

Northeastern Cave Conservancy News

Volume 16, Number 4

November 2014

The Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. (NCC) is a not-for-profit corporation committed to the conservation, study, management, and acquisition of caves and karst areas having significant geological, hydrological, biological, recreational, historical, or aesthetic features. To these ends, the NCC combines the resources and expertise of affiliated cave explorers, educators, scientists, land-owners, and conservation officials.



Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc.		
Officers		
President	Robert Addis	president@necaveconservancy.org
Vice President	Vince Kappler	vicepresident@necaveconservancy.org
Secretary	Christa Hay	secretary@necaveconservancy.org
Treasurer	William Folsom	treasurer@necaveconservancy.org
Board of Trustees		
Thom Engel		t.engel@necaveconservancy.org
Peter Youngbaer		p.youngbaer@necaveconservancy.org
Alan Traino		a.traino@necaveconservancy.org
Mitch Berger		m.berger@necaveconservancy.org
Kevin Dumont		k.dumont@necaveconservancy.org
Paul Woodell		p.woodell@necaveconservancy.org
Michael Chu		m.chu@necaveconservancy.org
Morgan Ingalls		m.ingalls@necaveconservancy.org
Tom Rider		t.rider@necaveconservancy.org
Committee Chairs		
Acquisitions	Chuck Porter	acquisitions@necaveconservancy.org
Bylaws	Joe E. Levinson	bylaws@necaveconservancy.org
Education	Thom Engel	education@necaveconservancy.org
Finance and Investments	Joe E. Levinson	finance@necaveconservancy.org
Membership	Peter Youngbaer	membership@necaveconservancy.org
Nominating	Bob Simmons	nominating@necaveconservancy.org
Legal	Vacant	legal@necaveconservancy.org
Fundraising Barn Dance	Vacant Emily Davis and Michael Warner	fundraising@necaveconservancy.org barndance@necaveconservancy.org
Office	Emily Davis and Michael Warner	office@necaveconservancy.org
Preserves	Thom Engel (Onesquethaw)	onesquethaw@necaveconservancy.org
	Alan Traino (Sellecks)	sellecks@necaveconservancy.org
	Mitch Berger and Emily Davis (Knox)	knox@necaveconservancy.org
	Michael Chu Thom Engel Chuck Porter (Clarksville)	clarksville@necaveconservancy.org
	Alan Traino (Ella)	ella_armstrong@necaveconservancy.org
	Jonah Spivak (Bentleys)	bentleys@necaveconservancy.org
	Morgan Ingalls (Merlins)	merlins@necaveconservancy.org
	Luke Mazza (Bensons)	bensons@necaveconservancy.org
Liaisons Surprise Cave Thacher Park	Bob Simmons Thom Engel	surprise@necaveconservancy.org thacherpark@necaveconservancy.org
Publications Editor Webmaster Publisher Publicity	Christa Hay Danny Brass Michael Chu — —	publications@necaveconservancy.org newsletter@necaveconservancy.org website@necaveconservancy.org publisher@necaveconservancy.org publicity@necaveconservancy.org
Science	R. Laurence Davis	science@necaveconservancy.org
Special Use	Thom Engel	specialuse@necaveconservancy.org
Volunteer Value	Vince Kappler	volunteervalue@necaveconservancy.org

The *Northeastern Cave Conservancy News* is published quarterly by the Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. The Northeastern Cave Conservancy promotes the study and preservation of speleologically significant properties in the northeastern United States. Annual membership is \$15 (Regular), \$5 (Additional Family), \$10 (Student), \$50 (Benefactor), \$100 (Institutional), \$100 (Family Life Membership), and \$300 (Life Membership). All checks should be made payable and sent to:

Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc.
P.O. Box 254
Schoharie, N.Y. 12157

www.necaveconservancy.org

In this Issue

Minutes of the August 24, 2014 BOD Meeting.....	3
NCC Announces Winter Cave Closures.....	5
North American Symposium on Bat Research.....	6
Bensons Cave Preserve - Opening Ceremony.....	9
NCC Lifetime Membership Raffle.....	11
Sixth Annual NCC Barn Dance.....	12
NCC Barn Dance Donors and Sponsors.....	13

Next Board Meeting**Sunday, December 7, 10:00 am****Speleobooks****Sheldon Road - Schoharie, NY**

The Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. (NCC) is a not-for-profit corporation committed to the conservation, study, management, and acquisition of caves and karst areas having significant geological, hydrological, biological, recreational, historical, or aesthetic features.

