

IKC UPDATE

A Quarterly Publication of The Indiana Karst Conservancy
September 2014

Number 114

INDIANA KARST CONSERVANCY, INC

PO Box 2401, Indianapolis, IN 46206-2401

ikc.caves.org

Affiliated with the National Speleological Society



The Indiana Karst Conservancy is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation and preservation of caves and karst features in Indiana and other areas of the world. The Conservancy encourages research and promotes education related to karst and its proper, environmentally compatible use.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

President
Jerry Lewis (2015)
(812) 967-7592
LewisBioConsult@aol.com

Secretary
Kevin Smith (2015)
(317) 856-0500
FreeWheeler2Go@yahoo.com

Treasurer
Keith Dunlap (2015)
(317) 882-5420
Keith.Dunlap@juno.com

Directors
Bruce Bowman (2017)
(317) 539-2753
Bruce.Bowman@tds.net

Christopher Dick (2015)
(812) 988-8221
Espresso0000@yahoo.com

Dave Haun (2015)
(317) 517-0795
DEHcave@onet.net

Everett Pulliam (2016)
(317) 745-7816
SpeleoRat@aol.com

Bob Sergesketter (2017)
(812) 482-5517
CableBob@insightbb.com

Bruce Silvers (2016)
(260) 456-8562
BruceSilvers@frontier.com

Karen Silvers (2015)
(260) 249-0924
BentBat@hotmail.com

Tom Sollman (2015)
(812) 753-4953
Sollman@juno.com

Carla Striegel-Winner (2016)
(812) 367-1602
CarlaStriegel@gmail.com

Bob Vandeventer (2017)
(317) 888-4501
VandeventerBob@gmail.com

Richard Vernier (2017)
(812) 385-5058
rsavcaver2@gmail.com

Jamie Winner (2016)
(812) 367-1602
JAWinner@gmail.com

COMMITTEES / CHAIRPERSON

Education/Outreach
Don Ingle
(see E-Board list)

Web Technologies
Bruce Bowman
(see E-Board list)

IKC Update Editor/Publisher
Keith Dunlap
(see E-Board list)

Hoosier National Forest
Jerry Lewis
(see E-board list)

Buddha Property Manager
George Cesnik
(812) 339-2143
GeoCesnik@yahoo.com

Orangeville Rise Property Manager
Steve Lockwood
(812) 944-8097
sknalockwood@yahoo.com

Robinson Ladder Property Manager
John Benton
(812) 389-2248
JMBenton1952@gmail.com

Shawnee Property Manager
Jerry Lewis
(see E-board list)

Sullivan Property Manager
Keith Dunlap
(see E-Board list)

Wayne Property Manager
Robert Sollman
(812) 753-4953
BobSollman@gmail.com

Indian Creek CE Monitor
Jamie Winner
(see E-board list)

GROTTOES & LIAISONS

Bloomington Indiana Grotto*
Dave Everton
(812) 824-4380

Central Indiana Grotto*
Keith Dunlap
(317) 882-5420

Dayton Underground Grotto
Mike Hood
(937) 252-2978

Eastern Indiana Grotto
Brian Leavell
(765) 552-7619

Evansville Metro Grotto*
Steve Weinzapfel
(812) 4630-7995

Harrison-Crawford Grotto
Dave Black
(812) 951-3886

Louisville Grotto*
Susan Wilkinson
(317) 910-8023

Near Normal Grotto*
Ralph Sawyer
(309) 822-0109

Northern Indiana Grotto*
Jennifer Pelter
(260) 456-3374

St Joseph Valley Grotto*
Joy Baiz
(574) 286-9404

Sub-Urban Chicago Grotto
Gary Gibula
(630) 393-6746

Windy City Grotto
Jack Wood
(773) 728-9773

*grottos with liaison agreements

MANAGED CAVES / PATRONS

Buddha Cave
Jeff Cody
(317) 888-9898
codyjpme@att.net

Robinson Ladder Cave
John Benton
(830) 305-1026
JMBenton1952@gmail.com

Shiloh Cave
James Adams
(317) 945-8604
JKAdams@aol.com

Suicide Cave
Ronnie Burns
(812) 883-7400
RonLiz1998@gmail.com

Sullivan Cave
Anthony Owens
(812) 322-7359
SullivanCave@gmail.com

Upper Twin Cave
Dave Everton
(812) 824-4380
DEverton@indiana.edu

Wayne Cave
Dave Everton
(812) 824-4380
DEverton@indiana.edu

Cover: In honor of Binkley Cave surpassing 40 miles, Mike Drake in the Clean Washed Way, Harrison County, Indiana. Photo by Chris Schotter (2010)



QUARTERLY MEETING REMINDER
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13th, 3:00 PM EDT
MILLTOWN, INDIANA
RIVER CABIN OF KEVIN SMITH

The quarterly meetings are for the Executive Board to conduct business, and for our members and other interested persons to have an open forum to talk about caves and karst conservation and related topics. Past, present, and future IKC projects are discussed to solicit comments and input from our members and the caving community as a whole. The meetings are informal, and everyone is encouraged to attend and participate. The IKC Board wants your input.

