

RKC News

Volume IV, Issue II

Spring 2008



www.rkci.org

The Rockcastle Karst Conservancy is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation and preservation of caves and karst in Rockcastle County, Kentucky.

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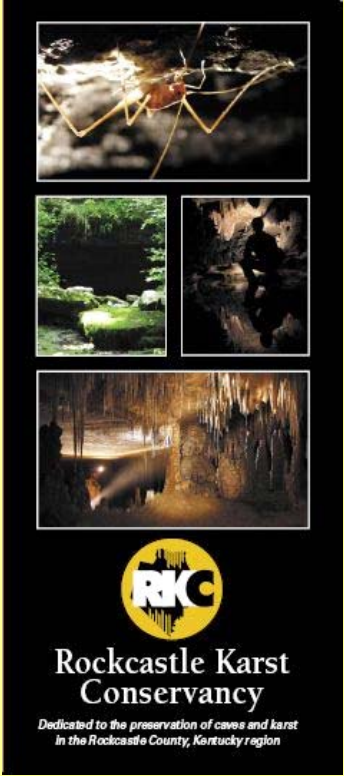
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Photo Credits:

Front Cover: RKC member Tammy Otten in Rockcastle County's Goochland Cave. Photo © by Ivan Artiouchine.

Back Cover: On of our caving friends we often see in Rockcastle County Caves



Tell people about the RKC!
Give them a brochure!
 GET YOUR BROCHURES AT:
www.rkci.org/brochure.htm

Volume IV, Issue II

April 2008

For more information about the Rockcastle Karst Conservancy, please visit our website at www.rkci.org. Membership is open to anyone interested in protecting the caves and karst of Rockcastle County, Kentucky. See page 15 of this issue for a membership application and the different membership levels and dues.

The *RKC News* is published quarterly for members and other interested parties. The purpose of this publication is to keep members aware of RKC activities. Articles published in the *RKC News* do not necessarily represent the opinions or policies of the Rockcastle Karst Conservancy or its represented members.

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RKC has educational material for lending. See the website:

<http://rkci.org/library/index.htm>

or contact Tammy Otten:
tammyotten@yahoo.com



The RKC News is published during January, April, July and October. Deadline for submissions is the 10th of March, June, September, and December. Send submissions to: mkhood (at) woh (dot) rr (dot) com.

OFFICERS

Chairman

Werner Jud

orion@one.net

Vice Chairman

Pat Hutson

caver723@aol.com

Treasurer

Mike Rzesutock

mikeprz58@aol.com

Secretary

Howard Kalnitz

DIRECTORS

Werner Jud

orion@one.net

Pat Hutson

caver723@aol.com

Mike Rzesutock

mikeprz58@aol.com

Jim Perkins

jim666@aol.com

Howard Kalnitz

hkalnitz@fuse.net

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Membership

Alan Leach

alan.micah.6.8@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor

Mike Hood

mkhood@woh.rr.com

Karst Monitoring Coordinator

Deb Bledsoe

debcaves@yahoo.com

Community Liaison

Deb Bledsoe

debcaves@yahoo.com

Education Coordinator

Tammy Otten

tammyotten@yahoo.com

Fundraising

Vacant

Cave and Karst Acquisition

Bill Addington

kvrbill@aol.com

Advisory Committee

Mark Moore

markles@bellsouth.net

Great Saltpetre Preserve

Bob Dobbs

cavepig124@fuse.net

Election Committee

Howard Kalnitz

hkalnitz@fuse.net

Webmaster

Andy Niekamp

andyniekamp@gmail.com

RKC Quick News:

- Congratulations to the new officers and directors elected at the annual meeting:
Werner Jud - Chairman
Howard Kalnitz - Secretary
Jim Perkins - Director
Howard Kalnitz - Director
- An Elections Committee has been established by the board. Howard Kalnitz is the chairman. See the meeting minutes for more information.
- The Fundraising Committee is in need of a chairman. Contact Werner if interested.
- The RKC extends a huge THANK YOU! to Andy Niekamp and Lisa Pruitt-Thorner for their service as Chairman and Secretary the past few years.
- The GSP Open House will be May 17-18, 2008. See page 14 for more details. Volunteers are needed!

From the Chairman:

Greetings RKC members,

The annual RKC board meeting occurred on March 1, 2008 and had excellent attendance. Those present at the meeting will agree that it began with some flurry surrounding the process by which new people were appointed to the Board of Directors. Despite any appearance of impropriety, the actions of the board were within the framework of our bylaws.

To summarize: the board had to initially fill one vacancy created by Andy Niekamp's early announcement that he would be stepping down. Only a few applications were received by the deadline; one week before the scheduled meeting date. It was at this time a second board member decided it was time to step down. No announcement of this 2nd board opening was made to the general membership. We had three applicants to choose from within the final week, so we worked from the pool we had. Some of the members at the meeting expressed dismay that notification of the late breaking changes was improperly withheld. There was no intent to deliberately conceal anything. Nonetheless, we apologize to members for not clearly announcing this sudden development.

Detailed and comprehensive minutes were taken at the meeting, so I encourage members to refer to the record. They will be posted to the RKC website.

