralogy

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

Robert Montgomery – Preserve Manager
John Scheltens
Mike Hanson
Marc Ohms
Dan Austin
Carl Bern
Paul Spackman

PROJECTS:

- This year's proposed projects, for the preserve are: a noxious weed survey (and proposed treatments), fence repair and construction, and continued maintenance of the Great X Cave gate.
- These and other projects on the Great X Cave Preserve will be scheduled for this year's field season, which will not start until late July.

PROBLEMS:

- During several trips, it has been noted that the gates in the fences on the preserve have been left open. I suspect that lazy individuals on 4 wheel ATV's are the culprits here. The gates have been wired shut and locked. We will check and repair the fences again this year in July along with the locked gates and "No Trespassing" signs. We are also intending to build new fences on the SE boundary of the property to keep livestock from accessing the property from that area.
- In addition, it was noted that there are several areas infested with Canadian Thistle on the property. Since these are noxious weeds we are attempting to eradicate them over the next several years.
- Forest Service caves in this area had been closed, due to White Nose Syndrome. They have now been reopened. It was decided to keep all caves on the Great Expectations Cave Preserve open. There have only been a few bats sighted in the caves and these apparently only roost there in the summer if at all. We are requiring all persons entering the caves to use proper decontamination procedures. The BLM caves in the area are still open to caving. The BLM and US Forest Service did bat surveys in several area caves this winter. I have not heard the results of the surveys.

PLANS:

- In addition to the above-mentioned projects, we intend to cut some dead timber on the property above the cave entrance. A conservation trip is being discussed to do a clean up in the Milky Way area of the cave. The management plan is currently being reviewed and revised to more accurately reflect the level and type of usage of the property and caves. A rescue plan is being developed and there are plans to place a rescue cash in the cave. There is also a proposal to more accurately map and sketch the section of the cave from the entrance to the end of the Great Hall and to the Cephalopod Malt Shop.

SUMMARY:

- Overall this last year's caving season was mostly uneventful. Usage of the cave was been about the same as previous years, Usage this last year was down from previous years, mostly due to the late season.

- Lack of time available by volunteers has limited the work being done on the preserve in recent years. This next year a group of volunteers is planning a long weekend to repair fences, cut wood and other projects.
- Due to normal snowfall in the Bighorn Mountains this winter and a late spring, access to the cave may be delayed until late July this year.

JAMES GAGE KARST PRESERVE

Thom Engel and R.W. Simmons – jgagecommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: James Gage Karst Preserve
2. LOCATION: Schoharie County, New York
3. ACQUISITION DATE: January 20, 1995
4. DEED LOCATION: NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS: Yes
6. ACREAGE: 40 Acres of land and 310 acres of cave rights
7. LIABILITY RELEASE: Yes
8. AREAS OF INTEREST: Recreation, geology and history

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

Thom Engel – Preserve Co-Manager
 Robert Simmons – Preserve Co-Manager
 Emily Davis
 Mike Warner
 Peter Teresco – Cabin Registrar

PROJECTS:

This year's proposed projects, for the preserve were:

1. Perform routine trail maintenance and parking area maintenance.
2. Re-write of the preserve management plan.
3. Obtain cost estimates/bids for implementing various options for the cabin.
4. Rebuild-relocate the outhouse.
5. Add crushed stone to driveway/parking area.
6. Review options for replacing/repairing the cave entrance ladder.
7. Work with NYS DEC on determination of the presence of the Northern Long-Eared bat.

PROGRESS:

- The cave was reopened after the winter closure on May 1, 2016. An evaluation of the cave for the continued presence of the federally threatened Northern Long-Eared Bat should be planned. Cave to remain closed through the hibernation periods. We have instituted a temporary vertical competency and equipment requirement for cave visitation, due to the ladder deterioration.

