

IKC UPDATE

A Quarterly Publication of The Indiana Karst Conservancy
March 2005 Number 76



INDIANA KARST CONSERVANCY, INC.

PO Box 2401, Indianapolis, IN 46206-2401
 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.

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*grottos with liaison agreements

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Robinson Ladder Cave

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Cover: Sue Vernier in the entrance of Mill Cave, Washington County.
 Photo by Richard Vernier.



ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

SATURDAY, MARCH 19th, 10 AM

GREENWOOD, INDIANA

GREENWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Annual Business meeting is for the explicit purpose of Board elections. Annual reports from the IKC Cave Patrons and Property Managers are also presented. And as always, the meeting is for members and other interested persons to have an open forum for talking about cave 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 meeting is informal, and everyone is encouraged to attend and participate. The IKC Board *wants* your input.

Preliminary Agenda Items: Elections; Cave Patrons/Property Managers annual reports; Brief recaps of last quarter's activities; Upcoming workday at the Sullivan property; Under-Earth Day at Robinson Ladder; Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve discussion; other Land Acquisition Committee activities, HNF inventoring project; and more....

Following the meeting (approximately 1 PM), we will most likely socialize/de-brief over lunch at a nearby restaurant.

Meeting directions: See page 21 (inside back cover) for directions and map.

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

- 10 MAR = IKC ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING, Greenwood (see above)
- 26 MAR = LOST RIVER TOUR, Orleans (see page 20)
- 16 APR = SULLIVAN PROPERTY WORK DAY, Springville (see page 5)
- 30 APR = INDIANA CAVE SYMPOSIUM, Mitchell (see page 10)
- 30 APR = ACCA SPRING SINKHOLE CLEAN-UP, Horse Cave, KY
- 14 MAY = UNDER-EARTH DAY/ROBINSON LADDER, Milltown (see page 5)
- 04 JUN = LOST RIVER TOUR, Orleans (see page 20)
- 07 MAY = TAKE PRIDE IN AMERICA/HNF WORKDAY (see page 5)
- ?? MAY = TREE MAINTENANCE AT SULLIVAN PROPERTY (see page 5)
- ?? MAY = TREE MAINTENANCE AT BUDDHA PROPERTY (see page 5)
- ?? JUN = WAYNE PROPERTY WORK DAY, Bloomington
- ?? JUN = IKC QUARTERLY MEETING, Bloomington

For more information on the Indiana Karst Conservancy, visit our web site at <http://www.ikc.caves.org> or write to our PO box. Membership to the IKC is open to anyone interested in cave and karst conservation. Annual dues are \$15. Please see inside back cover for the membership application form or to make a much appreciated donation.

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...

“People clearly present substantial challenges to the health of our planet, but they are also at the core of each and every solution.” -- Steven McCormick, President and CEO, The Nature Conservancy.



This sums up much of what I like about The Nature Conservancy, they are a pragmatic organization, not given to parading in the streets with puppet heads and megaphones. While many other “green” organizations

are shouting and tossing lawyers back and forth, TNC is out there identifying critical habitat and working with the farmers, ranchers, realtors, military and even cavers to see to it that the work of conservation gets done.

That’s not to say there isn’t a call for puppets and megaphones from time to time but that is not the style of TNC, or for that matter, the IKC. For myself, I prefer to work quietly, supporting efforts to educate the public and the business community regarding the value of nature in general, and karst in particular, and expanding our list of preserves. Others are much better at confrontation than I am.

In the Spring 2005 edition of TNC’s publication “Nature Conservancy, Saving the Last Great Places on Earth” I note two karst related projects. One is in Vermont: “With bat populations plummeting across the country, protecting habitat is crucial to the species’ survival. Dorset Bat Cave, the largest overwintering site for bats in New England, is now protected with a new gate, constructed by volunteers...who transported 5,000 pounds of steel up a rugged mountain path. The gate...is designed to facilitate bat flight while allowing seasonal human access.” This sort of thing should sound familiar to many IKC members. The other is a partner-

ship with Bat Conservation International to preserve and manage 700 acres surrounding Bracken Bat Cave in Texas.

The Nature Conservancy has been a valued advisor for the IKC over the years, providing input and guidance on our acquisitions, working with us on cleanups and so on. You may recall that they deeded over the Orangeville Rise property to us in exchange for our pledge to provide proper stewardship for it. If you aren’t already a member of TNC, then you should consider the value of becoming one.

This brings me to my main subject -- cave acquisition. The IKC, in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, has acted on an opportunity to purchase Robinson Ladder cave near Milltown, along with 40 acres of surface preserve. The cave plays host to around 300 endangered Indiana bats and a hundred or so Little Brown bats during hibernation and was once a well-known recreational cave. The surface property is scenic and has some nice wooded areas, two fields and a small barn. An 11-acre property belonging to The Nature Conservancy lies adjacent to one corner and descends steeply to the Blue River.

As it is now unfolding, TNC will put up almost half the money towards the purchase price of \$74,100. There is simply no way we could have done this without the participation and financial backing of The Nature Conservancy!

Closing on the property was March 4, and we are now working out the details of the fundraising for the balance of the acquisition cost as well as beginning to put together ideas for a management plan. One exciting possibility put forward by Allen Pursell of The Nature Conservancy would involve re-establishing a post oak woodland / barrens in one or both of the fields.

There is more to read about our newest preserve in this issue and we will be holding an “open house” and cleanup/workday on the property on May 14th. We hope you will join us.

Richard Vernier

DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR DUES

NEWS BRIEFS...

- ❑ With winter winding down and spring just around the corner, the IKC's activity calendar is once again full of cave conservation/educational projects. Check out the calendar on page 3 (and related announcements throughout this issue) and pick a few projects to volunteer for while having a little fun too. IKC projects can be very rewarding and there is always lots of fellowship in accomplishing good things together.
- ❑ The first project of the year is at the Sullivan Cave Property on April 16th. We plan to re-plant about 100 trees (replacement for seedlings that have died), remove a large limb over-hanging the parking area, and perhaps do some trail maintenance. Contact Keith Dunlap if you are interested in helping.
- ❑ In May (exact dates to be determined), at least two workdays will be scheduled for tree maintenance at the Sullivan and Buddha properties. Each of these workdays will only take three or four volunteers and the primary task will be performing chemical weed control around the trees we have planted over the past five years (over 3,000 trees between the two preserves). Contact Keith Dunlap if you are interested in helping.
- ❑ Also in May, on the 7th, the Hoosier National Forest will be sponsoring their annual Take Pride In America workday. There will be a number of stewardship projects needing to be accomplished. The "cave-related" project this year will be installing bat houses at one of their wetland restoration sites. Other projects will include trail repairs, tree-plantings, and general trash pickup. After the projects are complete, everyone returns for a free cook-out and some fabulous door-prizes. Registration starts at 9 AM at Shelterhouse #1 in Hardin Ridge Recreation Area (just off SR 446 on the east side of Lake Monroe). Note, if you are coming from the south and wish to help with the bat house project, call Steve Harriss (812-275-5987) as you may want to go directly to the worksite rather than drive north just to turn around and drive back south. Any other questions can also be directed to Steve Harriss.
- ❑ In June, work will continue at the Wayne Cave Property under the guidance of Robert Sollman. Tasks will include additional work on the driveway and completing the work started

...continued on page 20 

UNDER-EARTH DAY 2005 - ROBINSON LADDER PRESERVE SATURDAY, MAY 14

The Indiana Karst Conservancy will once again organize a workday in celebration of Earth Day. This year we will be working at our newest property, the Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve. We have a number of projects to complete including two trash piles to clean up, a barn to clean out, a section of fence to remove, grapevines to cut, over-hanging brush along the access road to trim, two tree stands to remove, and general litter to collect. The workday will also serve as our "open house" for the members and caving community to explore the property, both above and below ground.

