

IKC UPDATE

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INDIANA KARST CONSERVANCY, INC

PO Box 2401, Indianapolis, IN 46206-2401

ikc.caves.org

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: Typical passage downstream from the IKC entrance in Upper Twin Cave.
Photo by Dave Everton (February 2012).



IKC QUARTERLY MEETING REMINDER
SATURDAY, June 9th, 2:00 PM EDT
BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA
WAYNE CAVE PRESERVE*

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 caves 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: All things about the Shawnee Karst Preserve (stewardship activities, fund-raising status, grants); Upcoming workdays at our other preserves; Indiana Cave Symposium review; White-nose Syndrome update; Financial reports; Land acquisition activities; and more....

Directions to the Wayne Cave Preserve: From the intersection of SR37 and SR 45 in Bloomington, take SR 45 west 1.4 miles to Airport Road. Turn west (right) on Airport Road and continue past the airport to Garrison Chapel Road (approximately 2.7 miles from SR 45). Turn south (left) on Garrison Chapel Road for about 1/4 mile to Gardner Road. Turn west (right) on Gardner Road for approximately 4/10 mile and look for a driveway on the left (marked 8363 on the fence). If the gate is open, proceed up the driveway to the parking area. GPS Lat 39° 07' 57" Long 86° 38' 59".

***Note:** In case of inclement weather (or the forecast of a likely chance of rain), the meeting will be held at 2 PM in Room **126** at the IU Geology Building at 1001 E 10th St in Bloomington. If in doubt, call Jerry Lewis at (812) 786-1744 the morning of the meeting.

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

June 9 – IKC Quarterly meeting (see above)

June 9 – Wayne Workday (see page 7)

June ?? – Weed Control Around Trees at Buddha Karst Preserve

Sept ?? – IKC Quarterly Board Meeting (date & location to be determined)

For more information on the Indiana Karst Conservancy, visit our website at ikc.caves.org or write to our PO box. Membership to the IKC is open to anyone or any organization interested in supporting cave and karst conservation. Annual dues are \$15. Please see inside the back cover for a membership application form or to make a much-appreciated donation. Donations can also be made by credit card using the donation button located on our website's home page.

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...

Establishing the IKC’s new Shawnee Karst Preserve (SKP) has already required a great deal of thought, planning and effort. One of the many things that had to be considered was the Management Plan for the new preserve, and within that document, one facet that was discussed was minimum age requirement for persons wanting to go in the cave. As my article later in this *IKC Update* tells (see page 7), a trip into the IKC entrance of Upper Twin Cave is definitely not the same level of difficulty as a trip to the Mountain Room in Sullivan Cave. Those discussions aside, I wanted to *ramble* a little about the merits of younger cavers.

By the time I had graduated from high school in 1971, I believe I had been to most of the tourist caves in Indiana, as well as some in several national parks: Mammoth Cave (Kentucky), Carlsbad Caverns (New Mexico), and Wind Cave (South Dakota). There were others, the names of which have faded since then, that we visited on family vacations. Then in the fall of 1971 I became a “caver”, wading into my first waist deep 56-degree water on a Southern Illinois University grotto trip into Mystery Cave in eastern Mis-

souri. The rest, 41 years later, is a history that continues to unfold.

I started taking my twin sons, now 28, to wild caves before they entered elementary school. And I definitely still remember carrying Geoffrey, now 17, through Wyandotte Cave at age 2. Kids learn what their parents teach them, and this is part of what we have taught ours: an appreciation of caves and cave animals that many people hardly know exist.

Anyone who doubts what a teenager can accomplish should read Gary Roberson’s book on the exploration of Binkley Cave. I was caving with Rand Heazlit in Binkley last week and he was telling me at age 15 he was already crawling around under the sinkhole plain. So it is with some sense of *déjà vu* that Rand and I have been exploring under the same sinkholes with Seth Gower, 15, as the underworld opens in front of him.

Turning on to caving is great in itself, but my interest lies in the possibilities for cultivating deeper interest and appreciation that manifest as something that makes a more lasting contribution to cave and karst conservation. The first step is education. Learning and putting into use



photos Jerry & Salisa Lewis

the adage “Do no harm” is a vast improvement over using the nearest hole as a trash dump. That moves the balance from the negative column to the middle, but let’s not stop there. If you were at the IKC’s work day at the SKP a few weeks ago you would have seen Geoff (16) and friends Jared (16), Seth (15), Anna (18) and Alice (18) spending the day working, hard, with other IKC members.

In one day we cut and hauled away dozens of invasive cedars and poplars that had invaded a karst glade, and thanks to everyone’s efforts, some day we will have saved another little piece of Indiana’s vanishing natural heritage.

Moral? Perhaps “Teach your children well.... and feed them on your dreams”.

Jerry Lewis

NEWS BRIEFS..

- ❑ The IKC annual elections on March 17th saw two changes. Dr Jerry Lewis was re-elected President, Kevin Smith was elected Secretary, and Keith Dunlap was re-elected Treasurer. Christopher Dick was newly elected as a Director, and Dave Haun, Karen Silvers, Tom Sollman were re-elected as Directors. We wish to thank retiring Board Members James Adams and Bruce Silvers for their many years of service.
- ❑ If you haven’t done so already, we hope you will consider making a donation to the IKC’s Shawnee Karst Preserve acquisition fund. We still need around \$15,000 to fully fund the initial purchase and we are committing an additional \$6-7,000 in near-term investments (survey, driveway hardening, driveway gate, erosion control). In the last few months, we have received a \$5,000 grant from the NSS and have applied for a similar grant from the National Speleological Foundation. We have also completed all the paperwork needed to receive the partnership grant from The Nature Conservancy. See page 8 for the full list of contributors.
- ❑ Between 2002 and 2010, the IKC planted more than 12,000 hardwood trees at our Buddha Karst Preserve. To protect our investment, the seedlings need weed and grass management (i.e., spot treatment with herbicide) for the first few years, and periodically as they get larger. From 2002 to 2009, the planting schedule was two to three acres per year and the manual weed treatments were manageable with just a few volunteers. In 2010, we received a USFWS wildlife habitat improvement grant to plant the remaining twelve acres and also contract out the first year’s weed treatment. Last year, we applied for and received an EQIP grant that allowed us to contract out weed treatment on nine acres, while we manually treated another six acres (treating all trees planted in 2009 and 2010). This year we still have some EQIP funding, but it was decided we would attempt to manually treat the nine acres that was mechanically sprayed by the contractor last year. With the early spring, we (George Cesnik and Keith Dunlap) got a jump on the work and have already treated about three acres. We hope to recruit more volunteers and get over the remaining six acres in the next six to eight weeks. The work does not require a lot of skill, but you are hauling around a backpack with four gallons of water. The reward is knowing that twenty to thirty years from now you will have a forest. Also, the IKC will be reimbursed \$55/acre for the trees that we treat (that figures out to about \$15/hr). If you are interested in volunteering, contact Keith Dunlap (keith.dunlap@juno.com).
- ❑ On April 12th, Jerry Lewis and Keith Dunlap represented the IKC at the Indiana Land Protection Alliance meeting, an umbrella group for the twenty-plus land trusts and numerous conservation partners in Indiana. While we have not been overly active in the ILPA, this meeting had several topics of interest that could be beneficial to the IKC. Most noteworthy was a presentation by Nick Heinzelman on the newly created Bicentennial Nature Trust (BNT). This trust is focused on providing funding for conservation land acquisition between now and 2016. The BNT is similar to the Indiana Heritage Trust, but has some difference selection criteria (it uses a scoring system) and encourages local community support. The BNT can provide up to 50% project funding with a maximum of \$300,000 per project. The trust was initially funded with \$20 million from the State which when matched, is expected to eventually protect up to 20,000 acres.
- ❑ The IKC has gained seven new member in the last quarter. Welcome Ben Bailey (517), Gerry Woltering (518), Jesse Houser (519), Dayton Boyd (520), Daniel Hanes (521), Danyelee Cottrell (522), and Ari Doucette (523). The IKC membership currently stands at 192.

