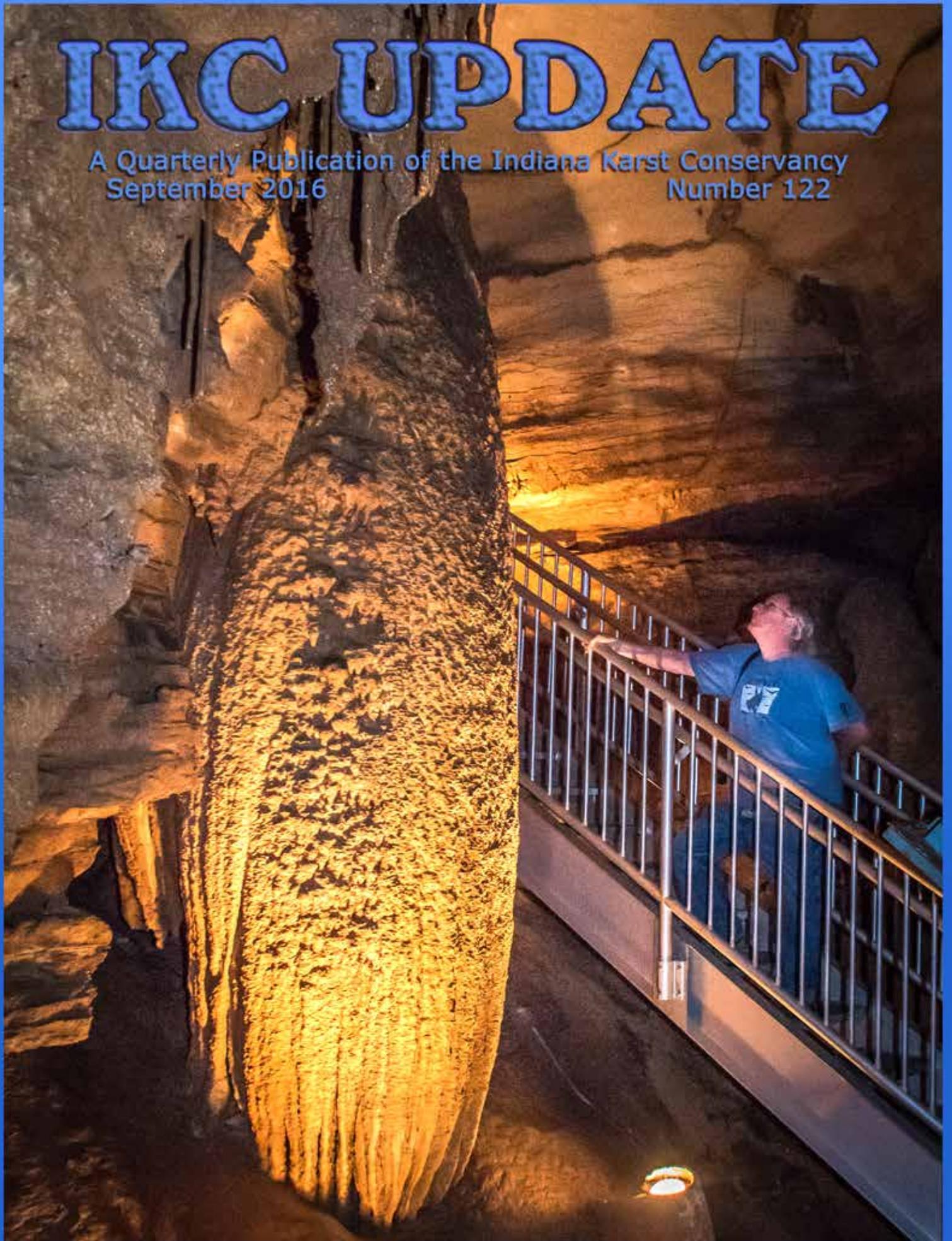


# IKC UPDATE

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# INDIANA KARST CONSERVANCY, INC

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[ikc.caves.org](http://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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# IKC QUARTERLY MEETING & COOK-OUT REMINDER

## SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10th, 4:00 PM EST

### FERDINAND STATE FOREST, INDIANA

### HOME OF CARLA & JAMIE WINNER

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: Brief reports on the various IKC preserves, summer stewardship activities, and possible fall workdays at some of our properties; Bylaws Committee update; Land acquisition projects; Financial reports; and more....

Following the quarterly meeting (around 6 PM) will be the annual pitch-in cook-out. The main entree(s) will be provided. Please bring a salad, dessert, and/or other covered dish to share. If there are enough entries, we will also have a dessert contest. *Please bring a lawn chair if you want to sit down during the meeting.*

Meeting directions and camping details: See the inside back cover (page 19).



## ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

**Sept 10 – IKC Quarterly E-Board meeting and cook-out (see above)**

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

For more information on the Indiana Karst Conservancy, visit our website at [ikc.caves.org](http://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...

This is my vacation Ramble, brought to you from here on the patio of a condo on Sanibel Island, Florida, where I have my laptop on my knee checking e-mail and typing various documents that seemingly won't wait for me to return to Indiana. Other duties today were out on the beach, collecting the seashells for the Ramble's photo and arranging them to say "IKC", while other beach-combers wondered what an IKC was. Otherwise I'm the guy on the beach digging in the sand. I'll try to convince you that I'm studying creatures of the psammon... the subterranean crustaceans and other creepy-crawlies that live down in the interstitial spaces of coastal sand beaches, but in reality it's just my inner three year old who still likes to dig in the sand.

While we were down here in sunny Florida, I noticed on the news that back in the real world the Affrilachian Poets in Lexington, KY had been selected to receive a 2016 Governor's Award for the Arts from Kentucky Governor Bevin. This is a prestigious award that the non-profit organization quickly rejected because, "It is the opinion of the group that the Governor's comments, positions, and actions regarding education in general, the Humanities specifically... have been reprehensible and go against the core of who we are as writers and educators...". Without commenting on Kentucky politics, one of the Governor's positions to which the Affrilachian Poets objected was his statement that "We don't need any more French majors". I'd agree that I don't know a lot of wealthy language majors, but my mother was an English teacher, I have a degree in French, and my daughter just graduated with a degree in Spanish. So I suppose we're a family interested in words. I'll be exploring some words as I ramble along.

It's been a busy year, and Salisa and I are always happy to step away from life for a few days for our annual Sanibel retreat. In the week before we came down here, we were busy working in nine different states in seven days, from Virginia to Michigan, and generally not in the same state for more than 24 hours or so. "Busy" is an interesting word. It's always remarkable to me when someone tells me,

usually in an e-mail, that they're too busy. I don't know anyone who *isn't busy*... do you? Sometimes a person will tell me they're busy and I get the impression that they're trying to impress upon me that they're different from everyone else in that they're busy and no one else is. So, just for the record, I know you're busy and I appreciate you taking the time to read the *IKC Update*.

