



Western Cave Conservancy

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Minutes for the Annual Public Meeting of the Board of Directors on Saturday, January 24, 2015

*Held at the office of the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST),
222 High Street, Palo Alto, CA*

Next Meeting ~~May 3~~, 2015 (later changed to May 17)

At the Weller Preserve,

Sutter Creek, CA

Call to Order: at 1:15pm

Attending were: Bruce Rogers (President), Mark Bowers (Director of Public Relations), Martin Haye (Treasurer), Marianne Russo (Secretary), Jerry Johnson, Kelley Prebil (Director of Stewardship), Pat Helton (Recording Secretary), Chuck Lee, Jef Levin, David Weaver, Gale Beach, Ray Beach, Roger Brown, Caroline Brown, Sharon Bowers, Urs Mader, Chris Compton, Steve Ruble, Barb Maeso-Ruble, Bill Frantz, Jim Lakner, Paul Ringgold (Vice President, POST), Laura McLendon (Sempervirens Fund project manager)

Attending by Skype/phone: Chuck Chavdarian (Director of Acquisitions), Neil Marchington (Director of Special Projects), Dave Cowan

Presentation about Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST): Paul Ringgold

Paul explained the large map showing the locations around the Bay Area (San Francisco to Monterey, SF to Oakland/San Jose) where POST has been actively working to help preserve land. He told about acquiring the San Vicente Redwoods property and the partnership and MOU with the WCC.

Approval of the Agenda

Added items: 1) Discussion about the Temperance Flat Dam which will impact Millerton Lakes Cave(s). 2) Re-election of several officers. 3) Martin Haye has an update on the signature cards with the Bank of America. 4) Martin Haye has an idea for kick-starting the newsletter.

Approval was moved by Marianne Russo; seconded by Mark Bowers; passed by all.

Approval of Minutes of the November 02, 2014, Meeting at the home of Mark and Sharon Bowers, Livermore, CA

Approval was moved by Martin Haye; seconded by Marianne Russo; passed by acclamation.

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

Reviewed his written report. Signed MOU with POST and Sempervirens Fund; worked at Weller Preserve several times along with many others; retrieved some of the older WCC brochures from

Frantz's. Plan to soon sign a 5-year lease with owner of Cave of the Catacombs and will discuss possible purchase with him. Will visit with BLM to discuss access via Coast Dairies (owned by BLM) to the San Vicente property.

Vice-President's Report: Mike Spiess

Mike was not present today, and he has not yet submitted a report due to his daughter's wedding today.

Treasurer's Report: Martin Haye

Dealt with donations checks. Communicated with people overseeing Bill Papke's estate, and on December 29 we received a large check from them. Purchased a site license for MS Office which can be used by any of the WCC directors. Found that we need to adjust some of the expenses at Weller to reflect that they were actually improvements. Will file full forms for taxes because we had more than \$250k income. This is the first time we've ended a year/quarter with a net worth of greater than \$500k.

Later comment: If anyone needs software to work on WCC projects, we should talk with him—there are lots of very good deals for acquiring software needed; e.g., he acquired Quickbooks very cheaply.

Secretary's Report: Marianne Russo

Sent thank-you letters to all who donated; sent some reminders for renewals and some of those have been responded to; a number of donations were for specific projects; we currently have 59 member households/grottos; we have more than 220 other people in the database, but many of them donated at the beginning and have not kept up their membership. Marianne would like to go through that list and send a mass mailing to update them and see if they'd like to begin donations again. She has also informally taken over the tasks that were being done by Jerry Johnson before he stepped down as Volunteer Coordinator, and has found that there are several Directors who are up for re-election now.

David Weaver commented that someone in Diablo Grotto recently asked what today's WCC meeting is all about, so he gave a brief overview of the WCC and realized that we should be doing more updates in our grotto meetings. Bill Frantz suggested having someone give a presentation to the grottos about the WCC; Martin Haye and Bruce Rogers mentioned that there was an older show available for presentation but that it was now somewhat dated; and a discussion continued about creating a slideshow that could be presented by different people to various grottos, links to our Website from the grotto sites, and a CD that Jerry is working on about our history of the Weller Preserve and the work that has been done there, including archived photos.

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: Chuck Chavdarian

Chuck Chavdarian reported on the work he, assisted by David Weaver and Bruce Rogers, has been doing toward potential management of Cave of the Catacombs (CotC), a very historic cave in California. He's been working with the owner, R. H---, on a lease that could be signed with us; unfortunately, a week before signing Mr. Hong had a serious accident and could not sign it. We now have a new date to sign the lease: January 31. Mr H--- has been quite active in pursuing this lease and he is anxious to sign. We will talk with him further about other possibilities. Once we have the papers signed, we should act

quickly to get cave gating in place. David Weaver has offered to take the lead on these projects, and Mark Bowers has also offered to assist with the projects.