ROBINSON LADDER CAVE'S "GRAND RE-OPENING" TRIP

by Carla Striegel-Winner

The IKC Executive Board in March voted to re-open Robinson Ladder Cave on May 1st after a three-year hiatus due to the White-nose Syndrome (WNS) closure. As an Indiana Bat hibernacula, it was the only IKC-owned cave to be closed. Re-opening was bittersweet; an acceptance that WNS was in Indiana... and the cave... anyway.

My husband, Jamie, and I are both involved with the Harrison-Crawford Grotto (HCG). Jamie thought it would be nice to lead the "Grand Re-Opening Trip" during HCG's Hogfest, held annually on the first weekend of May in southeastern Orange County; only a hop, skip and a jump to the Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve (RLCP) in north-eastern Crawford County. I thought it would be fun to rig a ladder for the trip – both to allow non-vertical cavers to go, and as a tribute to the cave's name (if I ever suggest this again, remind me how easy it is to rappel less than 20 feet.)

It must have been a good idea because practically everyone attending Hogfest decided to tag along (alright so it was *very* low turnout and this was the *only* led trip offered... but still...). Amazingly, the twelve of us left Hogfest Headquarters only a few minutes after the prescribed time and headed off to RLCP. Jamie and I had a borrowed aluminum extension ladder in tow, and were planning on lowering that down the first drop and also using another amazingly heavy wooden contraption stored in the barn that we had been told was a ladder for the climb up into the main passage. Jamie stressed all morning that we should have come early and rigged the ladder first. *Yeah, perhaps that would have been good.*

We had a couple of new cavers in the group, and I'm pretty sure they got a great impression of HCG and they *will* be back... *Right!* First off was the group discussion on how to tie a Bolin. Once we finally got a rappel-quality rope rigged, Jamie got on a safety, had the ladder handed to him and headed down

to the drop. As soon as the ladder was lowered, it promptly fell into two pieces, leaving one end dangling on the rope while the other clattered to the cave floor. Brian Welp to the rescue. Our buddy Brian had actually brought his vertical gear and offered (OK, was told) to run down to the car and get it so he could put the ladder back together and set it up for us. Brian quickly descended the sixteen-foot drop. And then things got slow again. There was quite a bit of metallic clanging and some mumbling about needing to be smarter than the ladder (but no cussing, because this was Brian Welp, after all). Now, the folks from Kentucky and the CIG and the new cavers just trying out the HCG for the first time were all up top, and if I was them, I'da been getting mighty nervous, wondering what I'd gotten myself into.

Welp finally got the thing together and we got in the cave about two hours after arriving on site. Oh, I can't forget to mention the Titanic of a six-foot "ladder" that we had brought from the RLCP barn that also needed lowered. The offhand comment was made that it was obviously fabricated by a biologist and not an engineer (we knew this because a certain family actually signed their names to the project). It did the job though, and was perfect for the short climb up to the passage.

Jamie ended up in the tail end being a model for the camera freaks in the group, so I was the only one that had been in the cave before. Now, if I think I am facilitating a trip, I tend to over-pre-

Continued on page 21...



photo David Black

THE GREAT ANNIVERSARY CAVE TRIP: A TRIP INTO UPPER TWIN CAVE

by Jerry Lewis

Over the weekend of May 11th, Salisa and I stayed at the Spring Mill Inn to celebrate our eighth wedding anniversary (we were married in the park in 2004). One of the highlights of our stay was a trip into Upper Twin Cave through the IKC-owned entrance. Twin Cave is not just your proverbial “walk in the park” and we wanted to tell a little about what to expect in traversing it.

We first scoped out the situation at the Upper Twin “boat dock” entrance in Spring Mill State Park to see how high the water was. The pipe in the dam at the karst window between Upper and Lower Twin (thus the name Twin Cave) was open and the water was not impounded into the entrance of Upper Twin Cave. This meant that the water level in the downstream end of the cave should be a couple feet lower than what would be there when the park was running its boat tours.

Proceeding to the IKC property, we both put on full 5 mil wetsuits and descended the short climb-down at the bottom the large sinkhole containing the IKC entrance. From there we looked around the standing height entrance room, then headed down the breakdown slope leading to the cave stream. We entered the water and headed downstream. Reportedly upstream is a more sporting trip and we decided to go the wimp-way this first time. We did a short section of hands-and-knees over a gravel

bar to the first pool, where we saw the first three cavefish (*Amblyopsis spelaea*). We decided to start counting the fish as we headed onward.

A few hundred feet downstream from the entrance is a complex area where the stream passage intersects a large, mostly sediment-filled, upper level. A room with a large slab of breakdown in the middle of the passage occurs at the intersection of an infeeding stream passage. We went around



photo Dave Everton

the breakdown block and saw several more cavefish. Beyond that the stream passage merges with an upper level to form a large room with a twenty-eight foot ceiling height. Downstream a mile or so, a similar upper level paleo-passage occurs just inside the entrance of Donaldson Cave, creating the impressive entrance room. There must be a lot of this filled upper level out there winding un-

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WAYNE CAVE PRESERVE WORKDAY – JUNE 9th

Prior to the IKC Quarterly meeting on the same day, we plan to tackle several stewardship projects at the Wayne Cave Preserve. This will include trail maintenance to the cave entrance, mowing the perimeter of the clearing for camping, invasive control especially autumn olive removal, grass/weed control on the parking area, driveway gate adjustment, and trash pickup along Gardner Road. We plan to start around 10 AM and be finish before having to break for the meeting. See page 3 for directions to the property.

der the sinkhole plain, the predecessor of today's trunk stream passage.

Continuing down the passage the cave was generally walking height with a few areas where we had to scramble on hands-and-knees in passage about four feet high. The cave followed a pattern of riffles followed by deeper pools. In most of the pools we were able to touch the bottom, but in a few it was necessary to just float with the current for a distance to shallower water. We continued to count the cavefish and there were also many cave crayfish as well.

One of the things we were watching was the ceiling height above the water. We entered the cave under a clear blue sky with no chance of rain forecast. One of the aspects of managing this cave is knowing how it responds to rain. Dave Everton had told me that when he entered the cave last winter to take photos, he judged that the water was up just a bit, and reported that the current made the trip back upstream somewhat of an issue. The lowest ceiling that we noticed was in an area where the passage

constricted to only a few feet wide and we could not touch the bottom. There was debris on the ceiling. As we swam through this constriction the ceiling came down to about 2 1/2 feet above the water. This was spacious on our trip, but would be pretty exciting if the water were higher and faster.