Preliminary Agenda Items: Upcoming workdays at our preserves; Robinson Ladder prairie options; Financial reports; Wayne Cave Preserve expansion proposal; Other land acquisition activities; and more....

Following the quarterly meeting (around 5 PM) will be the annual pitch-in cook-out. The main entree this year will likely be self-roasted wieners over a campfire. Please bring a salad, dessert, and/or other covered dish to share. Please bring a lawn chair if you want to sit.

Directions to the meeting location: Starting at the bridge across the Blue River in beautiful downtown Milltown, take Main Street south/east to Spencer Street and turn south (right), then go 0.2 miles to the stop sign. Turn west (right) onto Hill View Road, and go approximately 0.6 miles south (after cresting the hill, there will be a house on the right). Turn immediately after the house onto Hill View Park NW (a private driveway) and follow the driveway along the creek to the cabin on the right. Parking is available on the left next to the red garage. Note: Google Map, MapQuest, and some GPS units still have the driveway shown as Huggins Road (name changed several years ago).

GPS Coord.: 38.32750 N 86.27611 W. Street address 8529 Hill View Rd, DePauw IN 47115

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

Sept 13 – IKC Quarterly Meeting (see above)

Sept 13 – 8th Annual Bat Festival, IUPUI Campus, Indianapolis

Oct ?? – Weed Control Work at Buddha Karst Preserve

Dec ?? – IKC Quarterly Board Meeting (date & location to be determined)

For more information on the Indiana Karst Conservancy, visit our website at ikc.caves.org or write to our PO box. Membership to the IKC is open to anyone or any organization interested in supporting cave and karst conservation. Annual dues are \$15. Please see inside the back cover for a membership application form or to make a much-appreciated donation. Donations can also be made by credit card using the donation button located on our website's home page.

The IKC Update, distributed for free, is published quarterly for members and other interested parties. The purpose of this newsletter is to keep the membership and caving community informed of IKC activities and other news related to cave/karst conservation. Submission of original or reprinted articles for publication is encouraged.

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RAMBLINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Recently, Salisa and I were asked to participate in the Boy Scout of America (BSA) Court of Honor for our young friend Seth Gower, specifically, to bestow the rank of Eagle Scout. I was asked to prepare some personal remarks on Seth's path through scouting and I thought I'd share those here, as they originated at an IKC work day and relate to caving directly. Here's the story I told, paraphrased as best as I can remember:

"Earlier in the summer a group of us met at the Buddha Karst Preserve to conduct a number of chores, including the job of carrying a heavy pre-fabricated bridge from the parking area to the ravine on the back side of the preserve where we were installing it. When we'd finished we were sitting around the parking area drinking water, eating sandwiches, and pulling off ticks. Seth and I were sitting on the ground talking and the conversation turned toward the completion of his Eagle Scout rank. He said he questioned whether it was good for anything. I tucked that away for future reference... and that's right now."

"Life has doorways with paths that lead beyond them. I'll bet that every person at this ceremony over the age of 30 can remember the day that a doorway opened that changed their lives, when life's path split and they took a trail that led them to where they are today. Some of those doors are obvious, like deciding to complete the Eagle Scout rank. Other times, it's a hidden doorway and you don't know it's there, or that you are choosing a path..."

"I remember a time when there was a scruffy-looking teenage kid with a pony tail..." And Salisa, standing behind me, says... "and an *attitude*..." which was funny, because what I was getting ready to say myself was "and an *attitude*".

Everyone at this point thinks I'm talking about Seth who fits the description. But... "that person was me, at Southern Illinois University, over forty years ago. I had seen an announcement on

the bulletin board at my dormitory that said 'GO CAVING!' and being an obedient person, did so immediately with the grotto there at SIU. I then got the wild idea that I was going to go do some grandiose scientific project, I didn't know what, with the cave animals I'd seen in that Missouri cave on that fateful day in the fall of 1971."

"I was directed by the President's Scholar advisor to make an appointment with Dr. Brandon in the Zoology Department, who had experience with working with cave animals. I did so immediately, and Dr. Brandon listened to my interests, obviously taking in my scruffy appearance and long hair. He told me he'd think about it and that I should come back tomorrow. So I came back the next day and he told me he'd thought about it and the answer was 'NO'. But then said maybe this guy up on the fourth floor might be worth talking to. So I tucked

my tail between my legs and went upstairs to try again."

