



Western Cave Conservancy

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**Minutes for the Winter Meeting of the Board of Directors
on January 19, 2013 (Annual Public Meeting)
Held at Lexus of Stevens Creek, San Jose, California**

***Next Meeting:
April 27, 2013, at California State University, Chico, CA***

Call to Order: at 1:11p

Attending were: Marianne Russo, Jerry Johnson, Bruce Rogers, Mike Spiess, Pat Helton, Steve Ruble, Barb Ruble, Bill Frantz, Peri Frantz, Martin Haye, Gale Beach, Ray Beach, James Lakner, Steven Johnson, Nick Schmalenberger, Terry Silva, Gail McCoy, David Weaver

Attending by phone (at various times): John Moreno, Neil Marchington, Dave Cowan

Approval of the Agenda

moved, seconded; all in favor.

Approval of Draft Minutes of November 17, 2012, Meeting

moved, seconded; all in favor.

Officer Reports Discussion

Officers and directors briefly recapped their emailed reports and discussed any questions.

President's Report: Marianne Russo

The amount raised at last year's Regional dinner: Gail McCoy (WR Treasurer) is still waiting for final figures.

Marianne Russo learned how to get a certificate of insurance for us.

She's sent out all the thank-you letters for auction items last fall.

She sent out the year-end appeal, although quite late in the year. We know it should have gone out earlier.

Jim Lakner arranged for this room at Lexus of Stevens Creek—thank you!

On January 5, Marianne Russo, Jerry Johnson, Bruce Rogers, and Pat Helton got together at Bruce & Pat's and made good progress on updating the Board Manual. They also got WCC documents in an electronic form from Martin Haye.

Marianne Russo is resigning as WCC President; she's held that position for 10 years except for a brief break when Martin took it. She's learned a lot and feels it's a worthwhile endeavor and just wants to take on other tasks within the WCC. Peri Frantz moved that we all give her a big round of applause, and we did. ☺

Vice-President's Report: Mike Spiess

A very professional report, if quite brief: Nothing to report.

Treasurer's Report: Mike Spiess

He received ~\$1300 from PayPal late in the year, and \$150 in checks, for the WCC. This doubled our income for 2012. He's been concerned about the slow, steady decline in membership, especially since the push to purchase the Weller Preserve/Rippled Cave several years ago.

We need to approve the proposed budget for next year. It's based on last year's budget, as he didn't receive requests from all the directors. We haven't spent a lot last year.

Secretary's Report: John Moreno

There were several people who didn't show up in the listings who had donated...we need to look into the reason for that. He is stepping down as WCC Secretary and will be delivering all the secretarial items and files soon at Bruce's.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Public Relations Committee Report: Kaedean Doppelmayr

Kaedean is stepping down due to a full schedule. We'll need to find someone to take over the PR tasks; we really need to re-invigorate PR for the organization.

Acquisitions Committee Report: Bruce Rogers

Bruce Rogers talked about his work with POST/SF. He discussed Tom Gilleland's recent visit & his evaluation about gating three entrances to White Moon Cave. Other caves in the surrounding area haven't been relocated. We may need to call on volunteers to assist with the gating work. Bruce hasn't been able to work much on the Rippled Cave map or other possible acquisitions because of all the time invested with POST/SF.

He talked about a cave east of Bakersfield mostly because of reports of additional rooms through a tiny squeeze. There was also a report from a woman regarding water resources in the area. He's also been in touch with Matt Bowers regarding developing signage at Calaveras Natural Bridges, but that's still on hold pending hearing from them.

MOU with POST/SF re: CEMEX (San Vicente Redwoods) tract. We need to resurvey parts of the caves plus other caves. Lots of work to be done there.

Who chose the name White Moon Cave? The owners are quite paranoid about others finding out about the caves, so they wanted a “code name” for the main one when discussing it, particularly with the recent KQED film. Bruce suggested a rarer obscure names used in the later 1960’s. The name is not in any publications except it is now after the KQED film, and on the site treehuggers.com. A concerted effort was made to make sure that the cave location was obscured in the filming as well.