As we progressed we came upon a four-foot high side passage on the right wall that we recalled leads back to another entrance, followed by a larger side passage just a couple hundred feet further downstream. This also told us that we were nearing the park boundary. We started to encounter mud on the stream bottom, a sign that the part of the cave degraded by the impoundment for the boat tour had been reached. Our casual count noted 97 cavefish on the trip between our entrance and the park boundary.

Salisa and I had several conclusions: (1) this is a *great* cave, (2) it has serious water – we considered a wetsuit and flotation device (if your wetsuit isn't enough) a necessity, (3) this is not the place to be if it might rain.

SHAWNEE KARST PRESERVE GRANTS / DONATIONS			
\$10,000 or more			
The Nature Conservancy*			
\$5,000 to \$9,999			
Richard Blenz*			
Keith Dunlap			
National Speleological Society*			
\$1,000 to \$4,999			
Bruce Bowman George Brutchan Andrew & Alison DuBois		Tom Sollman Bruce Trotter In Memory of Paul Barker	
\$250 to \$999			
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\$5 to \$49			
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Project goal: \$102,600			
Raised/Pledged to date: \$88,363			
Percent of goal: 86.1%			
May 26, 2012			

Indiana's Lost River and its cave system to get federal protection.

by Carrie Ritchie

A mysterious river that dodges in and out of Indiana's second-largest cave system is getting federal protection.

The federal government announced this week that it will buy 244 acres near French Lick that include part of the Lost River and its cave system. The government is buying about 20,000 acres of natural areas from North Carolina to Oregon.

The Lost River and its cave system are in the Hoosier National Forest in Southern Indiana and are home to several rare species of cavefish and insects, including a few that have not been found anywhere else. It's a wild and sometimes dangerous area that some describe as a natural treasure.

"The Lost River cave system is one of the most interesting geological sites in all of Indiana," said Angela Hughes, government relations associate for the Nature Conservancy of Indiana.

US Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said Thursday that the purchases will protect clean water and fish and wildlife habitat, absorb private holdings within wilderness areas and support outdoor recreation spending that contributes \$14.5 billion annually to the nation's economy.

The government will buy the Lost River parcels from the Nature Conservancy for about \$546,000, Hughes said. The conservancy has owned the land for about 10 years, and the US Forest Service will take it over after the purchase is complete in a few months.

The area is expected to remain open to the public; representatives from the Forest Service couldn't be reached for comment Friday.

Hughes said it's important to pro-

tect the cave because "from a biological standpoint, [it's] really sensitive." Pollutants on the surface can seep into the cave and affect the wildlife within it, she said.

The cave also is one of Indiana's greatest geological gems, she said. The Binkley cave system in Harrison County is the state's largest.

Borden-based cave biologist Julian Lewis, who has explored the Lost River cave system a few dozen times, said it is unique not just for its size – it's more than 20 miles long – but also for the variety of creatures that live inside it.

"It's one of just a handful in the US that have that many cave animals present," he said. "It's on par with the major cave fauna sites of North America, like Mammoth Cave (in Kentucky)."

Lewis discovered a new type of beetle in a cave in the 1990s. The still-unnamed beetle is tiny and red and has no eyes, he said. It's on display at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh.

Blind cavefish, blind crayfish and blind crickets also live in the caves. Bats are rare because the caves can flood to the ceiling, he said.

That's why inexperienced cavers should stay out of them, too, he said.

The Lost River cave system is reputed to be dangerous, and some have died while exploring it because of the flooding.

"Even as wild cave systems go, it's a pretty wild one," Lewis said. "You're looking at deep water, tight places, lots of mud. It's a pretty inhospitable place, and it will flood to the ceiling in a heartbeat."

Reprinted from the April 7, 2012 issue of the *Indianapolis Star*.

We need more places like the Lost River

I commend The Star on its aptly named article, "Saving a state treasure," about Indiana's Lost River and intricate cave system. I am proud that The Nature Conservancy was able to partner with the Forest Service on this natural area over a decade ago. I want to add that this remarkable site would not have been formally protected without the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

The fund is the federal government's key vehicle for purchasing land for such iconic places as Grand Canyon National Park, but also helps local communities purchase small parks and trails. Some of Indiana's best-loved places, such as Eagle Creek Park in Indianapolis and Brown County State Park, are better protected today due to the fund.

I hope the April 7 article about the Lost River helps Hoosiers recognize that an investment in conservation is an investment in Indiana and our country, because clean water and natural lands are essential to our strength. One doesn't have to be an experienced caver to appreciate the Lost River, and it costs nothing to enjoy. Indiana needs more of these places, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund can help make that happen.

Mary McConnell
The Nature Conservancy

Reprinted from the April 12th issue of the *Indianapolis Star*.

THE HORNADAY INTERVENTION

by Salisa Lewis

Lately I've become a big fan of the TV show "The Big Bang Theory". Each episode has a clever title, frequently an "intervention" or "implementation". It's not clear initially why the episode was given that title, but somewhere near the midpoint of the show, the reason behind the title becomes clear. If you understand "Soft Kitty" and "Bazinga", you know what I mean. If you don't know what I mean, don't worry, the title will become clear about midway through this article.

This idea behind this article started while Jerry was writing the President's ramble. We were discussing the new Shawnee Karst Preserve (SKP) and how great it would be if someone wrote an article about all the things that have happened since its purchase. Many parts of the preserve have undergone physical changes, and Keith Dunlap and Jerry have completed an immense amount of paperwork behind-the-scenes. In a volunteer organization, it's easy to get so caught up in activity that we forget to acknowledge all the help we've received, and appreciate how far we've come in such a short time. Conversely, if you haven't been "in" on a project, it's very difficult to understand what all the fuss and commotion is about. In an effort to both acknowledge the amazing work the volunteers have done, *and* to keep those who haven't been able to volunteer abreast of the changes afoot, we're going to walk down the time line of the IKC's newest acquisition (which also contains the "IKC entrance" to Upper Twin Cave).

In November 2011, the property came to our attention via member Bruce Trotter, and Jerry and Keith visited the property and recommended to the Board that we pursue acquisition. Jerry solicited assistance from The Nature Conservancy and Keith worked with the broker for a price that better reflected the property's post-timbered value. Over the next six weeks, we had a grant commitment from TNC for half of the purchase price and an accepted purchase price that was lower than our offer price based on an independent appraisal. The IKC took possession of the property on January 13th.



Soon after, a "committee" was formed consisting of Jerry, Keith, Bruce Bowman, Everett Pulliam, and Kevin Smith. Minor and major project areas were identified, and then prioritized. The top three projects were establishing the correct boundary lines, installing a driveway gate, and improving/hardening the existing skidder trail into the interior of the property for improved access.

Workdays on the property began almost immediately. Jerry and Keith began clearing limbs from the driveway and filling in the worst parts of the ruts. The property marker crew looked long and diligently for the existing survey markers. Some of the corner pins could not be found and our usual surveyor, Jess Gwinn, had to be brought in to re-survey part of the north boundary. The survey marker crew then spent several hours on April 21st putting in visible posts to clearly delineate our boundaries.