The new board has already taken steps to refine and improve our communication to its general membership. We plan on more meetings in the coming year. We will be sending out agendas before the meetings. We are experimenting with a Yahoo site that allows the membership to observe the communication between the directors. Because the first official election of board of directors will be next year, we have already established an election and nomination committee and encourage your involvement in the process. If you are interested on being on the board of directors, send an email to officers@rcki.org

We will work on improving the existing committees and their reporting to the board. We will also be reviewing the bylaws to see how we might clarify some of the language. Land acquisition for the protection of Karst resources is our mission. Much time was spent discussing this and how to structure a committee that is both autonomous in their ability to act while still supported and guided by RKC membership and leadership.

I look forward to a productive year where RKC will become better focused in all our endeavors. As I wrote in the last newsletter (is plagiarizing oneself wrong?): "...Bring your skills into the mix. If you know how to write grants, if you're looking for a charitable cause, if you know how to raise funds, we need you. We need big picture people and detail oriented people. We need people who like to deal with people and people who like to deal with stuff. This is how GSP will remain protected and is also the only way RKC will grow and make a difference..." and the only way RKC will get anything done. Thank you!



Werner G. Jud
RKC Chairman
March 2008

NEW RKC MEMBERS

**As of this Publication
(RKC Membership Number in Parenthesis)**

**Peoples Bank (7), Berea, KY
Karst Environmental Education and
Protection, Inc., (8), Louisville, KY**

**The RKC now has
132 Individual Members**

And

8 Organization Members

Welcome!

