

**IKC FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**Saturday, February 3, 2007--Bloomington, Indiana**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

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

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Steve Lockwood

The meeting was called to order at 1:19 PM at the home of Kriste Lindberg in Bloomington, President Richard Vernier presiding. Karen Tadsen was accepted as proxy for Bill Tozer. The minutes of the December 2006 meeting have not yet been published so they could not be approved.

Treasurer Dunlap reported a cash balance of \$79,992.23. Land Holdings amount to \$258,000. Total IKC assets stand at \$337,992.23. IKC membership stands at 182. Sixteen people have been dropped because of non payment of dues. There is a complete and detailed Treasury Report in the *IKC Update*.

**Nominations**

Election of the three officers and one third of the Board members will take place at the March business meeting. Nominations are being sought for President, Treasurer, and Secretary which are one year terms. Five Director positions are also up for election, four for three year terms and one to finish out Bill Tozer's term which has one year left. Vernier, Dunlap, and Sergesketter agreed to run for re-election to the posts of President, Treasurer, and Secretary respectively. Directors whose terms are up are Ingle, Lockwood, Noe, and Winner. Ingle, Noe, and Winner all agreed to run for re-election. Dunlap said that Jim Adams told him that he would run for a Director position. Lockwood was not present and it is unclear if he intends to run for re-election. Vernier said that he thinks he will. Dunlap moved to accept the ballot as described, contingent on Lockwood accepting the nomination. The motion was seconded by Ingle and passed 14-0-0. In the election for Director, the four candidates getting the most votes will get the three year terms. The fifth place winner will finish out the one year remaining on

Bill Tozer's term.

## **Education and Outreach**

Lindberg reported that all is going well in the Education and Outreach area. Just this morning she and Vandeventer presented a program based on Project Underground for the public through Bloomington Parks and Recreation. The 37 foot "inflatable cave" is often used and she said that it is a real hit with the people who attend. Lindberg reported that she recently presented a Project Underground workshop for the state. There were 21 teachers as well as other formal and informal educators taking part. She said it went over really well and now Indianapolis Parks wants to do one too.

She will be doing some sessions at the upcoming NSS Convention and is working on an article for the March *NSS News*. Vernier gave Lindberg an adaptation of an article about the history of the IKC that he prepared for the 2007 NSS Convention Guidebook thinking that she may be able to use it in her presentations.

The Hoosier Association of Science Teachers Incorporated, (HASTI), conference is February 7-9 at the Indianapolis Convention Center. The IKC will have a booth and Nick Noe will be staffing it. He said that he will need a lot of handouts and there was discussion of what handouts we can get. Suggestions included NSS and IKC membership brochures, the Sinkhole flyer, and information on the cave biota video. Bat information would also be needed.

Dunlap reported receiving information about the sixth annual "Bat Festival" to be held at Dobb's Park in Terre Haute on August 11. The event, said to possibly attract 2,000 people, has been held in other cities in the Great Lakes area but Dunlap didn't think it had ever been held in Terre Haute before. What exactly happens at a "Bat Festival" is unclear at this time and our degree of involvement is also up for discussion but that discussion will take place at a future meeting. Vernier thought that we should have our booth set up and the cave biota video could surely be used somehow. The inflatable cave, some sort of Project Underground activity, and maybe the NSS Convention "mascot bat" were also mentioned.

## **Cave Biota Video**

Vernier reported that the Environmental Protection Agency Education Grant that was being pursued to fund the development of a teaching guide to be used with the cave biota video is dead, at least for now. The EPA Educational Grants were not funded and the application deadline has passed anyway so the earliest anything could happen is next year.

The premier of the cave biota video will be March 23, 2007, at the Buskirk-Chumley Theater in Bloomington. The activities will begin at 5:00 PM, EDT.

## **I69/Indiana Bat**

Noe reported that he has talked to the attorney who is handling the litigation and he seems to be taking his time so there is nothing new to report other than he said that Noe wouldn't be asked to say anything regarding the Indiana bat. He would be asked to give a more general testimony regarding the impact that the highway would have on cave life.

Vernier said that he talked to Thomas Cervone of Bernardin Lochmueller and Associates expressing our concerns about the urban sprawl that will be accompanying the highway. Cervone said that they were trying to keep sprawl to a minimum by having fewer interchanges but Vernier doesn't think that will prevent it. He said that Cervone assured him that mitigating actions are being taken but Vernier isn't confident that anything will really be done. For now, there isn't a lot we can do except monitor the situation and continue to express our concerns. Dunlap said that the question now is will the highway be a freeway or a toll road. Either way, it's going to be built but in his opinion, a toll road might be preferable because no one would use it and thus it would have less secondary impact.