Are there any plans to relocate the other caves on the property? Yes, that’s been mentioned to POST/SF (one cave was covered in an article in the Cal Caver in 1962). This is one of our plans as well.

Bruce will send the URL for the film out to the Board—can Google for “Shadows & Spiders” on KQED:

<<http://science.kqed.org/quest/video/shadows-and-spiders-a-secret-cave-in-california/>>

Property Stewardship Committee Report: Kelley Prebil (Kelley Prebil cannot attend; M.Russo will summarize report.)

The Windeler Cave trustees for 2013 are as follows:

- Kelley Prebil – SFBC
- Jef Levin – Diablo Grotto
- Dave Bunnell – Unaffiliated Cavers
- Mark Bowers – SJVG/Stanislaus Grotto
- Ron Davis – Mother Lode Grotto (MLG)
- TBD – Unaffiliated Cavers

There are some other changes in the agreement with the owners (Forest Service) at Windeler.

Kelley Prebil’s organized the info needed per the new agreement. She’s also talked with Val Hildreth regarding doing some restoration work at Windeler Cave, particularly the repair of a broken stalactite.

Working on a rescue pre-plan [for Windeler Cave] with NCRC. Now planning on a day to go out and plan the steps necessary for a rescue or self-rescue.

Martin Hayw added some details about the agreement, and extended compliments to Kelley for all her work on Windeler Cave and working with the individuals involved. Others agreed with her ability to get things done and to work with others.

a) Weller Preserve Manager’s Report: Marianne Russo

They dropped a couple of trees on the property, one near the driveway, and a neighbor helped to cut them up and took away the firewood. A win-win for all. They took a storage cabinet up there for storage in the shed.

Several grottos are planning work/caving days at the Weller Preserve. They have the option of staying overnight (work one day, camp overnight, and cave the next day). We

need to do continued brush removal, working on trails, keeping the poison oak under control around the trails.

Marianne will continue as the Weller Preserve Manager.

Volunteer Resources Committee Report: Jerry Johnson

One of the ongoing issues has been our ability to contact & talk with the Advisors, and find out what they'd like to do. Jerry will be contacting each Advisor soon to find out what they want to do (become a Director?) and what talents/skills they have and would like to use. We'll also be getting together to continue work on the Board Manual. This will be important as we recruit new people to be on the Board. We have four Directors whose terms are up in 2013, and they'll need to be replaced or reappointed (including Mike Spiess & Bruce Rogers). We started out with staggered terms so that all would not expire at the same time.

Mike Spiess suggested: When people renew as Advisors, ask them what they'd like to do as volunteers. We also should have a manual for each position, outlining not only the duties for that position, but also HOW they can accomplish that.

Special Projects Committee Report: Neil Marchington

Everything was in the report. Still working on the MOU there. Progress on CND is slow; it's hard to get the US Forest Service (USFS) to do anything. Still working on ideas for promoting the WCC at the Regional there this year. Regarding another sensitive cave (EIP): how would the WCC be involved? Much like the involvement at Windeler, WCC could take an advisory role and approach issues as they come. Martin Haye: Also if they need funding for gates etc, the WCC can help (as well as the Region).

Science Committee Report: Unfilled Position

2:11p: Board Recess—15 minutes. Will re-convene as Committee of the Whole for general discussion of issues.

-- Reconvened at 2:39p. (while others are still trying to make the projector/screen work together)

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Scheduled was a presentation of the KQED –PBS Film “Shadows and Spiders” about the geology and biology of White Moon Cave (Santa Cruz vicinity project) (time: 9 minutes). Following the film Bruce Rogers will be leading a discussion about progress on this project and asking for input from meeting attendees.

