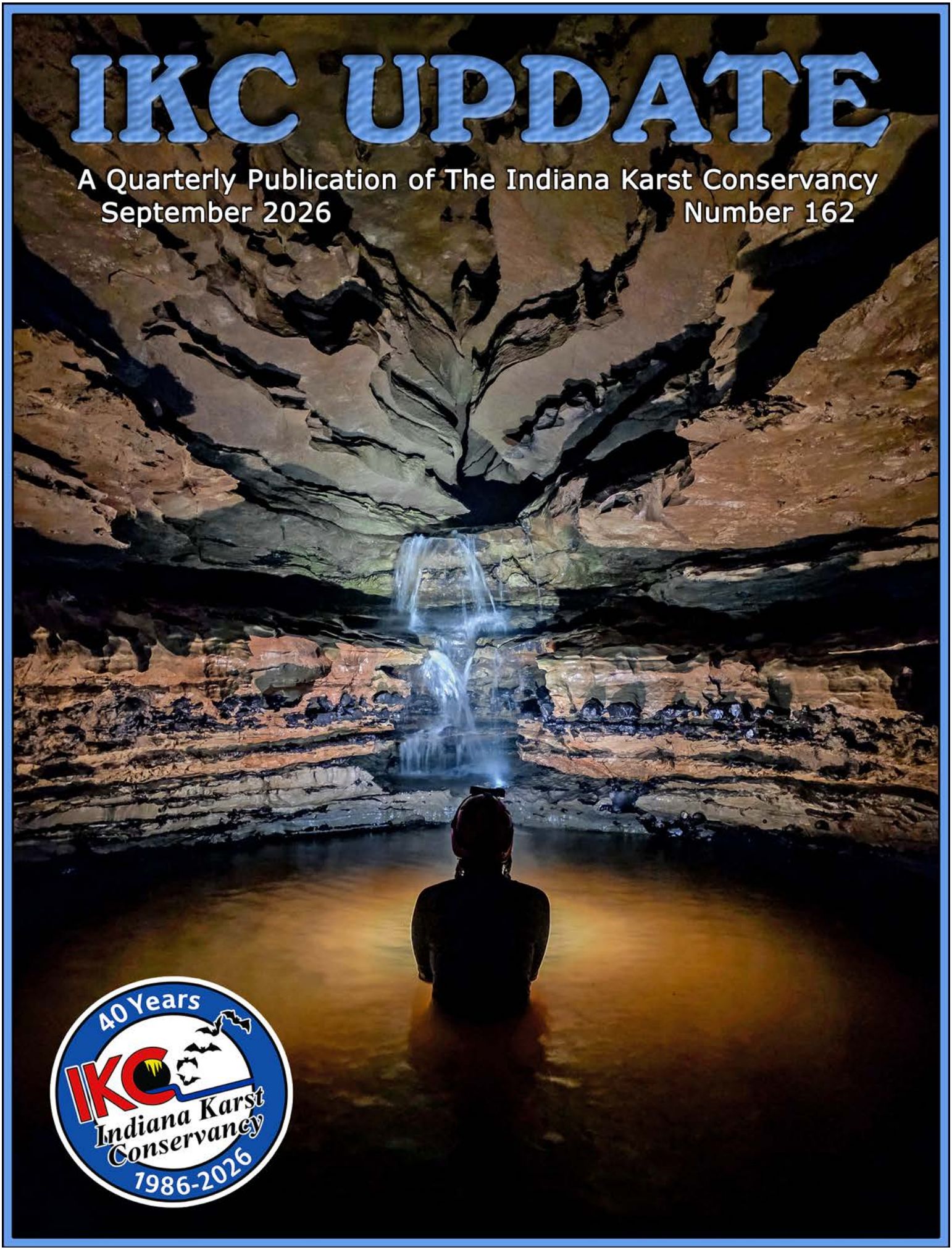
IKC UPDATE

A Quarterly Publication of The Indiana Karst Conservancy
September 2026 Number 162



INDIANA KARST CONSERVANCY, INC

PO Box 2401, Indianapolis, IN 46206-2401

ikc.caves.org

Affiliated with the National Speleological Society

The Indiana Karst Conservancy is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation and preservation of caves and karst features in Indiana and other areas of the world. The Conservancy encourages research and promotes education related to karst and its proper, environmentally compatible use.

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Cover: Amanda Beach in Raymond Bliss Cave in Harrison County, Indiana. One of many caves visited during the NSS Convention. Photo by Chris Bell (2026).

Myotis Press

IKC QUARTERLY E-BOARD MEETING REMINDER

Sunday, September 13th, 1 PM EDT

International Day of Caves and Karst

Sullivan Cave Preserve

2088 SR 54 W, Springville IN

The quarterly meetings are for the Executive Board to conduct business, and for our members and other interested persons to have an open forum to talk about cave and karst conservation and related topics. Past, present, and future IKC projects are discussed to solicit comments and input from our members and the caving community as a whole. The meetings are informal, and everyone is encouraged to attend and participate. The IKC Board wants your input.

Preliminary Agenda Items: Financial reports; 2026 NSS Convention recap; Education/Outreach/Field Days updates; ILPA Stewardship Gathering; Electronic scheduling and waiver system update; Cave/land acquisition activities; Recap of recent and upcoming preserve work projects and related items; and more...

Meeting Details: The meeting will start promptly at 1 PM. If rain is likely, the meeting may be moved to a neighboring property with an outbuilding (1992 SR 54 W). The decision will be made by noon. If you have questions about the meeting, please contact Matt Selig (see contact information on page 2).

Pre-Meeting Lunch and Social Hour: Starting at noon, prior to the meeting, we will have a pitch-in lunch with the IKC providing grilled hot dogs and brats. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share. This will also be a time to informally discuss your thoughts on anything related to the IKC or caving in general. If you have questions about the lunch or social, contact Joe Kinder (see contact info on page 2).

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

Sept 13 – IKC Quarterly E-Board Meeting (see above)

Oct 10 – Big Day Bird Hike, Shawnee Karst Nature Preserve (see page 15)

Oct 24 – Wilderness First Aid Scenarios Hike, Wayne Cave (see page 6)

Nov 7 – Cave Data Collection Hike (location to be announced, see page 22)

Dec ?? – IKC Quarterly E-Board Meeting (date and location TBD)

April 24 – 2027 Indiana Cave Symposium, Orange County Community Center

For more information on the Indiana Karst Conservancy, visit our website at ***ikc.caves.org,*** our Facebook page at ***www.facebook.com/IndianaKarstConservancy***, or write to our PO box. Membership in the IKC is open to anyone or any organization interested in supporting cave and karst conservation. Annual dues are $20. Please see inside the back cover for a membership application form or to make a much-appreciated donation. Memberships dues and donations may also be paid electronically by credit card or PayPal using our online services on our website (see the Join Us! tab in the menu) or ***ikc.caves.org/join-the-ikc***.

The *IKC Update*, distributed for free, is published quarterly for members and other interested parties. The purpose of this newsletter is to keep the membership and caving community informed of IKC activities and other news related to cave/karst conservation. Submission of original or reprinted articles for publication is encouraged. Back issues can be found at ***ikc.caves.org/ikc-updates***.

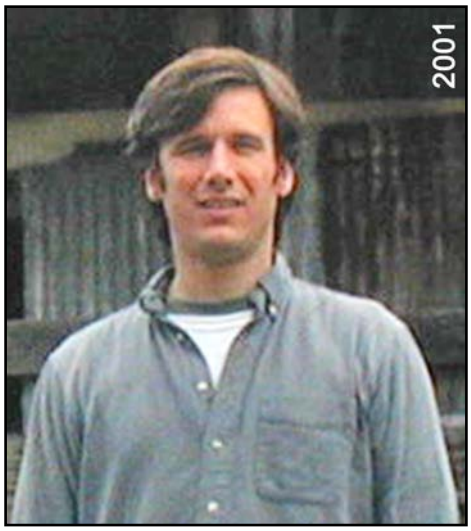
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RAMBLINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT...

I have spent a good deal of time following the traces of Morgan's Raiders in Indiana's cave country, with the amateur hydrologist and military history buff in me arguing about how karst terrain and military necessity interacted.

To recount, Confederate General John Hunt Morgan began his Great Raid in June of 1863 with high expectations. His superiors believed a cavalry force of some 2,500 men could threaten Louisville and Cincinnati and disrupt Union communication along the Ohio River.

While the raid was being planned, Confederate forces holding Vicksburg and blocking Union use of the Mississippi River were under heavy pressure from Union General Ulysses S. Grant. Morgan, it was hoped, could force the Union to divert troops and attention.



Morgan rode out of Tennessee on June 11th with explicit orders from General Braxton Bragg not to cross the Ohio River. He was to threaten Louisville and spread fear through the North.

On July 3rd and 4th, respectively, the Confederacy suffered enormous defeats at both Gettysburg and Vicksburg. Robert E. Lee's army began its retreat back to Virginia, and the Mississippi River would soon be open again to Union commerce and warships.

By then Morgan had already fought at Tebbs Bend on the Green River, just east of where surface water starts sinking underground into the karst of the Mammoth Cave region.

His force then turned west toward Brandenburg, Kentucky, where they commandeered two riverboats, the Alice Dean and the John B. McCombs. On July 8th they crossed the Ohio, in direct violation of Bragg's orders, and landed at Mauckport, Indiana, where a hastily assembled militia only briefly slowed them down.

Once the crossing was done, Morgan had the Alice Dean burned and sunk so pursuing Union cavalry could not use her. Her anchor chain was recovered and can be seen today at the Battle of Corydon Historic Site, just south of Corydon.

The next day, July 9th, Morgan's force ran into a defensive line held by 400 to 450 members of the Indiana militia on a high ridge concealed behind hasty breastworks. Morgan's Tennessee cavalry broke the Union right flank, and the militia fell back toward Corydon, many captured along the way. With a couple of well-timed cannon volleys, Morgan convinced the town to surrender, and his men helped themselves to whatever food and money they found there.

The Battle of Corydon holds a small but real distinction: it is the only recognized Civil War battle fought in Indiana, and one of the very few fought north of the Mason-Dixon line. Four Hoosier militiamen lost their lives in this battle, while the Confederates lost eleven.

Studying battlefields and the terrain soldiers fought over is one of my great passions, right alongside karst science. I like to stand where an engagement happened and try to work out why someone chose to make a stand there, or why a commander picked one route over another.

Reading about the Union right flank collapsing at Corydon, I came across an account from a militiaman who was taken prisoner that day. When ordered to lay down his arms, he threw his rifle into Little Indian Creek and came back the next day after he'd been released to retrieve it.

Little Indian Creek is a base-level stream in this part of Harrison County. That detail got me thinking about what caves Morgan's raiders might have passed near, or even ridden directly over, on their way through Harrison and Washington counties.