Noe reported that the State bat legislation is moving forward very slowly. He said that it is in write up now and he has given them copies of the legislation used in Texas, Oklahoma, and Virginia. They will draft something and attach it to another bill. Dunlap said that it is assigned a Senate Bill, number 473. He said that it is the only thing on that bill and it is basically this one sentence. The bat commonly known as the Indiana Bat, *Myotis sodalis*, is hereby adopted as the Official Bat of the State of Indiana. The bill is assigned to the Rules and Legislation Committee. State Senator Richard Young, who introduced the bill, is on that committee. The future of the bill may now depend on how it gets pushed and that depends on how much interest is shown by constituents. Noe has volunteered to write a letter on behalf of the IKC and everyone is urged to write their own letter as well. This needs to be done very soon because all bills must be in third reading by February 28.

## **2007 NSS Convention**

Caver access to IKC owned and managed caves during the convention was discussed. Vernier said that he talked to John Benton, Cave Patron and Property Manager for Robinson Ladder Cave, and he thinks it would be an appropriate convention cave but we probably don't want hordes of people stomping through it. Sue Vernier said that the fact that it has a vertical entrance may reduce traffic somewhat which lead to a discussion of whether or not we will rig ladders in advance and leave them in place all week. Dunlap thought that we need to have ladders in place at the entrance and at the climb up in the cave. Vernier agreed that having ladders in place would probably lessen the impact to the cave although it might also result in increased visitation and maybe a greater exposure to liability. Vandeventer suggested having only sign up/led trips throughout the week. Dunlap said that he didn't think it would be a problem to have open visitation as long as everyone signed release forms. Vernier said that we probably should have someone check the cave and the ladders every day. Dunlap volunteered ladders for the week.

Vernier asked about Sullivan Cave. Vandeventer, Cave Patron for Sullivan Cave, said that we'll certainly have to feature it. The cave has a lot of history and even though it is fairly distant from the convention site, it will be a popular destination. Dunlap thought that Sullivan Cave should be limited to one trip a day and have the party check out the key. People would have to sign up for the trip but it wouldn't necessarily have to be a led trip. He said that Dave Everton has volunteered to lead a couple of trips to Sullivan if there is a demand. There may be some trips to Sullivan during pre-convention.

Vernier asked about Wayne Cave. Dunlap thought that key checkout and signing a release form would work for Wayne Cave too.

Noe asked about Buddha Cave. Vernier pointed out that Buddha Cave is a little more hazardous and wondered how we want to handle trips. Do we want to rig it with a rope or a cable ladder in advance? Vandeventer said that we need to point out in the cave description that Buddha is hazardous and is a serious vertical cave. Vernier said that we need to get Jeff Cody's input on Buddha Cave also. Dunlap said that there will be details about each cave including special hazards and also information about things like parking at the cave "kiosk" at the convention.

IKC promotional items were briefly discussed. Kathy Welling was doing some research into that but she was not present to give a report. Dunlap said that we should order another round of IKC hats. We can sell them through Consignment Sales at the convention so we won't have to set up as a vendor. The last time we ordered hats, we got four dozen and they lasted two or three years. Sollman said that he will check on prices. Dunlap thought that we may want five or six dozen this time in case we sell a bunch of them at the convention. Vernier confirmed that he is still in charge of the IKC display at the school during the convention.

### **Buddha Karst Nature Preserve Tree Planting**

Dunlap said that 500 trees have been ordered and April 14 is the planned tree planting day. Work will commence at 10:00 AM, EDT.

### **Orangeville Rise**

Dunlap reported that the plaque has been repaired and given back to Lockwood for reattachment to the concrete monument.

### **Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve**

Vernier asked Winner if he is willing to help John Benton plan, prepare, and carry out the burn plan for the property. Winner said he will. He said that he has done some research but more is needed. He said the first thing that must be done is to file a variance and that must be done sixty days before the proposed burn date. The names of all adjacent property owners must be obtained and included with the variance. A burn plan must also be filed with the state. The state will then notify the property owners of our intentions to have a controlled burn on our property. Winner said that actually writing the burn plan is not a problem. Vernier suggested to Winner that he may want to talk to Allen Pursell of The Nature Conservancy and get his input. Winner said that he has talked to Mark Bennett, Wildlife Biologist with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, about the proposed burn. Winner said that a big concern is who actually does the burn. Last year the DNR Fire Headquarters said that as long as there was somebody to fill out the burn plan, they could probably come out and do the burn. He doesn't know if that offer is still on the table but he can ask. Sue Vernier said that TNC needs to take the lead on this because they have the expertise. Winner said that the paperwork for this is easy enough to figure out but determining the best day to do it and actually doing the burn requires someone with the manpower and knowledge to do it safely. Fire Headquarters certainly could handle it but we're not sure that they would. Vernier said that if we left it to TNC they would have to contract the job out to someone. Winner said that there are liability concerns that he doesn't know how to address. What if it gets out of control and gets onto an adjoining landowner's property? Do we need additional liability insurance? He talked to a person from Stewart Turner Forestry Consultants, a company that could conduct a prescribed burn, and the cost