We tried to show the film but had numerous technical difficulties. Bruce reported that once the MOU is in place, then we'll get some people together to work on the mapping and recon work. He mentioned Nadia Hamey (works security for CEMEX) and Sandy Lyon and others who have historic knowledge of the area. Evidently CEMEX turned over

nothing to SVF-POST (Sempervirens Fund-Peninsula Open Space Trust) about the caves, so they're delighted to get any info from us that we can provide. It appears that we're all on the same page: to preserve the caves, do research, and have limited trips to visit the cave(s). Bruce will be discussing with them the possibility of arranging perhaps once-a-year trips for cavers to just visit.

Marianne Russo suggested that we may want to have rescue pre-plans in place. Bill & Ethan Frantz, Bruce Rogers, and Nick Schmalenberger have worked with Santa Cruz SAR groups (the Santa Cruz Sheriff's Department, the Santa Cruz Fire Department, and California State Parks folks) last year in Cave Gulch, and they recognize the potential problems with cave rescue, so they may be quite ready to help with pre-planning at Davenport. Nadia Hamey is also interested. Ray Beach asked if they've been in touch with BAMR (Bay Area Mountain Rescue). Ethan Frantz is with BAMR and has worked with the Santa Cruz folks. Martin Haye and Dan Snyder will be interested in joining that rescue plan group. Martin has experience at Windeler.

Dave Cowan asked if any seacaves are included in this property. Bruce Rogers said he has talked with them about the fact that they have some on their adjacent coastal property, and they're eager to have WCC work with them to identify their caves. This will be a separate project.

Bill Frantz: Does POST plan to pass this CEMEX (San Vicente Redwoods) property on to anyone else? Bruce: No, but they will be passing the conservation easement on to Save The Save the Redwoods League & Santa Cruz Land Trust so that it will be perpetually preserved from development.

General Issues and Potential Projects

- 1) Schedule Work Meetings: While our January 5 meeting was productive it was just the beginning. We should schedule at least two more work meetings to continue working on the Board Manual and job descriptions, etc. BRING YOUR CALENDARS!!
- 2) Should the WCC join Sempervirens and POST?: (Rogers) Since we are working with these organizations to develop a management plan for the Cemex Redwoods caves, perhaps we should consider offering at least a token financial support.

Martin Haye/Dan Snyder and Peri/Bill Frantz are members of POST at \$50 & \$100/year—they're now looking into the cost for membership with POST & SF...

- 3) Investing \$ in an NSS Fund: (Spiess) News regarding whether the NSS Foundation is interested in handling our funds or not.

No news at this time. Mike Spiess has contacted the NSS Foundation & is waiting to hear back from them. Peri Frantz and Martin Haye both said they have had very positive experiences with them. We need to know how long it would take to liquidate from them if we needed it quickly for a purchase opportunity.

- 4) Membership Database: (Mike Spiess/Marianne Russo) *There have been discussions regarding possible modifications to our database which would allow for automated dues reminders. Note: We received an email from Advisor Roger Mortimer saying that he fully supported the idea of getting an email reminder for dues since it is so easy for him to renew using a card and a handy electronic device. Is this the right time or are there other things that need to happen first?*

We're now putting in the email addresses for everyone, and will also add skillsets. In reviewing the membership list, Marianne was aware that for the first time we lost four members last year. ☺ We can now (soon) send out reminders via email rather than paying postage—a cost-saving measure for us. Occasionally people want to pay up for a couple of years in advance, and the database may need to be modified a bit to accommodate that. Also, if a person renews in summer, and they still donate at the year-end appeal, does that change their renewal date? Yes. Jim Lakner reminded us that a couple of years ago we had agreed that all memberships would be up at the end of the year and prorated for their first year. That was never implemented, so we're not doing that. There was emphasis on the fact that we really need to implement the automatic reminders. If someone does not want to use the email reminders, they should just not give us an email address. John Moreno said that if there was no email listed for members, he just looked it up (so that opt-out may not work).

