

Minutes of the Fall 2012 VAR Meeting

September 23, 2012

Lexington, VA

Meeting was called to order at 9:05

Reports

The Secretary - Mary Sue Socky, substituting for Carol Tideman

A motion was made by Bubble Cave to accept the Spring 2012 minutes. New River Valley Grotto seconded. Meredith Weberg requested that a "clean" copy of the minutes be posted. Motion passed.

The Treasurer - John Fox

Oct. 2011 to Sept. 2012 Budget was presented and distributed (see attachment). John reported:.

- VAR did not receive any dues from the group (Tidewater Grotto) who co-hosted the Fall 2011 VAR.
- VAR did receive money from the Spring 2012 host group (Tri-State Grotto)
- VAR thanked Blue Ridge Grotto for its donation to VAR.
- The VAR Domain Name is paid for five years. We are to renew it in May 2017.
- The Money Market checkbook includes 5 accounts that are not added to the VAR total assets.
- The NSS Foundation account is added to the VAR total assets.

The Vice Chair - Judy Fisher

Nothing to report.

The Chairman - Judy Fisher, substituting for Craig Hindman, who was in a very bad accident.

Judy invited VAR attendees to sign the "Get Well Craig" poster after the meeting.

Conservation CO-Chair - Meredith Hall Weberg

- Several cave cleanups have been done over the last few months.
- Bear Cave (Rockbridge County, VA) was cleaned up yesterday (9/22/2012) as part of Fall VAR.
- Melrose Caverns is an ongoing VAR project.
- Projects at MayaCon (NSS Convention June 25-29, 2012) that JEP can report to Meredith later.

- A possible new project in Augusta Co. VA that someone mentioned this weekend; the person is going to email me about.

VAR Outstanding Service Award - Meredith Hall Weberg

The VAR Outstanding Service Award goes to, but please keep it a secret and out of the minutes of the meeting because this person's grotto wants to surprise him/her with the award at (Spring VAR 2013) when some special friends will be there.

JC Fisher presented the Fall 2012 VAR Outstanding Service Award to Meredith Hall Weberg.

Landowner Recognition Awards - Janet Tinkham

There are no recipients. Please nominate someone.

Landowner Legal Support Committee - Bob Hoke

No new is good news.

Region Record - JC Fisher reporting for Bob Hoke

The Fall issue of the Region Record was not published, because no material or articles other than the Spring VAR minutes was available. There will be a Winter issue. Deadline is December 15. Here are some questions to ask:

- Is the Region Record still relevant?
- Should we change (reduce?) the number of issues to be printed per year?
- Also, please consider a new editor for the Region Record. A younger person is needed.
- Bob Hoke will continue to be Region Record editor for the time being.

After a short discussion, this topic was tabled until Spring VAR on suggestion of Josh Rubenstein (Charlottesville), seconded by Karen Kastning (NRVG).

VAR List Server - Walt Pirie

No report.

VAR Web site - Jim McConkey

No report.

Cave Bucks - JC Fisher

Cave Bucks is alive and well. Please encourage grottos to collect and send out Cave Bucks. The money cannot help conservation organizations if they don't get it! Tri-State Grotto is closing in on the \$6,000.00 mark—collected and sent to conservation organizations.

VSS - Rick Lambert

No report.

WVASS - George Dasher

No report.

WVCC - John Pearson reporting for Carroll Bassett

Thank you to Fred Grady, who generously donated Haynes Cave during MayaCon and signed over the ownership to WVCC in a nice ceremony at OTR.

SCCI -

No report.

Grand Caverns/Cave Hill - Mary Sue Socky reporting for Jim McConkey

VAR cavers assisted with the June 2012 "Grand Heritage Days," which went very well; cavers did an outstanding job of decorating/illuminating the Ballroom for the dance. Ongoing projects in Fountain Cave will stop for the winter, as the cave will be closed for bats until April 2013. Documentation of historic signatures in Grand Caverns will continue for the winter, as well as ridgewalking caverns property, and working on their archive files. Contact Carol Tiderman if you wish to help with the project.

Virginia Cave Board - Meredith Hall Weberg

- The Virginia Cave Board is continuing work on the Virginia Cave and Karst Trail. Caver-artist Marian McConnell is working to create the logo for these distinctive signs (similar to the "Birding and Wildlife Trail" signs) will be posted at designated trailheads.
- The next Virginia Cave Board meeting will be in Charlottesville, VA on November 3, 2012. Josh Rubenstein will arrange to pick up the key for the meeting. Virginia Cave Board meetings are open to the public and interested cavers.

CCV - Joey Fagan

- Grants from CCV were used to publish the new Cave Life of the Virginias guide, written by Daniel W. Fong, Megan L. Porter, and Michael E. Slay.
- CCV has funded karst studies, hydrology work, dye tracing, cave gating, etc.
- CCV has money for grant requests. Contact them with a proposal for your project.

