

National Speleological Society
Administrative Vice President's Report
Board of Governors Meeting
Rio Rancho, NM NSS Convention
June 19, 2017

Prepared by: Katherine L Crispin, Ph.D.
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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.

The AVP wrote a column in the NSS News Conservation Issue. In this column were outlined a unified vision for the Department of the Administrative Vice President.

An ongoing effort to fulfill the AVP's vision is being coordinated between the Division chiefs and their respective committees. It was hoped that the first Department-wide meeting would occur at this NSS Convention, but circumstances prevented the AVP from attending in person. There will be conference calls between all Division chiefs on a regular on-going basis. Additional conference calls between committees can occur as needed utilizing the conference call line established by the AVP. The Landowner Relations Network Committee is having monthly meetings with this method.

The Landowner Relations Network Committee (LRNC) is doing a phenomenal job both reaching out to Landowners and recognizing Landowners who go above and beyond. Many thanks to Julie, Rick, Gaylene, Tom (incoming) and Gene (outgoing)! See the detailed committee report below for specific actions that have been undertaken by this committee. Special thanks to Amber Lehmann for designing the awards certificates for this committee. One problem of note: There needs to be a better coordination between the NSS Office and the LRNC. When requests come in from any landowner, even those who are local to the office, they should be referred to the LRNC. This includes any potential cave acquisitions, as this is being coordinated between the LRNC and the Preserves Committee. Additionally, it would potentially help things if there were a phone directory when calls come in to the office, such as "press 3 if you are a landowner with questions". A message would more easily be passed along to the LRNC.

Mike Hood is making progress at putting the Education Division back into shape. This should be one of our shining stars of the NSS, but currently we are sadly lacking. Tony Canike has stepped in to help with the website updates. There is money in the budget to fund some additional website upgrades, including hiring professional help. The biggest need is to get content created. This will be an ongoing focus for the next year – I anticipate high coordination between Education, Conservation and Management – all

three are closely linked and they should present a uniform appearance as our “public face”. We should be the go-to source on the internet for anything cave related.

Because of the early date of the NSS Convention and the last BOG meeting being only a couple months ago, fewer reports than normal have been submitted. It is an ongoing evaluation to determine committees that are repeatedly failing to report. Additionally, some committees may be combined or eliminated to better serve the needs of the NSS.

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

- Five NSS LRNC Certificates of Appreciation have been handed out since March. The inaugural NSS Award for Outstanding Landowner-Caver Relations will be handed out at the awards banquet this convention.
- Possible bids are in process for both the 2019 and 2020 Conventions. There have been a couple of interested parties for 2021.
- A couple of grants are in process for cave conservation projects
- A grant was given to SCCi to help acquire the Deleo entrance
- We are still in need of a new WNS liaison
- Congratulations to the Sandia Cave Project – they are being honored with the 2017 NSS Group Conservation Award and Sandia Grotto is being honored with the 2017 NSS Grotto Conservation Award.
- CaveSim traveled to 9 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!
- Tom Rider has stepped down from McFail’s Preserve – the new preserve managers are Peter Haberland and Jason Siemion – we thank Tom for his many years of service!

CAVE MANAGEMENT DIVISION REPORT SUMMARY

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

June 2017

The Cave Management Division Chief recommends approval for the following BOG

act: Establishment of the Cave Management Advisory Committee for Research Crispin moved: The Cave Management Advisory Committee for Research (CMACR) is established in the department of the Administrative Vice President (AVP) to encourage and advise cave management research. Organizations and persons engaged in cave management research may apply to affiliate with the NSS by agreeing with the purposes of the NSS, and applying in writing to the CMRAC. Approval of said standing is at the discretion of the AVP. The approved research projects may use any of the following descriptions: "A Cave Management Research Project of the National Speleological Society," "An NSS Cave Management Study," or similar description. Grant requests from affiliated cave management researchers should be sent to this committee for review and then to the NSS Research Advisory Committee for its consideration.

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

Several years ago, the Cave Conservancies Act was amended by deleting requirements such as reporting to the Chairman or the Cave Conservancies Committee and that offices be members of the NSS. In summary, there are no BOG established criteria for NSS Cave Conservancies except for the agreement clause. Is this policy a good thing?

50-584 Cave Conservancies Committee 11-02-96 The Cave Conservancies Committee is established in the department of the Administrative Vice President to encourage all cave Conservancies and other persons and groups responsibly managing caves to affiliate with the NSS. This committee will be proactive in promoting the NSS to Conservancies and other cave owners, as the major cave organization for providing cave management information, expertise and assistance. Cave managing organizations and persons may affiliate with the NSS as a conservancy by agreeing with the purposes of the NSS and applying in writing with the Cave Conservancies Committee.

List of Cave Conservancies known to the NSS:

Name of Conservancy by date of founding	Date Founded	Date Incorporated	Date of NSS Conservancy Status	Conservancy No. and Status
Butler Cave Conservation Society (BCCS)	1968	1972	1990 or 91	5
Appalachian Cave Conservancy (ACC) Formerly known as PerCCAMS	1977	5 Feb 2004	1988	4
Northeastern Cave Conservancy (NCC)	1978	1978	Oct 2003	16
Cave Conservancy of the Virginias (CCV)	1980	July 1980	July 2004	17
Pennsylvania Cave Conservancy (PCC)	1983	1984	Mar 1999	8

Michigan Karst Conservancy	1983	1983	NA	NA *
New Jersey Cave Conservancy (NJCC)	1984	2002	Nov 2000	11 * Inactive circa 2009
Ellis Cave Conservancy	1985	Never	1986	1 * Disbanded 1989
Indiana Karst Conservancy (IKC)	1985	Feb 1986	April 1987	2
Texas Cave Management Association (TCMA)	1985	1986	April 1987	3
Greater Cincinnati Grotto Great Saltpeter Preserve	1989	Not Inc.	1995	6 * Ended Conservancy Status 2007
Southeastern Cave Conservancy (SCCI)	1991	1991	NA	NA *
Texas Cave Conservancy (TEXCC)	1994	Oct. 1994	Oct 2003	14 * Disbanded 2016
Missouri Caves and Karst Conservancy (MCKC)	1995	1995?	2010 ?	19
Mid-Atlantic Karst Conservancy (MAKC)	1997	1998	Nov 1998	7
West Virginia Cave Conservancy (WVCC)	1997	Dec 1997	Nov 2000	10
Carroll Cave Conservancy (CCC)	1998	May 2002	Oct 2003	15
Karst Conservancy of Illinois (KCI)	1998	1998	June 2000	9
Cave Conservancy of Hawaii (CCH)	2002	July 2002	Mar. 2003	12
Western Cave Conservancy (WCC)	2002	Aug 2002	Mar 2003	13
Rockcastle Karst Conservancy (RKC)	2004	May 2004	July 2007	18
Kentucky Karst Conservancy (KKC)	2012	June 2012	Aug 2014	20
* Not presently an NSS Cave Conservancy				
Cave Conservancies that are Institutional members of the NSS				
Michigan Karst Conservancy				
Southeastern Cave Conservancy				
West Virginia Cave Conservancy				

The Cave Conservancies Committee is aware of several other organizations in the United States that have the words “cave conservancy” in their name. According to our best information, these organizations do not meet our definition of a cave conservancy.

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

The Roundtable theme is “Working to inspire future conservancy leaders to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to serve and to meet future challenges; to motivate cavers and environmentalists to participate in the conservancy’s work; to build infrastructures of support in relevant communities.” Every caver who is a member of a cave conservancy is invited to participate in the Roundtable. All NSS members are invited to participate in the Nature Preserves meeting. The Twenty Annual Cave Conservancy Roundtable is scheduled at the 2017 NSS Convention on 23 June 2017, Friday starting at 1:00 PM. The theme is “Working to inspire future conservancy leaders to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to serve and to meet future challenges; to motivate cavers and environmentalists to participate in the conservancy’s work; to build infrastructures of support in relevant communities.” **NSS Nature Preserves - Tom Griffin - a1topcatdesign@aol.com** The Roundtable will be followed in the same room at 3:00 PM by a meeting of the NSS Nature Preserves, with Tom Griffin presiding.

Contemporary Cave Use Study -

The following is a proposed study. The committee working with NSS software writers will construct an internet-accessed database for any caver to enter his or her data in the CCUS cave file. Each cave and each caver in this database will have an account with password protection in which to enter their cave trips. Each person will create their account and enter data on caves in which they have access. As new caves are created in the database, the CCUS committee will approve that cave and may occasionally need to consolidate caves that are entered incorrectly. For example, a cave created using the wrong cave name would be edited. Files will need regional monitors to maintain data integrity and manage cave files in the event of problem people. For example, the regional supervisor might have authority to approve access for each caver and to each cave in his region. This is the same process in which people are given access to websites such as the NSS member's page of caves.org. This database will cost a significant amount to construct, but the data entry problem becomes much easier for the caver entering his data and doable for the CCUS Committee. The EC and BOG should note that this concept as the proposal will come later provided.

The position of chair of the Contemporary Cave Use Study Chair is vacant. The usual knowledge and skills appropriate for this type of study are not usually associated with cave science. However, understanding the people impact on the cave environment is crucial for the proper management of caves and karst. NSS leaders are asked to assist in finding a person who would be appropriate to chair this committee. 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. Anyone interested in helping with the CCUS committee should contact John M. Wilson by email jmwgeo@gmail.com or phone 808-929-8256. There are some people related studies being done by NSS members. For example the Caver Village study by Perez and Wilson. A progress report presentation is planned for the 2017 NSS Convention.

Show Caves Coordinator - Gordon Smith, Chairman 812-945-5721 showcaves@caves.org

The following motion was approved at the last BOG meeting, "Show Caves Liaison Act 40-929 Crispin moved: The position of Show Caves Liaison is renamed to Show Cave Coordinator and moved to the Cave Management Division in the department of the Administrative Vice President."

I will be attending the ICS 2017 in Australia and will be visiting many show caves in both Australia and New Zealand. I will also be attending the NCA annual convention in Hannibal Missouri in September and the Cave Management Conference in Arkansas in October. There are numerous examples of NSS cavers helping show cave owners with exploration and surveying as well as show cave owners opening their caves to cavers at local caving events at no or reduced charge. There are no problems that I am aware of. After doing this for over 30 years, I will be happy to step aside if you can find someone else to do this. Unfortunately, I do not know of another show cave owner (or manager) that attends all NSS Conventions. I have recently sold Marengo Cave after 44 years but still am involved in the ownership and management of Diamond Caverns in Kentucky and Cumberland in Tennessee. See you in Albuquerque.

NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee – Julie Schenck-Brown –
jeschenck@hotmail.com

Please welcome Tom Griffin as the new Vice-Chair of the Eastern Region of the NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee (LRNC), as he replaced Gene Harrison who served as the Vice-Chair during the initial development of the Committee. Tom has a passion for working with cave landowners in West Virginia and Virginia and will oversee landowner relations for West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland, Ohio, Indiana, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and New Hampshire. In addition, Tom knows most of the LRNC members in his region and will be networking with local grottos to promote landowner relations and the mission of the LRNC. Our deepest thanks to Gene Harrison for his service and contributions on behalf of landowner relations, which are greatly appreciated.

OVERVIEW

The NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee (LRNC) has been established to work on private sector landowner relations at a national level and facilitate access to the resources of the NSS for the purposes of cave conservation, cave access, cave preservation, and cave acquisition. Through this mission, members of the LRNC are encouraged to establish a relationship with landowners of known caves that see frequent visitors, and visit owners of closed caves to re-establish relationships for cavers.

Landowners who are known to have good relations with cavers are a valuable resource for the NSS and cavers in general. The LRNC takes a proactive approach to caver-friendly landowners to broach the delicate subject of setting up a mechanism to preserve access to the cave upon a change of ownership. In this capacity, the LRNC partners with NSS grottos and other cave conservancies to negotiate the best possible outcome for continued access, whether it's a formal or informal access agreement, a lease, a donation, or sale to the NSS or other conservation organizations.

PROGRESS

Landowner Relations Network Committee Awards

Since the previous report, the *NSS LRNC Certificate of Appreciation* for landowner-caver relations was awarded to the following landowners:

- Blanche Madison of Clarks Cave, VA who has been more than welcoming to cavers for many years. She has not only opened the cave to NSS members, but allows scout/novice trips for many to experience the unique landscapes around the entrance and underground.
- Carol & Merile Obrian of Hoy Cave, KY who promote access for the survey and recreational exploration of their cave that is literally in their backyard; since 2008, they have allowed 57 survey trips and 20 recreational trips led by members of the Green River Grotto. This cave was also visited by members of the NSS BOG after the spring 2017 meeting.
- PJ Hogan of Pryor Spring Cave, TN who has always been a very gracious landowner with her remarkable cave. She has gone to court and fought for the top entrance of Pryor Springs not to be destroyed and shows her pride and love for the cave by sharing it with cavers even though a cave rescue had occurred in her backyard.

- Ronald L. Clark of McKinney Cave and McKinney Pit Cave in AL who has been a friend of cavers for 20+ years and has always allowed access for science and recreation to any caver who has asked permission to enter the caves. McKinney Cave is also a habitat for the endangered Alabama cave shrimp, which has only been documented in three other caves.
- Theresa & Roscoe Hinkle of The Sinks of Gandy Cave in WV, a highly historic, well known and popular caving destination. The Hinkles continue to allow cavers and WV tourists open access to visit “The Sinks.” A nearby cave, Stillhouse Cave, is also accessible from the same parking area. While the Hinkles do not own Stillhouse, it is open to caving without prior permission, making the duo a popular destination.
- Special thanks again to Amber Lehmann who designed the LRNC Certificate of Appreciation to recognize landowners.

The inaugural NSS award for Outstanding Landowner-Caver Relations will be presented by NSS President-elect Geary Schindel at the 2017 NSS Convention since the NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee Executive Committee (Julie, Tom, Rick, and Gaylene) will not be able to attend the Awards Banquet. The recipient of this award has been notified and invited to the 2017 NSS Convention as a guest, thus they are not being charged registration fees.

Articles in the NSS News

- Rand Heazlitt’s article, *Landowners: The Future of Original Exploration and the NSS*, will be featured in an upcoming issue of the *NSS News*, possibly August per Dave Bunnell, NSS News Editor. This article highlights landowners who allow access to the Binkley’s Cave System in Indiana, one of the Nation’s longest and most active survey projects.
- An article that describes the inaugural recipient of the NSS Outstanding Landowner-Caver Relations Award has been submitted to the *NSS News* and will be printed this year.
- Members of the NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee are encouraged to contribute updates and articles to the *NSS News* as well as the NSS social media outlets, including the NSS Landowner Relations Committee Facebook Group.

Brochure

- The content for the NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee brochure is in final review by the LRNC Executive Committee and will be sent to Amber Lehmann for design.
- This brochure will be distributed to landowners and cavers.
- The brochure will be printed, but a PDF version is also being planned to be available for download from the NSS website.
- We are still requesting that members submit photos to LRNC@caves.org for consideration of publication in the brochure.
- Per Dr. Kat Crispin, NSS AVP, money has been allocated in the annual budget to print the LRNC brochures; although this budget still needs to be approved by the NSS BOG, we anticipate having these funds available.

Business Cards

- The content for the NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee business cards has been collected and will be sent to Amber Lehmann for design and layout.
- Members of the NSS Landowner Network Relations Committee will be provided business cards to distribute to landowners and cavers. These cards will provide contact information for the NSS, plus an area for a LRNC member to include their name and contact information.
- Per Dr. Kat Crispin, NSS AVP, money has been allocated in the annual budget to print the LRNC business cards; although this budget still needs to be approved by the NSS BOG, we anticipate having these funds available.

Facebook Group

- Please join us on Facebook at **NSS Landowner Relations Network** to share your stories of landowner-caver relations, especially successes and lessons learned!
- This group is officially sanctioned by the NSS and is open to all cavers and landowners.
- Similar to the LRNC brochure, we need photos of landowners with cavers and their cave. But, please do not include specific locations (GPS coordinates, driving directions, etc.)

Annual Meeting

- Members of the NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee Executive Committee will not be able to attend the 2017 NSS Convention, thus there is no annual meeting scheduled.
- We anticipate having a meeting at the 2018 NSS Convention.

PROJECTS

- A report on Fossil Cave, KY is included in the NSS Acquisitions Report.
- A report on the donation of land at Link Avenue, which would extend the NSS Shelta Cave Preserve is included in the NSS Acquisitions Report.

Clarks Cave, Virginia

The LRNC was asked to provide information on how to approach a landowner to discuss long range planning such as ensuring perpetual access to her cave, including how to talk with her about selling the cave or preserving it through a warranty deed, conservation easement, or trust. This information is being developed into a handout to share with other members of the committee, as well as landowners. This landowner was also a recipient of the NSS LRNC Certificate of Appreciation, as discussed previously in this report.

Guys Cave, Alabama

Although located on land owned by the State of Alabama, cavers have historically enjoyed access to this very popular multi-drop via a friendly landowner at the base of the mountain. However, this access area was sold last year and Andy Zellner, who is a member of the NSS LRNC, has worked extensively with the new landowner to arrange access. Unfortunately, the landowner is not allowing access through his land at this time, despite the fact that he has it listed on the property records as being owned by a land conservation group. Andy will continue to maintain relations with this owner to hopefully gain access for cavers. In addition, Andy continues to maintain landowner relations throughout the southeast to routinely update the TAG Closed Cave list.

Drake Mountain, Alabama

Members of the Huntsville Grotto assisted Helen Ventress Sharp and Randy Sharp, who are landowners on Drake Mountain, with marking trails and clearing vegetation for access to their caves. A clean-up of the small remnants of trash that were dumped prior to Helen and Randy's work to clean-up the mountain with the assistance of Bill Torode, has been postponed to the fall as the spring vegetation arrived earlier than anticipated due to an excessively wet winter season. Ongoing visits are scheduled with these landowners to ensure there are no access problems as previously reported in the March 2017 LRNC report.

Whitings Neck Cave, West Virginia

It was reported that the owner of Whitings Neck Cave and Indian River Cave was upset and approached one or more cavers as they came out of the cave about blocking his driveway. The following report in italic font is an account of what happened and was written by Chris Duffy of the Mt St. Mary's University Outdoor Adventure Group and posted to social media, where a flurry of suggestions grew. Tom Griffin, Vice-Chair of the NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee, as well as Bob Bennett who is a member of the LRNC approached the landowner and provided support to the landowner to ensure continued access in a responsible manner; Tom's report follows the initial overview. And please note that the report from Chris has not been edited.

Last Saturday, March 18th, Mt St Mary's University had a group of 6 people at Whiting's Neck. I was not part of the group but supervise the leaders who were in the field leading this trip.

My group parked at the Nature Preserve, got geared up and started walking the road to the cave, leaving their vehicle in the nature preserve parking area.

On the driveway at the entrance of the property that the cave is on, right next to the fence, they encountered three other cavers getting out of their parked vehicle. Those cavers were wearing "real" cave suits. The cavers told my group that they were guiding a group of people later in the day, and were planning on leaving their vehicle on the driveway while they quickly scouted Indian Cave to see if the bats inside were still hibernating. The people explained that if the bats were hibernating, then they would bring their group later that day into Whiting's Neck instead. My group noted that the other group's vehicle was a silver SUV with a NSS sticker on the back.

When my group was in Whiting's Neck, leaving the ladder room and entering the crawl, they heard yelling, a whistle and a dog barking. They went towards the cave entrance to see what the issue was. They said that there was a person who was saying that "their vehicle was blocking the road to his property." My caver apologized for his trouble but explained that the vehicle did not belong to us and that we were unable to move it. He was confused but eventually understood and left.

It is frustrating that this landowner who is kind enough to let a lot of people use his land to go caving could not get down his driveway.

I don't know what to do about this or who to let know about the incident. I figured I would start here.

Please keep me in the loop about this or direct me to other places to send this.

Chris Duffy

Director of Outdoor Adventures

Mount St. Mary's University

Tom Griffin, Vice-Chair of the NSS LRNC, provides this update:

This hit the social media circuit like wild fire along with emails flying across the computer faster than I could read them.

I spoke with Bob Bennett who mentioned that he would like to speak with the owner of the property. Bob and I went to the Whiting's Neck property, and spoke to Mr. Steven Williams who was very cordial about us being there. Mr. Williams is the son of the original owners who have owned the property for at least 40 years. And I was a teenager when I started visiting this cave. Because of their ongoing kindness to cavers, the Tri State Grotto gave the Williams family a nice plaque some years ago. There are two homes on the Williams property with one gate that leads to both. There is very little room to park there and the area can accommodate one vehicle at most. Thus, Mr. Williams has asked that no one park there.

While speaking to Mr. Williams he mentioned he had the vehicle tag number, and we later discovered that the owner is a member of the DC Grotto. Mr. Williams also mentioned that he felt he was out of line for how he spoke to the group and felt bad. Bob and I let him know he was not out of line that we will look into the incident further. We also asked if there was anything we could do, like putting up signs. He said he had signs up at one time only to have them marked with graffiti. Mr. Williams also said he really didn't want anything done other than spread the word to please, not park at the gate. In addition, he mentioned how much he really enjoys having cavers who are young and old visiting the cave and assured us the cave will always be available as long as he is around.

