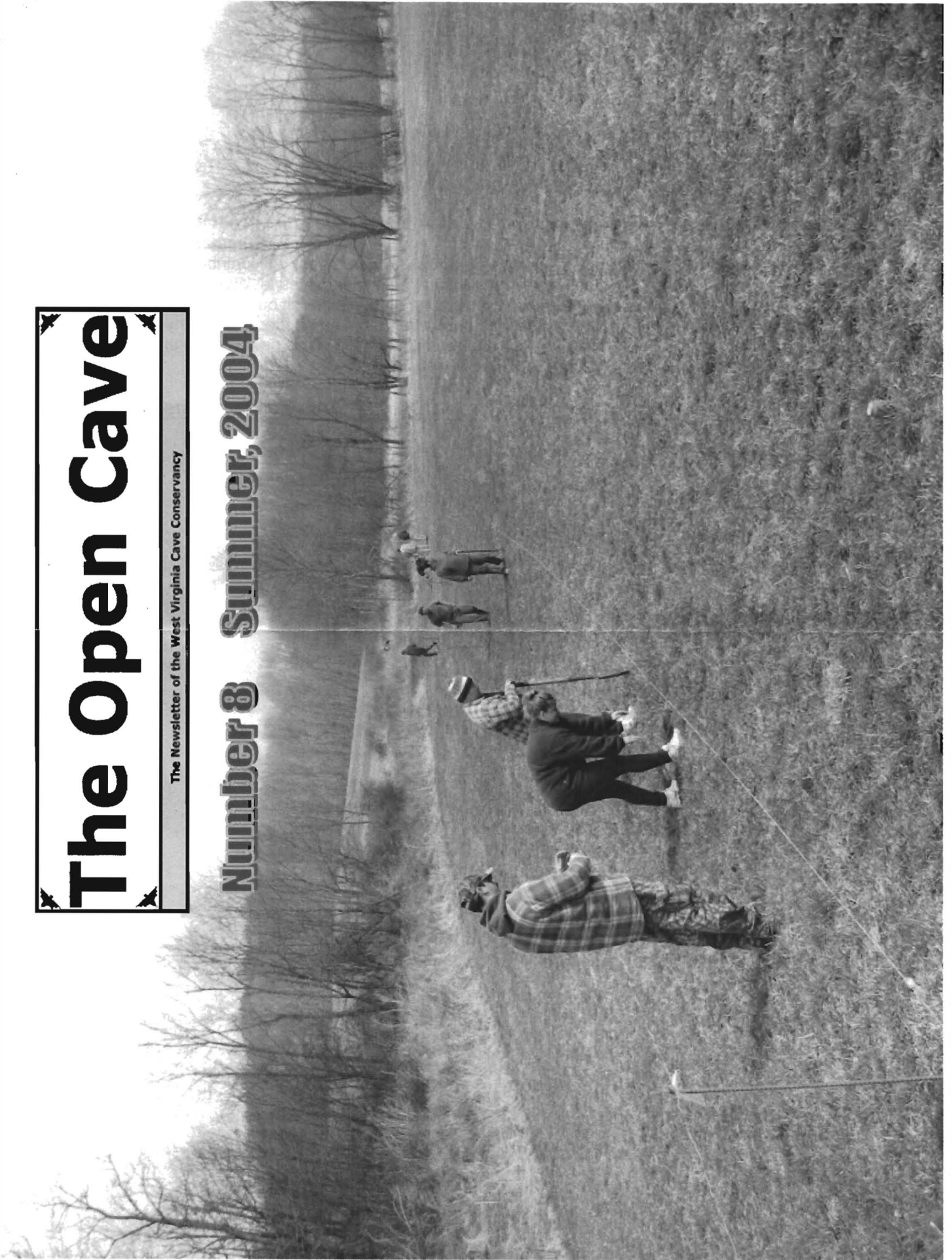


The Open Cave

The Newsletter of the West Virginia Cave Conservancy

Number 8 Summer, 2004



WEST VIRGINIA CAVE CONSERVANCY

**"Preserving the cave and karst resources of West Virginia for future generations"
Number 8 Summer, 2004**

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Note to Members: Annual memberships expire on anniversary date of initial membership. Be sure to check your address label for anniversary date. To renew, use membership application at back of newsletter.

This month's cover shows Front Royal Grotto members, Bubble Cave members, and YTR attendees working during the recent tree planting at the Persinger Cave Preserve. Thanks to many that helped, and read more inside this issue!

2004 National Cave Conservancies Forum, April 15-17, 2004

Text by John Pearson, Photos by Jeff Bray

The week leading up to the Forum was a busy one. There were pre-Forum trips to think about, the Howdy Party, the actual classes and papers, and the cracker barrel sessions. As this Forum was being held in Lewisburg, WV, it made a lot of sense to help out with the proceedings. The original Forum idea was formulated by Mike Warner and Emily Davis and pitched to Jeff Bray at the last National Cave and Karst Management Symposium proceeding in Tucson, Arizona in 2001, and again at the NSS convention in Porterville, California last summer. They decided that the Northeastern Cave Conservancy and the West Virginia Cave Conservancy would sponsor the Forum along with the NCKMS.

How could I help? Well, first of all, they needed someone to lead some trips. Okay, but I wanted to go somewhere that would be fun for me. I had helped a beginner's trip about a month ago with Jeff Bray to Rehoboth Church. We only scratched the surface of the cave, not even making it to the Zoo Room, the jump off point to the rest of the cave. So, I had a cave that I could go to that would be relatively new for me, and interesting. Also, I wanted to be back in time for the Howdy Party, so I didn't want a long trip.

I contacted Bob Frostick about using his map in a little souvenir booklet that I wanted to give to trip participants. His map and excellent description were published in the Fall 2000 VAR guidebook put out by WVACS. As Jeff was the editor of that particular guidebook, there weren't any problems with permissions. Bob said okay, and we were on our way. I limited the trip to six people with Gordon Birkhimer going to help me out with the trip.