- 5) Online Resources for Cave Conservancies and Non-Profits: (Marianne Russo/Bruce Rogers) *The cave conservancies are starting up a restricted section of Cave Chat network just for the conservancies to be able to communicate with each other. Should all directors be included? The Land Trust Alliance is also offering a similar service for “all volunteer” land trusts like us (Bill Frantz sent us this notice) and I received an announcement for a series of Webinars aimed at maximizing your donation success. While the actual webinars are over, they listed links to reference material that might be very helpful to us. Perhaps visiting these sites would be useful during one of our work meetings.*

Peri Frantz: The WCC should consider doing a one-time Webinar for the NSS, talking about the caves, our management efforts, etc. This could assist us in getting support from outside the West who'd like to assist with our conservation efforts. Mike Spiess agreed that this would be good & proposed that Bruce Rogers should do it. Martin Haye: Should we essentially do our dog-and-pony show? Yes, that would be good. Gale Beach: Should we wear tags at the Convention? That could help with PR and to solicit donations (“I support the WCC” or “Help the WCC—ask me how” or something similar)—we could carry brochures & accept donations on the spot rather than refer them back to a table in such-and-such Building. Matt Bowers is planning to take the NSS BOG members to Windeler Cave at the BOG meeting, and Peri mentioned that the BOG need to know about this asap because they're making their travel plans now and need to accommodate that. They need to be told about how tight it is, the culvert entrance/exit problems, and the timing of the trip. Gale suggested that the info be sent directly to the BOG members, not posted on the Webpage about the meeting. It should be restricted to the BOG.

Mike Spiess: Is the WCC still a member of LTA (Land Trust Alliance)? Marianne Russo: No. It was expensive and we were saving our money to buy Weller Preserve at the time. Dave Cowan: We could also join as an individual rather than organization. Mike Spiess: They also have an accreditation process that could be useful for us. Marianne Russo: We will reconsider it.

Re NSS's Cave Chat: it's complicated to join this group but should be very worthwhile. Bruce is looking into how to join. It's a great opportunity to interact with other conservancies besides once a year at the roundtable at Convention. The next one will probably be in Texas.

6) *Possible WCC campground in Mother Lode for cavers: At our Fall meeting we discussed the idea of buying some property that cavers could use as a campground during visits to the Mother Lode region. Since this would be of the most interest to Bay Area cavers, what do folks think of this idea? Is this something appropriate for the WCC to investigate?*

Also re camping at Weller: we need water & power.

Neither Diablo Grotto nor San Francisco Bay Chapter seem to have a need for camping in the MotherLode—they normally do day trips. Where would this be needed?

Marianne: probably in the Calaveras County area.

Jim Lakner: What about the Forest Service campground—it has buildings there.

Peri Frantz: Not sure any one spot would be central, considering how expansive the “MotherLode” area is. Several comments that WCC could use its funds better by buying cave properties rather than this. It would also have an effect on our insurance/liability. Cavers have changed; they used to spend the weekend & camp overnight, but the younger cavers seem to prefer to do one-day outings.

Mike Spiess: We'd need to look at cost plus cost of maintenance. The idea doesn't look like one to pursue.

Later Dave Cowan suggested that we should talk with the campground operators and make some arrangements with them to be able to use their showers for a few bucks etc.

John Moreno also suggested we use the Cave of the Catacombs property, which has a building. Then there was support for purchasing property that has a cave, and we could camp on that property. Cave of the Catacombs is actually a good possibility for purchase if the owner's agreeable, and John Moreno said he would contact the owner.

7) *Open discussion about WCC activities/direction/volunteer participation: Questions, comments, and suggestions from meeting attendees. This is a chance to exchange ideas.*

John Moreno suggest the project of contacting the expired members and ask about rejoining.

Peri Frantz expressed concern about our dropping membership.

John Moreno said it's because we're not actively marketing the WCC.