Another word that I like is "exciting". I just googled it and the definition is that it means "causing great enthusiasm and eagerness". Before we came down to Florida I had been out in a sinkhole, down on the floor about forty feet below the surrounding forest floor, continuing some of my work on the ecology of sinks. I was trying to hurry a bit since I knew there was a storm front coming in from the west and I didn't particularly want to be there when the clouds opened up. There was no rain yet, but the distant rumble of thunder suggested that haste would be prudent.

Just then, a bolt of lightning hit a tree on the edge of the sink. It was close enough to be blinding, deafening, hot, and literally messed up my hairdo. I think it would be safe to say that it was pretty exciting, in that it caused me to have great enthusiasm to depart. You might say a certain eagerness to get the hell out of Dodge. I was remembering all the rumors I'd heard about lightning preferentially hitting cave entrances... sort of like the one I was sitting next to... and thinking that my personal research now had some data to support that hypothesis.

Other than getting soaked in the blinding rain that ensued on my half-mile hike back to the car (where a flash-flooding stream had already started to cover the road that was my escape route), nothing untoward came of the event. I chalked it up to just another memorable experience in the life of a field biologist. Sort of like my boot with the souvenir rattlesnake fang mark in it from when I'd tried to get myself killed climbing down a cliff to reach a cave in Tennessee (that was exciting, too). It brings to mind that line in *Saving Private Ryan* where one soldier tells the other that his mother would probably not approve of his behavior (he was dodging machine gun bullets). My apologies



to my mom, where ever she may be, and in my defense I wasn't trying to get bitten by a rattlesnake or hit by lightning, it just sort of happened.

With vacation in mind, I hope that everyone reading this has the opportunity to take a little time off from their busy lives to do something fun and relaxing this summer, even if it's a staycation. I know some of my friends went to the NSS Convention out west and returned via meandering paths through various national parks and other neat places. Others have enjoyed Cave Capers, or mapping in their favorite cave, or kayaking, or whatever. The majority of my friends are cavers, or connected in some way to caving, and their interests are as varied as the seashells on the beach here. The glue that holds them together is caving.

It's great when one loves their work so much that some of it seems like being on vacation. As an example, in July I had the privilege to teach the summer cave ecology class for Western Kentucky University (more about on page 12), which in some respects was like a "working vacation" for me. This was the first time I'd taught the class, hosted at the Cave Research Foundation Hamilton Valley field station, and featured daily trips into the world's longest cave (which coincidentally has the most complex cave community in North America). I didn't really know what to expect, other than it was a college class, and I was teaching it as an adjunct professor for WKU. It was a small class, six students and me.

A pleasant surprise was that most students apparently take the course as a non-credit workshop. So this was a group of people who were here completely of their own volition, just because each of them thought it would be fun to learn more about cave ecology. Most of the students had professional affiliations for which they could apply the course for continuing education units, if they were so inclined. But one participant, Mike, caught my eye in particular and I wanted to tell you a little about a great guy here, rather than in my article describing what we did during the class.

In the real world, Mike is employed at an auto assembly plant in east Tennessee. As far as I could tell there was nothing tangible in the class for him other than he was a caver who was interested in caves, and has a seemingly ravenous appetite for knowledge about the cave world. If you met Mike, the word "ravenous" isn't what you'd think of, because he's laid back, quiet, and has nothing but good things to say about everybody and everything. And if someone needed help, he was the first to step forward. For instance, an archaeology student staying at the CRF

field station while we were there came out one morning to a flat tire on his car. Mike just happened to have an air compressor in his van... he reinflated the tire and it seemed like the leak was slow enough that the car could be driven into Cave City for a tire repair (and it was). Mike reminded me a lot of Tom Sollman, another caver who was a career employee at a car plant with an equally ravenous appetite for information about caves (see my June 2016 Rambling).

Every morning I'd get up around sunrise, walk from the bunkhouse over to the field station, where I'd pour a cup of coffee and go out onto the deck to find Mike. He was always there with a camera taking pictures of the foggy sunrise over Hamilton Valley. We'd chat about nothing in particular until it was time to grab some breakfast and head out with the group for a day underground talking about cave ecology. Mike was always happy to help carry equipment or help in any way needed, and seemed completely engrossed in hearing about every nugget of ecological trivia that I could churn out. A lot of people might be put off by a discussion of the *milieu souterrain superficiel*, (i.e. the subterranean habitat known as the superficial underground compartment), but not Mike. He's a great guy and it was a pleasure to get to know him.

To wrap this up, I'd like to mention "great", a word that's getting bandied around a lot in the context of making our country "great again". I can tell you I've been to some other countries, some of which were hostile soil, and definitely were not by any stretch of the imagination "great". I'll bet that the Republic of South Vietnam didn't have anything as esoteric as a karst conservancy. I believe we live in a great country, not perfect, but great. I'm led to make this remark by an experience from last night at the Captiva Island restaurant called the Mucky Duck. Salisa and I were sitting out on the patio, having a drink, and listening to a guy play guitar and sing popular tunes. He interrupted his string of folk/rock songs to chat for a moment about our country's greatness, and then broke into a song that received resounding applause. I'll finish this Ramble with the first verse:

*O beautiful for spacious skies,  
For amber waves of grain,  
For purple mountain majesties  
Above the fruited plain!  
America! America!  
God shed his grace on thee  
And crown thy good with brotherhood  
From sea to shining sea!*

*Jerry Lewis*

## WYANDOTTE CAVES RE-OPENS TO THE PUBLIC

*by Keith Dunlap*

**Background:** When Wyandotte and Little Wyandotte caves closed for the season on Labor Day, 2008, little did anyone know the caves would be scuttled indefinitely. Gone were the educational, recreational, and family bonding experiences. Also gone was a travel destination that served as an economic engine for Harrison and Crawford counties. While the initial explanation for the closure was said to be maintenance issues (both in-cave and the visitor center), the following year, the closure became part of the larger preventive initiative to combat the spread of White-nose Syndrome (ignore the fact that the DNR continued to operate their Twin Cave commercial tours at Spring Mill). WNS was observed at Wyandotte in 2011, so the closure was then extended to prevent the fungus from spreading elsewhere. Subsequent inquiries were often asked when Wyandotte and other DNR caves might re-open. To the DNR's credit, a pilot program was implemented in early 2014 to re-open several popular caves in Spring Mill State Park/Cave River Valley. However, the inertia to re-open Wyandotte Cave seemed impossible with various state and federal agencies at odds, and the legitimate lack of funding to fix the things needing to be fixed.