To these ends, the NCC combines the resources and expertise of affiliated cave explorers, educators, scientists, landowners, and conservation officials.

The NCC programs are focused mainly on the preservation of caves and karst. Outreach includes education in schools and local communities, establishment of park spaces on karstlands, and educational messages about the significance of groundwater pollution on this sensitive underground ecosystem.

NCC members assist in the exploration, survey, and protection of these natural resources, and manage them so you can explore them yourself.



NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY, INC.

August Minutes - Summary

August 24, 2014 Board meeting held at Speleobooks, Schoharie, NY

Bensons opening ceremony was held after the meeting and thanks go to Luke Mazza and all those that helped to prepare the property, and to Emily Davis for making the cakes!

Vice President Vince Kappler ran the meeting as the President was not able to attend.

Publications/Publicity Committee – we will be using Whispering Pines Design for brochures.

Open Committees are the Fundraising Committee and Legal Committee. If interested or know someone who is, please contact a board member.

Office Committee has been coordinating with the Special Use Group Chair during this busy time of year. Waivers are picked up at the post office, checked, and reported daily.

Knox Cave Preserve – We received one very nice note of appreciation for the volunteer work and time that went into the ladder and other maintenance of the preserve. Aside from replying, we shared the note with the Boston Grotto, as it was involved with the ladder project. Jay Siemion replaced the second of the lower bolts in Crossbones. The Wildlife Health Center research project is wrapping up.

Onesquethaw Cave Preserve – Preserve manager has recommended that a formal survey of the property be conducted.

Sellecks Karst Preserve – Manager will schedule a work day.

Clarksville Preserve – There are reports of large, red-painted arrows in the cave that need to be cleaned up.

Bentleys Preserve – Reports of graffiti in the cave. Manager will assess whether it is new or old graffiti and set up a work day to clean.

Merlins Cave Preserve – The board approved the revised Merlins Management plan and adoption of the forest management plan as an appendix. During a summer visit a new, decent-sized dome room was found. On the surface, a make-shift shelter was found near Dragon Bones and was removed.

Bensons Cave Preserve – Lots of work was done by volunteers to get ready for the opening ceremony. A reporter from the *Times Union* plans to write an article about the Bensons acquisition and will be meeting the property manager at the property for a tour.

Membership Committee – As of August 18, 2014, our current membership stands as follows, compared to the baseline of April 22, 2012 and our high point of February 28, 2014.

April 22, 2012	February 28, 2014	August 18, 2014
Life: 18	Life: 29	Life: 32
Family Life: 0	Family Life: 0	Family Life: 3
Benefactor: 10	Benefactor: 15	Benefactor: 12
Regular: 88	Regular: 99	Regular: 90
Family: 16	Family: 17	Family: 13
Student: 0	Student: 3	Student: 2
Institutional: 3	Institutional: 7	Institutional: 4
TOTAL: 135	TOTAL: 170	TOTAL: 156

Education Committee – Thom Engel had brief contact with an environmental studies teacher at Doane Stewart School.

Special and Group Use Coordinator issued 145 permits for the period.

Volunteer Value Committee Year to date totals: Members reported 781 hours of volunteer work and 212 hours of drive time for NCC projects, for a total value of \$32,425.00. Volunteer hours were accumulated by cavers working on the Bensons and Knox Preserves, in addition to the hours reported by the Treasurer, Office, and Membership Committees.

Nominating Committee Officer Elections are coming up.

Ad hoc Risk Management Committee plans to review all NCC materials to ensure uniformity and compliance with our attorney's recommendations.

Convention Conservancy Meeting – Thom Engel and Peter Youngbaer attended the conservancy round table. Eight conservancies were present. Peter spoke about liability. There was conversation about communication and networking and LTA discussions.

Hay moved that The Executive Committee may recruit qualified persons to serve as advisors to the NCC. Individuals willing to offer their expertise to the NCC will be identified as an NCC Advisor on our website and in print, where appropriate. The EC may occasionally rotate advisors as additional individuals agree to offer their services.

