



TCMA



FALL 2006

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# TCMA Celebrates 20 Years

*By Joe Mitchell & Linda Palit*

Twenty years ago there was no organized means of protecting caves in Texas. But around that time, there was the beginnings of a push to set aside caves and protect their wildlife. People such as Robert Green, Mike Grimm, Mike Walsh, and Mike Warton started thinking about a caver-led organization that would work to protect caves. The organization focused on those goals was founded on April 7, 1986 and was named the Texas Cave Management Association.

Since then, TCMA has grown to over 150 members and now owns 12 caves on 7 different Preserves totaling 345 acres and also manages numerous additional caves under three management contracts. In the last five years, the organization has seen tremendous growth and has been taking on new and challenging tasks, most notably the purchase of Deep and Punkin Caves and the \$125,000 fundraising effort to pay for the property. Looking at the recent growth, current TCMA President Linda Palit said, "I hope our current growth and purchases are just the beginning of cavers owning caves and preserving cave resources for the future. Land in Texas is becoming more and more valuable, and we need to purchase caves now so they will be a part of our future."

This fall TCMA celebrates its 20th anniversary at the Texas Caver Reunion. A Texas sized birthday cake will be served accompanied by a silent auction, a decorated TCMA booth, and the annual Sunday fundraising breakfast. TCMA's members meeting is Sunday immediately after the breakfast and member attendance is appreciated. New board members will be elected, and other information and business will be considered. Additionally, this special issue

of the Passages commemorates the history of the organization with numerous articles, interviews, a timeline, and a look at TCMA's Preserves.

As TCMA looks toward the next twenty years, it now has to begin to balance the transition from a small organization to a larger and more complex one. Recent Board discussions have involved the possible need to hire an Executive Director to managed either grant writing or the day-to-day operations. Director Allan Cobb notes that the basic goals of the organization will remain: protecting Texas Caves for Texas Cavers. "I would like to see TCMA acquire more properties. It is important to acquire caves with unique and delicate resources as well as caves with recreational potential. TCMA needs to remember that everything has been accomplished with the help of cavers so we need to make sure caves are available to cavers."

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## VIEW FROM THE PALIT

By Linda Palit

### Twenty years!

A board member suggested we postpone the celebration to next year when TCMA will be 21 years old; then at least we could drink!

Even though TCMA is twenty years old, I have only been involved for the last seven years. From my view, I'd say the Terrible Teens have lived up to their reputation including lots of major and minor crises and growing pains as we tried to expand. Every acquisition seems to take three times as long as expected. Raising money is a continual burden, though Texas cavers have been very generous. Projects grow from simple to complex with no encouragement. Everything we do seems to require paperwork and then even more paperwork. Even with all this, TCMA has continued to move forward. And I am honored to be a part of the work TCMA is doing.

Now that TCMA is 20 years old, it continues to mature. As TCMA matures, Texas cavers have

a chance to help shape and determine the future of TCMA. After all, TCMA exists only because of the help of cavers.

What caves will TCMA buy, and will we see them when they are available, or miss valuable opportunities because nobody is looking?

How to structure visitation of caves to ensure preservation while letting the caves be used for cavers and for educational purposes?

How do we educate the public about caves and cavers, and about the importance and fragility of cave resources?

What roles will Texas cavers play as TPWD develops its caves and policies? Will we find more opportunities to participate in projects such as the LIDAR Project at Devil's Sinkhole?

These questions are important in guiding how TCMA grows in the coming years. The answers to these questions depend on the cavers who support TCMA. Cavers and caves are the reason for the existence of TCMA. Celebrate with us as we move into the third decade of TCMA's existence.

### Volunteer for Texas Caves!

#### You can :

- Become a trip leader at Deep and Punkin Nature Preserve.
- Work on the fundraising committee.
- Organize the next TCMA auction.
- Donate monthly to the Cave Acquisition Fund.
- Write grants to find money for caves
- Facilitate a project to complete Robber Baron Cave Preserve Restoration.
- Search for caves available for TCMA to purchase.
- Lead educational cave trips.

*If you can work on any of these projects, please contact any member of the TCMA Board of Directors.*



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## A History of the Texas Cave Management Association

*Excerpted from 50 Years OF Texas Caving by Carl E. Kunath, ©2006*

The Texas Cave Management Association (TCMA) was founded in 1986 and organized as a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation in 1988. Initial officers and directors were: Cindy Aase, Bill Elliott, Rod Goke, Robert Green, Jay Jordan, Linda Palit, Ron Ralph, Joe Sumbera (Chairman), Mike Walsh, and Mike Warton.

Its charter states that it is organized for:

*The preservation for posterity of the caves and caverns of Texas and their mineral, biological, archaeological and aesthetic contents; to promote the conservation and study of caves within the state of Texas; to promote and support any scientific and educational programs on caves in Texas the Board of Directors shall from time to time authorize; to acquire ... real and personal property by lease, ownership or other means .... All of the activities are to be carried out solely for conservation, scientific and educational purposes and not for profit.*

In 1987, the TCMA became a conservancy of the National Speleological Society. With time, TCMA has grown to become the premier organization of its type in Texas. TCMA's volunteers have worked with landowners, developers, and various state, local, and federal agencies to manage the state's karst resources: protecting them for future generations, helping develop access policies, and educating the public. The emphasis of TCMA's activities has been on the preservation of caves; initially this was accomplished through the management and/or donation of caves to the organization. Recently, the TCMA has initiated efforts to directly purchase caves; a notable example being the ac-

quisition of Deep Cave and Punkin Cave (Edwards County) in 2004.

In 1990, the TCMA acquired Whirlpool Cave (Travis County) and 4.25 acres of adjoining land, becoming the first Texas caving organization to own a cave. In 1992, TCMA joined with the Alamo Group of the Sierra Club, the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Coalition, the Helotes Creek Association, and the Texas Speleological Association to petition the US Fish and Wildlife Service to add nine species of karst invertebrates known only from caves in the northern and northwest parts of

Bexar county to the List of Threatened and Endangered Wildlife. In December 2000 the Fish and Wildlife Service designated the nine species as endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

In 1993, there was an internal disagreement concerning the management, finances, and

general direction of TCMA with the result that two of its members, Walsh and Warton, left the organization and formed the Texas Cave Conservancy.

The organization has produced a fairly regular newsletter variously known as the TCMA Conservationist (1990), the TCMA Activities Newsletter (1990-1999), the Capital Caver (1993-1996), and the TCMA Passages (2000-present).

TCMA currently manages or owns a number of important Texas caves including: Amazing Maze Cave (Pecos County), O-9 Well (Crockett County), Robber Baron Cave (Bexar County), Punkin Cave (Edwards County), Deep Cave (Edwards County), Ezell's Cave (Hays County), Whirlpool Cave (Travis County), and others.



The Texas Cave Management Association Patch

# TCMA Founder, Mike Walsh

By Aimee Beveridge

## INTERVIEW

*As we celebrate our 20 year anniversary, it seemed natural to look all the way back to the founding of the TCMA. We are pleased to include in this issue an interview with the man who started it all, Mr. Mike Walsh.*

**AB:** Mike, I wasn't around in 1986 when TCMA was first chartered as a non-profit cave conservancy, I wonder if you could give me an idea of what started it all, including the folks who were involved?

**MW:** In 1985, along with Robert Green, I was talking with Mike Warton about the future of cave protection in Texas. Mike Warton had started the discussion when he pointed out that the City of Austin was working on a Watershed Ordinance (1986) that might require caves to be set aside. In addition, Bill Elliott and James Reddell were working to get several cave related invertebrate species listed as endangered species. (1990). We felt it was better to have caves managed by cavers rather than a land management company.

Is there anyone in particular that was very active in the beginning that is no longer involved? How did you get the name for the organization?

Robert Green and John Spence. While on the way

to the 1985 NSS Convention in Kentucky I was discussing starting a cave conservancy with Robert Green and John Spence. I suggested the name "Texas Cave Management Society", Robert said: "No, the Texas Cave Management Association". I looked up from the discussion and saw the Casey Jones Museum just off IH 40 in Jackson, Tennessee. That is where the TCMA was born June 22, 1985.

What was the first cave preserve owned or managed by TCMA?

Of course, Whirlpool Cave was the first cave managed by the TCMA. Mike Grimm had excellent relations with the owner of Whirlpool Cave for a number of years. The owner stated that he would donate the cave to someone if they paid the \$1200 in back taxes. Mike asked me to assist in the negotiations to acquire the cave for the TCMA. We raised the money for the taxes through a raffle and the rest is history. Mike Grimm was one of the early TCMA supporters.



Mike Walsh, President of the Texas Cave Conservancy and founder of the TCMA.

Did the TCMA view caves containing endangered species as potential targets or were there specific caves of interest?

We made two important trips to check out endangered species caves for protection. One was Ezell's Cave in San Marcos with Jon Credit. The other was Beck Ranch Cave in Round Rock with Bill Elliott. Both are now under Texas caver manage-

ment. Most cavers have no idea how much work and how many years of effort go into such arrangements.

Were there any caves that we almost got but somehow lost?

Texas cavers lost Blowing Sink Cave in Austin when cavers failed to honor the owners request to stay off the site for three months. Spring Creek Cave near Boerne was set aside as a cave preserve and then sold out from under us. We were not able to raise \$250,000 for Harrison Cave near Sonora and it was sold to another buyer. Failure is also an important part of the effort.

Do you think the goals of cave conservation have shifted through the years or has there been consistency in the mission of the associations?

Cavers have always been important in my involvement in cave conservation. The idea of completely closing visitation to caves in order to protect them seems harsh. Caves must be monitored and there must always have room for the average caver to assist. Unless we include the average caver where possible, the cavers will view cave conservancies as obstacles instead of a benefit to those who care about caves.

I understand that there was some disagreement leading to some members departures, and you starting the Texas Cave Conservancy (TCC). Would you like to comment on this?

We (a few other folks and myself who formed TCC) felt that a non-profit, non-member organization with a four- person board could function as an efficient business. Our business is public education and the protection of caves. Today both organizations hold cave management contracts where money is obtained for land management services.

It has been a number of years since you left the TCMA. Today the two cave conservancies in Texas have good relations. What sets the TCC apart from the TCMA?