PROBLEMS:

- **LADDER:** During several trips in 2015, it had been reported that the upper ladder section, a portion of which has broken off (the portion formerly extending above ground) is generally loose. Given the age of the ladder (25 years) and its wooden construction, repair, removal and or replacement is being evaluated. MET Grotto has volunteered to repair upper part of ladder, materials costs included in annual budget.
- **SURVEY:** A new and complete survey of the preserve has been completed and accepted. The survey will be filed on the Schoharie County land records. Now that the metes and bounds of the preserve have been defined, we are looking into posting boundary markers along the property lines in the forested area of the preserve to provide a visual demarcation of the property.
- **CLOSURE:** As we are in the origin area for WNS and Balls Cave has historically been a hibernaculum of note, the cave has been closed each of the past several winters. We are requiring all persons entering the cave during the open season to use proper decontamination procedures. We have been informed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation that Balls Cave is listed as a historic hibernaculum for the Northern Long-Eared Bat which was listed in 2015 as a Threatened Species. The full impact of this listing on the management of the preserve should be negligible since the cave was being closed for the hibernation period anyway. Balls cave is posted as closed between October 1 and May 1.
- **OUTHOUSE:** The "Outhouse" structure at the site consisted of a wooden superstructure set atop a concrete pad over a plastic holding tank. Due to frost issues and shallow water in the area, the tank and outhouse had heaved out of the ground and are presently not usable. We have contacted a local construction firm to reconstruct the system with a concrete tank in accordance with local health regulations. The wooden superstructure has been detached from the base and temporarily stored on the site. The current preserve budget includes costs for the reconstruction of the outhouse, which we anticipate performing in the dry late summer season this year.
- **CABIN:** The Gage Cabin consists of a 20X30 foot, single-story, wood frame, on-slab rustic building. The Cabin is in overall poor condition and is in need of extensive repair, replacement or removal. Based on the condition of the Cabin and the outhouse (as noted above), use of the Cabin has been curtailed indefinitely until such time as it can be made habitable again. Last fall we had the local electric utility company come and disconnect/remove the overhead electrical service line, which has not been in use for decades. An asbestos/lead paint survey has been completed to assess building issues, prior to renovation or removal. No asbestos containing materials were identified and the

lead levels were below the waste thresholds so no special handling/disposal will be necessary for demolition or renovation wastes. The budget currently includes disposal dumpsters, assuming the cabin can be taken down with local caver labor (no lead or asbestos issues).

- **PARKING AREA:** The parking area next to the cabin was previously augmented with processed stone in order to provide a dry and well founded parking area for the preserve/Cabin. This process has raised the parking portion of the site slightly above the area near the cabin and exacerbated drainage/water issues associated with the cabin and intervening grassed area. Water accumulation in the cabin and rutting of the grassed area are common occurrences and contribute to the overall maintenance issues at the preserve. The current budget includes costs for adding crushed stone to parking area and driveway to harden these areas. This is planned to be performed concurrently with the outhouse work in the drier late summer.
- **MANAGEMENT PLAN:** The Management Plan has not been substantively updated since it was written for the original acquisition of the property by the National Speleological Foundation (NSF) in 1987. The plan was written before the onset of WNS and before the acquisition of the Cabin. The “plans” section calls for replacement of the ladder in the cave, which was done in 1989. A complete re-write of the management plan is underway.
- **KIOSK:** The informational kiosk at the gateway leaving the Cabin/parking area is in poor condition and needs to be repaired or replaced. The signage on the kiosk still identifies the preserve as the “Barton Hill” preserve and needs to be updated to reflect the name change to the James Gage preserve.
- **ACCESS ROAD:** The majority of the access road remains in overall good condition. There are a number of wet/low areas, which inhibit vehicular traffic (in case of a rescue at the cave). We have allowed our neighbors to place excess stone and gravel in some areas to promote drainage and provide a firmer surface. These operations will continue over time to gradually improve the utility of the roadway while preserving its natural character. Several of the more remote sections of the roadway are constantly growing over with vegetation and require steady upkeep to keep the roadway open.

PLANS:

- Determine whether the existing ladder should be repaired, replaced or removed and present that decision for consideration, in the interim allow local grotto to repair/replace upper section to allow easier and continued cave access.
- Complete the Re-Write the management plan for the preserve and submit to the board for approval.
- Repair/renovate the Kiosk.
- Determine a recommended course of action with respect to the existing cabin including the likely cost implications.
- Reconstruct the outhouse system.
- Arrange to have a load of crushed stone placed in the driveway.
- Obtain and post property boundary markers.

- Continue the assessment of the possible presence of the Northern Long-Eared Bat at the preserve.

SUMMARY:

A lot of work to be done; replacement of the cabin will likely require a fund raising effort as well as utilize available volunteer efforts of local members and neighbors.

BUDGET: No new items have been added to the preserve budget request at this time.

AVP note: There is a much longer, more detailed report available, containing details of the survey, sketches of work to be done, lab reports, invoices, etc. If interested send me an email request and I will forward it to you.

