

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

<http://www.caves.org/conservancy/ikc>

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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QUARTERLY MEETING/COOK-OUT REMINDER

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24th, 1:00 PM

CLOVERDALE, INDIANA

Property of Tom Rea, 8677 South State Road 243

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 recaps of last quarter's activities; Treasurer's report; Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve status; Grotto Liaison Agreement status; HNF biota video update and funding request; Education/Outreach report; Other IKC preserves updates; Other land acquisition opportunities; and more!

Following the business meeting will be the annual pitch-in cookout (starting around 5 PM). This year it will be a joint activity with the Central Indiana Grotto. The IKC/CIG will provide the grilled burgers, hot dogs, and brats; condiments; and soft drinks. Please bring a salad or covered-dish to share. Finishing off the evening's activities will be the highly competitive dessert contest (14th annual). Bring an entry or enjoy sampling and selecting the winners. **Please bring lawn chairs, and the family, too.** Contact Kathy Welling for further details. NOTE: Those not wanting to drive home Saturday night are welcome to stay and camp.

Meeting directions: From I-70, exit onto SR 243 (exit 37). Turn north and go approximately 1/4 mile. Turn into the first driveway (8677) north of the small stream crossing. Proceed up the driveway to the open field on the right. The meeting will be in Tom's "kennel" building. See map on page 17.

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

- 24 SEP = IKC QUARTERLY MEETING/COOK-OUT (see above)
- 24 SEP = LOST RIVER TOUR, Orleans (see page 6)
- 08 OCT = TNC HENDERSON PARK WORKDAY, Salem (see page 6)
- 19 NOV = HNF/IKC COMMITTEE MEETING, contact Steve Lockwood
- ?? DEC = WINTER QUARTERLY MEETING (date and location TBD)

For more information on the Indiana Karst Conservancy, visit our web site at <http://www.caves.org/conservancy/ikc> 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...

Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect. -- Chief Seattle, 1855

If all mankind were to disappear, the world would regenerate back to the rich state of equilibrium that existed ten thousand years ago. If insects were to vanish, the environment would collapse into chaos. -- Edward O. Wilson



As some of you know, videographer David McGowan has been working with the Hoosier National Forest to produce a video, tentatively titled "Cave Life: Links in the Web" showcasing life in the caves of Indiana's karst

regions. One particularly hot day this summer, Keith Dunlap, my wife Sue, and I volunteered to help haul Dave's equipment out to Gypsy Bill Allen Cave on HNF property near Huron. The walk was longer than I remembered, and we stopped occasionally to try to catch a shaft of light or a dew-encrusted spider web.

Once we reached the cave, Dave and his assistant, Jacek Lupina, set up the camera and proceeded to march us into and out of the cave - many times. "Action!" was our cue to file along the path, self-consciously stumbling over rocks. "OK, let's do it again! This time look around with your lights so I can see the sides of the passage!" Anyone visiting the cave this year will wonder why there is a well-trampled path that seems to start out of nowhere just fifty feet or so from the entrance.

Sometime during this, Dave announced that he needed an interview. Keith made himself scarce and I was elected. One of the things we had been hauling turned out to be a long "shotgun" microphone. This was soon attached to a stand and set up over my head. Unfortunately, in order to get me in the light

and the cave entrance in the background, the tall, wobbly, microphone stand had to hang out over a steep slope. This necessitated a good bit of time arranging rocks and carefully balancing things. In the end, the microphone was suspended (barely) above my head. Dave had to caution me not to look at the camera or to roll my eyes nervously up at the (hopefully) unseen contraption hovering above me.

During the course of the interview, Dave asked me why we should be concerned for the fate of creatures such as the tiny isopods, copepods, and springtails found in our caves. For a moment or two I was flummoxed. Somewhere, he now has video of me giving him a "deer-in-the-headlights" look, rolling my eyes heavenward, cringing, and mumbling something to the effect that Dr ("Jerry") Lewis would be more qualified to answer that question...

I recovered somewhat and offered the explanation that we don't have all the answers and therefore it's risky business making decisions about which species stay and which go. What if a sample of an enzyme excreted by a cave animal was found to be useful in treating cancer but the last known representatives of the species were exterminated in a chemical spill from a road built over their last remaining refuge? What if we found that as the populations of other "bugs" fell below a certain level, their link in the chain of life was broken and other, higher, life forms also faltered as a result?

It sounded lame at the time but I've since heard the same argument other places, usually relating to terrestrial animals. When trying to convince the "man-on-the-street" that he should be concerned about creatures that aren't particularly cute and cuddly or good when breaded and fried, it's hard to hand him a direct cause and effect relationship showing where the effect of dumping a load of motor oil into a sinkhole causes an inconvenience akin to missing the big stock car race or having the barbeque end up tasting like an old shoe.

Speaking of cave "bugs", if you aren't a Nature Conservancy member, find someone who is or head down to your library and borrow the most recent (Autumn 2005) issue of



their magazine (called, naturally enough, *Nature Conservancy*). In it, you will find an article called *The Last Frontier* by Dan Ferber with photography by Stephen Alvarez, about -- Dr Jerry Lewis and his cave bugs. It's a good article, even if it concentrates on Tennessee caves, and it shows that others share our concerns.

You can also visit <http://www.nature.org/initiatives/programs/caves/> on the web, where you can get more information on why cave animals are important. I've borrowed some of those reasons:

- Karst habitats comprise 20% of the Earth's land surface.
- One-quarter of the world gets its freshwater from karst aquifers.
- Scientists estimate 60,000 species of cave-dwelling animals worldwide, with 10% in North America.
- An estimated 90% of subterranean life has not yet been described.
- Animals found only in caves and groundwater habitat represent more than half of the imperiled species in the United States, but less than 4% have federal protection.
- Caves harbor a rich diversity of freshwater fishes, amphipods, and crayfishes,

which are among the world's most endangered animals.