Dave Cowan asked about the surface above the cave—were there any plans to conserve and protect the surface? This will be part of the walk-through after signing the lease and before starting work on the gates. Dave mentioned a professor from the University of Maryland (name to be forwarded to us later) who was interested in a possibly endemic plant hopper found in the cave in the 1990's by Frank Howarth of the Bishop Museum (equivalent of the Smithsonian of the Pacific Basin) and Fred Stone of the University of Hawaii, Big Island. Chuck Chacdarian replied that we will definitely keep that in mind and take any necessary action on that. Bruce Rogers asked Dave for the name of the individual, and Dave will send it to him. Chuck said that there is a skylight entrance, and Bruce said he wants to get Geo Graening (cave biologist) to visit the cave and evaluate for biology. There was further discussion by Jerry Johnson about human remains that have been found in that cave over many years, some bags of bone removed and taken to the Calaveras County Coroner's office, and that remains (bones) are still frequently being found there. Chuck mentioned that at times (e.g., on Diablo's 2011 trip to the cave) the cave was mostly dry, although the cave usually contains some water, but at other times it's dry. Future plans include doing a resurvey of the cave, and Chuck would like to do a photo series at that time.

Future work: East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD)caves: Chuck said that there are tafoni (wind caves) well known in the Las Trampas area, but also an unnamed cave just outside that property on East Bay Municipal Utilities District land which was surveyed last year. The name will probably be Saclan Cave. Chuck said that there are leads on several other caves in that area as well, and we'll be working further with EBRPD on them. There's also another cave nearby CotC named Sink Cave; discussions will be held with the owners there to see if the WCC can become involved with oversight/management or even ownership of the cave. There was a considerable bone deposit about 22,000 years old in Sink Cave that was sampled in ~1995, and more work can be done on that.

Public Relations Committee Report: Mark Bowers

a) General Report on Activities: Mark Bowers

Mark Bowers has the brochure close to ready to print, and will cost ~\$150 for 1000-1200 brochures, in trifold format. He'd like to have people take a look at that and if possible get the go-ahead today for printing. We have more room for more photos and a bit more text if desired.

Matt Bowers is working with a PBS TV channel in Reno and they'd like to make a movie about cave restoration in Cave Valley Cave as well as caves/caving in preparation for the 2016 NSS Convention.

Mark is looking for volunteers who might help work on PR; Martin Haye said he'd be on the committee.

Barb Maeso-Ruble commented that a movie is more difficult to update than a PowerPoint slideshow. Steve Ruble also suggested putting our movie(s) on YouTube. David Weaver suggested breaking the "movie" into several shorter films that could be linked together via YouTube. This would make updates easier and might keep the attention of a viewer if we're focused on specific topics. Further discussion continued about how this could best be done without giving locations of caves (turn GPS off on cameras).

b) WCC Newsletter: Vacant Position

Mark would like to get the newsletter going again, but he can't do it frequently himself. He'd like to see us make a "movie" about the WCC for presentation rather than just a slideshow.

Science Committee Report: Vacant Position

No director; no report.

Special Projects Committee Report: Neil Marchington

Neil recapped his report. Still about \$462 available from grant. David Hodges wants to restart digging in CND now that it is incoroprtaed into the new Oregon Caves Natural Area, but the NPS folks may be more concerned with conservation than with digging; we shall see. Working with Matt Bowers on the Cave Valley Cave restoration project and will assist with the WCC sand blaster rig trailer. Looking forward to more work trips and cave cleanup trips throughout the western US.

Martin Hays: In the cave restoration work, does that include speleothem repair? No, there aren't many of those in the lava tubes in Oregon. Barb Maeso-Ruble: What's in the plan for restoration of Cave Valley Cave? There's graffiti, it's limestone & quite wet inside; they're working with BLM on the plan. A major concern is whether the debris-catching tarps are sufficient to protect the endemic species in the cave.