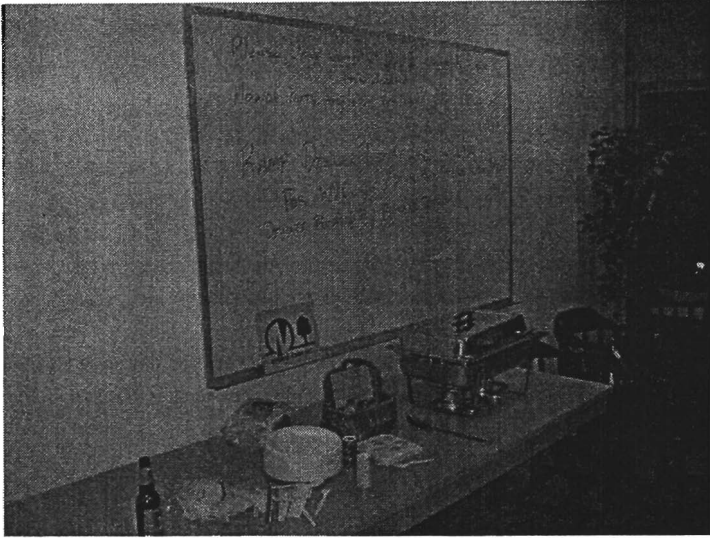
April in this part of the woods can only mean one thing. Ramps. I decided to have a ramp dish at the Howdy Party as a local taste of our area and to raise some money for WVCC. Mark Manor and I went out looking for ramps the Sunday before. We tried three places, but they were far and few, so we left those patches to get bigger for the future. We finally found this year's Mother Lode on one of the back roads to Lobelia and picked what we thought we would need. Gordon came down Wednesday afternoon and I told him of our plan to cook ramps. However, Mark and Gordon had found a recipe for potato and ramp casserole that looked to be tasty. We needed more ramps, though, so we hopped in Gordon's truck and drove back up to Lobelia Thursday morning before the Rehoboth Church trip. Afterwards, Gordon and I got the potatoes and ramps cleaned up before our trip and we left Mark to make the meal.

Gordon and I arrived at the Brier Inn just before 1 p.m. There were a few arrivals from Florida and Missouri that had arrived and wanted to go caving. Carl Pierce had called me the day before and said that he would like to join us, but he couldn't get there before 1:30. Not a problem, I said. Joining the three of us were Jamie Euliss of Springfield MO and Bill Walker of Ocala, FL. A nice sized group. Everyone knew that this was a "search for leads" kind of trip. Nothing too long and time consuming. We took about 45 minutes to drive down to Union before we got to the cave.

Everyone suited up after I had checked in with the house at the parking lot. We all took that leisurely 150-yard walk to the entrance at the insurgence. It was nice being on a trip that I didn't have to watch what everyone else was doing. We all popped in the cave and decided that the water wasn't too high to do the cave. It had rained the three previous days and there was a lot of water at all the indicators I use before I go underground around here. Not in the cave, though. Water might have been up two inches. I led everyone back to where I stopped at the previous beginners' trip. Carl or Gordon immediately found the hole that you needed to locate to get to the Zoo Room and the rest of the cave. We all decided to check out the Kondasum and proceeded to crawl and walk to that end of the cave.

As we were running out of time, Gordon and I left the others to push the lead to the Seraphim Passage, to the Long Room and the Sand Passage. They were all off the same lead. The two of us changed out, waiting for the others to exit the cave. I had Jamie's stuff in my car. Now to head back to Renick, through eight of the ten stoplights in Greenbrier County. No such thing as rush hour here. It's more like creep and crawl. Finally arriving at Renick, we got cleaned up and loaded the casserole that Mark had finished and left for the Howdy Party. There was beer, wine and soft drinks supplied by the Northeastern Cave Conservancy and Speleobooks, plus lots of munchies. Plus there were lots of friends, both old and new. A few of us ended up at a local watering hole playing pool until the wee hours of the morning. But eventually it was time to go home, because tomorrow the Forum began.

The next morning, Gordon and I managed to get up and out of the house on time. We got to the Brier Inn



in plenty of time, so we grabbed a bite to eat first. When we got to the room, I was pleasantly surprised. There were fifty people there from all over the country. Jeff gave a Welcome and all the conservancies introduced themselves to each other. Mike Warner made some observations about the proceeding and we were on our way. Our first speaker wasn't feeling well, so Dr. Pat Seizer was asked to speak first. She is one of two Doctors of Cave Management & Stewardship. Pat discussed the protection of "No Access" caves, short-term conservation easements, and educating landowners and surrounding neighbors, as well as including the community in various projects, nature walks and other special presentations for the locals.

Next up was Emily, who discussed "Tough Love", or how to keep out the party crowd. Essentially, a conservancy works with the local authorities in enforcing "No Trespassing" rules. Working with authorities puts money in local coffers and teaches the trespassers that those signs mean just what they say. Educating the local authorities is the first step in making them treat trespassers similar to someone that broke into the local high school.

We next delved into the world of raising money. Numerous ways were mentioned from the rubber ducky race and the bat canon at OTR, to pig roasts, and other fundraisers. We were told to not be afraid and ask someone for what you need. There is grant money available, as well as challenge grants and Community Foundations. Working on matching grants from larger corporations and working with local community organizations that raise money for charities were also discussed. Of course, a lot of money comes from a conservancy's membership. Banquets, Buy a Piece of Cave and regular credit card income were just a few of the membership-backed ways to raise money. Of course, my favorite is Bingo. It is labor intensive, but the money isn't coming from the caving community, it's coming from outside sources and doesn't strain a caver's pocketbook. Other options outside the caving community included approaching natural history suppliers, tee shirt vendors and Federal Funds. Lastly, one of the most important resources discussed was Volunteer Time. You cannot put a dollar figure on it, but if ten people drive two hours each way for a project and they all work four hours, that's eighty hours of time.

Next, Thom Engel spoke about The Whys and Hows of Management Plans. He started out with points to consider. The purpose of the plan should be to describe what is on the property and in the cave and how they should be managed. It shouldn't be written and then placed on a shelf to be forgotten. It should be referred to on a regular basis. It states that the Manager must follow the plan unless there is a compelling or over-riding reason to do otherwise. And lastly, the plan can be amended after an analysis of the proposed changes or additions have been agreed on. Other points that needed consideration were that changes to conservancy rules must be reflected in the Plan and if the plan is the basis for a management agreement with a third party, then those changes must be approved by the third party. Thom's Plan Components are based upon Appendix Z of the NSS Board of Governors Manual. Thom expanded Appendix Z to include other items such as the purpose of the plan, use conflicts, exploration rules and rescue considerations. To see a copy of Appendix Z, please go to <http://www.caves.org/nss-business/bog/app-z.html>. I could give you five pages of notes on this one topic alone.

