

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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*grottos with liaison agreements

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Cover: Jeff Fuller in the culvert entrance of Donnehue Cave, Lawrence County.
Digital image by Dave Everton, assisted by Landon Parks and Jim Fussner.



QUARTERLY MEETING REMINDER

SATURDAY, JUNE 17th, 6:00 PM

BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA

IU GEOLOGY BUILDING, ROOM 143

(SAME ROOM AS THE BIG MEETING)

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

Preliminary Agenda Items: Brief recap of last quarter's activities (Sullivan workday, Buddha workday, Wayne workday, Robinson Ladder workday/Under-Earth Day); Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve fund-raising status; Treasurer's Report; HNF inventory project; Cave biota video update; Upcoming projects; and more...

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

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

- 17JUN = IKC QUARTERLY MEETING, Bloomington (see above)
- 17JUN = WAYNE CAVE PROPERTY WORKDAY, Bloomington (see page 5)
- 17-18JUN = BUCKNER CAVE WORK WEEKEND, Bloomington (see page 4)
- 18JUN = SULLIVAN CAVE PROPERTY WORKDAY, contact Keith Dunlap
- 23-25JUN = INDIANA CAVE CAPERS, Marengo
- 22-23JUL = BUCKNER CAVE WORK WEEKEND, Bloomington (tentative)
- 07-11 AUG = NSS CONVENTION, Bellingham, WA
- 26-27 AUG = BUCKNER CAVE WORK WEEKEND, Bloomington (tentative)
- 23SEP = IKC QUARTERLY MEETING/COOK-OUT (tentative)
- 23SEP = LOST RIVER TOUR, Orleans

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...

You must be the change you wish to see in the world...

-- Gandhi



Good News! Thanks to grants received this spring from The Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust and The Efroymson Fund and to contributions from you, matched by Richard Blenz, the Robinson

Ladder Cave Preserve acquisition project is now fully funded. See the accompanying articles on pages 8 and 9.

When you get to be my age, it's sometimes hard to remember how things were at twenty. Twenty seems like an impossibly young age and yet it's an age when you make many of the most important decisions of your life, decisions that will determine who you are and what you will become.

The IKC has turned twenty. For an organization, twenty can be more like middle age than rosy youth -- many of the founders have left the room and the governing board is growing gray around the edges. Mind you, that is not all bad. How many times have you said, "If I'd only known at twenty what I know now I'd have sure done things differently."

Hopefully it's not time for a mid-life crisis

but it is probably a good time to reflect upon the past and to think about what we want from the organization in the next twenty years and how we go about doing it. As has been said many times, we are an all-volunteer operation and you make us what we are. Along those lines, I'd like to hear from the membership as well as the Board as to what you like and don't like and what we should and shouldn't be doing. Please keep in mind that we are a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization and, as such, are restricted as far as the amount of legislative action we can become involved in so don't push for us to hire a lobbyist. This classification is important when we pursue outside grants as most charitable foundations will not consider grant requests from organizations that do not have a 501(c)3 status. Send your comments to rsavcaver@yahoo.com or to the IKC PO box. Let's look forward to another twenty years of conservation and preservation of caves and karst in Indiana.

Now for the important part - how to celebrate. Since next year's NSS Convention is being held in Indiana, it seems like we should take advantage of that circumstance and postpone any big doings until then. Instead of a 20th birthday party, we'll celebrate our 21st. There will probably be a few toasts at the annual picnic in September, of course.

Richard Vernier

NEWS BRIEFS...

- ❑ IKC elections on March 18th yielded a few changes to the Executive Board. Dick Vernier, Bob Sergesketter, and Keith Dunlap were re-elected President, Secretary, and Treasurer, respectively, for another year. Likewise Dave Haun and Tom Sollman were re-elected Directors for three more years. New Directors elected were Dr Jerry Lewis and Bruce Silvers. The other Directors remaining on the Board include Don Ingle, Kriste Lindberg, Steve Lockwood, Nick Noe, Bill Tozer, Bob Vandeventer, Sue Vernier, and Jamie Winner.

We like to express our appreciation to out-going Board members Bruce Bowman and Bruce Devore, both deciding not to seek re-election. Both Bruces joined the IKC Board in 1993. Bruce Devore served continuously as a Director for twelve years while Bruce Bowman rotated between Director, Secretary, and President.

- ❑ As many of you may know, there is a major effort underway to restore Buckner Cave (see page 10 for complete details). Dave Everton is leading the effort, but the success of the project will depend upon the number of volunteers that can be recruited. Work weekends will be scheduled approximately monthly. The next weekend will be June 17/18th. Tentative dates

of July 22/23 and August 26/27 have also been planned. Contact Dave at *DEverton@indiana.edu* for more information.

- ❑ Spring is always a busy time for stewardship activities. The first workday of the year was at the Sullivan Property on April 8th. Seven volunteers made quick work of planting 100 replacement trees in the back field and removing old flagging tape from older trees. Participants included George Cesnik, Andrienne Condon, Bambi & Keith Dunlap, Everett Pulliam, Shawn Tucker, and Bob Vandeventer.
- ❑ On April 29th, ten volunteers tackled a slightly more ambitious stewardship project, planting 500 oak trees at the Buddha Karst Nature Preserve. A total of 2300 trees (approximately 5 acres) have been planted since 2002 when the IKC took ownership of the property. Participants included George Cesnik, Keith Dunlap, Jerry & Salisa Lewis, Everett Pulliam, Tom Rea, Ray Rough, Bill Tozer, and Dick & Sue Vernier.
- ❑ Our largest stewardship project of the year was Under-Earth Day at the Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve on April 22nd. While the cave was still closed for the bats, there were plenty of surface projects to keep the twenty-plus participants busy. Accomplishments included clearing a new trail from the lower parking area to Robinson Ladder Cave, removing barb wire and posts from an interior fence line, re-grading the lane between the lower and upper field to improve drainage, and eradicating grapevines. Volunteers included John Benton, Terry Clark, Jaime Coffman, Bambi & Keith Dunlap, Don Ingle, Glenn & Allison Lemasters, Steve Lockwood, Ernie & Jacqueline Payne, Bob Sergesketter, Gordon Smith, Mark Sparks, Tom Sollman, Bill Tozer, Bob Vandeventer, Dick & Sue Vernier, and Jamie Winner.
- ❑ Most of the IKC's basic operating expenses and obligations (newsletter, insurance, property taxes, routine stewardship activities) are paid with membership dues. However, we are greatly dependent upon additional donations to supplement and support the many projects and initiatives the IKC undertakes. Since last June, forty-seven individuals and five organizations/corporations have made general donations (excluding the Robinson Ladder acquisition contributions acknowledged on page 9 and other land acquisition donations recognized below) for a total of \$2,112. We'd like to recognize those members/contributors who have given a little extra. They include John Ahlberg, Ken Alwin, Aaron Atz, David Anderson, Dave Anderson, Bill Baus, Roy Becker, John Benton, Ted Bice, Larry Bundy, Chris Carpenter, Jim Clark, Larry Coker, Mike Dowden, Keith Dunlap, Jeff Farr, Jeff Gosnell, Brent Grist, Scott Hammon, Dave Haun, Dave Hazen, Tim Heppner, Tem Hornaday, Glenn Kotnik, Dan Lucas, Nick Noe, Sue O'Shields, Ernie Payne, Don Peters, Everett Pulliam, Russ Pusilo, Steve Ragsdale, Tom Rea, Charles Rex, Kelle Reynolds, Robert Roundy, Jay Savage, Ralph Sawyer, Kristie Schavey, Bob Sergesketter, Mark Sparks, Dave Stahl, Susan Strickland, Bob Vandenveter, Nicholas Walden, Rich Whisler, Dean Wiseman, Scott Worpell, Bluesprings Caverns, General Motors, The Nature Conservancy, Near Normal Grotto, and Saint Joseph Valley Grotto.
- ❑ Fund-raising for the Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve is now complete, but land acquisition restricted donations can still be made by those who wish to support such activities. Donations made to this fund will be formally acknowledged once the next project is identified. In the interim, we would like to thank Tim Alkema, George ... (continued at the bottom of page 6)

WAYNE CAVE PRESERVE WORKDAY - JUNE 17th

The IKC will have its next workday at the Wayne Cave Preserve on June 17th, starting at 10 AM. The primary tasks will be to grade the new stone on the driveway (delivered and rough spread the prior week) and to finish removing and leveling the root piles left by the logger prior to our acquisition. Grapevine and invasive removals will also be addressed if there is time (wrap-up time will be 4 PM in order to have time for dinner prior to the IKC meeting that evening). For more information, contact Robert Sollman (see page 2).

CLICK CAVE SINKHOLE CLEANUP PHASE II

by Dave Everton

In the December 2005 issue of the *IKC Update*, I reported on what started as an Indiana University Caving Club (IUCC) project to remove trash out of a sinkhole adjacent to (and likely feeding into) Click Cave. Only three persons showed up on that November 12, 2005 day, but quite a few bags of trash were collected, and left on site for pickup at a later date, with hopes of resuming the project. Not long after that, Brian Leavell and other EIG members took a grotto trip to the cave, and they kindly hauled off some of the bags which had been filled.

Hopes were to continue to try and solicit interest from IUCC members in the following semester. Therefore, when spring rolled around and the semester started to wind down, the group's president Marianne Batchelder and I agreed that regardless of club participation, we would go back down and make a good-faith effort (if nothing else) to get more done on the project. We decided to schedule it for the same day as the Indiana Cave Symposium, since it would be fairly close to that area, and could afford participants a convenient opportunity to attend both events.

