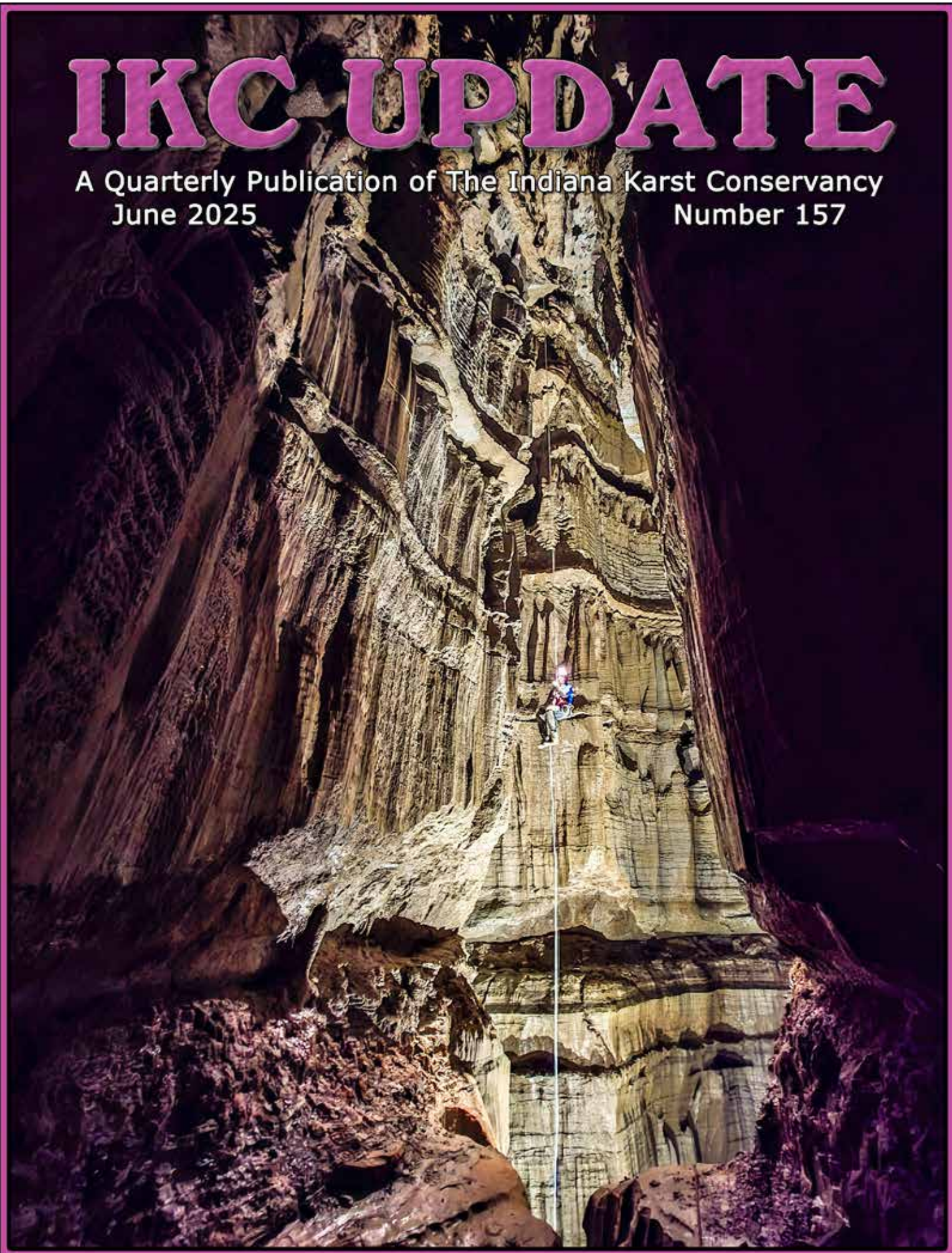


IKC UPDATE

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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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IKC QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING REMINDER

Sunday, June 29th, 1 PM EDT

Wayne Cave Preserve

8307 W Gardner Rd, Bloomington, IN

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 cave and karst conservation, and related topics. Past, present, and future IKC projects are discussed to solicit comments and input from our members and the caving community as a whole. The meetings are informal, and everyone is encouraged to attend and participate. The IKC Board wants your input.

Preliminary Agenda Items: Financial reports; Recap of recent preserve work projects; Promotion of upcoming preserve projects; Education/Outreach/Field Days updates; Indiana Cave Symposium recap; Electronic scheduling and waiver system status; Cave/land acquisition activities; and more...

Meeting Details: The meeting will start promptly at 1 PM. If rain is forecasted to be likely during the meeting, the location may be moved down the street to Brandon Chasteen's garage (8619 W Gardner Rd). The decision to move will probably not be made until 12:30. If you have questions about the meeting, please contact Matt Selig (see contact information on page 2).

Pre-Meeting Stewardship Activities: Those wishing to participate in pre-meeting stewardship activities on the property should arrive by 10 AM. Tasks will include invasives treatment and trash/tire removal (on the new tract). We will provide snacks for participants. If you have questions, contact Cris Seuell (see contact info on page 2).

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

June 29 – IKC Quarterly Meeting & Pre-meeting Stewardship (see above)

July 12-13 – Wilderness First Aid, Lawrence County (see page 26)

Aug 7-10 – Cave Capers, Crawford County Fairgrounds

Aug 16 – Hike With A Bat Biologist, Robinson Ladder Preserve (see page 9)

Oct 11 – Big Day for the Birds, Buddha Karst Nature Preserve

Nov 8 – Fauna and History of Lawrence County Caves and Karst

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...

What does the Indiana Karst Conservancy really do?

On the surface, it's a simple question. We're a nonprofit dedicated to the conservation and preservation of caves and karst features. We support education and research, and we work and advocate to make sure that karst is used wisely. That's the language we use in our Exempt Purpose. That all sounds tidy. But crawling down this going lead, we find (as always) our work begins where the survey ends.

When the IKC started, the threat to Indiana's caves was easy to see. Some of Indiana's caves were wrecked - graffiti on the walls, the smell of urine (or worse), trash piles deep underground, formations smashed for the fun of it. The first IKC project was focused on only one cave. We gained access to a small, three-foot-diameter entrance that now serves as the heart of our Wayne Cave Preserve. We gated it, started hauling out garbage, and worked to undo the damage.

From the beginning, we told the story of our work. Through this quarterly *IKC Update* and in conversations among our members and with our friends, we shared what we were learning and what we were trying. This dialogue helped shape our approach to cave conservation.

The IKC didn't stay focused on just one cave for long. More caves needed help. More land-owners reached out. We found ourselves balancing cave restoration, access management, and surface protection. Opportunities to purchase land above the caves we were working to conserve came our way. With support from those who share our commitment, we now own and manage seven cave/karst preserves.

Over time, the attitude toward caves began to shift. People stopped seeing caves as dumping grounds and started seeing them as something worth protecting. Today, I'm not aware of any Indiana cave currently being trashed the way many were forty years ago (but if you know of any that are, please reach out to us).

That change didn't end the work – it just re-directed it. These days, a lot of the IKC's efforts go towards surface management: invasive species removal, habitat restoration, and trail building. We partner with other organizations, manage access to caves such as those in Spring Mill State Park and Henderson Park, and support events like botany and bird hikes, and even moth surveys. We sponsor training for cavers in important subjects such as cave rescue and wilderness first aid. We provide access to scientists doing real research in caves. Our work has broadened, but our purpose is the same.

Still, after this past April's Indiana Cave Symposium, I've been thinking about how both the threats to Indiana karst and the IKC's role continue to evolve. It's not graffiti and broken stalactites we're up against anymore. Threats remain, though they may not be obvious to those of us focused on underground exploration.

Take Monroe County, where the IKC's first cave project started. Drive Garrison Chapel Road now and compare it to the 1980s as urban growth continues creeping westward. Development adds pressure to

karst aquifers. Paved surfaces increase contaminated runoff. What flows into the sinkhole plain today doesn't just vanish; it ends up in the aquifer and its karst ecosystems below.

Further south, evolving threats look different. Intensive agriculture and the spread of confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) bring with them the risk of chemical and biological contamination to karst aquifers. Quarry operations in Mississippian limestone are increasing in some areas. The Hoosier rock that built the Empire State Building and the Pentagon is still coming out of the ground, and the landscape over the caves is being carved up in the process. The point is, the risk to Indiana's karst isn't going away, it is evolving.

I am no Luddite. I've worked in for-profit businesses long enough to know development isn't automatically the enemy. In fact, the wealth



generated by our free-market system is part of what makes land conservation possible. It's a reality that may make some uncomfortable, but it's one we need to acknowledge and leverage if we're serious about conservation.

But the risks put us, as an organization, in a position where we have to think about how we respond. Our exempt purpose asks us to look beyond just recreational cave use. If we take that seriously, then we must at least ask ourselves what our role should be when threats come not from underground visitors, but from above-ground activity that affects the cave systems we love and work to protect.

This doesn't mean we should abandon our roots. We're still an organization of cavers. But maybe it means we need to broaden the conversation. It's not about changing who we are, but rather it's about staying true to our purpose as the ground shifts beneath our feet.

As President, it's not my job to unilaterally define that path. I work with the rest of the IKC Board to build consensus about where we should devote our limited time, energy, and fi-

nancial resources. That said, I believe we're at a moment where it's worth asking: How do we meet the evolving challenges related to protecting Indiana's caves and karst?

So I'd like to put this out there for our members and supporters: If our mission is to conserve and preserve karst, and a potential material risk now comes from development and surface activity, how does the IKC's purpose call on us to respond? Do we adapt our work and strategies?

Karst land is many times more expensive than it was forty years ago, another artifact of economic development. Our volunteers are the best around, but they're limited in number. We have more conservation opportunities than we have the money, labor, or time to address. That's not a complaint – it's just the reality of the finite resources we have for our work.

So, let's have a conversation. Let's think together about what matters most, where we can have the greatest impact, and how we might need to grow – or not – to meet the coming challenge.

Matt Selig

NEWS BRIEFS...

- ❑ Please note that starting July 1st, all new and renewing members will be assessed at the new dues rate of \$20 annually. We really do value our members and spent hours of discussion, research, and planning before making this change, our first dues increase since 1987. Thank you all for your continued membership and donations. For an in-depth article on this upcoming change, please see page 8.
- ❑ IKC embroidered ball caps are back in stock and can be ordered from the IKC merchandise/promo page (ikc.caves.org/ikc-promotional-items). We also now have embroidered winter beanies, available in blue or black. Both styles are \$20 each, plus shipping. If you know you will be attending an IKC meeting or event, you can contact the IKC at IndianaKarstConservancy@gmail.com ahead of time and we can deliver the merch in person and save you the postage.
- ❑ After five years and hundreds of person-hours of effort, the IKC has completed its three Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contracts at the Wayne Cave Preserve. Most of the work involved removing invasive plants (autumn olive, multiflora rose, bush honeysuckle, Japanese honeysuckle, etc) and implementing Forest Stand Improvements (mainly cutting excessive grapevines). The IKC also performed several years of wildlife monitoring as part of the contracts. Often a landowner hires out the work to a third-party, but the IKC elected to perform all the practices using our volunteers. This “sweat-equity” approach allowed the IKC to retain most of the contract payments which can then be used to perform and fund stewardship work on all our properties. We thank Ralph Unversaw, DNR District Forester, for technical assistance as well as



Continued on the bottom of page 26...

2025 INDIANA CAVE SYMPOSIUM RECAP

by Keith Dunlap

The 31st Indiana Cave Symposium, co-sponsored by the Indiana Karst Conservancy (IKC) and Indiana Cave Survey (ICS), was held on Saturday, April 26, at the Orange County Community Center in Paoli. This was the same venue as the last several years. Attendance from my estimation was just under 100 people for the meal and a few more showing up for the presentations, both records.

As in the past, the symposium offered a free cookout (burgers, brats, and other assorted meats and non-meat offerings) and we encouraged attendees to share pitch-in side dishes and desserts. The meal service started at 5 PM with everyone getting through the food line in fairly quick order, with some making a second pass (or third). People then socialized until the presentation portion of the event started promptly at 6:15. Kevin Strunk was the emcee/facilitator and did an excellent job of keeping everyone on schedule.



photo courtesy Keith Dunlap

Prior to the formal presentations, Matt Selig (President of the IKC) and Dave Everton (Chairman of the ICS) made brief introductions and respectively thanked the attendees for coming. Also Dean Wiseman, co-chair of the 2026 Ohio Valley NSS Convention, gave a brief reminder that the convention will be held in Corydon, Indiana the week of July 6-10, 2026 and then showed a short convention promotional video. He then solicited and encouraged attendees to volunteer for various opportunities to assist with the convention.