Most of the TCC professional cave management work is conducted "in house" rather than through the use of contractors. I am currently the only employee to oversee seventy cave preserves and the 134 caves under contract. In addition, we are purchasing the TCC headquarters. It is a valuable tool for meetings, parties and for obtaining grants.

This year the TCC has started an active outreach relationship with cave conservancies around the country. Toward that end, the TCC is attempting to gather information on all of the areas around the country where development is having a significant impact on caves. This network will allow us to pass on information about what is occurring here in Texas.

We congratulate the Texas Cave Conservancy on being the recipient of the prestigious 2006 NSS Conservation Group Award. Did the nomination catch you by surprise?

It only took twenty years to bring this award to Texas. Many hours of work by both the TCMA Members & the TCC Associates were required to be in a position to be considered for the honor. Both the TCC and the TCMA are showing other cave conservancies what can be done in the 21st Century. No, it was not a surprise, just a long deserved award for the major efforts made by those Texas cavers that care deeply about caves.

Tell us about TCC's education and outreach activities, and the story behind Ricky and Rebecca Rhadine?

A long- term goal is to make the cave related endangered species as popular as the bats are here in the Austin area. Ricky & Rebecca Rhadine were created as the cartoon brother and sister beetles that live in Mushroom Cave. On Cave Day, a caver lowers a microphone into the cave where the voices of Bill & Jeanette Larson tell the beetle's story. "We would invite you into the cave but you are so large you might step on us. People live their lives on 24 hour clocks, we are on a ride that never stops....." For a full copy of the text check out our website.

See MIKE WALSH

➡ p. 7

## TCMA Through the Years

*By Jay Jorden & George Veni*

For almost 20 years, the Texas Cave Management Association has been saving caves the old-fashioned way—by buying them. It's the oldest and largest organization of its kind in the state.

Through its history, the nonprofit corporation has been active in conservation, management, education and mobilization efforts for preserving underground resources. TCMA owns Lost Oasis and Whirlpool caves in Travis County and Robber Baron and Rolling Oaks caves in Bexar County, with several other acquisitions pending.

Through TCMA's efforts at properties that it either owns or manages, thousands of school children and others have been exposed to caves in their natural state to teach conservation and safety. The Whirlpool Cave Preserve has been used by the City of Austin, the University of Texas Speleological Society and other groups on a regular basis for beginner trips.

In Southwest Texas, 0-9 Water Well and Amazing Maze Cave were made available for regular caving trips through a management agreement with the University of Texas System.

San Antonio conservation activities have included work at Robber Baron Cave, which was closed to visitation in 2001 over safety and conservation concerns. Volunteers from TCMA and the NSS' Bexar Grotto have worked to rebuild the entrance and restore the cave's natural air flow.

Through TCMA's work in Central Texas, it has become a major player in the environmental and conservation community, helping to implement tougher regulations against groundwater pollution in Travis County, working with land developers and others to set aside adequate recharge zones to protect caves and aquifers, urging more stringent safeguards in Bexar County and working with local, state and federal agencies in furtherance of these and related goals.

Over the years, TCMA has received a number of accolades, including the Environmental Education Award from the Barton Springs-Edwards Aquifer Conservation District.

In 1986, TCMA was chartered as a nonprofit

Texas corporation for: "The preservation for posterity of the caves and caverns of Texas and their mineral, biological, archaeological and aesthetic contents; to promote the conservation and study of caves within the state of Texas; to promote and support any scientific and educational programs on caves in Texas the Board of Directors shall from time to time authorize; to acquire ... real and personal property by lease, ownership or other means ... . All of the activities are to be carried out solely for conservation, scientific and educational purposes and not for profit."

Other TCMA cave management projects have included work at preserves from subdivision set-asides in Cedar Park. Its volunteers work with landowners and developers to manage the non-renewable resources: protecting them for future generations, helping develop access policies and educating the public.

Perhaps one of TCMA's greatest challenges has involved financial aspects, since money is always in too short a supply for organizations that seek to purchase property for preservation. However, chartering as a Texas nonprofit corporation and attainment of 501(c)3 status through the Internal Revenue Service has enabled the organization to seek charitable contributions and grants to help fund its work. Those challenges continue to date, but TCMA has been slowly growing both through its beneficial structure and because of hard-working volunteers who have sustained its endeavors.

In 1992, the TCMA, TSA and several other groups including the Alamo Group of the Sierra Club, the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Coalition and the Helotes Creek Association petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to add nine species of karst invertebrates to the list of threatened and endangered wildlife. The nine species of invertebrates are known only from caves in the northern and northwest parts of Bexar County. The USFWS in December 2000 designated the nine species as endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

Invertebrates are animals such as butterflies, beetles, grasshoppers and spiders that lack internal

skeletons or backbones. The nine Bexar County species listed as endangered include three beetles, five spiders and one harvestman, a relative of the common household daddy-longlegs. Although small, ranging from less than 2 millimeters to 9 millimeters long, and generally overlooked because they spend their entire lives underground, these invertebrates are biologically and ecologically unique.

TCMA's work with government agencies has established a solid reputation for consistency and dedication to conservation causes. The organization in the late 1980s assisted in development of a Texas cave protection bill, which was later passed by the state Legislature. The cave conservation organization has developed a working relationship with The Nature Conservancy, through which it has developed a number of projects. Also, TCMA has developed a "partners" relationship with USFWS to protect the endangered species at Robber Baron Cave. What began as a cave gate modification and grounds improvement project has turned into a major undertaking because the old gate and its foundation proved to need replacement.

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➡ **MIKE WALSH** (from p. 5)

Some folks say that the Endangered Species Act is at risk depending on the political winds of change. What is your take on protection of caves with endangered species?

One of the reasons that the TCC spends so much time and effort in developing trails, educational signs, etc., in the cave preserves is to emphasize the importance of and to encourage the long term protection of these caves. With greater public involvement, the call for these sites to be protected will be driven with or without the Endangered Species Act. Thirty years from now, perhaps a woman taking her daughter to one of the preserves will tell how her grandmother once took her there on a similar walk. Long-term protection encouraged rather than dictated by political will is vitally important in the effort to preserve our cave and karst resources.

What do you see as the future of cave conservation groups in Texas?

There are presently a number of unique models for conservancies. Someday, I see a conservancy in Texas that may be formed to protect only two or

The cave conservancy, through its longstanding endeavors, has effectively become the conservation component of organized Texas speleology. The TSA has at times maintained a Conservation Committee, but its efforts are augmented by TCMA. The conservancy has cooperated with TSA and other caving groups in hosting and assisting many cave-related events over the years, including conventions and board of governors' meetings. In 1991, more than 120 cavers from across the state participated in the TSA winter BOG meeting at Whirlpool Cave. The January meeting was designed to acquaint cavers with the TCMA's Whirlpool preserve. Electricity and water were provided from a nearby residence in the Whirlpool Cave Neighborhood Association. Trash pickup, cleanup and other work was performed by cavers over the weekend. TCMA board member Carl Ponebshek and other volunteers cooked a large spaghetti feed for the group and Peter Strickland of Austin even provided a hot tub on site. A number of trips were made to other South Austin caves, including Maple Run and Midnight.

three caves. I see more Texas cavers supporting both of the two existing conservancies the TCC and the TCMA, rather than choosing to support only one. In the June 1990 Texas Caver, I asked, "How many caves will be owned or managed by Texas cavers when the year 2000 is reached? While it is not possible to say, 20, 30 or more is possible. It will not happen without caver support". Let us work together to make the number of caves owned or managed 300 or more by 2016.

Is there anything that we may have missed in this interview?

There have been hundreds of Texas cavers that helped build the two organizations, the Texas Cave Management Association and the Texas Cave Conservancy. One of the many good guys is Mike Warton. Neither of the organizations would exist without Mike Warton. Often, behind the scenes he made things come together. Until this interview most Texas cavers did not know about Mike Warton's significant support of both organizations. From all the Texas cavers that care about caves, thanks for being there. A silver dollar and a handshake, Mike.

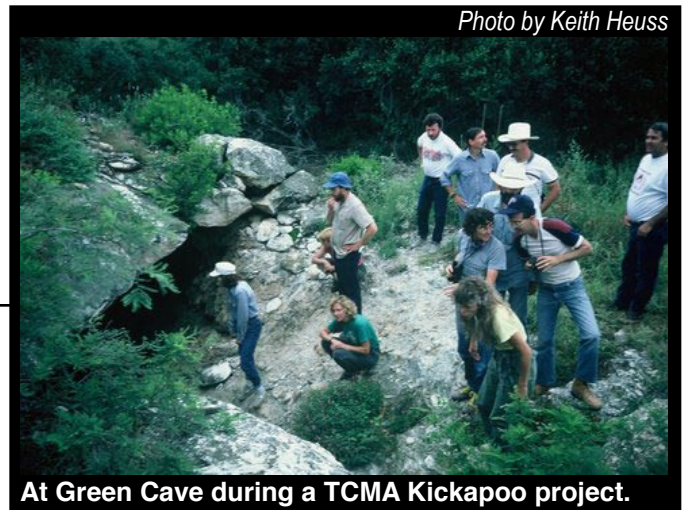
# TIMELINE OF TCMA HISTORY

1985

- May 5, 1985 was the first meeting at Mike Warton's house in Austin, Texas concerning a new cave management organization that became the TCMA - *Robert Green, Mike Walsh, Mike Warton*

1986

- On April 7, 1986, the Texas Cave Management Association was created in Austin, Texas. - *Robert Green, Mike Grimm, Mike Walsh, Mike Warton*
- The TCMA worked with Mike Herring of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department to identify some of the best caves in Texas to acquire. Kickapoo Cave, Green Cave, Fawcett's Cave and the Devil's Sinkhole were purchased. - *Mike Walsh*
- The TCMA was incorporated with the Secretary of the State of Texas. - *Robert Green, Mike Walsh, Mike Warton, Initial Directors*
- On July 19, 1986 the Regional Conference on Caves and Land Development was hosted by the TCMA and the City of Austin. - *Lea Stone, Mike Walsh*
- Mike Warton and the TCMA worked with the City of Austin to establish the Goat Cave Preserve. Mike designed a high quality cave preserve map for the project. - *Mike Warton*
- A Texas cave protection bill was drafted by members of the TCMA. - *Carolyn Biegert, Linda Palit, Mike Walsh, George Veni*
- The TCMA conducted a cave conservation poll at ORT. The results of this valuable tool were printed in the August 1986 issue of the Texas Caver.
- On December 12, 2007 a Richmond Area Speleological Society grant of \$2500 for a Texas bat publication was received. - *Mike Walsh*
- Built a 2- by 4-meter mobile cave for educational use
- Signed memorandum of understanding with American Cave Conservation Association
- Organized exhibit for Edwards Aquifer conference



