

**Virginia Cave Board Meeting Minutes
November 9, 2013
DCR Office
8 Radford Road
Christiansburg, Virginia 24073**

Virginia Cave Board (VCB) Members Present

Michelle Baird
Robert Denton, Jr.
Dan Doctor
John Haynes
Rick Lambert
Steve Lindeman
Marian McConnell
Meredith Weberg

Virginia Cave Board Members Absent

Ruth Blankenship
John Graves
Roger Kirchen, representing Dept. of Historic Resources

Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Staff Members Present

Ellen Koertge
Wil Orndorff
Larry Smith
Rebecca Stewart

Guests

Karen Kastning
Roy Jameson

Chairman Meredith Weberg called the meeting to order at 2:21 p.m.

Introduction of New Members: Michele Baird, John Haynes, and Marian McConnell were introduced. We still have one vacancy on the board.

Approval of Past Meeting Minutes: Minutes from our June 8 meeting had been shared with the members of the Board. Dan Doctor moved that they be accepted. Meredith Weberg seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Election of Board Officers. Meredith Weberg was elected as Chairman and Steve Lindeman was elected as Vice Chairman. Both were unopposed and unanimously elected. It was decided that the position of

secretary would be served on a rotating basis with Dan Doctor offering to serve for the February meeting.

Treasurers Report: \$1,680 remains in the Cave Board account to be used to print and mail the *Virginia Cave Owners' Newsletter* (VCON). It was again suggested that we go paperless to all interested owners. It was mentioned that some owners may prefer the paper copy. As funds for this are running low, it was suggested that we look for more funding. Some potential sources were discussed.

DCR Karst Program Update

Wil Orndorff announced Rebecca Stewart's internship will end soon and that Natural Heritage hopes to move Ellen Koertge into that critical position. Ellen has been working as a seasonal employee for DCR, and the overlap has facilitated training of Koertge by Stewart.

Virginia Department of Transportation is funding field work to update of older element occurrences (records of rare species or natural communities) near VDOT rights of way. A portion of this funding is being used to update cave-related element occurrences, including significant caves and cave occurrences of rare organisms and natural communities.

Land Conservation Update

Steve Lindeman from the Nature Conservancy spoke about the Lee County Russell Sawmill property acquisition. The Thompson Cedar Cave entrance is located on the property. The US Fish and Wildlife Service and Virginia DCR Natural Heritage Program are monitoring the recovery of the Lee Cave Isopod at this and other sites. There are currently four populations found and one more protected population is needed to meet a delisting requirement as specified in the species official recovery plan. The current populations are doing well. The Russell Sawmill property has residual sawdust leachate, remnants of an oil storage facility, and old timber industry equipment that need to be cleaned up. At this point, a group of public and private sector partners is working to put together a plan to buy this property and restore it to a combination of local park facilities and natural area preserve with limited public access.

Next year the DCR Natural Heritage Program will be preparing a list of new targets for creation of new natural areas to be protected through easements and fee purchases. Included on that list will be significant karst and cave areas.

Concerned citizens recently notified authorities that there was logging going on near Rocky Hollow Cave, a very significant cave located on Powell Mountain in Wise County. The property is owned by The Nature Conservancy and they are checking into the events.

OLD BUSINESS:

Board Appointments

Welcome to the new members. The Cave Board is considering gaps in expertise as a list of potential nominees is created for submission to the Governor's staff.

Virginia Cave Owners' Newsletter

Meredith Weberg called for articles for the next edition of the *Virginia Cave Owners' Newsletter*. The deadline for articles is February 1, 2014. Article topics and authors are:

Landowner-submitted poem
Electronic VCON statement
Dan Doctor: Virginia Cave and Karst Trail
Wil Orndorff: Ogdens Cave and Cave Week 2013
Bob Denton: Karst Site Assessment Guidelines
Michele Baird: Getting Kids into Caves
Bob Denton: Mid Atlantic Karst Conservancy and Crystal Caverns update.
Steve Lindeman: Gap Cave

Site Assessments for Karst Areas

Bob Denton shared the Karst Site Assessment Guidelines. There was some discussion about the recommendation in the guidelines that qualified professionals performing a karst assessment have some years of karst experience in addition to professional certification. Language in the guidelines was revised by the Board, and the guidelines were accepted and approved by all. Meredith Weberg will proofread the introduction and make it more plain language.

Virginia Cave and Karst Trail

We discussed the logo for the Virginia Cave and Karst Trail. The majority of the Board preferred the light blue with gray, followed by green and brown. It was asked if the green/brown model could have contrasting blue water to replace the current brown water. It was also noted by Meredith that to meet Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act compliance that certain greens cannot be used. Funding for the signs was also discussed. For example, the signs for the Wine Trail were funded by VDOT. Larry Smith will look for more funding options.

DCR's Public Communication Office offered to help with website development and written material for the Virginia Cave and Karst Trail. Dan Doctor, Meredith Weberg, and Larry Smith will meet with Julie about planning these things in December. Meredith Weberg and John Graves will also work on the brochures, as discussed at the last meeting.

Dan Doctor demonstrated the Google Earth KML (Keyhole markup Language) file he created for the trail. It was decided that the white background was the preferred logo for placemarks.

Other Old Business

VMI hosts the Environmental Virginia conference every year. Larry Smith will contact VMI to schedule a Karst and Cave session for the 2014 conference. Presentations that were discussed for this session were karst area site assessment guidelines (Denton), karst groundwater monitoring (Orndorff), and Nisource Pipeline Karst Survey Staff Geologist.

A concern was raised that a change in the alignment of I-81 may cause an impact to Dixie Caverns; DCR expressed this concern to VDOT in early 2013.

The Pennsylvania Cave Conservancy is hosting a regional meeting in the spring focusing on cave conservancies. Meredith Weberg will work with them for a possible Virginia Cave Board presence.

Bob Denton received an invitation from the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences to participate in a round table discussion about sinkholes and engineering issues in karst and will present a paper there on November 14, 2014.

The Spring Meeting of the Virginia Region of the National Speleological Society (VAR) will be held in May, specific date to be determined.

Next Meeting: February 22, 2014. This meeting will be held at Melrose Caverns. John Haynes will arrange the next meeting location at James Madison University if Melrose Caverns is not feasible due to weather conditions.

Meeting adjourned 3:44 p.m.

DRAFT