



Western Cave Conservancy

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DRAFT Minutes for the Fall Meeting of the Board of Directors on Saturday, October 26, 2013

Held at the home of Ric Gates, Sacramento, CA

Next Meeting (Annual Public Meeting):

January 25, 2014, at 1pm at possibly Livermore or Frantz's or POST offices, CA

Call to Order: at 1:07p

Attending were: Bruce Rogers (President), Marianne Russo (Secretary), Jerry Johnson (Director of Volunteer Resources), Mike Spiess (VP & Treasurer), Pat Helton (Recording Secretary), Ric Gates (Advisor), Jim Lakner (Advisor)

Attending by phone: Neil Marchington (Director of Special Projects)

Approval of the Agenda

By acclamation; no discussion, no dissention.

Approval of Minutes of August 3, 2013, Meeting

Pat will correct attendance (Mike Spiess attended by phone).

Mike moved, Marianne seconded; all in favor.

Officer Reports Discussion

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

President's Report: Bruce Rogers

Bruce recapped his report (he will re-send it to everyone after the meeting). He participated in a novice caving trip in Santa Cruz and shared info with them about the WCC. He also met with the staff at Don Edwards and discussed seacaves and a possible trip to the Farallones.

Pat and I attended the September 20, 2013, grand opening of the "Crystals, Caves & Kilns" exhibition at the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History, where the WCC is represented; the exhibit will move to the Felton Museum in February 2014. Talked with Math Science Nucleus (Fremont teacher resource center) about caves. Will be presenting a talk about seacaves at Point Reyes on Thursday, November 14. Dale Pate (NPS) and Tamara Williams (GGNRA) were at the July 25 meeting at Marin Headlands, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, where Ed Strausser (Redwood Grotto) and Bruce & Pat met with staff of GGNRA and Pt Reyes National Rec Area to discuss a seacave project, likely to begin in fall 2014.

Vice-President's Report: Mike Spiess

Nothing to report.

Treasurer's Report: Mike Spiess

Normal junk.... We're now paying the California Rural Fire Fee. Assessor's office has reassessed & did not raise our exemption. We need to call them & get that corrected (should pay only about \$25). Add agenda item: Project Accounting. This is the first time we've had "restricted funds" to be spent only on specific projects.

Budget was submitted. He suggested we should have an Audit Committee, who do not have signing authority, to review our procedures & budgets. Budget notes: worked on income, donations, memberships. No plans for event fundraising.

Budgeted \$1,500 for insurance—we paid more this year because of the change to a different agent/policy, but it should be the same for next year. Net income ~\$1100 this year. Nice bump up in membership this year, which should help. Contributions & membership income have been good and we still have fourth quarter to go. No big expenses at Weller. We could add ~\$500 to the Windeler budget.

Mike also added a new category of expenses for LTA (our membership in other conservation organizations like POST). Perhaps we could set up autopay?

Re electricity for Weller: PG&E estimated \$4,000 for the required transformer, but they can't do anything until the county makes a determination about whether ours is a residence or business building—at this point we have neither. Looking into options.

Bruce suggested that it's time to print new brochures, so it was agreed to raise the Educational Materials—Printing budget from \$150 to \$300.

Marianne asked Mike to check on whether (and when) we received a check from the Western Region for the dinner WCC put on last fall at the Frogtown Regional. Marianne's been asking Matt Bowers about it for several months and doesn't think it's been sent to us yet.

Re the kitchen equipment: It's currently residing with Marc & Kaedean, and they're no longer active with the WCC. Suggestion: Bruce could contact them & explain that we need to inventory & plan for our next dinner activities, so we need to find out what we have. Someone can arrange to pick up the items from their place, or they could drop them off at, for example, Ric Gates' place.

QuickBooks: Mike uses this to keep our books, and if anyone else wants to look at it they'll need QuickBooks. He's allocated ~\$50 in the budget to purchase or upgrade this if necessary.

Petty Cash: Should be about \$70, which Marianne has with her.

PayPal: YTD activity has been ~\$917.

Mike asked Neil about the expense report he submitted: when Mike received it, it was blank. Neil said it was filled out when he sent it; Marianne said the version she received was completed, and Jim had a printed copy here that was complete. Mike will reimburse Neil right away.