You do not need any special skill to assist and family participation is encouraged. Bring gloves, good shoes, water, and lunch. And of course your caving gear if you wish to visit the caves. Starting time will be 10 AM EST (Indy time) / 11 AM EDT (Louisville time).

The property is located just off of SR 66, 2.8 miles north of SR 64 (Milltown) coming from the south, or 4.2 miles south of US 150 coming from the north. Watch for Baylor Road, heading west from SR 66 (the intersection has GPS coordinates N4249542 E0563592). The access lane to the IKC property is directly opposite of Baylor Road heading to the east. Take the lane 1/4 mile to the property. If you need further directions or information, contact Keith Dunlap (keith.dunlap@juno.com or 317-882-5420).

ROBINSON LADDER CAVE/PROPERTY ACQUISITION

by Keith Dunlap

As you may have read in Dick Vernier's column, the Indiana Karst Conservancy has acquired its fifth cave preserve. The property is a 40-acre tract located in northeast Crawford County, approximately three miles north of Milltown. The property is a mix of mature hardwood (approximately 20 acres) and two fields which have been "hayed" to keep open (see the aerial photo on page 8). There is approximately 130 feet of elevation from its low point in the northwest corner to the top of the ridge. To the east a short distance is the Blue River. The property is accessed by a quarter-mile right-of-way from SR 66.

The primary feature of interest to the IKC is Robinson Ladder Cave (see map on page 8). A mostly horizontally developed, single passage cave with approximately 1700 feet of cave. The entrance has a 13-foot climb-down and there is a nearby climb-up of approximately the same distance that has to be negotiated to see the cave. There is also a 44-foot blind pit that can be optionally visited. For a more detailed description of the cave, its geology, and history, see the re-print article on page 9). The entire cave lies completely under the acquired property.

Robinson Ladder cave has recreational value, but the justification for buying the cave and property is that it serves as a Priority III hibernaculum for the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), a federally endangered species. The cave has been included in the biennial winter bat census since 1989 and has consistently hosted 350-400 *myotis* (a mix of *sodalis* and *lucifugus* - see the accompanying chart). Because of the bats, visitation to the cave will likely be allowed only during the period from May 1st to August 30th.

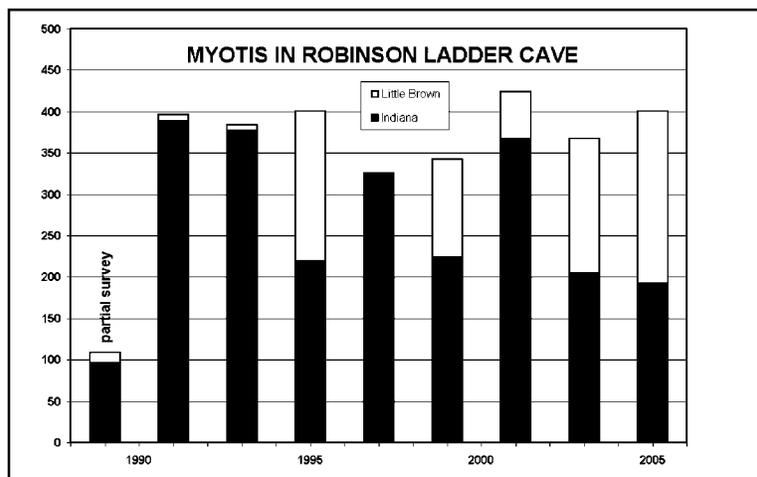
There is also a second cave on the property which we found during our inspection visits. The cave is not documented by the ICS and we have not yet entered the cave to see if it goes. We did observe good airflow on a cold day, so it could potentially connect to Robinson Ladder.

The IKC Board has infor-

mally talked about management philosophies for the caves and the surface property, but the process of drafting a management plan has not started (likely a committee will be appointed at the March 19th meeting). The Board will also be looking for interested volunteers to serve as the Property Manager, and/or the Cave Patron.

I won't go into great detail about the actual acquisition other than to say that we found out that the property was for sale on January 5th. After discussions with Hank Huffman (Indiana DNR Nature Preserves) and Allen Pursell (The Nature Conservancy, Blue River Office), it was decided that the IKC would take the lead roll to acquire, and an offer was submitted on January 31st. The original offer was rejected, but a counter-offer was accepted on February 3rd. After all of the contingents were met (appraisal, environmental inspection, entrance location verification), and financial approved, closing occurred on March 4th, less than 60 days, start to finish.

As Treasurer, I would be remiss to not mention the financial aspects of the purchase. The accepted offer was \$73,000 along with another \$1,100 in closing and appraisal costs. The Nature Conservancy agreed to assist with the acquisition in the amount of \$33,500 leaving the IKC's share at \$40,600. We plan to pursue several grants, but it is likely we will need to raise about \$25,000 from individuals within the caving community. Our membership and others have been very supportive in the past, and we hope you will find this acquisition worthy of support.





Bob Sergesketter posing in the entrance sink of Robinson Ladder Cave on the IKC's newest preserve.

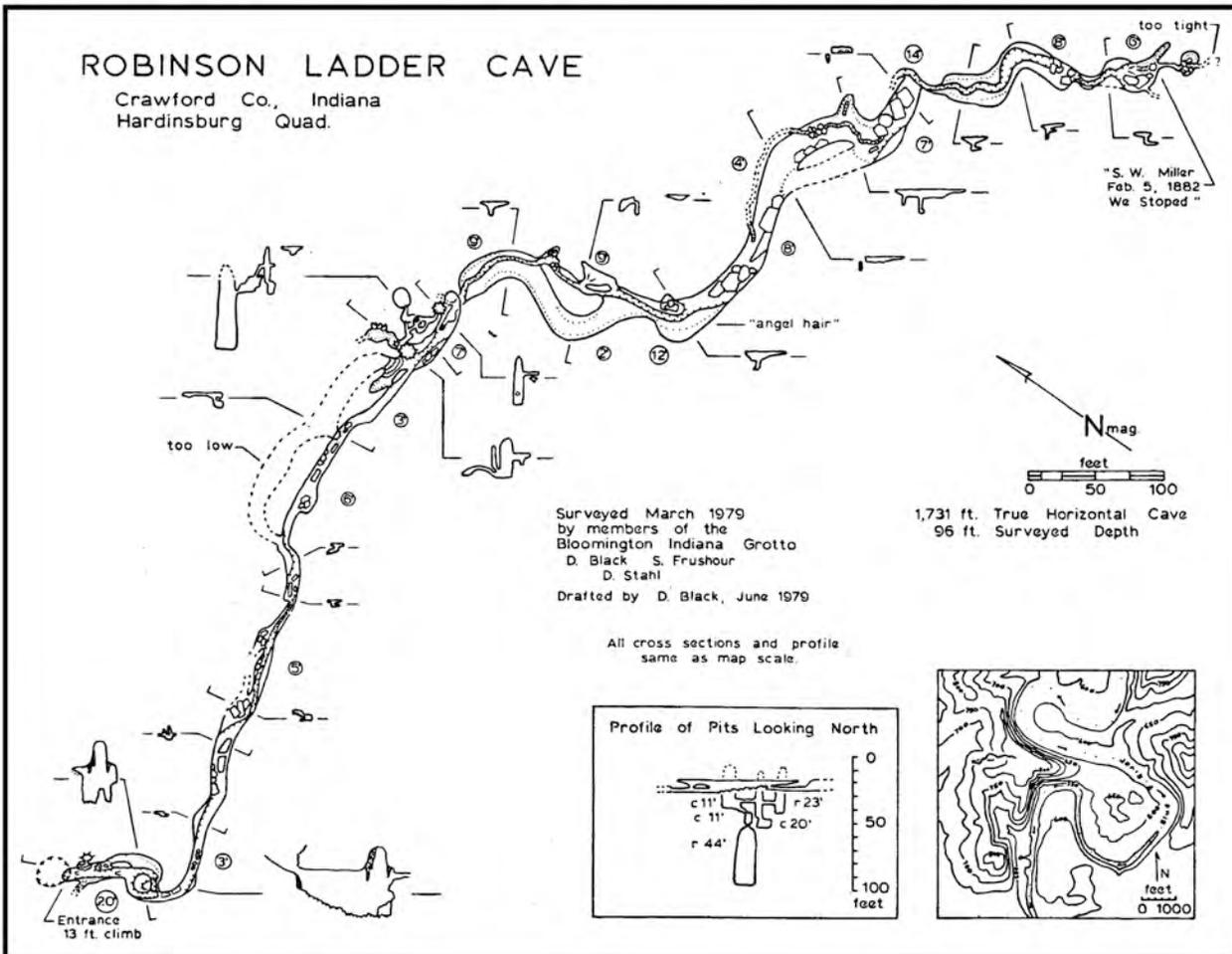


Keith Dunlap peering into the unknown of the other small cave on the property.