Peri thinks part of the problem is that we haven't done anything splashy recently that brings “cave access” like Weller Preserve & Windeler Cave. We had membership pulses associated with those projects. White Moon Cave hasn't brought a lot of caver attention (no increased access...yet).

Mike Spiess: A project is much more splashy than just asking for donations.

Gale Beach: Some people donate because that's what they do; others need to see something going on to spur donations. The newsletter is a good way to get the info out about what's going on.

David Weaver: Another way is to have the trustees remind trip participants that they're enjoying the trip because of the WCC, and here's a donation/membership envelope.

Marianne Russo said she does this when people go to Rippled Cave.

Mike Spiess: Getting articles for the newsletter is difficult. One of the land trusts he belongs to has put out an item in each newsletter about a type of bird, or grasses, or something else on the land.

Marianne Russo: One of the problems with sending the newsletters electronically was that we sent out a link to the newsletter, but that didn't work well because even a Director never followed the link.

Martin Hays: Then we sent out just the first paragraph of the articles, with a link to the remainder of the article.

Jerry Johnson also has amassed info about the wildlife & plants at Weller.

Bruce Rogers said he's looking into setting up a possible project on the seacaves at GGNRA, which could be done with Redwood Grotto and with WCC.

8) Other items presented at the meeting:

None.

1/4 – 1/2 hour break to craft motions arising from discussions and reports as needed)

NEW BUSINESS (Board Reconvenes)

MOTIONS

- 1) Appointments to the Board of Directors
- 2) Election of new President
- 3) Appointments to Advisory Board if applicable
- 4) Any policy decisions coming out of Committee of the Whole
- 5) Donate \$50 to Peninsula Open Space Trust
- 6) Donate \$50 to Sempervirens Fund
- 7) Donate \$250 to rejoin the Land Trust Alliance

Formal Motions:

That we nominate and appoint Mike Spiess for a term of three years to the Board of Directors.

Neil Marchington moved, Jerry Johnson seconded, all in favor

That we nominate and appoint Bruce Rogers for a term of three years to the Board of Directors.

Mike Spiess moved, Neil Marchington seconded, all in favor

That we nominate and appoint Bruce Rogers as President of the WCC.
Mike Spiess moved, Neil Marchington seconded, all in favor

That we nominate and appoint Marianne Russo as Secretary of the WCC.
Mike Spiess moved, Bruce Rogers seconded, all in favor

That we donate \$50 to Sempervirens Fund.
Neil Marshington moved, Jerry Johnson seconded, all in favor

That we donate \$50 to Peninsula Open Space Trust.
Jerry Johnson moved, Mike Spiess seconded, all in favor

That we spend \$250 to re-join the Land Trust Alliance.
Mike Spiess moved, Neil Marchington seconded, all in favor

Mike will take care of the expenditures.

The next meeting of the Board of Directors will take place at Chico State University on April 27, 2013 at 1pm.

Based on email responses, the suggested date is April 27 (Sat) or 28 (Sun).
Suggested locations: Weller Preserve or Chico Univ. State Farm.
Bruce Rogers also suggested: USFS Grindstone Ranger Station
Mike Spiess also suggested: Amador County Fairgrounds

Meeting adjourned at 4:38pm.

On January 24, 2013, Bruce sent out an email to all the Directors, asking for their votes on two unfinished items from the meeting:

That we affirm Kelley Prebil as a Director in the WCC for another two years (so as to make her appointment as a Director a full three year appointment).

and

That we approve Treasurer Mike Spiess's proposed WCC Budget for 2013.
(Mike presented his proposed budget at the Saturday, Jan. 19 meeting at San Jose Lexus and the Directors should all have a copy.)

By January 28, 2013, all the Directors had voted in favor of both these motions; Bruce announced to the Directors that the motions have passed

Minutes respectfully submitted,

Pat Helton, WCC Recording Secretary

Marianne Russo, WCC Secretary