

## **Rockcastle Karst Conservancy Winter Board Meeting – December 7, 2025**

### **In Attendance 12/7/2025**

**Directors:** Patrick Gibson, Werner Jud, Janice Gott and Mary Gratsch were present  
On site.

Gary O'Dell present online.

(A quorum does exist)

**Others:** Mike Wuerth, Richard Duncan, Neena Jud, Debi Pavey and Scott Pavey were present on site. Gary Bush, Suz Gagnon, Jared Embree and Ken Bailey were present online.

78th Meeting of the Rockcastle Karst Conservancy was held at the Reading Branch Library Cincinnati, OH and online.

Meeting called to Order by Chair Patrick Gibson at 2:11 PM EST.

(12/7/25 Meeting Agenda at end)

### **Announcements:**

none

### **Secretary's Report:** (M. Gratsch)

1. Asked for comments/amendments to the Minutes of regular Meeting of 9/7/2025 as posted on the RKC website; no response.

**MOTION: Motion to accept the minutes of the 9/7/25 meeting as posted on the website (J Gott motioned to accept, P. Gibson 2nd, passed by acclaim).**

### **Treasurer's Report:** (J. Gott)

1. One new Life Member, Chris Baker. He included a donation of \$200 from the Baker Foundation into our Bluegrass Legacy Endowment account.
2. Sustaining members have slowly been making the switch from Paypal to Zeffy.
3. GSP repaid RKC for it's share of the liability insurance.
- 4 David Jackson, on behalf of the Pine Mountain Grotto donated \$300.
5. Last meeting the Board approved Janeen Sharpshair up to \$125 for up to 5 landowner gift Baskets, however, she has spent \$300 for 10 gift baskets. (In the future Janeen would like the proceeds from the die dye shirts to go towards this expense.)

**MOTION: To reimburse Janeen Sharpshair \$300 for the 10 gift baskets (Gott, Gratsch 2<sup>nd</sup>, by acclaim)**

**MOTION: To accept the Treasurer's Report as presented (Gratsch, Jud 2nd, by acclaim)**

### **Committee Reports:**

(A) Membership/Message Committee: (Gratsch)

1. Leah needs content for the Winter Newsletter by 12/15. The Spring Newsletter is scheduled for March 1, 2025. Since it is the end of the fiscal year, it should contain reports for all the Preserves. Content should be sent to Leah by February1, 2026.

(B) GSP Committee: (Debi Pavey)

1. Water line repairs have been completed.
2. Ticket house renovations require obtaining alternative wall material since the original boards have warped. Also something needs to be done to resupport the gutters.
3. Someone drove too close to the new underground water sub-meter box, across from the Caretaker Residence, despite the flags around the unsettled earth.
4. The shower house has been winterized.
5. Large logs have been placed along the grass areas where the stream bank is eroding.
6. Some of the Boundary signs have been put up. In doing so Werner found that a large black oak boundary tree, an established nexus point shared by 3 landowners, had been poached and an adjacent landowner has marked their boundary 30' inside GSP's property line. Werner will talk to the Forest Service and Neena will contact the surveyor. Werner suggested that we should find a lawyer who could help us address this, generate a warning letter to the landowner(s) and to be a resource for future logging threats or invasion and other property issues.

(C) Misty Cave Committee: (P Gibson)

1. The Board received a request from Diego Dilley, OSU undergrad and COG member, who would like to study microbes in Misty. We still need to establish protocols for such request perhaps copying GSP's protocol. The Board recognized the importance of granting such a request but because Misty is currently closed, due to being a hibernaculum, decided that special considerations need to be implemented.

**MOTION: RKC grants special access to RKC properties to Diego Dilley, OSU undergraduate student, to collect samples for his proposed research project, with the following conditions:**

- 1) **To limit the number of people in the hibernacula cave (Misty) to 2-3 people to minimize disturbance to the bats. Also, no use of carbide lights in the cave.**
- 2) **RKC receives a copy of the research report when submitted to the professor(s). RKC will not republish this report, it is for our records only (Gratsch, Jud 2<sup>nd</sup>, by acclaim)**

(D) Skylight Dome Committee: (Jerry Brandenburg)

1. no update; Jerry B and Scott Pavey will inspect the current condition of the road.

