



Western Cave Conservancy

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DRAFT Minutes for the Spring Meeting of the Board of Directors on Saturday, May 03, 2014

*Held at the home of Mark Bowers, Director of Public Relations,
4116 Loch Lomand Way, Livermore CA*

Next Meeting: 17 August 2014

At a location to be determined and announced later

Call to Order: at 1:17pm

Attending were: Bruce Rogers (President), Marianne Russo (Secretary), Jerry Johnson (Director of Volunteer Resources), Kelley Prebil (Stewardship Director), Chuck Chavdarian (Director of Land Research), Mark Bowers (Director of Public Relations), Pat Helton (Recording Secretary); Advisors: Jim Lakner, Sharon Jobrock-Bowers, Terry Silva, David Weaver, Gail McCoy, Barb & Steve Ruble

Attending by phone: Neil Marchington (Director of Special Projects), Mike Spiess (VP & Treasurer), Dan Snyder, Martin Haye

Approval of the Agenda

Moved, seconded, all in favor

Approval of Minutes of January 26, 2014, Meeting at the Livermore Public Library

Moved, seconded, all in favor

Officer Reports Discussion

The reports were recently emailed to Directors and Advisors. Officers and Directors briefly recapped their emailed reports and discussed any questions.

President's Report: Bruce Rogers

Bruce recently gave an hour-long lecture at the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History; a trip to Empire Cave followed, with enthusiastic participants. The WCC recently co-sponsored Lehman Lint Camp; most organization work was done by Gretchen Baker; 600 feet of passage cleaned; 4,000 pounds of debris removed(!); 37 participants.

I had an hour-long phone discussion with the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County about public access to the CEMEX (San Vicente Redwoods) tract in Davenport and attended their meeting for public comments on public access. I prepared a quarterly update for Speleo-Ed, but Jim Lakner reports that there was no mention of the WCC at the Speleo-Ed; Speleo-Ed was low-key. I wrote an article for the Western Caver. I met with staff of Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge re a new project at the Farallon Islands; one island has a cave with an endemic cave cricket found no place else. I signed numerous donation thank-you letters. Continued revising the WCC operations manual. Matt Bowers talked with Reno's PBS station, and they

are eager for the WCC folks to do a show for them; discussion will continue with WCC's PR Director Mark Bowers.

Vice-President's Report: Mike Spiess

Nothing to report.

Treasurer's Report: Mike Spiess

Mike is stepping down as Treasurer.

Last year's report may appear a bit skewed because of the grant last year & spending it this year. Still working on year-end financial report. Jim Lakner: Are we getting any interest on that money? No. Is there a requirement to have a balance in our PayPal account? No...is there any reason to move it? Do we have any accounts that get interest? No. Mark Bowers said that the WR NCRC account does get 1%. Have we looked into interest-bearing accounts? Dan said that we really need to find a place to earn interest, and that the NSS Foundation did a good investment with the early WCC funds. Mike asked the NSS about this a couple of years ago but has not received a reply from them. Neil offered to check with the NSS Foundation whether we could invest through them. Dan mentioned that the WCC will be receiving a large donation from an estate, and all agreed that we need to look into options and decide what we want to do with it when it arrives. David Weaver also mentioned that we should plan ahead whether we want to use any right away. Barb Ruble suggested that we may want to consider whether we want it insured or not. Dan added that we should consider whether we can afford to lose any of the principal in the hopes of earning a high interest rate. It was agreed that the NSS Foundation has a very good, proven track record on handling investments, and that we should contact them, and that whoever we work with should be very reliable. Mike also mentioned that we don't know yet whether there may be any restrictions by the estate on how the money is used; Martin, who has read the will, doesn't think there are any restrictions. Neil will take the lead on contacting the NSS Foundation. Mike asked him to find out how long it would take to liquidate the funds in case we suddenly had an opportunity to make a purchase. David Weaver said that the investment with the NSS Foundation would probably be considered collateral if we needed to get a quick loan.

We need to amend the budget to accommodate the power line at the Preserve—Marianne will do this today. We need an action item to adopt the proposed budget. Mike explained the budget for the year, which may seem confusing because of Neil's project and how it's listed.