Passed Unanimously

Ingalls moved to approve the revised Merlin's Management plan and adopt the forest management plan as an appendix.
Passed

Kappler moved to approve the revised Bensons Management plan as submitted.
Passed Unanimously

Act 35-36 was amended to read:

Filling Vacant Committee Positions

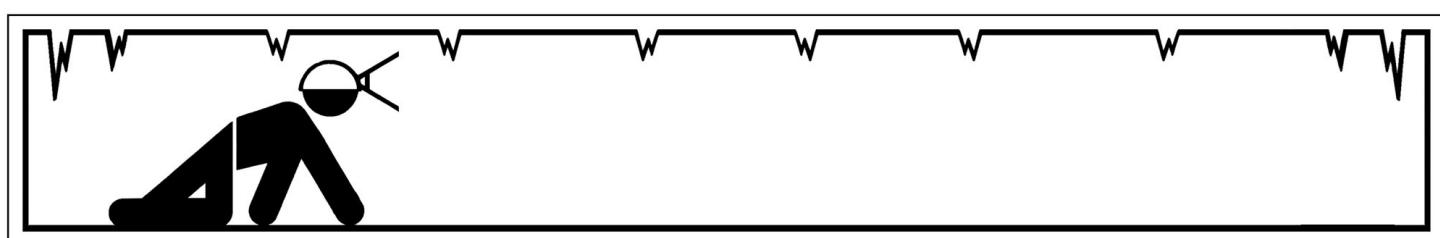
The Northeastern Cave Conservancy shall advertise to all members any vacant positions for Chair or permanent committees prior to making a permanent appointment.

Passed Unanimously

Addis moved to appoint Luke Mazza as Bensons preserve manager.
Passed unanimously

Addis moved to thank Emily Davis and Mike Warner for hosting the meeting.
Passed unanimously

Traino moved to congratulate Mike Warner for the amazing work with *National Geographic* on their recent photo essay of the caves of China.
Passed unanimously



NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY ANNOUNCES WINTER CAVE CLOSURES FOR 2014 - 2015

— Peter Youngbaer —

In response to the continuing effects of white-nose syndrome on hibernating cave bats, the Northeastern Cave Conservancy (NCC) announced it is closing four of its caves for the winter in order to protect hibernating bats from this disease. The closure was effective starting on October 1.

Caves affected by the closure are Knox Cave, Dragon Bones Cave, Bensons Cave, and Merlin's Cave, all in New York State. Access to all the caves will return to their summer status after May 15th, 2015.

The other caves owned and managed by the NCC will remain open for visitation under regular visitation policies.

Action by the NCC parallels that of the National Speleological Society, which also closed its three New York cave preserves on October 1: Schoharie Caverns, Gage Cave (Barton Hill Preserve), and McFailsCave.

The NCC advises all cavers to clean and decontaminate their gear and clothing according to the protocols found on the US Fish & Wildlife Service's website (<https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/>). In addition, any gear and clothing used here should not be taken out of the region, in an effort to contain the disease.

The Northeastern Cave Conservancy is committed to the conservation, study, management, and acquisition of caves and karst areas having significant geological, hydrological, biological, recreational, historical, or aesthetic features. The NCC owns and manages eight Cave Preserves, containing 15 known caves in the Northeast.



NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY CO-SPONSORS NORTH AMERICAN SYMPOSIUM ON BAT RESEARCH

— Peter Youngbaer —

The Northeastern Cave Conservancy had an extraordinary opportunity to co-sponsor this year's North American Symposium on Bat Research (NASBR), held October 22 - 25 in Albany, New York.

This year's symposium was the largest ever, bringing together over 400 of the top bat researchers in the world. NASBR is academic scientific research at its best. Undergraduates, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty joined to share their work over the course of three full days of presentations to their peers.

While most attendees were from the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, others from Central America, Europe, and Southeast Asia were also present. Vendors of field-study gear for working with bats (such as acoustic monitoring devices and mist nets), bat conservation materials, books, and anything else having to do with bats were on hand, engaging with the researchers on their work or simply to sharing bat-related items.

NASBR is all bat, all the time. Topics ranged from habitat, flight dynamics, genetics, reproduction, socialization, and echolocation to the effects of wind turbines and diseases (including white-nose syndrome).