Photos by
James Adams



Aerial image of the Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve (above) and cave map (below).



ROBINSON LADDER CAVE

by D Black, S Frushour, D Stahl

reprinted from the BIG Newsletter, Vol 14#4 (August 1979)

DESCRIPTION

The entrance to Robinson Ladder Cave is located in a small sinkhole on the west side of a large ridge. At the bottom of this sinkhole a canyon passage can be seen. To reach it one must do a 13-foot climbdown on a flowstone wall. A handline makes this climb easier. Once on bottom, one walks a short distance through the canyon to a dome. On the right, 15 feet off the floor, is a passage. To reach it one must climb another flowstone wall. This is the main passage of the cave. It starts as a hands and knees crawl, but soon enlarges to walking dimensions.

Halfway through the cave one encounters two dome-pits that intersect the left wall of the main passage. At the bottom of the first are three passages. The left-most passage leads to a low, muddy breakdown room. The right-most passage is a crawl that takes one to another dome-pit. Past this dome-pit the passage continues and intersects the second dome-pit off of the main passage. The middle passage leads to a 10-foot climbable pit, at the bottom of which is a 44-foot pit. The entrance to this pit is a narrow slot that immediately opens up into a nice pit. There are no leads at the bottom as reported by the few people that have descended. The bottom of this pit is still 100 feet above base level and some small overlooked canyon could lead to another drop and a stream passage.

To continue past the dome-pits one must crawl through a hole in breakdown. This opens into walking passage. The passage continues as walking and crawling until a room is reached. A tight crawl of six feet leads to the terminal room. This room is 10 feet in diameter with enough head-room to sit up. A breakdown filled canyon continues from here. This is the best lead in the cave and should (with a lot of digging) lead to more upper level cave [*editor's note - digging will likely not be permitted under the management plan*].

HISTORY

Robinson Ladder Cave has been known and explored for nearly a century. The earlier explorers left a record of these visita-

tions by leaving their signature and date of visit. The earliest period of visitation was from 1882 to 1885. Totten, whose family lent their name to the nearby bridge over the Blue River, visited the cave in 1883.

The next period of visitation was in 1920-1930 with only a few dates. Then in the 1960's, the Schotter family visited the cave several times, leaving their names in the Graveyard, an area in the main passage where people have piled up slabs of rock to look like tombstones.

Mr. Guthrie, the current owner of the cave, reported that an average of two groups a year have visited the cave in the four years that he has owned the property [*editor's note - Walter and Aleta Guthrie sold the property to Mel and Dianna Carver on January 4th, 1988 who then sold it to the IKC on March 4th, 2005*].

GEOLOGY

Robinson Ladder Cave is developed in the Ste Genevieve Limestone member of the Blue River Group. The main passage shows two stages of development, a phreatic tube approximately two feet high and 10 feet wide and a canyon downcutting from this tube. The depth of this canyon increases to the east. A third stage of development is demonstrated by the dome-pits which accidentally intersected the main passage.

The cave, because of its elevation and phreatic development, must have helped to drain the valley to the west in an earlier stage of valley development. When the Blue River was lowered, conditions changed from phreatic to vadose and a free running stream started to form a canyon. When another underground route for draining the valley developed, the stream abandoned the upper level of the cave.

With the retreat of the sandstone cap on the ridge, dome-pits started to form. These dome-pits, are in the entrance area and halfway through the cave. In both areas, water enters the cave during heavy rainfall and immediately sinks into breakdown. This water should come out of the northernmost spring shown on the topo overlay.

INDIANA CAVE SYMPOSIUM 2005

by Keith Dunlap/Dave Everton

The thirteenth annual Indiana Cave Symposium will be held on Saturday, April 30th at the Scenic Hills Camp, a few miles east of Spring Mill State Park. A hot-dog/brat/hamburger cook-out will begin at 4 PM EST (5 PM if Indiana adopts daylight-savings time) and talks will begin promptly at 6 PM (7PM EDT). Please bring a covered dish and/or dessert to share. The hot-dogs/burgers, sandwich fixings, soft drinks, paper and plastic ware, and ice will be provided. Camping is available at nearby Spring Mill. The Indiana Karst Conservancy and Indiana Cave Survey are co-sponsoring the event.

The purpose of the symposium is to assemble the active caving groups to share and discuss their projects, and for cavers and cave researchers to network. Presentations will cover exploration, surveying, science, and conservation projects. At this time, there are nine presentations on the schedule, not necessarily in this order:

- **Wayne Cave Property Update** - Several improvements have been made during the past year to the property containing this classic Monroe County cave now owned by the IKC, and property manager Robert Sollman will update us on them.
- **Carcass Crypt Pit Cleanup** - Although the cleanup took place in 2003, Brian Leavell will finally show us how it was all pulled off in this nice southern Indiana pit. A last-minute situation prevented him from doing so in 2004, but he's agreed to try again in 2005.
- **To Be Announced** - Brian Killingbeck always seems to have his hands in some great survey project, and he promises to share some of his survey exploits of the past year with us, which of course involves Indiana caves!
- **HNF 3-year Biology Project** - Jerry Lewis had a scheduling conflict last year and was unable to present, but he's back again in 2005, eager to give an overview of his recently-completed 3-year biota study of caves in the Hoosier National Forest.
- **The 2005 Winter Bat Census** - Virgil Brack, Keith Dunlap, and company have been at it again, this past winter being one

for the biennial bat survey. Hear Keith explain the details of how many Indiana bats were counted in which caves, and how the figures compare to those of previous surveys.

- **Lost River System Project Update** - It has been two years since we've gotten this program due to Tony Cunningham's busy-ness, and although he can't make it again, SJVGer Kim DeCero has volunteered to step up to the podium and deliver an update on this massive spaghetti-bowl type of cave system that just won't stop growing in hard-earned mileage.
- **HNF Cave Inventory Update** - Bruce Trotter will be telling about the progress that he, Ray Sheldon, Jerry Walker, and others have been making at improving the quality of cave data (locations and resources) for the caves and karst features of the Hoosier National Forest, which has proved to be a formidable task on this 200,000 acre property.
- **Jake's Water Bowl Cave** - Dave Black has been at the survey helm as usual, and will treat the group to the story of the exploration and survey of a (in his own words) "nice little 5000-foot long cave east of Palmyra."
- **The Roberts Digs: Caves East of Spring Mill State Park** - Have you ever dreamed of opening a 4700-foot, mainly walking cave in Indiana? Forget about opening one then; how about surveying such a cave? Thanks to owner Willie Roberts' digging persistence and hospitality, cavers have recently had the privilege of benefiting from his efforts, which include a couple of other caves he has opened on his property in addition to the "big" one. Sean Lewis and Dave Everton will have the pleasure of presenting on the area caves, including participation from Willie.

For more information, contact Dave Everton at (812) 824-4380 or e-mail DEverton@indiana.edu Also visit the ICS's website (www.caves.org/survey/ics) for the latest information and location map.