The weather turned out to be absolutely gorgeous; a classic southern Indiana spring day, with sunny skies and pleasant temperatures for working outside. The initial cleanup crew was comprised of Sean Lewis, Marianne Batchelder, Bill Baus, Virginia White and Dave Everton. Long-time Indiana caver Bill Schulze, who currently lives in Mount Vernon, Kentucky, joined the group later during the cleanup process.

Many more bags of trash were filled. Efforts were made to separate aluminum cans for recycling. It was decided to concentrate on trying to make the outer edge of the sinkhole and trash pile slightly more visually appealing by removing trash there, although it was difficult to make it look better due to the large quantity of materials. After filling

all the available bags (which was a conscious decision to limit the available amount), the crew called it a day and spent some time chatting about future cleanup plans for the sinkhole. One very appealing idea discussed was the possibility of simply covering up the trash, since none of it seemed to be environmentally hazardous or sensitive. It was interesting and somewhat coincidental that Bill Schulze was former Sanitation Officer for Washington County, and agreed the option was a feasible alternative to removing the trash, at least in this situation. Soon after, everyone returned to the vehicles to prepare to go caving.

Bill Schulze had long had an interest in visiting the cave, especially due to its previous use as a commercial cave. The visit therefore had a special meaning for him. A few hours were spent in the cave, with Virginia, Bill, and Dave sticking together, and the other crew left first to go bounce Hell Hole prior to the evening's activities at the Indiana Cave Symposium in Milltown.

Although the sinkhole contains much remaining trash, more progress was accomplished on this effort. Thanks to each participant for their assistance! Anyone wishing to assist in the future should contact me for more information.



Continued from page 5...

Brutchen, Larry Coker, Keith Dunlap, Scott Fee, Scott Hammon, David Lasser, Bill Morrow, Ernie Payne, Don Peters, Kelle Reynolds, Patty Ruback, Gordon Smith, Ty Spatta, Nicholas Walden, Kathy Welling, Rich Whisler, and Jamie Winner who have donated a total of \$2,095 since January.

- ❑ Two new members have joined the IKC in the past quarter. Please welcome Robert Young (453) and Nicholas Walden (454). The IKC membership now stands at 190.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE REPORT

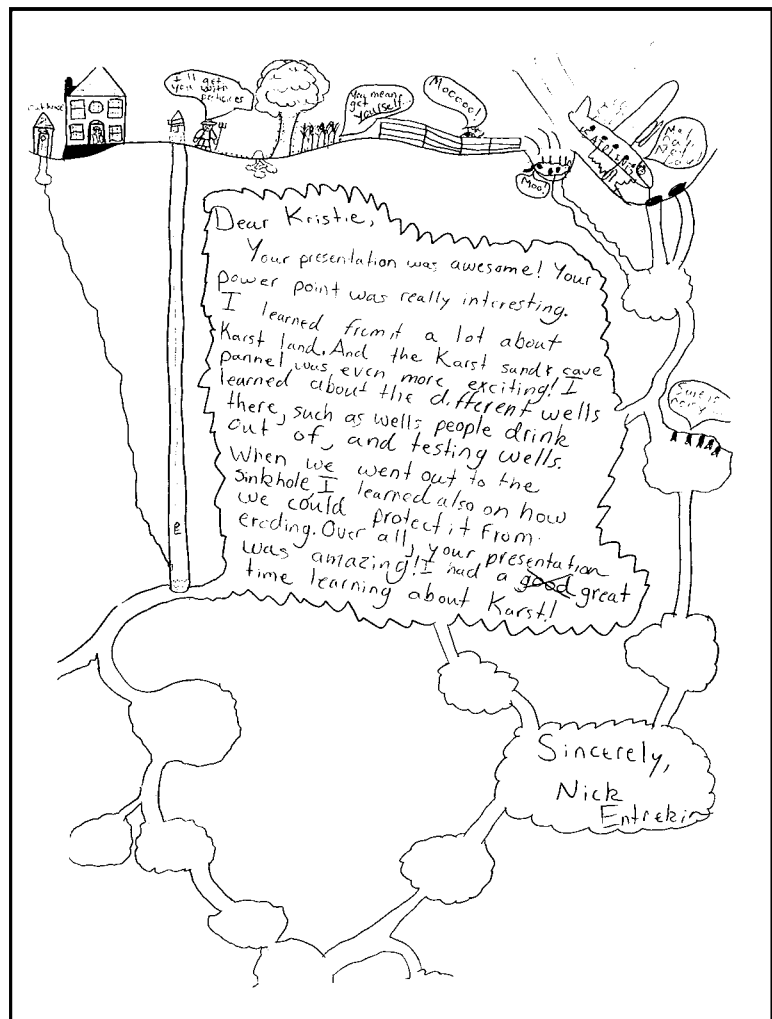
by Kriste Lindberg

While recently being interviewed by Anne Kibbler, of *The Herald-Times* newspaper, In School section, regarding the Indiana bat blog project we've been working on for the past several months, something struck me -- just how valuable of a partner the media can be in helping us get the word out on conservation education! That, coupled with reading thank you letters by the students, really sent the message home. Basically, the more that folks understand our sensitive natural resources and how to take proper care of them, the better. Our relationship with not only the paper and schools but other sources, such as the cave biota video project and even the arts community, have grown. Now, we're even working together and joining forces in ways that are mutually beneficial for even more impact.

As you have read in previous *IKC Updates*, we've been working with *The Herald-Times* on the Indiana bat blog for the past several months. Weekly articles were submitted by the three area schools to the blog, which were, in turn, posted on the internet for all to see. "Bat experts" even visited the schools as part of the project -- Lori Pruitt from US Fish & Wildlife Service, Laura Hohman from Bat World Hoosier Hills, Steve Harriss from the USDS Forest Service, and myself. School is over for the summer, and now the project must come to an end. We will miss it, but have found that it will live on through projects and activities were started while working on the endeavor, including encouraging school kids to write letters to their legislators in support of designating the Indiana bat as the official State Bat (thanks also to friends at the Hoosier Environmental Council on this!). Children are truly strong and wonderful ambassadors for conservation. Thanks to Carol Kugler of *The Herald-Times* for coordinating the project. While it

lasts on the internet, you can follow the blog at: www.heraldtimesonline.com.

The paper has also published an article on the cave biota video project. This project is moving right along, as a matter of fact, it has greatly exceeded our expectations! For example, we're now including an enhanced educational component where we'll be incorporating it into "Project" activities such as Project Underground, Project Wet, Project Wild, and so on, as well as state standards and even a virtual cave tour. Venues where it has been shown over the last couple of months include the Indiana Cave Symposium, tours at *The Herald-Times*, a trial run for a new activity with Project Underground which the Bloomington Parks and Recreation called "Cave Critter Creations", and so



on. Clips of the video will also be shown this summer at the NSS National Convention as well as an international biospeleology conference in Romania. We're currently talking with others regarding the possibility of making it into a television documentary to reach an even greater audience. Hold on to your helmets! As you can see, we're excited about the potential... Check out the website for the latest clips: www.cavebiota.com

All of the above media outlets are helping others to understand why and how to take care of our sensitive natural resources. They have inspired me to include the following in an abstract for convention this summer, "Media can be a successful partner in cave conservation". Sources such as newspaper, film, artwork, and the internet can help "get the word out" on land use practices that affect cave life, which can, in turn, be seen as

indicators, for example, of water quality. There tends to be a direct relationship -- the more folks that are informed, the more likely stewardship will increase.

Other education and outreach endeavors since the last *IKC Update* include the annual The Nature Conservancy Spring Fling at O'Bannon Woods State Park and an educational collaboration with Sycamore Land Trust at Leonard Springs Nature Park.

The summer holds the following activities: the first, official run of "Cave Critter Creations", two Project Underground workshops, Don Ingle and Dave Everton working again this year with a girl scout troop, a trail workday at Leonard Springs Nature Park by the Bloomington Indiana Grotto, and the debut of a new "cave" that we have created with WonderLab for education and outreach purposes.

NINA MASON PULLIAM CHARITABLE TRUST ANNOUNCES \$1,805,000 IN GRANTS

The Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust awarded \$1,805,000 to twenty-six Indiana nonprofit organizations on March 20.

The Indiana Karst Conservancy received \$20,000 from the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust. The funds will be used to acquire the 40-acre Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve in Crawford County. In addition to the property's surface conservation values, the tract contains Robinson Ladder Cave, an important winter hibernacula for the federally endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*). The acquisition will allow the cave and bats to be protected, contributing to the recovery of the species.

"Since the Trust began its grantmaking in 1998, it has awarded more than \$57 million to 339 Indiana nonprofit organizations. The Trust has continued to further the causes Nina Pulliam supported during her life. As Trustees, we are pleased to continue her legacy of helping people in need, protecting animals and nature, and enriching community life," said Frank E. Russell, Trustee chairman.

"This is the first presentation of three grant rounds this year and includes every area of the Trust's interests," said Harriet M. Ivey, Trust president and CEO. "Grants range from \$20,000 to \$200,000 and 10 of

today's organizations are first-time recipients, Ivey added."

The Trust recognized 19 organizations helping people in need with grant commitments totaling \$1,470,000. "Nina spent a lifetime helping others, and her Trust has evolved into a strong resource for nonprofit groups in her beloved hometown of Indianapolis. With a strong emphasis on encouraging self-sufficiency, the Trust serves individuals, including the elderly and disabled, women, children and their families," Trustee Carol P. Schilling said.

The Trust awarded \$190,000 to four organizations, including the Indiana Karst Conservancy, involving the protection of animals and nature. "Nina was known for her love of animals and was concerned for their welfare. Throughout her life, she supported efforts to protect animals of all kinds, as well as their habitats and the natural beauty of Indiana," Schilling said.