estimate was in the \$2,000 range. Winner thought that price was excessive but Lewis said that, when you consider what is required for a job like this, it sounds like a bargain. He said that he has seen some real disasters with multi million dollar lawsuits. He said that when you start burning your property, you're getting into the big time. Vernier said that whether we do it ourselves or contract it out, we must keep in mind that the property is enrolled in the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program which will provide funding to do this. They would pay for 75% of the cost. We would have to contribute 25% of the cost and at one time, TNC offered to pick up some or all of the 25%. If we were to have to pay \$2,000 or whatever, we could probably get most of that money from outside sources. He asked Winner to discuss the situation with Pursell and see what can be worked out. Winner said that he will try to get something going on this and he will keep Benton up to date on the proceedings.

Vernier reported that John Benton got a price quote for gravel for the lane that goes to the upper field. The price per ton of #53 stone would be \$8.30, delivered and spread. They estimated that it would take three 20 ton truckloads to do 500 feet of drive, ten feet wide and three inches thick. The total cost would be \$498. The quote was from the Robertson Quarry which is the closest to the property and they require a two to three working day lead time. Dunlap said we need to act on this quickly while the ground is frozen because if we miss this opportunity it will probably be next summer before it is dry enough to get a rock truck in there without tearing everything up. He thinks we ought to get four loads instead of three and said we'll probably have to put some more down next year. Dunlap moved that we authorize John Benton to order four truckloads of #53 stone to be delivered and spread, total cost not to exceed \$700, contingent on the ground remaining frozen. Sue Vernier seconded. The motion passed 14-0-0. Dunlap will inform Benton. Winner will remove the lock on the property entrance gate.

Dunlap announced that Under Earth Day will be observed by holding a workday at the Robinson Ladder property. The date will be April 21 and work will start at 10:00 AM, EDT. Scheduled activities will be grapevine eradication and debris removal including the destruction and removal of an abandoned truck bed camper that sits on TNC property just north of our property. TNC will provide a dump trailer to haul the junk away.

Lindberg said that TNC is having their annual open house the same day at O'Bannon Woods and we usually have an information stand set up. She will be unavailable that day. Vernier said that he and Sue can set up the display in the morning and still attend the workday. If someone wants to spend the day at the open house they are welcome to do so. The annual Indiana Cave Symposium will be held that evening in Milltown. The traditional pitch in meal will be served followed by the presentations.

### **Sullivan Cave Preserve**

Dunlap reported that he has been busy with convention stuff therefore there is no outhouse, no campground leveling, and nothing has been done regarding weed control in the grassy area. The campground leveling will have to wait for drier conditions and as for the invasive weed, we'll wait and see what comes up in the spring.

### **Wayne Cave Preserve**

Property Manager Robert Sollman was not present. Tom Sollman reported that everything looks good at the property. He wants to get a few of the trees that were ordered for the Buddha

property to plant in the clearing. He said that the big pile of stumps and brush that was in the middle of the clearing is about gone. There is still some metal debris including the old culvert that needs to be hauled off sometime. Lindberg said that she might be able to get a dumpster for the metal for free. She said that if we find that new trash has been dumped there, the county will come out and pick it up free of charge.

### **Beck's Mill**

Ingle said that he was unable to attend the January meeting of the Friends of Beck's Mill so he has nothing to report. He recommended that the subject be dropped from future agendas and if he has anything to report, he will bring it up under Items from the Floor. Vernier agreed.

