

# IKC UPDATE

A Quarterly Publication of The Indiana Karst Conservancy  
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# 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.

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

### President

Richard Vernier (2006)  
(812) 385-5058  
rsavl1@juno.com

### Secretary

Bob Sergesketter (2006)  
(812) 482-5517

### Treasurer

Keith Dunlap (2006)  
(317) 882-5420  
Keith.Dunlap@juno.com

### Directors

Bruce Bowman (2006)  
(317) 539-2753  
IKC@tds.net

Bruce Devore (2006)  
(260) 639-7249  
BRDevore@aol.com

Dave Haun (2006)  
(317) 781-1996  
DEHcave@onet.net

Don Ingle (2007)  
(812) 847-4406  
D.Ingle@insightbb.com

Kriste Lindberg (2008)  
(812) 339-7210  
Lindberg@kiva.net

Steve Lockwood (2007)  
(812) 849-5766  
Steve.Lockwood@dana.com

Nick Noe (2007)  
(317) 782-3442  
NickNoe@msn.com

Tom Sollman (2006)  
(812) 753-4953  
Sollman@juno.com

Bill Tozer (2008)  
(765) 778-3259  
WTozer@aol.com

Bob Vandeventer (2008)  
(317) 888-4501  
VandeventerBob@netzero.net

Sue Vernier (2008)  
(812) 385-5058  
rsavl1@juno.com

Jamie Winner (2007)  
(765) 945-7343  
JAWinner@insightbb.com

## COMMITTEES/CHAIRPERSON

### Education/Outreach

Kriste Lindberg  
(see E-Board list)

### Web Technologies

Bruce Bowman  
(see E-Board list)

### Update Editor/Publisher

Keith Dunlap  
(see E-Board list)

### Hoosier National Forest

Steve Lockwood  
(see E-board list)

### Rescue Coordinator

Anmar Mirza  
(812) 339-1506  
AMirza@indiana.edu

### Buddha Property

Tom Rea  
(765) 653-4423  
TomRea@ccrtc.com

### Orangeville Rise Property

Steve Lockwood  
(see E-board list)

### Robinson Ladder Property

John Benton  
(812) 683-2733  
JBenton@fullnet.com

### Sullivan Property

Keith Dunlap  
(see E-Board list)

### Wayne Property

Robert Sollman  
(812) 753-4953  
SollmanCaver@hotmail.com

### Indian Creek CE

Richard Newton  
(812) 365-2495  
Cedarman@netpointe.com

## GROTTO/LIAISONS

### Bloomington Indiana Grotto\*

Dave Everton  
(812) 824-4380

### Central Indiana Grotto\*

Keith Dunlap  
(see E-Board list)

### Dayton Underground Grotto

Mike Hood  
(513) 252-2978

### Eastern Indiana Grotto

Brian Leavell  
(765) 552-7619

### Evansville Metro Grotto\*

Ernie Payne  
(812) 477-7043

### Harrison-Crawford Grotto

Dave Black  
(812) 951-3886

### Northern Indiana Grotto\*

Bruce Silvers  
(219) 471-9908

### St Joseph Valley Grotto\*

Mark Kraus  
(574) 295-6673

### Stygian Grotto

Richard Orr  
(314) 521-0355

### Sub-Urban Chicago Grotto

Gary Gibula  
(630) 393-6746

### Windy City Grotto

Ken Redeker  
(630) 548-1259

\*grottos with liaison agreements

## MANAGED CAVES/PATRONS

### Buddha Cave

Jeff Cody  
(317) 888-9898

### Coon & Grotto caves

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

### Robinson Ladder Cave

John Benton  
(812) 683-2733  
JBenton@fullnet.com

### Shaft Cave

Jeff Cody  
(317) 888-9898

### Shiloh Cave

James Adams  
(317) 882-3724  
JKAdams@aol.com

### Suicide Cave

Ronnie Burns  
(812) 883-7400  
RBurns@blueriver.net

### Sullivan Cave

Bob Vandeventer  
(see E-Board list)

### Wayne's Cave

Tom Willett  
(812) 332-8004  
TomW@pigstye.net

Covers: Front (with Ryan Moran) and back (with Sean Lewis) views of a formation in Gemini Cave. Copyrighted photos by Brian Killingbeck.





# QUARTERLY MEETING REMINDER

**SATURDAY, JUNE 18th, 7:00 PM**

**BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA**

**IU GEOLOGY BUILDING, ROOM 143**

**(SAME ROOM AS THE BIG MEETING)**

The quarterly meetings are for the elected Board to conduct business and for our members and other interested persons to have an open forum to talk 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 meetings are informal, and everyone is encouraged to attend and participate. The IKC Board *wants* your input.

Preliminary Agenda Items: Brief recap of last quarter's activities (Sullivan workdays, Robinson Ladder workday/Under-Earth Day); Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve Management Plan, Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve fund-raising status; Treasurer's Report; HNF inventory project; Grotto Liaison agreement; Upcoming projects; and more...

Meeting directions: The Geology Building is located at 10th and Walnut Grove. Tenth Street runs east/west and is one of the major streets that cut across the IU Campus. Park behind the building, parking permits are not enforced at night. Enter the building from the rear at the west end. The room is halfway down the hall on the right.

## ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

18JUN = IKC QUARTERLY MEETING, Bloomington (see above)

04-08JUL = NSS CONVENTION, Huntsville, AL

05-07AUG = INDIANA CAVE CAPERS, Marengo

24SEP = IKC QUARTERLY MEETING/COOK-OUT (see page 7)

24SEP = LOST RIVER TOUR, Orleans (see page 8)

08OCT = TNC HENDERSON PARK WORKDAY, Salem (see page 8)

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...



Just to be different I'm going to write a trip report this time. No quotes, no pleading, no inspirational messages, well maybe a little message or two -- and maybe a plea somewhere in there, but mostly just a trip report.

It's Friday the 13th of May, the night before the Under-Earth Day/Robinson Ladder open house and I find a message from Ralph Sawyer of the Near Normal Grotto. He wants to know if the activity is still a go before he drives all those hours from near Peoria. Before I give him an affirmative, I decide to check the weather - NOAA tells me showers tonight then clearing by ten the next morning. Great! No problem. I message Ralph to come ahead.

Next morning, it's raining to beat the band. It rains all the way to the property; and when we get there around 9:30, it really cuts loose. Sue and I sit in the truck and discuss the National Weather Service. We come up with a plan to balance the budget by cutting their funding and leasing their supercomputers to the casino industry to run gambling programs on the Internet.

Amazingly, the rain eases up around ten just as Tom Rea arrives. We test the lane as far as the first field. Tom decides to try for the barn at the top of the hill but I decline, my balding tires seem likely to let me down despite the four-wheel drive. People soon start arriving - including Ralph - who doesn't seem to hold me personally responsible for the weather report. At least I assume that, because he doesn't attack me with the large pair of pruning shears he's brandishing.

Even though this is billed as an open house for the property it's really a workday with time off for caving if we do a good job. Property manager John Benton and Under-Earth Day organizer Keith Dunlap have a list of jobs. It's a rather long list but at least we probably won't be painting the property lane gate with the current weather.

It's a beautiful piece of property; all made possible by a few instigators and the generosity of donors and already being enjoyed by

many. Sue and I are just back from the desert southwest and our eyes are tuned to reds and browns and sand; so the green of the fields and the newly leafed trees seems intense, even through the mists.

