



The Open Cave

The Newsletter of the West Virginia Cave Conservancy

Issue 18

Summer 2010



Pop your head out from underground and read all about WVCC's latest preserve!

WEST VIRGINIA CAVE CONSERVANCY

"Preserving the cave and karst resources of West Virginia for future generations"

Number 18

Summer 2010

The West Virginia Cave Conservancy is a nonprofit, 501(c)3 organization. All contributions to the Conservancy are tax-deductible. Please send all contributions and dues to: WVCC, Inc., PO Box 243, Frankford, WV 24938. For more information on membership, visit our Web site at www.wvcc.net. Please send all contributions to the newsletter to the newsletter editor. Any internal organization of the NSS has permission to reprint materials in this newsletter with proper recognition given to the author and *The Open Cave*.

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All Wild Cat Preserve Photos courtesy of Bill Balfour.
Photos by Phil Lucas.

Cover photo: "Bill Balfour at Wild Cat Entrance"

WVCC Calendar

September 2-6, 2010: Old Timers Reunion, during which WVCC holds its annual Member Appreciation Wine and Cheese Party (Friday)

October 1-3, 2010: Fall VAR at Friars Hole, West Virginia. Hosted by Baltimore and D.C. Grottos

November 13, 2010: WVCC Banquet, Lewisburg, West Virginia

November 14, 2010: WVCC Board Meeting, Lost World Caverns, Lewisburg, West Virginia, 9:30 a.m. Members welcome!

Return of the Great WVCC Fun-draisers!!

By Jeff Bray

In the spirit of some of the most unique fundraisers OTR or any caving event has ever seen, the West Virginia Cave Conservancy (WVCC) is excited about re-inventing popular games and having fun while raising money for a good cause. At this year's OTR, please plan to swing by the WVCC booth. We will have lots going on!!

First, we are happy to celebrate the acquisition of the Wildcat Entrance to Culverson Creek Cave. We are going to be offering segments of the cave and right-of-ways that are

part of the Richard J. Bantel Cave Preserve for adoption by individuals and groups. Most parcels available for adoption will be available at a constant, low donor level so that hopefully many people interested in showing their support for the activities of WVCC will be able to adopt part of the property. But there will be one or two "high-level" opportunities for adoption as well, just in case you were interested in making a substantial donation (and in return adopting a substantial part of the preserve). Please consider immortalizing yourself or your

friends or grotto by adopting part of the Richard J. Bantel Cave Preserve.

Finally, we are excited to announce the return of our FUNdraisers. This year we are developing a game based on the popular TV show, "Minute to Win It!" Before OTR, take some time to brush up on the game show on NBC, or Google it and visit the Web site to see what possible games we will be playing. This is going to be a tournament with several opportunities to play over the weekend, and with one grand prize at the end of OTR on Sunday

with all the earlier winners playing against each other for that grand prize. So brush up on those goofy games, and be ready to compete against other cavers for the grand prize!

Keep in mind that all monies raised, whether through our various symbolic emblems, games, donations, membership, and other fundraisers all go toward preserving caves and cave access for future generations. Please help us work toward being prepared for our next acquisition!!

The Richard J. Bantel Cave Preserve

By Bill Balfour

It is with great pleasure that I announce the newest cave acquisition for the West Virginia Cave Conservancy (WVCC). Rick Bantel has donated approximately an acre of land surrounding the Wild Cat Entrance to the Culverson Creek Cave System. Culverson Creek Cave is one of the premier caves in the country and contains around 20 miles of surveyed passage.

The Richard J. Bantel Cave Preserve is located in downtown Unus, a metropolis of about six or seven people. To get there, take U.S. 219 north from Lewisburg to Frankford, then take Williamsburg Road 4 miles to the junction of Carroll Hill Road in Unus. On the right at the intersection you will see a black fence with a red gate; you may park there or over in front of the red barn on my property. There is a walking easement to the sinkhole property that contains the entrance.

