

Minutes of the Fall 2000 VAR Meeting

September 24, 2000

Maxwelton, WV

Pine Mountain Grotto moved to adjourn the April 30 meeting. Independent Bill Nelson seconded - motion passed

The Meeting was called to order at 9:02

Reports

The Secretary - Carol Tideman

A motion was made by VPI to accept the minutes as published. DC Grotto seconded. Motion carried.

The Treasurer - John Fox

A financial report was presented. VPI moved to accept Pine Mountain Grotto seconded. Motion passed

The Vice Chair - Judy Fisher

Will be attending the Potomac Highlands Conservancy. A written report will be submitted to the Region Record.

The Chairman - Craig Hindman

Our tax status with the state is OK.

Conservation Chair - Andy Reeder

There have been rumors about trash around caves in the region. Andy is putting together a conservation report form.

Bowden Cave

Summer - Frederick, Winter - BATS, Spring - DC/Tri-State , Fall BATS Oct. 28

Island Ford Cave

Winter - Front Royal, Spring - New River, Fall - Charlottesville

Easter at Grand Caverns

formation restoration is planned. The Regional Park Authority is putting up half the money to create a master plan to make it a regional park.

Fletchers was cleaned up by Keltic Cavers

Goodwin's Cave

Blue Ridge Grotto took a cub scout den into Goodwin's on June 3, 2000. The trip was a success. The cave continues to "heal" from the vandalism. The property and cave gates are secure. We have just learned from the neighbors of Goodwin's Cave that a proposed pipeline (natural gas) is to go through the cave and adjoining wet land. There will be an informational meeting in Roanoke Oct. 3

Staunton Cave - Ted Andrus

The new city manager is receptive to working with us in developing a management plan. The city is still questioning if we have liability insurance. We are trying for ownership but probably get an easement. We are taking the city folks on a trip to the cave in October. An agreement will be in place before we start investing volunteer time in the project. Expect something in writing by spring.

Landowner Recognition Awards - Don Anderson

Ferrell James, Zitt James JR. Owner of Ferrell Caves #1-26 were presented the award. The Dore's - Scott Hollow Cave - were nominated

VAR Outstanding Service Award - Tom Spina

no report

Landowner Legal Support Committee - Bob Hoke

no news

Region Record - Bob Hoke

The Region Record needs material. Deadlines are Dec. 15 and March 15.

Patch Committee - Ernst Kastning

no report

VAR List Server - Walt Pirie

There are approximately 10-15 new subscribers - not very active. One change was made - when someone wants a reply the default is to the sender not to all on the list.

VAR Web site - Vitus Eidukevicius

The site up and running. Approximately 30 visits a day.

Cave Bucks - Judy Fisher

Collect, send, spend

VSS - Phil Lucas

Total number of caves 3853. Total number of surveyed cave passages 423 miles

DCR receives projects for review under the Natural Heritage Program. These projects that fall within

karst areas or otherwise may impact caves are sent to the VSS (Phil Lucas) for further review. We have reviewed 278 projects since March to date. From these, it has been determined that 36 caves could or will be impacted by the proposed projects. Of these 36 caves, three are on the Significant Cave List and two are archaeologically significant. And one is a new candidate for the Significant Cave List.

Atwell Pit and Chimney Rock Caves in Tazwell County have been blasted and collapsed by the owner who is developing the property for commercial businesses. These caves were not completely investigated and only partial inventories were conducted prior to their destruction. It is quite possible that both caves may have been candidates for the Significant Cave List.

VDOT is the owner of many caves. There has never been a policy or procedure by VDOT to protect, manage, or to acknowledge that caves are a resource. Most of VDOT activities dealing with caves are to seal shut cave entrances in order to protect the traveling public and to discourage pedestrian traffic on their right of ways. The vast majority of cave entrances on VDOT right of ways have been sealed. Those remaining are ones where a large cost is involved or ones that they simply do not know about. The VSS has recommended to the Va. Cave Board to take steps to develop an agreement with VDOT where cave entrances are not sealed and a management plan prepared to utilize and protect the cave resource. A meeting is planned for VSS and Cave Board representatives to meet with VDOT concerning this matter.

A new cave has been added to the Significant Cave List. Rust Cave #1 in Loudon County. This was determined after a field investigation was conducted following a request for environmental impacts by the Natural Heritage Program. Rust Cave #1 is located in Loudon County, an area not known for caves or karst. This cave is significant in the following categories. Geological: The cave is developed in Limestone clast conglomerate Calico marble also known as the Leesburg member of the Balls Bluff siltstone. No where else in Va. Are caves known in this Triassic conglomerate. The cave is over 1200 feet long and for this type of formation, the length is remarkable. Hydrological: The cave is phreatic and reaches down to the water table. Biological: A wide range of terrestrials and aquatics are found in this cave. Some outside their known ranges and perhaps some "firsts". Archeological and Historical significance may also be determined as indicated by anecdotal evidence. Unfortunately, this cave and another smaller cave close by, Rust Cave #2, is located on property where the construction of a school is planned. According to out information, the caves are located where a planned septic field is to be located and the caves will be blasted and collapsed. Further field investigation is planned.