NASBR meetings move all over North America. Several years ago NCC members (and Speleobooks proprietors) Emily Davis and Mike Warner put in a proposal to host the event in Albany. They have been working hard since then to pull off the event. Naturally, they recruited fellow NCC members to help. Al Hicks, former long-time NY-DEC bat biologist—and now running Vesper Consulting, which does contract bat work—led a downtown walking tour of Albany. Bob Simmons handled audio-visual duties for the presentations. Peter Youngbaer was in charge of registration, aided by Morgan Ingalls (also attending as a graduate student) and many other volunteers from Vesper and the bat and caving community.

The NCC Board voted to help underwrite the Symposium as Bronze Level Sponsors. Christa Hay put together an excellent table display of the Northeastern Cave Conservancy's work on bat conservation, including our work on winter bat surveys and summer acoustical monitoring for white-nose syndrome. This was in the main hall with all the other exhibitors and vendors, and helped raise the profile of the NCC within the bat-research community. Christa and NCC President Bob Addis attended the closing

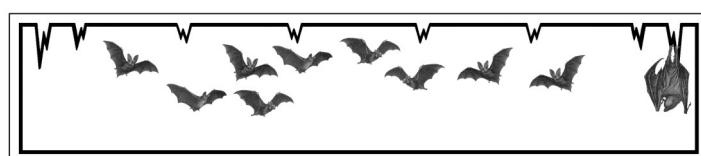


The Northeastern Cave Conservancy display at the North American Symposium on Bat Research emphasized the many contributions that the NCC makes to cave conservation and education. The display was well received and helped educate convention attendees to the work that the NCC does on behalf of caves and bats in the Northeast. Photo by Peter Youngbaer.

banquet and awards ceremony, where Bob was seen to be stealing lines from the evening's auctioneer.

As far as white-nose syndrome (WNS) in our area goes, the news is generally good. Evidence from several states shows that the population of little brown bats has stabilized, and may actually begin to grow again. Big brown bats are showing strong resistance and are doing well, often taking over maternity roosts formerly used by little browns. Even the hibernating routines of big brown bats seem unaffected by the same dynamics as other, more-affected species. The worst news is for the northern long-eared bat, currently under active consideration for federal listing as an endangered species. Never very numerous (and hard to find during hibernation, as they prefer deep cracks or drill holes in mines), they are few and far between at this time.

Yes, the disease continues to spread. However, fears that WNS will wipe out the federally endangered grey bat are not coming to fruition. Evidence from their hibernacula is showing they are highly resistant, and we are not seeing mortality. Researchers in Canada and the western United States are conducting baseline studies of their bats, something that we didn't have the luxury of doing in the Northeast before WNS hit.



NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY SUPPORTS NORTH AMERICAN SYMPOSIUM ON BAT RESEARCH

— Mike Warner —

A largest-ever crowd of 400 bat-research scientists invaded the Albany Hilton October 22 - 26 for the 2014 North American Symposium on Bat Research. Of those attending, 170 were students, the largest number of students ever at a NASBR. Overall, this was the largest event that the organizing society has hosted in North America.

The Northeastern Cave Conservancy (NCC) continued its long-term support of bat conservation and research in a multitude of ways this past October. The Board voted a cash sponsorship of \$1000 to the NASBR, which helped defray costs for student attendees.

