



# IKC UPDATE

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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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Cover: John Harris ascending the first pit in Joy Cave, Washington County.  
Digital image by Dave Everton (12/31/2005).



**ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING**  
**SATURDAY, MARCH 18th, 10 AM**  
**INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA**  
**DECATUR BRANCH - MARION COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
**5301 S KENTUCKY AVE 317-275-4330**

The Annual Business meeting is for the explicit purpose of Board elections. Annual reports from the IKC Cave Patrons and Property Managers are also presented. And as always, the meeting is for members and other interested persons to have an open forum for talking about cave and karst conservation and related topics. Past, present, and future IKC projects are discussed to solicit comments and input from our members and the caving community as a whole. The meeting is informal, and everyone is encouraged to attend and participate. The IKC Board *wants* your input.

Preliminary Agenda Items: Elections; Cave Patrons/Property Managers annual reports; Brief recaps of last quarter's activities; Upcoming workdays at the Robinson Ladder, Buddha, and Sullivan properties; Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve surface restoration; Indiana Cave Symposium; Sullivan Cave Preserve management plan revisions; Financial Report and Land Acquisition Fund-raising activities; HNF inventorying project; and more....

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

Meeting directions: See page 23 (inside back cover) for directions and map.

### ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

18 MAR = IKC ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING, Indianapolis (see above)  
25 MAR = LOST RIVER TOUR, Orleans (see page 6)  
08 APR = SULLIVAN PROPERTY WORK DAY, Springfield (see page 5)  
22 APR = TNC SPRING FLING, O'Bannon Woods State Park (see page 6)  
22 APR = INDIANA CAVE SYMPOSIUM, Milltown (see page 7)  
22 APR = UNDER-EARTH DAY/ROBINSON LADDER, Milltown (see page 6)  
29 APR = BUDDHA PRESERVE TREE PLANTING, Buddha (see page 5)  
06 MAY = TAKE PRIDE IN AMERICA/HNF WORKDAY (see page 5)  
?? MAY = TREE MAINTENANCE AT BUDDHA PROPERTY (see page 5)  
?? MAY = TREE MAINTENANCE AT SULLIVAN PROPERTY (see page 5)  
03 JUN = LOST RIVER TOUR, Orleans (see page 6)  
?? JUN = WAYNE PROPERTY WORK DAY, Bloomington  
?? JUN = IKC QUARTERLY MEETING, Bloomington

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

*We could have saved the Earth but we were too damned cheap...*

-- Kurt Vonnegut Jr



One of the things that your Executive Board can never seem to get too far from is fund raising. This is probably the least pleasant of the various aspects of the job, but where would we be without it? To date, the IKC

owns five preserves with a total of 128 acres. None would exist were it not for the generous donations from many individuals and organizations. I would say that Vonnegut didn't have the IKC in mind when he made the above statement.

The Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve (RLCP) fund raising should soon be complete -- approximately one year after having signed the deed. We are optimistic that one or both of the still active grant requests will receive at least partial funding and we will know the answer to both of those this month. Success with these grant applications will potentially open avenues for anticipated future projects.

Dick Blenz's offer to match contributions to the Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve brought in an additional \$6,734 from donors, thus netting the project nearly \$13,500 at the end of 2005. Thank you Dick!

We are still paying back our internal loans so as to bring the Cave Acquisition Fund back to pre-RLCP levels, but we are not in any danger of defaulting on obligations or in any other way forfeiting any of our assets or curtailing any services. If we had no plans for the future, we could call it complete; but as you know, opportunities arise and we must be prepared.

Land prices in Indiana's cave regions are still going up. Only recently I heard that prices had risen 20% to 100% in the French Lick area as a result of the development expected around the new casino. Monroe County (Bloomington), of course, continues to climb. These increases ripple out into the surrounding region and make it more difficult for us to acquire new preserves. Con-

sidering this, we really should be working to increase our reserves. Each of us has his "Boy wouldn't that be great if we could just get..." cave in mind and you never really know when it might come onto the market or when the owner might finally agree to our requests. Usually these quick response acquisitions are made possible through no-interest loans from a core group of committed members, but no matter how you look at it, that strategy is burdensome and costly for those persons and as financial positions and jobs change, may not be viable in the future. Thus, we really can't slack off; we need to build that Acquisition Fund back up.

Another success for the year has been our cooperation with the Hoosier National Forest. Here we successfully worked with the HNF to obtain "significant cave" status for twenty-eight caves on Forest property. The significant cave designation accords additional protections for these caves. Also, the IKC became a co-sponsor with the HNF of the Cave Biota video project. The HNF is paying the bulk of the costs while the IKC is helping with expertise, labor, coordination of volunteer effort, and publicity. We also contributed a nominal amount from the funds realized through building and installing a protective cover over Piggy Pit - a cave on HNF property. Be sure and view the progress of the Cave Biota project by checking the "webumentary" that director and Academy Award nominee David McGowan is posting at [www.cavebiota.com](http://www.cavebiota.com). David adds new footage periodically. The video is beginning to take shape and interest is developing beyond the HNF and the caving community. We look forward to having it as a powerful tool for education about the life found in our caves and the need to conserve and protect this limited resource. Finally, as mentioned in the December *IKC Update*, our various efforts with the HNF resulted in the IKC being given the Eastern Region Honor Award for *Volunteer of the Year* by the USDA Forest Service.

All in all, a pretty good year.

*Richard Vernier*

## NEWS BRIEFS...

- ❑ With winter winding down and spring just around the corner, the IKC's activity calendar is once again full of cave conservation/educational projects. Check out the calendar on page 3 (and related announcements throughout this issue) and pick a few projects to volunteer for while having a little fun too. IKC projects can be very rewarding and there is always lots of fellowship in accomplishing good things together.
- ❑ The first project of the year is at the Sullivan Cave Property on April 8th. We plan to re-plant about 100 trees (replacement for seedlings that have died), perhaps work on some invasives, and maybe perform a little trail maintenance. Contact Keith Dunlap if you are interested in helping. Start time is noon.
- ❑ If you want to plant a lot more trees, we are offering a second opportunity this year with plans to plant 500 seedlings at our Buddha property on April 29th, starting at 10 AM. Bring gloves and a light lunch and hopefully we will have enough people to make it a short day. Contact George Cesnik (see page 2) if you are interested in helping. Note, our tree order has not yet been confirmed, so please contact George a few days prior to the workday to verify that plans have not changed.
- ❑ In May (exact dates to be determined), at least two workdays will be scheduled for tree maintenance at the Sullivan and Buddha properties. Each of these workdays will only take three or four volunteers and the primary task will be performing chemical weed control around the trees we have planted over the past six years (over 3,500 trees between the two preserves). Contact Keith Dunlap if you are interested in helping.
- ❑ If none of these workdays fit your schedule, there are other stewardship projects you can do on your own. We have trail mowing and maintenance at Buddha, camping areas mowing at Sullivan, Wayne, and Robinson Ladder, and invasive eradication at all of our properties needing attention. Contact any of our property managers (see page 2) to see how you can help.
- ❑ One other area the IKC could use your help. Be our eyes and ears for cave properties that might be available for acquisition. While the IKC has contacted a number of landowners regarding high-priority caves the IKC would like to someday protect, there are hundreds others that would probably fit our criteria, and these occasionally come on the market. If you hear a cave owner mention they might be putting the property up for sale, or you see a realtor sign on a cave property, please forward that information to Keith Dunlap or another Board member so we can investigate.
- ❑ Also in May, on the 6th, the Hoosier National Forest will be sponsoring their annual Take Pride In America workday. There will be a number of forest-wide stewardship projects needing to be accomplished on that day (generally they have more than 100 volunteers). The "cave-related" project this year will be a restoration and protection project in Dillon Cave. Tasks are to include cordoning off the multiple bear-wallows in the cave, photo-documenting historical smoked signature, removing contemporary graffiti, and removing any trash in the cave and surrounding surface areas. The meeting place for the Dillon work project will be the Hardee's parking lot in Paoli, meeting at 9:30. Bring your caving gear, water, lunch, and your favorite wire brush (if you have one). After the project is complete, everyone is invited back for a free cook-out and some fabulous door-prizes at Hardin Ridge. For more details, contact Cindy Basile (cbasile@fs.fed.us) at the HNF Tell City office.
- ❑ In June, work will continue at the Wayne Cave Property under the guidance of Robert Sollman. Tasks will include additional work on the driveway and completing the work started 2004 to level out the dirt/root mounds around the clearing. The exact date will depend upon the spring weather but probably will be scheduled to correspond with the June IKC quarterly meeting. Contact Robert if you are interested in helping with this project.



- ❑ On April 22nd, in addition to Under-Earth Day (see below) and the Indiana Cave Symposium (see page 7), you can start the morning off at The Nature Conservancy's Spring Fling at the O'Bannon Woods State Park Nature Center. The open house is from 9-11 AM. The IKC will be one of the participants (we will have our display set up). There is also the Hellbender Hustle (a 5k walk/run) starting at 9 AM, followed by a local band (also called the Hellbenders). For more information, contact Cassie Hauswald (chauswld@tnc.org 812-737-2087).
- ❑ Bob Armstrong and Dee Slater of the Lost River Conservation Association will once again be conducting their guided auto/hiking tours of the Lost River area, starting from the east at its head waters in Washington County, through Orange County to its disappearance near Orleans, and on to its rise near Orangeville. This year there will be two spring tours scheduled: March 25th and June 3rd. 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.
- ❑ After many years as the Wayne Cave Patron, Tom Willett has "retired" as of December 31st. Replacing Tom will be Bloomington caver, Dave Everton. The Cave Patron is responsible for the cave, arranging access, and handling the paperwork associated with access. Robert Sollman remains the Property Manager who is responsible for the stewardship of the property, excluding the cave. We wish to thank Tom for his efforts and welcome Dave to the Wayne Cave management committee. Dave is also the BIG's liaison with the IKC.
- ❑ The December *IKC Update* contained a summary of the 2005 Indiana bat census. The full 104-page report covering the bat census is now available as a pdf file, free for the asking. If you would like a copy, contact Keith Dunlap (keith.dunlap@juno.com) and he will e-mail you the document.
- ❑ Five new members and one organization that have joined the IKC in the past quarter. Please welcome Steve Dobbs (448), Jeff Gosnell (449), Roy Becker (450), Martin Ryan (451), Robert Young (453), and the Near Normal Grotto (452). The IKC membership now stands at 188.