1987

- The TCMA became an NSS Conservancy in April 1987.
- On February 12, 2007 the TCMA presented testimony to the Texas Water Commission hearing in Hondo, Texas concerning caves and water protection. - *Mike Walsh*
- A contract was signed by the TCMA with the University of Texas to manage O- 9 Well. - *Mike Warton*
- The TCMA, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department – Cave Task Force was created. - *Mike Walsh, TCMA coordinator*
- October 16,18, the Kickapoo Caverns State Park Project finds six new caves in the park. - *TCMA, TSA*
- Received \$350 grant to develop publication on bats and urbanization of karst



1988

- The Texas Almanac listed the TCMA as a cave information source. - *Bill Elliott*
- The TCMA acquired the non, profit IRS 501 ( c ) (3) status. - *Jay Jorden, Mike Walsh*

- TCMA member Mike Warton starts the Goat Cave gate installation on March 15, 1988. - *Mike Warton*
- Co-organized TSA project to clean-up Longhorn Cavern

1989

- The TCMA developed and published, A Proposed Cave Management Plan for the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department. - *Mike Walsh –Editor & Publisher*
- April 1, 2, TCMA & TSA workers removed tons of trash from the caves and sinkholes during the Longhorn State Park Project. - *Doug Allen (TSA), Mike Walsh (TCMA) project directors*
- Whirlpool Cave came under TCMA management. The gate was installed on May 22, 1989. - *Mike Grimm*
- October 3, 7, 1989 the TCMA hosted the 1989 National Cave Management Symposium in New Braunfels, Texas. Braunfels, Texas. - *Mike Walsh Program Chairman, Andy Grubbs, Carl Ponebshek, Bill Rupley*
- The TCMA made a grant of \$300 for the Wurzbach Bat Cave gate material.
- On September 29, 1989, the TCMA & the TSA received a Certificate of Volunteer Service from Governor William Clements.
- On June 15, 1989, the Texas Sportsman's Law was signed by the Governor, William Clements with "cave exploration" added. - *Doug Allen, Carolyn Biegert, Linda Palit, George Veni*

- Whirlpool Cave & 4.5 acres was transferred to the TCMA by Col. Beckett following the payment of \$1200 in back taxes. The tax value of the land was \$46,000. With this, the TCMA became the first Texas caving organization to own a cave. - *Mike Grimm & Mike Walsh*

1990

- July 27, 29, 1990 the Whirlpool Cave Preserve was created. - *TCMA, TSA Membership*
- On October 13, 1990 the Texas Cave Raffle raised over \$1800 to pay the back taxes to acquire Whirlpool Cave. - *TCMA, TSA, OTR*
- The TCMA developed & published, "Devil's Sinkhole State Natural Area & Kickapoo Caverns State Park". - *Mike Walsh, Editor & Publisher*
- The TCMA received the 1990 Barton Springs Aquifer District Conservation Award.
- Negotiated with Texas Highway Department for drainage improvements near Whirlpool Cave, an aquifer recharge zone
- Produced newsletter, "TCMA Conservationist," which was renamed "TCMA Activities Newsletter" by the second issue.



Photo by Keith Heuss

Starting up TCMA's first Preserve: Whirlpool

- On January 27, 1991 the TSA Winter Business Meeting was held at the TCMA owned Whirlpool Cave. Over 100 cavers attended. This is the first Texas meeting to be held at a cave owned by Texas cavers.

1991

- A contract was signed with the University of Texas to manage Amazing Maze Cave. The cave has more than 30,000 feet of passage. A wine and cheese party was held in the cave to celebrate. - *Mike Warton*
- A \$1000 grant was given to the TCMA by the Wray Trust of Houston to develop the Whirlpool Cave Preserve. - *Jay Jorden & Mike Walsh*
- The TCMA assisted James Loftin in the gating of Wurzbach Bat Cave, San Antonio, Texas. This cave was acquired by the De Luna family to protect the bats. - *L.J. Graves, Charlie Savvas, Mike Walsh, Mike Warton*



Photo by Keith Heuss

TSA Winter Meeting held at Whirlpool Preserve.

- The TCMA signed a petition in San Antonio for nine cave species to be listed as U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service endangered species.

1992

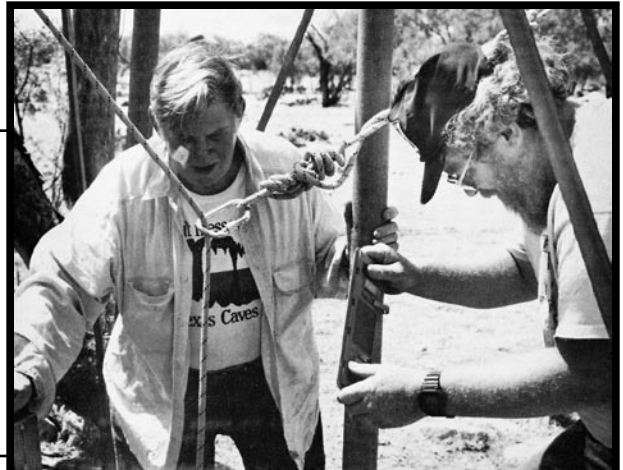
- TCMA members located and secured the site for the 1994 NSS Convention, at Bracketville, Texas. - *Carl Ponebshek, Mike Walsh*
- Simon & Associates opened discussion on management of five endangered species caves. Marigold was the largest of the five caves. - *Mike Walsh, Mike Warton*
- The Edwards Underground Water District opened discussion on management of three San Antonio caves. - *Carl Ponebshek & Mike Walsh*
- The TCMA developed & published, 1989 National Cave Management Symposium Proceedings. - *Jay Jorden, Robert Obele*
- The TCMA testified before the City of Austin Council concerning the value of caves. - *Mike Walsh*
- The City of Austin requested an agreement to manage and monitor city owned caves. - *Doug Allen, L.J.Graves, Mike Walsh, Mike Warton*
- The TCMA Board of Directors voted to attempt to secure Lost Oasis Cave, Travis County. - *Jay Jorden, Carl Ponebshek, Mike Walsh*
- Medical and liability insurance first purchased

1993

- Lost Oasis Cave and 3.5 acres was donated to the TCMA. The land value is listed as \$56,000. - *Jay Jorden, Mike Walsh*
- The Lost Oasis Cave Preserve was created.
- Simon & Associates signed a contract for the TCMA to manage five endangered species caves for \$1200 per year (Marigold, Pebblebrook, and Forest Trail - Buttercup Creek area in Cedar Park). Mike Warton was appointed the cave manager. - *L.J. Graves, Carl Ponebshek, Mike Walsh, Mike Warton*
- Printed proceedings of 1989 National Cave Management Symposium
- Conducted clean-up and restoration at Marigold Cave
- Accounting and related irregularities result in several administrative changes and bylaws revisions.
- Mike Walsh resigns as director and as a member.

1994

- TCMA members secured access to some of the best caves in the Bracketville area for the 1994 National Speleological Society Convention, held in Bracketville, Texas. This included Palace Cave, Turkey Pen Cave and Webb Cave at Alamo Village, Texas.
- Held NSS honorarium, awarded to the Texas Convention Committee, in trust for the TSA until a fund could be established using the stipend as seed money
- Board meeting and workday held at O-9 Well



Rigging the pit at a TMCA Meeting at O-9 Well

1995

- More clean-up and maintenance trips to Marigold Cave
- Robber Baron Cave bequeathed to TCMA
- Received \$750 grant from Richmond Area Speleological Society to purchase and distribute bat posters

1996

- Web site is established

1997

- Begin negotiations that led to creation of the Village of Western Oaks Karst Preserve

1998

- Cleanups and other trips were organized to Robber Baron
- Austin area TCMA members coordinated trips to Whirlpool

1999

- Last issue of TCMA Activities Newsletter.



Activities Newsletter

- 2000**
- "TCMA Passages" replaces TCMA Activities Newsletter
  - Developed MOU with City of Austin to investigate caves on watershed lands
  - Received "Environmental Education Award" from Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District.
  - Agreement with military officials at Camp Bullis to manage 23 caves with endangered species.

- 2001**
- USFWS grant for Robber Baron Cave to improve conditions for endangered species; first USFWS Partners Program grant for a cave
  - Robber Baron bunker gate found unstable; cave closed for safety
  - Received NSS grant of karst groundwater model
  - Evaluates karst potential of Medina Co. property under consideration for purchase by Nature Conservancy

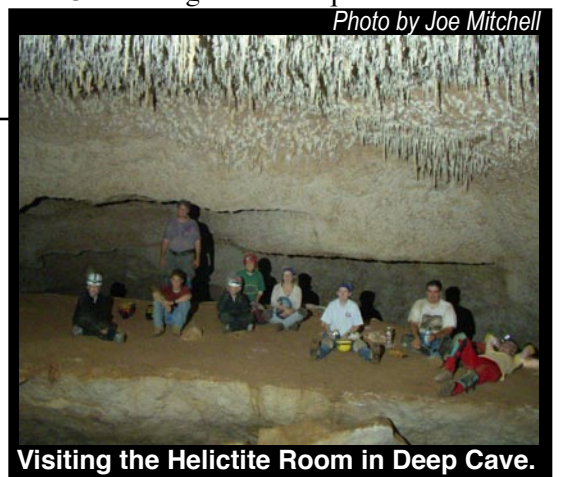
- 2002**
- Co-sponsors opening of Village of Western Oaks Karst Preserve
  - Co-sponsors national bat conference field trip with BCI
  - Evaluates karst potential of Bexar and Comal County properties under consideration for purchase and protection by The Nature Conservancy

- 2003**
- Complete replacement of the Robber Baron gate and excavation of sinkhole begins with heavy machinery
  - Acquires three small caves in Bexar County, one with endangered species, from the U.S. Marshal's Service
  - Board of Directors size increased from 9 to 10.
  - TCMA receives proceeds from the first "Texas Women, Texas Caves" calendar.