(E) Cornhole Cave Committee: (Gratsch)

1. Gratsch paid property taxes, \$119.63.

(F) Sloans Valley Cave Preserve: (Mike Harrington- report by email)

1. \$60 was retrieved from the donation pipe. Mike needs Janice's address to send her the money.
2. Mike hopes to set up for internet merchandise sale by spring 2026.
3. Patrick G reported that COG held their annual Sloansgiving in November. He reported that the Preserve looks good!

(G) Fundraising Committee: (Gratsch)

1. Suz Gagnon offered to take the RKC display and Stitch-an-Bitch vests and hats to Carter Caves Winter Adventure Weekend. Suz will contact the WAW organizers to see if arrangements can be made for the sale of our items and if there are any associated costs.

(H) Land Acquisition: (Wendy Orlandi- no report)

1. Janeen Sharpshair, along with help from Rob Coomer, Janice and others, developed a Brochure explaining the Kentucky Cave Law that can be given to Kentucky landowners. She is requesting \$100 to print 500 brochures. The brochures can be put in gift baskets and given out at Open House.

**MOTION: to reimburse Janeen Sharpshair up to \$120 for the printing of Kentucky Cave Law brochures (Gott, Gratsch 2<sup>nd</sup>, by acclaim)**

(I) Grant Committee: (Neena Jud, Jared Embree)

1. Jared requested a \$1500 grant for the 'Lets GO Caving' program from Bricker& Grayson, a legal firm. No word yet.
2. Neena identified a National Fish Passage Program Grant that may be able to fund the Repair of the Bridge to the Point. This requires coordination from the regional Coordinator. No word back from him yet.
3. Grant for the GSP entry road repairs from the Kentucky Colonels was rejected because it was too large for a first time grant. Perhaps requesting a smaller amount to fund the Sloans kiosk would make a good grant proposal.
4. Boy Scout Troop #44 is donating 8 benches to GSP.

(J) Waiver Committee:

Nothing new.

**Old Business:**

1. Patrick presented a power point program discussing the difference between MOU's, Charters and Management Plans. The RKC/ GSP/sustaining grottos MOU had been shared by email. The new MOU was discussed. Werner noted that he was very satisfied with how the document was written.

**MOTION: The MOU between RKC, GSP and the supporting grottoes, as written on 12/7/2025, is approved for signing (Gott, Jud 2<sup>nd</sup>, roll call vote 5-0-0**

2. Elections- Janice nominated Patrick Gibson and Mary Gratsch. Both accepted. There was a call for additional nominations, None were received. Nominations are closed at the end of the meeting.

**Motion to accept the slate of nominations by acclaim (Gott, Jud 2<sup>nd</sup>, by acclaim)**

**New Business:**

1. Ken Bailey contacted RKC Board inquiring whether RKC might be interested in serving as a back-up organization for the Kentucky Karst Conservancy (KKC), which owns the Mushroom Entrance to Big Bat Cave, in case they should become insolvent. Ken was reassured that the RKC Board is very interested in doing whatever it can to ensure that the Mushroom Entrance to Big Bat remains in cave conservancy protection. Ken will carry the idea back to the KKC Board. If they are in favor, RKC will determine the next steps to make a legally binding agreement.

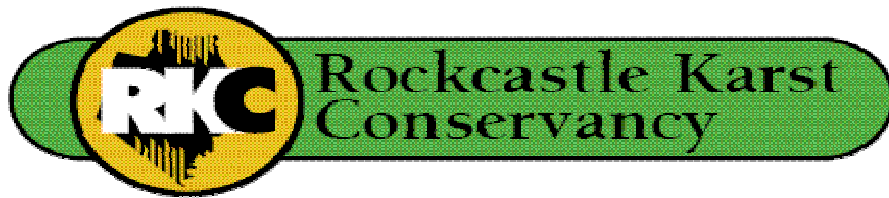
**Next Meeting:** The next Meeting was set for Sunday, March 15, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. EDT, at the Deer Park Library.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 4:57 p.m. (Gratsch, Jud 2<sup>nd</sup>, by acclaim)

