

**IKC ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING**  
**Saturday, March 18, 2006**  
**Indianapolis, Indiana**

**Board Members Present:**

Richard Vernier, President  
Bob Sergesketter, Secretary  
Keith Dunlap, Treasurer  
Bruce Devore (proxy by Karen Tadsen)  
Dave Haun  
Don Ingle  
Kriste Lindberg  
Steve Lockwood  
Nick Noe (proxy by George Cesnik)  
Tom Sollman  
Bill Tozer  
Bob Vandeventer  
Sue Vernier  
Jamie Winner

**Board Members Absent:**

Bruce Bowman

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 AM at the Decatur Branch of the Marion County Public Library, President Richard Vernier presiding. Karen Tadsen was accepted as proxy for Bruce Devore and George Cesnik was accepted as proxy for Nick Noe. The minutes of the December 2005 and the February 2006 Board meetings were approved as published in the March 2006 *IKC Update*.

Treasurer Dunlap reported total assets of \$304,664.12. Our land holdings are valued at \$257,013.16 and we have cash in the various funds totaling \$47,650.96. A detailed Treasury Report is published in the *IKC Update*.

Dunlap reported that we have 188 members of which 126 have already renewed for 2006 or beyond. More renewals are coming in daily. He said that we are in good financial condition.

**Elections**

Tom Rea served as election teller, assisted by Bill Tozer. Ballots were passed out to members who had not already sent in a ballot. Vernier asked for nominations from the floor. None were forthcoming. Dunlap moved to close nominations and proceed with the election, seconded by Vandeventer. The motion passed 13-0-0. (Board member Lockwood was not present to vote on this motion.)

The election results were the re-election of Vernier as President, Dunlap as Treasurer, and Sergesketter as Secretary. Re-elected to the Board were Haun and Sollman. Newly elected to the Board were Dr. Jerry Lewis and Bruce Silvers. Dunlap noted that new Board members take office on April 1. Dunlap moved that the ballots be destroyed, seconded by Vandeventer. The motion passed 13-1-0.

**Annual Reports From Property Managers and Cave Patrons**

Reports were given for Sullivan Cave and property, Wayne Cave, Buddha Cave and property, Orangeville Rise property, Robinson Ladder Cave and property, Shaft Cave, Coon/Grotto Cave, and the Indian Creek Sink Conservation Easement. No reports were received for the Wayne property, Suicide Cave or Shiloh Cave although Sollman gave a verbal report on the Wayne property. The annual reports will be published in their entirety in the *IKC Update*.

**Robinson Ladder Cave Acquisition**

Dunlap reported on the fund raising status. He said that we are \$17,642 short of our \$84,000 goal. We have a good chance that we will be getting two grants of the many we submitted, one for \$20,000 and one for \$10,000. This will more than cover the \$17,000 we need and that brings up a couple of issues. If we get both grants, we will have raised more than the \$84,000 needed. We asked for donations from members to purchase the Robinson Ladder property and the members responded generously and now, with these two grants, we will have excess. Dunlap said that he thinks the excess should be rolled into the Land Acquisition Fund so as to be ready for the next purchase, whatever that may be. Some members who

contributed money to the Robinson Ladder purchase might be concerned about having their contribution rolled into the Land Acquisition Fund. The Board needs to communicate this situation to the members. Do we need to contact every donor and ask them if it's okay to roll it over or do we just do it. Dunlap said that members need to understand that we never know how grant requests will play out. In this case we really didn't know about our chances of getting these until the last two weeks. Also, one of the things that these foundations and funds look at is the amount of support that the organization gets from its own members.

Ingle said that we should run an article in the next *IKC Update* thanking the donors and explaining the situation. Sollman agreed but said that the explanation be very prominent. Jeff Cody asked if the grant money or a portion of it could be rolled into the Land Acquisition Fund. Dunlap and Vernier said no, the grants are very specific. The money must be used for the purchase of the Robinson Ladder property and nothing else. The grants can't be used for a land survey, Stewardship Fund, or any other use other than the actual purchase of the land.

Haun suggested that something be put on the website explaining the situation. Vernier said that in the future we will be more specific with our fund raising literature and explain that if we are overfunded for a certain project that the excess will be rolled into the Land Acquisition Fund. He thought that it was always understood that that would be the case but in the future we will make it known up front. Tozer thought that we had run into this dilemma once before. Dunlap said that we had a small overrun when we bought the Sullivan property and a large excess when Buddha was purchased. Both times the excess was rolled over without any fanfare but we now realize that we should be more clear about where the money goes.