Here are summaries of the six presentations:

- The Bloomington Indiana Grotto Survey Group: Truitt Cave Project – Matt Lewis and Nathan Schonegg. Matt and Nathan described their training class to introduce cavers on how to conduct cave surveys and then draft the



photo courtesy Keith Dunlap

subsequent maps using various software tools. The class is based upon a similar one developed by the Greater Cincinnati Grotto. In-cave surveying training is being conducted in Truitt Cave and then the cartography work is being done on-line. They also discussed their efforts to develop a lower-cost digital survey unit.

- A Brief Review Of Archaeological Studies At Wyandotte Cave, Indiana – John Benton. John discussed a number of past and current studies related to Native American visitations into Wyandotte Cave to mine flint and other minerals. They navigated using shagbark hickory torches and may have left artwork sketches on cave walls.
- Karst Protection- Sycamore Land Trust Properties and Priorities – Tom Swinford. Tom has decades of preservation experience with the Indiana DNR and TNC and is the new Land Preservation Director for SLT which includes identifying acquisition projects and larger landscape strategies. Since SLT's service area overlaps much of the IKC's service area, there is the potential for collaboration between the two organizations.
- WFYI Across Indiana: Exploring Indiana's Caves with the Central Indiana Grotto – Scott Frosch. While there has been a lot of promotion of WTU's *Journey Indiana: Underground* show that premiered in March, Scott was involved with another Indiana PBS station, WFYI. He was featured in a caving segment for their *Across Indiana* series. To see the seven minute video that Scott showed, go here: www.wfyi.org/programs/across-indiana/television/exploring-indianas-caves.
- Survey and Mapping Updates in Hell's Hole –



Jamie Winner. Jamie presented on the renewed interest in the Hell's Hole survey project in Harrison County. This project was dormant for many years due to the difficulty of the cave. There were a number of leads left unexplored or unsurveyed, and a new generation of cavers have picked up the effort. Mike VanNote, the original survey leader, is still involved and has produced some wonderful maps of Hell's Hole and adjacent caves which Jamie had on display.

- The Early Modern Era Cavers of Indiana, from the forthcoming book *Mud, Water & Guts - Indiana Cavers and Their Caves* – Gary Roberson. Gary's presentation highlighted some of the very early "cavers" in Indiana, mostly professionals studying caves and cave life in the late 1800s through the 1960s, when cavers transitioned to more recreational and exploration focused. Gary's book should be very interesting when published. 🦋

2025 INDIANA CAVE SYMPOSIUM PRE-TOUR

by Carroll Ritter

This year's Indiana Cave Symposium's pre-symposium tour on April 26th provided an interesting adventure in the historic French Lick area. Not only does the remarkable past speak here, but the geology is also of exceptional interest. John Benton, Carla Striegel-Winner, and I hosted 20 participants to wander Indiana.

The perfect spring afternoon trip began at the privately-owned Bear Cave, with an interesting story of how it may have gotten its name. Supposedly, in the early 1800s, old Jim Wilson chased a bear into the cave, and they had quite a scuffle before the bear escaped. Jim suffered a serious scalp wound, but survived.

The scenic entrance to Bear Cave is capped by Big Clifty sandstone which overlies Beech Creek limestone. Passages follow the joint-controlled development for some 427 feet. The cave today still feeds a spring which was once used as a water supply. We were able to notice live salamander larvae (babies), which live in the shallow pool inside, and a phoebe's nest occupied a ledge nearby.

From Bear Cave, we proceeded two miles west



Visiting the Wolfington-Jackman Cemetery and discovering the whetstone tombstones

to Outlaw Cave, the scene of a murder way back in 1886. John described the story of Sam Bunch, one of the Archer gang of thieves, who would not tell where another one of the thieves had fled with the stolen goods. After being dragged into the cave, Sam was shot, then later removed and the body burned nearby. The large entry room in Outlaw Cave was called the Chamber of Death and it was in this very place that we told the story again. The passages were developed along joints much in the same way of Bear Cave, and the passage length was amazingly nearly the same as the prior cave. Our group was able to explore some of those tall narrow conduits. Water exited below the entrance and was also used in the past as a water source.

Following up on the macabre history of the Archers, we visited the nicely restored Wolfington-Jackman Cemetery where some of the Archer gang were buried and a stone was placed to commemorate them. The local folks at Shoals, where four of the gang were hanged, refused their burial in cemeteries there. This location is now the final resting place for some

Continued on the bottom of page 13...



Carroll Ritter at the entrance to Outlaw Cave explaining the local geology of the French Lick area

photo courtesy Carla Striegel-Winner

photo courtesy Carla Striegel-Winner

IKC DUES INCREASE – WHEN AND WHY

by Keith Dunlap and Danyele Green

The discussion of increasing dues for any organization can be a difficult and contentious topic. This has been an item the IKC Board has considered several times in the past, but the general consensus had been that we would rather have as many supportive members as possible, and would not want our dues to be the deciding factor in joining or renewing a membership.

With that said, the IKC Board also has the fiduciary responsibility to assure the conservancy is and will remain financially stable in the long-term. This means dealing with the discussion of dues. Our dues have been \$15/year since 1987. If adjusted for inflation, our dues should be \$32.40. And while our dues have never fully covered our operating expenses, in recent years that funding gap has grown. Below is a chart showing our dues revenue compared to our operational expenses, which include liability insurance, property taxes, business expenses (PO box rental, membership renewal/election letters, etc), educational/outreach activities, newsletter printing and mailing, and stewardship activities. Note, we exclude our acquisition costs/expenses from operational expenses since these are managed and paid for on a per project basis.

Our dues revenue has increased gradually over the years as we have increased our membership numbers. On the other hand, our operational expenses are more sporadic, primarily due to various stewardship projects that come up as we acquire new properties. Also in recent years, our liability insurance has more than doubled, our property taxes have increased as we acquire more land, and we are now a dues-paying member of the Indiana Land Protection Alliance (ILPA).

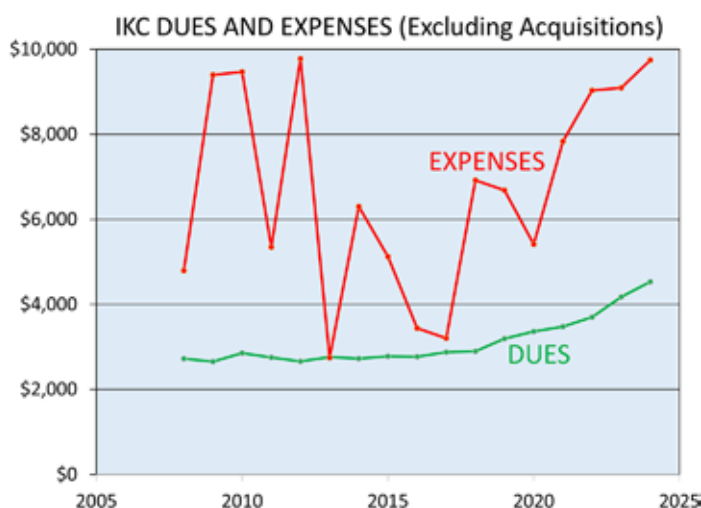
More members do help to cover these increases, but the bottom line is that our dues now pay for less than half of our operating expenses (in 2024, it was 47%). We are fortunate to have many of our members include additional donations at the time of renewal which definitely helps make up the dues short-falls.

Our latest Board discussion on dues started at the June 2024 E-board meeting. The action item from that discussion was assigned to Danyele Green to research how other peer organization (land trusts, cave conservancies, and other caving groups) were handling memberships and their dues structures. Danyele used various methods to collect and summarize her findings, including holding a special zoom meeting on dues hosted by ILPA which included multiple organizations across the state. She then presented her findings to the Board at the December meeting. The main takeaway was that almost every land trust had higher dues than the IKC, and many of them also had complex multi-tier dues levels. The Board decided to form an *ad hoc* committee consisting of Danyele, Bruce Bowman, Carla Striegel-Winner, and Keith Dunlap with the task of studying Danyele's research further and making a formal recommendation to the Board at the March 2025 meeting.

The committee's recommendation was that a small dues increase was warranted and recommended an increase to \$20/ year, although we would still be dependent upon member/supporter donations to make up the funding gap. The committee also discussed having a second/higher tier membership category, but was neutral on that recommendation, and did not forward that on to the Board. At the March IKC meeting, the Board discussed the recommendations of the committee and voted to raise dues to \$20/year, effective on July 1, 2025.

Setting the effective date to July 1st allows us time to notify all stakeholders, allowing current members the opportunity to renew in advance at the current rate of \$15/year for as many years as they wish. So if you are interested in locking in your membership dues at the current rate, please go to ikc.caves.org/renew-your-ikc-membership or mail a check post-marked before July 1 to: IKC, PO Box 2401, Indianapolis IN 46206.

Likewise, new members can join and also pay ahead at the current rate, as long as they do so before July 1st. They should go to ikc.caves.org/join-the-ikc. 🐦



STEWARDING OUR LANDS WITH PASSIONATE VOLUNTEERS

compiled by Carla Striegel-Winner

When we conserve caves and karst, we promise to take care of them in perpetuity. While it's easy to get excited about new acquisitions, it's through continuous, competent stewardship that we really conserve these properties. And we do it with passionate volunteers. Here's a sampling of what was accomplished since our last newsletter:

- ☑ Prairie mowing and trail mowing at our Shawnee Karst Preserve: 12 person-hours (Keith Dunlap, Bambi Dunlap).
- ☑ Weed Wrangle/Garlic Mustard Pull at our Orangeville Rise Nature Preserve: 25 bags of invasives removed and 14 person-hours (Carla Striegel-Winner with Emily Russell, Nancy Kimmel, Missy Elgin, Wes Roeder, Emily Finch, and Bambi).
- ☑ Garlic Mustard Pull at our Lowry Preserve: 3 bags of invasives removed and 10 person-hours (Jasper Beavers; Matthew, Eli and Noah Rhule; Keith).
- ☑ Trail mowing, fallen ash tree cut/clean up, grapevine lopping at our Buddha Karst Nature Preserve: 6 hours (Keith).
- ☑ Four walks with NRCS staff and additional work to complete our EQIP grant at our Wayne Cave Preserve: 24 person-hours (Cris Seuell, Danyele Green, Keith).



- ☑ Mowing lanes and campground area at our Robinson Ladder Preserve: 3 hours (Jamie Winner).
- ☑ Campground and overflow parking mowing, and invasive management at our Sullivan Cave Preserve: 8 person-hours (Joe Kinder, Keith).
- ☑ Graffiti removal in Sullivan Cave: 12 person-hours (Nate Vignes, Sarah Smith, Brad Barcom, Keith, Joe).

If you are interested in helping at one of our preserves or assisting one of our Property Managers, reach out to them directly or to IndianaKarst-Conservancy@gmail.com. If donating new (or gently used) equipment, or funding the purchase of stewardship tools is more to your liking, we would welcome that as well. 🦇

HIKE WITH A BAT BIOLOGIST

Robinson Ladder Preserve, Crawford County
Saturday, August 16, 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM EDT

Enjoy a hike with our own Board member and bat biologist Goni Iskali as she takes us on an evening hike to discover great bat habitat. Discover what we do at our preserves to ensure bats have great summer roosting and foraging habitat and what you can do at your own home and community to do the same! After the hike, Goni will be completing an acoustic and visual survey at the Preserve. Everyone can have a chance to stay and assist or observe. Registration opens July 18, but you may go to [IKCFieldTourAugust2025.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/IKCFieldTourAugust2025) at any time and have a reminder sent to you. *Optional pre-hike stewardship opportunity: Join us at 5:00 PM for a few stewardship tasks, and we will provide a light meal before the hike.*



MOTH FIELD EVENT AT WAYNE PRESERVE PROVES POPULAR

by Carla Striegel-Winner

Although bright lights and cheap beer may sound like a good way to attract cavers, it's also a great way to attract moths! Our "Welcome to the Dark Side" field event on May 10th was a memorable evening that brought together IKC members and supporters to explore the nocturnal wonders of the Wayne Cave Preserve in Monroe County. Postponed from May 3rd due to the "rainiest weekend ever", the rescheduled event allowed participants to delve into the hidden world of moths under the guidance of experts Steve Morris, Jim Vargo, and Jeanette Jaskula. Although we were disappointed several members who had originally signed up could not make it to the rescheduled event, the open spots filled up and it was wonderful seeing so many new faces enjoying our preserve.

