

THE CAVE CONSERVATIONIST

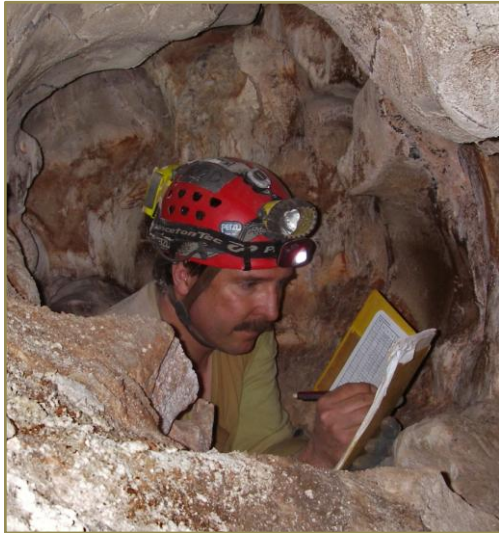
February 2011
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The Cave Conservation and Management Section of the NSS

Chairman's Corner

By Rod Horrocks



You will notice a new look and feel to this issue of the Cave Conservationist. As you might have guessed, we are transitioning to a new editor. We want to thank our outgoing editor, James O'Neill for all of his hard work and at the same time welcome our new editor, Cynthia Sandeno. Not only does she have some exciting new ideas for the Conservationist, but she really wants to stick to a regular publishing schedule and make sure that the content is relevant to on-going cave conservation issues. If you are involved in cave conservation/restoration projects or if cave management is part of your professional duties, we are striving to make being a member of the Cave Conservation and Management Section of the NSS valuable to you. If you have let your membership in the section expire, this is a good time to renew. We are sending this first issue out to all previous members of the Cave Conservation and Management Section via email and to professionals involved in cave conservation and management. We hope you

like what you see and take the time to join the section. A membership renewal form is included in the back of this issue.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Chairman's Corner	1
New MOU - Forest Service and Cave Research Foundation	1
Cave Conservation and Management Section Special Meeting: WNS National Response Plan	2
Intergovernmental Executive Committee Convenes To Lead International WNS Response	3
Cultivating Creativity within the National Speleological Society	4
Contacts and Items of Interest	5
Membership Form	6
Cultivating Creativity Continued and Special Arts Opportunities	7

New MOU – U.S. Forest Service and Cave Research Foundation

The Forest Service has re-established its partnership with the Cave Research Foundation (CRF) through a national Memorandum of Understanding. This agreement acknowledges CRF's many efforts in cave conservation and management and will assist the Forest Service in further implementing the Federal Cave Resources Protection Act. The agreement also encourages joint participation in developing cave management plans and scientific research.

This partnership will increase the number of volunteers contributing to the management and study of caves located on National Forest System lands. Cooperation and coordination may involve a wide range of activities including, but not limited to education, inventory, research, monitoring, protection, restoration, and other activities necessary to conserve these resources.

Cave Conservation and Management Section Special Meeting: WNS National Response Plan

By John Hoffett

The Cave Conservation and Management Section (CCMS) of the NSS called an impromptu special meeting on August 3, 2010 with Jeremy Coleman (U.S. Fish and Wildlife, WNS Response Coordinator), Peter Youngbaer (NSS, WNS Liaison), and Jim and Val Werker (NSS, Conservation Division). The meeting served to identify (1) the status of the WNS National Response Plan (Plan), (2) the needs and anticipated activities of USFWS for implementation of the Plan, and (3) the needs and anticipated activities of the NSS leadership to address WNS. As a result of the meeting, the CCMS established 5 Action Items to support the NSS in its role within the Plan.

John Hoffelt moderated the special CCMS meeting, and Rod Horrocks represented the CCMS. About 24 people attended the meeting, including representatives of the National Park Service, National Forest Service, Bat Conservation International, and numerous interested cavers from all regions bringing a true nation-wide perspective to the discussion. Jeremy provided a synopsis of the National Response Plan and its status for approval and implementation. He then outlined his vision for carrying-out the various aspects of the Plan and how to achieve the overall goal of controlling and minimizing impacts of WNS. We followed-up with a discussion of the role that cavers and the NSS can fill with respect to data collection and operations within the planned response. Peter provided his perspective on the NSS functions within the Plan and how the NSS membership can help. The Werkers coordinated getting all the individuals to the impromptu meeting, and they identified various resources available within the

Conservation Division to support the identified efforts and activities.

The National Response Plan consists of seven (7) working groups that coordinate through a management structure. The seven working groups consist of the following: Communication (includes public outreach), Disease Surveillance, Diagnostics, Disease Management, Etiology and Epidemiology, Data and Technical Information Management, and Conservation and Recovery. The exact make-up and members of the Working Groups are not finalized; however, it is thought that cavers could help acquire data for Disease Surveillance. The Working Group leaders report to a Coordination Body that is managed through a Steering Committee. The Steering Committee reports to the Executive level of USFWS. It is thought that membership in the Working Groups may include individuals from the community (such as cavers) and that organizational representatives may sit on the Steering Committee.