### **Financial Support for Spring Mill State Park Expansion**

Dunlap reported that there is a forty acre tract of land just north of Spring Mill State Park that lies over Whistling Cave. Two or three years ago the owner wanted to sell and John and Susan Bassett looked at it but decided that he wanted too much money. They tried to get state parks and TNC to buy it but it never worked out. The story then started that the owner was getting serious about sub dividing the property into six or seven tracts and putting in some modular homes. True or not, the Bassetts took it seriously and purchased the property with the intention of eventually selling it to the state. The state is now interested in buying the land and will probably use Indiana Heritage Trust money to fund at least part of the purchase which would then become part of Spring Mill State Park. IHT requires, or at least favors, partners. TNC is willing to partner with the state and TNC is asking us if we would also partner with them. In other words, a financial commitment from the IKC. Dunlap told Les Zimmer of TNC that the IKC is scraping for money as it is. Zimmer asked if we could put in a token amount so that when they go to IHT, the IKC can be listed as part of the financial package. Lewis asked how much is a token amount? Dunlap said that they didn't discuss a figure but that he was making a motion to take \$1,000 out of the General Fund for this purpose. Sue Vernier seconded. Lewis wondered if \$1,000 would even show on the radar. Dunlap replied that when they go to IHT, they look at the number of partners more than at the dollar amounts. Lewis asked about the total amount needed. Dunlap said that the original owner was asking \$6,000 an acre which he thought was way too much. He thinks that it is now considerably less than the initial asking price but he doesn't know what it is. IHT will be springing for most of it and TNC will also put in a significant amount. Dunlap pointed out that it is a very important piece of land situated as it is right over a cave system. Vernier said he thinks it's a good idea and we should support them. He thought that \$1,000 was a good number. Dunlap asked if the money should come from the General Fund as he proposed or from the Land Acquisition Fund. Sollman said that money in our Land Acquisition Fund should be used for acquiring land for the IKC. Vernier agreed saying that we should treat this as a contribution to a TNC project. Dunlap clarified the language of the original motion. The motion is; Dunlap moves to commit \$1,000 from the General Fund for the purchase of the forty acre tract of land north of Spring Mill State Park. The motion was seconded by Sue Vernier. With that wording, we won't be writing a check until the deal actually occurs. The motion passed 14-0-0.

### **Little Wyandotte Work Project**

Dunlap reported that last September, a big rain caused a heavy inflow of water into Little Wyandotte Cave. The flood washed out part of the tour trail in the cave. A deep hole is now

right next to what's left of the trail. The Department of Natural Resources had pondered for three months on how to fix it and the cave is supposed to re-open on March 1. Hank Huffman suggested that Dunlap consult on it so he looked at the situation in December and recommended installing a drain and filling the rest of the void with concrete. The DNR agreed and so Dunlap put in a bid on behalf of the IKC to do the job. The job will be done on the weekend of February 10-11 and , if necessary, February 17-18. The job will require five or six volunteers.

### **Land Acquisition Activities**

Several future land acquisition possibilities were discussed but none were deemed to be feasible at this time.

### **Items From The Floor**

Vernier reported that he and Sue are friends with the manager of the Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge and he recently got a call from the manager who told him that their budget has been frozen since 2004. Meanwhile, expenses rise due to inflation and other various factors. As a result of this, they have received a directive announcing that all personnel will be taking a 20% pay cut. Vernier said that this is going on nationwide but it's being rolled out one region at a time. In regions where this has already taken place, the results have been cutbacks in services, elimination of educational activities, shorter hours or closing of visitor centers, and possibly some areas closed to the public due to lack of staff. Vernier said that the particular focus of the IKC in this matter is the impact to the Muscatatuck and Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuges because they contain karst features. He read a portion of a letter he is drafting to be sent to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service requesting adequate funding be restored to the refuges. He is seeking input from the Board on what points to bring up in the letter. Lewis offered some suggestions. This letter will be sent on behalf of the IKC to several legislators as well as to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. IKC members are encouraged to write to their own representatives and request that funding be restored and increased.

Vernier also reported that the Indiana Heritage Trust is funded by the sale of the Heritage Trust specialty license plate and also by an appropriation of a certain amount by the legislature. Typically about half comes from plate sales and half is appropriated but in the last session there were no funds appropriated so the Heritage Trust must operate strictly on what is made from the sale of the specialty license plates. In the current two-year budget cycle, Governor Daniels has proposed a \$6,000,000 appropriation for the Heritage Trust. Vernier encouraged everyone to ask their representative to support the Governor's proposed appropriation for the Indiana Heritage Trust and reminded us that IHT money was used to buy the Buddha Karst Preserve. Noe reminded everyone that a donation to the Indiana Heritage Trust can be made on the Indiana state income tax return.

Dunlap said that we usually split the cost of the meat that is served at the pitch-in cook-out at the Indiana Cave Symposium with the Indiana Cave Survey. He moved to spend up to \$60.00 for half the cost of the meat, seconded by Ingle. The motion passed 14-0-0.

Lindberg mentioned that Dave McGowan has recently been talking with TNC about doing a project on barrens and she was wondering if the Robinson Ladder property is officially a barrens landscape. Vernier said that it is not although we once thought that it might become one. According to the WHIP guidelines and the State Biologist's recommendations, it will be

managed more as a savannah.

Vernier said that we need an election teller for the next meeting. Dunlap will ask Tom Rea to do it.

The next meeting will be March 24, 2007 at the White River Public Library which is located at the intersection of State Road 135 and Smith Valley Road in Greenwood, not at the Marion County Decatur Branch as originally planned. The meeting will begin at 11:00 AM, EDT.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.

Thanks to Kriste Lindberg for hosting the meeting and providing refreshments.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Sergesketter, Secretary