"At that point I met Dr. Joe Beatty, who became my faculty advisor for the rest of my years as an undergraduate at SIU. I didn't know it that day, but I had just walked through one of life's hidden doors that would change the

rest of my life in a huge way. Because of what happened that day, at that fork in the path, I would become a cave biologist. And Joe Beatty would become a life-long friend who I would know literally to the time of his death a couple years ago."

"I remember a moment in Greg Sander's (the scoutmaster) garage woodworking shop when I was working on a scout project with my son, Geoff. I met this scruffy kid with long hair and an attitude, and not long after that, I took him and the other scouts on a cave trip. Seth was hooked. In crawling through that cave entrance, he had just gone through a hidden doorway. Seth started going with me frequently to caves, and I introduced him to Keith Dunlap, and the three of us spent a lot of time together during



the period when we were blazing the new trails at the Shawnee Karst Preserve.”

“I recognized his caving potential and introduced him to Gary Roberson (I’d give Seth a copy of Gary’s book) and Dave Everton. Seth jumped in feet-first into the mapping of Binkley Cave. For those of you here that aren’t familiar with Seth’s caving exploits, it would probably surprise you to hear that Seth has been places in Indiana where no one has ever been or ever seen. He’s walked into huge cave passages, not far from here in one of the largest cave systems in the world, that when he put his boot on the cave floor, it was the first footprint in human

history to step there.”

“So... was the scouting path worth it? You be the judge. Seth acquired a new caving family and with them has already, at age 18, had experiences that most people will never know in an entire lifetime. And I’ve obtained a life-long friend. All because of scouting, and walking through a hidden door.”

Jerry Lewis

Editor note: Seth is now in basic training in the US Army... another door opening in his life.

NEWS BRIEFS..

- ❑ At the June IKC meeting, Dave Everton was appointed the Cave Patron for Upper Twin Cave at the Shawnee Karst Preserve. Jerry Lewis, the previous Cave Patron, remains the Property Manager for the preserve. The switch was to simplify access for those cavers who want to make a “though trip” utilizing the DNR-owned section of the cave during the winter months. Dave serves as the Access Coordinator for the four Spring Mill State Park caves and previously cavers wanting to visit both sections of Upper Twin had to interface with two people. The change allows Dave Everton to handle all the arrangements.
- ❑ Speaking of Dave Everton, he was recently honored with the National Speleological Society’s 2014 Lew Bicking Award to recognize Dave’s tremendous life’s effort in cave exploration, mapping, and documentation. The Lew Bicking is perhaps the most prestigious award for cavers and Dave is well deserving. Dave has mapped and published over 120 maps of small and large cave systems in Indiana. In recent years, Dave has spearheaded the Binkley Cave project. Congratulations Dave.
- ❑ And speaking of the Binkley Cave System, in July, a whole new area and drainage system was discovered and explored, significantly expanding the system to the southeast. On one trip, over 7,000 feet of new cave was pushed and surveyed. This expands Binkley to almost 41 miles and elevating it to 8th place on the US Long Cave List.
- ❑ Each year, the IKC enters its newsletter covers in the NSS Cover Art Salon. Of the hundreds of covers entered, in 2014 there were fifteen Honorable Mentions, five Merit Awards, and one Best of Show ribbons. Of those, *IKC Update* #111 (photo by Dave Everton) received an Honorable Mention, while *IKC Update* #109 (photo by Brian Killingbeck) and *IKC Update* #110 (photo by Dave Black) received Merit Awards.
- ❑ The 2014 Indiana bat census results were summarized in *IKC Update* #112 (March 2014). Now the full report has been published by the DNR and is available upon request (contact Keith Dunlap) or can be found in the Indiana Cave Survey eLibrary (if you are an ICS member).
- ❑ On June 21st, prior to the IKC quarterly meeting, a productive workday was organized at the Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve in Crawford County. Volunteers worked on trimming back brush along the quarter-mile access right-of-way to the property, last addressed in 2005. Grapevine cutting and olive autumn eradication was also accomplished. Lane and camping areas were mowed. Finally, additional stakes were installed to support the plastic “deer tubes” around the recently planted chestnut trees. Participants included John Benton, Keith Dunlap, Everett Pulliam, Kevin Smith, Tom Sollman, Bob Vandeventer, and Jamie Winner.
- ❑ The IKC has gained one new member in the last quarter. Welcome Mark Campbell (549). The IKC membership currently stands at 189.

WHY THE IKC DECLARES WAR ON INVASIVE PLANTS....

by Jerry Lewis

Over the years there have been many IKC workdays where one of the chores was the never-ending task of eradicating invasive/exotic (i.e., non-native) plants like Autumn olive, Tree of Heaven, Bush honeysuckle, Japanese honeysuckle, and Johnson grass. This article gives an example of why it's important to control these plants on the surface to protect the underlying caves.