Vernier said that everyone has to understand that fundraising is very unpredictable. Tozer said that it's an interesting situation in that our receiving these grants is causing somewhat of a problem but he wouldn't discourage us from going after grants for our next purchase. Vernier said that our ideal situation would be to fund our next purchase entirely with grants and not to have to raise funds through member donations. Discussion continued but in the end everyone agreed that while our success in getting these grants may be complicating things a bit, overall we're in a good position and most members and contributors will be understanding. Tozer ended the discussion by saying that as we acquire more property, finding dedicated people to manage our property is going to be at least as important as getting funds to purchase property.

Dunlap said that he would like to make two motions relating to funding of the Stewardship Fund. In the past, we have set aside ten percent of the purchase price of each property and placed that amount in the Stewardship Fund. The purpose of the Stewardship Fund is to provide revenue to pay such costs as insurance, property taxes, and property maintenance. Right now we have enough income from donations and dues to pay these expenses but we must plan for the future and provide a revenue source so that the properties can be maintained no matter what entity owns them should the IKC cease to exist. In the past we transferred money from the General Fund to the Stewardship Fund and Dunlap thinks that is a good policy but at this time he would like to make an exception and transfer money from the Land Acquisition Fund to the Stewardship Fund. His reasoning is that a lot of the money in the Land Acquisition Fund came from grants with some of them written in such a way that would allow us to do this. Dunlap moved that the amount of \$5,000 be transferred from the Land Acquisition Fund to the Stewardship Fund, contingent upon reaching our funding goal of \$84,000. Sue Vernier seconded the motion. A clarification was made that the Stewardship Fund is one fund for all IKC properties. There is not a separate fund for each property. Dunlap said that we have funded the Stewardship Fund appropriately for all of our properties except the Wayne property which is \$2,500 short and the Robinson Ladder property. The motion on the floor will take care of two thirds of the amount owed to the Stewardship Fund for the Robinson Ladder property. Sollman said that he was glad that it was brought up that the IKC won't be around forever and that we are trying to plan for the future. He asked how the Stewardship Fund will be divided upon dissolution of the IKC. Dunlap said that there is no written plan for how the fund would be distributed. Sollman said that if we're really serious about taking care of our property into the future, we should have a written plan for handling the Stewardship Fund but he admitted that he doesn't know how to go about doing it. There was a short discussion but no action was taken.

Vernier returned our attention to the motion on the floor and called for a vote. The motion passed 14-0-0.

Dunlap moved that the amount of \$2,500 be transferred from the IKC's General Fund to the Stewardship Fund towards the Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve 10% contribution. Cesnik seconded the motion. There was a short discussion. The motion passed 13-0-1. It was noted that this completes the Robinson Ladder contribution to the Stewardship Fund. The total amount transferred was \$7,500. We still "owe" \$2,500 on the Wayne Property contribution.

John Benton, Robinson Ladder Property Manager was not present to report on restoration activities. Vernier reported that nothing is happening other than vegetation is greening up. Benton has been gathering information needed by the surveyor. There have been problems finding someone to do the controlled burn because there had been a burning ban in Crawford County. The ban has more than likely been lifted and if we had someone to do the burn it could probably proceed. Winner said that he got somewhat involved because it seemed no one was quite sure what needed to be done. He said that he asked at Fire Headquarters about a controlled burn and they said that was something they could do. They would come with fire engines, people, and equipment and do the whole burn for free but someone would have to come up with a burn plan and

take charge of the operation. Winner said that Mark Bennett would probably be the one to come up with the plan and take charge. Vernier said he didn't think that Bennett was qualified to be in charge of the burn. Winner said that Bennett had written burn plans before and the way it works is that he writes the burn plan, Fire Headquarters approves it, and then they come out and do the burn.