Stewardship Committee Report: Kelley Prebil

a) Weller Preserve Manager's Report: Marianne Russo

It has been very busy at Weller this past quarter, with many trips (14 work days). The Tool Shed was finished and work started on the interior of the Field House (electricity is now installed, insulation and sheetrock installed and tape/mud started). More work to do outside, and that will be done in the spring. Some pavers (donated by Lakners) will be installed around the outside of the Field House and some installed around the Tool/Stool Sheds. Preston Addison of Redwood Grotto donated the sheetrock (~\$500 worth) as well as a couple of days of intense work. If anyone would like to help, let Marianne know when you're available and whether poison oak is a problem for you. We can start letting organizations like NCRC know that the building can be used for classes soon. It was suggested that we should look at other options for sanitation there; for a PortaPotty to be there on a semi-permanent basis, it would cost ~\$2,000/year (mandatory ~\$150/mo or portion of a month). Installing a septic system would be expensive because drilling the well would be expensive, and the last time Marianne asked about it, the county said that it must be a flush/sewer system. Someone suggested that now that we have power, we may be able to install some other type of system; she will call and ask about that again. Barb Maeso-Ruble also suggested a Porta-Potty on a trailer; this could be towed to a company to have them flushed out (no onsite servicing necessary). Neil Marchington will send Marianne some info about some used there in Oregon that are so good that they are installed along the river margins, and Mark Bowers looked up some possibilities online that looked promising.

b) Windeler Cave Report: Kelley Prebil

Kelley Prebil was not able to attend the meeting; Bruce read her report. (Kelley arrived shortly after this.)

She included the list of current trustees; Jef Levin is stepping down and was thanked for his work.

Martin Haye commented that there are some speleothems in the cave that need repairs and we'd like to have someone who has done this type of repair. One of the broken soda straws was done on a trustee trip but the others were done in previous years.

Jerry Johnson asked about the broken ladder, and Martin said that he had repaired it himself by drilling new mounting holes and bolting it to existing brackets.

c) *San Vicente Redwoods Project Report: Bruce Rogers*

Bruce showed slides of their recent survey work in the adit (770 feet mapped with much more to be done). He also gave some history of the adit and explained some of the items they found there. He showed a “toy” salamander the size of the resident population of California Giant Salamanders they found in the adit. He then recapped his written report: They made a survey trip into the adit on November 28; a draft map of the work was posted on the wall for all to view. He outlined further work he plans to do, including mapping the White Moon and G---- Caves. Jef Levin is interested in helping with the work. Bruce will be emphasizing detailed, accurate mapping, and we need more individuals who can keep book. Chuck Lee said he thought the previous maps done are acceptable and we should be able to check the maps and do “caving” trips at the same time. Bruce pointed out that there are missing passages, and the profile was an outline filled in with black, with no detail. Bruce pointed out that we've been asked by POST to do the mapping and that is our primary, first focus, and then we can do more surface recon to locate other “known” but now lost caves in the area. There was much discussion about starting future trips immediately, that we should do these as soon as possible versus stretching them out for some time, and the existing maps may be adequate or not.

Paul Ringgold of POST updated the issues of property access. The conservation easement is now held by Save the Redwoods to protect the property. The current plans are to open public access via Empire Grade Road at the northernmost part of the property for hiking, some mountain biking, and equestrian access. The longer trail will extend down the westernmost side of the property and not come near the quarry/cave area. He mentioned that the Coast Dairies property has been transferred to BLM as of January of this year, and that there's a move to convert that tract to a National Monument, but there's some local opposition. There will be a meeting about this on February 12 in Santa Cruz with Anna Eshoo & Bruce Babbitt - a meet & greet. (See Santacruzredwoods.org)

Volunteer Resources Committee Report: Vacant Position

No director; no report.

Board recess (10 min) at 3:34pm – Reconvened at 3:51pm as Committee of the Whole for general discussion of issues.

Dave Cowan said that a biologist at the University of Maryland is interested in the New Melones transplant site near Snells Cave. The Virginia Cave Conservancy may offer funding to get cave

biologists out to take a look at the closed mine site since no one's been there since the 1980's(?) visits of now-Missouri cave biologist William Elliot.

Dave asked: What is the access like to the mine? Reply: there's much new rural development surrounding the area around the Merk limestone quarry; also, the lime quarry itself is much bigger now. Dave replied that he will be willing to make a trip there either before or after the 2016 Ely Convention.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

General Issues and Potential Projects:

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 near future, including re-writing the VP position and looking for a new Newsletter Editor as well as Volunteer Resources and Science Directors.*

Discussion about Bill Papke's endowment to the WCC: *We have been endowed with a substantial amount of money from Bill Papke's estate. Since this is a very sizable amount, we will discuss where this should be ensconced until we decide a good use for it. It was suggested at the last Board meeting that we seriously look into putting these funds in the National Speleological Foundation that held Martin Haye's funds until the Weller Preserve/Rippled Cave purchase.*

Martin Haye said that Marianne Russo has been in touch with Peri Frantz, who offered to help us in dealing with the NSS/NSF (National Speleological Foundation). NSF was going to require us to put it in a fund dedicated for use with western caves (not just the WCC). He's heard two different thoughts about this: put the money into a cave right away; or set the money aside so it will be available when we do have a cave to purchase.