This story goes back to 2007, when Salisa and I first censused the Illinois cave amphipod (*Gammarus acherondytes*) in Wednesday Cave, Monroe County, Illinois. The cave is only about thirty feet long, but the amphipod was abundant in its small stream. The amphipod was designated as an endangered species in 1998 and we had been monitoring populations since 2000. The entire remaining range of the Illinois cave amphipod in Monroe County is so small that a person can drive across it in a few minutes. This unique subterranean crustacean had the misfortune to spend countless millennia evolving in a region that has now become a bedroom community of St. Louis.

With this endangered species remaining in so few caves, each site is critical. Few of the caves receive any protection. During our 2007 visit to Wednesday Cave I discovered that the farm where the cave was located was for sale. I passed this information along to the regional heritage biologist for the Illinois DNR and to make a long story short, the farm was purchased by The Nature Conservancy and then ownership was transferred to the Illinois DNR. All was good, or so we thought.

We visited Wednesday Cave again in March, 2011 and found that the Bush honeysuckle car-

peting the large sinkhole had matured to the extent that few native plants would grow under it. With nothing to hold the soil, the steep slopes of the entrance sinkhole were eroding and the floor of the sink around the cave entrance was a sea of mud. Unlike the 2007 visit when we could easily slide into the entrance crawl, an hour of digging with a trowel was necessary to re-open the entrance enough that we could enter. Inside the cave, we were shocked to see that mud was slumping into the stream. We found only one Illinois cave amphipod and the message was communicated clearly: *This site is in deep trouble.*

This year we visited again and conditions

had worsened. The mud flow into the cave continues and the former gravel stream bed is now all mud. The Illinois cave amphipod is gone from this cave... mud-floored streambed is unacceptable habitat to the species, which is almost always found associated with gravel-floored streams.

We're working on finding a way to reverse the damage. In a meeting with some members of a local conservation group I remarked that if this were an IKC cave, we'd have a workday and there'd be twenty or more volunteers show up to work on fixing the problems. I think in one day we could accomplish a number of things:

chainsaw and spray the honeysuckle bushes, put out straw mats to hold down the soil, and create erosion barriers to keep the mud out of the cave. I've been amazed by what an IKC volunteer day can achieve. Unfortunately, this cave isn't in Indiana, so we're looking at other options.

In the meantime, Wednesday Cave is the "post-child" for why we spend so much effort in controlling invasive plants on our IKC preserves.



A LOOK BACK AT INDIANA KARST

by John Benton

What does the dire wolf, giant land tortoise, beautiful armadillo, Pleistocene jaguar, Pleistocene horse, Pleistocene tapir, American mastodon, fisher, pine marten, snowshoe hare, northern bog lemming, long-nosed peccary, and flat headed peccary all have in common? Caves you say? Yes, and more specifically, they are all vertebrates (many of them now extinct) where species remains have been identified at Megenity Peccary Cave in northwestern Crawford County near Taswell, Indiana, not far from the shores of what is now Patoka Lake.

Since 1987, the Indiana State Museum (ISM), under the leadership of Ron Richards, Senior Research Curator of Paleobiology has conducted the research. The cave itself is rather obscure, mapped in 1987 by IKC members Dave Black, Glenn Lemasters, Ron Richards, Holly Cook, and D Rieger, showing a horizontal length of 412 feet. But in those 412 feet the remains of over 600 peccaries and numerous ice age animals have been discovered. For the past twenty-seven years, Indiana State Museum staff and volunteers have conducted the dig, usually taking about two weeks at the site in late summer or fall. Much of the time, the bone and fragments are not visible, but carried out in the sediments in five-gallon buckets, then screened and sifted for inspection. Identification often comes months down the road as each piece is studied. Some have to be examined by other paleontologists, specialist in a certain field of animal identification.

The bones of more than 100 different animals have been found. Most of the bones are small, like a vertebra from a salamander or a mouse toe. There are also a lot of fragments. Only a few skeletons have been found. The bones of the giant land tortoise are estimated to be 100,000 years old. Most of the peccary skeletons fall into the 20,000 to 30,000 years old range. Richard states that it is unusual to have such a long history of animals in one place, from 100,000 years ago right up to present day.

It was the 1960's when a couple of boys went exploring on their fathers' land. The boys became teachers and brought their students back to the

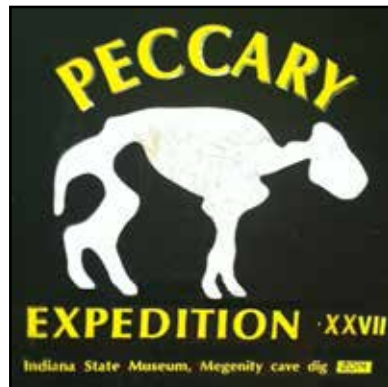
cave. One of the students who studied at IU in Bloomington, took some of the bones to be identified in 1987. The professor called Richards and the ISM began heading the excavation. The vast range of animals found at the site indicate that the climate in Indiana has been changing and has been doing so for thousands of years. The museum wants to totally excavate the cave, removing all soil down to the bedrock. That's when the task of totally dating, and categorizing the bones will get fully underway. Some of the bones from Megenity Cave are on display on a rotating basis at the museum's Age of Ice exhibit in Indianapolis.