The Challenges Facing Sloans Valley and Neelys Creek

By Dr. Hilary Lambert, RKC 45

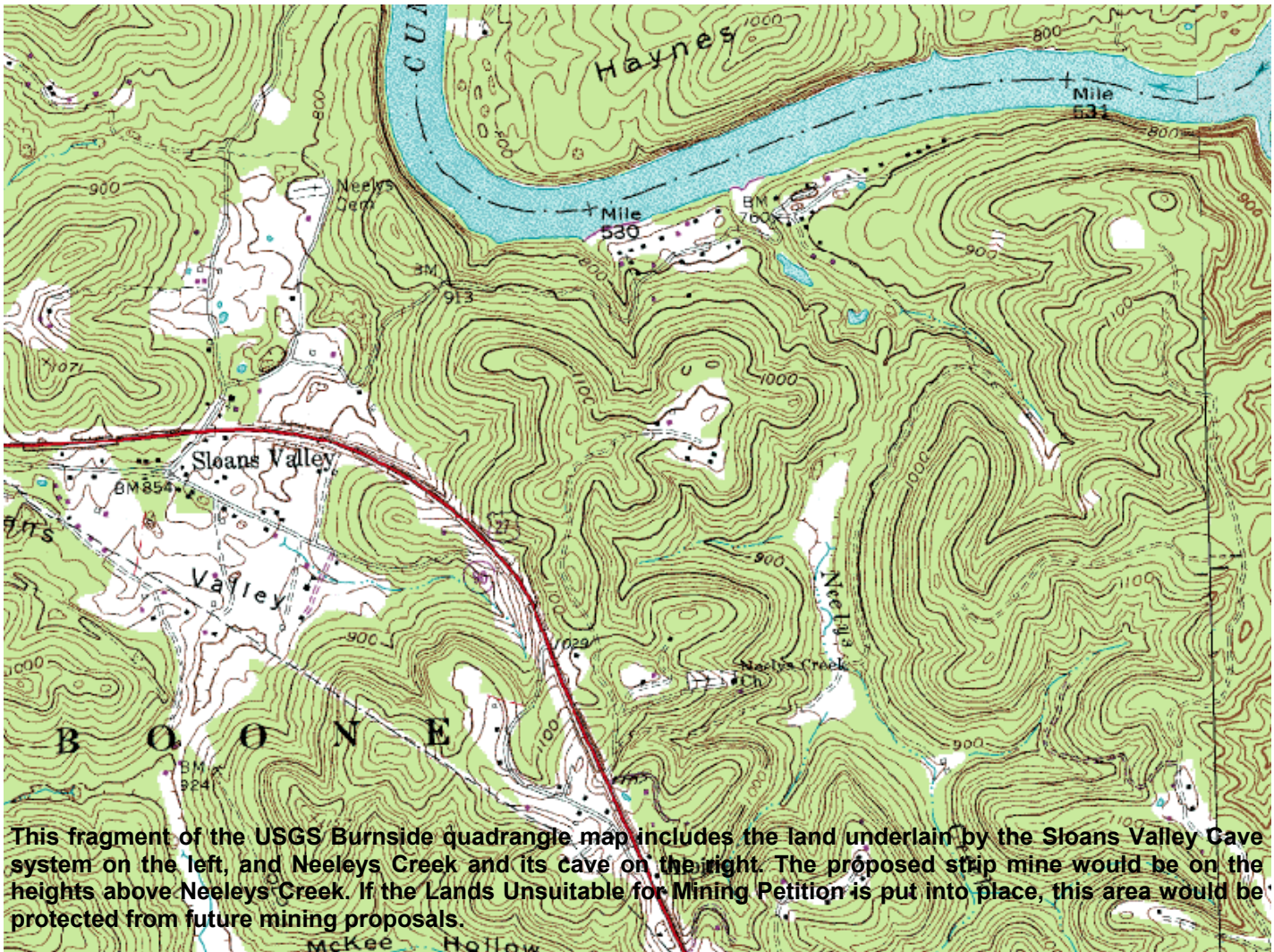
Sloans Valley: Beloved and Beleaguered

Sloans Valley Cave is well known to cavers of the Ohio Valley area and beyond. Situated along US 27 south of Burnside KY, the convenience of its location for visitors has left it vulnerable to vandalism and abuse. The good news is that while the edges of the Sloans Valley Cave System around its main entrances are tattered and worn, its wild heart is untouched and remote.

Nonetheless, in recent decades it seems that every time the cave gets a breathing space, someone else decides that the forested, rural community of Sloans Valley KY is the right place for another get-rich-quick scheme.

This article provides a brief history of the area, its caves and caving. Also, your help is requested, by writing a letter and/or showing up at a hearing on April 10 in Somerset, to make comments in favor of a Lands Unsuitable for Mining Petition. This petition, if approved, would permanently protect the area from mining, including a proposed coal strip mine that would directly and negatively affect Sloans Valley and Neelys Creek Cave (details follow, below).

Strong cavers are also needed to help with re-surveying and dye tracing projects for parts of the cave system, and to push exploration and mapping while Lake Cumberland's waters are lowered for repairs to Wolf Creek Dam (contact information follows, below).



This fragment of the USGS Burnside quadrangle map includes the land underlain by the Sloans Valley Cave system on the left, and Neelys Creek and its cave on the right. The proposed strip mine would be on the heights above Neelys Creek. If the Lands Unsuitable for Mining Petition is put into place, this area would be protected from future mining proposals.

During the European settlement period, the Sloans Valley area was known to have several separate caves, used for many purposes. Geologists explored some portions of these caves and made careful records of their observations, especially during the late 1940s just prior to the rising of Lake Cumberland's waters. The various entrances were not linked up by systematic exploration and mapping until the 1970s, when a host of cavers from Ohio and Kentucky came to call and stayed to map a major American cave system.

A Time-Table of Events

A rough and ready time-table of the Sloans Valley Cave System's experience of humans goes something like this:

Hundreds to thousands of years ago, Native Americans used Sloans and Neelys Creek cave entrance areas and springs.

By the 18th century, European settlers were using the entrances and springs, and an ancient trail through the valley became a settled road between Somerset to the north and Tennessee to the south.

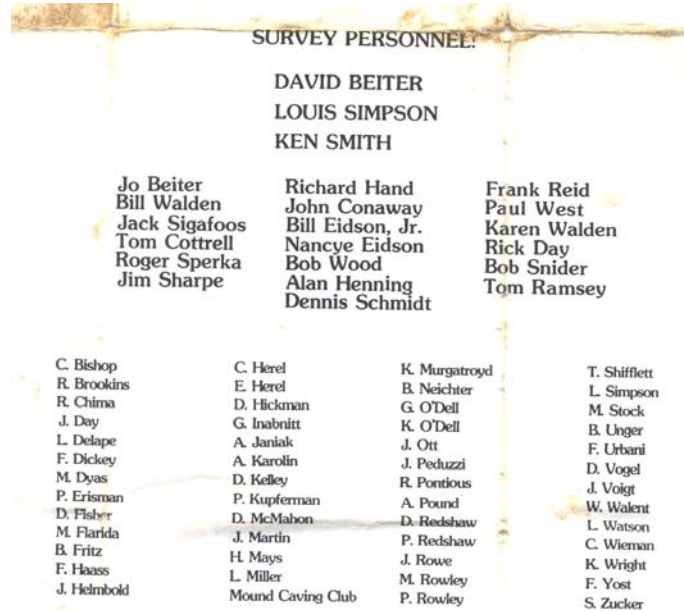
By the early 20th century, a rail line with frequent passenger and freight trains ran through the valley next to the road, along the spine of the then-unknown cave system, with a stop in Sloans Valley.

Along the edges of the valley, several low-yield coal mines were dug and strip-mined from the 1940s to the 1970s. Thin coal layers are found in the rock above the limestone that floors the valley.

A commercial cave tour was established in Crystal Cave, a lower portion of what was later mapped as the Sloans Valley Cave System (the entrance gates to the property are still visible today, overgrown and crumbling). When water began rising behind Wolf Creek Dam in the late '40s, the tourist route was flooded and the business was abandoned. The lowest levels of Sloans Valley's caves were (and are) permanently flooded.

From the late 1960s to the 1980s, the Central Ohio Grotto and the Bluegrass Grotto dominated caving in the region. I have previously made bad mistakes

in trying to accurately list the groups, leaders and heroes of this long-term effort, so I provide here a photo of the list of surveying and exploring names from the main Sloans Valley Cave map, in hopes that will convey the caving talent and fortitude involved in this long-term project.