- Cave animals live much longer than their surface counterparts -- sometimes 10 times longer.

I am particularly amazed by the fourth point: "An estimated 90% of subterranean life has not yet been described." Until scientists like Dr Lewis began taking a closer look at our caves, the discovery of new species was mostly limited to remote regions such as rain forests and the depths of the oceans; now we find our backyards, right here in the Midwest, are suddenly a hotbed of discovery with new species being uncovered at rates not seen since the 1800's.

Our latest property, the Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve, has not yet been surveyed for biological content -- aside from the bats anyway. Who knows what might be found there, what globally threatened obligate cave species may be discovered. We have a unique chance in this instance to control the surface inputs to the cave as the entire cave and recharge area are within the boundaries of the preserve and thus we have a better chance to protect what lives beneath.

With your help, the IKC will work to preserve these unique and imperiled creatures.

Richard Vernier

NEWS BRIEFS...

- ❑ 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.
- ❑ In July, The Nature Conservancy offered a special cave education trip for some of their Legacy donors. The trip was to the surface area of Wesley Chapel Gulf (owned by the Hoosier National Forest) and then an underground trip into Lost River Cave using entrances on

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE REPORT

by Kriste Lindberg

It has been a good summer for karst education and outreach! The following are a few highlights...

At the beginning of June, The *Hoosier Times* newspaper serving primarily the Bloomington/Bedford and surrounding area, printed a story, "Underground Education" in their Sunday, June 5, issue. It consisted of an interview with me and featured a number of ways folks can get involved with learning about karst and how to best live with it, such as taking a Project Underground workshop, encouraging development to incorporate sound conservation practices, and so on. An example of a development, Renwick, that has removed invasive plants from a sinkhole and replaced them with native plants was illustrated as a good model. Several nice photos were taken at Leonard Springs Nature Park and an illustration out of the Project Underground guidebook was used. Thanks to H-T reporter, Carol Kugler, and H-T photographer, Monty Howell, for doing a great job on this important subject. If you would like to see a copy of the article, contact me.

This article was especially timely as it boosted enrollment in a Project Underground class that I taught later that month. Thanks to Bob Vandeventer and George Cesnik for help with the class (note: This class was preceded by a Hoosier Riverwatch class that I taught along with Angie Smith of Bloomington Parks and Recreation and Cathy Meyer of Monroe County Parks and Recreation.)

In addition, it was good timing as the City of Bloomington is working on updating their ordinances, including karst and others related to water quality. And, Monroe County, in conjunction with the City, are working on waste water management systems such as alternatives to septic, etc. The Bloomington Environmental Commission continues to help with the above and more.

Also in June, the Bloomington Indiana Grotto did their duty by donating a few hours time to trail maintenance at Leonard Springs Nature Park as part of the City of Bloomington's Adopt-a-Trail program.

Later in the month, a group of agency partners, including the Hoosier National Forest, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and In-

diana Department of Natural Resources met to discuss the cave biota video "webumentary" project (see previous issues of the *IKC Update* for more detail). Our Producer friend, Dave McGowan with Ravenswood Media in Chicago, is overseeing the project. I have been acting as his Production Manager in the area as time allows. The project is moving right along. He has been filming at various caves in the area and interviewing noted scientists and karst specialists. We are looking for a few dedicated souls to help out. If you are interested, please let me know. Special thanks to IKC Director Don Ingle for helping to get this project started and the Hoosier National Forest for the majority of the funding.

July found many of us at the NSS Convention in Huntsville, Alabama. During which, I gave a presentation on working with development, "Karst Education: Working with Development", attended the annual Project Underground board meeting, displayed an educational poster, "Indiana Karst Conservancy" (see on adjacent page), and entered the poster and a pen and ink drawing I did of a salamander, "Cave Capers Salamander", in two separate salons at the encouragement of others. I was thrilled to discover that both the poster and the salamander were awarded blue Merit Award ribbons (subsequently, Project Underground has asked me design a poster to be distributed nationally).

August found us preparing for many good things to come later in the season/early Fall: a Project Underground workshop at O'Bannon Woods State Park, a Master Naturalist segment on karst for the Hoosier Heartlands Resource Conservation and Development Council, the Growing Communities on Karst workshop in West Virginia where we'll likely attend in order to bring back good information on the subject to the area, more work on the cave biota webumentary, and the possibility of working with the state to have the Indiana Bat designated as the official State Bat. More on these exciting developments in the next issue of the *IKC Update*!

For more information or if you would like to volunteer to help, please contact me at lindberg@kiva.net

Karst is a term that was first applied in Yugoslavia. It has now come to be known throughout the world. Such regions are characterized by the presence of limestone or other soluble rocks, where drainage has been largely diverted into subterranean routes. The topography of such areas is dominated by sinkholes, sinking streams, large springs, and caves.

Unfortunately, many karst features are subject to incompatible or damaging uses, including vandalism. Most are on private land, often with owners apathetic to their preservation or unaware of their significance. Protection and awareness of karst features is what the Indiana Karst Conservancy is all about.



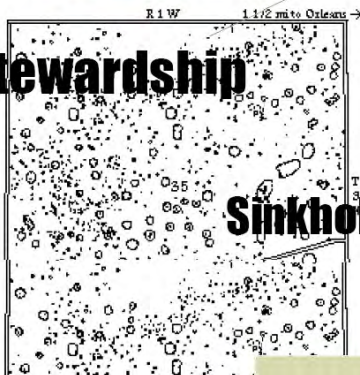
The **Indiana Karst Conservancy** is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and conservation of Indiana's unique karst features. The IKC was formed by concerned individuals when it was apparent that no similar group was actively protecting such features for their inherent geological, biological, and archaeological importance.