JOHN GUILDAY CAVES NATURE PRESERVE

Earl Suitor – jguildaycommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: John Guilday Caves Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION: Franklin, West Virginia
3. ACQUISITION DATE: March 15, 1983
4. DEED LOCATION: NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS: Yes
6. ACREAGE: 41.6 Acres
7. LIABILITY RELEASE: Yes
8. AREAS OF INTEREST: Recreation, archeology and history

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

Earl Suitor– Preserve Manager

Cheryl Suitor

Jeff Jahn

Rob Lee

Eric Berge

Alex Mawdsley

PROBLEMS

1. Sign inside New Trout needs repainting.
2. Cavers need access to Sites Cave & Cave Rat Cave (Old Sites Property).
3. Work with new landowner to satisfy requirements to obtain access.
4. Secure funding for fences for same [Cave Conservancy of The Virginias, N.S.S., etc.]

PROGRESS

1. New roof on kiosk [6-25-16].
2. Replenishment of brochures at kiosk.
3. Retouch of paint.
4. Continued graffiti removal as needed.
5. Leading educational trips at preserve for boy scouts and other groups.
6. Repair of gate at Trout.
7. Rehab of locks at Trout.
8. Continued recon and landowner work to obtain access to the old Sites property East of the preserve.
9. Clearing fire roads of deadfall, etc. for owner of the old Sites property.
10. Replaced registers in New Trout & Hamilton.
11. Dessicant installed in register tube in Hamilton to prevent soggy/mildewed register.
12. Replaced sign-in book at kiosk.

KINGSTON SALTPETER CAVE NATURE PRESERVE (GA)

Larry O. Blair - kingstoncommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: Kingston Saltpeter Cave Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION: Bartow County, Georgia
3. LEASED DATE: June 21, 1983
4. DEED LOCATION: Leased Property from Felburn Foundation
5. DONATED FUNDS: N/A
6. ACREAGE: 40 Acres
7. LIABILITY RELEASE: Yes
8. AREAS OF INTEREST: History, Archeology

PROJECTS: Removing deadfalls from the big entrance enclosure

PROBLEMS: Everything is well at the preserve

SUMMARY: Kevin Glenn is now the email correspondent for the preserve (the manager, Larry Blair, does not have a computer or email).

McFAILS CAVE NATURE PRESERVE (NY)
Tommy Rider - mcfailscommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: McFails Caves Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION: Schoharie County, New York
3. ACQUISITION DATE: August 11, 1965 – First NSS Preserve
4. DEED LOCATION: NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS: Yes
6. ACREAGE: 2 Acres
7. LIABILITY RELEASE: Yes
8. AREAS OF INTEREST: Recreation, hydrology, geology

SUMMARY:

McFails Cave is open for the season. Not too many trips so far- maybe a half a dozen or so. One of the trips removed most of the “supplies” from an old rescue cache at Northwest Dome that was established many years ago; only some large plastic sheets remain. Some surface cleanup work needs to be performed including mowing the parking area, trimming brush along the trails, and remarking the trails. Most significantly, the logging operation on the adjoining property this past winter has resulted in several sections of the trail being difficult to follow.

MILL CREEK SINK NATURE PRESERVE (FL)

Charles Roberson – jcrober67@gmail.com – millcreekcommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: Mill Creek Sink Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION: Alachua, Florida
3. ACQUISITION DATE: December 6, 1993
4. DEED LOCATION: NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS: Donated by City of Alachua, Florida
6. ACREAGE: 8.58 Acres
7. LIABILITY RELEASE: Yes
8. AREAS OF INTEREST: Cave diving site only - recreation, hydrology, geology, biology

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

PRESERVE MANAGER: Charles Roberson

GUIDES: Rob Anderson, Ward Beecher, Doug Chappell, Rick Crawford, James Draker, Wayne Kinard, Bill Main, Mark Messersmith, Jerry Murphy, Kelly Jessop, Jeff Petersen, Charles Roberson, Robert Schulte.

AVP note: The lawsuit brought by the NSS and Alachua City against Alachua County and Wal-Mart has been successfully resolved. Strict conservation regulations have been put in place and building plans that would have affected the groundwater and springs have been altered to protect the cave system.

This "win" has received some minor attention from various media outlets. In addition, a neighbor is preparing paperwork to gift adjoining acreage to the preserve to further protect this delicate ecosystem.