Riding from Mauckport to Corydon, the column would have flanked Squire Boone Caverns to the east. Closing in on Corydon, they passed close to what is now Indiana Caverns, part of the Binkley Cave system, and the Sinks of Indian Creek. I have never found a single mention of karst in any account of the raid. There is little surface water in this country, springs and base-level streams would have mattered a great deal to cavalry and their horses during a hot July in Indiana. They did not need to know it was called karst for the landscape to shape the choices available to them.

Morgan's men left Corydon for Salem on July 10th, traveling through Palmyra. I have often wondered whether any soldier foraging on the

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west flank caught sight of the 90' wide entrance to Redfield's Cave, near what is now State Road 135.

Morgan also had a second column moving west of his main force, up through Ramsey and Fredericksburg, and not far from the IKC's own Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve. I like to imagine those tired men and horses quenching their thirst at Hunter Spring south of Fredericksburg as they moved next to the Blue River and passed Fredericksburg Cave on their journey north.

Morgan's eastern wing came near New Pekin, where I helped survey several caves back in the 1990s. It was near New Pekin that a handful of Morgan's cavalrymen were captured by Union regulars, in what is locally remembered as the Battle of Oak Ridge, in which they may have been captured while hiding out in a cave.

Then the raiders came to Salem, in Washington County, where residents were already gripped by fear before the soldiers arrived. Citizens hid their bank's money under a porch just east of the town square, expecting the same treatment Corydon had received. The home guard at Salem was routed and captured (though they were paroled soon after), and Salem lay at the raiders' mercy.

Morgan's troops occupied the town, looted its stores, and demanded a thousand dollars apiece in ransom from mill owners in exchange for not burning their mills down. By now the cavalry's sleek mounts were worn out and being swapped for draft horses taken from local farms.

After a few hours in Salem, the raiders headed east toward Vienna, just south of Scottsburg.

Shortly after leaving Salem, they left Indiana's Mississippian karst country behind entirely. Their route ran roughly parallel to today's Knobstone Trail in this area, and through Leota. Excellent backpacking country, rugged and hilly, but with no caves.

There is also a good chance that they came near the IKC's Lowry Cave Preserve as they crossed Indiana's strip of Devonian karst on their way toward Vernon, but there is no record of that either. Perhaps they visited the cave, looking for water.

And there is the legend that a deserter from Morgan's cavalry lived as a hermit in Bat Cave in Versailles State Park, but as reported in *IKC Update* #145, this is more of a local legend than a well-documented fact.

Having averaged roughly thirty miles a day while in Indiana, Morgan pushed on into Ohio, where his raid finally came apart.

He was looking for a way back across the Ohio River into Kentucky and safety, but high water and pursuing Union troops cut off the crossing. Morgan and most of his command were captured. He eventually escaped and made it back to Confederate territory, and the raid, more than a thousand miles long, was the high point of his military career. He was shot and killed a little over a year later, in September 1864, ironically during a Union cavalry raid in Greeneville, Tennessee.

Yet I keep asking myself the same question whenever I follow Morgan's route through Harrison and Washington counties. Did he see the caves? Did he, or any of his men, find that country beautiful, or stop to appreciate a karst spring where their exhausted horses could drink in the heat and humidity of an Indiana summer? I assume he had other things on his mind.

Morgan's men were looking for water, for roads, for a way north. They were not thinking about conservation. Thirty years ago, surveying caves in the same country, I wasn't thinking about the route his cavalry took either. I did not yet see the history laid over the caves.

Yet the IKC's duty asks us to see everything a cave is part of. The springs and the sinks. The ridge where a militia made its stand. The creek that hid a rifle overnight.

The landscape shapes what is possible on its surface just as surely as it shapes what moves beneath it. We have a responsibility to keep that country whole for the people who haven't found their way there yet.

Matt Selig

NEWS BRIEFS...

- Save the date of Saturday April 24, 2027 for the Indiana Cave Symposium. It will be at the same venue as the past few years, the Orange County Community Center in Paoli. More details to come.
- There is a new initiative called "*Our State, Our Bat*" to promote naming the Indiana bat as Indiana's official State Mammal. This designation is done by the state legislature. The organizer is Desiree Coy (***BattyForIN@gmail.com***) who is soliciting supporters to sign her petition at c.org/JrdDXNvVh8. You can

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learn more about this effort on Facebook here: ***m.facebook.com/BattyForIN***.

- For the past year, under a research permit issued by the IKC, Steve Morris has been visiting various IKC preserves to identify moths that inhabit these wild areas. In late May, Steve visited our Robinson Ladder Cave preserve netting over 40 new (to the IKC) species, putting us well over 400 species found on the four IKC properties he has visited so far. While he did not find anything new to add to the Jim Vargo master list of species found in Indiana, he did find five species that were new to Indiana on BugGuide, an online resource devoted to North American insects, spiders, and their kin, offering identification, images, and information. One of the new ones to Indiana was *Sympistis kappa* (see photo). *Sympistis* is a large genus with approximately 175 species found in North America. However, this is the first time Steve has personally found *Sympistis* east of the Mississippi River. A nice sampling of species found at each property can be viewed on BugGuide (***www.bugguide.net***). Type "Indiana Karst Conservancy" or the specific preserve name (Robinson Ladder, Wayne Cave, Sullivan Cave, or Shawnee Karst) into the search box at the top right of the home page.



- As a member land trust of the Indiana Land Protection Alliance (ILPA), IKC Board members and selected other volunteers are invited to take part in opportunities offered by this umbrella organization for Indiana land trusts. A long-time ILPA activity has been its Stewardship Gathering, held every fall for land trust stewardship staff and volunteers. We are pleased that the IKC will co-host this year's event with the Sycamore Land Trust in south-central Indiana! We have been providing input on all aspects of the agenda, and ILPA is pulling it all together into a jam packed three-day event. Two of

Continued on page 21...

Into the Field: A Wilderness First Aid Scenarios Hike

Wayne Cave Preserve, Monroe County
Saturday, October 24 – 10 AM to 1 PM EDT

What happens when an emergency occurs far from help? On this scenario-based hike, participants will work through simulated wilderness medical situations while hiking the one-mile loop trail at Wayne Cave Preserve. Led by experienced instructor (and IKC Board member) Danyele Green, this program emphasizes practical skills, clear thinking under pressure, and adapting first aid principles to realistic outdoor conditions. This event is ideal for hikers, cavers, and anyone interested in safety and preparedness in wild places. Registration for this field trip will open on September 18, but you may go to ***IKCFieldTourOctober2026.eventbrite.com*** at any time and have a reminder sent to you.



photo courtesy Carla Striegel-Winner

Questions? Contact Carla Striegel-Winner (***IndianaKarstConservancy.Info@gmail.com***) or 812-639-9628.

THE 2026 NSS CONVENTION: HIGHLIGHTS, AWARDS, & MORE

by Laura Demarest (2026 NSS Convention Co-chair)

The 2026 NSS Convention this past July 6-10 was a truly extraordinary event, bringing 1,113 attendees together in Corydon, Indiana from 43 states, two Canadian provinces, Vietnam, Japan, and New Zealand. The entire Corydon community rolled out the red carpet for cavers, with Corydon Central High School and the Harrison County Fairgrounds providing ideal hub locations for a week filled with caving and camaraderie. It should also be celebrated that this year's event did not experience any of the extreme weather drama that past NSS conventions are famous for – only a bit of rain on a few days (one with a rainbow) to cool off the intense mid-summer heat.

Roughly one-third of all convention attendees managed to get underground, with many taking advantage of curated tours of Wyandotte Cave organized by IKC members Keith Dunlap and John Benton. Participants also enjoyed a wide range of field trips and hands-on workshops: Geology (organized by IKC member Kevin Strunk), Biology (organized by IKC members Jerry Lewis and Wyatt Williams), Speleology for Cavers, Cave Photography, Cave Sketching, Contingency Considerations in Caving, Karst Hydrology of the Lost River (led by IKC President Matt Selig), and Speleothem Repair. There were also contests for rope work, cartography, sketching, fine arts, and even cave storytelling hosted by prolific former Indiana caver Bill Steele. The Junior Speleological Society had a wide variety of daily field trips and activities. There was a 60' x 60' Mammoth Cave walk-about map on display. And the vendor area was the largest that has been hosted at an NSS Convention in years.


Chris Bell

Evening activities kept the energy high throughout the week with catering by Schnitzelbank (out of Jasper) and customized cave-themed alcohol selections from Feed Store Beer (Greene County, Indiana) and Turtle Run Winery (Harrison County). Fantastic live performances under the grandstand were delivered by The Creekers, Muchos Garcias, and Reverend Peyton's Big Damn Band, who all share a genuine love for caves in their own right. Indiana Caverns hosted an open house for the Howdy Party. We were also excited to host keynote Speaker Genevieve von Petzinger for her presentation "The Deep Time Relationship Between People and Caves" which was recorded for the NSS Webinar Series (***youtube.com/watch?v=R8-KwOaa4Ew***).

A major highlight was also CaveSim (***CaveSim.org***), brought to the Convention thanks to the financial support of the IKC and many other generous sponsors. The CaveSim team demonstrated incredible dedication by driving all the way from California and overcoming a vehicle breakdown along the way to make it happen! The week was made even more special by the well-deserved recognition of several Indiana cavers and organizations, including our very own Keith Dunlap being awarded the NSS Outstanding Landowner-Caver Relations Award and the IKC being given the NSS Group Conservation Award (also see page 9). In addition, Indiana cavers Tony Akers, Laura Demarest, Matt Pelsor, and Dean Wiseman were named NSS Fellows.

An event of this scale relies deeply on community support and strong partnerships. Special thanks go out to the Harrison County Convention and Visitor's Bureau, Cave Country Canoes, and Indiana Caverns, serving as our primary sponsors for the event. We are also extremely grateful to the Wyandotte Cave staff, Indiana DNR officials, Hoosier National Forest, and local law enforcement for overseeing safety and access across multiple cave locations, as well as the private landowners and trip leaders who generously shared some amazingly special places with convention attendees. Above all, we must thank our volunteer staff who put their hearts into this monumental event, working tirelessly (and attending many Zoom planning meetings!) since planning started in July 2022.

We may not know when the NSS Convention will return to Indiana, but there is no doubt that Corydon will be remembered for many years as an amazing host location. This event demonstrated the power of regional collaboration and showcased the character of our local community and caves to a national audience. We have much to be proud of and thankful for as we close the books on another memorable NSS Convention.

RECENT STEWARDSHIP ON OUR PROPERTIES

compiled by Keith Dunlap

It has been a busy summer with our many stewardship activities. Here are some of our projects from the past few months:

☑ On May 5, Jamie Winner visited the Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve and mowed the access lane, parking area, and the camping area by the barn.

☑ On May 28, Buddha Karst Nature Preserve Property Manager Keith Dunlap mowed the trails using the IKC's new DR walk-behind mower. He also did some mowing at the Shawnee Karst Preserve.

☑ On May 30, Keith Dunlap did invasive and weed control spraying inside the chestnut plantation enclosure at the Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve. He also treated the surviving hybrid chestnut trees with fungicide to mitigate the chestnut blight.

