



Western Cave Conservancy

213 Elm Street ■ Santa Cruz, California 95060

Voice or fax: (831) 421-0485 ■ Email: mail@westerncaves.org

Minutes for the Annual Public Meeting of the Board of Directors on Saturday, August 22, 2015

*Held at the home of Mark and Sharon Bowers,
4116 Loch Lomond Way, Livermore, CA*

Next Meeting Sunday, November 15, 2015, at 1pm

*At the home of Mark and Sharon Bowers,
4116 Loch Lomond Way, Livermore, CA*

Call to Order: at 1:13 pm

Attending were: Bruce Rogers (President), Chuck Chavdarian (Director of Land Research), Mark Bowers (Director of Public Relations), Pat Helton (Recording Secretary); Advisors: none.

Attending by Skype/phone: Mike Spiess (Vice President), Neil Marchington (Director of Special Projects)

Approval of the Agenda

Added items: None

Approval was moved by Chuck; seconded by Mark; all in favor.

Approval of Minutes of the May 17, 2015, Board Meeting at the Weller Preserve.

Approval was moved by Mike; seconded by Mark; 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

Redacting previous minutes for posting on the Website, generating newsletter content, assisting w/Leila, Rippled map, work meeting on June 20.

Planned work [read from report]: complete lease for Sink Cave (with Chuck Chacderian), continue with CA bat survey activities, assist with arranging gating for Cave of the Catacombs, attend Western Rregional meeting in Joshua Tree National Park area, present cave-oriented public program at The Exploratorium in San Francisco, conduct fieldwork on Weller Preserve geologic map project, and continue Rippled Cave digital map work. Longer term: set up Winter 2015-16 WCC Public Meeting.

Vice-President's Report: Mike Spiess

No report.

Treasurer's Report: Martin Haye

Martin Haye could not be present, so Bruce Rogers read his report.

Mike Spiess commented that he was disappointed to see the income statement. In the past we have not overspent our income, but we are beginning to do that now. We need to do something about that soon. The problem seems to be that the income is lower than usual and lower than it should be.

He also reminded us that the Directors who spend money need to submit their budgets for next year.

Martin Haye, Mike Spiess, and Mark Bowers were unable to meet as planned to discuss financial matters. They will continue to attempt their discussions.

Secretary's Report: Marianne Russo

No report at this time. Marianne Russo has had surgery and is recovering.

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

[merged with Land Research Committee Report: Chuck Chavdarian]

Cave of the Catacombs was leased in January from the owner.

Chuck Chavdarian is in negotiations with the owner of Sink Cave to lease the cave. On August 7, the owner responded that the lease would be ok, with some corrections/additions they made. Now we need to consider the revised lease and discuss the situation.

Chuck has shared with the Directors (via email & paper handouts today) the proposed and owner-edited versions of the lease. The edits were discussed:

- Access would apply only to Sink Cave, and not to the other possible/potential caves on the property. The Directors agreed that this was fine.

- Access is for the exclusive purpose of accessing and conserving Sink Cave by a designated route that will be mapped out. Directors agreed that this was fine. Anyone visiting the cave will need to have a map showing where to park and what route to traverse to reach the cave, especially because they will likely also be visiting Cave of the Catacombs at the same time and can park there. Mike Spiess mentioned that we should have a way to notify the resident, who still lives on the property, when a visit is planned so that they will know someone will be arriving. Mark Bowers asked whether we should have Trustees for these caves, or just give each grotto a key to visit on their own. This needs to be

discussed. We already have a similar arrangement with Marianne Russo for visiting Weller Preserve. Mark Bowers said there should be a single point of contact for the landowners to contact in case of any issues. Details need to be worked out.

- further issues were discussed and approved by the Directors.

Gating: The lease is a renewable 1-year lease, at the request and approval of the owner. We know that the owner is planning to sell the property in a few years (possibly ~3 years). If we gate the cave now, there's no guarantee that we will be able to purchase the cave property then, or that the new owners would be welcoming or willing to work with the WCC, or even to allow further access. Several options have been discussed with the owner, including donating the property to the WCC (and getting a large tax deduction for that), but at this time the owner is only willing to do a renewable 1-year lease.

Chuck Chavdarian then presented information about gating Sink Cave. There are two entrances: a walk-in and a 35-foot drop-in entrance.