The purposes of the IKC are the management, protection, and acquisition of the karst areas in Indiana. The IKC also supports research and promotes education related to karst and its appropriate use. Many of today's abuses in karst areas arise from lack of understanding and knowledge...



Indiana Karst Conservancy

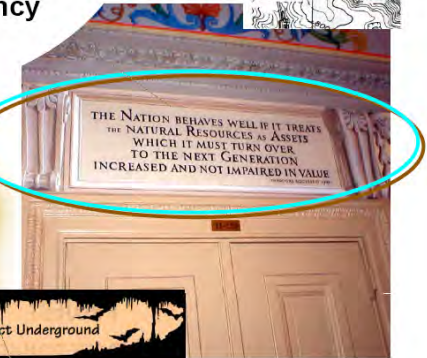
Stewardship



Sinkholes!



Project Underground

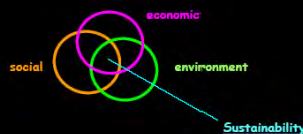
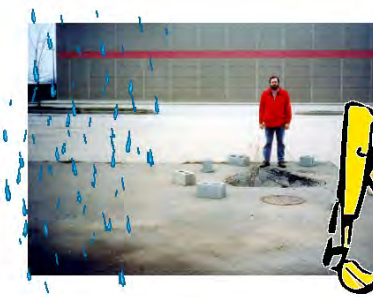


Awareness → Education → Acceptance



Education!

The vast majority of karst properties in Indiana are on private land. For continued access to them, it is essential that cavers maintain a level of trust and goodwill with these cave owners, including the development community. They do not have to allow access to their resources and it's very important that we let them know how much we appreciate their tolerance. Many of the activities of the IKC are related to this objective.



www.caves.org/conservancy/ikc
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ROBINSON LADDER CAVE PRESERVE

by Keith Dunlap

ROBINSON LADDER DONATION LIST	
\$10,000 or more	
The Nature Conservancy	
\$5,000 to \$9,999	
National Speleological Society	
\$1,000 to \$4,999	
Bruce Bowman George Brutchen* Keith Dunlap Tom Sollman The Robertson Association*	
\$250 to \$999	
Mark Deebel Bob & Phyllis Sergesketter Bill Tozer Richard & Sue Vernier Birmingham Grotto St Joseph Valley Grotto	
\$100 to \$249	
John Benton Carl Brown Keith Calkins George Cesnik Tony Cunningham Dave Haun Don Ingle Dan McDowell Everett Pulliam Russ Romme	Gordon Smith Richard Van Rheenen Jamie Winner Bloomington Indiana Grotto* Bluesprings Cavern Park Eastern Indiana Grotto Evansville Metro Grotto Northern Indiana Grotto Windy City Grotto
\$50 to \$99	\$5 to \$49
David Anderson Chris Carpenter Jeff Cody Debi Cress Jeff Farr Scott Fee Mark Kraus Nathan Pate Jacqueline & Ernie Payne Andrew & Shavon Peacock Don Peters Kelle Reynolds Robert Roundy Carla Striegel Steve Taylor BSA Troop 321 (Laporte)	James Braswell Dave Everton Mark Gelzleichter Tim & Andrea Grissom Scott Hammon Adam Manship Tom & Kim Metzgar Jon Miller Pat Mudd George Mundy Steve Ragsdale Kevin Rasmus Tom Rea Charles Rex Gary Roberson Patty Ruback Ray Sheldon Mark Webb Norbert Welch Kathy Welling
Acquisition costs: \$74,095 Donations/Pledges: \$50,268 Amount unfunded: \$23,827 Percent funded: 67.8% September 10, 2005	

The IKC is now into its eighth month of ownership of the Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve. Over the past four months, a number of grottos and cavers have had an opportunity to visit the cave and property and there have been a lot of positive comments about both. The cave is now closed for the bats with authorized visitation to resume on May 1st. However, camping (with permission) and hiking on the property are allowed year around.

This fall, we hope to start our pasture conversion with the assistance of The Nature Conservancy and the Indiana DNR. The fescue will be treated to allow other plant communities to take root. Some tree plantings may also be done in the future. Partial funding (up to 75%) is being provided by the Natural Resource Conservation Service under the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program. Property Manager John Benton is overseeing these and other activities.

Financially, since the June report, we have raised another \$8,600, from twenty donors reaching the 2/3rd mark. The largest donations were \$5,000 from the National Speleological Society and \$1,500 from The Robertson Association, but every donation is important. We have submitted grant proposals to the National Speleological Foundation, the Cave Conservancy Foundation, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and are working on application for two other private foundations. However, most of these grant requests are speculative at best, so we still need support from individuals and organizations within the caving community. **To encourage donations, Dick Blenz has once again offered to match non-grant donations made or pledged by December 31st. So now is an excellent time to give, making your donation go twice as far.**

THE GREAT COVER-UP AT PIGGY PIT

by Keith Dunlap

Early this year, Cindy Basile of the Hoosier National Forest asked if the IKC could visit a new property they had acquired. The property had an open "well" on it that the previous owners, the Romingers, used as their primary water source. Upon visiting the well, we concluded that the "well" was actually a seventeen-foot deep stone lined pit that intersected a short horizontal cave with a flowing stream. The "well" had a makeshift cover constructed of a couple of horizontal re-cycled utility poles, several sheets of rotting plywood, and multiple generations of tattered blue tarps. The concern of the HNF was that the existing "cover" posed a hazard should a hunter or ATV end up on top of it and it then collapsed into the pit. Simply removing the cover would still leave a dangerous opening that an unsuspecting visitor could stumble into, making it a potential legal liability since it had been previously covered. So the request from the HNF was for the IKC to replace the existing dilapidated cover with a stronger and more durable one.