As dusk settled, we started with a great sit down program with lots of Q & A. Each expert told us how they got into moths. Would you believe that Jeanette got bored with birding? She loves lists and spreadsheets... and now on her "life list" of moths she has over 1400 species! Jim is actually renowned nationwide – and has a collection of over 8000 specimens. He mentioned he does not do many programs... so we felt special that he was there as well! He got his bait mixture out so we could see and smell the lovely stuff that many moth enthusiasts use... and even painted one of the trees with it at the picnic tables as a demonstration. You can see a recipe on the opposite page.

By the time the questions and show-and-tell were done, it was getting dark and we got to choose between two "bait trails" through the woods and also several different set ups with lights which attract the moths to them. It was so neat gaining firsthand experience in moth identification. Walking the trail

in the dark and checking each of the 20 or so trees that had bait painted on them earlier that day was exciting! In addition to attracting moths, other insects often show up as well. This particular night, the bait trails were not attracting much, so our leaders shifted to focusing on the light set ups. Each expert uses a slightly different technique. Steve was the only one of the three who does not use bait trails. He has a special set up that involves a screen house-style canopy tent like those used when camping. All four sides are screened and it has no floor. A light is placed inside at the center and moths are attracted to the netting/screening, making it easy to observe. The other two experts used lights shining at white sheets (see below). Both bait trails and the three light stations were close enough together that we could all easily walk from place to place, checking for new additions. Participants were welcome to leave or stay as long as they wanted, and our last participant left around midnight. Our moth experts, who hold a permit to collect on our properties, kept going until the wee hours of the night, and identified 150 species of moths... including one new state record. Cadbury's Mystique (*Polygrammate cadburyi*) was already known to Ohio and Kentucky, and its common name is actually after the Marvel character that can easily shape-shift... referring to its caterpillars' "remarkable color transitions," according to Jeanette.

Of course there were some favorites among the participants, such as the Rosy Maple moth (*Dryocampa rubicunda*) – one of our younger moth night enthusiasts, Ida Jones, age 5, came to the program with a stuffed animal that proved popular... a rosy maple moth! You can imagine how much we all loved when she got to see one attracted to Jeanette's

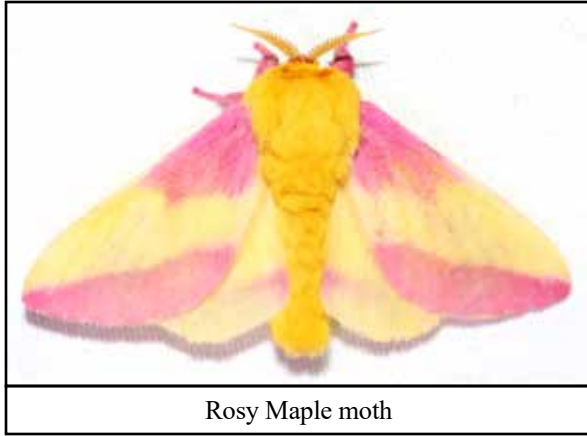
photo courtesy Jamie Winner



photo courtesy Carla Striegel-Winner



photo courtesy Jeanette Jaskula



Rosy Maple moth

light station. We were all enamored by it. Another tiny beauty was the Riding's Fairy moth or *Adela ridingsella*, with its fuzzy face and long antennae.

A large moth always looks spectacular, and we were all excited when a majestic pale green North American Luna moth (*Actius luna*) made an appearance at Steve's set up. I spent more time along Jim's bait trail and light station. A few of my favorites included a *Spiloloma lunilinea* or moon-lined moth and also a couple of species of snout moths. The *lunilinea* (I just love saying it!) was one of the few actually attracted to the bait trail that night, and then it flew onto Jim's shirt and hung out.

Our moth-ers made their inaugural visit to Wayne Preserve last September, and found over 200 species of moths then. Of the ones found this evening in May, at least 100 were not recorded in that fall outing. This puts us at over 300 moth species at Wayne Preserve! We are so pleased to not only offer this event, but to know that our

preserves do have a diversity of moth species. Our bats rely on moths to eat all season long as they are nursing their young and fattening up for winter! We thanked our volunteer experts that evening with a gift of ingredients for their bait



Riding's Fairy moth

photo courtesy Steve Morris

mixtures and native evening primrose plants, but we sure want to thank them again for taking the time to share their passion and expertise with us.

If you missed the program or are chomping at the bit to learn more about moths, head over to Jeanette's iNaturalist profile page, where she lists the many locations you can go moth-ing with her this year. Find her page here: www.inaturalist.org/people/jmjaskula.

To see many of the moths identified and photographed by our experts, go to Jeanette's moths here: tinyURL.com/WayneMothsJ and Steve's moths here: tinyURL.com/WayneMothsS.

This event was part of the IKC's "Focus on Fauna" field event series. The next event in that series is a **Hike with a Bat Biologist** with our own Executive Board member, Goni Iskali, at our Robinson Ladder Preserve in August. For more info on that event see page 9. 🦋

Jeanette's Moth Bait Recipe

1 can of cheap beer

1½ cups brown sugar

4 mashed, overripe bananas

Optional add-ins: ¼ to ½ cup molasses, brewer's yeast tablet, spoonful of cornmeal

Dissolve the sugar in the beer, add the bananas and any add-ins, and stir together. Leave concoction to ferment for several days. Keep the lid loose to allow for escaping gases. It's ready when it smells strongly of alcohol. Paint on tree trunks a few hours before dusk and touch-up the edges closer to dusk.

The bait mimics sugary plant secretions such as sap, nectar, and rotting fruit. In the spring, moths visit tree wounds when sap is running, and many species are often found inside maple syrup buckets. In the fall, bait mimics rotten fruit such as pawpaws, apples, and persimmons. Fall is a great time to spread bait because nectar sources have waned after goldenrods and asters have finished blooming. The bait can be used to attract moths year-round. Even warm nights in January (40° F at dusk) will yield a few species.

A LOOK BACK AT INDIANA KARST

by John M. Benton

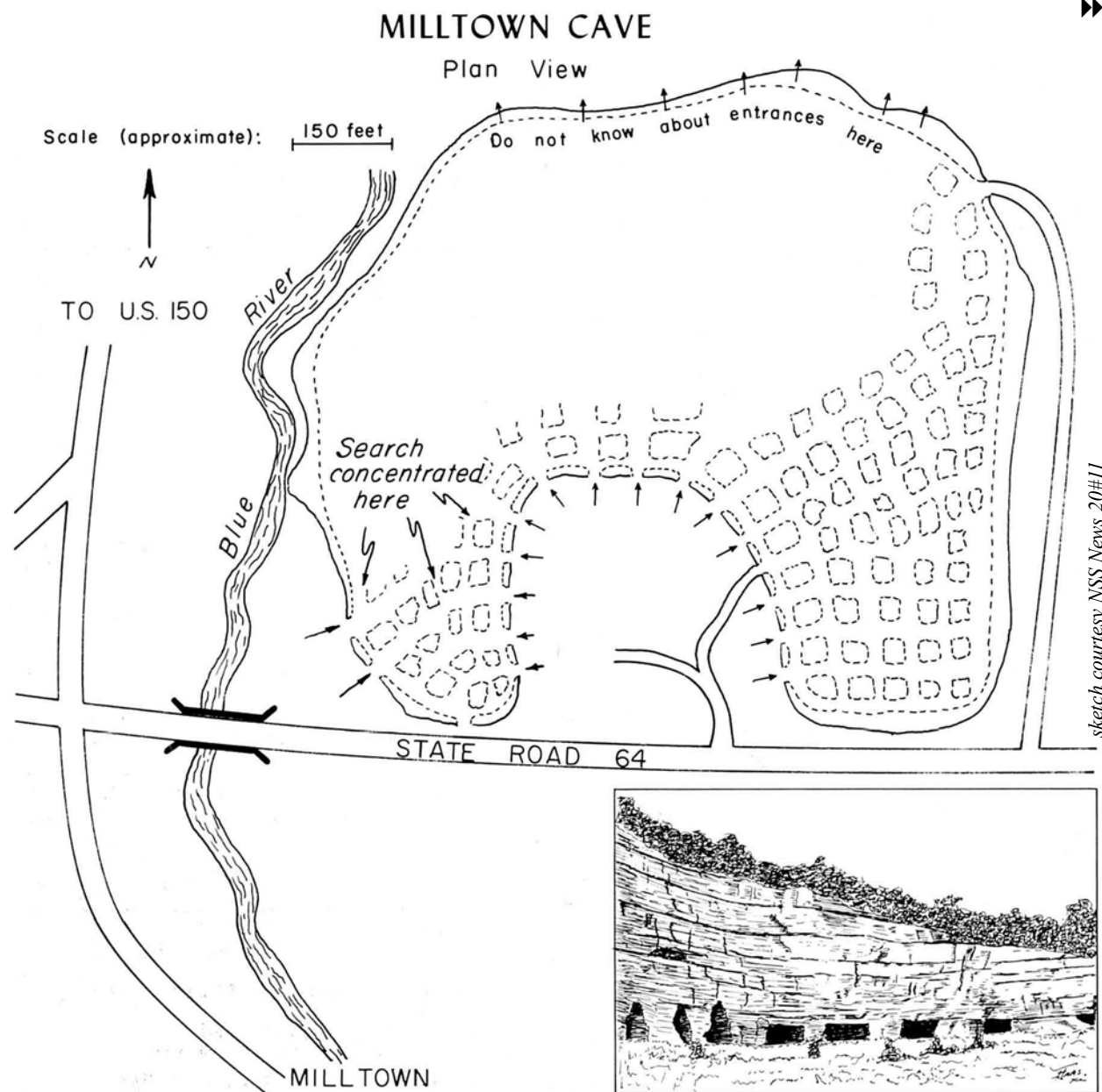
The Great Mail Robbery and Milltown (Quarry) Cave – Possible Connections

The press dubbed it “The Great Plymouth Mail Truck Robbery.” At the time of its occurrence on August 14th, 1962, it was the largest cash heist of all time. A U.S. Mail truck was delivering over \$1.55 million dollars in small bills from Cape Cod Massachusetts to the Federal Reserve Bank in Boston. The two robbers, dressed as cops and brandishing sub-machine guns, tied up the mail truck’s driver and guard, and drove the truck themselves to places unknown, where the money was believed dropped off in several places. The

truck and its two tied-up occupants were abandoned near Randolph, Massachusetts.

For five years the United States Postal Inspection Service, as well as the FBI, intensively followed leads in the robbery, but were frustrated by lack of evidence. Authorities even offered a \$150,000 reward (or 10% of the amount recovered) for leads solving the case in addition to the \$50,000 reward posted by the U.S. Postal Service. The combination of media, law enforcement, and popular interest in the record breaking robbery combined for an atmosphere of near hysteria in the Boston area in the early and mid-1960s.

In 1967, with the five year federal statute of



limitations approaching with no real leads, the Department of Justice stepped up a campaign of near total surveillance and harassment of all known armed robbers in the Boston area. To this day, the haul of \$1.55 million cash (equivalent to approximately \$16,400,000 in 2025 dollars) remain undiscovered by the authorities.

Shortly before the statute of limitations was to expire, a federal grand jury did indict four men and one woman as the perpetrators of this robbery. One of the defendants disappeared just before the trial and was never found. It is theorized, he was about to rat out his fellow defendants and was “done away with”. The other defendants were acquitted at trial.

So what connection does all of this have to do with a cave in southern Indiana? Per the article that appeared in the November 1962 *NSS News* (with photos from long time Indiana caver Don Martin), a “responsible citizen” reported seeing three cars parked outside Milltown (Quarry) Cave, along State Highway 64, shortly after the incident happened. Two of the cars had Massachusetts license plates and the third had Jefferson County, Kentucky plates. The citizen said after watching the vehicles, all three exited the scene, minutes apart from each other, each car had one driver and no passengers. Officials and postal authorities conducted a search of the underground quarry after receiving the report, but no evidence or leads were found. The article notes none of the money has been located, anywhere!