## **UNDER-EARTH DAY 2006 - ROBINSON LADDER PRESERVE SATURDAY, APRIL 22**

The Indiana Karst Conservancy will once again organize a workday in celebration of Earth Day. This year we will return to the Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve to continue some of the projects started last year and to start some new ones. There is another deer blind to remove, more interior fences to take down, and grape vines to eradicate. We also have some road work to do on the gravel drive through the woods. The workday will also serve as our "open house" for the members and caving community to explore the property, both above and below ground (Robinson Ladder Cave will still be closed due to the bats, but there is another little cave on the property that can be explored).

You do not need any special skill to assist and family participation is encouraged. Bring gloves, good shoes, and water. Starting time will be noon EDT (Indy time). Will be done by 4 PM so participants can attend the nearby Indiana Cave Symposium.

The property is located just off of SR 66, 2.8 miles north of SR 64 (Milltown) coming from the south, or 4.2 miles south of US 150 coming from the north. Watch for Baylor Road, heading west from SR 66 (the intersection has GPS coordinates N4249542 E0563592). The access lane to the IKC property is directly opposite of Baylor Road heading to the east. Take the lane 1/4 mile to the property. If you need further directions or information, contact John Benton (JBenton@fullnet.com or 812-683-2733).

# INDIANA CAVE SYMPOSIUM 2006 PREVIEW

by Dave Everton

The 14th annual Indiana Cave Symposium, co-sponsored by the Indiana Karst Conservancy and Indiana Cave Survey, will be held on Saturday, April 22, in Milltown, Indiana, at the Cave Country Canoes campground. The customary *free* cookout and *pitch-in* dinner will start at 5 PM Eastern Daylight Time, with presentations beginning at 7 PM EDT in the nearby Community Center building. The expected topics and presenters are as follows, not necessarily in this order:

- **Cave Signs** - Do you know your caving sign? Join John Benton, Bob Sergesketter, Terry Clark, and George Jaegers to show signs of caves, but NOT huge sinks, karst valleys, entrances, disappearing streams, etc. Confused? Ribbon winning presentation at 2005 NSS Convention.
- **I-69 Indiana Potential Bat Hibernaculum Identification Project** - As part of the I-69 Phase 2 project, the Indiana Geological Survey was contracted by Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates, Inc. to determine if any known cave entrances within 5 miles of either side of the sections 4 & 5 corridor were potential habitats for the federally-endangered bat. They covered gobs of ground, and like the USPS, were not stopped by rain, snow, sleet, timbered areas, or even rednecks! Sam Frushour will provide a summary of what they accomplished.
- **Cave Airflow** - Sean Lewis has jumped in to his undergrad studies at Indiana University with both feet, and has already managed to incorporate caving into his curriculum! Observe his report on a recent project he and a colleague conducted in Sullivan Cave on the physics of cave airflow.
- **Recent Projects in Indiana Cave Biology** - Dr Jerry Lewis and his wife Salisa will be talking about several topics, including a book chapter for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and field work they've done at the Buddha Karst Preserve, Leonard Springs and Baseline Barrens Nature Preserves. Jerry promised to cram everything he's done in

the past 35 years in 500+ Indiana caves into 30 minutes, but we'd be sorely disappointed if he really did so.

- **Lost River System Project Update** - A milestone was reached earlier this year: 20 miles of passage surveyed in the system. Mark Deebel, Jake Morris, and Tony Cunningham (or any combination thereof) will be explaining the latest and greatest hard-earned accomplishment. In the spirit and tone of the late Mr. Rogers, "Can you say 20 miles? I knew you could!"
- **Hoosier National Forest Cave and Karst Update** - Bruce Trotter will be summarizing the progress that Ray Sheldon, Jerry Walker, Keith Dunlap, and he have been making at finding caves and karst features in the HNF, and the associated documentation that goes along with the effort.
- **Cave Biota Webumentary** - Ravenswood Media has been hard at work filming in many locations for a webumentary on cave biota, and Kriste Lindberg will provide an overview of this huge project being undertaken by Dave McGowan of Chicago.
- **The Roger Spring Cave System** - Comprised of three known separate segments of cave passage initially surveyed by Illinois cavers in the early 1970s, the system was recently resurveyed and extended by several Hoosier Cavers. Dave Everton will provide an overview of the effort, which took place between July 2005 and January 2006.

Camping will be available on-site at Milltown Canoes campground. For more information about the Symposium, contact Dave Everton (deverton@indiana.edu or evening phone 812-824-4380) or visit the Indiana Cave Survey website at [www.caves.org/survey/ics](http://www.caves.org/survey/ics)



# ROBINSON LADDER CAVE PRESERVE

by Keith Dunlap

ROBINSON LADDER DONATION LIST	
<b>\$10,000 or more</b>	
The Nature Conservancy	
<b>\$5,000 to \$9,999</b>	
Richard Blenz	
National Speleological Society	
<b>\$1,000 to \$4,999</b>	
Bruce Bowman	
George Brutchan	
Keith Dunlap	
Bob & Phyllis Sergesketter	
Tom Sollman	
Bruce Trotter	
Cave Conservancy Foundation	
Central Indiana Grotto	
National Speleological Foundation	
The Robertson Association	
<b>\$250 to \$999</b>	
Mark Deebel	
Steve Lockwood	
Robbie Miller	
Matthew Selig	
Bill Tozer	
Richard & Sue Vernier	
Jack Wood	
Birmingham Grotto	
Bubble Cave LLC	
St Joseph Valley Grotto	
<b>\$100 to \$249</b>	
John Benton	Gordon Smith
Dave Black	Richard Van Rheenen
Carl Brown	Jamie Winner
Keith Calkins	Robert Zatarski
George Cesnik	Bloomington Indiana Grotto
Tony Cunningham	Bluesprings Cavern Park
Jeff Farr	Eastern Indiana Grotto
Dave Haun	Evansville Metro Grotto
Don Ingle	Greater Cincinnati Grotto
Dan Lucas	Harrison-Crawford Grotto
Dan McDowell	Lewis and Associates
Nick & Carita Noe	Northern Indiana Grotto
Nathan Pate	Sewanee Mountain Grotto
Everett Pulliam	Windy City Grotto
Russ Romme	
<b>\$50 to \$99</b>	
Ron Adams	Andrew & Shavon Peacock
David Anderson	Don Peters
Chris Carpenter	Kelle Reynolds
Jeff Cody	Robert Roundy
Jaime Coffman	Don & June Shofstall
Debi Cress	Carla Striegel
Scott Fee	Steve Taylor
Cassandra Hauswald	Rich Whisler
Mark Kraus	BSA Troop 321 (Laporte)
Jacqueline & Ernie Payne	
<b>\$5 to \$49</b>	
Aaron Atz	Anthony Pope
Cindy Basile	Steve Ragsdale
James Braswell	Kevin Rasmus
Dave Everton	Tom Rea
Mark Gelzleichter	Charles Rex
Tim & Andrea Grissom	Gary Roberson
Crystal Jenkins	Patty Ruback
Scott Hammon	Ray Sheldon
Adam Manship	Kevin Strunk & Jennette Holland
Tom & Kim Metzgar	Mark Webb
Jon Miller	Norbert Welch
Jacob Morris	Kathy Welling
Pat Mudd	Terra Society - Chicago
George Mundy	

As I write this status report, it has been exactly one year since the IKC acquired the Robinson Ladder Cave property. In many respects it has been the most rewarding of acquisition projects with the cave being a winter hibernacula for the endangered Indiana bat. The 40-acre property is also the largest tract that we now own and provides a number of surface recreation and restoration opportunities. Likewise, the restoration work will allow us to partner with The Nature Conservancy and the Indiana DNR, as well as expand our stewardship skills.

These same restoration "opportunities" are also challenges since for the first time we must have some of the work done by professionals. While much of the work will be cost-shared with our WHIP grant, I know several on our Executive Board are uneasy about paying others to perform tasks we would typically do ourselves (if we had the equipment and skills).

In addition to the surface restoration work, the Executive Board has approved to have the property surveyed (we held off on this expense until we knew we were financially). While we know where two of the corners are from previous surveys, the other two corners are only evident by sighting down old fence lines which may or may not be accurate.

On a more positive note, as Richard Vernier indicated in his column on page 4, the fund-raising aspect of the Robinson Ladder Cave acquisition is about complete. Thanks to a \$2500 grant from the National Speleological Foundation and the challenge matching grant from Dick Blenz (netting over \$13,000), we have exceeded our goal for money from the caving community. We still have money to raise, but we are hopeful that the remaining money will come from the two grants we still have outstanding (we should know by the end of the month).

If you have not visited the property yet, we would encourage you to come to our Under-Earth Day work day/open house on April 22nd (see page 6). We hope to see you there.



## EDUCATION AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE REPORT

by Kriste Lindberg

As the December *IKC Update* was going to press, several members of the Education and Outreach Committee were in Milwaukee accepting the *Volunteer of the Year* award for cooperative work done with the Hoosier National Forest (see accompanying photo). Little surprise that over the past three months, the IKC continues to work with out federal agency partners on a number of fronts...

