

Northeastern Cave Conservancy News

Volume 18, Number 3

September 2016

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.



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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:

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Next Board Meeting
Fall Board Meeting
Sunday, October 2, 2016 10:00 a.m.
Mass Wildlife District Office

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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.



THACHER STATE PARK MATCHING-GRANT GOAL MET!

— Bill Folsom —

The NCC raised over \$5,000 towards the matching-grant goal set by NCC Trustee Thom Engel. Congratulations, those of you who have invested in the future of caving in the Northeast! By contributing to this fund, you will help expose folks visiting the new Thacher State Park Visitor Center to a focused opportunity to learn about caves and geology via a “kids cave” and an adult-themed karst interpretive display. Bob Addis got us over the top with a \$500 challenge match at the Spring NRO. And a big Thank You to Thom, who will be matching the \$5,000 with his own \$5,000 donation!



Kudos to those with the long-term vision to make this a reality:

Up to \$49

Melanie Peterson
Bill Folsom
Robin Strashun

\$50 to \$99

Nigel Dyson-Hudson
Brian Taylor
Christa Hay
Amy Cox

\$100 to \$249

Peter Youngbaer
John & Jean Mylroie
Francois Errandonea
NNJG
CNJG
SCAG
CCG
MET

250 to \$499

NRO
VCA
Ben Brown

\$500 to \$999

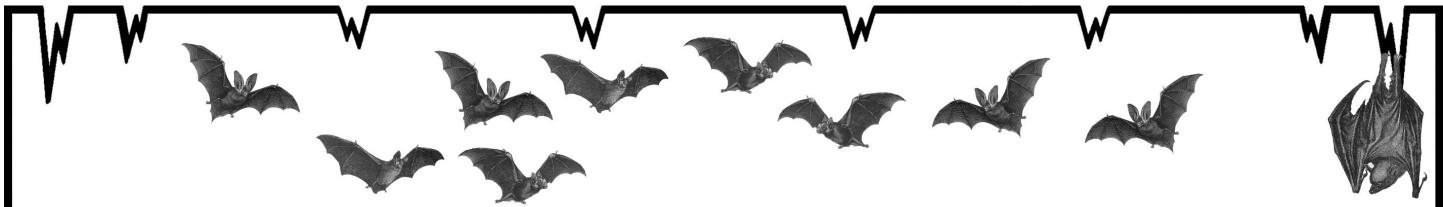
Al DeMaria
Bob Addis

\$1,000 to \$4,999

Brian & Bonnie Pease

\$5,000 and up

Thom Engel



RETURN TO SELLECKS

— Teddy Garlock —

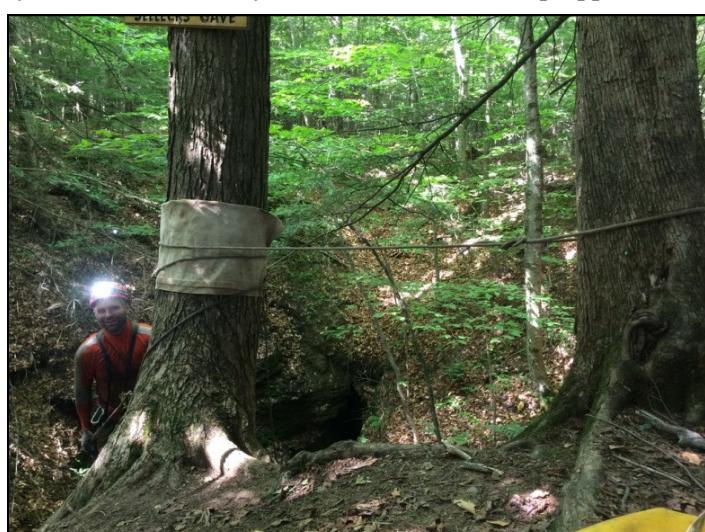
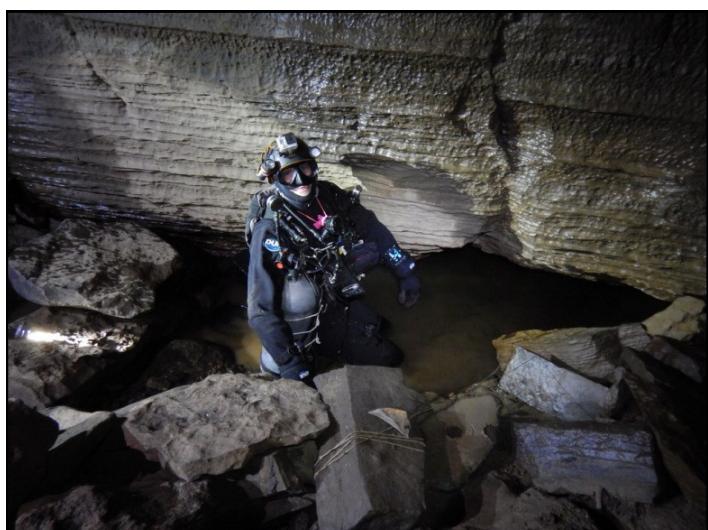
Seven months had gone by since we had a chance to continue the exploration of the Sellecks cave system. Over the winter I spent a couple of months in Florida cave country, learning how to survey underwater caves and building my cave diving skills and experience. Suffice to say, I was more than a little excited to get back to my little NY project.

During my last dive in November I wasn't able to push the line in sump three, but did discover a new air chamber in sump one. The biggest limiting factor to exploration has been limited visibility, typically less than 3'-5' on the way into the system, and always zero on the way out. As sump three continues it gets bigger and bigger, not ideal in such low visibility. We've been watching the weather closely over the past month, hoping for a few weeks with no rain. We were hoping that with a decrease in rainfall we would see significant improvements in conditions... we were correct.