After our visit, it was determined that the "well" had been previously visited by several different groups of cavers and mapped in 2003 by the Saint Joseph Valley Grotto. The SJVG named the cave Piggy Pit after an unsubstantiated story that a pig had entered a nearby sinkhole and ended up at the bottom of the pit.

In response to replacing the cover, a design and cost estimate was submitted and after some revisions were made, a cost-share contract was executed between the IKC and HNF. Volunteers were then solicited and the work date of July 16th was selected.

Prior to the installation, the steel was procured, pre-cut, primed, and painted. Two pickups were used to transport the steel and equipment to the site and the final assembly of the structure went smoothly with the exception of heavy thunderstorms for most of the day, requiring tarps to be rigged so work could continue. After the welding was done and the concrete footers poured, the cover was re-primed and painted. All that was left was to cleanup the site and reload all the equipment.

Participants included Keith & Bambi Dunlap, Steve Lockwood, Bob Sergesketter, Bruce Trotter, Bob Vandeventer, and Dick & Sue Vernier.

It should be noted that the new cover is

open on the sides to allow recreational activities and free movement of fauna.



The old plywood and tarp cover (top). Welding together the framework prior to adding the expanded metal mesh (middle). The finished cover with corner posts (bottom).

Photos by Keith Dunlap

EDUCATION/OUTREACH REPORT -- EVERSOLE CAVE

by Don Ingle

On Wednesday, June 26th, Dave Everton, Willie Roberts, Landon Parks, and myself met on a hot sweltering summer day to lead a Girl Scout troop from Camp Gallahue into Eversole Cave in Lawrence County. This was to be my first experience in leading a bunch of Girl Scouts underground, and I frankly had no idea what to expect, but I was sure of one thing -- it was going to be interesting. I had kind of thought that I would be just along to assist, but once there, I had discovered from Dave that I was apparently the only one with any prior experience in Eversole Cave. So I am to be trip leader. Wow, I had thought, these people are really in for it. I had been there all of three times prior to this, but really didn't anticipate any problems, as the cave is as close to a completely safe and comfortable experience as any wild cave is ever going to be, as long as you avoid the Better Off Lost Passage. Only one climb and a whole lot of splashing in no higher than calf high water in the majority of the cave. I figured the girls could handle it. I needn't have worried.

The Scenic Hills Bible Camp was in full swing there on that day, with the camp as crowded as I had ever seen it on any of my trips there. The happy campers goggled at us and we goggled right back at them, as we headed down the trail to the cave. Bags were unpacked, and helmets and lights were then distributed to the girls. And after a short preparatory period of time, we headed in.

Now, I have two step-daughters, and I had sort of expected these girls to be somewhat like I would expect my step-daughters to be, assuming I would have ever been able to talk them into it. And believe me, there's not much chance of that ever happening. If it doesn't involve going shopping at the mall, talking on the telephone, or going to eat Mexican food, they are not interested in the least. You would have as much chance of seeing them in a cave, even a show cave, as you would have of seeing a card carrying atheist at a Benny Hinn revival. And *if* they *did* go, much whining and wailing and gnashing of teeth would ensue. With them whining and wailing, and me doing the gnashing of teeth, that is.

But what I had gotten instead was a pretty pleasant trip. The reluctant ones mostly

kept their doom and gloom to themselves, while the majority were either agreeable enough to the path we had chosen for them or you practically had to restrain from charging up each and every side passage we had encountered along the way. One girl in particular was a born caver. I think. She had wanted to do the Better Off Lost passage so badly she couldn't stand it. I cannot remember her name for the life of me at the moment, but what I remember her for predominantly, was that I had the opportunity to hear her say "Awww, why not?" an awful lot during the trip. But we had already agreed that we were not going to split the group beforehand, so the breakdown room that had signaled the beginning of that section of the cave was where we had stopped to turn back.

I did pull one nasty trick on them however. Rather than take the easy way around, I did inflict one short water crawl on them just before the breakdown room. They probably would not have even known they had been had, were it not for the fact that Dave and Willie had recognized the other passage we did not take as being an overflow cutoff route and had decided quietly amongst themselves to take it instead and had preceded us up into the passage ahead, using this quite com-



fortable walking passage. Then the girls had understood. Many good natured threats of personal physical violence directed at your friend and humble narrator then followed. I needn't bore you with the details.

Then coming out, we ran into quite a few of the happy campers, which slowed our exit from the cave immeasurably. Two parties of them, totaling about thirty or so in number. In a passage that was not much more than four feet wide in most spots. And to make matters worse, we ran into the bulk of them at the breakdown climb, which absolutely *had* to be done in single file. So we waited on one side for what had seemed an interminable length of time before we could proceed out of the cave. Then they changed outside while we waited inside, then we changed after they had gone back to their van to head back to camp, and that was that. Eversole Cave in about two hours. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Then later that evening we reconvened at Camp Gallahue for the Education Outreach presentation at 7 PM. This was primarily my baby again with mixed, but mostly good results. The homemade mini-karst watershed I sort of messed up, (I had unfortunately cut the two liter bottles a little too deep, and had no spares). but the sinkholes in a cup went spectacularly well. I talked some about why we have karst in the state where we have it and why we don't have it

where we don't, answered a few questions, and after showing the girls a short video called "Living With Karst" and the pictures I had taken with my digital camera of the trip to Eversole Cave to them, we headed back to the back room where Dave Everton had his most excellent slide show presentation set up, where we all sat enraptured for a time. Dave, as many of you might know, is a pretty darn good photographer, and he had quite a few pretty spectacular shots for us all to enjoy. He definitely showed them many subterranean oddities and things that they could not have seen from Eversole Cave, for instance, like say, pretty formations. The prettiest thing about Eversole Cave is unfortunately, the entrance. But darned if it wasn't well-suited for a novice trip like this.