Since it's raining and we're at the driveway and some people have clippers and loppers and weed whips, the command is given to retake the lane from the brush growing along the fence. Dutifully, we work our way along the quarter-mile drive, clipping branches here and there, flogging back the offending weeds. We are nearing the gate when we hear a chainsaw. It's Tom Sollman. Tom isn't into wimpy clippers, loppers, and weed whips. We stand back and watch as all living vegetation is cut neatly in half at the fence. "Hey, you made it easier for me to get my saw in there," he offers, sensing that we were feeling foolish and inadequate.

Next job is taking down an interior fence. Several people start on this with the knowledge that chainsaws and barbed wire don't mix.

Another party piles into Keith's (borrowed) and Bob Vandeventer's pickups and heads up the hill to the barn to clean it out. It's good timing because the rain cuts loose again as we hurry inside. It's an opportunity to evaluate the roof, which turns out to be in good shape. The barn itself has wide gaps between the vertical siding boards and inside we find supports for racks. Those of us who have spent time caving in Kentucky recognize the signs of a tobacco barn. With all the gaps, it's well lit inside but the heating bill would be horrendous. The trash is quickly bagged with the exception of a tractor tire and rim (too big even for Keith's extra jumbo trash bags), two kids chairs, and a rather nice beach ball, which we leave neatly arranged in a corner, certain to provoke consternation from anybody checking inside.

The next task is cleaning up trash piles around the upper field. One of these is a large stack of foam insulation, which is also bagged and loaded into Keith's (borrowed) now overflowing truck. A second pile in the northeast corner contains several bags of trash, a half dozen tires, and the intake manifold for a four-cylinder tractor engine. These are all loaded into Bob Vandeventer's also overflowing truck.

There are two deer stands on the property and they're on the list. The first one is sturd-



ily built for a southern Indiana deer stand. Tom Sollman props Keith's wimpy ladder against the tree and works his way up, methodically pulling off boards until the stand is gone. The second is more typical, rotten steps nailed haphazardly to a rotten tree. Actually, the steps are nailed to the rotten tree on one side and to a sturdy, live tree on the other. Tom leans the ladder against the good tree and starts popping off boards. After about three boards it becomes apparent that the large rotten tree is being held up by the steps. Tom quickly improvises a "failure mode and effect analysis" and announces that if the rotten tree knocks his ladder over when it goes down he'll give the good tree a big bear hug. The tree goes over, scattering us but not upsetting the ladder. Tom calmly finishes the job.

Even though the sun is now out, Keith decides to forego the gate painting as well as the grapevine eradication, and decides it's time to "rig" the cave. To this end he takes his ladder and Bill Tozer's rope over to the entrance with the rest of us close behind. Keith and Bill are the only people with cave gear as it was in Keith's (borrowed) truck so the rest of us run down the hill to get ours while they install the ladder and rope. Sue and I return just as Keith and Bill are disappearing down the ladder. Keith stops to steady the ladder for Sue as she uses the rope to descend the slippery sink. I've wedged myself at the top of the ladder to give her a hand getting on. She has no problem. At the bottom we stumble around, tripping over big rocks and logs, still blinded from the now brilliant sun above. The passage floor slopes down and we walk into a fair sized room with flowstone on one wall and small clusters of bats on the flat ceiling high above. "What kind of bats are they?" Sue asks. Keith responds that they are most probably Indiana's. Federally endangered Indiana bats, now protected from all but the most determined vandals, the main reason we have purchased this cave. The IKC has long been involved in protecting, monitoring and lobbying for the Indiana bat but now, with the help of The Nature Conservancy, we've taken a major step and purchased an actual hibernaculum. It's now our responsibility and the bats are dependent on the support of our membership. While we have the cave and forty beautiful acres of property above, we still are in debt for it and need your help (see page 11).

It seems cold in here and it may well be as the entrance serves to trap cold air and keep the temperatures in the 30's during hibernation, a condition required by the Indiana bat.

Over by the flowstone we can see a passage coming in about fifteen feet up. Keith climbs up a slope and tells us that it's the way on. He describes how Dr Virgil Brack uses some tenuous and ice-covered handholds to traverse from where Keith stands, over to the passage during their periodic bat surveys. Keith climbs down and Bill goes up. Bill likes to climb and if Virgil can make it then so can he and with a couple of deft moves he does just that. This, of course, puts the pressure on. I climb up to the traverse and study the situation. Keith takes a different approach and starts up the wall from the bottom. He makes it. Bill starts offering me encouragement -- I wonder if this is their way of arranging a change of administration. I'm not a strong free climber and to make matters worse I've done some sort of internal damage during an incident with a nearly flat tire on our southwestern epic and stretching and twisting to get under a rock horn and over to a marginal hold are certain to cause trouble. Sue comes to my rescue. "I'm cold and am heading out. Do what you want; just don't kill yourself." Can't have her falling off that treacherous ladder, "I'm going to make sure Sue gets out OK, go on without me." As we are leaving, Bruce Silvers and Karen Padsen entered and begin examining the climb. Sue and I exit without incident. Outside, it's beautiful and sunny; maybe the weather service gets to keep their computers after all.

On our way down we pass Bill Baus and Ralph Sawyer heading to the cave. They had become suspicious when they saw people going to their vehicles and grabbing cave gear and realized that they were the only people still working.

Sue decides to nap in the warm truck but I eye the ladder rack. In a minute I've got my ladder off and am headed back up the hill with it on my shoulder. There's nobody around at the entrance as I negotiate the slippery slope with a ladder in one hand and the handline in the other. As I stumble along the passage with my ladder I run into everybody heading out. Keith has to be back in Indianapolis and needs to leave. He and Tozer had been as far as the pit area but had to turn back. Baus and Sawyer are fired up to do the pits but need a way to get back out. My lad-

der is thus greeted with enthusiasm.

Tozer graciously agrees to entrust us with his battered old Goldline rope, an object to which he seems to have some sentimental attachment. Baus and Sawyer need to run down and get their vertical gear so I'm left alone to watch Keith's ladder disappear up the flowstone. Tozer has instructions to tell Sue that I have been delayed a bit as I had mumbled something like "be right back" when I took off with the ladder.

I set the ladder up and quickly discover that its middle rests against the curved surface of the flowstone, an invitation for disaster. After some fiddling and the addition of flat rocks at the base it's stable enough to climb, though I hang onto the rope while I test it.

Before long Bill (Baus) and Ralph return and we drag the ladder over to the climb up. The old log that someone has placed at the climb to allow people to shinny down serves to steady the ladder. As we stoop along the passage we have to watch carefully to avoid the bats scattered around the ceiling. Most of these appear to be solitary Eastern Pipistrelles.

The passage continues, alternating between stooping and crawling (with me wishing I had taken the extra thirty seconds to strap on my knee pads) until we come to a small, ten or twelve foot, pit on the left side. We are looking for a forty foot pit and none of us really remembers the description (we later learn we should have gone down this pit and taken the middle of three passages at the bottom) so we go a little further to where we hear water dripping down a shaft on the left and over the top of a rock slab. This pit also looks to be short of the forty-foot mark but Bill remembers something about the forty footer being off of a twenty footer so we scout out a solid rig point. Besides no knee pads, I also brought no vertical gear, in fact I had planned to just go to the pit then turn around and leave, moving the ladder and letting Bill and Ralph shinny down the log, but changed my mind and decided to stick around. Bill goes first and quickly lands on the bottom. "Nothing here, no way out!" he calls up. Ralph decides to go down anyway and about halfway down calls out that there is a side passage where he is. He quickly swings over and makes his way to another pit. Bill then climbs up and they drag the end of the 90-foot rope over and drop it in -- after making sure there is a knot in the end. Bill descends

wearing full climbing gear but finds that the rope reaches the bottom. Ralph follows, then both climb back out. Neither seems to think that the second pit was forty feet deep (we later find out it wasn't).