A problem that Winner pointed out is that we apparently need a variance from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management before we can burn. He said that Bennett didn't think we needed one but Winner disagrees. The variance must be applied for 60 days in advance of the proposed burn date although he was told that they usually come back in about 15 days. There are also conflicting ideas about whether the vegetation should be mowed before burning or burned without mowing. There are a lot of questions to be answered before we can proceed but at this point nothing will be done until fall except possibly filling out applications and writing plans. Other issues include the nature of fire breaks, the spraying of herbicide, and notification of neighbors. Sollman asked to be reminded of the reason for all of the spraying, mowing, and burning. Vernier said that the goal is to get rid of the non-native fescue and to convert the plant community to what the biologists say was native to the area in historical times. The Nature Conservancy suggested that it would be good if the land could be converted back to a more natural state. Sollman asked if anyone knows what the bats want because we are supposed to be managing the property for the benefit of the bats. Vernier replied that we probably don't really know what the bats prefer but we've had input from various people saying that they thought that the converted property would be at least as good for the bats if not better.

Dunlap said that another reason to convert the property is so we can enroll it in the Classified Forest and Classified Wildlands programs. We are currently paying almost \$500 a year in property taxes. Once we get the land converted and enrolled our taxes will drop to five dollars a year. Sollman said that he is not against continuing our present course of action but he wants to make sure that we don't lose sight of the main purpose of our purchase of the property and that is to manage it for the benefit of the bats. Vernier pointed out that no matter what we do with our fescue fields, there will still be plenty of open fields around our property. He also said that perhaps Dr. Lewis may be able to give us an idea of what the bats prefer in the area surrounding the cave.

Vernier said that he will be getting with John Benton and Mark Bennett and together they'll decide if we do some more mowing or possibly spraying or if we just wait until fall to do something. If we intend to mow, we'll need a volunteer with a tractor or we will have to hire someone to do it. The last time it was mowed by a nearby farmer and it cost us \$300. We should have a better idea of our course of action by the June IKC meeting and we may have to allocate some funding at that time.

#### Under Earth Day

Dunlap said that Under Earth Day will be April 22 at the Robinson Ladder property from noon until 4:00 PM. Work to be done includes removal of an old tree stand, cutting wild grapevines, and repairing the road that goes to the upper field. Vernier asked if we should discourage people from driving up the hill. Someone said that it's probably water more than vehicles that is doing most of the damage to the road but it would be good if people refrained from driving up the hill when the road is wet. Vernier thought that we might want to make the parking area at the bottom of the hill better defined so that visitors will use it and walk up the hill to the cave. Sollman said that he can bring a tractor for road work if needed. It was pointed out that the cave will still be closed to visitation on Under Earth Day.

#### Indiana Cave Symposium

The Indiana Cave Symposium will be April 22 at Milltown. The pitch-in supper will be at 5:00 PM and the presentations will start at 7:00 PM. Dunlap moved that the IKC approve the expenditure of up to \$50 towards 50 percent of the expenses of the 2006 Indiana Cave Symposium. Haun seconded and the motion passed 14-0-0.

#### Education and Outreach Report

Lindberg reported that the IKC got some good exposure in the March 2006 NSS News special Conservation Issue. The photo on the front cover was taken in Buddha Cave, the back cover was the IKC Karst Poster which won a Merit Award at the 2005 NSS Convention. There were also two articles in the issue concerning the IKC, the 2005 Education and Outreach report for the IKC written by Kriste Lindberg and an article about the Robinson Ladder property written by John Benton.

Another new poster, designed by Kriste Lindberg, promotes the cave biology video and appears on the back cover of the March 2006 *IKC Update*.

Lindberg said that she and Cindy Basile of the Hoosier National Forest had a meeting recently with the people at the Natural Resources Education Center to discuss ways to get the cave biology video worked into state programs such as Project Wet and Project Wild. She will be doing a presentation at the Indiana Cave Symposium and at the 2006 NSS

Convention. The Bloomington Herald-Times is still promoting Indiana Bat conservation programs. Dick and Sue Vernier will be hosting the IKC booth on Earth Day at O'Bannon Woods. Don Ingle may also be helping.

Nothing has been done yet to update the information in the kiosk at the Buddha property. Lindberg thanked Bob Vandeventer and George Cesnik for helping her with Education and Outreach projects.

#### Wayne Cave Preserve

Dunlap suggested June 10 or 17 to work on the driveway. We probably want to schedule it for the same date as the June IKC meeting, the date of which will be decided later.

#### Buddha Cave Preserve

Cesnik reported that the tree order has been confirmed. Planting will take place on April 29 starting at 10:00 AM. Dunlap said if we get about a half dozen people it should go fast. Bring shovels and gloves.

