



The Region Record

Vol. XXI No. 2 Spring 2008

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Craig

Joint SERA/VAR Meeting Bristol, Tennessee June 5-8, 2008

by Robbie Spiegel

The Appalachian Cave Conservancy and Mountain Empire Grotto are presenting the first ever joint SERA Summer Cave Festival/Spring VAR June 5 through 8.

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declare your allegiance to one or both. Thursday camping will be \$5 additional. Registration post-May 21 will be \$33.

Early arrivals: If you want to camp earlier than Thursday, we encourage people to camp at nearby Appalachian Caverns. Talk to Roger Hartley, Appalachian Caverns, 420 Cave Hill Road, Blountville, TN 37617, 423-323-2337. See their Web site at www.appalachiancaverns.com for more info.

You might also consider camping or renting a cabin at Natural Tunnel State Park, near Duffield, Virginia (see www.naturaltunnel.info for general info and www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/index.shtml for camping information and reservations). The park is on the edge of the Rye Cove karst area and is near many of our Scott County trip caves.

For a wilder camping experience, consider the Dennis Cove Recreation Area near Hampton, Tennessee. It's close to Grindstaff Cave and offers hikes to several waterfalls and a popular easy rock climb on the Appalachian Trail (see www.fs.fed.us/r8/cherokee/recreation2003/ROGS/Watauga/dennis.pdf for more info).

Attractions: Visit Natural Tunnel State Park and check out the tunnel, which is a 1,000-foot-long cave in its own right. Admission to the park is free. The park offers trips through the tunnel and to several

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 See more information in this issue

Rockingham County, VA. More info at
www.er-ncrc.org.

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Spring SERA/VAR

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other caves on a trip-for-fee-basis. The tunnel has a railroad going through it and the railway personnel are extremely sensitive about unauthorized trips. The park is on the edge of Rye Cove, one of the most cave-rich areas in the state. The Gray Fossil Site, Gray, Tennessee, is possibly the largest deposit of mammal fossils in the world. It's a Miocene Age sinkhole dating back about five million years, and features tapirs, alligators, peccaries, saber-tooth cats, rhinos, and just about every other Miocene beast except horses, which mysteriously still haven't been found. Visit their new museum, admission is free; a semi-guided trip over the site has a low fee. If there's enough interest, Drs. Wallace and Schubert will arrange some digging and sieving. From my own experience, you are almost guaranteed to find some bones (probably tapir) if you dig a few hours.

Vendors: Our confirmed vendors are IMO, One Life Outfitters, Cavers Connection, Howie's Harnesses, On Rope 1, B&C Wunderwear, SCCi, the NSS Bookstore, and SpeleoBooks.

Show caves: Appalachian Caverns and Bristol Caverns are about 10 minutes, in opposite directions, from the campground (see www.appalachiancaverns.com and www.bristolcaverns.com). AC is the longer cave, Bristol the prettier. Mountain Empire Grotto is starting a survey project at AC that we hope will be winding up by event time.

Trip caves: About 60 area caves. There will be something to appeal to everyone. We have Gilley, Worley, and Carter Saltpeter which are kid-friendly horizontal caves with big walking passage. Vertical caves will include Obeyes Creek, Kerns Smokehole, and the Duffield trio of Caine, Miller, and Cat Hole.

Don Feathers is laying out a vertical tour that will take you through Scott County and finish at the Powell Mountain Karst Preserve. Mike Ficco of the Cave Conservancy of the Virginias has kindly offered access to the Preserve, the site of Omega's Blowing Hole entrance. The details and conditions are up to Mike, but he did say there will be trips into the entrance area of Omega, the longest cave of record in Virginia and the deepest east of the Mississippi. PKMP also has Franklin Pit and Parsons Cave. The Blowing Hole entrance is a 100+-foot pit that blows an amazing amount of air. Franklin Pit is an interesting multi-drop cave with surprisingly intact saltpeter works that were rediscovered in 2003. Parsons is a very, very easy horizontal cave. Bill Balfour has volunteered to get us access to nearby Crackers Neck Saltpeter.

Guided trips: We'll endeavor to give as many tours as people want into beautiful Perkins Cave, about one hour from the campground. Perkins is the largest cave in Washington County, Virginia. We call it "advanced horizontal"; it's really not suitable for kids or people who are very timid about exposure to heights. Tom Roehr's 1970s map showed 48,000 feet. The cave is now under resurvey, with an additional 25,000 feet expected. Wil Orndorff is guiding a trip to Unthanks, the second longest cave in Lee County, Virginia. It's a big borehole stream cave more than seven miles long.

