

IKC UPDATE

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Bob Sergesketter 1946-2021

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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Cover: Bob Sergesketter at the entrance to Robinson Ladder Cave in Crawford County. Photo by James Adams (February 2006)



IKC QUARTERLY MEETING REMINDER
SATURDAY, JUNE 19th, 11:00 AM EDT
1992 SR 54 W, SPRINGVILLE, INDIANA
(PROPERTY ADJACENT TO THE SULLIVAN CAVE PRESERVE)

The quarterly meetings are for the Executive 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: Recap of recent work projects and the promotion of upcoming projects at our various preserves; Financial reports; Wayne Cave EQIP funding contracts update; Investment Committee update; Beach Bequest Committee report; Election Process ad hoc Committee status report; Director appointment; Membership questionnaire/feedback; Covid restrictions update; Cave/land acquisition activities; and more....

Directions: Turn onto the access drive (marked 2000/1998/1992 and Owens Farm Road) two driveways west of the Sullivan Cave access driveway on SR 54. Follow the blacktop drive approximately 600 feet, and then continue straight onto the white stone drive when the blacktop drive veers right. Follow the stone drive to the end.

Meeting Contingencies: This meeting will be held outdoors (bring your lawn chairs) following any current CDC social distancing/masking guidelines. There is a large garage at the property if the weather is inclement. If the weather is forecasted to a total washout, the meeting might be switched to a virtual meeting. If you wish to verify the meeting status, contact Matt Selig (MSelig@hotmail.com).

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

June 6 – Wayne Cave Preserve Work Day (see page 10)

June 19 – IKC Quarterly Executive Board meeting (see above)

July 20 – Wayne Cave Preserve Work Day (see page 10)

Sept ?? – IKC Quarterly Executive Board meeting (place and time TBD)

For more information on the Indiana Karst Conservancy, visit our website at ikc.caves.org, our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/IndianaKarstConservancy, 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. Memberships and donations may also be made electronically by credit card or PayPal using our on-line services on our website (see the Join Us! tab in the menu) or ikc.caves.org/join-the-ikc.

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. Back issues can be found at ikc.caves.org/ikc-updates.

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RAMBLINGS FROM THE (NEW) PRESIDENT...

Dear fellow members of the Indiana Karst Conservancy, I want to thank all of you for your confidence in electing me the first new President of the IKC in 13 years! It is a great honor to be a member of this organization, and I promise to all of you that I will work to the best of my ability to help the IKC grow in its role as a vital part of the community of cavers who *love* Indiana's caves.

I don't use the word "love" lightly. One of Webster's definitions of "love" is "an object of attachment, devotion of admiration." Since I've served on the IKC's Board, I've been fortunate to serve with other people who love Indiana's caves, and I don't think it's too strong a word to use.

This is also a great moment to thank Dr Jerry Lewis for his long-term service to this organization. As his final "Ramblings From the President" notes, he presided over a period when the IKC experienced a great growth in its organizational capabilities, caves and karst features under the IKC's direct protection, and the growth of the IKC's resources to help it accomplish its mission.

Growth like this requires vision, passion, and an extended period of hard, (very) hard work. It was my distinct pleasure to work with Jerry on several of the IKC's recent property acquisitions. It was also great to discuss with him the IKC's opportunities and challenges.

Dr Lewis' wise and steady hand guiding the IKC will be missed, and I hope I don't speak out of turn in extending him the IKC's best wishes in his many future endeavors.

Regarding other members of the IKC's Executive Board, I have had the pleasure over the decades to cave with many of you. I remember meeting our Treasurer, Keith Dunlap, sometime in the mid-1980s as the IKC first started managing caves that eventually became the current portfolio of caves and karst features we own, and I have always had a great respect for his vision of what

the IKC could be. I have also had the pleasure to work with Keith directly on several IKC acquisitions and look forward to doing more!

I've written previously in the *IKC Update* about my understanding of cave science topics and won't rehash them here, but I want to touch on them so we can take a few minutes to consider the IKC's Exempt Purpose. In legal terms, our Exempt Purpose is the reason we've told the Internal Revenue Service that the IKC exists, and why we deserve our tax-exempt status.

It is also a good reference point with which to measure our efforts and think about future IKC opportunities. It states: "*The IKC 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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What follows is my interpretation of what this Exempt Purpose means, which I believe says that primarily, the IKC seeks to conserve and preserve caves and karst landscapes, primarily in the State of Indiana, and we advocate for the benefit of caves and karst of the

world in general. While the IKC is not a "caving club", I know the IKC's membership consists of avid cavers and I believe we can work cooperatively with other organizations whose primary focus is recreational caving, as we focus our efforts to conserve and preserve. And I do not see this Exempt Purpose as limiting our efforts and concerns to merely properties owned by the IKC.

Secondly, the IKC encourages scientific research related to Indiana's caves. We know so little about caves. I believe we have hundreds, if not thousands, of undiscovered caves yet to find in Indiana. The IKC also possesses wonderful karst assets to use (responsibly) in support of this research.



Every time I go caving, I learn something new or see something I've never seen before, and I believe there remains more to learn about Indiana's caves than we currently know about them. Conservation of this great body of knowledge waiting to be unearthed should be somebody's mission and by great forethought, the IKC has placed itself at the center of this effort as a partner with others who share our interests and passion for caves. I believe the solid foundation the IKC is built upon gives us a great opportunity to grow and become better at accomplishing the IKC's Exempt Purpose.

There are also a multitude of down to (under) earth matters to deal with. The IKC relies on its dedicated Cave Patrons, Property Managers, and volunteers to take care of its properties, both on the surface and below the ground. We can and should discuss how to grow as better stewards of the IKC's resources.

Finally, I remember when I first visited Lowry Cave with a group of IKC Board members to investigate whether we thought this property would be a good acquisition for the IKC. Before the trip I wasn't sure if I should bring my

cave gear and I didn't know if anyone would even want to go in the cave.

The other Board members in the car laughed and were like "Oh yeahhh, we're going in the cave, for sure." And I smiled and thought to myself, "This is what I love about the IKC!!" We did some great caving on that trip and we were excited when we saw the great karst conservation opportunity the Lowry Cave property presented. Which points me back to one of my guiding principles while we're thinking about Indiana caves as things we are attached to and admire – find something you love and work hard for it.

And I'll end my first Rambling with an invitation to all of you to join with me in rolling up our collective sleeves and working hard for the IKC, and the Indiana cave and karst resources we all admire (dare I say *love*?). I can't predict the future or the challenges and opportunities we'll confront, but I promise the hard work we do together will be worth it!

And now, I'm excited to get to work...

Matt Selig

NEWS BRIEFS...

- ❑ As part of the Annual Business meeting in March, the results from the mail-in Executive Board elections were announced: Matt Selig was elected President, Laura Demarest was elected Secretary, and Keith Dunlap was re-elected as Treasurer, all serving one-year terms. Dave Haun and Tom Sollman were re-elected as Directors, while Rand Heazlitt, Joe Kinder, and Paul Uglum were newly elected Directors. Our sincere gratitude to out-going President Jerry Lewis (13 years as president and previously two years as Director), Secretary Marc Milne (three years), and Director Sue Vernier (seven years as Director, and previously Secretary for three years). Also thanks to James Adams, Kevin Strunk, and Wyatt Williams for willing to be viable candidates, and thanks to the Election Tellers Goni Iskali and Danyele Green.
- ❑ The IKC was awarded a third Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) grant from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to eradicate harmful invasives and to perform some productive timber stand improvements (TSI) at our Wayne Cave Preserve in Monroe County. This third grant covers the middle "third" of the property. The northern and southern "thirds" were covered by grants approved in 2019 and 2020, respectively, and are on-going. We elected to split the property into three tracts to spread out the workload to match our volunteer resources. Each grant contract spans four years and will require a lot of volunteer "sweat equity" to be completed annually, but will really improve the quality of our woodlands, and likely will provide some excess funds for other stewardship activities at the property, or one of our other preserves. The first year of the contract is typically the most labor intensive, with fewer and fewer invasives to be treated the subsequent years. If you would like to know more about this volunteer opportunity and how you could help, please contact Property Manager Danyele Green (iluvlabs2006@yahoo.com). Also see page 10 for the first two scheduled workdays.
- ❑ The IKC has gained nine new members in the last quarter. Welcome Cameron Behringer, Joseph Buttrill, Brandon Chasteen, Nickolas Farid, Joshua Hershberger, Aronne McCoy, Chuck Perkins, Jamie Sutton, and Anthony Ward. The IKC membership currently stands at 246.

BOB SERGESKETTER, NSS 17602 FE, IKC #70

by Richard Vernier

After a long struggle with Parkinson's disease, Indiana Karst Conservancy Director Bob Sergesketter passed away from complications of the disease on April 5, 2021.

Bob served the IKC continuously on the Executive Board since 1994 – four years as Secretary, and twenty-four years as a Director, making him the third longest serving IKC Board member.

Over the years, Parkinson's, a neurodegenerative disorder that gradually destroys the body's motor control, relentlessly robbed Bob of his physical abilities, but it could never take away his mind, his positive outlook, his sense of humor, or his incandescent grin.

Bob was born on May 23, 1946 in Huntingburg, Indiana. Bob's interest in caves and caving began in high school in Jasper, Indiana through his involvement in scouting. In the early-1960s through the 1970s, several "Cave Man Expeditions" were held for Explorer Scouts of the Boy Scouts of America by an association of caving groups in Indiana: the Bloomington Indiana Grotto, the Central Indiana Grotto, the Evansville Museum Grotto (now Evansville Metropolitan Grotto), and the Southern Indiana Speleo Group. As an Explorer Scout in the Buffalo Trace Council of the BSA, Bob likely attended the expeditions at Cave River Valley and at Harrison-Crawford State Forest, and later would use what he learned to guide scouts through many classic Indiana caves as the Explorer Post Leader at Holy Family Catholic Church in Jasper.

Bob was a United States Navy Veteran, serving during the Vietnam War era aboard the USS Enterprise. I recall him talking about the Enterprise and how huge and complex it was. He admitted to sometimes being lost aboard in the giant three dimensional maze and that it reminded him

of a cave, particularly when he was crawling and climbing through cable racks and tight passages tracing some fault that he had been tasked to fix. Even his bunk was cave-like, requiring agility to get in and out of; and he likened it to sleeping in a tight crawlway without a helmet, and having to share it with a large and sometimes noisy pipe.

In 1971, Bob married Phyllis Leinenbach and

settled down to civilian life, making a home in Jasper and raising a daughter, Julie. Part of that life was a restart of former interests like caving.