- 2004**
- Memorandum of understanding with University of Texas System for management of UT lands caves under renegotiation.
  - Godwin Ranch property in Georgetown containing Thor Cave comes under TCMA management.
  - Ezell's Cave in San Marcos acquired from the Nature Conservancy. This cave has 43 known species and descends to the Edwards Aquifer.
  - Major ongoing land acquisition fundraising campaign begins to pay for cave purchases.
  - Two major west Texas caves, Deep and Punkin, purchased. This is TCMA's largest land acquisition to date at 225 acres for a price of \$128k.
  - New gate completed on Robber Baron - cave reopened, but much work remains.

- 2005**
- Extensive development work proceeds at Deep and Punkin Preserve to improve the cabin, mark boundaries clean up the property, and build trails.
  - A new survey project begins at Deep Cave.
  - Co-sponsored the NSS Board of Governor's meeting in San Antonio
  - The Whirlpool Cave Preserve has a sewer line put through it and the USGS installs a monitoring well. The cave is TCMA's most heavily visited.
  - Board of Directors size increased from 10 to 11.



- 2006**
- Agreement reached with the University of Texas to manage 2.1 million acres of land in west Texas including O-9 Well and Amazing Maze.
  - LIDAR 3D mapping project of Devil's Sinkhole and other caves to be managed by TCMA in agreement with TPWD and TBEG.
  - TCMA celebrates 20th anniversary at TCR.

## Mike Warton: A TCMA Pioneer

*We welcome the opportunity for this 20th anniversary issue to include this interview with Mike Warton, one of TCMA's first members.*

In a previous interview with Mike Walsh he stated, there would be no TCMA without Mike Warton. Would you tell us how you got involved with the TCMA?

There were three primary factors that promoted my interests in cave conservation and desire for effective management. I had been exploring Central Texas caves since mid-1960's, and saw the destruction of many of them as the result of mindless development practices. I met James Reddell in 1965, who greatly influenced me on the uniqueness of cave biology.

In 1972, as a concerned caver, I met with the University of Texas Land Systems and walked away with a site management agreement for the O-9 Well, Crocket County. This led to the construction of my first cave gate and toward working on the NSS Cave Gating Handbook. In 1985, the City of Austin was working on a watershed ordinance. I saw an opportunity for cave management of large areas. I felt that the organized Texas caving could play a significant role in cave management. Since cave management had been limited up to that point, I felt it was time to get something started.

Who were some of the other cavers that started the TCMA?

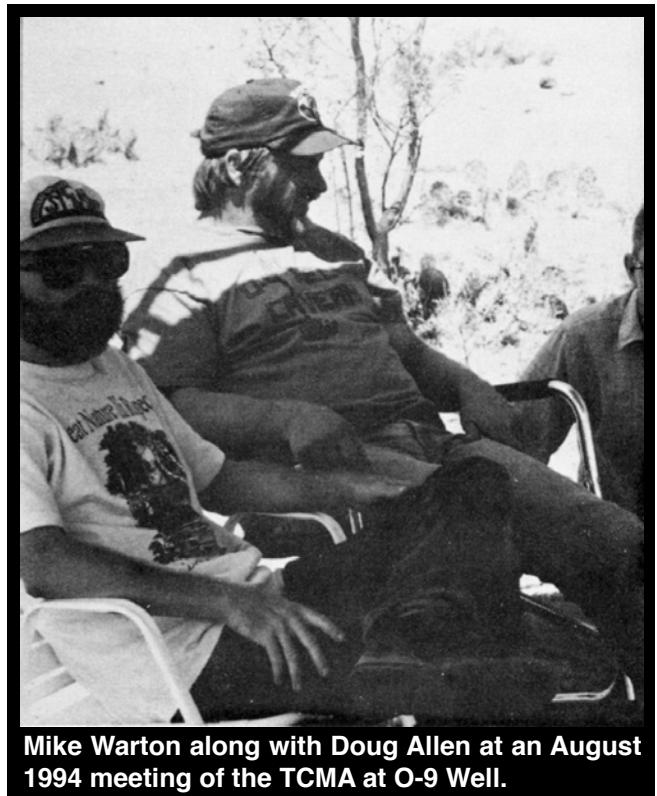
The early lifetime members to join the TCMA were: Runi Burnett, Pat Copeland, George Crosby, Patricia Dougherty, Bill Elliott, Butch Fralia, Rod Goke, Mike Grimm, James Jasek, Jay Jorden, John Kibler, Dave McAdoo Jim McLane, Carl Ponebshak, Ron Ralph, Bill Russell, Mike Walsh, and Mike Warton.

Could you tell us how the TCMA acquired management of O-9 Well and Amazing Maze?

### INTERVIEW

O-9 Well was one of my favorite caves and most who have been there understand why I feel that way. Even with its remote location, I felt early on that it would always be popular with cavers and that it would need to be gated. It was my hope the gating of the cave would prevent what ultimately happened there. For many years I managed the cave on my own but it became more difficult after leaving the area. I felt that management would be best handled through the TCMA with the local group, the Permian Basin Speleological Society as the on site cave managers.

Amazing Maze Cave is also owned by the UT land management people. When I offered to survey the cave they took me up on the offer. Following the many-many survey trips, they were pleased with the final map. They contacted me to gate the cave and secure the road cut entrances. This led to another situation where the TCMA and the PBSS could assist through cave management.



**Mike Warton along with Doug Allen at an August 1994 meeting of the TCMA at O-9 Well.**

What do you view as some of the early setbacks for the TCMA?

In 1988 George Veni and I worked on the very first U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service karst invertebrate species site study project in central Texas. As a result, we both started our own environmental consulting business. It took a good deal of communication to convince the average Texas caver that we were one of the “good guys”. The slow TCMA membership growth was a result of the time necessary to show cavers that the caver business world and the caving community could work to achieve a cave management situation of value to the Texas caving community.

Where did the initial funding to start and run the TCMA come from?

Funding was tough in the beginning but there was a good core group that donated \$100 each to start the organization. Mike Walsh’s abilities to orchestrate fund raising activities were very instrumental in launching the organization. I couldn’t count all of the raffles, product sales, feeds, outings, daytrips, etc. that brought in a slow but steady flow of money for the organization. It was like raising a child, you had to keep feeding it.

How has the TCMA changed from the early days to what it is today?

The Texas caving community can be proud of both cave management organizations since each has grown through support of the core of the caving community. There have been periods of high and low activity, now however, both organizations have shown a number of accomplishments for their labor. The competition to save caves is a healthy one since both organizations can assist one another on important issues. I am honored to have been a founding member of both of the organizations.

We heard tale of a “Miracle of the Month” contest that you had with Mike Walsh prior to his leaving the TCMA?

Around 1991 we were being called the “Blues Brothers” by some cavers. Walsh was in the Jim Belushi role. I was, of course, represented the more attractive Dan Aykroyd. Each week we would contact each other discuss a new contract or other accomplishment that we obtained for the TCMA. We pounded the pavement to build the organization. Cavers began to think of Walsh and I as the “Attaché Cavers” since we often pulled piles of paper out to explain the new “miracle”. It ultimately paid off and there were never any regrets.

What would like to see in the future for the TCMA?

I would like to see the TCMA work to strengthen their relationship with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in the San Antonio area. There are a number of opportunities for the TCMA in San Antonio. I would like to see the TCMA continue to acquire good recreational caves. The acquisition of Deep and Punkin Caves at Carta Valley was and will remain a great move for the organization maintaining the support of the Texas cavers.

Do you have any other comments for this 20th anniversary TCMA interview?

I am honored to have had the opportunity to make a significant role in the establishment of the two cave conservancies in Texas. Since I have had a successful career working around caves, it is rewarding to know that I have been able to give back to karst more than I have taken through cave protection and preservation.

### **TCMA has a new address!**

**Texas Cave Management Association  
P.O. Box 7427  
Austin, Texas, 78713**

**You can still find us at our website:  
[www.tcmacaves.org](http://www.tcmacaves.org)**

# THE PRESERVES OF TCMA

## Whirlpool Preserve

*Location:* South side of Austin

*Year acquired:* 1989

*Property size:* 4.4 acres

*Caves:* Whirlpool Cave

*Significance:* Popular cave with largest room in Travis County.

*Description:* Whirlpool cave is located in a populated residential neighborhood near an expressway. The cave is an occasional floodwater route and is generally Y-shaped with over 400 m of total passage. It has long been a great cave for cavers and was the first Preserve owned by the TCMA. The cave is the most heavily visited of TCMA's caves and is especially suited for new cavers, children, or as a fun, easy caving trip.

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## Robber Baron Preserve

*Location:* Near-north side of San Antonio

*Year acquired:* 1995

*Property size:* 0.37 acre lot

*Caves:* Robber Baron Cave

*Significance:* Longest cave in Bexar County; Extensive maze cave; Two endangered species.

*Description:* Robber Baron Preserve is located in a densely populated residential neighborhood along a major street. The cave has a long history and was once a commercial cave. It is heavily visited and is suitable for a wide range of abilities including new cavers and children. The cave is an extensive maze of more than 1.3 km of passages that is entered from the bottom of deep surface sinkhole. The property is currently undergoing a major renovation supported largely through volunteer efforts and grants to restore the sinkhole and surface while making the property more attractive.

---

## Godwin Ranch

*Location:* Northwest edge of Georgetown

*Year acquired:* 2003

*Property size:* 105 acres

*Caves:* Thor Cave, Red Crevice Cave

*Significance:* Endangered species.

*Description:* Located at the fringe of the Georgetown urban area, this property is primarily for protection of endangered species found in Thor Cave. Thor Cave is moderately small cave while Red Crevice is very small. Visitation is infrequent.

## Lost Oasis Preserve

*Location:* South side of Austin

*Year acquired:* 1993

*Property size:* 3.6 acres

*Caves:* Lost Oasis Cave

*Significance:* Endangered species

*Description:* Located in a residential neighborhood, Lost Oasis Cave is less than 20 m long and consists of a shallow room with numerous inactive formations. Airflow from two small openings indicates that digging might lead to more cave. The cave is managed as a biological preserve as it has a rich biology, including several species of concern, that need protection under the Balconies Conservation Plan. Visitation is infrequent.

---

## Rolling Oaks Preserve

*Location:* Far west side of San Antonio

*Year acquired:* 2003

*Property size:* 5.0 acres

*Caves:* Obvious Little Cave, World Newt Cave, Chimney Cricket Cave, Niche Cave

*Significance:* Endangered species.