From this awe-inspiring, many-year effort, the Sloans Valley Cave System emerged at minimum 26 miles long, with at least 16 entrances. The passages available for exploration depend on the level of Lake Cumberland, which floods the lower areas of the cave. With the water level down right now, there's a lot more cave than there has been in years. Several private and public landowners control access, including the US Forest Service and the US Army Corps of Engineers; notable among the private owners are Mr. Tom Crockett and his family, Mr. Lynn Haynes, and others. During the late 1980s and 1990s the Miami Valley Grotto dominated caving and use of the cave systems in this area.

Across the valley from the Sloans Valley Cave System is the gorgeous Neelys Creek Cave. Neelys Creek is both a surface and subterranean creek – it runs in and out of a series of caves as it charges downhill through beautiful woodlands toward Lake Cumberland. Neelys and Sloans are undoubtedly a single interconnected cave system. With the waters lowered since 2007, Neelys' big rooms near the lake have been revealed. The Neelys portion of the Sloans/Neelys catchment

area is directly affected by the strip-mining proposed for the slopes above it – more on this, below.

In the late 1980s, a “temporary” landfill was opened on the strip mine bench on the north side of Sloans Valley. An official state permit allowed its overflow leachate to drain into an “unnamed tributary” to Lake Cumberland. The “unnamed tributary” was the subterranean river that flows to the lake through the Sloans Valley Cave System. Cavers and local residents were upset and attended hearings and wrote letters in a fruitless attempt to stop the project.

Five years later in 1992, when the already-full landfill was bought by a New Jersey waste hauling company and threatened to become an expanded, mega-landfill with imported waste, the Sloans Valley Conservation Task Force was established to stop the expansion, with the help of the National Speleological Society, the Miami Valley Grotto and the Ohio Valley Region of the NSS, the Somerset-Pulaski County Concerned Citizens, and many others. The Pulaski County Landfill War raged for about eight years. Today the original landfill is capped and closed, and no expansion took place, although it was a very near thing, and the situation requires continual watching.

During the mid-'90s the Sloans Valley CTF received the group conservation award from the NSS for its work on behalf of cave protection, and



The Great Rock Sink Entrance to the Sloans Valley Cave System, with Chris Reynolds on the left and John Cole on the right. Do not even THINK about going into this entrance without first meeting with the landowner, Mr. Lynn Haynes. Photo by Hilary Lambert.

nominated the Sloans Valley Cave System as a Significant Federal Cave, due to its great value as a storehouse of natural and human history and heritage. The group’s happiness was permanently impaired by the unexpected death in a freak car wreck of one of its stalwart leaders, the incomparable Cathy Crockett, wife to Tom and mother to Josh, Sarah, and Emily. However, time passes and cavers continue to enjoy the cave and valley, and to visit with Tom and his family, and – with his permission – to camp on his property.

A New Threat to the Area Emerged in 2007

In early 2007, the peacefulness of Sloans Valley was shattered when it became known that a local landowner was buying up property in the hills on the southern end of the valley, directly above Neelys Creek, in order to clear-cut the timber and then strip mine for coal.

Mining and landfilling were unsuitable land-uses for this vulnerable, beautiful area decades ago. The idea of strip-mining for coal above Sloans Valley today – in this major tourist region on the shores of Lake Cumberland – is totally unacceptable. The blasting, pollution, and heavy truck traffic would immediately decimate Neelys Creek, its water quality, and the biotic diversity of its near-pristine valley, and would permanently and negatively harm the Sloans Valley Cave System and the valley’s rural community. Spoil from this mountaintop-removal mining technique would be bulldozed into adjoining creek valleys, permanently altering surface and subterranean water flow and water quality.

A new organization, Friends of Sloans Valley KY, Inc., has been established by local residents. Its mission: “The maintenance, protection and restoration of the land, plants, water, caves, artifacts and natural beauty surrounding Sloans Valley and its cave.” The Friends have submitted a Lands Unsuitable for Mining Petition to Kentucky’s Department for Surface Mining, asking that the Sloans Valley/Neelys Creek area be permanently protected against destructive mining practices.

What You Can Do

The Friends and other groups are asking for YOUR help – as cavers, caving organizations, and nature-lovers – to help get Sloans Valley/ Neelys Creek designated permanently as a no-mining area. We ask that you write and send a letter in favor of the Lands Unsuitable for Mining Petition, and/or attend and speak at the public meeting being held on April 10, 2008 at the Burnside, KY Elementary School from 6:30-9:30 pm eastern time.

Your letters and statements need to include your opinion and facts about any or all of the four following points:

1. Coal mining is incompatible with existing state and land-use plans for the area, such as: Caving, boating, hiking, natural beauty of the area, views of the shore from boats on Lake Cumberland; vacation or retirement homes, nearby Buck Creek as a Nature Conservancy Bioreserve, the surrounding Daniel Boone National Forest, the Significant Federal Cave status of the Sloans Valley Cave System.

2. Coal mining will affect fragile or historic lands in the area, in which such mining operations could result in significant damage to important historic, cultural, scientific, and aesthetic values, and natural systems such as: Paleontological, biological, and/or archeological sites, Native American or Civil War era artifacts, Harriet Arnow's historic depiction of the area, human burial sites, endangered or threatened flora or fauna in the area, caves and streams.