I'm a bit chilly; besides the kneepads and vertical gear, I also left my coveralls back at the truck. I've been admiring the bats clinging to the ceiling and the amount of guano on the floor and wondering how long this spot has been used and by how many bats but am ready to get moving. We decide to leave the rest of the cave for another trip.

Outside, the sun is still shining and Sue is still asleep in the truck so I'm not in too much trouble.

Thanks to all who attended: John Benton, Bill Tozer, Keith Dunlap, Don Ingle, Tom Sollman, Ralph Sawyer, Bill Baus, Patsy Rahn, Bruce Silvers, Karen Padsen, Bob Vandeventer, Robbie Miller, Robert Miller, Everett Pulliam, Tom Rea, Kriste Lindberg, George Cesnik, and Dick and Sue Vernier.

If you missed the open house, don't worry; there's still more to do. I'm sure John and Keith are making another list. Like all IKC properties, the surface is always available for hiking, picnicking, enjoying nature, etc. Please contact John Benton at (812) 683-2733 or [JBenton@fullnet.com](mailto:JBenton@fullnet.com) to arrange cave visits (be sure and observe the cave closure period -- the cave is a Priority III hibernaculum for the Indiana Bat and is closed at the direction of the US Fish and Wildlife Service from September 1 to April 30.)

Remember that we are still paying off the mortgage and all help will be much appreciated. We hope you enjoy the property, the cave, and the bats.

*Richard Vernier*



Trimming brush along the access lane. photo by Don Ingle

## NEWS BRIEFS...

- ❑ IKC elections on March 10th yielded no changes to the Executive Board. Dick Vernier, Bob Sergesketter, and Keith Dunlap were re-elected President, Secretary, and Treasurer, respectively, for another year. Likewise Kriste Lindberg, Bill Tozer, Bob Vandeventer, and Sue Vernier were re-elected Directors for three more years. The other Directors remaining on the Board include Bruce Bowman, Bruce Devore, Dave Haun, Don Ingle, Steve Lockwood, Nick Noe, Tom Sollman, and Jamie Winner.
- ❑ In addition to Under Earth Day activities in May (described in Dick Vernier's report starting on page 4), there were a number of other workdays this Spring including three at the Sullivan property, and one each at the Buddha and Wayne properties. Tasks included tree planting, tree pruning, weed control around the trees, large limb removal, general mowing, and roadside trash pickup. Participants included Bambi & Keith Dunlap, Mark Kraus, Robert & Tom Sollman, and Bob Vandeventer.
- ❑ At the March meeting, George Cesnik was appointed the new Property Manager for the Buddha Karst Nature Preserve. George replaces Tom Rea who asked to be replaced due to other priorities. The Property Manager oversees activities above ground including mowing, trail maintenance, invasive control, tree planting/maintenance and anything else needing attention. Jeff Cody remains the Buddha Cave Patron who manages access and other aspects related to the caves on the property.
- ❑ As cavers, we often get calls and questions about bats in attics and what to do with injured bats. Recently, two Indiana resources have organized as part of a national network of bat rehabilitators (as well as bat rescuers and educators). In the Bloomington area, Laura Hohman is heading up the effort. In the Indianapolis area, Terri Warne is the person. Complete contact information can be found at [www.batworld.org/local\\_rescue/maplist.in.list.html](http://www.batworld.org/local_rescue/maplist.in.list.html).
- ❑ The Fall quarterly IKC meeting is scheduled for September 24th, starting at 1 PM. The site will be Tom Rea's property near Cloverdale. Following the meeting will be our annual pitch-in cook-out, co-hosted by the Central Indiana Grotto. As always, the festivities will culminate with the highly competitive dessert contest. Bring an entry or volunteer to be a judge... either way it's a yummy-good time.

- ❑ Over the past fifteen years, the Indiana DNR and the IKC have been monitoring Coon, Grotto, and Jim Ray's caves for winter disturbances in these critical *Myotis sodalis* hibernacula. This monitoring is done passively with electronic "speloggers" which are installed near the entrances of the caves and record the date and time of each human disturbance (triggered by light). The information collected is providing a means to determine the effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of our closure methods in discouraging unauthorized entry. In the fall of 1996 we installed new signage and other deterrents. As you can see, since that time there have been *no* unauthorized visits into Grotto Cave and only one in Coon Cave. Ray's Cave has had a few more disturbances, but few have been during the core winter months when the greatest impact would occur. This was the seventh year the DNR used the new speloggers designed/constructed by IKC member Dick Vernier. The DNR is also monitoring several other caves using these speloggers.


Winter	Number of Disturbances		
	Jim Ray's	Coon	Grotto
04 / 05	0 <sup>(1)</sup>	0 <sup>(1)</sup>	0 <sup>(1)</sup>
03 / 04	2 <sup>(2)</sup>	0	0
02 / 03	5 <sup>(1)</sup>	0 <sup>(1)</sup>	0 <sup>(1)</sup>
01 / 02	0	0	0
00 / 01	0 <sup>(1)</sup>	0 <sup>(1)</sup>	0 <sup>(1)</sup>
99 / 00	2 <sup>(2)</sup>	0	0
98 / 99	3 <sup>(1)(3)</sup>	0 <sup>(1)</sup>	0 <sup>(1)</sup>
97 / 98	1	1	0
96 / 97	0 <sup>(1)</sup>	0 <sup>(1)</sup>	0 <sup>(1)</sup>
95 / 96	3	9	4
94 / 95	8 <sup>(1)</sup>	8 <sup>(1)</sup>	5 <sup>(1)(4)</sup>
93 / 94	-- <sup>(5)</sup>	-- <sup>(5)</sup>	-- <sup>(5)</sup>
92 / 93	7 <sup>(1)</sup>	3 <sup>(1)</sup>	8 <sup>(1)</sup>
91 / 92	6	1	5
90 / 91	4 <sup>(1)</sup>	8 <sup>(1)</sup>	n/a

1) Excludes one visit for biennial bat census  
 2) Includes two visit for landowner's relatives  
 3) Excludes one visit for anabat testing  
 4) Spelogger failed on day 182 of 227 days  
 5) Data loss due to improper batteries





- ❑ Bob Armstrong and Dee Slater of the Lost River Conservation Association will hold their final guided auto/hiking tours of the Lost River area on September 24th. 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, the tour is something not to be missed. 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 Saturday, October 8th, The Nature Conservancy will sponsor a workday at Henderson Park west of Salem. The main task is to install erosion control. Brings gloves, water, and lunch. Meet at Howard's Restaurant (one block west of SR 135 on SR 56) in Salem at 9 AM (Indy time). Please RSVP with Bonnie Wolf (812-972-1506) if you plan to participate.
- ❑ The IKC covers most of its basic operating expenses and obligations with membership dues. However, we are greatly dependent upon additional donations to supplement and support the many projects and initiatives the IKC undertakes. Since last June, forty individuals and

...continued on page 10 

## RECURRING DONATIONS - A NEW WAY TO GIVE

Over the years, several members have suggested that the IKC set up a "sustaining membership/donation" program similar to ones used by other conservancies (most notably the SCCi). We have investigated the possibility, but the economics made it hard to justify when there might be few participants, plus we did not want to be responsible for maintaining member's credit card information.