*Description:* This preserve is in a low density residential neighborhood outside of the city. All the caves on the property are very small and one is closed due to trash fill in its entrance. The property was acquired from the US Marshals Service who had seized the property. Visitation is rare.

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## Ezell's Preserve

*Location:* South side of San Marcos

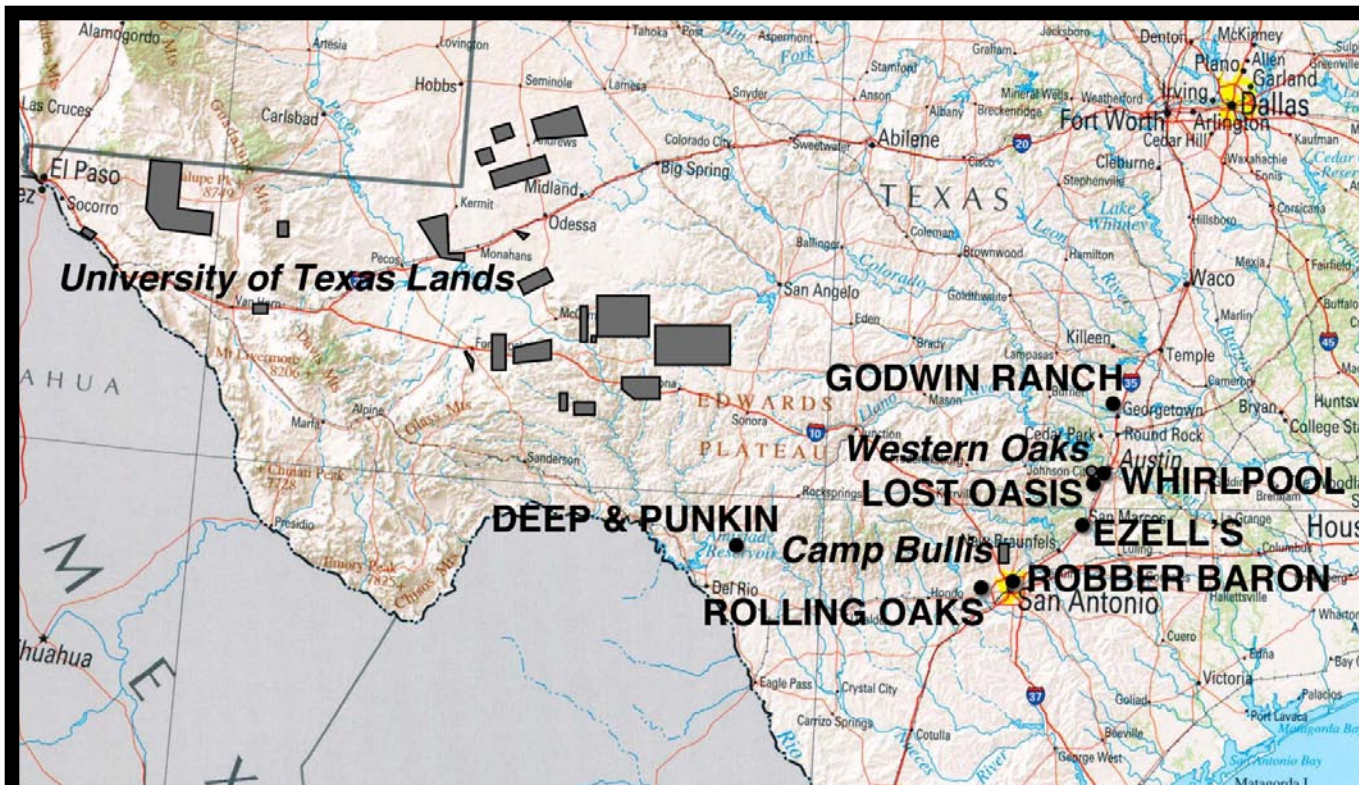
*Year acquired:* 2004

*Property size:* 2 acres

*Caves:* Ezell's Cave

*Significance:* Diverse and extensive community of cave fauna; Home to Texas Blind Salamander; Direct access to the Edwards Aquifer; National Natural Landmark.

*Description:* Ezell's Cave is located in a residential neighborhood. The cave is not extensive with only 80 m of un-submerged Passage, but contains an important and delicate ecosystem of nearly 100 rare and endangered subterranean species. With its direct access to the aquifer, the cave is an important scientific resource. Visitation to the cave is kept restricted to protect it.



Lands owned or managed by TCMA. Managed lands are shown in gray, while Preserves owned by TCMA are shown as black dots.

### Deep and Punkin Preserve

*Location:* Western Edwards County

*Year acquired:* 2004

*Property size:* 225 acres

*Caves:* Deep Cave, Punkin Cave

*Significance:* Two major, classic Texas caves; Deep Cave highly decorated; Large bat population in Punkin Cave; H<sub>2</sub>S origin probable.

*Description:* Deep and Punkin are located in a remote area of west-central Texas in the Carta Valley amid large ranches. Both caves are interesting complex, multi-level caves. Deep Cave is quite extensive with over 2.5 km surveyed and it continues to reveal major new passage. The cave contains vertical sections and highly decorated sections including the Forest of Columns and Helictite Room. Punkin Cave has a 14 m free-drop pit entrance into a large bat chamber that leads to more than 400 m of mapped cave. Many leads remain to be explored. The property also contains a cabin that sleeps 10 or more. This property is extensively visited and very popular. Since acquisition, there have been numerous work projects to improve the property, renovate the cabin, and continue exploration and survey of the caves.

### AREAS MANAGED BY TCMA

#### Village of Western Oaks Karst Preserve

*Location:* South side of Austin

*Managed since:* 2002

*Owner:* City of Austin

*Property size:* 18 acres

*Caves:* Get Down Cave, Equinox Cave, Live Oak Cave, Millennium Cave, Survey Line Cave

*TCMA is moving toward ownership of this property in the near future.*

#### Camp Bullis

*Location:* Far-north side of San Antonio

*Managed since:* 2000

*Owner:* US Army

*Property size:* 12,000 acres

*Major caves:* Headquarters Cave, Bullis Hole, Bullis Bat Cave

#### University of Texas Lands

*Location:* Multiple areas in West Texas

*Managed since:* 2005

*Owner:* University of Texas

*Property size:* 2.1 million acres

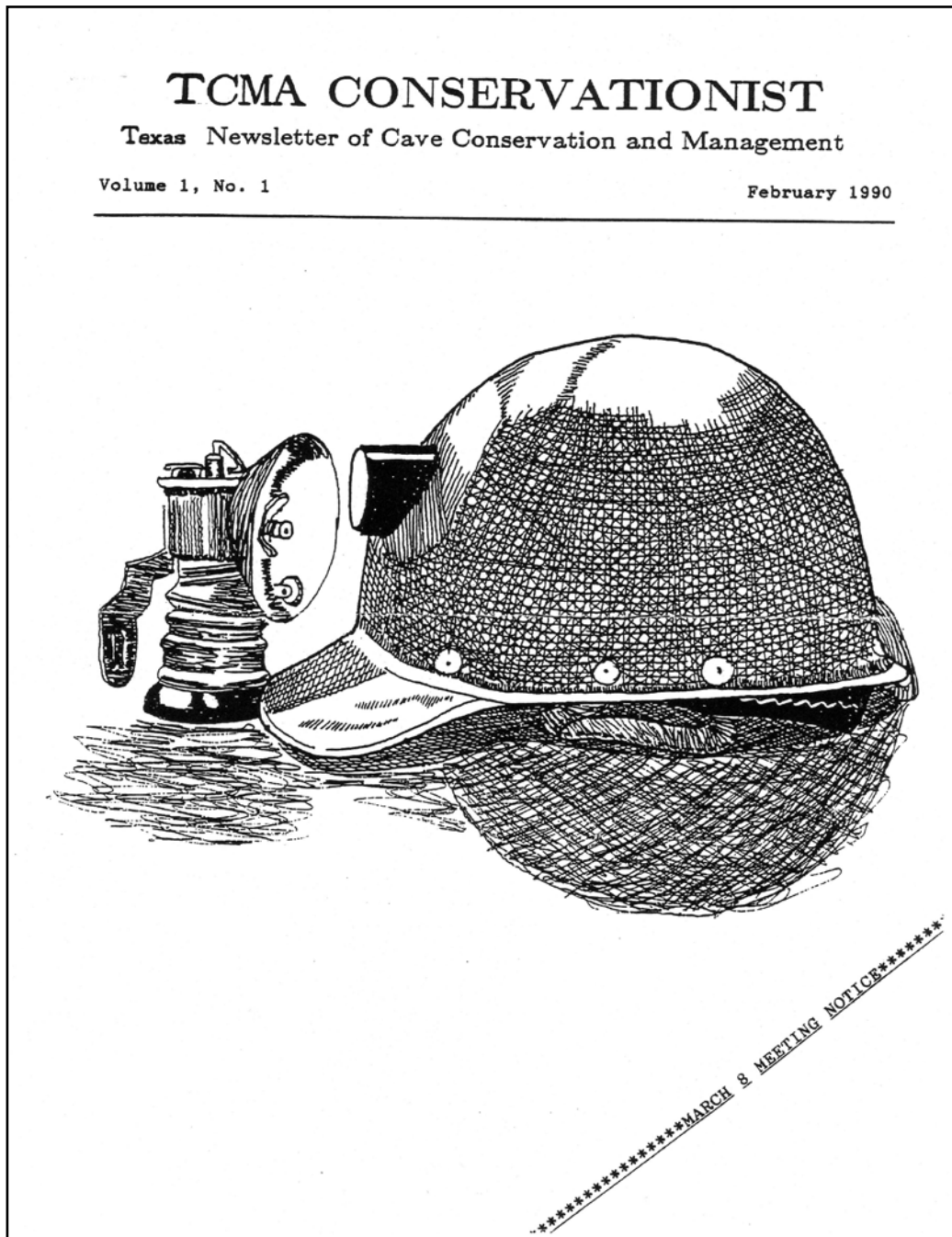
*Major caves:* O-9 Well, Amazing Maze

# Before the Passages: The TCMA Conservationist

The *TCMA Passages* is only the latest incarnation of publication put out by the TCMA. For many years from 1990 until 1999, the regular publication was the *TCMA Activities Newsletter*. The newsletter was typically produced a couple of times a year and ranged over the years from a single sheet of paper to a full fledged glossy magazine. However, before the *Activities Newsletter* was the very first

## SPECIAL FEATURE

TCMA publication: the *TCMA Conservationist*. This was only produced for a single issue before turning into the *Activities Newsletter*. Here is presented a reprint of selected portions of Vol. 1 No. 1 of the *Conservationist*.