Richards says this is one of the largest deposit of bones at a cave site, and it is the biggest deposit of peccary bones know in North America. Outside donors have funded the dig and the family's original owners have donated all the finds to the ISM. Within the last couple of years, the surrounding

land has been purchased by The Nature Conservancy, with the cave and about 26 acres dedicated as a Nature Preserve. The sheer volume of bone recovered from the site is daunting. Richards estimates well over a million scraps of bone. He states the museum has 6,000 plus little plastic boxes of small bone fragments alone.

Each year hundreds of buckets of material are removed from the cave. The early digs started in the back of the cave and have gradually worked their way toward the entrance. The ceiling is low in places and the walls can be narrow; a span of wooden track and steel rollers are in place while the team works to make getting the buckets out of the cave a little easier. Each bucket is tagged and there is always a sketcher at the point of the dig to know from what layer, position, etc. the bucket came from that may be useful in studying the bones. Each bucket is sealed with a lid before coming out of the cave. It can be an exhausting experience, especially on a hot humid late summer day! After the buckets leave the cave, they are hauled to a nearby screening station where the largest bone pieces are removed and the smaller pieces are bagged for further study. All are tagged for reference.

Richards estimates it will take several more years (maybe 3-6) before the dig at the cave can



Continued on page 12...

Try this: A caving adventurer discovers the upside of the underworld

by Dennis Barbosa

At first, it just looks like a medium-size hole in the ground – only with a rectangular metal door attached. I look closer and clearly it is a barred gate, padlocked. Past the rusted metal frame, I stare into a shadowed abyss. Without a bright light, there’s no way to know how deep it goes.

That’s when a man in dirty, navy coveralls unlocks it. He’s Charlie Veters, our leader, and he goes in last.

He’s not being polite – it’s so he can lock the gate behind us.

We’re a three-person caving group about to enter the underworld known as Sullivan Cave, just west of Bedford between Owensburg and Springville. I’d be more specific, but the exact location is kept under wraps to protect the cave from unwanted visitors and vandals. Same reason the gate was installed.

To even access the place we’re about to descend into, you need permission from Indiana Karst Conservancy, a not-for-profit that promotes cave conservation. The conservancy says Sullivan Cave is the fourth-longest cave in Indiana – out of more than 3,000, with concentrations in Monroe, Lawrence, Orange, Crawford, and Harrison counties.

I was introduced to caving by an Indiana University classmate last fall. I had little-to-no knowledge of the pastime, but the prospect of doing something few people try – something that could be dangerous – was enough to hook me.

The danger? Well, there’s drowning, falling rocks, or your own falling self – all outlined in a liability waiver. And that reality kicks in when I get my first sight of the Backbreaker.

Like most cave features, it is aptly named. With a 3- to 4-foot clearance, its long south passage

seems to go on forever. After traversing, hunched, just a few of its 1,500 feet, I can feel the muscle burn in my thighs.

I should say here that I am in my late 20s and in good shape. I should also say that I’m patient. If there is one thing I’ve come to love about caving, it’s that there is no rush. Most of the time you’re looking at either a six-hour or 12-hour trip. Think of it sort of like a mini-vacation from the civilized world: No cell. No natural light. No noise. No traffic.

After the Backbreaker, I avoid the Merry-Go-Round, a circular, mud-covered canyon people tend to get stuck in. It’s the first place search-and-rescue parties check when looking for trapped people in the cave, Charlie says.

We opt, instead, for the Mountain Room, where you really get a sense of how old and massive the cave is. Standing at 60 feet tall and

Continued on page 13...

Shawnee Karst Preserve Breeding Bird Survey																																						
Surveyors: Jerry Lewis & Salisa Lewis, 21 June 2014; Start: 10:15 AM; Finish: 12:30 PM; Sunny, 87 F at end of survey																																						
Station	Turkey vulture	Wild turkey	Mourning dove	Black-billed cuckoo	Chimney swift	Red-headed woodpecker	Red-bellied woodpecker	Northern flicker	Downy woodpecker	Eastern wood pewee	White-eyed vireo	Red-eyed vireo	Blue jay	American crow	White-breasted nuthatch	Tufted titmouse	Carolina chickadee	Blue-gray gnatcatcher	American robin	Wood thrush	Gray catbird	Carolina wren	Kentucky warbler	Prairie warbler	Common yellowthroat	Yellow-breasted chat	Northern cardinal	Eastern towhee	Indigo bunting	Field sparrow	Song sparrow	Brown-headed cowbird	Red-winged blackbird	Orchard oriole	House finch	Total		
1	1														1		1	1								1	1										6	
2				1							1																		1	1		1					7	
3									1	1		1				1						1						2									7	
4																1																					1	
5																	1												1								2	
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7					1														1								1	1	1	1	1						7	
8											1											1			1	1		1	1								6	
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19										1			1	1													1	1		1	1	1						8
20											1																											2
2014	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	4	2	1	2	1	3	3	1	2	0	1	4	2	1	2	3	12	4	7	4	1	2	1	1	1	1	74	
2013	1	1	4	0	0	7	4	1	0	5	7	1	7	4	4	0	2	1	2	4	1	6	0	3	3	2	21	12	5	4	1	0	0	0	0	113		