As Bob and I were leaving, we went to the parking area. The car that matched the information that Mr. Williams gave us was there along with the guilty party. We pulled him aside and spoke to him about the incident and he was very apologetic. We did let him know to never park there again to spread the word and the incident was cleared up. The caver's reasoning was that he went to check the bat population of Indian River Cave and had planned to only be gone about 15 minutes. It takes that long to walk to the cave, then you have the walk back not including going in the cave to see if the bats were there. At best it was 30 minutes, but probably closer to 40-45 minutes. This caver and other members of local grottos understand the importance of not blocking the landowner's driveway and respecting his property.

On a final note, this situation, which grew like a developing storm cloud through social media, was effectively handled by members of the NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee who have experience talking with landowners, even when they are upset. The quick dissemination of information ensured this cave will remain open and accessible to all cavers. In addition, it has been suggested to write a nomination for Mr. Williams to receive a LRNC Certificate of Appreciation and this will be done in the immediate future.

PROBLEMS

Communication with the NSS Office—ACTION NEEDED BY THE NSS AVP & NSS OVP

- In the March 2017 report, the NSS AVP and NSS OVP were asked to develop a plan of action for the NSS Office to contact the NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee with questions or issues related to landowner relations so the Committee can support and advise grotto members or even work to negotiate a more positive outcome. However, this has not occurred and we are still waiting on this request. If the NSS

LRNC is not supported by the NSS BOG and Executive Committee it will never be successful.

- The Landowner Relations Network Committee has previously proposed that the NSS telephone directory include an option for landowners. For example, a caller would receive a voice prompt to “Dial 1 for the office manager, Dial 2 for the Bookstore, and Dial 3 if you are a cave landowner.” The NSS needs to be prompt and responsive for all cave-related needs, but especially landowners. However, there has been no action on this suggestion. This topic falls under the authority of discussion between the NSS AVP and OVP to improve communications and outreach efforts on behalf of the NSS through better utilization of the NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee.

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

John Guilday – From Earl

On a personal note: Cheryl and I greatly appreciate the award you are giving us at the NSS banquet. We had planned to be at the convention. Our car engine went and we had to get a new car, so the convention plans had to be scrubbed. We are continuing our efforts to get Mystic back open (this is a slow go), and the Sites / Cave Rat Cave owner relationship is going well.

RBNC Cave Preserve – Possible land acquisition, more information on the Land Acquisition sub-committee below.

Kingston Saltpeter – currently no report.

Great X – Nothing new to report.

Tytoona – Report submitted, Nothing new to report

Schoharie Caverns Nature Preserve – Currently no report

Shelta – Kevin is working on plans to build a Kiosk

William J. Stephens – Kevin is working on plans to build a new Kiosk

Warren Cave Nature Preserve – Nothing reported in 2 BOG meetings

McFails Cave Nature Preserve – Nothing new

James Gage Karst Preserve – Proposal added as attachment for Outhouse removal and replacement and Parking area.

Donald R. Russell Preserve – No report submitted

Mill Creek Sink – No report submitted

New River Nature Preserve – No report submitted

Wells Cave Nature Preserve – Bill Walden Manager has been busy at the Preserve. He noticed new survey markers, not sure who is surveying. He has requested Preserve signs and did not get them.

New River Nature Preserve – No report currently. Last report. Wil suggested gating the cave. No new report.

NSS Acquisition Report

June 11, 2017

Prepared by Tom Griffin, Chairman of the NSS Acquisition Committee

I would like to thank Kat for asking and giving me the opportunity to handle the Land, Cave and Karst acquisition. I receive or hear about different properties people would like to sell or donate through the year. It's a new area for me so I have lots to learn. I also have asked Julie Schenk Brown if she would Vice-Chair with me since she is familiar in these areas also. I feel we have a very good executive committee to ask any questions we may have. We will make sure any information we are aware of will be brought forth. Below you will see the Properties we are currently working with.

RBNC Possible Acquisition

Anmar Mirza wrote about a 26 acre parcel opening up by a family that owns the second entrance to Buckners Cave of the RBNC Preserve. There is a current agreement with the owners to manage the entrance. The concern is, what would the new owners do?

The RBNC has already secured a loan for at least 10 acres which is the minimum parcel size for the county. The goal once the loan is paid off through fundraising efforts the property would then be donated to the NSS to expand the Preserve. This also secures the only other entrance to Buckner.

Current asking price is \$4-4.5K per acre. Anmar already has a pledge for 10K from a donor and another 10K pledge from another donor associated with the IKC if the RBNC can obtain the total 25/26 acres. This would give contiguous property from the IKC to the RBNP. Long term would also secure a right of way across one intervening property owner and create a cave Karst hiking trail that could be 3 to 5 miles in length.

The Laherty's are in a divorce settlement which should be final by the time you see this. The husband is motivated to sell. The price has not been negotiated yet. The above is the market price. The total sale is 55 or 56 acres. The Indiana Karst is looking into purchasing 30 acres.

From conference call I had with the AVP (Kat) and the Acquisition Vice Chair (Julie Schenk Brown), Kat mentioned that she could offer as high as 5K. A discussion about a report in the NSS News talking about the RBNC Preserve and what the Acquisition has to offer along with request for donations, Anmar said he liked the idea and is working on it.

Anmar is currently in a waiting pattern until the divorce is final. Anything the NSS can do is welcome.

NSS Acquisitions Report

June 11, 2017

Prepared by Julie Schenk-Brown, Vice-Chair of NSS Acquisitions

Work continues on two acquisitions by the NSS: Fossil Cave in Kentucky and a residential lot with a house that adjoins the NSS Shelta Cave Preserve in Huntsville, Alabama. This report provides a background of activities, as well as an update on the progress since the previous report, which was included in the NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee Report.

Fossil Cave, KY

Scheduled to be the next NSS Preserve, Fossil Cave, Kentucky is a mile long cave that has been owned by Art White, since he inherited it from his father, Ted, in the 1980s. This cave was surveyed by members of the Mimi Valley Grotto (KY) from January 1999-March 2001 with assistance from Art, who is a former caver and NSS member; based on Art's generosity and the support I received from Daryl Robinson, NSS 41510, this will always be one of my favorite cave survey projects. Daryl and I later helped Art with a documentary about Fossil Cave in 2009 that was produced by Chris Johns and we have maintained regular contact with Art since that time as we became friends during the survey.

Last year, Art approached the NSS about donating his cave for perpetual protection and explained to me that his adult children really did not have any interest in the cave. The NSS BOG voted to accept this donation and allocated up to \$5,000 towards legal fees for the title transfer, boundary survey, and other expenses associated with a transfer. Per an initial request by Dr. Kat Crispin, NSS AVP, I have been assisting with Art with the transfer, with the understanding that the actual contracts will need to be signed by the NSS Treasurer and the NSS Legal Counsel. Art understands this arrangement and prefers to talk with me as the POC for the NSS. Art and I have discussed his desire to protect the cave, but keep it open to cavers, especially for educational purposes. Over the years, Art has worked very closely with students from Antioch College; these students have studied Fossil Cave and even made improvements such as the addition of foot bridges at the entrance and inside the cave. Art provided the materials and he wants to keep the cave wild, but has made some of the areas safe for beginner cavers, so they can enjoy the underground.

Art continues to emphasize that the perpetual conservation and protection of Fossil Cave is of utmost importance to him. I have advised Art that he can use his lawyer and draw up the arrangements for the cave and the transfer to the NSS. In addition, I advised Art that his lawyer can bill the NSS directly, so he does not incur any out-of-pocket expenses. Art is thankful for this arrangement and explained that prior to visiting his lawyer, he wants to create a rough draft of his ideas for perpetual conservation and protection of the cave to discuss with me. When I recently talked to Art, he reports selling his house in seven days and having to relocate in 30 days after the sale, thus he has been incredibly busy with construction of a building for his wife's business as well as plans to construct a house; Art was a general contractor for several

years and a skilled carpenter, thus he is completing the majority of construction by himself. Art also mentioned he has even taken leave without pay to work towards construction of his wife's building and has not had time to write down his conservation goals for Fossil Cave to discuss with me and ultimately his lawyer. However, Art is still very committed to the donation of Fossil Cave to the NSS and these transactions take time to negotiate all of the details. I will continue to stay in contact with Art to help the NSS move forward with this acquisition and have plans to visit him and stay on the property that includes Fossil Cave in July or August 2017.

Property Adjoining the Shelta Cave Preserve

Last year the NSS was contacted by Mr. Quinton Nelson, who lives on Link Avenue in Huntsville, Alabama; during his initial contact, Mr. Nelson explained to the NSS staff that, upon his death, he wanted to donate his property to expand the NSS Shelta Cave Preserve (The attached maps show the extent of Shelta Cave, as well as the NSS properties which are outlined in red, and Mr. Nelson's property which is outlined in black). Since the previous Chair of the NSS Cave Acquisition Committee had not followed up with Mr. Nelson, I was asked by Dr. Kat Crispin, NSS AVP, to contact Mr. Nelson and meet with him on behalf of the NSS. I asked Kevin Reeves, NSS Shelta Cave Preserve Manager, to join me in a visit with Mr. Quinton Nelson in January 2017 to discuss his desire to donate his property at 2506 Link Avenue to the NSS after his death. Kevin and I were pleasantly surprised by the scenery at the east end of Link Avenue as Mr. Nelson has a real sense of pride that is reflected in his property. This pride is also evident in the adjoining vacant lot and two other vacant lots across the street that he maintains. There is a nice sitting area overlooking Link Avenue and he reports flowers have been planted throughout.

Mr. Nelson grew up in North Huntsville and moved to Seattle, Washington for a few years in the 1990s, before returning to Huntsville and Link Avenue; he has no children and wants his property, which adjoins the NSS Shelta Cave Preserve, to remain a wildlife corridor. Specifically, Mr. Nelson explained that a multitude of wildlife transit through the property, as well as surface runoff, which eventually dissipates in a sinkhole across the street. Kevin, Mr. Nelson and I walked to the edge of the sinkhole as Mr. Nelson noted the large amounts of fill (concrete, asphalt, gravel, etc.) that have been placed over the years to fill in the sinkhole. This property was scheduled for sale via an online auction and Mr. Nelson reports it has been sold multiple times over the years and that based on the volume of fill and drainage to the sinkhole, he would consider it a very poor location for any type of construction. Mr. Nelson also reports plans to encourage other landowners in the neighborhood to donate their properties to expand the NSS Shelta Cave Preserve.