Meeting Minutes prepared by Mary Gratsch

**Action Items**

1. By 12/14/25 articles for the Winter Newsletter need to be sent to Leah. Articles for the Spring 2026 Newsletter need to be sent to Leah by 2/1/2026
2. Gratsch to contact Diego Dilley to inform him of the Boards motion to allow him special access to Misty, with stipulations, for him to collect specimens for his research project
3. W Jud to contact the Forest Service about the poached boundary tree. N Jud to contact the Surveyor to see who had the survey done
4. Gratsch to give Suz Gagnon RKC's inventory of vests and hats and RKC display before WAW
5. Jerry Brandenburg to obtain a bid to repair the road to Skylight
6. Plans for SVCP Kiosk – Harrington
7. Jared Embree to submit grant request to Kentucky Colonels for Sloans Kiosk/Shelter
8. Learn more about potential closing of a Sloans passage by Fish & Wildlife Service and whether RKC should comment - Gibson
9. RKC Website link for SVCP logo merchandise–Harrington, Bush, Treasurer
10. Cornhole Cave survey – Gratsch
11. Contact Wendy Orlandi to see if she still wants to chair Acquisition Committee – Gibson
12. Update RKC Bylaws
13. Update RKC Strategic Plan



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**Winter 2025 MEETING AGENDA**  
**Sunday December 7, 2025**  
**Reading Branch Library, Cincinnati OH - 2:00 P.M.**  
**8740 Reading Rd, Cincinnati OH 45215**

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- **Call to Order – Patrick Gibson**
- A. Announcements**
- B. Secretary’s Report – Mary Gratsch**
  - 1. Minutes 9/7/2025
- C. Treasurer’s Report – Janice Gott**
  - 1. Life Membership & Endowment Funds
  - 2. Migrating Treasury Income from Paypal to Zeffy
  - 3. Reimburse Janeen Sharpshair for landowner gift baskets
- D. Committee Reports**
  - a. Membership/Message Committee – Mary Gratsch**
    - 1. Is there going to be a Winter Newsletter?
  - b. GSP Committee – Debi Pavey**
    - a. Water Line Repair
    - b. Ticket House Renovation
  - c. Misty Committee – Sean Cain**
    - c. Request from Diego Dilley, OSU undergrad & member COG, who would like to study microbial communities in Misty – need for protocol to deal with such request
  - d. Skylight Committee – Thor Bahrman/Jerry Brandenburg**
    - d. Road damage from recent rains
    - e. Update?
  - e. Cornhole Committee – Mary Gratsch**
    - f. Property taxes paid (\$119.63)
  - f. Sloans Valley Preserve Committee – Mike Harrington & Joe Morgan**
    - g. Kiosk Plans
    - h. Ladder Plans
    - i. Emergency Contact Plan with Pulaski County
    - j. Cathy Crockett Memorial Trail ownership?
  - g. Fundraising Committee - Mary Gratsch**
    - 1. nothing new to report
  - h.. Acquisition Committee - Wendy Orlandi**
    - 1. Acquisition Report
    - 2. Janeen is requesting \$100 to print 500 brochures, which combine an explanation of Kentucky Cave Law and ways for landowners to protect caves. The brochures can be given out to landowners, passed out at Open House and put into Holiday gift baskets.

- i. **NSS Preserves Program / MOU Committee – Gratsch, Gibson, Jud**
    - 1. nothing new
  - j. **Grant Committee – Neena Jud for Jared Embree**
    - 1. Requested prioritized list of projects from each Preserve Manager about the immediate and long term (5-10 year) needs
  - k. **Waiver System Committee**
- E. Old Business**
- 1. GSP MOU, Charter, and Management Plan
- F. New Business- Mary Gratsch**
- 1. Ken Bailey contacted RKC asking whether we would be interested in being a back-up organization for Kentucky Karst Conservancy (KKC), which currently owns the Mushroom Entrance to Big Bat

**Next Meeting Date & location – March 2026**  
**Motion to Adjourn**