



The Western Cave Conservancy

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Minutes for the Meeting of the Board of Directors of August 14, 2010

Held at the home Eileen Belan, Antelope, CA

Call to Order: 1:18 pm

List of Attendees

Rolf Aalbu, Denise Aalbu, Jerry Johnson, Bruce Rogers, Bill Papke, Martin Haye, Marianne Russo, Eileen Belan, Mike Spiess, Pat Helton, Morley Hardaker, Kelley Prebil, Jim Lakner

Approval of the Agenda and Minutes

Minutes from last meeting are not available yet. They will be sent out soon.

Motion to approve the agenda passed.

Reports Discussion

Marianne commented on Jerry's HR report: re including all Directors on the Advisory Board list. Are they separate entities? It was agreed to keep them separate. Jerry needs email addresses for all on Advisory Board so he can notify people when their term is up. Also need to get Advisory Board members to pay their dues; most have not responded to the reminder letters sent to them. Eileen and Jerry will get together today to determine which people still have not paid dues.

Marianne commented on Martin's combined format for producing & sending out the committee reports. She's concerned that the Advisors may not bother to download and read the reports. Bill said it was also a bit confusing because there were several versions of the combined reports. If all the reports had been turned in earlier, Martin would have sent it out only once. The final submitted report also included pictures, which made the file much larger. It can take awhile to transfer such a large file over a phone connection. Martin can send/post photos separately to reduce file size. Rolf commented that he'd also still like to have each director give an oral report at the meeting, to prompt comments and discussion. It was decided to have a very brief oral summary as a reminder of the report contents & proceed with discussions about the reports.

President's Report: Martin recapped his activities since last meeting. Also expressed the WCC's sincere appreciation for all the work done by a number of individuals.

Vice-President's Report: Marianne summarized her report. There have been break-ins to M2 cave since its closure (inadequate seal resulted in trash vandalism). An unusual spider found in the cave may be a surface species. There's a possible opportunity to re-open & revisit M2 cave in another year or so, at our expense.

Treasurer's Report: Mike Spiess summarized his activities. We're slightly behind last year in both contributions and expenses. He had questions about tracking pledge payments and discussion ensued. Also need to track various types of contributions separately. Marianne: we do need to track promised monies carefully (e.g., we still have not received from Western Region the proceeds for the past two Speleo-Ed dinners; Marianne will calculate how much they owe us & send them a bill—that might be more effective so they don't have to calculate how much it should be :-). Bill P asked about the \$150,000 listed in fixed assets—what about the field house at Weller? Marianne said we are paying taxes on it, so it's been assessed & she'll find that info; then it can be listed and depreciated in the books. Mike will add it to the books appropriately.

Secretary's Report: Eileen Belan recapped her report. Marianne suggested sending out a self-addressed envelope with the membership renewal letters. It was agreed to also include in the letters a reminder that

the donations can be made online. Should the envelope be stamped? It was decided to track how many donations come back with or without a stamp, and which donations come via online. Online donations will not receive an envelope in the thank-you. Martin has set up a drop box (dropbox.com) to scan the deposit slip & checks & membership forms; then he shares the scans with both Eileen & Mike so that they can update their respective records. It's working very well.

PR Report: Marianne recapped the WCC dog-and-pony show presented to SFBC & other activities. Upcoming: membership campaign and dinner at the Lava Beds Regional Oct 9-11.

Acquisitions Report: Bruce Rogers added to his submitted report re Shasta Caverns for sale: owner isn't interested in continuing to run it & his kids also aren't interested; it barely breaks even so isn't a money-maker; for \$1.3 million, this probably isn't the property we should be looking at purchasing right now. Recapped his discussion with [redacted] property. Bruce suggested and Marianne agreed that perhaps we should design a presentation/brochures aimed at folks like these potential "partners" so they'd understand who we are & what we do & how we could assist/work with them. Bruce was concerned about referring them to our Website if it's not kept up to date.