Marianne Russo said that Peri Frantz had advised that we should have a Board motion to state what it should be used for, even if we're not doing it right now. Bill Papke would want us to get the most we can out of the money, and something that would be lasting.

Gale Beach said that she'd like to see a Western Cave Library as one consideration. The Weller Field House has been mentioned for a library, but the fire hazard there is too high; Marianne said that sooner or later a fire will be coming through there and it will be hard enough to get people out of the canyon.

Chuck Chavdarian said it would be important to put part of the money into an endowment fund, and leave part of it for immediate use if necessary. Chuck Lee commented that libraries are old and others agreed that libraries are now online and paper should be done away with.

Jim Lakner said that he's in favor of putting the money into an endowment fund to earn the most interest we can for future use. Martin Haye and others agreed. Bill Frantz said that the NSF has a plan where they pay out a steady rate (3-4-5%) of interest. Martin Haye agreed to look into the possible places for investing this. Someone had suggested to him to put the funds into a savings account for now to earn even a small amount until we determine what we want to do for a longer term. It was agreed that this would be good. Don't think we need to vote on this...just transfer the funds to a savings acct.

Should we offer a stipend to someone to be our newsletter editor? Mark Bowers was willing to hand the task off to someone else. Martin: so how much should we offer? Maybe \$250/issue? Geo is still willing to publish our newsletter as an incorporated part of the WesternCaver.

Bank signature card: Currently the individuals on the card are: Martin Haye, Marianne Russo, and Mike Spiess, so the only one missing is Bruce Rogers. Does he need to be on the card? If not, it can be left alone. If so, they can start a new card with Martin signing at a BofA near him; they can then send the card to a BofA near Marianne and she can go in & sign it there; then it would be sent to banks near Mike and then Bruce for their signatures. The BofA rep said this could take some time, but it at least would get the job done.

Bruce outlined the issue of the Temperance Flat Dam/Millerton Cave. He's been in touch with Mark Balcom. Agreed that a letter from the WCC expressing our non-support of the dam may be useful. Bruce will attempt to contact Mark Balcom about this.

David Weaver suggested that the letter could outline how the cave has been long recognized as significant, even before the dam was proposed. Perhaps some old articles from JCKS? Or even grotto newsletters? Ask Geo Graening if any bio studies have been done there? Bruce asked if anyone would be willing to help look for any past articles or other references that might exist? No offers. Dave Cowan suggested offering to lead as many cave trips as possible for/with the environmental groups involved in the dam/no-dam efforts.

One option officially presented was going to flood Fine Gold Cave, which is not as large/impressive as Millerton.

Urs Mader suggested that perhaps the WCC could work with POST about purchasing cave properties or establishing relationships with landowners? General reply: POST is San Francisco Peninsula-centric and there's little limestone & few caves available for purchase. Marianne Russo: Trust for Public Land might be approached, but they are already assisting work on getting a land swap from a lumber company to the US Forest Service for Avalanche Cave. David Weaver suggested asking Paul Ringgold about approaching landowners for possible acquisition. Paul Ringgold was quite willing to run a day seminar to advise the WCC on how to approach landowners about possible sale/conservation easements, etc.

Brief board recess to craft motions arising from discussions and reports as needed.

NEW BUSINESS

None at this time.

MOTIONS:

Appointments to the Board of Directors:

That we nominate and appoint Kelley Prebil for a term of three years to the Board of Directors.
Moved/Seconded/all in favor

That we nominate and appoint Marianne Russo for a term of three years to the Board of Directors.
M/S/all in favor

That we nominate and appoint Neil Marchington for a term of three years to the Board of Directors.
M/S/all in favor

That we nominate and appoint Jerry Johnson for a term of three years to the Board of Directors.
M/S/all in favor

That WCC offer a \$250 stipend per issue to the Newsletter Editor for publishing a WCC Newsletter four times per year.
Martin motioned; Mike Spiess seconded; all in favor

That the WCC shall manage the William Papke bequest as a perpetual endowment until such time as the Board instructs otherwise.
Martin Hays motioned; Mike Spiess seconded; all in favor

Appointments to the Advisory Board: None at this time.

Policy decisions coming out of the Committee of the Whole: None at this time.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of the Board of Directors (our Annual Public Meeting) will take place at the Weller Preserve, CA, on May 3, 2015, at 1pm. [Note: This date was later changed to May 17.]

Meeting adjourned at 4:59pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted,

Pat Helton, WCC Recording Secretary