



Western Cave Conservancy

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**Minutes for the Summer Meeting of the Board of Directors on
Sunday, August 17, 2014 Held at the home of Bruce Rogers (WCC
President) and Pat Helton (Recording Secretary),
37899 Los Arboles Drive, Fremont CA**

Call to Order: at 1:20pm

***Next Meeting: November 02, 2014 At the home of Mark & Sharon
Bowers, 4116 Lomond Way, Livermore, CA***

Attending were: Bruce Rogers (President), Kelley Prebil (Stewardship Director) (had to leave at 4pm), Chuck Chavdarian (Director of Land Research), Martin Haye (Treasurer), Pat Helton (Recording Secretary); Advisors: Jim Lakner, Nick Schmalenberger.

Attending by phone: Mike Spiess (VP), Mark Bowers (PR)

Approval of the Agenda

Added items: 1) San Vicente Redwoods (formerly CEMEX Tract) update; 2) Martin would like to talk about banking issues. Agenda approved by acclamation.

Approval of Minutes of August 03, 2014, Meeting at the home of Mark Bowers (Director of PR)

Approved by all.

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

Recapped his report. Jim Lakner asked about the results of Bruce asking about the WCC using POST HQ for meeting space; Bruce replied that we have a good working relationship with POST and it may be possible.

Vice-President's Report: Mike Spiess

Nothing to report.

Treasurer's Report: Mike Spiess

We currently have \$40,000 in cash; revenue looking good this year; expenses not as much as anticipated, so we're in the black. PayPal is reconciled & bank records updated as of July. He needs our anticipated budget needs for next year asap.

1) We should have an audit/investment committee—maybe this could be an action item for October—to oversee as we transition between Mike & Martin Haye as treasurers. 2) Our new audit/investment committee could also help us find a way to invest some of our funds to earn interest. He’s looked into the NSS Foundation investment folks & recapped what he’s learned. He also contacted another investment group he’s used before, who has much experience with nonprofits, and recapped their info. Transition: Mike’s RFF1 (Ofc of the Attorney General) is the only “problem” as it seems it may not have been submitted properly in the past few years; Mike and Martin Haye will discuss & work on this. Otherwise, the transition should be smooth, as they’ve worked together to make sure all the info is transferred. He also offered some suggestions that would help other Directors as they transition their duties to the next person.

Martin Haye reported that he’s purchased QuickBooks for \$25 and is ready to go as our new Treasurer.

Secretary’s Report: Marianne Russo

We’re caught up with processing, but this quarter has been rather slow. At our work meeting we tried to fix the PayPal problem, and Mark Bowers tried to make a donation via PayPal and thought it had gone through OK; checking later, Marianne found that it had not in fact gone through. This still needs to be fixed. [Martin Haye and Mike Spiess are checking right now to see if he has notification of the donation. They found that the missing donations were actually there, and they will send Marianne Russo copies of the updated info.] A check donation from Kip Baumann also didn’t go through, but the problem was found: when the check was scanned, the writing was so light that it registered as a blank piece of paper; the problem was fixed. Marianne also has a check from Barb Maeso-Ruble and Steve Ruble; they had promised up to a \$2,000 pledge to help with getting electricity to the Weller Preserve. Steve has now helped with the work, arranged for an electrician friend to do the contract work, and they’ve given us a check for \$2,000. Thank you!

COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

Acquisitions Committee Report: Bruce Rogers

Recapped his report. With help from Kelley Prebil, he was able to acquire a sample lease for Chuck Chavdarian to use with Cave of the Catacombs.

Land Research Committee Report: Chuck Chavdarian (Including slide presentation about Cave of the Catacombs)

After the last meeting, he followed up with Mr. R. H--- about Cave of the Catacombs. Mr. H--- is interested in conservancies (he’s a member of the Sierra Club), so he was very interested in conservation for his property, which he visits as a “retreat.” His family is not interested in the property, and we’re anticipating

possibly leasing the cave for the near-term (10 years or so) and then discussing long-term purchase or at least conservation. We are now nearly ready to offer him a lease to review & discuss, and then of course have everything reviewed legally. He has told us that we can park on his property and even use his cabin & outhouse whenever we'd like; he's a very gracious person. We could either work with him to parcel out the property and procure only the cave, or consider the entire property (~2.5 acres?). We then discussed the possibility of purchasing it from him sooner and then allowing him to use the property as long as he'd like. Jim suggested a document giving us "first rights of refusal" to purchase the property. We generally agreed to try it for a year or so, gate the cave, do some cleanup work, and then go back & talk with him about more long-term conservation/acquisition. After agreements are in place with this property, we could then go to the adjacent neighbor (whose property contains Sink Cave) and discuss the same kind of arrangement with them. 😊

Chuck Chavderian then showed some lovely slides of the property and inside the cave. He received a call from Chuck Lee recently, asking about the possibility of having a caving trip to Cave of the Catacombs & Sink Cave as a part of the upcoming Western Regional (Sept 20- 21). We discussed the pros & cons, and Chuck agreed that he would ask Chuck Lee to hold off on hosting a trip of this size until after the negotiations are completed.