For our dive on 6/26/2016, we certainly didn't have a shortage of sherpas! Assisting with the dive was Nathan Roser, Steve Millett, Thomas Holder, Marlene Holder, Dan Gilroy and Owen Gilroy. We started out in 90-degree heat, hiking the fifteen minutes through the woods to the cave entrance. Steve rigged the drop and the team began moving all of the gear into the cave. For this dive I brought LP95's, along with two bags full of gear. For exposure protection I am using a DUI CF200 compressed neoprene drysuit. This suit is amazing. It keeps me warm, dry and safe with its phenomenal abrasion resistant neoprene.

Getting to the sump was uneventful, and it was really nice to finally be deep underground, out of the heat. While everyone made their way down into the cave, I prepped all of

the dive equipment and suited up. Since the water is 47 degrees, I need to wear some pretty thick dry-gloves. Dexterity is a major issue, so I required some assistance gearing up.





Due to the drought conditions there was no visible flow in the stream that connects the upstream sump to the downstream sump. In fact, there was no visible stream at all! This made my entrance into the water very difficult, because the pool of water I usually float myself in to gear up was no more than a puddle now. In fact, I was a little worried that the water would be too low for me to get through the entrance restriction without a lot of effort. I taught my sherpas the signal for “stuck!” (crossed legs) and took off. Luckily it was easier than expected. On the way through sump one, I surveyed the line to make a map of the system in the future. The line was in great shape, buried in a few places but completely intact. I surveyed 226' of sump one, and surfaced into the first air chamber. I did a rough survey of the air chamber, and continued into sump two. Sump two is much shorter, only 117' in length. The second air chamber is extensive, roughly 500' and perfectly straight. Due to the difficulty of surveying while traversing this passage, I took an azimuth and estimated the distance (approximately 500'). In the future I will return with another sump diver to do a proper survey of the air chambers, but for now this was sufficient.