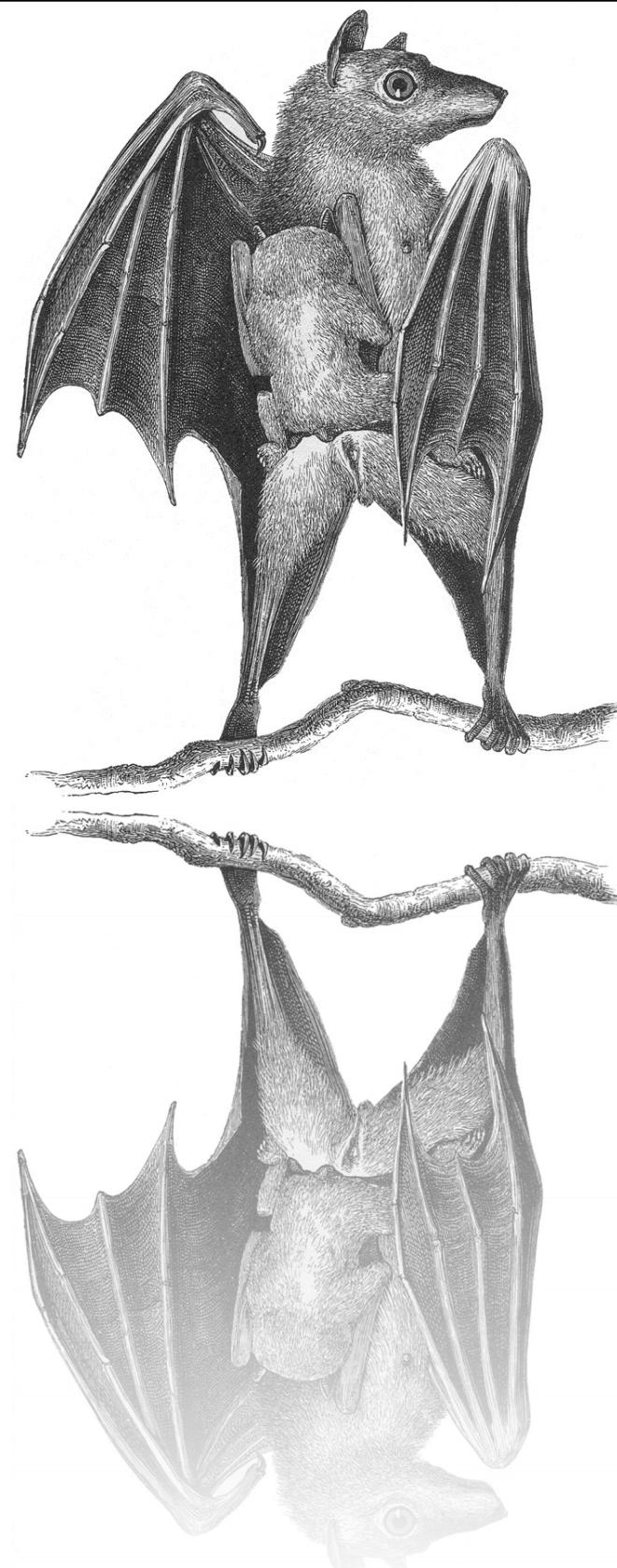
In addition, Mike Warner (Office Committee member and former member of the Board of Directors) and Emily Davis (Office Manager) were the local hosts of this event. Board member Bob Simmons was in charge of audiovisual for the event, and membership chair Peter Youngbaer ran the on-site registration. NCC member Al Hicks was also involved. Al offered a great field trip—a walking tour of Albany—for symposium attendees and was also the keynote speaker at the Teacher's Workshop, where he talked about "Bats of New York."

A specially prepared NASBR-targeted display was prepared by Christa Hay. It was in the exhibit area for the entire event. Bob Addis also stepped up to the plate, showing up at 4:00 a.m. to help shuttle attendees to the airport on Sunday morning.

The Teacher's workshop would not have been as heavily attended without NCC member Leslie Hatfield's work before the event. She also helped with post-workshop distribution of attendance certificates, which are vital for educators in order to receive continuing education credit for their participation. The workshop hosted 25 educators and included a presentation by Rob Mies, well-known bat conservationist and director of The Organization for Bat Conservation. Rob and members of the cast for the upcoming Batman movie recently appeared in promotional videos encouraging bat conservation.

Other conference participants included Morgan Ingalls (Chair of the Merlin's Preserve Committee and NCC Trustee), who attended the symposium, and Ellen Schwartz (NCC member), who attended the Teacher's workshop.

Emily and I could not have hosted the event without the invaluable assistance of the NCC and its members.





Bob Addis and Christa Hay. Photo by Mike Warner.