Bob Addis spoke about insurance and who needs it. Landowner liability and Sportsman Laws were discussed. Bob also passed out a comprehensive Table of State Liability Laws. To see a copy of the Table, go to http://www.imba.com/resources/trail_issues/liability_chart.html. A landowner has no duty to post his property, nor do they have to keep the property safe or make it safe for others to use. Insurance is a hot topic for conservancies at this time. It was recommended that directors of conservancies add \$1,000,000 each occurrence for personal liability on their individual homeowners policy. The cost would be less than \$36 per year. It was discussed that there are records for use of certain caves that could possibly be used for actuary tables for insurance companies. This is one area that we all must work together on. Insurance companies do not understand the caving community and one accident can give them a bad taste that could cancel a policy.

The last speaker of the day was Kriste Lindberg from the Indiana Karst Conservancy. It was getting late, so it was a good thing that she was the last speaker. Her talk was entitled Creative Partnerships for Karst Protection, a How To. She discussed working with the community in Bloomington Indiana as well as developers that would work with her in setting aside conservation easements. All the talks were beginning to tie in with each other. In the meantime, Mark was leading a trip to Scott Hollow. After all, some of these people came a long ways and wanted to do a little caving.

We finally broke for the day and were offered a tour of Lost World Caverns. Sixteen of us decided to take the tour, so we hopped in our cars and made our way to LWC. The owner, Steve Silverberg, met us there. Steve gave us a talk about the history of the Caverns. As he was beginning a story about a publicity stunt from the early 1960's where a caver named Bob Addis stayed on top of a stalagmite for 16 days, our group slowly parted and Bob held up his nametag. Imagine the look on Steve's face when the person he was talking about was in the audience. The two of them elaborated on the story and we all had a good time. Bob Handley gave us a little history about the caverns. The original entrance was called Grapevine Pit. It is a beautiful drop down into a huge room and was named for the grapevines that grew by the original entrance. Bob had visions of making it into a commercial cave, but the owners back then wanted too much of a cut, so the original commercialization of the cave was halted.

Dinnertime. I had to go home and feed my cows and pigs. This essentially cut into my time, so I was unable to get back in time for the cracker barrel session of that evening. It appeared that they kicked around some good ideas, but I have no notes, so I cannot elaborate. Afterwards, some of us went to play pool again. Since there was an announced alcohol checkpoint north of the Brier Inn, we both kept the drinking down to two each and then we drove the back roads to avoid the checkpoint.

TinY was at my house when we got in. We shot the breeze for a couple of hours before hitting the sack. The next day, Gordon and TinY went over to the New River Gorge to prepare for their upcoming El Capitan rappel. They were going to be the first tow people to ever drop El Cap in tandem. The National Park Service is still trying to decide if they are going to allow them to do it. Come on NPS, if they can drop Golondrinas in tandem, then they are good enough to drop El Cap. Mark still wasn't back from Scott Hollow, though.

I was dragging a little the next morning when I got to the Forum. Fortunately, the car that took everyone to Scott Hollow was in the parking lot. Everyone was safe. Emily started the session with a talk on Managed Access to Conservancy Caves and Lands. Documenting access to cave properties creates a record of conservation and information exchange, demonstrates standardized access rules for a particular conservancy, provides rescue personnel a list of names and addresses for those involved in a rescue and creates a record of cave and property use. The potential difficulties of Managed Access Policies are that it creates an increased burden on both the manager and the visitor. We discussed that certain groups have their own set of rules, such as the Boy Scouts. If a group does have a set of rules, then the group's rules must be followed. Liability and waiver forms were discussed. In fact, I never knew that I was required to sign a waiver from the NSS when I visit Trout Rocks in nearby Pendleton County.

I also found it interesting that managers should not inspect anyone's equipment. That puts the equipment responsibility on the trip leaders, not the managers. Pre-requisite requirements were discussed as well as window permits. Obviously, every cave has different needs, so posting permits varies from cave property to property. It was stressed that all requirements for a cave must be placed on the waiver form, so that there is no confusion. Carbonless forms are considered a desirable way to get a waiver signed and give a copy of what was signed to the participant.

What requirements do you need to put in the Access Policy of a cave? We discussed five main points. The first point was group size for safety, conservation or aesthetic purposes. Experience and equipment was discussed next. How do you determine standards? Formal affiliations like the NSS or a grotto, self testament (which cannot be confirmed) and other vetting methods are the methods usually employed. Time and quantity restrictions were the third item on the list. This involved a cumulative impact from the number of groups that use the cave, impact from simultaneous use by more than one party and other issues such as ice, water and bats. Fourth on the list was Age Restrictions. Some caves are not youth friendly, while some youth groups have special waiver or permission requirements. Lastly, the nature of access restrictions could affect access to a cave. Science, exploration, pay adventure (cave-for-pay), pay institutional (summer camp, school or scouts) and recreational caving all could affect access to the cave.

Dave Culver was up next. He discussed managing and protecting biological resources such as bats, bugs, and ferns. He discussed the cave property from different perspectives. On the surface, endangered plants might be found in the soil, at entrances to caves and along karst surfaces. Just because they are not found in a cave,

they are still part of the cave property and stewardship should pertain to everything on the property, not just the cave. At the entrance to caves, one might find cave salamanders, orb weaving spiders, phoebe nests, or other organisms. The entrance of a cave is the way carbon (*food*) enters and leaves a cave. Gating a cave could interfere with an entrance species.

The last level was in cave. Of course, we all know bats use caves. However, not all bats depend on caves. In fact some never set foot in caves. Bats do use caves for hibernaculums, maternity colonies and day roosts. He stated that if we wanted more information on bats, to check out the BCI website or go to www.natureserve.org. There you can find information on state and natural history programs that are being offered.

Obviously, Dave is interested in cave invertebrates. There are 1100 species of cave dwelling organisms in North America. www.karstwaters.org has a searchable cave invertebrate list if you would like to see what's out there. He taught me a new word, endemism. The word is related to endemic, which essentially means native to a particular area. In this case, we were discussing that there were 400 species that are endemic to only one cave. Within a cave there can be four main types of communities.

The first is terrestrial transitory organic matter such as cricket poop. Some communities rely on this matter to sustain themselves. The second was riparian/stream species. The species that utilize this community are sensitive to water conditions and watershed issues such as silt runoff. The third community is in the epikarst, the area that is between the surface and the cave itself. There is very little known about this community and most species that are discovered are found because they fell into the cave accidentally. The last community is found in the phreatic, deep cave habitat. It is usually found with little or no lateral flow of water. Something like the little microbes that people like Dr. Hazel Barton is working with.