Stewardship Report: Martin Hays reported on Windler & [redacted] there. There were two trustee trips to the cave. Different grottos have different ways of determining what grotto members are chosen to go on the trips. Rolf said that on a recent trip someone had a great deal of trouble getting out of the cave. Vertical gear is necessary on each trip, even though some people claim that it is not. Need to make sure that all visitors are vertically qualified & experienced (no novices). Also need to make sure the leader is capable of locking the [cave] at the end of the visit. Martin is open to suggestions if people want to send them.

HR Report: Jerry Johnson commented on his report; Eileen said that the report had inaccurate info about who has actually paid their dues, so the report needs to be amended.

Weller Preserve Management Report: Marianne Russo recapped highlights of her report. The new gate is in place (Wayne Cedidla, former welder, did the welding work); Scotch Broom seems to be well under control; they're planning an upcoming trip to work on finalizing the map with Bruce & Matt & Heather; there's a yellow jacket nest on the cliff face (now ~1 ft in size!) located where ropes fall when doing vertical work (Rolf advised spraying the nest, preferably at night, to kill them—they're quite common and non-native).

Research Report: Rolf Aalbu summarized his report. Four items:

- 1) Rolf would like a copy of the report from Tracy/Geo.
- 2) BioBlitz at Weller: Of the participants, only two people have submitted reports thus far. There were ~2 dozen identified samples.
- 3) Went to Bloomington Cave, southern Utah; collected specimens. Went with John Jasper (who has worked in Nutty Putty), who said he'd seen the same beetles in Nutty Putty. Rolf would like to visit Nutty Putty to see the beetles, but WCC advised him today that it's unlikely, as Nutty Putty is "closed" to all.
- 4) M2 may be a candidate for preservation due to its biological inhabitants; John Dooly (Big Name Biologist) wants to come back to M2 in September.

Committee of the Whole

Corporate maintenance - Calif SI 100, process for ensuring things get filed (MH)

Martin just received a notice from the State Attorney General that we haven't paid taxes yet (though we don't typically pay taxes and aren't required to file as our income is less than \$25,000). Who should do this? He receives notices like this because he's at the official address. Mike felt it should be done by the Treasurer. He will work with Martin to compile a list of things to be filed throughout the year, and he will advise Martin when these happen so that Martin can cross them off his own list.

Working with [redacted] (BR)

Bruce spoke with them recently & will follow up.

WNS closures in the West - does WCC need to act at present? (MH, MR)

Marianne again brought up the idea of WCC adopting a policy regarding WNS (she'd suggested it last meeting and had already developed a written policy, but it was tabled then). Discussion followed.

Marianne and Pat/Bruce will work on rewording the policy statement that Marianne had written, and it can be posted on the WCC Website as well as used as handouts when appropriate. The Website will also include links to the NSS policy & decontamination procedures.

--- BREAK 3:00 - 3:20pm ---

Board and committee roster (MS, JJ)

Pat agreed to put together a list of Board, Advisors, etc. with phone, address, & email address. Will start w/MLG roster to gather the info.

Budgets - who, when, what (MS)

Marianne & Martin (as stewards for Windeler and Rippled, respectively) will plan budgets based on their needs for gating, PR materials, etc. & let Mike know within 3 weeks before the next meeting. Marianne will put together the necessary info for budgeting fundraiser dinners.

Fixed Assets (WP) – already discussed.

Reduce number of bank accts (MS)

Mike would like to get rid of two of the four current bank accounts & consolidate into one. There was agreement that this would be good; it will also reduce our exposure to online banking fraud. Mike also encouraged that we find someplace else to put the funds to earn some interest rather than a simple bank account.

Dinner Suggestions (MH)

Need to decide what to serve at the WCC fundraiser dinner at the Western Regional at Lava Beds in October. Discussion ensued. Decided on Lasagna, salad, & French bread.

Advisory board reappointments, email list (JJ)

Jerry will update the list. Some people will be contacted to see if they're still interested in participating, some need to pay dues, and some will be dropped.

Including reports in the minutes - advantages, extra work for public version (MH)

Discussion ensued. Yes, we should still have an official version of the minutes, and we can try making minor mods for a more public version—we'll see how much additional work it really is. Reports will not be included in the public minutes. Newsletters will be offered to Weller neighbors to see if they're interested in receiving them (small expense for good PR!).