The HNF/IKC Cave and Karst Inventory Project has been making good progress. Bruce Trotter, Ray Sheldon, Jerry Walker, and Keith Dunlap have been very busy in the field documenting caves, springs, mines, and other karst features that will eventually all be entered into the HNF's GIS for better resource management.

A few of us also joined HNF personnel for a site visit to an area by the name of Deuchars to check on the possibility of doing a sink cleanup there, but someone had already beat us to it.

The Cave Biota Video, yet another wonderful HNF partnership project, is taking shape. In January, we held an organizational meeting to discuss the future of the project. Several folks attended to pitch in their thoughts. We brainstormed and made a "to do" list. Items are in the process of being checked off. I'm happy to report that the education component is off to a good start. We have already created a cave biota video poster (see the back cover of this issue) and a new educational program, Cave Critter Creations, which will be held for the first time in June and sponsored by Bloomington Parks and Recreation, and in March, HNF personnel and I are meeting with Natural Resources Education Center personnel to discuss incorporation of the video in educational programs including Project Wet, Project Wild, Hoosier Riverwatch, and so on. We will be networking with other educators, too. Hold onto your hats! The website for the video is: [www.cavebiota.com](http://www.cavebiota.com). You also might check out the HNF site at [www.fs.fed.us/r9/hoosier/project\\_docs/projectsofinterest.htm](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/hoosier/project_docs/projectsofinterest.htm)

Other media friends include The Herald-Times, a local newspaper in the Bloomington area. We, along with other partners including the Hoosier National Forest, US Fish and Wildlife Services, Laura Hohman, etc. have been working on a really neat program with various schools and school children by the name of, "The Bat Project". It focuses on the Indiana bat. You can follow progress on "Indiana bat blog" which is on Herald-Times' website at [www.heraldtimesonline.com](http://www.heraldtimesonline.com).

Progress is still being made on the potential designation of the Indiana bat as the official State Bat. The above, as well as the Hoosier Environmental Council and others, are helping with that. Let's keep our fingers crossed that by NSS CON 2007, which will be hosted right here in Indiana, we will have the designation completed!

In February, we did a presentation on agency partnerships to an IU-SPEA class on community development.

Also in February, the Hoosier Environmental Council held a meeting in Bedford to discuss the formation of regional partnerships. It was well-attended, over 50 people representing various organizations were present! They will help to tie all of the above and more in together utilizing a regional partnership perspective that will encompass several counties in southern Indiana that contain karst. Additional, follow-up, meetings will be held in March.

Partnerships abound! They are an essential key to our success.

...continued on page 10



## RICHARD BLENZ NATURE CONSERVANCY

by Patty Cummings

Buckner Cave has a long and storied past. Most recently, as the property of Richard Blenz, it has been the site of many a person's first cave experience. Boy Scouts, college groups, church organizations, and youth groups, among others, have made Buckner Cave their destination to learn about caving and karst. Unfortunately, granting access to responsible persons to enter the cave led some people to believe that the cave was public property and accessible to everyone no matter the time of night, or the purpose of the visit. It became a party place, filled with debris, vandalism and graffiti. There were regular rescues of untrained spelunkers, often on a weekly or monthly basis. Something had to give or the cave would be lost to the forces of destructive behavior.

After a variety of efforts to control access to the cave property had been tried, eventually a small group of Bloomington cavers worked with Richard Blenz to develop and install the Richard Blenz Nature Conservancy (RBNC). The Executive Board consists of Anmar Mirza, President; Patricia Cummings, VP; Sam Frushour, Secretary; and Richard Blenz, Treasurer. Non-members are asked to request permission at least one week prior to their planned trip, to honor the policies and to sign a liability waiver before entering the property. Membership allows expedited access to the cave. There are three levels of membership, all costing \$25. The highest level of membership grants the member the most opportunity to be a steward of the property, as it requires twenty-four hours of service to the Conservancy, in addition to the \$25 fee, and it also confers full voting privileges. The intermediate level confers some voting privileges, but only requires eight hours of service. The lowest level of membership has no voting privileges but also has no work requirements. The RBNC encourages everyone to seek the highest level of membership possible for

them, as it is our belief that working on the property gives one a greater sense of responsibility toward the development of policies and rules.

Currently, there is no on-site caretaker at the property, and the Board members are the ones granting permission upon the request of qualified persons. Waiver forms are to be left at the kiosk, after a person has read and agreed to abide by the rules posted on the website. Only after contacting and receiving permission from a Board member is the gate access combination given. The gate combination changes randomly to provide against unauthorized persons seeking access. The cave and property is regularly checked for trash and graffiti and other problems.

We, the Board of the Richard Blenz Nature Conservancy, would like to invite you to come to Buckner and see how much it has changed since you were last here. Many people came here in the 70s, 80s, and 90s, and remember it as a party place. It has been cleaned up quite a bit (although there is always more to be done, as you cave conservationist folks know too well), the road has been graded and filled, and there is rock on the trail down to the cave. Ruts in the camp area have been filled in, graffiti has been removed from many places in the cave, trash has been gathered and hauled off. The gate has been rehung and painted, and the kiosk has been wired for light and painted. There are even some bats in the entrance now! There will be more work days scheduled for this Spring and Summer, and there are always projects that can use an extra hand. Contact any one of the Board members for more information or check out the website.

For more information, a more complete list of visitation policies, and to download the liability waiver, go to [www.caves.org/-grotto/big/rbnc/rbnc.htm](http://www.caves.org/-grotto/big/rbnc/rbnc.htm)

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Upcoming educational events include TNC's Spring Fling on Earth Day April 22, two Project Underground workshops (June 21 and August 23), working more with the

Sycamore Land Trust through their evolving education and outreach efforts, and a potential clean up in southern Indiana.

Note: For a recap of the highlights of the IKC's 2005 Education and Outreach Committee, see the March 2006 *NSS News*.

## Lighting the way Karst Conservancy not only goes underground, but into the classroom and before the public to get the message out.

by Steve Hinnefeld

Members of the Indiana Karst Conservancy are hard-working, organized and dedicated to protecting the state's caves and karst areas.

But what makes the group truly effective, supporters say, is its readiness to form partnerships -- with state and federal agencies, land owners, conservationists and developers.

"A lot of us are working on the same things, and we may as well utilize each other more effectively," said Kriste Lindberg, who chairs the conservancy's education and outreach committee.

This month, the organization was recognized as volunteer of the year by the US Forest Service Eastern Region, which includes 14 national forests in the northeastern United States. Cynthia Basile, wildlife biologist and karst coordinator for the Hoosier National Forest, nominated the group for the honor.

She said the Hoosier's small staff couldn't effectively manage the 200,000-acre forest without help from volunteer organizations. And the Indiana Karst Conservancy stands out among such groups, she said.

"They volunteered over 5,000 hours to the Forest Service last year alone," Basile said.

The conservancy's efforts in-

clude locating, inventorying and mapping the more than 140 caves in the forest. It also helped produce short videos on cave creatures such as the endangered Indiana bat, the Northern cavefish and the slimy salamander.

Thanks to the conservancy, Basile said, Hoosier Forest officials can give appropriate consideration to caves and karst features, including sinkholes, springs and underground streams, in management decisions.

"All the information we've collected on what's living in our caves, where our caves are, how our cave systems are connected, that's all been volunteer stuff," she said.

The Indiana Karst Conservancy has about 200 members, said Lindberg, who works for the Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department. Part of the National Speleological Society, the conservancy was formed by individuals who saw a pressing need to protect fragile caves and karst resources from vandalism, overuse and development.

Lindberg counts herself as typical. She was living in the Chicago area in the early 1990s when she began traveling to southern Indiana to explore caves.

"We'd always come down to the Bloomington area to go caving," she said. "One thing led to another and it just kind of snowballed."

Now she forms networks with other agencies and gives talks at schools, parks and civic meetings on caves and karst. Working with property owners and donors, the conservancy has acquired caves to protect them. It manages five cave-and-karst nature preserves.

The group has cleaned up caves, removed trash from sinkholes and helped the state mine reclamation division gate abandoned coal mines that serve as bat habitat. It is working with *The Herald-Times* and wildlife agencies to teach students in area schools about the Indiana bat.

Lindberg is enthusiastic about working with developers to preserve karst features. A success story, she said, is Renwick, the Wininger-Stolberg Group project on Bloomington's southeast side.

"They've naturalized their sinkholes with native plants and put in interesting signage and trails," she said.

Basile, the Hoosier National Forest biologist, said the passion that conservancy members bring to their partnerships makes the group stand out.

"They love their resource," she said. "They love caves and karst and the things that live there."

*Reprinted from the January 1, 2006 issue of The Hoosier Times.*

## Taking wing: Students in three schools launch semester-long study of the bat and could have a say in its protection.

by Anne Kibbler

Trae Carroll has been fascinated by bats since he came across one in the grass a few summers ago on the way home from the pool. Now he'll have a chance to study them up close and share his observations with readers of *The Herald-Times*.

Trae and about 125 students in Monroe County schools are going to bat for a winged, furry creature on the federal endangered species list, and they hope hundreds of


other kids will join them.

The students, at Edgewood Intermediate, Childs Elementary and Tri-North Middle schools, wrote winning essays for *The Herald-Times* bat project. Starting today, they will produce a weekly column for In School and maintain a blog at HeraldTimes-Online.com through the end of the school year, educating readers about the urgency of saving the Indiana bat.

The kids know they have a big responsibility ahead of them.

"So many species have gone extinct because of the way the human race has acted," said Aaron Crain, a seventh-grader in Martha Bowman's science class at Tri-North. "I want to be able to say, 'Hey, I've been able to help save a species that was endangered.'"