Cleanup trip: Rocky Hollow Cave was extensively vandalized last year. The gate was breached and lots of spray paint applied. Wil Orndorff of Virginia DCR will be leading a trip to clean it up. One of the perpetrators will be on hand to help us, by court order, a rare treat! May be scheduled for the pre-event weekend, depending on available volunteers. Survey trips: MEG always has lots of juicy surveys going. Send some e-mail to megrotto@gmail.com if you're interested.

Paddling opportunities: The grotto's expert paddler, Greg Marshall, will organize trips depending on demand and water level. There are rivers and TVA impoundments a short drive in almost every direction.

The campground: Bristol Campground (www.bristolcampground.com) is in the Bristol, Tennessee city limits, across the street from Bristol International Raceway, only 15 minutes from I-81. It has space and hot water for 10,000 screaming NASCAR fans. Bristol has a sports center next door—we're thinking of having a SERA vs. VAR softball game. There's a long perimeter of trees to give us some shade and a nice corner for the hot tub. The campground is about 10 minutes from the nearest pizzeria, McDonald's, and Food City grocery store. Worley Cave, our nearest big trip cave, is about 15 minutes away. No ATVs!

Hotels: There are plenty of hotels on I-81 within about 15 minutes drive. Bristol's Day's Inn on 11-E is a bit closer.

Music: The Jug Busters and Dave Foster's Soulgrass are performing Saturday night. Friday night: open hoot. If bluegrass is your thing, consider visiting Jonesborough's free Music on the Square Friday night or the Bristol Country Music Association's free Thursday night concert at the Bristol Mall, or a dozen other musical events within a quick drive of the campground.

Late information: Check the MEG Web site at www.caves.org/grotto/meg for late information and updates about the event.

2008 Annual Grand Caverns Easter Restoration

by Meredith Hall Johnson

This year's annual Easter Restoration weekend at Grand Caverns came early, but was well attended. At least 39 people showed up to haul gravel, eradicate algae, and hide wires, among other things. A lot of old, many rusted, screws were removed from cave walls. The rustier, the harder it was to take them out. The gravel pile that had been worked on during the survey weekends was all hauled into the cave to upgrade the tourist

trail. Leftover wiring was removed. Some folks went up to Fountain Cave to try to fix broken formations. I heard there was some success with that. Some of the more adventurous workers started demolition of the floor cement in one of the pavilions. That is an ongoing job. Even the local Charlottesville news station sent a camera reporter who interviewed me, Andy Reeder, and Caverns Manager Tom Messick. You might still be able to find the clip at nbc29.com ("Volunteers Help Clean Up Grand Caverns"). All in all, we had a very successful day.

Thanks to everyone who came out and helped, even those who could

come up just for the day on Friday. This is an annual event that welcomes all groups, not just cavers, though this year was just cavers.

Virginia Cave Statistics

by Phil Lucas

The Virginia Speleological Survey maintains a database of information about the caves in the state. The information below was extracted from the database and presented as a report at the VSS meeting in March, 2008.

Total Number of Virginia Caves as of 3/28/08:	4,421
Total number of miles of "surveyed" cave passages in Virginia caves:	507
Total number of cave maps and sketches:	2,077
Total caves that have been mapped:	1,369
Average length of all caves (feet):	605
Total Number of significant caves:	370
Number of new caves reported in last 12 months:	29
Miles of new passage surveyed in the last 12 months:	5

Virginia Cave Statistics by County

limestone counties	no. of caves	no. of miles	longest (miles)	deepest (feet)	avg. feet per cave
Alleghany	178	22	7.3	266	661
Augusta	151	8	3.8	200	296
Bath	232	85	20.1	806	1943
Bland	78	28	6.7	360	1,925
Botetourt	161	5	0.5	239	158
Clarke	5	0	0.0	20	40
Craig	34	5	1.6	240	705
Frederick	19	1	0.7	75	311
Giles	301	70	22.5	718	1,222
Highland	328	26	7.0	518	412
Lee	357	57	13.7	478	849
Montgomery	82	3	1.0	120	197
Page	63	3	0.9	130	248

limestone counties	no. of caves	no. of miles	longest (miles)	deepest (feet)	avg. feet per cave
Pulaski	183	12	4.3	127	336
Roanoke	81	5	2.5	350	337
Rockbridge	196	10	1.5	215	261
Rockingham	123	9	4.5	200	387
Russell	311	15	1.6	267	255
Scott	404	26	1.5	325	346
Shenandoah	87	3	0.4	160	196
Smyth	215	16	2.4	461	401
Tazewell	168	30	7.7	517	937
Warren	86	3	1.0	120	200
Washington	220	24	10.0	300	571
Wise	141	35	23.2	1,263	1,309
Wythe	121	4	0.4	231	173

Pink Helictite Cave Sinkhole Clean-Up

by Linda Tracy

The Mountain State Grotto would like to invite folks to participate in completing the trash clean-up of the sinkhole at the entrance to Pink Helictite Cave in northern Pocahontas County on Saturday, April 26th, 2008.