The general discussion among the group iterated the need to publicly endorse the current ethic in caving of thoroughly cleaning cave gear. Also, the group called for additional WNS information at the 2011 NSS Convention in Colorado. The CCMS will invite Jeremy Coleman to speak at the next section session, and the group expressed broad support for a separate WNS-dedicated general session to address a wide range of topics.



Intergovernmental Executive Committee Convenes To Lead International White-Nose Syndrome Response

Members of a new intergovernmental executive committee tasked with implementation of the white-nose syndrome (WNS) national plan met in late December to discuss the coordinated national response to this deadly wildlife disease. WNS has killed more than one million bats in the Northeast, and has spread rapidly across the United States and into Canada since its discovery in 2007.

The White-Nose Syndrome Executive Committee will provide oversight across participating state and federal agencies and tribal governments to ensure consistency and coordination in management action, policy interpretation, communication, and collection of scientific information related to WNS.

Co-chaired by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), the committee also includes representatives from five Native American tribes, four states, and six federal agencies in addition to the Service: U.S. Geologic Survey, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and Department of Defense. The committee will also include representatives from federal wildlife management agencies in Canada and Mexico.

“The Committee will provide the cooperative leadership necessary for the implementation of the national plan, and an opportunity to build on the science and work that has been ongoing since discovery of WNS,” said Dr. Jon Gassett, Commissioner, Kentucky Department

Following the special meeting with the WNS response leaders, the Cave Conservation and Management Section (CCMS) executive committee met and identified the following Action Items for the Section to assist with WNS response efforts:

Item 1 - Assemble a list of experts to assist Peter in reviewing the National Response Plan

Item 2 - Publish articles encouraging clean caving ethic

Item 3 - Call upon CCMS members to assist with acoustic surveys

Item 4 - Call upon CCMS members to contact Senators to support funds for WNS research

Item 5 - CMMS shall extend an invitation to Jeremy Coleman for the 2011 Section Session

of Fish and Wildlife Resources and AFWA co-chair of the WNS Executive Committee.

“The cooperative response to this unprecedented wildlife disease has been tremendous,” said Marvin Moriarty, executive committee co-chair and Northeast Regional Director for the Service. “But as WNS continues to spread, the work of this team to ensure we are working closely to leave no stone unturned will be critical to conserving North American bat species.”

The committee’s work will include:

- Guiding cooperative intergovernmental leadership in response to WNS,
- Providing oversight across participating agencies and organizations to ensure consistency in management, science, policy decisions, and funding,
- Addressing need for intra-organizational resources, and
- Ensuring exceptional scientific and technical expert representation in WNS organizational structure.

Cultivating Creativity

within the National Speleological Society

By Kriste Lindberg, Carolina Shrewsbury, and Jennifer Neemann Ph.D

On the evening of October 19, as folks were gearing up for Halloween, Bob Vandeventer and Kriste Lindberg descended upon The Venue, one of Bloomington, Indiana's fine arts galleries. Their mission was to educate the public about cave and karst conservation through the arts. Bob introduced caves, what biospeleologists do in caves and why it is important for us to learn more about caves. Kriste presented a demonstration of how to use cave creatures as an art project. People left knowing a lot more about the cave creatures they display at Halloween and why they need to be aware of their protection and survival.

Now, some might think that art and the conservation of caves make strange bedfellows. That's not necessarily so. We are finding that they are really quite compatible. Although science is more objective, and art is more subjective, the two can work well together in a complimentary and cooperative fashion - that is... if you let them.

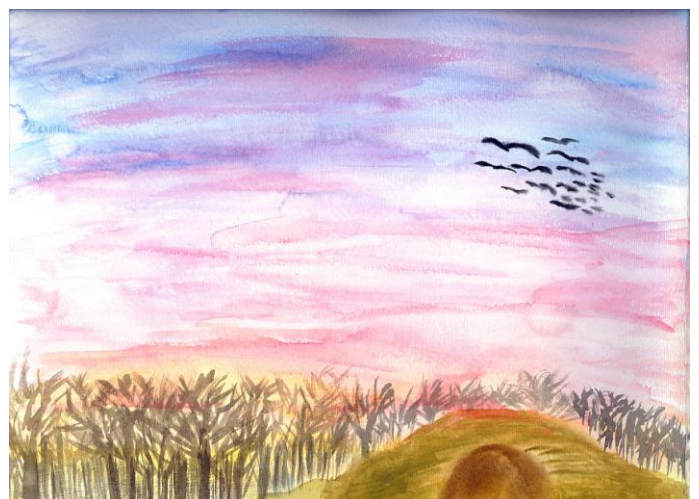
Although literalists will argue that logic does not "reside" on the left side of the brain just as creativity is not "located" on the right side of the brain, this model provides an excellent metaphor for our purposes not only with participants but also within our own thinking; speleologists practicing art in this scientific field have been able to communicate interests within speleology by breaking down barriers between "logic" (science) and creativity of caves.