#### Sullivan Cave Preserve

Dunlap said that a workday is scheduled for April 8 beginning at noon. One hundred trees are to be planted, mostly to replace trees that have died. He has already flagged the trees that need to be replaced so it's just a matter of sticking a new tree wherever there's a blue flag. Dunlap said that he may not be able to make it that day so he was seeking someone to take charge for the workday. Vandeventer volunteered to take charge and see that the trees get planted.

The revised management plan for the Sullivan property has been sent to the Board. Dunlap said that he incorporated all the changes that were proposed at the last meeting, mostly minor changes in wording. The one issue that we couldn't resolve at the last meeting because Vandeventer wasn't present was the subject of camping. The current situation requires a reservation to camp on the Sullivan property. Sollman felt that a more open policy could be implemented. He thought that a privilege of IKC membership should be camping allowed on a first come, first served basis. During the discussion at the last meeting some thought that an open policy may be OK for other IKC properties, but the popularity and limited space at Sullivan necessitates a more restrictive policy. Often groups are travelling long distances and don't arrive until the early morning hours and they need to know that they'll be able to have a place to park and set up camp. Vandeventer, who coordinates almost all camping and caving activities at Sullivan, said that conflicts can and do occur though not very often.

Dunlap said that in the revised management plan he left the camping requirements the same as they always were but he has provided alternative language that, if adopted, would allow open first come, first served camping to IKC members on Sunday night through Thursday night. Friday and Saturday nights would still require reservations. Winner asked about the requirements for camping at other IKC property such as the Wayne Cave Preserve and Robinson Ladder. Dunlap said that the language in both of those plans require permission in advance to camp. He said that he thinks we ought to look into revising those plans sometime. Winner said that he likes the alternative language and if we're thinking of relaxing the camping requirements at Wayne and Robinson Ladder that there's nothing wrong with open camping at Sullivan during the week. He doesn't think it would be too confusing.

Haun said that he thinks it should be either open all the time or require reservations all the time, not have different rules for different days of the week. He said that he is in favor of removing restrictions on the other properties.

Dunlap moved to revise the Sullivan Cave Management Plan as presented to the Board, using the primary language for camping arrangements, that is, permission must be obtained to camp at the Sullivan property at all times. The motion was seconded by Ingle.

Sollman said that after listening to Vandeventer's concerns, he is now in favor of keeping the camping policy as is. Tozer said we should come up with a way to enlarge the camping area. Dunlap said that he's looking into it. Vandeventer said that he's not sure that we can alleviate all problems at Sullivan. Parking remains a problem and even with the present restrictions, overcrowding occurs. Sollman said that it sounds like we're trending towards more open access but we can't due to lack of room. Vernier noted that we have a lot of acreage but only a very small portion is suitable for camping and parking. Vandeventer said that no matter what we do, conflicts are bound to happen. Dunlap said that there is still a parking area on the side of the highway for day trippers visiting the cave. Vernier said that we're doing the best we can for the situation that we've got and then called for a vote. The motion passed 14-0-0.

#### Bat Conservation International Project

Dunlap said that he has been in contact with Kat Kennedy who has been running the project in Kentucky. He provided her with locations of caves that she wanted to visit. They are supposed to be in the area the last two weeks of April. Vernier

said that we have several volunteers ready to help. Dunlap said that as far as he knows, none of the volunteers have been contacted.

#### Beck's Mill

Tom Rea reported that he did not attend the meeting of the group attempting the preserve and restore Beck's Mill. He has no further information and he will not have time to get involved with the project. Vernier asked if anyone is interested in making contact with the Beck's Mill group. Ingle said that he would try to get involved.

#### Hoosier National Forest Land Sale

Vernier reported that apparently the National Forests, not just the HNF but nationwide, are being pressured by the administration to sell off property. Allegedly these properties are isolated, surplus, unusable, unrelated to their purpose or just difficult to manage. The HNF is involved with this. About 800 acres are up for consideration for being sold. He has talked to people within the HNF and he's been told that they know nothing and that the lands involved have not been evaluated by any resource specialist to determine if any rare or endangered species are present or any other type of value. It's not clear who picked the tracts to be sold. He said that he has identified some of the tracts and the majority do not appear to be in the karst region although there are some that are in Crawford county a little north and west of Marengo and could be in a karst area. Sue Vernier passed around copies of an Audubon Action Alert which outlined the plan and listed a few examples of parcels in several states that would be sold if the plan goes forward. According to the alert, Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management land in thirty five states would be affected and it appears that much of this property is not isolated or unusable but very desirable. Sue is attempting to get more information from Senator Lugar's office and she urged IKC members to contact their representatives, express your concerns, and ask what is going on. The USDA is asking for public comment by March 30 and she intends to respond on behalf of the Evansville Audubon Society and Dick will respond on behalf of the IKC.