Dave then discussed threats to various species. Water quality and quantity are primary to consider. Not only are sinkholes, sinking streams and cave entrances funnels for food, they are also funnels for contamination of the ecosystem. Sinkhole and cave cleanups are not necessarily all they are cracked up to be. In a sinkhole, you might take out the car with its leaking oil pan, but you might also destroy fragile plant life that is using the sinkhole. I know that I have helped "clean" cave walls of graffiti, but animals don't like "cleaned" habitat. Maybe this needs to be better thought out before we run out and "scrub" a cave wall during our next cleanup. The visitation threat needs to be accessed to determine if it is detrimental to a species. There are times we control access to a cave to protect a species. The one that I need to begin practicing is less stream walking, the better. This pertains to banks as well. Obviously, there should be more protections for invertebrates. Dave's final words were "retain and replant".

Is your head spinning yet? Well mine was. Still is.

Next up was The Nature Conservancy of WV. Ashton Berdine and Beth Wheatley addressed the topic of Conservation Easements. A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a Land Trust that is set up to permanently protect the property. The owners of the property do not give up their rights to the property. They can still sell, donate or lease the property to others. They do give up the rights like development and logging, though. Generally, the conservation easement defines what restrictions or uses are going to be given up by the landowner. However, the conservation easement also reserves rights that the landowner wants to continue to have for his property.

The conservation easement can be donated to a qualified organization for possible tax benefits to the landowner. The easement can also be sold. There are federal funds available for purchasing conservation easements. However, the value of the easement must be established by a third party, which is qualified to make the assessment. Once an organization holds an easement, it must uphold the integrity of the agreement in perpetuity. They must deal with violators and inspect the property at least once a year, if not more often. The landowner's responsibilities also increase. Not only do they also have to uphold the integrity of the easement in perpetuity, they must also follow all restrictions that were placed upon the property by the easement. They must also note third party violations and report them to the easement holder in a



Rane Curl uses his 'finger' to make a point.

timely fashion for action.

What type of restrictions can be placed on an easement? There are many types, but to name a few, I will begin with no commercialization of the cave property, no building on the property, no logging, no dumping, no pesticides. So you see, the restrictions need to be well thought out before they can be enforced. If you would like more information, please check the Land Trust Alliance on the Internet at <http://www.lta.org>. They have a lot of useful information, contacts and resources.

Rane Curl, past president of the NSS and The Michigan Karst Conservancy, spoke about the Land Trust Alliance perspective. There are more than 1800 land trusts in the U.S. today. The LTA is a repository of information for all alliances that deal with the preservation of lands. It is recommended that if you wanted additional information written so that it could be understood, to pick up Steven Small's book entitled *Preserving Family Lands*, which can be ordered by going to his web site at www.stevesmall.com. Rane set out fifteen points for inclusion in the perspective beginning with the purposes and goals, board accountability, possible conflicts of interest of the board, basic legal requirements, fundraising practices, financial and asset management, staffing, selecting projects, choosing the best conservation method for the property, examining the property in question, ensuring sound transactions, tax benefits, board approval of any transactions, conservation easement standards, and ending with land stewardship.



Forum attendees socialize before one of the evening sessions.

Ted Kayes, one of three Stephenson Group members attending the forum, spoke about planned giving. This is a form of fund raising that most of us do not look forward enough to plan for. Essentially, it is a format whereby one's estate is bequeathed to a conservancy by one of a few methods. We all are aware about wills. Some time in our lifetime, someone we know has named one of us in a will. They are normally filed for probate reasons and are a public document. Living trusts, however, are not public documents. They allow an individual to address tax concerns, family privacy, simplified estate administration for the survivors or difficult family decisions to pledge money. However, if a conservancy doesn't know that they are named in a living trust, there is no way they can protect their interest in it. So, if you know about a living trust, try and get a copy of the first page, the signature page and any relevant pages that concern the anticipated testamentary gift. Another thing is to make sure that the living trust gets the conservancy name right.

There are other ways pre-planning can help a conservancy. Gift annuities, charitable remainder trusts, life insurance policies that are no longer needed by an individual, individual retirement accounts and deferred annuities are just a few. It was suggested that each time a conservancy does a mailing, that they have one sentence addressing the planned giving program. If you feel the cost is justified, prepare a special flyer. You must have a source of help for anyone that might be interested and have further questions. You will want to record people that have shown interest in the program, be able to answer basic questions about the program for those people, have someone who is knowledgeable who can volunteer their time and expertise, and have a list of at least three supportive attorneys for them to contact if they have any legal questions.

The first paper presented was by Tom Aley of Ozark Underground Laboratory, Inc. His paper, entitled *The Value of Delineating Recharge Areas for Critical Caves*, addresses acquiring surrounding properties to protect caves. One may own the entrance to a cave, but if a neighbor who owns the property adjacent to a critical, sensitive cave or karst area does something detrimental to the cave, what good does trying to conserve the cave do? Nothing. Tom took the CCV guide, *Living on Karst*, and re-worked it for landowners in South Central Missouri with the help of the Nature Conservancy. It addresses issues relevant to landowners in that area. Like the CCV guide, it isn't for sale; it is distributed for free to landowners and educators in that area.

Next up to bat was Phillip Moss, the NSS Cave and Karst Acquisition chair. He laid out how to obtain an NSS grant to help purchase cave or karst land. For the record, he referred to the Appendix Z mentioned by

Thom Engle and also referred to Appendix L. He stressed the request must have a definitive statement of significance before the NSS could even consider a request for a grant.

The next paper was about the NSS' John Guilday Cave Preserve in Pendleton County, West Virginia. Fred Grady gave us a historical overview of the last 20 years for the property. He discussed the fund-raising to acquire the Preserve as well as some of the problems encountered. Closure of the property due to endangered Indiana Bats was a contentious point between the management committee and the NSS. Also, significant paleontological discoveries have been made on the property. The caves are now open to everyone and there is an annual ConserVacation weekend sponsored by DC Grotto to do cleanups, both above ground and in cave, trail restoration to prevent erosion and fence repair. Several thousand people visit the caves annually and the Preserve continues to be a destination for cavers.

