

MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE PRESERVE FOR

THE LIGHTNER'S ENTRANCE TO McCLUNG'S CAVE

APPROVAL

This Management Plan was approved by the Board of Directors of The West Virginia Cave Conservancy on March 25, 2001

INTRODUCTION

The West Virginia Cave Conservancy (WVCC), a non-profit, West Virginia corporation, has purchased approximately 11.62 acres that includes the Lightner's Entrance to McClung's Cave. This parcel was subdivided from the old Lightner Farm, located on Vago Road, approximately one mile from U.S. Route 219 at Maxwelton, WV. Some other parcels have already been sold from this original 300 acre farm. The farm is in a prime development area in the booming Lewisburg, WV area, and the entire farm will probably be subdivided in the near future.

Access to all of the major cave systems in Greenbrier County are potentially threatened by the rapid population growth and development of the area, and by increasing liability concerns. WVCC has a goal of maintaining access to McClung's Cave, and to as many of the other major systems in West Virginia as possible. McClung's Cave offers outstanding scientific, educational, and recreational opportunities. WVCC will manage the Lightner's Entrance to maximize these opportunities.

HISTORY OF THE PROPERTY

Tom Lightner Sr., who had owned the farm for more that 50 years, died in January, 2000. He directed in his will that his executor, Tom Lightner, Jr., must sell the farm and distribute the proceeds to the heirs. Accordingly, the farm was subdivided, by survey, into 38 lots, and these lots were offered at auction on September 30, 2000. WVCC representatives attended the auction and offered the highest bid on the parcel that contained the Lightner Entrance, but all bids for all the parcels of the entire farm were rejected. Subsequently, WVCC representatives entered into negotiations with Tom Lightner, Jr. that resulted in the purchase by WVCC of a tract of land that includes the Lightner's Entrance.

The Lightner's Entrance is an approximately 60 foot drop into a large room that is tied into the Tufa Trail and Freeman Avenue area of McClung's Cave. The Lightner's

Entrance was discovered in 1985, and was subsequently closed in 1986 by the owner due to a lost-caver incident. This entrance affords relatively easy access to the south-western portions of McClung's Cave. This area is one of the most remote sections from the historic McClung's Entrance.

The systematic exploration and survey of McClung's Cave began in the mid 1950's. By the late 1960's, this project had been adopted by The West Virginia Association for Cave Studies as an on-going project.

RESOURCES

McClung's Cave is listed on the Significant Cave List for length, depth, hydrology, geology, biology, history, and esthetics.

The historic McClung's Entrance to McClung's Cave has been known since settlement of the area during colonial times. The historic entrance was documented by geologists who were mapping the county geology, and was also recorded by William E. Davies in his "Caverns of West Virginia."

McClung's Cave is one of the longest, most complex of a series of so called "contact cave systems" located in the historic "Great Savannah" of Greenbrier County. These contact cave systems are known for extensive passage development in the contact zone between the overlying Mississippian Greenbrier Limestone and the underlying Maccrady Shale. To date, approximately 17 miles of passage has been surveyed in McClung's. McClung's Cave lies between two other major contact cave systems: Ludington's Cave to the northeast, and Maxwellton Cliff Cave to the southwest. All these systems are interrelated, and connection potential exists for all of these systems. A total of 5 major contact cave systems are developed adjacent to each other in this area, with McClung's Cave in the center. A total of 77 miles have been mapped so far in all these systems.

Major stream passages in McClung's were formed near the Limestone/shale contact, and are cutting down into the underlying red shales, yielding interesting passage morphology. In addition, numerous faults and folds have been documented, and the cave shows interesting passage modifications where these features are encountered.

Hydrologically, McClung's has several in-feeder streams that travel from the surface down-dip to the master trunk stream in Chocolate Avenue. This is the same stream that flows through Ludington's Cave from the north. This stream has been dye traced to an eventual resurgence at Davis Spring, approximately 15 miles to the south on the Greenbrier River. McClung's Cave serves as a major in-feeder to the 65 square mile Davis Spring drainage basin.

Although not highly decorated with speleothems, certain areas of the cave contain nice formations. The large flowstone formation near the historic entrance is featured on the cover of "The Life of the Cave" by Mohr and Poulson.

McClung's contains several species of bats and invertebrates that are common to the area. One invertebrate is apparently unique to McClung's. The cave is not a significant hibernaculum. The cave has also produced some interesting paleontological finds that have been documented by researchers.

SURFACE RESOURCES

The Lightner's Entrance is situated in the northeastern corner of the Lightner farm, approximately 2000 feet from Vago Road. Consequently, WVCC had to acquire approximately 11 acres of land around the Lightner Entrance in order to yield a reasonable subdivision of that corner of the farm without leaving any odd remainder, and had to acquire an approximately 1700 foot long access road from Vago Road to the 11 acre lot. The purchased access road is not simply a right-of-way, but was purchased fee-simple. The 11 acre plot has some of the highest ground of the immediate area, and has a beautiful panoramic view. The site offers nice opportunities for day use, such as picnicking. Camping may be a future possibility, if appropriate facilities can be developed.

ACCESS POLICY

The Lightner's Entrance will be maintained in an "open" condition, and will be freely available to all responsible cavers, regardless of any organizational affiliation. If, in the future, additional information indicates that some resource needs some additional level of protection, whatever minimal controls needed to protect the resource may be instituted. In general, access to the cave will be maintained as open as practical. No release form is required for visitation. No cave-for-pay, or any other activity "for pay" is allowed.

PUBLICITY POLICY

WVCC will publicize the Lightner's Entrance preserve only to the extent necessary to accomplish our mission goals. Publicity of details and location information will only be available within the established caving community. Publicity available to the general public will be limited to information needed to promote our educational and scientific goals. In the event of a rescue at the cave, WVCC will make every effort to minimize media coverage, especially any location information

MANAGEMENT

The Board of Directors has established a management committee to implement and monitor this management plan. The Board will be responsible for any plan changes. The management committee will report to the Board on the status of the preserve, with any recommendations for changes to this plan.

The management committee will be responsible for monitoring the following rules

controlling use of the preserve:

1. No camping or fires will be permitted at this time.
1. All trash and human waste must be packed out.
1. ATV's, dirt bikes, and snowmobiles are not permitted on the preserve.
1. Collection of rocks, flora, fauna, etc. on the surface is prohibited. Any collection underground must be done in accordance with West Virginia laws, which require a permit from the state, based in part on permission from the Board. The Board will approve such requests on an individual basis, based on scientific need.
1. No placement of permanent bolts or anchors is allowed. No other defacement of the cave is allowed.
1. Parking is allowed only in designated areas.
1. No hunting will be allowed on the property. No fireworks or firearms will be allowed on the property.
1. No commercial activity, including cave-for-pay, will be allowed on the property.
1. Visitors conduct should conform to National Speleological Society conservation guidelines, and to NSS Safety and Techniques Committee recommendations.
1. Visitors are expected to comply with all applicable state and federal laws.

FUTURE PLANS

An informational kiosk will be placed on the preserve. All necessary information, including the rules of the preserve, and information about the conservancy and the NSS will be posted on the kiosk.

An initial parking area will be established at the start of the access drive from Vago road to the preserve. As funds allow, a gravel roadway will be established to a parking area on the 11 acre plot near the Lightner Entrance.

In the future, picnic shelters and camping areas may be established, if the necessary facilities are sufficiently desired by the caving community.