We had some discussion about adding a "donate" button on the Website for donations (via PayPal) that will go to the Sandy Glacier/Redmond Project. This would be in SquareSpace. Suggestion: Neil, Mike, and Kelley need to talk very soon about how this is to be done most effectively.

Secretary's Report: Marianne Russo

She has a nice letter to Jim Hildebrand for Bruce to sign today.

We currently have 76 member households (95 individuals).

The most important goal for this quarter is to get out a year-end appeal. Want to emphasize our conservation activities, especially at Redmond Caves & CEMEX Redwoods, assisting landowners etc. The best time for this appeal is probably around Thanksgiving—Mike suggested just after Thanksgiving. The individuals can go to the Website & pay/donate via PayPal, or send a check. Even though it was late last year, we still had a good response & donations/memberships.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Public Relations Committee Report: Vacant Position

No Director; no report.

Jerry suggested that the responsibilities could be divided up and we could have two individuals to handle Public Relations, so that it's not so overwhelming.

Acquisitions Committee Report: Bruce Rogers

Bruce reviewed his written report. Tom Gilleland is currently at CEMEX (San Vicente Redwoods) with his welder (also named Bruce) installing cave gates, expected to be completed about Monday or Tuesday. They will have assistants coming from SoCal on Sunday to help out for one day. White Moon Cave is being gated. Marianne asked about another major cave...no, that will be left alone; it's very difficult to get to and the location is not obvious. In a 1992 trip report, the presence of Townsends bog-eared bats in that cave was noted, so any gate must be bat-friendly. If it turns out that people are looking for it, then we can revisit the gating issue. Yet another cave is much the same—difficult to get to and not obvious. It, too, is a major Townsends big-eared bat colony location; hence it would require special consideration in gating.

Did some work on the Rippled Cave digital map, but need to check out & clarify some places in the cave before continuing with the map.

Someone asked about a cave near King Tut's Cave—needs to talk with Glen Malliet, offering to gate & manage the cave they own. The owners are not very happy with visitors on their property. Glen has a dig going also (in another cave?). There's also another nearby cave (Jim described a passage going down) which Bruce says is now on private property & thus inaccessible.

Bruce also spent some time looking for mining records in the USGS Library, but didn't find anything about the Rippled Quarry.

Anticipated work: field check for the Rippled Map; go to Vasco Caves area (but not into the caves)—David Weaver & Chuck Chavdarian have both talked with folks about having the WCC get involved with the caves in the area (an Ohlone rock art site); start on a geologic map of the Weller Preserve; one of the Preserve managers for Sempervirens Fund has moved to work for MidPeninsula Open Space Trust, so Bruce mentioned to him that his new area has caves and he will contact later to discuss them; possible seacave inventory work on POST seacoast land.

Property Stewardship Committee Report: Kelley Prebil

a) Weller Preserve Manager’s Report: Marianne Russo

This is the first quarter they haven’t been able to visit & do work at Weller Preserve. She’s looked into getting electricity run to the building, and will continue to get costs of wiring the building and running PG&E power in. Mike will also look into the feasibility and cost of installing solar panels. Presently Amador County does not permit pit toilets, composting toilets, etc. Neil suggested a portapotty on a small trailer, which could be towed to a “dump site” and cleaned out. Marianne & Mike will continue to look into the options. Marianne will start work there once again, removing leaves & debris and trying to finish off the Tool Shed. Bruce has purchased a couple of bolts to install above the vertical entrance—to be installed at a later time.

b) Windeler Cave Report: Kelley Prebil

She’s leading a trip to Windeler in a week or two.

Volunteer Resources Committee Report: Jerry Johnson

Still have 3 open positions for Directors. No one’s up for reappointment until next year.

Special Projects Committee Report: Neil Marchington

Will continue looking for funding sources for Redmond. Will be spending money for Sandy Glacier soon. Some research already done, and he will be paying them.

What about CND? Bruce has emailed with Steve Knudsen around the time of the government shutdown and everything was put on hold then. Bruce said that yes, we’d like to be involved if that’s possible. CND is adjacent to Federal Monument property and thus doesn’t fall under the stricter rules that govern Parks. It would be good to have some sort of agreement among the “players” and come up with a management plan. Neil agreed to take the lead on this and see what he can find out about who’s in charge of the cave etc. and keep us informed.