Dunlap said that currently the isolated parcels owned by the HNF are utilized in exchanges for more desirable property because there is no money available to the HNF to buy property. This proposal would remove those isolated HNF tracts from the exchange pool thus leaving the HNF with nothing to trade. Instead of the isolated tracts benefiting the HNF, the money gained from the sale will end up in the federal pool of money from land sales all across the nation.

Sollman asked that any comments sent under the IKC letterhead be restricted to comments about property in Indiana. Vernier agreed.

#### HNF Cave Registers

Vernier said that several IKC members have been working with the HNF developing cave management plans. Some of the old plans included a cave register program, developed by the NSS, that involved filling out a survey form consisting of several pages by each person visiting the cave. The program got written into the new management plans for some HNF caves and now we're getting inquiries about it from the HNF as to whether we want to continue the program. We told the HNF that it depends on if they think that any information they got from the survey was of any use to the HNF. Vernier said that his feeling is that the NSS isn't pushing it, the IKC and the Indiana Cave Survey have no use for the information either so he is asking if anyone has any thoughts on the subject before we make a recommendation to the HNF that we don't do it. Tom Rea had a thought. He suggested not doing it, so that will be our recommendation to the HNF.

#### Richard Blenz Nature Conservancy / Buckner Cave

Patty Cummings was not present to give a report. Vernier said that she would like the IKC to get involved with the Richard Blenz Nature Conservancy. He thinks we should but how and to what degree needs to be discussed. Tozer said that IKC members should try to support the RBNC individually, he doesn't think that we need a committee. Winner agreed that we should get involved as individuals and respond as we can to their projects. Sollman thought that the IKC could join the RBNC as an institutional member.

Sergesketter moved that the IKC join the Richard Blenz Nature Conservancy as an institutional member for \$25.00. Vandevanter seconded and the motion passed 12-0-2.

#### Items From The Floor

Sollman reported that his son Robert is getting his Eagle Scout award on Sunday, March 19, and that everyone is invited to the ceremony.

Dunlap said that the Near Normal Grotto, (Illinois), is requesting a grotto liaison relationship with the IKC. Their

application has been received and it is complete and in order. Vandeventer spoke in favor of the group. Haun moved to accept the Near Normal Grotto into the Grotto Liaison program, seconded by Vandeventer. The motion passed 14-0-0.

Tozer reported that the International Congress of Speleology is being held in Texas in July, 2009. He wanted to know if there is any interest in putting on a caving camp in Indiana either before or after the event. This would be intended primarily for foreign cavers who want to visit various caving areas around the country before and after the congress. What form the camp would take would be up to the group hosting it. It could be a weekend or a couple of days during the week, but it will take commitment and if the support isn't there, we won't do it. Ingle thought it would be a good idea. Haun thought we should try to coordinate with Kentucky because a lot of visitors will want to take in some of the bigger and well known caves. Tozer thought that Kentucky cavers will probably host their own events. Sollman thought that Wyandotte would hold a lot of interest for European cavers. Someone asked how many people would attend the congress. Tom Rea said that there could be 2,000 people at the congress but before and after they will be spread all over the country. There may only be a few who would show up in Indiana. He has had experience with these events and he reminded us that these will be foreign people who don't know their way around. They'll expect a guidebook, to be told where they are going to stay, what they are going to eat, transportation and cave descriptions. Vernier said that the IKC doesn't necessarily have to get any more involved than to make our caves available and maybe provide guides. This may be a project that a grotto might want to take on. The IKC in general supports the idea but no action was taken.

The next meeting will be on June 17, 2006, in room 143 of the Geology Building on the campus of Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. The meeting will begin at 6:00 PM EDT.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:23 PM

Respectfully submitted,  
Bob Sergesketter, Secretary