Once again, as I have done in the past, I recommend taking the time to participate in any Education Outreach opportunities that come your way. They are rewarding in many ways, not just for the people you may be doing it for, but for yourself as well, and you may find that you have some hidden talents that you were heretofore unaware of. That hasn't worked out yet for me, but hey, you might just be the one to find out. And besides, some of them could be, after all, the cavers of tomorrow, and it is a good thing to instill in them the conservation values that we as cavers hold today so that they can have unspoiled caves to enjoy for tomorrow.

THE RETURN TO SULLIVAN CAVE

by Laura Lexander

After seeing a hearse driving to work Friday morning with the license plate "Deep 6" and chipping one of my teeth at a Chinese Buffet, I had to wonder what this second foray in Sullivan Cave would present us. Our group was Ralph Sawyer, Jeffery Gosnell, Marc Tiritilli, Bill Morrow, John Ernst, his son Cory, Cory's friend John Mayberry, and me. Entering Sullivan for the second time was the first time I had been in the same cave more than once. After the initial drop in, we spotted several salamanders. Ralph also pointed out to me some lovely big spiders. I had been in Sullivan, yet never down the Backbreaker [*editor's note: on Laura's first trip, they unsuccessfully attempted to make the Endless Crevice connection to the North Y area*]. Want to get a good thigh-

and-butt workout? Try walking slumped over for about 1300 feet. It was not that difficult of a trek for me, granted I am only 5'5". So my taller companions had a bit more fun. We let the two boys study the map at intervals to see if they could lead us down the right path, to teach them how to read the map.

From the Backbreaker we went through a little bit of crawling and entered the Mountain Room. Who knew there were large rooms in Sullivan? (I am being facetious -- those familiar with my previous report know we never entered anything large the last time.) We poked around for a bit in the Mountain Room, with Marc and Ralph taking photographs. A few of us slithered into a small tunnel at the highest part of the room,

nosing our way around a bit. There were lots of formations, though many were damaged by human hands. The crawlway looked like it might have gone on, but we regrouped, dropped down to the stream passage on the western part of the Mountain Room and proceeded into the 52-degree water of the Sullivan River.

The first time the cold seeped into my boots it made me cringe. It was painful until I became accustomed to it. We sloshed through the steam several hundred feet trying to spot crayfish and cave fish. The crayfish seemed more plentiful.

The water level did not reach much higher than three feet, occasionally wading through deeper parts. It was always possible to keep to the shallower edges of the passage, a quite beautiful and expansive tunnel. When we reached the Spiral Room, Ralph and Marc took more shots. The room is one-of-a-kind, with a flat ceiling and breakdown sinking into a circular bowl.

We scoured the room to no avail for the Speed Hollow exit. We pushed crawlways and scrutinized the map. A couple of times we thought we had it. Along the way, Jeffery nicknamed himself the "monkey". A post-surgery Bill would spot hard leads and direct Jeffery into them. "Sure, give the monkey a peanut, and send him in the hole", he would joke.

After one crack proved fruitless I followed Jeffery back to another possibility. I decided to be the monkey for this one, to see if I could do it. We were crawling along large breakdown at the southern end of the room. The hole I pushed was probably the smallest I have done yet. It took me a bit of time to gather up the courage to slither down. I could easily slide my legs in, but my hips were a different story. Rock was kissing hip bone, and I was not sure I could fit. A few things raced through my mind at this point. I did not want to be the cause of a cave rescue, nor did I want to give up needlessly. I was also not optimistic it would go anywhere. After a few more minutes of deliberation and Jeffery telling me not to push myself too hard, I made my decision. 1-2-3, and I let my body slide down. I had to maneuver, but once I was committed it was not that hard. It is amazing what one can fit through when you simply try. I was giddy with delight and crawled on. It did not matter that this lead also proved itself a dead one, I was happy with myself.

Marc dropped down into the same passage further east than me and we crawled back out the way I had come in, letting Jeffery know it was another no-go. At this point Bill called us all back to the water's edge because it was time to go.

When we got back to the hole leading up into the Mountain Room we encountered Bambi and Keith Dunlap, the property managers of Sullivan Cave, along with Joe and Julie Myer. We chatted several minutes, which included learning about another route into the Mountain Room. We decided to give it a go.

After climbing back into the Mountain Room, Jeffery and I talked about the climbs we were willing to do in caves that we would adamantly refuse in the full light of the sun. Caving lends to a sort of immediacy that other parts of life cannot. In a cave you are forced to take things one step at a time because the whole picture is blanketed in darkness. Perhaps that helps play a role in being able to let go of everyday concerns and live in the moment while caving.

Instead of heading west into the Backbreaker we headed north and completed the Bone Crawl and Baker's Nitch. As we turned southward we entered the Helictite Passage. Per Bambi's directions we found a slot in the floor and poked our way through.

From here it took a bit of exploring. Bill, John, and the boys continued northeast to the "Grand Canyon" before realizing that could not be the correct way. Bill found the right little crevice, though not without persistent searching from Marc and Ralph. Bill, John, and the boys headed into the tunnel first.

Meanwhile, I spotted another group of folks in the passage above us. I followed their light beams over to the slot we had dropped in, and called up. This time the encounter was with Northern Indiana Grotto member Bruce Silvers. I tried to explain we were looking for a route into the Mountain Room and he, concerned that we were lost, made sure we knew the regular way. Ralph assured him we were good.