Then entered State Representative Lloyd Arnold (from Leavenworth) who understood the economic importance of the caves. Not just from ticket sales to the DNR (which likely is a break even proposition at best), but from the tourist dollars for restaurants, motels, campgrounds, and related recreational activities. For the concerns about WNS, Arnold asked why was it that nearby Mammoth Cave (run by the National Park Service) could continue to operate, but Wyandotte Cave needed to stay closed for WNS. Apparently there was not a good answer to that question. More importantly however, Arnold was able to introduce and pass a funding bill that would provide some of the needed capital dollars to upgrade the infrastructure at the cave (e.g., re-lighting in the cave, and a new visitor center). The rails were greased and there was light at the end of the crawlway to get Wyandotte Cave reopened.

**Pre-planning:** There was a tremendous amount of work performed by just a handful of DNR staff leading up to the **grand** re-opening of the two caves. On the ground was O'Bannon Woods Property Manager Bob Sawtalle, Assistant Property Man-

ager Stanley Baelz, Naturalist Jarrett Manek, and Office Manager Heather Kintner. In the Central Office was Deputy Director of Stewardship Ginger Murphy. The initial physical improvements to the property including demolishing the old visitor center (constructed in 1956), rehabbing the outside rest rooms, and bringing in two pre-fabbed "log" cabins to serve as the temporary ticket office and equipment storage buildings. Also constructed was a "decontamination" station to facilitate the removal of cave soil from visitors' shoes as they exit their tours (to minimize transportation of the WNS fungus spores to other caves).

The preparation work inside the caves was less rigorous, as most of the original lighting system was still functional after the long hiatus. With that said, there was a contingent plan to use helmets and lights in Wyandotte Cave, just in case.

Since the legislative funding was for capital expenses, the DNR staff had to be creative on the "soft" operational side. Just four tour guides were hired for the initial tour season. For the grand re-opening weekend, the DNR leveraged staff from other properties, along with recruiting a large number of volunteers.

**July 9, 2016:** I have attended many grand opening functions over the years, and I was pretty skeptical of this one, considering the limited parking, small dedicated staff, and logistics of managing large number of people wanting to visit the caves (did I mention the tours on the opening weekend were **free!**). I have to say I was pleasantly surprised with the outcome. Parking was well managed with several off-site lots and shuttle vans bringing the visitors to the caves. A large tent with seating for perhaps 300 had been erected in case of rain (there was a heavy downpour the night before, but the weather for the re-opening weekend was perfect). The opening ceremony included numerous DNR dignitaries, state legislative and local politicians, and even Lt Governor Eric Holcomb. There was a color guard, Boy Scouts leading the Pledge of Allegiance, and cheer leaders from a local school. After the pomp and circumstance, there was even an ribbon cutting to officially re-open the caves.

While the main focus of the attendees was to visit the caves, the DNR staff also organized numerous "activity stations" to keep the guests occupied while waiting for their tours. Some of the "stations" were sponsored by other DNR proper-





photo by Richard Vernier

ties/divisions and featured snakes, birds of prey, hellbenders, woodrats, bats, cave rescues, and information about our forests.

The IKC was also invited and our booth was threefold. Our main display was on the rich fauna of Wyandotte Cave/Sharpe Creek area. Jerry Lewis prepared an extensive list of cave species and provided representative photos of various classes. I then standardized the photos and list into a visual tabletop display so visitors could see and appreciate the many species, large and small, that could be found in the caves. Also under our shelter, John Benton brought a large number of historic photos, post cards, and Wyandotte Cave brochures from his personal collection. Finally, Carla Striegel-Winner and Salisa Lewis organized several kid's activities related to collecting "cave critters", including one visually interesting task of using small artist paint brushes to collect "bugs" from artificial "scat". The kids loved it, parents, not so much. Other IKC volunteers at our booth included Dick and Sue Vernier.

**Cave Tours:** Obviously the main attraction for the day was the *free* cave tours. Little Wyandotte was set up to be "self-guided" with volunteers stationed along the way with prepared scripts. However, it seems that some of the volunteers liked to improvise and add their own "knowledge" as the day went on... I heard a story of the frog-eating orange-spotted lizards (aka cave salamanders).

Wyandotte Cave featured the traditional two-hour tours, but also a shorter tour to the end of Washington Avenue, then back out. I "tailed" several tours into the cave (to keep the stragglers moving). To handle the demand, group sizes which would typically be 25 or less often exceeded 75 or 100. Regardless, almost everyone enjoyed the experience (I say almost everyone, because there were some out-of-shape participants that struggled on the "rugged" tour). The guides on this first day were the new-hires (who were still trying to learn their scripts) and volunteer former guides such as Jim Cole and Chris Bell.

At the end of the day, there was an estimated 1,200 combined cave visits (i.e., if a person visited both caves, that would be two cave visits).

**July 10, 2016:** There was much less fan fair on the second day, with only led trips into both caves. I again volunteered as a tail-guide on two trips into Wyandotte Cave. It is such a remarkable experience of nature mixed with human interactions. While I left before all the trips were out of the cave, I believe there were over 800 combined cave visits into the two caves. Over the two days, I personally saw over thirty cavers (many who also volunteered) take advantage of the free tours.

**Going Forward:** For the shortened 2016 season, the DNR conducted tours on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday until Labor Day. I believe in 2017, they will be operating from Memorial Day to Labor Day. I'm not sure if they will be open more days per week. It is also hoped there will be an opportunity for off-trail "wild" trips in the future.

In the cave, I believe the plan is to re-light most of the cave with low-power LEDs and improve the reliability of the lighting systems. This task is hampered by the inability of the contractors to access the cave for the majority of the year. On the surface, plans are in the works to construct a new permanent visitor center. The size, scope, and functional features of the center is likely still up for consideration and I suspect additional funding and perhaps private sponsors will need to be identified, so it might be several years before this project is completed.

**Summary:** I can't express how wonderful it is to have Wyandotte Cave (and Little Wyandotte Cave) re-open. I know there are many others in the caving community with the same enthusiasm. For old-timers, the re-opening is a re-acquaintance of an old friend. For new cavers, there is a half-generation who have never experienced this wonder of the world. Thanks again to Bob Sawtelle, Stanley Baelz, Jarrett Manek, Ginger Murphy, and especially Lloyd Arnold for getting the ball rolling.