The Indiana bat has been officially endangered since 1967, and its numbers are still declining. A 1996 population count by the US

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# INDIANA KARST CONSERVANCY TREASURY REPORT

## Income/Expense Statement From October 1, 2005 to December 30, 2005

### INCOME:

Dues Apportionment and Residuals	712.50	
Donations - General	132.25	
Donations - Acquisition Fund	13752.00	
SpeLogger Sales (4)	614.00	
Interest	287.03	
		<u>\$15,497.78</u>

### EXPENSES:

IKC Update (printing, production, mailing)	243.00	
Stewardship/Conservation	348.76	
Education (cave biota video)	1500.00	
Donations (HEC membership)	100.00	
Business (insurance, service charges, PO box)	770.06	
Property taxes	291.92	
SpeLoggers (10)	837.00	
Transfers to/from restricted funds/other adjustments	13897.50	
		<u>(\$17,988.24)</u>

NET OPERATING EXCESS (DEFICIT) THIS PERIOD: (\$2,490.46)

## Balance Sheet December 30, 2005

### ASSETS:

Cash in Checking / Saving Accounts / CDs	46325.13	
Accounts Receivable/Pledges <sup>1</sup>	7279.00	
External Loans	-10000.00	
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>\$300,617.29</u>

### LIABILITIES & OPERATING EXCESS:

Land Acquisition Restricted Fund	1831.80
Deferred Dues Restricted Fund (185 members)	2028.75
Stewardship Endowment Restricted Fund	16461.67

Previous Operating Excess	25785.53
Net Excess (Deficit) This Period	<u>(2490.46)</u>
Current Operating Excess (unrestricted funds)	23295.07
Real estate liquidity	<u>257000.00</u>

Total Liabilities & Operating Excess \$300,617.29

### NOTES:

1) Pledges towards Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve (\$6979) and SpeLoggers (\$300)



# IKC QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Saturday, December 17, 2005 Indianapolis, Indiana

## BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

## BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

none

The meeting was called to order at 12:13 PM at the home of Nick and Carita Noe in Indianapolis, President Richard Vernier presiding. George Cesnik was accepted as proxy for Dave Haun, Karen Tadsen was accepted as proxy for Bob Vandeventer, and Kathy Welling was accepted as proxy for Jamie Winner. The minutes from the previous meeting were approved as published in the December 2005 *IKC Update*.

Treasurer Dunlap reported net cash assets of \$36,300 and land holdings worth \$257,000 so we have total assets of \$293,300. The cash assets consist of \$23,500 in the General Fund, \$16,300 in the Stewardship Fund, \$2,670 in the Deferred Dues Fund, and a negative \$6,248 in the Land Acquisition Fund. A detailed Treasury Report may be found in the *IKC Update*.

Dunlap reported that we have 183 paid members.

### **Robinson Ladder Cave Acquisition**

Vernier reported that he received an e-mail from John Benton, Robinson Ladder Property Manager. He reports that he found another deer stand that should be removed. It is an old one but was recently discovered. He also said that the road leading from the lower field to the upper field is starting to erode in spots and we may need to take some action to maintain the road. The haying/vegetation management project has been completed by the farmer and the cost was \$300. We should be able to get compensation from the state for 75% of that cost and The Nature Conservancy may pick up the remaining 25%. Dunlap said that he has sent a check to the farmer and he suggested that we wait until we run up some more expenses in the spring and then seek reimbursement for everything at one time. Vernier said that the bales were still on the property when he was last there a few weeks ago. They may have since been removed.

Vernier said that we had talked about a boundary

survey of the Robinson Ladder property and he hasn't heard any details or quotes so he asked if we needed a motion to proceed with the project. Dunlap said that he has been in contact with Jess Gwinn who has done our other surveys and he has given a worst case scenario price of \$3,600. There are some things that may complicate the survey. One is that the section the property is in lies in two different counties. Vernier asked if we really need a survey. Dunlap answered that it would be good to know the actual boundaries and we have been including survey expenses of \$1,600 in our grant requests. The actual cost of surveying the Wayne Cave property, a similar size parcel, was \$1,400. We may be able to reduce the cost by helping with some of the preliminary research and with the survey. He also said that if we're going to do this, now is the time. It's a lot easier when there's no vegetation to fight through. Sue Vernier made a motion that we authorize up to \$3,600 to proceed with the survey, seconded by Welling. There was a short discussion in which it was noted that there has been other surveying going on in the area, for what we don't know. Bowman said that this seems like a lot of money to survey a square parcel, but Dunlap said that we must allow for the worst case price. The motion passed 13-0-2. Dunlap will get in touch with Jeff Gwinn to get things started on the survey.

Vernier reported that the restoration proposal activities are on hold. The mowing was delayed because the farmer was busy with other things. The mowing is now done, but it's too late to spray so that has been pushed out to spring. The spraying of the fescue may be contracted out or we may have to come up with a way to do it ourselves, possibly with rented equipment. We may only be spraying the upper field because Mark Bennett, the State Biologist, has been leaning towards minimal management for the lower field because it already exhibits a lot of the characteristics of a barrens community. Spraying the whole field might be counter productive. Selective spraying with a backpack type sprayer might be a better method in the lower field.

On the subject of a controlled burn, Vernier said that we need to hire someone who knows what they are doing to do that job. No one has been contacted yet. He also noted that there is some difference of opinion within the various state agencies about the correct way to conduct a controlled burn. Details will have to be worked out because there could be a wide variation in the cost of a burn, depending on the methods being used.

Dunlap reported that the Robinson Ladder acquisition is about 70% funded. The project goal is \$83,000 which includes a Stewardship Fund endowment of 10% of the purchase price. Donations and pledges so far amount to about \$59,000 leaving about \$24,000 unfunded. We have several grant applications in the works including one to the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust that he feels com-



fortable that we will get, but we won't know for sure until March 3. Others that we have not heard from yet are to the National Speleological Foundation, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Florida Power and Light, (a real long shot), and to the Efroymsen Fund. We had submitted a pre-proposal to the Efroymsen Fund and they then requested a full proposal which is a positive sign. We probably won't know how all these proposals play out by the February meeting, but we should know by the March meeting.

Dunlap said that the Dick Blenz matching fund is up to about \$4,000.

#### **Wayne Cave Patron**

Vernier said that he received an e-mail from Tom Willett, cave patron for Wayne Cave. Tom wants to retire from that position and is asking that we name a replacement. He said that he will stay on for a few months until we find someone to take the job. Dave Everton has volunteered to take the position. Vernier wondered if we want to wait and see if anyone else wants to be considered or just go ahead and appoint Everton to the position. Dunlap said that Everton definitely wants to do it and has told him in the past that if the position opened up that he would be willing to take it. Sue Vernier moved to appoint Everton as cave patron for Wayne Cave. No one seconded but during the discussion that followed, several people said that we should somehow make it known that the position is open. Ingle said that we could appoint Everton as an interim cave patron until we can publicize the opening and see if there is anyone else interested. He said that if Everton decided that he didn't want the post that he would be interested in taking it. Vernier said that he didn't think that Willett was in such a hurry to be relieved that we needed to appoint an interim patron. He thought that we could make an e-mail solicitation for volunteers and make a decision at the February meeting. Tozer said that if we have a willing volunteer for the position, there is no reason not to move forward and appoint Everton. Bowman said he has no problem with Everton but we should let people know that the position is available. Tozer said we should go ahead and appoint Everton, but we should get the word out that if IKC members have an interest in any of the cave patron or property manager positions they should let the Board know so that if a position opens we have an idea of who might be interested.

Welling made a motion to accept Dave Everton's offer to take the post of Wayne Cave Patron, seconded by Sue Vernier.

Dunlap said that he agreed with Bowman in thinking that the post should be advertised first before an appointment is made. Sollman said that while he intends to vote for the motion, he thinks that we should more formalize the procedure for selecting people to fill these positions. Welling agreed saying that some sort of policy statement laying out procedures for soliciting volunteers would be a good idea, but for this case, where we already have a will-

ing volunteer who is well qualified, we should move on with the appointment. There was no more discussion so the vote was taken and the motion passed 12-1-2. Dave Everton is the new Wayne Cave Patron.

Dunlap asked if the Board thought it would be appropriate to recognize Tom Willett's many years of service as Wayne Cave Patron. Everyone agreed that it would. Tom Rea will work on a certificate or plaque. Vernier will write a letter on behalf of the Board thanking Willett.

#### **National Forest Volunteer Award**

Vernier said that the IKC has won the 2005 National Forest Eastern Region *Volunteer of the Year Award*. He then introduced Cindy Basile, Karst Coordinator and Wildlife Biologist with the Hoosier National Forest. Cindy said that she and Kriste Lindberg, George Cesnik, and Bob Vandeventer were at the awards ceremony in Milwaukee. She said that the Volunteer of the Year award is given out at the end of the program and when she talked to the audience describing the volunteer work that the IKC does and the number of hours of work donated to the HNF, there were gasps of amazement. She and Kriste also got to do a poster presentation on partnership to the regional leadership team and Kriste also demonstrated the groundwater model. Cindy congratulated the IKC and reminded us that this is a very prestigious award and we should be proud to have received it. She thanked us for our past efforts and encouraged us to continue our mission. Lindberg showed everyone the award and several photos were taken and backs were patted all around.

#### **Shiloh Owner Appreciation Gift**

Dunlap said that we have had a formal lease agreement with the owner of the Quarry Entrance to Shiloh Cave for a number of years. We paid him a dollar a year and he would never cash the check. Jim Adams, Shiloh Cave Patron, was talking to the owner recently and the owner said that instead of the check, he would rather have a gift certificate to Shapiro's. He also mentioned that he doesn't have any good photos of his cave. Dunlap suggested that we get a \$25 gift certificate and also said that Dave Everton took a really good photo in Shiloh Cave that the Central Indiana Grotto used for their Christmas cards this year. He would like to have that photo professionally printed and framed for presentation to the Shiloh Cave owner. He estimated the total cost of the picture and the certificate to be about \$75. Ingle moved to authorize the expenditure of up to \$75 for the Shiloh Cave owner appreciation gift, seconded by Welling. The motion passed 15-0-0. Dunlap said that the owner doesn't want to continue with the formal lease agreement. He has no objection to our continued use of the cave and the access policy has not changed. He also said that the quarry company is moving its headquarters from downtown Bedford out to the quarry.