Into the tunnel we went, this one being quite a tight squeeze, but not overly hindering. We popped out in the northeastern corner of the Mountain Room.

Bill, John, and the boys looped back around to retrieve their packs and we converged in the passage leading to the Backbreaker.



As I waited for Ralph and Marc at the final traverse to the waterfall room, I took several moments to gaze longingly down the curving passage of the Endless Crevice, Sullivan pulling at my heart stronger than ever before.

This trip was completely different than the last one, yet knowing those other pathways were there left me feeling almost stunned. It's hard to describe how passionate I feel about Sullivan now. It is a fierce loyalty that might seem odd to some people, especially non-cavers. It's akin to how a sea captain feels for his ship or how the military feels towards our country.

And that is not to mention the friends you are with at the time. It had been about eight and a half years since I last saw Marc and it

was wonderful to meet back up with him. I know we will not let such time pass again. I believe my friendship with Ralph and Jeffery grew stronger on this trip as well and meeting Bill was also a plus! It was also great to be there with new people, showing them Sullivan for the first time.

We are definitely planning a Sullivan Rise trip and on that one we will most likely try to connect the Flood Route with the Mud Room via the Connection Spring. For now, I must find contentment with the world above ground. Caving is good for the soul so I think I'll be able to handle it until the next journey.

This trip report was originally edited by Jeffrey Gosnell for the Near Normal Grotto.

Continued from page 5...

TNC-owned property. Kriste Lindberg organized the trip and trip leaders. Among those that attended and helped with the trip were Richard and Sue Vernier, Bob Vandeventer, George Cesnik, John Bassett of EarthTech, and members of the Saint Joseph Valley Grotto including Dave Tibbets, Mark Deebel, and Kevin Kulwicki. The participants had a good time exploring Wesley Chapel Gulf and the underground passageways, looking at a well pipe, and getting exercise after lunch at Herle's Cafe in Orleans. The trip also provided exposure and appreciation to caves and karst for some of TNC staff.

- ❑ The Hoosier National Forest and the Indiana Karst Conservancy has had an on-going cooperative cave/karst inventory project since 1988. Over the years there have been a number of volunteers involved and activities have fluctuated. Over the past year, new blood assumed responsibility for systematically revisiting every known cave to verify their location using GPS, filling out new ICS forms, and photographing the entrances. To date, over one hundred locations have been visited. Bruce Trotter and Ray Sheldon are organizing the database of information with additional field support provided by Jerry Walker, Kevin Wools, and Keith Dunlap. Additional volunteers are needed for mapping and conducting resource inventories. If you would like to help, contact Keith Dunlap.
- ❑ The status of the federally-endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) has not been good with some experts in recent years predicting extinction due to the continued population declines despite considerable efforts to protect the species. Since the late 1960s through 2001, the drop was consistent, going from an estimated 880,000 bats to less than 380,000 (nearly a 60% decrease). The greatest winter losses were observed in Missouri and Kentucky where the largest concentrations were found. The next largest population was found in Indiana caves which surprisingly has stayed relatively stable and in recent years have demonstrated increases, along with other northern range states of Illinois, Ohio, and New York. Fortunately in 2003 and 2005, the overall population of Indiana bats have increased. Part of the increase may be due to improved and more standardized survey techniques, but some experts are now optimistic that the species has bottomed out and is starting to recover. Indiana now hosts over 45% of the winter population, compared to less than 20% in the late 1960s. We would like to think at the efforts of the IKC over the past twenty years has contributed to the bat's overall recovery.
- ❑ One new member has joined the IKC in the past quarter. Please welcome David Stahl (and family). The IKC membership now stands at 192.

INDIANA KARST CONSERVANCY TREASURY REPORT

Income/Expense Statement From April 1, 2005 to June 30, 2005

INCOME:

Dues Apportionment and Residuals	625.00	
Donations - General	704.00	
Donations - Acquisition Fund	2627.00	
Interest	192.13	
		\$4,148.13

EXPENSES:

IKC Update (printing, production, mailing)	153.11	
Stewardship/Conservation	94.83	
Education	78.11	
Business (security box rental, service charges)	63.30	
Property taxes	119.24	
Transfers to/from restricted funds/other adjustments	5216.46	
		(\$5,725.05)

NET OPERATING EXCESS (DEFICIT) THIS PERIOD: (\$1,576.92)

Balance Sheet June 30, 2005

ASSETS:

Cash in Checking / Saving Accounts / CDs	39333.00	
Accounts Receivable/Pledges ¹	720.00	
External Loans	-19000.00	
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)	13.16	
		<u><u>\$278,066.16</u></u>

LIABILITIES & OPERATING EXCESS:

Land Acquisition Restricted Fund	-22226.20
Deferred Dues Restricted Fund (191 members)	3093.75
Stewardship Endowment Restricted Fund ²	16195.11

Previous Operating Excess	25580.42
Net Excess (Deficit) This Period	<u>(1576.92)</u>
Current Operating Excess (unrestricted funds)	24003.50
Real estate liquidity	<u>257000.00</u>

Total Liabilities & Operating Excess \$278,066.16

NOTES:

- 1) Pledges towards Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve
- 2) Includes \$2500 transfer from General Fund per 6/18/05 Board motion

IKC SUMMER BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Saturday, June 18, 2005 -- Bloomington, Indiana

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Nick Noe

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM in Room 143 of the Geology Building on the IU campus, President Richard Vernier presiding. George Cesnik was accepted as proxy for Dave Haun and Bambi Dunlap was accepted as proxy for Tom Sollman. The minutes from the previous meeting were approved as published in the June 2005 *IKC Update*.