Prior to our meeting with Mr. Nelson, a property search was conducted by Kevin Reeves, who alerted Dr. Crispin, Tom Griffin, the current NSS Acquisitions Chair, and myself to the fact that the property is not titled in Mr. Nelson's name. During our initial meeting, Mr. Nelson explained that the title is in his friend's name as he had no credit when he returned from Seattle,

but has paid the balance in full. Thus, the title can be transferred with what he describes as “no issue.” In addition, Mr. Nelson was adamant that after he passes, the NSS can bulldoze his house, but he wants the property to remain a green space with no additional construction; Mr. Nelson also explained that he wants his donation to be a legacy of perpetual protection from development, while allowing others to enjoy this amazing beauty in such an unlikely location.

Since this initial visit, Kevin and I have contacted Jay Clark as NSS Legal Counsel, to see what steps will need to be completed for Mr. Nelson to clear the title on his house and ultimately make the transaction to donate his land to the NSS. Jay commented that this would be a nice addition to the preserve and recommended that we can get a warranty or quitclaim deed from the current owner to Mr. Nelson. Then we can work with Mr. Nelson to figure out if he wants to give the NSS a deed and reserve a life estate for him. Jay also reports we could do the donation by will, but prefers a deed in which the NSS deeds the property to him and the NSS jointly with right of survivorship; with this latter option, the property automatically goes to the NSS when Mr. Nelson dies. Jay also recommends that we involve the title company to make sure the NSS obtains a clear title to the property, especially because of Mr. Nelson’s previous credit problems. In addition, Jay reports he will handle the legal transfer pro bono on behalf of the NSS, thus the only anticipated costs would be the warranty or quitclaim deed from the current owner to Mr. Nelson, if Jay is not able to execute this transaction.

Mr. Nelson is very easy going and quite an enjoyable person to work with and learn the history of the area. Thus, Kevin and I look forward to working with him as we move forward with this possible land donation to expand the Shelta Cave Preserve. We have tentatively planned our next meeting with Mr. Nelson for June 22, 2017 and will remain in regular communication with Jay Clark, NSS Legal Counsel and the NSS AVP as this transaction proceeds.

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

- 2017 Conservation Tuesday: Conservation Management and Restoration on Public and Private Lands. Full day during NSS Convention in Rio Rancho, New Mexico, June 19-23. Join us in Room 1225. Moderated by Val Hildreth-Werker and Rod Horrocks.
- Send nominations for NSS Group and Grotto Conservation Awards. Presented during each annual Convention with recognition added to plaque housed in Huntsville NSS HQ. Send nominations to Kathy Lavoie lavoiekh@plattsburgh.edu

- At ICS in Australia, Val & Jim will represent NSS Conservation and present outcomes of our International Cave Conservation Management/Restoration Course in Brazil.
- Jim & Val plan to attend October 2017 NCKMS slated for Arkansas. We plan to use two of the registration slots associated with NSS Sponsorship.
- April 2017 NSSNews is the Annual Conservation Issue, edited by Val Hildreth-Werker. Send notice of intent and articles for next year to werks@cunacueva.com Typically January 15 deadline.
- Cave Conservation Facebook Group now has over 1500 Members from many nations.
- Four Save-the- Caves Conservation Grants approved to date this year. See below.

Biological Response Committee/ White Nose Syndrome Liaison Report

The NSS is looking for cavers to join the Biological Response Committee. We are also looking for someone to chair the committee. This committee coordinates the NSS' response for biological threats to caves and karst. If you can help communicate, want to support research, share your love for bats, collaborate with agencies, and want to protect caves and caving, contact AVP@caves.org or werks@cunacueva.com

Jennifer Foote has stepped down from chairmanship. We deeply appreciate Jennifer's years of dedicated service to bat protection, caving, WNS decon advocacy, and the NSS, as well as her ongoing support among the WNS community, continuing assistance in Convention Decon Logistics, and for encouraging USFWS presence at Convention.

Cave Vandalism Deterrence Commission

Sarah Richards, Chairman vandalismdeterrence@caves.org or srichster@gmail.com

- No report received for this period.

Conservation Committee

Conservation Division & Committee Mission – Val & Jim werks@cunacueva.com

Develop cooperative partnerships for resource protection, conservation outreach, and karst advocacy.

Promote karst stewardship as an environmental/cultural priority across the US—karst, a household word!

- Continuing interaction with various international concerns.
- Activities listed throughout this report.
- Will prioritize growing The Conservation Pages after ICS in Australia.

Challenges: Financial support was not available to bring Dr. Jannie Loubser, archeologist, rock art conservator to 2017 NSS Convention for Special Talks and Workshop focusing on Sandia Cave near Rio Rancho, where Dr. Loubser collaborated with USDA-FS, Sandia Grotto, local trail groups, and Jim/Val in a 10+day assessment and mitigation project for this significant cave archeological site.

Conservation Sub-committee Reports Received This Period

Conservation Group and Grotto Awards

Kathleen Lavoie, Chairman lavoiekh@plattsburgh.edu

- 2016 Group Award was presented to Lehman Caves Lint Camp during the Ely, Nevada Convention, resulting in media coverage and more local recognition of the project.
- Progress. Nominations for the 2017 Awards in hand. Promoted in NSSNews April Conservation Issue.
- Plans. Nominate Your Group/Grotto by submitting articles to the NSSNews Conservation issue and by posting project reports on NSS Social Media venues.
- Problems. Plenty of conservation work across the country, but not many nominations.

Brochures Coordinator

Cheryl Jones cs.jones@verizon.net

- Nothing to Report

NSS Conservation Network

Steve Smith stevenlsmith@usa.net

- Great place to get rapid alerts out!! (Infrequent sends intentional).
- E-mail list quickly disseminates info to IOs and interested individuals.
- Promoting email address updates: April NSSNews Conservation Issue and on The Conservation Pages.

NSS Conservation Website Coordinator

Currently vacant and on hold, Val is communicating directly with Alex on website upgrades.

Conservation Grants

Val Hildreth-Werker werks@zianet.com

- Awarding Conservation Grant to initiate Park Guide Cave Stewardship Training and enable hands-on speleothem inventory and trail demarcation in the dark zone of Gruta do Janelão, located on the new soon-to-open Peruaçu National Park in Brazil where Jim & Val consulted during their 2014 collaboration with Brazilians Luciana Alt, Vitor Moura, and Instituto do Carste.
- Three awarded and delivered. Save-the-Caves Conservation Grants approved for 1) \$700 conservation activities in Puerto Rico 2) \$500 matching funds for cave gate in PA and 3) \$1000 Montana high school caving club to continue GIS monitoring inside eight Arizona caves, compare to baseline data collected 20 years ago, publish magazine-format report, and continue the research program, Hans Bodenhamer, Bigfork High School.

Caves of Cyprus Project Report Lauren Satterfield, PI (Cyprus) lauren.redwoodhill@gmail.com

- (Save the Caves Grant in 2014 to supplement Lauren's Fulbright Scholarship Award for establishing cave and karst protection awareness partnerships in Cyprus).
- Initial article reporting initiation of on-going project printed in 2015 NSSNews Conservation Issue.
- Through Lauren's extensive 2016 EU Grant application process, the project was awarded \$267,000 Euro. Lauren started her PhD and is now only marginally involved – caving skills training is planned in accordance with international caving standards. Local biologists in Cyprus are currently in charge of organizing project logistics. Lauren extends thanks to Fadi Nader and George Veni of the UIS, and the people in Cyprus for their continuing enthusiasm and support.

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: Upcoming events with the CaveSim trailer:
- Progress
 - STEM Night, Patriot Elementary School, Ft. Carson, CO, 3/9/17
 - Science night, Lake George Charter School, CO, 3/16/17
 - Science program, Legacy Academy, CO, 4/13/17
 - Week-long science & technology program for Elementary and High School students, Grove, OK, May 1-5, 2017. Organized by caver/teacher Deitra Biely of Boston Mtn. Grotto.
 - Outdoor Skills Day, Mueller State Park, CO, 5/20/17
 - End-of-school event, Cresson Elementary School, CO, 5/25/17
 - Convention! CaveSim is here

- Progress (photos: www.cavesim.com/news):
 - Added more formations to the CaveSim trailer and the system at CityROCK Climbing Gym (see www.climbcityrock.com/cave.html?cave=1). 225' of realistic passage surveyed so far, 40' pit, 50+ formations with electronic sensing and computer scoring. Come visit!
 - Completed 2 events at CaveSim CityROCK:
 - Winter Break Vertical Caving Camp at CityROCK Climbing Gym. Taught boys & girls ages 8-12 about cave conservation and how to use: rack, Frog, Prusik, Sked. All participants rappelled and ascended the 40' CaveSim pit. Great verti gear from IMO, GGG, and Petzl.
 - Thanksgiving Break Vertical Caving Camp at CityROCK. Same as Winter Break camp. Thanks to Mike & Donna Frazier for lending verti gear.
 - Completed 4 events with the CaveSim trailer:
 - Kartchner Caverns Cave Fest, 1/21-1/22/17. Great public turnout despite weather. Strong showing from AZ grotto members.
 - Carson Middle School STEM Night, 12/6/16. Very popular despite the snow.
 - Boy Scouts Centennial Family Campout, Calhan, CO, 10/15/16. Busy all day teaching hundreds of Scout about cave conservation. Should have had a helper!
 - CoolScience: geology and speleology talks, knots demos, carbide demos, etc. for hundreds of general-public attendees. 10/14/16
- Problems (opportunities!): If you like what we're doing, and you'd like us to bring CaveSim to a regional event, please contact Dave. If you, your grotto, or your business would like to sponsor CaveSim events (including Convention), contact Dave.

Cave Conservation and Restoration

KIP/USF Jacqueline M. Sampson, Coordinator (Doctoral Student, USF School of Geosciences)

No report received.

Index Rachel Bosch, Coordinator for Thorough Indexing

Nothing to Report.

Regional Conservation Representatives – Reports Received This Period

Arizona Regional Association – Steve Smith stevenlsmith@usa.net

ARA Progress

- ARA Cooperation with the National Forests in Arizona— Forest-level Cave & Karst Management recommendations for five National Forests is still being actively worked and will (hopefully) be signed soon. This MCCA, along with previous MCCAs already in place, will make project coordination between cavers and the Arizona National Forests much easier.
- Cavers from Escabrosa Grotto, Southern Arizona Grotto, and Cochise County Cavers continue work with the Coronado National Forest to develop and implement a comprehensive Management Plan for SP Cave (Huachuca mountains).

Central Arizona Grotto (Phoenix)

- CAG continues work with the National Forests in Arizona to create cooperative agreements for cave and karst management.
- CAG will reinstall the gate on a cave on Tonto NF in March in support of seasonal closure for maternity colony of Fringed Myotis.
- CAG repaired a cave gate for a private landowner (Grand Canyon Caverns). In that same cave, CAG discovered and reported new graffiti, took pictures, sent the pictures to the landowner and the offending person was reprimanded (fired).