Eddie Simmons discussed The Carroll Cave Conservancy's restoration and conservation practices in the Carroll Cave System, in Camden County, Missouri. By digging a new entrance, CCC has created a multitude of opportunities for cave exploration, science and research. Their purpose and direction is to utilize the cave and its natural resources with attention to creating the least amount of impact on the cave.

The last paper was by West Virginia Cave Conservancy director Bob Handley. He discussed the archeological study of Rapps Cave, located in Greenbrier County, West Virginia. Discovery of petroglyphs near the cave entrance made the cave significant for archeologists to study. The cave is considered to be the most eastern and northern range of the Mississippian Indians, dating back 600 to 800 years.

The last speaker was John Wilson of the NSS Cave Conservancies Committee. John was quite gung ho on the entire Forum. When he spoke, I imagined him as a sports coach trying to get his players pumped up for the game. In our case, cave conservation.

I saw and heard an incredible amount of information. At the last Cracker Barrel session, we all discussed whether we wanted to hold another forum. It was a unanimous yes. The fifty people that attended this first forum will be staying in contact and we will set a date for 2006 for the next forum. We discussed who would host it and where it should be held. The majority of the people thought that Lewisburg was relatively centrally located for many of the eastern conservancies. Those from out west said that no matter where it was held, that they would have to fly, so they had no problem with the Lewisburg proposal. There is a real good chance that Bubble Cave LLC will host it in 2006, with support from WVCC. Next time Jeff can lead some cave trips, while I play the dapper host.

The last day saw trips being led to Haynes Cave by Fred Grady, the Persinger entrance to Benedicts Cave by Amos Mincin and to the Norman entrance of the Bone/Norman system by yours truly.

All in all, a lot of information was shared and the majority of people that attended came away with more than they walked in with. The Forum will continue, alternating years with the National Cave & Karst Management Symposium, which meets October 31, through November 4, 2005 in Albany, New York. Hope to see you there.

Conser-Vacation Cleanup day in at the John Guilday Cave Preserve ***Bob Hoke***

The NSS-owned John Guilday Cave Preserve in Pendleton County, West Virginia, contains three of the most popular caves in the state: Trout Cave, New Trout Cave, and Hamilton Cave. These three caves are visited by hundreds of cavers each year, varying in experience and equipment from ill-equipped flashlight cavers to properly equipped and experienced NSS members.

Each fall the NSS committee that oversees the caves hold a cleanup day, called the "Conser-Vacation" with the goal of removing as much evidence of human visitation as possible from the caves. The first Conser-Vacation was held in 1995 and a lot of accumulated graffiti was removed from the caves in the first few years. Amazingly, very little of it has reappeared over the years and the annual cleanup trips have usually had little actual cleaning to do.

It is unclear why these caves are not seeing the heavy spray paint and other graffiti that many other popular caves are suffering from. One possibility is that the cave's locations rather high up on a hill makes them impractical to use as party caves (due to the difficulty of hauling beer up the hill). Another, more positive, possibility is that visitors appreciate that the caves are open to them and they respect them. There is a visitor contact booth and signs that include the magic words "please" and "thank you" when they ask visitors to respect the caves.

The date for this year's Conser-Vacation has not been set since the date for the Fall VAR meeting isn't yet firm. However, anyone who is interested in helping this year, the 10th consecutive Conser-Vacation," should watch the various caving calendars for the date.

Conser-Vacation is suitable for cavers of all experience levels, including novices. However, no kids under 14 are allowed on these cave cleanup trips, and no kids under 18 are allowed on the trips unless one of their parents is also on the trip (due to liability concerns). For additional information contact Pauline Apling at (301)604-0764 or e-mail papling@erols.com.

Persinger Tree Planting Weekend

Text by John Pearson, Photos by Jeff Bray

The weekend of April 2nd 2004 found an excellent turnout of more than 40 people helping out with the Conservation Plan that was drawn up for the Persinger Cave Preserve. The Plan was designed by USDA Soil Conservationist, Misty Householder for WVCC on April 1, 2003. The Plan stated that the Property "had abundant opportunities for the enhancement of wildlife habitat" and it initially called for the planting of 2500 trees.

This weekend was going to be the first phase of tree planting. 500 spruce and 500 white pine seedlings were ordered by Ed Swepston from Musser Forests of Indiana, Pennsylvania. Thank you, Ed, for such healthy looking trees. Your choice of tree nurseries was excellent.

As a historical background, I volunteered for this job because I couldn't save two decrepit, lightning struck, red oak trees on the right-of-way to the Lightner's Cave Preserve. Ellie Florance petitioned WVCC to save the trees, but all the paperwork was already done. I couldn't save the two trees, but I could oversee a lot of new trees being planted, at another classic West Virginia cave, Benedict's. We've got quite a few good caves around here that need us.



Now to the real heroes of the story. You, the Volunteers. Thank you for an excellent turnout. Not only did you get the initial phase of tree planting done, you finished the entire job!!! Sound planting practices were utilized in spacing the trees. Taking into account that there are some areas that need to be "tree free" for parking and primitive camping, 775 trees did the entire job.

The logistics went as planned. The weekend was chosen with the energetic Young Timers Reunion crowd in mind. YTR is held in early April, and that just happens to be

when you want to plant young trees. There were volunteers from Bubble Cave, The Zoo, Front Royal Grotto, BATS Grotto, WVACS, Nittany Grotto, VPI, JMU and WVU. I know that others were there, but they just never signed in, so I can't give them proper recognition. There were even WVCC Directors getting down to earth planting trees.

Ed Swepston and I began the festivities on Friday morning. We met at the Marathon Gas Station and proceeded to the property utilizing the new map to the property that Bill Balfour made. The new route was necessary to avoid potential right-of-way issues. Those issues are easily bypassed using the new route. We really don't want any landowners getting down on us now, do we?

Ed and I walked the entire property. Fortunately, the rains held off, but it was a little windy. For the property boundaries, there were only two pins to work from and wooden stakes at most of the major intersections. However, the most important stake was long gone, the southwestern one. Our plans were to plant trees along the southern border of the property and to establish a shielded parking area (see the cover of the last issue of *Open Cave*). I took an educated guess as to where it should be from the pins on the southeast corner and placed a stake by the road at the SW corner.