ROBERTS PROPERTY SINKHOLE & CAVE CLEANUP

by Dave Everton

INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2004, Indiana DNR employee, IKC member, and Lawrence County landowner Frank Hodges arranged caver access through Mark Kraus of the St Joseph Valley Grotto (SJVG) to investigate a cave on nearby property that his neighbor Willie Roberts had dug open. Mark organized the subsequent survey of the cave, which taped in at nearly 4700 feet, much of which was walking passage. Willie got digging fever, and later opened two other caves on his land. Many of the sinkholes contained trash, and he desired to clean them up. In addition to being the right thing to do, it would also facilitate continued and more efficient digging.

THE CLEANUP

On Saturday, February 19, 2005, a total of 26 cavers from Indiana and other states including Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Virginia showed up at the Roberts property. Group by group and one by one, they filled out the sign-in sheet and liability release forms and were directed to various sinkholes by Willie, who coordinated the trash attack. Tom Rea brought his 6x4 Gator, which proved immensely useful at tugging and then hauling trash to the drop off location in the back of Willie's barn.

Willie had previously targeted nine different locations on his property for trash

removal. He marked trees with numbered signs and included a map showing the locations. He had plenty of digging implements on hand already due to his past experiences running a landscaping business, and shared them for use to those that hadn't brought any. Brian Leavell had provided grain bags made of strong nylon for use as trash and haul bags, which worked out perfectly.

Much of the trash in the sinkholes had been covered over after placement, so most efforts were concentrated on digging it up in order to remove it. In one sinkhole, the crew working there discovered an automobile! Removing it was quite beyond the scope of any equipment available that day, so it was left for future removal. One caver believes it is an old Corvair.

Lunch was provided by Brian Anderson of Anderson and Associates Insurance Company of Orleans. He paid for 50 sandwiches from Back Yard Burgers in Mitchell, although Willie had already planned on paying for it. Willie picked up the food, and a spread was created since the meat and fixins were all individually wrapped or provided separately. Each person could build their own custom sandwich! Willie bought some soda pop as well.

After the late lunch, the only real work remaining was the cleanup of the vertical entrance to Lisa Roberts Cave in the front yard. A small crew volunteered to do that. Although they had some minor difficulty

...continued on page 20 



One of several sinkholes being excavated to uncover buried trash on the property of Willie Roberts.

photo by Mark Deebel

INDIANA KARST CONSERVANCY TREASURY REPORT

Income/Expense Statement From October 1, 2004 to December 31, 2004

INCOME:

Dues Apportionment and Residuals	705.00	
Donations - General	219.38	
Donations - Wayne Cave / Land Acquisition Fund	1327.00	
Interest	127.29	
	127.29	\$2,378.67

EXPENSES:

IKC Update (printing, production, mailing)	181.42	
Stewardship/Conservation	121.77	
Membership	116.84	
Property taxes	100.10	
Business (insurance, PO Box rental)	71.50	
Transfers to/from restricted funds/other adjustments	1369.88	
	1369.88	(\$1,961.51)

NET OPERATING EXCESS (DEFICIT) THIS PERIOD: \$417.16

Balance Sheet December 31, 2004

ASSETS:

Cash in Checking / Saving Accounts / CDs	48471.71	
Wayne Cave Preserve (20.00 acres)	75000.00	
Sullivan Cave Preserve (28.00 acres)	72000.00	
Buddha Karst Nature Preserve (36.84 acres)	29000.00	
Orangeville Rise Nature Preserve (3.01 acres)	7000.00	
Indian Creek Conservation Easement (valued at \$1/acre)	13.16	
	13.16	\$231,484.87

LIABILITIES & OPERATING EXCESS:

Land Acquisition Fund	9643.55
Deferred Dues Fund (184 members)	1860.00
Stewardship Endowment Fund	13548.07

Previous Operating Excess	23016.09	
Net Excess (Deficit) This Period	417.16	
	417.16	
Current Operating Excess	23433.25	
Real estate liquidity	183000.00	
	183000.00	

Total Liabilities & Operating Excess \$231,484.87

IKC QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Saturday, December 4, 2004

Indianapolis, Indiana

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Richard Vernier, President
 Bob Sergesketter, Secretary
 Keith Dunlap, Treasurer
 Bruce Devore
 Don Ingle
 Kriste Lindberg
 Steve Lockwood
 Nick Noe
 Tom Sollman
 Bill Tozer
 Bob Vandeventer
 Sue Vernier
 Jamie Winner

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Bruce Bowman
 Dave Haun

The meeting was called to order at 10:25 AM at the home of Nick and Carita Noe in Indianapolis, President Richard Vernier presiding. No proxies for the two absent Board members were accepted. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as published in the December 2004 *IKC Update*.

Treasurer Dunlap reported that total assets of the IKC stand at \$230,636.12. Land holdings amount to \$183,000 and there is a cash balance of \$47,636.12. The various funds have balances as follows: Stewardship Fund, \$13,509.19, Land Acquisition Fund, \$8,516.55, Deferred Dues, \$2,475, and the General Fund, \$23,139.38, for a total of \$47,636.12.

IKC membership now stands at 183 after dropping about fifteen members for non payment of dues.

Grotto Liaison Agreement Status

The new Grotto Liaison Agreement has been mailed to the five Indiana grottos that have a current Grotto Liaison Agreement with the IKC. Those grottos are the Northern Indiana Grotto, Central Indiana Grotto, Bloomington Grotto, St Joseph Valley Grotto, and the Evansville Metropolitan Grotto. The Saint Joseph Valley Grotto and the Evansville Metropolitan Grotto have returned signed agreements so far.

Documentary Video

Vernier reported that he had mentioned to Noe that the IKC would have no objections to the Hoosier Environmental Council contacting Mr McGowan and working with him and that the IKC would support whatever was done as long as the karst portion was done in a fair and unbiased manner. Noe said that the HEC had approached him and would probably talk to him in January of 2005 and see what they can put together for the Spring. Noe said that the HEC is very interested in proceeding with an I-69 video that would involve caves and when it comes time for caver input, they would depend on the expertise and advice of the IKC to a great extent.

Ingle, who is now the entire Documentary Video Committee, said that he has been contacting people who could help on this project. He has received either verbal or e-mail commitments from Horton Hobbs, Julian Lewis, Andrew King from US Fish and Wildlife, and John Whitaker from Indiana State University. Now that several well known cave experts have been lined up, the focus is changing from getting people to getting financial backing. Getting money is proving to be much more difficult and complicated.

He said that he checked with the Environmental Protection Agency and that they had a deadline that went down at the beginning of November and that they would have required a detailed financial report documenting where any money was spent and since we haven't spent any yet and don't really know what the expenses will be, it's impossible to put a proposal together. Another possibility is the Supplemental Environmental Project which was explained by Lindberg at the Fall IKC meeting. This is a program through the Indiana Department of Environmental Management and it has similar requirements for detailed financial reports. Ingle said that he doesn't think we would qualify for the SEP program but Lindberg thinks we might. He thinks we have a good chance with the EPA but it will be Spring before we can get anything going with either one.

Ingle said that the NSS budgeted about \$6000 in 2004 for educational grants and they would probably budget that much for 2005. This project would probably qualify for a portion of that money. The next NSS Board of Governors meeting is in March of 2005 and he will put a grant proposal together to be presented at the meeting.

Dunlap asked Ingle if he was going after a conservation grant or an education grant. Ingle said education. Tozer said that the committees that oversee these various NSS funds are often looking for places to spend the budgeted money.

Carita Noe, speaking as someone with a background in education, said that we should be aware that professional quality video programs like this can easily cost \$5000 per minute to produce. Vernier explained the arrangement that we are working out with Mr McGowan and that we believe that it will be a good deal for the IKC. Carita Noe said that the IKC should be sure to retain the copyright to any program that is produced. Ingle agreed and he said that McGowan was agreeable to that.