INDIANA KARST CONSERVANCY TREASURY REPORT

**Income/Expense Statement
From April 1, 2014 to June 30, 2014**

INCOME:

Dues Apportionment and Residuals	630.00	
Donations - General	1,101.00	
Donations - Land Acquisition Fund	100.00	
Interest	<u>336.72</u>	
		\$2,167.72

EXPENSES:

IKC Update (printing, production, mailing)	336.73	
Education / Outreach	213.19	
Stewardship/Conservation	953.82	
Wyandotte Gate	319.56	
Property Taxes	30.00	
Business (renewal/ballot letters, misc fees)	107.55	
Ind Acad Science grant	0.00	
Transfers to/from restricted funds/other adjustments	<u>323.33</u>	
		(\$2,284.18)

NET OPERATING EXCESS (DEFICIT) THIS PERIOD: (\$116.46)

**Balance Sheet
June 30, 2014**

ASSETS:

Cash in Checking / Saving Accounts / CDs	135,533.24	
Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve (73.48 acres)	162,000.00	
Shawnee Karst Preserve (50.31 acres)	105,000.00	
Wayne Cave Preserve (20.00 acres)	75,000.00	
Sullivan Cave Preserve (28.00 acres)	72,000.00	
Buddha Karst Nature Preserve (36.84 acres)	29,000.00	
Orangeville Rise Nature Preserve (3.01 acres)	7,000.00	
Indian Creek Conservation Easement (valued at \$1/acre)	<u>13.16</u>	
		<u><u>\$585,546.40</u></u>

FUNDS & OPERATING EXCESS:

Land Acquisition Restricted Fund	29,910.95	
Deferred Dues Restricted Fund (172 members)	4,050.00	
Indiana Acad of Science	796.40	
Stewardship Endowment Restricted Fund	53,675.15	
Previous General Fund (total)	47,230.36	
Net Excess (Deficit) This Period	<u>-116.46</u>	
Current General Fund (unrestricted)	47,113.90	
Current General Fund (committed)	2,500.00	
Real estate liquidity (basis value)	<u>450,000.00</u>	

Total Liabilities & Operating Excess \$585,546.40

IKC EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Saturday, June 21st, 2014 – Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve, Milltown, Indiana

Board Members Present:

Jerry Lewis, President
 Kevin Smith, Secretary
 Keith Dunlap, Treasurer
 Dave Haun (proxied by Richard Newton)
 Everett Pulliam
 Bob Sergesketter (proxied by John Benton)
 Tom Sollman
 Carla Striegel-Winner
 Bob Vandeventer
 Richard Vernier (proxied by Salisa Lewis)
 Jamie Winner

Board Members Absent:

Bruce Bowman
 Christopher Dick
 Bruce Silvers
 Karen Silvers

The meeting was called to order by President Jerry Lewis at 4:00 PM at the IKC's Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve.

Minutes of the annual business meeting were accepted as published in the June 2014 *IKC Update*.

E-Mail Motions

None since the last meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Dunlap reported cash assets totaling \$134,310.65 and land assets totaling \$450,000.00 for total assets of \$584,310.65. Funds include Stewardship: \$53,451.82; Deferred Dues: \$4095.00; Land Acquisition: \$29,810.95; General Fund: \$46,156.48; Ad hoc Science Fund: \$796.40.

IKC membership currently stands at 188. Of these, 21 members have not renewed their membership.

Education and Outreach Report

No report.