Finally, the start of sump three. I began by fixing a potential line trap towards the entrance, and surveying on the way in. I surveyed 103' of passage in a straight line to the end of my exploration from last year. The visibility in sump three was unreal. I had experienced ~5' on the way through the first two sums, and now I was blessed with almost 20' of visibility in some sections. I stowed my survey gear and tied in a new reel. I continued on for approximately 100' before coming to a junction. There was a large passage going right, and another going left. Based on the progression of the cave so far, I elected to go left. Soon I arrived at another passage, shooting off to the side. Straight ahead looked like it may surface into another air chamber, with fissure-like passage. I decided to shoot to the right, into a tunnel approximately 3.5' tall and 6' wide. Absolutely PERFECT dimensions. The visibility decreased slightly

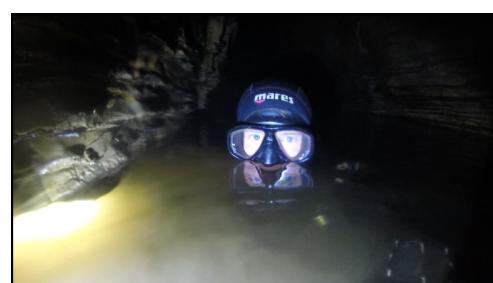
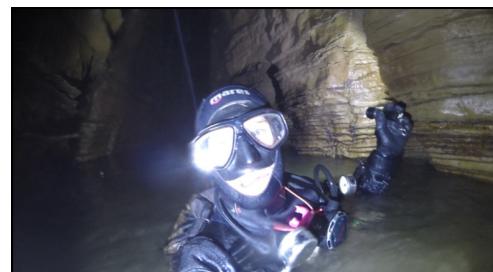
with a visible halocline, what looked like some sort of tannic intrusion. I continued onwards until running out of line another ~100' into the tunnel.

Remember how I mentioned those dry-gloves and decrease dexterity? Well, let me remind you... dry gloves SUCK for line work! While trying to get the looped end off of the reel drum, I accidentally knotted the line, preventing the line from coming off the reel and also from the reel being able to function as a reel. Since I had stopped moving and was now turned around, visibility was zero. The only thing I could see was a glow from my light. I felt around on the bottom and the sides of the passage for a place to tie off. None. I considered a silt-stake, but the silt was far too shallow. I drop-weight would have been ideal, but I didn't have one. I decided to wrap the line around the reel, then stow the reel at my last tie-off. Soon enough I was there, and I parted ways with my reel (to be recovered next time). Cutting the line to tie off is a last-option in my opinion, since a loose end of line in zero visibility with no dexterity is a horrible recipe for disaster.

My exit from the sump was uneventful, as were the next two air chambers and sums. I paused in the first air chamber to take some photos, and poke around a bit.

On my way back through sump one, I took my jump from last year into another air chamber. When I surfaced I could hear voices!! Sure enough, I shouted and had a brief conversation with the sherpas on the other side of the walls. This is significant, we'll map out the location and it might be worth digging out the connection. Not that it will add any dry passage for cavers, but it would be cool all in the same.

All in all, an extremely successful dive. Time to plot out the survey data and start preparing for a return trip, ideally in the next few weeks.



BENTLEYS CAVE TRIP

— Bob Addis —

On Saturday, August 13, 2016, Peter Haberland and I led a group of seven—five new cavers from the Rensselaer Land Trust and two new NCC members—on a Bentleys Cave trip. It was hot and humid; the hill was as steep and long as ever, and it threatened to rain.

Christine Young accompanied us, but only had time to walk up and back to take photos, and didn't enter the cave. She and I stayed in the rear of the group talking about some NCC business. We soon fell behind the group, deciding to do some creative bushwacking under the assumption that "it looks like someone walked through these briars and sticker bushes before!" No one had.

We all made it to up to the cave. Christine got her photos

and then walked back down, while the remaining nine of us enjoyed a cave trip. It could be that we sparked an enthusiastic interest for caving in some new cavers. Bill and Stephanie, our newest NCC members, seemed to enjoy the trip and meeting other cavers. We'll look forward to seeing them at other NCC Cave Preserves!