WVSS - George Dasher

WVASS has produced two publications within the past year, the Spring Creek Dye Tracing monograph, which documented WVACS' dye tracing in the Culverson, Buckeye, and lower and west Spring Creek basins, and the 2000 NSS Convention Guidebook.

WVASS' annual meeting was at the 2000 OTR, and the minutes were published in the October 2000 West Virginia Caver. WVASS has provided input to several agencies and organizations (including the West Virginia Division of Highways and Division of Environment Protection) concerning 12 potential problems, and anyone wanting more information on these should contact George Dasher for a copy of

the minutes. George's contact addresses are 63 Valley Drive, Elkhorn, West Virginia 25071; 304-965-1361 wvcaver@juno.com.

WVASS is continuing to collect information on the State's caves. The coordinators for the various areas are as follows:

- J.C. Fisher: Mineral, Morgan, Hampshire, Berkeley, and Jefferson Counties.
- Pete Penczer: Hardy County.
- George Dasher: Pendleton County, with Gordon Brace for Germany Valley.
- Nick Schaer: Mercer County.
- Phil Lucas and Bill Balfour: The Culverson Creek Basin.
- Jeff Bray: Monroe County east of the Sinks Grove Anticline.
- Joseph Caldwell: Ludingtons and McClungs Cave area.
- Doug Moore: Moore County.
- Cliff Lindsay: Renick Peninsula.

Several of these projects have regularly-scheduled work weekends. These are:

Taylor Run of Randolph County; the first weekend of each month; contact Devin Kouts at 703-288-0166.

Germany Valley; the second weekend of each month; contact Gordon Brace at 703-288-3889 or braces@iop.com.

Tucker County; the third weekend of each month; contact Doug Moore at 304-592-2610 or doug@karstsports.com.

Mercer County; the fourth weekend of each month; contact Nick Schaer at 304-369-1749.

At present, WVASS has no Grant County coordinator and is searching for one.

Also at present, the State of West Virginia has approximately 3800 known caves

History of the Region

No further progress. (Sorry folks, it's been a busy summer and I do procrastinate.) Mary Sockey has heard rumors that Tom Spina is dropping out of caving, but has not talked to Tom about his lack of caving plans, or plans for the "History Part 2" project.

West Virginia Cave Conservancy

Negotiations are underway to get Maxwellton's. They are persuading others. Rapps is still closed - persuading excavation permits for the archeological project - will resurvey the cave

Power Lines - Will Orndorff

No action since the testimony. Bats are being tagged and a bat survey is ongoing. Appalachian Power will be monitoring springs, water supplies and tower sitings

New Dixie

One more survey trip should wrap up the resurvey. A decision on the I-73 route will be decided in October 2000. (The proposed western route for I-73 would definitely impact New Dixie Cave.) It was noted at the July 15, 2000 survey trip that vandals had tampered with the lock on New Dixie, but were unsuccessful in gaining entry.

Host Grotto Report

WVASS reported approximately 215 people attended.

Old Business

Region Non-Profit Status - Craig Hindman

We are back in good graces

Host for Spring 01 - Pine Mountain

at Cumberland Gap - 1st weekend in May - there will be led trips on Friday and Saturday.

Host for Fall 01 - RASS

no report

Host for Spring 02 - WVCC

possibly at Natural Chimney's

COG Report - Walt Pirie

Passed by the BOG - NSS membership will receive priority at the Mammoth Field Camp. The Forest Service provided conservation video's for every grotto.

1. only NSS members can submit in NSS salon competitions
2. restructuring of the assignment of number of votes per group
3. cave health insurance
4. base membership representation on NSS records - failed for lack of motion

5. Change wording for COG voting from grotto's and sections to Internal Organization - postponed
6. John Cole elected Chair

New Business

Host for Fall 2002 - no volunteers

A VPI moved to give the officers a discretionary fund of \$50. WVSS seconded. Gene Turner was recognized and thanked for allowing us to have the VAR here and for years of friendship

Grant Requests

NONE

Elections

Pine Mountain Grotto moved to elect the same slate of officers. Blue Ridge seconded - motion passed

Announcements

Project Underground has received 1 year of funding from the state of Virginia. Contact Carol Zokaites if you care to host a workshop

Cheryl Jones - the NPS and the NSS have entered an agreement - The NPS will purchase materials for a cave and karst initiative. 5 NSS 5 NPS volunteers will be running workshops - there will be a stipend for attending - trained people will give at least 4 presentations to students - ground water module purchased by NPS.

Cheryl Jones reported the IMAX movie is due to be released next spring. The NSS reviewed the first draft, sent input. It is not a high adventure file. It is science oriented

Tri-State has purchased a ground water module and will loan it out. Soil and water districts have ground water modules and will loan them out.

NCRC level 1 and 2 seminars needed

Bill Nelson asked about graffiti removal - JMF remover costs \$70 per gallon - he asked it if was effective in removing paint from popcorn - it was recommended you parge popcorn with mud - the mud removes the paint over time

VSS moved to adjourn at 10:30 Pine Mountain seconded.

Respectfully submitted: Carol Tiderman