There are four options for gating Sink Cave, in addition to the gate on Cave of the Catacombs (CotC):

- Have Tom Gilleland gate both caves on the same trip = saves over making two trips; one gate on CotC and two on Sink Cave.
- Gate CotC and only the main entrance to Sink Cave, and not the drop-in entrance.
- See if we can get a less expensive yet reasonably secure gate for Sink Cave's walk-in entrance.
- Don't gate Sink Cave at all, but the landowner probably wouldn't like that.

Bruce Rogers described Sink Cave to those who have not visited. Not a lot of decorations, not terribly long, but it's a major fossil locale. In 1995-96 we took Dr. Don McFarland there and pulled out a bucket of fossil bones. Some were dated to approx 21,000 years before present, and there's a real assortment of animals represented. It is a major Sierra Nevada fossil site.

Mark Bowers asked about non-formal caver visitation? There's not a lot of vandalism to either cave, but some graffiti outside CotC. Mike Spiess expressed the possibility of gating with one that keeps out honest folks, not one that's more heavy-duty (and expensive). Discussion continued about current use of the caves by visitors and animals, and determining just how much gating is required at both caves. Mark Bowers proposed gating only the walk/stoop-in entrance at this time. Discussion followed about possibly setting up an alarm inside the cave in case intruders dropped in through the vertical entrance. Mike Spiess moved to accept the lease as amended by the owner. Bruce Rogers moved to ask Tom Gilleland to submit a proposal for doing the two gates at the same time (CotC and lower Sink Cave entrance).

Chuck Chavdarian also told about some other work he's doing—working toward management plans for both caves, planning to contact East Bay Regional Park District re some caves on their property (one of which we recently mapped), and keeping an eye open for other cave properties for lease or possible purchase.

As approved at the last meeting, Chuck Chavdarian purchased the caps w/WCC logo, and received reimbursement from Martin. We need to set a price today. Mark Bowers suggested \$15, and all agreed. It was decided that for a generous \$15 donation to the WCC, the donor will receive a gift of a cap. Chuck has already pulled out 3 caps for specific individuals. The remainder of the hats will go to Mark (PR Director): 44 caps, plus 3 already sold to Chuck, plus the 3 set aside for others = 50 caps total.

Public Relations Committee Report: Mark Bowers

a) General Report on Activities: Mark Bowers

Mark Bowers started collecting articles for a newsletter, but still needs some pictures. Please send him photos!

Would this newsletter be emailed to the members, or printed and mailed out to members? Bruce said he recalled that it had been decided that we would try emailing it to the WCC members. It can also be published in the Western Caver. Mark said we can also put a link on the WCC Website to download a hi-res version of it, which also makes it available to non-members (which is a good thing). All agreed that sounds good. Bruce Rogers said to contact Marianne Russo for a list of member emails, and Kelley Prebil about posting to the Website.

Mining claims: Mark Bowers also said he'd taken over the overlying the French Gulch Placer #2 mining claim. That claim may contain Windeler Cave, but it may also be in the next one...should he also get that claim? Bruce Rogers has no reliable, accurate Windeler map so can't really say whether the cave goes into the other area. Mark thinks that the cave is partially in the other claim. Bruce said he feels that we should have the mining claims on all the property holding the cave, so Mark will pursue that claim as well. He's spent \$600 on the first one; the second will be another \$600, renewable each year at \$200 each. The claims must be done and financed by individuals, not by the WCC (or other corporations). Mark is required to put up signs about his mining claims, which he will do.

Bruce Rogers is writing an article about CotC that will go to Chuck Chavdarian & David Weaver, then to Mark Bowers for the newsletter. Chuck also has some nice, interior photos for the newsletter, as well as from Windeler.

The newsletter is planned to come out within a couple of months, depending on other demands on people's time.

Martin Haye and Mark Bowers are doing a lot of work at Windeler, and others are welcome to help.

Regional: Mark Bowers will print 50 copies of the newsletter to take to the Regional, along with the hats for a \$15 donation.

He suggested we provide the badges & lanyards for the Convention attendees, with a clear front w/WCC logo in the corner, and our Website & elevator statement on the back. Also printed a QR code on the latest WCC brochure, to make it easy for someone to join or donate to the WCC.

Will work with Kelley Prebil to update the Website & make it more user-friendly.