Northeastern Cave Conservancy members continue reaching out to members of the communities in which we are located, as well as to our partners like the Rensselaer Land Trust. Joint trips like this one build stronger alliances and have the possibility of increasing memberships and participation in events.

Thanks to Peter Haberland for help in co-leading this trip and to Christine Young for organizing it with the Rensselaer Land Trust. The Bentleys Preserve looked good to the first-time visitors (especially with its freshly mowed parking lot). So thanks to Ramon Amen, the Preserve Manager, for that.



Descending into Bentleys Cave. All photos on pages 6 and 7 by Christine Young.



IMAGES FROM THE FALL NRO—CENTRAL BRIDGE, NY



Auctioneer Emily Davis raises money for the Northeastern Cave Conservancy at the NRO auction. Photos by Norm Berg.



Speleobooks remains open through the night, while the "Five to Midnight" band rocked the campground. Photos by Norm Berg.



Emily Davis, Mitch Berger, and Christa Hay serve up dinner, while cavers enjoy the evening repast. Photos by Norm Berg.

OLD TIME BARN DANCE

AT

KNOX CAVE

Knox, N.Y. - Octagon Barn, Middle Rd.

Sat. October 1st

**8th
Annual**

Dancing 7 to 10PM, Doors open @ 6:30

Featuring Paul Rosenberg & Tamarack

Live fiddle band playing traditional early American, Celtic,

French-Canadian, Old-time and original fiddle tunes

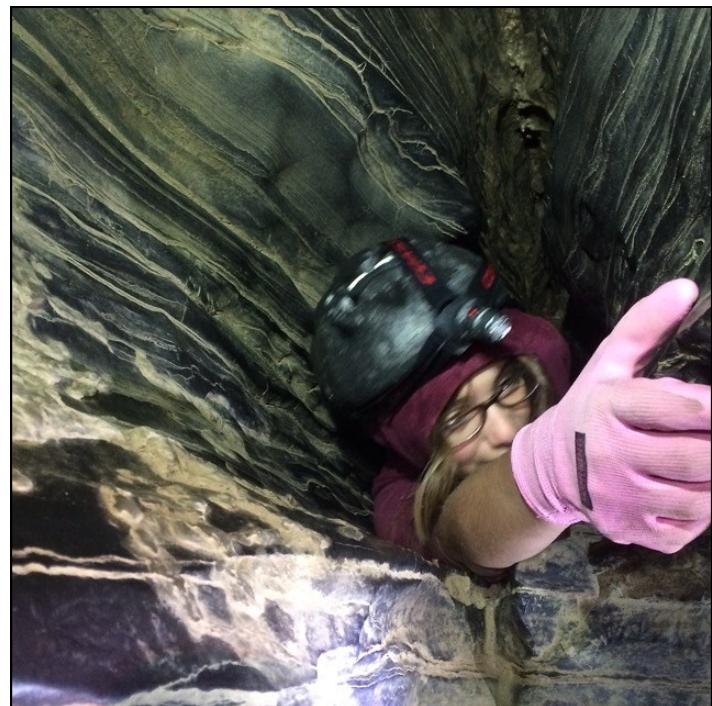
Easy to learn step-by-step contras, squares and folk dances.

No experience necessary, all dances are taught.

**Sponsored by Northeastern Cave Conservancy
Knox Cave Memorabilia Exhibit (Free to view)**

Raffle & Door Prizes!

\$10 per person (\$5 for students), \$20 per family, children under 12 free
Refreshments and light snacks will be served



First trip to Knox Cave. Photos by Ed Mintel.

NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY, INC.
June 4, 2016 Minutes - Summary
Melrose, New York

Attendance

Officers: B. Addis, V. Kappler, B. Folsom, C. Hay

Trustees: M. Chu, K. Dumont , T. Engel, M. Berger, P. Woodell, M. Ingalls, A. Traino, T. Rider, J. Morris-Siegel

Absent with Proxy

Morgan Ingalls – John Dunham proxy

Tom Rider – Luke Mazza proxy

Nomination Report: Bob Simmons

CANDIDATES:

Mitch Berger	Dennis Wischman
Paul Rubin	John Loz
Marcia Middleton	Christine Young
Jackie Turnquist	Francois Errandonea

Kevin Dumont and Paul Woodell were thanked for their years of service to the NCC.

New and returning trustees will be seated. Welcome Paul Rubin and Christine Young.

NCC Membership Strategic Planning Survey Results were discussed. Thanks to Peter Youngbaer and the members.

Updated Onesquethaw management plan is approved.

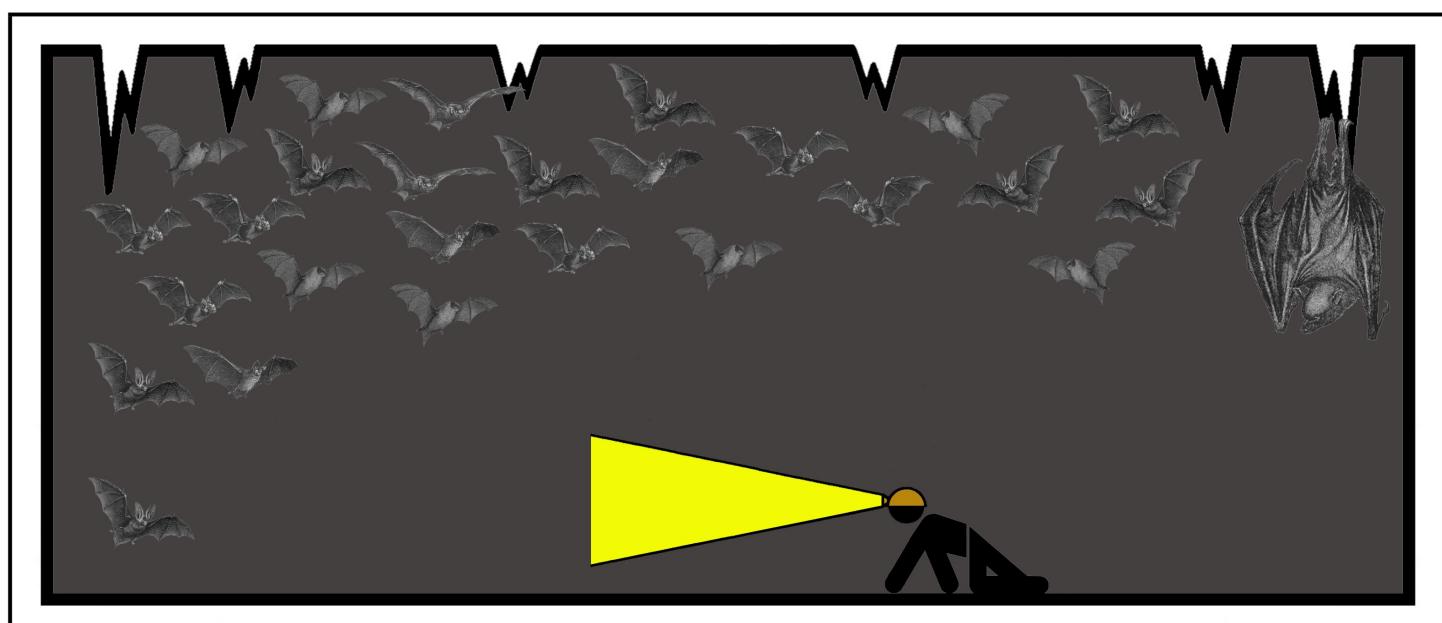
Mike Chu is appointed Technology Committee Chairman.