The Trust's commitment to enriching community life in Indianapolis includes \$145,000 in grants to three organizations. "During her life, Nina supported programs that brought cultural and educational opportunities to children and adults who otherwise might not have realized such experiences," Schilling explained.

ROBINSON LADDER CAVE PRESERVE FUNDING STATUS

by Keith Dunlap

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

As was announced to members in late March, the fund-raising goal of \$84,000 for the Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve was met with the receipt of two Indiana-based grants. On March 20th, a \$20,000 grant to the IKC was awarded from the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust (see the related article on page 8). Two days later, it was announced that the IKC would receive a \$10,000 grant from the Efroymsen Fund, a Central Indiana Community Foundation donor-advised fund. These two grants along with previous grants/large donations from The Nature Conservancy, the National Speleological Society, the National Speleological Foundation, the Cave Conservancy Foundation, the Central Indiana Grotto, The Robertson Association, and Richard Blenz covered the majority of the actual acquisition. Individual donations helped to cover acquisition costs (legal fees, closing costs, title search and insurance), the property boundary survey, and contributions to the IKC Stewardship Fund. Because of the late timing of the final two grants, some individual donations were transferred back into Land Acquisition Fund providing a head start on the next project.

In many respects, finding grants for the Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve was "easier" because of its use by the federally endangered Indiana bat. However, applying for many of these "non-traditional" grants required significantly more effort and time than requesting funds from cave-related organizations. While we were successful with the Pulliam and Efroymsen grants, we were unsuccessful on three other requests. All told, there were several hundred man-hours invested in grant writing and financial records preparation for these various grants.

Having reached our goal, this will be the last published status report, but we will continue to update our donor's list on our website for those who still wish to contribute towards this acquisition or to upgrade their status to a higher category (although their donation will effectively go towards our next acquisition).

BUCKNER CAVE GRAFFITI REMOVAL PROJECT

by Dave Everton

Many Indiana cavers are already aware of the restoration project underway at Buckner Cave in Monroe County, to remove graffiti using special sandblasting equipment.

The cave has long been the object of spray-painted graffiti, as well as other types. Although various efforts to remove the offending "artwork" have taken place at different times, and has recently increased on a regular basis by a small group of regular visitors, the amount of graffiti present in the cave is staggering. Keith Dunlap recalls the time during the late 1980s that he and Ernie Payne used the process of mud-washing to completely cover the graffiti in the Signature Room. Within a period of two to three weeks later, the room was already on its way to becoming covered again.

One very important major change has taken place since then, which should encourage any individual or group that is concerned about seeing their efforts go in vain. That change is access to the cave and property: it has been fairly tightly controlled now for several years. Anmar Mirza, currently serving as the President of the newly-formed Richard Blenz Nature Conservancy (RBNC), recently reported that through his observations during frequent visits to the cave over the past few years (every Monday night, during which he and others spend 20 minutes or so removing graffiti with wire brushes), the most recent graffiti he is aware of was done around 2002. That is actually quite remarkable, and is strong testament to the fact that access control (mainly enforced by Art Gahimer until a few months ago) has actually worked, and is continuing to work toward diminished vandalism to the cave. Therefore, it is encouraging to believe that effort spent to remove graffiti will be longer lasting than it has in the past. A second encouraging factor is the power and willingness of the RBNC to pursue legal recourse if needed against violators, which will be much easier to accomplish due to the controlled access in place and existence of the Conservancy as an organization.

Around 2003, during an NSS Convention, owner Dick Blenz participated in a demonstration of the process of removing cave graffiti by sandblasting with equipment designed for that purpose by Arizona caver Ray Keel-

er, and now owned by the Peppersauce Cave Conservation Project (PCCP) and managed by Ray. Dick requested at that time to use the equipment in Buckner Cave, and was put on a waiting list. Earlier this year, it became available for use, and the Executive Board of the RBNC approved the project. The equipment was recently obtained for use, and Ray Keeler gave a training session on April 15, 2006 in the entrance room of the cave.

Approximately twenty-five cavers participated that day. Although productivity wasn't a goal, some graffiti was removed nonetheless. Most importantly, it gave participants the opportunity to see how the equipment and process works, which is obviously a necessary step of coordinating and executing the restoration project.

I could go on in great detail about the project, including some of the challenges it faces, but let's approach some of the issues from a question and answer method:

How long do you have the equipment for use? One year; possibly more, depending on demand and how well we are utilizing it. This time limitation could ultimately be the single largest restricting factor to how much we can accomplish, although it certainly isn't the only one.

How is the project being funded? Dick Blenz has made a commitment to funding it. However, other methods are being sought as well, including a pending grant request to the NSS Save the Caves Fund. Other grants are also a possibility, including Federal Clean Waters monies, but those avenues have not yet been pursued. Donations are also being welcomed; the St Joseph Valley Grotto has already pledged \$100 to the project.

How much graffiti removal are you expecting to accomplish? Unfortunately, because this is strictly a volunteer effort, we cannot realistically set specific goals for how much of the cave can be done. However, the more volunteers, the more we'll get done; it's that simple. One major immediate goal is the Signature Room, although we will be removing some graffiti between the entrance and along the way to that room first.

Will this project restore the cave to its former unvandalized state? Regrettably,

no. However, it does substantially improve it visually. It is difficult at best to blend areas from which the paint has been removed with the surrounding rock color. We plan to experiment with methods (e.g. slurry-washing) which will minimize the difference, but even without these methods, the results are definitely a noteworthy improvement over the spray paint. Also, not all graffiti was sprayed on with paint; much has been scratched into the rock. Obviously, the sandblasting process will not restore that type of damage.

I've never had an interest in Buckner Cave; why should I have one now? I must confess that I've resembled this remark in many ways in the past. However, the cave and property are experiencing a turnaround from past abuse, and will continue to improve, but only with time and effort. Although we weren't responsible for the past misuse, we are responsible as good stewards to do something about it now, especially if we believe our efforts will not go in vain. If you haven't cared before, now is the time to. The day may come that you are not only willing to visit the cave, but are possibly proud to take others there as well, especially if you have given of yourself to improve the cave's condition.

How often will I have an opportunity to help? Graffiti removal project weekends are expected to be scheduled monthly. If there is enough interest, additional ones could be held as well. Currently, I am trying to announce the weekends to cavers throughout Indiana through e-mail. The RBNC Web site is also being updated with information on project weekends as well.

What if I can't help on a project weekend? Due to logistics, we can't just fire up the sandblasting equipment at any time. However, there are plenty of other volunteer opportunities on the property and in the cave. Contact me at any time, and we can work with you to make arrangements for your participation, even if not with graffiti removal using the sandblasting equipment.

Do I have to go inside the cave in order to help? Not at all. Much help is needed without ever needing to set foot inside the cave. Some tasks require little or no physical labor, although many will at least require hiking to and from the cave entrance.

Are you accepting help from Scouts or

other groups? Most definitely! However, that needs to be arranged in advance and well-coordinated, so please direct potential leaders to me for initial contact, and I will in turn work with them and the RBNC executive board regarding arrangement and details.

What do I need to bring with me? We will supply all the tools and equipment, including personal safety equipment. You should bring your caving gear along with water and your lunch. There may be work days during which some food may be provided; that information will be announced in those cases.

I have a long way to drive. Am I allowed to camp at the property? Yes, camping is allowed, but must be arranged in advance. Simply contact the Project Coordinator in advance, informing him of even tentative intentions of camping.

What about historic signatures? An effort is underway to document them in order to spare them from removal or damage. If you are interested in helping, it will be welcomed.

Will sandblasting have any negative impacts to the biota or bats in the cave? Efforts are being taken to avoid harming or having any negative impact on bats or other biota.

Website Links:

Richard Blenz Nature Conservancy:

<http://www.caves.org/grotto/big/-rbnc/rbnc.htm>

Buckner Cave Graffiti Removal Page:

<http://www.caves.org/grotto/big/-rbnc/GraffitiRemoval.htm>

The Timpanogos Grotto website has a summary and 8-minute video of the large project in Bloomington Cave in southern Utah near St George. The link to the video is near the top of the following page:

<http://www.caves.org/grotto/timpgrotto/-BloomingtonGraffiti.html>

For more information contact:

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THE 14th ANNUAL INDIANA CAVE SYMPOSIUM 2006

by Dave Everton

Ah, to be a Hoosier caver! Better yet in this case, to be a Hoosier caver interested in the annual Indiana Cave Symposium! What a feeling to be back in Milltown at the Cave Country Canoes campground along the Blue River, slightly upstream of the dam, for this annual event. It was an absolutely gorgeous spring day on April 22, 2006, with the trees and flowers in glorious bloom, the precious morel fruit of the underground fungus developing (some were found earlier that day!), and cavers were out and about, doing various cave-related service projects during the day, before attending the annual Indiana Cave Symposium, co-hosted by the Indiana Karst Conservancy and Indiana Cave Survey, late that afternoon and evening. Each organization shares the financial responsibilities for the event, chipping in for the food, including burgers, brats, hot dogs, buns, as well as soft drinks. Attendees helped out by bringing side dishes, desserts, chips, and the like, which created a full-blown cookout with all the fixin's.