#### **HEC Membership**

Bowman moved that we renew our membership in



the Hoosier Environmental Council at the \$100 level. Dunlap seconded and the motion passed 14-0-1.

### **Under-Earth Day**

Earth Day is on April 22 this year and Noe said that is also the date for the Indiana Cave Symposium. Dunlap said that combining the two events on the same day or weekend generally hasn't worked well. He said that the symposium will likely be at Milltown this year.

Vernier said that things we could be doing for Under-Earth Day include reforestation work at the Buddha property or working at the Robinson Ladder property on grapevine control, driveway maintenance, and deer stand removal. Dunlap said that we could probably get the Robinson Ladder projects done and still have the symposium on the same day. If we would decide on working at Buddha, it would have to be on a different weekend. Vernier said that it might be possible to do the spraying at Robinson Ladder but we will have to figure out how many people we would need and also get the needed equipment. Bowman suggested that we tentatively plan to have Under-Earth Day at Robinson Ladder on April 22, the same day as the Indiana Cave Symposium, and make the final decision at the February Board meeting. Vernier noted that Robinson Ladder Cave will still be closed for the bats on that date.

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

Vernier said that we have received the \$2,300 for building and installing the cover for the pit.

### **HNF Grant Request/Documentary Video**

Vernier said that previously approved \$1,500 has been given to Dave McGowan as the IKC share of the funding for the video. Check the website, [www.cavebiota.com](http://www.cavebiota.com), to see the latest clips from the video. Welling said that McGowan recently did a presentation at the Central Indiana Grotto meeting. Lindberg said that he also gave a presentation at a Bloomington Indiana Grotto meeting.

### **Bat Conservation International Project**

Vernier said that BCI has received a grant from the Pulliam Trust in the amount of \$23,000 to fund work relative to Indiana bat recovery in Indiana. The data that Keith Dunlap and Dr Virgil Brack have compiled over the years has suggested that Indiana may be the last stand for the Indiana bat. There are at least some positive trends for the bat population and this has been recognized by BCI. There may be some benefit in identifying past bat hibernacula within the state and then identifying why the bats abandoned these locations and then taking some sort of remedial action. The grant that BCI received from the Pulliam Trust will be used to fund work along those lines.

They will need volunteers to seek out potential sites. There will also be some work involved in installing and retrieving temperature logging devices and maybe some cave entrance modification such as what was done at Saltpeter Cave near Wyandotte Cave a few years ago. They will also be looking for

volunteers to actually run the project as well as people to do the legwork.

Dunlap has talked to Jim Kennedy of BCI directly and he said that there is potential funding available for an organization to carry out this project, either with unpaid volunteer labor or maybe even hiring somebody for some of the work if it turns out to require a bigger commitment than the organization can handle. Dunlap said that Kennedy needs to get this done in the next two or three months. BCI is running a parallel program in Kentucky and it is fairly well established. They pursued the funding to do the same project in Indiana although on a smaller scale. Dunlap thinks that the biggest problem for the project in Indiana will be identifying caves to visit because we've already visited and evaluated a lot of the caves that would be of interest though perhaps not to the degree that BCI would like to study them.

Dunlap thinks that it is a good project but he's not sure how Kennedy is going to involve the various parties that have expressed interest in helping. He doesn't think that the IKC is in a position to take on a major role in running the project but we can certainly help in some way. We need to figure out to what degree the IKC wants to be involved. Kennedy told Dunlap that the individuals or organization that runs this project could earn a significant part of the grant money.

Vernier said that the ball is in Kennedy's court now as to what he wants us to do. He said that there may be some opportunities for historical research on some of the caves to try and find out about past bat populations. Old trip reports, grotto newsletter articles, and books and reports by geologists and biologists may contain references about bat use of certain caves.

Dunlap said that Kennedy is also interested in caves in Indiana that have historical records of saltpeter mining. He thought that Sollman may be interested in helping in that area. Sollman said that he's already done that, in fact, almost everything Kennedy wants to do has already been done. Dunlap agreed but said that Kennedy, being from out of state, may not know what has been done and still may want to visit some of the caves to get first hand information rather than rely on old trip reports which Sollman admitted can leave a lot to be desired. He said that a lot of the trip reports from the 50s and 60s tend to dwell more on who got stuck and how much beer was consumed rather than scientific observations. Nevertheless, Sollman said that he will help as much as he can.

Vernier asked if we need to take any action now on any of this. Tozer suggested that we wait until Kennedy defines what he wants us to do. No action needs to be taken now. Vernier said that we are disseminating the information among the caving community and we are receiving feedback from people who are interested in participating in some fashion. We could let Kennedy know that there are



some historical references that could be researched and there are studies available on saltpeter connections to caves of Indiana. We will then wait and see what his next move is.

### **Beck's Mill**

We have received a communication from Hank Huffman urging us to make contact with a group called "Friends of Beck's Mill". This organization is trying to restore and maintain the Beck's Mill property in Washington County, Indiana. Dunlap said that the mill and 13 acres is in the process of being transferred to this non-profit group and they want to restore it. Sollman asked if we wouldn't be more interested in Beck's Mill Cave, the water source for the mill, rather than the building. Vernier said that he is just passing on the information for anyone who may be interested in joining the organization and participating on an individual basis. Carita Noe said that an issue that may be of interest to us is the way the cave entrance has been changing. The cave stream is rerouting itself and the water is bypassing the small reservoir that is located just outside the entrance. The reservoir is supposed to supply water to the sluiceway which then feeds water to the mill wheel. They want to block the present route of the cave stream and force it back to the former route so that it feeds the reservoir and sluice. She said that the water has been diverted from the original route for so long that the cave habitat has changed. Blind fish and other cave creatures have been observed and her concern is that methods used to get the water back to where it will operate the mill wheel may adversely affect the cave habitat. We should have someone who can advise them in their effort so that the cave habitat is not changed. Vernier said that he sent them a letter offering our knowledge and expertise regarding the cave portion of their project. He has not received a reply. Tom Rea said that he intends to attend a meeting of the group in January. Sollman said that he is all for helping them with the caves on their property.

### **Sullivan Cave Preserve/Outhouses**

Dunlap checked on several sources for outhouses. To rent one would be \$1,000 a year, serviced weekly. We wouldn't need to have it serviced that often but the owner insisted on that schedule. He asked about buying a used one but no one had any for sale. A friend of Dave Haun did have one out on his property that we could have for nothing but we don't know what condition it's in. Dunlap said that he and Dave will check on it. If we get one, either donated or purchased, we still have to make arrangements for getting it serviced. No action was taken.

At this point, Bruce Devore and Karen Tadsen, proxy for Bob Vandeventer, had to leave. Before leaving, Tadsen relayed a message from Vandeventer, "Combination locks suck." This launched a brief discussion on problems associated with some of the locks on our properties.

### **Indiana State Bat**

Noe said that he talked to State Senator Brent Waltz who is probably going to champion it on the

Senate side and David Orentlicher will push for it in the House. Waltz is a Republican and Orentlicher is a Democrat so the bill will have bipartisan support. Lindberg said that the Bloomington Herald-Times is sponsoring a contest in the paper involving school children writing letters explaining why they support designating the Indiana bat as the State Bat of Indiana.

### **Education and Outreach Report**

Lindberg said that there will be an area wide karst meeting at the HNF office on January 13. Vernier said that it was his understanding that the meeting will be concentrating mainly on the cave video. Cindy Basile said that at least the first part of the meeting will be figuring out where we want to go with this video once it is complete.

Lindberg thanked George Cesnik and Bob Vandeventer for helping out with Education and Outreach projects. She also said that the HNF might have some funding available to do some cleanup projects on Forest Service property. Basile said that they have about \$20,000 available for soil and water improvement projects. In the past that money was used to clean up dumps and now they are making the transition to other types of cleanups too. She hopes that this will become a permanent source of funding that they can count on. Any kind of project that can be somehow tied into soil and water improvement could be funded from this account. For example, if we had cleaned out the Rominger Well pit before putting the cover on it, the whole project could have been funded from this account. She is interested in finding a property or two that can be earmarked for cleanup in 2006. Noe asked when the money goes away if not used. The money must be used by September 30, 2006. Basile said she really wants to get something going on this as soon as possible so she needs some proposals. Vernier said that the IKC has a long history of being involved with cleanups so we can certainly do a project like this. It mainly becomes a problem of scheduling to get the most people involved. We can look into partnerships with other groups such as The Nature Conservancy. Welling mentioned past projects with the Ohio Valley Region. Maybe we can get them involved again. Vernier said that we can publicize the information within the OVR as well as the various grottos. Basile said that she can hire a private contractor to do the work or do a partnership with the IKC and then we could get paid for what we've been doing for nothing. Dunlap said that we are very interested in doing something on this but we probably can't handle \$20,000 worth. Lindberg said she'll be talking to Tim Maloney of the HEC after the next HNF meeting and maybe together they can come up with something.

Lindberg said that she has been contacted by the Indiana Conservation Alliance to see if the IKC is interested in joining them. Vernier said that he was unaware of the group until very recently. He would like to have more information about them before we join, such as their real purpose and objectives. Lindberg will attend their next meeting and report. Noe





said that the HEC doesn't belong but they are looking it over.

### **Buddha Cave Preserve Projects**

Property Manager Cesnik said that he has been to the property a few times and removed some trees that had fallen across trails and sprayed some multiflora rose plants. He said that we ought to get some information on display in the kiosk that was erected on the property some time ago. He met with Cliff Chapman at the property to discuss some ideas about what kind of management we want to do. He talked about getting a truck sprayer and going over the whole property with Roundup. Once the fescue is killed, the native plants should move in. The Indiana Division of Nature Preserves must review and approve any plans before we do anything. We maybe able to get into the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP) to fund some of the work at the property.