*A large tour group in Wyandotte Cave at the bottom of the entrance steps in Faneuii Hall.*



*Above was the IKC's booth at the Wyandotte Cave re-opening. It included a display board of fauna found in the cave (right) and a kid's activity of collecting "bugs" off of cave "scat" (below)*



*photos by Richard Vernier*

## PROTECTING TRUITT CAVE

*text and photos by Danyeale Green*

It all began a year or so ago while taking a group of IU students to Truitt Cave (also known in early literature as IU Cave) on the west side of Bloomington, when we noticed more broken glass than usual and recent graffiti not far inside the entrance. After the trip, the owner of the cave mentioned he is sick of vandals sneaking in and partying on his property, which we know was the cause of the recently found destruction. He asked, “Danyeale, do you know anything about getting a gate installed?” As a matter of fact, I did know enough to be dangerous and starting asking folks that had previously worked on gating projects where to begin. That turned into a project that Keith Dunlap so graciously agreed to take on and not only design the gate, but organized the volunteers and oversaw its construction/installation. With wonderful help monetarily by the CIG, BIG, IKC, and the Caving Club at IU, we got the remaining costs lowered for the cave owner, so it wouldn’t be a huge financial burden for him to protect an area we all so deeply loved and respect.

With initial assistance from Bill Baus and myself, we helped Keith find a good location near the entrance and took detailed measurements for his



design. Keith then procured the material and pre-fabricated the two removable access bars. The design was a typical “bat-friendly” angle iron design spanning ten feet at the base and three feet near the top, and six foot high. On June 5th of this year, Keith and Bill, along with Tom Sollman, Bruce Trotter, and Jerry Walker came down to work on the installation. First a trench was excavated down to solid material. Next the two vertical columns were positioned and pinned at the top and bottom. Next the horizontal “hangers” were welded to the columns, then the horizontal



*Finished gate just beyond the entrance (left), Tymme Laun painting (right), historic signatures (upper right).*

bars cut to length and secured. The final task for the day was to prime all the bare metal so it would not rust in the high humidity environment.

My contribution to the physical aspects of the project was priming and painting. Given the rainy and humid conditions, it has taken me quite some time to get the first coat of paint on once we finished the primer coat on the 5th. I'll be going back again to apply the second top coat once the humidity drops and the gate isn't soaking wet two minutes after I wipe it off (Tymme Laun helped me with the first coat – he would wipe and I would paint – we had a system down, but still wasn't the ideal conditions).

Hopefully the gate will put an end to the trash

and graffiti filling up this cave, and organized cavers have improved our relationship with the land-owner! I will add, the historical graffiti in this cave is quite abundant – and fairly legible, where not covered in spray paint. Dates have been found from as early as the mid 1800s, including the signature of Eli Truitt (September 19, 1856).

Access to Truitt Cave is as follows: If you know the owner, you can contact him directly to arrange a trip. Otherwise, please feel free to contact Danyele Green ([dcottrel@ju.edu](mailto:dcottrel@ju.edu)) or Bill Baus ([Baus1210@gmail.com](mailto:Baus1210@gmail.com)) **at least one week in advance**, and we will request permission for your group and make arrangements for you to pick up the gate key.

## A LOOK BACK AT INDIANA KARST

by John M Benton

With the recent (July 2016) re-opening of Wyandotte Caves near Leavenworth, Indiana, in this issue I will take a look back at the past hotels/visitor centers, that have been utilized at the popular tourist attraction over the past 150+ years. As of July, there are now a couple of relatively small temporary buildings that the State hauled in for their use as the ticket office and administrative space for the caves. Supposedly, a bid will be let sometime in the next year for a new visitor center for Wyandotte Caves. It remains to be seen what style or how elaborate the new visitor center will be.

**Circa 1860 to 1868:** The first Wyandotte Hotel is still standing in the valley below the cave. When originally built, it was the private residence of Henry Rothrock, but as visitation increased to see the cave, some of the rooms were rented for lodging. The building was last used as a residence in the 1970s, when the Harper family occupied the home. Plans by the present owners are to restore the house as a bed and breakfast, although no work has been

done on the interior for several years. Also of interest, across the road from this home, back a narrow lane, the Rothrock Family Cemetery is located near the Blue River where Henry Rothrock and several other family members are buried.

**1868 to 1933:** This white-frame building was built on the top of the ridge near the big cave's entrance (where the past three hotels/visitor centers have been located). By the late 1860s, more and more tourists traveled to see the cave (it was a one-way day's journey from Corydon by hack or horseback and others came via steamboat



photo by Tina Nauman



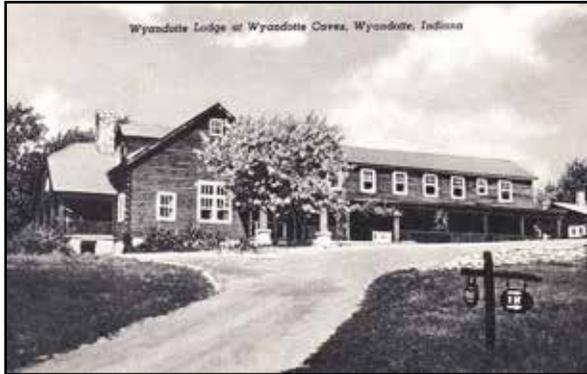
Wyandotte Lodge, Wyandotte Cave, Ind.

post card collection - John Benton

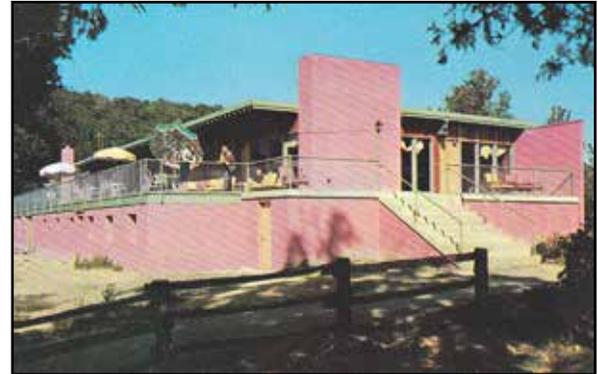
up Blue River from the Ohio River) and Henry Rothrock found his private home was too small (or inconvenient) for tourists to stay, so the site on top of the ridge was selected. This wooden building burned in 1933, reportedly from a candle left burning in a tourist room too close to the curtains of an open window. The closest fire department would have been Leavenworth, only the foundation was saved.