Treasurer Dunlap reported a cash balance of \$38,500 and land holdings of \$257,000. We still have \$19,000 in external loans for the Robinson Ladder Property purchase, so our total assets are about \$277,000. A detailed Treasury Report may be found in the *IKC Update*.

Dunlap reported that membership stands at 191 of which 166 are paid up.

Grotto Liaison Agreement Status

The Central Indiana Grotto still has not signed the new agreement. Dunlap said that he will corner CIG Chairman Eric Higbie and get him to sign it.

Robinson Ladder Cave Acquisition

Dunlap reported that we have received about \$42,000 so far in cash and pledges. That amount includes the donation from The Nature Conservancy of \$33,500 which we received since the last IKC meeting. The total price of the property was a little over \$74,000. He has prepared and submitted grant proposals to the NSS for \$5,000 and to IPL for a Golden Eagle Environmental grant of \$10,000. He thinks that we have a good chance to get both of the grants. One strike against us receiving the Golden Eagle grant is that IPL has changed the rules this year. They now require that one half of their grant money must be for projects in their service area.

Dunlap said that he is also looking into a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. He said that he is seeking \$18,500 but he got the impression that they may not be interested in funding such a

small project. They accepted a pre-proposal and gave the go ahead to submit a full proposal so that is what Dunlap will do. He will also be asking some of the caving organizations for some smaller grants. Another opportunity may exist through The Central Indiana Community Foundation. We may qualify to get some funding but it would be a real long shot.

Dunlap presented a management plan for the Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve. The plan is based on the Wayne Cave Preserve plan with revisions and adaptations suggested by the Executive Board and the Management Plan Committee over the last several weeks. He said that the main topic of discussion among the members of the committee was whether or not to have Robinson Ladder Cave included in the Grotto Liaison program. They decided to keep cave access controlled by the cave patron for the first year.

Dunlap moved to accept the Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve Management Plan as distributed to the Board at this meeting. The motion was seconded by Sue Vernier and passed 14-0-0. Bowman asked President Vernier to dissolve the Robinson Ladder Management Plan Committee and he did so.

John Benton, Robinson Ladder Property Manager and Robinson Ladder Cave Patron, spoke on the restoration proposal for the two open fields at the property. The plan is to get rid of the existing fescue and allow native vegetation to take over, thus returning the open fields to a more wildlife friendly environment.

He has been working with the USDA office in Corydon applying for inclusion in the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program, (WHIP). Allen Pursell of The Nature Conservancy and Mark Bennett, Wildlife Biologist with the IDNR are also providing assistance in our application for a grant from the WHIP program to convert the fescue. The estimated cost of the project is \$9,067 of which WHIP would pay 75%, (\$6,800).

Benton mentioned several questions that we need to think about. Will the changes that we make be detrimental to wildlife, particularly bats? Will this change our status as a Classified Forest or Classified Wildlife Habitat? What would be the time frame for getting the work done and where will the labor come from? Will there be a need for volunteer labor? Where will the remaining 25%, (\$2,267), come from? Benton said that Allen Pursell said that there is a possibility that TNC may fund all or part of the remaining 25%. Tozer said that we need to get clarification of the cost and we must know how much, if any, funding TNC will contribute.

Benton said that Allen Pursell mentioned in an e-mail that he has people lined up who can do the spraying and whatever else is involved with the fescue eradication.



Vernier asked about a July 8 deadline that was mentioned in the discussion. Benton said that a form called a Ranking Worksheet must be submitted by July 8. Mark Bennett will fill it out and we sign if we agree to it. Vernier asked if this would be a binding agreement and Benton said no, it is just a proposal for now.

After much more discussion it was decided that Dunlap will check with Dr Whitaker about possible harm to bats from chemicals that may be used, Vernier will talk to Allen Pursell about TNC funding, and Benton will ask Mark Bennett for an opinion on whether any of this will affect our Classified Forest or Wildlife Habitat status.

Benton said that an officer of the IKC must sign the application or he would need Power of Attorney authorizing him to sign. Benton and Sergesketter will work out the details of getting Benton Power of Attorney.

After some discussion, Tozer and others were of the opinion that we should have Board approval to make the commitment to this restoration project. Sue Vernier moved that, based upon receiving positive responses to our questions regarding possible impact on bats and their habitat and other questions we may have, we authorize John Benton to sign the application enrolling the IKC in the WHIP program for the Robinson Ladder property. Ingle seconded and the motion passed 14-0-0.

The Under-Earth Day and open house event at Robinson Ladder was a success in spite of the rain. A good time was had by all.

Stewardship Fund

Dunlap said that we have been trying to set aside 10% of our property value in the Stewardship Endowment Fund but we fell behind with the Wayne property purchase and now with the Robinson Ladder purchase we are even further behind. Dunlap moved to transfer \$2,500 from the General Fund to the Stewardship Endowment Fund. Bowman seconded. The motion passed 14-0-0.

Hoosier National Forest Management Plan

Vernier said that the Hoosier National Forest is proposing a new forest management plan and we need to decide if we want to comment on the proposal as an organization. Dunlap said that the plan was published on March 15 and though the original comment period was 90 days, it has been extended to June 23 or June 27, depending on which page you look at on their web site. He said that we're running out of time to comment as an organization and we may not want to comment as an organization. The plan consists of a 498 page Environmental Impact Statement, 160 pages of actual plan proposals, and a 30 page summary. Vernier said that there are five alternative plans within the proposal. The first is to leave things as they are, the second is the "conservation" alternative which would not permit any logging and no management

except maybe some basic species management. The third option is the "ATV" proposal which would open a portion of the forest to all terrain vehicles. Fourth is a maximum management alternative where up to 80% of the forest might be open for logging. The fifth is the "preferred" option which is very similar to the present situation but may have some additional logging. Dunlap again stated that if we want to comment as an organization we need to move quickly. Sue Vernier suggested that any member with an opinion on this to express it personally and to let the IKC's President make comments on the plan on the IKC's behalf as he sees fit. There was general agreement all around.