February 1990 TCMA Conservationist Page 2

The Conservationist is the official publication of Texas Cave Management Association, a Conservancy of the National Speleological Society. Distribution is free to TCMA members. Associate membership costs \$10 annually. Additional complimentary copies are distributed on a temporary basis at the Editor's discretion to cave owners, NSS members and internal organizations, and others involved in cave conservation projects.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Jay Jorden, 1518 Devon Circle, Dallas, TX 75217-1205.

SUBMISSIONS: Articles and other correspondence should be sent to the Editor.

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Officers

Mike Walsh Executive Director  
 Claire Snider Secretary-Treasurer  
 Joe Ivy Board Chairman  
 Doug Allen Directors  
 Keith Heuss  
 Joe Ivy  
 Jay Jorden  
 Carl Ponebshek  
 Jack Ralph  
 Mike Walsh

The following are notes from the Texas Cave Management Association meeting of Feb. 13, 1990. The meeting, at Mr. Gatti's Pizza on Interstate 35 in Austin, was called to order at 7:15 p.m.

A quorum of directors was present.

The TCMA directors present appointed William Russell to speak on the organization's behalf with the City

February 1990 TCMA Conservationist Page 3

of Austin about a management plan TCMA members for 1 p.m. Saturday, Maple Run Cave. The appointment was unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Directors also approved Mike Warton to use his funds to produce T-shirts and Jay Jorden to use personal seed money for patch production. Once they "make their money back," all remaining shirts and patches will revert to TCMA's ownership for its fund raising efforts. The decision was unanimous.

In other actions, the board of directors:

- Voted unanimously to change the TCMA charter to reflect six board members rather than nine;
- Voted to appoint Jorden as chairman of the Cave Acquisition Committee. The vote was: four ayes, one nay and one abstention;
- Approved the pursuit of acquiring Whirlpool Cave under TCMA ownership, pending a clear deed; i.e., with taxes paid and clear title without using current TCMA funds for payment of said taxes. The vote: five ayes, one abstention;
- Empowered the Executive Director to sign a deed for Whirlpool Cave's acquisition on behalf of TCMA, subject to a tax settlement. The vote of five ayes and one abstention;
- Scheduled the next TCMA meeting for 7 p.m. Thursday, March 8, at Mr. Gatti's Pizza, Interstate 35 and William Cannon, in Austin; and
- Set a Whirlpool Cave trip for

Executive Director's Report by Mike Walsh

Greetings! We need committee chairs for TCMA. Currently, I serve as TCMA-Texas Parks and Wildlife liaison and Jay Jorden chairs the Cave Acquisition Committee. Open committee positions exist for Bat Protection and Information, Fund Raising, Membership, Cave Management and Cave Education.

If the Whirlpool Cave acquisition goes through, we will need to develop a cave management plan. We also need one for 0-9 Well. Also needed is a weekend work project at Whirlpool to clean up the property, do rockwork on the gate, put in fences, build an oil catch at the drainpipe, put up signs, etc. Jay Jorden and I are working on the 1989 National Cave Management Symposium proceedings. Thanks to Mike Grimm for his work on Whirlpool Cave and prompting the state highway department to move the drainpipe. We will attempt to secure landscaping to re-establish native grasses.

A TPWD Cave Task Force meeting is upcoming. Contact me at (512) 625-7229 or write P.O. Box 310732, New Braunfels, TX 78131 for details. We will also need to establish cave acquisition guidelines for our membership. Contact Jay or I if interested. Rod Goke has offered numerous items for a TCMA fundraiser -- garage sale, flea market, etc. Contact me if you have donations.

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## New Fence, Bridge, and Steps at Robber Baron

By Joe Mitchell

It has been a busy summer at Robber Baron cave as a series of highly successful, monthly work trips have pushed this long running project closer to completion. It was felt that having a series of regularly scheduled workdays (the 4th Saturday of each month) would be effective in making progress.

Starting on June 24th, the project resumed by stabilizing the rock retaining wall alongside the trench. Some portions had eroded since it was put in last year. Many of the smaller rocks were removed and small and medium sized gravel was used to fill in between the larger rocks. This was hoped to act as a graded filter to slow water flow and hold the larger rocks together. Meanwhile a second team built a retaining wall adjacent to the secondary entrance in the sinkhole to reduce sediment flow into this entrance. A stunning 35 volunteers turned out for this workday.

During early July, vandals struck at the cave pushing in a section of the retaining stones along the trench and tossing most of the remaining construction material on the property into the sinkhole.

The July 22 workday saw 21 volunteers participate in both cleaning up after the vandals and



Photo by Joe Mitchell

**A team of volunteers builds a retaining wall at the top of the trench to divert water and to form the top of the steps that will lead down into the sinkhole.**

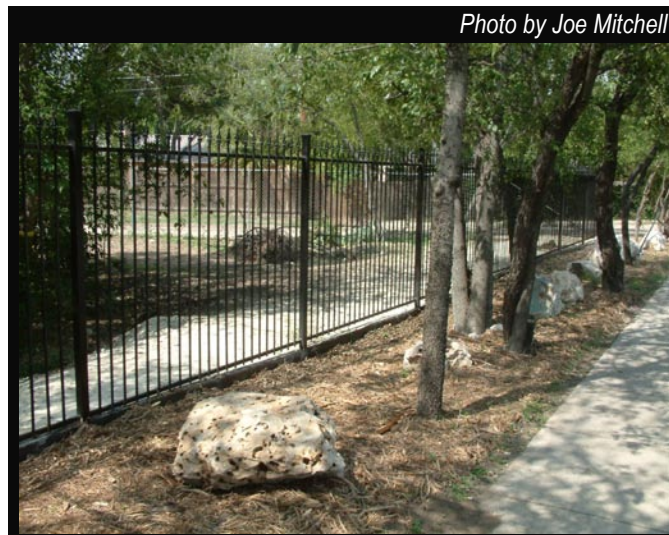


Photo by Joe Mitchell

**The new fence and landscaping along the Nacogdoches Rd. frontage.**

finally beginning serious work on the steps in the trench. Starting at the bottom of the trench, a series of step-height rock walls were built and then backfilled with gravel. The rock walls used mortar to fill between and anchor the fieldstones used to make the walls in place. Short lengths of PVC pipe through the walls were used for drainage. At the top end of the trench, a second team built a high rock retaining wall that will prevent surface water on the property from flowing into the sinkhole. Runoff was causing sediments to build up in the sinkhole and slowing filling up the second entrance.

The most visible change from this workday was the new bridge over the trench. Built by Tom Brown and installed the night before the workday, the bridge has been seen as an attractive addition to the property. The bridge makes it easier to get across the property and provides a way to raise and lower buckets during digging and construction.

The August workday was different in that it did not use many volunteers but instead was the culmination of an Eagle Scout project performed by Nick Navarro. He assembled a team and raised money (to which TCMA contributed \$2000) to get a decorative black wrought iron fence built around the Nacogdoches and Camilla sides of the property. The fence features a single person gate along the

Camilla side and a larger, vehicle-sized gate at the corner with the alley. The fence is built up on a curb to prevent water flow from the street during flooding.

The most recent workday, on September 23rd, involved a team of 17 volunteers who planned to continue work on the middle section of steps in the trench. However, it was found that there was considerable sediment deposited in this area so most of the work day involved removal of this material with on a couple of new steps being built. A second team removed sediment that was plugging the secondary entrance.

Another work trip is planned for October 28th. This will likely be the last major work day for the year, so we hope to largely complete the steps. After this there are a few section of steps and walls to be completed at the bottom of the sinkhole and then completion of plantings, trails, and signage on the surface.



Photo by Joe Mitchell

Volunteers work on building the steps in the trench using the new bridge to transfer material.

## A History of Ezell's Cave

by Jon Cradit

Ezell's Cave was transferred from the Texas Nature Conservancy to Texas Cave Management Association in October of 2004. Ezell's has a long history which is rather well documented.

The legend of the cave begins with Greenberry Ezell (1817-1904) who is credited with finding the cave while looking for gold and other buried treasure. The cave eventually did reveal a great treasure. The first endangered species listed on the first federal list was from this cave, the Typhlomolge rathbuni, also called Eurycea rathbuni but also called Typhlomolge cathburn. Since those biologists can't decide what to call it, how about the rest of us just calling it the Texas Blind Salamander.

In the Hays County Times dated April 1893, the headline article was that a mammoth subterranean lake or river was discovered and the land was purchased by Mr. Ezell to protect the cave. As word of the cave spread and grew so did the size of the cave. In one newspaper article from a Beeville paper it is reported that Mr. Ezell "...has explored it for a mile and a half, where further progress was stopped by a large underground river. Auriferous deposits of the

stream indicate that its source abounds in placer gold."

In 1967 The Texas Nature Conservancy purchased Ezell's Cave and two acres of property for around \$2,050 from the owners of Wonder Cave. The old SWT Grotto and Biology Club both helped with raising money to purchase the property from the owners of Wonder Cave. In the 60s the Wonder Cave owners had plans to integrate Ezell's into their cave tour. But that story will have to be covered at a different time.

In November 1971 the cave was designated by the Secretary of the Interior as a National Natural Landmark, a distinction which it holds to this day. In 1996 instruments were installed in the lake room in order to monitor the quality of the Edwards Aquifer.

The TCMA has now acquired the cave to manage for scientific research. This is not a sport cave nor is it good for general visitation due to the various different ongoing scientific research projects and due to the unstable rockfall area which must be traversed.