NEW RIVER CAVE NATURE PRESERVE (VA)

Wil Orndorff – newrivercommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: New River Cave Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION: Radford, Virginia (Giles County)
3. ACQUISITION DATE: May 2014
4. DEED LOCATION: NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS: Yes/Fund raising sufficient to complete purchase of cave
6. ACREAGE: 13 Acres
7. LIABILITY RELEASE: No, Sign in and out procedure defined in management plan
8. AREAS OF INTEREST: Biological, geological, historical, and recreational

PROJECTS:

- Trail construction at New River Cave is complete. A kiosk has been build and an informational display for the kiosk is being finalized. This project was generously supported by the Cave Conservancy of the Virginias, and conducted by the VPI, New River Valley, and Blue Ridge Grottoes of the NSS.

PROBLEMS:

- There was vandalism (graffiti) in the register room discovered in March, 2016. The perpetrator was not identified, but appears to have been tipped off because there was an

attempt to remove the graffiti (spray paint.) The New River Preserve Committee is considering option for low impact removal of the spray paint.

- The log book has once again disappeared from the register tube.

PLANS:

- The Preserve Committee and volunteers are working to improve the "river lot" portion of the NSS property to make it suitable for camping. Major issue is procurement and maintenance of bathroom facilities.

SUMMARY:

- Visitation continues to be regular. Fortunately, outside of the graffiti in the register room and the disappearing log book, impacts to the cave appear to be minimal.

RICHARD BLENZ NATURE PRESERVE (IN)

Anmar Mirza – blenzcommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: Richard Blenz Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION: Bloomington, Indiana
3. ACQUISITION DATE: 2008
4. DEED LOCATION: NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS: Donated by Richard Blenz
6. ACREAGE: 41.3 Acres
7. LIABILITY RELEASE: Permit
8. AREAS OF INTEREST: Recreation, hydrology, geology

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

Anmar Mirza – Preserve Manager

Dave Everton

Sam Frushour

No report sent for last two BOG meetings

SCHOHARIE NATURE PRESERVE (NY)

Manager: Christa Hay - christahay@yahoo.com 518-237-1165

Cabin Reservations: Peter Teresco pteresco@nycap.rr.com

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: Schoharie Nature Preserve Richard Blenz Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION: Schoharie County, New York
3. ACQUISITION DATE: 2008 (1994?)
4. DEED LOCATION: NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS: Donated by Richard Blenz
6. ACREAGE: x Acres – Property survey is needed!
7. LIABILITY RELEASE: No
8. AREAS OF INTEREST: Recreation, hydrology, geology

No report sent, however a survey that was budgeted for has been completed. Encroachment of the neighbor was discovered and will be dealt with. Maps will be filed with the proper county authorities. A weed trimmer purchase is in progress.

SHELTA CAVE PRESERVE REPORT (AL)

Bill Torode – sheltacommittee@caves.org

Phone 256.534.7809

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: Shelta Caves Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION: Huntsville, Alabama
3. ACQUISITION DATE: September, 1967 (2nd owned preserve)
4. DEED LOCATION: NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS: Yes
6. ACREAGE: 12 Acres
7. LIABILITY RELEASE: No
8. AREAS OF INTEREST: Recreation, Ecology, History, Hydrology,

Bill Torode currently checking on property and acting as manager.

PROJECTS: Bill continues to clean up the Shelta Cave Preserve, and remove fallen trees.

SUMMARY: Bill also keeps the grounds picked up at the old NSS office on Cave Ave across the street from his house.

TYTOONA CAVE NATURE PRESERVE (PA) -
Garrett Czmor - tytoonacommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: Tytoona Cave Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION: Tyrone, Pennsylvania (Blair Valley)
3. ACQUISITION DATE: December 23, 1997
4. DEED LOCATION: NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS: Yes, Huntingdon County Cave Hunters
6. ACREAGE: 6.8 Acres
7. LIABILITY RELEASE: Yes for Cave Diving only
8. AREAS OF INTEREST: Recreation, Ecology, History, Hydrology,

No report sent.