IKC Upper Twin Cave Patron / DNR Limited Cave Access Program

Jerry Lewis noted that a through trip of Upper Twin Cave from the Shawnee Karst Preserve to Spring Mill State Park (or vice-versa) requires approval from two separate people managing access for each of these entrances. Currently, Dave Everton is the DNR Access Coordinator for the Upper Twin Cave entrance within Spring Mill State Park and Jerry Lewis manages visitation requests for the Shawnee Karst Preserve entrance to Upper Twin Cave. To facilitate easier and more efficient through trip planning, Lewis proposed that Dave

Everton be named as the Cave Patron (IKC access coordinator) for the Shawnee Karst Preserve entrance to Upper Twin. Keith Dunlap moved to appoint Dave Everton as the IKC Cave Patron for Shawnee Karst Preserve. Bob Vandeventer seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Dunlap reports that the DNR has not provided any feedback regarding the Interim Cave

Access Program. All paperwork for a visitation request should be forwarded to Dave Everton at least 4 days in advance. Additionally, DNR/Spring Mill State Park requires 48 hours notice for issuance of cave visitation permits. In general, the partnership between IKC and DNR/Spring Mill State Park appears to be working well. It was noted that the stairs leading to the upper level/dry portion of Donaldson Cave have not been re-installed.

Wyandotte Cave

Dunlap reports that the old gate installed at Wyandotte Cave was dismantled and removed from the cave on 31 May. A historic walking tour of the cave was held afterwards which everyone felt was a nice reward for all the hard work!

Shawnee Karst Preserve

Lewis discussed the need to schedule another work day at the preserve to eliminate some of the poplars in the glade that have begun to regrow since cutting them down last year and to work on cleaning up the log dump in the sinkhole pond. A tractor would be needed to effectively remove the logs.

Lewis requested that the IKC consider purchasing a pond liner for one of the wildlife ponds on the property. The pond dam is intact but the pond itself will not hold water. Lewis stated that the cost of a liner and sealer would be approximately \$225. There was some discussion as to whether this was an appropriate expenditure, was environmentally compatible, and if there were any other options (e.g., bentonite), however Lewis felt the liner was the best and most appropriate option. Dunlap moved to spend up to \$225 on a pond liner and sealant. Lewis seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 8 to 1 with 2 abstentions.

A datalogger has been purchased to track the stream level in Upper Twin Cave. Further discussion revolved around where to locate the monitor in the cave to ensure reliable and accurate data collection and how to secure the instrument in the stream.

Indian Creek Conservation Easement

Jamie Winner reports that the annual inspection was completed on 30May. Issues were noted for two property owners. Both property owners were found to be



mowing areas within the easement boundary. One property owner's mowing practice was considerably more excessive than the other and showed no improvement since last year's request to refrain from mowing beyond easement boundaries. Letters were sent to the landowners requesting modification of mowing practices. After some discussion, it was decided that Jamie would revisit the property after a couple of months to reassess. If improvements are not observed, an attempt to meet with the property owner will be made to discuss easement violation issues. If improvements are not made, an attorney's letter may be considered.

Buddha Cave Preserve

Recent stewardship activities include installation of a new bridge, planting seven chestnut trees, and trail mowing. New trees are looking good, however, there is a need to spray herbicide around the trees to ensure they continue to grow and stay healthy. Jerry reports he will be conducting a bird count on the property in late June.

Sullivan Cave Preserve

The annual report from the cave patron was not received. Dunlap will attempt to get visitation data/records from the patron, summarize the data, and provide a report at the next IKC quarterly board meeting. Dunlap reports that he mowed the camping area for the second time on 20 June. He also notes that the tulip poplars planted in the smaller field are growing well but some may need to be girdled to reduce density and promote additional species. An inspection of the property to maintain its classified forest status is due in two years.

Wayne Cave Preserve

Lewis reports that there is an old wildlife pond on the property that could be restored if the dam was repaired. A ten foot section of PVC and some sandbags may be necessary to fix the breach. Repair costs would be minimal and could be drawn from the property's management fund. Carla Striegel-Winner mentioned that it may be possible to approach the district forester regarding incentives/funding to maintain wildlife ponds.

Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve

The group discussed the management plan for the preserve including options for maintaining the prairie portion of the property. It was noted that the prairie has undergone two prescribed burns with the last burn considered to be ineffective. To maintain the prairie would

most likely require reseeding and other periodic control measures. Options discussed included bush-hogging the area every other year, planting trees and leaving the prairie to its own devices, or just leaving the prairie alone and simply manage the invasives. Carla agreed to develop several options for future prairie management including cost and required resources, and providing a report at the next quarterly business meeting. Plans were also made to remove a problem tree behind the barn.

Request for cave gate project at Eversole Cave

Jerry Lewis reports that he had been approached by the Scenic Hills Church Camp manager regarding replacement of the existing gate installed at the entrance to Eversole Cave. The current gate is somewhat crude and is made of welded rebar sections. The gate is functional however it is not very pleasing from an aesthetic point of view. Options were discussed including the IKC providing expertise and resources to replace the gate, however, the church camp would be responsible for all expenses. Materials needed to build a proper bat-friendly gate would cost approximately \$1000. Dunlap agreed to investigate a better location for the new gate location at some point past the dripline of the cave.

911 Address Signs Update

Dunlap reports that he has purchased materials needed to create proper 911 street address signage.

Land Acquisition Activities

No new land acquisition activities to report.