For a time, Bob caved independently with the Explorer Scouts and mentored former Explorer Scouts like Steve Weinzapfel, now an IKC member. By 1980, Bob had become interested in organized caving and joined the Evansville Metropolitan Grotto, to which he remained a member for the rest of his life, serving as Secretary for many years.

Through the EMG, Bob began caving in Kentucky and helped to explore and map a new section of Glover's Cave near the Tennessee border. He also participated in the exploration and mapping of Twin Level Cave and Gilliam's Well Cave in the same general area.

It can be said that the good Germans of Jasper have a strong work ethic and Bob began to feel that going on cave trips, while fun, was not productive. In his words, he

was being a "cave consumer" and he longed to do more, to be a "cave producer". To this end he, along with several of us, through Dave Black and Holly Cook, became involved in project caving with the Central Kentucky Karst Coalition operating mostly in Roppel Cave in Kentucky. This was an arrangement that lasted until he could no longer cave and included a great many hours of survey and the exploration and mapping of some major finds like the "Metro Dome".



Bob Sergesketter entering Roppel via Dave Weller's entrance. Photo by Ernie Payne, 2010.



Bob Sergesketter on the bottom ladder of Dave Weller's entrance to Roppel Cave. Photo by Dick Vernier, 2010.

In the same time frame of not wanting to be just a “cave consumer”, in December of 1987, Bob joined a brand new organization in Indiana, the Indiana Karst Conservancy, and began participating in cleanups in some of the caves he had led scouts through. Bob took part in the original “Under-Earth Day” held April 21, 1990 in Sullivan Cave and hauled many bags of trash out through the Backbreaker.

Meanwhile in Kentucky, when the original entrance to Roppel and the entrance below the old Roppel fieldhouse (now called the Daleo Entrance, owned by the SCCi) were closed, we and Bob were left without a project. Nobody wanted to go back to being “cave consumers”; so when Bob remembered caving in a vertical cave in the area – Brushy Knob Pit Cave, and that there were some leads that nobody had pushed, we immediately planned a trip. This was the beginning of a project that lasted from 1988 to 1991 and completely changed the size and nature of the cave. Brushy went from a three-pit yo-yo cave to over 6,000 feet of challenging passage ranging from body size squeezes to huge, screaming borehole along with at least a dozen pits, many domes, an aid-climb or two, and a vertical extent of 305 feet. Bob made the second most survey trips into the

cave and kept book, a thankless job, on several trips. Years later when I drafted the final map, based on working maps by Dave Black, I found Bob's notes and sketches to be meticulous and accurate. His sketches were so impeccable that all I had to do was scan and re-scale them, and trace over them. I remember griping at him in the cave at the time that he was taking too long, but later found out why and appreciated his efforts.

During the Brushy Knob project, Bob took time out to be a major part of another project, the creation of the Khan Entrance into Roppel Cave. This effort took place under the leadership of Dave Weller and Richard Market with Bob, Steve Weinzapfel, and myself taking supporting roles.

After the entrance shaft was sunk, Bob and I volunteered to make an exact survey of the shaft, which was not perfectly vertical and angled to nearly horizontal at the bottom to reach the side of a large room. Bob came up with the clever idea to use two-by-fours to construct a framework which could be carefully aligned in the shaft and serve as a reference frame for lots of lateral measurements made with string levels. In a sense we were creating what we now call a “point cloud”, usually done with LiDAR. I was then able to use the data to create a “solid model” on an early CAD/CAM system



Bob Sergesketter with Richard Vernier and Richard Market after discovering and mapping a new passage in Glover's Cave in Kentucky. Photo by Ernie Payne, circa 1980s.

that identified rocks that needed to be shaved and allowed me to design a culvert broken into sections cut at angles, which could be reassembled from the bottom up in the cave. Bob, Steve Weinzapfel, and Richard Market then constructed and test fit the entrance at Steve's place of work.

The construction of the Khan Entrance leading into the seldom visited north end of Roppel raised hopes of major discoveries, including an elusive connection to another major cave in the area. Bob and I made many trips working towards that end, but yielded only small gains. Richard Market and Bill Walters had better luck, but even their discovery soon petered-out. During that time, we became aware that the project teams working in the other major cave really didn't want to be connected to and absorbed by Mammoth Cave. While those of us working in Roppel considered it to have its own identity and weren't troubled by its connection to Mammoth, this did not appear to be the case for the other group. In accordance with their wishes, we abandoned leads that might have made such a connection, and soon the interest in the new entrance died out.

After the Khan Entrance project, Bob went back to Brushy Knob and continued with it until word came that Dave Weller had purchased a piece of property over the Downey Avenue section of Roppel. Soon Brushy was abandoned and the team of Bob Sergesketter, Richard Market, Steve Weinzapfel, Dave Weller, and myself were hard at work sinking another shaft – this time into a dome complex in a location in the heart of Roppel.

In addition to his Indiana and Kentucky interests, Bob also became involved for a time in the Bluespring Cave (TN) project, several times accompanying Bill Walters on long, intense survey trips far into the hinterlands of this huge cave system.

By 1994, Bob had decided to run for an IKC Director's position and almost to his surprise, he was elected. Afterwards, he would rarely miss a meeting, usually bringing Phyllis who sometimes volunteered to proxy for absent Board members. Before Parkinson's made travel challenging for them, he and Phyllis often carpooled with Sue and

I. On the way we would discuss everything from IKC business to Roppel.

Before the disease made everything just too difficult, Bob loved the IKC work projects. Whether it was installing bat-friendly gates on abandoned mines, installing the driveway at the Wayne Cave Preserve, removing an old trailer at Sullivan Cave property or an abandoned camper at Robinson Ladder Cave property, cleaning trash out of a sinkhole, or helping to build a split-rail fence around Gory Hole, he was one of the first to volunteer. One of the last big work projects he was able to participate in was the installation of the new bat-friendly gate at Wyandotte Cave. With great concentration he was able to help carry many of the heavy steel bars into the cave and to set them in place.

My wife Sue and I were along on one of Bob's last

cave trips, an eight hour or so trip into Roppel Cave via the Dave Weller's entrance, the one mentioned earlier. Bob did quite well though he had to be very slow and deliberate in his actions. Anyone who has been in this entrance knows that there are four very long and very heavy duty ladders that get you to the bottom of the entrance dome complex. These ladders are followed by some crawling and another short ladder that drops you into a canyon. As we made our way in, Bob began to recollect about the creation of the entrance and how it fit into the larger picture of the exploration of Roppel.

Bob was quite familiar with these ladders as he played a major part in their installation. To place



Bob Sergesketter helping to construct a split-rail fence around Gory Hole for the HNF. Photo by Bill Tozer, 1996.



Bob Sergesketter assisting with the driveway gate post at the Wayne Cave Preserve. Photo Tem Hornaday, 2004.

the ladders, we had to rappel in and guide them into location as they were lowered; and Bob did more than his share of this hazardous work.

At first, the Weller's entrance only afforded access to the north, away from the more central and more promising part of the cave; but one day Bob was sitting on the rubble pile at the bottom of the dome and shaft entrance complex when he noticed a slight breeze coming from the pile. After hours of digging out and rearranging the rubble pile that we had created in the course of clearing the way for the ladders, we discovered a very tight way on. Bob and Steve Weinzapfel were able to make their way past a very tight spot and I remained behind to enlarge it. Eventually, I was able to crawl through and join Bob at another, even tighter constriction. Steve had managed to crawl through, but was afraid he could not get back out so Bob and I carved rock while Steve explored. Eventually, Steve returned and announced that he had followed a canyon until he was able to climb up and fit himself under a boulder that blocked the way, and on the other side he had popped out into a big dome with a drizzly waterfall and realized that he recognized where he was, and that the passage far over his head was the southern continuation of Downey Avenue leading to the main part of the cave!

After we had retrieved Steve, we sat at the base of the bottom ladder and discussed what to do. This was obviously the way we were looking for,

but it was a long ways from being a tourist route. We would need to get Dave Weller involved to create a passable connection. Bob then named it the "BSD Connection" after the discoverers (Bob, Steve, and Dick) – though I'm not sure that was ever formally incorporated into the map.

On Bob's last Roppel trip, we had a much easier time. Over the years Dave Weller had enlarged the tight spots and eliminated most of the obstacles and it was now practically walking the whole way. It had become the main route into the cave. Bob, Sue, and I made our way to the Arlie Way borehole as we listened to Bob reminisce about earlier trips and how much harder it once was to get to this area.

Bob really wanted to visit his favorite place, a waterfall accessed from a climb near Promenade Pit. At times the waterfall ran with such power that it could be heard rumbling long before you even reached the climbdown. Several times on past trips we had had to detour a bit when the rumbling was too much for Bob to pass up. I remember Bob, soaked from the waist down standing near the base of the deafening falls, unable to shout over the roar, but clearly conveying, without words, just with a huge grin, how much he appreciated the sight. This time Bob had to concede that the climb was too much for him and he had to be content with his memories.

Parkinson's often leads to loss of balance and falls. Bob lived with this for more than a decade and did pretty well until he fell at home and fractured a hip. This led to additional loss of mobility and other difficulties that finally got the best of him on April 5th of this year. He will be missed for his wit, his hard work, his intelligence and his willingness to help others – he was a great caver and a great friend.



Bob Sergesketter and others disassembling an old trailer at the Sullivan Cave Preserve. Photo uncredited, 2000.

ORANGEVILLE RISE WORKDAY 2021

by Carla Striegel-Winner

Saturday, May 1st was a beautiful day in southern Indiana and the IKC was especially lucky to have fourteen dedicated volunteers commit to the second-annual Orangeville Rise workday. We logged in over 35 hours of work and ridded the property and watershed of 38 bags of invasive plants – mostly garlic mustard. Volunteers broke into small groups and were able to cover the entire three acre property. I'm estimating a thousand pounds of garlic mustard was pulled in two-and-half hours. Additionally, some winter creeper was pulled, trash picked up, and some non-native irises that had been dumped with their landscaping cloth were relocated to become a happy part of a volunteer's yard. We even had a neighbor stop by, introduce herself, tell us, "I don't know what you are doing, but thank you!" and donate a huge box of trash bags!

We could not have asked for a better day – it was cool and sunny; perfect for volunteers to relax at lunch with their complimentary made-to-order sandwiches. Of course, all will agree that the best part of the day was Keith Dunlap's homemade cookies. Some folks headed home or on to other projects after lunch, while a group of ten took a jaunt to nearby Wesley Chapel Gulf for a short hike and plenty of good conversation on a gorgeous spring day.



drone photo by Matt Selig (2021)

The IKC is dependent on volunteers committing time to our properties and I would like to thank the following for their work on that day: Miriam Ash, Sarah Burgess, Patti Cummings, Bambi Dunlap, Keith Dunlap, Lee Florea, Sam Frushour, Danyele Green, Wes Roeder, Matt Selig, Cheri & Ron Winner, and Jamie Winner.