3. Coal mining would affect renewable resource lands in the area, in which such mining operations could result in a substantial loss or reduction of long-range productivity of water supply or food or fiber products, and such lands to include aquifers and aquifer recharge areas such as: Negative impacts to the water quality of Lake Cumberland; pollution of prime karst aquifers in the area; direct and indirect pollution of Sloans Valley's subterranean rivers and Neelys Creek by blasting, trucking, and valley filling; drinking water impacts; a rise in mining-related pollutants at boat docks, including sediments, air and noise pollution; impacts to aquatic life, above and below-ground.

4. Coal mining would affect renewable resource lands in the area, in which such mining operations could result in a substantial loss or reduction of long-range productivity of water supply or food or fiber products, and such lands to include aquifers and aquifer recharge areas such as: Negative impacts to the water quality of Lake Cumberland; pollution of prime karst aquifers in the area; direct and indirect pollution of Sloans Valley's subterranean rivers and Neelys Creek by blasting, trucking, and valley filling; drinking water impacts; a rise in mining-related pollutants at boat docks, including sediments, air and noise pollution; impacts to aquatic life, above and below-ground.

5. Coal mining would affect natural hazard lands in which such mining operations could substantially endanger life and property, such lands to include areas subject to frequent flooding and areas of unstable geology, such as: The area is highly karstified with many sinkholes, caves and streams draining into Lake Cumberland. Anyone with a sinkhole in their yard, or who has built upon the cave area, could receive damage to their property due to the blasting which also could cause cave-ins or blockages of the sinkholes which would lead to flooding and possible injury to any persons in the caves due to loosened cave ceilings, rocks or slabs possibly falling without notice. Accidents, dust, noise and exhaust chemicals from the coal trucks traveling on one-lane roads; runoff, erosion and sedimentation would have a negative impact of the health and well-being of everyone in the community as well as affecting property values through aesthetic degradation. Hunters, hikers, ATV riders all could be harmed by fly rock and other debris from the explosions, even outside the immediate blast area. Research indicates that blasting in an area with caves and karst may negatively affect a wide area.

Please include any research or specific information you may have about your particular concerns. Most importantly, please write these letters and send them in as soon as possible. We urge individuals and cave organizations to submit comments.

Your letter must include:

1. A focus on the Sloans Valley/Neelys Creek catchment area and its cave systems, draining to Lake Cumberland.
2. Your name, address, phone number.
3. Support of Petition number LUM-08-1 Pulaski County.
4. Your interests and concerns stated as specifically as possible, focused on the four topic areas above, including any data that substantiates your concerns.
5. Indicate your willingness to speak at the April 10 public hearing.
6. Your notarized signature.

Mail your letter to:

Director, Division of Permits
 Dept. for Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement
 #2 Hudson Hollow
 Frankfort KY 40601

More Information

To get involved in dye tracing, surveying and mapping the Sloans/Neelys system, contact: Bill Walden: wdwalden (at) windstream (dot) net or Randy Paylor: caver (at) insightbb (dot) com

To learn more about Friends of Sloans Valley Kentucky, Inc. and the Lands Unsuitable for Mining Petition, contact Mary Zriny: mary (dot) zriny (at) insightbb (dot) com.

RKC ANNUAL MEETING

March 1, 2008

**North Central Public Library
 Cincinnati, Ohio**

In attendance:

Werner Jud Tammy Otten
 Neena Jud Matt Keller
 Bill Addington Howard Kalnitz
 Pat Hutson Mike Deitmaring
 Joetta Hutson Bob Dobbs
 Mike Rzesutock Cindy Dobbs
 Bob Yuellig Terry ?
 Mary Gratsch Denny Wortman
 Bruce Soluski Pete Stow
 Brian Pitcher Roger June

Meeting called to order

by Pat Hutson as acting chairman at 1:00 pm

Minutes of Last Meeting

Werner Jud summarized the Meeting Minutes from the last meeting on October 24, 2007. A motion was made (WJ) and seconded (??) that we approve the minutes for the last meeting. There was a unanimous vote of the Board in favor. The minutes can now be posted on the website.

Announcements

Pat gave the floor to Werner Jud to read a statement to address the concerns expressed by the membership over the past week. The Board remains convinced they did not do anything in breach the Bylaws. They followed them in good conscience. Nevertheless, they see that there was a failure of communications with the membership. This was aggravated by Board members not communicating to one another. Werner summarized the chronology of the last month and the timing of Lisa's resignation. There were multiple challenges and issues that all occurred in the seven days prior to the meeting. All members were aware that applications were due by February 22. The Board selected from the three members who submitted their application on time.

- Members voiced their thoughts and concerns about the actions taken by the directors:
 - Board's thoughts as expressed by Werner should have been sent a week ago.
 - Last meeting we agreed to better communications, this is not better communications.
 - Questions about why applications were not requested for second position.
 - Dismay over inconsistency of process.
 - Expectation that "vote by voice" would be taken at this meeting.
 - Suggestion to study amendments to the by-laws to better define the process.

Werner acknowledged feelings of frustration in the members.

Werner acknowledged that Lisa's resignation should have been announced immediately to the membership.