And all of this occurred in 1962 – no cell phones, no internet, no social media, only newspapers, radio, and network TV.

As a side note, a few weeks after the sighting of the three parked cars by the quarry, there were several cavers who were “investigating”



photo courtesy Don Martin

the quarry tunnels and became turned around and lost (or temporarily dis-oriented) before successfully navigating their way out of the cave.

References:

- Tidyman, Ernest; “Big Bucks: The True, Outrageous Story of the Plymouth Mail Robbery and How They Got Away With It”, 1982.
- *NSS News* 20#11, November 1962; pp. 170-171.
- *Wikipedia: Plymouth Mail Robbery* 🐦

...continued from page 7

of the most noted villains in the history of Martin and Orange counties. While there, we were pleased that participant Sam Frushour recognized that some of the old gravestones there were whetsone, and Sam was able to describe the stones and how to recognize them. Kevin Strunk added info of this world-famous Hoosier stone that was sold world-wide at one time... more for sharpening knives than making tombstones!

To finalize the trip on a pleasing note, we stopped at the famous West Baden Springs Hotel

for coffee and ice cream in the magnificent dome, once the largest in the world, and now a National Historic Landmark.

We would like to give special thanks to the two landowners who graciously granted our group permission to visit their historic caves. Normally these caves are closed to visitation.

Editor's note: For more information on these two caves, see “Revisiting Several Historic Caves of the French Lick Area” by Carroll Ritter in the December 2024 IKC Update #155 (pages 6-9). 🐦

NORTH AMERICAN QUARRY LIFE AWARD PROJECT COMPETES INTERNATIONALLY

*Editor's note: Last fall, the IKC submitted a proposal for the project "Population Status of the Hoosier Cavefish (*Amblyopsis hoosieri*) in Hamer Cave, Lawrence County, Indiana" to Heidelberg Materials and the project was selected. Board member Tom Sollman is acting as the Principal Researcher for this, with the intent to do a census monthly through September. Those interested in this project may want to consider attending our November 8th Field Event, which will focus on Tom's findings as well as the history of the cave and surrounding area. The following press release by Heidelberg Materials is the first announcement on the project (dated May 7, 2025).*

The 6th edition of the Quarry Life Award, launched by Heidelberg Materials this past year, is well underway. This competition, held every three years, aims to raise awareness of the ecological value of mining sites and discover new ways to enhance them. Established in 2011, this flagship initiative in the building materials industry has generated over 450 innovative project ideas to promote and protect biodiversity.

For North America, we are proud to have a strong candidate for the International Competition in the Research Stream segment of the contest. The project is titled, "Population Status of the Hoosier Cavefish (*Amblyopsis hoosieri*) in Hamer Cave, Lawrence County, Indiana" and is located on quarry property near our Mitchell, Indiana, cement plant.

This project involves a multiple-visit population study of the Hoosier cavefish, found only in caves in southern Indiana. Conducted in Hamer Cave, owned by Heidelberg Materials and located within the Spring Mill State Park watershed, the study aims to determine the current status of the cavefish compared to observations that date back to 1873 and establish a new baseline population for future habitat management.

The project is led by a researcher from the Indiana Karst Conservancy (IKC), a nonprofit focused on cave and karst ecosystem conservation.

"Understanding the population of the endangered Hoosier cavefish is crucial for protecting its limited habitat and the biodiversity of cave ecosystems," said Thomas Sollman, Principal Researcher and member of the IKC Board of Directors. "Knowledge of individual cave pop-

ulations helps prioritize effective management activities, especially when habitat protection is linked to surface protection and usage."

Although the cave passages are under protected land, much of the recharge watershed is on private property. Raising awareness among residents and visitors about the cave's biodiversity is valuable.

"The Quarry Life Award raises awareness about the ecological value of mining sites, helping communities understand the importance of biodiversity and conservation efforts," said David Perkins, Senior Vice President of Sustainability and Public Affairs for Heidelberg Materials North America. "The projects that have come out of the Quarry Life Award are great examples of Heidelberg Materials' commitment to sustainability and demonstrate how mining operations, research, and environmental organizations and the local community can collaborate to enhance biodiversity and contribute to a nature-positive future."

Between now and September of this year, IKC team members will be conducting several site visits. Stay tuned to the Quarry Life Award page for more information and updates this year throughout the project. 🦋



photo courtesy Scott Frosch

Hoosier cavefish (*Amblyopsis hoosieri*)

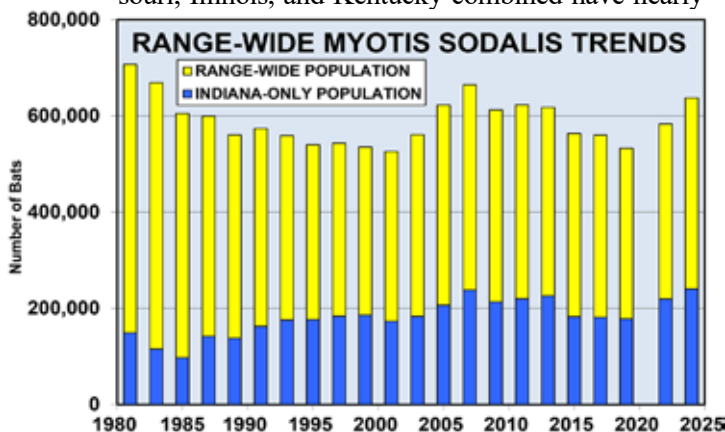
RANGE-WIDE POPULATION TRENDS OF INDIANA BATS

by Keith Dunlap

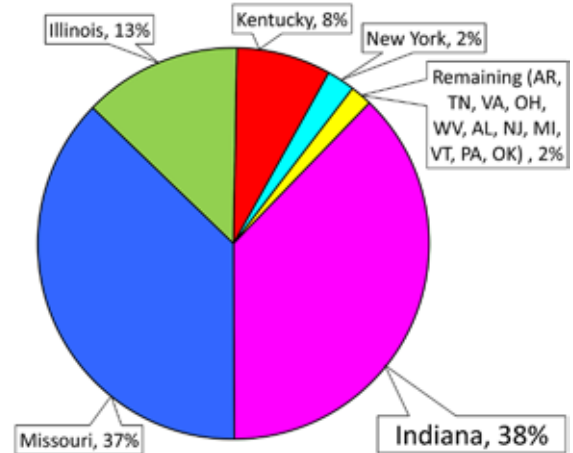
In *IKC Update* #156 (March 2025), I presented a summary of the 2024 winter bat census in Indiana conducted by Environmental Solutions & Innovations (ESI) for the Indiana DNR. In this article I will summarize the results on all the states that have Indiana bats (*Myotis sodalis*) from a report compiled by Andy King of the USFWS and the Indiana Ecological Services Field Office in Bloomington. You can see Andy's full report here: www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2024-09/2024_ibat_population_status_update_8-1-2024_508.pdf. Note I have adjusted some of the numbers in Andy's report related to Indiana as he was using preliminary numbers that have since been revised.

The chart below shows the range-wide and Indiana-only populations of Indiana bats over the past 40+ years. The 2024 range-wide population is thought to be approximately 637,400 bats. This is an encouraging increase of about 9% compared to the prior 2022 census and an increase of 17% compared to the 2019 census. However, the 2024 total is still about 5% less than the pre-White-nose Syndrome (WNS) 2007 population "peak" and about 10% less than the 1981 estimated population when systematic censuses were first started. Further, it is thought the current population is about 25% less than in the mid-1960s, but it is unclear to me how that population total was derived. The other interesting observation from the chart below is that the Indiana contribution to the total population has gradually increased from approximately 20% in 1981 to almost 38% in 2024.

The pie chart above shows the percentage of Indiana bats by states. As can be seen, Indiana and Missouri have about the same percentage of Indiana bats and together, those two states account for approximately 75% of all the bats; while Indiana, Missouri, Illinois, and Kentucky combined have nearly



2024 INDIANA BAT POPULATION BY STATE



96% of the bats. The remaining states in order of Indiana bats are New York, Arkansas, Tennessee, Virginia, Ohio, West Virginia, Alabama, New Jersey, Michigan, Vermont, Pennsylvania, and Oklahoma. So while the range of the Indiana bat is very large, the core area where they hibernate is much smaller.

To take it even further, and one of the reasons that the Indiana bat was originally nominated and then listed as endangered, is that the species congregate/concentrate in large numbers in just a few hibernacula. Thus, should something happen to one of these mega-sites, the species would take a major hit. There are over 500 caves that have been documented to have had one or more Indiana bats, but about a third of that number are considered historic with no Indiana bats observed there in more than 10 years. And of the remaining two-thirds, most have just a few bats and are not really sustainably viable for the species. And since WNS, the concentration of Indiana bats into fewer and fewer caves has been observed. In 2024, 80% of all Indiana bats hibernate in just one of four sites: a mine in Missouri (35%), Wyandotte Cave (16%), Jug Hole (16%), and Magazine Mine in Illinois (13%). Further, 90% of the bats are in just ten sites. Almost all of these ten sites are gaining populations, while caves with smaller populations are losing their bats. This is definitely not an ideal situation, but does allow agencies to focus on protecting these mega-sites.

In summary, prior to WNS the species seemed to be recovering. The species had a setback due to WNS, but the species now appears to again be showing signs of recovering, with the caveat that the species appears to have preference to concentrate in fewer, larger sites while abandoning many of the smaller population sites. 🦇

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 year's activities and incidents, and to present any future goals and recommendations needing implemented. The following is a compilation of their CY 2024 reports:

Buddha Property Report (Keith Dunlap)

This was the IKC's 23rd year of ownership of the Buddha Karst Nature Preserve and we continue our long-term stewardship projects, but otherwise we are in "maintenance mode".

The parking area and perimeter trail were mowed twice (early July and October). Some trimming along the trails were done.

The leaning kiosk issue was resolved on May 12 when Jeff Cody and I jacked up the kiosk, sawed off the rotting support posts, bolted on metal angle "legs", and secured the new legs in concrete. So there is now no exposed wood contacting to the ground.



photos courtesy Keith Dunlap

Bambi Dunlap also rehabilitated the old parking lot gate by wire-brushing the old paint/rust off with a grinder, priming the bare metal, then applying a nice green top coat. It looks great and should be good for another 20-30 years.

Several invasive treatments were completed in 2024 including Stiltgrass on the trail.

The planted trees on the property are hitting their stride and looking great!

There is a very large Chinkapin oak on the north side of the property that fell across the perimeter trail in 2021 and will eventually need to be re-

moved from the trail, although currently hikers can pass under the tree trunk.

In March, Goni Iskali and I hosted a tour of the property for approximately 30 attendees organized by Janet Eger (District Forester for Lawrence County) and the Lawrence County SWCD.

In October, I gave a property tour to Camille Verendia (USFWS Private Lands Biologist) to show the results of the tree planting completed by a USFWS grant in 2010.

There were no major management problems or concerns encountered during 2024.

2025 activities I hope to accomplish:

- Continue mowing the trails.
- Continue working on the grapevines (area near the Buddha Cave entrance).
- Continue bushy invasive treatments as necessary.
- Continue addressing the Stiltgrass on the trails (herbicide treatment)
- Remove the fallen oak off the trail (once it blocks the trail).
- Plan for the removal of the dead Ash tree by the parking lot gate (hopefully it will naturally fall).

Buddha Cave Patron Report (Jeff Cody)

I had a total of only four trips arranged through me. This represents five less trips than I had the previous year. These trips had 18 people fill out waivers turned into me. I was not given any trips arranged by anyone other than myself. All of these trips were in the second half of the year. Two trips were made during Cave Capers held nearby. I guess the fewer trips is a good thing. I suspect the reason is the need for a ladder near the entrance. My knee situation did not allow me to get into the cave this year. I did make a few trips to the property for surface related stewardship. I seem to get calls about every year from those wanting to go until they hear of the need for a ladder or vertical gear. No one reported anything out of place. I did walk to the entrance each time and did not see anything myself that needed attention. Keith is doing a great job as usual with the property management. The parking lot gate going into the property looks good thanks to Bambi Dunlap



giving it a fresh coat of paint. I also painted and helped with the kiosk leaning so it too looks fresh now. All seems to be well as best as I can tell. One thing I will mention and suggest to those going is the sight-line pulling out of the property. It is difficult to see any cars coming. My suggestion is to have a passenger get out and walk up the road a bit toward the house across the road and check traffic for the driver pulling out. Not much can be done about this and fortunately the road not heavily traveled.