☑ On June 6, Keith Dunlap sprayed several backpack tanks of Crossbow on the western side of Sullivan Cave Preserve to control invasives. He also mowed the camping area.

☑ On June 10, Jamie Winner visited the Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve and mowed the the typical areas.

☑ On June 15, Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve Property Manager John Benton cleared several downed trees on the access lane using one of the IKC's new chainsaws.

☑ On June 18, Orangeville Rise Nature Preserve Property Manager Carla Striegel-Winner string-trimmed around the pull-off areas and picked up trash in advance of the upcoming NSS Convention. She also noted 7 or 8 mm cords draped over a tree and guardrail and into the water that will need to be removed on a future trip.

☑ On June 21, Wayne Cave Preserve Property Manager Cris Seuell and Chris Donohue started chainsawing/trail clearing after the June 17th tornado that uprooted a large number of trees in the southeast corner of the preserve.

☑ On June 21, Keith Dunlap mowed the overflow parking area at the Sullivan Cave Preserve.

☑ On June 26, Cris Seuell and Chris Donohue continued trail clearing due to the tornado damage at the Wayne Cave Preserve.

☑ On June 28, Joe Kinder and Brad Barcom put their prior chainsaw training to work to remove a huge double-trunk chinquapin oak that had fallen across the perimeter trail at the Buddha Karst Nature Preserve (see photo below). This tree fell several years ago. Initially visitors could pass under the trunk, but recently it had settled, blocking the trail. Property Manager Keith Dunlap also did some invasive spraying on the same day.



photo courtesy Keith Dunlap

Joe Kinder and Brad Barcom clearing the trail at the Buddha Karst Nature Preserve.

☑ On July 3, in preparation for the NSS convention visitation to the Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve, Jamie Winner mowed the access lane, parking area, and the camping area by the barn.

☑ On July 22, Shawnee Karst Preserve Property Manager Keith Dunlap mowed most of the hiking trails on the property. There are a few trees down on the lesser used trails that need to be removed in the future.

☑ On July 23, Keith Dunlap coordinated with Lowry Property Manager Jasper Beavers and then sprayed two backpack tanks of Crossbow to treat broadleaf invasives and two more tanks of Clethodim to treat stiltgrass, systematically walking the entire Lowry Karst Preserve twice. The property's woodland health has improved significantly since it was acquired in 2019.

☑ On July 30, Wayne Cave Property Manager Cris Seuell and Keith Dunlap sprayed two backpack tanks of Clethodim on stiltgrass on the 20-acre connection property. They also did

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some minor trail clearing from recent storms.

☑ On August 3, Orangeville Rise Nature Preserve Property Manager Carla Striegel-Winner string-trimmed along both pull-offs. The previously-noted cords were gone, although Matt Selig noted that they were there during the NSS Convention Lost River Hydrology Tour he led on July 9.

☑ On August 4, Buddha Karst Property Manager Keith Dunlap sprayed five tanks of Clethodim on the loop trail treating stiltgrass, plus another tank in a wooded area. This invasive seemed worse than in years past. He also treated Johnson grass with glyphosate along the county road at Buddha.

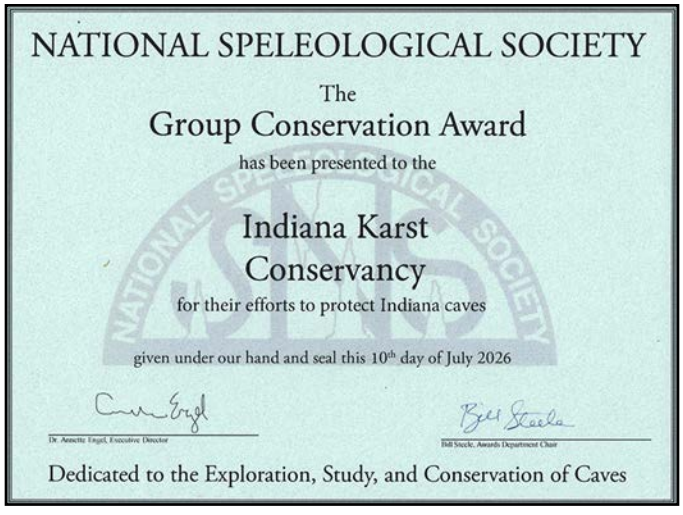
☑ On August 13, Buddha Property Manager Keith Dunlap mowed the parking lot and all the trail in preparation for the upcoming Spider field event and Cave Capers. He also did some mowing at the Shawnee Karst Preserve.

☑ On August 15, seventeen volunteers undertook several stewardship activities at the Buddha Karst Preserve prior to the Spider field event. Tasks completed included transporting the replacement footbridge materials from the parking area to the work site at the back of the property, trimming back branches and weeds along the perimeter hiking trail and also along the county road (for overflow parking), and removal of a few invasive autumn olive bushes.

2026 NSS GROUP CONSERVATION AWARD

Editor's note: At this year's NSS Convention in Corydon Indiana, the IKC was honored to win the NSS's Group Conservation Award. This is actually the second time the IKC has been recognized with this annual award (the first time in 2010). The following is the banquet introduction for the award delivered by Val Hildreth-Werker, NSS Conservation Chair.

"The NSS Group Conservation Award is given to a Grotto, Conservation Task Force, Conservancy, Region, or a group of NSS members who have consistently made major contributions to the conservation, protection, or restoration of cave systems or karst areas over a period of years, and usually includes a body of work through hands-on action and outreach activities.


NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The

Group Conservation Award

has been presented to the

Indiana Karst Conservancy

for their efforts to protect Indiana caves

given under our hand and seal this 10th day of July 2026

Dr. Annette Engel, Executive Director

Bill Steele, Awards Department Chair

Dedicated to the Exploration, Study, and Conservation of Caves

Somebody is celebrating their 40th Anniversary this year!

This all-volunteer caver organization was founded in 1986 in response to the extensive vandalism of the iconic Garrison Chapel Valley caves.

Some of you remember the Wayne's infamous 1,200-foot crawlway and the equally long Backbreaker in Sullivan Cave. Countless hours were spent tediously removing trash and graffiti from the passages by this organization in its formative years.

This conservancy acquired its first preserve, where Sullivan Cave is located, in 1998.

Six additional preserves totaling almost 300 acres have been added representing caves and exposed karst landscapes.

Beyond their seven preserves, they manage access to privately owned caves, as well as state-owned caves in Spring Mill State Park and Cave River Valley Natural Area. They have also partnered with The Nature Conservancy and the City of Salem in managing other sites.

This renowned cave conservancy is "dedicated to the conservation and preservation of caves and karst features in Indiana and other areas of the world."

The Indiana Karst Conservancy, 300+ members strong, is committed to advocating on behalf of Indiana's caves and karst, the life forms that depend on them, and to the promotion of safe and responsible caving.

Please help me congratulate the IKC on the 2026 NSS Group Conservation Award."

IKC AT THE NSS CONVENTION – GOODNESS WHAT A WEEK!

by Carla Striegel-Winner

We were overjoyed to play a part in the recent NSS Convention in Corydon the first week of July. The annual convention was last in Indiana in 2007, and before that 1992, 1973, and 1965. After nearly 20 years, Indiana cavers were thrilled to show over 1100 attendees from across the country (and the world) a really good time! Everyone pulled together for an amazing event!

The IKC was a Platinum sponsor, which allowed us to have an ad in the convention program and an insert in the swag bag promoting the IKC. We were also provided complementary tickets to the Salon and Banquet events that we shared with selected cave owners and land trust peers. Our sponsorship helped bring the very realistic and popular mobile CaveSim simulated cave (***CaveSim.org***) to the convention all week long.

Additionally, we had the IKC display table set up in the non-profit organization hallway all week, with hundreds of attendees stopping by to check it out on their way to and from sessions. We featured info about our caves and preserves and brought in over $185 in one and two dollar donations for IKC stickers, and our 40th anniversary buttons and bottle openers.

While the IKC as an organization played only a small part in the convention, our Board members and members in general were quite visible and involved. Board member Laura Demarest was convention co-chair, which is a several-year commitment that started in 2022. Board member Danyele Green was the volunteer coordinator, facilitating approximately 300 volunteers and over 7000 volunteer hours during the week-long event. IKC President Matt Selig led the Karst Hydrology of the Lost River Field Tour, with over 30 participants. Treasurer Keith Dunlap and member John Benton helped plan and facilitate daily tours of Wyandotte Cave, as well as helping to arrange trips for the Geology field trip, the Biology field trip, and the sketching workshop. This resulted in approximately 25% of convention-goers visiting Wyandotte that week! Most of our 15 Board members attended the convention, and many volunteered with various tasks and events through the week.



photo courtesy Richard Vernier

The IKC helped sponsor the cave simulation (CaveSim) educational activity at the convention.



photo courtesy Carla Striegel-Winner

Stickers and buttons were popular at our display table and brought in over $185 in donations.

Several of our caves were featured as led trips and self-led trips, including Sullivan, Buddha, Robinson Ladder and even Lowry Cave. Caves that we manage, such as the caves at Henderson Park and the caves owned by DNR Division of State Parks at Spring Mill State Park and Cave River Valley, had trips as well. These are all thanks in part to our Cave Patrons and Access Managers, as well as the landowners. I was able to lead a special trip into Hamer Cave, thanks to our work with Heidelberg Materials.

We were very excited when the last event of the week came around. On the evening of the Awards Banquet, where over 1000 attendees were served dinner and local wine, we were pleased to receive the NSS Group Conservation Award! (see page 9) Additionally our own Keith Dunlap received the NSS Outstanding Landowner – Caver Relations Award and Laura was honored with being named an NSS Fellow.

It was a terrific week. The energy that is generated from over a thousand cavers coming together is a great feeling that is hard to describe. I'll likely be in my mid-70s when the convention comes to Indiana again; and I imagine one of our members now in their 20s or 30s will be chairing the next time. It will be wonderful to see what part the IKC can play at that future convention as well.

MORE PHOTOS OF THE IKC AT THE CONVENTION



photo courtesy Keith Dunlap



photo courtesy Indiana Karst Conservancy

Above: One of the many tours and other activities in Wyandotte Cave during the convention. **Above right:** IKC President Matt Selig standing on a bridge over the Lost River during his hydrology field trip of the area. **Below right:** The IKC's Robinson Ladder Cave lived up to its name during the convention. The cave, close to the convention site, was pre-rigged for the week to allow easier access for attendees. **Below:** A special convention trip arranged by the IKC into Hamer Cave with permission from Heidelberg Materials.



photo courtesy Carla Striegel-Winner



photo courtesy Carla Striegel-Winner

OLD KAOLIN MINES, CAVES, AND THE MYSTERIOUS MISSISSIPPIAN-PENNSYLVANIAN UNCONFORMITY

by Carroll Ritter

As the buckboard bounced along the well-used and rutted road uphill from Huron towards the mine, a cloud of dust in the distance focused attention on a wagon drawn by two horses loaded with a large mound of whitish gray rock and clay. That load was destined for further transport down to the small town of Huron. Today, May 6, 1876, is a meeting of importance up on Gardner Ridge. Dr Joseph Gardner of Bedford is meeting with a representative who had come from Philadelphia. Final details are being set for the purchase of mines producing large deposits of what had been named *Indianaite*. The Pennsylvania Salt Manufacturing Company has tendered an offer to purchase these largest kaolin deposits in Indiana from Dr Gardner, State Geologist E.T. Cox, and Michael Tempest of Cincinnati Pottery.