More photos can be found on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/IndianaKarstConservancy.

WAYNE CAVE PRESERVE INVASIVES WORKDAYS

Sunday, June 6th – 10 AM to 2 PM EDT (rain date July 11th)

- ✓ Multiflora rose foliar spraying (northern tract)
- ✓ Autumn olive and privet cutting and stump treating (southern tract)

Tuesday, July 20th – 4 PM to 7 PM EDT

- ✓ Multiflora rose foliar spraying (southern tract)
- ✓ Autumn olive and privet cutting and stump treating (southern tract)
- ✓ Multiflora foliar spraying and flag anything that needs cut/treated (middle tract)

Please contact property manager Danyele Green at iluvlabs2006@yahoo.com or 317-370-7891 if you wish to attend or have any questions. Additional details will be e-mailed to those who RSVP. Food/drinks will be provided, so please provide any dietary restrictions you may have with your response. If you respond to the Facebook event, please mark GOING only if you are actually planning to come. Otherwise, mark INTERESTED. Thank you so much!

LOWRY KARST PRESERVE STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

by Ray Sheldon

It has been a busy few years of stewardship at the Lowry Karst Preserve since the property was acquired in 2019. You can read a summary of the 2020 activities on page 22. This article will cover activities for the first five months of 2021.

First there is an ongoing effort by the IKC to learn what types of plants grow here (good natives and not-so-good invasives) and understanding what biological species are present. Keith Dunlap reports in his observation visits that the same (this is speculative) transient Indiana bat has been retuning for the past three years to temporarily roost in late-April in a ceiling crack inside Lowry cave. He has also observed a big Brown bat in April, which may or may not be one of the same ones which over-winter in the cave. He also identified a wall clinging flowering plant (Mountain stonecrop) that is present on the limestone faces near the cave's entrance.

In January, Bruce Trotter, Jerry Walker, and I started the effort to replace the old rusted metal gate posts on the lane gate. First we dug out the concrete encased metal hinge post and replaced it with a 6" x 6" treated wood post secured in concrete. In May, Bruce and I replaced the opposite rusted-off metal rest post with another 6" x 6" treated post, also secured with concrete with a 6" x 4" treated "foot" for the gate to rest on when closed.

Removing invasives below the tree canopy continues on the preserve. In May, several IKC members helped pull garlic mustard on four different occasions. At least two dozen trash bags were packed away with only one tick noticed.

Here is a complete list of activities at the property:

January 10 – Beth Sheldon and I checked out the property and looked for hibernating bats in the entrance room of Lowry Cave.

January 12 – I began digging out the concrete en-

cased rusted metal gate hinge post.

January 13 – I continued digging out the concrete encased rusted metal gate hinge post.

January 23 – Bruce Trotter, Jerry Walker, and I used a come-along to pull out the concrete encased rusted metal gate hinge post and replaced it with a 6" x 6" treated wood post secured with concrete.

February 13 – Dave Haun and Bob Vandeventer visited the preserve and the entrance to Lowry Cave.



February 27 – Beth and I checked out the property. We installed the hinge post hardware and reset the lane gate.

March 6 – Wes Terrell lead a Central Indiana Grotto trip to Lowry Cave that included Drennan Terrell, Kristen Champion-Terrell, Solvie Terrell, Amy Howe, and Jamie Howe.

March 22 – Beth and I removed fallen branches from the interior lane and checked the Lowry Cave entrance area for Big Brown bats.

April 15 – I checked out the property and checked the Lowry Cave entrance area for Big Brown bats.

April 17 – Carla Striegel-Winner lead an EMG visit to Lowry Cave that included Debbie Durham, Anna Francis, Greg Dunwoody, Sue and Richard Vernier, and Jamie Winner. After the cave trip, Carla and Sue pulled up some garlic mustard on the cave side of the interior lane.

May 5 – Bambi Dunlap, Keith Dunlap, and I pulled garlic mustard (six bags).

May 8 – Carla Striegel-Winner and Keith Dunlap pulled garlic mustard (12 bags) while Bruce Trotter and I replaced the rusted metal gate rest post with a new 6" x 6" treated post with a 6" x 4" gate rest secured in concrete.

May 12 – Bambi Dunlap, Keith Dunlap, and I

Continued on page 29...

DONNEHUE CAVE CLEAN-UP

by Jeff Cody

The Culvert entrance to the Dog Hill-Donnehue Cave is a longtime favorite of many Indiana cavers, myself included. My history of caving here goes back to 1982. The access close to a highway made it easy for me and others back then; unfortunately it also made it easy for vandals and those less conservation-minded (or just ignorant). Back in September of 2020, while working on another conservation project with Scott Frosch, he mentioned to me that new pink spray paint had been discovered in Donnehue Cave. There had always been some spray paint here and there in the cave, but this new paint was obvious. This disturbed me as I have a sentimental attachment to the cave, as it was one of my first caves. My concern was that this new spray paint might “breed” more vandalism, and the cave might end up like Buckner Cave was back in the early 1980s. So I decided that I should try to organize a clean-up trip to remove this new paint and other spray paint from the past.

In early January I made a post on the Central Indiana Grotto Facebook page seeking help to remove the new spray paint, and also to maybe dig flood debris from the culvert entrance grate. I noticed on a trip in December of 2019 after a heavy rain, that water was backing up at the entrance preventing entry, and would make an exit during these flood conditions difficult. Much to my surprise, I got replies from many who said they were willing to help with the conservation project. Thus I selected a date (January 30) for this clean-up. I also set up a Facebook event page inviting all who replied, but was not sure how many would actually

show up. Next I needed to secure a small collection of wire brushes, pasting brushes, and small buckets to mud paint. Keith Dunlap contacted me and offered me a nice stash of tools owned by the IKC that I could borrow. I made arrangements to pick up the equipment a couple weeks before the trip. I also made everyone aware that the date could change if we got unseasonable cold or significant snowfall. The week of the event came around and temperatures did not look too bad, so I checked with everyone on the event page to see if they were comfortable with the forecast, and they all seemed to be. Snowfall was expected that day, but it was later in the evening. I set up a meet time of 10 AM at the nearby church and crossed my fingers, hoping I could get maybe half of those who said they were interested in the project to show up.

On the morning of the project, I woke and left home in plenty of time to stop for breakfast on the way down. I arrived at the church lot early and found Kim Dickerson already there. Soon after Bambi Dunlap arrived. By 10 AM, I was shocked to find thirteen or more people in addition to myself. This list included myself, Kim Dickerson, Scott Frosch, Bambi Dunlap, Mitch Vaughn, Summer Rathfon, Christina Kay Seuell, Andrew Coyle, John and Nikki Hartung, Krista Reeves, and a few others. We had a sufficiently-sized group to split up the tasks, with one group working on the entrance grate dig (see below), and the second group going in with wire brushes and mud paint to start on removing/camouflaging the spray paint (see top of opposite page). Mitch, and his friend, along



photos by Scott Frosch and Bambi Dunlap (2021)

with Scott, Kim, Christina, Krista, and myself worked with shovels digging and pulling debris at the entrance. In a short time we noticed a difference in the flow of water. Flood debris was maybe three and a half feet up the grate from its bottom. We took turns with shovels while the rest pulled large rocks, car tires (see below), and other debris from this flood pile. After about two hours we had it all cleaned out where you can actually see the bottom of the grate. I had not seen it look like this since the early 1980s. I am hoping this effort will prevent flood waters from backing up at the grate (at least for a while), preventing a rescue incident.

After the entrance project was complete, we decided to enter the cave. Most of my group wanted to go explore some areas in the upper-level, but I wanted to go back and check on the progress of the graffiti removal team. As we entered, I noticed some areas of mud paint along the way. While the rest did the upper-level climb up, I remained low and caved solo further back until I reached the other group. I originally thought I would find them pretty quickly, but much to my surprise, I did not find them until I had almost reached the first of the lower crawls near the Spring entrance. This was reportedly where the new spray paint had stopped (a recon group, including Christina and Andrew, had gone in a few weeks earlier to check on the extent of this damage). I soon met the “wire brush and mud paint” group as they were beginning their trip out. They had taken care of everything! I noticed several mud painted areas on my way in. I carried in a bucket with mud, a wallpaper paste brush, and wire brush just in case I was needed to assist. We all exited together and stopped a couple times to get some stuff not easily seen going in. After that we exited. Those who were not part of the entrance dig group were amazed at what the difference we had made since they entered. We grabbed a couple of the car tires and took them up the hill and placed them in the back of Christina’s truck. We also picked up a small amount of trash inside the cave, but not as much as you would expect given the traffic the cave seems to get (perhaps the cave is “self-flushing”). I brought in a couple large trash bags, but never needed them. We all changed and the rest of the mud-painting group left as I stayed in my car to wait on the upper-level group to return. A short time later they returned. Snowfall was showing on my phone radar to the north and it turned out to be significant enough to slow traffic down to 35 mph on I-69, and later on SR 37.

I was proud of what we had accomplished. I was also amazed at the turn out given the snow-

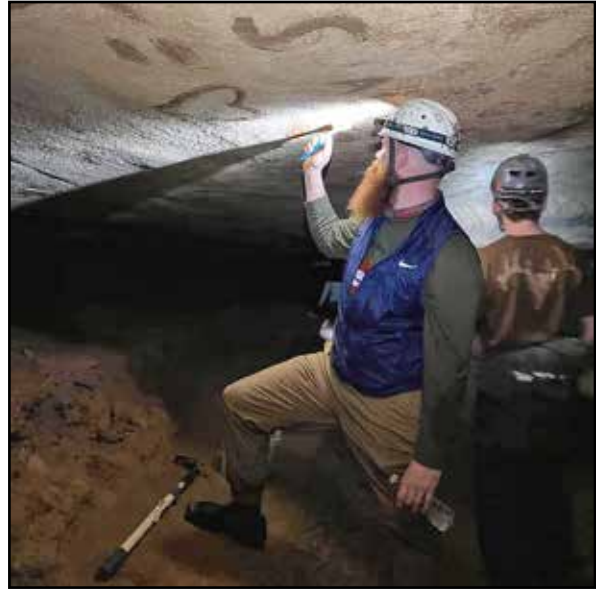


photo by John Hartung (2021)

fall in the forecast. We spent maybe four hours or so doing the tasks. There is still more work to be done. The cave itself is now mostly trash-free, but some trash was among the entrance debris. I figure maybe a large trash bag full. Also two large tractor tires had washed in close to the entrance that need to be removed. They have mud inside them, making them heavy. The best way to remove them, I suspect, is to cut them into more manageable pieces with a battery-powered sawz-all. Even after that is done, I will still need someone with a truck to haul off the cut up pieces and find a responsible way to dispose of them. It was also suggested to me to perhaps increase the existing grate opening a bit more to make it more friendly for bats to pass. There are some bats reported in the upper-level and near the Spring entrance. Prior to White-nose Syndrome, Donnehue had a respectable population of Little Brown and Tri-colored bats, so doing what we can to improve bat access is a positive thing.