Vernier said that the WHIP is what we're using at the Robinson Ladder property and there can sometimes be a difference in philosophy between different state and federal agencies as to how to best manage an area.

Dunlap said that we don't have to do anything at Buddha if we don't want to. It's up to Cesnik with approval of Cliff Chapman. Sue Vernier said that she had a conversation with Chapman in which he said that if we want to experiment in small areas, we could.

Basile said that if you are looking at regeneration, burning is the best bet. Burning doesn't kill fescue but it will knock it back and give the native plants a chance to move in. She said if you really want to wipe out the fescue, you must spray it. Dunlap said that we know how to spray but we don't know how to burn. Vernier said that Chapman can get someone to handle the burning if that's what we want.

Basile said that organizations such as Quail Unlimited and The Wild Turkey Federation may partner with us to do some of this work. While they are primarily interested in game management, lots of species benefit from the work they do. Tom Rea questioned if they would be interested if they couldn't hunt the property. Basile said they would because they are interested in providing habitat as well as hunting.

Lots of ideas were tossed around but no action as taken. We need to continue thinking about what we want to do with the Buddha Cave Preserve.

### **Wayne Cave Preserve**

Property Manager Robert Sollman was not present. Tom Sollman said that he stopped at the preserve on his way to the meeting. He cleaned a couple of trees from the rail and said it looks like there is a lot of activity at the property. There was a bus there from some college with a group apparently in the cave. He said that the large rocks on the drive-

way are sinking nicely and should provide a good base for a layer of smaller gravel to be applied in early summer. There is a lot of stump cleanup to be done as well. Maybe both projects could be done at the same time, possibly timed with the June Board meeting. Dunlap said that about \$1,600 has been spent so far on property improvements. \$2,500 was allotted.

Sullivan Cave Property Manager Dunlap, reported that Management Plan revisions are still dragging on.

About one hundred trees need to be planted in early April to replace dead ones. Sometime in May we need to spray around the existing trees. Many of the trees are doing very well, but there was a lot of cicada damage to the oaks.

The offending trash producing trailer on the adjoining property is gone.

We will have some gravel hauled in to widen the parking area this summer. Some gravel will also be spread on the lane. It has a good base but could use a little maintenance. Vernier asked if there had been any feedback from the student who was doing the air flow study at the cave. Dunlap said that he hasn't heard from him lately but he's pretty sure that he is finished with the study that he was doing for his class. Dunlap thinks that he wants to continue the study on his own. Sollman asked if we will get a copy of his study. Dunlap said he hopes that we will. Tozer asked if there wasn't some kind of cicada study at Sullivan and what the results were. Dunlap said that was actually the Wayne property and he doesn't think it was used for the study. Vernier said that he would be interested in the results of the airflow study and if the results or methods used could be applicable to Robinson Ladder Cave.

There were no items from the floor.

The next meeting will be February 11, 2006, at Kriste Lindberg's home in Bloomington. The meeting will start at 6 PM *[this was later switched to 1 PM]*.

The annual business meeting will be March 18, 2006, at 10:00 AM at the Greenwood library *[this was later changed to the Decatur Branch of the Marion County Library]*.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.

Thanks to Nick and Carita for hosting the meeting and for furnishing the refreshments..

Respectfully submitted,  
Bob Sergesketter,  
Secretary

# IKC FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Saturday, February 11, 2006 Bloomington, Indiana

## BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

## BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Bruce Bowman  
Steve Lockwood

The meeting was called to order at 1:10 PM at the home of Kriste Lindberg in Bloomington. President Richard Vernier presiding. George Cesnik was accepted as proxy for Dave Haun and Patty Ruback was accepted as proxy for Bob Vandeventer. The minutes of the December, 2005 meeting have not yet been published so they could not be approved.

Treasurer Dunlap reported a cash balance of \$44,230.86. Land holdings amount to \$257,000. Total IKC assets stand at \$301,230.86. IKC membership stands at 186. There are two grant requests outstanding related to the Robinson Ladder Cave acquisition. We should have more information about them at the March meeting. A detailed Treasury Report may be found in the *IKC Update*.

There was a discussion of how we might recruit more members. Vernier noted that membership seems to hover in the 180 to 200 range. Dunlap said he thinks that number probably represents about one third of the cavers in Indiana. He said that there may be grant money available to fund a membership drive if that's what we want to do.

Vernier asked if we should keep the solicitation within the established caving community or seek members from other conservation minded groups and individuals. Dunlap replied that we would have to decide that when we work out the details but he thought that we would probably need to extend beyond the caving community if we want to see a meaningful increase in membership. For example, he said that the Sycamore Land Trust went from a handful of members to over a thousand with the help of a paid organization builder and funded by a \$40,000 grant. Dunlap said that he realizes that the IKC has a more limited appeal than the Sycamore Land Trust but it gives us an idea of what can be done. Vernier wondered how we could solicit members from like-minded groups such as the Audubon Society or The Nature Conservancy. Patti Cummings, suggested articles or notices in the publications of other conservation organizations. Vernier said that he's not sure of what route to take but we need to think about it. We need broader support if

we want to continue purchasing karst property and funding other projects. Dunlap said that the first and most obvious place to start is to recruit from our own, that is, from Indiana cavers. He thinks there are about 400 cavers in Indiana and about 150 of them are IKC members. That leaves about 250 who are probably aware of the IKC but for one reason or another have not joined. The first time the IKC did a statewide solicitation; membership went from about 50 to about 100. We haven't done that for a long time. Vernier thought that we should try it again or at least have some sort of membership drive this year.

## Nominations: Three officers, four directors

The terms of Board members Bowman, Devore, Haun, and Sollman expire this year. Bowman and Devore have decided to not seek re-election. Sollman said that he will run again although it troubles him that new blood is not coming in. That comment prompted Patti Cummings to speak on behalf of the Richard Blenz Nature Conservancy, which is Buckner Cave. She said that there is a lot of visitation at Buckner and if we could get our message to the many Scout troops, church groups, hiking clubs, college students, and all the rest while some of them are still "trainable", we might prevent a lot of problems in the future and gain some members in the process. Perhaps some additional IKC information at Buckner would be helpful. She also said that groups are often looking for trip leaders and that would be an opportunity for us to get a strong conservation message out as well as, promoting safe caving techniques. She said that Art is gone and they are trying to get a consistent access policy in place. They are receiving a lot of requests for trips and they need help in handling cave trips. A lot of the people coming out to Buckner are the people that the IKC needs to reach and she thinks that this could be a good project for the IKC.

Vernier said that we should develop more of a presence at the Buckner property and admitted that he hadn't been there in quite a while. Cummings suggested that we might want to have a get together sometime at Buckner, either in conjunction with an IKC meeting or with a work day at the property. Tozer congratulated Cummings for the work that's going on at the Buckner Property. Vernier said that this is an opportunity that we shouldn't ignore.

Getting back to the nominations, Vernier said that Dave Haun indicated that he would run for re-election to the Board. Also running for Director positions are Dr Jerry Lewis, Patty Ruback, and Bruce Silvers.

President Vernier, Treasurer Dunlap, and Secretary Sergesketter each said that they would seek re-election to their respective positions. The three officer positions are for one-year terms and the Director positions are for three years. The election takes place at the March meeting.

Vernier wondered if there was some way of presenting information about candidates prior to the elec-



tions, maybe something like the ballot for the NSS Board of Governors election. He noted that we might have to change the whole voting process because the present system only has about thirty days between approving the slate of candidates and the election. Tozer thought it would be a good idea to publish information on current Board members in the IKC Update so that all IKC members would have some idea of who the leaders are. Noe asked what happens if a Board member resigns. Dunlap said that the Board has the choice of leaving the post vacant or appointing any IKC member to the post for the remainder of the term. Noe said that he may be running for the Indiana House of Representatives and if successful, would probably have to resign from the Board.

Dunlap moved to accept the slate of candidates as discussed, that is, Haun, Lewis, Ruback, Silvers, and Sollman running for four Director positions and Vernier, Dunlap, and Sergesketter running for President, Treasurer, and Secretary, respectively. The motion was seconded by Sue Vernier and passed 13-0-0.

Dunlap said that he will take care of the ballots. He will list name, hometown, and grotto affiliation. Vernier said that the ballot would be a good location for a paragraph about each candidate. Dunlap agreed but said that the time is too short this year. He'll try it next year. Sollman asked about the number of Directors. Vernier said that the number of Directors is determined by the number of members, with a minimum of four Directors and a maximum of twelve. We are at the maximum now and as long as we have at least 141 members, we will have twelve Directors.

### **Robinson Ladder Cave Acquisition**

John Benton, Robinson Ladder Property Manager, reported that we have received the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP) grant money. This is a grant of up to a certain amount to be used over a ten year period to restore the property.

Last fall he and the Verniers met with Department of Natural Resources District Biologist Mark Bennett and did a walk over the property. They discussed the plans to eradicate the fescue in the upper and lower fields. Late in the fall the local farmer who had been haying the two fields for years cut and baled both fields per the recommendation of the biologist. Early this spring we are to either spray or do a controlled burn or both to eradicate the fescue. After that, Bennett thought that through natural process, the native plants would move in and take over. Benton has not had any recent contact with Bennett. The spraying or burning must happen before vegetation starts to green up in the spring. Vernier asked Benton to e-mail Bennett and ask what kind of time line we need to be on. Benton said that one stumbling block concerns the burn and liability issues associated with it. Vernier said that we might get some help from Cliff Chapman of the Division of Nature Preserves. Benton said there seems to be a bit of hesitancy in someone actually taking charge of the burn.