**1934 to 1955:** A new log structure was soon rebuilt on the same site. It contained several hotel rooms, offices, visitor center, and a restaurant. Several Indiana governors and boxer Joe Louis were guests here at one time or another, as were numerous elected officials. People would drive from Corydon, New Albany, and other area towns for sumptuous Sunday dinners. Dances were also held at the hotel. This was the time of Prohibition, so alcohol was brought in by bootleggers. Gambling, also illegal, was rumored to have happened ‘back door’ too. Old time Indi-

**1956 to June 2016:** The pink stucco-covered building was built on the same site as the previous two hotels/visitors centers, utilizing at least some of the stone foundation of the old hotels. The new building contained hotel rooms, offices, ticket, souvenir store, display areas, as well as a restaurant initially. There were several other buildings and cabins on the property too. The Rothrock family heirs sold the caves, buildings, and 1,100 acres to the State of Indiana in late 1966 for \$350,000. The State discontinued the hotel and restaurant functions at that time. Be-



post card collection - John Benton



post card collection - John Benton

ana caver Harold Meloy (from Shelbyville) once related to me that he remembers seeing slot machines in the lobby of the Wyandotte Hotel back in the 1920s and 1930s. Not far away in French Lick, gambling was also going on in this time period, even more openly. The 1934 hotel also was destroyed by fire in 1955. David Wilkins from Leavenworth, whose father Wallace Wilkins was a long-time guide at Wyandotte, related to me that after the 1955 fire, the very next day, the Wyandotte Cave staff and management were roasting hot dogs over the hot coals and selling them to the visitors; with the cave open for business as usual with tours!

neath the main building was a vertical air shaft into Wyandotte Cave that was originally drilled to provide air-conditioning for the hotel, but was never used for that. In 1968, electricity conduits were placed in the shaft when the cave was electrically lit by the State. Lines for the seismograph in the South Branch of the cave were also placed in the shaft. In the early 2000s, computer cables were run in the shaft to transmit micro-climate data to the surface as part of a bat research project in the cave. After sitting idle since the fall of 2008, the visitor center was demolished in June 2016 by the State, who deemed it was too far deteriorated to renovate.



Demolition of the Wyandotte Cave visitor center, June 2016. Photos by Tina Nauman (left) and John Benton (right).

## 2016 KARST FIELD STUDIES CAVE ECOLOGY CLASS

by Jerry Lewis

In 2015, I was asked to teach the annual cave ecology class for Western Kentucky University (WKU). The week long class is hosted at the Cave Research Foundation's Hamilton Valley field station located on the edge of Mammoth Cave National Park (MCNP). In the 1980s, I conducted part of my doctoral work in the Mammoth Cave System and have continued to do consulting projects in the central Kentucky karst region since that time, so I have a comfortable familiarity with the fauna of the Mammoth Cave area.

When asked by WKU what title I wanted to give the class, I decided on "Experiential Cave Ecology", reflecting my intention to spend zero time sitting in classroom talking. I figured who wants to take a field cave ecology class only to sit in a building? So the class was taught underground, with four guest speakers for variety.

The class started on Sunday evening, July 10th with a greeting from WKU by Pat Kambesis. Next, Rick Toomey extended a greeting on behalf of MCNP and briefly discussed the rules, regulations, and safety procedures for off-trail trips into Mammoth Cave. After the greetings, we went to Adwell Cave on the Hamilton Valley grounds. I'd been told that there was a "small cave" on the property that others had used for various classes, but being from Indiana, had interpreted that to mean a three foot high cave, half full of water. When I previewed the cave two weeks earlier, I found that Adwell was a "small" central Kentucky cave... a fifty foot wide by twenty foot high trunk passage. On this first trip, we immediately saw clusters of cave crickets and started recognizing the importance of these little creatures to bring food into caves in the form of their guano. We also started taking the air temperature and humidity to learn the crucial role of high humidity on the presence of many troglobites. Adwell Cave was also important because it was not in the National Park, and thus could be used for student projects that might involve sampling some of the bugs.

On Monday morning we piled into the van and rode over to the parking lot at the Mammoth Cave hotel, then started a hike down the ridge toward the Green River. We first looked at a seemingly insignificant hillside, which in actuality was the surface of the terminal breakdown of Rafinesque Hall in Mammoth Cave. I used that as an introduction to the *milieu souterrain super-*



photo by Jerry Lewis

*ficiel*, a habitat first described by the French, or superficial underground compartment, basically micro-caves created by the spaces between buried rocks. We next stopped at the large sinkhole above Mammoth Dome (in Mammoth Cave) and talked about sinkhole ecology. At White's Cave, the class posed with our official flag (custom made by Salisa), which sported a cave isopod and the motto "Don't tread on me". The cave is a few hundred foot long segment of highly decorated passage related to passage off the top of Mammoth Dome. White's Cave is arguably the most famous "biology" cave in MCNP, with several species first attributed to Mammoth Cave actually having been collected in White's Cave in the 19th century. Finally, we stopped at Echo River Spring, which was in flood flow and thus not accessible for study.

After a picnic lunch, Rick Toomey joined us and was our guest speaker for an afternoon trip. Rick talked about the use of the Historic section of Mammoth Cave by bats during the Pleistocene, when there were apparently much larger populations – perhaps in the millions – and showed us the evidence: large areas of ceiling staining and floor still covered by bat guano. In discussing White-nose Syndrome, I was surprised to hear that the "decontamination" mats that Mammoth, Wyandotte, and other commercial caves employ actually contain nothing that kills the WNS fungus. The purpose of the mats is to physically remove spores from peoples' shoes, a function which Rick noted was only partially achieved by the mats.

On Tuesday, we entered Mammoth Cave via the Elevator Entrance with guest speaker Rick Olson (MCNP). We first walked from the Snowball Dining Room down Cleveland Avenue to Jenny



Lind's Dining Table, a huge flat slab of breakdown that early visitors had littered with chicken bones and bottles. Rick told us that it was an excellent example of when a well-meaning cave "clean-up" had gone off the rails, with a lot of culturally significant artifacts being mistaken for trash and discarded. Rick also taught about chemoautotrophic communities, where the food source of the cave community was essentially the rock itself. I then led the group to the main goal of the trip, Cathedral Domes, where I explained the aquatic community of the stream draining the 100 foot high domes. I assisted each student as they censused the invertebrates in a section of the stream. In my censuses of this stream in the 1980s, the community was dominated by the amphipod *Crangonyx barri*. Rotten wood planks from a collapsed staircase were subsequently "cleaned up" from the stream, and our 2016 census discovered the amphipod was gone and flatworms were now the most common animal.