Science Committee Report: Vacant Position

No director; no report.

[Board Recess –15 minutes; Re-convene as Committee of the Whole for general discussion of issues.]

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

General Issues and Potential Projects:

1) Scheduled Work Meetings: After the success of several small working group meetings, we should schedule more work meetings to continue working on the Board Manual, Job Descriptions, etc. **BRING YOUR CALENDARS!!**

It was agreed that we need to do this. Suggested that we spend a day writing articles for a newsletter issue. Alternatively, or in addition, Geo has agreed to print a page or so of WCC news in the Cal/Western Caver newsletter. Neil agreed to produce a couple of pages (maybe 3-4) of text & photos about the projects he's working on. Jerry will write something on Weller (photomonitoring, Indian use of the area, etc.) with lots of photos. We will plan to meet sometime in late November to compile what we can produce by then.

2) Director's Positions:

1. **Public Relations Director.** Who can we find to fill this position? Chuck Chavdarian was asked in early July if he would be interested in the Director of Public Relations. He wants to see a Position Description. This Position Description still needs to be written—and soon.
2. **Science Director.** Chuck Chavdarian, Gary "Geo" Graening and Shelly Arregui are interested.
 - A. **Chuck Chavdarian** is a retired organic/pharmaceutical chemist and does part-time consulting and is based in the SF Bay Area.
 - B. **Geo Graening** is a biologist who has his own biology remediation/study company, teaches at Sacramento State University, and is based in Sacramento.
 - C. **Shelly Arregui** has a broad science background of both natural science and engineering, is currently involved with outreach activities, and is based at the Univ. of Washington.At the break, Neil sent a message to Shelly. He will try to meet or email with her & invite her to join the work at Sandy Glacier or other work, and get an idea of her level of capabilities, knowledge, interest, etc., and how she might best fit into the WCC.
3. **Land Research Director.** This person (and any committee formed by that Director) would scour the Western States for possible caves to buy, lease, or become involved with in some manner. Do we have any candidates for this position as one of the new Directors or do we need to advertise this position in the WCC, NSS Western Region, or elsewhere? David Smith of SAG was mentioned; has he been contacted?

Dave Smith should be invited to be an Advisor, and he could look into any possible acquisitions in his area. Dan Snyder may be a good resource for him, since Dan's already done land research throughout the area. Jerry will contact Dan and then Dave about that, and will let Dave know that advisors must also be members (@\$25)

Marianne suggested that it would be a great idea to work with the FS or Park(?) to help with the area around Avalanche Cave (actually on Sierra Pacific Industries land). There are other nearby caves like Ant Lion. Perhaps we could put up educational signs? May have some maps (Paul Greaves & possibly Leissring/McDonald). Perhaps could install cave registers to monitor the level of actual visitation?

3) Vice President Position Description: The Vice President's position needs rewriting to make it more useful. Do we have any more suggestions for tasks to be incorporated besides archiving records of the WCC's actions? As part of writing grant proposals (assuming we get further into that task), Jerry Johnson suggested making part of this job field oriented as much as possible since just writing grants soon wears out the person writing.

Need to do sometime soon.

4) Speleo-Ed Seminar: *Who might be going to the next Western Regional reportedly to be held in the greater San Diego, CA area? We need an up-to-date report to give to the assembled masses at the Western Region meeting that Saturday evening.*

5) WCC Wish List: *We have a suggestion for some time to compile a WCC Wish List. Who will generate this and where should this be posted/published? Should this be advertised in the WCC Newsletter and/or in the Western Region Newsletter, The Cal/Western Caver? In the NSS News along with a WCC-touting PR article? Each Director has been tasked with generating a Wish List for their activities and/or committees so please bring this to the meeting. There were many good suggestions at the last Board Meeting. Has anyone taken it upon themselves to write up these and pursue this idea further?*

Need people!

6) Sandy Glacier, Mt. Hood Ice Caves Research Grant Request: *Have we received any further funding from this project? The project been successful in gaining support from other entities, but who else might we tap for funding? Has a Pay pal account via the WCC website been installed for funding directly to this project as was suggested recently?*

Already discussed.