On the same day, another crew was busy installing the driveway access gate. Headed by Tom Sollman, several volunteers dug holes, secured posts, and installed the twelve-foot gate. It's a *smooth-swinging* gate with a spiffy combination

lock and some intimidating support fencing on either side to minimize folks trying to go around it.

Simultaneous to these other two tasks, another crew, or perhaps mob would be more accurate, descended on the glade area to clear cedar and other unwanted saplings which were shading the native grasses and flowers. At one point, more than twenty people were in the glade, cutting, spraying, and hauling trees parts. In June, when the wildflowers begin blooming, botanist Mike Homoya has agreed to evaluate the plant community and give recommendations for preserving and/or improving our glade project.

Since we consider conservation a family affair, we decided our youngest son, Geoff (16), would *really* like to work on yet another Boy Scout project, the little known and even less popular Hornaday Silver Award (*Bazinga!*). The BSA website calls it "The Gold Medal of



Conservation". Basically, the proud recipient of such honor must complete *four* Eagle Scout-type projects, all relating to different areas of conservation. Luckily, the new IKC preserve holds many opportunities for Scouts to participate in conservation (Hint, hint... Scouts are an excellent source of free labor and nearly endless enthusiasm for horrible tasks). The first project consisted of restoring the breached dam on a former wildlife pond. Many, many buckets of dirt, rock, and clay hauled by dubiously enthusiastic teens created a partially intact dam with an overflow pipe. Further clearing of the area will allow a tractor to access the area and complete the filling of breach. It may not look like much, but it required over 100 hours of labor to put in the pipe and fill the void.



Project Two began with the mobbing of the glade. Glades are a native plant community in the Midwest, and were once common on top of the limestone of the interior low plateau region in Southern Indiana, Illinois, and across Kentucky and Tennessee. Limestone glades are characterized by very thin soil and highly specialized plant communities. Several species of birds, such as the indigo bunting, prairie warbler, and Bachmann's Sparrow, prefer limestone glade and grassy barren habitats. The birds will never know, but a lot of labor from a lot of dedicated volunteers created what will become an oasis of sun and grasses in the midst of the forest.

Speaking of oasis, Jerry and Keith spent one day creating two camping sites. One has a fire ring, the other is still waiting for the anonymous riprap donor to have a slow traffic day (You'll have to ask Jerry for details). Neither campsite has been used yet, so for those of you who enjoy camping and would like to be the first, here's your chance!

True conservation never happens without some

destruction. I don't know if the willful destruction of the old deer blind, aka the giant camo-painted ag water tank, was therapeutic or just hard work, but it was taken down and hauled off the same day the driveway gate and property markers went up.

Since then, many hours have been spent clearing invasive exotic plants like honeysuckle, multiflora rose, and autumn olive, to improve the forested areas' health.

The property has also been visited by District Forester Janet Eger and enrolled in the Classified

Forest and Wildlands Program. This will not only provide us with the DNR's technical assistance and potential funding for forest improvements, but it also significantly lowers our property tax obligations (from \$350/year to \$5/year).

If you've been to the property, you've

seen the old log yard at the front which was mostly rutted bare ground and rock. It has now been regraded and reseeded with native warm-season grasses with funding allocated by the IKC board. It should significantly curb erosion near the front of the property and improve the water quality in the adjacent sinkhole pond.

So, now you know. The preserve will continue to be a work in progress, and many more hours of volunteer effort will be given.



Many, many thanks to all the volunteers so far. Participants include: Anna Barczynski, Alice Bompard, Keith Dunlap, Bill Greenwald, Seth Grower, Zachary Heil-Reynolds, Alex Lewis, Geoff Lewis, Jerry Lewis, Salisa Lewis, Tim McClain, Bill Morrow, Austen

Noyes, Ernie Payne, Jackie Payne, Everett Pulliam, Ralph Sawyer, Ray Sheldon, Bruce Silvers, Karen Silvers, Kevin Smith, Robert Sollman, Tom Sollman, Bruce Trotter, Aaron Valandra, Jerry Walker, Brian Welp, and Jamie Winner.

INDIANA CAVE SYMPOSIUM 2012 OVERVIEW

by Keith Dunlap

The Lawrence County Fairgrounds' Community Building was again selected for the 20th annual event, which was held this year on April 21. Indiana cavers were out and about earlier that day; many of them working at the nearby Shawnee Karst Preserve, while others were off caving, or just enjoying the wonderful spring weather. The Symposium was again co-hosted by the Indiana Karst Conservancy and Indiana Cave Survey, with each organization sharing the facilities rental and food costs, which included burgers, brats, pork country ribs, buns, condiments and soft drinks. Approximately 70 attendees helped out by bringing side dishes, desserts, chips, and the like to complete the cookout for the first part of the event.

The program part of the Symposium began around 7 PM. The following summarizes the presentations:

- **Shawnee Karst Preserve** – Jerry Lewis gave an introduction to the IKC's latest acquisition, the 50+ acre preserve just south of Spring Mill State Park that contains the upper entrance to Upper Twin Cave. In addition to the biological and geological significance of the cave, Jerry covered the many surface projects that are underway or planned for the future.
- **Binkley Cave Update** – It has been a very interesting and productive year for the Binkley exploration project as detailed by Dave Everton. Several significant connections were made, first Guy Stover Pit was connected to Binkley, then Binkley and Blowing Hole were connected, extending the complex to over 35 miles. This is project caving at it's finest.
- **White-nose Syndrome in Indiana** – Keith Dunlap presented information provided by Scott Johnson on where WNS has been found in Indiana, and various other projects that are underway to understand WNS and track its impact on our bats.
- **Cave Connect Newsletter** – Dave Haun (in absentia due to another com-

mitment) created a video, which was shown and discussed by Bill Greenwald. The Cave Connection project is an attempt to inform and educate Indiana's private cave landowners about caving matters, including the status of WNS, cave cleanups, and other pertinent information. There is an effort also to expand the CIG Christmas Card program to more of a statewide effort, and make information and past cards available on the Cave Connection website which is still in development. Bill also gave a bonus presentation on a bat house project the Central Indiana Grotto is working on with IUPUI.

- **Gas Monitoring in Caves Update** – Anmar Mirza gave an update to his gas monitoring project that was started in 2010. He provided multiple examples of O₂ and CO₂ concentrations in caves that were significantly different from the norm. The study will continue.
- **2011 Bioinventorying in Indiana** – Jerry Lewis give his annual update on his cave bioinventory activities. In 2011 he worked in HNF caves near Patoka, and in the Binkley complex, which is becoming "world class" for cave life.
- **Dukes Cave and other small surveys** – Chris Schotter covered a number of caves he has explored and surveyed in the Harrison-Crawford area. The most impressive being Dukes Cave which provided many rewards for their extensive digging efforts.

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photo Bruce Bowman

A Corydon cave jumps in size and national rank with passageway discovery — Passageway links Binkley, Blowing Hole caverns; system rises to 11th longest

by Grace Schneider

For decades, explorers crawling through the vast limestone caverns beneath Corydon, Indiana, hit dead ends when trying to connect two well-known caves.