On Tuesday afternoon, we drove over to Flint Ridge, where we entered Great Onyx Cave with guest speaker Gavin Bradley from the University of Louisville. Gavin told the class about the natural history of Cave salamanders and his "mark" and recapture studies featuring computer pattern recognition software. We looked at the rich cave cricket guano community present around the entrance, then went deeper into the cave where we found the troglobitic spiders *Phanetta* and *Anthrobia*, which



Jerry Lewis demonstrating cave stream censusing in Cathedral Domes, Mammoth Cave. Photo by Rick Olson, MCNP.

spurred a discussion of classical "*r versus K*" life history strategies. We ended that day by walking deeper into the cave to gawk at the ceiling covered by gypsum flowers in the "Great Kentucky Desert", where we found the relative humidity percentages in the 80s, and almost no invertebrates were present – in contrast to the rich troglobitic community near the entrance, where food was abundant and the humidity was 99.9 percent.

Wednesday was our day to spend the entire time on a long loop through Mammoth Cave, moving from one patch of aquatic habitat to the next. One of the students wearing a Fitbit reported that we walked eight miles that day. Entering from the Historic Entrance, we hiked to Gratz Avenue, where we conducted a census of the small Shaler's Brook emerging from Annette's Dome (my former study site of isopod life history for my doctoral dissertation). Next we visited "Richardson's Spring", where Alpheus Packard found the first cave isopod (*Caecidotea stygia*) in North America in 1871. Then on to Flint Dome in Jessup Avenue to see the isopod *Caecidotea bicrenata*. We ate lunch there, and then completed our tour of aquatic habitats at the base level River Styx, where we saw cavefish and cave crayfish.

Thursday was the only day we spent "off campus", where we journeyed out to the sinkhole plain in a tour dedicated to talking about pollution ecology in caves. We looked at the sites of the old Cave City and Horse Cave sewage treatment plants that had once discharged their effluents into Hidden River Cave, the L&N Cave refugium upstream from the sewage, and the I-65 roadside park constructed on top of the downstream end of the main stream passage. After lunch at a Mexican restaurant, we entered Hidden River Cave and looked at the former underground route of the sewage effluent. Returning to the field station, after dinner, I accompanied several students to Adwell Cave to finish up work on their individual projects.

Friday was our last day and we made a final trip into Mammoth Cave via the Frozen Niagara Entrance, where Kurt Helf (NPS cave ecologist) met us to explain his cave cricket cluster census methods. We then headed back to Hamilton Valley, where after lunch, I gave a Powerpoint presentation: a summary with photos of the habitats, communities, and other ecological concepts discussed over the course of the week. Then each student did a brief presentation of findings of the individual project conducted during the week. For example, the feeding preferences seen in different

terrestrial communities in different caves, or species interactions in aquatic communities.

The feedback I received from the class participants was very positive. Everyone had a great time and got to see a wide variety of species, different sorts of communities, and mile-after-mile of habitats in the vast Mammoth Cave System (one student did suggest that maybe we saw too many miles of Mammoth Cave!). It was a pleasure to be back in Mammoth Cave again and to have the opportunity to share my knowledge as well as learning new

things from our four guest speakers. I'll look forward to the opportunity to do it again next summer.

Thanks go to Rick Toomey for facilitating my entry into Mammoth Cave and for being a guest speaker, along with Kurt Helf (NPS), Rick Olson (MCNP) and Gavin Bradley (U of L). Bo Schaefer was my good-natured student assistant during the class, taking care of driving the van and helping me manage the class. Entry to Hidden River Cave was courtesy of the American Cave Conservation Associates, facilitated by Peggy Pnims.

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## NEWS BRIEFS...

- ❑ With the changing seasons, so do cave assess. On September 1st, the IKC's Robinson Ladder Cave in Crawford County is closed until April 30th for the benefit of the few Indiana bats that still hibernate in the cave. Likewise, the DNR's Endless Cave and River Cave in Cave River Valley are closed September 1 through April 30th for the bats. The good news is that "through trips" in Upper Twin Cave in Lawrence County are allowed after November 1 (through May 15), and "through trips" in Shawnee Cave (aka Donaldson/Bronson) are allowed year-around with permission. See [ikc.caves.org/dnr/spring\\_mill.htm](http://ikc.caves.org/dnr/spring_mill.htm) for more information.
- ❑ Each year the IKC enters its past year's newsletter covers in the NSS Cover Art Salon. For the most part, we have been pretty successful, typically with at least one of our covers getting a ribbon. At the 2016 NSS Convention in Ely, NV, all four *IKC Update* covers from 2015 received recognition. Cover #116 earned an Honorable Mention (green ribbon), while covers #117, #118, and #119 each received a Merit Award (blue ribbon). A great thanks to photographers Kevin Smith, Dave Black, Dave Black, and Brian Dennis, respectively. To see all of the winners, go to the [NSS Salon page](#).
- ❑ The IKC has gained two new members in the last quarter. Welcome Josh Carpenter (568) and Daniel Briere (569). The IKC membership currently stands at 195.



*Jerry Lewis in Little Wyandotte Cave (Crawford County, IN) during the grand re-opening.*

photo by Richard Vernier

## Former tour guide recalls life at Wyandotte Caves

by Taylor Ferguson

Donald Dell's earliest childhood memories could be described as dark, chilled and, at times, soggy, something Dell was never upset about because they all involved Wyandotte Caves.

With his father as the head tour guide and his mother working in the kitchen and dining room and as a maid, Dell grew up playing inside the caves.

"From my earliest memories, I can go back to about 6 or 7 years old," he said. "I was there during the summer months when they worked and I was out of school. I used to ride my bicycle down into the cave before they added steps. That was quite a thrill because you had that real steep hill and then you had to stop before you hit the wall down there where the gate was."

Keeping it in the family, Dell, who still lives a few miles from the caves, got his first job at the park in 1951 when he was 11 tying bumper stickers on automobiles.

"Back then cars had bumpers you could tie stuff onto," he said. "The piece said 'Wyandotte Cave' on it and had about six holes that you had to use binder twine to put through those holes, and we could tie that onto the front and back bumpers."

However, it wasn't long before Dell started moving up the ladder in hopes of becoming a tour guide like his father.

"And, of course, by hanging around there and going through the cave with my father and the other guides I got a lot of knowledge on how to be a guide," he said. "As I grew older and bigger, I would go through the cave with my dad and the other guides and do what we called 'tail guiding' with larger parties.

"Because of the value of the

formations in there, people liked to take a souvenir, and there was a \$500 fine if you got caught doing that," he continued. "So, I started out there as a tail guide, not paid, just helping my dad and the other guides out. That was very important, because those formations take hundreds of years to form a cubic inch."

After tail guiding for a year or two, Dell became a full-time tour guide at age 15. The job paid \$3.50 a day, resulting in about \$22 a week after taxes, while his father, as the head guide, made about \$47 a week.