Kaolin was used in that time for potter's clay, alum cake, porcelain insulators, fire brick, and tile. Partially refined at Huron, the product



Blue endellite nodules in the walls of the kaolin mines.

photo courtesy Indiana Karst Conservancy

was then shipped onward for final manufacturing. Kaolin as a generic term occurs in these Gardner Ridge deposits as a series of closely related compounds composed of aluminum silicates. Subtle variations in crystal structure and hydration states are known as *halloysite* and

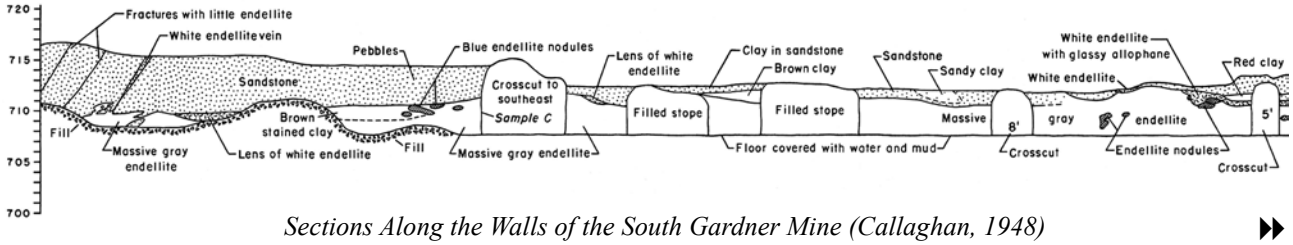


North Gardner Mine portal (Callaghan, 1948).

endellite. The discovery of these clays in 1874 began along the sandstone bluffs at high elevations on the Crawford Upland in Lawrence and Martin counties. Here, the notable contact zone called the Mississippian-Pennsylvanian Unconformity exposes that overlap of the Mansfield sandstone upon the upper layers of what is called the Chester series of older age. A large erosional event between the two geologic periods removed a major continuity in the sequence. Mineralogic changes occurred in clays and silicates replaced existing compounds.

Concentrations of kaolin along exposures on Kings Ridge Road were found during original exploration for iron deposits, also commercially important in the area. The tunnels into kaolin clays were primarily in three or four spots. Thicknesses of four to five feet were most common, with tunnels extending from 100 to 494 feet back. Sufficient mining provided removal of up to 2,000 tons per year for 10 years (Blatchley, 1896). Production declined by 1891, although an alum processing plant in Huron in 1920 was active before burning down in 1924. The kaolin mining district on Gardner Ridge was then at its end.

The Gardner Ridge area is now part of the Hoosier National Forest. For safety, all the mine openings were gated in the early 2000s (see *IKC*



Sections Along the Walls of the South Gardner Mine (Callaghan, 1948)

Updates #63 and #65). This was imperative since passage collapses commonly occurred in these friable sandstones and clay voids. Most of the tunnels would be inaccessible and percolating groundwater has filled them.

Caving in the area is primarily in the limestones of Upper Mississippian age from Beech Creek and downward into Beaver Bend, Paoli, and Ste Genevieve limestone. Any sandstone "caves" in the Mansfield or Big Clifty are usually short, occur in shelters, or may be blocked with entrance collapse. One such cave this author explored many years ago has now completely fallen in. Other caves on the contact are similarly often blocked at the entry, but have a sizeable spring exit on the lower limestone or shale interface.

Caves in proximity to the kaolin lenses and below the Miss-Penn Unconformity include Amish Well caves in the Big Clifty/Beech Creek (Litaker, 1991), Felknor Spring (Dick, 2012), and Raccoon Run Cave (Nelson & Rough, 1991). Other major swallows and drains have also been addressed by this author in the Felknor valley in a previous article (see *IKC Update* #158). These large sinks occur primarily in the Beaver Bend or Paoli limestones and take huge volumes of water from torrential rains, but need further dye tracing to determine the outflow. Some are still developing and if an opening occurs, large passage networks may be encountered. One interesting sandstone cave entrance known as Amish Saltpetre Cave continues inward as a dug tunnel, likely for iron ore exploration, as its elevation is too low for kaolin lenses.

On the north side of Gardner Ridge are other exposures of Mansfield, then dropping in elevation to other large swallows. In this area, old



photos courtesy Martha Ritter

Carroll Ritter at the South Gardner Mine portal.

sandstone quarries are found. Also Lewis Cave, Feldman Cave, and Feldman Sinks. Drainage on the north may flow to outlets at Blindfish Spring, Hooper Spring, or Williams Spring.

With the fascinating history and geology of this area in Lawrence and Martin counties, it is no wonder many papers and journal articles have been written all the way back to the times of Indiana's first State Geologist.

Other References of interest:

- Callaghan, Eugene (1948). *Endellite Deposits in Gardner Mine Ridge, Lawrence County, Indiana.* Indiana Dept of Conservation, Bulletin #1, 47 pp.
- Cox, E.T.(1875). *Sixth Annual Report of the Geological Survey of Indiana*, made during the year 1874, p 13-23.
- Logan, W. N. (1922). *Economic Geology of Indiana*, in Handbook of Indiana Geology, Indiana Dept of Conservation Pub. #21, p 571-1058.



photo courtesy Richard Vernier

The large projection screen at the NSS Convention Awards Banquet displaying the IKC being presented with the 2026 NSS Group Conservation Award (also see page 9).

A LOOK BACK AT INDIANA KARST

by John Benton

A History Review Of Peacher Cave, Orange County, Indiana

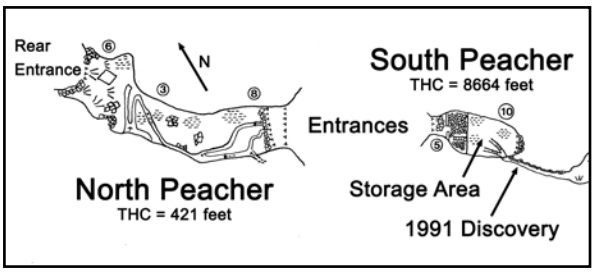
Peacher caves (both the north and south sections) are in the heart of the classic Lost River drainage. Both caves have large opposing entrances. North Peacher Cave has about 300 feet of passage and a smaller rear exit. South Peacher Cave was originally only about 100 feet long. Both caves were surveyed by Clyde Malott and Robert Schrock in 1929, and then redrafted by Richard Powell in the 1960s. In 1991, a major break-through in South Peacher Cave was made by members of the Saint Joseph Valley Grotto that extended the cave to over 8600 feet of passage.



Gate and stairs at the entrance to South Peacher Cave.

Visitors today are often curious about the substantial brick wall and metal bar gate at the entrance to South Peacher Cave, and the concrete stairs and handrails that led down to the large, flat-floored room just beyond. There have been speculations that the south cave may have previously been used as a naturally "air-conditioned" dance hall or even a Prohibition-era "speakeasy", but neither of these rumored activities appears to be true (or at least I could not find any written evidence to substantiate those purported uses). However, there have also been reports that South Peacher was used for cold-storage and in searching newspaper archives, this appears to be true. Several newspaper articles I located from 1925 to 1939 tell the story of how Peacher Cave was used for apple storage.

An article from the February 24, 1925 *Seymour Tribune* stated that "Mr. Joe Burton and his son had accomplished to their perfect satisfaction [the winter] storage of apples in Twin Cave southeast



adapted from Dave Seng's map

of Mitchell without the aid of ice" and those works in the cave would serve as the basis for using other caves in the southern part of the state (i.e., Peacher) for similar purposes. The Burton Orchards produced thousands of bushels of apples annually, so that extensive winter storage was necessary to their business.

The August 11, 1927 issue of the *Mitchell Tribune* ran the obituary for W.H. Peacher, owner and "proprietor of the famous Peacher Cave". Why was Peacher Cave known as *famous* in 1927 after only having been used for apple storage for a few years? Was the cave such a game-changer in the apple orchard industry? Or was it something else… maybe the cave really was a secret speakeasy?

Per several newspaper accounts in October 1935, a ceiling collapse over the storage area in Peacher Cave destroyed several thousand bushels of stored apples worth hundreds of dollars owned by the Troth-Burton Orchards. The collapsed rock was estimated to have weighed ten tons. The articles also mention that the cave had been equipped with electric lights and tracks laid for carts to move the apples into and out of the cave. The remnants of the electric lights (white porcelain insulators) are still visible in 2026.

In April 1938, a hard freeze wiped out much



The apple storage area in South Peacher Cave.

photos courtesy John Benton

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of the spring apple blooms in the area. The mercury dropped to 24 degrees near Mitchell. The Troth-Burton Orchards reported a freeze loss of 75% to the fruit crop, devastating that years' production. As a result, in June 1939, the Troth Orchard was listed for sale. This was near the end of apple storage in Peacher Cave.

An article from a 1985 Bedford *Times-Mail* featured an interview with a former employee of Troth Orchard who was a sales manager. Mr. Lindville Ferguson recalls how up to 12,000 bushels of apples per year were stored in Peacher Cave. The apples were stored in wooden beer cases that each held about 1-1/2 bushels. He talked about a cable car that ran on a track down into the cave. Today there is no sign of the rail track or cable car – perhaps the steel was recycled for salvage during WW II? It's possible that the empty beer cases used to store the apples is where the speakeasy legend may have originated. Today, any signs of the beer cases are long gone. Mr. Ferguson also mentions that there were problems with rats getting into some the of apples in storage. Could these have been the native Allegheny woodrats?

This is a fascinating story of Indiana caves and their usage from the past! Peacher caves were part of the 2026 Indiana Cave Symposium Field Trip (see *IKC Update* #161, page 12). The owners are greatly appreciated for their generosity in allowing visitation to their caves! Both caves are on private property, and although the owners do allow cavers to visit, they require that they be contacted in advance for permission. Please do not just show up and expect to go caving!