Ingle said that he also had another thought. If McGowan was unavailable for this, we could probably produce a video on our own cheaper and faster. He said that the interest is there to produce a video and he has more than enough experts lined up to help out. As it is, it will be at least Spring before we can



do anything about lining up financing but if we had a really good camcorder, we could probably start shooting tomorrow. Carita Noe said that people at Mammoth Cave did an eighteen minute video on their own and it is fairly decent. The CIG library has a copy. She said that we might also contact Bob Armstrong because someone, she thinks IUPUI, is in the process of recording Bob's Lost River Tour.

Vernier pointed out that having someone like Dave McGowan do this project goes far beyond the quality of the camcorder or other equipment. There is an art to it. Dunlap agreed, saying that editing is everything and that if this is going to go out with the IKC's name on it, it must be professional in every way.

Dunlap asked if the focus of the video is going to be Indiana cave biota. Ingle said yes, and that McGowan is okay with that. In fact, he is much more comfortable with doing the biota angle than something on I-69.

Vernier said that we probably can't take any action on any of this now since we don't know what the HEC is going to do. We also need to be realistic with Dave McGowan and not string him along since we don't know for sure if this is going to happen or not. Ingle said that McGowan knows that we are seeking funds and that we are being up front with him.

Several more minutes were spent discussing the points that were discussed at the September meeting such as how this video will be distributed and used, who will use it, fundraising to pay for it, what are the expected results, firm commitments from people to help, length, and the need for a firm and realistic price to carry the project to completion.

Education and Outreach

Lindberg said that she is serving on the I-69 Community Advisory Committee as the IKC representative.

The Indiana Geological Survey hosted a groundwater conference in November and Lindberg led a day long field trip for the participants including stops at Leonard Springs Nature Park, different road cuts in the area, Wesley Chapel Gulf, and the Orangeville Rise.

The next weekend Lindberg did a Project Underground workshop at Spring Mill for the Environmental Education Association of Indiana annual conference.

Lindberg said that she is working with a teacher doing a program for Science Olympiad on aquifers using the karst groundwater model. She also said that she has been asked to be chair of the Environmental Commission of Bloomington. In this position she will be working a lot more with developers. Dunlap asked if developers are participating with the various environmental commissions just because they have to. Lindberg said yes, at least for now, but they are getting better. She said that conservation issues are starting to get more attention both with developers and with home buyers.

Sergesketter asked how the inflatable cave is coming along. Lindberg said that it is not put together yet but she got Bender Lumber Company to supply all the materials.

Indian Cave, The Nature Conservancy

Dunlap said that after the last IKC meeting he e-mailed Allen Pursell of The Nature Conservancy and told him that the IKC would be interested in being involved with the Indian Cave property, whatever that might be. There are still landowner/caretaker problems that need to be worked out. Those issues were discussed at the September IKC meeting. Vernier said that this could be a TNC land acquisition with the IKC possibly managing the cave. If the property is acquired, Winner, who lives nearby, agreed to be the property or cave manager if the need arises. Dunlap said that Pursell hasn't heard from the person in Indianapolis who is handling the matter for the property owner. Tozer asked if anyone else lives in the area if Winner would be unable to keep an eye on the place. Dunlap said that Dr Jerry Lewis would probably be the next closest and he is interested in the cave from a biological standpoint. Dunlap thinks that Dr Lewis would be a good backup.

Hancock Property Status

Dunlap said that the frustration continues. He has not heard a peep out of anybody.

Wayne Cave, Fund Raising

Dunlap reported that the Land Acquisition Fund is still about \$10,000 short of what we had going into the purchase of the Wayne property, but we're still in the black.

Wayne Cave, Scout Workday

Robert Sollman reported that on the weekend of November 27-28, his Boy Scout troop from Fort Branch held a work session at the Wayne property. He passed around before and after photos of several areas of the property. The Scouts delineated a couple of camping areas, cleared and marked a trail from the parking area to the cave, and put in some fire rings. Devore asked if we have received any comments from the neighbors, since we've taken over the property. Dunlap said that we don't hear much. The tenant who lives across the road has been vocal about people parking along the road. The driveway and parking area should alleviate that problem. Trash along the road is a continuing problem and we'll get blamed for some of that.

Robert Sollman proposed some changes to the Wayne property management plan in order to eliminate listing projects that have been completed and list work that needs to be done. After some discussion, it was determined that the things that needed to be done could be done at the discretion of the property manager. Jobs that remain to be done include getting rid of the huge brush pile, removal of the scrap metal that was found, clean up the stumps and dirt piles on the south side of the clearing, put down finer gravel on the driveway, and put in permanent property boundary markers.



Vernier asked if we needed a motion to update the management plan to reflect the progress made on the various projects at the property. Sue Vernier so moved but it was not seconded. After more discussion it was decided that the property manager will go through the plan and review it in light of the proposed changes and the current status of the projects and reword the plan and make a proposal at the next meeting.

The smaller gravel will be put on the driveway in the Spring or early Summer, possibly on a date to coincide with the June IKC meeting. Dunlap said that when we do that, he will have the tractor with the blade and we can probably work on the dirt and stump piles at the south edge of the clearing the same day.

Wayne Cave, Other

Lindberg asked about access to the property. Dunlap said that there is a combination lock on the gate. The cave key is available from any grotto liaison. Sollman said that the property doesn't get much visitation but he likes the idea of having IKC properties easily available to IKC members. If someone is passing through and wants to camp there for the night, they should have access and if the combination lock method works out at the Wayne property, maybe it could be used at other IKC properties, specifically at the Sullivan property. Tozer said that we do have a similar arrangement at Sullivan but Sollman pointed out that a key is needed to get through the driveway gate at Sullivan. Sollman said that he would like to see a combination lock on the driveway gate at Sullivan if, after a reasonable amount of time, we don't have any problems at the Wayne property. Dunlap said that the Sullivan property has a lot more visitation than the Wayne property will ever have so there would need to be more coordination among users. It might not be as easy to just pop in and set up camp without prior arrangement.

Sullivan Cave, Management Plan Update

Dunlap will take on the task of reviewing the current plan and propose updates as needed and will make a report at the next IKC meeting.

Sullivan Cave, Fence

Dunlap doesn't think that there is enough of a problem to justify putting up a fence separating our field up on the ridge from the neighbors next door. He said that we should keep an eye on the situation and see if the kids on ATVs stay off of our property.

Sullivan Cave, Outhouse

Dunlap said that he has received requests to put an outhouse on the property. He said that he is not in favor of doing it but he has heard from many people who think it's a good idea so it needs to be discussed. He said that there used to be an outhouse but by the time the IKC bought the property it was unusable and it was removed. We have a large user base at the Sullivan property and people are "going" all over the place. As more and more people use the property, the problem is going to get worse. Building

an outhouse creates maintenance issues. Depending on how it's built, there may be environmental issues, and it would be a setback from keeping the property natural. If we put one in, the choices are to simply dig a hole and build over it which would probably be unacceptable in a karst area, or have some sort of sealed pit which would have to be pumped or dug out from time to time. If we put one in that needs to be pumped out, it must be accessible by a service truck. Vernier asked if there are any regulations concerning outhouses. Dunlap said that there may be regulations concerning construction but there probably are no laws preventing us from putting one in. A sealed system would likely meet all codes. Vernier asked if there were any insurance considerations because we would be adding a structure. Dunlap didn't think it would impact our taxes or insurance. Sergesketter asked about the economics of a Porta-john. Dunlap said that he thought about it too, maybe buying one and having it serviced as needed. Tozer asked about the frequency of servicing a sealed pit type. Sollman described the type of outhouses used at the Old Ben Scout Camp in Pike County. Described as the "Taj Mahal" of outhouses, he said that they are of the sealed pit type and are very heavily used but are only pumped out once a year. The down side is that construction cost would be very high. Devore said that the Northern Indiana Grotto has property near English with an outhouse and they have only had to move it once in ten years. He said that they throw a coffee can full of lime in it every now and then and it breaks it down. He said that the simpler we make this the better but he agreed that a sealed pit would be best at Sullivan. Sollman said that he has heard that often groups that use the Sullivan property offer monetary donations to the IKC for the use of the place. Vandeventer said that is true. Sollman said that, while he really doesn't want to create another fund, outhouse maintenance would be a good use for donations received from groups using our property. The discussion went on but it was finally decided that Dunlap will do a little more research and present a plan at the next IKC meeting.