"I was fairly large for my age, and I had learned the spiel from my dad, so Sam Riley, the manager at that time, decided to put me to work since I was hanging around all the time. That's how I got started as a cave guide," he said.

Working during the summer months, Dell not only led tours inside the caves, but also policed the grounds and took care of the equipment, including the Coleman lanterns.

"That was the only light we had in the large cave, so we were required to make sure there was enough fuel in the lanterns," he said. "Each guide had to keep a small pouch to keep our equipment in, which consisted of various items such as matches, mantels, red flares and a three-cell flashlight for pointing things out. Now, with these laser beams, that would have been ideal if we had those."

Even when Dell was off duty, he was still enamored with the cave.

"Sometimes at night some of the younger guides would get together and we'd go exploring in the cave," he said. "There are places back in there, out-of-the-way places, where the people wouldn't see them, where you'll find our initials."

However, Dell also has watched as the grounds and caves themselves have transformed throughout the years.

"Back then that was a major attraction in this area. I remember when that place was packed without hardly anywhere to park," he said. "The main building, made out of western cedar, had a lobby, a great big fireplace, hotel rooms upstairs and all across the front of it was a great big front porch.

"It was a rustic setting. People would come from Louisville and all over," he continued. "The dining room specialized in cooking ham and fried chicken. Imagine the smell wafting all over the place."

Dell said the dining room on the weekends was comparable to the Overlook Restaurant in Leavenworth.

"That was a drawing card because of the ambiance of the building and the grounds, but, after the building burnt down and they built a new building, and Sam Riley passed, the Rothrock family sold it to the state," he said. "People loved to come sit on that big porch and look out at that view down over the hills. They could come out and dine, bring their friends and go through the cave, rent a room, if they needed to."

Dell's last trip inside the caves was in 2001 with his grandson, but he hopes to change that now that Wyandotte Caves are open once again.

"It brought back a lot of memories," he said. "I'll probably go down there and just see how they got it all set up. I would like to go in the little cave again and see what all they changed in it. I'm glad they got it opened up. It's something people should be allowed to see."

*Reprinted from the 7/13/2016 Corydon Democrat.*

**INDIANA KARST CONSERVANCY TREASURY REPORT**

**Income/Expense Statement  
From April 1, 2016 to June 30, 2016**

**INCOME:**

Dues Apportionment and Residuals	675.00	
Donations - General	361.50	
Donations - Land Acquisition Fund	248.00	
Interest	<u>290.31</u>	\$1,574.81

**EXPENSES:**

IKC Update (printing, production, mailing)	348.50	
Education / Outreach	111.16	
Stewardship/Conservation	198.51	
Business (renewals, safety deposit box, etc)	164.33	
Property taxes	35.00	
Transfers to/from restricted funds/other adjustments	<u>457.01</u>	(\$1,314.51)

**NET OPERATING EXCESS (DEFICIT) THIS PERIOD:** \$260.30

**Balance Sheet  
June 30, 2016**

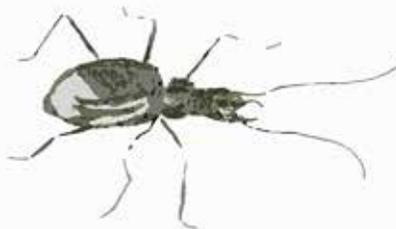
**ASSETS:**

Cash in Checking / Saving Accounts / CDs		148,525.94
Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve (73.48 acres)	162,000.00	
Shawnee Karst Preserve (50.31 acres)	105,000.00	
Wayne Cave Preserve (31.85 acres)	85,000.00	
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)	<u>13.16</u>	<u>\$608,539.10</u>

**FUNDS & OPERATING EXCESS:**

Land Acquisition Restricted Fund		37,287.95
Deferred Dues Restricted Fund (180 members)		4,200.00
Stewardship Endowment Restricted Fund		56,318.24
Previous General Fund (total)	50,472.61	
Net Excess (Deficit) This Period	<u>260.30</u>	
Current General Fund (unrestricted)		50,732.91
Current General Fund (committed)	600.00	
Real estate liquidity (basis value)		<u>460,000.00</u>

**Total Liabilities & Operating Excess** \$608,539.10



## IKC QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Saturday, June 4, 2016, 3:30 PM EDT – Mitchell, Indiana

### Board Members Present:

Jerry Lewis, President  
 Sue Vernier, Secretary  
 Keith Dunlap, Treasurer  
 Joy Baiz (proxied by Salisa Lewis)  
 Bruce Bowman  
 Danyelee Green  
 Dave Haun  
 Everett Pulliam  
 Bob Sergesketter  
 Kevin Smith  
 Tom Sollman  
 Carla Striegel-Winner  
 Bob Vandeventer  
 Richard Vernier  
 Jamie Winner

### Board Members Absent:

none

The meeting was called to order by President Jerry Lewis at 3:30 PM EDT at the Scenic Hills Christian Youth Camp, Mitchell, IN. Jerry asked if it would be appropriate to consider a donation to the church camp for graciously allowing us to use their facility on such short notice. Bruce Bowman made a motion to donate \$50 to the Scenic Hills Christian Youth Camp. Richard Vernier seconded. Motion approved (as we look out the window at a downpour; thankful that we are not outside at our intended original meeting location of Shawnee Karst Preserve).

### March Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the March Annual Business meeting were approved as published in the June 2016 *IKC Update*.

### Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Keith Dunlap reported cash assets totaling \$148,428.40 and land assets totaling \$460,000.00 for total assets of \$608,428.40. Funds include Endowment: \$56,109.23; Deferred Dues: \$4,410.00; Land Acquisition: \$37,043.95; and general fund (unrestricted): \$50,865.22. The IKC membership currently stands at 194 with 17 yet to renew.

### Shawnee Karst Preserve

Keith Dunlap reported that Tom Sollman, Dave Haun, Bob Vandeventer, Everett Pulliam, Kevin Smith, and himself tackled several stewardship projects at Shawnee prior to the Board meeting. A bat house donated by the Caving Club at IU was installed, a downed tree removed from the trail (other downed trees to be dealt with later), both loop trails and the access lane were mowed, foliage was trimmed back from the lane, and water diversion

work was done at the cave entrance. There is a need to reduce or remove a rock at the entrance. Jerry asked Tom Sollman if he would consider removing the remaining downed trees. Jamie Winner volunteered to help Tom in tree removal, and also in removing the rock at the cave entrance. Jerry has the "rocket box" bat house and trail guide holder at his place.

### Buddha Karst Nature Preserve

Keith Dunlap reported a tree down across the trail at Buddha Preserve. Bruce Bowman had volunteered to address the issue, but the weather did not cooperate.