Cochise County Cavers (Sierra Vista)

- One CCCcaver logged 24 hours working data logger collection, analysis, and water sampling at Kartchner Caverns State Park
- Four CCCavers joined Southern AZ Grotto in an ongoing restoration project at Sphinx Cave in the Chiricahua Mountains on Jan 1 and Feb 5, 2017. Logged 12 caver-hours shuttling water for cleaning formations and moving large rocks to use as a base "clean" area in muddy section.

Escabrosa Grotto (Tucson)

- Escabrosa manages access to Onyx Cave, which is used by Fringed myotis bats (*Myotis thysanodes*) as a summer maternity colony.
- Escabrosa continues an on-going project to remove remaining carbide dumps from Onyx Cave (Santa Rita mountains). After Escabrosa started managing Onyx in 1974, an extensive effort was initiated to clean-up main passages strewn with many hundreds of carbide dumps. While most of the dumps along the main passageways were removed (the 'low hanging fruit'), numerous dumps 'hidden' in small nooks and crevices were overlooked in the initial effort. Recently Escabrosa initiated a project to seek out and remove these more difficult 'hidden' dumps and over this reporting period over 90 caver-hours were expended to locate and remove as many of these 'residual' dumps as possible. This will be a continuing project.
- Central Arizona Grotto (Phoenix)

Southern Arizona Grotto (Tucson)

- Coordinated with Local Boy Scout Troops and church youth groups from all over Arizona, accomplish over 300 man hours of trash/litter, graffiti cleanup in several caves in the Santa Catalina Mountains.
- Working directly with the Coronado Nation Forest, we have logged more than 80 caver-hours hauling water and scrubbing formations in Sphinx Cave (Chiricahua mountains). Members from Southern Arizona Grotto, Escabrosa Grotto, Cochise County Cavers, and the Forest Service have helped in this cleanup effort. We are collecting rocks from within the cave to better mark the trails and creating a changing area so cavers have a clean spot to change into new shoes, knee pads, elbow pads before they climb up and over into the formation filled canyon. We have temporarily closed this cave until the cleanup is completed. Additionally, this cave will also be closed to everyone from April 15-October 15 for a summer maternity colony of bats.

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

Sandia Cave Project –ABQ Sandia Grotto

Sandia Cave is just up the road! a few miles from Rio Rancho and Star Casino NSS Convention Site!

- Ongoing. 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/] for description, 10 days of tedious graffiti inventory and cleanup in 2015 under the supervision of archeologist/rock art specialist, Dr. Jannie Loubser.
- Follow-up includes educational conservation kiosk and 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.
- Volunteers record hours using Sandia Cave Google Calendar. Contact CarrinRich@hotmail.com
- **Best News!** Public education, media outreach, cooperation among various groups, and monitoring works! No new graffiti since the Sandia Cave Project removal in June 2015!

Carlsbad Caverns CRF – William and Tammy Tucker

- Presidents Day Weekend 2017 - worked in Billing Doves Tunnel removing 13 buckets of tracked muddy sediment from trails with more to do; removed foreign items, tossed rocks, coins, trash from two pools near Top of the Cross seating - found and did not disturb likely historic items including a campfire and broken spoon.

Little Manhole – Janice Tucker

- Plans: Goal to repair a broken stalactite and train cavers in speleothem repair.

- Progress: None
- Problems: BLM staff stated they wanted to evaluate in person prior to agreeing to repair. I have not yet received further info. Need to follow up on this issue.

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

Greater Allentown Grotto continues to work restoring Lost River Cave Crystal Cave in Kutztown PA.

- During the closed months of Dec to Feb the grotto works three days per week.
- Recently installed seven formations in Crystal Cave.
- Due to past cleaning and restoration efforts crickets returned to the cave this past fall in large numbers! Never seen before by the staff, owners, or grotto members. They continue to increase. We are pleased with this unplanned habitat resto success!

Seven Valleys Grotto

- Continuing cave gear decon.
- Participated in VAR cave cleanup activities: Fountain Cave, Grand Caverns, and an ongoing sinkhole cleanup effort just north of Harrisonburg, VA
- Leading beginner trips, educating future cavers with beauty/importance of preserving delicate cave environments.
- Assisting PCC in organizing cleanup effort around McAlisterville Cave, May 20, 2017

Rocky Mountain Region

Chloe Beck (CO) chloebeck@utexas.edu

Camille Pullham McKinney (UT) cami_mckinney@nps.gov

- May 1: Jewel Cave National Monument is safe under presidential executive order for monument reviews.
- April 5: Vandalism and graffiti problems in Fountain Creek, Manitou Springs, CO reach Hunt's Cave. Hunt's Cave is not under area's designation as Historic Site, though nearby Rainbow Falls is.
- March 30: The current paleontological dig in northern Wyoming's Natural Trap Cave is featured in a new documentary film: Natural Trap Cave - The Pleistocene Epoch
- March 14: Colorado Cave Survey members visit Buffalo Cave with Colorado Parks & Wildlife biologists to count hibernating bats
- March 4: Four Utah men have been sentenced for theft and damage to Timpanogos Cave National Monument, Utah, in February 2015.
- February 22: Ancient fossils, located in a Wyoming's Natural Trap Cave, will soon be under the curation of the University of Wyoming, which will serve as a federal repository for the fossils. Julie Meachen, an assistant professor of anatomy at Des Moines University is leading the excavation.
- February 18th: Data loggers from the Colorado Grotto and Eric Holzman, a park ranger with Jefferson County, discovered vandalism on an annual trip to CJ's Crystal Cavern in Golden, Colorado. The cave door hinges had been removed and the protected cave entered. No damage was found and the cave door is to be replaced.

Southeastern Region – John Hoffelt (TN) MossyGuy@comcast.net

Allen Padgett (GA) on_rope@windstream.net

Sean Roberts (FL) sean_roberts@netzero.net Vacant (AL)

- No reports received.

Virginia Region – Janet Tinkham (VA) janete@shentel.net

- April 16-22, 2017 VA Cave Week sponsored by the VA Cave Board is recognized each year to promote

understanding of Virginia's caves and surrounding limestone karst habitats. Theme 2017 was Karst Springs. Volunteers from VA Cave Board, DCR, and Virginia Region cavers hosted activities throughout the week. www.vacaveweek.com

- [April 18, 2017](#) Karst Spring Tour – Participants, led by VA Cave Board members and VA Department of Conservation and Recreation Staff, did a walking tour highlighting some of the more significant springs in the Cedars area of Lee County.
- [April 19, 2017](#) Karst Spring Tour - This outdoor presentation and walking tour described intimate connections between geology and water resources of Clarke County. Participants learned about the rocks and springs exposed on the Blandy Farm property, and in other parts of the county. Discussed recent research in Clarke County on how past climate change in the Shenandoah Valley region has affected its water resources.
- [April 20, 2017](#) Karst Spring Tour - Participants visited historic McKay Spring near Front Royal to learn about its history, hydrology, and the challenges an old spring faces in a rapidly developing area.
- [April 22, 2017](#) Karst Springs Tour - Stops included Aqua Cave and its Sinking Creek, Owl Cave, and Water Sinks Cave recharge points. It covered a short walking tour of Water Sinks Cave. Participants also looked at Coursey Spring, which is the third largest karst spring in VA.
- [April 22, 2017](#) Karst Springs Tour of Winchester a one-mile historical tour that included stops at Shawnee and Abram's Delight Springs
- [April 22, 2017](#) 14 volunteers from the Virginia Region (VAR) arrived to continue the sinkhole clean out project at Huckleberry Hollow Farm in Rockingham Co, VA. Focus for the day – load a bin with scrap metal for hauling to the scrap metal facility...the bin was full!

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

Joel has agreed to come back onboard as Western Conservation Rep! Thank you and welcome back, Joel.

- 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

Vacant – No current need for appointment of Overall CTF Coordinator

No new inquires. CTF reports listed here.

Hawai'i Cave Conservation Task Force

Tomaslav Gracilov tnv@att.net.

Asa Aue asa_aue@gmail.com

Fred Stone fred@hawaii.edu

- The Hawaii Cave Conservation Task Force is continuing to work on getting Pahoehoe Cave protected through the State Natural Area Reserve System.
- Fred Stone sent a note stating that he is turning HCCTF over to Tomaslav Gracilov and Asa Aue. We welcome them to NSS Conservation 3P updates and we send our deep gratitude and recognition to Fred Stone for his many decades of dedicated service to cave stewardship in Hawai'i. Mahalo, Fred.

High Guads Restoration Project (HGRP) CTF

Jennifer Foote, highguads@yahoo.com, <http://www.hgrp.org/>,

www.facebook.com/High.Guads.Restoration.Project

- Things are still in limbo in the Guads. The USFS Cave Specialist was hired, but stuck in the hiring freeze, and may start May 15. We expect to start running more trips once he arrives.

- Ran a trail flagging repair trip at Thanksgiving to a cave at the request of USFS.
- Planned introduction to restoration trip with a small group of NM Tech students in March.
- Contact me if interested in a trip, highguads@yahoo.com. I am not sending out open calls for participants anymore, people need to commit that they want to be there.

Klamath Mountains CTF

Steve Knutson SssKnutson@aol.com

- Marble Mtn caves, no new progress regarding caves management plans. Area use declined. We are currently ahead of the curve with fewer horse packers and flashlight cavers.
- Ape Cave is accessible again, but we need both entrances for our work to continue: installing permanent stations about every hundred feet, mapping the cave, including stations, and referencing inventory within the cave to the stations.
- Gifford Pinchot contracted for gate designs for Ape Cave three years ago. If they follow through on this and install them, it will be an interesting exercise in visitation control. Decades ago, the agency decided to allow visitation of Ape Cave to increase unchecked. That visitation level is now said by the agency to exceed 150,000 per their season, April to October. This is, in effect, some 300,000 per year. There are two sources of trouble in now using gates to control visitation, the folks who experienced total freedom and the business the visitors brought to local communities like Cougar, Washington. Up to now the agency has had a hands-off approach at Ape Cave, where there is normally no agency presence. If that lack of presence continues, it's hard to imagine gates going unvandalized. Public response and compliance will be important if gates are installed. Certainly would create opportunities for public awareness outreach regarding resource stewardship.
- The WNS situation is interesting, as the USFWS has not been able to find a source location for the occurrence east of Seattle. I suspect that caves were not involved as there are none known in that locality. This indicates that the transmission of WNS need not involve caves or cavers, at all.
- Marble Mtn caves, no new progress regarding caves management plans. Area use declined. We are currently ahead of the curve with fewer horse packers and flashlight cavers.
- Klamath NF continues with cave management plan not finalized.
- Same unfinished state for Shasta Trinity NF.
- Regional FS Cave Specialist, Joel Despain, led a trip to check on Paul Gibson cave in the Trinity Wilderness. He is completing the mapping of side passages.
- Two dead bats were found in Sinking Stream Cave last summer and were collected and sent for WNS analysis by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. They proved negative for WNS.
- KMCTF is involved in the Ape Cave issue, the USFS at the St Helens Nat'l Monument, Gifford Pinchot NF in southern Washington state. Together, we are concerned with over visitation in Ape Cave (USFS estimate of >150k visitors to that cave April to October)
- I sent a proposal for doing inventory and mapping in Ape and nearby caves, to aid their management future. That includes creating a GIS for recording the state of the cave now and after future management changes.
- Design and production of permanent station markers, and installed 14 markers last fall, will continue when the snow is gone. For permanent installation, we use epoxy after grinding the placement flat and found that the lave is quite porous and water would be oozing out of the flat almost immediately! A sample marker photo is attached – Bigfoot wearing a caver helmet!