Culverson Creek Cave is the finest water cave of West Virginia—be prepared to get wet. In the summer the water levels are usually low and the water temperature is fairly warm; the main creek can be 70 degrees. Just make sure that you watch the weather—the cave is prone to flash flooding, logs lodged in the ceiling 50 feet above you attest to the velocity and severity. In the winter, the cave is not as friendly; the water is usually higher and much colder. Plan accordingly, wetsuits are a welcome addition.

There are two entrances side by side at the base of the cliff. One has a pipe in it and the other natural opening is the main Wild Cat Entrance that was dug



Bill in Ripple

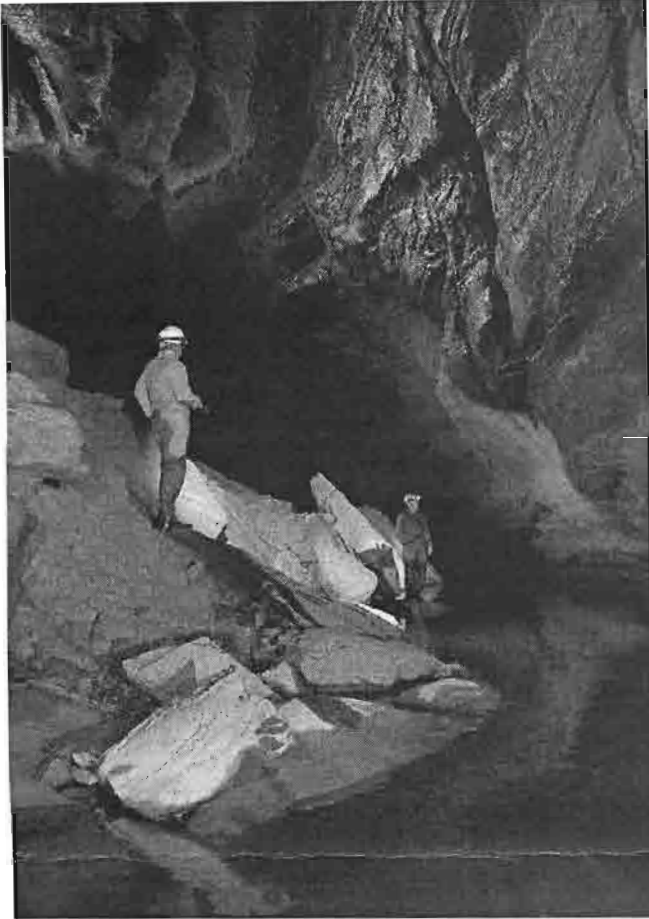


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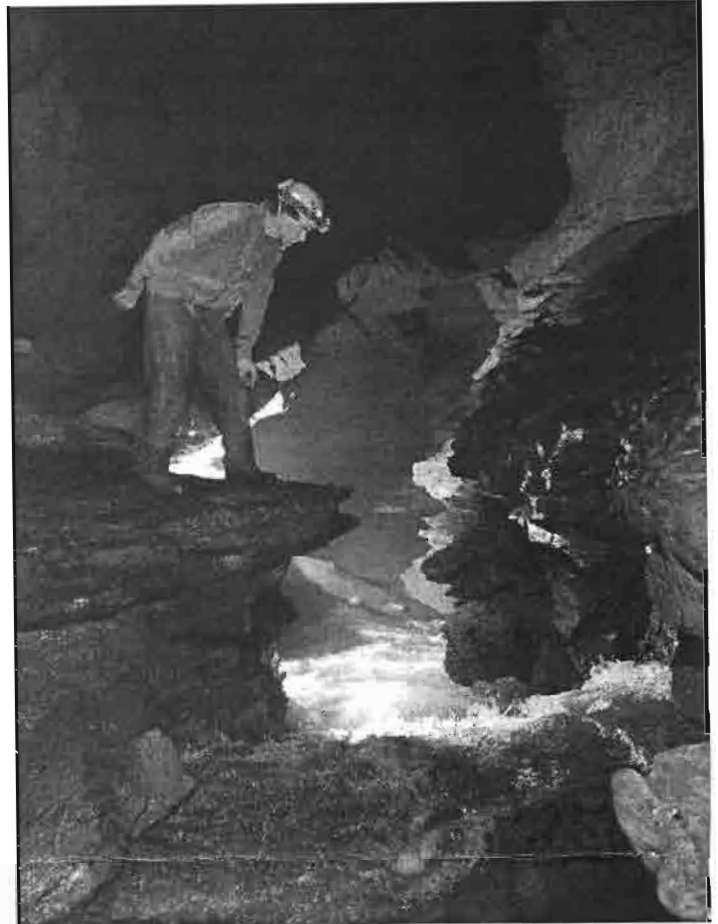
open from the inside. The main Wild Cat Entrance leads down into the McLaughlin-Unus section of the cave. The passage gets big very quickly and shortly you are strolling down borehole. There are two other entrances that connect into this section of the cave so a through-trip is possible.