Sullivan Cave, Other

Dunlap said that a new roof is needed on the small shed at Sullivan. It doesn't need to be done right now but we should work it in soon. Vernier asked if we want to add more rock to the parking area and maybe make it a little larger. Dunlap said we probably need to. He said that the plastic chain has helped to keep people from driving off the gravel but everyone agreed that parking can be tight at times and that people don't intend to drive in the grass but they end up there anyway. Sollman asked about the condition of the old trail from the highway to the cave. Vandeventer said it's in great shape.

Gas Drilling in Karst Areas

There was a discussion of the problems of gas drilling in karst areas led by Kevin Strunk who is a Professional Geologist.

Items From The Floor

There was a discussion of an "Adventure Race". The



sponsors initially wanted to use Wesley Chapel Gulf Cave for a portion of the race but they were denied a permit. Then they wanted to use Tucker Lake Spring Cave and there was strong pressure to approve a permit but when it got to the Karst Specialist, the idea was killed. Vernier said that as far as he knows, in the end they didn't use any cave for the race.

Next Meeting

The next IKC meeting will be February 12, 2005, at

Kriste Lindberg's home in Bloomington, IN. The meeting will start at 6:00 PM. The Annual Business Meeting will be March 19, 2005, at the Greenwood Library. The meeting will begin at 10:00 AM.

Sue Vernier moved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 1:26 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Bob Sergesketter, Secretary

IKC FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Saturday, February 12, 2005

Bloomington, Indiana

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Richard Vernier, President
Bob Sergesketter, Secretary
Keith Dunlap, Treasurer
Bruce Bowman
Bruce Devore
Dave Haun (proxy by Bambi Dunlap)
Don Ingle
Kriste Lindberg
Steve Lockwood
Nick Noe
Tom Sollman
Bill Tozer
Bob Vandeventer
Sue Vernier
Jamie Winner

The meeting was called to order at 6:25 PM at the home of Kriste Lindberg in Bloomington, President Richard Vernier presiding. Bambi Dunlap was accepted as proxy for Dave Haun. The minutes of the December, 2004 meeting have not yet been published so they could not be approved.

Treasurer Dunlap reported a cash balance of \$48,256.97. Land holdings amount to \$183,000. Total IKC assets stand at \$231,256.97. IKC membership stands at 184. Dunlap said that membership has been pretty flat. Very few new members have joined in the last six months. Vernier asked if we need to have a membership drive. There was a brief discussion but no action taken. Sergesketter asked what is the Deferred Dues Fund. Dunlap explained that when members pay their dues, whether for one or multiple years, the money goes to the Deferred Dues Fund. Every three months, one fourth of each member's dues for the current year gets transferred into the General Fund. The theory is that if the IKC folded, there would be money set aside to repay the unused portion of each member's dues.

Grotto Liaison Agreement Status

Signed agreements have been received from the Saint Joseph Valley Grotto, the Evansville Grotto, and the Bloomington Grotto. Dunlap said that the Central Indiana Grotto lost the paperwork in the process of changing officers and the new chairman has the agreement and it will be signed very soon.

Gene Pelter said that he handles the mail for the Northern Indiana Grotto and does not remember ever getting the new agreement. Vernier said that he will send another one. Ingle reported that the Western Indiana Grotto is defunct. Dunlap said the WIG divided their treasury and donated half to the NSS and half to the IKC. The IKC received a check from the WIG for \$94.57.

Buckner/Isom Property

Vernier said that there was an e-mail sent out from someone asking if the IKC had any information about Buckner Cave or the Bull's Eye entrance on the Isom property. This person was interested in possibly buying the property. Dunlap said that he talked to the wife of the person making the e-mail inquiry and she said that they were interested in building a house on the property.

Documentary Video

Vernier said that he sent some information on the proposed video to the Hoosier National Forest because he knew that they had some funds for karst related projects. He talked to Cynthia Basile who is a wildlife biologist and is now the karst specialist. Vernier said that she sounded quite enthused about it but wasn't sure about getting it in the budget for this year. He gave her McGowan's contact information. She has not contacted McGowan but she still seems interested. If the HNF turns out to be a source for funding a karst video, there would be a question of ownership of the rights to the finished product.

Ingle has been in contact with the NSS seeking funding but has been unsuccessful. Although they asked him to keep in contact, it appears that the NSS will not be a source for funding at this time or in the near future.

Lindberg said that the IKC is now included on the list of organizations eligible to receive funds from the Supplemental Environmental Program, but it would be a long shot since she said that developers can pick where they want to spend their "fines". Vernier said that he has a meeting with the HNF on February 19, and he will find out if they will be able to help. He thinks that the HNF is our best bet for



funding for now.

Education and Outreach

Lindberg reported on a Hoosier National Forest karst program a couple of weeks ago. She gave a preliminary presentation and then Dr Lewis talked on cave biology. That was followed by a presentation by Steve Harriss about bats on the Forest. During the meeting, the IKC was presented an award acknowledging our partnership with the HNF on karst issues. Also, Ken Day, Forest Supervisor, signed off on a Significant Cave list, accepting the first twenty-eight caves that were nominated.

Lindberg said that she has been working with students at a local high school on a Science Olympiad program called "Awesome Aquifers". The program includes building a small karst aquifer model for water quality demonstrations. She is also still working with developer and recently traveled to Muncie to see some alternative septic systems. She has written an article for the upcoming NSS News Conservation Issue.

Lindberg said that Virginia has recently designated a "State Bat" and she thinks that Indiana should also make such a designation. We already have a species of bat anxious to accept the title. Noe said that we must first get a state legislator to write up the proposal and introduce it. Then we all have to get behind it and keep lobbying until the designation is made.

There will be a Project Underground on September 10, 2005, at Harrison/Crawford State Forest.

Indian Cave

Dunlap said that there has been no contact with anyone concerning Indian Cave. The matter is in the hands of The Nature Conservancy to pursue.

Hancock Property

Dunlap said that he has heard rumors that the appraisal still hasn't been accepted by the Federal Government appraisal reviewers. He has talked to others who have a stake in this matter and they are all equally frustrated. Basically, there is no change in the status.

Wayne Cave

Robert Sollman reported that there has been no work done since the November work weekend. At that time campsites and fire rings were established and a clearly marked trail to the cave was put in. No workdays are planned until sometime in late spring. He said that in looking over the management plan for the Wayne property, he noticed that a lot of the plan is written in future tense. He wants to make some changes to the plan and he had a copy of the proposed changes in hand. Vernier advised him to distribute the proposed changes to the Board for study and then bring up the subject at a future meeting.

Robinson Ladder Cave Acquisition

The Robinson Ladder Cave property is a forty-acre

tract of land in Crawford County, Indiana. It is about four miles north of Milltown and a quarter mile east of State Road 66. It is partially wooded and has two large open fields. The property contains Robinson Ladder Cave, which is a listed Indiana bat hibernaculum, and another small cave of unknown size. The property is square and is accessed by a twenty-foot wide easement from SR 66. The tract is for sale and the asking price is \$74,000. The Nature Conservancy is officially supportive of assisting the IKC with the purchase and has offered up to \$34,000. TNC owns a ten-acre adjoining tract.