I had to leave to meet Jim's Sanitary Service. They were bringing the comforts of home to us for our use. They needed to be shown where the property was. So, back to the Marathon. After giving them 10 minutes for being late, I tried to call them from the pay phone. No dice. The phone was jammed. I hopped into the car and drove to the next nearest gas station and gave them a call. Yep, they had forgotten all about the order. The only

person I didn't give a reminder call to, and they were the one that dropped the ball. In my favor, though, they jumped into their trucks and met me about an hour after their initial appointment time. I killed the time by going by the USDA office and picking up six dibbles that Misty had obtained for us to get the tree planting job done correctly. A small SNAFU that ended up going away.

Now back to the property to begin laying lines for tree planting. You know, nice straight lines of trees in rows spaced ten feet apart with the trees spaced every eight feet. I went back to the two pins that I was sure of and shot them with my Suunto. From the second pin, I laid out my new survey tape. Never been used. My cows chewed the last one into three different lengths. I placed a flag every 50 feet or so along the entire southern border for over 750 feet. That moved the stake that I originally placed about 30 feet further out. Now we had a real property line to work from.



The second border was a lot harder. The northeast stake was down in a sinkhole. In order to shoot a sight from the pin from the stake, I had to climb up the other side of the sink until I could see both the stake and the pin. I would then try and place a flag on the other side of the sink so I had a line to work from. I must have gone back and forth six or seven times before I was okay with its placement. I then went back to the pin and began placing flags. At this point, I was now going to cross the wetlands that comprise the best surface feature on the property. One flag was placed short of the 50-foot spacing to keep me out of the wetlands. A slight detour for a large multi-flora rose bush was also necessary until the eastern line was defined.

As an aside, I documented wood frog egg masses in the wetlands as well as three other amphibian species. We got a winner here. The Canadian cavers from Quebec I just met at the Bowling Alley said they saw a 6-7" brown salamander just inside the entrance. Any off line help from you Biologist types would be appreciated. My address is jpearson@rcc.com.

Back to the story, now. Part of the border is defined by the access road. When the road ends, there is one border that would need to be defined, but that was for another project weekend. Misty told me to bring the trees about eight feet in from the property line, so I laid out four long lines along the southern border. I used some four-foot lengths of rebar donated by my employer, RCC Consultants, and drove them about every 150 feet and stretched some nylon binding twine between them. I only had enough rebar for the four lines, so additional lines would have to be drawn and made as we went along reusing rebar from lines that had been planted. Once I was done with the lines, I could now go back and party with the YTR group.

The next morning was the big day. I met Ed Swepston at 9:30 with the trees at the property. We defined the parking area and where the primitive camping site would be and then began planting trees. The first people to arrive were my friends from Front Royal Grotto. I had Pete Bracken trim the multi-flora roses back along the path to the cave entrance. There was a run-away 800-pound bale of hay that had rolled down into the sink. It ended up near the entrance to the cave, so I had Pete spread the hay along the path to the cave. In the meantime, Janet Tinkham and Twila Neeld joined Ed Swepston and I planting trees along the outer line.

Sarah Pearce and Mike Conner of BATS joined us and the show had begun. More and more people began showing up. The weather had not gone south on us as originally forecasted. We had a blustery day, with some sun occasionally, and temperatures in the 40s. Those of us that had already begun the first row of trees finished up that row and we could now move the rebar to make more rows.

The Bubble Cave crowd, led by Bev Bassett had now arrived. There is no stopping this woman when she can get her hands dirty working the soil. Leading Chuck Hatcher, Troy Mann and myself, she tackled the hilly portion of the property beyond the road. I also know that the group of Kristen Matak, Tim Bleech and Scott Martz personally planted over 100 trees. They planted trees along the road in an area that wasn't even on the agenda for this weekend. The trees were going in rapidly.

As we were planting, I consulted with Tom Malabad, one of the Property Managers, as to where he would put the primitive camping area. He immediately moved the area to more level ground than was originally planned. An excellent idea.

I also want to thank Mark Manor for doing all the catering for the group. Mark made cole slaw and baked beans from scratch and was busy with the 3-foot frying pan roasting the hot dogs. I even saw Bob Handley eating one of the dogs. The only thing that I hadn't planned for was a camera. I really shouldn't be allowed around creative things like cameras, but I wish that there were some pictures taken, just to show how many people helped and Before and After pictures. I understand that Jeff Bray took some pictures, though.

The following is only a partial list of workers, but they should all be recognized:

Ed Swepston, Janet Tinkham, Twila Neeld, Pete Bracken, Sarah Pearce, Mike Conner, Tim Bleech, Kristen Matak, Bob Handley, Katy Schnieder, Jeff Bray, Tom Malabad, Brian Perkins, Scott Martz, Mark Manor, Chuck Hatcher, Bev Basset, Troy Mann, Brian Henthorn, Bill Balfour, Glen Clouser, Andy McKinnon, Carl Droms, Ben Mirabile, Rich Bailey, Whitney Butler.

Thank you all for an excellent turnout and a wonderful day of conservation.

WVCC LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

Tim Brown

AN OPPORTUNITY

The West Virginia Cave Conservancy's (WVCC) Endowment Trust Fund Committee is pleased to offer to you the opportunity to purchase a Lifetime Membership to the WVCC.

OUR GOAL

Your Support and Lifetime Membership fee will help enable the WVCC Endowment Trust Fund to reach its goals. One goal is to provide the funding for the perpetual care of the Caves and Properties entrusted to the WVCC's care and protection.

LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

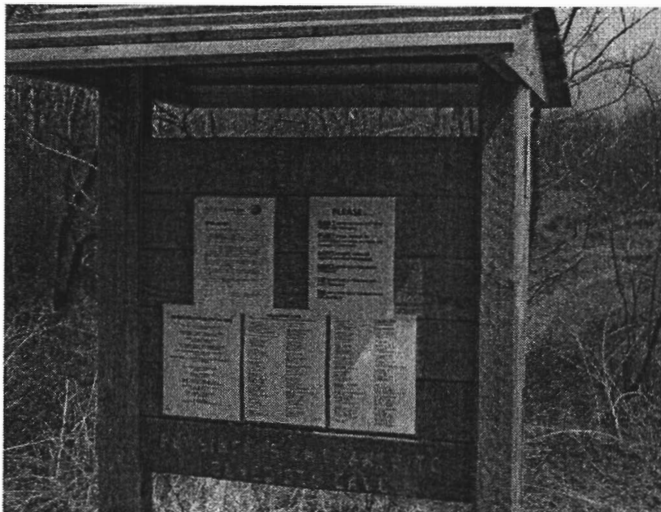
Lifetime Membership to the West Virginia Cave Conservancy, special Recognition at the WVCC annual dinner, and a Special Appreciation Certificate.