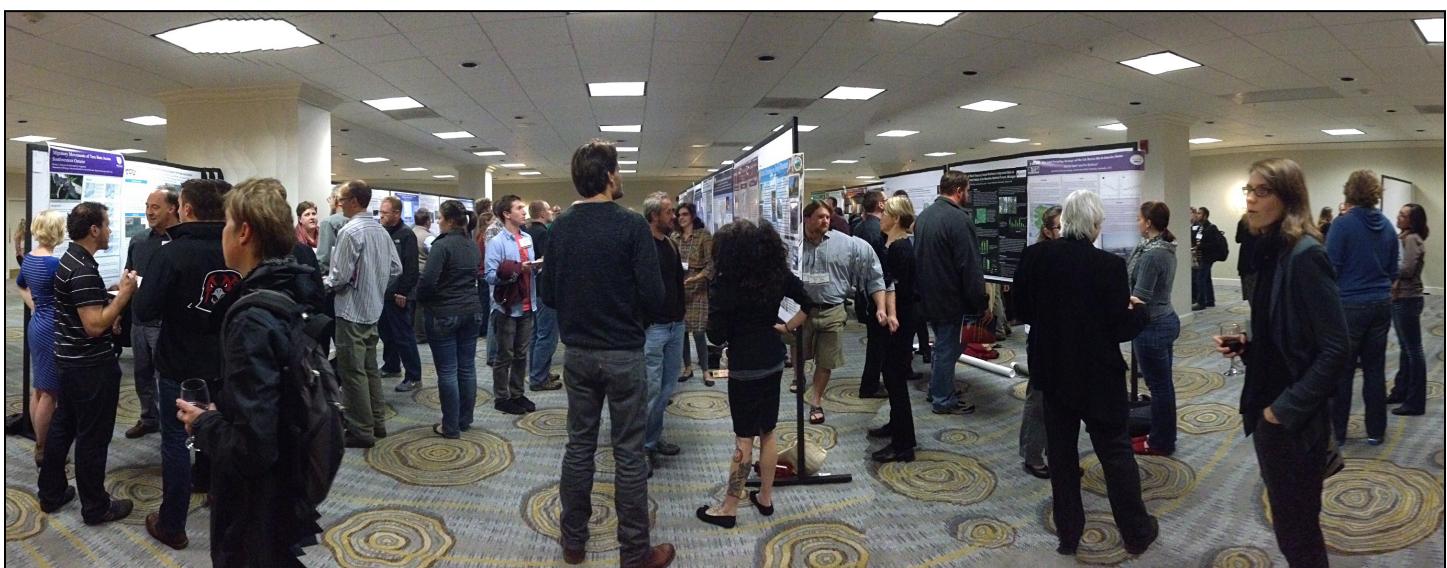
Students gathering at the student social. Photo by Mike Warner.



Rob Mies discussing important bat-related matters with conference attendees. Photo by Mike Warner.



Peter Youngbear, Katie O'Connor, and Kim Corwin at registration. Photo by Mike Warner.



The poster session at the North American Symposium on Bat Research, 2014. Photo by Mike Warner.