Secretary's Report: Marianne Russo

She has caught up on membership renewal appeals (see her written report). She noticed something in her report that she needs to correct, so that updated report will be received soon and will supercede her report submitted a couple of days ago. Member households now stands at 55, but we expect that number to go up soon, as responses are received from her appeal letters (as many as possible were sent by email). She has a new tracking system (on paper) which is working pretty well. Next she will send letters to people who haven't been members for a few years. She is also planning to get a good description of Secretary duties written up.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The reports were recently emailed to Directors and Advisors. Committee Chairs briefly recapped their emailed reports and discussed any questions.

Public Relations Committee Report: Mark Bowers

No report submitted this time; we need to update our mailing lists! Mark had a couple of questions: He talked w/Dan about the newsletter—Dan asked to wait until after tax time. Mark went to Windeler last week with the Trustee trip. Two goals for outreach: PR & education etc, vs appeals for money. It was agreed that those two goals should be kept separate. Marianne feels that we should be focusing on grottos, regionals, etc...our own cavers. Many, especially young cavers, don't know about the WCC and we need to continue to push that education with caving groups.

Bruce also encouraged education with many people who are interested in the outdoors but may not be cavers. Mark also feels it's important to approach other non-caver groups and offer information/talks to them about caves, as well as educating cavers about the trips into caves the WCC owns/manages and how to get on those trips. Have we contacted public cave owners about placing info at their locations about the WCC and perhaps asking for donations? Bruce explained about his discussion with the new Mercer Caverns manager, which was positive and needs to be pursued. There are several other public caves that need to be contacted. Dan Snyder offered some suggestions: We need an occasional article which lays out our vision for the future, especially a vision that articulates how access to caves helps to preserve the caves (sounds like we're talking out of both sides of our WCC mouth, but it's true). Jim Lakner asked about our WCC brochure—at the last meeting it was mentioned that we have one but it needs to be updated. Bruce will send the electronic version to Mark later (which he did during the meeting). We have very few paper copies left, but some are at each of two natural history museums.

Acquisitions Committee Report: Bruce Rogers

Led White Moon trip on 29 January for POST donors; returned 4 days later with scientists—Drs. Jessica Oster and Aaron Covey (Vanderbilt University), Cory Lawrence (USGS), and Sarah Truebe (Stanford University)—to place recording instruments. Imet with Martin & Pat re Windeler Cave Committee methods to apply to the CEMEX (San Vicente Redwoods) project. I visited S----- Cave at Las Trampas with Chuck Chavdarian, David Weaver & others on 12 April to survey a 185-foot long tafoni cave. I gave talk at Bay Area Sea Kayak group in San Francisco. I mentioned the cave map handouts at Lava Beds National Monument & that we'll be meeting/talking with them next weekend. I also mentioned the meeting we attended about public access to the CEMEX (San Vicente Redwoods) property—there were climbers present at the meeting but there seemed to be no inclinations to open the quarry to access.

Stewardship Committee Report: Kelley Prebil

a) Weller Preserve Manager's Report: Marianne Russo

We had 6 work trips and 2 grotto trips to the cave. Redwood Grotto visited & spent a couple of hours working in addition to visiting the cave. There were several hardworking volunteers as well as a professional tree trimmer to reach a very large high limb. Some of the accomplishments: tree limbs & other vegetation were removed for access to the power pole and for the overhead power line to be routed; Marianne did a floor plan of the building and got a county permit for the wiring work (good for 6 months); Steve Ruble and his electrician friend will help with the installation. We expect it will be completed by end of summer/early fall. Not

much progress on other projects. Others have volunteered to help with work and installations there, including a new retaining wall installed. Estimated cost from PG&E ~\$6,000.

b) Windeler Cave Report: Kelley Prebil

I held their first annual Trustee Trip (and want to repeat it yearly): it was great to discuss routes, talk about problems/issues. Jef Levin has asked to step down as a trustee, and Steven Johnson is stepping up as his replacement for Diablo Grotto. Flagging was done to delineate areas to avoid, and zipties will be used to close the gate while a group is inside the cave.

What about the NCRC evaluation of the cave? Marianne said she hasn't been able to pursue this, but it does still need to be set up. We do need to go through the process. Mark Bowers' group (San Joaquin) actually did—they got wet, which was unusual, and one person had to be assisted out. This reminds us that we need to make sure that all participants are vertically trained, and that all trustees are trained in how to “remove” someone who may be injured. Kelley: We also need to remove the weeds in the area of the cave (fire hazard). Dan and Martin had some suggestions on that. Mark added that they had seen a good-sized mountain lion track near the cave (the first time they've seen evidence of that visitor).