Buddha Trips in 2024:

- **July 7** – party of five led by Jordan Lacy
- **August 15** – party of three led by Michael Thomas (Capers trip)
- **August 16** – party of five led by Jasper Beavers (Capers trip)
- **November 12** – party of five led by Gregg Jones

Lowry Property Report (Jasper Beavers)

I visited Lowry approximately once per month.

I cleaned up glass around the entrance that seems to constantly reappear during every visit. I also cleaned up the mess that someone left around the fire pit and campground.

4/21/2024 – Seven of us pulled enough garlic mustard to fill the back of a Ford Explorer

8/25/2025 – Keith Dunlap treated for invasives.

We had two trips visit the property. On 5/20, Keith Johnson visited, but did not go caving because his companions ended up not joining him. On 7/31, Kevin Strunk, Ben Dattillo, and Victoria Leffel visited the property for a geology tour, but did not go caving.

Lowry Cave Patron Report (Jasper Beavers)

I had two people reach out on different occasions asking for permission to visit the cave who said they had heard about Lowry on the internet. I never received waivers, so I did not grant permission and did not tell them the location of the property.

Orangeville Rise Report (Carla Striegel-Winner)

Year six as Property Manager brought our first partnership Weed Wrangle, a strange bicycle appearance, and water monitoring by kayak.

- **Property Visits** – I stop by about once a month, usually picking my uncle up at the First Chance

Center Day Program in Paoli, and he and I then hang out and get a snack at Lost River Market before heading to the Rise. Or sometimes we go to the West Baden Dome for ice cream afterwards. He walks the roadside areas picking up litter while I weed-eat, if no weed-eating is to be done, I pick up trash as well. We always have a few pieces of litter, much of it gets recycled. We both enjoy these monthly visits together.

- **Symposium Tour** – Orangeville Rise was a stop on the April 2024 tour, led by Matt Selig and some folks from Indiana Geological and Water Survey. There about 20 attending.
- **Scientific Research Permit** – We finished year four of ten on Indiana Geological and Water Survey (IGWS) having a permit to collect a sample from Orangeville Rise once during dry season. This year, researcher Tracy Branham says he “recruited a couple of intrepid young women here to kayak their way to... Orangeville Rise”. Tracy says that so far the samples are looking about the same as in the past. He also says he’s “not sure what the status of this years’ program is as we await to see what our allocation will be from the State. If they do not increase our allocation this year, then it is highly likely that McKailey (Sabaj) will have to reduce the number of springs she will visit this year to just a handful of new ones, and shelf re-sampling springs until the allocation is increased.” This has to do with some salary adjustments they needed to make at the IGWS. The 2024 info is not yet on the springs database, but the IGWS springs database is available here: igws.indiana.edu/research/water and then click on “Springs Database”.
- **Weed Wrangle Event** – After not holding a volunteer workday in 2023, I worked with the newly revitalized Orange County Invasives Partnership (OCIP) to hold an event on April 25, 2024. At my suggestion, the group decided to hold a pull at Wesley Chapel Gulf from 3-5 PM and then at Orangeville from 5-7 PM on a week-night. I had been suggesting to the HNF staff for a couple of years that we partner since the garlic mustard is spreading a bit at that location. I was pleased, but I did notice that some folks who were planning on attending both were tired by the time the Orangeville pull came and did not show up! No worries, we did have volunteers for the Orangeville event! Invasives Species



Specialist Emily Finch also dug Poison Hemlock and Snowdrops. In addition we had IKC regulars come as well as folks from the Lost River Watershed, the Orange County SWCD, and our SICIM regional specialist. The added benefit for OCIP was that they were able to get \$2000 in funding from SICIM after holding the Weed Wrangles. Emily just reached out to me to repeat the event (see 2025 Goals).

- **General Invasives and Property Management**

– I continue to monitor and work on the invasives at the 3-acre property. Of course when individuals dump their non-native cuttings from their yards at the top of the rise... those become part of our landscape and can be quite trying. So we have snowdrops, day lilies, etc in addition to multiflora rose and air potato. Every rain and flood brings new seeds so really, we are just a good example of proper stewardship and do a decent job of keeping on top of it. I did not do a lot of spraying this past year. A rope showed up on one of the trees above the Rise in the last half of 2024. I have not had a rope swing appear since one sort of removed itself with the tree dying and falling when I first became manager.

- **A September Gift** – A couple of years ago I had some folks somehow pull old appliances out of the Rise and leave them by the roadside for me to recycle. This year I had another odd gift. A very rusty old child's bike that looked like it had been underwater for many years appeared near the pull off. I recycled it and did a Facebook post. That post garnered some attention... some



photo courtesy Carla Sriegel-Winner

of which concerned me slightly as comments suggested possible “magnet fishing” which I had never heard of, but got myself “Google educated” quickly. This apparently involves lowering a powerful magnet under the water and seeing what you can “fish” out. I did not engage with those comments as I was a bit concerned

with this being a State Nature Preserve we really do not want to encourage folks to “fish” in this manner. And what if they find something of historic value!?! I am probably way overly concerned! It was, however, super-duper neat that the bike appeared for sure!!

- **Advocacy** – I continued to correspond with local folks and also with agencies such as the Indiana Division of Nature Preserves, Hoosier National Forest, and Orange County Invasives Specialist. The individual who started working on the neighboring Orangeville Store property has not put any more work into it in 2024. There is an intermittent stream of visitors that stop by the Rise to view it – locals and tourists alike. Hope you do too!

2025 Goals – The Orangeville Rise had a flood in January so cleaning up litter left from the flooding will happen this year. I need to remove the rope that was placed on one of the trees in 2024. Garlic Mustard Pull Weed Wrangle – Wednesday, April 24, 2025 will be hosted with OCIP for second year now. I also plan to continue monthly visits, invasives management, and continue advocating for the property.

Robinson Ladder Property (John Benton)

February 6, 2024 – Five Environmental Solutions & Innovations (ESI) employees made a visit to Robinson Ladder Cave (RLC) to do the biennial bat census (outside the normal bat closure). All signed waivers. IKC member Tom Sollman entered the cave, but remained in the entrance area. IKC member Keith Dunlap remained topside at the entrance. The group of five visited most of the horizontal cave. Tally: 1 Indiana bat, 3 little brown bats, 10 tricolored (pipistrelle) bats, and 3 big brown bats were seen.

May 5 – IKC member Jamie Winner mowed the drive lanes and camping areas. He noticed some invasive plants (*Ailanthus*) sprouting along the camping area.

June – Property manager John Benton, walked the property, picking up some trash. Pulled some poison ivy around the drive gate.

June 30 – Keith Dunlap sprayed the American Chestnut trees in the upper field (trunks and foliage) with vegetation six feet tall inside the fence. Several of the chestnuts had died back and most are showing some signs of cankers, so Keith tried

the fungicide treatment. There is also a lot of multiflora rose inside the fence.

July 18 – Jamie Winner mows the drive lanes and camping areas. He also mowed the upper trail leading to Breakdown Falls Cave. He cut up a tree that was across the lane, and cut some low hanging branches over the drive lane.

July 25 – There was some discussion about replacing the swinging steel lane gate off of Highway 66. The old gate is still functional but sagging, and hard to close, dragging the ground as it is open/closed. No action was taken at the time.

September 18 – Property manager John Benton met with birder Jeff Sells to walk the property and give Sells an overview for the upcoming bird count next month.

September 23 – Jamie Winner mowed the drive lanes and camping areas, trails, in prep for birder Jeff Sells coming next month. Carla Striegel-Winner gawked at the somewhat rare Allegheny Stonecrop flowering plants that occur on the property.



photo courtesy Carla Striegel-Winner

September 26 – Keith Dunlap completed some invasive treatment of multiflora rose along the woods edge on the Campbell tract and Autumn Olive in the lower clearing.

October 5 – Keith Dunlap and Carla Striegel-Winner did some treatment of Tree of Heaven on the Campbell tract.

October 12 – Indiana Audubon member and birder Jeff Sells of Washington County conducted a bird count on the property, eight people attending, was a mix of IKC members and non-members. The walk took two hours and covered 1.3 miles, mostly along trails wood lines. Twenty-seven different species were observed and 105 individual birds: 8 turkey vultures, 1 bald eagle, 1 red shouldered hawk, 1 red-tailed hawk, 5 red-bellied woodpeckers, 1 downy woodpecker, 2 pileated woodpeck-

ers, 3 northern flickers, 15 blue jays, 20 American crows, 8 Carolina wrens, 3 Carolina chickadees, 4 tufted titmouse, and 3 white-breasted nuthatch. Also from 1 to 3 each northern mockingbirds, eastern bluebirds, swainson's thrush, American robin, cedar waxwings, northern cardinal, and others. Sells commented that the RLCP property was a good birding site, offering a variety of habitat (open fields, woods, good ground cover, cliffs along Blue River, perimeter along woods, water nearby, etc).

Future – The wildlife pond is holding water and appears stable. Continue to mow the access lane and camping areas as needed. Three mowings a year seem to work well. Ongoing treatment of invasives as needed mainly autumn olive, multiflora rose, and tree of heaven. ToH seedlings keep popping up. The access lane need to be watched for low hanging limbs which may need to be removed.

Thanks to all volunteers, especially Jamie, Carla, Keith, and Bambi for using their equipment at RLCP. It is appreciated! Some hand tools have been stored in the barn by Property Manager John Benton.

RL Cave Patron Report (John Benton)

February 2024 – Five ESI cavers and 1 IKC member conduct a bat census.

July 2024 – A Bedford area caver inquiries about leading of group of 6-8 to the cave, but no follow up.

There were no other cave trips that I am aware of. RLC is closed for visitation due to hibernating bats from September 1 to April 30 each year.

Shawnee Property Report (Keith Dunlap)

This was the IKC's 13th full year of ownership of the original 50-acre tract and the 4th full year of owning the expanded (17 acre) property.

The majority of the trails were mowed in early July and some of the trails in the sunnier areas were mowed later in the fall.

The larger open prairie on the 50-acre tract along with the small opening near the 4000 driveway was mowed in early March in lieu of prescribed burning. Jamie Winner did the mowing with his tractor and bushhog attachment. The mowing in these fields seems to be effective in controlling the cedars, poplar, and other saplings trying to take over, and



stimulating the native grasses. Mowing these fields biennially will keep the field open to add biological diversity to the property.

There were a couple of requests that were granted permission to camp at Shawnee during this report year. Some used the more private sites while others camped near the storage shed.

On November 9, the property hosted a field tour/hike for winter Tree ID featuring Janet Eger (DNR District Forester). There were approximately two dozen participants.

After the November 9th hike, we had a service project to clean up a trash pile on the 17 acre tract (near the old apple tree). An entire pickup truck of bagged trash was removed, and recyclable metal was stacked for later removal.



photo courtesy Keith Dunlap

There were several invasive treatments completed (July 11, July 27, August 8, and August 12). The 3 acres area surrounding Whittaker Cave was the main target for the year.

I gave a property tour to Camille Verendia (USFWS Private Lands Biologist) to discuss potential USFWS funding for invasive control and habitat improvements.

There was no progress on the kiosk during 2024 and we need to decide if the location should be moved to the new driveway.

The IKC entrance to Upper Twin continues to enlarge with each rain. The ravine feeding the entrance swallowhole continues to erode and need some stabilization attention.

There were no known management problems or concerns encountered during 2024.

2025 activities hoped to accomplished:

- Mow the smaller (1 acre) prairie area in late February or early March in lieu of burning.
- Install a driveway gate on the 17-acre tract driveway.
- Complete the kiosk.
- Continue work to clean out the garage and replace the door frame for better security.

Upper Twin Cave Patron Report (Dave Everton)

Per IKC policy, all trips to this cave are Patron-arranged. During 2024 there were four trips (one less than last year) with a grand total of 23 cavers. The Patron did not visit during this period.

All of the trips were taken during the period in which the IDNR allows access to their portion of the cave (November 1 through May 15). Cavers enjoy entering the IKC entrance, exiting at the IDNR Upper Twin entrance, walking on the surface to the Bronson entrance, and exiting at Donaldson.