- Before we started the mapping project I tried to hire environmental lawyers to use the FCRPA (federal cave resources protection act, 1988) to force more protection for Ape Cave but two different law groups both returned the same view -- the FCRPA is useless to get protection for any significant cave. There are too many loopholes in it. This was a sorry revelation for me, and would be a surprise to most western caves so I wrote this up for the conservation issue of the NSS News. I feel we should all know this. Thus the mapping-inventory project to prove the need for conservation management.



Ozark CTF

Kathy Kriska katcnygrl@sbcglobal.net

- When bat hibernation ends, planning Onondaga State Park last weekend of April during Cave Fest.
- Hosting group of Missouri State students.

Twin Lakes CTF

John Durall TwinLakesCCSTF1@aol.com

Steve Gentry, Lead Advisor SGentry177@aol.com

Twin Lakes is on stand down status at this time. Steve Gentry has not been able to help out do to Dr. Instructions. I currently travel for work all the time. So Twin Lakes is inactive for the time being, until the time is right.

Washington Cascade Mountains Bat Conservation Task Force

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

Bill sent the following note to the WMBatCTF Board on April 6, 2017:

Hello all, and my thanks for your help and support for the CTF. I am now blind and it is time for someone else to take over. Aloha nui, Bill Halliday NSS #812. PS No replies please.

- No big news from WA state since the March 31, 2016 press conference last year.
- There still is only one known victim of WNS in WA state, plus one case of a migratory immune carrier (*Lasionycterus*) that already was identified as an immune carrier back east. The popular statement of three victims is incorrect.
- I have completed our first WCBCTF Newsletter and have material for the second. The first describes administrative framework. Planned for 2017 inclusion: (1) summary of the lengthy 1984 Senger and Crawford biological inventory of the principal caves of the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, (2) article comparing bats and bat caves of the Washington Cascade Mountains to the classic karstlands back east, (3) the collected spelean publications of Clyde Senger, PhD., (4) reprint of 2003 article by Denny Constantine on translocation of bats. Please note that, with the exception of items directly attributed to the NSS BOG and the Constitution and By-laws of this CTF, opinions expressed in the Newsletters are not necessarily those of the CTF, its officers and/or its members.

NSS Mammoth Cave Restoration Project

Bill Copeland, Director restocaver@yahoo.com

- Mammoth Cave Restoration Project November 5-6 2016
- 40 volunteers worked to move 5 pickup loads of cut electrical wire from Grand Central Station out of the Frozen Niagara entrance.
- We removed two buried concrete slabs at Frozen entrance.
- Helped NPS Guide relocate his family grave yard and clear brush inside the Park.
- 320 volunteer hours donated to Mammoth Cave National Park.

External Conservation Organization Networking Updates

Updates received for this period included below. NSS Conservation Division networks with activities worldwide. Included here are updates we receive.

Bat Conservation International Update

Shawn Thomas stthomas@batcon.org

No update this period.

KEEP Update

Leslie Barras lebarras@gmail.com

Nothing to report from **KEEP**.

Missouri Bat Census

Kirsten Alvey-Mudd, MoBat Census Founder/Executive Director cavechef@gmail.com

Work ongoing. No update received.

The Nature Conservancy Networking Update

Cory Holliday, NSS/TNC Liaison

No update received.

Kartchner Caverns Update

Erika Way, Cave Unit

No update received.

CONVENTION DIVISION REPORT SUMMARY

Prepared by Carol Tideman - ctider@ymail.com

HIGHLIGHTS

- Bill Steele will be the guest speaker at the Fellows and New Members Reception
- CaveSim will be at Rio Rancho
- Merlin Tuttle will be the Banquet Speaker at Rio Rancho

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 group hosting the 2017 Convention in Rio Rancho, NM.
- Working with the Whitefish, MT (now Helena, MT) group hosting the 2018 Convention
- Did a site visit to Cookeville TN, potential site of the 2019 Convention
- We have a group offering to host a Convention in WV in 2020
- There is a Western group thinking of hosting at a point in the future

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

- Finding hosts for 2021 and beyond.

2017 NSS Convention – Blake Jordan

The Registration Count as of 5/11/17 was 320. I spoke with Kevin and we decided to cut back on the number of tables, chairs, and space needed for the Howdy tent. He told me that one month out for the Ely Convention, a rough estimate that had been registered was close to 700. That is more than twice what we have now. For this reason, I also told Linda Starr (Publications Chair) that we would only be ordering 500 copies of the Guidebook.

The Guidebook this year is an Offset design and costs more than digital. She balked at the lesser amount and said we could order the 800 and sell the rest. I opposed her and said the registration count was too low to support such quantity, so I decided to lower the amount of Guidebooks to 500.

We believe that several factors are keeping the registration numbers low this year. First, we only have a 30 day buffer between our event and ICS. Second, it is set much earlier in the summer and the procrastinators are waiting for the last minute. Third, the WNS in Texas has had a negative effect for cavers, where Jim Goodbar and Rio Puerco BLM are limiting access to

only 3 caves for convention and they are scrutinizing all cavers from Pd positive states to leave their gear at home or don't go caving. Fourth, the campgrounds have less appeal because of the pavement surface and desert camping possibilities. Finally, NCRC conflicts with our convention because of an oversight.

We have ordered the Shot Glasses for the Fellows/New Member reception. Bill Steele will be our 10-15 minute speaker for the event. We will have a list of Fellows and New Members for our convention, in coordination with Registration and NSS HQ for Membership. Only Fellows and New Members will be allowed in the event. We will have a list and if they are not on the list, then they may not attend.

We have ordered the beer mugs, totes and rock glasses as well, all from Discount Mugs at the 500 count. T-shirts will be ordered soon, with an accurate Registration count as the determining factor.

Speleology for Cavers has been canceled due to the low registrations for the class.

We have a Refund Policy in place and can be found on the NSS 2017 Convention Website.

There still seems to be some people who have a difficult time with Online Registration, but I get notices daily of the Online Activity, so it may not be such a hindrance as thought.

The last contract is the Special Use Permit from the City of Rio Rancho which will be submitted near 5/22/17 in which a fee of \$67 non-refundable will be paid.

A couple of mentions:

- We will have a local Star Gazing club scheduled for Monday night for those who want to gander at the stars and planets.
- Our brew for the Howdy Party and Campground will be from Marble Brewery. They have over a dozen flavors.
- Our Banquet Keynote Speaker is Merlin Tuttle

The Staff has really been working hard and will continue through to the end. We look forward to having it complete and successful.

The Convention Treasurer and I plan to have the books closed prior to the 90 day deadline.

Respectfully Submitted,
Blake N. Jordan, Chairman
2017 NSS Convention Committee

2018 NSS Convention – Doug Warner

Progress

- Budget submitted for approval
 - Many individual items received updated amounts with the change to Helena and the move from estimated amounts to actual quoted amounts.
- Convention video almost complete
 - Video to include recently shot drone footage of campground
 - Final editing and voiceover remain; tentative voiceover script created; scheduled work times next week with professional director
- Campground reviewed in more detail
 - Drone footage converted to 3D for site layout and planning
 - Site visit by our plumber/shower person with detailed photos taken for planning
- Vertical session area designed and laid out and received preliminary approval from vertical section.
 - Reminder: vertical competition and training will occur off-site at the nearby fairgrounds due to gym floor resurfacing.
- All venues tentatively reserved
 - Final reservation won't be complete until down payment is made, but all forms have been submitted
- Secondary revenue in process - Helena tourism grant for \$2500 submitted and commitment to invoice Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks \$1000 to be a sponsor (FW&P oversees all state parks, notably the nearby Lewis & Clark Caverns)
- Preliminary plan for transport of traveling convention gear from NM to MT
- Promotional t-shirts for MT representatives in NM queued to print as soon as final artwork updated
- Registration forms started
- Website framework complete; now for content
- Hotel room block discount rate bids received, final hotels chosen by Friday.
- Representative from Helena Tourism registered to attend NM convention with Helena promotional items

- Guidebook content updated with Helena geology, only formatting remains
 - Initial discussions with Steven Frye on printing options and approach

Plans

- Work through any budget issues that come back from the EC
- Finalize remaining items before NM convention:
 - bank account
 - registration form
 - web site
 - & online registration
 - final video
 - promotional t-shirts \
 - Hotel discount room blocks formally held
- Connect MT convention volunteers with their NM counterparts at the NM convention for shadowing/brain picking
 - All hands staff meeting at NM convention
 - The key roles need to understand how and when to recruit massive manpower for various key times (banquet setup/teardown, photo salon setup & backstage process/timing, etc)
- Items to complete immediately post NM convention:
 - transport equipment to MT
 - finalize facility rentals with down payments
- Ongoing:
 - continue updating budget with new information (outstanding price quotes, projected plumbing expenses, etc)
 - begin selection of caterers and bands
 - layout campground
 - investigate software for abstract submissions
 - and the 10,000 other details to manage

Problems

- some key volunteer positions are still (or newly) unstaffed; will need to aggressively recruit, perhaps from outside the area for some roles
- I have a Lechuguilla expedition immediately before the NM convention (June 9 - 18, departing MT June 3) causing compressed timelines and a potential failure scenario for any last minute items or decisions.

- With driving to & from NM for caving events, I will be out of touch for most of June for any vendors or other contacts.
- I will likely have "real life" take a larger chunk of my available hours in July to catch up from time away in June.

