



Western Cave Conservancy

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Minutes for the Meeting of the Board of Directors of November 12, 2011

Held at the home of Martin Haye and Dan Snyder in Santa Cruz, California

Call to Order: 1:18pm

Attending were: Martin Haye, Marianne Russo, Jerry Johnson, Eileen Belan, Bruce Rogers, Dan Snyder, Bill Papke, Pat Helton

Attending by Skype: Mike Spiess

Attending by phone: Dave Cowan and Kelley Prebil

Approval of the Agenda

Motion to approve; seconded; all in favor.

Approval of the Minutes

Approval will wait until next meeting.

Reports Discussion

Emailed reports were briefly recapped, and questions and comments discussed. Late breaking reports, if any, are given briefly here.

President's Report: Martin Haye

He's set up Google groups which is easier to administer & Kelley can also handle.

He's stepping down as WCC President on February **28, 2012**.

Vice-President's Report: Marianne Russo

Clough Cave project. It was very successful; weather was wonderful; there were 30 volunteers including people from the park & through WCC recruitments. There was no high line but David Larson had a pump. The cave looks much better now; rimstone is cleaned so that it's visible now. All the broken pieces were scattered "tastefully" throughout the cave. For example, there was a square hole that had been dug in the past & had been re-opened later by curious people; some of the broken pieces were scattered there to obscure the former hole. Found & documented 73 locations of graffiti, most of which were historic. Kaedeon did a great job feeding everyone; only \$670 was spent on food.

Treasurer's Report: Martin for Mike Spiess

Records are up to date (more will be discussed later). State found filing dates wrong.

Secretary's Report: Eileen Belan

She's working on the database of members; needs to mail out reminders; overlooked one of the dropbox messages so will send out apology letters & make sure they're all acknowledged. Donations have been low, mostly made at the Western Regional meeting.

Acquisitions Report: Bruce Rogers

Sempervirens Fund is still working on buying the Cemex property at Davenport (San Vicente Redwoods); discussed a possible cleanup at Helbing Ranch Caves; mentioned photomonitoring or gating

(see previous minutes). Bruce Rogers and Dave Cowan will work together to identify cave names near Standard, CA. There was some discussion about McNamee's Cave area.

Human Resources Report: Jerry Johnson

Public Relations Report: Marianne Russo

A Website working meeting was held at Bruce Rogers & Pat Helton's, and much was accomplished. The "Join Now" page was fixed. Thanks to Bill Papke working with Marianne Russo, the WCC Newsletter is ready to distribute! Marianne wants to get out one more issue by the end of the year, focusing on the work at Clough Cave; we're anticipating that next year we'll be back to 3-4 issues/year. Martin Hays wants to put an item in the next issue (this year) about the progress at Windeler Preserve. Marianne invited & encouraged all the Directors to write articles for the Newsletter. Bruce has one to add as well.

Marianne Russo said we are listed in the NSS List of Conservancies. She will ask Heather McDonald who at the NSS she sends the Valley Caver to for archiving and will send the Newsletter there also.

To do: work on the Website, start working again on the membership drive, and more.

Stewardship Report: Martin Hays

Windeler Cave: A work trip was held, including: weed cutting to avoid fires; markers for the mining claims; Ron Davis suggested a simpler way to secure a lock on the gate inside the cave; need to resecure the ladder; Joel Despain marked areas that should be flagged to avoid traffic there, etc. Dave's group then went in to certain areas and put in lines of pebbles or cords laid out to delineate these areas to be avoided. We had one false alarm on the alarm system. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is still in process with the Forest Service; they say it's on track to finish by the end of the year. There was a suggestion to request an extension to our current agreement (which expires at the end of the year); Martin Hays agreed that if we have no word by December 1, then he'll request an extension. Work on outer gate to be undertaken: Chuck Lee's cousin has done much of the steel work there. The steel set aside for the upper gate at Windeler Cave has been lost so it will need to be replaced. This needs to be done for safety—if someone locked the gate while a group is inside, they couldn't unlock it from the inside; the new gate would remedy that issue.

There's a need to revise the rules for closing the cave to make the entrance less obvious: visitors must replace all the rocks that were there when the cave was unlocked.

NCRC: Ron Davis has helped get information from Roger Mortimer about training, and sent that to Marianne; she will work on it soon.

There will be new trustees chosen in December. Martin Hays will be stepping down, and Ron Davis will probably replace him.

Weller Preserve: This has been a very quiet quarter there, with not much visitation, and hardly any scotch broom! Jerry Johnson has done an outstanding job of getting rid of poison oak around the cave & building. Bruce Rogers has made progress on the cave map. There have never been any indications that anyone has tried to break into the building or even nosed around there. Jerry started some work on the layout of the tool shed. The plywood on the stool shed has not resisted moisture well, so we've put 3 coats of paint on it but it still doesn't hold up well. Jerry found out that it's difficult to purchase weather-resistant plywood (or paint) anymore.

Volunteers (Jerry Johnson)

There are currently 41 members on the Advisory Board. Marianne Russo wants to nominate Jerry Nickelsburg (SoCal Grotto) to the Board. Jerry Johnson has started working on changes to the Mission Statement because our mission focus has changed somewhat as we've grown. There was discussion about what needs to be reworded (Bylaws? Mission Statement? Articles of Incorporation? Other? Need to refile w/Secretary of State? IRS?). It was decided to just change the Mission Statement—the other

documents seem to be balanced with what we actually do and don't need to be changed. We could have the revision ready to announce and/or vote on at the Public Meeting.