I want to thank all who helped. I could not have done this without their efforts. I feel this is a cave worth putting some effort in. We have definitely made a difference, at least for the time being.



photo by Bambi Dunlap (2021)

ROBINSON LADDER CAVE AND PRESERVE DESERVES A CLOSER LOOK

by Carla Striegel-Winner

The most recent reading of the annual Cave Patron and Property Manager reports (starting on page 17) revealed that not a single recreational caver visited Robinson Ladder Cave in 2020. Okay, there was the pandemic and all, but still... John Benton, our Property Manager of the Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve (RLCP), also mentioned in his report (see page 20) that the preserve is one of the least visited properties owned by the IKC. I suppose I am not surprised by this, but I hate to see our members and Indiana cavers leaving it out. I hope I can entice more folks to visit the cave and our largest preserve.

The Cave(s)

The IKC actually purchased the original property and the cave in 2005, largely due to the Indiana bats known to hibernate there. The Indiana bat winter population has since dropped to zero due to White-nose Syndrome, although we have hopes the bats will someday return. The cave is open for visitation from May 1 to August 31 annually. It is actually a pretty neat little cave that certainly deserves a bit of attention. It's worth the two or so hours it will take to explore this Crawford County cavern. The entrance, in the mature woods, is a scenic sink with rock outcroppings draped with ferns and other native vegetation (see a winter view of the entrance on the cover of this issue). A hand line is normally used to negotiate the flowstone drop from the thick forest humus into the cave itself. This drop is where the "ladder" in the name came from, back in the day. Some may prefer a cable ladder or vertical gear to negotiate this drop or the climb back out. At the bottom of the entrance slope, cavers will find themselves in a large room with an exposed climb up into the main section of the cave, which is crawling and walking through very dry environs. For a little extra adventure, there is an optional dome-pit complex beyond the first crawl which requires vertical gear. The cave has been known for quite some time, as evidenced by many historic signatures. The oldest one dates to 1882, the year before nearby Marengo Cave was discovered. The Schotter family is well represented in The Graveyard area of the cave. All in all, it makes for a great grotto trip cave for new and experienced cavers, as well as a fun jaunt as part of a Harrison/Crawford counties caving day or camping weekend. An-

other small cave on the property, Breakdown Falls Cave, was originally discovered and mapped in 1986, but sees even less visitation. The entrance can be intermittently closed due to debris build up.

The Camping

It always surprises me that this property is not a popular camping site for members. It is an out of the way scenic spot in the middle of great a great caving area. It is also not too far from the towns of Milltown and Marengo, both with amenities any caver would need or desire. An area at the preserve is kept mowed at the top of the ridge near the barn (yes, barn!) and although there are neighbors across the way and down the hill, the average person will feel like they are absolutely in the middle of nowhere. The barn, complete with dusty picnic table, is great for rain outs and the property is idyllic southern Indiana at its best. To access this camping spot, a high-clearance and all-wheel is recommended for the steep graveled lane. Alternatively, cars can park in the mowed area just before the lane goes up the hill.

The Chestnut Plantation

No visit to RLCP would be complete without checking out the 2016 American Chestnut plantation. The chestnuts and their companion trees reside close to the barn in a deer enclosure. These iconic American trees once forested large swaths of the eastern United States including southern Indiana, until the Chestnut blight of the 1930s killed most of them. Researchers have been working diligently to try to bring the great American Chestnut back through crossbreeding. This site was chosen by The American Chestnut Foundation as a suitable one to help "return the iconic American Chestnut to its native range." Our hope with this experimental plantation, which is managed in cooperation with the Foundation, is that at least a few of the trees live to maturity and can produce nuts, thus reproducing and helping bring the chestnut back to our forests. Of the original fifty chestnuts planted in 2016, most have survived and a few of these are well over ten feet tall.

The Road, the Cliff, the River, and the Pastoral Scenes

RLCP is, without a doubt, located along one of the most scenic highways in southern Indiana, a small section of State Road 66, that just feels like

Continued on page 29...

A LOOK BACK AT INDIANA KARST

by John M Benton

Often historic signatures in a cave are from unknown visitors, but occasionally the names can be traced to people of prominence with a story behind their signature. Wyandotte Cave has many such signatures and below are just a few with a little history about the “graffiti artists”. All photos by John Benton.

H. C. Hovey and J. D. Butler’s signatures in Wyandotte Cave are found in what is now known as Butler Point. The exact date is unknown, but likely in the early-1850s after the Long Route and the Auger Hole were discovered. Hovey was a professor/geologist at Wabash College and Butler was Hovey’s student. Butler Point was named after Butler, suggesting he might have been the first person to find the then terminal room and these may have been the first signatures placed in the room (there have been many since then).

Photo taken in June, 1998.



Robert Dale Owen’s signature, dated 1857, is located on the ceiling in Wyandotte Cave in the Sandy Plains, near the Mountain Room. Owen was the State Geologist at the time, and lived in New Harmony, IN.

Photo taken the summer of 2005.

Ben Hains’ signature inside Wyandotte Cave is in an obscure passage off the South Branch. Ben Hains was from New Albany Indiana and took over fifty [stereoview](#) photos in Wyandotte Cave, as well as several other commercial caves: Marengo Cave, [Mammoth Cave](#) (KY), and Weyers Cave (VA). Most of his stereoviews in Wyandotte were from the late-1800s, more specifically circa 1898. Above Hains’ signature you can also see (Henry) H. A. Rothrock’s signature, a distant relative of the owner of Wyandotte Cave at the time.

Photo taken circa 2005.



THEN AND NOW - TREES AT THE SULLIVAN PRESERVE

by Keith Dunlap

On April 7, 2001, as the main project for Under-Earth Day XII, twenty-four IKC volunteers ambitiously planted 1,700 trees on three acres at the Sullivan Cave Preserve. The left and right photo pairs below were taken in approximately the same spots in the same direction. *What a difference twenty years make!* Tree species planted included a mixture of oaks (red, white, black, scarlet, bur, chinkapin), hickory (shagbark, pignut), black cherry, persimmon, tulip tree, and white ash. Participants that day included George

Cesnik, Jeff Cody, Bambi Dunlap, Keith Dunlap, Jeff Fraiser, Hal Rempe and family, Ariaunah Koster, Isaiah Koster, Jordan Koster, Kent Koster, Melissa LeToundedu, Kriste Lindberg, Adam Manship, Everett Pulliam, Tom Rea, Jeff Sanders, Brian Schultz, Bob Sergesketter, Tom Sollman, Bob Vandeventer, Mark Webb, Kathy Welling, Cheri Winner, Jamie Winner, Ronald Winner, and Bob Zatarski.

Reference: *IKC Update* #61 (June 2001), page 7.



GET TO KNOW YOUR INVASIVES: BURNING BUSH

by Danyele Green

The second in a planned installment of invasive species education series.

Fast Facts:

- Common name: Burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*).
- Deciduous shrub popularly sold as a showy ornamental.
- Can grow 15' tall.
- Leaves are opposite, oval-obovate, fine-toothed. Green changes to red in the fall.
- New stem growth is greenish in color. Older branches can have ridged/winged look and turn brown with age.
- Flowers are small, light green, four petals.
- Bright red berries in the fall. Loved by birds (ugh – wide seed distribution), but poor in nutritional quality.
- This plant creates thick, dense areas that displace native plants.
- Respond to chemical persuasion, but the safest and cheapest method of control is to pull small young plants. Larger shrubs respond well to 'cut and paint' methods.
- When pulling up plants, be sure to grab at the base and gently pull up to remove all of the root. Bag and trash to ensure no re-rooting occurs.



photo credit mc-iris.org website

Alternative to planting burning bush:

'Burning Bush' is still widely sold in Indiana. It is not yet on the 'illegal to sell' list, but it should be! There are *native* burning bush, so please do your research before purchasing.

- Wahoo (*Euonymus atropurpureus*) maroon flowers and larger fruits in fall.
- Running Strawberry Bush (*Euonymus obovatus*) perennial groundcover. Five petaled flowers.
- Strawberry Bush (*Euonymus americanus*) southern Indiana, wet woodlands. Also five petaled flowers.

ANNUAL CAVE PATRON / PROPERTY MANAGER REPORTS

Each year at the Annual Business meeting, the IKC Cave Patrons and Property Managers are asked to present a verbal summary and submit a written report describing the prior calendar year's activities and incidents, and to make any future recommendations needing implemented. The following is a compilation of their reports for 2020:

Buddha Cave Patron Report (Jeff Cody)

The past year saw a decrease in visitation to Buddha Cave compared to previous years. I suspect the same can be said for other IKC caves due to the pandemic. I have permits filled out for only four trips into Buddha Cave. All these trips were warm weather trips when bats were not in hibernation with the exception possibly of the October 14th trip. Three trips were arranged through myself, and one was through Dave Everton (BIG). The cave was made available for Indiana Cave

Capers, as the event was held at nearby Camp Riverdale. Following the then current IKC guidelines of spacing trips out by 48 hours, we could of had a Friday trip and a Sunday trip, but only the Sunday trip was made. This was the largest trip of the year with eight waivers filled out. I did make a quick trip to the property during Capers weekend. I did not enter the cave, but walked the property and inspected the area around three entrances since I was passing by. I always ask the leaders of trips arranged through me to report to me of any trash or graffiti, or anything out of the normal and no one reported anything to me. I think the need for a ladder at the entrance has reduced visitation as it provides an obstacle for entry.

The only suggestion I have is to install a bolt up top of the entrance climb. This could make it easy to secure the top of the ladder during trips and also



serve as a rig point if the ladder somehow was knocked over while others were in the cave. I do not remember an obvious natural rig point near this climb. I feel a bolt is an easy fix with minimal impact to the cave and possibly save a potential entrapment. Most groups will have vertical gear and rope as they exit. If one is familiar with TAG “pull down” rig style, you could rig the short drop and pull the rope down behind you. There are two easy rigging options to achieve this. One may require a steel ring at the bolt. I could likely find someone to place the bolt if the board will allow.

Buddha Property Report (Keith Dunlap)

This was the IKC’s 19th year of ownership and we continue our long-term stewardship projects, but otherwise we are in “maintenance mode”.

The parking area and perimeter trail were mowed three times in 2020. Some briar and cedar tree trimming was done along the trails.

The area where we culled the over-crowded oaks in 2019 looked really good. There are some other areas that need thinning as the trees get larger. A few standing dead ash trees near the parking area were dropped proactively. The planted trees everywhere on the property are really starting to grow and fill-in.

There were no major management problems or concerns encountered during 2020.

2021 activities I hope to accomplish:

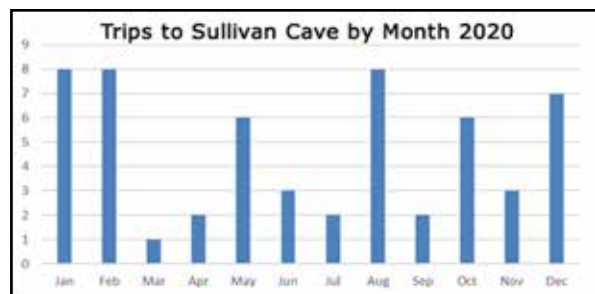
- Continue mowing the trails.
- Continue working on the grapevines (still a few acres to go).
- Plan for the removal of the dying Ash tree by the parking lot gate.

Sullivan Cave Patron Report (Paul Uglum)

This report covers the activity and visitation from January through December, 2020. As in past years, people and groups with a wide range of caving experience and expectations have requested visits to Sullivan Cave. Groups’ experience-levels range from very experienced cavers traveling upstream to the Rise, to various youth groups with limited or no wild cave experience making trips to the Mountain Room and back, with an experienced caver as a guide. The ability to scale trips based on the experience level of the cavers makes Sullivan Cave ideal for groups with varied experi-

ence levels and larger groups. The largest groups were very early in the year prior to the new Covid-19 restrictions. Late in the year, the number of requests has increased significantly with as many as three requests for the same date.

For 2020, there were 54 trips with a total of 364 participants. Most trips were arranged through the IKC and BIG. The number of trips decreased significantly from last year. Group sizes range widely, from 3 to 25 participants, with the average of 7 participants per trip. More experienced groups tended to be smaller, while led youth groups and Grotto beginner trips were larger. There were an additional 10 trips that were scheduled through the IKC, but did not take place due to Covid-19 or Covid-related restrictions on group size.



There were eight nights of camping on the site. This year there were only two Sullivan caving trips associated with the camping. Camping requests are required to have at least one member who is an IKC member.

There were 40 additional inquires, about the same as last year, that did not result in a trip. These were generally non-cavers who did not respond to replies after I explained that Sullivan was a wild cave and what the IKC rules are. These groups included several that wanted next or same day visits and gave the impression they thought Sullivan was operated like commercial cave with regular tours. Formal rejections were for the most part for same or next day visitation (later alternatives were offered). In the case of inexperienced and unequipped requestors, alternatives for beginners such as trips through local grottos were recommended.

Due to Covid-19, I led no trips to Sullivan’s this year.

There was one incident with a cave lock replaced after the lock was damaged when the gate was closed with the lock in place. The lock was replaced shortly after the trip by Dave Everton. A second incident was with two groups visiting the cave on the same day in violation of the IKC Board’s Co-

vid-19 restrictions. Upon investigation, only one trip was approved through the Patron, so the other group was either approved by a Liaison who did not coordinate with the Patron, a group with an approved trip that chose without checking to visit on a different date, or someone with a copy key. Liaisons were reminded to check with the Patron to see if dates are available prior to approving trips.

Most trips were requested via e-mail and keys mailed to the trip leader and returned by mail. One key was lost, with all other keys returned in a timely manner this year. I encourage anyone wanting to visit Sullivan Cave to plan ahead. Locks have been replaced as needed, but the “SF” series remained the same throughout the year.

Opportunities for improvements:

As with last year, an in-cave cleanup/restoration project would be a good idea. There are parts of the backbreaker that have far too much graffiti in some locations – this tends to encourage more damage in my estimation. It would also be good to have a general clean up.

There are more beginners who would be interested in visiting the cave if they could find someone to lead them. I generally direct them to the local grottos. REI had no in-store classes this year, so the CIG introduction to caving class was not available. I do not have a good solution, but the interest is there if anyone has a workable solution. It would be useful to create a list of those who are willing to lead an occasional trip with a youth group.

Individuals and groups who are interested in wild caving, but have little or no experience continue to contact the IKC Sullivan e-mail seeing opportunities to go caving. It would be good to have an outreach program to direct them to grottos and encourage them to become responsible cavers.

A more detailed map of the cave would also be useful. Looking at the new Buckner’s map having a similar one of the south parts of Sullivan would be nice.

Sullivan Property Report (Keith Dunlap)

This was the IKC’s 22nd full year of ownership and we continue our long-term stewardship projects, but otherwise we are in “maintenance mode”.

The camping area and the area out by the highway were mowed three times last year. Twice during the growing season (by David Schaefer) and once after all the leaves were down to mulch the leaf cover (by

Keith Dunlap). I also treated Stiltgrass in August (to prevent seeding) on the mowed areas.

Several members and a few youth groups took advantage of the camping area and firewood over the past year, but fewer groups than in past years. Paul Uglum, the Cave Patron, generally manages permission for camping. Locks are also serviced by Paul.

The port-a-john was not serviced last year due to less visitation. I do have a lead on a new and hopefully cheaper service vendor which I plan to pursue.

Janet Eger, Lawrence County District Forester, conducted a Classified Forest inspection on the property (earlier than the typical 5-year timing due to a random audit she had to perform). She made several prescriptive suggestions. The first was invasive treatment (mostly multiflora rose) on the west side of the property that was partially completed last summer. Also general grapevine control which was also partially completed in December.

I have yet to disassemble and remove the large free-standing deer stand that was discovered last year. This was obviously erected at some point by the “neighbors” to the west of the property. The neighbors are now gone. Two smaller tree stands were discovered and removed.

There were no major management problems or concerns encountered during 2020.

2021 activities I hope to accomplish:

- Replace the existing port-a-john with a newer/nicer unit (donated by A1 Porta Potty)
- Systematically walk the woods to remove grapevines, per the suggestion of the DNR District Forester (started in 2020).
- Systematically perform invasive treatment on the property (started in 2020).
- Perhaps spray the camping area again in August to control the Stiltgrass.
- Over-seed the camping area in the fall with tall fescue that will be more hardy.
- Put a new roof on the red “wood shed”.
- Remove the unauthorized deer stand.

On the 11-acre adjacent property to the west (now owned by me), the modular “double-wide” home has been demolished and removed, as well as one of the two garages. The “utility shed” is also in the process of being removed. I plan to do some



tree planting in 2021 and enroll the property in Classified Forest.

On the 2-acre adjacent property to the west (now owned by me), two house trailers, a garage, and utility shed were removed. This property is available for the IKC to acquire at some point.

Wayne Cave Patron Report (Dave Everton)

Patron-Arranged Trips: 13 Number of cavers: 65

Liaison-Arranged Trips: 2 (Near Normal Grotto and CIG) Number of cavers: 13

Total Trips: 15 Total number of cavers 78 (some went more than once)

Wayne Property Report (Danyele Green)

For 2020:

- We have completed YEAR 2 of our Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contract with the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on Tract 1 (northernmost) and most of YEAR 1 on Tract 3 (southernmost).
- Tract 1 treatment involved finding everything we missed in 2019 along with pulling or spraying the new growth. This tract consisted of mainly Autumn Olive, Multiflora, Burning Bush, Grapevine, and a few other invasives thrown in for good measure.
- Tract 3 had the southeastern area **loaded** with Autumn Olive and Privet. The work in Tract 3 was done by a handful of individuals over the course of the late summer/fall.
- Special thanks to all who were involved in workdays, either planned or *ad hoc*. Keith Dunlap, Cris Suell, Jerry Lewis, Scott Frosh, Laura Demarest, Goni Iskali, Bambi Dunlap, Tymme Laun, Jack Cathcart, and Nic Garza.
- Other stewardship work consisted of additional trail clearing and marking. The abundance of fall leaves and lack of adequate foot traffic made it difficult to see where the trail went. I **highly** encourage everyone to get out and hike the trails this spring once I ensure the trail is properly visible. Work is still being done to level things out and clearing the way, but we need feet pounding down the route!!
- Several unauthorized camping trips occurred in 2020. I am not fully aware of who the campers were, other than I've been informed

that people have been camping that have not contacted me for permission. One camp appeared to be from an unhoused individual for short-term residence and unfortunately for us, they left their belongings behind that had to be removed and trashed (thanks Mike Drake, Tom Nugent, and Cody Hudson for helping with that situation, and to Mark Longacre for letting us know). I would like to reiterate, camping is permitted **with permission**.

Future Projects:

- We will complete YEAR 3 of the Tract 1 contract, and the remainder of YEAR 1 for Tract 3 contract. Fingers crossed we will be awarded a grant for Tract 2. We may know before this goes to print! [*yes, we did get it!* - editor]
- There have been several requests for a port-potty to be placed at the Wayne Property. We currently have one available for our use, and need to discuss the fees/cleaning at the March meeting to get it in place hopefully by May 1.
- Weather permitting, we hope to have a March workday for trash cleanup and trail work, and an April workday to pull garlic mustard and other small invasives.

Robinson Ladder Property (John Benton)

April 24, 2020 – Keith and Bambi Dunlap met at property. First objective was to remove a tree that had fallen across the access lane. Up on the hill top, several small branches were picked up and moved into woods. There were two large trees down on north side of nylon wildlife fence, and some fence repair was done besides tree cutting/removal. Keith and Bambi alternated mowing inside the fence around and between the tree seedlings. A mixture of smaller and larger trees were noted. Keith plans a return trip in 30 days or so for herbicide treatment around the trees. Keith noted that Jamie Winner had removed all tulip poplars outside the fence to the south, which was good.

April, 2020 – IKC member/volunteer Jamie Winner mowed the camping areas and access lanes.

June 16, 2020 – Keith Dunlap did tree maintenance. First Keith spent an hour removing lower tree branches and leaves so that when he sprayed, they would not come in contact. He also pulled weeds from smaller trees making them easier to see before spraying, and did minor pruning to promote established primary stems. Then he sprayed a three-foot

diameter circle around each tree using glyphosate (Round-up). Approximately 200 trees were treated, taking 2-1/2 backpack tanks. The walnut trees seem to be dominating the planting. The butternuts and red oaks are doing okay, the chestnuts showing mixed results; the tallest chestnut is 15' tall, a lot are 6'-8' high, a few have died, but may have re-sprouted. Keith plans to discuss a possible ambrosia beetle issue with tree specialist Glenn Kotnik (TACF). The beetle may be boring into the chestnut stems and killing them (Kotnik said to best treat beetles, spray in late-winter, early spring 2021, with bifenthrin).

October, 2020 – Property Manager John Benton cut vines from around the barn, picked up miscellaneous trash, and removed poison ivy around the drive gate. He noted there was a new home built along on the northeast corner of our property on in-holding leading to Blue River. With all covid issues and protocols, there seems to be even less visitation than prior years to preserve.

Future work – We had been mowing the upper and lower fields, every other year (alternating fields). Jamie/Carla have mentioned that the field mowing may be too intense for his level of equipment. We may also ease the tree care as they mature. We will continue to monitor the wildlife pond for retention. Also continue to mow drive and camping areas. Finally the treatment of invasives, as needed.

Thanks to all volunteers especially Keith Dunlap, Bambi Dunlap, Jamie Winner, and Carla Striegel-Winner for using their equipment at RLCP. It is much appreciated!

RLC Patron Report (John Benton)

January 27, 2020, Bat census, Tim Shier (IDNR), Keith Dunlap, 2 other DNR staff. Noted 3 pips and 2 big browns in entrance area.

May 28, 2020, Darwin Brack, Brandon Yates, ESI bat biologists, Tim Shier (DNR) noted 3-5 bats, may have been Indiana bats? No greys observed.

RLC continues to be one of least visited cave preserves of the IKC.

Upper Twin Cave Patron Report (Dave Everton)

Patron-Arranged Trips: 1 Number of cavers: 6

Shawnee Karst Preserve Report (Jerry Lewis)

In 2020 the Shawnee Karst Preserve was expanded with the acquisition of 17.5 acres of land between the existing preserve and Indiana

Highway 60. The property had included a home with an in-ground swimming pool, pole barn garage, and other smaller out-buildings, plus a horse pasture and several wooded acres containing a small cave and numerous sinkholes. A second dilapidated home was on a small extension of the property on the north side of the highway. The property was purchased by Keith Dunlap in 2019, who conducted demolition on both houses and all of the out-buildings, except the garage. The swimming pool was also filled and graded. After demolition was completed, the property was sold to the IKC in November.

Last March, one hundred white oak trees were planted in the field adjacent to the garage. All of the fencing in the open field were removed and recycled, and the cedar posts were pulled (stacked to be burned at some point). Finally some invasive control of multiflora rose in the open field, and additional invasive treatment of multiflora rose and autumn olive on about one acre of wooded areas were conducted last summer.

In late 2019 and early 2020 the area of native prairie grasses on the extant preserve as well as the part where the grassland extended onto the expansion property was prepared for burning. Some cedar trees were cleared and a firebreak was mowed around the grass. Unfortunately, immediately before the anticipated prescribed burn the Covid-19 pandemic occurred. With the onset of social distancing protocols and other concerns about how things were going under the mandates of the pandemic, the decision was made to postpone the prescribed burn until after the pandemic. As of this writing, Covid-19 vaccinations are occurring and the incidence of the virus is decreasing, but the pandemic is still in progress.

Otherwise, the Shawnee Karst Preserve required only minimal maintenance. The nature trail, consisting of about a mile and a half of trails that roughly follow the perimeter of the property, was mowed on two occasions. The preserve's gravel road remains in generally good condition. The cave entrance, previously closed and then re-opened after mechanical excavation, was monitored periodically and remained open in 2020.

In 2019, holes for the footing of the kiosk were excavated in the area at the end of the lane. Social distancing protocols instituted due to Covid-19 prevented further construction of the kiosk in 2020. Other than periodically filling with rain water and

a minor bit of slumping, the holes are still present.

A small wildlife pond near the cave entrance was restored several years ago and a liner installed to assist in maintaining water. The liner has failed at the spot where an overflow drain was installed, resulting in little water being maintained in the pond. The drain pipe could be removed and the liner patched, or the liner could be removed and the pond allowed to fend for itself.

I have been the Property Manager of the Shawnee Karst Preserve for the 9-year period between the initial acquisition of the 50-acre preserve (in 2012) and 2021. At this time, I am resigning from this position and will let someone else enjoy managing this classic karst property.

Lowry Cave Patron/Manager Report (Ray Sheldon)

Standing at the entrance to Lowry Cave gives the viewer a sense of shelter. The entrance area is quite roomy and during daylight hours, the twilight extends deep into the entrance room where a cascading waterfall and dry sandy area welcome visitation. The continuous stream that flows through the cave comes mostly from subsurface absorption. This water source along with the cavern passages presents a habitat for many different species.

In 2020 my wife, Beth, and I visited the property often to check things out. We also worked with volunteers on a couple of small projects to improve vehicle access further east into the Preserve. Keith Dunlap made several visits to the preserve to eradicate invasive plants and advised volunteers on similar techniques. A second layer of gravel was spread on the old county road in front of the preserve and on the interior lane to where the gravel ended in 2019. This effort extended the interior lane another 150 feet to a place where vehicles can park and turn around (ie, a cul-de-sac).

About 150 feet south of the cul-de-sac is where Wilkerson Cave is located. The entrance to this small cave lies in the bottom of a small sinkhole. The tight passage continues a short distance into an area where a chimney entrance can be seen about eight feet south. Looking north there is a tight side crawl heading northwesterly. To my knowledge the cave has not been fully explored. In 2021 I hope that Wilkerson Cave will be fully explored and mapped. Hopefully an idea of what species use the cave will be identified.

In 2021, I would like to see a historic signature study

conducted in the entrance area of Lowry Cave. There is some trash near the end of the cave that will need to be removed. On-going counts of the species that use the cave for habitat will be made.

Plans for the preserve in 2021 are to place new gate posts and improve the gate's functionality. Continuing the invasive plant eradication is a top priority. Cleaning out some sinkholes on the southwest end. Removing some Cedar trees on the southeast end. Extending the gravel drive east another 300 feet to where a recreational area for picnics and camping can be developed. The only 2021 expenses I foresee are for the gate improvement and additional gravel to the eastern end.

The following is a chronological list for 2020 activities at the Preserve:

February 8 – Rob and Robbie Jarboe, Travis Toliver, Scott Davis, and Shane Johnson made a visit to Lowry Cave.

March 1 – Bruce Trotter and I visited the property to get a better look at the stream and waterfall that flows into Graham Creek. We took a good look around the outside of Lowry Cave entrance while discussing a need for future entrance area improvements.

April 4 – A spring visit to the preserve where Dr Jerry Lewis and Salisa Lewis looked around while pulling honeysuckle bush and noticing a fire pit inside the back of the entrance area of Lowry cave.

April 6, April 15, and April 26 – Beth Sheldon and I walked around the preserve grounds and cleaned out debris from two different fire pits inside Lowry Cave. We continued to check on the Lowry Cave entrance area and noticed a few bats in a ceiling crack. Potentially transient *Myotis sodalis*.

May 2 – Doug Van Demark and Andi visited the preserve and took some photos of the entrance to Lowry Cave.

May 10 – Beth Sheldon, Megan Hohnstreiter, and I tied string with flagging between the T-posts along the north side of the interior lane to direct foot traffic to the preferred trail from the interior lane to the Lowry Cave entrance.

May 11 – A visit to the preserve included a meeting to pick up liability waivers with area caver Jacob Grider for an upcoming visit.

May 13 – Jacob Grider and Bradley Winston made plans to visit Lowry cave, but were cancelled because of poor weather conditions.

May 23 and May 31 – Beth and I checked out the property and the entrance area in Lowry Cave.

June 6 – Workday at the preserve to pull/treat invasive species and open up some sinkholes from smaller trash and debris. Participants included Brian Cross, Keith Dunlap, Bambi Dunlap, Beth and I, Debbie and Jerry Walker, and Bruce Trotter. Bruce has used his chain saw on a couple occasions to cut up trees across the interior lane and large grapevines. Bruce and Brian removed tree branch debris from a sinkhole in the southeast end of the property that provided a first look into Wilkerson Cave.

June 11- Keith worked on spraying invasive plants under the tree canopy while I sprayed the interior lane and the un-maintained county road.

June 22 – Keith Dunlap hosted Cassie Hauswald and two TNC interns (Gabby and Ashley). Their purpose included spraying broadleaf and grass specific herbicides targeting multiflora rose and Stiltgrass. After a lunch at the cave entrance, the group visited Graham Creek to look for mussels.

June 23 – IKC member Anthony Yoder made an extensive trip into Lowry Cave with five members of his family. Traci, Rachel, Ruth, Abraham, and Benjamin, seeing most of the passage and daylight at the plugged entrance near the end.

June 26 – Beth and I used the chainsaw to drop the double trunk black locust tree. The north trunk fell easterly onto the interior lane and the south trunk was dropped in a southerly direction into the woods.

June 27 – Beth and I used a chainsaw to cut up the part of the black locust tree that fell on the interior lane.

July 4 – Members of the Yoder family: Anthony, Ben, and Abraham; my grandson Logan Hohnstreiter, and Beth and I cut up the rest of the black locust tree and removed the larger pieces obstructing travel on the interior lane.

July 5 – Jonathan Annonson, Harrison Moore, and Stuart Moore visited Lowry Cave. They observed several salamanders, numerous spiders, and a surface crayfish.

July 12 – Keith sprayed five tanks of Clethodim 2E to treat Stiltgrass on the east end of the south half of the preserve.

July 24 – Keith sprayed 5 ½ tanks of Clethodim 2E to treat Stiltgrass on the west end of the south half of the preserve.

August 6 – Phil Connor made a trip to the preserve to grind off the black locust stump. This was the last obstacle that needed to be removed in order to safely extend the interior lane. While Phil was busy, I sprayed invasive Stiltgrass along the un-maintained county road.

August 22 – Robbie Baker who drives for Bishop's Trucking, delivered 21 tons of stone. He helped extend the interior lane to a total length of nearly four hundred feet. He also spread another layer of stone on the un-maintained county road.

August 30 – Visit by Bruce Trotter, Jerry Walker, and I to fill out an ICS report form on a small cave located in the southeast area of the preserve. This small cave has two entrances located in one depression. One is a crawl-in and the other a chimney. Unless someone knows otherwise, the cave is virgin past fifteen feet. Keith named it Wilkerson Cave in honor of the long-term land-owners (100+ years) prior to the IKC acquisition.

September 5 – Jasper Beavers, Tyler Maggard, Megan Hohnstreiter, and I made a trip into Lowry Cave. We observed numerous formations, four salamanders, surface crayfish, crickets, spiders guarding their egg sacks, a field mouse, five isopods, and the daylight at the plugged entrance.

October 18 – Beth and I used a leaf blower and rake to remove fallen leaves off of the interior lane.

November 1 – Beth and I used a leaf blower and rake to remove fallen leaves off of the interior lane, and probed a couple of test holes near the existing gateposts.

November 21 – Beth and I checked out the property and the entrance area in Lowry cave.

November 28 – Tyler Maggard, Jasper Beavers, and son Isaac Beavers visited Lowry Cave. They checked out the upper level and continued to the end. On the way out, they removed a couple pieces of broken pipe leaving one that might still be in use. They took a quick peak inside Wilkerson Cave and said they did not go past the small area below the entrance.

December 30 - I checked out the property and the entrance area in Lowry Cave. I found one Big Brown bat sleeping in a crack in the ceiling.

Cave visits summary: 5 authorized trips into the cave with 21 cavers beyond the entrance room. 23



cave waivers collected with 21 cavers going beyond the entrance room.

Shiloh Patron Report (James Adams)

The Indiana Karst Conservancy has continued, with the permission of the landowner, to permit up to six recreational 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 2020, only four of these trips were taken into the cave. The four trips in 2020 allowed 32 cavers to visit Shiloh Cave. Two of the trips were filled to capacity.

Several Spring/Summer trips were postponed until later in the year or cancelled completely because of concerns over Covid-19. This may also have contributed to two of the trips not being filled to the maximum number of cavers.

Suicide Cave Patron Report (Kevin Smith)

2020 had three documented trips totaling 25 cavers. Trips were affiliated with the Windy City Grotto (WCG), Central Indiana Grotto (CIG), and the Eastern Indiana Grotto (EIG). This is the least number of trips in several years likely due to the Covid-19 pandemic. None of the groups noted any issues with their cave trip.

As always, the IKC is very appreciative of the opportunity to provide stewardship activities for this cave afforded to us by Charlie and Will Biel, owners and stewards of the Arrow Hill Ranch Forestry and Wildlife Sanctuary.

Orangeville Rise Report (Carla Striegel-Winner)

Total Manager volunteer time for 2020: 50 hours

Total other volunteer time for 2020: 8.5 hours (5 workday volunteers)

Total trash removed: 5 pounds (down 78% from 2019)

Total invasives pulled and disposed of: garlic mustard 38 pounds, winter creeper 13 pounds, 24 poison hemlock plants dug.

As my second full year as Property Manager, much of the time I spent was planning, organizing, facilitating, and communicating. We held a garlic mustard pull in May, keeping volunteer numbers down and ensuring we were social distancing. I promoted that day through pre-and post-articles in the *IKC Update*. Additionally, I fielded questions and comments from those

opposing the Mid-States Corridor (who later organized as the group name The Orangeville Rise). I communicated with IU Center for Rural Engagement to receive quarterly updates for the board, to write an article for the *IKC Update*, and helped facilitate the renewal of their IKC research permit. We also had a request to film for a movie at the Rise; the company decided not to pursue further, but did film at other locations in Orange County. I corresponded as needed with IDNR Nature Preserve staff, IKC Officers and Board, Orange County SWCD, and Lost River Watershed.

I made five physical visits to the Rise, routinely picking up trash, weed-eating the grassy pull off and along the guardrail, checking the monitoring site, and continuing positive public relations with the neighborhood pets and their people. I also prepped for and hosted the workday.

The Rise is looking good. I often see folks pull up or neighbors walk by while there. There continues to be a small amount of trash left behind every couple of months, but no dumping has been observed. No new rope swings have appeared. No one has bothered the monitoring equipment, to my knowledge. My main concern is the invasives on the property. With such a small piece of property within a residential area, this is not surprising, and will just need regular monitoring.

Plans for 2021 include boundary marking/walking, holding a garlic mustard pull/workday in May, organizing volunteers to repaint the preserve sign, continuing invasive treatment and other general maintenance, and continuing open communication with agencies and organizations.

Indian Creek CE Report (Jamie Winner)

Properties covered by the conservation easement were inspected by Jamie Winner on July 2nd, 2020. Inspection reports were mailed to applicable landowners in early July.

Once again a PVC T-post cover was found to be missing along the easement boundary of lot #10 and lot #11 but a replacement was not available at the time of inspection. Some Johnson grass and poison hemlock noted in previously treated area of lot #10. No other issues or changes to easement area were noted.

INDIANA KARST CONSERVANCY TREASURY REPORT

Income/Expense Statement From January 1, 2021 to March 31, 2021

INCOME:

Dues Apportionment and Residuals	933.75	
Donations - General	4,899.41	
Donations - Land Acquisition Fund	2,808.00	
Ray & Gale Beach Bequest	400,000.00	
Investment Earnings	<u>1,454.24</u>	
		\$410,095.40

EXPENSES:

IKC Update (printing, production, mailing)	450.22	
Education / Outreach	0.00	
Stewardship/Conservation	220.07	
Stewardship Endowment Fund Contribution	7,000.00	
ILPA Membership	500.00	
Business (PayPal fees, renewal/election letter)	504.68	
Transfers to/from restricted funds/other adjustments	<u>404,187.54</u>	
		(\$412,862.51)

NET OPERATING EXCESS (DEFICIT) THIS PERIOD: (\$2,767.11)

Balance Sheet March 31, 2021

ASSETS:

Cash in Checking / Saving / CDs / Brokerage acc'ts	614,513.03	
Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve (73.48 acres)	162,000.00	
Shawnee Karst Preserve (67.78 acres)	175,000.00	
Wayne Cave Preserve (57.59 acres)	188,000.00	
Buddha Karst Nature Preserve (36.84 acres)	29,000.00	
Sullivan Cave Preserve (28.00 acres)	72,000.00	
Lowry Karst Preserve (6.66 acres)	33,000.00	
Orangeville Rise Nature Preserve (3.01 acres)	7,000.00	
Indian Creek Conservation Easement (valued at \$1/acre)	<u>13.16</u>	
		<u>\$1,280,526.19</u>

FUNDS & OPERATING EXCESS:

Land Acquisition Restricted Fund	63,346.42	
Deferred Dues Restricted Fund (241 members)	6,060.00	
Stewardship Endowment Restricted Fund ¹	82,592.88	
Ray & Gale Beach Bequest	400,003.00	
Previous General Fund (total)	65,291.00	
Net Excess (Deficit) This Period	<u>-2,767.11</u>	
Current General Fund (unrestricted)		62,523.89
Current General Fund (committed)	1,100.00	
Real Estate Basis (excluding value of CE)	<u>666,000.00</u>	
Total Liabilities & Operating Excess		<u>\$1,280,526.19</u>

NOTES:

1) Reflects \$7,000 contribution from the General Fund for the Shawnee Preserve expansion

IKC ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

March 27, 2021 – 10:00 AM EST

Virtual Meeting

Board Members Present:

Jerry Lewis, President
Marc Milne, Secretary
Keith Dunlap, Treasurer
Jeff Cody
Laura Demarest
Scott Frosch
Danyeale Green
Dave Haun
Goni Iskali
Matt Selig
Tom Sollman
Carla Striegel-Winner
Richard Vernier
Sue Vernier

Board Members Absent:

Bob Sergesketter

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President Jerry Lewis at 10:00 AM in a virtual setting.

Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes from the December Board meeting were approved as published in the March 2021 *IKC Update*.

E-mail Motions Since the December Meeting

On 9 February 2021, Goni Iskali moved that we approve the 2021 ballot candidates with Matt Selig as President, Laura Demarest as Secretary, Keith Dunlap as Treasurer; and Dave Haun, Tom Sollman, Rand Heazlitt, Joe Kinder, Wyatt Williams, Paul Uglum, Kevin Strunk, and Jim Adams as Directors. Marc Milne seconded the motion and President Jerry Lewis called for the vote. The last vote was received on the evening of 10 February and the motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Keith outlined the current financial status of the organization: Cash assets totaling \$612,633.91 and land assets totaling \$666,000.00, for total assets: \$1,278,633.91. Funds include Stewardship Endowment: \$75,595.76; Land Acquisition: \$63,066.42; Deferred Dues: \$5,970.00; General Operating Fund (unrestricted): \$68,001.73; and the Beach Bequest: \$400,000.00. The main change from the last report was the Beach Bequest, which increased our Cash assets by \$400,000.

Membership: Currently stands at 241 members. 171 renewed recently or in the past. Seventy remain, who have not yet renewed.

Shawnee Karst Preserve Expansion Status: Projected

expense/fund-raising goal: \$78,500.00. Donations collected: \$86,350.00. We are at 110% of our fund-raising goal. The Board typically makes a contribution to our Stewardship Fund from the IKC General Fund for each property acquisition (usually 10% of the land cost), but that has not yet been done for the Shawnee Karst Preserve Expansion acquisition. Therefore, Keith Dunlap made a motion that we transfer \$7,000 from the IKC General Fund into the Stewardship Fund for the Shawnee Karst Preserve Expansion. Dick Vernier seconded. Danyeale asked why we can't just transfer the extra 10% that we raised. Keith responded that 10% above our fund-raising goal is restricted and should be rolled over to the next project. The motion passed unanimously.

Elections Results

The results of the 2021 election were announced. The elected members will be seated April 1, 2021. The results were as follows:

President: Matt Selig

Secretary: Laura Demarest

Treasurer: Keith Dunlap

Directors (5): Rand Heazlitt, Paul Uglum, Joe Kinder, Dave Haun, and Tom Sollman.

Cave Visitation Protocol for Covid-19

Paul Uglum suggested that we modify our Covid-19 visitation protocol to stay within a 10-person limit, but move to allow subsequent day visits. Because Covid-19 has been found to be primarily transmitted from person-to-person, it's unlikely that it will be transferred between different groups at different times. Paul stated that he has had to turn down a lot of groups because of the existing every-other day rule. Danyeale stated that the Safety Committee actually met about this and agree with Paul's suggested change. She said that the committee also suggests using the management plan to determine maximum group size. Paul said that he wanted the maximum person limit increased beyond 10 at some point in the future. Danyeale said that the committee has other minor changes, including inserting a line to follow CDC guidelines for vaccinated people. Laura made a motion that we update our Covid-19 guidelines per the written verbiage from the Safety Committee. Keith seconded motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Beach Bequest

Jerry said that the money from the Ray and Gale Beach bequest was received and is in the IKC bank account gaining interest. He suggested forming an ad hoc committee to determine options for what IKC could do with the funds from the bequest. The Board discussed their



knowledge of friends of the Beach family and how to contact them to get a better idea of how the Beach family would have liked their money spent. Keith stated that the goal of the ad hoc committee would be to have conversations with the Board to put together some proposals and then hash them out by the next meeting so that we would then have a direction. Keith, Matt, Rand, Laura, and Joe asked to be on the committee. Jeff suggested writing an article about the Beach family for the *IKC Update* with the help of Bill Tozer. The group discussed scheduling a meeting for the committee.

Indiana Land Protection Alliance Membership

Jerry said that the IKC contributed \$500 for our Indiana Land Protection Alliance (ILPA) membership fee in 2019 and it is due again this year. The ILPA have had changes in their leadership recently. Keith stated that he has attended their meetings and have interacted with the leadership. He said the IKC paid the membership fee in 2019; the ILPA didn't collect in 2020; dues are due again for 2021. We need to determine if we want to continue to be a member of the ILPA. Paul asked about the benefits of membership. Keith said that the primary goal of ILPA is to determine how to identify and get more public money allocated for land acquisition; to create an efficient networking system among land trusts; and some educational goals. He said ILPA works with legislatures and granting institutions to try and get more money available for land trusts. The Board discussed ILPA leadership, membership, and goals. Carla made a motion to renew our membership to ILPA for one year. The motion was seconded by Danyele. The motion passed unanimously.

Indiana Cave Symposium

Keith said that the organizers of the Indiana Cave Symposium are discussing holding the Symposium in the fall, and then again in Spring 2022. The format would be virtual or hybrid virtual/in-person. The organizers will decide in June and they want IKC's thoughts on the proposal. The group discussed the Symposium and the pros and cons of each meeting date. The Board came to a consensus that it would be best to delay the Symposium until the spring of 2022.

Questionnaire Update

Keith said that 63 questionnaires have been returned on paper; plus 5 returned electronically, for a total of 68 returned, so far. The received questionnaires represented about 30% of the membership. We set a soft deadline of March 31st to have questionnaires returned. Keith said that he will send out an e-mail reminder to the entire membership before the deadline. He said that he will summarize the results in early April and distribute the results with comments to the Board, and then create an article of that summary for the *IKC Update*. Keith requested help transcribing comments. Laura agreed to help with that process.

Shawnee Karst Preserve

2020 Cave Patron report (Dave Everton): Jerry summarized that there was only one cave trip to Upper Twin Cave.

2020 Property Manager report (Jerry Lewis): Jerry said that in the past year the IKC purchased 18 acres, and controlled invasives on the property. The holes previously excavated for the kiosk remained without further work being completed in 2020. The IKC planned to burn the prairie to control cedars and sassafras. In preparation for the burn, we also mowed fire lanes. However, we postponed the burn during the pandemic as a safety precaution. After eight years, Jerry said that he is stepping down as the Property Manager for the preserve.

Buddha Cave Preserve

2020 Cave Patron report (Jeff Cody): Jeff said that trip numbers were down and there were only four trips last year (usually there are six to ten every year). Most of the trips were for smaller groups. Jeff discussed putting in a safety bolt into the top of the entrance climb to secure the ladder. The IKC decided to give the issue to the Safety Committee.

2020 Property Manager report (Keith Dunlap): Keith said that he mowed trails and conducted invasives control. There is a large dying ash tree by the parking lot gate. He contacted REMC to cut the entire tree down, but they only trimmed the upper branches overhanging the county road and their power lines.

Lowry Karst Preserve

2020 Cave Patron/Property Manager report (Ray Sheldon): Ray wrote a detailed report that itemizes improvements on the road, invasive control, parking renovations, and lane gate renovations at the Preserve. There were five trips into the cave with a total of 21 cavers. Keith suggested that we may want to re-think if we need a waiver just for going into the entrance room. This would cut down paperwork and reduce enforcement.

Orangeville Rise

2020 Property Manager report (Carla Striegel-Winner): Carla said she has communicated with the researchers doing water monitoring and they have renewed their permits through our new permit system. She encouraged them to update us through an *IKC Update* article. The IKC did a garlic pull (pulled 38 pounds of it) in 2020. Another invasive pull is scheduled for this spring. Carla has recruited a volunteer to repaint the preserve sign.

Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve

2020 Cave Patron/Property Manager report (John Benton): Keith summarized for John that there were a few visits for bat studies, but no recreational trips. Keith said Jamie Winner is still mowing the access lane and camping areas of the property. The chest-

nut tree plantation is still being maintained through weed control and mowing. Some chestnuts have a beetle infestation, so we will control with insecticide. The Board discussed mowing or not mowing the two clearings of the property (about 15 acres). Jamie has declined to continue doing this because he does not have the proper equipment, so we would need to hire someone if we want to continue.

Sullivan Cave Preserve

2020 Cave Patron report (Paul Uglum): Paul said that there were 54 trips to the cave, which is down significantly. These trips took 364 people into the cave. Ten trips were cancelled because of Covid-19 restrictions. Ten camping trips occurred on the property. He fielded many inquiries about people wanting to get into caving for the first time. He would like to work on eliminating old graffiti in cave. He would like to change the locks on the cave. He is continuing to get requests for visits and has reservations through October. The Board discussed the graffiti removal process considering "historic value" of certain areas. The Board discussed the desire to purchase the nearby property around the Spring entrance.

2020 Property Manager report (Keith Dunlap): Keith said that he has completed invasive control on about half of area needing attention, particularly of multi-flora rose, Autumn olive, and grape vines. He plans to put a new roof on the red shed, switch out the port-o-john from an older one to a newer one, and the removal of an unauthorized tree stand in the upper field (two smaller ones have already been removed). He bought the two-acre tract with the house and other structures near the Sullivan property (part of the subdivide when the IKC bought the property 22 years ago). He had all of the "improvements" removed and this property is now available to be purchased by IKC, if there is interest. He also previously bought the property (11 acres) to the west of the Sullivan property in 2019 and is in the process of removing most of the buildings on that property and planting trees on property. The Board discussed the advantages and disadvantages of purchasing the nearby two-acre property.

Wayne Cave Preserve

2020 Cave Patron report (Dave Everton): Keith summarized for Dave that there were 15 trips and 78 cavers.

2020 Property Manager report (Danyele Green): Danyele said that a lot of invasive work was recently done on the property. She is also working on re-routing the trail in a couple of places due to erosion issues. March 14th was a very successful workday in removing several chunks of abandoned cars on the property, and 6-7 bags of trash. April 18th is the next workday; she will be working on removing invasives in Tract 1. There are plans on bringing wood chips to place beneath the kiosk next time she visits. The Board discussed a key stuck in the lock for the cave gate and how to fix the issue. The Board discussed possibly replacing the deteriorat-

ing sign at the cave entrance and it was decided to just remove the sign and posts. The Board further discussed placing a port-o-john on the property. Danyele made a motion to have the Board approve the port-o-john placed on the property (we already own a spare one) and to pay to have it serviced as needed. Motion seconded by Goni. Motion passed unanimously.

Danyele stated that Tract 1 and Tract 3 have active EQIP contracts/grants for them. We have submitted an additional application for an EQIP contract/grant for Tract 2. No word yet about its status.

Indian Creek Conservation Easement

2020 Conservation Easement Monitor report (Jamie Winner): Jerry reported that Jamie Winner is stepping down as the monitor, thus there is a vacancy of the CE Monitor position. The Board discussed the responsibilities of a CE Monitor. Jerry suggested incoming Board member Rand Heazlitt and the incoming President discuss with him.

Shiloh Cave

2020 Cave Patron report (Jim Adams): Jerry summarized that four trips were taken in 2020.

Suicide Cave

2020 Cave Patron report (Kevin Smith): Keith summarized that three trips for 25 cavers occurred last year.

Land acquisition activities

The Board discussed the possible purchase of two properties near Shawnee Karst Preserve.

Items from the Floor

Laura stated there was a significant entrance collapse at River Cave (in Cave River Valley), but the cave is still open. Tom said the Upper Twin boat trips conducted by DNR were cancelled last year (due to Covid-19) for the first time since 1936. There was no noticeable effect seen on the cavefish. Tom suggested that all cavers should be conscious of cavefish on trips through that cave.

Danyele said that the Caving Club at IU has officially dissolved and the head of the former group has decided to distribute the club's remaining funds to various caving organizations, some of which will go to the IKC.

Laura suggested the IKC create a Social Media/Outreach committee. Jeff volunteered to help with the committee. Jerry suggested this idea be tabled until the June meeting.

June Business Meeting Scheduling

The next Board meeting will be on June 19th, 2021. The preferred meeting location will be at the property just west of Sullivan Cave at 11 AM EDT.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Secretary Marc Milne.

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pulled garlic mustard (6 bags) and worked on adding gate braces to both lane gate posts.

Upcoming projects will improve the interior lane access to the east side of the preserve where primitive camping is now available. The ongoing effort to remove invasives (foliar spraying) will continue and there will be workdays to remove some inherited sinkhole debris.

Property Manager Ray Sheldon pulling garlic mustard at the Lowry Cave Preserve. Photo by Keith Dunlap.



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it came from another era. The narrow winding road is dotted with old farmhouses set on gravel lanes, still actively supporting small family farms. The karst topography is evident throughout, and families still use the spring water that issues forth near their homes. The RLCP property itself is dotted with small sinks and graced with a beautiful forest and fields in early succession stages of growth. There are no trails on the property, so visitors should be aware of possible ticks when exploring it in the summer months. The history buff will not be disappointed with Clarks Ford Road, which crosses our property and can be hiked to or driven to. On the IKC part of the property, Clarks Ford Road goes along the top of a steep cliff, the base of which is the Blue River, home to the famous Hellbenders. The river runs 250 feet below, virtually inaccessible. This area of the property is part of a second RLCP acquisi-

tion, which had been previously been owned by The Nature Conservancy and was gifted to the IKC in 2010. An aerial photo showing the property lines is available in the RLCP [management plan](#) on our website, and is worth a look for anyone exploring the 73.48 acre preserve.

How to Visit Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve

If I have managed to pique your interest in the Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve, check out its webpage at ikc.caves.org/robinson-ladder-cave-preserve or contact Cave Patron and Property Manager John Benton at jmbenton1952@gmail.com. Photos of the cave and preserve can be found on the preserve's webpage [photo link](#) or on our [Facebook page](#). Remember that the cave itself is only open for visitation from May 1 to August 31, but members may visit the property anytime and camp with prior permission throughout the year.

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.