References:

- *The Tribune*, Seymour IN, Tuesday February 24, 1925: *Uncle Joe Burton Dies At Mitchell.*
- *Mitchell Tribune,* Mitchell IN, Thursday August 11, 1927: *W.H Peacher Obituary.*
- *The Herald,* Jasper IN, Friday Oct 18, 1935: *Apples.*
- *The Indianapolis News*, Indianapolis IN, Saturday October 12, 1935: *Cave-In Wrecks Apple Storage Underground.*
- *The Alexandria Times,* Alexandria IN, Tuesday April 5, 1938: *Southern State Fruit Crop Is Hit.*
- *Mitchell Tribune,* Mitchell IN, Thursday June 8, 1939: *For Sale: Troth Orchard Farm.*
- *The Times-Mail,* Bedford IN, Sunday April 21, 1985: *Fergusons Retiring After 51 Years In Business In Orleans.*



A HISTORY OF ENTRANCE NAMES IN THE SHAWNEE CAVE SYSTEM

by Tom Sollman with entrance photos courtesy of the Indiana Cave Survey database

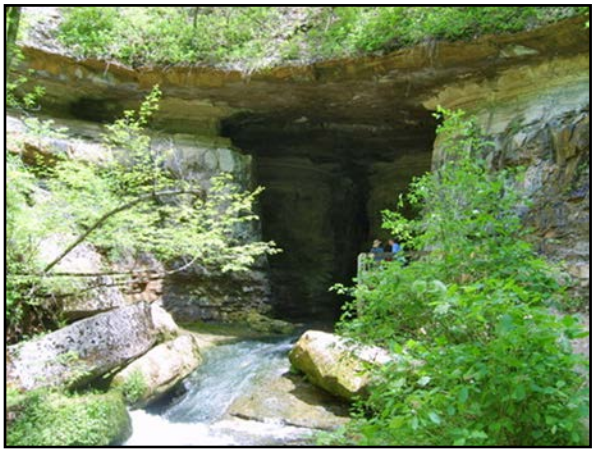
Names of the various entrances of the Shawnee Cave System (i.e., Donaldson, Lower Twin, and Upper Twin caves) in Lawrence County, Indiana have changed perhaps more than any other cave in Indiana. This multitude of names (and the interchangeability of entrance and cave in those names) and two karst windows (each with two adjacent entrances) has led to lot of confusion over the years, especially when reading historic reports and descriptions. This article is an attempt at deciphering the names given through the years in numerous publications. I will start with the most downstream entrance of the system and work my way upstream (see the map on the opposite page).

Entrance 1

1800s to 1840s: In the valley below today's Donaldson Cave there has been a series of historic mills which caused the area to be commonly called **Mill Springs**. About 1800, a powder mill operated there using nitrous earth from the cave's upper dry passages. In 1819, Isaac Fife erected a sawmill with an overshot wheel powered by a flume from the cave. In 1831 the mill was sold to William and Shelton Smith, who added a distillery and a log cabin in the valley (there are conflicting accounts of who built what during this era). After James Lynn built a sawmill below the cave circa 1847, the common name on the entrance changed to **Lynn's Cave**.

Mid-1860s: When George Donaldson bought the property in 1864, he renamed this entrance to **Shawnee Cave**. The entrance is shown as Shawnee Cave in *An Atlas of Lawrence County*, 1879.

Late 1860s to 1890s: Even though Donaldson had changed the name to Shawnee, the commonly used name in publications became **Donaldson's Cave** (examples: Cox's 1874 *Geology of Lawrence County*; *Atlas of the State of Indiana*, 1876). Misspellings in publications include **Donelson's**, **Donnelson's**, and **Douelson's**.



Early 1900s: After Donaldson's death in 1898, legal wrangling over the land's ownership continued for a quarter century with Indiana University managing, and then owning the property until the Indiana Department of Conservation acquired the property in 1927. During this time Carl Eigenmann and his students from Indiana University did numerous studies on the cavefish population and life in the area. Newspaper articles during this time called the entrance/cave **Farm Cave** or **University Cave**, or even **University Farm Cave**.

Today: It's common today to see this downstream entrance referred to as **Donaldson**, **Shawnee**, or **Donaldson/Bronson**.

Entrance 2

This small entrance located in the right-hand side room now accessible by the walkway is not shown on the 1908 or 1931 maps (see *IKC Update* #160 for the referenced maps) as it didn't exist when those maps were drafted. On the 1978 map, the entrance is shown and referred to as a "hole to surface".

In a 1980s internal park document, *Donaldson Cave Tour Planning,* this entrance is mentioned: "*The hole was caused by a tree falling in the 1940s… The crack was dug out by dogs and children and enlarged*" and is shown on a basic hand sketch of this upper cave level in the document.

In a circa-1985 park internal document *Caves of Spring Mill State Park* by the park Naturalist Carmelita McGurk, the hole was named for the first time as **Mini-Donaldson** and described: "*A two-foot by three-foot hole on this far end alters the cave environment – letting in light, outside temperatures and humidity.*"

On the 1991 cave map the entrance can be found, if you know what to look for... The line representing the passage outline shows a gap where the entrance is, but it's not identified as such. The entrance was mentioned by Payne, in his December 2008 *The Petroglyph* article Spring Mill Park stating "*[kids] …had gone in the right-hand passage*

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and were climbing out of the cave-window on the side of the cliff."

In the current ICS database this entrance is listed as "**Donaldson (side)**".

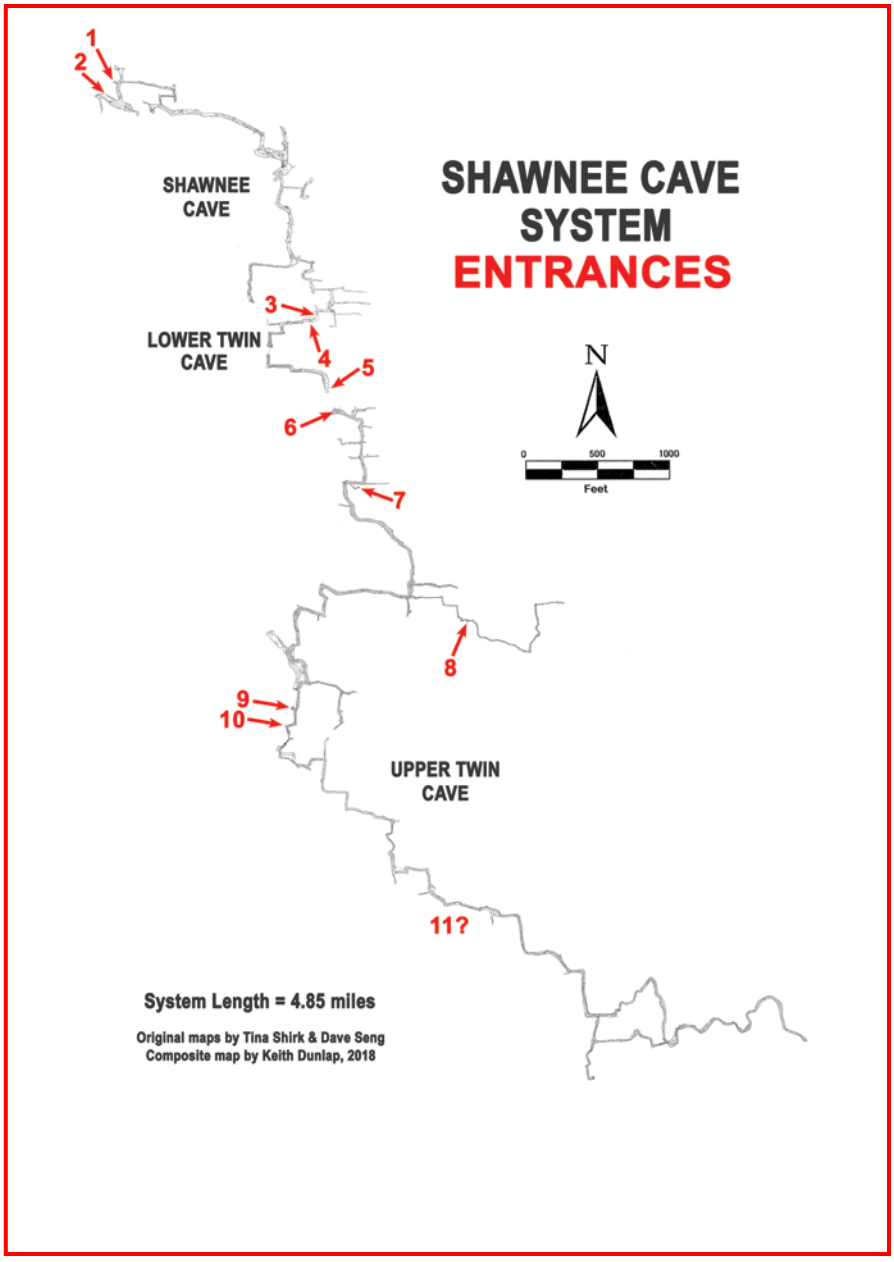
In summary, it appears that the entrance was formed when the root ball of a tree on the hillside ripped it open as it fell in the 1940s. The entrance has been growing steadily larger since. I've seen a lot of people use it on a nice weekend, usually going out and sliding down the hillside. It is likely that use of this entrance will diminish due to the 2022 installation of the elevated walkway going to the cave's main entrance. Now if visitors slide out of this entrance and down the hillside, they are not able to get back onto the walkway.

Entrance 3

1867: The earliest published name of this downstream entrance in the northern karst window was by George Donaldson as **Lake Cave** in a January 25, 1868 article in the *Glasgow Daily Herald* . It described a September 30, 1867 canoe trip in the cave that went past the "Silver Domes" room, and describing the entrance as "*... situated in a rough, rocky, and picturesque hollow, about 60 feet under the level of the surrounding district, with an irregular area of somewhere about 60 feet in diameter. The entrance to the cavern is at least 6 feet high and 11 feet wide...*"

Late 1800s to early 1900s: Scientific papers and newspaper articles during this time called the two entrances in the northern karst window the **Twin Caves**. Examples: The December 29, 1908 Bedford, *Indiana Daily Mail* named the entrances Donaldson, **the Twin Caves** and Rising Springs. F.C. Greene in an article in the July 15, 1909 *The Muncie Sunday Star* newspaper *Wonders of the Subterranean Fairyland of the Blind Fish* named the entrances Donelson's Cave, **Lower and Upper Twin Caves**, and Lower and Upper Dalton or Spring Caves. The only published reference I have with the Bronson name prior to the state acquiring the land is from an article in the June 5,1892 *The Sunday Journal*, Indianapolis, Indiana, *The Bowels of the Earth,* which mentions visiting Donaldson's, **Bronson's** and Dalton's Springs caves.

1929: Shortly after the state created Spring Mill Park in 1928 the state completely changed the commonly used names in the Shawnee System. Moving the Twin Cave names from the northern karst window to the southern upstream karst window and renaming the two northern karst win-





dow entrances from the normally used (upper and lower) **Twin Caves** to (upper and lower) **Bronson Caves** calling both entrances in the northern karst window "the two **Bronson Caves**" in the *Year Book for the State of Indiana* for 1929. The Bronson name is also used in an October 1929 *Indiana History Bulletin* article.

The origin of the Bronson name is something of a mystery. Early plat books do not show anyone named Bronson owning land nearby. It is possible a Bronson lived in the house near the northern karst window called the "Red House" which the park repaired and converted into a camp/cottage with a short driveway leading to it in 1929. To be consistent, this entrance singularly would be referred to as **Lower Twin** (pre-1929) and **Lower Bronson** (post-1929).