BENSONS CAVE PRESERVE OPENING CEREMONY

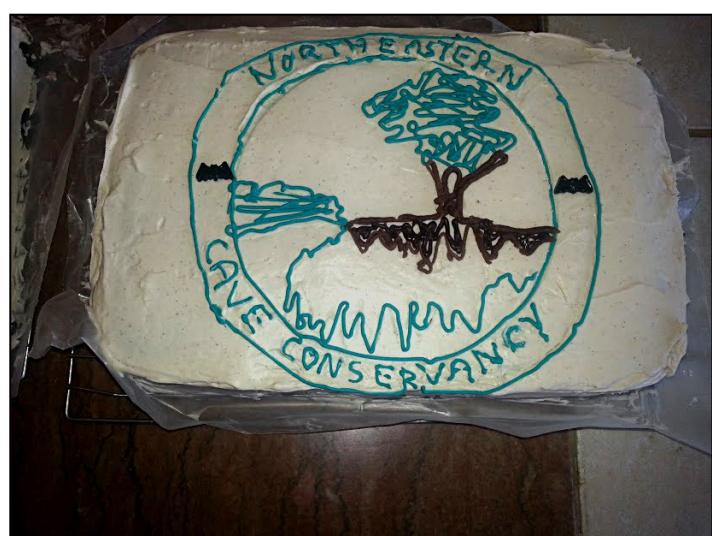
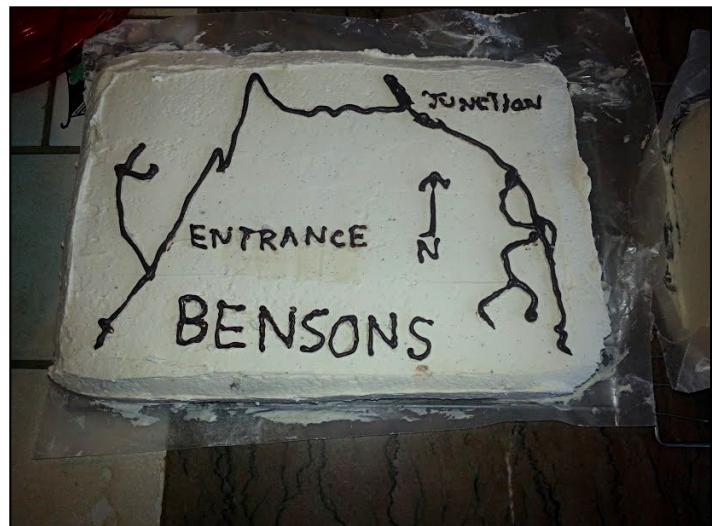
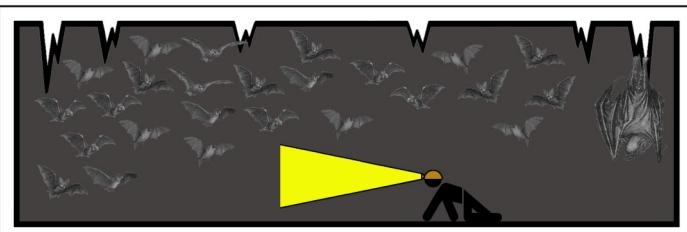
— Luke Mazza —

August 24th brought balmy weather and approximately 22 people to the Bensons Cave Preserve in the township of Howes Cave, NY, to witness the opening ceremony for the preserve. Opening remarks were given by Vince Kappeler and myself, and guests were invited to share in some refreshments and to tour the property to view the trail and entrances. Special thanks to Emily Davis for providing two excellent cakes—one with a frosting-drawn map of the cave and the other with the NCC logo—and to Mike Chu, Bob Addis, and Vince for working to finish the preserve kiosk in time for the festivities.

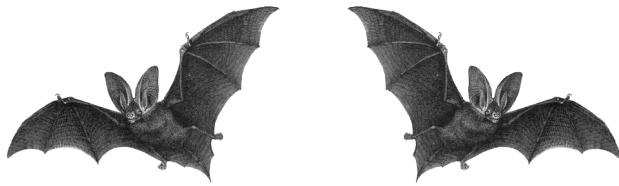
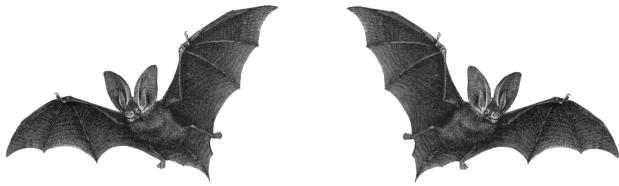
Those in attendance included Jim Harbison, a caver and attorney who was instrumental in the purchase of the property by the USCC way back in 1993, and County Historian Ted Shuart, who shared his accounts of exploring local caves as a kid just a few miles away. This was also a great opportunity to introduce a few non-caver locals to the NCC, explain what the NCC does, and describe the nature of wild caving.

Some background on the preserve: Bensons is the eighth NCC preserve; it was donated in March of this year by the United States Cave Conservancy (USCC) after 20 years of stewardship on their part. The approximately 6.5 acre wooded property includes three entrances to Bensons Cave, which is a major link in the Secret-Bensons-Barytes system, along with numerous sinks, deep fissures, and other great examples of karst terrain. The cave itself is over 3000 feet long, excluding the portion owned by Secret Caverns. With its 60-foot-high, free-hanging vertical entrance and large variety of wet and dry passages, Bensons is a fantastic cave to visit for most vertically competent cavers.

I'd also like to send a hearty thanks to the numerous other volunteers who turned out earlier in the year to haul out an entire dumpster's worth of trash, clear brush, and generally get the preserve ready and looking great. Also, please note – Bensons Cave is currently closed for bat hibernation and will re-open to visitors on May 15.



Emily Davis preparing to serve the cakes that she made for NCC officers, members, and guests during the opening ceremony of the Bensons Cave Preserve. Photos by Christa Hay.