Meet at 9 am at the Boilerhouse Theater parking lot on the Davis and Elkins College Campus in Elkins, West Virginia.

Wear sturdy shoes. Gloves and garbage bags will be provided.

Contact Linda Tracy for information at 304-636-8328 during the evening.

Virginia Cave Board Report

by Tom Lera
Chairman, Virginia Cave Board

We are pursuing funding to purchase 500 "All Caves Are Protected Under the Virginia Cave Protection Act" signs to install one in every significant Virginia cave (370) and then others until the supply is used up. The signs and installation materials will cost around \$2,000.

When you visit a Virginia cave and if you find a Virginia Cave Protection Sign, please let a Cave Board member know what cave the sign was in. We suspect that many caves still have the old signs from 10 years ago, but we are not sure how many. Your help in identifying these caves will help us in the placement.

The Cave Board also made the following statement about the White Nose Bat situation:

- The Virginia Cave Board supports the scientific studies being undertaken to determine the cause of "white nose" in bat populations.
- The Cave Board endorses the on-going policy of seasonal closure of caves where large numbers and/or legally protected species of bats are hibernating or have summer maternity or bachelor colonies, as identified by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.
- The Virginia Cave Board encourages cavers to follow gear disinfecting protocols between cave trips.
- The Cave Board asks that cavers, in the normal course of caving, report any bat mortality, anomalous behavior, unusual appearance, or high bat concentrations to Rick Reynolds at the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries:
Rick.Reynolds@dgif.virginia.gov
540-248-9386.

[The notice below was distributed on February 28 and provides information about the problem that is killing bats in New England. Although the problem has not been seen in any VAR caves, the biologists are asking that cavers cooperate in reporting the problem and helping stop any possible spread of it]

NOTICE TO CAVERS White Nose Syndrome – a new threat to cave bats

by Craig Stihler (WVDNR) and
Barbara Douglas (USFWS)

Background

In 2007, a mysterious fungus was discovered growing on the muzzles of several bats hibernating in caves near Albany, NY, and the term "White Nose Syndrome" was coined to describe this phenomenon. Between 8,000 and 11,000 bats in one cave died from this condition which appears to be something previously unreported. Several bat species were killed including the federally endangered Indiana bat. In 2008, this condition was observed in additional caves/mines in New York, Vermont, and Massachusetts. So far, White Nose Syndrome has not been found in West Virginia caves, and we want to do everything possible to keep it that way. We would like to ask the caving community to assist in keeping this problem out of West Virginia, if that is possible.

There is still much we don't know about this phenomenon, but several top-notch labs across the country are working on this issue. This winter, WV Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) biologists conducted several bat surveys that were scheduled for Jan-Feb 2008. The caves surveyed were in Randolph, Pocahontas, Greenbrier, Monroe, and Mercer counties and were part of the regularly scheduled bi-annual hibernacula survey protocol (i.e., are usually surveyed

every even numbered Jan or Feb). We considered cancelling surveys, but decided it was more important to do the surveys and determine if the caves were affected by White Nose Syndrome. We cleaned gear between surveys, but at that time no disinfecting protocol had been developed. The good news is that, to date, White Nose Syndrome has not been detected at any of these sites nor have any reports of White Nose Syndrome in West Virginia been received from cavers.

What we know

Several species of bats are affected and 1000s of dead bats have been found in New York to date. Most of the dead bats were little brown bats and Indiana bats, but northern long-eared bats and eastern pipistrelles are also affected. So far, big brown bats and small-footed bats, which also hibernate in these sites, have not exhibited White Nose Syndrome. Many, but not all, impacted bats have the white fungus on the muzzle with associated skin irritations. Dead or dying bats recovered from affected caves have very little fat reserves. With reduced fat reserves the bats that are still alive will probably not be able to survive the winter. In fact, affected Indiana bats had so little energy left that they did not even stir when biologists visited sites and collected specimens for analysis. At several sites, bats were noted hibernating closer to the entrance than normal, often within the twilight zone. There are also reports of large numbers of bats leaving the caves and flying in daylight, often when temperatures were below freezing.