Marianne Russo: WCC job descriptions should be posted online, and Martin Hays started with a couple but hasn't posted the rest yet. Mike Spiess suggested there should be two levels of the job descriptions: a broad description for someone who's interested in the position, and one that gives detailed instructions for the procedures for that individual to follow (the "nuts & bolts" of how to do the job). Marianne and Jerry will take the lead on getting this completed and sent to Martin to post online. There are a couple of new positions they're adding.

Budget Discussion (Mike Spiess)

Discussed the proposed 2012 budget that Mike had submitted, made some changes to both anticipated income and expenses, and Mike redid the spreadsheet on the spot. It's approved as a tentative budget, and the formal presentation and vote will be done at the January Public Meeting.

Do we still need to be registered with the state of Oregon? Mike said he'd filed the wrong form with Oregon by mistake. It will cost us \$10 per year if we're planning to send solicitations for donations via the postal system to people in that state. For Arizona we had to have a notarized form submitted to them each year; we've dropped that.

Say No to BofA. There was discussion about withdrawing our funds from Bank of America and moving to another institution, such as a Credit Union. We'd still need to have debit cards as well as full online banking capability. Martin Hays suggested that we wait until after the new president, etc., are installed next year.

Break: 3:10 – 3:28pm

Committee of the Whole

Prospects for cave purchases (Dan Snyder)

Dan Snyder presented info about some properties that have been watched for awhile: Near Murpheys there are caves. Dan spoke with the developer who owns the site, and they are desperate to unload the property or at least to get some cash infusion and continue to develop the property. The caves are a problem for them as developers, and they're being told to "seal them up". They were open to selling us a portion of the property with the caves, which are a liability for them. This could be a first-step into purchasing and/or managing some property that could be "developed" as greenspace with hiking trails etc. Problem: people tend to dump trash in the open space, so we'd have to provide oversight & maintenance. We'd probably have 20-30 acres...not huge, but not insignificant. Not currently being grazed. And yes, we could use some of the caves for recreational caving trips.

The next properties are WNW of Weed, the three caves near Pluto's Cave. It might be possible to buy the properties from the owners, who have never developed on them and may want to sell.

Pro and con of helping Bureau of Rec - New Melones locate all their caves (Marianne Russo)

Marianne Russo: Matt Bowers has been working to get a project with the Bureau of Reclamation to geolocate their caves in the New Melones area. They'd also like all the inventory information we can give them about all the caves. Problem: they require that we have a million dollars of insurance. There's money for the project, but we couldn't spend the money on an insurance policy. Unfortunately, we don't have the personnel/time right now to devote to this major project; we're looking for a Director of Special Projects. How many caves are in that area? Is the Volunteers in Parks Program available through the Bureau of Recreation as it is through the National Park Service? There was much discussion about pros & cons of this project and whether we have the capability of doing this.

Rippled dig straw poll (Dan Snyder)

Dan Snyder: Dig in Rippled Cave? There's an end to one of the passages that looks like it could be a promising lead if some rocks/boulders were moved. Support for the project? Discussion—need to do more inventory of the area and of the cave before moving anything. It appears that it **could** be the furthest reach of the limestone there. Not much support at this time for moving things inside the cave. Dan then asked about excavating at a sinkhole he's found on the property and there was more support for that. He will write and submit a proposal for the work he'd like to do.

Membership discussion (poll, new requirements, etc.) (Kelley Prebil)

Membership Discussion (Kelley Prebil)

We have a lot of people on committees and even on the Advisory Board who are not WCC members. What about people who lead trips to Rippled Cave—should they be WCC members?

Marianne Russo said that we've agreed to give a "pass" to anyone who comes to a Director & says that they just can't afford the membership but would like to be involved & help out otherwise. This has not been abused at all. Now the issue is committee members & trustees. We gave a membership to Dave Bunnell the year he donated a lot of auction items to benefit the WCC. Some of the Advisory Board members have never paid membership, never attended a meeting, etc. Why are they on the Advisory Board? This is difficult to enforce because we don't always get out the membership request letters on time, and we don't yet have the database to determine easily who is & is not a "member". Possibilities: send not just one letter, but two or three reminders; send an email with a link to our Website where there's an easy online pay button; send thank-you emails for the work they have helped with; even try a survey to ask "why are you a member" or "why are you not a member". There was much discussion about this.

Dan Snyder suggested adding an item in each newsletter like "Who's benefiting from the WCC?" and list the groups that have had trips to Windeler or to Rippled etc. Great idea—Marianne will add it to the newsletter!

Member database auto-email ideas (Kelley Prebil)

Non-responders to advisory board email change (Martin Hays)

How many people want to be on the Advisory Board? 13 out of the 41 did not respond to the invitation to join the Google group for Advisory Board.

Board recruitment (Martin Hays)

None as yet. Marianne Russo: Kelley Prebil was somewhat interested in a couple of the positions. Marianne also talked with Steve Hobson, who is thinking about it & hasn't gotten back to her yet. Neil Marchington is also interested but at this time he's overwhelmingly busy. Martin Hays: We have room to expand the Board, and can expand to new positions if someone is interested.

Jerry Nickelsburg for advisory board (MRusso)

Marianne Russo recommended Jerry Nickelsburg for the Advisory Board. He attends functions and asked her about it.

New Business:

Motion: that we appoint Jerry Nickelsburg to the Advisory Board.

Marianne Russo moved, Mike Spiess seconded, all in favor. Motion passed.

Meeting Planning

Database work meeting at Eileen's (Mike Spiess, Martin Haye, Marianne Russo, Eileen Belan, Kelley Prebil): January 7 at noon

WCC Public Meeting: January 28, 2012, at Bill & Peri Frantz's home in Los Gatos.

Adjournment: 5:12 pm