Will work with Matt Bowers on a TV spot about the upcoming 2016 NSS Convention in Ely.

b) WCC Newsletter: Vacant Position, but Mark Bowers is putting together the Newsletter.

Break (computer problems, had to move the car, ice cream called). Showed Ely NSS Convention video just released by Matt Bowers.

Reconvene 3:32p

Science Committee Report: Vacant Position

No director; no report.

Special Projects Committee Report: Neil Marchington

Cave Valley Cave cleanup pre-Convention. Sand blaster truck to arrive before that.

Convention: may have trailers there w/demos & info.

[Neil Marchington will have to leave today about 4pm.]

Stewardship Committee Report: Kelley Prebil

Not present; no report.

a) CotC Project: David Weaver

No report submitted. Chuck Chavdarian gave update already.

b) Weller Preserve Manager's Report: Marianne Russo

No report submitted due to her recent surgery.

c) Windeler Cave Report: Kelley Prebil

No report submitted. See earlier report given by Martin.

Mark Bowers said there's work being done on the entrance area & surrounding (thanks to Mark, Martin Haye, Dan Snyder, and some non-cavers). Work in progress—need to do more. At times the flies are very bad around the stream 6a-11a, and 5p-on.

d) San Vicente Redwoods Project Report: Bruce Rogers

During May-August he participated with Leila Harris to visit several of the caves; they found some bats. In White Moon Cave there were ~20 flying bats, different sizes (a maternity colony), so the people quickly & quietly backed out. They set up some acoustical devices (listen & record the sounds for later analysis) & were able to observe & identify several species flying around at/after dusk. This was the first real report of numbers of bats in this area and in these caves.

Bruce Rogers read aloud a summary of the San Vicente access plan from Land Trust of Santa Cruz (August 2015). They took into account the feedback from public meetings and have modified their plan for trails and use of the tract. No public access will reach the quarry or cave areas.

Volunteer Resources Committee Report: Vacant Position (Brevet Marianne Russo)

No report.

Already took a break. Short Board recess, then reconvene as Committee of the Whole for general discussion of issues.

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 work in the near future, including re-writing the VP position and looking for new Volunteer Resources and Science Directors.

We held a work meeting a couple of months ago, which was successful, and we need to do more.

Investment strategies:

Martin Haye, Mark Bowers, and Mike Spiess haven't had opportunities to work on this, but they will.

Other Items Presented At The Meeting:

Review of Google Groups for communication

It seems to be working for everyone else; we'll figure out Bruce Rogers' problems with it.

2016 NSS Convention: How can the WCC participate?

Mark Bowers mentioned having a crawl box; Bruce Rogers said they'd had a crawl area (empty cans stacked two-high, outlining the path) at another event years ago. Need to have a brainstorming meeting to come up with some ideas.

As mentioned above under PR Report, Mark Bowers suggested we provide the badges & lanyards for the Convention attendees, with a clear front w/WCC logo in the corner, and our Website & elevator statement on the back.

Also possibly get a QRcode reader for handling WCC sales at the convention.

Mark Bowers is interested in further work after mid-October.

Chuck suggested showing a slide show or videos of our caves etc.

Suggestions for communicating with WCC members:

Mark Bowers's mother uses Constant Contact – for sending reminder emails to donors.

Mike Spiess said the WCC database can send individual text emails, but no attachments. Mark will give it a try.

Chuck Chavdarian will write up a short piece for Mark Bowers (for the newsletter) about CotC & gating, asking members to donate generously for the project.

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

NEW BUSINESS (Board reconvenes):

MOTIONS:

Moved that we accept the owner-edited & WCC-revised lease agreement for Sink Cave and start asking for an estimate for the lower entrance gate from Tom Gilliland. Mark Bowers moved; Mike Spiess seconded; all in favor.

APPOINTMENTS OF NEW DIRECTORS (if applicable):

Bruce Rogers moved David Weaver and his work at CotC to the Stewardship committee under Kelley Prebil.

No new appointments.

POLICY DECISIONS COMING OUT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE:

None

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of the Board of Directors is tentatively set for Sunday, November 15, 2015, at 1pm, at the Bowers' residence, Livermore, CA.

Bruce Rogers will look into holding the January 2016 meeting at POST headquarters in Palo Alto (as we did last year) or maybe at Santa Cruz Land Trust. Mark Bowers will look into meeting where his radio club meets.

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted,

Pat Helton, WCC Recording Secretary