A PARTNERSHIP

A Lifetime Member is an important partner in the WVCC's cave ownership and management efforts. Its permanent endowment fund generates annual revenue for WVCC's properties and programs. Your tax-deductible payment of \$250.00 (a payment plan of 5 yearly payments of \$65.00 is available) is never spent. Rather, it is permanently invested to grow and generate revenue in support of WVCC's important programs forever.

THE WEST VIRGINIA CAVE CONSERVANCY

WVCC is a non-profit corporation dedicated to "Preserving the cave and karsts resources of West Virginia for future generations". WVCC is a recognized 501c corporation making your donation a tax deduction. Membership is open to any interested party. Donations can be sent to WVCC P.O. Box243 Frankford, WV. 24938. Applications may be obtained on our web site (www.wvcc.net), or you can use the form in this newsletter.



WVCC Enters Into Memorandum of Understanding with the WV Division of Natural Resources

Jeff Bray

The WVCC has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the WV Division of Natural Resources (WV-DNR). This agreement came to fruition due to the fact that federal funds have come available to identify caves that could be threatened from a number of scenarios, not excluding development and agricultural activities. The deal also involves The Nature Conservancy of West Virginia, who has been contracted to help identify these caves that are of concern. The West Virginia Speleological Survey has also agreed to support this endeavor.

Below is a copy of the MOU. This is a great step forward in working together with state, federal, and private organizations that share similar goals as those of the WVCC. It is also a great model of how information can be shared for the common good, while still respecting all wishes of those submitting information. This is why we have such a strong state-wide cave survey, and a state-wide conservancy. It is important to note that all requests that are (or have been) submitted by projects to WVASS or WVCC will not be compromised, and, provided your project has communicated any needs or requests to WVCC and WVASS, attempts will be made to contact project members if it is found that information is being requested concerning one of these projects.

*MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
between the
West Virginia Division of Natural Resources
and the
West Virginia Cave Conservancy
SHARING OF DATA RELATING TO CAVE CONSERVATION*

- A. The West Virginia Cave Conservancy (WVCC) will allow the WV Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) to use cave-related data in the possession of the WVCC for the purposes of the protection and conservation of caves and cave life.
- B. WVCC data will remain the property of the WVCC and will not be distributed by the WVDNR to other parties without the expressed written permission of the WVCC. These data will not be subject to Freedom of Information Act requests received by the WVDNR.
- C. If, with WVCC permission, data are shared with other agencies or organizations (i.e., The Nature Conservancy), these data will remain the property of WVCC, and such agencies/organizations will not be permitted to distribute these data without the expressed written permission of the WVCC.
- D. WVDNR, Wildlife Diversity Program personnel, will use WVCC data for activities relating to the protection and conservation of caves and cave life including:
 - 1. Review of permit applications (i.e., coal mining, highway construction, development, infrastructure improvements, etc.) for potential impacts to caves or cave life, especially state and globally rare species, through direct or indirect impacts,
 - 2. Designing surveys to inventory cave resources to provide better data on the distribution and abundance of cave life, especially rare species,
 - 3. Identifying biologically significant caves/karst systems in need of conservation actions, and
 - 4. Developing management strategies to address conservation needs and work with landowners and land managers to implement such strategies.
- E. WVDNR and WVCC will cooperate on cave conservation activities of mutual interest to maximize the effectiveness of each organization's resources.
- F. When developing conservation strategies, especially when such strategies may include limiting caver access to a particular cave or cave system, WVDNR will notify the WVCC of its intent and work with WVCC to find a strategy that provides for conservation activities while allowing the caving community access to an extent consistent with the conservation goals.
- G. WVDNR will provide WVCC with cave-related data for conservation purposes. WVCC will not distribute WVDNR data to other parties without the expressed written permission from the WVDNR.
- H. This agreement becomes effective when signed by the designated representatives of both organizations.
- I. Either party can terminate this agreement by giving the other 30 days written notification.

WEST VIRGINIA CAVE CONSERVANCY

Jeff Bray
President
WEST VIRGINIA DIVISION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Date

Ed Hamrick
Director

Date

The President's Column

Text and Photos by Jeff Bray

Well, it's been a busy spring and early summer so far. If you've read the newsletter up to this point, then you're up to date on some of the activities we've been working on so far this year. So now I'll go ahead and mention a few more things.

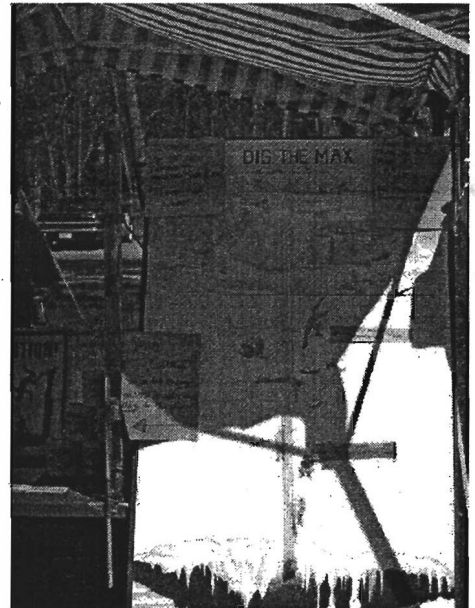
The most important aspect of a volunteer organization like this one is its volunteers. And we certainly could use some more! Many of you have come through wonderfully for us with your help at the Persinger property and at the Maxwelton project. But we still need some help throughout the rest of the summer with fundraising. We are planning to have booths at convention and OTR this year, and need volunteers to help run the booth and hand out information or answer questions. This isn't too hard, and we will be happy to arm you with all the information to make this endeavor successful. But we just can't do it alone, so if you find you have some time, or some ideas about fundraising, please don't hesitate to contact me.

I also would like to recognize John Pearson, Carroll Bassett, and Dave Cowan for some work they've accomplished recently. These three WVCC supporters answered a call for assistance by a Lewisburg cave owner that has kept his cave closed to cavers for quite some time. This cave, Hide-A-Bed Cave is located within city limits, and has at least one mile of passage associated with it. The owners were concerned about a calf that they thought had fallen into the cave entrance, and called the WV Department of Environmental Protection for help, who in turn called on these three cavers to help. The cavers promptly went to the owner and provided the assistance which was requested. The owners were very pleased with the quick response and also showed concern for the sinkhole and the possible problems it could continue to provide with their livestock. The three cavers offered their assistance by suggesting some plans which could help protect both the cave and the livestock. The cavers then asked for \$1000 from VAR at the spring meeting (which was granted) to help begin this plan. Of course, there are never any guarantees, but once this work is done, the hope is that cavers will once again have access to this cave (and discussions have not led anyone to think otherwise). This is a win-win for all involved, and is a great sign of support for cave conservation. Thank you guys for your work so far!