Two caves in NY which were affected last winter were visited again this winter. Large numbers of dead bats were observed at these sites in 2007, and when visited in 2008, the bat populations in these caves exhibited declines of 90% and 97%; the remaining live bats were in poor condition. Many of the dead bats collected in 2008 were exam-

ined and showed signs of pneumonia and hemorrhaging in the lungs. The live bats in the cave had body weights comparable to the weights the bats should have when leaving the cave in the spring and will likely die before the end of winter. The caves where White Nose Syndrome has been confirmed harbor approximately 400,000 bats including over 44,500 Indiana bats. The prospects for these bats are grim.

What we don't know

At this time we do not know the cause of the problem. A fungus is apparent on the bats, but no one knows if the fungus is the cause of the problem or if it is just a secondary infection of bats weakened by some other condition. The actual cause may be fungal, viral, bacterial, or some other agent. Several labs, including University of California/Davis, Cornell University, Columbia University, Indiana State University, Boston University, USGS National Wildlife Health Center, and the Centers For Disease Control are currently working on this problem. Techniques being employed include pathological examinations, bacterial, viral, and mycological investigations, testing of immune response in affected bats, and use of thermal imaging to examine the bats' response (or lack thereof) to stimuli.

We do not know how this problem is spread. It is possible that it may be spread from cave to cave by cavers, bat biologists, and others who enter caves. Until we know more, we need to assume this is a possible means by which it is spread. If it is carried from cave to cave by the bats themselves, there may be little that can be done to stop the spread of White Nose Syndrome.

At this time we do not know if there are risks to humans, but the potential risks to humans are being assessed. Potential impacts to other wildlife species are not known.

Implications for WV bats

Several West Virginia caves are important to bats, including two federally endangered species, the Indiana bat and the Virginia big-eared bat. In addition, some caves contain regionally significant numbers of the more common species, such as the little brown bat and eastern pipistrelle.

West Virginia has more Virginia big-eared bats than any other state (about half the global population) including the largest known maternity colony and the largest hibernating concentration in the world. A serious concern is that although there are several caves with summer colonies of Virginia big-eared bats in West Virginia, these colonies mix together during the fall and winter. Therefore, if this problem shows up in one cave, it is likely to spread to all big-eared bat caves in the area.

Populations of Indiana bats in West Virginia caves have been increasing for almost two decades thanks to cave protection efforts. However, Indiana bats continue to decline in many other parts of their range. The most recent surveys of major Indiana bat hibernacula showed a range-wide increase in bat numbers. However, this increase was largely due to increases in New York and West Virginia. It appears that all but one population of Indiana bats in New York are currently being impacted by this Syndrome. If populations in West Virginia become effected, the likelihood of recovery for this species could be greatly reduced.

What can you do?

1. The WVDNR and USFWS have prepared a list of important bat caves in West Virginia that we feel should be closed until more is known about how to contain this problem. Some of the caves are already closed year round or seasonally to protect bats or for other reasons. We ask cavers to not enter these caves. This is the best precautionary step we can

take at this time. The list of caves is attached, but updated lists will be posted on the USFWS Web site at

www.fws.gov/northeast/white_nose.html and on the Virginia Region's Limited Access Cave List at www.VAR-caves.us.

Please check for updates before planning a trip. Note that not all the cave owners have expressly closed their caves, but we still ask you to avoid them at this time.

2. Follow the containment and decontamination procedure on the USFWS Web site to reduce the risk of spreading the Syndrome to new sites. Check for updates.
3. If you have been caving in the affected area (NY, VT and MA at this time) in the past two years, please do not use gear that has been used in these areas in West Virginia caves. This is particularly important for gear that may carry cave dirt (boots, coveralls, etc.). If you have been caving in the affected area and may have been in an affected cave, please visit www.necave-conservancy.org and complete a simple questionnaire regarding affected caves you have visited and caves you visited subsequently. This may help target caves that should be surveyed for White Nose Syndrome.
4. Pendleton County contains a large number of bat caves, including some of the most important hibernacula in the region. The county has the state's most important bat hibernaculum (Hellhole) which is the only cave designated as critical habitat for both the Indiana bat and Virginia big-eared bat and three other caves designated as critical habitat for the Virginia big-eared bat. Pendleton County caves hold 72% of the Virginia big-eared bats in maternity colonies in West Virginia, including the largest maternity colony in the world. The county also contains

caves with smaller number of bats that are not included on the closed cave list. Many of these minor bats caves are located in close proximity to the major bat caves, and bats are known to move from cave to cave. If WNS were introduced into the county, either by cavers or bats moving between caves, it could quickly spread to major bat caves, and have devastating impacts. For this reason, cavers should be especially vigilant in using decontamination procedures when visiting any cave in the county and we would encourage cavers to consider avoiding caves in Pendleton County if you have other options.