Dunlap reported that on January 27, 2005, he made the following motion to the Board by e-mail and telephone. "I move that the IKC pursue acquisition of the forty-acre Robinson Ladder Cave tract, expending not more than \$40,000 for the land, and not more than \$2,000 for other related expenses including an appraisal, closing costs, etc., but excluding a legal survey." All fifteen members of the Board voted for the motion and so Dunlap made an offer of \$70,000 on the property. The offer was quickly rejected. The realtor told Dunlap that if the IKC would offer \$73,000, he would kick in the extra \$1,000. That offer was accepted. Dunlap ordered an appraisal the same day the offer was accepted. The appraisal is not done yet so we are still not sure if the purchase can go forward but assuming the appraisal comes in satisfactorily, Dunlap said that he is targeting a March 4 closing date.

If we close on March 4, we're going to need up to \$74,500, depending upon closing costs. TNC will be contributing \$33,500 but it could be six weeks before that money becomes available so the IKC is initially going to have to foot the entire cost. In the past, IKC members have volunteered to make short-term interest-free loans to carry us through situations like this and Dunlap proposes doing that again. He wants to borrow, from external sources \$53,500. When the \$33,500 of TNC's money comes in, that will be used to pay down some of the external loans, leaving \$20,000 to be paid off. If we do that, we will still have to come up with \$21,000 internally. We have \$9,600 in the Land Acquisition Fund and we could "borrow" \$11,400 from the General Fund. At this time, the General Fund has \$23,145 in it, so we would be borrowing about one half of it. We also have \$13,548 in the Stewardship Fund as well as \$1,920 in the Deferred Dues Fund so we will still have significant cash reserves in the treasury. Dunlap moved to have the IKC borrow \$53,500, interest-free, for a term not to exceed one year. The loan will be secured by a promissory note from the IKC. Proceeds from TNC, when received, will be used to pay down that loan. Bowman seconded. Noe asked how close the appraisal has to be to the selling price. Dunlap said that it should be close, within five to ten percent, but the final decision is up to the Board. Vernier asked how past appraisals have worked out. Dunlap said that the Buddha property was appraised higher than what we paid. If the appraisal comes in much lower than \$73,000, we'll have to discuss what we want to do. Dunlap said he thought that TNC has a policy that they will not pay



more than the appraised value, however, since the IKC is actually buying the property, he doesn't think that rule will come into play. Tozer asked if our offer contained anything about the appraisal. Dunlap said that there was a contingent that the appraisal has to match the offer. That gives us a way out if the appraisal comes in much lower than the asking price. There being no further discussion, the vote was taken. The motion passed, 15-0-0.

Dunlap moved to use the full amount, (about \$9600), in the Land Acquisition Fund for the acquisition of the Robinson Ladder property. Tozer seconded. The motion passed, 15-0-0.

Dunlap moved to borrow not more than \$12,000 from the General Fund for the acquisition of the Robinson Ladder property. Ingle seconded. The motion passed, 15-0-0.

Dunlap suggested we discuss what we'll do if the appraisal comes in much lower than the asking price. Vernier said that we also need to discuss what we'll do if The Nature Conservancy withholds their funding because of the appraisal. Dunlap said that without the TNC contribution, we will also have to back out of the deal, however, he thinks that TNC will still put in the their \$33,500 because the IKC is the purchaser and if we want to go ahead with the deal, even if the appraisal is low, that's our business.

Noe asked how much time would elapse between the time that the appraisal is available and the closing date. Dunlap said that the appraisal is to be completed within twenty-one days of the accepted offer. He said that he expects to hear something in the coming week. Vernier asked if there would have to be a separate timber appraisal. Dunlap said that he thinks the appraiser should have taken the timber into account when he did the inspection of the property but if the appraisal comes in low, a separate timber cruise might be used to bring the appraisal figure up.

There was a discussion of how low the appraised value could be and still be acceptable. Sollman thought that a five percent reduction would be acceptable. Anything more and the Board should be asked for approval before proceeding with the purchase. Vernier said that the Board should be kept informed no matter what. It was finally decided that if the appraisal was low by less than five percent, we'll go ahead. If the difference is greater, we'll have to rethink the deal.

Vernier asked if we will get a firm commitment out of TNC before March 4. Dunlap said he's pretty sure we will. He said that they are definitely committed. Tozer asked if TNC will have input in how the property would be managed. Dunlap said that he thinks that TNC is confident that we know what we're doing. He said that they would probably expect a strong commitment from us to continue managing the cave for the benefit of the bats. Sollman said that his primary reason for supporting the pur-

chase is managing the cave for the bats. Vernier agreed that this property is a worthwhile acquisition and the fact that TNC is helping to pay for it makes it a real good deal.

Dunlap said that if things go as we expect, at the next meeting we'll set up a committee to write up a management plan for the property.

Dunlap said that membership renewal notices and IKC election ballots will be mailed next week. Do we want to make an announcement of, the pending purchase in that mailing and maybe even solicit donations or wait until we have closed on the property? He thought that if we get an acceptable appraisal before the mailing goes out, there's little else preventing us from buying the property so it would be good to announce that we are buying it but making it clear that it isn't a done deal yet. If we don't have an appraisal, we won't say anything.

Devore said that he thinks that a separate letter, sent after the closing, announcing the purchase and seeking donations would be more effective. Vernier said that we should at least put something in the renewal letter about the need to build up the Acquisition Fund and that we are contemplating an acquisition and we need some capital to work with. Dunlap noted that the next *IKC Update* will go out after the closing so we can have something in there, either an article or a separate insert or both.

Another issue is if we want to have the property surveyed. Dunlap said we can discuss that at the next meeting. He thinks that the west boundary has been surveyed. Sollman asked if the power transmission line along the South side is on the property. Dunlap said that if it is, it just barely grazes it.

Election Ballot

Election of various Board positions will be held at the March meeting. President Vernier, Treasurer Dunlap, and Secretary Sergesketter agreed to run for re-election. In addition, four Director positions will be open. Lindberg, Tozer, Vandeventer, and Sue Vernier will all run for re-election. George Cesnik accepted a nomination to run for Director. Dunlap moved to accept the list of candidates as stated, seconded by Devore. The motion passed, 15-0-0. Dunlap said that if anyone else wants to run for a position, they must make it known within the next few days but the Board will have to approve each nomination. That can be done by e-mail or phone.

Under Earth Day

Dunlap asked if anyone had any suggestions for an Under Earth Day project. He said we could work on the trail at Sullivan. Bambi Dunlap suggested working on an outhouse but Keith didn't think we were ready to start on that. Bambi insisted that something needs to be done because of the heavy use of the property. Tom Rea said that they just completed building an outhouse at the Fiborn property in Michigan and they used a heavy plastic box buried in the ground as the pit. He thinks that



there is another one available and we could probably get it if we want to use it. The box is about three or four feet square. Dunlap said that he'll do some more research. Vernier said that we'll discuss it at the March meeting. Tom Sollman said that there is work to be done at Wayne, but Dunlap said we probably should wait on that until we have a tractor available. Sollman asked about Buddha. Dunlap said there's nothing to do there but we do have about one hundred trees to plant at Sullivan plus some trail work. Sollman asked if we could hold Under Earth Day at the Robinson Ladder Property. Dunlap said we could. Under Earth Day is usually in April and we would own the property at closing which is planned for the fourth of March. There would be time to announce it in the *IKC Update*. There is some trash to clean up on the property. Tozer said it would be a good time to get people out to look at the property and see what we've bought. Sollman thought that the easement from the highway to the property should be opened up --there are a lot of overhanging tree limbs. Grapevine removal is another possibility. Dunlap pointed out that the cave would still be closed in April, but we could change the date. The cave is closed until the first of May. We finally decided that Under Earth Day will be at the Robinson Ladder Cave property on May 14. If, for some reason, that can't happen, plan B will be to plant trees at the Sullivan property in April.

Gas Drilling In Karst Areas

There was a final discussion of the problems associated with gas drilling in karst areas.

Items From The Floor

Vandeventer said that he needs to replace the locks at the Sullivan property due to normal wear and tear. Dunlap will buy new locks and distribute the new keys to the Grotto Liaisons.