Maxwelton Sink's new entrance is nearing completion. The entrance that was dug is now sealed to prevent airflow from seeping in and out of the cave, and the project is awaiting the next step, which is reclaiming of the land around the new entrance, and the installation of the final pieces of culvert. Once the site has been graded and reclaimed, and the rest of the pipe added, the project will then be looking for help with the survey of the cave, so keep your eyes and ears open for this news which should be coming up soon. There are also a couple of

fundraisers that are currently being administered to help offset the digging costs. You can help us raise money to pay for the culvert by donating 5 dollars per inch of culvert (we intend to have a maximum of 60 feet of culvert at the entrance). The goal here is to raise \$3600 by the end of OTR to offset the cost of the pipe and some of the concrete work at the entrance. There is also the possibility of a ladder being installed to ease the trips up and down the pipe, in which case, a recognition-based fundraiser where one can donate money and have a wrung of the ladder dedicated to whomever you wish (or yourself of course). Those donating will eventually be permanently recognized at the entrance upon completion of the dig project. Each wrung on the ladder will represent specific donations, which can be seen on our website on the Maxwelton page, with information on how to donate for this project.

I also want to invite everyone to plan to attend our annual fundraising banquet in Lewisburg on November 6, 2004 at the Brier Inn. More information on this event will be available as it draws closer, but this is sure to be a fun time, with maybe a few surprise auction items in the mix after the successful silent auction last year. You never know what will happen, so it's worth coming by to see!



Finally, you can look forward to some really cool perks for donating while visiting our booth at various events. Originality has struck again, along with nostalgia for one of our popular past fundraising games, and this year's booth is sure to have some unique surprises for you, the benefactor. Please don't forget about us at the various events.

So there you have it. Another great season is about to begin on the heels of an absolutely wonderful spring for the WVCC and cave conservation across the country! Please consider being a part of it, whether it be by helping the WVCC or (and!) your other conservancy.

Island Ford Cleanup Scheduled
John Pearson

Folks, mark your calendar for October 2, 2004 for the Fall cleanup of Island Ford. Members of James River Grotto and Bubble Cave will be doing the annual cleanup that day. As the trash has been less and less with the installation of the WVCC kiosk, it is anticipated that it will not take much time. Plan on meeting at 9 AM at the cave. Trash bags will be supplied, so bring your gear and gloves for this conservation project. If you need directions or further information, contact John Pearson at 304-497-3803 or email him at jpearson@rcc.com. WVCC thanks you all in advance for your participation.

Donaldson Cave Clean-up Trip
Bob Hoke

Saturday, June 26th is the Donaldson Cave clean-up trip. Please meet at the cave at 10:30 AM. You may park at the parking area near the cave, but since parking is limited, we may need to relocate vehicles once we see how many show up. The DC Grotto will supply wire brushes and trash bags, so the only thing folks need to bring is their usual caving gear.

If you need more information, please contact Pauline Apling at 301-604-0764 or papling@erols.com.

Directions. Take Exit 20 off I-81 in West Virginia. Go west on SR 901 approximately 5 miles and take a right onto CR 2. If you cross the railroad tracks, you missed the turn. Proceed 0.5 mile to the parking area on the left adjacent to the cemetery.



P.O. Box 243
Frankford, WV 24938

Membership Application

- Regular Membership (\$15.00 per year)
- Family Membership (\$25.00 per year)
- Institutional Membership (\$50.00 per year)
- Lifetime Membership (\$250.00 one time fee)
- Benefactor Membership (\$1000 minimum)
- Sustaining Membership (See below**)

****Sustaining Membership is \$65 per year for 5 years. Upon completing this, you will be a Lifetime Member. Authorizing a recurring credit card transaction below can facilitate payment.**

In addition to dues, I would like to make the following donation to support the work of WVCC.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <u>Amount</u> | <u>Frequency</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Single donation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Amount \$ _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Annually |

Method of Payment

- Cash Check Visa MasterCard

Make check payable to **WVCC** and return this form to:
WVCC
PO Box 243
Frankford, WV 24938

Credit Card Authorization

Credit Card Number: _____ Exp Date: _____

Signature: _____

(By signing, you authorize the West Virginia Cave Conservancy to charge you account for the amount, frequency, and duration indicated above.)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Phone No: _____

Email Address: _____

Caving Affiliations: _____

NSS Number if member: _____

Sustaining Contributors Wanted!

We've got all these great T-shirts that we want to give away to sustaining contributors, and I'll bet you don't have one! There were only 50 of these T-shirts made, and less than that still available. In order to get your hands on one, you need to join our sustaining contributor program. Basically, this works by you telling us how much you would permit us to charge to your credit card account per month, quarter, or year. The minimum in order to get a free T-shirt is 10 dollars per month for at least one year, but you can choose any amount and any interval that suits you best. These donations will go into the general operating fund for the conservancy, which helps pay for the necessities of insurance and other important expenses that our properties endure throughout the year. If you'd like to join this program, please fill out and return this page, and hurry, there's only a limited supply of the T-shirts!



SUSTAINING CONTRIBUTOR

Sustaining Contributor Form

This form is not for membership renewal—see next page for membership renewal or lifetime memberships!

Method of Payment

- Cash
 Check
 Visa
 MasterCard

Make check payable to **WVCC** and return this form to: **WVCC**
PO Box 243
Frankford, WV 24938

Credit Card Authorization

Credit Card Number: _____ Exp Date: _____

Signature: _____

(By signing, you authorize the West Virginia Cave Conservancy to charge you account for the amount, frequency, and duration indicated above.)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Phone No: _____

Email Address: _____

Caving Affiliations: _____

NSS Number if member: _____

The Open Cave

c/o WVCC
PO Box 243
Frankford, WV 24938



FIRST CLASS MAIL

Robert Hoke R 4/24/2004
6304 Kaybro St.
Laurel, MD 20707



Zaphod says, "I'm not taking my head out of the loo unless you remember to renew your membership!"