Entrance 4

This upstream entrance in the northern karst window was rarely mentioned in publications separately. It was usually combined with the downstream entrance as "The Twin Caves" or "The Bronson Caves". To be consistent with the adjacent entrance 3, this entrance singularly would be referred to as **Upper Twin** (pre-1929) and **Upper Bronson** (post-1929).



2011: The park naturalist, Jill Vance, changed the entrance name to **Schmelz Cave** circa 2011 "*...to avoid confusion...* " D.V. Schmelz was a researcher of Indiana's old-growth forests who wrote a series of papers on Donaldson Woods which is directly east of the entrance. Except in the ICS database which names the entrance "Lower/Schmelz", I've never seen this entrance named Schmelz in any publication.

Note: Entrances 4 and 5 are almost always referred to, and shown on maps, as being associated with two separate caves, but the connection between the cave segments is possible for a determined person in very low water conditions. The 1991 map does refer to the two segments as Lower Twin Cave. So entrance 4 would be the downstream (or Lower) entrance to Lower Twin Cave, and entrance 5 would be the upstream (or Upper) entrance to Lower Twin Cave.

Entrance 5

This entrance is the downstream entrance in the southern karst window and is rarely mentioned separately in publications, but when it is, most articles follow the name of the more prominent upstream entrance name in the same karst window, but with the preface of "lower". Thus **Lower Dalton**, **Lower Big Springs**, or **Lower Twin**.



Side-story: When the park was first created, a rough stone dam was made at the dripline of the upper entrance of the southern karst window, circa 1928. In 1937 the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) constructed a more substantial dam of large stones mortared together about 2/3 of the way downstream in the karst window. The following

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year the first boat tours were conducted in the upper cave (entrance 6). In 1983-84, this dam was enlarged and raised 16 inches to its current height by park maintenance using concrete (the concrete was hand carried down the steps in bags!).

Side-story #2: This southern karst window is also noted as the "type locality" of the term "karst window" as described by William Von Osinski in his article *Karst Windows* in the *Indiana Academy of Science Proceedings* from 1934. While there has been some confusion if Von Osinski was talking about the southern or northern karst window, a close comparison of his included detailed map with modern topographic maps confirms he was referring to the southern karst window (containing entrances 5 and 6).

Entrance 6

1820s to 1830s: The first name I have for the upper entrance in the southern karst window is **Cave Springs** from an 1821 reference describing the route of a proposed road from Palestine to Becks Mill on page 234 in the Lawrence County Commissioners Record Book B, 1823 to 1835. On page 382 of the same record book is an 1832 reference using the name **Big Cave Springs** by the county road commissioner, Hugh Hamer. Big Springs church was located nearby, to the southwest of the cave. There was also a Big Springs school nearby. During the Civil War, militia volunteers mustered at Big Springs in the area directly east of the karst window.

1840s to 1880s: The name varies between **Big Cave Springs** and the **Dalton Caves** or **Dalton's Springs** during this time. It's "Dalton's Springs" in Collet's 1873 *Geology of Lawrence County* and in Hovey's 1882 *Celebrated American Caverns*, but "Big Springs Cave" in *An Atlas of Lawrence County*, 1879.

The Dalton Cave name comes from the Dalton family, who owned land south of the cave. William Dalton Jr lived southeast of the entrance and was hired by Hugh Hamer in 1847 as a "Stiller" and reportedly held that position for 40 some years, passing away in September of 1887. Oddly, the Daltons didn't own the actual cave entrance. George Donaldson owned it, as shown in the 1879 *An Atlas of Lawrence County*.

Late 1800s to early 1900s: Confusion abounded during this time with names bouncing back and forth. In Frye's 1899 *Advanced Geography – Indiana Edition* is a captioned sketch of Mouth of **Upper Twin Cave**, but the detailed sketch plainly shows that period's **Upper Dalton** or **Big Springs Cave**. In Banta's 1907 *The Fauna of Mayfield's Cave,* he refers to the Twin Caves and Donaldson Spring Caves. In Hahn's 1908 *The Mammals of Indiana it is* ***Upper Spring Cave***. In Eigenmann's 1909 *Cave Vertebrates of America*, it's **Dalton's Spring**. Newspaper articles of the early 1900s sometimes called it **Rising Springs**.



1920: A possible alternate name may be found in the June 24, 1920 *Bedford Daily Mail* and the July 1, 1920 *Bedford Daily Democrat* newspapers. They give the most detailed account of an interview of Carl Eigenmann's of his cavefish studies, reprinted in newspapers nationwide of the time.

"*I started looking for the blind fish when I was a professor in the university in 1891. I have made many trips with students to Orange county, hoping to find blind fish and after several years of unsuccessful effort the students lost interest. Finally, Professor W. J. Woenkhaus* [a colleague of Eigenmann and an ichthyologist and professor at Indiana University] *and I made a last attempt east of Mitchell, at Shawnee cave.*

In this part of the state there are a number of underground streams, which issue from the caves in the bluffs of White river. We fell in with a farmer, who offered to show us a particularly interesting place called ***Walton's Scoring cave****. In this place the cave roof had fallen and the stream flowed above ground for about 100 yards. We went down to the stream and found blind fish swimming around near the surface of the water, within a few yards of the mouth of the cave.*"

This is the only reference to a Walton's Scoring cave I've ever found. Apparently it refers to one of the two karst windows in the system as it references Shawnee Cave. Other newspaper interviews during this time point to the southern karst window as the site where he first found cavefish in the area, so I be-

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lieve it is referring to this entrance. To add some additional confusion, E.Y. Guernsey in his 1931 book *Spring Mill State Park, A History and Description* wrote that Eigenmann found his blind fish "*Within sight of the lower spring at* ***Dalton's Cave****...*" in 1896! It's odd that Eigenmann would have to search for blind fish as the "caves east of Mitchell" had been noted as containing cavefish in several Indiana Academy of Science Annual Reports, history books, and newspaper articles prior to this.

Circa 1929: As stated previously, the park inexplicably shifted the common name from the northern karst window entrances to the southern karst window, renaming them the **Twin Caves**. Interestingly E.Y. Guernsey (who played a central role in developing Spring Mill Park) in his 1931 *Spring Mill State Park, A History and Description* mentioned Eigenmann finding blind fish at the "*lower spring at Dalton's Caves*", which the park had already renamed Upper Twin.

Today: This entrance is *almost* universally named the **Upper Twin Cave** entrance in publications … but it's also very common to hear this called the **Boat Dock** entrance by park visitors and cavers. *Sigh*.

Entrance 7

Matthew Cave was in the old ICS database as entrance #1041 with a reference/source of "BIG 1961". At the time they didn't know it connected to Upper Twin Cave. Eventually it was determined that this cave was a duplicate of the **Cork Screw** entrance (discovered during the 1989 resurvey of the cave), so the Matthew Cave (ICS index #47278) reference was consolidated with Upper Twin Cave as an entrance and then deleted (Keith Dunlap pers. comm.). The Cork Screw name's origin is obvious if you have been through that entrance, but the Matthew name is a mystery. I can't find any landowner by that name.

Side-story: This entrance has been known for over 80 years. Edward Marshal, in his 1986 book *Spring Mill Park: Its Environs and People*, tells the story circa 1945 where he crawled down through the tight entrance to where it enters the main passage which is just upstream from where the park's boat tours turn around. He spent most of an afternoon messing with the boat tours, making for each boat tour more and more little clay "mud men" statues with match sticks holding little red flags torn from a handkerchief. On the final tour of the day, as the boat was heading back to the entrance, Marshal yelled, "*Hey! Come and take me out of here.*" That left the tourists delighted and the guides in bafflement.

Entrance 8

This entrance, on private property, was discovered October 8, 1989, by Tom Miller, Kenny Carrigan, and Scott Fee while surveying from inside the cave out to the entrance. It was heavily filled with trash, mostly broken glass, thus the name, **Glass Men-Agony**. After plotting out the survey it was found that the new entrance was really the third entrance on the 1978 ISS map (*Spring Mill Project Report*, *CIG Newsletter*, December 1989). The trash filled sinkhole entrance was first listed as an unnamed cave in January 1963 in the *Speleo Epitaph,* Volume 2#6. The ICS had it listed as a separate cave (index # 47134) until the 1989 connection to Upper Twin when it was consolidated in the database.

Entrance 9

1990: This entrance was discovered from inside the cave while surveying. It got the **LaDuke** name from the nearby landowners. The cavers crossed their property to enter the entrance during further surveying, but the LaDukes never actually owned the entrance. In Jill Vance's 2011 unpublished *Caves and Karst Features of Spring Mill State Park* it was called **LaDuke Cave**.



2012: When the Indiana Karst Conservancy bought the property including this cave entrance, they changed the name to the **IKC** entrance (hey, everybody else was changing names!). The justification was that the LaDuke's never really had any association with the entrance named after them.

Entrance 10

This entrance was named the **Sollman** entrance in honor of the guy who, on September 16, 2022

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muttered "*What the ****?*" after squeezing up through breakdown deep in Upper Twin Cave and was suddenly bathed in bright sunlight from a freshly collapsed hole in the ceiling to the outside. This entrance is also on the IKC property.

Entrance 11

It was rumored that during a 2012 Cave Capers trip, an unnamed entrance far upstream of the IKC entrance was found from the inside. While the existence has supposedly been confirmed, this entrance has not been re-found since. Upstream of the breakdown constriction just below entrance 10, organic detritus and even larger debris are substantial (as would be necessary to support the ecosystem of the largest population of cavefish in Indiana). I've even found old cans. Most of this probably comes from the Sinks of Mosquito Creek (the primary water source of the system several miles to the southeast), but there may be one or more intermittent openings. So …. maybe!

...News Briefs, continued from page 6

our preserves, Wayne and Buddha, will be featured on the field day. Our Board members, Property Managers, and selected stewardship volunteers will be invited to attend the September event.

- IKC Board member Carla Striegel-Winner was invited to join the Indiana Plant Conservation Alliance's newly formed Allegheny Stonecrop Conservation Team. This group, one of 20 rare plant focus teams, is made up of conservation-minded individuals and organizations from around the state. One of our preserves has this rare plant. The team is tasked with researching current populations, searching for new populations, and using DNA sequencing to determine if the current known populations are indeed *Hylotelephium telephioides* and not the domesticated Orpine or Livelong plant (*Hylotelephium telephium*) which is very similar. See *IKC Update* #149, page 13 for an article on this plant.

- Outreach and Education Chair Carla Striegel-Winner was asked to host a talk as part of the "Science and Nature Cafe" series at the Bedford Public Library on July 30th. The series is co-hosted by the library and the Hoosier National Forest. Carla's presentation was themed around the "Unearth A Story" summer reading program, and titled *Unearth Indiana's Amazing Caves*. She focused on how and why the IKC believes in conserving caves while facilitating recreational caving, showed some great cave photos, discussed some of the wildlife that uses the caves and ended with additional actions folks could take to explore Indiana's amazing caves. The hour-long program was well attended by 20 people and she even ran out of some of the handout materials she had on display!