5. If you are aware of any other significant bat caves that should be closed until we learn more, please contact Craig Stihler or Barbara Douglas (contact information below). This would include caves with large numbers of common bats as well as caves with endangered species.
6. If you see affected bats or dead and dying bats, please follow the procedure listed on the USFWS Web site and report the observations to Craig or Barb ASAP. Also report observations or reports of large numbers of bats near cave entrances and other unusual bat activities (i.e., large numbers of bats flying in daylight outside of caves, especially in cold weather – it is not unusual to see an occasional bat flying on a warm winter day).

Bat populations are doing well in West Virginia caves thanks to the cooperation and assistance of land owners and the caving community. Great strides have been made in the last 20+ years. We could be taking a giant step backward should White Nose Syndrome appear in West Virginia caves. Once it is here, there may be no going back. We are trying to be proactive in protecting bats in West Virginia and minimizing the potential to

transport this problem to our area, while also minimizing the impact to the caving community. Unfortunately, we are not able to provide a specific time table for how long these recommendations will remain in effect. Researchers, resource managers, and cavers from across the country are working together to try to identify the cause of WNS and how it is spread. We have a mutual interest in resolving this situation as quickly as possible. As we learn more about how White Nose Syndrome, we may revise the recommendations including cave closures, disinfection protocols, etc. No one has dealt with this problem before and your assistance and patience at this time is greatly appreciated. The fate of bat populations in the East may be in our hands, let's play it safe until we know what needs to be done. We appreciate your cooperation on this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Craig Stihler
Wildlife Biologist
WV Division of Natural Resources
(304) 637-0245
craigstihler@wvdnr.gov

Barbara Douglas
Senior Endangered Species Biologist
US Fish & Wildlife Service, WVFO
(304) 636-6586
barbara_douglas@fws.gov

[The list of the West Virginia caves that should be avoided is on the next page. This list may change so please check the VAR Limited Access Cave List at www.VAR-caves.us for the latest access information]

West Virginia Closed Cave List for White Nose Syndrome in Bats

CAVE NAME	COUNTY	STATUS *
Arbogast/Cave Hollow	Tucker	Closed year round for bats.
Big Springs	Tucker	USFS is working on paperwork to close cave. Previously closed in winter for bats.
Blood	Pendleton	No previous closure for bats.
Boar Hole (partial closure)	Greenbrier	Closed by owner. No previous closure.
Caldwell	Mercer	Closed by owner. No previous closure for bats.
Cassell	Pocahontas	No previous closure for bats.
Cave Mountain	Pendleton	USFS is working on paperwork to close cave. Previously closed in summer for bats.
Cornwell	Preston	Previously closed for bats in winter.
Dreen	Randolph	Closed by owner. No previous closure for bats.
Dyers	Hardy	No previous closure for bats.
Elkhorn Mountain	Grant	Closed by owner. Previous summer/fall closure for bats.
Falling Spring	Pocahontas	No previous closure for bats.
Flute	Pendleton	Closed year round for bats.
Fort Lick	Randolph	Previously closed in winter for bats.
General Davis	Greenbrier	Closed by owner. Previously restricted access to protect rare salamander.
Greenville Saltpetre	Monroe	Closed by owners. Previously, partial closure for bats in winter.
Hamilton	Pendleton	Closed by owner. No previous closure for bats.
Hellhole	Pendleton	Previously closed in winter for bats and restricted access rest of year.
Hoffman Pit	Pendleton	Closed year round for bats.
Hoffman School	Pendleton	Closed year round for bats.
Honacker	Mercer	No previous closure for bats.
Izaak Walton	Randolph	Previously closed in winter for bats.
Lambert #1	Pendleton	Previously closed in summer for bats.
Marthas	Pocahontas	Closed by owner. Previous winter closure for bats.
Mill Run	Pendleton	Previously closed in summer for bats.
Minor Rexrode	Pendleton	Closed year round for bats.
Mystic	Pendleton	Previously closed in summer for bats.
New Trout	Pendleton	Closed by owner. No previous closure for bats.
Organ	Greenbrier	No previous closure, although restricted access at certain entrances. Commercial tours will continue.
Patton	Monroe	Closed by owner. Previously closed in winter for bats.
Peacock	Grant	Closed year round for bats.
Piercys	Greenbrier	Closed by owner. Previously closed in winter for bats.
Saltpeter	Pendleton	Closed year round for bats.
Schoolhouse	Pendleton	Closed year round for bats.
Simmons-Mingo	Randolph	No previous closure for bats.
Sinnett/Thorn	Pendleton	Closed by owner. Previous summer closure for bats.
Smokehole (cave, not caverns)	Pendleton	No previous closure for bats.
Snedegars	Pocahontas	Previously, restricted access in winter – generally closed Jan-May.
Stewart Run	Randolph	No previous closure for bats.
The Portal	Greenbrier	Closed by owner. No previous closure for bats.
Trout	Pendleton	Closed by owner. Recently, there has been no closure for bats.
Tub	Pocahontas	No previous closure for bats.
Two Lick Run	Randolph	USFS is working on paperwork to close cave. Previously closed in winter for bats.
Upper Marthas	Pocahontas	Closed by owner. No previous closure for bats.