Dunlap asked if the fescue wouldn't come back if it's just burned. Benton said that it could take two

burns and a spray to get rid of it. We need to talk to Bennett more about this. The time to act is rapidly approaching.

Dunlap reported that the last external loan for the purchase of the Robinson Ladder property has been paid off. Right now the Cave Acquisition Fund is about \$7,000 short of where it was when we started buying the property. It had about \$9,000 in it. It now has about \$2,000. What we really want is to be back where we were after we make our contribution to the Stewardship Fund. We're about \$16,000 away from that so our goal is to get another \$16,000. We have two grants outstanding, one for \$10,000 and one for \$21,000. If we get either one we'll be in good shape. If we get both, we'll ask one to lower the amount of the grant. We should know by the March meeting where we stand on both grants. The Dick Blenz matching program brought in \$6,700, which was matched by Dick so we made \$13,400. Thanks Dick. Dunlap said that overall we're in good shape and we see the light at the end of the tunnel with the Robinson Ladder project.

Benton said that the administrator of the Efroymson Fund showed up at Marengo Cave a few weeks ago looking for Robinson Ladder Cave. Gordon Smith, owner of Marengo Cave, just happened to overhear the conversation between the clerk in the gift shop and the gentleman and so Gordon introduced himself, answered his questions, and took him out to the Robinson Ladder property. They did not walk the property, but Gordon told him about the IKC and the significance of the cave and our plans for the property.

Dunlap asked about progress regarding the gathering of old survey data in preparation for the boundary survey of the Robinson Ladder property. Benton said that he spent several hours recently at the Crawford County courthouse in English looking up data requested by Jeff Gwinn who will be doing the survey. This involved looking up such information as old surveys of our property as well as all adjoining properties, old deeds, and notes from the original survey of Crawford County dating back to 1810. Since the section that our property is in, is partially in Harrison County, he will have to do the same thing at the Harrison County courthouse though he doesn't think it will be as involved since none of the property is actually in Harrison County.

### **Under Earth Day**

Under Earth Day will be April 22 at the Robinson Ladder property. The work day will commence at noon. Projects include some road repair on the lane from the lower field to the upper field, removal of an old deer stand that was overlooked before, some fence removal, and grapevine cutting. Prior to the workday at Robinson Ladder, TNC will have an open house at the O'Bannon Woods State Park Nature Center from 9 to 11 AM. Dick and Sue Vernier plan on being there as is Don Ingle. They will display IKC information and possibly the groundwater model, the cave video poster, and a DVD of clips from the cave biota video. The workday at Robinson Ladder should be over by 4:00 PM. Everyone can then go down the road to Milltown for the annual Indiana Cave Symposium, which will be held that



evening, preceded by a cookout. Please bring a covered dish to share.

### **Bat Conservation International Project**

Dunlap reported that he has sent e-mails to Jim Kennedy of BCI and Kennedy has called a couple of times in the last few days when Dunlap was not available to take the call, but eventually they will get together. Dunlap said that he knows their project is moving along in Kentucky but he doesn't know what they have planned for Indiana. He sent Kennedy all the information that he requested and now we wait until we hear from him.

### **Beck's Mill**

Tom Rea was planning on attending a meeting of the group organized to preserve and possibly rebuild Beck's Mill in Washington County, but Tom wasn't present to report. Noe said that they have a nice website. They have some very ambitious plans such as totally refurbishing the mill and getting it running again. He said we might want to consider the implications to the cave system if the water is backed up again. Vernier said that if we can get some level of involvement then it could mean a little additional exposure for the IKC.

### **Indiana State Bat**

Noe reported that the bill did not get introduced in this session of the legislature. This was a short session and the number of bills that each legislator can introduce is limited. This was a brand new issue and it came in kind of late so it ended up at the bottom of a lot of people's lists. If we keep after it and keep the cards and letters coming in, there's a good chance that it will be introduced in the 90-day session which begins in January 2007.

### **Education and Outreach Report**

Lindberg reported that the production, of the cave video is moving right along. She showed a large poster promoting the video. Benton asked how the video will be distributed. Lindberg said distribution is still being worked out. She said that it will probably not be sold. She said that she is going to incorporate it into several new programs that she is developing in conjunction with Project Underground. One program is called Cave Critter creations will be coming out with the Bloomington Parks and Recreation summer guide. She will also be meeting soon with the person who oversees the Natural Resources Education Center at Fort Benjamin Harrison. They do several different educational programs and Lindberg is going to promote Project Underground. Lindberg said she will publish a recap of Education and Outreach programs for 2005 in the *IKC Update*.

Noe reported that he attended the two-day HASTI (Hoosier Association of Science Teachers, Inc) convention. Noe was obviously trying to get Tozer envious. Noe said that he was handing out the link to the cave biota website and the information was very well received. Lindberg reported that she got a message from the editor of the NSS News. He wants to put the IKC poster on the back cover of the special conservation issue of the NSS News published this spring.

### **Buddha Cave Preserve Projects**

Vernier reported that Dr Jerry Lewis has completed his report on his findings from his collection and analysis of dead bugs in Buddha Cave. The work and report was sponsored by the Department of Natural Resources. He hasn't received much feedback from the DNR yet, but what he has heard has been positive. Vernier said that he, Dunlap, and George Cesnik, the Buddha Cave Preserve Property Manager, have copies of the report. It was not sent to all of the Board members because of the size of the document. If someone wants a copy, please contact George Cesnik. Cesnik said that he has only read about half of the report so far but has already concluded that Buddha Cave is biologically very diverse. Vernier described it as a biological hot spot.

Vernier reported that there had been a meeting with Cliff Chapman regarding management options at the Buddha property. There was some discussion but Vernier said that we can't do much without getting approval from the Division of Nature Preserves. Cesnik said that Chapman mentioned some options such as getting rid of the fescue and planting trees, or doing nothing. Vernier thought that Chapman would like to see more oak trees planted. Dunlap asked Cesnik if he had any interest in doing some tree planting this spring. Cesnik, said that he would be interested. Dunlap asked if the Board was interested. Vernier asked if he had an idea of the cost. Dunlap said that trees cost \$30 per hundred and that he thought 500 trees would be about right. Sollman thought that we should consider planting some trees in the valley leading into the Buddha Cave entrance. He said he doesn't think that historically the cave used to flood like it does now and that having more trees in the valley would slow down the erosion and the deposition of silt in the cave. Dunlap said that it might be hard to get trees growing in that area because of the competing vegetation. Sollman admitted that there would be a high mortality rate but thinks that some will thrive. Ruback asked if we have an idea what the impact of planting particular trees around a cave entrance is as far as affecting the water entering the cave. Sollman said the things we can be fairly sure of is that the Buddha Cave area used to be all forest and that flooding of the magnitude that is presently occurring was not happening. Dunlap said that he thinks the area in question may reforest itself faster if left alone. We have stopped mowing it and there is some evidence that trees are starting to come up. Sollman agreed that natural reforestation is preferable to planting hundreds of genetically identical trees. There was more discussion and then we decided to let Cesnik and Chapman decide what kind of trees to plant and how many. Dunlap moved to fund the expenditure of up to \$500 for the purchase and planting of 500 trees for the Buddha Karst Preserve, subject to approval by the Division of Nature Preserves, seconded by Cesnik. The motion passed 13-0-0.

Cesnik also reported that Chapman was promoting a wholesale treatment of the fescue at Buddha using a truck sprayer and Roundup if we really want to wipe it out. Vernier thought that we need to hold off on that plan for a while. We probably want to estab-





lish a committee to look at what we want to do with the property and what the impact on the cave environment would be with a massive spray program. Sunlight is supposed to break the chemical down but what happens if the product goes directly into the cave? Dunlap noted that the small areas that he has sprayed around young trees are immediately taken over by thistle, Johnson grass, and other undesirable plants. He thought that if we really want to go with a large-scale spray program, we should do a test plot first and see what happens after a year or two. Vernier said a good place to try it would be along the road on the upper part of the property where the Indian grass is.

#### **Wayne Cave Preserve**

Robert Sollman, the Wayne Cave Preserve Property Manager, reported that he wants to get a layer of fine gravel on the driveway. He wants to coordinate that project with Dunlap's plans for additional gravel at the Sullivan property. A firm date will be set by the March IKC meeting.

Ingle said that the group that was at the property back in December was from Goshen, Indiana. He stopped by and talked with them on his way home from the December IKC meeting. He said that they were appreciative of the improvements to the property. Some of them were sleeping in a van in the parking area and some were in a local motel. Vernier presented Robert Sollman with a Certificate of Appreciation for his work at the Wayne property and also a plaque which will be part of an informational kiosk at some point in the future. Another certificate was also given, to be presented to Robert's Scout troop.

There was a long discussion on kiosk construction which also led to discussing the need for better informational displays in the kiosk at the Buddha property. There was no action taken but a lot of things are going to get looked into and maybe there will be some ideas at the next meeting.