Stewardship Committee Report: Kelley Prebil

a) Weller Preserve Manager's Report: Marianne Russo

They've been pretty busy at Weller Preserve. There were 5 small work trips, some working on the tool shed with Konrad Allert; it's coming along very well. Wiring the building: great progress, and as of yesterday morning it's about finished. The electrician and Steve have provided much of the equipment...thanks!

Unfortunately, the PG&E estimate already agreed to and the contract they've sent out are widely different: Now they want \$9,000 instead of the original estimate of \$4,000. The contract she received also did not acknowledge the \$1,000 we've already paid them. Marianne will call them on Monday to discuss the discrepancies. It may be related to the fact that we plan to use electricity minimally there, and they may be charging for the connection based on how much we'll be using it in the future.

Mike Spiess asked if solar power is looking better. We discussed the possibility of opting for solar even at this point, now that the cabin is already professionally wired. One of the big problems there would be clear access to sunshine as well as downed trees & branches. Mark Bowers also mentioned that the batteries & replacement of them can be expensive.

Marianne will follow up with PG&E, but she'd like to have some other help looking into solar power as an option.

Jerry Johnson has been working on the tool shed but is not able to accomplish all he'd like. Marianne reports that the cost of the building will be greater than the anticipated \$500 in order to buy some ready-made parts rather than building everything from scratch, including a skylight for lighting inside and purchasing a ready-made door. She's asking the Board if they will approve a \$1000 increase in the construction budget.

There was one trip to Rippled by Diablo; otherwise it's been pretty quiet there.

b) Windeler Cave Report: Kelley Prebil

Kelley Prebil has been busy with other issues lately, but the most recent update on Windeler is that the demand for trips has gone down, so they don't believe they need to have as many trips as in the past. There's some discussion about whether to promote trips or just let people ask if they'd like to go. Most people in the nearby grottos who would like to go have already visited the cave. Now we mostly have new cavers signing up. Any presentations we give about the cave are primarily to "advertise" the WCC, not to push to get more people who'd like to visit. Martin would still like to set up a security system there but has been otherwise busy lately. There's also a large piece of conveyor-belt rubber that Mike White found and shaped to fit the culvert; this is put in place to reduce airflow to & from the cave.

There are also fewer disagreements & hard feelings about who gets to go & "why couldn't I."

Public Relations Committee Report: Mark Bowers

a) General Report on Activities: Mark Bowers

In June we looked at redoing the brochures, one for the public/education, and the other oriented towards cavers and asking people to support the WCC. He talked with Matt Bowers about the special that the Reno PBS TV station wants to do about us. 2015 - have a cleanup & film & interview with some of us; we'll need a sandblaster for this, and Neil Marchington is in the loop on this. Mark is working on a list of people & skillsets but hasn't gotten far on that & will need some assistance. He was also going to start blogging on WCC activities but he'll need Kelley's assistance to moderate that & make sure we don't put inappropriate info there. Mark says he will need a team to work with him on these projects. Bruce said that Geo has said that he's happy to put WCC info in the Western Caver until we can get our own Newsletter up & going again. Mike also reminded Mark that if he anticipates any expenses for publishing, etc., he should be sure to let Martin Hays know the estimates as quickly as he can.

b) WCC Newsletter: Dan Snyder (stepping down from this position)

Martin Hays reported that Dan Snyder finds that he is unable to fulfill the duties as Newsletter Editor after all, so he is stepping down. He is happy to write articles & help with contributions but just cannot take on the duties of Editor at this time.

Science Committee Report: Vacant Position

No director; no report.

Special Projects Committee Report: Neil Marchington

No report, and Neil was unable to attend this meeting.

Volunteer Resources Committee Report: Vacant Position

Marianne Russo reported that Jerry Johnson is stepping down as Committee Chair. Bruce and others said that they'd like to have him remain as a Director if he's willing—he has a great deal of knowledge about our issues and we value his advice as a Director.