EDUCATION DIVISION REPORT SUMMARY

Mike Hood, Education Division Chief – education@caves.org

PLANS:

Tony Canike has stepped up to assist with the Education Division's web page, which is in need of an overhaul. Below is what Tony's vision is for the page and related pages:

"Scope: My understanding is that I'll be responsible for the Educational Division web pages, such as

<https://caves.org/committee/education/index.shtml> https://caves.org/committee/education/ed_div.shtml <https://caves.org/committee/education/learnmoreaboutcaves.shtml> <https://caves.org/committee/education/eec.shtml> https://caves.org/committee/education/education_links.htm

It looks like most of the committees and the one commission in your division have their own separate web pages (and other webmasters), so they are not part of my scope. Specifically, the pages for NCRC, Safety&Techniques, Youth Groups Liaison, Project Underground, and Education Grants and Scholarship are someone else's responsibility. I'm not opposed to helping with these areas, it just looks from the web server directory structure that someone else is taking care of these. On the other hand, it does look like the Environmental Education Committee is in-scope for my role.

First steps:

1. Correct Division Chief to be Mike Hood and not Chris Lafferty. DONE 6/4/17. 2. Update the remaining Education Division Personnel to match the 4/10/2017 NSS

Table_4D_personnel.pdf "current personnel" document. DONE 6/4/17 Next steps:

1. Reorganize the information on our three main pages

<https://caves.org/committee/education/index.shtml>

https://caves.org/committee/education/ed_div.shtml

<https://caves.org/committee/education/learnmoreaboutcaves.shtml>

I'm not thrilled about how the landing page (index.shtml) for "Learn About Caves" is a big blank white page with four big blue links. I think our first page should be more like the "learnmoreaboutcaves.shtml" page, and then with links to the Educational Division organization page and the other committee pages."

Julie Schenck-Brown has been in contact with the Land Trust of North Alabama. A positive dialog has been established with its executive director, Marie Bostick, who has indicated an interest in working the the NSS to the mutual benefit of both organizations. Julie provided me this information about them: "The Land Trust of North Alabama has a substantial amount of protected preserves and an outstanding reputation in the Huntsville area community and beyond to promote preservation, stewardship, and education. In addition, several of their preserves have caves and karst features, and they have plans to manage access to responsible cavers who are properly trained and equipped. Their website, which is located at <http://www.landtrustna.org/>, provides an overview of their mission, projects, and long range goals." Right now, my part would be to assist in the development of educational materials the Trust can use.

President-Elect, Geary Schindel, contacted me about educational outreach using the NSS Headquarters. His vision would be to utilize the rooms at the back of the headquarters and create a national educational program using the facilities at the headquarters. It would increase our utilization of the facilities, generate income, and provide another member service. Geary's suggestion is:

"It would be great to have 2 to 7 day programs on the following subjects. Some of them could be offered a couple times a year.

- Cave Photography
- Introduction to Caving
- Vertical Caving
- Small Party Self Rescue
- Cave Restoration and Conservation
- Karst Hydrology
- Cave and Karst Geology
- Cave Archeology
- Cave Cartography
- Southeastern Hydro Geo Workshop."

OVP, Dave Haun, responded to Geary's e-mail and will include it in his report, so I won't rehash it here.

PROGRESS:

There are many "irons in the fire" and I'm attempting to line up volunteers and resources to get the many education division items put into place. Some will likely happen fairly quick, while other projects will take time to complete.

PROBLEMS:

Funding for many of the education division projects is a sticking point, unless NSS volunteers can be found to produce the products in-house.

Education Grants and Scholarships Committee - Pamela Tegelman Malabad

Plans

There are no plans at this time except to make a submission in the NSS News soon to solicit new grant submissions that focus on primary and secondary audiences for these grants. We haven't had any submissions in a while.

Progress

No grant applications have been submitted for this period.

Problems

Again, we haven't had grant submissions as of late. Revamping the Education Grants page on the NSS website might be a good start to gain more submissions.

Junior Speleological Society - Zach Schudrowitz

No report received.

Webinar Committee - Debbie Spoons

There have been two webinars, and a meeting. The webinars average about 25-30 people because NSS members have found that it is easier to view the webinars on line or download them. Alex has the statistics of how many people have downloaded webinars, but there is no way to track how many views there are on line. The webinars routinely generate thousands of hits to the NSS website. Since the start of the webinars we have had over 35K downloads, and those just looking at or watching we have no way to track.

Youth Group Liaison Committee – Allen Maddox

Nothing to report at this time.

Safety and Techniques Committee - Scott McCrea

No report received.

Environmental Education Committee – Kyle Mills

No report received.

National Cave Rescue Committee - Anmar Mirza

PROGRESS

Work is progressing on getting the NCRC database on line and available to persons with a need to know (while addressing privacy issues). This is speeding up and simplifying resource management which is one of the charges of the NCRC by charter of the NSS.

The Small Party Assisted Rescue (SPAR) class curriculum is making progress and how instructors are to be certified has mostly been sorted out.

Approximately 150 people have been trained in cave rescue by the NCRC this year so far. It should be noted that students receive a discount for classes for being NSS members. This discount is greater than the cost of the NSS membership and on the online registration for NCRC classes there is a link to the NSS to join right then, so the NSS gets numerous new members every year directly because of NCRC trainings.

The NCRC curriculum update is mostly complete and is now undergoing fine-tuning.

An instructor retreat was held in Mentone, Alabama in February. The last time this was done was 5 years ago. The purpose was to get broader input as to the direction the NCRC should be taking in the strategic plan for the next few years. A professional moderator was utilized to help ensure as many voices were heard as possible.

PLANS

Plans are being made to present more NSS Webinars to build a library of cave rescue related material. Work with Debbie Spoons to provide her with NCRC personnel to lead webinars.

A series of cave rescue training videos are being discussed.

Find additional fixed sites around the country for the rotation of the seminar locations. The National Seminar has very specific requirements that are not common and thus finding suitable locations is difficult. The Mentone Alabama site thus far is the only one. The 2015 seminar held in Park City Kentucky at Park Mammoth Resort that was used is a possibility but the biggest lack is classroom sites. The caves and cliff sites were very well received and the logistics of having everything needed on site and not having to drive to locations lent much more instructional time.

The BORC is discussing standards and recommendations for certifications in cave rescue. A test of the tester certification process will be conducted at this year's national seminar.

Additional curriculum development and realignment is in the works.

A SPAR manual is being developed.

The NCRC once again will be a co-sponsor of the annual ITRS (International Technical Rescue Symposium) conference.

PROBLEMS

WNS continues to be an issue in both finding locations for training as well as consuming much time during training for decontamination requirements. This has had a major impact to the detriment of the students.

Seminar costs, while very low with regard to similar professional rescue training (approximately ¼ the cost), continue to be above the reach of many of the newer, younger cavers who would most benefit from them. More scholarships and other grants directly to students would be helpful. NCRC already manages its money in the most efficient manner possible and the seminar cost is as low as it is because instructors and staff subsidize a large portion of it. The typical weeklong seminar costs \$600 and includes food and lodging for the 8 day training. If not for the contributions of the volunteers the seminar would not be able to be held for under \$2000 per participant.

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: nothing new to report

James Gage Preserve: Proposal for outhouse removal and replacement and parking area. Money has been budgeted for this.

John Guilday Preserve: Planted trees during VAR. Continuing efforts to reopen Mystic. Relations with Sites/Cave Rat Cave owner is going well.

Kingston Saltpeter Preserve: no report.

McFails Preserve: nothing new.

Mill Creek Preserve: no report submitted – ongoing effort to coordinate with Florida governmental entities for conservation easements – Geary Schindel is working with the preserve managers on this

New River Cave Preserve: no report submitted – was suggested to gate to prevent graffiti and vandalism.

Richard Blenz Nature Preserve: possible additional land acquisition

Schoharie Caverns Nature Preserve: no report

Shelta Preserve: Kevin is working on building a kiosk.

Tytoona Cave Nature Preserve: Nothing new.

Warren Cave Nature Preserve: no report for two BOG meetings.

Wells Cave Nature Preserve: Bill Walden Manager has been busy at the Preserve. He noticed new survey markers, not sure who is surveying. He has requested Preserve signs and did not get them.

William J. Stephenson Nature Preserve: Kevin is working on building a kiosk

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 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 are scheduled for this year's field season, which will not start until August.

PROBLEMS:

- During this trip, it was noted that the main gate in the fence adjacent to the Forest Service land had been cut loose on the end that was not locked and left open. I suspect that lazy individuals on 4 wheel ATV's are the culprits here. The gates have been wired shut again and locked. We checked and repaired the fences again this year in September, along with the locked gates and "No Trespassing" signs. We 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 a noxious weed 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 last winter. I have heard the results of the surveys at a Wyoming BLM WNS meeting that I attended and provided input.

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. We anticipate a late season this year due to over 150% of normal snowfall in the area. Usage should increase this year due to the Rocky Mountain Regional being held in the area.
- 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.

JAMES GAGE KARST PRESERVE
R.W. Simmons – jgagelcommittee@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:

Robert Simmons – Preserve Manager

Emily Davis

Mike Warner

Vacant – Cabin Registrar

PROJECTS:

This year's proposed projects for the preserve (and anticipated dates for completion) are:

1. Perform routine trail maintenance and parking area maintenance (on-going).
2. Re-write of the preserve management plan (complete for June Board meeting).
3. Obtain cost estimates/bids for implementing various options for the cabin (on-going).
4. Post the preserve boundaries with new signage (Spring 2017).
5. Rebuild-relocate the outhouse (Summer 2017).
6. Add crushed stone to driveway/parking area (Summer 2017).
7. Replace the cave entrance ladder (Summer 2017).
8. Work with NYS DEC on determination of the presence of the Northern Long-Eared bat (on-going).

PROGRESS:

Balls Cave was closed for the winter on October 1, 2016 and will reopen May 1, 2017. An evaluation of the cave for the continued presence of the federally threatened Northern Long-Eared Bat is being planned. Cave to remain closed through the hibernation period. While the other two caves on the preserve (Greens and Keyhole) have not been identified as NLE Bat hibernacula, these caves are also closed for the winter hibernation period until such time as they have been determined to be free of wintering bat populations.

PROBLEMS:

LADDER: The access ladder will be removed this spring. Given the age of the ladder (25 years) and its wooden construction, replacement has been arranged and will be performed this summer. Materials costs have been included in annual preserve 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 will be posting the new boundary markers along the property lines in the forested area of the preserve to provide a better visual demarcation of the property.

OUTHOUSE: We have a local construction firm on board 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 2017.

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 replaced. 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 current includes disposal dumpsters, assuming the cabin can be taken down with local caver labor. Cabin demolition will not be performed until the replacement concept is approved and funded, so we do not risk being grandfathered under the local zoning regulations.

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. The current budget includes costs for adding crushed stone to parking area and driveway to harden and repair these areas. This work will be performed concurrently with the outhouse work this 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 and will be presented to the Board for review prior to the summer (June 2017) Board meeting.