As an alternative, several years ago we set up a method of accepting credit card donations via a donation button on our website with the processing done by a reputable third-party. This has worked well for one-time donations, but the system has been underutilized because there was not an option to allow repeated donations. However, starting last month, this functionality was added so donors can now give monthly, quarterly, or annually (\$10 minimum donation per transaction). What is nice about this new system is that the donor is in complete control of starting, stopping, and revising amounts without any interaction on our part. Electronic notification is given prior to each donation and declined transactions simply suspend giving until the donor decides to re-initiate. For complete details, see the "Frequently Asked Question" page at <http://support.networkforgood.org/?c=36>

To start your recurring giving, simply go to our home page [www.caves.org/conservancy/ikc](http://www.caves.org/conservancy/ikc) and click on the "Donate Now" button which will transfer you to the Network For Good page, then click on the second "Donate Now" button. This will bring up a donation form where you can select the recurring donation option, the amount and frequency, as well as designation of a particular project (e.g., the Robinson Ladder acquisition). You will then be asked to register by providing your e-mail address and a password. This will let you manage your account in the future. Start-to-finish should take less than 5 minutes -- all very painless. If you have any questions or need assistance, you can contact Keith Dunlap (317-882-5420 / 317-280-6274 or [keith.dunlap@juno.com](mailto:keith.dunlap@juno.com)).

One final comment, the Board has not yet decided if we will set up a true "sustaining membership" classification (this will require a by-law change). So for now, and until we determine how many members will participate, we will simply be promoting this system as a excellent way of making smaller, but regular donations to the IKC. We will also attempt to recognize those who participate (unless they prefer to remain anonymous).



## INDIANA CAVE SYMPOSIUM 2005

by Dave Everton

Spring in Indiana: the trees and flowers burst forth out of sleep to gloriously bloom, the morels bear their precious fruit, and cavers are out and about, readying themselves for the annual Indiana Cave Symposium, co-hosted by the Indiana Karst Conservancy and Indiana Cave Survey. Each organization shares the financial burden for the event, chipping in for the venue fee and food, consisting of burgers, brats, hot dogs, buns, condiments, and soft drinks. Attendees help out by bringing side dishes, desserts, chips, and the like, to create a full-blown cookout with all the fixins.

This year's location for the event was brand new; CIG caver Bill Greenwald had suggested Scenic Hills Camp in Lawrence County, a few miles east of Spring Mill State Park, which happens to contain two caves: Coon and Eversole. The building used for the Symposium was the camp's cafeteria building, and contained a full kitchen, plenty of tables and chairs, and even had heat, which came in somewhat useful since the outside temperature started out in the 50s and ended up cooling considerably later on in the evening.

It was hoped that presentations could begin a little bit earlier than the usual time of 7 PM, so the room was darkened by the means of black plastic trash bags hung over the windows. After the technology guru "Slide Show Bob" Vandeventer got all the presentations loaded, the show began. The presentations included:

- **Wayne Cave Property Update:** Robert Sollman, the Property Manager for this

recently-acquired Indiana Karst Conservancy property and cave, gave an overview of some improvements made to the property, including the installation of a driveway, driveway gate, parking area, campsites, and trail to the cave.

- **2005 Winter Bat Census:** Keith Dunlap showed charts, graphs, and photos and discussed the 2005 census and how it compared to previous ones. The federally-endangered Indiana bat population within the Indiana is increasing. However, the overall population is still decreasing.
- **Carcass Crypt Pit Cleanup:** Brian Leavell's long-awaited program on the 2003 Ohio Valley Region / Eastern Indiana Grotto cleanup detailed how the Lawrence County pit cave was first prepped, cleaned up, and subsequent property improvements made, including a stout fence around the sinkhole.
- **Richard Blenz Nature Conservancy:** While not slated as a presentation per-se, Anmar Mirza spent a few moments briefing everyone on the newly-created conservancy in Monroe County, which includes the well-known Buckner Cave. The Conservancy is now an official non-profit organization, howbeit in its infancy stage.
- **Caves East of Spring Mill State Park:** Cave owner Willie Roberts (who lives in nearby Stonington), Sean Lewis, and Dave Everton teamed up to cover the several caves Willie has dug open, as well as a few previously-known caves on neighboring properties.
- **Robinson Ladder Property Acquisition:** Keith Dunlap took the helm again with a brief description of the IKC's newest property and cave acquisition in Crawford County. While obtained primarily because of the use of the cave during the winter by the federally-endangered Indiana bats, the management plan includes caver access during the summer.
- **HNF Cave & Karst Project:** Bruce Trotter spoke of the efforts of several cavers including Ray Sheldon, Jerry Walker, Kevin Wools, Keith Dunlap, and himself in describing the intense field and



paperwork efforts they've undertaken to confirm entrance locations and records for HNF owned and related caves and karst.

- **Gemini Cave:** Brian Killingbeck gave a detailed account of this nearly three-mile long cave recently discovered in Indiana. Ryan Moran spoke of some bolt climbs done inside as well. The presentation included a video segment of some of the photographs accompanied by music created by Nate Newkirk (who couldn't attend), but was shown as the very last segment of the Symposium.
- **Karst Education: Working With Developers:** Another in a continuing series of presentations by Kriste Lindberg about the relationships between cavers, government, and business, it highlighted recent cases of progress between various groups.
- **Lost River System Project Update:** Jake Morris from the Saint Joseph Valley Grotto gave the latest facts and figures of the massive spaghetti-bowl type of cave

system, which now stands at nearly nineteen miles of mapped passages, 300+ leads still requiring exploration and survey.

- **Jakes Water Bowl Cave:** Dave Black received an internet inquiry from a Harrison County landowner that resulted in a nearly 4700-foot long "new" cave, primarily walking. The Harrison-Crawford County surveyed it during the past couple of years.

Dr. Jerry Lewis was scheduled to present on the three-year Hoosier National Forest biology project he'd just completed earlier in the year, but once again had a conflict preventing his attendance. He felt very badly for missing two years in a row and sent his regrets for having to back out.

A hearty thanks to everyone who made the 13th annual Indiana Cave Symposium a success, from planners, to presenters, to supporters, and attendees (over 70 total which may be a new attendance record). Interested in presenting in the future? Just let it be known!! Hope to see you next year!

## DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR DUES

Continued from page 8...

seven organizations/corporations have made donations (exclusive of the Robinson Ladder acquisition contributions acknowledged on page 11) for a total of \$2744. We'd like to recognize those members/contributors who have given a little extra. They include Ron Adams, Dave Anderson, John Benton, Ted Bice, Don Bohling, George Brutchin, Larry Bundy, Chris Carpenter, Jeff Cody, Bruce Devore, Jeff Farr, Doug Hanna, Dwight Hazen, Tem Hornaday, Greg Inman, Pat Jarboe, Mark Kraus, Paul Lundberg, Jacob Morris, William Morrow, Carl Nelson, Nick Noe, Don Peters, Everett Pulliam, Kevin Rasmus, Tom Rea, Kelle Reynolds, Charles Rex, Robert Roundy, Ralph Sawyer, Bob Sergesketter, Susan Strickland, Steve Taylor, Bob Vandeventer, Dick Vernier, Stan Weinzapfel, Norbert Welch, Rick Whisler, Scott Worpell, Kevin Wyatt, Bluesprings Caverns, BSA Troop 101, Dayton Underground Grotto, General Motors, Lilly, Roche, and the Western Indiana Grotto.

- ❑ Five new members have joined the IKC in the past quarter. Please welcome Tim Alkema (440), David Carson (441), John Schrire (442), James Smeltzer (443), Laura Lexander (444). The IKC membership now stands at 190.