#### **Sullivan Cave Preserve**

Dunlap has put together an updated management plan. There are not a lot of changes. It mainly addresses things that were in the original plan that were to be done and now are done. The primary reason for revising the plan is that we are now operating the cave under the grotto liaison system and that wasn't in the original plan. In the liability waiver, the language was changed to address the issue of cavers being under adjoining property. Dunlap asked if we want to make a motion and pass it right away or wait until the March meeting. Sollman had a question about camping at the Sullivan property. He felt that the stipulation that camping permission must be sought in advance and would generally be given to only one group at a time is too restrictive. He thought that as an IKC member, he or any other member should be able to visit and camp on IKC owned property with a minimum of red tape as long as it doesn't hamper some other member's use of the same property. Dunlap said it's more of a logistic problem in that there is a limited amount of space suitable for camping and also limit-

ed room for vehicles. He said that one reason the policy is written that way is that if a group from, for example, Chicago, were to plan a trip weeks in advance and have permission to camp but maybe not arrive until two or three in the morning, they need to know that they'll have a place to camp when they arrive. If it's opened up to a first come, first served basis, someone who just assumes it's all right to set up camp on the spur of the moment could cause a problem. He admitted that a situation like that might be a rarity, but it's still an issue that must be dealt with. Dunlap said he sees the problem both ways and really doesn't have an answer and maybe the Board needs to discuss it and work something out. Sollman said he thinks that we need to open it up and if a problem develops, we'll deal with it. Tozer said that because of the heavy use of the Sullivan property, maybe we ought to consider expanding the camping area somehow. Sue Vernier thought that the real limiting factor is room for vehicle parking. Tozer agreed and Sollman pointed out that parking is already a big issue just for the groups that come for a day trip of caving. Sullivan Cave patron Bob Vandeventer was not present so we decided to table the issue until the next meeting when we can get his input. This did not stop the discussion, however. Tozer said that he agrees with Sollman's position that members should be able to camp there on the spur of the moment and he would like to see that happen. Dunlap said that when we revise management plans, we probably should make the camping policy more liberal. Sollman said that we want people to see tangible benefits from belonging to the IKC as well as the high ideals of conservation and preservation of karst. The discussion continued several more minutes until Vernier again tabled the issue (until we can include Vandeventer in the debate).

Dunlap said that he and Dave Haun have not yet had a chance to check out the free porta-john that was offered to us for possible use at the Sullivan property. Dunlap is planning a workday at Sullivan to replace about 100 trees. He is thinking of doing it on April 8th but we also need to schedule a tree planting day at Buddha so the Sullivan tree planting may be moved to a different date. He will be getting the trees in early April.

#### **Items From the Floor**

Winner reported that the State Forester, Jack Seifert, is interested in purchasing property with caves, especially caves containing Indiana bats. Since he was aware of Winner's involvement with the IKC, he asked Winner if he knew of any caves that fit that criterion. Winner assumed he was only interested in caves in the Harrison Crawford region. He is interested in attending an IKC meeting. Winner suggested that he talk to Dunlap and he also gave him Vernier's contact information. He also told him about our March meeting and he might be there. Jug Hole and Parker's pit were mentioned as being of interest. The owners of those two caves must be contacted to see if they are willing to sell. Winner thinks that this whole process relates to the Fish and Wildlife Service's Habitat Conservation Plan that they are trying to draft right now relating to



the Indiana Bat. Winner said he is unsure how all of this will pan out. Tozer wondered if they are planning on buying these properties and then closing the caves. Winner said he thought that could happen, at least for part of the year but he doesn't know. There was much more discussion but no action taken.

Dunlap said that Indiana Senate bill number 354 made it through the Indiana Senate and is now in the House of Representatives. This bill redefines Classified Forest and Classified Wildlife Habitat areas and combines them into a single category now called Wildlands and will be administered through the Division of Forestry. He thinks that if passed it will help us at places like Robinson Ladder where part of the property is timber and the rest is open area. There was another long discussion.

Lindberg reported that she has been paired with a representative of the Indiana Forest Alliance for a presentation to some community development group.

Benton reported that he has submitted an article about the Robinson Ladder property to the NSS News for inclusion in the conservation issue.

Lindberg said that Dave McGowan has been in contact with her about getting some additional funding. This turned in to a discussion of whether the video

is on track for a timely completion or if there could be a funding problem. Tozer asked Lindberg if McGowan has enough money to get the bits and pieces put together into a DVD and whatever else will be put on the web. Lindberg said that she's not sure. Tozer said that we need to know if additional funding is needed to complete what he has already committed to do. Dunlap said that McGowan will complete what he has contracted to do, that is, develop a video about cave life. However, additional funding could result in a better product with wider distribution. Vernier said that McGowan has talked about generating "education packets" for school and teacher distribution. Tozer said that the opportunities for the video are present and growing, but he wonders if additional funding is needed to expand the opportunities even further or to cover what he's already done. There was much more discussion but no action was taken.

The next meeting will be March 18, 2006, at the Decatur Branch of the Marion County Library. The meeting will start at 10:00 AM.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Sergesketter, Secretary

Continued from page 11...

Fish and Wildlife Service found about 353,000 Indiana bats, a decrease of about 60 percent since population surveys started in the 1960s. The creature is known to exist in 23 states in the eastern part of the country.

Lori Pruitt of the US Fish and Wildlife office in Bloomington said the students have an important role to play in helping the Indiana bat.

"The fact that bats are so poorly understood is part of the problem with their conservation," she said. "There are myths about rabies, that they are aggressive and that they bite, which leads some people to not like them. Beyond that, people don't necessarily appreciate their role in the ecosystem."

Pruitt especially wants to educate people about the Indiana bat. In fact, she's working with Mesker Park Zoo in Evansville to develop classroom materials about this particular species.

"If we are going to do good things for the Indiana bat, this is the place to start doing that," she said, noting that about 50 percent of Indiana bats spend their winters in the state. "We have tar-

geted students in Indiana because the places that need to be conserved are in these kids' back yards."

One area where students might have an impact is in rewriting the US Fish and Wildlife Service's recovery plan for the Indiana bat. The plan hasn't been revised for more than 20 years. It will go out for public comment during the school year, and kids are welcome to be part of the process, Pruitt said.

She said when she visits classrooms, she tells students that it's not enough for them to just like bats -- they also need to educate others. Edgewood Intermediate teacher Judy Morran said playing the role of educator gets her students excited about learning.

"I truly think kids learn when they care about what they are doing and are part of a community of learners," she said. "Being able to teach lots of people and make a difference is a powerful motivation."

Students involved in *The Herald-Times* bat project have lots of questions about the Indiana bat. Here are just a few:

"I want to learn about how the population of bats is changing due

to cave destruction." -- Morgan Manson, grade 7

"How long have bats been on earth?" -- Trey Pogue, grade 5

"I want to know how bats are able to see in the dark." -- Chris Healy, grade 7

"I want to know about how they defend themselves, and about their predators." -- Halima Mohammed, grade 7

"I want to know if bats hibernate, when and why. Do they fly south for the winter?" -- Kyle Chambers, grade 7

"Why do they hide in human houses?" -- Aaron Crain, grade 7

"Why do they sleep upside down?" -- Mark Snapp, grade 7

"How do they do night flights?" -- Laurel Harris, grade 5

"If the Indiana bat were extinct, would there be a huge increase in the insect population?" -- Dylan Murray, grade 7

"How do bats use echo location?" -- Levi Potter, grade 7

*Reprinted from the January 17, 2006 issue of The Herald-Times.*

# ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

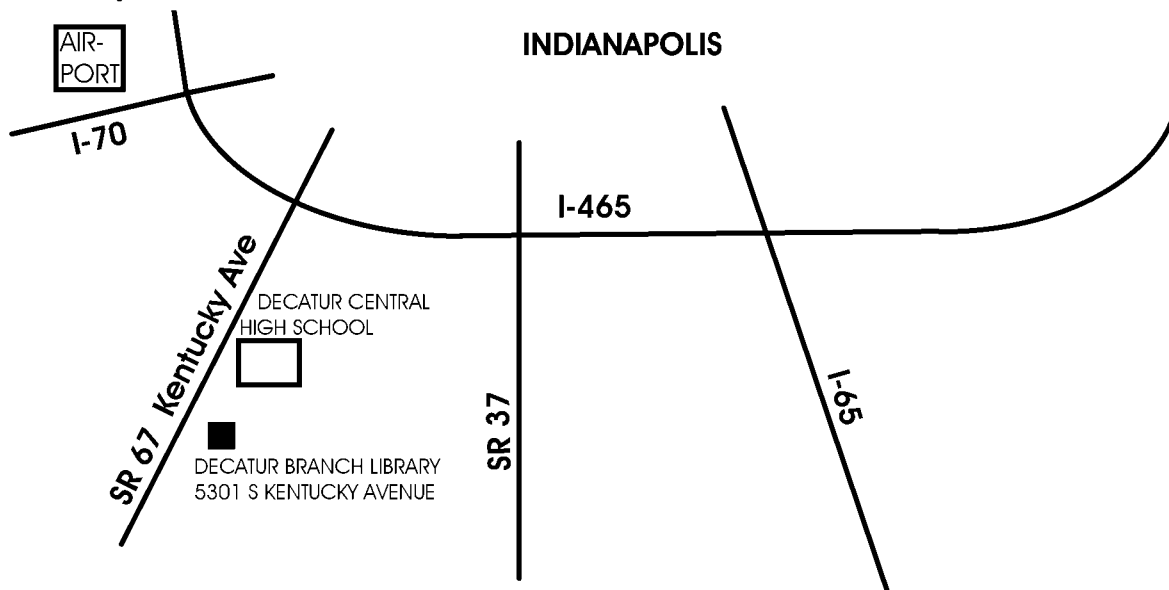
**SATURDAY, MARCH 18th, 10 AM**

**INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA**

**DECATUR BRANCH - MARION COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**DIRECTIONS:** The Decatur Branch Library (5301 S Kentucky Ave, 317-275-4330) is located 1.2 miles south of I-465 on SR 67 (Kentucky Ave). From I-65, Indianapolis, or other locations north, take I-465 to the southwest side and exit onto Kentucky Avenue. Turn south and go to the second traffic light (not counting the ones at the exit). The library is on the left just south of Decatur Central High School. From the southwest, come up SR 67 (if coming up SR 37, jump over to SR 67 at Martinsville) and watch for the library on your right. If you pass Decatur Central High School, you've missed it.

Enter the library's front entrance and the meeting room is immediately on your right **BEFORE** you enter the main part of the library. The library does not open until 10 AM, so the meeting will likely start a few minutes late.



**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 \_\_\_\_\_

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CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

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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.

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