- Where did the summer go? Reminder: a number of bat caves are closed from September 1 until April 30 for bat swarming and hibernation. These include Langdon's Cave in the Harrison-Crawford State Forest, Wyandotte Cave (commercial), Endless and River caves in Cave River Valley, Robinson Ladder Cave owned by the IKC, and a number of caves on INDOT mitigation easements (Coon, Grotto, Salamander, Clyfty, and Eller caves). Also remember that all caves in the Hoosier National forest are now closed from August 16 to May 14. Other privately-owned caves that serve as bat hibernacula should be avoided as well.

- IKC members and supporters who shop at Kroger (and affiliated stores like JayC, Ruler, etc) can help generate quarterly donations for the IKC through the Kroger Community Rewards program. If you use a Kroger Shopper's Card, simply designate the IKC by logging into your Kroger account and in the My Account menu, select Community Rewards, then search and select "Indiana Karst Conservancy" as your designated organization. Currently the IKC receives about $100 annually with only a few members participating, so doubling or tripling the number of participants could really make a difference. Also note the listed organizations are specific to Kroger marketing regions and we are currently only enrolled in the Central Indiana and Louisville (southern Indiana) regions.

- The IKC has gained ***thirteen*** new members in the last quarter. Welcome Lauren Ballou, Levi Bell, Derek Bristol, Alfred Cooper, Wyatt Earl, Garrett Gay, Caleb Jarrett, Crystal Miller, Tyler Paulus, Grace Rodriguez, Ken Schnautz, Reggie Van Stockum, and Cayden Zarbock. The IKC membership currently stands at 307.

NEW INDIANA LAND TRUST DAYS CAMPAIGN CELEBRATES OUR WORK

by Carla Striegel-Winner



Indiana Land Protection Alliance (ILPA) is excited to announce the inaugural Indiana Land Trust Days! Throughout August, September, and October, the work of member land trusts is being celebrated by highlighting events hosted on the lands we all protect. More than 60 events are featured, so Indiana residents and visitors can discover the impact of local conservation statewide. ILPA has a special page on their website showcasing the events and promotes those on their Facebook page.

The IKC has three events featured, which include ***Big Day for Birds*** at our Shawnee Karst Preserve on October 10 with expert birder Cathy Meyer, and our fall field event ***A Wilderness First Aid Scenarios Hike*** on October 24 with expert instructor Danyele Green at our Wayne Cave Preserve. It also included our summer field event with Dr Marc Milne, ***In Search of Spiders***, which was held on August 15 at our Buddha Karst Nature Preserve.

ILPA has giveaways created for Land Trust Days, including the new "I Heart Indiana Land Trusts" stickers and a Land Trust Days logo sticker. Those attending our October events will receive both stickers, as well as an IKC 40th anniversary sticker. You'll need a new water bottle for all those awesome stickers, so we will be giving away a 32 oz Nalgene water bottle at each event as a door prize.

To explore all of the events being featured statewide, go to ***protectindianaland.org/land-trust-days***.

Our events are also promoted in this I*KC Update*, on our website at ***ikc.caves.org***, and on our Facebook page.

From Field to Form: Cave Data Collection Hike

Location to be announced

Saturday, November 7 – 10 AM to 1 PM EST



photo courtesy Carla Striegel-Winner

Come along with Carla Striegel-Winner on a field hike to learn how to collect cave data and fill out report forms for our sister organization, the Indiana Cave Survey (ICS). We'll hike to a cave feature and walk through what data to gather, how to record it in the field, and how it all fits into the ICS database. This is a hands-on, learn-by-doing outing – perfect for anyone interested in helping document Indiana's caves. Registration will open on October 2, but you may go to ***IKCFieldTourNovember2026.eventbrite.com*** at any time and have a reminder sent to you.

Questions? Contact Carla Striegel-Winner (***IndianaKarstConservancy.info@gmail.com***) or 812-639-9628.

40 YEARS OF THE IKC: THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE ORGANIZATION

by Keith Dunlap

In this third installment reflecting back on the IKC's 40th anniversary, I will focus on those who have served the IKC in various ways and roles. For it is the ***people*** who founded and then have volunteered over the past 40 years to keep it running and moving forward that are the heart of the organization. With that said, this by no means is to downplay the importance of our members who pay their dues and make generous donations to financially support the IKC.

The IKC began as a concept by William Wilson who saw the need in Indiana for a conservation-focused organization that could take some bold actions to protect caves rather than just sit back and complain about the vandalism and destruction that was happening in "our" caves. There were a number of informal meetings with a handful of cavers plotting the path to form the IKC. They were not necessarily pioneers, as they leveraged the organizational structure of the Michigan Karst Conservancy that had formed several years prior. However, the MKC was focused on only a few caves, while the founders of the IKC envisioned a broad scope of conservation. Unfortunately, if minutes were taken in those pre-IKC organization meetings, they have been lost. But the main drivers were Bill Wilson, Tom Rea, Dave Haun, Cindy Riley, and a few others.

The first official meeting of the IKC was held in Indianapolis on March 22, 1986, shortly after receiving our Indiana incorporation certificate on February 14, 1986. The first order of business at the meeting was to allow members to join the organization. Then, with 19 members, they elected the first Executive Board consisting of Bill Wilson (President), Tom Rea (Secretary), Cindy Riley (Treasurer), with Keith Dunlap and Glenn Lemasters as Directors. Of the other attendees present, George Brutchen, George Cesnik, Jeff Cody, Steve Collins, Dave Haun, Mike Lorance, and Lynn Miller are still members today. Others who joined within the first year (considered "founding members") and are still members today include Ernie Payne, Noel Sloan, and Kevin Strunk. Second year members who are still current include Bill Baus, Dave Black, Paul Cannaley, Dave Everton, Tem Hornaday, Hank Huffman, Angie (Manon) May, Jane Miller, Kevin Rasmus, Susan (Sweeny) Strickland, Bruce Trotter, Richard Vernier, and Kent Wilson.

The size of the IKC Executive Board according to the bylaws is dependent upon the number of members, so it started out as the three Officers and two Directors, but over time has grown to its current maximum of fifteen (the three Officers and twelve Directors). Over the past 40 years there have been 60 different people who have served on the Executive Board in various capacities. There have been seven Presidents (in order and years serving): Bill Wilson (1 year), Keith Dunlap (7), Bruce Bowman (7), Kriste Lindberg (2), Dick Vernier (5), Jerry Lewis (13), and Matt Selig (5). There have been 14 different Secretaries, with Jim Adams serving the most terms at 14 years. There have been five Treasurers with Keith Dunlap serving the longest at 32 years.

While I will not list all of the Board members who have served, the following have served at least 10 years: Keith Dunlap (40), Tom Sollman (33), Dave Haun (29), Bruce Bowman (28), Bob Sergesketter (28), Jim Adams (19), Bob Vandeventer (19), Carla Striegel-Winner (16), Bill Tozer (16), Jamie Winner (16), Jerry Lewis (15), Tom Rea (15), Bruce Devore (13), Kriste Lindberg (13), Jeff Cody (12), Don Ingle (12), Nick Noe (12), Steve Lockwood (11), Danyele Green (10), and Sue Vernier (10).

Over the years we have had 25 Cave Patrons associated with 10 different caves the IKC has managed. Four of those Cave Patrons have served over 20 years with Jim Adams putting in 35 years with Shiloh Cave, Jeff Cody the only patron for Buddha Cave for 25 years, John Benton the only patron for Robinson Ladder Cave for 22 years, and Dave Everton who was the patron for Wayne Cave for 21 years. Likewise, Keith Dunlap was the Property Manager for Sullivan Cave Preserve for 24 years and John Benton is still the Property Manager for Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve going on 22 years.

While the IKC does not track volunteers' hours, I'm sure the cumulative hours total is in the tens of thousands and the equivalent of hundreds of thousands dollars in sweat equity. So as I stated in the beginning, it is the ***people*** of the IKC that has made the IKC what it is today, and what it will be in the future.

INDIANA KARST CONSERVANCY TREASURY REPORT

Income/Expense Statement
From April 1, 2026 to June 30, 2026

INCOME:		
Dues Apportionment and Residuals	1,440.01	
Donations - General	727.07	
Donations - Land Acquisition Fund	640.00	
General Investment Earnings	1,858.45	
		$4,665.53
EXPENSES:		
IKC Update (printing, production, mailing)	1,050.61	
Education / Outreach	256.71	
Stewardship / Conservation	1,489.42	
Business (renewal/election mailing, PayPal fees, etc)	141.01	
Property Taxes	287.70	
Transfers to/from restricted funds/other adjustments	640.00	
		($3,865.45)
NET OPERATING EXCESS (DEFICIT) THIS PERIOD:		$800.08

Balance Sheet
June 30, 2026

ASSETS:			
Checking / CD / Brokerage / Endowment accounts		1,049,795.97	
Wayne Cave Preserve	(77.46 acres)	393,000.00	
Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve	(73.48 acres)	162,000.00	
Shawnee Karst Preserve	(67.78 acres)	175,000.00	
Buddha Karst Nature Preserve	(36.84 acres)	29,000.00	
Sullivan Cave Preserve	(30.00 acres)	88,000.00	
Lowry Karst Preserve	(6.66 acres)	33,000.00	
Orangeville Rise Nature Preserve	(3.01 acres)	7,000.00	
Indian Creek Conservation Easement (valued at $1/acre)		13.16	
			$1,936,809.13
FUNDS & OPERATING EXCESS:			
Land Acquisition Restricted Fund		127,209.39	
Deferred Dues Restricted Fund	(290 members)	13,130.00	
Stewardship Endowment Fund	(12.9% for Q2)	180,341.89	
Gale & Ray Beach Endowment Fund	(15.0% for Q2)	625,007.93	
Previous General Fund (total)	103,319.84		
Net Excess (Deficit) This Period	800.08		
Current General Fund (unrestricted)		104,119.92	
Current General Fund (committed)	3,930.01		
Real Estate Basis (excluding value of CE)		887,000.00	
Total Liabilities & Operating Excess			$1,936,809.13

DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR IKC DUES!

IKC EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Sunday, June 14, 2026 – 2:00 PM EDT

Wyandotte Cave Shelter House

Board Members Present:

Matt Selig, President
Goniela Iskali, Secretary
Keith Dunlap, Treasurer
Bill Baus
Brandon Chasteen
Bruce Bowman
Jeff Cody
Laura Demarest
Scott Frosch
Danyele Green
Joe Kinder
Cris Seuell
Tom Sollman
Carla Striegel-Winner
Richard Vernier

Board Members Absent:

None

Others Present: John Benton, Carrie Kinder, Grace Rodriguez, Kevin Romanak, and Sue Vernier.

Call to Order – IKC Exempt Purpose & Introductions
Meeting was called to order by Matt Selig, President, at 2:00 PM EDT.

Acceptance of Proxies

No proxies, all Board members present.