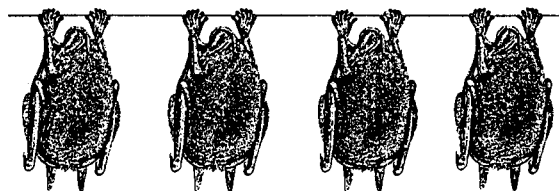
# ROBINSON LADDER CAVE PRESERVE

by Keith Dunlap

ROBINSON LADDER DONATION LIST	
\$10,000 or more	
The Nature Conservancy	
\$1,000 to \$9,999	
Bruce Bowman George Brutchen Keith Dunlap Tom Sollman	
\$250 to \$999	
Mark Deebel Bill Tozer Richard & Sue Vernier	
\$100 to \$249	
John Benton Carl Brown Geroge Cesnik Tony Cunningham Dave Haun Don Ingle Everett Pulliam Russ Romme Gordon Smith Richard Van Rheenen Bluesprings Cavern Park Evansville Metro Grotto Northern Indiana Grotto Windy City Grotto	
\$50 to \$99	\$5 to \$49
Chris Carpenter Jeff Cody Jeff Farr Scott Fee Mark Kraus Nathan Pate Jacqueline & Ernie Payne Kelle Reynolds Robert Roundy Carla Striegel Steve Taylor BSA Troop 321 (Laporte)	Scott Hammon Adam Manship Tom & Kim Metzgar Jon Miller George Mundy Steve Ragsdale Kevin Rasmus Charles Rex Gary Roberson Ray Sheldon Mark Webb Norbert Welch Kathy Welling
<b>Acquisition costs: \$74,095</b> <b>Donations/Pledges: \$41,669</b> <b>Amount unfunded: \$32,426</b> <b>Percent funded: 56.2%</b> <b>June 5, 2005</b>	

A number of things have happened over the past three months since taking ownership of the cave and 40-acre property on March 4th. First the IKC Board appointed John Benton as the Property Manager and Cave Patron. Please contact John (812-683-2733 or JBenton@fullnet.com) if you wish to visit the cave or camp on the property. The Board also appointed a committee to draft a management plan for the property. This draft plan is now complete and has been presented to the Board. It will be discussed and hopefully approved at the June quarterly meeting (and will be on-line shortly thereafter). Finally, we held a very successful Under Earth Day at the property on May 14th. Despite the rain, we had a respectable turn out of volunteers and accomplished a number of stewardship projects (see report starting on page 4). I think it is safe to say that everyone who visits the property is impressed with the IKC's newest acquisition.

From a financial standpoint, The Nature Conservancy's \$33,500 pledge has been received and a number of members and organizations have made contributions (see at left). We have submitted a \$5,000 grant request to the National Speleological Society and are preparing several other grants applications (large and small) which will be submitted as their respective deadlines approach (many grant programs only accept applications once a year). The good news is that if we are successful with all of our grant requests, we will have lowered our original \$74,000 obligation down to only \$15,000. The bad news, however, is that we will still need to raise \$15,000 which is still a lot of money for a small organization (but we have done it several times in the past). So if you have not made a donation yet, please consider doing so using the enclosed mail-in form or using our "donate now" button via our website. Give what you can. Even the smallest donations are greatly appreciated.







Aaron Atz descending the 44-foot pit located half way back in Robinson Ladder Cave.

Photo by Brian Killingbeck



Large flowstone near the entrance of Robinson Ladder Cave (above) and typical horizontal passage found in the cave.

Photos by George Jaegers



## ANNUAL CAVE PATRON / PROPERTY MANAGER REPORTS

Each year at the Annual Business meeting, the Cave Patrons and Property Managers are asked to submit a written report summarizing activities and incidents. The following is a compilation of these reports for CY2004:

### **BUDDHA CAVE PATRON - Jeff Cody**

During the past year Buddha was visited on seven occasions with permits. The first trip was on April 2 and the last was on December 11. A total of 55 people filled out waivers for these trips. In late July the logger was checked. All but two trips were grotto trips. I made my annual trip in the cave on November 14. On this trip I did not notice anything out of the ordinary. I did notice more flood debris than what I remember in the past, most of this was in the upper level. Also while there that day, I took a quick look around the property. I did not see anything unusual or any ruts in the parking area. Also anytime I am caving in the area I stop by for a quick look at the property.

I feel it is necessary to inform each trip leader about the possibility of the parking area being soft. Due to the slight angle of the parking area some vehicles may become stuck and create ruts trying to get out. Also, I advise spotting people up and down the climb near the entrance. On my last trip it seemed to be harder going down than climbing up.

### **SULLIVAN CAVE PATRON - Bob Vandeventer**

As always there were many contacts with groups interested in going to Sullivan. We have the regulars who return every year and some first timers in the mix of people going to the cave. I was on several trips again this year and still enjoy the time spent there.

There were no problems to report this year as all went well with the trips and I will say the liaisons have helped take some of the load off of me in scheduling and getting the key to the trip leaders. We do need to replace all of the locks due to their condition. I have been rotating them from gate to gate but it's time for new ones.

In 2003 we had a count of just over 400 people and this year we passed that amount by another 100 with over 500 visitors in 2004. There were many more large groups I tried to spread out in the schedule so they would not be there at the same time. E-mail is still the main contact source but I still do quite a bit of phone communication also.

I am looking forward to another safe and enjoyable year at Sullivan and thanks to all who help me get that job done.

### **SULLIVAN PROPERTY MANGR - Keith Dunlap**

During the IKC's sixth full year of ownership, a number of stewardship projects continued.

On April 3rd, the IKC hosted Under-Earth Day at the property. One hundred Ash trees were planted, replacing seedlings that had died over the previous year. Most of the trees in the south field were

re-flagged. Grape vines in the woods were also severed.

The summer months saw mostly tree maintenance. Nearly 100% of the trees had one spot application of weed control (RoundUp). The tulip trees planted in the smaller field in 2000 continue to out-grow everything else. The smaller field is really starting to look "forested".

The camping/clearing area was mowed three or four times as was the area by the driveway out by the road.

The vinca treatment done in December of 2000 (approximately half of the infested area) is still very noticeable compared to the untreated area. Retreatment needs to be done and the other half of the infested area needs to be treated.

The driveway and parking areas remained in good shape. The yellow plastic chain was re-installed to keep people from driving off into the grass when soft.

Several members took advantage of the camping area and firewood over the past year. Several firewood donations were received as well as other donations from those who visited the cave. A pick-up load of used cedar shingles were delivered for "starter" firewood.

A used mobile home was installed directly to the east of our property at the north end. The newer mobile home on our west boundary is allowing their trash to build up and some of it was blown/washed onto our property. The people living there have since moved into Kenny Owen's modular. It was observed that their kids (perhaps 8-10 years old) were riding their ATV onto our property. I had a discussion with their mother who seemed "unconcerned".

There were no major problems or concerns encountered during 2004. Activities planned for 2005 include weed control around the trees, replacement of dead trees, perhaps working on the loop trail, and of course mowing the clearing and driveway area. We also hope to construct an out-house and a water hand-pump.

### **WAYNE CAVE PATRON - Tom Willett**

Wayne Cave has not had heavy visitation this past year (a total of 82 cavers on 16 trips). It has however been consistent throughout the year. The new driveway and parking area have been a big addition. This makes access to the cave much easier and should make us better neighbors, since cavers no longer have to park along the road. So far, there has been no trouble with people trashing the area and we hope it will continue that way. I anticipate that many cavers will take advantage of the camping available at the property now (Indeed several have already in 2005).

### **WAYNE PROPERTY MANAGER - Robert Sollman**

The Wayne Cave Preserve was purchased July 2, 2003 by the IKC. The Management Plan was ap-



proved at the Fall Board Meeting and Picnic. I was elected the Property Manager on December 6, 2003.