Werner would like membership to act more timely in submitting letters of interest.

Mike Rzesutock stated that next year three director's positions will be up for election – the three appointed directors serve until the next election.

Elections

Vote by voice was held to record in the minutes: (by proxy...)

Lisa Pruitt
Mary Gratsch
Jim Perkins
Werner Jud
Howard Kalnitz
Pat Hutson
Mike Rzesutock

Therefore new directors as voted in are: Howard Kalnitz & Jim Perkins (whether or not Lisa's vote is counted).

Nomination and Vote for Officers:

Nominated for Chairman:

Werner Jud
Howard Kalnitz
Vote: 3 in favor of Werner Jud

Nominated for Vice Chairman:

Pat Hutson
Vote: 5 in favor of Pat Hutson

Nominated for Treasurer:

Mike Rzesutock
Vote: 4 in favor of Mike Rzesutock

Volunteer for Secretary:

Howard Kalnitz
Vote: 3 in favor of Howard Kalnitz

As described above, the Board of Directors and Officers of RKC have been established for the year March 2008 - March 2009.

Announcements

Werner wishes to publicly thank Andy Niekamp and Lisa Pruitt for their outstanding service on the Board.

Treasurer's Report (summarized)

There has been a Net increase in income. There is less income from contributions and memberships but there happens to be an offsetting decrease in expenses. For details see Treasurers report (attached). Nonetheless, yearly expenses are projected to be around \$1500.00, mostly for insurance and Tax Prep.

Total income to declare on the IRS abbreviated 990 form is about \$21,000.00 (2/3 from GSP and 1/3 from RKC). For future reference, when the total income in one year exceeds \$25,000.00 we must use the long form.

Balance Sheet – We currently have about \$17,000.00 in checking account. When the CD's came due, they were not renewed in order to be prepared if funds were needed for property acquisition.

Detailed Treasurer's report was handed to Secretary Howard for inclusion in the minutes. Note: these reports are RKC without GSP funds.

Committee Repots

Publications

Werner would like to extend praise to Mike Hood, the Newsletter Editor for doing such a fine job. Werner would like to poll members as to whether the newsletter should be offered in a print version.

This was not completed at this meeting. Howard suggests getting estimated budget to see if finance will cover.

GSP report

Bob Dobbs, Committee Chairman:

Things are fine at GSP.

We are looking for grants for the Composting. Toilets (outhouse replacement) project.

The lease agreement has been signed by the Greater Cincinnati Grotto at the last Board Meeting. This lease lists about 21 items (the canopy was removed from the list due to extensive

damage), requires a payment of \$1.00 by the GSP Committee, and runs until August 2011, at which time ownership of the leased items will transfer to the GSP Committee.

The issue of RKC being signatory to the GSP Committee's checking account was resolved at the last meeting. Lisa Pruitt has submitted a resolution to amend that act to limit the ability for RKC to take the funds. Basically the previous act states that RKC needs to be signatory to the account but should not have access to the money unless it is an emergency. This resolution defined the emergency as something in order to protect GSP, and required a 2/3 majority vote by the RKC Board. Discussion ensued and it was resolved that the resolution be amended to include: the GSP Committee shall be notified in writing within one week, of any decision (to take the money for an emergency).

The official Resolution is as follows:

"RKC, through its Great Saltpetre Cave Preserve Committee ("GSP Committee"), shall maintain and manage a separate bank account for the preservation, maintenance and improvement of the Great Saltpetre Cave Preserve. The GSP Committee bank account shall be designated as the GSP maintenance fund and monies deposited, held, and spent therein shall be used solely for GSP unless there is an emergency requiring withdrawal of funds by the Rockcastle Karst Conservancy.

"Emergency" is defined as a condition requiring urgent action by the Rockcastle Karst Conservancy ("RKC") in order to protect the funds or assets of GSP from accidental or intentional misuse and/or to respond to a sudden, unforeseen and serious incident which threatens the security of Great Saltpetre Cave Preserve. Before any emergency condition is established which requires withdrawal of GSP maintenance monies from the maintenance fund, there must be a 2/3rds majority vote by the RKC Board of Directors. In the event of an emergency vote the GSP committee will be notified in writing within one week."

A motion was made Werner and seconded Pat Hutson that we accept the resolution as amended.

There was a unanimous vote of the Board in favor of the amended resolution.

Fundraising

Joetta Hutson has been the Chairperson of the Fundraising Committee since its inception. At this meeting, she verbally offered her resignation. It was accepted although no replacement was appointed.

In the meantime, we need someone to handle setting up a booth at Open House, which is the weekend of May 17 & 18, 2008. The purpose of the booth is mostly exposure to the local residents and visitors to Open House. Mike Deitmaring volunteered to handle that.

Regarding other fundraising opportunities such as KOR, Joetta has a list of all the businesses and organization that donated anything for the raffles and other fundraising events which will help a new person take over the position.

Election Committee

An Election Committee was established. Howard Kalnitz was appointed Chairperson of this new committee. Members volunteering to assist include Roger June, Joetta Hutson, Bob Yuellig and Tammy Otten. The purpose of this committee is to establish the procedures for holding elections, then to handle the election for the next annual meeting. This committee will meet independently of the Board.