7) WCC Grant procedures: *Since it appears we want to become more involved with awarding cash or work-in-kind grants towards worthy cave conservation or purchase activities, who has taken it upon themselves to write up, in concert with PR goals, a grant policy compatible with WCC long-term goals? Instead of burdening the Special Projects Director with these, should we make a specific Director responsible for dealing with each grant process, and how should these requests be parceled out?*

Neil has a list & timetable of reports due for his projects, and he'll handle them.

Marianne suggested that perhaps a good task for the VP is to keep our WCC "CV" up to date, documenting our track record about what we've done/accomplished. This could include writing small updates to be published in the newsletter/WesternCaver. This will help to give the WCC credibility with other folks we'd like to do work with, or as we submit proposals for projects/grants.

8) Education goals: *Since we are seriously going to make an attempt to include education for science and conservation one of our goals, which director will manage this? This most probably should be partnered with the above grants enhancement. Working with WCC Advisor Gretchen Baker of Great Basin National Park coordinating, sponsoring, and advertising the upcoming 2014 Lehman Lint Camp seems to be a good start for this position. Where should this be sequestered: PR, Science, or as a separate Directorship for Education and Outreach?*

Bruce emailed with Gretchen & they discussed January or February (BR pushing for March) for the Lint Camp so that we could use the Park housing during their off-season. Possibly President's Day or sometime in March –it's a long way and not something just for a day or weekend. Mike suggested that we could provide food for 15 people or so if there's a large-ish kitchen facility (rather than apartment kitchens). There are lots of caves in the area. We (WCC) could do the advertising for the Lint Camp and promote it for the Park, and it would give us visibility as well.

9) WCC Newsletter: *We need an editor for this now! Bill Frantz and Gretchen Baker were suggested as possible candidates for the Editor—has anyone contacted them? Has anyone generated articles for this? Do we have any other items of interest to actually go into this? The time is now for assembling and publishing*

this. Should we seriously attempt to put several paragraphs or a page into each Cal/Western Caver? This should not be a great effort as simple Word documents can be incorporated easily.

10) Matt Bowers suggested arranging a weekend/day effort with commercial caves to both expose the public to the WCC (and possibly solicit donations) and enhance their favorable feelings towards cave conservation. Has anyone undertaken contacting any of the commercial caves about this?

Bruce suggested talking with Mercer Caverns (they were amenable to talking with him) about giving a special presentation there about caves & conservation & the WCC.

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

Jim asked about WCC brochures—do we have some/need some?

Other items presented at the meeting:

Project Accounting (suggested by Mike):

The money in a project is considered “restricted funds” and needs to be carried over to the next year while keeping it out of the WCC overall funds; the next year, the expenses may be greater than usual, although it’s expenses of that project. This may appear confusing in the annual budget, but Mike will try to make it clear in the reports he submits.

Audit Committee (suggested by Mike):

We don’t really need to have an outside audit—which would be quite expensive—but just an informal oversight—even a “Finance Committee”. These individuals would not have “signing authority” but simply review our financial policies, records, and budgets. Mike suggested that we think about what Advisors might be good for this, possibly even talk with them, and then discuss this further at the January meeting. Scott Bernstein (securities & fraud lawyer) and Mark Balcom (worked with Mike on finances of the Sierra Foothills Commission) were mentioned as possibilities.

Member Interests (suggested by Pat):

Suggested adding a question on the membership renewal form asking about the interests & abilities of the member. This could also be done via a post to members.

NEW BUSINESS

None at this time.

MOTIONS:

Appointments to Board of Directors, if applicable: None at this time

Appointments to Advisory Board, if applicable: None at this time

Any policy decisions coming out of Committee of the Whole: None at this time

NEXT MEETING:

There was a discussion about past locations and the general turnout at various places, and possible new locations; we ended up with a list of 13 possibilities. It was decided that the next meeting of the Board of Directors will take place at 1pm on January 25, 2014, in the Bay Area. The most likely locations are the POST Headquarters Office in Palo Alto, or at Frantz's in Cupertino, or in Livermore....

Meeting adjourned at 5:15pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted,

Pat Helton, WCC Recording Secretary

Marianne Russo, WCC Secretary