On June 19/20, the driveway and parking area was prepared with tractors, water swells were created to lessen erosion on the driveway, and the old culvert pipe was removed and replaced. During the following week, #2 stone was spread by Hanna Trucking.

On June 26/27, a driveway gate was installed, and the gravel was spread and leveled. We pulled dead trees and brush from the area surrounding the parking area into the middle to be burned.

On August 28, we painted the gate, cleared more stumps and brush from surrounding area, sowed grass seed along areas thought to be showing erosion, and installed a 40-foot piece of corrugated field tile along uphill side of driveway.

On November 20/21, Boy Scout Troop 242 of Fort Branch, came and camped overnight on the property. They cleared and outlined two camping areas (with fire rings), and made a path to the cave entrance from the parking area.

Activities planned for 2005 include vine control around the property, and of course mowing and maintaining the driveway/camping areas. Adding smaller stone on top of the larger stone will also be decided. We plan to create some type of information kiosk for the property.

#### **ORANGEVILLE RISE - Steve Lockwood**

On March 17, 2004, Keith Dunlap, Everett Puliam, and Steve Lockwood installed concrete posts in the southeast corner, east side, and west side of the property to better define the property boundary survey pins. The used concrete posts had been donated to the IKC from the Indiana DOT. The post hole at the southeast corner of the property was easy to dig in the alluvial flood plain next to the Lost River. The post hole next to the old county bridge on the east side of the property was also easy to dig but the survey marker was difficult to find because the alluvial mud deposited next to the bridge had already covered the marker in less than three years. The post hole on the west side of the property next to the old general store was difficult to dig due the rocky terrain. The entire project took the three volunteers about five hours to complete.

The property continues to attract trash due to the large road frontage and seasonal flooding but is remaining relatively clean between trash pickups. Trash was collected from the property in June 2004, September 2004, December 2004, and March 2005. Every quarterly cleaning of the property yielded a large garbage bag full of trash or more. The trash consisted of glass bottles, plastic bottles, plastic jugs, oil filters, plastic bags, wood posts, a metal wash tub, a spare tire and rim, and even a string trimmer.

#### **COON/GROTTO CAVE PATRON - Keith Dunlap**

There were no incidents/problems reported to the Patron during CY2004.

There were only 2 authorized recreational trips

to Coon Cave involving 11 cavers. Both trips were arranged through the BIG liaison.

There were 12 recreational trips to Grotto Cave involving 85 cavers. Nine of the trips were arranged through the BIG liaison, the other three were through the CIG liaison.

There were 2 trips into each cave for scientific/conservation purposes (to remove and then re-install various monitoring equipment/service the alarm systems).

There was no surface clean-up workday in 2004.

The annual report to the property owner was drafted and mailed on December 20th.

I made several "drive-by" checks of the property during the past year.

There were no unauthorized visits recorded in either cave by the monitoring speloggers during the hibernacula closure period (9/2003 to 4/2004). In the past eight years since the alarm systems were installed, there has only been one violation.

The temperature monitoring project continued in both caves (started the 11th deployment on 9/18).

The caves remain in good condition and no in-cave clean-ups are planned.

#### **SHAFT CAVE PATRON - Jeff Cody**

This past year there were six trips to Shaft with permits. A total of twenty-nine people completed waivers for these trips. All trips were done without incident. The first trip was in January and the last was in October. All of these trips were on weekends.

On March 7, I made my annual cleanup trip of the parking area and also a trip to the big room and back. During this trip I picked up a few cans near the parking area. I did not see any trash in the cave except for some small logs at the bottom of the main pit. On this trip, I saw for the first time a waterfall in the main shaft. It came down on the opposite wall from the one you rappel next to and did not pose any problems.

I am in Bloomington once a week for work and occasionally stop at the parking area for a quick check for trash, and very rarely do I find anything out of the ordinary. The cave, fence area and parking area seem to be in great shape during my periodic inspections. I also have a small supply of replacement signs should the need arise.

#### **SINKS OF INDIAN CREEK CE - Fig Newton**

I visited the sinks on March 9th (2005) with Allen Purcell. Primavera is surveying the lots. Also had one of the potential buyers call and ask about all the trees that were cut along the easement. Had me anxious to get down there. It turns out that some saplings were cut by the surveyors in making the lines. Also several stakes show exactly the easement line. I will be going back with some rebar and some steel fence posts to mark where the wood stakes are to make it permanent. Also Primavera is going to call and I hope to get them to mark the rest of the easement so we can make it permanently marked. Picnic site looked cleaner than usual. Should re-visit the site again in the near future.



**INDIANA KARST CONSERVANCY TREASURY REPORT****Income/Expense Statement  
From January 1, 2005 to March 31, 2005****INCOME:**

Dues Apportionment and Residuals	691.25	
Donations - General	1319.57	
Donations - Wayne / RLCP Acquisition Fund <sup>1</sup>	5018.25	
Interest	<u>148.68</u>	
		\$7,177.75

**EXPENSES:**

IKC Update (printing, production, mailing)	261.37	
Stewardship/Conservation	90.13	
Membership	116.66	
Property taxes credit <sup>2</sup>	-544.63	
Business (insurance, fees, service charges)	31.22	
Transfers to/from restricted funds/other adjustments	<u>5075.83</u>	
		(\$5,030.58)

NET OPERATING EXCESS (DEFICIT) THIS PERIOD: \$2,147.17

**Balance Sheet  
March 31, 2005****ASSETS:**

Cash in Checking / Saving Accounts / CDs	35374.71	
Accounts Receivable/Pledges <sup>3</sup>	34580.00	
External Loans	-52500.00	
Wayne Cave Preserve (20.00 acres)	75000.00	
Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve (40 acres)	74000.00	
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)	<u>13.16</u>	
		<u>\$274,467.87</u>

**LIABILITIES & OPERATING EXCESS:**

Land Acquisition Restricted Fund <sup>4</sup>	-24853.20
Deferred Dues Restricted Fund (188 members)	3135.00
Stewardship Endowment Restricted Fund	13605.65

Previous Operating Excess	23433.25
Net Excess (Deficit) This Period	<u>2147.17</u>
Current Operating Excess (unrestricted funds)	25580.42
Real estate liquidity	<u>257000.00</u>

Total Liabilities & Operating Excess \$274,467.87

**NOTES:**

- 1) Excludes pledges
- 2) Robinson Ladder tract property taxes for 2004 payable in 2005 (credited at closing)
- 3) TNC contribution to Robinson Ladder tract, plus other pledges
- 4) Includes TNC contribution and other pledges

# IKC ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

Saturday, March 19, 2005 -- Greenwood, Indiana

## BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

## BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Nick Noe  
 Steve Lockwood

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM at the Greenwood Public Library, President Richard Vernier presiding. Bambi Dunlap was accepted as proxy for Tom Sollman and Bob Decker was accepted as proxy for Bill Tozer. The minutes of the December 2004 and the February 2005 Board meetings were approved as published in the March 2005 IKC Update.

Treasurer Dunlap reported a cash balance of \$33,189. We have outstanding loans of \$52,500 which will be reduced to \$19,000 when The Nature Conservancy makes their donation towards the purchase of the Robinson Ladder property. Land holdings now amount to \$257,000, reflecting the purchase of the Robinson Ladder Cave property. Our General Fund stands at \$25,017, Stewardship Fund is at \$13,548, and the Deferred Dues Fund is at \$3,375. The Acquisition Fund is a minus \$61,250, reflecting the Robinson Ladder purchase. A detailed Treasury Report may be found in the IKC Update.