Volunteer Resources Committee Report: Jerry Johnson

Jerry is resigning from the Board due to medical issues. He's been working on the stool shed and tool shed, and he will be working with others to get the projects done. He has enjoyed his past 12 years on the Board.

Special Projects Committee Report: Neil Marchington (attending by phone)

Neil purchased an enclosed trailer for the sandblasting project in order to keep all the sandblasting equipment & supplies safe during storage & transport (there are photos in his report).

He's also been communicating with Steve Knudsen re: CND. Looks like they now have a USFS District Ranger who may stay rather than the temps they've had, so there's hope for working out an agreement with them.

They are now looking at Mt. St. Helens, with the glacier caves there.

Marianne suggested painting the floor of the sandblasting supplies trailer, as she's found it helps with cleaning.

Neil has submitted financial reports for the Redmond Caves Project to Mike Spiess.

Marianne asked Neil to pass along the message to Oregon High Desert Grotto (OHDG) that it's time to renew their membership with the WCC. He will mention it to their Treasurer.

Science Committee Report: Vacant Position

No director; no report.

Land Research Committee Report: Chuck Chavdarian

Two items to discuss, including an update on his submitted report.

CofC (Cave of the Catacombs) & Sink Cave: ~11 years ago several people visited there and talked with the owners about the WCC possibly getting involved. Several years ago there was a Diablo recreational trip there (arranged by Al Keller). There are Native American remains there, and at times it's partially flooded. Now Chuck has written to Mr. H--- (CoC) saying that we'd be interested in either purchasing or managing the cave; he responded within a couple of days. He's open to discussion about the options and would like to meet with WCC people. Chuck suggests that he, David Weaver, and Bruce go to visit with him soon. It sounds promising!

Sink Cave: Chuck took 3D photos in 2003 and could do a presentation. David suggested showing the photos to Mr. H---, and Chuck will plan to take them on the visit. Chuck explained about the two caves: CoC is an archeological resource, and Bruce added that Sink is a paleontological resource. Chuck suggested that Jerry may be able to discuss with us about how best to deal with the Native American resources in CoC. Jerry: since it's on private property, it doesn't fall under the Native American Graves Protection Act. He doesn't know of any artifacts found in CoC (which may indicate that it's a burial cave) ...but lots of human bones. A few years back the Sheriff contacted Jerry because some people had removed ~4 large grocery bags of bones from the cave—he doesn't know whether the bones were turned over to the local Miwoks, but they did not go back into the cave. There are a number of caves in the area that contain bones. Jerry also discussed about McNamee's and Pinnacle Point Caves nearby. There are a lot of artifacts at Sacramento State University because they haven't been claimed. Perhaps there should be a good inventory done of CoC—either with Mr. H---'s permission or as a part of the management plan. Bruce asked if Jerry & Marianne would be willing to visit there to help with evaluation after the discussions with Mr. Hong, and they are willing. Chuck will get back in touch with Mr. H--- to arrange a meeting with Bruce & David. Perhaps if an arrangement is made with Mr. H---, the neighbors/owners of Sink Cave may be more likely to work with us as well.

Both of these caves would be wonderful opportunities for furthering our conservation and education missions, even if not the exploration/enjoyment missions.

East Bay Hills: They've hiked a lot in the East Bay Hills, and they're familiar with the wind caves (sandstone tafoni) on the Las Trampas property. Devil's Hole is on Water District property and requires a permit to hike there. They recently surveyed the cave in the S----- Cave drainage and provisionally named it S----- Cave. Perhaps we could approach the East Bay Regional Park District and show the map they've made, and discuss with them how the WCC could perhaps help with inventory, mapping, management, etc. It's an under-studied area for both archeology and geology/caving. Bruce is researching finding an Ohlone name for the cave.

Chuck has other cave opportunities in mind for later pursuit.

Break at 3:30p

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

Reconvened at 4:05p

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!! There are several items that need working on in the extremely near future, including re-writing the VP position.*

It was decided that we will meet on Sunday, 22 June 2014, at 1pm, at Mark Bowers' home in Livermore. Kelley will be in the area that weekend and will be able to join us.