NCC officers, members, and guests gather at the recently constructed kiosk of the new Bensons Cave Preserve, while others explore the grounds of the Northeastern Cave Conservancy's most recent acquisition. Photos by Christa Hay.

NORM BERG WINS NCC LIFE MEMBERSHIP RAFFLE AT FALL NRO

— Peter Youngbaer —

Thanks to a generous donation by Thom Engel, the NCC held a unique raffle at the Fall NRO (Arlington, Vermont), which was hosted by the Vermont Cavers Association.

Thom had an idea to spur new memberships in the NCC, and perhaps motivate people whose memberships had lapsed to rejoin. If you joined or renewed, you had the opportunity to buy a \$5.00 raffle ticket and the chance to win a Life Membership in the NCC—a \$300 value.

Thom was right; the raffle spurred 15 new and renewing memberships. The drawing was held on Sunday morning during the NRO business meeting, and Norm Berg became the NCC's newest Life Member (#38). Congratulations, Norm!



Abe Lincoln (aka Alan Traino) was this year's star at the NCC auction during the Fall NRO. The auction raised \$655. We thought Abe was taller....Photo by Lee Boop.



The Northeastern Cave Conservancy Lifetime Membership Raffle during the Fall NRO was a rousing success. Photo by Lee Boop.

**WNS Research
Needs YOUR help!**

The NSS WNS Rapid Response Fund
Timely, direct, and much-needed support for WNS research.
Donate today!
www.caves.org/wns



SIXTH ANNUAL NCC BARN DANCE

— Emily Davis —

The Sixth Annual NCC Barn Dance was held in September at the Octagon Barn in Knox and raised just over \$1,000 after expenses. Special thanks to Amy and Russ Pokorny. Once again, Paul Rosenburg and Tamarack entertained with their popular calls of traditional dances. The crowd of 75 nicely filled the building and included a large percentage of area residents. Thank you to our sponsors and the long-time supporters of the Barn Dance.

NCC BARN DANCE REPORT - 2014

INCOME

Sponsorship	
NBT Bank	\$ 75.00
Kappler family	\$100.00
Raffle	\$195.00
Auction	\$435.00
Entries paid	
53 adults	\$795.00
1 student	\$ 10.00
12 children as family members free	
Total Income	\$1610.00

EXPENSES

Band	\$350.00
Cider	\$ 42.00
Food	\$105.00
Total Expenses	\$497.00

NCC BARN DANCE REPORT - 2013

EXPENSES

Sponsorship	
NBT Bank	\$100.00
Kappler family	\$100.00
Raffle	\$165.00
Auction	\$353.00
57 Entries paid	\$855.00
Total Income	\$1573.00

EXPENSES

Band	\$300.00
—	
Food	~ \$100.00
Total Expenses	~ \$400.00

The profit from Sixth Annual NCC Barn Dance (2014) was \$1113. Again, we are down slightly. The band was \$50 more and I had to buy cider this year, as I did not have time to make it myself. We also had slightly lower attendance. We actually need to push caver attendance more although we are doing well with the community support. Is there any chance we can set a date for next year soon and advertise it more widely (e.g., in the *NSS News* or *North-eastern Caver*)? Does anyone have any other ideas for changes?



Thank You to the 2014 NCC Barn Dance Donors and Sponsors

Gold Level: \$100+

The Pokorny Family
The Kappler Family
Stewart's Shops
L. L. Bean - Colonie Center
Wild Cotton - Atlas Screen Printing, Gainesville, FL

Silver Level: \$50 - \$99

Guernsey's Schoharie Nursery, Schoharie
NBT Bank, Schoharie
Speleobooks, Schoharie
Honest Weight Food Co-op, Albany

Bronze Level: \$25 - \$49

Princeton Tech, Trenton, NJ
Ichiban Japanese & Chinese Restaurant, Guilderland
The Carrot Barn at Schoharie Valley Farms, Schoharie
Sharon Vrooman, Schoharie
Price Chopper, Slingerlands
Blue Star Café, Schoharie
The Hive, Schoharie

Supporters

Mad Dog Bicycles, Delmar
I Love Books, Delmar
Fox Creek Farm CSA, Schoharie
The Apple Barrel, Schoharie