Land Acquisition Committee

Meetings have been held to start establishing the framework to guide the process. Goals of the committee were stated to be as follows:

- To identify and prioritize possible acquisitions for the RKC.
- To research and develop management plans, landowner relations, easement and funding mechanisms.
- To provide leadership and guidance throughout the RKC acquisitions process.

Through discussions, the committee developed several tools for use by the Committee and RKC in general. These include a method for weighting caves and lands for further efforts towards acquisition. The Committee also encourages forming partnerships with other organizations such as the Daniel Boone National Forest and the Nature Conservancy. We should make use of easements and options, and resort to taking out a mortgage on the property as a last resort. Leasing property (as we did with GSP for many years) should be an option as well as managing lands owned by a Conservancy.

The time frame goals established by the Land Acquisition Committee in July of 2007, was to establish the guidelines for property acquisition within one year and be prepared to purchase additional land within three years.

It was generally agreed that the research and weighting efforts must be pursued, but we also must be ready to take advantage of a situation that pops up. Therefore we should prepare guidelines for two tracks – a slow and methodical research base track, and a fast track. All people, whether they are committee members, board members or members at large that are working on (or happen to see) an opportunity for land acquisition must report to the Committee. The Committee will then report to the Board. Members of the Committee should be empowered to make an offer, that is after a process for making an offer has been established. Part of the process must include identifying the best one person to handle the Land Owner relations for each particular situation.

The Land Acquisition Committee was directed to establish a regular meeting schedule.

Fundraising for Land Acquisitions should be a separate committee. Hilary Lambert has offered to help with writing grant applications but cannot do this alone. A half-day workshop has been offered to members who would be willing to help in this effort. The second and fourth weekends in April were suggested as possible times for this seminar. This message will be sent to Deb Bledsoe and Hillary Lambert to set up this workshop.

Land Acquisition Fund should be tracked separately in the Chart of Accounts. When a donation is received that is earmarked for Land Acquisition, it cannot be used for general operating expenses.

GrantStation.com – fee is \$150.00 per year.

Mike Rzesutock reported on efforts to open negotiations on Misty Cave (in Sand Gap, Ky). The board agreed that this is a promising possibility and to continue the approach to the current land owner for more information. The board recognizes that due to the need to move quickly, this may well occur before the land acquisitions committee will complete long term planning

Mike Rzesutock also reported on negotiations with the current owners of Deweys Drop. This is more a cash on the barrel negotiation, however we will await more info on this as well.

New Business

There is a need to update the insurance policy with the names of the new Board of Directors.

Brian Pitcher announced his desire to be considered for the position of Caretaker when Bill Carr leaves. This is a GSP Committee issue, and as such his offer should be made to that group.

Before Andy Niekamp left for his temporary assignment in England, he gave the RKC items (such as t-shirts and table top display) to Tim Hale for delivery to Werner Jud.

Andy also maintained the website. He has agreed to continue to maintain the website for the present.

There were two Standing Committees established in the by-laws. These are Fundraising and GSP. At the last annual meeting (March 2007) a Land Acquisition Committee was formed and Bill Addington was appointed Chairperson.

Howard Kalnitz suggested starting an RKC Yahoo Group so that members can see/read what the Board is discussing. A few options were discussed, and it was concluded that the Group would be

private, only open to RKC members, and only the Board members could post messages. If a member wanted to contact a Board member, or all Board members it could be by email or whatever directly. If a member wanted to discuss a topic with other members, there are other channels that could be used.

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Membership dues are to be sent to Alan Leach (who unfortunately was not present since a few people wanted to renew their memberships). Alan processes the memberships and deposits the money directly into the bank.

There are a variety of addresses in use for RKC. The official address used for the filing of the 501c3 paperwork was Lisa's office address in Catlettsburg, Kentucky. A P.O. Box was suggested, but the question was where would it be located and who would deal with it. Conclusion was that the official address remain as is, as long as Lisa is OK with that. All other paperwork should be adjusted to match that, but continue to be mailed to the appropriate person.

Next meeting

Will be on Saturday, June 7, 2008 at 1:00 pm at the Union Library (if available).

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm.

Meeting minutes prepared by Neena Jud & amended from notes by Howard Kalnitz. Secretary



GREAT SALTPETRE PRESERVE COMMITTEE REPORT

The Great Saltpetre Preserve (GSP) has become much more than a place to camp with fellow cavers before and after cave trips. The headline in our GSP management plan reads "to protect and preserve through education". As a grotto of the NSS our purpose is to "advance the study, conservation, exploration and knowledge of caves." According to the Greater Cinti Grotto (GCG) bylaws our purpose is "to educate our members and the public in, and to advance the study and the science of speleology." As you can see, we are not only cavers, but teachers also. And GSP has become our classroom.

Each May on the weekend after Mother's Day we have an Open House at GSP where we give free tours through the cave for the local community and talk about caves, geology, bats, and the history of GSP. For the past two years straight we have had over 700 visitors on those weekends. Between preparing, executing and cleaning up, this event requires four to five hundred man hours.