Once again, for the presentation portion of the event, Gordon Smith offered the use of the Milltown Community Center building, which was prepped by darkening the room by placement of black plastic trash bags taped over the windows. After the technology guru "Slide Show Bob" Vandeventer got all the presentations loaded, the show began around 7:30. The following summarizes the order and presentations:

- **Cave Signs** - Do you know your caving sign? John Benton represented the team of Bob Sergesketter, Terry Clark, and George Jaegers to show signs of caves, but *not* huge sinks, karst valleys, entrances, disappearing streams, etc. It was a ribbon-winning presentation at the 2005 NSS Convention, and was well enjoyed here as well.
- **Cave Biota Webumentary** - Ravenswood Media has been hard at work filming in many locations for a webumentary on cave biota, and Kriste Lindberg provided an overview of this huge project being undertaken by Dave McGowan of Chicago. She also highlighted how the effort ties into karst education.
- **I-69 Indiana Potential Bat Hibernaculum Identification Project** - As part of the I-69 Tier 2 project, the Indiana Geological Survey was contracted by Bernardin, Lochmueller, and 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 provided a summary of what they accomplished.
- **Recent Projects in Indiana Cave Biology** - Dr Jerry Lewis spoke of several projects that he and his wife Salisa have been involved in, 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 threatened to cram everything he's done in the past 35 years in 500+ Indiana caves into 30 minutes, but thankfully, he didn't do so, and we'd have been disappointed if he'd tried!
- **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! He reported on a recent project that he and a colleague conducted in Sullivan Cave on the physics of cave airflow.
- **Hoosier National Forest Cave and Karst Update** - Bruce Trotter summarized the progress that he, Ray Sheldon, Jerry Walker, and Keith Dunlap have been making at finding caves and karst features in the HNF, and he gave lots of facts and figures of their accomplishments as a result of the effort.
- **Bat Caves With No Bats: Identifying and Protecting Overlooked Habitat** - Special guest presenter Jim Kennedy of Bat Conservation International came to Indiana all the way from Texas to relate some efforts he and his wife Cat have been involved in, to not only identify past bat colony habitats in various caves, but steps

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Group works to document life in southern Indiana

by Mike Leonard

It wasn't long ago that Cindy Basile happened across a newspaper article extolling what was described as the remarkable discovery of more than 20 new species of plant and animal life in California.

"I thought, 'Huh? We've found more than 30 in Indiana,'" said Basile, a wildlife biologist for the Hoosier National Forest. "That was a clear indicator to me that we need to do a better job letting people know what remarkable work is being done right here."

A handful of scientists and hundreds of volunteers are helping Indiana map, study and document the singular life forms that exist in the remarkable karst topography that reaches from Putnam County south through a south-central Indiana swath that stretches to Mammoth Cave, Ky.

There are karst regions throughout the world. But none of them has been well-studied or popularly appreciated because the caves beneath the surface that prove so fascinating are difficult and uncomfortable to explore. In contrast, mountains are easy.

The initiative to document and educate the public about the regional subterranean ecosystem has progressed through a partnership among the federally supported Hoosier National Forest; the Indiana Karst Conservancy, a volunteer organization; and Ravenswood Media, a private media production company in the Chicago suburbs.

With the help of biologists, scientists and a slew of cave-knowledgeable volunteers, Ravenswood Media owner Dave McGowan has been journeying into southern Indiana caves, setting up cameras and lighting and doing the painstakingly difficult and time-consuming "filming" that one would associate with a National Geographic production.

He's captured on digital video some remarkable things, including a blind cave fish that exists only in the labyrinth of underground streams that stretch from south of Bloomington to Mammoth Cave, Ky.

"It actually evolved with no pigment, no eyes. It's totally bizarre -- as bizarre as anything you'd find in the tropical rainforest," McGowan said.

The filmmaker, with the help of the forest and karst conservancy advisers, seeks out scientists familiar with cave ecology and biology and edits their comments down into manageable video clips. Many segments already are posted on the Cave Biota site at www.cavebiota.com. The site is mostly built, up, and running. But McGowan expects to spend the upcoming summer heading back into the caves of southern Indiana to complete Cave Biota.

Basile is ecstatic at what has been accomplished so far.

"I'm the karst coordinator for the Hoosier National Forest and the only person who has time dedicated to doing karst stuff. And that's like 10 percent of my job. If it weren't for the hundreds of hours volunteered by people from the IKC and the cavers in the region, we could not do what we've done."

It was the IKC that spearheaded the Cave Biota project. It proposed to the Hoosier National Forest that a portion of its educational mission could be dedicated to investigating and documenting the forest's untold story of karst topography.

Karst refers to "regions characterized by the presence of limestone or other soluble rocks, where drainage has been largely diverted into subterranean routes," according to the IKC. "The topography of such areas is dominated by sinkholes, sinking streams, large springs, and caves."

"In this region, it's nature's storm sewer system," explained Kriste Lindberg of the IKC. "That's why we try to educate people, to not trash your sinkholes. Whatever you put in there just drains to an underground stream."

"We work with developers to help them understand these things," she said. "Recently we've worked with Renwick (a developing housing project in Bloomington) on their sinkholes. The idea

is to turn what is there into an asset. If you have a sinkhole, turn it into a park instead of parking."

"What amazes me is how fragile the system is," said McGowan, the videographer and producer of Cave Biota. "One gasoline truck could turn over on the highway, drain into a cave system and destroy it."

A Michigan City native once nominated for a short subject documentary Academy Award, McGowan admits he never appreciated southern Indiana so much until he took on this project. "I think southern Indiana is this weird secret to the rest of the country. The landscape, above and below the surface, is just gorgeous," he said.

Making the Cave Biota documentary, or "webumentary" as it's being called, has been challenging, even for a motivated media producer.

"It's incredibly difficult to carry gear down into caves, set up eve-

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Filmmakers Jacek Lupina, left, David McGowan, center, and professor Horton Hobbs, of Wittenberg University, document cave biology on film in Buddha Cave as part of the Cave Biota webumentary that shows caves across southern Indiana and the life that thrives in the cave environment that few people ever see.

photo credit Pete Schreiner (Hoosier Times)

EXTREME MAKEOVERS - DILLON CAVE GETS A "FACE LIFT"

by Cindy Basile

Visitors of Indiana caves are often spell-bound by the natural beauty they find, but many of our caves aren't as beautiful as they could be. Many times delicate speleothems are missing that have been destroyed or removed by previous visitors. The cave may even be spoiled by fires, marking on walls, digging, littering, or the killing of cave wildlife. Graffiti is a very common problem in many Indiana caves, including Dillon Cave. Some visitors may mark their route through a cave to help them find their way out, or just decide to record their name for posterity. In the long run, these signs encourage others to vandalize the cave.

Just as conservationists restore prairies, forests, barrens, and wetlands, dedicated cavers and conservation biologists can restore abused caves. Unfortunately, damage done to a cave can never be completely repaired. A broken stalactite or stalagmite that took millennia to form from dripping or flowing water may never reform, and it can be very difficult to fix any darkening or inhi-

bition of growth that may have resulted after porous rock has been contaminated by skin oils or mud. Cave restorers accept the fact that damage often occurs much more quickly than it can be fixed and that their efforts will never restore a cave to pristine condition.

Yet, cavers can make huge strides towards restoration, as demonstrated by this year's cave-related "Take Pride in America" project which included photo-documenting historical smoked signatures, removing contemporary graffiti, and removing trash in Dillon Cave and the surrounding surface area. While most trained cavers are aware of the sensitive nature of caves and take measures to minimize their impact, not all cave visitors are conscientious. Some maliciously break formations or paint slogans and obscenities on the cave walls, while others leave behind their garbage.

On May 6, seven dedicated members of the Indiana Karst Conservancy (IKC) set out to reverse the damage made by past visitors of Dillon Cave. Armed with trash bags, five gallon buckets, and an array of brushes, these cavers prepared for a day underground. The entrance to Dillon Cave is large and very scenic, hiding the fact that you have to stoop-walk and crawl for the majority of the journey. The shallow stream that runs through most of the caves is another part of the adventure, guaranteeing wet socks and clothing. While this may be daunting to many people, it doesn't even slow down these cavers.

"Dillon Cave is quite remarkable from many perspectives," said Wildlife Biologist Cynthia Basile. "Dillon contains more bear wallows than any other cave in Indiana. These wallows are over 100 years old and well preserved. In some places, they even exhibit claw marks in the clay, and we want to make sure that they remain in great condition well into the future. The cave also has several smoked signatures on the ceiling dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries showing that the cave has been visited for at least 130 years."

Before this restoration work began, the cave was carefully explored and photographs were used to document historical signatures. These photographs were also used to decide what graffiti should be removed and what



Dick Vernier removing graffiti from the ceiling in Dillon Cave on the Hooiser National Forest as part of the Take Pride in America workday.

should remain. Cave restorers do not remove old pictographs, petroglyphs, signatures or anything else that might carry special historical significance.

Restoration techniques vary widely. Carbide lamp soot may be removed using a wet brush with fine bristles; whereas paint and scratches may be covered by brown-washing. Brown-washing is a technique in which mud slurry is applied over the offending area. When dry, the wall reverts to something approaching its previous appearance. Sediment used for this should be collected as close to the site of the graffiti as possible. During this restoration project, volunteers were very careful not to further damage the cave's resources. Harsh chemicals that could poison cave life were not used, and stiff wire brushes were used only when necessary. Where graffiti was cemented under a coating of calcite, it was left alone so that the calcite could continue to cover it.

The removal of litter and trash from cave environments is often tedious work involving the collection of spent carbide, cans, bottles,

small pieces of trash and wire, and other items. By the end of the day, the cavers had successfully removed graffiti and trash from 1200 feet of the cave. There is still work to be completed in Dillon Cave, including cording off the bear wallows and removing additional contemporary graffiti. All of the tasks conducted under this project were identified in the cave management plan for Dillon Cave written by the IKC. This project allowed the Hoosier and the IKC the opportunity to make these recommendations a reality. "While the project was a great way to spend the day, people need to know that restoring caves after they have been damaged is not a good solution," said volunteer Kriste Lindberg. "The only recourse to vandalism and damaging overuse of caves is conservation through education and protection before damage is done."

Editor's note: Author Cindy Basile is a wildlife biologist and the Cave and Karst Resource Specialist for the Hoosier National Forest.