Ingle said that he was on a trip to Clicks Cave and he just wanted to thank the Northern Indiana Grotto for working with the landowner and getting the cave open again. It was a closed cave but now it is gated and protected.

Next Meeting

The next meeting, the Annual Business Meeting, will be March 19, at 10:00 AM, at the Greenwood library. Sollman will be out of the country at that time. Bambi Dunlap agreed to be his proxy.

Dunlap moved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 PM. After the meeting, Dunlap presented a photo tour of the Robinson Ladder Cave property.

Thanks to Kriste Lindberg for hosting the meeting at her home and for providing refreshments.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Sergesketter Secretary

Andrew Rasmus
203 S. State St.
Bloomington, IL 61701

Dear Mr. Dunlap

Thank you so much for allowing my Venture crew to visit Sullivan Cave and camp on the property this past weekend. The cave was wonderful and the weather was perfect.

Thanks again to the IKC for maintaining the cave and the property and allowing us to visit

Sincerely
Andrew Rasmus
Andrew Rasmus
President, Venture Crew 3

continued from page 11....

with the tripod made from 2x4s, they were able to remove most of the metal, glass, and other household trash dumped into the 25-foot entrance by previous owners. Some cavers also picked up trash in Roberts Cave.

CONCUSION

Willie was very happy with the results of the day's efforts. He plans to continue digging in some of the sinkholes in hopes of finding more caves on his property, and plans to open the property to camping cavers in April. If you would like to contact Willie regarding access to his property or caves, you may reach him by cell phone any time after noon at 317-370-6247 or by e-mailing

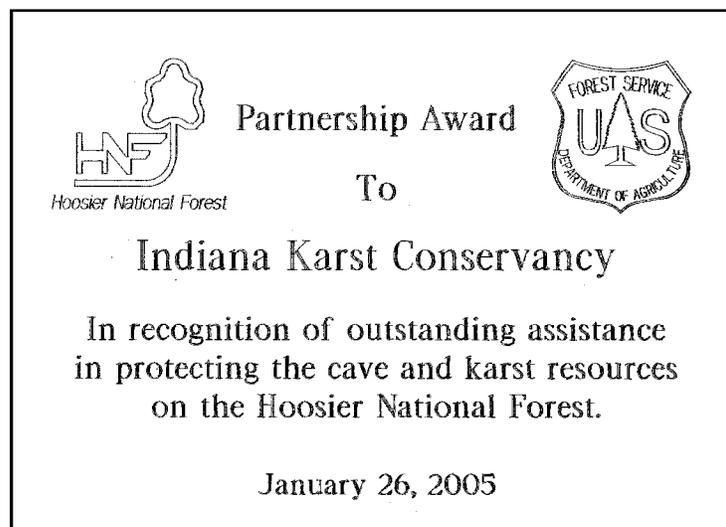
him at emailtowillie@yahoo.com. In my opinion, Roberts Cave will make a decent Boy Scout/novice type of cave, and Willie is looking forward to accommodating cavers and trips of that nature.

I would like to extend a hearty thank you to each person that participated in the workday: Scott Cobel, Brent Cook, Kim DeCero, Mark Deebel, Craig Deiner, Mike & Nicole Drake, Bambi & Keith Dunlap, Dave Everton, Jeff Gross (Grand Rapids, MI), John Harris, Greg Inman, Keith Johnson (Belding, MI), Mark Kraus, Lance & Robin Mitchell (Winchester, VA), Rich Monty (Indiana, PA), Billy Pea, Andrew Peacock, Tom Rea, Tom Reynolds, Willie Roberts, Wayne Tucker, Kevin White, and Lowell & Charles York.

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last year in leveling out the dirt/root mounds around the clearing. The exact date will depend upon the spring weather but probably will be scheduled to correspond with the June IKC quarterly meeting. Contact Robert if you are interested in helping with this project.

- ❑ Bob Armstrong and Dee Slater of the Lost River Conservation Association will once again be conducting their guided auto/hiking tours of the Lost River area, starting from the east at its head waters in Washington County, through Orange County to its disappearance near Orleans, and on to its rise near Orangeville. This year there will be two spring tours scheduled: March 26th and June 4th. The orientation lecture starts at 7:40 AM at the southeast corner of the square in Orleans and will depart promptly at 8 AM. Reservations are not required. Tours will go, *especially* if it rains. There will be some moderate hiking so sturdy footwear and long pants/sleeves are strongly recommended. The tour is free, but a small donation is suggested for the optional printed handouts. This is a must-do tour, if you are interested in Indiana karst. For more information, contact Dee at (317) 253-6951.
- ❑ On January 26th, the Hoosier National Forest organized a half-day presentation on cave-related topics. First up was Dr Jerry Lewis who presented his findings after three years of performing biological surveys on the HNF. Next Kriste Lindberg gave her presentation on agency partnering. Finally Steve Harriss presented recent bat projects being conducted on the forest. In addition to the presentation, Cindy Basile, the HNF's Karst Specialist, announced that the first 28 nominations for the Significant Cave list had been prepared and Forest Supervisor Ken Day did the ceremonial signing. Ken also presented the IKC with a plaque to express the HNF's appreciation for the volunteer efforts the cavers have contributed.



ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

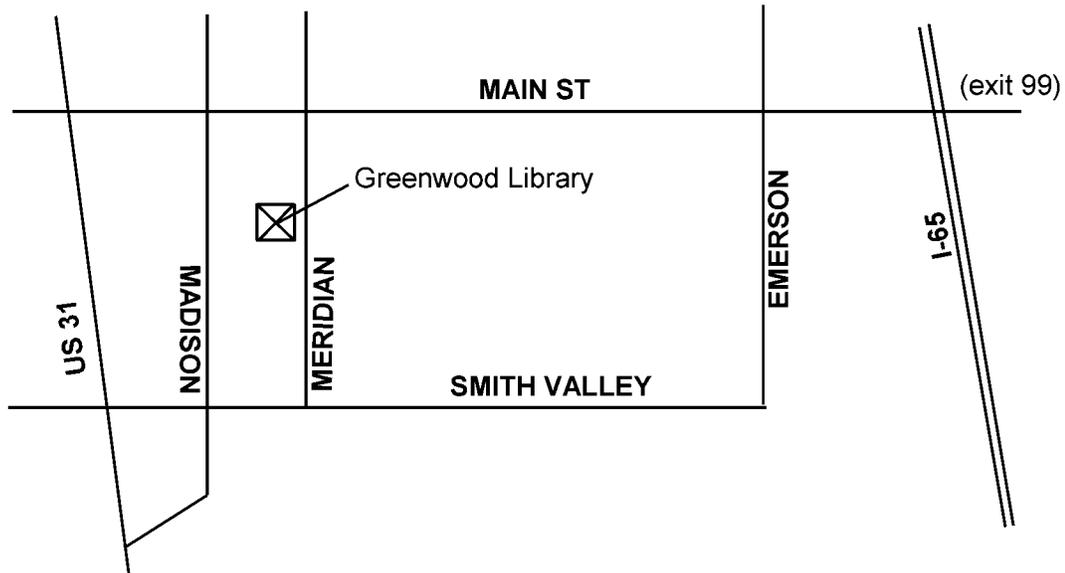
SATURDAY, MARCH 19th, 10 AM

GREENWOOD, INDIANA

GREENWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY

DIRECTIONS: The Greenwood Public Library (310 S Meridian, 317-881-1953) is located three blocks south of Main St in "old" Greenwood. From I-65 (exit 99), take Main Street west. After crossing the railroad tracks, turn south on Meridian (first traffic light). The library will be on your right. From SR-37, take Smith Valley Road east all the way to US 31. Continue on Smith Valley to Madison (next traffic light) and turn north. Just past the Greenwood middle school, turn right into the library's parking lot.

Enter the library's front entrance and turn left just past the main desk. Go down the hall and turn left again to the meeting room.



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.