Documentary Video

The documentary video project is still being pursued through the HNF. McGowan has been out doing some filming at a bat maternity roost. Lindberg said that McGowan has had a meeting with some bat experts. She said that the top of the tree where the maternity roost was located fell over, smashing the scaffolding that had been erected to aid in filming the colony. They did get some good bat footage from a bridge, however.

Education and Outreach

Lindberg reported that as a tie in with the video, there could be renewed interest in designating the Indiana Bat as the state bat. There is some support in the legislature. It would be nice if this could happen before the 2007 NSS Convention which will be held near Marengo.

Project Underground was featured in a recent article in the Bloomington Herald-Times. Lindberg said that she received a lot of positive feedback. The article included a color photo and was on the front page of the second section of the paper.

Lindberg said that she will give her presentation on working with developers at the NSS Convention in Huntsville in July. She is also in charge of the educational poster session at the convention.

Bob Vandeventer and George Cesnik have been helping with presentations at Leonard Springs.

Ingle reported that each year Dave Everton takes a Brown County Girl Scout troop on a cave trip. Next week he will be taking them to Coon and Eversole caves and then present the Karst Education Program at the scout's meeting location in the evening after the trip.

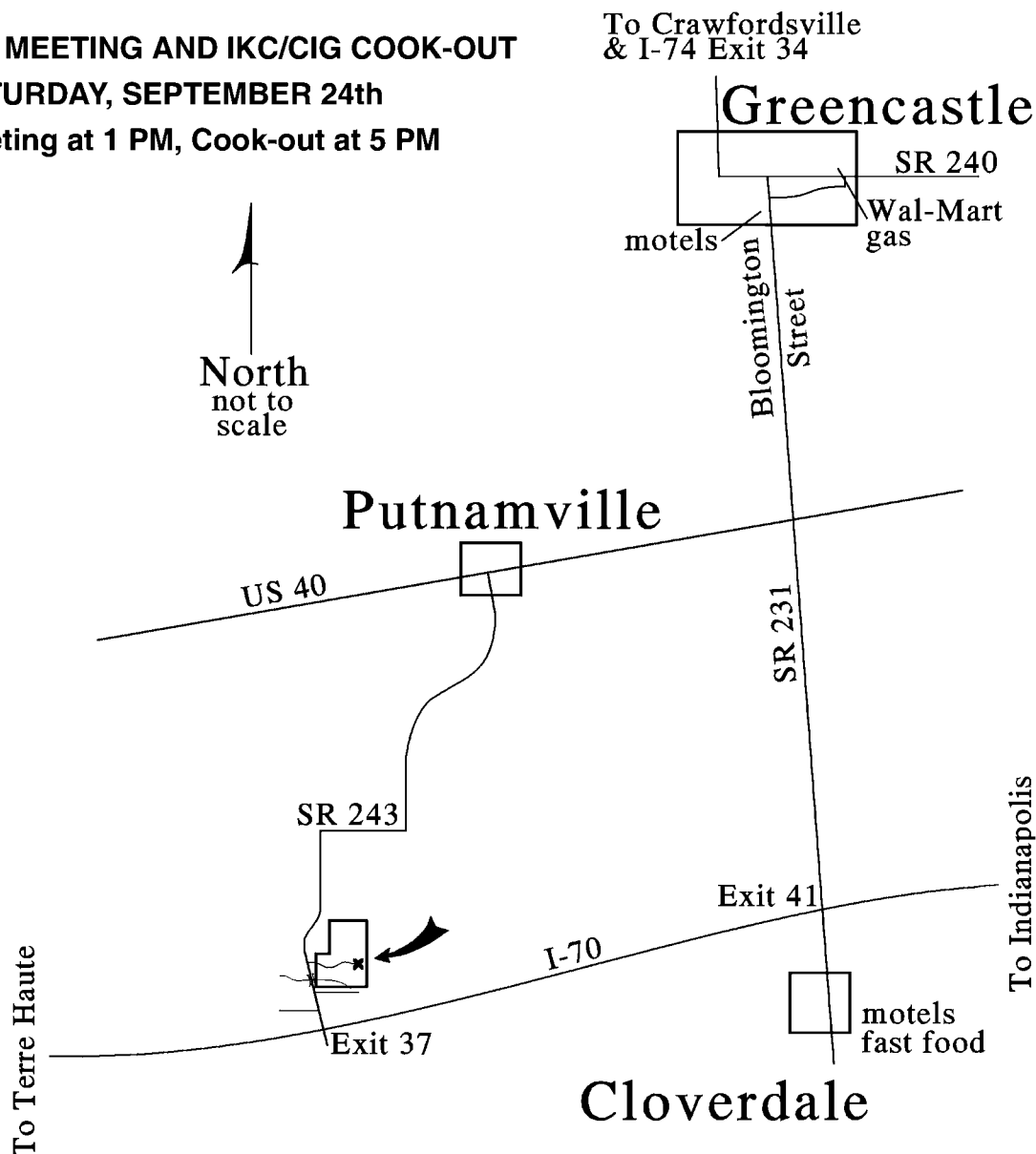
Dunlap moved that the IKC help fund the CIG/IKC picnic with a donation not to exceed \$50. Ingle seconded. The motion passed 14-0-0.

President Vernier adjourned the meeting at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Sergesketter, Secretary

IKC MEETING AND IKC/CIG COOK-OUT
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24th
Meeting at 1 PM, Cook-out at 5 PM



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.