WARREN CAVE NATURE PRESERVE (FL)
James Hamlin, Ph.D. - warrencommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: Warren Cave Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION: Alachua County, Florida
3. ACQUISITION DATE: June 3, 1991
4. DEED LOCATION: NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS: Donated by Nature Conservancy
6. ACREAGE: 4.01 Acres
7. LIABILITY RELEASE: No
8. AREAS OF INTEREST: Recreation, Ecology, History, Hydrology, Biology

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

James Hamlin, Ph.D. – Preserve Manager
Les Cochram
Erik Amsbury
Buford Pruitt
Irv Sterling

PROJECTS:

1. A re-survey of the dig to aid its completion. The dig would bypass a long tight crawl and squeeze, thus facilitating further explorations at the back of the cave. We have completed about half of the re-survey.
2. Removing trash and expired emergency supplies. A large number of bottles of Gatorade and granola bars were stashed in the cave more than a decade ago as part of an effort to explore the back of the cave. Most of these are now expired. We have begun the process of hauling all of this out of the cave.

PROBLEMS:

No problems to report. No evidence of trespassers or vandalism. On my last visit to check the property, a large turkey vulture appeared to have taken up residence in the entrance pit, just above the cave gate. It remains to be seen if the vulture will move on. Apparently several years ago a vulture had nested in the pit, but generally flew off when visitors approached. Turkey vultures are protected by the migratory birds act.

PLANS: No updates to management plan. Volunteer efforts keep the cave accessible.

SUMMARY:

This year, David Lizdas, who served as a temporary preserve manager after Bill Oldacre transferred preserve management to James Hamlin, NSS 65329. Since the last report, there have been four trips to the cave by local cavers, one of which included a visitor from Georgia. I have received, on average, about two emails per month from people requesting to access the cave. Many (though not all) of these emails are from people that do not realize that some equipment and experience is necessary to access the cave. For this reason I propose a slight modification of the description of the cave on the NSS preserves page. Below is a proposed new version:

“Warren Cave Nature Preserve, located in Alachua County, Florida, was donated to the NSS in early 1991 by The Nature Conservancy. The Nature Conservancy had held the property, since acquiring it in 1976 with the help of the Florida Speleological Society, an NSS grotto. The Warren Preserve property is now overseen by the Warren Cave Nature Preserve Committee, headed by James Hamlin, with assistance from the Florida Speleological Society.”

Warren Cave is the longest known dry cave in Florida with over four miles of mapped passage. As beautiful as Warren Cave is, with ribbons of chert, karst canyons, and Miocene era fossils, it is also known for long and tight squeezes. Large stretches of the cave involve hands-and-knees or belly crawling. Access to the majority of the cave requires rigging and negotiating two fifty-foot drops. At the present time, the cave is gated, but visitation is allowed. A waiver must be signed for admittance to the property.”

WELLS CAVE NATURE PRESERVE (KY)
William (Bill) Walden – wellscommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: Wells Cave Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION: Pulaski County, Kentucky
3. ACQUISITION DATE: April 2003
4. DEED LOCATION: NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS: Yes
6. ACREAGE: 3 Acres
7. LIABILITY RELEASE: No
8. AREAS OF INTEREST: Recreation, Ecology, History, Hydrology, Education

PROJECTS:

- In the parking lot area there are several downed trees. I was able to move two but six remain. I will return with a chainsaw and cut them up.

PROBLEMS:

- The neighbor reported multiple problems with people getting stuck at the beginning of the drive into the parking lot. The proper way to eliminate this problem would be to extend the culvert pipe by 6 feet and fill the problem area with gravel. That requires hiring some one to do the work with a backhoe and this is more expensive than I care to spend. I suggest installing a sturdy guide rail with reflectors. I can handle the expense.

PLANS:

SUMMARY:

- I just returned from Wells Cave where I got the lawn mowed and picked up trash - one piece of trash from the cave and two pieces from the parking lot area.
- Did see one new graffiti in the entrance passage.

WILLIAM J. STEPHENSON NATURE PRESERVE (AL)
Bill Torode – stephensoncommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: William J. Stephenson Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION: Huntsville, Alabama
3. ACQUISITION DATE: 2013
4. DEED LOCATION: NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS: Yes

6. ACREAGE: 60 Acres
7. LIABILITY RELEASE: No
8. AREAS OF INTEREST: Recreation and Education

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

Bill Torode currently checks on the property. PRESERVE MANAGER is still needed.

PROJECTS: Yesterday 11 June I walked up the trail on the William J Stephenson Nature Preserve I only got about half way up the mountain, trimming back the summer growth. The Trail is in good shape. Not many people go up to the caves and I think that the trail may eventually grow back over.