KIOSK: The informational kiosk at the gateway leaving the Cabin/parking area is in poor condition and needs to be repaired, removed or replaced. The utility of the current kiosk is minimal and replacement with signage/bulletin board construction is recommended. The signage on the kiosk needs to be updated to reflect the name change to the James Gage Karst Preserve.

ACCESS ROAD: The majority of the access road remains in overall good condition. Several of the more remote sections of the roadway are constantly growing over with vegetation and require steady upkeep to keep the roadway open for potential rescue vehicles, should the need arise.

PLANS:

1. Replace the existing ladder.
2. Complete the Re-Write of the management plan for the preserve and submit to the board for approval.
3. Replace the Kiosk.
4. Begin the clean out in preparation for the eventual demolition of the existing cabin and design and price out a suitable replacement. Fund raising for the replacement structure will likely be necessary
5. Reconstruct the outhouse system.

6. Arrange to have a load of crushed stone placed and spread in the driveway.
7. Post property boundary markers, after receipt.
8. Work with NYS DEC and the local Northeastern Cave Conservancy Bat Hibernaculum Committee concerning the assessment of the possible presence of the Northern Long-Eared Bat at the preserve and adapt the management plan accordingly.

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.

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

Currently no problems

PROGRESS

- On April 29th a contingent from Spring VAR spent the day Re-doing the fences along the trail to Hamilton Cave and additional fence was installed just prior to Hamilton Cave entrance. Looks good now.
- The WV DOT hydroseeded the hill all along US 220, and covered it with straw.

- 75 Redbud trees were planted on the hill along US 220, as well as flower seeds and extra grass seed around trail & kiosk.
- “Stay on trail” and entrance signs have been replaced.
- Kiosk brochures replenished.
- Painted some signs standard dark green on preserve. Retouched kiosk paint.
- Biota survey of NSS Flood Cave planned this Fall.
- Bat counts were done in March w/ DNR.

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

no report yet – the manager types and mails in the report

McFAILS CAVE NATURE PRESERVE (NY)

Peter Haberland and Jason Siemion - 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

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: Peter Haberland and Jason Siemion

PROJECTS:

The management plan, including the access policy, has been updated. The updated plan will be submitted along with this report to the NSS BOG for approval. Property itself is in decent shape although the trails could use to be remarked - particularly the trail to McFails Hole

PROBLEMS: None at this time

PLANS: During the upcoming caving season we plan on 1. Work days to clear and re-establish trails; 2. Clear cave entrances of windfall trees; 3. Installation of property boundary signage; 4. A short trip into the cave to check on the bolts at the Halls Hole drop and the 2 nuisance drops, and 4. Replacing the poster on the kiosk.

NEW/SUMMARY: Peter Haberland and Jason Siemion have taken over management of the McFail's Cave Nature Preserve from Tom Rider. On behalf of the many visitors to the preserve, we thank Tom gratefully for his many years of dedicated service. Property itself is in decent shape although the trails could use to be remarked - particularly the trail to McFails Hole

MILL CREEK SINK NATURE PRESERVE (FL)

Charles Roberson – jcroberson67@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: no report submitted, however, there is ongoing negotiation with Florida government entities about a change of status to conservation easement – Geary Schindel is taking the lead on this project

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:

Major trail repairs and a new Kiosk. The portion of the preserve along the river front is slowly being converted into a usable camping area where out of town NSS cavers can stay when visiting New River Cave and other caves in the area.

PROBLEMS:

Graffiti continues to be an issue at this ungated cave. The notion that casual visitors would treat the cave with more respect after construction of the kiosk and the nice trail has proven to be false. Unfortunately, it is looking like construction of a cave gate may be necessary for responsible stewardship of this resource.

PLANS:

Further investigation into perpetrators of vandalism (graffiti) in 2017, with goal of prosecution under the Virginia Cave Protection Act.

- Develop and implement graffiti removal plan.
- Develop estimate of cost for gate construction.

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

Progress:

The property continues to be utilized by several hundred people a month.

Cleanup of graffiti and garbage being led by Bill Baus continues.

A work day is planned for July.

Plans:

A gate has been installed at the entrance to the crawlway (see: vandalism issues below). This will be secured with a combination lock set to the same combination that visitors get for the property gate, and it will be a one way gate openable without the combination from the inside. Placement has been planned so as to not interfere with rescue and removal if necessary is via 2 stainless steel bolts accessible once the gate is opened. As of now the gate is locked in the open position until the locking mechanism can be installed. The “Thunder Crawl” will be blocked with rocks large enough to not be easily moved but removable if necessary.

Further work on the shelter to finish stonework around the footers, extension of the roof over the stone wall.

More graffiti removal and garbage cleanup.

We will be moving the request and visitor tracking web based stuff to a database engine to better be able to not only serve visitors but to allow more efficient management, including flagging problem visitors.

The property over the Bullseye Pit entrance of the cave (blocked off) has been offered to the RBNC as the owners are undergoing divorce and need to sell part of the property. The current plan is to purchase 5-15 acres around the entrance, then once it is paid off, donate the parcel to the NSS as an expansion of the Preserve. Funding is still being worked on and we are presently waiting for the property owner’s divorce to finalize before proceeding.

An article for the NSS News as requested is being prepared.

Problems:

Nothing new.

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 PreserveRichard 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. A weed trimmer purchase is in progress.

SHELTA CAVE PRESERVE REPORT (AL)

Kevin Reeves & 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 Kevin Reeves Manager.

PROJECTS: Review the preserve management and caver access plans and adjust as needed

PLANS: Planning to build a kiosk, working on designs now.

Continue to visit the cave at least 1x per month.

Working on an article about both cave preserves. Working with a cave photographer for pictures.

SUMMARY: Bill continues to remove brush and dead limbs/trees/cut grass as required. A budget request was submitted to the preserve chairman for a new kiosks to provide info on the cave.

SIMS SINK NATURE PRESERVE

Buford C. Pruitt, Jr. – bpruitt570@gmail.com

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

- 1. PRESERVE NAME: SIMS SINK NATURE PRESERVE
- 2. LOCATION: Suwannee County, FLORIDA
- 3. ACQUISITION DATE: early 2017
- 4. DEED LOCATION: NSS OFFICE
- 5. DONATED FUNDS:
- 6. ACREAGE: 2.0 ACRES
- 7. LIABILITY RELEASE: YES
- 8. AREAS OF INTEREST: BIOLOGY

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

BUFORD PRUITT, JR. - PRESERVE MANAGER

PROJECTS:

- 1. Removed coal-tar creosoted wood platform February 17-19.
- 2. Relocated double-gate to a useful location on chain-link fence February 17-19.
- 3. Removed nuisance laurel oaks, brush piles, and snags February 17-19.
- 4. Planted two hardwood tree seedlings February 17-19.

PROBLEMS:

- 1. Already excavated platform soil may need to be relocated.
- 2. Additional dead wood, brush, and laurel oaks should be removed prior to additional plantings.
- 3. Platform wood waste must be hauled away to landfill.

PLANS:

- 1. Continue clearing nuisance plant material within preserve.
- 2. Continue planting quality hardwoods within preserve.
- 3. Stygomorphic crustacean research is planned for 2017-.
- 4. Obtain and install NSS preserve boundary signs.
- 5. Prepare feature article on this new NSS nature preserve for the NSS News.

SUMMARY:

- 1. Title transfer is the single most important task to be accomplished at this time.
- 2. Ecological and infrastructural rehabilitation of the preserve continues.
- 3. Total expenditures on fencing to date are \$153.73.

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,

PROJECTS:

- Brochures are being restocked at the kiosk on a monthly basis along with any minor garbage removal.
- Three no trespassing signs (prohibiting off-trail usage) were replaced due to weather damage.
- The boundary markers from the NSS will be placed later in the year when the leaves fall off the trees.

PROBLEMS:

A small section of the fence/railing had spray paint which I removed with a power drill sander.

Plans:

- A coat of wax will be applied to the wooden railing this year. Spray paint doesn't absorb in the wood well after a good wax coating.
- We might review the old "Tytoona" brochure and design a newer one this year.

SUMMARY:

Not much new to report since the last report. Property and cave seems in good condition. Visitation has increased now with warmer weather. Having said that, the water level has been a bit higher than normal due to the wet preceding months.

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

No report submitted

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:

- Bob Roth and I planned a clean up trip to Wells Cave May 13, 2017. Only four cavers showed up probably because of poor weather. Cavers who helped: Bill Walden, Bob Roth Harry Goepel, and Jonathan Carman.
- Mowed the lawn
- Trimmed trees and brush around the parking lot.
- Cut up two downed dead trees in the parking lot and tossed the pieces out of the parking lot.

- Trimmed two downed trees that were against the kiosk.
- We split into two teams both equipped with wire brushes and a contractor trash bag.
- Bob Roth and I went to the left cave. We found some new graffiti since last year all of which we removed. We didn't find much trash. One intriguing find was a complete deer skeleton and the skull of a second deer in the bat hibernation area. Mystery as to how the deer got there as it had to travel over breakdown and negotiate two 6 foot drop offs in a narrow passage. Bob found lots of signatures dating to the early 1800s which we were careful not to damage. I noted that in places where graffiti had been brushed off the cave walls in the left cave in previous years that the color of the walls has returned to normal and it is difficult to see that graffiti had been removed.
- Harry Goepel and Jonathan Carman went to the right cave following the route to the river passage. One section along that route has massive graffiti. They tackled that graffiti until they were tired. Much of that graffiti still remains. So need to organize more trips to that section. They didn't find much trash either.
- Both teams noted new survey stations in the cave. No idea who is resurveying the cave.
- Last year I requested a sign to identify the property as belonging to the NSS - a sign similar to the signs at other NSS preserves. I repeat that request. Also I want to put up a sign asking people to remove their trash and not to write on the cave walls.

PROBLEMS:

- Last year I requested a sign to identify the property as belonging to the NSS - a sign similar to the signs at other NSS preserves. I repeat that request. Also I want to put up a sign asking people to remove their trash and not to write on the cave walls.

PLANS:

- Cut up the two downed trees next to the kiosk.
- Scrub the kiosk and paint it. I'll pay for the paint.
- Remove vegetation between the kiosk and the driveway.

WILLIAM J. STEPHENSON NATURE PRESERVE (AL)

Kevin Reeves & 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 as Preserve Supervisor. Kevin Reeves is the Preserve Manager.

PROJECTS: Kevin is working on a Kiosk

SUMMARY: Bill continues to remove brush and dead limbs/trees/cut grass as required.

Bill, Kevin and others have walked the trails up the hill and removed brush on the paths to the caves.