* If a cave is not specifically listed as closed, the owner may not have closed the cave due to White Nose Syndrome, but the WVDNR and USFWS are still asking people to avoid these caves at this time.

28 Feb 2008

VAR Listserver Provides Timely Information

By Bob Hoke

Walt Pirie maintains the VAR listserver. This is a computerized e-mail list that allows any subscriber to easily send e-mail messages to the other subscribers.

The listserver is seeing increasing use as a vehicle for quickly disseminating and/or soliciting information from subscribers throughout the Virginia Region.

Anyone is welcome to subscribe. All you have to do is send an e-mail message to:

listserv@listserv.vt.edu

In the body of the message enter:

sub varlist your name

That's all you have to do. You will receive a message asking you to confirm your subscription and then you will be a subscriber. The list is not accessible by outsiders and you will not receive any junk e-mail (spam) from it.

Any subscriber may post messages to the list, but the following rules apply:

1. No flaming (personal attacks)
2. No Spam (commercial messages)
3. Do not redistribute a post without the original author's permission.
4. Posts must be relevant to VAR and to caving.

How to Continue Receiving the *Region Record*

Anyone who attends a VAR meeting automatically gets the next four issues of the *Region Record*. If an NSS member moves into the Region he/she is normally sent two free issues. Anyone may subscribe for the paltry price of \$3.00 per year (see the form on the back page).

The easiest way to continue receiving issues is to attend a VAR meeting at least once a year.

VAR Limited Access Cave List

Check the access status of VAR caves on-line at

www.VAR-caves.us

Minutes of the Fall VAR Region Meet October 14, 2007 Dailey, WV

The meeting was called to order at 9:16 a.m.

Reports

Secretary - Carol Tideman

A motion was made by BATS to accept the minutes as published in the Region Record. Blue Ridge seconded. Motion passed.

Treasurer - John Fox

A financial report was presented. A motion was made by Bubble Cave to accept the financial report, BATS seconded. Motion passed.

Vice Chair - Judy Fisher

Nothing to report.

Chairman - Craig Hindman

Letters were read regarding the Mark Ziemianski issue that arose at the Durbin, WV, VAR. The passing of Lyall Steger, owner of Madisons Cave, also the owner of Jones Quarry Cave, was mentioned as well as the passing of cavers Ken Horning and Don Shofstall.

Conservation - Co-Chair Meredith Hall Johnson

- Dixie Caverns Cleanup - algae abatement and graffiti removal was performed. Also a wall was built to prevent access to the newly cleaned rimstone flow.
- A Cave Conservation Cafe will be held at the USDA - in attendance will be representatives from the BLM, NSS, Nature Conservancy, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service on October 23.

Goodwins Cave Management - Al Stewart

Nothing new since the last meeting. A cleanup was done after the Dixie Caverns Cleanup.

VAR Outstanding Service Award - Meredith Hall Johnson
Awards were presented to Alex Sproul, Janet Tinkham, and Judy and J.C. Fisher. Nominations forms are on the Web.

Landowner Recognition Awards - Janet Tinkham

The Award was presented to Christine and John Shifflett - owners of Glade Cave. There is a form online to use for submitting nominations.

Landowner Legal Support Committee - Carol Tideman for Bob Hoke

No news is good news.

Region Record - Carol Tideman for Bob Hoke
Send articles - Deadline Dec. 15.

VAR List Server - Walt Pirie
No report.

- VAR Web Site** - Jim McConkey
- Thanks to everyone who submitted changes and updates early. Please check you grotto's contact information for correctness.
 - If you have an event of region-wide interest, please send it in for the calendar.
 - A major site update is planned, primarily to make it easier to maintain and update. Suggestions are welcome for new things to include, old things to drop or any other suggestions you may have. Send to webmaster@VAR-region.org.

Cave Bucks - J.C. Fisher

The conservancies need your dollars. The program is voluntary. To date Tri-State has donated over \$4,000.