NCC enter into an agreement with Jersey Nerds for up to \$1,400.00 to upgrade our website.

NCC joined the Land Trust Alliance at \$350 for annual membership fee.

Executive committee meeting will be November 6, 2016 at 10:00 am (location TBD).

NCC December Board meeting will be December 4, 2016 at 10:00 am (location TBD).



— WHO RUNS THIS JOINT — NOMINATING COMMITTEE SEEKING CANDIDATES FOR OFFICER POSITIONS

Each year at the Annual Meeting in December, the Trustees elect the four Organization Officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer). Each year, the Nominating Committee presents a slate of candidates for these four positions for consideration by the Trustees. Nominations are also solicited from the Trustees. The Nominating Committee is looking for potential candidates for the Officer positions at this time. If you would like to be considered for a position, would like to nominate someone for a position, or would just like more information on the process and requirements, please contact Bob Simmons at nominating@necaveconservancy.org. For reference, the general duties and responsibilities of the four Officer positions are described below.

President: The President is the Chief Executive Officer of the NCC, and supervises the activities of the NCC within the scope provided by the bylaws. The President presides at meetings of the Board of Directors. The following committees report to the President: Acquisitions, Preserves, Nominating, and Risk Management, as well as any ad hoc committees established for specific purposes.

Vice President: The Vice President assumes the duties of the President in the event of absence, incapacity, or resignation of the President, and presides when the Board meets as a Committee of the Whole. The following committees report to the Vice President: Bylaws, Education, Science, Special Use, Surprise Cave, and Thacher Park.

Secretary: The Secretary keeps the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors and of the Executive Committee, and maintains the membership roll. The Secretary also carries on all organizational correspondence as delegated by the President and sends out notices of meetings. The Secretary is responsible for editing and publishing the Board Manual. The secretary may appoint assistants, as required.

Treasurer: The Treasurer is responsible for the safekeeping of organizational funds; maintaining and reporting financial records and statements to the Board of Directors; and filing all financial documents required by local, state, or federal regulations. The following committees report to the Treasurer: Technology, Fundraising, Membership, Office, Publications, and Volunteer Value.

CURRENTLY OPEN COMMITTEE CHAIR POSITION:

Fundraising Committee Chair: The Fundraising Committee Chair coordinates all fundraising activities for the NCC. The fundraising committee may be authorized by the board to research and apply for grants to generate funds for specific projects, including cave acquisitions. If interested in this position, please contact Vince Kappler at vicepresident@necaveconservancy.org.

NCC VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

Cavers can get involved with many volunteer opportunities offered by the NCC. These include work on various committees or assisting with one of the cave-preserve management teams. Volunteers contribute to the maintenance and preservation of unique underground environments and help to support various NCC educational and outreach activities. If interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities with the NCC, please contact Vince Kappler at vicepresident@necaveconservancy.org. You can also speak to any NCC board member or officer. Don't pass up the chance to give something back to the caves that are so important to us all.



PROPOSED BYLAW CHANGE

Bylaw Change: At the Spring board meeting, Kappler moved that Bylaw VI.4 (Removal of Officers) be amended by inserting new text:

4. Removal of Officers. Any Officer that fails to attend two consecutive meetings, excluding special meetings, without notice or fails to execute the duties of office, may be removed by a two-thirds vote of the Trustees at any Board of Directors meeting, provided that the Officer to be removed is notified of the intention to take such action at least 21 days prior to the vote on removal.

Original wording:

Removal of Officers. Any Officer that fails to attend two consecutive meetings, excluding special meetings, without notice or fails to execute the duties of office may be removed by a two-thirds vote at any Board of Directors meeting provided that the Officer to be removed is notified of the intention to take such action at least 21 days prior to the vote on removal.

At the Fall board meeting, NCC members present can vote on the proposed bylaw change. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact a member of the board.



Thom Engel leads a karst geology hike at Thacher State Park during the Fall NRO. Photos by Danny Brass.