Dunlap reported that we have 187 members. So far, 117 have paid their dues for 2005. He said that several members have paid many years in advance, one has paid fifteen years and others have paid ten years. Donations coming in seem to be down a little and money for Robinson Ladder isn't coming as fast as he expected but a lot of members renewed before the announcement of the purchase so donations may still be coming.

Sue Vernier asked when TNC meets to make the official approval of the donation for Robinson Ladder. Dunlap said that he thinks that has already happened, it's just a matter of processing, and that could take six to eight weeks from the first of March.

The first order of business was to be the election of the Board for 2005 but election tellers Kathy Welling and Torn Rea had not arrived so we moved on to the annual reports from the Cave Patrons and Property Managers of the various IKC owned or managed properties.

Dunlap reported on the Sullivan property surface activities. Vandeventer reported on Sullivan Cave. Jeff Cody reported on Buddha Cave and Shaft Cave. Vernier read Tom Willett's report on Wayne Cave. Dunlap read Lockwood's report on the Orangeville Rise. Dunlap reported on Coon and Grotto caves. Vernier read a report from "Fig" Newton on the Sinks of Indian Creek Conservation Easement. There were no reports on Suicide or Shiloh caves or the Wayne property. The complete reports will be published in the IKC Update.

## Elections

Election tellers Welling and Rea passed out ballots to those who had not sent in a ballot. The results were a nearly unanimous re-election of Vernier as President, Dunlap as Treasurer, and Sergesketter as Secretary. Lindberg, Tozer, Sue Vernier, and Vandeventer were re-elected to the Board. Sergesketter moved that the ballots be destroyed, seconded by Sue Vernier. The motion passed 13-0-0.

## Grotto Liaison Agreement Status

The Northern Indiana Grotto has signed and returned their agreement form. The Central Indiana Grotto still hasn't signed and Vernier wondered what the problem is. Dunlap said that it got lost during a change of grotto leadership and now it appears that no one has gotten around to signing it. There was a short discussion and Vernier said that if it doesn't get signed by the June IKC meeting, he'll send Bruce "The Enforcer" Devore around to see what the problem is.

## Indiana Cave Symposium

The 2005 Indiana Cave Symposium will be held April 30 at Scenic Hills Church Camp which is located just east of Spring Mill State Park. Dunlap said that there are nine or ten presentations scheduled and in the past we have split the expenses with the Indiana Cave Survey and so he made a motion to spend up to \$50.00 for food and \$25.00 for rent of the facility. Ingle seconded and the motion passed 13-0-0.

## Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve Acquisition

Vernier reported that as of March 4, 2005, the Robinson Ladder Cave property is ours. Now all we need is money to pay for it.

Dunlap said that after taking TNC's donation into account, the IKC owes approximately \$36,000 on the property. We hope to get a \$10,000 Golden Eagle grant, maybe an NSS grant of up to \$5,000, and possibly some smaller grants in the thousand dollar range. This leaves about \$20,000 that will have to be raised through donations from the caving community. As far as donations coming in, he said that there have been 25 or 30 so far, mostly in smaller amounts. He said that there are things working against this property. It is not well known and the cave is not a major cave like Sullivan or Wayne but it is still a very desirable property and the fact that TNC is putting up almost half the purchase price



made it hard to pass up.

Vernier asked if TNC is still thinking of giving us the adjoining property that they already own. Dunlap said that it is still an option. He thinks that if we showed an interest in it that they would probably deed it over to us but he's not sure if it would be in our best interests to go through with it. If they really wanted to give it to us we would consider it but we probably don't want to ask for it. Another possibility is that we could be the stewards for it and keep an eye on it without changing ownership since it is sort of outside the area of our mission.

Vernier said that John Benton has volunteered to be both the Property Manager and the Cave Patron for the Robinson Ladder property. Benton was present and said that he has caved for years in the area of the property. He is a long time member of the NSS, the IKC, and TNC. He lives in Huntingburg and travels through the area at least every week on business. Haun moved to accept Benton for both positions and Sue Vernier seconded. After a short discussion, the motion passed 13-0-0.

Dunlap volunteered to chair the ad hoc Robinson Ladder Management Plan Committee. Also serving on the committee will be John Benton, Bruce Bowman, Bill Tozer, and Kathy Welling. Dunlap said that he would like to have a draft proposal by the middle of May. We need to have a plan in place in order to pursue the NSS grant. Dunlap had some questions for the Board about the management plan. Do we want to continue the bat closure policy? Vernier asked who actually sets the bat closure dates. Dunlap said that the US Fish and Wildlife Service sets the dates and the State of Indiana is required to enforce the rules at registered sites such as Robinson Ladder Cave. We can opt out of the closure system if we want to but the general consensus was to leave the cave as a registered hibernaculum. Next Dunlap asked if we want to have cave access through the Grotto Liaison system. Bowman spoke against having the cave in the liaison system initially. He said that, at least for the near future and until a management plan is in place, all trips should be arranged through the Cave Patron. Dunlap said that the liaison system conveys more of a feeling of ownership to both the grotto and to the individual caves and that translates to good feelings towards the IKC. That being said, he thinks that visitation should be planned through Benton until a management plan is in place. Vernier asked if gating the cave was a possibility. He said that he is not proposing a cave gate but since there is a bat colony in the cave, could a gate become a necessity in the future. He noted that our experience with Grotto Cave has shown that people are generally respectful of the closure dates and do not enter the cave when closed. Dunlap said that active monitoring would be the first step, using speloggers for a couple of years to determine if more aggressive measures need to be taken.

Dunlap asked if we want to allow camping on the property. Several people said yes. Details will be worked out.

Next we got into a long discussion on active restoration of one or both fields on the property. Do we want to plant trees or do nothing and let nature take its course. Vernier said that Allen Pursell would like to see at least one if not both fields return to post oak barrens which is a native plant community for that part of the country. This would involve getting rid of the fescue in the fields by some means but no other action would be needed. The fields would eventually be taken over by the plants and trees that are already there. We don't want to adversely affect the bats with any of our restoration activities. Under a program called the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP), returning the land to barrens probably wouldn't cost us anything. The program would provide 75% of the funding and we would provide 25% but Allen Pursell said that TNC could probably pick up the 25%. We would probably be expected to provide any necessary labor.

We need to find out if the property could qualify for the Classified Forest Program if we let it go back to post oak barrens. Winner wasn't sure if it would but he asked about putting it into the Classified Wildlife Habitat Program. Dunlap said that any open area that is not fescue could probably be put into the Classified Wildlife Habitat Program. It must be a minimum of fifteen acres with no more than five acres of forest. The property can be enrolled in both programs so that the total of forty acres could be in one or the other. First we could have it in wildlife habitat and later as the fields fill in, we could change it to classified forest. After much discussion about the requirements and benefits of the various programs, Dunlap moved that we pursue the funding possibilities of WHIP. Sue Vernier seconded. When several members asked for clarification of the exact meaning of the motion, Dunlap said that it means we can continue to discuss with the District Biologist various options for changing the fescue fields into something besides fescue such as a post oak barren or whatever. When pressed further, Dunlap restated the motion saying that we will pursue enrolling in WHIP which will include the eradication of the fescue and the conversion of the fields into something more natural. The motion passed 13-0-0.

Turning to the subject of property taxes, Dunlap said that the tax on the property now is about \$500 per year. Enrolling in either Classified Forest or Classified Wildlife Habitat programs in the future would greatly reduce the tax bill. We also have the option of requesting an exemption from property taxes which is something we could do for the short term. When asked how this is possible, Dunlap said that since the IKC is a non profit organization and our stated primary purpose is conservation and preservation, we should qualify for the exemption. It is just a matter of filling out several forms every two years. Vernier asked if there is a down side to taking the exemption. Dunlap said that there may be resentment from other property owners that perceive the IKC as not paying their fair share. The Orangeville Rise property and the Buddha property are both in this program. After a short discussion, Dunlap said that he will file the necessary forms to



request exempting the IKC from paying property taxes on the Robinson Ladder property.