VSS - Rick Lambert
No report.

WVASS - George Dasher
No report.

WVCC - Meredith Hall Johnson
Currently they are not looking for new acquisitions, but they are always willing to accept more. The annual Banquet will be on Nov. 10. The cost is \$30. A maximum of 80. Location the theater in Lewisburg.

New Dixie - Al Stewart
The survey is complete, but the map is not.

Cave Management Forum - Joey Fagan

- It has been very busy this year. A delineation of the conservation site boundaries to be completed in about a month.
- Dye tracing materials are available.
- Rocky Hollow Cave will be gated.
- The Kelley Cave gate has been repaired.
- The Arbogast Saltpetre Cave gate was installed.

Virginia Karst Program - Joey Fagan

- *Virginia Cave Owners Newsletters* have been distributed.
- Cave Week has been moved to April in conjunction with Earth Day.
- Cave Board wants to become involved with your cave project.

SCCI - Walt Pirie
No report.

Grand Caverns/Cave Hill - Carol Tideman for Jim McConkey

- A new passage has been found in Grand, but we have not had ac-

cess to the cave due to post-lightening strike repairs.

- The Fountain Cave dig continues.
- The weather and foliage as changing so we are returning to ridge-walking and digging projects.
- The drought gave us an opportunity to survey Hopkins Cave at the "other" Cave Hill in McGaheysville - nearly a year after the landowner asked us to investigate his cave after hearing about our work at Grand. A map should be forthcoming and the current length of the cave is at least twice what was reported - but it still does not go to Endless Caverns.
- We need additional volunteers in the coming months to help with pavilion roofing and drainage ditch clean out.

Virginia Cave Board - Dave Socky

No report.

Wilderness Proposal - Bob Handley

Report was not received before the meeting.

Virginia Karst Trail - Joey Fagan
About a year ago input for the Virginia outdoors plan was submitted. The Virginia Karst trail is mentioned in the plan. VAR is mentioned in the plan. May be asking for help/education on the near future.

CCV - Joey Fagan

Nov. 3 - Richmond - deadline for submitting grant requests. Today is the deadline for elections.

New VAR Grotto

TRA Grotto requested membership in the VAR - passed.

Host Report - Triangle Trogs

There were about 280 attendees. Thanks for coming. Bubble Cave moved to thank Triangle Trogs

and Philly Grotto, BATS seconded - passed.

Old Business

The Spring 2008 VAR will be held in Bristol TN - there will be lots of caving available. There will have recycling bins. Registration forms are being sent to the VAR Web site.

John Pearson announced that as an NSS affiliate we can get event insurance coverage. Bubble is considering hosting a VAR and needs such coverage. The cost will be \$150 flat rate.

New Business

- Fall 2008 - Blue Ridge Grotto is investigating the possibility
- Spring 2009 - Tri State is offering to host.
- BATS moves to reinstate Mark Ziemianski - Triangle Trigs seconded - passed.
- New River moved to add a \$300 line item to the budget for JSS. Bubble Cave. Seconded - passed.
- Spring 2010 - Bubble Cave offered to host.
- It was asked that the minutes be posted on the list serve about two weeks before a meeting.
- Front Royal Grotto Cave gate repair to be scheduled.
- The possibility exists of three gates to be installed in WV.

Grant Requests

None received.

Elections

New River made a motion to elect the same slate of candidates. BATS seconded - passed.

Announcements

- Oct. 27 - There will be a sinkhole cleanup - no major equipment is needed, only bodies. Will feed.

- Grand Caverns - reroofing pavilions will be done one per month.

- May 7-10 - the Appalachian Karst Symposium will be held in E. Tennessee University - Scientific papers will be presented.

- Craig will write a letter to Mark Ziemianski.

Adjournment

Blue Ridge moved to adjourn, BATS seconded.

Meeting Adjourned 10:50.

Respectfully submitted:

Carol Tideman

Spring 2008 VAR MEETING AGENDA

Sunday, June 8, 2008 9:00 AM

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. DELEGATE REGISTRATION
- III. DISTRIBUTION OF AGENDA
- IV. CALL FOR INDEPENDENTS
- V. OFFICERS REPORTS:
 - A. SECRETARY - Carol Tiderman
 - 1. Motion to accept Fall minutes
 - 2. Other
 - B. TREASURER - John Fox
 - 1. Current financial report
 - 2. Other
 - C. VICE-CHAIR - Judy Fisher
 - D. CHAIRMAN - Craig Hindman
- VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS
 - A. CONSERVATION - Andy Reeder / Meredith Hall Johnson
 - 1. Report on activities
 - 2. Other
 - B. GOODWINS CAVE MANAGEMENT - Blue Ridge Grotto
 - C. VAR OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD - Meredith Hall Johnson
 - D. LANDOWNER RECOGNITION AWARD - Janet Tinkham
 - E. LANDOWNER LEGAL SUPPORT COMMITTEE - Bob Hoke
 - F. *REGION RECORD* - Bob Hoke, Pauline Apling
 - G. VAR LIST SERVER - Walt Pirie
 - H. VAR WEB SITE - Jim Mcconkey
 - I. CAVE BUCKS - J.C. Fisher
 - J. VSS - Rick Lambert
 - K. WVASS - George Dasher
 - L. WVCC - Bob Handley
 - M. NEW DIXIE - Blue Ridge Grotto
 - N. VIRGINIA KARST PROGRAM - Joey Fagan
 - O. SCCI - Walt Pirie
 - P. GRAND CAVERNS/CAVE HILL - Jim McConkey
 - Q. VIRGINIA CAVE BOARD
 - R. WILDERNESS PROPOSAL
 - S. VIRGINIA KARST TRAIL - Andy Reeder
 - T. CCV
 - U. OTHER _____
- VII. HOST GROTTO REPORT - Mountain Empire Grotto
- VIII. OLD BUSINESS
 - A. HOST GROTTO FOR THE FALL 2008 MEETING - Blue Ridge Grotto and James River Grotto
 - B. HOST GROTTO FOR THE SPRING 2009 MEETING - Tri-State
 - C. OTHER _____
- IX. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. HOST GROTTO FOR THE FALL 2009 MEETING
 - B. HOST GROTTO FOR SPRING 2010 MEETING
 - C. OTHER _____
- X. GRANT REQUESTS - SUBMITTED TO CHAIR
 - A. Virginia Cave Board requesting funding for Virginia cave protection signs and verbiage correcting labels.
- XI. ANNOUNCEMENTS
- XII. ADJOURNMENT

SERA/VAR Pre-Registration Form

Bristol, Tennessee June 5-8, 2008

Sponsored by the Appalachian Cave Conservancy, Hosted by the Mountain Empire Grotto

(please print)

Name of Primary Registrant: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone#: _____ Cell#: _____

Email: _____ Arrival Date: _____

Grotto/organization: _____

	<u>Qty.</u>	<u>Unit Price</u>	<u>Total</u>
Primary Registrant			\$ 28
Organization fee (select one or both) () VAR \$3, () SERA \$1.50			\$ _____
Spouse / Signif. Other (no guide book) Name: _____		\$18	\$ _____
Organization fee (select one or both) () VAR \$3, () SERA \$1.50			\$ _____
Additional Guide Book _____		\$10	\$ _____
Extra Night Camping (June 5) \$5 per person 13 yrs and older _____		\$5	\$ _____
Children (13-18yrs) (names): _____ _____		\$14	\$ _____
Children (0-12yrs) (names): _____ _____		Free	\$ 0
Well-behaved pet (must be on leash) _____		\$10	\$ _____
Small T-shirt _____		\$12	\$ _____
Medium T-shirt _____		\$12	\$ _____
Large T-shirt _____		\$12	\$ _____
X-Large T-shirt _____		\$12	\$ _____
XX-Large T-shirt _____		\$15	\$ _____
		Total Due =	\$ _____

May 21th, 2008 Pre-Registration Deadline

Cost if postmarked after May 21, 2008: Add \$5.00 per person.

*Make Check Payable to Mountain Empire Grotto & Mail
Pre-Registration Form To: Mountain Empire Grotto
302 Roy Martin Rd. Gray, TN. 37615*

National Speleological Society
6304 Kaybro St.
Laurel, MD 20707-2621

Address Service Requested

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Spring 2008 Regional News

If you want to continue receiving the *Region Record*, please read this . . .

If this page is marked "TIME TO RENEW" it means that your *Region Record* subscription has run out and this is the last issue you will receive. Subscriptions are automatically extended when you attend a Spring or Fall VAR meeting, or you can subscribe to the *Region Record*. The last issue you will receive (Volume-Number) is indicated on the top line of your mailing label. More detailed information about subscriptions is listed in the box on page 2.

If you wish to renew your subscription, please copy or send this entire page. The address label contains information we need to expedite processing. Also, *please print legibly*. Thanks.

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Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

E-mail _____

Grotto (or other caving organization that I claim as my primary caving affiliation) _____

Please make checks payable to VAR and send to:
Meredith Hall Johnson, 8061 Kittiwake Ct., Springfield VA 22153