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rything and then wait to capture something of value," McGowan said. "We've hauled gear down passageways 3 1/2 feet high, stooped over for a mile. And that was just part of the way."

On one "filming" expedition, McGowan and a partner bought a raft to carry gear through an underground river to reach a location.

"Some of the things we're getting, the average person would never see if we didn't film it," he said. "I know that some of it, I'll never see again because it's just so hard to

get to."

The beauty of the Cave Biota project, all parties agree, is that the technology of digital media and the reach of the Internet has made what might be seen as an esoteric nature documentary readily available to anyone with a relatively up-to-date computer and Internet access. No major investors or distribution channels required.

"Our original goal was to make a 30-minute DVD to educate people about our karst resources and the incredible things that exist in our cave systems," said Basile, the Hoosier National Forest wildlife

biologist. "But the Web site is doing so well and we're getting so many hits (viewings) that this has exceeded all expectations and much, much more. Our goal now is to eventually make that DVD, but in the meantime direct people to this wonderful resource, where people can view the amazing things Dave has captured. He's a true artist. Even those of us who know something about these things are amazed at what Dave has done."

Reprinted with permission from The Hoosier Times (May 7, 2006).

Volunteers planting trees on April 29th at the Buddha Karst Preserve in Lawrence County. This is part of the IKC's long-term restoration plan to return the property to its pre-settlement condition.

photo by Jerry Lewis



LOST RIVER CAVE SYSTEM

by Sue Vernier

When I received the invitation from The Nature Conservancy to join them for a caving trip in the Lost River Cave system, I had this hazy memory of St Joseph Valley Grotto members describing a maze of sleazy, muddy, crawling, squeezing cave that periodically floods. I would have dismissed the idea of a trip; except, TNC usually isn't in the business of endangering the lives of their members. Besides, my husband, Richard, as IKC President, thinks this will be a good opportunity to personally thank TNC for making the purchase of Robinson Ladder Cave possible.

IKC members, Kriste Lindberg, Bob Vandeventer, George Cesnik, and Dave Tibbets were coordinating the trip. As the day approached, I contacted TNC to verify that there are other registrants besides Dick and myself. Yes, indeed, there would be TNC members Randy Holley and John Bassett and his wife; plus Ann Harris and her friend, and Betsy Smith from the TNC office. All total, they would have 15 people, including the cavers from the IKC and SJVG.

On July 30, 2005 we met for lunch in Orleans and then carpooled to the parking area at Wesley Chapel Gulf. Before donning our cave gear, we took a walk around and down into the Gulf. Thanks to an extended Midwest drought, I had never seen such low water in the Gulf. At least that should eliminate any concerns I may have had about being flooded in while in the cave, and as it turns out, walking in waist-deep water. Now it was time to get our gear and gather at the cave entrance on the TNC-owned Blanton Property.

The SJVG cavers made a quick judgment of the fitness of the novices (mainly TNC people, since the Bassett's are also cavers) and decided it was possible to do a trip going in one entrance and out another. The issue of claustrophobia was dispensed with immediately as the entrance requires a squeeze through a gate and a short crawl before reaching a steep, muddy slope down to a stream. We were now in the sinking stream portion of the Lost River system whose drainage basin above the rise is about 150 square miles. The Lost River "disappears" southeast of Orleans through a string of swallow holes and sinks, to rise again near Orangeville. On the surface is a meandering dry bed channel twenty-two miles long.

At this point we were able to walk in the stream through a large passage. I'm pleased that this was nothing like I imagined and was thoroughly enjoying this Indiana cave. Someone called out as a single bat flies through. We also stopped and examined depigmented crayfish and George took a picture of an especially large one. Unfortunately, no "blind" cave fish were spotted, but by then, the water was silted with all the people slogging through the stream passage.

The water continually changed from barely ankle deep to knee deep, but never waist deep. Sometimes the sucking mud tried to take me for a swim, but I managed to stay upright (I found out later that my husband did go for a little swim when his foot got caught under a shelf hidden by the silted stream).

Along the way we admired the occasional formations: "bacon" drapery, soda straws, and columns of various sizes. We were now in an area with thin layers of dolomite that reminded Dick of a section in Roppel Cave in Kentucky. The potholes of varying size were difficult to get through. In the midst of this terrain, Ann Harris announced that her boots were disintegrating with one sole nearly detached. The resourcefulness of cavers became apparent as a knee pad, duct tape, string and stainless steel wire appeared from various bags. My husband wrapped them around her foot to hold the boot together. We still had a good distance to go; and though the crippled footwear was tiring Ann, she managed to hang on with little complaint.

When we finally reached the climb-out point, our group temporarily splits, with Ann, her friend and one of the cavers heading for the exit, while the rest of us continuing a short distance to the largest room in the cave. By this time I'm wishing very much that Bob Sergesketter were along so I could actually "see" the cave with his carbide light! We retraced our steps and I quickly scrambled up the slope and crawl toward the exit. By now, I realize my electric light was fast fading but there's only a few more yards to scramble through before reaching daylight. We had been in the cave approximately three hours; a good way to spend a hot, sultry July day. I'm glad I decided to go on this trip. Thanks to the TNC, SJVG and IKC for making this rare opportunity available.

ANNUAL CAVE PATRON / PROPERTY MANAGER REPORTS

Each year at the Annual Business meeting, the Cave Patrons and Property Managers are asked to submit a written report summarizing activities and incidents. The following is a compilation of these reports for CY2005:

BUDDHA CAVE (PATRON) - Jeff Cody

Buddha Cave this past year was visited eleven times with permits. Sixty-two people filled out waivers for these trips. One trip in March was canceled due to high water concerns. This trip was rescheduled and went in October. Most trips were led by area grottos or by people that I know to be responsible cavers. No one on any trips reported anything to me out of the ordinary. One trip on Thanksgiving weekend, led by a local caver, was a photo trip involving cavers from out of state.

This past year there were four more trips into the cave than last year, but only seven more people filled out waivers than in 2004. This year the first trip was in March, and last year the first trip was in April. I did notice that this year I had a few cavers asking if they could camp on the property; I don't remember anyone asking in previous years. They were all told that camping is not permitted. Most trips involved the use of vertical gear to reach the lower level as opposed to the use of cable ladders.

SULLIVAN CAVE (PATRON) - Bob Vandeventer

This report is on the cave trips and activity at Sullivan Cave from CY2005 for the Indiana Karst Conservancy annual business meeting.

One thing that remains the same each year is the number of contacts with groups interested in going to Sullivan. E-mail is still the main contact source, but I still do quite a bit of phone communication.

We have our regulars who return every year and some first timers in the mix of people going to the cave. Missing from our regulars this year were some School groups that could have been victims of budget cuts for outside activities. I hope do hope to see them back next year. The cave is very popular with scout troops with several offering to help in cave or surface projects in the future. I went on several scout trips and enjoyed spending time with them.

There were no cave related problems to report this year and that is always good news. We did have one of the combination locks on the driveway gate change its number for some reason. It was replaced and I have not heard of any other locks failing. We also are still getting compliments on the condition of the cave from cavers of years past. I thank everyone for taking the time to look around and keep the cave in such good shape. There were many good pictures taken in the cave that were sent to me so thanks to everyone who took time to do that. Our grotto liai-

son plan is working quite well and without a doubt it has helped me out getting all who want to visit the cave a chance to do so. A big thank you to all of the grotto liaisons for their help.

For the first time since I have been making these reports the number of people visiting the cave this year has dropped. Not much of a drop but still a first. Last year we had a count of just over 500 people and this year the total was 464. There were many large groups as usual so scheduling was important for these visits. After looking at the information I do think that gas prices at the first of the year may be the reason a lower amount of visitors. The heavy traffic time is in late summer and fall which seems to be the same every year. I can always count on a full schedule in October and November. I have not been keeping a count of the number of people who camp at the property on their trips but several do and I will add that to my reports in the future.

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

SULLIVAN (PROPERTY MNGR) - Keith Dunlap

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

In early April, one hundred Ash trees were planted, replacing seedlings that had died over the previous year. In May, I spent several weekends doing tree maintenance with nearly 100% of the trees having a spot application of weed control (RoundUp). The tulip trees planted in the smaller field in 2000 continue to outgrow everything else. The smaller field is really starting to look "forested".

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

The driveway and parking areas remained in good shape. The yellow plastic chain has been effective in keeping people from driving off into the grass when soft.

Several members took advantage of the camping area and firewood over the past year. Several firewood donations were received as well as other donations from those who visited the cave.

The modular home adjacent to the back field has been for sale (at last check, it still looked vacant). The mobile home that was causing the trash problem has been removed. The lot owner is attempting to sell the lot.

There were no major problems or concerns encountered during 2005. Activities planned for 2006 in-

clude expanding the parking area, weed control around the trees, replacement of dead trees, perhaps working on the loop trail, and of course mowing the clearing and driveway area. Little progress was made on providing sanitation privy. Dave Haun has a lead on a free crapper.

WAYNE CAVE (PATRON) - Tom Willett

Submitting this report for 2005 Patron Tom Willett is Dave Everton, who was appointed to the position after Tom's recent resignation.

From records provided to me by Tom and Keith, there were a total of ten trips into the cave in 2005. Nine of them were arranged through grotto liaisons and one through the Patron. Four of the nine were through CIG; the other five were through BIG. According to the records, a total of 60 persons visited the cave.

As the incoming Patron, I can't say much more about activity in 2005. However, since my report is so small, I'll report that my last visit to the cave was in January of 2006. The lock worked fine, and all seemed normal in the cave. There were small amounts of trash in the bottom of the entrance area, but nothing major. I unsuccessfully searched for the bolt cutters in the entrance area on the way out, although it wasn't a comprehensive search. My belief is that there should be some present, but I will make it a point to do a more thorough search prior to requesting a replacement set.