But earlier this year, they had a breakthrough – finding a passageway linking Binkley Cave and Blowing Hole Cave, a spectacular uncharted section with tall cathedral-like caverns and an array of limestone formations.

The cool factor multiplied when the cavers with the Indiana Speleological Survey realized that by adding the seven-mile Blowing Hole Cave to Binkley, they'd unearthed a combined cavern that is now the 11th longest nationally, at nearly 35 miles.

That's big in caving circles, said Arthur Palmer, a retired hydrology professor at the State University of New York who explored Binkley in the 1960s with an Indiana University team.

"People all over are interested in what's happening at Binkley," Palmer said, because "it's kind of rare for a cave to undergo a big (growth) spurt like this, especially when it's been explored for so many years."

There are far bigger caves. Mammoth Cave near Cave City, Kentucky, is the world's longest at 390 miles, with Jewel Cave in Custer County, South Dakota, second at 157 miles. But Binkley's growth "goes beyond exciting to incredible," said Julian "Jerry" Lewis, a biologist from Borden, Indiana, who has worked inside the cave on groundwater and wildlife studies.

"They keep finding more and more and more" territory, Lewis said. "The potential for it to become more immense is growing by the day."

Harrison County is part of a large area of Indiana with karst terrain – meaning it contains deep sinkholes and underground caves and streams. The Hoosier region is similar to porous landscapes found in Kentucky's cave country and central Illinois.

Underlaid by limestone, the bedrock has been eaten away by water to form a honeycomb of sinkholes, caves, streams and springs.

As with Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, Indiana's caves are a big tourist attraction, drawing more than 80,000 visitors annually to places like Marengo Cave in Crawford County and Squire Boone Caverns in southern Harrison County.

But the Binkley and Blowing Hole caves are accessible only via private land, said Jim Hash, an Indiana conservation officer in Harrison County.

Since the late 1960s, a band of diehards has mapped and documented Binkley's passageways and large rooms, venturing into muddy, water-filled passages that make exploration very difficult. "Indiana is known for its mud. It's very wet and muddy," and caving involves a lot of difficult crawls, said Patricia Kambesis, an instructor of cave mapping and cartography at Western Kentucky University.

For example, in a March excursion in the Binkley area, cavers Rand Heazlitt, of Harrison County, and Indianapolis resident Tim McClain crawled through a tortuously small twisting tunnel for 250 feet, and then had to rappel 40 feet under a waterfall into a high-domed room.

Then they had to scale a 35-foot wall to reach another opening near the ceiling.

Over the last 18 months, cavers

from Corydon, Bloomington and other nearby areas made dozens of trips into Binkley to refine maps and search again for a Binkley-Blowing Hole connection. With each push into new territory, they posted their findings on a group website.

One clue emerged in September 2010, when cousins Tim Pride and Shane Myles, of Oakland City, spotted a tunnel, or lead, high inside a large room at Binkley that led toward Blowing Hole. The two erected a makeshift ladder – called a scaling pole – and climbed to the opening.

From there, they found a previously unexplored larger passageway with a stream running through it. After mapping it on return trips, they realized the water and air currents were flowing toward Blowing Hole.

In February, Heazlitt, McClain and Brad Barcom, also of Indianapolis, met one Saturday morning in Corydon with six others for a day-long operation. Packing air horns, white dye, smoke bombs, and radios, they sent two teams into separate ends of the caves while a third party stayed on the surface to track the progress.

Heazlitt's group inside Binkley traveled down a passageway with water flowing on the floor and hit a "breakdown," or a mound of stone and rock, that was blocking the way. They felt air flowing through the tunnel and, thinking they may be close to the other team, they dropped dye into the water.

Although they couldn't hear or see the other team, Heazlitt said, they saw colored smoke rise through rocks. Then they heard an air horn blast somewhere below them.

They dug into the rocky breakdown and moved rock until finally they

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ANNUAL CAVE PATRON / PROPERTY MANAGER REPORTS

Each year at the Annual Business Meeting, the Cave Patrons and Property Managers are asked to give a verbal summary and submit a written report describing the prior year's activities and incidents, and to make any future recommendations needing implementing. The following is a compilation of the reports for calendar year 2011:

Buddha Cave Patron Report (Jeff Cody)

This year there were ten permits issued for Buddha Cave. Forty-eight waivers were filled out for these trips. This is one fewer trip than 2010. All of the trips from 2011 went from May 1 on into November. No permits were issued in the early part of the year. One thing I find interesting was that in 2010 there were 7 trips that went in the winter compared to 0 in 2011. Maybe it was a better year for the hibernating bats. We had three trips that went in mid-August during Cave Capers with a total of 18 waivers forwarded to me. One noteworthy trip was made back in mid-June when Ken Redeker from Illinois led a small group in to the cave do some kind of documentary on OCD (<http://vimeo.com/25879553>). I went in the cave during the last weekend in October and found the cave and parking area and trail to the cave to be in good shape. I also stop by the property when down there by myself a few times during the year.

One suggestion I would like to make is if there were some way we could have everyone who fills out a waiver to write down the trip date and trip leader [*editor's note - we are implementing this suggestion as we revise our waivers*]. I ask this because I have found that after the end of the year, I sometimes get waivers sent to me not separated by trip. This sometimes makes it hard to get an accurate trip count. Also I know we changed the wording on the website asking those who a requesting permits to allow time for the process to take place via mail if necessary. I do not think the word is getting out as I still have several people call me from out of town a couple days before their trips.

Buddha Property Report (George Cesnik)

We had a number of on-property activities/workdays last year:

- May 7 - Keith Dunlap mowed the trail on the property.
- May 23 -Keith was at the Buddha Karst Pre-

serve this afternoon to meet with the contractor (Rob Haubry) who will be doing the weed treatment on 9 to 10 acres of the 12 acres planted in 2010. Weather permitting, he thought he would get to it this week. Keith also walked the trail and trimmed briars and branches sticking out.

- May 28 - The contractor (Rob Haubry) conducted weed treatment around 9 acres trees that were planted in 2010.
- June 3 - Marcella Larch, Keith Dunlap, and George Cesnik performed weed treatment around planted trees.
- June 11 - Everett Pulliam, Keith Dunlap, and George Cesnik continued with weed control by spraying glyphosate on the weeds around the planted trees.
- June 17 - Keith and George spent the day on the property finishing up weed treatment around the planted trees.
- August 9 - Keith mowed the trail in preparation for nearby Cave Capers.
- October 21 - Keith mowed the trail and he and Bruce Bowman did ICS entrance documentation on and near the property.
- November 4 - Keith and George performed honeysuckle spaying on the property.

No problems were observed on the property during the visits in 2011.

We do have the second year of EQIP funding to treat up to 16 acres of trees in 2012, so we will likely have the contractor re-treat what they did, and we will retreat what we did.

George visited the campsite owned by Rick Nichols about one half mile from the Buddha-Tunnelton Road intersection. Rick has invited IKC member to camp on the property with prior notice.

Sullivan Cave Patron Report (Anthony Owens)

This report is on Sullivan Cave's activity and visitation for 2011. The numbers significantly increased this year. I've also noticed a lot of people are still using out-dated waiver and there are still a lot of people not filling out the waiver properly.

"A day at Sullivan" was the big event of the year for me and I hope to do more this year as things start to get back to normal in my life.