I was not made aware of any issues on any of the trips. As always, the Patron thanks the IKC for its continued support, preservation of, and access to Upper Twin Cave!

Sullivan Property Report (Joe Kinder)

This was the IKC's 26th full year of ownership and we continue our long-term stewardship projects, but otherwise we are in "maintenance mode".

March 9, 2024 – I contacted Izzy's and request they service the porta-potty soon since we had received a lot of visits over the winter months. They were able to service the unit later that week.

March 30 – Jamison, Lily, and I arrived at the property to see how things looked since I had not been down there over the past few months.

- We were able to blow leaves on the road & parking lots as well as the camping area, the shed area and the path down to the cave.
- Jamison worked on mowing the camping areas while I trimmed throughout the property. We stacked wood and cleaned up the fire pit area.
- Lillian helped by picking up sticks and debris around the property as well as a small amount of trash from visitors.
- We also greased the cave gate (I ran out of grease, so I planned a follow up on this on a



later date to finish). All in all, it was a great day to be on-site with my kids.

- I restocked the porta-potty with TP.

Thank you, Jamison & Lily!

April 4 – Keith Dunlap emailed me sketches of the kiosk he had designed for the Shawnee property. He is also thinking this design would look good at the Sullivan property. We exchanged several emails discussing the budget and proposed amounts for materials and getting a shopping cart list together from Lowes.

April 24 – Prepping for work day.

- I exchanged email communications with Keith Dunlap about the kiosk where I created a shopping cart at Lowes to determine a good budget for a request to be made at an upcoming board meeting.
- Also, discussed with Keith the need for a roofing sealant for the shed roof. He planned on ordering the roofing sealant from Amazon soon for us to use on an upcoming workday.

May 5 – I camped with my family at the property and planned to work on general maintenance.

- We worked on mowing and trimming around the property. Blowing and raking leaves as well as splitting and stacking firewood with the help from my family (my two sisters – Laura & Lindsey, my brother-in-law Danny, my nephew Lucas, as well as Carrie, Jamison, and Lily).
- I had previously made a request for the porta-potty to be serviced, but noticed it was badly in need of service. I contacted Izzy's and requested them to come out as soon as possible to service the unit.

Big thanks to my family for their support and help, always appreciated.

May 10 – Izzy's serviced the porta-potty.



photo courtesy Laura Demarest

May 21 – The IKC sponsored an orientation to cave rescue training which was taught by volunteer instructors and specialists from the Central Region of the National Cave Rescue Commission (NCRC). The event was hosted at the Sullivan Cave Preserve with roughly 30 participants in attendance. Thank you to the volunteers for their time and expertise!

June 28 – I contacted Izzy's and requested they service the porta-potty soon since we have received a lot of visits over the past few months. They scheduled and serviced the unit later that week.

June 29 – Keith Dunlap contacted Paul Uglum and I to let us know a neighbor (Sherrill Owens) had contacted him and was having his driveway sealed, asking if they could park in the overflow parking lot area for a few days. Keith gave them the go ahead to do so which shows the IKC is a good neighbor, and he wanted to let Paul and I know. Thank you, Keith!

July 26 – Received email communication from Keith Dunlap mentioning he had been discussing with the USFWS Bloomington Office to assist them with an upcoming bat "study" they were working on to demonstrate/verify that they can determine various bat species simply by collecting DNA "air samples" at the entrance. Keith had recommended using Sullivan Cave entrance for this study. They were planning to conduct the study later in the summer, early fall, and Keith wanted to let me know he would be in touch about coordinating their visit.

July 31 – I received an email from a Sarah Bartram who mentioned she had been doing research on caves in the Midwest and ran across Sullivan cave. She mentioned she had the dimensions of the entrance prior to the cave gate installation, but was wondering what the current dimensions of the cave gate were. I responded that I was not sure, but I could find out. I asked if she was a caver, where she was from, and what kind of research she was doing. I also asked why she specifically wanted to know the dimensions of the Sullivan Cave gate. I never received a response from her.

August 10 – I scheduled a workday to clean up the property prior to the upcoming annual Cave Capers event for the following weekend. Keith Dunlap, Jeff Cody, and my friend Jacob Lish assisted me with completing several tasks around the property. ►►

- Jacob, Jeff, and I picked up sticks and then mowed the camping areas as well as trimmed around the property.
- Keith helped me with greasing the cave gate since I ran out of grease in my gun from a previous attempt earlier in the year.
- Keith also brought two backpack sprayers and gave me some training on how they work, and the mix used to spray for invasives. We filled up the two sprayers and targeted spraying invasives in a large area uphill of the camping area.

Thank you for your help, greatly appreciated.

August 15 – Goni Iskali contacted me and mentioned she was going to be assisting the USFWS the next day with placing detectors at the Sullivan cave entrance for identifying bats. Thank you Goni!

September 8 – I scheduled another workday with several tasks in mind prior to our quarterly IKC Board meeting which we had scheduled at the Sullivan preserve.

- I arrived the day before and worked on mowing



photo courtesy Carla Striegel-Winner

and trimming around the property.

- Jeff Cody and Bambi Dunlap worked on and completed painting the roof of the wood shed, a big thank you to both, it looks great.
- Keith Dunlap, Danyele Green, Carla Striegel-Winner, and Kevin Smith continued our previous efforts of invasives removal around the property.
- There are drainpipe culverts along the drive that had been plugged up with debris and not been cleaned out in some time, Cris Seuell and Tom Sollman worked on shoveling out the built-up debris which will now allow water to flow through the drain pipes as they intended.
- Keith, Cris, and I then worked on installing a

post near the lane gate that will serve as a latch when open providing support for the gate as opposed to propping it up with a rock.

- Bill Baus and I worked on splitting some of the dead tulip poplar trees near the property entrance and with the help of Laura Demarest, Matt Selig, and others, we were able to stack the split wood in the shed.
- The fire pit area had several rocks stacked that were hauled down to the shed, several helped with cleaning up the shed area and re-stacking the wood pile.

Thank you so much to everyone for their hard work and help around the property, it was a great day followed by a great meeting.

September 24 – Carla Striegel-Winner contacted Keith Dunlap, Paul Uglum, and I, letting us know that a photographer named Zac Cody from the Indiana Land Protection Alliance (ILPA) was planning to visit the Sullivan Cave Preserve and take photographs around the property. She was just letting us know of his plans for a visit that coming Sunday and or Monday.

October 1 – Cavers from the Windy City Grotto scheduled a weekend of caving and camping at the Sullivan Cave Preserve. Chris Landis reported that while camping a large branch fell from a tree during a rain event and landed across the path leading to the cave. He reported they were able to remove it from the path and place it further back in the woods. Thank you Chris and WCG members for your help.

October 21 – Nate Vignes contacted Paul Uglum and I about recent new graffiti he had noticed in the domes part of the backbreaker and was looking for guidance on what to do about it. Nate provided images where the recent visitor carved their name as well as other inappropriate objects into the cave ceiling. We discussed this scenario and included Keith Dunlap and Matt Selig, ultimately Paul was able to determine the group and individual responsible and reached out to their trip leader to discuss and plan a date for them to correct this offense.

October 30 – I put a request into Izzy's to service the porta-potty as soon as feasible, they were then able to arrive later that week and service the unit.

November 1 – Paul Uglum was able to coordinate with the group leader and the individual who recently carved his name into the cave wall to go to



Sullivan Cave and remove the graffiti. With the help of Nate Vignes leading and being in attendance, they were able to remove the graffiti. The group leader contacted Paul and took responsibility for this action and responded with a heart-felt apology from himself, as well as the other individual involved.

Thank you, Paul and Nate, for addressing this issue and educating our visitors about the proper etiquette needed when visiting our preserves and caves.

November 8 – The Shallow Grotto planned their annual “Shallow Fest” event for this weekend.

- I was on-site for the event and blew leaves away from the camping areas, parking areas, and along the driveway.
- I had asked Kevin Romanak if he could bring some hardwood mulch to be placed around the fire pit area considering it had become very muddy, Kevin brought his small trailer with several bags of hardwood mulch which he provided to the IKC as a donation. Several of us spread the mulch which will make this area much more enjoyable for campers moving forward. Thank you, Kevin!
- Drew Packman attended and brought his log splitter; Drew and I were able to cut up most of the fallen tulip poplar tree near the entrance which several of us assisted in splitting into sections to be stacked for future firewood use. We loaded up the split wood into Kevin’s trailer and then stacked around the fire pit area as well as down in the shed.

A big thank you to the Shallow Grotto for their help!

Additional Notes:

- Several members/visitors and a few 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.
- There were no major management problems or concerns encountered during 2024.

2025 activities I hope to accomplish:

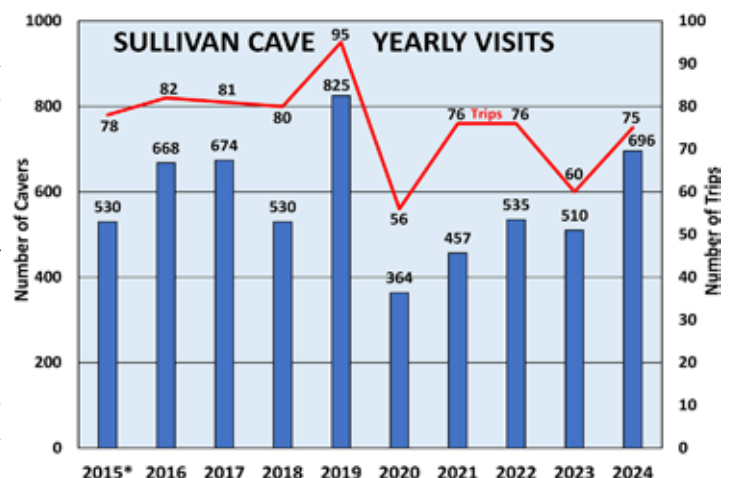
- Looking to install a gutter on the wood shed and utilize the rain barrel Danyele and Tymme donated.

- Finish cutting up, splitting, and stacking downed trees near the old entrance.
- Work with Keith and volunteers to potentially construct an informational kiosk.
- Work with other IKC property managers and members to help me better understand forest management and dealing with invasives.
- Schedule workdays with volunteers to continue cleaning up the property and start working on constructing a loop trail.
- Perhaps spray the camping area again in August to control the Stiltgrass infestation (*left this task in the report from Keith, will work with him on this*).
- Over-seed the camping area in the fall with tall fescue that will be hardier (*left this task in the report from Keith, will work with him on this*).

Sullivan Cave Patron Report (Paul Uglum)

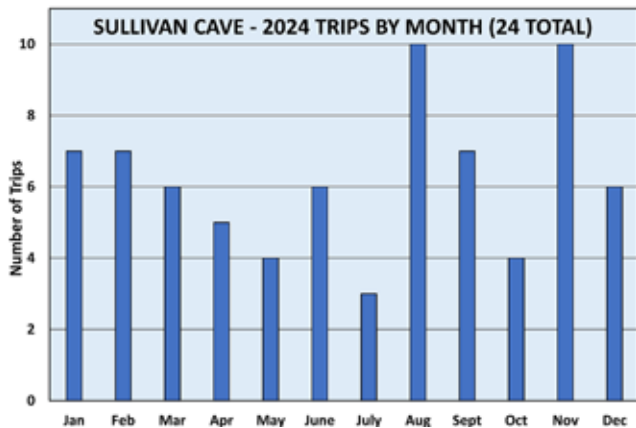
This report covers the activity and visitation from January through December, 2024. Groups with a wide range of caving experience and expectations have requested visits to Sullivan Cave. Groups experience levels range from very experienced cavers traveling upstream to the Rise, to various youth groups with limited or no wild cave experience making trips to the Mountain Room and back with an experienced caver as a guide. The ability to scale trips based on the experience level of the cavers makes Sullivan Cave ideal for groups with varied experience levels and larger groups.

Sullivan Cave also serves as a platform for cave rescue training. In the past it has been used for NCRC level 1 through 3 training. This year we hosted NCRC training in May. Caving groups from Wisconsin and Illinois as well as from Rose-Hulman



and Purdue visited Sullivan Cave. Several Scout and Venture Crews also caved in Sullivan.