## TCMA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING NOTES

Meeting Date: Sunday, May 21, 2006 / Location: John Knox Ranch, Fischer, TX

## OFFICER REPORTS

**President Report** - Linda P. requests idea for our 20th anniversary and that we promote the Tee shirt design contest.

**Treasurer Report** - Sue S. gives the Treasurer Report for the last quarter: Cash: \$ 142,600; Punkin & Deep mortgage remaining: \$48,762; Edward Jones Trust Account approx \$180,000. Ron Ralph asked where we are keeping our money market account. Suggests that TCMA contact him regarding excellent interest rates he can get through his savings and loan.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Database Committee** - Aimee B. says that she can no longer manage the database committee due to personal reasons but that all the checks sent to date have been entered and various address corrections have been made. Quarterly updates on donations and membership dues have been provided to the board. There have been no comments to the reports. Aimee offered to assist with training the next person. Ron Ralph asks about the number correspondences each year - Aimee speculates about 100. She notes that Peter Sprouse can access the database to generate a current member UT lands trips.

**Website Committee** - Joe R. says that Butch Fralia has graciously volunteered to assist in developing a comprehensive website design. Content is to be provided by the preserve managers and website committee members. Aimee B. asks Joe if he will send Butch the photos he has that were provided by various preserve managers. Joe R. agrees. When asked about the appropriate size for photos, Butch states that full-sized photos are best. He will downsize and edit the photos for the website. Butch suggests that reserve managers provide standard info and photos, including: 1. brief description of the site, management plan, photos, and preserve manager contact info. Linda mentioned that Butch will assist with the online pay donation system. Jay J. discusses server issues – SPAM filters, etc.

**Acquisition Committee** - Geary S. reports that Travis Scott has been added to the committee. Hutto Bat Cave has been checked out but is now apparently sold as part of a much larger tract. It could still be carved out and remains a possibility. Price per acre is an element that drives our potential to purchase. Jon Cradit mentions that there is a subdivision in North San Antonio with a cave called Pick Up Sticks. George Veni adds that Pick Up Sticks has not been known for very long and was discovered when a farmer scalped a dome room while driving a backhoe. The dome was filled with a multitude of long soda straws. Cavers entered and found a passage to stream passage. The cave is an important recharge feature to the aquifer. Aimee B. suggested that it be discussed with the landowner as a conservation easement opportunity. John said he is just in the discussion stage at this point but he will look into it. Deep Water cave is mentioned as a possibility with more potential than Hutto Bat Cave. William Russell asks which county it is located in. Joe R. says it is in Comal County. Linda P says that apparently the taxes are barely being paid for the property at Deep Water Cave. Kirk Menking is the contact for that cave.

**Fundraising Committee** - Allan C. says that the auction raised \$1,775 dollars. He suggests that the remaining un-auctioned items be saved for this year's TCR event as a silent auction. Allen attended a fund-raising session at the Texas Land Trust Conference in May. He said it was an excellent session and dealt with the psychology and theory of fund raising. Apparently we are doing everything right. The breakfast raised a total of \$245 before the cost of the food is taken out. Allen is looking for more fund-raising ideas. Aimee asks if Grants are under the fundraising committee. Linda says that there is no one in charge of grants at this time. She says that for a small non profit, our odds of getting grants is pretty good, better than one in ten. Linda asks if anyone would like to assist with finding and applying for grants.

## PRESERVE REPORTS

**Deep and Punkin Preserve** - Geary S. reports that a professor named Steve Worthington from Canada confirmed that the two caves have a sulfide origin. Geary hopes to run more science based trips to the site in the future. Aimee B. asks that the board be notified when science trips are planned. Currently there are trips out to the site every two to three weeks. Geary says that it is very dry out there right now. There was a recent large fire, approximately five miles west of the site that consumed over 1,000 acres. The nearby owner has asked for assistance with maintaining the road. There are proposals for septic system and there is a very creative water collection system out there presently. Currently we have approximately 450 gallon capacity but Geary hopes to increase that to over 900 gallons. Rune B. has asked about making additions to the cabin, including adding a roof to the back porch and additional sleeping quarters. It was suggested that the site be used for the International Caving Society Meeting in 2009.

**Godwin Ranch Preserve** - Aimee reports that things are going smoothly and a cost estimate for fence repairs has been submitted in the proposed budget provided in the January board meeting. Aimee also discussions issues of neighbor relations. She is planning an open house for TCMA.

**Rolling Oaks Preserve** - Fish and Wildlife has visited the site recently and said that the site should be fenced to keep ATVs out and the trash can be removed from the caves.

**Robber Baron Preserve** - Linda reports that we have about \$5000 of money left to spend, Need to complete fence along other sides of property – probably enough to complete fence and steps into trench.

**Ezell's Preserve** - Jon reports that negotiations with the adjacent landowner who wants to build town houses at the bottom of the hill continue. A platted road exists between the former trailer park and the preserve lands. The developer of the former

trailer park would like to go to the City Council and request that the road be abandoned. The developer requested that TCMA pay for half of the road abandonment. John asked them to consider building an 8 ft fence between the property and our site. Apparently there is a City code variance is needed for fences over 6 ft. Jon doesn't think we need to have a fence to be maintained along the property. There are no other outstanding issues. Jon also discusses the need for signage at the property. He is working with Terry Holsinger to get prices. Don Auburn suggests that sign be powder coated. He says that RD Hot Coat in San Antonio can do it. Ron R will check with TPWD to see how they have their signs constructed.

**Lost Oasis Preserve** - We had a new entrance installed and it controls airflow better. Potential exists for sale of some of the property. There were about 4 visits this year.

**MANAGEMENT REPORTS**

**UT Lands** - Peter reports that 09 Well Cave can now be visited. Bill Bently offered to let PBS manage Amazing Maze Cave. Peter and Charley Saavas will be fixing the gate on Amazing Maze as soon as Charley returns from his travels this summer.

**Camp Bullis** - A contract renewal has been prepared and submitted by Linda, using Zara Environmental as the subcontractor. George Veni states that endangered species is a top priority for Camp Bullis. He feels positive about contract. We should know something by September on whether we get it or not.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Insurance** - A general discussion of insurance is begun. Someone asks if we have errors and omissions insurance for board members. Jay says we have both error and omissions and a general liability policy. Fritz Holt states that there have been resignations of board members from other organizations because of liability concerns where the organization lacked errors and omissions insurance. Mark Alman introduced himself as the NSS Youth Committee Chair. Mark states that membership in TCMA should not be required to go to TCMA (Whirlpool?) cave(s) when liability waivers are signed. Discussion turns to rental of equipment. Joe Ranzau mentioned some written material that mentions rental of caving gear associated with Cave Day at Whirlpool. Several board members expressed concern that this is a liability issue for TCMA because of the perception of TCMA association, since Julie is an officer. Some suggest that this can be remedied through adding a sentence to our waiver that we will not be responsible for equipment failure and we will not provide equipment. Standardization of our waiver was also suggested as a good idea. It was agreed that TCMA should not be associated with such activities and that it would be a liability issue for officers and board members to participate in rental of equipment.

**LIDAR Project** - Geary give a summary of fund raising status, reporting that a proposal for NSS Research Committee grant has been submitted for \$1,000. He plans to submit a proposal for \$8,000 through the Gilmer Foundation. Otherwise, there are \$5,500 in pledges and donations from individual contributors so far. Geary mentions that we may be able to leverage cost with UT. They may also try to expand the project to include shooting LIDAR in Kickapoo Caverns. He has lots of volunteers who will help. It is requested that volunteer hours be tracked. Geary confirms that volunteers will track hours. Need \$11,000 total for the project. If more than \$11,000 is raised, the extra money will be used to improve the quality of the project, such as providing food for the volunteers.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**20th Anniversary Celebration Ideas** - There is discussion of offering a contest for tee shirt design to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the TCMA. Jay offers to look at old activity newsletters to see what might be appropriate as a "look back" article. It is suggested that festivities occur at TCR (October 22nd). Jay volunteers to be a committee chair to put together ideas for article and festivities. Butch Fralia adds that the TCMA and the Maverick Grotto submitted their charters at the same time.

**TSS Data Request** - George V. reports on a large folio that Walter F. gave him on UT Lands caves. TCMA has applied for data request for UT Lands and near-UT Lands caves and it was approved and it is nearly complete. George discusses what was found from the data request.

**Earth Share** - Jon suggests that we consider participation in Earth Share as a revenue mechanism. Joe R. will explore donations to the TCMA through the United Way.



**CONSERVATIONIST** (from p. 17)

Page 4	February 1990	TCMA Conservationist
Dues are due for everyone but paid-up lifetime members. Please remit \$10 for associate membership and \$100 for lifetime status (\$25 per year is OK) to Treasurer Claire Snider, 2205 W. 12th, No. 13, Austin, TX 78703.	-- Exhibit at conference on Edwards Aquifer north of Colorado River;	-- Assisted in the development of a cave protection bill;
Gill Ediger is storing the TCMA tent frame. We hope we can replace the canvas in the future. The tent is available for use by Texas cavers.	-- Signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the American Cave Conservation Association;	-- Developed and took the Caver Conservation-Cave Management Opinion Poll;
<b>TCMA ACTIVITIES HISTORY</b>	-- Developed a Texas' significant cave rating system;	
by Mike Walsh	<b>1987</b>	
Several people have expressed interest in what the Texas Cave Management Association has been doing recently. Here is a list of some of our activities for the past several years.	-- Received a \$3250 grant for a bat publication and development over karst areas;	-- Became a National Speleological Society Conservancy;
<b>1986</b>	-- Signed a contract with The University of Texas to manage 0-9 Water Well near Ozona;	-- Organized the Kickapoo Cave State Park project. With help from the Texas Speleological Association, doubled the known number of park caves;
-- TCMA was organized and incorporated;	-- Co-sponsored with the City of Austin a Goat Cave conference;	<b>1988</b>
-- Developed a TCMA brochure;	-- Built a 6- by 12-foot mobile cave education display;	-- A 40- by 40-foot tent frame was donated to TCMA;
-- Constructed a box for pamphlets;	-- Constructed a rear-projection slide display for conferences;	-- Organized the Longhorn Caverns State Park Clean-Up Project. TCMA
		(Continued next issue)
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## TCMA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING NOTES

Meeting Date: Saturday, September 10, 2006 / Location: Texas Speleological Society Office, Austin, TX

### OFFICER REPORTS

**President Report** - L. Palit notes good progress at D&P as well as at Robber Baron. All other properties are either busy or being maintained. Palit also notes that the LIDAR project is filling up and that our recognition is increasing. She states that a Board planning retreat was not held yet but is still in the works. She has been talking to some people who do strategic planning workshops. Hopefully the retreat will be right after the first of the year. Especially important is the need to consider where we are at now that we are becoming a larger organization. Something to consider is the need for an Executive Director either for day-to-day operation or for fundraising. It is not sustainable for a volunteer in the long term. Also, we need to look for more caves, especially in the central Texas area. Benders Cave is noted by K Menking as a good cave for sale. It is \$250k but we could split lot and sell off most of it. Menking and Joann Deluna will work on it.