There are about 5 miles of passage in the McLaughlin section of the cave. Going down the pipe entrance leads to a completely different section of the cave. A sloping crawl at the base of the pipe leads to a small room with a body-sized hole going down 12 feet (the Blackball Climb). Down-climbing dumps you into a feeder passage that is walking-sized for about 800 feet. At that point the passage intersects the Overflow Tube. If you go to the right, you head back toward the main Culverson Entrance over a mile away. To the left you can go to the Hairy Place and then to the Logjam and beyond. The majority of the cave is in this direction. If you have pre-rigged the drops in the Fullers section, you can do a connection trip in about 15 to 20 hours and come out either the SSS Entrance or the main Fullers Entrance (owned by WVCC Board Member Cliff Lindsay).

So there it is, come see our newest cave. If you been here before, come on back, if you've never been here, come see it; it's a pretty neat cave. And oh, by the way, even though the cave was given to us, we did incur expenses to acquire it. Things like a property survey, appraisal, and deed did strain our budget. So any donations are most welcome.



Go High or Stay Low



Hairy Place

Local Landowner Receives Prestigious Recognition

On Saturday, May 22nd Rick Bantel was honored by cavers from the Virginia Region of the National Speleological Society with its prestigious Landowner Recognition Award. The award is given to cave owners who are particularly supportive of cavers and their interests. Presenting Mr. Bantel with the award is NSS President Gordon Birkhimer, who was in

town this weekend to assist Bubble Cave, LLC in hosting the Spring VAR caving event that was held at the State Fair of West Virginia in Fairlea.

The State Fair of West Virginia, Greenbrier East High School, and Eastern Greenbrier Middle School were selected to be the location of the NSS annual convention in June 2012. This weekend's event, which was attended by 329 cavers,

showcased our excellent facilities to the caving community.

Other local landowners who have received this honor include George and Lee Sively; the Mothes family; Dr. and Mrs. J.T. Rogers; Geraldine Freeman; Pat and Mike Dore; John Mooney and Helen Baker; and Steve Silverberg.



Rick Bantel being presented with the Landowner Recognition award by NSS President Gordon Birkhimer. Photo by Carol Bassett.

The Open Cave

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Saturday, 15 May 2010

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Frankford, WV 24938

Dear Cavers:

I recently came into \$200 for doing some "work" on behalf of a fellow caver. (I was her advisor for a college program which involved helping caving & cavers via the D.C. Grotto, leading recreational caving trips, etc.) So I feel it's only fitting that this money be turned over to an organization which is also working along those lines. Since WVCC decided to keep its caves open to responsible caving (to the extent which is prudent), I have decided to donate this money to you. Spend it however you most need it.

Sincerely,



Doug Viner
(DC Grotto, PSC, etc.)

**Thanks
Doug!**

Editor's Note: Many thanks to our new layout person, Jean DeVries, who redesigned and totally spiffed up The Open Cave this issue. Don't forget to submit articles and photographs for our next issue! Thanks!!