Lastly, I thank the IKC Directors for appointing me to serve as Wayne Cave Patron, and am excited about the opportunity. I encourage anyone having questions, needs, or concerns to bring them to my attention and I'll do my best to address and resolve them as needed.

ROBINSON LADDER CAVE - John Benton

During the May through August "open" period, there were 10 different trips; 62 cavers, average 6.2 cavers per trip; high 17 cavers on one trip, low 2 cavers on one trip. States represented, IN, IL, OH, MI, KY, PA.

No adverse effect on the bat population was noticed during the cave being available for trips, May thru August; bat populations seemed constant.

Camping on the property occurred 4 times with no incidents.

A management plan was developed and approved by the Executive Board and is in use.

Robinson Ladder Cave was acquired by IKC in March 2005 and I (John Benton) was appointed property/patron manager soon after.

There were no reported incidents/problems reported to the patron during CY2005.

The surface clean up in May 2005 removed old deer stands, cut limbs protruding over access lane, and removed some old fence and trash, few tires. The road connecting the upper and lower fields is washing out and could use some repair during the upcoming workday on April 22, 2006. Another old deer stand just inside woods near lower field could also be removed.

I made several checks of the property during 2005, at least once a month, often more.

Bambi and Keith Dunlap mowed the drive lane and parking areas twice during the summer.

A WHIP (Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program) cost-share was applied for and received in August 2005; total cost share funding is \$6800 over the span of the project (total cost \$9067, funded at 75%=\$6800). This is to eradicate the fescue in the open fields and re-establish more native plant life. Continuing to evolve is the burn and or spray methods to bring about the restoration in consultation with the IDNR, USDA and TNC.

At the recommendation of IDNR biologist Mark Bennett, both fields were mown, raked and baled in November 2005 to help remove cover and in preparation for burning and spraying fescue in 2006.

Fund raising through grants, matches and member contributions continued throughout 2005.

I began collecting survey information for surveyor Jess Gwinn from Crawford and Harrison County court houses, in preparation for upcoming boundary survey of RLC property.

The barn in the upper field remains in good shape, with little stored inside at this point.

COON/GROTTO (PATRON) - Keith Dunlap

There were no incidents/problems reported to the Patron during CY2005.

There were 3 authorized recreational trips to Coon Cave involving 28 cavers. Two trips were arranged through the BIG liaison, the other through the Patron. There were 5 recreational trips to Grotto Cave involving 51 cavers. Four of the trips were arranged through the BIG liaison, the other trip was through the Patron..

There were 2 trips into each cave for scientific/conservation purposes (to remove and then re-install various monitoring equipment/service the alarm systems) and 1 trip each to conduct the biennial bat count. There was also one trip into Coon associated with the production of a cave biota video.

The 2005 bat count had both caves with nearly 10,000 bats each. Both caves were down slightly from the 2003 census.

There were no unauthorized visits recorded in either cave by the monitoring speloggers during the hibernacula closure period (9/2004 to 4/2005). In the past nine years since the alarm systems were installed, there has only been one violation.

The temperature-monitoring project continued in both caves (12th year of deployment on 9/18).

The State of Indiana continues to demonstrate its complete incompetence in being able to obtain an acceptable appraisal to pursue the acquisition of this property.

The annual report to the property owner was drafted and mailed on 12/20/05.

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

SHAFT CAVE (PATRON) - Jeff Cody

This past year Shaft Cave was visited 13 times. These trips involved a total of 48 people who filled out waivers. Two people went more than once and only filled out one waiver. Most trips were made by cavers that I know or am familiar with. I visited the cave on October 30 with two other cavers to remove the old bolts. I am glad that this was done because one felt loose to me. While on this trip the cave, all the way back to the big room was in good shape. I only had to remove a small amount of old trash from the bottom of the entrance pit.

I received a call in October that a large tree had fallen on the fence around the entrance. I made a trip down on October 22 to investigate. A large tree had fallen from the downhill side of the entrance and had damaged about one-third of the fence. Keith Dunlap also went to investigate and we will be repairing as necessary when we can accumulate materials and set a time that will fit our schedules. While on this visit the surface area looked to be in good shape with the exception of some deterioration of the wood sign at the parking area. No incidents were reported to me by any of the trip leaders.

ORANGEVILLE RISE - Steve Lockwood

The property continues to attract trash due to the large road frontage and seasonal flooding but is remaining relatively clean between trash pickups. Trash was collected from the property in June 2005,

September 2005, and December 2005. Every quarterly cleaning of the property yielded a large garbage bag full of trash or more. The trash collected included glass bottles, plastic bottles, plastic jugs, plastic cups, plastic bags, and etc. Trash pickup was attempted in March 2006 but could not be completed due to most of the property being flooded. The road to the True Rise of the Lost River was covered with silt for the entire length of the Orangeville Rise property and three fourths of the property was covered with flood water. The trash will be removed from the property after the flood waters recede.

The fence built in 2003 on the western side of the property collected some flood debris but remains straight and structurally sound. The concrete property markers installed in 2004 were also intact after the flooding. The National Natural Landmark Marker has been vandalized and will have to be repaired after the Indiana Department of Natural Resources is notified and approval is granted.

Activities planned for 2006 include contacting the IDNR about repairing the marker, quarterly trash pickups, and cleaning trash from a small ravine located on the west side of the property which contains old bicycles, fencing, boards, posts, and other items.

SINKS OF INDIAN CREEK CE - Fig Newton

I visited the sinks this evening [March 17] and there needs to be some action taken. There is much building happening on the lots above the sinks. A new house is being built at the end of steam engine road. The owners of this house seem to be ok in what they are doing. The owners of one new house has bush hogged a road through the woods to connect to the old road that has always been there. They have also put a horse tank (upside down at present) at the edge of the old road and cleared a 20 x 20 foot area that appears to be on sinks easement. The people that bush hogged the field have cut several hundred square feet of brushy area at the edge of the old road next to where they picnic. There is a picnic table and a trash basket about 50 feet from the bank next to the sinks. Also two hunting stands are just to the east of the picnic table. There has been a lot of activity since my last visit last summer. I assume I should talk to the new house owners and let them know about the easement and what they can and can't do.

Continued from page 12...

taken to try and get bats to return to them.

● **The Roger Spring Cave System** - Comprised of three known separate segments of cave system initially surveyed by Illinois cavers in the early 1970s, the caves were recently resurveyed and extended by several Hoosier cavers. Dave Everton pro-

vided an overview of that effort, which took place between July 2005 and January 2006. A hearty thanks to everyone who made the 14th annual Indiana Cave Symposium a success, from planners, to presenters, to supporters, and attendees! Interested in presenting in the future? Just let it be known!

Hope to see you next year!

INDIANA KARST CONSERVANCY TREASURY REPORT

Income/Expense Statement From January 1, 2006 to March 31, 2006

INCOME:

Dues Apportionment and Residuals	697.50	
Donations - General	1184.00	
Donations - Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve	30800.00	
Donations - Acquisition Fund	770.00	
Spelogger sales (2)	300.00	
Interest	337.80	
		<u>\$34,089.30</u>

EXPENSES:

IKC Update (printing, production, mailing)	279.41	
Stewardship/Conservation	316.79	
Education / Outreach	6.93	
Membership services	154.36	
Business (credit card service fee)	0.60	
Contribution to Stewardship Endowment	7500.00	
Tranfers to/from restricted funds/other adjustments	26737.63	
		<u>(\$34,995.72)</u>

NET OPERATING EXCESS (DEFICIT) THIS PERIOD: (\$906.42)

Balance Sheet March 31, 2006

ASSETS:

Cash in Checking / Saving Accounts / CDs	68536.59	
Accounts receivables ¹	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>\$335,549.75</u>

LIABILITIES & OPERATING EXCESS:

Land Acquisition Restricted Fund	28401.80
Deferred Dues Restricted Fund (189 members)	3630.00
Stewardship Endowment Restricted Fund ²	24129.30

Previous Operating Excess	23295.07
Net Excess (Deficit) This Period	<u>(906.42)</u>
Current Operating Excess (unrestricted funds)	22388.65
Real estate liquidity	<u>257000.00</u>

Total Liabilities & Operating Excess \$335,549.75

NOTES:

- 1) Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve acquisition grant from the Efroymsen Fund
- 2) New contributions: \$5,000 from the Land Acquisition Fund and \$2,500 from the General Fund

IKC ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

Saturday, March 18th, 2006 -- Indianapolis, Indiana

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Bruce Bowman

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 AM at the Decatur Branch of the Marion County Public Library, President Richard Vernier presiding. Karen Tadsen was accepted as proxy for Bruce Devore and George Cesnik was accepted as proxy for Nick Noe. The minutes of the December 2005 and the February 2006 Board meetings were approved as published in the March 2006 *IKC Update*.

Treasurer Dunlap reported total assets of \$304,664.12. Our land holdings are valued at \$257,013.16 and we have cash in the various funds totaling \$47,650.96. A detailed Treasury Report is published in the *IKC Update*.

Dunlap reported that we have 188 members of which 126 have already renewed for 2006 or beyond. More renewals are coming in daily. He said that we are in good financial condition.

Elections

Tom Rea served as election teller, assisted by Bill Tozer. Ballots were passed out to members who had not already sent in a ballot. Vernier asked for nominations from the floor. None were forthcoming. Dunlap moved to close nominations and proceed with the election, seconded by Vandeventer. The motion passed 13-0-0. (Board member Lockwood was not present to vote on this motion.)

The election results were the re-election of Vernier as President, Dunlap as Treasurer, and Sergesketter as Secretary. Re-elected to the Board were Haun and Sollman. Newly elected to the Board were Dr. Jerry Lewis and Bruce Silvers. Dunlap noted that new Board members take office on April 1.