We discovered that reproducing an image created a deeper bond between what we have seen with what we know, thereby enhancing our need to educate ourselves further on our favored subjects and protect them.

Educating the general public about, and increasing their awareness of, the underground is an emotionally charged area for members of the National Speleological Society as well as other caving organizations world-wide. We do not want people outside of our specific scientific community to know where caves are or enter them if they happen to find an entrance. We are concerned that bringing attention to caves will encourage visitation by people who are not trained in proper techniques, safety and conservation ethic, and will cause unnecessary impact to the delicate cave environment. There are countless arguments against free access to caves, and the loudest one at the moment is the spread of White-Nose Syndrome, a fungal infection that has wiped out huge populations of bats in some caves in the Northeastern United States. The fallout from the infection has caused serious impact on bat populations in the caves where it occurs, and bats are essential to the function of the North American ecosystem, a fact not well understood by the general population.

Education should expand to encompass what caves and cave science means, including how to promote cave awareness in meaningful ways. One of those ways will be to promote the creative use of cave science as a medium to develop a bond between individuals and what they learn about caves. Also promoted will be the bonds created by the people with

Continued on page 7



An ethereal cave painting by an attendee.

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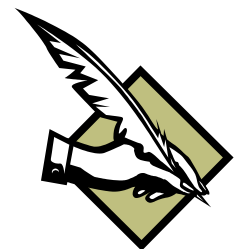


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the Web

Visit us at:

<http://www.acave.us/ccms/index.html>

Please contribute to The
Cave Conservationist. You
can send articles, news,
photos, ideas, etc. to
ccmsandeno@fs.fed.us



Story of Interest - Earliest Known Winery Found in Armenian Cave

Available Online at:

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2011/01/110111-oldest-wine-press-making-winery-armenia-science-ucla/>



**Cave Conservation and Management Section
of the National Speleological Society
Membership Form**



NSS #	Date you joined the Conservation & Management Section	Membership Paid Until (Office use only)	Membership Category (Office use only)

Title (Mr, Ms, Dr, Mrs., Miss, etc.)	First Name	Middle	Last Name	Suffix (Jr, Sr, III, PhD., M.D., etc.)

Address Line 1

Address Line 2 (if needed)

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City

State

Zip

Country

Check one:

- I wish to receive the *Cave Conservationist* electronically via email -- \$ 5.00 dues.
- I wish to receive the *Cave Conservationist* on paper via regular mail -- \$ 10.00 dues.

Phone (Home)

Phone (Work)

Phone (Cell)

FAX

Primary E-mail

Alternate E-mail

Checks should be made payable to Cave Conservation and Management Section and sent with this form to:

% Sandy Cowan
 Lytewood Preserve, Friars Hill Road
 HC 68, Box 117
 Friar's Hill, West Virginia 24938-9777

MEMBERSHIP IN THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT SECTION

The Conservation and Management Section is open to all members of the National Speleological Society as well as those interested in cave conservation and management. Members receive the newsletter The Cave Conservationist and are entitled to vote at the annual meeting. Annual membership dues are \$5.00 per year to receive The Cave Conservationist electronically and \$10.00 per year to receive The Cave Conservationist by regular mail. A section membership application can be found in select issues or on our website <http://www.acave.us/ccms/index.html>. Membership dues may be sent to the Treasurer, Sandy Cowan at sacowan@frontiernet.net. We hope you'll consider joining us!

Cultivating Creativity (Cont.)

whom they work or socialize while experiencing the cave environment. The value and importance of caves will become a natural transition between crafting information to establishing understanding.

The efforts of artists involved in collaborative projects have produced comradeship between participants, created ideas for teachers to introduce new class plans for their schools, raised money for equipment for the NSS Salons, educated artists about medium use and followed up with enthusiasm to exhibit in the Fine Arts Salon. Most importantly, they have interested educators enough to prove that what we are practicing not only develops cooperative group activity, but also has a subliminal effect that raises awareness of the subject. The emotional experience of speleological art projects brings the participants closer to understanding the subject of caves. There are deeper connections between

what one sees and what one does with it when translated into another medium.

Special Art Opportunities - 2011 NSS Convention

Get Down: Connecting to our Underground Resources - July 18th from 10am to 11:30am

This demonstration will be designed for attendees to not only learn for their own edification, but also be able to take the demonstration on the road in a "train the trainer" style of presentation. For more information contact Kriste Lindberg at kriste.lindberg@gmail.com.

SpeleoArt Workshop, Fine Arts Salon - July 19th from 9 am to 12:00p.m.

This is an annual activity to create enthusiasm and cooperative ideas for the next years' Salon. If you are interested in the SpeleoArt workshop, please contact Carolina Shrewsbury at speleoart@hawaiiiflow.com

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

<http://www.caves.org/committee/conservation>