For 2024 there were 75 trips with a total of 696 participants. As with last year, seventy five percent of the trips were arranged through the IKC and most of the remainder through the BIG. The number of trips increased over last year, but re-



main less than the pre-covid years. Part of this is, no doubt, due to the increased availability of other wild caves across Indiana. The number of nights camping increased from 27 last year to 35 this year. Some of the nights camping did not involve caving in Sullivan.

There were additional inquiries, that did not result in a trip. These were generally non-cavers who did not respond to replies after I explained that Sullivan was a wild cave and what the IKC rules are. Sullivan Cave has been known for some time and this leads to some unusual expectations and requests.

There is one approved research request for a US Fish and Wildlife bat study.

Most trips were requested via e-mail and keys mailed to the trip leader and returned by mail. I encourage anyone wanting to visit Sullivan Cave to plan ahead. Locks have been replaced as needed.

Opportunities:

We had one incident where new graffiti was identified shortly after a trip. Using the name on the cave wall and going through the waivers, both the trip leader and individual were identified. They were contacted and Nate Vignes led a trip with the offenders in which they removed the graffiti.

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. I have several volunteers, but need to identify information best practices in cave restoration.

Individuals and groups who are interested in wild caving, but have little or no experience continue to contact the IKC's Sullivan email seeing opportunities of go caving. It would be good to have an outreach program to direct them to grottos and encourage them to become responsible cavers as well as recruit them to be involved with cave conservation.

Wayne Property Report (Danyele Green)

Parking requests for Wayne Cave Preserve by groups going to other caves is on the rise. Reminder to please request approval in advance from the Property Manager prior to telling the group to park there to avoid conflicts.

Other activities included:

- **3/23/24** – Garlic Mustard Pull. Garlic mustard patch above the sinkhole pond was ripe for picking as it was in direct sun and growing early. Pulled ½ garbage bag full.
- **3/24/24** – Wayne Cave Workday: trail cleanup, invasive work on tracts 1 and 3. Walk through of tract 2, but not much found. Hand pulled a few multiflora and cut and paint a few honeysuckle.
- **4/28/24** – The IKC hosted a Chainsaw Safety Class. A half day held at Bloomington Fire District on Kirby Road followed by a half day held at Wayne Cave Preserve.
- **6/16/24** – Wayne Preserve Workday prior to the IKC meeting held on-site.
- **7/6/2024** – Storm Cleanup workday (70+mph winds), volunteers did what we could with lots of firewood collected. A contractor was subsequently hired for the trail cleanup above and beyond what the volunteers could do safely.
- **10/4/2024** – EQIP inspection performed.

Camping Trips: Three requests over the Eclipse weekend. Five additional requests over the remainder of the year: April 20-21, April 27-28, May 24 -26, May 31-June 2, and Aug 3-4.

Several requests were made the for porta-potty servicing, but not all were fulfilled in a timely manner by our contractor though. Generally

speaking, every three to four weeks I treated with a gallon of bleach in between full servicing.

Wayne Cave Patron Report (Dave Everton)

Wayne Cave was popular during 2024 and saw the following numbers... There were 16 separate cave trips with a grand total of 100 visitors (some were repeats), all but one of which was facilitated by the BIG Liaison and Cave Patron (me). One trip was arranged by the Evansville Metropolitan Grotto.

The Patron was not made aware of any negative incidents or issues during any of the visits.

As always, the Patron thanks the IKC for its continued support, preservation of, and access to Wayne Cave!

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, and I generally try to spread trips out to only one within a calendar month. During 2024, all six of these trips were taken allowing 50 cavers to visit Shiloh Cave. Four of the trips were filled to capacity.

One additional trip was initially planned, but was cancelled by the trip organizer and was not rescheduled for 2024. It is now on the list for 2025.

Our relationship with the quarry remains solid and no negative issues have been reported.

Suicide Cave Patron Report (Kevin Smith)

In 2024, Suicide Cave hosted nine authorized trips, welcoming a total of 72 cavers from various caving groups, including the Fox Valley Cavers from Wisconsin. Three of these trips took place during the annual Cave Capers event. Additionally, an early February trip was dedicated to conducting a bat census, during which approximately a dozen bats were observed, including tri-colored and little brown bats.

No significant issues were reported during these trips. However, one Cave Capers trip involved a high number of vehicles, prompting a call from the local sheriff. The primary concern was limited visibility for oncoming traffic due to vehicles being parked along the north side of the road. Overgrown vegetation on the south side prevented cars from parking safely off the roadway. To address

this, the property owner has granted permission to clear the vegetation, a task scheduled for spring or early summer. Moving forward, a four vehicle limit will be implemented to prevent similar concerns. In addition, the gate lock will be replaced and the gate hinges will be lubricated.

The Indiana Karst Conservancy extends its appreciation for the opportunity to continue stewardship of Suicide Cave. This is made possible by the generosity of Charlie and Will Biel, owners and stewards of the Arrow Hill Ranch Forestry and Wildlife Sanctuary.

Henderson Park Access Coordinator (Scott Frosch)

2024 was the first full year of the TNC/City of Salem/IKC partnership. During 2024, fifteen cave trips were registered at the park totaling 146 cavers. Highlights included a DNR bat count, the TNC/IKC Discovery Day, and Cave Capers. During a trip in October, a caver banged her leg against a sharp rock in a pothole above the waterfall in Middle Cave. She sliced her shin causing it to bleed badly. The trip leader was prepared with first aid supplies. The injured caver was quickly escorted down the ladder and out of the cave. The trip leader drove her to a nearby medical clinic where she received ten stitches. This incident highlights the importance of basic supplies and emergency training (e.g., CPR and Wilderness First Aid) as well as the need to collect signed waivers from everyone, every time. One waiver per caver per trip!!

Spring Mill Access Coordinator (Dave Everton)

In January 2014, the Indiana Karst Conservancy and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources signed a Letter of Understanding to create an Interim Cave Access Program to facilitate access to Bronson-Donaldson and Upper Twin caves in Spring Mill State Park, and Endless and River caves in the Cave River Valley Natural Area. The agreement was initially for two years, but has been renewed five times.

During 2024, the following trips took place to those caves:

Upper Twin: 6 trips with 61 cavers

Bronson-Donaldson: 24 trips with 189 cavers

Endless Cave: 10 trips with 116 cavers

River Cave: 11 trips with 110 cavers

Total number of trips: 51 with 476 cave visits.



Note, there were summary errors in the 2023 report. The total number of trips should have been 58 and total number of cave visits 374. Thus in 2024, there 7 fewer trips, but 102 more participants.

The Interim Access Coordinator made one very short trip to Endless Cave and one trip to Bronson-Donaldson Cave during 2024.

Cavers are typically eager to go caving, but very seldom report back on how the trip went. The Co-

ordinator was not informed of any problems on any of the trips.

Indian Creek CE Report (Bambi Dunlap)

I visited the conservation easement on August 14 with Keith Dunlap to tour the property, identify property line markers, and conduct a thorough annual inspection. Only a few minor items were noted. Inspection letters were mailed out to property owners with copies sent to TNC. All tasks are complete. 🐦

REGISTER NOW!

WILDERNESS FIRST AID

July 12 – 13

Lawrence County Independent Schools
223 Old Farm Road, Bedford, IN



- The course is two full days (16 hours) of classroom instruction with hands-on learning scenarios that range from crisis response, patient assessment, physical trauma, environmental issues, bleeding control, and how to handle medical emergencies.
- The IKC is sponsoring this class, which allows us to give deep discounts to attendees.
- The WFA class fee is \$125 with IKC members receiving a \$25 discount. Typically the fee for this course put on by other organizations is \$250-\$300.
- There is an optional/add-on CPR course offered on Saturday evening, and you are welcome to take this class separately, if there are any openings available. The fee for this optional training is \$25.
- The SOLO-certified instructors are Danyele Green (IKC Director) and Tymme Laun (IKC member).
- Primitive camping is available at our nearby Sullivan Cave Preserve.
- If you are not already and would like to become an IKC member to take advantage of the IKC discount, please go to ikc.caves.org/join-the-ikc to join.
- For questions, contact Danyele Green (mudandogs@gmail.com) by July 1st.
- To register for this class, go to form.jotform.com/250628785272162 (Registration closes July 1)

CLASS SIZE IS LIMITED...ONLY A FEW SPOTS REMAIN!

...continued from page 5

the staff at the NRCS Bloomington Office. Also thanks to Board member Danyele Greene for overseeing the EQIP contracts and coordinating the IKC volunteers from our side of the effort.

- ❑ The IKC has gained **thirty-one** new members in the last quarter. Welcome Jeff Appel, Melanie Arnold, Marilyn Bauchat, Michael Betson, Jessica Burden, David Cornelius, Patricia Cowin, Stas Daszkiewicz, Ginger Davis, Kevin Ernst, Cathy Gearhart, Doug Hanka, Chara Hendricks, John Hendricks Jr, Patrick Ivie, Julia Lowe, Daniel MacDonald, Nancey Maegerlein, Aaron McAlexander, Erik Meitner, Jason Pear, Westley Penland, Samantha Phipps, Shannon Phipps, Matthew Quigley, Michael Raymond, Constance Temm, Gregory Jay Valent, David Wildemann, Anna Zinga, and the Bloomington Indiana Grotto. The IKC membership currently stands at 347. 🐦

INDIANA KARST CONSERVANCY TREASURY REPORT

Income/Expense Statement From January 1, 2025 to March 31, 2025

INCOME:

Dues Apportionment and Residuals	1,228.75	
Donations - General	3,430.65	
Donations - Land Acquisition Fund	3,985.00	
EQIP grant	512.34	
Wilderness First Aid class	1,500.00	
General Investment Earnings	1,791.19	
		\$12,447.93

EXPENSES:

IKC Update (printing, production, mailing)	944.55	
Education / Outreach / Promo items	534.66	
Stewardship / Conservation	107.82	
ILPA grant	500.00	
Business (Ballot mailing, PayPal fees, postage etc)	731.31	
Transfers to/from restricted funds/other adjustments	3,985.00	
		(\$6,803.34)

NET OPERATING EXCESS (DEFICIT) THIS PERIOD: \$5,644.59

Balance Sheet March 31, 2025

ASSETS:

Checking / CD / Brokerage / Endowment accounts	804,176.73	
Wayne Cave Preserve (77.46 acres)	393,000.00	
Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve (73.48 acres)	162,000.00	
Shawnee Karst Preserve (67.78 acres)	175,000.00	
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>\$1,691,189.89</u>

FUNDS & OPERATING EXCESS:

Land Acquisition Restricted Fund	96,147.39	
Deferred Dues Restricted Fund (326 members)	9,075.00	
Stewardship Endowment Fund (-3.06% for Q1)	138,508.73	
Gale & Ray Beach Endowment Fund (-4.99% for Q1)	463,515.47	
Previous General Fund (total)	91,298.71	
Net Excess (Deficit) This Period	<u>5,644.59</u>	
Current General Fund (unrestricted)	96,943.30	
Current General Fund (committed)	3,890.92	
Real Estate Basis (excluding value of CE)	<u>887,000.00</u>	

Total Liabilities & Operating Excess \$1,691,189.89

DON'T FORGET TO RENEW/EXTEND YOUR DUES!

IKC ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

Sunday, March 23rd, 2025 – 1:00 PM EST

Monroe County Public Library – 600 West Temperance Square, Ellettsville, IN 47429

Board Members Present:

Matt Selig, President
 Laura Demarest, Secretary
 Keith Dunlap, Treasurer
 Bill Baus*
 Bruce Bowman
 Brandon Chasteen
 Jeff Cody*
 Scott Frosch
 Danyele Green
 Goniela Iskali
 Joe Kinder
 Cris Seuell
 Tom Sollman
 Carla Striegel-Winner
 Richard Vernier

* represented by proxy (see below)

Board Members Absent:

None

Others Present: Patti Cummings, Mike Drake, Bambi Dunlap, Sam Frushour, Rhonda Matteson, Adam Stanich, Nate Vignes, and Kent Waltz.

Call to Order – IKC Exempt Purpose & Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Matt Selig at 1:00 PM EST.

Acceptance of Proxies

Brad Barcom for Bill Baus, Sue Vernier for Jeff Cody.

Approval of Previous Minutes

Danyele made a motion to approve the minutes from the December meeting as published in the March 2025 IKC Update. Bruce seconded. Unanimously approved.