Dunlap moved that the ballots be destroyed, seconded by Vandeventer. The motion passed 13-1-0.

Annual Reports From Property Managers and Cave Patrons

Reports were given for Sullivan Cave and property, Wayne Cave, Buddha Cave and property, Orange-

ville Rise property, Robinson Ladder Cave and property, Shaft Cave, Coon/Grotto Cave, and the Indian Creek Sink Conservation Easement. No reports were received for the Wayne property, Suicide Cave or Shiloh Cave although Sollman gave a verbal report on the Wayne property. The annual reports will be published in their entirety in the *IKC Update*.

Robinson Ladder Cave Acquisition

Dunlap reported on the fund raising status. He said that we are \$17,642 short of our \$84,000 goal. We have a good chance that we will be getting two grants of the many we submitted, one for \$20,000 and one for \$10,000. This will more than cover the \$17,000 we need and that brings up a couple of issues. If we get both grants, we will have raised more than the \$84,000 needed. We asked for donations from members to purchase the Robinson Ladder property and the members responded generously and now, with these two grants, we will have excess. Dunlap said that he thinks the excess should be rolled into the Land Acquisition Fund so as to be ready for the next purchase, whatever that may be. Some members who contributed money to the Robinson Ladder purchase might be concerned about having their contribution rolled into the Land Acquisition Fund. The Board needs to communicate this situation to the members. Do we need to contact every donor and ask them if it's okay to roll it over or do we just do it. Dunlap said that members need to understand that we never know how grant requests will play out. In this case we really didn't know about our chances of getting these until the last two weeks. Also, one of the things that these foundations and funds look at is the amount of support that the organization gets from it's own members.

Ingle said that we should run an article in the next *IKC Update* thanking the donors and explaining the situation. Sollman agreed but said that the explanation be very prominent. Jeff Cody asked if the grant money or a portion of it could be rolled into the Land Acquisition Fund. Dunlap and Vernier said no, the grants are very specific. The money must be used for the purchase of the Robinson Ladder property and nothing else. The grants can't be used for a land survey, Stewardship Fund, or any other use other than the actual purchase of the land.

Haun suggested that something be put on the website explaining the situation. Vernier said that in the future we will be more specific with our fund raising literature and explain that if we are overfunded for a certain project that the excess will be rolled into the Land Acquisition Fund. He thought that it was always understood that that would be the case but in the future we will make it known up front. Tozer thought that we had run into this dilemma once before. Dunlap said that we had a small overrun when we bought the Sullivan property and a large excess when Buddha was purchased. Both times the excess was rolled over without any fanfare but we now realize that we should be more clear about where the money goes.

Vernier said that everyone has to understand that fund raising is very unpredictable. Tozer said that it's an interesting situation in that our receiving these grants is causing somewhat of a problem but he wouldn't discourage us from going after grants for our next purchase. Vernier said that our ideal situation would be to fund our next purchase entirely with grants and not to have to raise funds through member donations. Discussion continued but in the end everyone agreed that while our success in getting these grants may be complicating things a bit, overall we're in a good position and most members and contributors will be understanding. Tozer ended the discussion by saying that as we acquire more property, finding dedicated people to manage our property is going to be at least as important as getting funds to purchase property.

Dunlap said that he would like to make two motions relating to funding of the Stewardship Fund. In the past, we have set aside ten percent of the purchase price of each property and placed that amount in the Stewardship Fund. The purpose of the Stewardship Fund is to provide revenue to pay such costs as insurance, property taxes, and property maintenance. Right now we have enough income from donations and dues to pay these expenses but we must plan for the future and provide a revenue source so that the properties can be maintained no matter what entity owns them should the IKC cease to exist. In the past we transferred money from the General Fund to the Stewardship Fund and Dunlap thinks that is a good policy but at this time he would like to make an exception and transfer money from the Land Acquisition Fund to the Stewardship Fund. His reasoning is that a lot of the money in the Land Acquisition Fund came from grants with some of them written in such a way that would allow us to do this. Dunlap moved that the amount of \$5,000 be transferred from the Land Acquisition Fund to the Stewardship Fund, contingent upon reaching our funding goal of \$84,000. Sue Vernier seconded the motion. A clarification was made that the Stewardship Fund is one fund for all IKC properties. There is not a separate fund for each property. Dunlap said that we have funded the Stewardship Fund appropriately for all of our properties except the Wayne property which is \$2,500 short and the Robinson Ladder property. The motion on the floor will take care of two thirds of the amount owed to the Stewardship Fund for the Robinson Ladder property. Sollman said that he was glad that it was brought up that the IKC won't be around forever and that we are trying to plan for the future. He asked how the Stewardship Fund will be divided upon dissolution of the IKC. Dunlap said that there is no written plan for how the fund would be distributed. Sollman said that if we're really serious about taking care of our property into the future, we should have a written plan for handling the Stewardship Fund but he admitted that he doesn't know how to go about doing it. There was a short discussion but no action was taken.

Vernier returned our attention to the motion on the floor and called for a vote. The motion passed 14-0-0.

Dunlap moved that the amount of \$2,500 be transferred from the IKC's General Fund to the Stewardship Fund towards the Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve 10% contribution. Cesnik seconded the motion. There was a short discussion. The motion passed 13-0-1. It was noted that this completes the Robinson Ladder contribution to the Stewardship Fund. The total amount transferred was \$7,500. We still "owe" \$2,500 on the Wayne Property contribution.

John Benton, Robinson Ladder Property Manager was not present to report on restoration activities. Vernier reported that nothing is happening other than vegetation is greening up. Benton has been gathering information needed by the surveyor. There have been problems finding someone to do the controlled burn because there had been a burning ban in Crawford County. The ban has more than likely been lifted and if we had someone to do the burn it could probably proceed. Winner said that he got somewhat involved because it seemed no one was quite sure what needed to be done. He said that he asked at Fire Headquarters about a controlled burn and they said that was something they could do. They would come with fire engines, people, and equipment and do the whole burn for free but someone would have to come up with a burn plan and take charge of the operation. Winner said that Mark Bennett would probably be the one to come up with the plan and take charge. Vernier said he didn't think that Bennett was qualified to be in charge of the burn. Winner said that Bennett had written burn plans before and the way it works is that he writes the burn plan, Fire Headquarters approves it, and then they come out and do the burn.

A problem that Winner pointed out is that we apparently need a variance from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management before we can burn. He said that Bennett didn't think we needed one but Winner disagrees. The variance must be applied for 60 days in advance of the proposed burn date although he was told that they usually come back in about 15 days. There are also conflicting ideas about whether the vegetation should be mowed before burning or burned without mowing. There are a lot of questions to be answered before we can proceed but at this point nothing will be done until fall except possibly filling out applications and writing plans. Other issues include the nature of fire breaks, the spraying of herbicide, and notification of neighbors.

Sollman asked to be reminded of the reason for all of the spraying, mowing, and burning. Vernier said that the goal is to get rid of the non-native fescue and to convert the plant community to what the biologists say was native to the area in historical times. The Nature Conservancy suggested that it would be good if the land could be converted back to a more natural state. Sollman asked if anyone knows what the bats want because we are supposed to be managing the property for the benefit of the bats. Vernier replied that we probably don't really know what the bats prefer but we've had input from various people saying that they thought that the

converted property would be at least as good for the bats if not better.

Dunlap said that another reason to convert the property is so we can enroll it in the Classified Forest and Classified Wildlands programs. We are currently paying almost \$500 a year in property taxes. Once we get the land converted and enrolled our taxes will drop to five dollars a year. Sollman said that he is not against continuing our present course of action but he wants to make sure that we don't lose sight of the main purpose of our purchase of the property and that is to manage it for the benefit of the bats. Vernier pointed out that no matter what we do with our fescue fields, there will still be plenty of open fields around our property. He also said that perhaps Dr. Lewis may be able to give us an idea of what the bats prefer in the area surrounding the cave.

Vernier said that he will be getting with John Benton and Mark Bennett and together they'll decide if we do some more mowing or possibly spraying or if we just wait until fall to do something. If we intend to mow, we'll need a volunteer with a tractor or we will have to hire someone to do it. The last time it was mowed by a nearby farmer and it cost us \$300. We should have a better idea of our course of action by the June IKC meeting and we may have to allocate some funding at that time.

Under Earth Day

Dunlap said that Under Earth Day will be April 22 at the Robinson Ladder property from noon until 4:00 PM. Work to be done includes removal of an old tree stand, cutting wild grapevines, and repairing the road that goes to the upper field. Vernier asked if we should discourage people from driving up the hill. Someone said that it's probably water more than vehicles that is doing most of the damage to the road but it would be good if people refrained from driving up the hill when the road is wet. Vernier thought that we might want to make the parking area at the bottom of the hill better defined so that visitors will use it and walk up the hill to the cave. Sollman said that he can bring a tractor for road work if needed. It was pointed out that the cave will still be closed to visitation on Under Earth Day.

Indiana Cave Symposium

The Indiana Cave Symposium will be April 22 at Milltown. The pitch-in supper will be at 5:00 PM and the presentations will start at 7:00 PM. Dunlap moved that the IKC approve the expenditure of up to \$50 towards 50% of the expenses of the 2006 Indiana Cave Symposium. Haun seconded and the motion passed 14-0-0.

Education and Outreach Report

Lindberg reported that the IKC got some good exposure in the March 2006 *NSS News* special Conservation Issue. The photo on the front cover was taken in Buddha Cave, the back cover was the IKC Karst Poster which won a Merit Award at the 2005 NSS Convention. There were also two articles in the issue concerning the IKC, the 2005 Education

and Outreach report for the IKC written by Kriste Lindberg and an article about the Robinson Ladder property written by John Benton.