Approval of Previous Minutes

No edits were proposed to the last meeting minutes as published in the June 2026 *IKC Update. Danyele made a motion to approve the minutes. Brandon seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.*

Email Motions Since Last Meeting

None.

Treasurer Report

Keith outlined the current financial status of the organization:

Assets:	
Cash assets totaling	$1,039,223.08
Land assets totaling	$887,000.00
Total Assets	**$1,926,223.08**
Dedicated Funds:	
Land Acquisition Fund	$127,209.39
Stewardship Endowment	$178,745.47
Gale & Ray Beach Endowment	$616,700.02
Deferred Dues (as of 04/01/26)	$13,420.00
General (unrestricted) Fund	$103,148.20
Total Cash Funds	**$1,039,223.08**

Current members: 359 with 76 members yet to renew.

The annual growth rate of the Stewardship Endowment fund is 13.7% since it was invested. The annual growth rate of the Gale and Ray Beach Endowment is 11.4% (the original investment was $400,000), and this is lower because this fund was invested about 6 months later at a higher buy-in price than the Stewardship Endowment fund.

Land Acquisition

Matt reported that a foundation reached out to IKC about donating two small tracts of land (one 5 acres and the other 10 acres) in Bloomington, Indiana. Keith reported that there are limited karst features in these tracts (small springs and a small cave) and the properties likely can't be developed. The foundation is trying to get out of the land holding position. The Board asked if the tracts could be accepted and then sold at a future date, but the general consensus was that the Board would need to learn more about the karst features, liability issues, and confirm that they can't be developed, etc., before considering accepting. Keith, Cris, and Danyele will gather more information about the tracts and report back to the Board.

Education/Outreach Committee

Review Summer/Fall Outreach and Events – The summer outreach event will be "In Search of Spiders" on Saturday, August 15, 6-9 PM EDT at the Buddha Preserve. Carla passed fliers with more details during the meeting. This information can also be found on our website, including how to sign up for this event.

IKC Merchandise

Carla ordered limited quantities of swag that will be available at the upcoming NSS Convention. The 40th anniversary online pop-up store was a success at the Indiana Cave Symposium, and Carla asked if we should order more hats or other clothing merchandise to have available for events. Carla will reach out to our hat/shirt vendor, who will have a vendor booth at the convention, about potentially offering some of our items at the NSS Convention.

NSS Convention

The IKC will have a non-profit/exhibitor booth at the Convention. Laura stated that the exhibitor booths are out in the open and will not be locked overnight, and they are meant to be a quick informational stop in the hallway. The IKC will have an info/promo card that will be included in registration packets for additional information at the NSS

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Convention. In addition, Matt will lead a tour of Lost River to represent the IKC, and Carla is considering leading a surface tour of Robinson Ladder.

Carla asked if the IKC would be okay with same day liability waivers for some of our more local caves (Robinson Ladder, Lowry, Buddha) near the NSS Convention. Goni noted that she has offered to lead a trip to Sullivan for the convention on Tuesday and will provide Ron Adams, the Cave Central organizer, with information about how to use the online system and/or bring additional waivers. The Board decided to allow same day waivers for NSS Convention cave trips, but Goni noted that only Goni and Joe have the information for the lockbox at Sullivan Cave and therefore someone would need to contact Joe or Goni if going to Sullivan Cave outside of the scheduled Tuesday trip.

ILPA Update

The "Stewardship Gathering" will be held on September 23-26th at the Ransburg Scout Reservation on the banks of Lake Monroe in Bloomington, Indiana. This year's event will be hosted in partnership with Sycamore Land Trust and Indiana Karst Conservancy. The IKC may also host hikes at nearby preserves like the Buddha or Wayne preserves. The focus of the event is stewardship and education. *Carla made a motion to sponsor the ILPA fall gathering and requested up to $500 (if needed). Bill seconded it. The motion was unanimously approved.*

2026 Indiana Cave Symposium Recap

Matt summarized that roughly 100 people attended the Symposium and the event was an overall success that included great presentations.

Website Strategy

Bruce reminded the Board that we still need to find a new Webmaster. Matt noted that an *ad hoc* committee that was appointed in the March meeting was not able to meet. Bruce continued to recommend migrating the site from the NSS website and did some research on potential costs for the migration (roughly $200 in up-front costs for the first three years at an introductory rate, but future renewals will be more expensive). Bruce offered to migrate the website to the new domain and redirect any traffic from the old domain to the new website. *Bruce made a motion to spend up to $300 to start migrating the IKC website to a new domain, which would cover any required software and the costs of the new domain. Bill seconded it. The motion was unanimously approved.*

Our new domain will likely be *IndianaKarst.org*. IKC member (and former Board Director) Dave Haun currently owns this domain name and has offered to transfer it to the IKC.

The *ad hoc* committee that was established during the last meeting (made up of Board members and Tim Harris) will meet before the fall meeting to discuss the next steps for the IKC website, and Carla will inquire about what other organizations use as platforms.

2026 NSS Convention Passes

Laura is co-chairing the NSS Convention (July 6-10 in Corydon) and provided an update for the Board. Laura noted that as a result of the IKC's donation of $2,500 for CaveSim, the IKC receives the "platinum" sponsor tier. This tier offers a half-page ad in the convention program, a logo on the website, updates to social media, a one-week convention pass, four tickets to the salon, four banquet tickets, and inclusion in the convention packet. Keith suggested that the tickets for the salon and banquet can be given to landowners as appreciation gifts. Danyele and Joe offered to work with Laura to identify landowners to offer the tickets for the salon and banquet. Laura also stated that the weekly pass can be split into one-day passes and Board directors or other IKC partners can attend using that pass. It was decided that the one-day convention passes would be provided to Board members attending and/or leading trips to IKC caves and other IKC partners (e.g. ILPA).

The Online Permit Request System

Sullivan and Wayne caves are now enrolled in the online system. Goni suggested that we batch the next cave enrollments with the help of Tim Harris. This can be completed via online training/recordings. Carla also suggested that we develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to go along with the recordings as part of the training for cave patrons going forward. Goni will reach out to Tim about creating the SOP.

Grotto Liaison System/Agreements

Keith noted that the role of the Grotto Liaisons has changed with the online system because only the Cave Patron (with the Property Manager as the backup) has the authority to approve permit requests and/or distribute keys. Laura suggested that the grotto Chairs act as IKC liaisons in the future. The Board discussed how this new liaison role could potentially serve the IKC by distributing information to grotto members about the IKC and supporting cave patrons. Keith suggested that the IKC create a small committee to ask current liaisons if they're still interested in serving in this role and what value they see in this role for their grotto going forward. Kevin Romanak and Scott Frosch volunteered to help Keith because they are familiar with a lot of the current grotto leaders. Carla also asked for an updated list of the liaisons so she can send educational and/or IKC information.

Recap of Preserve Work Projects and Upcoming Preserve Projects

Sullivan Cave Preserve – Joe reported that Keith and Brad graded the driveway and added new crushed stone, fixed a large rut in the upper driveway, and created a ditch to direct some of the rainwater runoff. Keith reported that the driveway looks great now. Joe has also mowed and maintained the camping area. Keith

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also sprayed for invasives. Joe's upcoming goals are to stain and fix the picnic table in the camping area.

Wayne Cave Preserve – Cris reported that she hosted a recent trail workday and has been working on controlling invasives. She also reported that the damage after the last tornado is still visible and needs more work. Cris would like to get a volunteer to chainsaw a larger tree that fell after the tornado, and Joe volunteered to do this work. Lastly, Cris reported that the driveway side ditches were cleared of leaves, but the driveway ideally needs grading to even it out.

Shawnee Karst Preserve – Keith would like to get the trails mowed before the NSS Convention.

Buddha Karst Nature Preserve – Keith would like to move the materials for the replacement bridge to the work location at the back of the property during the stewardship day that will occur on August 15. He would also like to cut a larger tree that's obstructing the trail, and Joe has volunteered to do that.

Orangeville Rise Nature Preserve – Carla hosted the annual garlic mustard pull in April, but there wasn't a lot of garlic mustard to pull this year. She also plans to weed-eat around the property soon.

Indian Creek Easement – The annual required site visit is scheduled for September 22, and the IDNR biologist will join.

Robinson Ladder Cave Preserve – John Benton reported that Jamie Winner has been mowing the trail and campground area. Keith also sprayed the invasives around the chestnut plantation. Keith reported that we are down to 15 chestnut trees out of the original 50 that were planted and most of the remaining trees are showing signs of the chestnut canker disease, but he continues to apply a fungicide treatment. John reported that moth surveys were completed last month and over 40 species were detected, including some species new to the IKC. John is still looking for bids to take down a tree that's threatening the barn. Brandon responded that he has a contact who can do this type of work and lives in the Louisville area. Brandon will communicate the contact info of this person to John so that John can request a bid for the work.

Lowry Karst Preserve – No updates from the Preserve Manager. Carla noted she visited the property a few weeks ago and all looked well. Keith plans to do some invasives work and install "surveillance" signs/cameras to deter future vandalism.

Items from the Floor

- Goni noted that she plans to complete the biennial bat surveys for 2026 at the Sullivan, Wayne, and Buddha preserves. Goni reported that she also contacted WEST Inc to see if they can loan us their more sophisticated equipment for the August surveys at Buddha, as in previous years, and is waiting to confirm this with them.
- Bruce is still interested in finalizing the Management Plan for Wayne Cave, but suggested voting on the plan during the September meeting because the Board still had suggested edits that need to be incorporated into the plan.

Next Meeting Details

The next IKC Quarterly meeting is scheduled for Sunday, September 13, 2026 at 1:00 PM EDT at Sullivan Cave Preserve with Keith's nearby shed as the backup plan in the event of rain. A workday and/or a pitch-in lunch will be held at the picnic area prior to the meeting.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 PM EDT.

Respectfully compiled and submitted by Goni Iskali, IKC Secretary

INDIANA KARST CONSERVANCY – NEW MEMBERSHIP / DONATION FORM

I would like to help the IKC protect Indiana's unique caves and karst features. Use the QR code below or complete this form and mail to: **IKC, PO Box 2401, Indianapolis IN 46206**.

$ _____ for IKC membership dues at $20/year (please pro-rate $1.66/month to expire on March 31st).
$ _____ donation to the general fund (to be used for education, stewardship, etc).
$ _____ donation to the restricted cave/land acquisition fund.
☐ I know of an area worthy of protection, please contact me.
☐ I would like to volunteer to help, please contact me.

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____
Phone: _____ ☐ cell
Email: _____
Newsletter: ☐ digital PDF ☐ printed/mailed





Eric's River Cave (Crawford County) was one of the many caves available during the 2026 NSS Convention held in Corydon, Indiana. This cave is located in the Harrison-Crawford State Forest and requires a permit to visit. ***Top****: Brian Welp in a drier section of the cave.* ***Bottom:*** *Adam Happensack in one of the many pools in the cave that is habitat for the Hoosier cavefish. Photos by Chris Bell.*