Each year we have hundreds of Boy Scouts (and some Girl Scouts) visit and tour Great Saltpetre Cave. Every group is given a presentation beforehand on caving, conservation, geology and bats, then they are lead on a wild cave trip in the area (off GSP property). Each wild cave trip requires a leader and a backup person. Sometimes the larger troops may need to be separated into two wild trips. It is only March and already we have thirteen scout troops scheduled to camp and cave at GSP this year.

One week each summer Woodland Alters uses GSP for a youth caving summer camp. The camp includes a time of Bible study with persons of demonstrated Christian faith. Group leaders seek to help each camper have fun while growing in the context of a Christ-centered community. While this group is basically on their own, we still need to prepare for their visit and make sure there are adequate port-o-lets and dumpster space.

Five years ago I did a field trip to GSP for one second grade class from Mt. Vernon Elementary school. Since then the field trips have grown to six classes each year including second, third and fourth grades. In addition, this winter we received a request for a spring field trip from an elementary school in nearby Jackson County. These field trips consist of a basic program about caves and bats and a tour of the cave. Six to ten people are needed each day for these visits.

Needless to say, we are fulfilling our stated "purpose", and then some.

And then there is the on going property maintenance, repairs and mowing to keep GSP the great place it is...a magnificently beautiful and historical part of the community.

Of course none of these things could happen without the thousands of volunteer hours donated by the many dedicated and unselfish cavers from the Greater Cincinnati Grotto, Blue Grass Grotto, and Dayton Underground Grotto. Thanks to all of you for your help and support.

And amazingly, we still find time to go caving.

Bob Dobbs,
GSP Committee Chairman

2008 GREAT SALTPETRE PRESERVE OPEN HOUSE

**Saturday, May 17, 2008
10am to 4pm**

**Sunday, May 18, 2008
Noon to 4pm**

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!

The public is welcome and encouraged to attend. Free cave tours are offered. The tours last 30 to 45 minutes. The cave has electric lights. The cave floor is generally flat. Dress for the cave environment - comfortable shoes and a sweat shirt. The cave is 57 degrees. Bring a flashlight if you wish.

Other Activities:

- Free soup beans and corn bread.
- Live music on Saturday. *Bring an instrument and join in!*
- Food concession stand operated by the Livingston Fire Department.
- Souvenir concession stand.
- Miles of hiking trails.



Become a Member of RKC!

Join RKC and help preserve caves and cave access in the Rockcastle County, Kentucky region! Your membership dues go directly to efforts to purchase and manage caves.

Date _____

Name - Please print clearly _____

Street _____

City, State & Zip _____

E-mail Address _____

Telephone _____



Dues expire on January 1 of each year. Individual and Supporting Member dues are half the amount after June 30.

Membership Amount \$ _____

Additional Donation \$ _____

Total \$ _____

MEMBERSHIP FOR INDIVIDUALS - VOTING

- _____ Individual Member \$15/year
- _____ Sustaining Member \$75/year (After five consecutive years a sustaining member becomes a Life Member (along with a special T-shirt))
- _____ Life Member \$300/one time

MEMBERSHIPS FOR ORGANIZATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS - NON-VOTING

- _____ Supporting Member - Non-profit, grottos, and youth organizations \$25/year
- _____ Supporting Member - All other organizations \$50/year
- _____ Benefactor Member - \$1,000/one time

Make checks payable to the Rockcastle Karst Conservancy.

Mail completed form and payment to:

Rockcastle Karst Conservancy
C/O Alan Leach
2217 Cleaney Ave
Norwood, OH 45212



RKC T-Shirts!

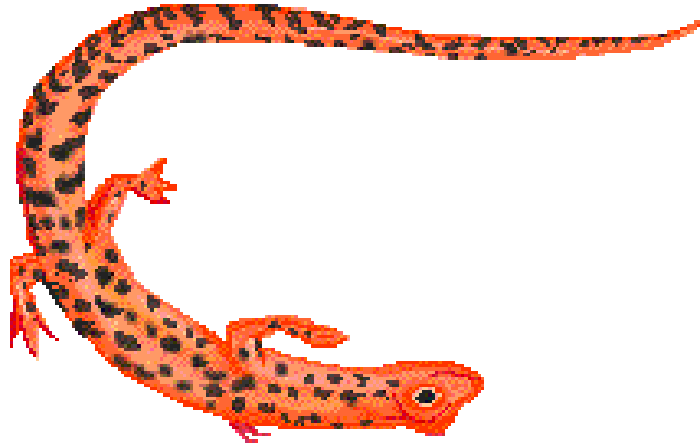
Price: \$15.00, RKC member price \$10.00
100% Pre-shrunk Heavy Weight Cotton, Navy Blue / Gold
Designed by Robert Coomer
Sizes: M, L, XL, XXL (sorry no S). Quantities are limited.

All proceeds benefit The RKC. Order on line:
<http://www.rkci.org/tshirt.htm>



RKC Life Member T-Shirt

Green with RKC logo
See membership details for more information.



Rockcastle Karst Conservancy, Inc.
1515 Cordell Dr
Dayton, Ohio 45439

FIRST CLASS

Deliver To: