



IKC UPDATE

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INDIANA KARST CONSERVANCY, INC

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ikc.caves.org

Affiliated with the National Speleological Society



The Indiana Karst Conservancy is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation and preservation of caves and karst features in Indiana and other areas of the world. The Conservancy encourages research and promotes education related to karst and its proper, environmentally compatible use.

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*grottos with liaison agreements

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IKC QUARTERLY MEETING REMINDER

Saturday, June 4th, 1 PM EDT

Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve

4000 SR 66, Milltown, Indiana

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 Items: Financial reports; Recap of recent preserve work projects; Promotion of upcoming preserve projects; Education / Outreach / Fields Days update; T-shirt update; Mid-States Corridor update; Indiana Cave Symposium recap; Cave/land acquisition activities; Capers display board / table staffing opportunities; Scientific research permit request; Document/photo archives; and more...

Meeting Details: The preserve is accessed via a marked farm lane opposite of Baylor Road ([38.39370/-86.27180](tel:38.39370-86.27180)) on SR 66 approximately four miles north of Milltown. However, if you are using Google or Apple map applications, the 4000 street address will incorrectly direct you south of Marengo. Use "4033 SR 66, Milltown" to get you within 50 feet of the access lane. The meeting will be held outside unless the weather is inclement, then it will be held in the barn in the upper field (low clearance vehicles may want to park in the lower field and walk up). Bring a lawn chair. We will be offering a hiking tour of the preserve at 11 AM as well as a picnic lunch of cold cuts and sides at noon. Email or text Carla (see page 2) if you think you will be joining the Board for these activities.

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

June 4 – IKC Quarterly Board Meeting (see above)

June 11 – IKC Summer Field Day – Buddha Karst Preserve (see page 7)

Sept ?? – IKC Quarterly Board Meeting (date and location TBD)

Oct 1 – IKC Field Day (tentative date) – Wayne Preserve (see page 13)

Oct 8 – Big Bird Day at Shawnee Karst Preserve (see page 7)

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 PRESIDENT...

Dateline: late 1980s. I'm in Buckner Cave and have just checked out the Crystal Pool in the Mountain Room, hopped down to the passage that goes to the Air Force Room, eased my way carefully past the pile of human feces somebody thoughtfully dropped right in the entrance to the crawlway with spray-painted arrows that say "OUT" pointing in every direction, and started crawling. After a few feet I come nose to nose with a discarded half-bottle of Pine Sol cleanser.

This is the strangest thing I ever found in Buckner Cave. Other than a tube of toothpaste on another trip. I still wonder – who in their right mind would bring either of these items on a caving trip and for what purpose? Then why would they toss them aside on the heaps of trash other spelunkers discarded?

The other "name-brand" caves of Garrison Chapel Valley weren't in much better shape. Access was getting more difficult because of angry landowners whose rights had been violated by trespassers. Wayne Cave had a gate on it, but people were still jamming the lock and writing angry letters to the IKC about the immoral and unsound logic (their opinion) of gating a cave. Cleanups had begun, but there remained a vast amount of backbreaking work to be done.

As I left Buckner and climbed the hill to my car in the parking lot, past the heaps of discarded clothing and other trash, a recurring thought came to mind. "Maybe we should just seal these caves shut and leave them for archeologists to find in a thousand years to study how we lived."

What kind of message would how we treated the caves of Garrison Chapel Valley, and many others, send to future paleontologists? What would it say about the state of humanity at that moment? "Out of sight out of mind." As long as it was underground, who cared? Some suggested we just declare them "sacrificial" caves in hopes the vandals would continue to go to them and save the other, "non-sacrificial" caves in the area. (*IKC Update #2, From the President... go to ikc.caves.org/ikc-updates to see all IKC Update back issues*).

These memories highlight the challenge the Indiana Karst Conservancy was confronted with at its inception in 1986. In my conversations with one of the founders of the IKC, he explained to me that two approaches were considered. Preservation, meaning that access to caves would be prevented and the caves would be left in peace. Much like my idea of sealing the cave for archeologists, although with thousands of caves in Indiana, this would be a daunting task.

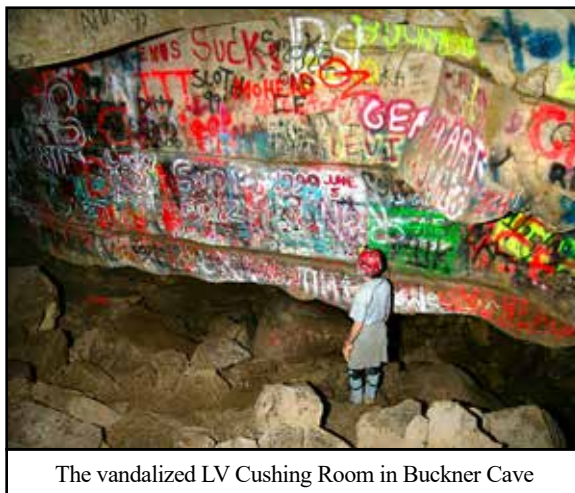
The other option being "conservation," meaning that access to heavily impacted caves would be controlled by gates and trespassing laws and that groups focused on cave conservation would remediate the damage done by thoughtless cave explorers and monitor the use of caves so that the damage would not re-occur.

IKC Update #4 states in its "From the President" column, "Cave Conservation is a big job and it takes time, effort, and money to make it happen. We will continue

to stand between the caves and the vandals because it is easier to protect a cave than to restore one. It is more fun to visit a cave full of living natural features, than one that is a dead hole in the rock. We cannot endure the scorn of future generations for letting the unique wonders of caves be destroyed."

My first direct involvement with the IKC that I can remember involved mud-painting over graffiti in Camp I in Wayne Cave, in December 1988. Access was controlled by a gate (installed at the request of the cave-owner who had heard enough complaints from the nearby neighbor) and this gate was controversial to the point that someone felt it within their rights to vandalize the gate and even risk the lives of cave explorers by jamming the lock while cavers were obviously in the cave. If you've followed us on Facebook, we've posted stories about the firsthand account of a group of cavers who couldn't exit Wayne Cave because of an intentionally jammed lock on the gate.

There are also letters in the early *IKC Updates* from concerned cavers who thought the IKC's ap-



The vandalized LV Cushing Room in Buckner Cave

proach was misguided or suspected our organization's motives were to deny cave access to earnest cavers and reserve it for only the blessed-few who were in the good graces or inner circle of the IKC.

From *IKC Update #3* in November 1986, "We the undersigned believe that the Indiana Karst Conservancy has chosen an erroneous path in its effort to gate the most heavily travelled caves in the State of Indiana. We believe the conservation of cave resources would best be served by effort in other directions... We also believe that cave conservation would be better served if resources of the IKC were not being misspent at the Garrison Chapel area caves that certain of the IKC leaders have an emotional attachment to."

Fast forward 30 + years and I had gone from a volunteer on cleanup crews in IKC managed caves to a Board member who was impressed with how the IKC conducts its business. Not perfectly or without mistakes. Not without those who feel we could do our job more effectively. In early 2020, Dr Jerry Lewis recommended the position of IKC President to me and after my initial surprise, I gave it a try and have since fallen in love with the work the IKC does day-in and day-out to protect Indiana's caves and karst.

It has been a long road, but now the caves of Garrison Chapel Valley aren't filled with trash and graffiti. Hundreds of trespassers per week aren't trampling property owner's rights. No one is putting shims in the locks on Wayne Cave or writing letters denouncing our work. No one mentions sacrificial caves anymore and other than a few exceptions, I can't find much in the way of Indiana caves that are being actively and massively vandalized like they were in the 70s, 80s and 90s. Cavers enjoy access to the caves we protect, our critics have become valuable members of the IKC, and the IKC itself has become a respected member of the Indiana land trust community.

But conservation for Indiana's karst and caves means something different to the Indiana Karst Conservancy now compared to the late 1980s. Our challenges are different. There are still environmental issues we can talk about. From time to time the State of Indiana still proposes building highways through our beloved karst regions, we treat invasive species and still pick up trash on Gardner Road outside the Wayne Cave property every year. Surface trails need to be maintained. Gravel driveways and parking areas need grading. Cave animals are still faced with ecosystem-threatening problems such as White-

nose Syndrome and pollution in karst waters.

In this new age of caves and karst conversation I am having discussions with our Board, our members, and interested cavers about what "cave conservation" means now. Where should we focus our efforts and resources for the most beneficial impact? How do we improve the ability of the IKC to "conserve" in this new (and thankfully much improved) environment?

The IKC's exempt purpose challenges us to not only conserve, but also to educate. What does "karst education" mean in this new day and age? Who do we educate? What do we need to educate them about? How do we most effectively use our internet presence and social media assets? What is the most important outreach work we can do for those who interact with Indiana's caves and karst, and what does the IKC as an organization still need to learn?

"*Plus ça change*" as the French say. The more things change, the more they stay the same.

At the April Bloomington Indiana Grotto meeting on the Buckner Cave property, location of the aptly named Richard Blenz Nature Conservancy (RBNC), we entered the well-traveled entrance room of Buckner Cave. As we discussed various elements of cave geology and hydrology surrounded by that marvelous example of cave conservation and restoration, I spotted an old steel beer can on the floor with a pull top opening on it, a can opening that hasn't been used in the United States since 1975.

I reflected that even after all the thousands of dedicated volunteer hours spent removing tons of trash from this cave, in one of the most travelled parts of the cave, I was astonished that this possibly 50+ year old beer can could still be laying on the floor decades into the conservation project in Garrison Chapel Valley. I write this not in a critical way to point out that, "They missed a beer can," but rather to say – there is still work to do, conservation-wise. Lots of rolling up our sleeves to repair the damage done and prevent it from happening again in the future.

The IKC is not finished with its conservation projects. Our work is different now and has evolved. We are excited that so much good has been done by not only the IKC, but by other groups that also love caves, such as the RBNC, the National Speleological Society and its grottos, as well as cave conservancies in other states.

We invite you to join us in the discussion of what "conservation" means at this point 36 years



into the IKC's evolution and also look forward to having you join us in our conservation work. Especially underground. Because, as cavers, that's where our hearts are, and the IKC will continue our work to serve the caving community.

As my predecessor Bill Wilson wrote in *IKC Update* #1, in his Letter from the President that has evolved into this tradition of Ramblings from the IKC's President, "Caves contain unique scientific and scenic resources that should be preserved for future generations. Ef-

fective conservation requires vigilance and assertive action. Whatever has been saved is still there to be taken, and you never get anything back after the damage is done."

More than three decades later, I couldn't agree more, and I wish for the IKC and all of us who believe in its mission the same courage and sense of definite purpose that has been a part of this organization since its founding.

Matt Selig

NEWS BRIEFS...

- ❑ Our volunteer Property Managers have been busy this spring with several volunteer workdays under our belts and more to come! Keith Dunlap hosted an early spring day to manage/restore our prairie remnant at our Shawnee Karst Preserve, with five volunteers assisting. Ray Sheldon at the Lowry Karst Preserve has been working on pulling garlic mustard. He and Keith pulled over 50 pounds (four large bags) on the workday on April 30. May 1st was the Orangeville Rise Workday, with five volunteers assisting Carla Striegel-Winner in her battle with garlic mustard, poison hemlock, and winter creeper. Two other workdays focused on planting trees at Shawnee and the Sullivan Cave Preserve (read about those on page 13). Buddha Cave Patron Jeff Cody rounded up a couple of volunteers for a painting project on that property (see page 10). Going forward, Property Manager Danyelle Green will be hosting some maintenance and invasive control opportunities at Wayne Cave Preserve with the first being on June 11, 10 AM to 2 PM... contact Danyele (mudandogs@gmail.com) for details. And we hope to have a workday at the Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve sometime later this summer or fall. Helping out at a workday is a great way to learn more about our preserves and the work we do. Continue reading below if you are interested in helping with these important stewardship activities.
- ❑ Since most of our stewardship work is weather dependent, we often do not send a member email notifying you of these opportunities. We have already started a list of folks who would like to be notified. If you have been to a workday or marked that you are interested on your membership renewal form, you may already be getting invitations. If you would like to be notified of opportunities, please email Carla Striegel-Winner (CarlaStriegel@gmail.com) and we will add you to the list. If you are only interested in one preserve, let us know that and we will connect you with the property manager at that preserve.
- ❑ Last year, Mike Van Note commissioned Wes Neal (Leaky Canoe Art Studio) to paint a profile of an *Amblyopsis hoosieri* from a photo taken by Eric Maxwell. Five prints were made and framed, with two of them being donated by Mike to the IKC to be auctioned-off as a fund-raiser. One was auctioned last August at Cave Capers, and the second one was auctioned at the recent Indiana Cave Symposium. The winning bid of \$140 was placed by Goni Iskali and Brad Barcom. Thanks to all who made bids and to Mike for his generous donation of the two prints.



- ❑ IKC logo stickers made their first appearance around Cave Capers last August with Laura Demarest having some made and making them available to participants. Keith Dunlap then thought it would be a fine idea to include those with the 2022 renewal letters and they were a hit. We mentioned them in a Facebook post and had several photo comments proudly showing them off. With those outreach campaigns under our belt, the stickers have now found a spot in our online merchandise store and at in-person events for the grand old price of \$1 each. One of our first purchasers was a Scout leader, ordering 20 to give out to his troop (thanks guys!). So if you need a sticker for your



water bottle, Pelican case, or cave-mobile, we'd appreciate you spreading the IKC love. Head on over to ikc.caves.org/ikc-promotional-items and buy a couple for \$1 each (plus postage).

- ❑ IKC Board member and bat biologist Goni Iskali was gifted a bat house by her former employer and she got to choose where they installed it. She chose the IKC's Sullivan Cave Preserve! Thank you Western EcoSystems Technology (WEST, Inc.) and thank you Goni! We hope for happy bat residents! The bat house is a rocket-style house recommended by Bat Conservation International (BCI). If you are thinking about building your own, check out the plan here: batcon.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/RocketBoxPlans.pdf
- ❑ On October 8, the Indiana Land Protection Alliance (ILPA) will partner with the Indiana Audubon Society (IAS), Indiana Karst Conservancy, and twelve other Indiana land trusts to host a statewide Big Bird Day event. Expert birders from across Indiana will lead members of the community on guided bird hikes at 15 different nature preserves and natural areas to count (and celebrate) our feathered friends and to raise awareness for the important protected lands they rely on. More details will be in the September *IKC Update* and on our Facebook page on how you can join the IKC at our Shawnee Karst Preserve in Lawrence County. Space is limited, and advanced registration will be required.
- ❑ The IKC has gained *thirteen* new members in the last quarter. Welcome Sarah Burgess, Dan Chase, Patrick Deel, John Harris, Rhonda Matteson, Peter Putzier, Cindy Rothrock, Kolleen Secrest, Charles Shipley, James Stahl, Jane Sulanke, Nate Vignes, and Matthew Wellsand. The IKC membership currently stands at 263.



BUDDHA KARST PRESERVE: KARST FEATURES AND ECOLOGY HIKE AND TOUR SATURDAY, JUNE 11, 2022 – 10 AM to 12:30 PM EDT

Join us for our second of four field trips in 2022, this one led by IKC founding member Keith Dunlap and Indiana's Community Ecologist (and IKC member) Wyatt Williams of the IDNR Division of Nature Preserves. Keith has been involved with Buddha Karst Preserve since its acquisition in 2001 and Wyatt, along with the state botanist, last year started a native plant inventory on this dedicated State Nature Preserve in rural Lawrence County. Over the IKC's 20+ years of stewardship, the 37-acre property has gone through a significant transition from cow pasture to successional forest, with over 12,000 native trees planted. We will do the one mile trail loop, plus some off trail stops. Keith will treat us to a great history of the preserve, as well as focus on the karst features that can be experienced along the trail. Wyatt is excited to share some of the special plants that like to grow near these karst features and will also share plant identification at different spots along the way. The event is free and open to everyone, but is by registration-only and limited to 20 participants.

Please be prepared for the weather, as the two-plus hour outdoor event will go rain or shine. The one-mile mowed trail is mostly shady with some hilly terrain. We may step off the trail on some of the stops. Sturdy shoes are recommended, and some may wish to have a hiking stick. Bring a good headlamp or other source of light as well. A snack and water cooler will be provided. There are no restroom facilities at Buddha Karst Preserve. Registration and information at ikcFieldTourJune11.eventbrite.com. Questions may be directed to the field trip organizer Carla Striegel-Winner (CarlaStriegel@gmail.com or 812-639-9628).

2022 FIELD DAYS, ONE DOWN, THREE TO GO!

by Carla Striegel-Winner

The IKC Board decided to offer field days after discussing feedback from our 2021 membership questionnaire. With these field tours, we want to engage our membership, help folks become more familiar with our preserves, and engage non members who may become members or supporters in the future.

I was excited to say that our April 23 field tour to Wesley Chapel Gulf and Orangeville Rise, featuring the knowledge of hydrogeology experts Sarah Burgess and Sam Frushour, was a hit. Sam is such a natural speaker and so full of knowledge from years studying the area. Sarah, having just spent two years of her life doing her masters thesis in the region, is a wealth of information as well. We had a full group of 23 registered participants. About half of the participants were current IKC members, with a little over half being cavers, and the remainder being cave and karst supporters who had found the event on Facebook or Eventbrite. I overheard one person referring to Sarah and saying “She’s the one that discovered the fault,” referring to the recently released article about the fault extension in Washington County. Sarah is well-deserving of this rock star status, for sure!! My favorite story was a couple

of very good family friends from Orange County, Bob and Debbie Turner, who had gone out to Wesley Chapel Gulf the week of the field tour. As they walked around, they realized they didn’t really know what they were looking at, what its significance was. So they decided to research. They got home and started Googling. One of the first things that came up was “Free Tour” that Saturday – they were overjoyed when they realized not only did they know the organizer, but that there were still openings! Afterwards they told me how much they enjoyed hearing from our two presenters. The tour, which was in conjunction with the Indiana Cave Symposium that evening, went well, and we could not have asked for better weather. Sam and Sarah did a wonderful job and as a thank you, were gifted with local maple syrup, handmade soap, and baked goods purchased at Lost River Market and Deli in Paoli.

If you missed the first field day – or you are ready for the next, check out the box/article on page 7 for the June 11th Buddha Karst Preserve Karst Features and Ecology Hike and Tour, and page 13 for the October 1st Hike with a Bat Biologist at Wayne Cave Preserve. A winter field tour for November or December is still in the works.



Tour presenters Sarah Burgess and Sam Frushour explain the flooded underground passage at Wesley Chapel Gulf

WHO IS READY FOR A NEW IKC T-SHIRT DESIGN?

The IKC has a very special t-shirt design that we cannot wait to unveil! Thanks to Board member Joe Kinder for working diligently on this project with graphic designer/artisan screen printer/caver/IKC member Charlie Vettters. Charlie has such an awesome eye for design! We guarantee you will *love* it! Our custom shirt, along with some of Charlie’s other caving shirts, will be available from a special on-line store for a limited time. When the store goes live, we will send members an email and do a Facebook campaign. You will have a few weeks to order and then they will be printed and shipped. There will also be options to pick up at Cave Capers, at the IKC’s September meeting, or directly from Organic Robot Designs in Greenfield to save on shipping. The IKC will receive a percentage of the proceeds and we expect everyone to wear the shirt with pride so your friends and family will ask about this awesome organization! We can’t wait to get our shirts and show them off!

MID-STATES CORRIDOR DRAFT EIS, DODGED A BULLET?

by Keith Dunlap

On April 15, the Mid-States Corridor Project released their Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The good news is that they did not select Route M or Route O as the preferred corridor, either of which would have been very damaging to the karst areas in Lawrence, Martin, and Orange counties. However, the bad news is that they still selected a preferred new-terrain route rather than the “No Build” option, meaning they are still proposing the construction of an expensive four-lane expressway that would basically run parallel to the existing US 231 from Huntingburg north to Crane (even after the governor last year committed to spending \$75 million to upgrade US 231). The proposed new-terrain road would remove up to 2,700 acres of productive agricultural and forest lands and displace up to 150 homes and businesses. This article will not dwell on the selected corridor, but if you would like to know more, the Hoosier Environmental Council has put together a nice fact/action sheet here: www.hecweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/2022-mid-states-corridor-fact-sheet-v2-HEC.pdf.

The rest of this article will address two issues. First, while the Draft EIS did select Route P as their *preliminary* preferred choice, that does not mean that is the final selection. There is a 60 day comment period for input (deadline is June 14th) and depending upon the comments and subsequent analysis, the final preference *could* change, meaning Route O or Route M is not yet completely off the table. Thus it is still very important that the IKC and cavers submit comments to express concerns on the environmental damage that would occur if the final decision on the preferred corridor were to change. The easiest way to make a comment is to submit it on the Mid-State Corridor website here: midstatescorridor.com/deis/#FORMAL.

Second, it was really disappointing to read the DEIS (it can be found here: midstatescorridor.com/deis/#DEIS), particularly Section 3.23 (Karst Impacts) and Appendix Y (Karst Impact Analysis), to see how superficial the documentation was pertaining to caves and karst. It may be they decided early-on that Routes O and M were not practical and thus did not do a deep-dive study of the two routes. Regardless, this project was an opportunity to capture important information on the karst areas that would be useful in the future for the next time they start looking to run a highway across this

same area. It seems like the same concept of a new-terrain highway from Bedford or Mitchell or Orleans to French Lick gets floated about every 20 years, and I’m sure this will not be the last time.

I did want to pull out some statements from the DEIS that were noteworthy. For both Route O and Route M, the conclusions were that the “...*high cost and high impacts to many resources resulted in [them] being removed from further consideration. Several resource agencies expressed their opposition to Alternatives M and O because of their overall high impacts. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers stated in its April 15, 2020 comment letter on the Screening of Alternatives package that it did not believe either Alternative M or O could satisfy the requirements to select the LEDPA, as required under the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines.*”

The report noted there were 28 and 21 known cave entrances along Route M and O, respectively. These numbers were primarily from information provided by the Indiana Cave Survey. It appears there was little or no in-field work done. And while the ICS is the best source for that information, it is understood it is not complete, and in fact over the past six months, a number of “new” caves and karst features have been reported by landowners out of concern over the highway. This includes the 600-foot x 300-foot Ragsdale Gulf located north of the Orangeville Rise at was right in the alignment of Route O. This significant karst feature was first documented by Clyde Malott in 1932, but was not added to the ICS database until a few months ago.

Another questionable statistic tabulated in the DEIS study was the number of sinkholes within the corridors... a maximum of 54 and 36 for Route M and O, respectively. This would seem to be a gross underestimate, considering the Route O alignment comes very near the section that Malott documented in 1949 with over 1,000 sinkholes in just one square mile, and both Route M and Route O have a footprint of 6-8 square miles (although not all of that is in karst terrain). Still, you can do the math.

In summary, while Route M and Route O were not selected as the preferred corridor, please take five minutes to submit a comment anyway that you concur with the study’s conclusions that the environmental impacts (geologic, forest, cave species, bats) are too high and should not be re-considered as the preferred route in the Final EIS.

REPAINTING THE KIOSK AT THE BUDDHA KARST PRESERVE

by Jeff Cody

The kiosks at our various preserves are the first thing visitors often see and can make a first impression. I had noticed in a photo taken last winter at the Buddha Karst Preserve that our kiosk there was looking a little neglected. It was originally installed in 2003 and it was time for a face lift. I am not much of a handyman, but painting is one thing I feel comfortable doing. I never was a painter, but worked in a commercial paint store dealing with paint contractors every day for fifteen years so I picked up a few things. I contacted the Buddha Property Manager, Keith Dunlap, about volunteering to paint the kiosk. He happily accepted my offer. I then went and inventoried my paint supplies. I had two mini roller frames for the 4 inch “weenie rollers” and a 4 pack of covers. I had roller buckets made for those rollers. I had a step ladder, paint scrapers, paint edger, and lots of rags. I even had two gallons of dark brown exterior trim paint. I had almost everything I needed. All I had to purchase was a couple of small disposable brushes. My plan was to get this paint job done one weekend in the spring. I figured if I had one other person to help it would go faster, but knew I could do it alone if necessary. In March I posted on CIG Facebook page soliciting one person to help. I got several offers.



Bambi Dunlap and Mel Litson painting the kiosk.

I had targeted various weekends only to be met by typical late March and April Indiana weather: cold, windy, and rain. Finally we had a good forecast for Mother’s Day, May 8. I was able to get my long-time Franklin caving friend Mel Litson to help that day. Bambi Dunlap, who had been wanting to paint the kiosk, volunteered to help too. The temperature was expected to be in the low-70s with no mention of rain. We were all set. I drove down

to meet Mel in Waverly on SR 37. I had contacted Bambi the day before and told her what time to expect us there as she was coming up from New Albany. We arrived at the preserve around 10 AM to find Bambi already there taping off the edges of the signage. After the exchanging of pleasantries, we got back to work.



The kiosk all spiffed up with a new coat of paint.

I filled the two small roller buckets about a quarter full and gave Mel a roller and he went to work on the back. Bambi used my five-foot step ladder and brushed some of the higher areas, and I went to work on the vertical posts with the other small roller. I cannot stress how handy these small rollers are for rolling small areas. These were perfect and we made a short order of getting this done. It took less than two hours and we used just a little over one-half gallon of paint. After the painting was done, and the sun had moved to a different angle, I was able to notice a few spots that were missed and hit those with a brush. Now it was time to pull the tape. It came off like it should as Bambi had used the good blue painters tape. With tape, it is all about how it comes off. The cheap masking tape comes off in pieces and takes forever to remove. The good blue tape works well, as long as it is removed the same day.

I also brought Windex and rags to clean off all three display panels as well. Between the painting and the cleaning, this made a huge appearance difference. With an IKC field trip coming up in June and also Capers being held at nearby Camp Rivervale in August, it was nice to get this done. And added bonus, this effort did not cost the IKC or myself a thing... I basically had everything I needed. Thanks to Bambi and Mel for helping.

TAKING ADVOCACY UNDERGROUND

by Matt Selig and Laura Demarest

On April 11, 2022, IKC President Matt Selig and Secretary Laura Demarest took a tour of the Lost River Drainage Basin with Ray McCormick, Congressional candidate for the 8th Congressional District of Indiana.

Mr McCormick and Laura had crossed paths during the spring at several agricultural functions in western Indiana. During their conversations, the topic of the Mid-States Corridor project came up and Ray mentioned becoming very interested in learning more about its potential environmental impacts after seeing a woman at the Orleans Mid-States Corridor town hall meeting “hold up a list of caves taller than she was!” Of course, this was none other than our very own IKC Director, Carla Striegel-Winner, who gave an informative presentation on this organization’s opposition to the proposed Routes M & O, which would slash through Indiana’s fragile karst ecosystems with a new terrain, four-lane highway. In fact, Route O would cross within a stone’s throw of the IKC’s Orangeville Rise Nature Preserve. After speaking at length with Laura and finding out that she was a caver closely involved with the IKC, Mr McCormick was ready to, in his words, “Go caving under the proposed Mid-States Corridor route.”

On an overcast afternoon, we met Mr McCormick in Orleans and proceeded to where the dry bed of the Lost River crosses under Highway 37, south of Orleans. Normally this dry bed contains no visible water on the surface as the Lost River sinks and disappears underground to the east (upstream) of this location. We wanted to emphasize how quickly spilled contaminants from a highway would enter the underground Lost River system and disperse into the environment.

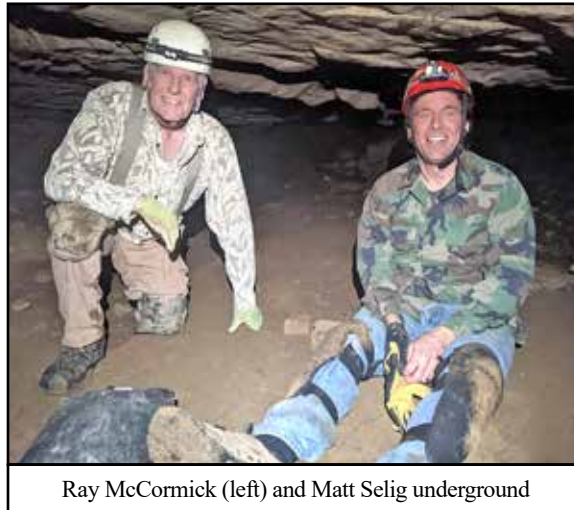
We then followed the Lost River downstream to Wesley Chapel Gulf, a designated National Natural Landmark, so that we could discuss how groundwater traverses this drainage basin. The water that day wasn’t too high in rise pool at the bottom of the Gulf. We also saw evidence on a wall of the Gulf where a large slab of limestone

had recently collapsed and shattered, a place where a number of IKC Directors had sat last year during a quick tour of the Gulf after pulling invasive species at the Orangeville Rise. Yikes, caves and karst are geologically dynamic places!

Then we travelled across the Springville Escarpment to the IKC-owned Orangeville Rise, another designated National Natural Landmark, and reviewed the hydrology of how the Lost River drainage basin resurfaces there and at the nearby

True Rise of the Lost River, and how the ecosystems connected to these springs would be impacted by contaminants entering from along the proposed Route O if that highway were constructed.

For the highlight of the field trip, Mr McCormick wanted to go underground and see a cave from the inside out. Laura and I were happy to oblige and we were able to coordinate access with a local



Ray McCormick (left) and Matt Selig underground

cave owner. For someone who had never been in a wild cave, Mr McCormick took to it like a natural born troglodyte! Once underground, we were able to continue our discussion and observations about how water flows through the Lost River drainage basin and see first-hand how the sensitive environment and its native and unique biology would be severely damaged if contaminated. It became clear that in a karst hydrogeological system, in order to understand caves, we must comprehend that the underground is intimately connected with the surface and that nothing is truly “out of sight, out of mind”.

During our tour, we read in the Evansville Courier & Press that the Mid-States Corridor project had just named Route P as its preferred route. This was good news for Indiana’s caves as this proposed route would have negligible impact on Indiana karst resources, although the effort in opposition to the Mid-States Corridor is not finished. There is still plenty of advocacy for the IKC and other groups to perform in the coming weeks and months (see page 9).

All in all it was a delight to share with Mr McCormick our love for Indiana’s caves and

Continued on page 29...

A LOOK BACK AT INDIANA KARST

by John M Benton

The Phantom of Bat Cave

Silas Shimmerhorn was a Confederate soldier during the American Civil War and a member of General John Hunt Morgan's infamous Morgan's Raiders, who in 1863 crossed into Union territory, with raids into Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, and West Virginia (see map). While in Indiana, Morgan's Raiders terrorized the townsfolk in Corydon, Salem, Dupont, Vernon, and other small communities, robbing the merchants and stealing food and fresh horses, and setting fires to mills, and other businesses. Shimmerhorn declared as a conscientious objector and deserted Morgan's troops somewhere near the town of Versailles or Vernon.

Legend has it that Shimmerhorn was afraid of the North (as an invader) and the South (as a deserter), so he holed-up as a hermit inside Bat Cave in Ripley County, in what is now part of Versailles State Park, near the town of Versailles. For his protection, legend says he befriended a pack of native wild timber (gray) wolves, gradually feeding them to be trusted. Being a very isolated area in 1863, he made Bat Cave his home for the rest of his life. He was seldom seen by the locals and was called the Phantom of Bat Cave.

Shimmerhorn's wolf pack reportedly would sometimes kill the local farmers' dogs, chickens, and other livestock; so farmers tried time and time again to capture Shimmerhorn, but the local farmers would not venture into Bat Cave, where they were always met by the protecting wolf pack and turned back. There is a story that some of Shimmerhorn's army buddies, a few years after the Civil War had ended, came back to persuade Silas to come home. They called into the cave entrance, but were answered with only the vicious snarls of the big wolves. Years later, the cave was explored, but no trace of Silas Shimmerhorn was found. Occasional campers at Versailles State Park report seeing an old man with a long gray beard and flowing hair emerge with a phantom pack of big wolves, roaming through the Ripley County hills.

The IKC's latest acquisition, Lowry Karst Preserve, is only a few miles south of this area and Vernon, on Graham Creek. It is documented that Morgan and his men crossed the creek, very near Lowry Cave. Did they explore or check out Lowry Cave? Was Silas Shimmerhorn with Mor-

gan at the time? Although not recorded in history that Morgan's troops did visit Lowry Cave, I would not be surprised that they did check it out, if only briefly, as a possible hide-out or water source for troops and horses. And maybe that is where Silas Shimmerhorn got the idea to desert the illicit mission and end up in nearby Bat Cave.

Today, Bat Cave is just over the ridge on hiking trail #2 in Versailles State Park, but unmarked with no signage or interpretation. There is a shelter house, named after Schimmerhorn, inside the park and near the lake. Last time I was at the park, there was a faint, unmarked trail leading to the cave. At one time, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources showed Bat Cave on their property map, but for whatever

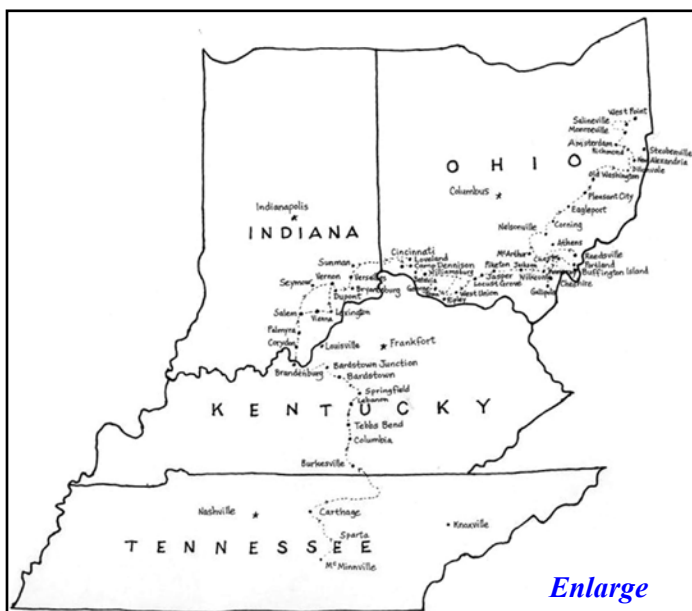


image courtesy of the Indiana Historical Society, 2007

the reason, it seems to have fallen into obscurity. The Indiana Cave Survey shows the cave has been mapped at least three times, the last being done by Bruce Trotter, et al in 2001. Over 700 feet of passage is shown, most of it being from two to five feet in height, with an entrance two feet high by five feet wide. It is believed that the IDNR tried to collapse the entrance with explosives in the early 1970s. Prior to that, it may have been a walk-in entrance.

Just how much of the Silas Shimmerhorn story is fact or legend, we may never know...

Reference: The (Cincinnati) Enquirer, May 8, 1964, Bat Cave Phantom Legend Lingers at Versailles State Park by Bill Thomas.

MAY THE FOREST BE WITH YOU

by Keith Dunlap

One stewardship practice that the IKC has consistently tried to do at our preserves is to convert open “fescue” fields to successional forests by planting trees. We have leaned towards oaks and hickories, but have also selected and planted native wildlife trees like cherry, persimmon, and pawpaw, as well as some shrubs like dogwood, hazelnut, and American plum. In total we have planted nearly 17,000 trees in the past 22 years.

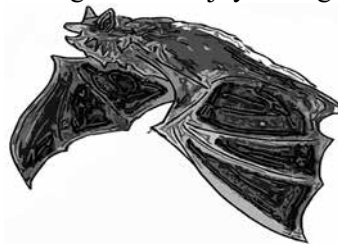
This year was no exception with the IKC planting approximately 450 trees/shrubs (red oak, white oak, black cherry, American plum) divided between three properties. On April 15th six volunteers planted approximately 130 trees at the Shawnee Karst Preserve. Then on May 7th, fifteen volunteers planted around 320 trees/shrubs at the Sullivan/Sullivan “adjacent” properties. We were lucky to have perfect weather for both days and lots of rain beforehand to aid in planting and jump-starting the purchased seedlings.



photo courtesy Carla Striegel-Winner

Stephanie Suen making a future forest.

Hopefully we will have a good survival rate. We encourage you to stop by the Sullivan and Shawnee preserves to check on the new trees. And our next generation of cavers and stewards will enjoy seeing the fruit of our labor.



WAYNE CAVE PRESERVE: HIKE WITH A BAT BIOLOGIST

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2022 (Tentative date)

Join IKC board member and bat biologist Goni Iskali at Wayne Cave Preserve for an evening hike along the trail to reveal bat habitat. We will discover why protecting and managing our preserves and other natural areas as great habitat is necessary for species survival. You will learn, as well, what you can do at your own home and in your community to attract and protect these wonderful winged mammals. This walk is timed to intersect with annual bat migration into their hibernacula, so Goni will talk about what happens during this important time. Weather permitting, at dusk, Goni will demonstrate a mist-net set-up (used by scientists for humane, live capture and release of bats) so we may get a chance to see one of these winged wonders up close and personal.

The hike will follow the mile-long loop trail at the preserve and will go rain or shine, so please be prepared for the weather. You may wish to bring a source of light, but please refrain from using it during the entirety of the program. If the weather is not conducive to mist-netting, Goni may set that up on a different date and all registered participants will be invited to attend at that time as well.

This hike, the third of our four field days for 2022, is free and open to anyone, but is by registration-only and limited to 20 participants. Registration does not open until September 1, but you may go to [ikcFieldTourFall22.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ikc-field-tour-fall22) at any time for more information. Click “remind me” to receive an email reminder when the sign up goes live. Questions may be directed to the field trip organizer Carla Striegel-Winner (CarlaStriegel@gmail.com or 812-639-9628).

2022 INDIANA CAVE SYMPOSIUM RECAP

by Keith Dunlap

The Orange County Community Center in Paoli was the venue for the 28th Indiana Cave Symposium, which was held this year on April 23rd. The Symposium, after a two year hiatus, was again co-hosted by the Indiana Karst Conservancy and Indiana Cave Survey, with each organization splitting the venue's rental and food expenses. The meal included burgers, brats, and pork rib entrées, along with buns, condiments, and soft drinks. Approximately 80 attendees helped out by bringing side dishes, desserts, chips, and the like to complete the pitch-in meal for the first part of the event. The program part of the Symposium began promptly at 6:30 PM. The following summarizes the presentations:

- **Lowry Karst Preserve** – Ray Sheldon. Ray covered the many big and small projects he and his volunteers have performed at the Lowry Karst Preserve since its acquisition in 2019. It has been quite a transformation on the property in stewardship and infrastructure to allow visitation and, in the future, small group primitive camping. The preserve truly is a nice addition to the IKC's portfolio of karst properties.
- **Cave Art in Kentucky & Indiana** – Joe Douglas. Joe's presentation was a great introduction and summary of the type of historic and pre-historic artwork that one could expect to have been left in caves. More common in Kentucky, and in fact only one example of pre-historic artwork has been discovered in Indiana, but that might just be due to cavers not knowing how to recognize it. Joe hopes his presentation will lead to more pre-historic artwork being found in Indiana.
- **National Cave Museum and Library** – Gordon Smith/John Benton. Gordon took everyone on a virtual tour of the new National Cave Museum on the property of Diamond Caverns in Kentucky. The museum has a number of collections on display and archived. Perhaps the most eye-catching item on display is the 27-pound rock that trapped Floyd Collins in 1925. While the museum and library are not open to the public, he said private visits can be arranged by contacting him.
- **IKC Update (2019-2022)** – Laura Demarest. With three years of activities to cover, Laura had her work cut out with three acquisition projects (Lowry, Shawnee expansion, and the Sullivan expansion), various stewardship projects on all of our preserves, and a new emphasis on education and outreach utilizing our social media presence.
- **Structural Control of the Mitchell Plateau and Some of its Caves** – Sarah Burgess. Sarah covered several projects she has been involved with over the last several years with emphasis on discovering and extending several fault lines in Indiana.
- **Mid-States Corridor Update** – Kevin Strunk/Carla Striegel-Winner. Kevin and Carla explained the recent announcement that Routes M and O through the karst areas were not selected as being the preferred route, but that does not mean we can now ignore the proposed highway and comments should still be submitted by May 31st [now extended to June 14th].
- **Bat and Salamander Count Project in Buckner** – Anmar Mirza. Anmar presented data on his multi-year monitoring project in Buckner Cave summarizing his observation of both bats and salamanders in the entrance room of the cave.
- **Binkley Cave System Update** – Rand Heazlitt. Rand highlighted a number of Binkley-related projects in recent years and highlighted the extensive effort that went into Butch's Dig Cave in hopes of opening up the southwest portion of the Binkley System.



photo courtesy Dave Black (2022)

A hearty thanks to everyone who made this year's Indiana Cave Symposium a success, including the Symposium presenters, the sponsors, the burger grillers, the food line organizers, the cleanup crews, and all the attendees! The venue was well received and we likely will use this facility in the future.

ANNUAL PROPERTY MANAGER/CAVE PATRON REPORTS

Each year at the Annual Business meeting, the IKC Property Managers and Cave Patrons 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 2021 reports:

Buddha Property Report (Keith Dunlap)

This was the IKC's 20th 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. Some briar trimming along the trails was done.

The area where we culled the over-crowded oaks in 2019 looks really good. There are some other areas that need thinning as the trees get larger.

The planted trees everywhere on the property are really starting to grow and fill-in.

There was continued effort on removing grapevines, finishing the area along the north property line. Still an area near the Buddha Cave entrance to cover.

There was a very large Chinkapin oak on the north side of the property that fell across the trail and will need to be removed from the trail at some point (currently you can walk under the tree trunk).

There were no major management problems or concerns encountered during 2021.

2022 activities I hope to accomplish:

- Continue mowing the trails.
- Paint/stain the kiosk.
- Continue working on the grapevines.
- Address the Stiltgrass on the trails (herbicide treatment)
- Remove the fallen oak off the trail.
- Plan for the removal of the dying Ash tree by the parking lot gate.

Buddha Cave Patron Report (Jeff Cody)

Buddha Cave received a total of four permitted trips this past year. There was one group in July that contacted me and obtained a permit, but did not go due to rain that day. This would have been five. This may be tied for the least number I have

had in any given year since I have been Patron. All but one trip was in the summer. Two of these trips were entrance-only visitations. I did have a couple contact me that did not know about the need for a ladder at the entrance area climb up and did not go. I seem to get that each year since the collapse of the climb up in 2015. I was not made aware of anything out of the ordinary by any of the groups. My records indicate a total of 11 people on these trips, so no large groups I am aware of. I feel fortunate that a cave this nice gets what I feel is little visitation. Rarely see groups larger than four or five in one trip unless maybe it is a Capers trip when Capers is held at nearby Camp River-vale. This will be the site for 2022 Capers, so I expect one or two possible larger groups. Typically in recent years we seem to get anywhere from 4 to 7 trips being the norm. I do not see anything specific that needs the attention of the IKC Board. I appreciate the efforts of Keith Dunlap going down to mow the trail from the parking lot toward the entrance. I am proud to help IKC manage such an Indiana treasure. Below is a list and dates of permits issued in 2021:

July 21 – Small group led by Chris Bell (cancelled by rain).

July 31 – Ben Hiatt group of 4.

August 15 – Vern Wilkins group of 3.

August 19 – Keith Dunlap party of 2 to entrance area.

December 26 – Keith Dunlap party of 2 to entrance area.

Lowry Property Report (Ray Sheldon)

In 2021 cavers, nature enthusiasts and volunteers visited the property. There were 7 groups that went caving totaling 46 cavers. Some groups reported a chlorine smell inside Lowry cave and at the entrance. Several volunteers worked on a variety of projects in Lowry cave and on the property. IKC member John Benton organized a fossil study within the twilight area of Lowry cave. Work continued to improve access to the eastern end of the property and a trail was cut to Wilkerson Cave. A new wooden gate swing post and a new wooden gate rest post were installed making the gate easier to open and close. The re-hung metal driveway gate was primed and painted. Near the eastern end of the property, an old block



fire pit was removed and an area near there was cleared of under-brush for camping or having a picnic. Other volunteers pulled garlic mustard, and Keith Dunlap made several visits to the Preserve to eradicate invasive plants and advised volunteers on similar techniques. To my knowledge Wilkerson Cave has not been fully explored.

I hope that in 2022, the source of the chlorine smell inside Lowry cave can be figured out. I plan to install a picnic table and benches on the eastern end of the preserve and gravel to be placed on the extended interior lane. It would be great if Wilkerson Cave can be fully explored and mapped, and maybe an idea of what species use the cave will be identified. The invasive plant eradication will continue to be a priority as well as removing some inherited trash in the sinkholes on the southwest end of the property. The only expenses I see for this year are for the picnic / camping area improvements, and the additional gravel to the eastern end.

The following is a chronological list for 2021 activities at the Preserve:

January 10 – Beth Sheldon (wife) and I checked out the preserve and observed the Big Brown bats hibernating in the Lowry cave twilight area.

January 12 – I probed and dug some test holes near the gate swing post in preparation of removing the old swing post and replacing with a new one.

January 13 – I removed the old metal swing post, chopped out roots and dug around the concrete footer in preparation for removal.

January 23 – Bruce Trotter, Jerry Walker, and I removed the swing post footer and installed a new wooden post in concrete.

February 13 – Dave Haun and Bob Vandeventer visited the preserve and checked out the entrance area at Lowry cave.

February 27 – Beth and I installed the new bolts in the swing post and reset the gate on the new post.

March 6 – Members of the Central Indiana Grotto including Wes Terrell, Drennan Terrell, Kristen Champion-Terrell, Sylvie Terrell, Amy Howe, and Jamie Howe made a visit to Lowry Cave.

March 22 – Beth and I checked out the preserve and removed branches that had fallen on the interior lane.

April 15 – I checked out the preserve and con-

tinued removing fallen branches from the unimproved county road and the interior lane.

April 17– Members of the Evansville Metro Grotto including Carla Striegel-Winner, Jamie Winner, Greg Dunwoody, Debbie Durham, Sue Vernier, Richard Vernier, and Anna Francis made a visit to Lowry Cave. Some members of the group pulled Garlic Mustard.

May 5 – Bambi Dunlap, Keith Dunlap, and I pulled Garlic Mustard on the preserve.

May 8 – Carla Striegel-Winner and Keith Dunlap pulled Garlic Mustard, while Bruce Trotter and I removed the old metal gate rest post and installed a new wood gate rest post.

May 12 – Bambi Dunlap, Keith Dunlap, and I pulled Garlic Mustard. Keith took measurements for pipe brackets at the new gate rest post and attached the steel brace.

June 21 – Beth and I checked out the preserve.

July 14 – Beth and I checked out the preserve.

July 24 – Keith spent four and half-hours spraying three tanks of Crossbow and ½ tank of Glyphosate to treat Multiflora Rose, Autumn Olive, and Bush Honeysuckle on the preserve.

July 30 – Brandy Faulstich and her husband hiked around on the preserve and checked out the Lowry Cave entrance area.

July 31 – Keith flagged several grapevines missed last year while I pointed out small patches of Stiltgrass along the east side. Keith then spent five hours spraying 5 ¼ tanks of Clethodim 2E to treat Stiltgrass on the west end of the south half of the preserve.

August 7 – Ed Larock, Ira Sasowsky, Peter Sasowsky, and Mark Wilson took a tour of Lowry Cave while visiting Indiana and attending Cave Capers.

August 22 – John Lang took a group of Boy Scouts and parents in Lowry Cave. The visitors included Christopher Padgett, Peter Settle, James Settle, Joel Riedeman, Michael Riedeman and son Michael Riedeman, Patrick Snyder, Thomas Snyder, Charles O'Brien, Quinn O'Brien, Chris Martin, Garrett Martin, Jacob Geier, Warren Rowland, and Nathan Rowland.

August 22 – Beth and I checked out the property and the Lowry Cave entrance area.



September 12 – I sanded, cleaned and applied a primer coat of paint on the gate.

September 14 – I applied a second coat of paint on the gate.

October 10 – Beth blew leaves off of the interior lane while I removed fallen limbs.

October 19 – Beth and I checked out the preserve and removed a few more fallen branches from the interior lane.

October 19 – John Benton, Gabbie Benton, Trey Benton, Danielle Benton, and Nick Benton visited Lowry Cave.

November 9 – I removed a tree that had fallen across the extended interior lane and took a few photos of the group looking at fossils in the Lowry Cave entrance area.

November 9 – John Benton, Dave Black, Richard Newton, William Pearson, and Tom Sollman conducted a fossil study in the entrance area of Lowry Cave. Several hours were spent identifying and taking photos of the fossils.

December 19 – Keith Dunlap, Bruce Trotter, Jerry Walker, and I removed the old concrete block fire pit and graded the area. The rubble was used to fill a low area on the extended interior lane. A washing machine tub was buried in the picnic area to be used for a fire pit. Some under-brush was removed in the camping area and we cut a trail to Wilkerson Cave. We removed an old metal box spring and some loose limestone from above the Lowry Cave entrance.

December 24 – Jon Sheldon and I placed stones and graded the dirt around the new fire pit. Jon also blew the leaves off of the interior lane and mowed the new trail to Wilkerson Cave. We checked out the entrance area in Lowry Cave.

December 26 – Jonathan Sears, Harley Brough, and Seth Gullett made a trip into Lowry Cave.

Lowry Cave Patron Report (Ray Sheldon)

Cave visits summary: Seven authorized trips into Lowry Cave with 46 cavers beyond the entrance room. 46 liability waivers collected in 2021.

Orangeville Rise Report (Carla Striegel-Winner)

Total Manager volunteer time for 2021: approximately 60 hours

Total other volunteers time for 2021: 45 hours

Total trash removed: 13 pounds

Total invasives pulled and disposed of: garlic mustard 1000 pounds, winter creeper 5 pounds

My third full-year as Property Manager for the Orangeville Rise Nature Preserve proved to be a busy one, with approximately a dozen visits to the Preserve. Initially upon sitting down to write this, I felt like I had abandoned the property to pursue other IKC-related tasks and projects, but now realize that I did indeed meet my goals and a lot was accomplished due to the help of others!

The first couple of months were spent in correspondence and planning; arranging for the continuation of the Indiana Geological and Water Survey (IGWS) research permit, planning the May 1 volunteer day, and working with others to prepare for future tasks.

In early spring I arranged to meet fellow IKC board member Keith Dunlap on site to go over the property boundaries (which seemed so simple at the time, and then the place becomes a jungle in the summer and one wonders where those boundaries are once again). I corresponded with staff from Lost River Watershed, DNR Division of Nature Preserves, Hoosier National Forest, and Orange County SWCD regarding the preserve and also the upcoming work day.

The volunteer workday on the first day of May attracted 14 volunteers with a total of 38 bags of garlic mustard and some winter creeper pulled, non-native irises removed, and trash picked up for a total of 36 hours of work that day. The volunteers were provided a lunch and optional visit to Wesley Chapel Gulf afterwards.

The Preserve sign was in need of repainting, and my mother and father-in-law did a wonderful job on that task later in May, volunteering about 8 hours perfecting it.

I had noticed what I believed to be new graffiti in a couple of small spots on one of the limestone outcroppings above the Rise in early 2021. At the workday I asked a couple of volunteers for advice, and was able to successfully remove the paint with a scrub brush and water on another visit.

The rest of May into June and July saw a couple of visits from me, but was spent mainly contacting and corresponding, writing an article for the IKC Update, sending thank yous, and planning the rest of the year's activities. Also, the IKC



president hosted a Zoom meeting for Property Managers, which I attended.

In early August, I met the DNR Division of Nature Preserves Regional Ecologist Jason Larson on site to pick his brain about management objectives. I wanted to ensure we are on the right track and to ask about invasive treatment, and what other management might be recommended. We had not done any major treatment here and I wanted to make sure I felt comfortable with our decisions going forward. Jason had some great suggestions, felt we were definitely on the right track, and (un?)fortunately identified a new-to-us invasive, air potato.

Keith had offered to come help spray invasives, which I happily accepted. Here are my notes from our August 15 adventure:

"A black Cloud over Orangeville. No rain anywhere else. Everything wet upon arrival. Drizzle while there. Stopped. Decided to spray stiltgrass. Sprayed half tank and went to refill. Started to rain. Rained good. No more spraying. We headed opposite directions, soaking wet, and within a few miles both reported dry roads and no rain. Go figure."

I felt bad that Keith had driven all the way down from Greenwood for nothing. Luckily, our second attempt on September 2nd was much more fruitful and we were able to successfully treat the entire property's population of multiflora, stiltgrass, and even got a good start our ominous air potato, which was vining itself 30 feet into the trees. I can confidently report that the multiflora treatment was quite successful. Time will tell on stiltgrass and air potato, as repeated treatments will be needed over a period of years. I certainly appreciated the help, as I was a bit overwhelmed and unsure of myself, and that gave me the confidence that it was not insurmountable, and made a real difference. The IKC wishes to continue to be good stewards of the Preserve and wants to ensure that we are responsible for slowing or stopping the downstream spread of invasives.

Additionally, the IGWS had completed their grant cycle and were no longer water monitoring at the site. They took their equipment down. Sarah Burgess, who had overseen the monitoring, had an article in the March 2021 IKC Update and also submitted her Master's Thesis to us. She indicated that IGWS would like a permit for 10 years to

monitor the Rise once a year, so I helped facilitate the Division of Nature Preserves Permit process for them (resulting in permit NP-21-26) and oversaw their successful request for an IKC permit for 2022. This was approved at the September 2021 IKC Board meeting (IKC Permit 01-22) and will be able to be approved by me annually for the next 9 years, through the completion of that project.

Throughout the year, I did have some discussion and inquiry about the proposed Mid-States Corridor Highway, as one of the proposed routes, Route O, goes right through Orangeville. But that is a story for 2022, which we all hope has a happy ending. Additionally, upon responding to a request for information, I started thinking about looking at the possibility of (maybe, just maybe) updating the website text. Sounds like a plan for 2022. The remainder of the year was spent occasionally stopping by the property to pick up trash, enjoy the ever changing Rise, and visit with the local dog population.

In December of 2021 I was able to confirm an April 23, 2022 Field Tour with Sarah Burgess leading us to Wesley Chapel Gulf and the Orangeville Rise.

Goals for 2022 include continued spraying and maintenance, the April 23 Field Tour, another workday, creating an outreach document about visiting the Rise, updating the webpage in cooperation with the webmaster, meeting our neighbors, and continuing to do outreach and education to explain why Orangeville and the drainage basin of the Orangeville Rise is not a good option for a four lane highway.

Robinson Ladder Property (John Benton)

March 21, 2021 – Keith Dunlap proposes spraying of chestnut trees in upper field, to attempt to prevent beetle "drill" damage of those plantation trees. Trees will be sprayed with an insecticide (Bifen XTS) containing bifenthrin, which is in same family of chemicals as permethrin, commonly used for tick control. This was recommended by one of the foresters at TACF (The American Chestnut Foundation). Also added to the spray mix, was a fungicide, propiconazole, to help protect the chestnuts from blight/fungus. Re-spray was suggested every 2-3 weeks, due to rain, elements, wash-off. Keith, Carla Striegel-Winner, and John Benton rotated duties on this task into August 2021. Treatment takes about 1 hour to walk the plantation applying the "cocktail" to the stems of the chestnut



trees. Treatment dates were March 20, April 1 (no joke), early May, May 19, June 10, July 3, July 22, August 5. Overall, the treatments seemed to have helped, but was not a total success. Unknown how much the cicada infestation of summer 2021 may have hurt the young trees.

May 19 – Keith, Bambi Dunlap, and John met at the property, and mowed the chestnut tree plantation with Keith's walk-behind mower.

June 1 – Keith sprayed glyphosate (round-up) around the approximately 35 chestnut trees and 150 other trees, to make mowing easier.

July 9 – Jamie Winner mowed the access lane and camping areas at RLCP with his tractor and mower.

July 19 – Had a ZOOM conference call with IKC property managers with Matt Selig, Striegel-Winner, Dunlap, others? Overview of property, chestnut tree planting, mow vs not mow fields, classified forest status, RLC bat protection.

Late July – John cut weeds around the property entrance gate and the barn in the upper field. Also sprayed some poison ivy.

August 5 – Jamie closely mowed the camping areas and access lane at RLCP with his equipment. This was right before Cave Capers.

September 27 – Had an inquiry from neighbor, Logan Tharp about deer hunting on the property. Explained our No Hunting policy on all IKC preserves and invited Logan to walk and enjoy the property, but stressed the no hunting or discharge of firearms on IKC land. He thanked me for information.

October 14 – John, Carla, and Keith met with Abby Hash, the Crawford County District Forester, for our 5-year Classified Forest re-inspection and for additional management recommendations. Later in day, John, Carla, and Keith sprayed a number of Tree of Heaven in the upper forest.

October 23 – Jamie mowed the access lane and camping areas. He and Carla picked up the spray chemicals stored in barn, and took them for winter storage. They left the water jugs for next season.

Future – Should we attempt to alternate mowing of upper and lower fields, every other year? The field mowing is too intense for the level of the equipment that we have been mowing the lane and camping areas with. So field mowing would probably be "hired out". An alternative would be let

nature take its course in the upper and lower fields, which is what's been happening the last few years. Easing of tree care as they mature? Watch wild-life pond for retention; it has been holding water. Continue to mow the access drive and camping areas. Treatment of invasives as needed. May need some limb removal along drive lane into property.

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!

RL Cave Patron Report (John Benton)

There was an increase in cave visitation for 2021. It is believed an uptick in promotion of the site in 2021 on the IKC Facebook page, definitely helped.

May 15 – Trevor Bird, led a group of 5, Purdue cavers to RLC.

June 5 – Laura Demarest, IKC member and Bloomfield caver led a trip of 5 people to RLC.

July 3 – Carla Striegel-Winner and Mike Woolard did a trip to RLC and Breakdown Falls Cave on the property.

July 7 to July 12 – Burnis Piper and some NIG cavers camped at the property, and visited area caves.

Shawnee Property Report (Keith Dunlap)

This was the IKC's tenth full-year of ownership of the original 50-acre tract, and the first full year of owning the expanded (17.5 acre) property. With the retirement of Jerry Lewis as the Property Manager in March of 2021, there were no new initiatives in 2021. I accepted the Property Manager's position in December of 2021 and will include some activities during the past year.

The hiking trails were mowed twice and an existing trail on the new property (maintained by the neighbor who previously hunted on the property) was linked into the original western loop trail. Also a short spur trail from the expansion property's garage/parking area was linked to the original eastern loop trail. There was a large black cherry tree that fell across the western loop trail at the far west end of the Preserve that still needs to be removed off the trail.

There was one group that was granted permission to camp at Shawnee during this report year.

The property hosted a group of plant enthusiasts on August 21. They were primarily interested in the plants in

the sinkhole pond, but visited the prairie opening too, finding a number of important native species.

In the spring of 2021, 100 red oak, 50 black cherry, and 50 poplars were planted on the expansion property. Herbicide treatment around the trees was completed in May.

There was some minor invasive treatment (one backpack tank) near the prairie opening.

No progress on the kiosk was made during 2021.

The entrance to Upper Twin continues to enlarge with each rain.

In early December Matt Selig was contacted by the Lawrence County authorities indicating one of their monitored releases had entered the property and cut off his GPS ankle-monitor. They asked for permission to enter the property and look for and hopefully recover their equipment.

There were no known management problems or concerns encountered during 2021.

2022 activities hoped to accomplished:

- Complete the kiosk.
- Mow the original prairie area in February or March in lieu of burning.
- Plant additional trees on the expansion property in April.
- Install a driveway gate on the expansion property.
- Clean out the garage and replace door frame for better security.
- Mow (in September) and treat for fescue (in October) at least part of the open field west of garage.
- Investigate 2023 or 2024 EQIP funding for invasive removal.

Upper Twin Cave Patron Report (Dave Everton)

Who wants to sit in a Zoom meeting and hear boring reports? Who wants to sit in an in-person post-COVID19 meeting and hear boring reports? I'll spare everyone the agony again this year!!

Patron-Arranged Trips: 5

Number of cavers: 34 (some went more than once)

Total Amount of Misery: Immeasurable

Total Amount of Ecstasy: Immeasurable

It should be noted that there was a medical emergency on the April 25 trip, during which a participant had some health issues. Emergency services took the person to the hospital after the group exited the park's entrance to the cave. The group terminated the remainder of the trip at that point, which was to enter Bronson and exit the Donaldson entrance.

Sullivan Property Report (Keith Dunlap)

This was the IKC's 23rd 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 and once after all the leaves were down to mulch the leaf cover. The viability of the grass has not been the best since the treatment with Clethodim in 2020 and another invasive, beefsteak plant, has shown up. To improve the situation, approximately 50 pounds of perennial ryegrass was over-seeded in September with at least some of it sprouting.

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

The port-a-john was serviced three times last year by a new vendor.

A large red oak tree uprooted in December. Several volunteers (Brad Barcom, Goni Iskali, and Chris Parks) cut up the upper branches into firewood and stacked it near the camping area. The larger branches were cut and will be split. Plans for the trunk logs are in the works, and likely will be addressed in early 2022.

Janet Eger, Lawrence County District Forester, visited the proposed 2-acre addition in July to evaluate enrollment in Classified Forest program. She prescribed mowing the fescue areas in September, then treating with glyphosate in October after the first frost to eradicate the fescue. These activities were both completed on schedule. The paperwork for the 2-acre tract was completed and recorded in December to add that land to the existing 28-acre Classified Forest area, so we will receive the property tax reduction starting in 2022 (payable in 2023).

I completed all of the grapevine cutting on the property (started in 2020).



I continued working on invasive treatment (mostly multiflora rose) on the west and south sides of the property. This was started in 2020 and will continue in 2022.

The unauthorized deer hunting blind on the property was disassembled in June and removed in October.

There were no major management problems or concerns encountered during 2021.

2022 activities hoped to accomplished:

- Systematically perform additional invasive treatment on the property (started in 2020).
- Put a new roof on the red “wood shed” (volunteers identified).
- Remove the large red oak tree that uprooted in the camping clearing

This will be my last Property Manager report for Sullivan Cave. I have been the Property Manager since September 1999 (22+ years). Joe Kinder will be taking on the responsibility in 2022.

Sullivan Cave Patron Report (Paul Uglum)

This report covers the activity and visitation from January through December, 2021. As in past years, people and groups with a wide range of caving experience and expectations have requested visits to Sullivan Cave. Group 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 experience levels and larger groups. The largest groups were very early in the year prior to the new restrictions. The number of requests in October and November was significantly larger than other months.

For 2021 there were 76 trips with a total of 437 participants. Most trips were arranged through the IKC and BIG. The number of trips increased significantly from last year. Group size tended to be bimodal, either large groups of more than 10 or small groups of 3 to 5. Group sizes range widely, from 3 to 35 participants, with the average of 6 participants per trip. More experienced groups tended to be smaller, while led youth groups and the NCRC trips being larger. There were an additional 9 trips

that were scheduled, but did not take for various reasons. There were ten nights of camping on the site. Camping groups are required to have at least one member who is an IKC member.

There were 25 additional inquiries, that did not result in a scheduled trip. These were generally non-cavers who did not respond to replies after I explained that Sullivan Cave 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 Cave was operated like commercial caves 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. A list of names and contact information was shared with the CIG and they reached out with an offer of a beginner's trip.

I led one trip with two groups of scouts from Illinois. They were accompanied by a photographer from Scout Life Magazine (formally Boy's Life Magazine). The group's leader (Troop 797, Utica, IL) is a caver and the group was very well prepared and behaved. We visited the Mountain Room and went part way to the Quarry room when we hit our turnaround time. If the trip results in a published article, I will forward the information to the IKC Board.

Most trips were requested via e-mail and keys mailed to the trip leader and returned by mail. One key was lost in the mail, all other keys were 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:

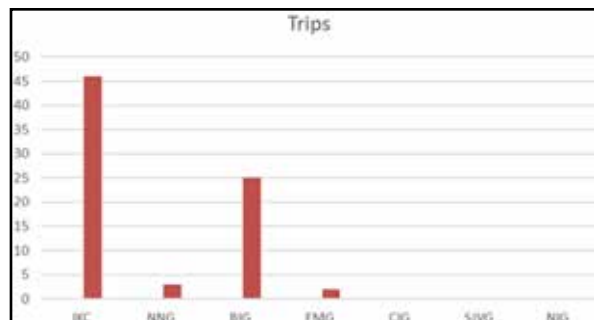
As in past years, an in-cave cleanup / restoration project would be a good idea. There are parts of The Backbreaker that have far too much graffiti in some locations – this tends to encourage more damage in my estimation. It would also be good to have a general clean up.

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



and encourage them to become responsible cavers as well as recruit them to be involved with cave conservation.

A more detailed map of the cave would also be useful. Having a map similar to the new Buckner's map of the south parts of Sullivan would be nice.



Visits to Sullivan's Cave by authorizer for 2021



Visits to Sullivan's Cave by month 2021

Wayne Property Report (Danyeale Green)

We have completed:

- Year 3 of our Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contract with the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on Tract 1 (northernmost); and
- Year 2 of the same contract on Tract 3 (southernmost); and
- Year 1 of the same contract on Tract 2 (middle section)

****I wish to extend a heartfelt *thank you* to all who were involved in workdays, either planned or ad hoc. You all saved me this year as I did not have the full time commitment to extend that I would have liked to.**

A Port-o-Potty (currently owned by the IKC, but not being used) was installed near the parking lot and is being serviced as needed. This should eliminate the eliminations that were occurring that did not follow the Leave No Trace principles.

The driveway and parking area were re-graded by our wonderful neighbor to the south and fresh

rock was laid on August 28.

Also on Aug. 28, we had our first ever Native Plants Hike in collaboration with the South Central Chapter of the Indiana Native Plant Society (SC-INPS) led by Nic Garza, owner of Outlier Farmstead. More hikes will be planned in the future – stay tuned for details!

2021 also consisted of additional trail clearing. 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!! Get out there and hike!!!

I would like to reiterate, camping is permitted with permission. All one needs to do is email me (mudanddogs@gmail.com) and request the dates you would like. Camping is granted on a First-come/first-served basis.

Future Projects:

- We are currently exploring the possibility of a controlled burn in the open area of the southeastern portion of the property. We currently have a bid coming in from Jack Cathcart of Oiko, a local ecological restoration company that Danyeale has worked with in the past and will discuss the potential for permit application and management plan at the March meeting.
- 2022 will consist of another round of invasive work on all tracts. Work Days will be announced via the Facebook page and possibly via email to the membership.
- Tentative dates (weather permitting): check social media for date confirmation and registration:
 - May 8, Noon to 4 PM – Trash Cleanup and Trail Work
 - June 11, 10 AM to 2 PM – Invasive Removal

Wayne Cave Patron Report (Dave Everton)

Who wants to sit in a Zoom meeting and hear boring reports? Who wants to sit in an in-person post-COVID19 meeting and hear boring reports? I'll spare everyone the agony again this year!!

Liaison-Arranged Trips: one (Evansville Metropolitan Grotto)

Number of cavers: 3

Patron-Arranged Trips: 14

Number of cavers: 104

Total Trips: 15

Total number of cavers: 107 (some went more than once)

Total Amount of Misery: Immeasurable

Total Amount of Ecstasy: Immeasurable

The Cave Patron visited the cave during the period of this report, going to Camp 4 and back with three other cavers. The cave gate lock was replaced once.

Shiloh Cave 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 2021, only five of these trips were taken into the cave. The five trips in 2021 allowed 33 cavers to visit Shiloh Cave. Only one of the trips was filled to capacity.

Concerns over COVID may have again contributed to the trips not being filled to the maximum number of cavers, similar to 2020. The trips were smaller groups of friends getting together rather than grotto-sponsored trips.

Suicide Cave Patron Report (Kevin Smith)

2021 had four documented trips totaling 22 cavers. Trips were affiliated with the Windy City

Grotto (WCG), the Central Indiana Grotto (CIG), the Bloomington Indiana Grotto (BIG), and the Purdue Outing Club. 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 & Wildlife Sanctuary.

Indian Creek CE Report (Rand Heazlitt)

Rand Heazlitt, Keith Dunlap, Carla Striegel-Winner, and Matt Selig, inspected the CE along the Sinks of Indian Creek on November the 3rd and found the following:

- Two T-posts marker covers were replaced on Easement #10 and #11.
- Numerous post caps were repainted along the easement boundaries.
- Invasives were noted to be treated in the spring, Ailanthus, Privet, and Johnson Grass in #10 and #9.
- Deer-stands were noted in #10 and #9 requested to be removed.
- Excessive mowing was noted on #11.
- Letters were sent early in December to landowners.

No other issues were identified on the CE.



What will be your legacy?

"The best time to protect a cave is 50 years ago. The second-best time is today...."

An easy way to make us part of your legacy is to list the Indiana Karst Conservancy as a beneficiary on a life insurance policy, 401K/IRA retirement plan, or investment brokerage account. You will only need our address and Tax Identification Number (TIN) 31-1185033.

Please contact President Matt Selig at MSelig@hotmail.com or 317-258-9983 to discuss any aspect of legacy giving.

INDIANA KARST CONSERVANCY TREASURY REPORT

Income/Expense Statement From January 1, 2022 to March 31, 2022

INCOME:

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|------------|
| Dues Apportionment and Residuals | 893.75 | |
| Donations - General | 3,373.87 | |
| Donations - Land Acquisition Fund | 1,837.00 | |
| General Investment Earnings | 3.52 | |
| | | \$6,108.14 |

EXPENSES:

| | | |
|--|----------|--------------|
| IKC Update (printing, production, mailing) | 360.91 | |
| Education / Outreach | 123.92 | |
| Stewardship / Conservation | 148.83 | |
| Indiana Land Protection Alliance Membership | 500.00 | |
| Land Acquisition Fund Expenses | 368.00 | |
| Business (PayPal fees, renewal letters, etc) | 394.25 | |
| Transfers to/from restricted funds/other adjustments | 1,469.00 | |
| | | (\$3,364.91) |

NET OPERATING EXCESS (DEFICIT) THIS PERIOD: \$2,743.23

Balance Sheet March 31, 2022

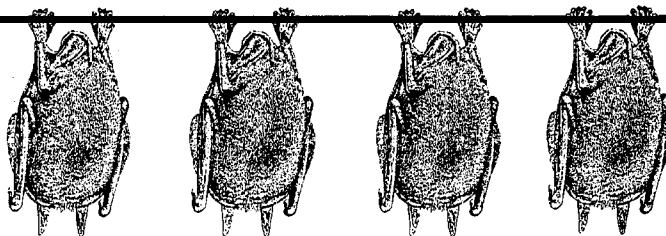
ASSETS:

| | | |
|---|------------|-----------------------|
| Cash in Checking/Saving/Brokerage accounts | 628,148.05 | |
| 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 (30.00 acres) | 88,000.00 | |
| 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) | 13.16 | |
| | | <u>\$1,310,161.21</u> |

FUNDS & OPERATING EXCESS:

| | | |
|---|-------------------|--|
| Land Acquisition Restricted Fund | 63,314.42 | |
| Deferred Dues Restricted Fund (254 members) | 6,690.00 | |
| Stewardship Endowment Fund (-4.83%) | 92,351.88 | |
| Gale & Ray Beach Endowment Fund (-6.67%) | 383,669.41 | |
| Previous General Fund (total) | 79,392.27 | |
| Net Excess (Deficit) This Period | <u>2,743.23</u> | |
| Current General Fund (unrestricted) | 82,135.50 | |
| Current General Fund (committed) | 1,972.87 | |
| Real Estate Basis (excluding value of CE) | <u>682,000.00</u> | |

Total Liabilities & Operating Excess \$1,310,161.21



IKC ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

Saturday, March 26th, 2022 – 1:00 PM EDT via Zoom

Board Members Present:

Matt Selig, President
 Laura Demarest, Secretary
 Keith Dunlap, Treasurer
 Jim Adams
 Jeff Cody
 Scott Frosch
 Danyele Green
 Dave Haun
 Rand Heazlitt
 Goniela Iskali
 Joe Kinder
 Tom Sollman
 Carla Striegel-Winner
 Paul Uglum
 Richard Vernier

Board Members Absent:

None.

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order by Matt Selig at 1:03 PM EDT.

Acceptance of Proxies

All Board members in attendance, no proxies needed.

Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes from the December meeting were approved as published in the March 2022 *IKC Update*. *Dave Haun made the motion and Jim Adams seconded. Unanimously passed.*

E-mail Motions Since Last Meeting

Wagoner Cave Property Offer (February 4th, 2022) – *Jeff Cody made a motion to 'direct the President of the Indiana Karst Conservancy to offer \$____,____ and cover all survey and closing costs for the one-acre parcel of property in Lawrence County that contains Wagoner Cave. We also authorize the President to share with the seller our February 1st, 2022 appraisal of the property.' Paul Uglum seconded. – 14-0 in favor with 1 abstaining. Motion passed.*

Vowell Cave Property Offer (February 7th, 2022) – *Laura Demarest made a motion to 'move forward and extend this offer to the owner of Vowell Cave on behalf of the IKC (in reference to the proposed offer discussed amongst the Executive Board)'. Danyele Green seconded. 14-0 in favor with 1 abstaining. Motion passed.*

2022 IKC Election Slate (February 8th, 2022) – *Joe Kinder made a motion to approve the 2022 slate of candidates. Paul Uglum seconded. 14-0 in favor with 1 abstaining. Motion passed.*

Treasurer Report

Keith outlined the current financial status of the organization:

Assets:

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Cash assets totaling | \$628,538.14 |
| Land assets totaling | \$682,000.00 |
| Total Assets | \$1,310,538.14 |

Dedicated Funds:

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Land Acquisition Fund | \$63,605.42 |
| Stewardship Endowment | \$92,203.67 |
| Gale & Ray Beach Endowment | \$382,630.54 |
| Deferred Dues | \$6,525.00 |
| General Fund | \$83,573.51 |
| Total Dedicated Funds | \$628,538.14 |

Membership currently stands at 253 paid members. This total includes the 63 memberships yet to renew by March 31.

Additional information on the Stewardship Fund and Beach Endowment investments was provided with the financial report.

Election Results

The Election Tellers reported that three Officers and five Directors will be seated on April 1, 2022. All Officers and Directors were re-elected. Officers (single year term): Matt Selig – President, Keith Dunlap – Treasurer, Laura Demarest – Secretary. Directors (3 year term) – Jeff Cody, Danyele Greene, Goni Iskali, and Carla Striegel-Winner. Director (2 year term) - Jim Adams (to serve out the remainder of Bob Sergesketter's term). It was also reported by the Nomination Committee that 236 ballots were sent out and 68 returned, the majority of which were returned via mail though some were submitted electronically. Additionally, there was some discussion about how several qualified candidates initially were interested, but then withdrew due to 'not feeling qualified enough' and in the future it may be helpful to encourage prospective candidates to attend IKC meetings and/or give them a more detailed overview of what being an IKC Director would entail.

Indiana Cave Symposium

After a two year hiatus due to COVID-19, the Indiana Cave Symposium will be held on April 23 at the Orangeville Community Center in Paoli with an option for Zoom. The IKC will partner with the ICS to organize and fund this event. The pitch-in dinner will start at 5:00 PM and presentations will begin at 6:30 PM. There will also be an IKC field day before the Symposium that will include a visit to Orangeville Rise and Wesley Chapel Gulf with expert speakers, Sarah Bur-



gess and Sam Frushour. Reservations are requested for both events to help with planning. Danyele also mentioned a cavefish print that could be auctioned at the event with proceeds to go to IKC.

ILPA Presentation

Andrea Huntington with the Indiana Land Protection Alliance (ILPA) tuned in at 1:30 to introduce herself and provide an overview of what the ILPA can do for land conservancy groups in Indiana. The ILPA strategic plan was launched in January 2021 and in the past year the group has focused on boosting membership, increasing awareness, and implementing programming for members. ILPA goals include helping land trusts and conservancy groups reach their own goals and increase capacity. She also touched on several topics that coincide with future programming (legacy planning, lobbying vs advocacy, property management strategies, connecting with government officials and partners to leverage support and funding, generating positive PR, and community development) and gave an overview of upcoming educational events for ILPA member groups.

Mid-States Corridor Update

Carla and Matt shared that a formal letter opposing Routes O and M had been sent to pertinent officials on behalf of the IKC. This letter as well as a 'Call to Action' sheet can be found on the IKC website and is meant to serve as a template for other caving groups and individuals to use as they implement their own opposition efforts. The response to IKC advocacy/outreach has been encouraging. A preferred route is expected to be announced in mid-April.

Education/Outreach Committee

General activities – Carla gave an overview of recent outreach activities including her contributions at the Orleans Mid-States Corridor 'town hall' meeting, as well as presentations given to the Indiana Sierra Club and Bloomington Indiana Grotto on the Mid-States Corridor issue. She also created a 'Call to Action' sheet for the IKC website and shared the slideshow to offer guidance to other groups. In addition, she has joined the ILPA Communications & Marketing committee.

Goni gave an overview of the \$127 donations collected from the Vibe Yoga fundraising event, which seemed like an easy and innovative way to increase public awareness about the IKC.

Some discussion ensued on funding for education/outreach/promotional materials as well as possible supplies and advertising as necessary for future field days and events. *Laura Demarest made a motion to earmark an amount not to exceed \$250 for the Education/Outreach Committee to be used at the Committee Chair's discretion for the remainder of the 2022 year. Dave Haun seconded the motion. 13-0 in favor (with 1*

abstaining and 1 absent). Motion passed.

Social Media Update – Carla and Matt reported that there has been a major uptick in engagements and followers and all is going very well. Increasing posts on the IKC Facebook page seems to be helping with increased membership and community interest.

2022 Property Field Days – Carla is still working to plan quarterly IKC Field Days and the first one will be on April 23rd preceding the IKC/ICS Symposium. Registration is currently open for this field day which will include visits to Orangeville Rise and Wesley Chapel Gulf with experts Sarah Burgess and Sam Frushour. There will be another IKC field day on June 11th at the Buddha Preserve and she is still planning fall and winter field days.

ILPA Big Bird Day October 8: Member land trusts from around Indiana are hosting a "Big Bird Day" with volunteer expert birders and event promotion being arranged by ILPA. We are participating and ours will be at Shawnee Karst Preserve.

Member engagement items - Keith reported good feedback from members after sending out IKC stickers with the recent mailing. One person even asked to buy more so they are now available for purchase in the online IKC merchandise store. Joe provided an updated T-shirt design from Charlie Veters as well as a preview of the online ordering shop for the shirts. A portion of the proceeds will go back to the IKC. He said that Charlie could also do hats and other promotional items if desired. Discussion ensued about the logistics of ordering/delivering/mailling shirts and the timing for Charlie.

Cave-Land Acquisition Activities

Wagoner Cave property – Matt explained that the owner responded to the IKC's offer which was above appraised value (but could be justified). Unfortunately the offer did not meet his expectations and he decided against subdividing off the one acre from the larger property. Time will tell if the owner changes his mind in the future.

Vowell Cave property – Matt reported that the IKC's offer was allowed to expire. When he followed up, the agent insinuated that the owner was going with another buyer. Matt recently discovered that the cave is now under contract to be purchased, though the transfer has not yet been recorded. It may be prudent to keep an eye on this property for future opportunities with the new landowner.

Reeves Cave property – Keith explained that it was listed at \$660,000 last year before being taken off the market and re-listed at \$600,000 recently. At its current price point and with the large house included, it is not reasonable for the IKC to purchase and the owner is not interested in dividing-off the cave.



Kinser property (adjacent to Wayne Cave preserve) – Keith reported that this property was recently listed though is priced optimistically for what is being offered. Keith had a long discussion with the listing agent who was unaware of the restrictions on and difficulty with subdividing this property which the agent was promoting. The IKC will continue to monitor this property.

Cave Patron/Property Manager Report Highlights

Property Managers and Cave Patrons submitted written annual reports (see page 15) though many joined the IKC Annual Meeting to provide a verbal summary of 2021 activities.

Buddha Karst Nature Preserve – Keith and Jeff reported that the property is in maintenance mode and there have been no reports of damage or vandalism. There were only four trips completed in 2021 (though several rain cancellations) and only two groups ventured beyond the entrance room. It seems that most are not aware that a ladder and/or vertical equipment is necessary for visitation.

Lowry Karst Preserve – Ray Sheldon logged the most visits of any IKC Property Manager at 46 total. He reported that expenses have been minimal and are mostly attributed to gravel. There has been evidence of frequent unauthorized visitation but no vandalism or damage.

Orangeville Rise Nature Preserve – Carla reported that IGWS completed their survey in 2021 and applied for a new scientific research permit to sample the Orangeville Rise once per year for the next 10 years. In addition to the May 2021 volunteer workday with 14 volunteers assisting, Carla visited the site monthly in 2021 to evaluate/clear invasive species, pick up trash, and weed-eat.

Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve – Property Manager John Benton submitted a very detailed annual report, though Keith provided some highlights on his behalf. The main activities in 2021 revolved around caring for the Chestnut trees as well as a favorable five year inspection for the Classified Forest program. There were three cave trips in 2021 as well as some camping. Visitation is moderate due to the cave only being open in the summer months.

Shawnee Karst Preserve – Keith reported little activity in 2021 since there was no Property Manager for most of last year, however 200 trees were planted and the entrance to Upper Twin Cave has remained open and seems to be getting larger. In 2021 there were five cave trips with 34 people total. There was an in-cave medical emergency reported – the patient had an allergic reaction to causes unknown, was taken to the hospital, and made a full recovery.

Sullivan Cave Preserve – Keith gave an overview of property management activities in 2021 which in-

cluded adding two acres to the property making the Sullivan Cave Preserve 30 acres total. In addition, the porta-john was serviced three times, a very large oak tree was removed from the camping area, and some grapevine control occurred. There were also 10 nights of camping requested. Paul (Cave Patron) reported an increase in caving trips last year with COVID concerns waning. There were a total of 76 trips with 437 participants, mostly through IKC and BIG. Experience levels and trip objectives varied and he continues to field a lot of random inquiries about the property and whether or not there is a 'gift shop'. Paul has been referring novices to the CIG in order to help interested people get started caving safely with a grotto. He also reported that Scout Life did a story on Sullivan in 2021 though it has not yet been published. Two well-attended cave rescue trainings were held in 2021, as well.

Wayne Cave Preserve – Danyele explained that the EQIP contract on the north-most section was successfully completed in 2021 and invasive species removal continues for the two other portions of the preserve still under contract. The parking lot and driveway were re-graded and new rock was added. She also organized and led a hike with the South-Central Native Plant Society. They were impressed with the property and would like to do an annual hike to identify and inventory native plant species. Dave Everton (Cave Patron) reported 15 total trips with 107 cavers. Dave himself went to Camp 4 as part of his annual inspection and reported no major damage or disturbance. Some old trash was cleaned up from the entrance area and all looks good!

Shiloh Cave – Jim Adams reported five trips with 33 cavers and only one trip was at the 10 participant limit. Several trips were comprised of grotto/caving group trips, but some were just groups of unaffiliated individuals. He prefers to have a month between trips when possible so they are spaced out and the cave does not experience too much impact.

Suicide Cave – Danyele spoke on behalf of Kevin Smith to explain that visitation has been recently limited in 2022 due to a colony of bats observed near the entrance. In 2021 there were four trips with 22 cavers and all were associated with caving groups.

Indian Creek Conservation Easement – Rand went with Matt, Keith, and Carla to monitor the property. They replaced boundary posts, found an over-mowed area, as well as a clandestine deer stand which they asked to be removed. They observed a number of invasive species including autumn olive, Johnson grass, and privet which will need treatment in the future.

Recent (2022) and Upcoming Preserve Projects/Updates

Buddha Karst Nature Preserve – Keith reported that a big tree that has fallen over the trail will need to be removed. Mowing activities and stiltgrass treatments are ongoing. The tree plantings are growing well and looks



healthy. Jeff Cody plans to paint/stain the kiosk soon and will ask for volunteers when the weather is nicer.

Lowry Karst Preserve – Ray is working to develop a camping/picnic area for visitors and may build a heavy wooden picnic table that will not be easily stolen or damaged. He plans to schedule a garlic mustard pull in May and will continue to work on treating other invasives. He also said that the concerning rock above the entrance was evaluated further and deemed to be of low risk. There were some recent questions about a chlorine smell in the cave. Ray noted that there are new homeowners living in the house above the cave, though the smell was noticed prior to that so perhaps it could be attributed to some other cause? Scott Frosch offered to arrange a visit to investigate soon.

Orangeville Rise Nature Preserve – Carla is planning a garlic mustard removal workday for late April or early May. She has consulted with Jason Larson, the regional ecologist for Division of Nature Preserves, to ensure appropriate management. She will be continuing with general invasive species control in the future. As noted, there will be a field day on April 23rd at the property and Carla is currently working to update the webpage as well.

Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve – According to Keith, a bat count was conducted in January; none were observed in the traditional dome entrance area, but a cluster of Indiana bats was found in the crawlway leading from the entrance room and a few more individuals about halfway back. A total of two dozen bats were counted. Abby Hash conducted the five year inspection for the Classified Forest program and work will continue in the future to cut grapevines and treat Tree-of-Heaven.

Shawnee Karst Preserve – Keith reports that the prairie area was recently mowed. This seems like it will be beneficial and is not as complicated as conducting a prescribed burn. There is a tree planting slated for April 15th. The goal is to plant 150 trees on Shawnee, 150 on Sullivan, and 150 on Keith's private property next to Sullivan. Plans to make progress on the kiosk are another goal for 2022 along with a new driveway gate. Once the EQIP contracts are finished at Wayne, it was suggested that focus could shift to Shawnee as autumn olive and other invasive species are a problem. Keith would like to look into submitting an EQIP application for Shawnee when the time is appropriate in the future.

Sullivan Cave Preserve – Joe Kinder is the new Property Manager and he plans to meet with Keith soon to discuss tasks for 2022, which include plans for a new driveway and parking area, along with removal of the existing driveway. He also plans to organize a volunteer tree planting event, replace the roof on the woodshed, and continue servicing the porta-john. There are also plans to create a kiosk on-site once the wood from the milled oak tree is sufficiently dry. Paul

suggested that a graffiti removal session in the cave is needed, but a reconnaissance trip might be necessary first in order to make sure historic signatures are not being inadvertently removed.

Wayne Cave Preserve – Danyele has tentatively scheduled several workdays, one of which will involve tree clearing since four trees have recently fallen over the trail. Other workdays will be dedicated to invasive species removal and other tasks. She recently consulted a professional about doing a controlled burn on the southernmost section in the future and is still waiting for cost estimate. She also spoke with NRCS District Conservationist, Cara Bergschneider, about the burn and she advised that they would need to maintain an adequate fire break, file a permit, and notify neighbors in advance.

Sullivan Preserve Management Plan

Keith circulated an updated draft prior to the meeting for the Board to review. Paul weighed in to say that he thought the Management Plan adequately suited access to the cave, group size, etc. Not too many major revisions were made to the previous plan, but some new guidance was added for photography/videography. Discussion ensued regarding IKC's stance on the matter and Keith suggested that the new wording in the Sullivan plan on media restrictions should be standard for our other management plans. *Jim Adams made a motion to approve the March 26th, 2022 revised Sullivan Preserve Management Plan. Jeff Cody seconded. 13-0 in favor with no abstentions and 2 absent. Motion passed.*

ILPA Renewal

The cost for the IKC to renew membership is \$500/year. Discussion ensued. The IKC currently isn't a member of any other similar organization and the cost of ILPA membership scales based on an organization's size. *Rand Heazlitt made a motion to approve \$500 renewal of ILPA dues for another year. Jim Adams seconded. 13-0 in favor with no abstentions and 2 absent. Motion passed.*

Items from the Floor

- Paul Uglum shared that Lilly Hunter reached out to him looking for a youth group caving opportunity, possibly in the form of a small event. She manages a well-respected program at a summer camp in Brown County. He wants to offer help and recommendations so he asked about rules or feedback from others regarding this prospect.
- Dick & Sue Vernier provided updates on the raptor rehab topic. They spoke with individuals with Sycamore Land Trust who could not recall having previous experience with raptor rehab organizations and were not aware of any existing policies their organization had on the matter. However, they did not recommend recreational falconry activities on a state dedicated nature preserve and explained that if the activity was allowed, proof of



liability insurance and signed waivers would be strongly recommended. Dick also consulted Amy Kearns, an ornithologist with DNR Fish & Wildlife, who reported that the Raptors Rise group is legit and licensed. She felt the proposed number of birds involved would be low and wouldn't significantly impact IKC preserves, however she cautioned against falconry as it could claim migratory songbirds. It was also noted that falconry is considered a form of hunting and is subject to certain regulations which could incur a potential burden and may require permits, waivers, and insurance with no benefit for the IKC. Other raptor organizations use private land for activities typically. Dick followed up with the Raptors Rise representative who would be amendable to not using falconry practices, but stated that once released, the birds could not be returned to the area where they had been previously, which could disturb existing birds on our preserves that are already established. After much research on the matter, Dick recommended that the IKC not allow falconry on preserves as it is a form of hunting. Keith agreed with not allowing falconry, but advocated for staying open to releasing birds in the future with stipulations. Dick stated that if it's a threatened/endangered species in need of release, there are positive benefits to wildlife conservation, but this would not be the same as rehabbing red-tail hawks, which are currently abundant. The consensus was that the IKC is already helping wildlife by acquiring, protecting, and improving habitat. *Jim Adams moved to table further discussion. Dave Haun*

seconded. Discussion ensued. Jim withdrew the motion and Dave concurred. Keith Dunlap moved that the IKC approve the release of raptors on our properties. Dave Haun seconded. 1-8 in favor with 3 abstentions and 3 absent. Motion failed.

- Matt Selig mentioned a recent scuba diving experience that included electronic waivers using software 'Smart Waiver' ~\$180/year. He just wanted to share some information for the Board to consider the pros/cons of adopting a similar method in the future for IKC cave access.
- Matt reflected on his one year anniversary as IKC President and expressed thanks.

Next Meeting Date and Place Selection

The next IKC Quarterly meeting was tentatively scheduled for the weekend of June 4th/5th at Robinson Ladder Preserve; exact date, time, and other details TBD. [Note: The meeting details were later confirmed for Saturday, June 4th at 1:00 EDT at Robinson Ladder Preserve, with optional caving/camping to follow.]

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:04 PM EDT (a new record meeting length).

Respectfully compiled and submitted by Laura Demarest, IKC Secretary

...continued from page 11

karst. We learn something new every time we go in the field and observe and share, and this trip was no different.

To finish the day, Mr McCormick helped us push a stuck vehicle out of the mud before we parted ways. We appreciated the opportunity to advocate for the karst systems we love, and look forward to future opportunities to get underground

and put objective eyes on how potential laws, regulations, and public works projects will affect Indiana's caves and karst.

Disclaimer: The IKC is a non-partisan, not politically aligned 501(c)3 organization. We stand ready to help any politician, candidate or governmental organization learn about, understand and appreciate Indiana's karst and cave resources.

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.