### Sullivan Cave Preserve

Danyelee Green advised that someone called her to report that their key broke off in the cave gate lock. Fortunately, another group was able to fish out the broken part and continued into the cave without further problem. Paul Uglum, the Cave Patron, has verified the lock is still okay.

### Wayne Cave Preserve

Tom Sollman said that it will be later this year before he finishes with the kiosk display panels.

### Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve

Keith Dunlap reported that the restoration hybrid chestnut trees were planted, as well as the other free trees (butternut, walnut, red oak). Spraying was done around each tree to assist their growth and a deer-exclusion fence was put up around the perimeter. Someone has donated a picnic table to the IKC to place at Robinson Ladder, but it will have to be moved from Indianapolis. Later in the year, Keith plans to spray autumn olive and the fence perimeter. Jamie Winner has mowed the area once. The CCIU bat house is installed.

### Bylaws Revision Committee

Bruce Bowman (committee chair), Keith Dunlap, Tom Rea, Jerry Lewis, and Tom Sollman make up the committee. Bruce Bowman previously sent out an email to the Directors listing the proposed Bylaws revisions. The intent of the current election process under Bylaws, Article VI, could be interpreted a number of different ways. The committee proposes a rewrite to clarify and streamline the process, plus changes in a few other areas. Discussion ensued with most of the Directors in general agreement with the proposed revisions. The final drafted language will be sent to the Directors to review and approve before being sent out to the membership-at-large for final adoption.

Jerry Lewis had a question on the removal of the numbering system on mailed ballots. Part of the election process is looking to the future (hostile takeover issues)



to prevent ballot box stuffing. Keith said each ballot has a unique number and he generates a list of the numbers so as to be able to verify the legitimacy of each ballot or retrieve a mailed ballot, if requested. Some day in the future the IKC may go to an online election process. The intent of the serialized number on mailed ballots is to keep the election honest; however, the details of numbering ballots could be removed from the Bylaws and left to a yearly vote as to whether to serialize ballots. The Bylaws could be reworded to say "secure ballot" without detailing a specific method to use.

The proposed Bylaws revisions will be published in the *IKC Update* and could be included in the annual mailing before a final vote. Bruce will do the actual written language changes; the changes will require a motion from the Board to accept. Everett Pulliam asked if the current Bylaws give a process to replace an empty Director's position. Bruce and Keith advised the answer was yes. Jerry thanked the committee for their hard work to this point.

#### **CavesLIVE Initiative by USDA Forest Service**

Jerry Lewis talked with the U.S. Forest Service Cave and Karst Program Coordinator, Johanna Kovarik, and Cynthia Sandeno regarding a new distance learning adventure, CavesLIVE. The project will create an educational program on the importance of cave resources and cave conservation to reach classrooms through webcasts and videos. Cynthia was previously involved with the "*Caves Beneath the Forest*" video, a joint partnership between the IKC and Hoosier National Forest. The CavesLIVE project needs funding of \$50,000. Keith Dunlap was in favor of a token \$250 pledge or donation, since it is in the IKC mission to do education outreach. Dave Haun suggested a \$500 pledge. Keith made a motion to pledge \$500 towards the project and send the funds, if and when it becomes a "go" project. The motion was seconded by Carla Striegel-Winner. The motion was approved with 14 yeas and 1 nay. Jerry will inform Johanna.

#### **Wyandotte Cave Re-opening**

Other than what he has read in the newspaper, Keith Dunlap has heard no further word on the re-opening of Wyandotte Cave. The article said some guides will be hired. Keith assumes that the IKC will be contacted by the DNR, if assistance is required.

#### **Gate Projects**

Jerry Lewis discussed at the previous IKC meeting a gating request from the USFWS for Sauerkraut Cave and has nothing new to report. The USFWS has an archaeological survey team in process at the cave.

Danyeale Green was contacted by the owner of Truitt (IU) Cave who is fed up with the party-goers and vandals and wants to gate his cave. Danyeale, Bill Baus, and Keith Dunlap have designed a gate and have a list

of materials needed. The owner wants to maintain control, but will allow responsible cavers access. The owner will provide some money and the CIG and BIG have pledged dollars. The IKC has not previously done gating for a private landowner, but Keith considers it appropriate just to maintain good landowner relations. The total out-of-pocket costs are over \$700 with \$350 already pledged; the owner will cover the balance, but it would be nice if the balance was smaller. Keith is donating the labor and other in-kind expenses. Keith has workers lined up and the work day is next Friday, June 10. Dave Haun made a motion for the IKC to donate \$100 for the project. Bruce Bowman seconded. Motion approved with 13 yeas and 2 abstain.

#### **Land Acquisition Activities**

Keith Dunlap has nothing new to report.

#### **Items from the Floor**

Jerry Lewis received a cold call from Nick Burgmeier, Purdue Extension Forestry & Natural Resources. Nick needs money to do a video for sinkhole cleanups. Carla Striegel-Winner said that if Nick would produce a solid proposal, then the IKC might consider it. It probably involves water quality issues. Jerry referred him to Cassie at The Nature Conservancy.

#### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting was tentatively set for September 10, 2016. Jamie and Carla Winner will host it at their place in Ferdinand State Forest. The meeting will be at 4 PM EDT followed by a cookout at 6 PM EDT. [*Jerry Lewis confirmed later via email that the September 10 date is firm - Secretary*]

#### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:59PM.

Respectfully submitted, Sue Vernier, IKC Secretary



**Directions to Ferdinand State Forest (FSF) and Jamie and Carla's Home:**

From State Road 64, just east of St Anthony: Turn south at County Road 600 East (there is a brown FSF sign) and go exactly 3 miles to the entrance gate.

From State Road 162, just north of Ferdinand: Turn east onto State Road 264 (there is a brown FSF sign), which ends at the entrance gate after six miles.

At the entrance gate: Stay on the main road about a mile and a half until it ends at the Sycamore Shelters. Park in the gravel lot there. The house is on the left just across the lot. The entrance gate is scheduled to be staffed on the meeting date, so just tell the attendant you are here for the meeting and they will let you through.

You can mapquest with success: **7985 S 600 E, Ferdinand, IN**. This will get you to the entrance; follow our directions to the house from there.

Overnighters: Folks are welcome to stay over, we have futon and floor space and a small yard for a tent. Also, a primitive campground is available at FSF for \$13 per night and you are welcome to use our shower!

Ferdinand State Forest also has hiking and mountain biking trails, a 38 acre lake, which is a fun canoe/kayak and has great fishing, so come early or stay over!

If you get lost, call (812) 367-1602.

**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.