E-mail Motions Since Last Meeting

Laura moved to accept the 2025 slate of candidates for election. Brandon seconded. Unanimously approved on February 5th, 2025.

2025 Election Results (Tellers' Report)

Three officers, four directors to be seated April 1st, 2025: Matt Selig (President), Goni Iskali (Secretary), Keith Dunlap (Treasurer), Jeff Cody (Director), Laura Demarest (Director), Danyele Green (Director), Carla Striegel-Winner (Director).

Treasurer Report

Keith outlined the current financial status of the organization:

Assets:

Cash assets totaling	\$809,558.17
Land assets totaling	\$887,000.00
Total Assets	\$1,696,588.17

Dedicated Funds:

Land Acquisition Fund	\$95,552.39
Stewardship Endowment	\$139,499.94
Gale & Ray Beach Endowment	\$469,788.14
Deferred Dues	\$6,963.75
General (unrestricted) Fund	\$97,753.95
Total Dedicated Funds	\$809,558.17

Membership currently stands at 320 paid members. 100 members have yet to renew.

The Stewardship Endowment Fund has grown by 8.6% APR and the Gale and Ray Beach Endowment Fund has shown favorable progress with a 5.0% APR increase since it was invested in mutual funds. Keith is currently working on the 990 non-profit return.

2025 Indiana Cave Symposium

The event will be held Saturday, April 26th at the Orange County Community Center in Paoli. Volunteers are being solicited for specific tasks; Carla passed around a list of duties. There will be a pre-symposium tour and Carla shared the registration QR code. Because some private caves will be visited, specific information will not be searchable. More information will be sent out to IKC members soon as well as social media promotion.

Education/Outreach Committee

Carla shared that new IKC hats and beanie caps are available for sale for \$20 each. They will be featured on the website soon and will also be available for sale at the Indiana Cave Symposium.

Upcoming field events are being planned at several preserves. May 3rd will be the first field event of the year at the Wayne Cave Preserve featuring an evening talk and hike with moth experts Steve Morris, Jim Vargo, and Jeanette Jaskula. On August 16, there will be an evening bat hike at the Robinson Ladder Preserve with bat biologist, Goni Iskali. A 'Big Day' bird hike will be scheduled again at the Buddha Karst Nature Preserve in October. On November 8, Tom Sollman and Keith Dunlap will host a blindfish-related talk and hike at Spring Mill State Park.

Danyele shared some information about the upcoming Wilderness First Aid class to be held in Fayetteville, IN July 12-13. Nine folks have already registered, and more information will be sent around to IKC members via email soon.



A tentative fall field day at Henderson Park is being discussed in partnership with TNC.

ISU Bat Fest – Annual event held in Terre Haute and Goni will be there representing the IKC on September 27th. If others are interested in joining, contact Goni.

Habitat Management Grant

Carla provided an update on the previously mentioned \$10,000 grant for invasive species control for bat habitat and funds are currently frozen. More information will be provided as new information emerges.

ILPA Updates

Carla shared that five IKC Board members attended the winter conference, which was summarized in the March *IKC Update*. Board members and key volunteers can attend the Friday, May 16th spring gathering at Fort Harrison State Park. Also, the land trust photography project sponsored by ILPA has concluded and some photos are available for future publications and promotions.

Final EQIP Walkthrough for Wayne Cave Preserve

The NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for invasives removal contract is in its final year. Due to some misunderstandings about the contract there will be some follow-up work to be completed.

Membership Dues Committee Update

Danyeale gave an update on the *ad hoc* Membership Dues Committee with the goal of referencing other similar organizations methods for assessing dues and fund-raising. Some notes were provided in favor of raising dues to \$20/year. If in favor, this would become effective July 1st, and members are welcome to pay forward a number of years at the \$15/year rate. Some options were discussed including offering a second ‘tier’ and various implementation nuances. The IKC dues has been \$15 since 1987 and if adjusted for inflation, they should be over \$40. *Danyeale moved to raise IKC membership dues to \$20/year effective July 1st, 2025. Laura seconded. Unanimously approved.*

Electronic Scheduling & Waiver System

Matt gave a progress report and shared a link via email for Board members to test and give feedback. Tim Harris has been working on the website and anticipates everything to be functional in the next one to two months for Sullivan Cave access and camping waivers. The plan is that more caves will be added in the future, eventually eliminating paper waivers, though Cave Patrons and Property Managers will still have ultimate oversight.

2024 Cave Patron & Property Manager Reports

Comprehensive annual reports were sent to the Board for review prior to the meeting and will be printed in

full in the June *IKC Update*.

Buddha Karst Nature Preserve (Property Manager – Keith Dunlap, Cave Patron – Jeff Cody): The kiosk and parking lot gate were refurbished. Last year there were four cave trips in total.

Lowry Karst Preserve (Property Manager, Cave Patron – Jasper Beavers): Monthly visits were conducted and a spring garlic pull occurred last spring. The property looks to be in good shape when it comes to invasives. Only two groups visited the cave: a geology group and another small group. Two other groups inquired, but didn’t follow up on permits or visitation.

Orangeville Rise Nature Preserve (Property Manager – Carla Striegel-Winner): In 2024, monthly maintenance visits were conducted which included invasive species removal and trash pick-up. The Indiana Cave Symposium pre-tour visited the site and annual water sampling was conducted by the Indiana Geological and Water Survey as part of their 10-year research permit.

Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve (Property Manager, Cave Patron – John Benton): The only trip requested in 2024 was related to the winter bat counts.

Shawnee Karst Preserve (Property Manager – Keith Dunlap, Cave Patron – Dave Everton): In spring 2024 a major trash clean-up was conducted and scheduled mowing occurred.

Sullivan Cave Preserve (Property Manager – Joe Kinder, Cave Patron – Paul Uglum): Joe Kinder reported several general maintenance events, completed with the help of family and other volunteers, including a scheduled fall IKC workday where the shed roof was repainted, drainage improved, wood split, and many invasives species were treated. An NCRC mock cave rescue event was hosted on-site as part of an Orientation to Cave Rescue (OCR) training. Bat studies were coordinated with USFWS last summer. Some graffiti was reported in the Backbreaker; the individual responsible was contacted, educated, and removed the defacement with the assistance of Nate Vignes. Cave Patron, Paul Uglum, provided a detailed report, sharing that there was a total of 696 visitors last year and it was noted that camping requests have increased in the last year.

Wayne Cave Preserve (Property Manager – Danyeale Green, Cave Patron – Dave Everton): Danyeale reported that there are a lot of parking requests and provided a reminder that permission needs to be requested



ahead of time for this. Several camping requests were made by IKC members and their groups. Significant storm damage resulted in the need to hire a contractor to help clear the trails. Some invasives were removed and an EQIP inspection was successful. No Cave Patron report was submitted by deadline (note Dave was accidentally left off the email communications on submitting the report).

Shiloh Cave (Cave Patron – Jim Adams): A total of six trips were requested, the maximum number allowed.

Suicide Cave (Cave Patron – Kevin Smith): A total of 72 cavers visited the cave in nine trips. Some issues occurred related to parking on the wrong side of the road during Cave Capers, and too many cars. The area along the side of the road was permitted to be cleared in the future though a maximum of four cars will still be enforced.

Indian Creek Conservation Easement (Monitor – Bambi Dunlap): It was Bambi's first year monitoring the easement, and she was oriented to the duties involved. Minor items were noted, and letters were sent to landowners.

Henderson Park MOU (Access Coordinator – Scott Frosch): Scott shared that the partnership between IKC, TNC, and the City of Salem has been going well. A total of 15 groups with 146 cavers in total visited the site, most associated with organized groups. A small injury occurred in Middle Cave resulting in leg stitches though the group self-rescued. A Discovery Day event was held with TNC, and another is planned for the future.

Spring Mill State Park (Access Coordinator – Dave Everton): No report submitted by deadline (note Dave was accidentally left off the email communications on submitting the report).

Recap of 2025 Preserves Work & Upcoming Preserves Projects

Buddha Karst Nature Preserve: Keith reports maintenance is ongoing, including invasive spraying and mowing. A 'Big Day' bird hike is scheduled to be hosted again in October.

Orangeville Rise Nature Preserve: Carla still needs to get rid of a swing-rope that has appeared on-site, though it doesn't seem to present any hazards currently. A garlic mustard weed wrangle will occur on Wednesday, April 30th. She also mentioned that funding for IGWS's annual water sampling project may be in jeopardy.

Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve: John had nothing new to report.

Henderson Park: Scott reported that 2025 Discovery Day is tentatively scheduled for November 15th.

Shawnee Karst Preserve: Keith and Bambi mowed

the smaller clearing (~1 acre) in early March. A couple of weeks ago, Keith and Carla loaded up scrap metal and made \$46. Aluminum cans have also been collected from members and recycled (\$0.68/lb) which netted another \$70.

Sullivan Cave Preserve: Joe shared some updates on general maintenance and would like to work on getting the kiosk established this year. Some gravel may need to be applied to the parking area and path to the cave later this year.

Wayne Cave Preserve: Cris is the new Property Manager and reports the kiosk has damage from carpenter bees and woodpeckers; some holes will need to be patched in the future. The map and other display materials in the kiosk will also need to be updated, which can occur after trails on the new property have been established. Some plans for future interpretive trail markers and a trail-building workshop are in development. Hoosier Hikers Council will loan tools for this purpose though they are unable to offer trail-building assistance since access is not open to the public. Invasive species removal is ongoing, and some graffiti removal needs to be conducted in Jim's Hole. Some large tires and trash items in the nearby vicinity also need to be removed. Bruce mentioned that the Management Plan needs to be updated, and he has volunteered to work on it. The website will also need to be updated along with some other administrative tasks.

Lowry Karst Preserve: Jasper has scheduled a May 3rd 10:00 AM Garlic Mustard pull to be conducted on the property.

Indian Creek Conservation Easement: Bambi had nothing new to report.

Items from the Floor

- Danyele has joined the Indiana Master Naturalist program in Monroe County and mentioned that the IKC can be listed on the website as an option for IMN volunteers to complete their necessary service hours.
- Keith noted that the property across the street from the Shawnee property has sold for \$300,000 (6+ acres).
- Kudos were given on the new *IKC Update* printing.

Next Meeting Date and Place Selection

The next IKC Quarterly meeting is scheduled for Sunday, June 29th at 1:00 PM EDT at the Wayne Cave Preserve (Brandon Chasteen's garage as a back-up rain option). There will be some preserve work tasks at 10:00 AM EDT preceding the meeting.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:02 PM EST.


Respectfully compiled and submitted by Laura Demarest, IKC Secretary 🐦

IKC PRESERVE FILLS NEED TO RELEASE REHABBED BATS

by Goni Iskali

The Pipsqueakery is a 501(c)3 nonprofit wildlife and small animal rescue and sanctuary in Bloomington Indiana. They provide care for medically and behaviorally needy rodents, rabbits, and other small animals; rehabilitate wildlife; and find forever homes and rescue placements for healthy adoptable animals. Bats are one of the species that The Pipsqueakery accepts for rehabilitation, which is rare because bats can be difficult to rehabilitate and require special conditions. The Pipsqueakery had been rehabilitating 11 big brown bats over the winter and reached out to the IKC to explore potential release sites. The IKC Board was thrilled to offer one of our properties, Sullivan Cave Preserve, as a release site because we manage all of our preserves to maintain and enhance bat habitat. The bats were released at Sullivan on May 8th right after sunset and when the weather was optimal. The Pipsqueakery volunteer and bat specialist, Grace Rodriguez, and I, being a bat biologist and on the IKC Board, did the releases. All the bats flew on their own out into the woods and hopefully found shelter, food, and water. The IKC expresses our gratitude to The Pipsqueakery for

rehabilitating the bats and looks forward to helping them out on any future bat releases.

To learn more about The Pipsqueakery, go to www.ThePipsqueakery.org or www.facebook.com/ThePipsqueakery. 



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.



Summer is here and there is no better caving activity than to visit Wyandotte Caves west of Corydon. Open Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays only, now through Labor Day. Tours of Big Wyandotte Cave (top) are offered at 11 AM EDT and 1 PM. Tours of Little Wyandotte (bottom) are at 10 AM, 11 AM., 1 PM, and 2 PM. Visit www.in.gov/dnr/state-parks/parks-lakes/obannon-woods-state-park/#Wyandotte_Caves for pricing and age restrictions.

Photos courtesy of Richard Vernier