Patron activities:

E-mail contacts: 321
 Phone contacts: 28
 Number of trips: 65
 Number of people: 626

Liaisons:

BIG	# of trips	39	# of people	293
SJVG	# of trips	3	# of people	55
CIG	# of trips	2	# of people	27
NNG	# of trips	9	# of people	80
EMG	# of trips	6	# of people	35
NIG	# of trips	?	# of people	??

Total: # of trips 124 # of people 1116

Sullivan Property Report (Keith Dunlap)

This was the IKC's 13th full year of ownership and we continue our long-term stewardship projects. The trees in the small field, planted in 2000, have grown impressively. Those in the larger ridge-top field planted in 2001 have a more mix pattern with some species doing very well and others just holding their own. In June and July, I spent five partial days performing grass/weed control around 100% of the trees (over 2000) in both fields. This was the first time in several years the south field had gotten much attention due to our increased stewardship efforts at the Buddha property. I also continued tree pruning/limbing in the southern field during the cold months and I'm about 80% complete. The pruning will improve the quality of the trees (e.g., removing multiple trunks) and increase their long-term market value, should future harvesting be considered. In December, the property had its second 5-year Classified Forest inspection with mostly positive findings (the District Forester did suggest we continue to focus on removing the grapevines).

The "camping" area was mowed several times, as was the area by the driveway out by the road. We do have a problem with Japanese stilt grass in the clearing area which is difficult to control without also impacting the good grass. I'm going to try and mow more often in 2012 to keep it from seeding (the plant is an annual).

The lane and parking areas are in good shape and no maintenance is anticipated for 2012.

Several members took advantage of the camping area and firewood over the past year, but overall use seemed down compared to a few years back. We are discouraging campers from bringing their own firewood to reduce Emerald Ash

Borer transportation. We did have several large trees blow down in 2011 and we had two firewood splitting sessions that fully replenished our stockpile in the red shed.

The porta-potty is still functioning and seemed to be used more than in the past. It was pumped in late December and we may have to do this more than once a year.

Locks are being serviced by Anthony Owens, as needed.

There were no major problems or concerns encountered during 2011.

On the adjacent property to the east, 250 trees were planted in April and the mobile home was removed in December. Some additional cleanup around the home site is needed and some earth grading is planned to restore the area. Overflow parking is available there and I may keep an area mowed for alternative camping. The property was also enrolled in Classified Forest with some Timber Stand Improvement planned. I also hope to plant more trees in 2012.

Wayne Cave Patron Report (Dave Everton)

How shall I declare my love to thee? By taking thee to Wayne Cave. How shall I show my hatred for thee? By taking thee to Wayne Cave. For many, this love-hate relationship is part of visiting Wayne Cave.

This year's records show 20 trips during calendar year 2011, representing two grottos through the liaison program, as well as other groups of cavers, some of which could be considered both liaison-arranged and patron-arranged trips. The breakout follows, not listed in any particular order:

Central Indiana Grotto: 1 trip, 2 cavers
 Evansville Metro Grotto: 1 trip, 4 cavers
 Patron-arranged: 19 trips, 75 cavers

Several cavers were gluttons for punishment and visited more than once; most everyone else visited once. There were a total of 91 waiver forms collected, but one trip of five persons didn't end up getting to visit the cave.

No problems were passed along to the Patron other than minor difficulties with the lock, which was not changed during the year. Since the Patron never seems to have difficulties with the lock when he checks it, determining when it should be replaced is difficult, if not nearly impossible. If he changed it every time someone reported having difficulty, it would get changed far too often.



Some users have not yet learned that some locks are like some women: they need extra care and very careful finessing! The Patron intends no offense to anyone by that comment.

Wayne Cave continues to be a source of enjoyment and pleasure for the average visitor, although many of them curse or otherwise loathe the moderately difficult, but nonetheless infamous crawlway. A huge thanks goes to the IKC for many years of past protection and restoration, as well as regular continued protection and property improvements. It should be noted for the record that WNS was reported in 2012, but not during the time period covered by this report.

.Wayne Property Report (Robert Sollman)

This will mark the IKC's ninth year of ownership of Wayne Cave.

The two Tulip trees in the hilltop clearing are growing well and seem to have made it through the drought. The hilltop at Wayne has otherwise not changed.

- Above ground activity has been limited to basic maintenance such as removal of downed trees as needed, mowing of campsite areas twice in the last year, and annual removal of trash along the road.
- IKC members and their guests continue to use the property for camping during cave trips as well as while in the area.
- There have not been any problems reported either with the use of the combination lock on the entrance gate or with the property in general.
- At this time, the information kiosk has still not been completed.

Robinson Ladder Property (John Benton)

2011 RLC Property activity:

- The normal (every two years) bat census for Robinson Ladder Cave (RLC) was canceled for January 2011. White Nose Syndrome (WNS) was detected in a few area caves in January 2011 such as Wyandotte and Endless Caves and a few other major hibernacula, and it was thought that a census in RLC in January 2011 would not yield any significant information.
- No organized spring workday was held at RLCP. There were no requests to visit the cave by recreational cavers in 2011. There were

also no requests to camp at the property.

- June 2011: Jamie Winner bush-hogged at RLCP; did not mow around the field edges due to possible mechanical problems.
- August 2011: Jamie and Carla Winner went to RLC; Jamie and Carla cut and removed a few trees and limbs, which had fallen across the road going up the hill. Jamie also mowed with his tractor around the field edges; camping, parking and road areas also mowed. Jamie noticed some Ailanthus (Tree of Heaven) roots sprouting along the field edges. Jamie to start work on variance needed for planned Fall Burn. The hinges on the access gate by Hwy 66 had worked loose. Jamie re-attached the bracket with an adjustable wrench and an adjustment by John Benton seemed to fix the problem.
- September 10, 2011: By prior notification, Jerry Lewis, Tom Sollman, and Keith Dunlap, entered Robinson Ladder Cave to service two temperature data loggers that had been deployed in the cave. Data was downloaded, batteries replaced, and relaunch/reinstall of the data loggers. The two data loggers have been in the cave since May 2009. The data shows that the two loggers indicate nearly the same temperatures; Dunlap theorized that the one (by the crack in entry entrance room) would show colder readings but it did not. The cave seems to warm slowly in the summer, indicating how good of a cold air trap the cave is. There is also a data logger outside the cave about 50 feet from the entrance. Tom and Jerry (the cavers, not the cartoon characters!) installed a new SpeLogger (per IKC Board directive) in the dome room on the left. The group also found a forgotten SpeLogger that had been installed by Dick Vernier in 9/2008, with a now expired battery. Proper WNS decon precautions were used and a cable ladder that had never previously been in a cave was employed for the drop.
- October 11, 2011: The Sullivan Indiana-based, burn crew, Wildlife Habitat Inc, conducts a controlled burn on the upper and lower fields. Assisting IKC members were Jamie and Carla Winner, Jerry Lewis, and John Benton. Due to the wet summer and fall, the burn was deemed minimally effective, only scorching some areas or not burning at all where there was a lot of green under-growth.