**Treasurer Report** - S. Schindel gives the Treasurer Report: Cash: \$36,362; Total Assets: \$ (Cash + \$461,100 Land + \$375,624 Investments); Punkin & Deep mortgage remaining: \$50,207; Cave Acquisition Fund: \$4,207; Total income for this year: \$163,742; Total expenses for this year: \$145,767. Schindel notes that she will soon be giving up the Treasurers position especially due to her new career. Accounting has now switched over to Quickbooks, so its now easier to use. The accountant will be able to finish setting it up. We could pay him to do it for us on a monthly basis if we chose. A discussion about the cost/benefits of having an outside person take care of the expenses ensues. However, it still involves a person in the organization to coordinate. Discussion about some details of the expense report. We have been covering our expenses out there for the most part plus getting new members. Discussion about splitting the Treasurer into a money recorder and money handler. Tracking of the details of income is improving but it still needs more detail and recording of sales. It is important to denote these things both for our knowledge and for tax purposes.

**Secretary Report** - J. Mitchell reports that we will send out membership letters soon - before TCR.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Website Committee** - J. Ranzau notes that Butch has updated the website. We will be switching our hosting which will improve some of our services. Ranzau just has to interface – others do the programming. Interface through Ranzau and Butch. Also we can setup webpay.

**Acquisition Committee** - Geary Schindel still coordinating this committee. Palit reports on a couple of caves that A. Cobb looked at such as Goyettes, but they are out of our price range and not worthwhile.

**Fundraising Committee** - A. Cobb reports that he has been busy so that there has not been much progress. He and Palit attended a fundraising talk at a Land Trust conference. He notes that we are doing much right, but that we need to tap into outside (non-caver) resources for money. Cobb would like for another person to take over as fundraising chair. Palit and J. Cradit note that we need to get more members involved in doing these things and less of the Board members. Ranzau notes that one way is through a membership listserv like CaveTex (but not anyone can post to it.) This should be available soon. Palit wants to have a silent auction at TCR for leftovers from Spring Convention. They are easy to manage.

**Database Committee** - Ron Ralph reports that he is updating the address in the database. He enters new member info from Julie Jenkins and feeds it to S. Schindel. However, he needs to coordinate with them to be sure he captures all the data. We all need new login information. We have about 148 active members.

**Insurance** - Our insurance has increased from about \$2000 to \$9000 per year this year. Discussion about how to deal with this large amount (it has already been paid for this year.) It is a widespread problem.

**By-laws Committee** - B. Russell discusses that the main changes that the by-laws need concerns electronic “meetings”. The details need to be added. Palit also notes that there needs to be a minimum number of meetings that Board members have to attend per year. We also have an advisory board (maybe we need to reactivate it.)

### PRESERVE REPORTS

**Godwin Ranch** - Workday on Sept 23.

**Deep and Punkin Preserve** - Geary Schindel provided a written report. Of interesting note is that Deep may be a resurgence ancient spring cave (according to world renowned expert who visited from Russia). Our tax exemption did not go through. The exemption was initially stated to be fully active, then we got a bill, then they said we got half tax exemption, then they looked at the property and said that maybe we could get 1/3 tax exemption. Discussion about rules regarding tax exemption. According to Hays Co. (Cradit) if you qualify, you get it all. We should get them to go ahead and grant the 1/3 exemption, then we can appeal for the whole property. We need to get this in writing. G. Schindel is working on this. Schindel also proposes a septic system for \$1k – Moves to allocate \$1200 for a septic tank to cover other incidentals (just holding tank for now) – (Ranzau/Menking) – PASS. Cabin floors need to be done – thick floor paint and linoleum are options. Motion for \$300 for flooring (Ranzau) –PASS – It is noted that sheet linoleum is encouraged over tile linoleum.

**Robber Baron Preserve** - Palit notes that a \$7000 LIP grant from parks & wildlife was received. It requires lots of paper-

work. We need to look at what additional paperwork needs to be done. Lots has been done at the property – the new fence completed, steps being built, bridge is in place. Workday on the 4th Saturday of each month.

**Ezell's Preserve** - Developer wanted to develop the land down the hill from ours. We negotiated to abandon the road between the two lots and developer gets the land but in return needs to build a fence and then maintain it. Developer will not agree to maintain the fence beyond one year. The cave has been used to monitor the aquifer level. Credit was going to get the new boundary marker signs. \$206 for 24 signs on aluminum stock.

**Whirlpool and Lost Oasis Preserves** - Russell reports that Cave Day is coming up and they are still discussing the wetpond. The neighborhood doesn't want to pay for upkeep of water in the pond. When this is settled we can get the money. Cave Day is the Oct 28th. Things are still going well with lots of trips (special trips for local school groups.) Digging is going on at Lost Oasis and security has improved.

#### MANAGEMENT REPORTS

**UT Lands** - Discussion was held about the proposed management plan for Amazing Maze and O-9 Well and reporting requirements as needed by the UT Lands agreement. The reports must come through the Board. Walter F. has visited O-9 – Amazing Maze will have to be un-welded.

**Camp Bullis** - The contract was renewed again for 2006-07 in the same amount. S. Schindel notes that we make \$53k profit from it each year.

#### OLD BUSINESS

**TCMA Birthday** - Palit notes that this fall is TCMA's 20th birthday and that we want to celebrate it at TCR. This will include a special issue of the Passages and a large cake. We need someone to interview Mike Walsh – Aimee agrees to do it. For TCMA history, we can talk to Carl Kunath who has an excerpt about the history in this Texas Caving book. Jay Jorden to contribute a "highlights" section. Other option include a table of preserves, a list of life members, and an interview with Mike Wharton's wife. Also, excerpts from the first TCMA newsletter plus the usual articles. Don is doing a T-shirt. We are not well organized in recognizing people for their contributions. An annual TCMA award idea is suggested. We can also decorate the TCMA booth with 20th b-day stuff. Discussion about having enough tables and tents for TCMA at TCR. **Passages** - Caver profiles will be included for volunteers and to publicly recognize them. Also articles are suggested about little known preserves, an up and coming volunteer, auction into, and a D&P update.

**LIDAR Project** - Cobb notes that the whole project is funded. Texas Parks and Wildlife gave them the additional \$4500 needed plus additional funding may be forthcoming. Making progress with National Geographic for funding and made it to 2nd round. We may also get full matching funds from Bureau of Economic Geology. Three weekends are scheduled for the Devils Sinkhole project in Nov, Dec, and Jan.

**TSS Office Space** - Palit notes that we now have space at the TSS office for TCMA files. We need to get our filing system together. Bring stuff to store at the office. Palit will bring a dedicated computer for TCMA purposes. Items will be secured but accessible.

**Land Trust Conference** - This year's national conference is in Tennessee. They can give scholarships, but it seems that no one can go this year. Also, Palit suggests we should network with other land trusts since we have cave expertise (an article in a land trust newsletter is a possibility). Beveridge notes that they can educate us in other areas such as conservation easements. Cobb and Palit report on this year's Regional Land Trust Conference about a program about Executive Directors and how they can potentially be very useful. Palit also discusses a program she attended about how Boards function. Cobb went to another talk about fundraising. Credit notes that he has experience in Conservation Easements through EAA.

#### NEW BUSINESS

**TCMA PO Box** - R. Ralph notes how the post office box is in a very inconvenient location now that Julie Jenkins has moved and would be better moved to a new location near campus at the University Station. Ralph will be making the mail pickups from now on. Motion to make the move (Beverage/Ranzau) – PASSED.

**TCMA Shirts** - Vreeland graphics should have the logo by now.

**Draft Budget Preserve and Report Form Template** - Budget form is for next calendar year and report form is for previous year. Capitol expenses are for a physical improvements to the property. Operating expenses are maintenance and regular expenses. Items to be ordered in priority. Submitted budget will be a draft to be approved by Board.

#### Misc. Business

- Spring Convention coordinator is needed.
- Nomination committee is needed: Geoff Hoese, Cobb, and Ranzau agree to be this committee.
- A TCMA Members Meeting will be at TCR – 9:30am on Sunday.
- Christi Bennett will cook breakfast for us at TCR.
- ICS 2009 promo movie will be done in Sept 28th-Oct 3rd – part will be filmed at some TCMA caves.
- Someone contacted Palit about making a movie in a cave – discussion among Board.
- Discussion about bees in Punkin Cave.

# TCMA'S FOUNDING MEMBERS

Cindy Aase  
 Doug Allen  
 Donna Anderson  
 James R. Beall  
 Carolyn Biegert  
 Rune E. Burnett  
 Allan Cobb  
 Corky Corcoran  
 Joann P. DeLuna  
 Bill Elliott  
 Butch Fralia

Rod Goke  
 James Goodbar  
 Lee Jay Graves  
 Robert Green  
 Michael Grimm  
 Russell Gurnee  
 Blake Harrison  
 Keith Heuss  
 Joe Ivy  
 Jay Jordan  
 Dave Macadoo

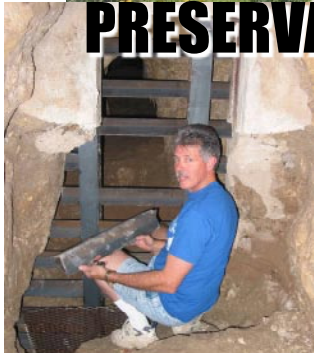
James McIntire  
 Linda Palit  
 Carl Ponebshek  
 Ron Ralph  
 Jack Ralph  
 Joe Sumbera  
 Tommy Thornhill  
 George Veni  
 Mike Walsh  
 Mike Warton



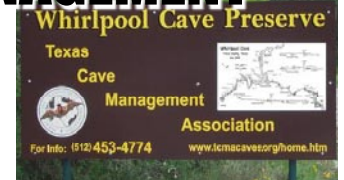
**PRESERVATION**



**MANAGEMENT**



**EDUCATION**



**SCIENCE**



# HAPPY 20TH BIRTHDAY, TCMA!