Board recess at 3:23pm – Reconvened at 3:35pm as Committee of the Whole for general discussion of issues.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

General Issues and Potential Projects:

1) Director's positions: a) Accept Mike Spiess's resignation as Treasurer and reinstate Martin Hays as a WCC Director and WCC Treasurer. Done b) Retain Jerry Johnson as an Unassigned Director. Done (no action needed)

2) Resolve the funding issues for the Weller Preserve Tool Shed. Done (motion passed by all)

3) Find a home for the WCC kitchen/banquet tools and materials. Marianne Russo and Jerry Johnson have them now but have no place to store them. Marianne: Much of the equipment is in plastic bins, but the cooking pots were "loose", so she has been reorganizing things & has put them into boxes that will stack & store better. There's also an oven/sink that were donated; they are not useful for us and we need to get them to either another nonprofit that can use it, or Goodwill, or Oakland's Urban Ore. She will talk with Ric Gates about listing it on Craigslist; perhaps he will handle that for us. Marianne will repack things to take less space and she'd like to find someone to store the boxes. She will get the coffee & hot water pots to Bruce Rogers' home to be taken to all the WCC meetings.

Marianne also has several "Treasurer" items that came from John Moreno, which she will get to new Treasurer Martin.

4) 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!

5) *Martin asked about the status of the San Vicente Redwoods involvement (evidently some people have become frustrated that nothing's happening yet): Bruce said that there has been a delay in starting the work at the quarry, but there will be a quick trip within a couple of weeks to take a look at what's needed and plan for the future work. Martin Hays suggested that, in addition to just Bruce, there should be an advisory committee in place to help discuss/decide who gets to go on the work trips in order to help avoid any ill feelings, particularly if someone wants to go but is turned down. Martin is willing to help with this as well and facilitate the development of the advisory committee; he has experience with the Windeler Committee which will help here. Marianne suggested doing a presentation to SFBC (they're local cavers) and give an update on "what's happening at Davenport"; this may help increase interest in the work there, and increase our own membership & interest in the WCC. Mike added that this will help to get more people involved in the organization, who may go on to become directors or to help with other projects.*

6) *Directors' Positions:*

a) *Volunteer Resources Director: We need a replacement for Jerry Johnson, who has resigned from this position.*

b) *The new Newsletter Editor–Dan Snyder–[is not able to work in this position. We will need to find a replacement for him.] At present, Geo Graening is still willing to publish articles for the WCC in the Western Caver journal.*

c) *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 and keeping track of grants?*

7) *Western Regional Meeting: Who might be going to the next Western Regional to be held at the Marble Quarry Resort in Columbia during the September 20-21 weekend? We need an up-to-date report to give to the assembled masses at the Western Region meeting that Saturday evening.*

Nick Schmalenberger is planning to attend. Bruce and Pat will be there just for the day and will try to attend the Regional meeting; the other Directors will not be attending.

8) *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? Mike Spiess again requested that we collectively make sure we fill the form(s) out correctly and finish reports as needed. Mike Spiess also suggested having a corporate CV.*

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Has anyone started this task? Pat Helton suggested updates like POST updates on multiple projects; has anyone done this?

It was agreed that this issue can be tabled for now.

9) Education goals: Has anyone delved further into this? Where should this be sequestered: PR, Science, or as a separate Directorship for Education and Outreach? 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? Need brochures for this!

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

Jim Lakner asked what the officers have planned to recruit new members. Marianne Russo encourages past members to re-join. We need to do more of this at Regional & grotto meetings & events. This was a good, intense discussion. Jim suggested we write a one-page handout with updates & pictures on one side and a registration form on the back, with detailed instructions about the various methods for joining (e.g., step-by-step instructions for using PayPal).

We had some discussion about the upcoming Western Regional—good points, bad points, and why. This “evaluation” helps us to make decisions for future events that we might be holding.

10) Other items presented at the meeting:

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None at this time.

MOTIONS:

a. That we nominate and appoint Martin Haye for a term of two years, starting immediately, to the WCC Board of Directors as Treasurer.

Marianne moved, Kelley seconded, all in favor

b. That we allocate the budget for the Weller Tool Shed to a total of \$1500.

Marianne moved, Kelley seconded, all in favor

NEXT MEETING:

November 02, 2014, at 1pm, at the home of Mark & Sharon Bowers, Livermore, CA Meeting adjourned at 4:56p.

Minutes respectfully submitted,

Secretary

Pat Helton, WCC Recording