Spring Survey Project - Joey Fagan reporting for Charlie Maus

This is an ongoing project, where several karst springs are being monitored for water quality. Contact Joey Fagan or Charlie Maus if you wish to help.

Crystal Cave at Hupps Hill -

Further deferred

Youth Group Liaison - Joey Fagan

Joey is the regional coordinator for the NSS Youth Groups. If your group wants to work with or take Scouts caving, or if you have been working with Scouts or youth groups, please let him know.

(Other) Va Dept. of Conservation and Recreation –(Intern) Rebecca Stewart reporting for Wil Orndorff

- Stewardship project at Ogden Cave Preserve with Front Royal Grotto and MAKC.
- Stewardship project at Clover Hollow NAP (Stay High Cave) with VPI Grotto.
- CCV Dye tracing in Thompson Valley (Tazewell County, VA) and Wolf Creek (Giles County VA).
- Completed Madison Cave Isopod mark-recapture project.
- Working with Dave Culver, John Holsinger, and Dave Hubbard on Invertebrate Cave Fauna of Virginia.
- Biological Inventory of Caines Cave and Cathole Cave in Scott County, VA (CCV)

WNS update from Wil Orndorff

Host Report - Rolland Moore

Successful VAR, nice weather. 108 people registered. Hopefully you visited some of the Rockbridge County caves this weekend – Rockbridge is a hidden treasure. Cave Updates:

- Zimmermans Cave – has been closed for the past 15 years. Owner has liked recently working with cavers, would like to re-open this cave as limited access to cavers. He needs a caver liaison.
- Hickman Cave – this weekend is the second time anyone's been there. The owner would like to gate it. (Note: Craig Hindman guesstimated it would cost \$4000.00 to gate). John Pearson pointed out there are several "Craig Apprentices" who could work on this and other gate projects. John Pearson will be willing to work with Rolland Moore on this gating project.

NRVG moved to thank Rolland Moore for hosting the Fall VAR. Everyone applauded.

Old Business

VAR Hosts

Spring 2013 VAR meeting, to be held April 26-28, 2013 at BSA "Camp Buckskin," on Rt. 28 in Pocahontas County, WV (near Durbin). Hosted by Tri-State Grotto. There will be showers, RV access, and a dozen led trips. Dinner will be Pork BBQ with vegetarian option. \$28 pre-registration, \$32–34 at the gate; reduced rate for kids age 0–14. FRG will be doing the Sunday morning Pancake Breakfast. No one stepped forward for Fall 2013 meeting, or beyond. Think about it.

Storm Drain Markers (update) – John Pearson

Storm Drain Markers were replaced in Lewisburg, WV, during the week of the NSS Convention (June 24 –29, 2012). Even the mayor of the town came out to help. Initially it was the mayor who had requested that the old faded markers be replaced. Thank you for helping fund this conservation project!

New Business

Future VARs (discussion)

The delegates had a discussion on Regional Meetings.

We have Fall and Spring VARs each year.

Do we need two meetings a year?

The Chair asked – How many would show up for just a meeting? The consensus was “Not Many.”

(Gary Moss) – We have done VAR/MARs before. MAR is having the same problems we are having – what if the two organizations agreed to co-host the two meetings a year; each would be responsible for one of the meetings (site, dinner, meeting, etc.)

(Dave Socky) – Finding a site every 6 months is a pain.

(Bru) – What about finding a permanent site?

(John Pearson) – A permanent site will negatively impact the area caves.

(Lynn Ott) - But people like variety and new sites. A permanent site would become boring.

(Vitas) –New folks do want the caving. It is a draw for VARS, and many look forward to them.

(Bru) –If we could combine VAR/MAR/OTR work weekend, would that help? (Consensus was “no,” it would cause a lack of work on the site, and that would not be appreciated.)

(Judy Fisher) – Tabled the discussion, promised this topic would be brought up again in the Spring.

Elections

Motion was made by Josh Rubenstein, seconded by Barbara Moss, to accept the current slate of officers for another year. There were no abstentions, the current slate was voted in.

Announcements

- A Derecho is an “every 4 years” event. (JEP)
- 2013 NSS Convention (Karen Kastning): Here are 2013 NSS Convention registration forms! Please pre-register! Mailing a form with a check saves us a whole lot of money (credit card fees are expensive). Please try to pre-register early, like between now and Christmas.
- (JEP) Tell the BOG to pre-register, please! There IS a refund policy, too.
- TRA – Fundraiser for the OTR Pavilion floor during Memorial Day Weekend (May 25–27, 2013). *By Reservation Only* Make a \$250.00 gift to this party. The OTR site will NOT be open to the public, only open to ticket holders. This will be a classy, formal affair.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 a. m.

Submitted by Mary Sue Socky, *with lots of help from Meredith Hall Weberg, Judy Fisher, John Fox and Dave Socky.*