Under Earth Day will be held May 14 at the Robinson Ladder property. Activities will include trash removal, deer stand removal, grapevine cutting, interior fence removal, and brush removal / tree trimming along the driveway. There was some discussion about the driveway, if it's an easement or a right of way and what the difference is and if we have the right to trim the trees along the driveway. We decided that we can and will trim the brush and trees along the drive. Dunlap moved that we approve doing the listed projects on Under Earth Day, seconded by Ingle. The motion passed 12-0-1. Dunlap said that he has authorized Mark Sparks to replace the existing driveway gate lock with a combination lock. The standard IKC combination will be used.

Vernier asked about the speculation that as a consequence of our having a right of way as opposed to having an easement, we may have traded away a strip of land along the west side of the property. This led to much more discussion but the bottom line is that nothing is mentioned in the deed and nothing showed up in the title search. There may be something mentioned in the deeds for the parcels of land that border our land along the west side but someone would have to look at those deeds.

#### **Documentary Video**

Vernier said that he still has hopes that the Hoosier National Forest personnel will pursue the project. They are still interested but they are involved with other projects. When those projects are finished, and if there is any money left, they may contact McGowan. If that happens, we may be contacted to provide labor and/or pretty faces to help out. Ingle said that the Documentary Committee is dormant.

#### **Education and Outreach Report**

Lindberg reported that she will have a display at the TNC/IDNR Division of Forestry open house at O'Bannon Woods on April 23. A full report of the Education and Outreach Committee is published in the IKC Update.

#### **Wayne Cave Preserve**

Tom and Robert Sollman were not present to give a report. Previously they had talked about having a workday in June to apply more gravel on the driveway and also to work on the large brush piles.

#### **Sullivan Cave Preserve**

Dunlap said that he has not worked on the management plan revisions. He has looked at possible sites for an outhouse and has found one. The receiving receptacle will be a sealed concrete enclosure which will have to be pumped out from time to time as needed. There will be a work day on April 16. There will be some tree planting and some overhanging tree limbs removed. Someone asked why we need a lock on the gate by the highway. Dunlap said that we don't. Locks cost about ten dollars each and that one serves no purpose.

Dunlap said that we may want to grade a few more flat areas for tents in the clearing. Sometime when we have a tractor on site we could create some terraces. Vandeventer said that the parking area needs to be bigger. Haun agreed saying that both the camping and parking areas need to be enlarged. Bambi Dunlap said that we should leave it as is.

Vandeventer reported that he has new locks for Sullivan and wanted to know when to put them on. Dunlap said that he must get new keys made and distributed to the grotto liaisons. He will let Vandeventer know when the new keys have been sent, probably by the end of March.

#### **Buddha Karst Preserve**

There was an e-mail motion made to allow Dr Jerry Lewis and crew to do some sampling in Buddha Cave to establish a biota baseline. The motion passed and approval was given. The action was required because collecting and sampling are not allowed by the management plan without Board approval.

Tom Rea, Property Manager at Buddha, said that he hasn't had time to get to the property for a long time and he is asking to be replaced. Haun nominated George Cesnik to replace Rea. Cesnik was present and said that he would accept the post. Dunlap moved that George Cesnik be appointed Buddha Karst Preserve Property Manager, seconded by Bowman. The motion passed 13-0-0. There will be a workday at Buddha, date to be announced. There was a discussion of possibly enrolling the Buddha property in the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program and eradicating the fescue on this property too. Welling said that she would like to see the fescue gone at Buddha and if the state will help us do it, that's even better.

#### **Piggy Pit (Rominger Well) Project**

Piggy Pit, also known as Rominger Well, is on a piece of property that was recently acquired by the Forest Service near Scarlet, Indiana which is about a mile south of Huron. It presently has a dilapidated wooden structure covering it but they want a more permanent cover and they have contracted with us to build one. It will be a metal cover, not really a gate but something to keep people, horses, or ATV's from accidentally falling in. The probable date for construction is July 16.

#### **Items From The Floor**

Lindberg reported that Bloomington is updating several ordinances including their karst ordinance and she would like to run the updated proposals past interested IKC members for comments.

The next meeting will be June 18, 2005, at 7:00 PM in the IU Geology Building in Bloomington. The Fall meeting will be September 24, at 1:00 PM.

Sue Vernier moved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bob Sergesketter, Secretary

# State's Caves House Many Rare Species

by Harold Allison

The state of Indiana is noted for many things; for example, basketball, the Indianapolis 500 and field after field of corn and soybeans. To me, the most important thing about our state is the many natural wonders that can be found from one end of the state to the other.

Caves are just one of these wonders. There are about 2,000 caves in Indiana, and there are probably hundreds more that may never be discovered.

In addition to the beauty of the formations and unusual geological features sequestered within our caves, they also contain some very unique forms of animal life.

Jerry Lewis, a world renown expert on cave invertebrates, in conjunction with Ronnie Burns and Salisa Lewis, has found the caves of Indiana contain a treasure trove of rare creatures.

Lewis has been involved in field work for both the Hoosier National Forest and the Indiana chapter of The Nature Conservancy. The latter project was in the Blue River region of southern Hoosierland. What was found in these two projects is amazing.

There is a global ranking of animal and plants. The ranking goes from G1 to G5, with 1 being critically imperiled to 5 being a stable population. G1 means the

animal or plant is known from only one to five locations. G2 has only six to 20 known locations and is listed as imperiled. G3 has 21 to 100 sites and is on the vulnerable list.

Using the Hoosier-Shawnee Ecological Assessment, which was recently published, and a listing of cave life from the Blue River office of the Nature Conservancy, I uncovered some very interesting facts.

Using both lists I found a total of 67 species of cave life from southern Indiana with a G1 ranking and another 29 with a G2 rank. That's 96 species that are known to live in only one to 20 locations worldwide. In addition, more than 30 species have been discovered that were new to science and may exist in only one cave system. Combined with a new species of fish, the blue-throat sculpin, and at least six new species of crayfish, that makes southern Indiana one of the top hot spots for new species.

The survey of the Hoosier National Forest caves and springs was conducted from 2000 to 2004 and involved 124 caves and 17 springs.

Now that so many rare species have been found, the next step is how to protect these endangered species. Several of our Indiana caves face threats from development, sewage that enters caves,

runoff from farm fields and construction sites, and excessive human visitation.

Officials with The Nature Conservancy, Hoosier National Forest, and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources are all working to help protect and preserve these new additions to the world's list of unique animal life.

The Lost River Cave System, Tincer Karst Area, Binkley Cave System, and the Wyandotte Cave System have all been listed as world-class hot spots for subterranean biodiversity. This listing is given only for a cave system that has 20 or more unusually subterranean species. This does indeed make our Hoosier caves world-class.

Hoosier National Forest officials, knowing the importance of these globally rare species, have worked with the Indiana Karst Conservancy to compile a list of the caves that contain endangered invertebrates. A total of 28 caves on Hoosier National Forest property has now been sent to the Forest Service Cave Coordinator for approval of additional protection.

More on the unique life found in our Indiana caves will be featured in future columns.

*Harold Allison can be reached c/o Hoosier Times, PO Box 909, Bloomington, IN 47402. This article was published May 1, 2005.*

## 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.