Future work needed:

- Continue spraying Ailanthus and autumn olive around field borders.
- Burn fields again in fall 2012? Discussion?
- Locate two metal pins at NW corner boundary of Campbell tract (one of former TNC)
- Minimize grapevines, mostly on former TNC tracts.
- Reopen cave after May 2012 to permit caving?
- Others work?

2011 Robinson ladder cave activity:

- Only 1 trip, September 2011, three people (info in above report).

NOTE: A Feb 2012 trip to RLC by Keith Dunlap, Andy King (USFWS) and Scott Johnson (IDNR) did confirm WNS on several luci and pip bats, but no Indiana bats showed signs of infection.

Suicide Patron Report (Ronnie Burns)

Please accept this 2011 annual report for visits to Suicide Cave in Washington County. Visitation was up from previous years, but might still be considered relatively light with seven trips consisting of 42 cavers visiting for the year. We had a work day at the cave this past year and a lot of the accumulated rubble in front of the gate was cleaned away with a large amount of the organic matter spread inside the entrance of the cave.

The gate itself is still doing well and should last for many more years. As usual, I replace the lock at least once a year. I have in my file signed waivers for all visitors. There have been no known injuries, lost cavers, or reportable mishaps.

Orangeville Rise Report (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 March 2011, July 2011, and November 2011. Every 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, aluminum cans, boards, and etc.

The fence built in 2003 on the western side of the property has collected more flood debris, but remains straight and structurally sound. One

of the lone fence posts at the southern end of the fence line has been damaged by a fallen tree. The concrete property markers installed in 2004 are still intact on the southeast corner and northwest corner of the property. The property marker on the east side of the property near the bridge over the creek that enters the channel to the rise has been washed away and has not been located at this time. The west bank of the Orangeville Rise streambed at the intersection of the Lost River streambed continues to slowly erode closer to the fence posts along the west property line.

Activities planned for 2012 include quarterly trash pickups, and cleaning further trash from a small ravine located on the west side of the property which continues to erode and uncover larger objects such as old bicycles, fencing, boards, posts, a basketball goal post and other items. The property manager would also like to schedule a cleanup activity on the property because a mailbox including a wooden post and concrete base was found in the rise at the edge of the rise pool during the March, 2012 trash pickup and assistance is required in removing it.

Shiloh Patron Report (James Adams)

The Indiana Karst Conservancy has continued, with the permission of the landowner, to permit up to six trips into Shiloh Cave for the general caving community per calendar year. Each trip is limited to 10 participants with three vehicles on the property. During 2011, only five of the allotted six trips were taken into the cave, totaling 32 cavers. No requests for visitation were denied.

During 2011, cave biologist Jerry Lewis began a bio-inventory of Shiloh Cave.

Lost River Cave Patron Report (Dave Tibbets)

The Lost River Cave System was entered fifteen times during 2011. Ten trips were by arrangement with the patron using entrances on The Nature Conservancy property. Five of those trips were into the Lost River entrance and five used the Pea Hole entrance.

On the HNF side of the road, four trips were made into the Elrod entrance and one into the Wesley Chapel Gulf entrance utilizing a Forest Service permit.

Seven cavers participated in these trips. The average group size was 2.73 people.

Maintenance: Locks were changed on both gates. Graffiti was discovered and mitigated in Elrod.

Survey: The connection between Lost River and Elrod Cave was found and surveyed, adding almost

Continued on page 21...

INDIANA KARST CONSERVANCY TREASURY REPORT

**Income/Expense Statement
From January 1, 2012 to March 31, 2012**

INCOME:

Dues Apportionment and Residuals	678.00	
Donations - General	625.00	
Donations - Land Acquisition Fund	15,285.00	
Interest	356.01	
	<u>356.01</u>	\$16,944.01

EXPENSES:

IKC Update (printing, production, mailing)	277.95	
Education / Outreach	81.97	
Stewardship	568.94	
Business (insurance, election mailing, fees, etc)	146.28	
Interest penalties (early CD redemption)	144.42	
Shawnee Karst Preserve Purchase	102,460.30	
Transfers to/from restricted funds/other adjustments	-86,998.66	
	<u>-86,998.66</u>	(\$16,681.20)

NET OPERATING EXCESS (DEFICIT) THIS PERIOD: \$262.81

**Balance Sheet
March 31, 2012**

ASSETS:

Cash in Checking / Saving Accounts / CDs	86,541.22	
External loans	-50,000.00	
Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve (73.48 acres)	162,000.00	
Shawnee Karst Preserve (50.31 acres)	103,000.00	
Wayne Cave Preserve (20.00 acres)	75,000.00	
Sullivan Cave Preserve (28.00 acres)	72,000.00	
Buddha Karst Nature Preserve (36.84 acres)	29,000.00	
Orangeville Rise Nature Preserve (3.01 acres)	7,000.00	
Indian Creek Conservation Easement (valued at \$1/acre)	13.16	
	<u>13.16</u>	<u>\$484,554.38</u>

FUNDS & OPERATING EXCESS:

Land Acquisition Restricted Fund	-45,952.13	
Deferred Dues Restricted Fund (186 members)	3,420.00	
Stewardship Endowment Restricted Fund	41,748.05	

Previous General Fund (total)	37,075.65	
Net Excess (Deficit) This Period	<u>262.81</u>	
Current General Fund (unrestricted)	37,338.46	
Current General Fund (committed)	7,065.00	
Real estate liquidity (basis value)	<u>448,000.00</u>	

Total Liabilities & Operating Excess \$484,554.38

IKC ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

Saturday, March 12, 2012 – Greenwood, IN

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jerry Lewis, President
 Keith Dunlap, Treasurer
 James Adams, Secretary
 Bruce Bowman
 Dave Haun
 Don Ingle
 Everett Pulliam
 Bob Sergesketter
 Bruce Silvers
 Karen Silvers (proxy by Kevin Smith)
 Tom Sollman
 Bob Vandeventer
 Richard Vernier
 Carla Winner
 Jamie Winner

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

The Annual Business Meeting was called to order at 10:09 AM at the Greenwood Public Library, Greenwood, Indiana, IKC President Lewis presiding. Kevin Smith was accepted as proxy for Karen Silvers.

Minutes of the December 2011 meeting were accepted as published in the March 2012 IKC Update.

E-mail Motions

On 1/17/2012, Dave Haun presented a motion to enroll the Shawnee Karst Preserve in the DNR Classified Forest and Wildlands Program. Bruce Bowman seconded on 1/17/2012. After additional discussion, the voting commenced on 1/18/2012. The voting was completed on 1/20/2012 with 15 in favor. Motion passed.

On 2/7/2012, Bruce Bowman presented a motion to accept the following slate of candidates (President Jerry Lewis; Secretary Kevin Smith; Treasurer Keith Dunlap; Directors Christopher Dick, Dave Haun, Bruce Silvers, Karen Silvers, Tom Sollman). The motion was seconded by Dave Haun on 2/7/2012 and was accepted by President Lewis. Twenty-four hours was allowed for discussion, additions, correction and the vote was called on 2/8/2012. On 2/9/2012, the motion was declared passed with 14 affirmative votes. Director Tom Sollman could not be reached by e-mail or phone.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Dunlap reported cash assets of \$80,138.07 plus land at \$448,000.00 for total assets of \$478,138.07. Funds included Land Acquisition, \$(52,527.13); Stewardship, \$41,748.05; Deferred Dues, \$3,832.50; General Fund, \$37,084.65.