2) Director's positions: *At the August 19, 2012, meeting we voted to add three more Director positions to bring our total to 12. At the January 2014 WCC Board Meeting two of these positions were filled.*

a) *Mark Bowers volunteered to be our Public Relations Director.*

b) *Chuck Chavdarian volunteered to be 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. (Subsequently, it was suggested that perhaps Acquisitions Director be combined with this post.)*

c) *Science Director. Both Gary "Geo" Graening and Shelley Arreguin are interested. Geo Graening is a Ph.D. biologist who has his own biology remediation/study company and teaches at Sacramento State University. Shelley is completing her Ph.D. dissertation in materials science and engineering at the University of Washington, Seattle. Shelley already has a BS in chemistry (Univ. Colo. Denver), another in Evolutionary Biology (Univ. WA), and a Masters in Materials Science and Engineering (Univ. WA.). Currently overseas in Eastern Europe working on her dissertation, she will attempt to call in for this board meeting.(She was unable to do so.)*

d) *Treasurer's Position: Mike Spiess has indicated that he'd like to step down from the Treasurer's position due to his now-increased teaching and allied tasks load. Who can we suggest to fill this position?*

Martin Hays has volunteered to step in and relieve Mike at any point. He served as WCC Treasurer in the past, so the transition should be pretty straightforward. They will begin the transition soon.

3) Speleo-Ed Seminar: *Who went to the Western Regional San Diego, CA? We would like a synopsis of what went on at the meeting and if the WCC was mentioned.*

There was no quorum at the Speleo-Ed, so there was no WR meeting, and thus no mention of the WCC.

4) WCC Wish List: *We have had 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; in the Western Region Newsletter; The 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 such a list of possible items/etc. to the meeting.*

5) WCC Newsletter:

a) *There will be a very short WCC Newsletter published in the next Western Caver that was generated by WCC President Bruce Rogers. This will be out and in the hands of the WR cavers in a very few weeks.*

b) *The new Newsletter Editor–Dan Snyder–currently is snowed under with tax work and will remain so for at least another month.*

We'll be in touch with him soon to see when his schedule is better.

c) *Geo Graening, editor of the Western Caver, has offered to publish the WCC Newsletter until we can arrange to self-publish it ourselves. He puts no limit on the size of the Newsletter.*

Bruce has written an article which Geo is putting in the next edition.

d) *Again, once we do start publishing the Newsletter ourselves, should it be a paper Newsletter or a digital edition? Should we do both with an option to send digital copies in lieu of paper?*

e) *Has anyone generated articles for another issue? Do we have any other items of interest to actually go into another issue?*

Bruce will step up his asking people for articles; Marianne agreed to write one (please give her a phone call reminder).

6) Avalanche Cave: *An update by Marianne Russo. Should we pre-plan what sort of management services we could provide the USFS? It appears they are interested in WCC participation in managing this cave.*

Marianne has been in frequent contact with the USFS there for some time. The cave has been off-limits for some time. Recently she was told that there's a mine above the cave resulting in the need for a toxic cleanup. The cleanup may be too expensive and deemed not worth doing, but Marianne will keep in touch with her contact there and will keep us posted.

7) Lehman Lint Camp, March 22-23, 2014: *A report by WCC Advisor Gretchen Baker.*

The report was distributed a week ago via email to the Directors and Advisors. Gretchen Baker, unfortunately, will not be able to attend this meeting in person or via telecommunication link.

They had both caver and non-caver participants. David Weaver attended this and discussed with Gretchen how to get more participation. She would like to have more cavers involved, and David suggested having different regions host a "Regional" there each year, potentially pulling cavers from their region each time.

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

Marianne mentioned that the email lists are not up-to-date, and how to have this done was discussed (Kelley and Martin are the only two who can access and make changes to the lists).

Mark noticed that his photo and work bio had been added to the Website, and he was asked to provide a photo and bio that he'd like to have posted.

[Board Recess: 15-30 minute break to craft motions arising from discussions and reports as needed]

NEW BUSINESS

None at this time.

MOTIONS:

Moved that we amend the 2014 Weller Preserve budget to include the costs associated with having PG&E connect electricity to the Weller fieldhouse, for an estimated total cost of \$5,000.

Marianne moved; Mike seconded; all in favor.

NEXT MEETING:

To be held on 17 August 2014 at 1pm at the Helton-Rogers residence in Fremont, CA..

Meeting adjourned at 4:56p.

Minutes respectfully submitted,

Pat Helton, WCC Recording Secretary