Another new poster, designed by Kriste Lindberg, promotes the cave biology video and appears on the back cover of the March 2006 *IKC Update*.

Lindberg said that she and Cindy Basile of the Hoosier National Forest had a meeting recently with the people at the Natural Resources Education Center to discuss ways to get the cave biology video worked into state programs such as Project Wet and Project Wild. She will be doing a presentation at the Indiana Cave Symposium and at the 2006 NSS Convention. The Bloomington *Herald-Times* is still promoting Indiana Bat conservation programs. Dick and Sue Vernier will be hosting the IKC booth on Earth Day at O'Bannon Woods. Don Ingle may also be helping.

Nothing has been done yet to update the information in the kiosk at the Buddha property. Lindberg thanked Bob Vandeventer and George Cesnik for helping her with Education and Outreach projects.

Wayne Cave Preserve

Dunlap suggested June 10 or 17 to work on the driveway. We probably want to schedule it for the same date as the June IKC meeting, the date of which will be decided later.

Buddha Cave Preserve

Cesnik reported that the tree order has been confirmed. Planting will take place on April 29 starting at 10:00 AM. Dunlap said if we get about a half dozen people it should go fast. Bring spades and gloves.

Sullivan Cave Preserve

Dunlap said that a workday is scheduled for April 8 beginning at noon. One hundred trees are to be planted, mostly to replace trees that have died. He has already flagged the trees that need to be replaced so it's just a matter of sticking a new tree wherever there's a blue flag. Dunlap said that he may not be able to make it that day so he was seeking someone to take charge for the workday. Vandeventer volunteered to take charge and see that the trees get planted.

The revised management plan for the Sullivan property has been sent to the Board. Dunlap said that he incorporated all the changes that were proposed at the last meeting, mostly minor changes in wording. The one issue that we couldn't resolve at the last meeting because Vandeventer wasn't present was the subject of camping. The current situation requires a reservation to camp on the Sullivan property. Sollman felt that a more open policy could be implemented. He thought that a privilege of IKC membership should be camping allowed on a first come, first served basis. During the discussion at the last meeting some thought that an open policy may be OK for other IKC properties, but the popularity and limited space at Sullivan necessitates a

more restrictive policy. Often groups are traveling long distances and don't arrive until the early morning hours and they need to know that they'll be able to have a place to park and set up camp. Vandeventer, who coordinates almost all camping and caving activities at Sullivan, said that conflicts can and do occur though not very often.

Dunlap said that in the revised management plan he left the camping requirements the same as they always were but he has provided alternative language that, if adopted, would allow open first come, first served camping to IKC members on Sunday night through Thursday night. Friday and Saturday nights would still require reservations. Winner asked about the requirements for camping at other IKC property such as the Wayne Cave Preserve and Robinson Ladder. Dunlap said that the language in both of those plans require permission in advance to camp. He said that he thinks we ought to look into revising those plans sometime. Winner said that he likes the alternative language and if we're thinking of relaxing the camping requirements at Wayne and Robinson Ladder that there's nothing wrong with open camping at Sullivan during the week. He doesn't think it would be too confusing.

Haun said that he thinks it should be either open all the time or require reservations all the time, not have different rules for different days of the week. He said that he is in favor of removing restrictions on the other properties.

Dunlap moved to revise the Sullivan Cave Management Plan as presented to the Board, using the primary language for camping arrangements, that is, permission must be obtained to camp at the Sullivan property at all times. The motion was seconded by Ingle.

Sollman said that after listening to Vandeventer's concerns, he is now in favor of keeping the camping policy as is. Tozer said we should come up with a way to enlarge the camping area. Dunlap said that he's looking into it. Vandeventer said that he's not sure that we can alleviate all problems at Sullivan. Parking remains a problem and even with the present restrictions, overcrowding occurs. Sollman said that it sounds like we're trending towards more open access but we can't due to lack of room. Vernier noted that we have a lot of acreage but only a very small portion is suitable for camping and parking. Vandeventer said that no matter what we do, conflicts are bound to happen. Dunlap said that there is still a parking area on the side of the highway for day trippers visiting the cave. Vernier said that we're doing the best we can for the situation that we've got and then called for a vote. The motion passed 14-0-0.

Bat Conservation International Project

Dunlap said that he has been in contact with Kat Kennedy who has been running the project in Kentucky. He provided her with locations of caves that she wanted to visit. They are supposed to be in the area the last two weeks of April. Vernier said that

we have several volunteers ready to help. Dunlap said that as far as he knows, none of the volunteers have been contacted.

Beck's Mill

Tom Rea reported that he did not attend the meeting of the group attempting the preserve and restore Beck's Mill. He has no further information and he will not have time to get involved with the project. Vernier asked if anyone is interested in making contact with the Beck's Mill group. Ingle said that he would try to get involved.

Hoosier National Forest Land Sale

Vernier reported that apparently the National Forests, not just the HNF but nationwide, are being pressured by the administration to sell off property. Allegedly these properties are isolated, surplus, unusable, unrelated to their purpose or just difficult to manage. The HNF is involved with this. About 800 acres are up for consideration for being sold. He has talked to people within the HNF and he's been told that they know nothing and that the lands involved have not been evaluated by any resource specialist to determine if any rare or endangered species are present or any other type of value. It's not clear who picked the tracts to be sold. He said that he has identified some of the tracts and the majority do not appear to be in the karst region although there are some that are in Crawford county a little north and west of Marengo and could be in a karst area. Sue Vernier passed around copies of an Audubon Action Alert which outlined the plan and listed a few examples of parcels in several states that would be sold if the plan goes forward. According to the alert, Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management land in thirty five states would be affected and it appears that much of this property is not isolated or unusable but very desirable. Sue is attempting to get more information from Senator Lugar's office and she urged IKC members to contact their representatives, express your concerns, and ask what is going on. The USDA is asking for public comment by March 30 and she intends to respond on behalf of the Evansville Audubon Society and Dick will respond on behalf of the IKC.

Dunlap said that currently the isolated parcels owned by the HNF are utilized in exchanges for more desirable property because there is no money available to the HNF to buy property. This proposal would remove those isolated HNF tracts from the exchange pool thus leaving the HNF with nothing to trade. Instead of the isolated tracts benefiting the HNF, the money gained from the sale will end up in the federal pool of money from land sales all across the nation.

Sollman asked that any comments sent under the IKC letterhead be restricted to comments about property in Indiana. Vernier agreed.

HNF Cave Registers

Vernier said that several IKC members have been working with the HNF developing cave management plans. Some of the old plans included a cave

register program, developed by the NSS, that involved filling out a survey form consisting of several pages by each person visiting the cave. The program got written into the new management plans for some HNF caves and now we're getting inquiries about it from the HNF as to whether we want to continue the program. We told the HNF that it depends on if they think that any information they got from the survey was of any use to the HNF. Vernier said that his feeling is that the NSS isn't pushing it, the IKC and the Indiana Cave Survey have no use for the information either so he is asking if anyone has any thoughts on the subject before we make a recommendation to the HNF that we don't do it. Tom Rea had a thought. He suggested not doing it, so that will be our recommendation to the HNF.

RBNC/Buckner Cave

Patty Cummings was not present to give a report. Vernier said that she would like the IKC to get involved with the Richard Blenz Nature Conservancy. He thinks we should but how and to what degree needs to be discussed. Tozer said that IKC members should try to support the RBNC individually, he doesn't think that we need a committee. Winner agreed that we should get involved as individuals and respond as we can to their projects. Sollman thought that the IKC could join the RBNC as an institutional member.

Sergesketter moved that the IKC join the Richard Blenz Nature Conservancy as an institutional member for \$25.00. Vandeventer seconded and the motion passed 12-0-2.

Items From The Floor

Sollman reported that his son Robert is getting his Eagle Scout award on Sunday, March 19, and that everyone is invited to the ceremony.

Dunlap said that the Near Normal Grotto, (Illinois), is requesting a grotto liaison relationship with the IKC. Their application has been received and it is complete and in order. Vandeventer spoke in favor of the group. Haun moved to accept the Near Nor-

mal Grotto into the Grotto Liaison program, seconded by Vandeventer. The motion passed 14-0-0.

Tozer reported that the International Congress of Speleology is being held in Texas in July, 2009. He wanted to know if there is any interest in putting on a caving camp in Indiana either before or after the event. This would be intended primarily for foreign cavers who want to visit various caving areas around the country before and after the congress. What form the camp would take would be up to the group hosting it. It could be a weekend or a couple of days during the week, but it will take commitment and if the support isn't there, we won't do it. Ingle thought it would be a good idea. Haun thought we should try to coordinate with Kentucky because a lot of visitors will want to take in some of the bigger and well known caves. Tozer thought that Kentucky cavers will probably host their own events. Sollman thought that Wyandotte would hold a lot of interest for European cavers. Someone asked how many people would attend the congress. Tom Rea said that there could be 2,000 people at the congress but before and after they will be spread all over the country. There may only be a few who would show up in Indiana. He has had experience with these events and he reminded us that these will be foreign people who don't know their way around. They'll expect a guidebook, to be told where they are going to stay, what they are going to eat, transportation and cave descriptions. Vernier said that the IKC doesn't necessarily have to get any more involved than to make our caves available and maybe provide guides. This may be a project that a grotto might want to take on. The IKC in general supports the idea but no action was taken.

The next meeting will be on June 17, 2006, in room 143 of the Geology Building on the campus of Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. The meeting will begin at 6:00 PM EDT.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:23 PM

Respectfully submitted, Bob Sergesketter, Secretary

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

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

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

\$ _____ donation to the general IKC fund.

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

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

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

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

PHONE # _____

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