The IKC has 186 members. Dues expire on March 31.

Elections

Tom Rea was appointed as Election Teller. Nominations were opened for the three officer positions. Lewis (President), Kevin Smith (Secretary) and Dunlap (Treasurer) were elected as officers. No additional nominations for Directors were made. Directors elected are Christopher Dick, Dave Haun, Karen Silvers, and Tom Sollman. New terms begin April 1. James Adams and Bruce Silvers will be retiring from the Board.

Shawnee Nature Preserve

Management Plan: The draft plan was previously posted on the IKC website for review. Dunlap moved to accept the Management Plan. Vernier seconded. The plan was approved 13-2-0.

Projected near-term expenses for the property include road hardening (\$3,500), boundary survey completion (\$1,120), driveway gate (\$200), and erosion control (\$1,200) for a total of \$6,100. Bowman moved to approve funds for expenses up to \$6,500. Seconded by Pulliam. Motion approved 15-0-0.

Sollman was volunteered to work on the driveway gate.

A Property Manager and Cave Patron are needed for this property. Lewis volunteered for the combined position. Sergesketter moved to accept Lewis as combined Property Manager/Cave Patron. Seconded by Ingle. Motion approved 14-0-1.

There was additional general discussion regarding the property.

Property Manager/Cave Patron Reports

The 2011 annual reports were presented to the Board as noted below. The full content of these reports will be published in the June *IKC Update*.

Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve

Dunlap reported on a visit to the Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve. In February, White Nose Syndrome (WNS) was noted in the bat population. He suggested that the IKC's shift regarding decontamination should change from pre to post visitation so that the disease is not spread to other caves.

Bowman moved to rescind all WNS related access restrictions on all IKC properties. Ingle seconded. Motion approved 15-0-0. Robinson Ladder Cave will still be closed September 1st to April 30th since it is an Indiana bat hibernacula.

Orangeville Rise

Dunlap reported on activities at the Orangeville Rise for Steve Lockwood.

Wayne Cave Preserve

WNS has been reported. The Property Manager and Cave Patron reports are available.

Indian Creek Conservation Easement

Lewis reported.

Bowman moved to offer a copy of Gary Robinson book on Binkley Cave to the easement landowners and fund the purchase of the book up to \$200. Seconded by Vernier. Motion approved: 15-0-0.

Buddha Cave Preserve

WNS was tested and confirmed in the cave. Jeff Cody reported on caving activities. Cody also suggested modifying the waivers to include the trip leader and the date of the trip. After discussion, Dunlap agreed to look into possible revisions (including the previous decontamination issue) and bring this for discussion at the June meeting.

Cody also noted some issues regarding rigging bolts in the cave.

Dunlap reported on property issues including the continuing tree maintenance activities.

Sullivan Cave Preserve

WNS has been reported in the cave. Dunlap reported for Anthony Owens. Caving activity has increased with 1,100 visitors.

The Port-A-Potty has been pumped.

Shiloh Cave

Adams reported on activities.

Suicide Cave

Lewis reported for Ronnie Burns.

Lost River Cave

Dunlap and Lewis reported for Dave Tibbets. Elrod Cave has been connected to Lost River Cave. The Nature Conservancy is pleased with the first year of our management and all trips into the cave have been survey trips.

Stewardship Activities

Buddha and Shawnee were previously discussed.

Land Acquisition Activities

Discussions continue with other partner organizations on one project and the IKC is always looking for new opportunities.

Education and Outreach Activities

Ingle reported that things are quiet, but he expects summer activities will be picking up. The next thing on the calendar is the Indiana Bat Festival in August.

Items From The Floor

Cody had some information regarding NSS Award nominations and urged everyone to nominate active Indiana cavers.

Vandeventer noted that our new Cave Patron for Sullivan, Anthony Owens, has been doing a great job.

Next Meeting

The next quarterly meeting was scheduled for June 9 in Bloomington beginning at 2:00 PM. The location is to be determined.

Meeting adjourned at 12:09 PM

Respectfully submitted, James Adams, IKC Secretary

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opened a small hole in the floor and found the Blowing Hole team.

With each one taking turns reaching through the hole and shaking hands, Heazlitt said, "We were just on top of the world."

And they are not finished exploring. "We think we have a chance to get as high as No. 6" in the national rank, with discoveries of new cavernous rooms, said Gary Roberson, a longtime caver who took part in

the February trip. Adding 10 miles would push Binkley into the No. 6 spot, held now by 45-mile Friars Hole in West Virginia.

The explorations have prompted some survey members to propose development of a new "show" cave that could offer the first public tours of Binkley. Roberson, a former co-owner of Marengo Cave, has approached town and Harrison officials about boring an entrance into Binkley from a 10-acre site

south of Corydon.

Still, Roberson said, the cavers are aware that despite its vastness, Binkley is fragile and must be protected.

"One of the legacies we can leave is to protect the resource," he said.

Reprinted from the May 10, 2012 issue of *The Courier-Journal*.

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pare. Not the case here, however. I had not bothered to even glance at the map and famously don't really remember passages very well. So our new cavers kept asking: "How much farther does it go? Is this the end? How far have we gone?" Oh, yeah, I made HCG proud on this one. "I dunno, I dunno, I dunno." Oh, and, I forgot to mention the "New Caver Dad" who was slightly claustrophobic. It was classic. He looked at me and said, "Does it open up after this?" "Um, It *shooouuuuld*," was my confident reply. Oh, I think they'll be back.

Fortunately, Robinson Ladder Cave is quite forgiving and is a great trip for a beginning 10 year old caver, an energetic 14 year old, as well

as interesting enough for the tried and true. We all enjoyed the formation room, the awesome gypsum cotton (which actually blew in the wind of our breath), and of course the "Graveyard". We were all above ground (OK, except the camera people) in about 2 1/2 hours, and I am sure this marks the beginning of many more recreational trips before the cave closes again for bat hibernation season on August 30th.

Anyone wanting to visit the cave can go through a grotto liaison or contact Property Manager John Benton (contact info listed on page 2). Anyone wanting to experience Harrison-Crawford Grotto can see upcoming trips posted on our Facebook page.

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- **Guy Stover Pit Cleanup** – Brenda Shultheis shared with the audience the impressive cleanup project at Guy Stover Pit. This was the second such project she has organized and the results were stunning for her and all the volunteers who assisted.

A hearty thanks to everyone who made this year's Indiana Cave Symposium a success, from planners, to presenters, to sponsors, to burger grillers, and attendees! Interested in presenting in the future? Just let it be known!! Hope to see you next year!

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a half mile of passage to the system.

Statistics:

- Surveyed Length, January 1, 2011: 112,094 feet
- Surveyed Length, December 31, 2011: 115,437 feet, making the Lost River System the 25th longest cave in the U S and 94th in the world according to Caver Bob's list

- Vertical Extent: 118.5 feet

Indian Creek CE Report (Jerry Lewis)

In 2011 the properties were inspected and no significant new problems were found. The picnic shelter that had been built on the easement had been removed. Inspection report letters were sent to all of the property owners as well as to Ellen Jacquart at The Nature Conservancy.

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.