Facebook presence - webmaster authority (MH, MR)

Kelley suggested setting up a FaceBook group for WCC. Discussion—this will make it easy to send out updates & easy for the users to get the latest info. It was agreed to set up the group & see how it works out. Kelley will set it up and also add Martin as an admin on the FB account.

[M2 Cave] - raising awareness. Start raising a war chest? (MH)

Discussion about raising funds to purchase the [M2] property. Current owner bought it for \$[redacted]. We don't want to have to manage 600 acres, so even if we could buy it, we'd probably turn around and immediately sell the non-cave land or donate it to another conservancy. It was then compared with Lake Shasta Caverns, also for sale though at \$1.3 million; Mercer Caverns was also discussed. There was the suggestion that we should raise funds for a "downpayment warchest" so we'll have ~\$25K on hand if we

have an opportunity to make an offer on a piece of land. Then we could have a fundraiser for full purchase money for that land purchase. But we would need to have some quick money first. However, if donors give sufficient money to WCC for purchasing caves, they'd want to see some relatively quick action & probably wouldn't want to wait for years to see their donations utilized. There was no decision at this point, but the idea merits further close consideration.

Sharing files on the web - use WCC FTP site? (MS, MH)

Mike Spiess suggested this. Martin now uses FTP to drop files on the Website. He and Kelley will work together on a simple way for other Board members to share files.

Millerton: nobody volunteered to spearhead. Back-burner ok? (MH)

Mike will talk with Sierra Foothill Conservancy about interest in the Millerton area. Mike knows someone there and will get in touch by email.

Avalanche Cave:

There are frequent large scout & church groups that visit. Marianne pulled the register out of Avalanche. She will share it with the Forest Service folks (e.g. Fran Herbst) there.

New Business: 4:30 pm

Three motions:

- 1) Resolved that G.O. "Geo" Groening is hereby appointed to the Advisory Board.
Marianne moved, and Jerry seconded to approve. Passed unanimously.
- 2) Resolved that WCC hereby adopts the attached White Nose Syndrome Policy, which is to be posted on the WCC web site and included with the other information sent to visitors to the Weller Preserve.
Marianne moved & Mike seconded approval. Passed unanimously.
- 3) Whereas WCC currently maintains four separate bank accounts for various purposes, and interest rates are very low obviating the need for at least one of them, and Treasurer has pointed out that maintaining fewer accounts would be easier and reduce our exposure to online fraud, Resolved that President is hereby authorized to close one or more WCC accounts and consolidate the funds held therein to another WCC account.
Eileen moved, and Mike seconded approval. Passed unanimously.

Upcoming Work Meetings

Martin & Marianne arranged a date to get together to work on the Weller Management Plan & Board Manual: September 12.

Next Board Meeting

The next Board Meeting will be October 23, 2010, at the Weller Field House.

There was some discussion about the next Public Meeting location in January. It should be advertised well in advance of the date so that more people can plan to attend. There were suggestions of Fresno (we could check with Roger Mortimer) or Modesto (talk with San Joaquin Valley Grotto to help with arrangements) or other... Decided on Fresno on the 3rd or 4th weekend of January 2011; someone will contact Roger to see if he can help find a location for the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: 5:00 PM

WCC's Policy Regarding White-Nose Syndrome

The WCC recognizes the serious nature of this epidemic and supports the efforts of the NSS to educate cavers, work with public agencies and landowners, and develop guidelines and procedures. These can be viewed at <http://www.caves.org/wns> >. The WCC strongly encourages everyone to visit this Website and learn.

The current WCC policy for Rippled and Windeler Caves: We prohibit the use of cave gear that has been used in caves that are infected by WNS. This includes clothing, helmets, boots, vertical gear, packs, lights, cameras, etc. We strongly encourage cavers to thoroughly clean all their gear between any cave visits to avoid the inadvertent transfer of potentially disruptive organisms.

Decontamination procedures for WNS have been developed, such as those published by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and available through the NSS Website listed above.