Items From the Floor

No additional details have been provided by Jeff Cody regarding a previous request to allow Adam Haydock and Chris Parks to conduct a scuba dive in the upstream portion of Buddha Cave.

Kevin Smith presented the IKC with a donation of \$1000 courtesy of Mike Smith and the Hulman Memorial Way Foundation.

Next Meeting

The next quarterly meeting was scheduled for 13Sept, 3:00 pm at Kevin Smith's cabin near Milltown.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Kevin Smith, IKC Secretary.

Continued from page 7.

be complete. It was/is/will be an interesting piece of Indiana karst!

References:

Excavating the Past, 11-5-2011, The Herald, by

Alexandra Sondeen, Jasper IN;

Museum Unearthing Secrets of Area Cave, 8-31-2010, The Herald, by A. Sondeen, Jasper IN;

Personal Communication, with Ron Richards 1987-present.

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100 feet wide, the Mountain Room is a breakdown dome – meaning it features an area where the ceiling has collapsed due to water flow weakening the walls. Unfortunately, it’s not all pristine. There’s evidence of vandalized stalactites and stalagmites that have been broken off. Fortunately, many “straws” – thin-walled hollow formations created from dripping water – line part of the ceiling that is too high for human hands to grasp. Decades-old graffiti can also be found.

After the Mountain Room, we enjoy a few, glorious moments of upright walking on our way to the Popcorn Crawl, named for the clumps of calcite or cave coral that cover the ground of the 2-foot-tall passage. It’s fairly painless if you remembered your knee and elbow pads, but you’ll be working up a sweat regardless. In the Scotto Grotto room, named for a grotto group that initialed the ceiling in 1952, I decide to make my own, more organic mark: a decent-size, spit-mudball splatted on the 10-foot ceiling. Remember me fondly.

The Sorry Room is where our descent to the river begins. It’s just your feet at first, but eventually – after you reach Armstrong’s Folly – you’ll find yourself waist deep in 50-something-degree water. The folly is a leading-nowhere excavated crawlway where apparently Armstrong swore he felt a draft and convinced himself there

was another cave. I feel no air crawling through Armstrong’s Folly.

Around this point is where I realize we are not alone, catching my first sight of a Sullivan cavefish, a sculpin routinely found in this part of the river. This small brown fish doesn’t dart away frantically; rather, it seems apathetic. Charlie explains that the sculpin get washed in from the outside part of the river, get stuck in the cave, and slowly starve to death.

The river’s chilly water leads us to the Spiral Room, marking a large



photo courtesy Charlie Veters

(about 46 feet high) circular collapse where progressive breakdown around the walls has formed an upward spiraling ledge. The towering spiral of precariously stacked boulders might make you think twice before standing anywhere near them.

Scaling up the breakdown pile is nerve-racking because of the significant drop, but luckily the old “not-looking-down” routine still works. Finding the exit from this room is a bit tricky, because it’s a

feet-first or head-first climb down a narrow hole crowded with fallen rocks from the cave-in.

We squeeze through this cumbersome crawlway, which is only about 100 feet, for what seems like an eternity. Here we encounter the Manhole, a hole in the wall leading to the Speed Hollow Entrance (our exit in this case), an up-to-your-neck frigid plunge. I am ahead of the group, and my measly 40-lumen headlamp makes the river entrance appear more ominous than it really is. I can’t see the water, so my imagination gets the best of me and I envision free-falling 10 feet before body-smacking into the river.

Instead, my feet touch the water as soon as I perch on the edge of the hole. There’s also a rope for lowering yourself into the river, but there’s no touching the bottom. You have to swim to the exit for about 200 feet. The ceiling is so low that at some points I have to hold my head sideways to breathe.

After six hours underground, I can finally start to see the bright summer light glowing from a wide, thin slit. As I get closer to the exit, I can feel the blast of summer warmth hit, taking away my shivers. I crawl out onto the forest floor happy to see the green of moss-covered rocks and low-lying foliage. And looking forward to caving again.

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INDIANA KARST CONSERVANCY, PO BOX 2401, INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46206-2401

I would like to help the IKC protect Indiana’s unique caves and other karst features. Enclosed is:

\$ _____ for IKC membership dues at \$15 per year (dues expire March 31st of each year, please pro-rate @ \$1.25/month).

\$ _____ donation to the general IKC fund.

\$ _____ donation restricted to a specific IKC project. Please specify: _____

_____ I know of an area worthy of protection. Please contact me.

_____ I would like to volunteer to help. Please contact me.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

PHONE # _____

Make checks payable to the Indiana Karst Conservancy, Inc. and mail to the IKC Treasurer, c/o Indiana Karst Conservancy, PO Box 2401, Indianapolis, IN 46206-2401. The IKC is an IRS recognized 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with membership dues and donations fully tax deductible.

