

**MINUTES OF THE
KANSAS CITY AREA GROTTO
SEPTEMBER 2018 BUSINESS MEETING
HELD WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18TH, 2018 – 6:30 P.M. TO 8:30 P.M.
ANITA B. GORMAN CONSERVATION DISCOVERY CENTER
4750 TROOST AVE, KCMO 64110**

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. The following members were present: Mary Beth Callicot, Kirsten Coltson, Seth Colston, Aaron Endicott, David Foran, Bill Gee, Kristen Godfrey, Keith Green, Iz Groceman, Steven Howe, Laura Jaynes, Gary Johnson, Chad McDaniel, John McGuire, Jack Peters, Seth Seagraves, Pic Walenta, Hou Zhong.

Presentation: Members of the Cave Spring Park Board joined us to provide info on a new project venture: to build a state-of-the-art simulated cave, and to develop new educational programs for the Cave Spring Association.

Some background of the park itself: The Cave Spring Association was founded in 1976 as a 501c3 and is a 39-acre public access park located in Raytown, Missouri. There are 4.1 miles of hiking trails, overnight camping, and educational opportunities for school field trips (63 schools visited in 2017). The park averages 75,000 adult visitors annually. Some board revisions were made in 2015, creating an Active Board and Advisory Board. Currently, the park's expenses are mostly covered by a stipend from Jackson County, approximately \$24,000/year. In 2015, Jim Cooley surveyed the cave on the property, Santa Fe Trail Cave (believed to be collapsed, no longer of substantial length). There are some obvious needs for the park, including full time hires for maintenance and a project director, and an upgrade of the educational programs.

Missouri is the Cave state, they just aren't around Kansas City. There is an absence of youth engaging outdoor/environmental education programs. To fill this gap and to help the park, they want to build an artificial cave, that people in the Metro can easily access and experience. They are working with Walltopia, a custom cave simulation company. Iz, the primary presenter, showed an example of their work with a demo video from a simulated cave in a mall in Dubai. The cost for what they are looking to build at Cave Spring Park is about \$650 per linear foot; ¼ mile of cave would cost approximately \$1 million.

They brought this project in front of KCAG because they want to do it right. The intent is to accurately portray the caving experience, and to be geologically accurate with both the simulated cave and redeveloped educational programs. By November 1st they would like to establish who is going to be involved and what roles will be. January 1st is the intended date to have the project plan agreed upon and laid out. Once an official plan is in place, they will begin to seek funding. They would like to offer KCAG 5% of the net proceeds if we sign off on involvement. A separate 501c3 would be formed for this venture, and it would ideally be built on a portion of the land that is owned by the Kline family, as to not interfere with other park programs and activities. Part of the vision is to be a self-sustaining project.

Some questions asked:

Q: Anticipating charging admission?

A: Ideally want it accessible to everyone, keeping it mostly cheap or free. There would be a charge for school districts for programs and trips.

Q: Flora or fauna education? (in relation to caves)

A: Definitely would be a key element in the educational programs.

Q: Handicap accessible?

A: It is feasible, and desired, for part of it to be handicap accessible.

Q: Time to construct?

A: 3-6 months once signed off on. The caves are made/assembled in Bulgaria.

Q: Durability?

A: There is a 20-year contract/guarantee, there have been no issues with Walltopia's products so far.

Idea/comment—this could be a good training point for scouts in preparation for entering a real cave.

Next step: If you are interested in participating in this project, please join the discussion/forum as planning continues. Contact Pic Walenta (picwalenta@aol.com, 816-665-5588) for contacts with the Cave Spring Park Board. Also visit cavespring.org for more information on the park and their current activities.

Officer Reports

President: Pic Walenta showed the group the CaveSim bumper sticker and t-shirt we received as a thank you for our sponsorship of CaveSim going to the NSS Convention. She auctioned both items to the group, selling the bumper sticker for \$5 and the shirt for \$25. Pic shared that she has been approached by Stark caverns, they are interested in having us come down and do some off trail caving, looking to organize trip for maybe November 9th.

Vice President: Jack Peters shared of an Over The Edge event happening two weekends after the meeting. No novice trips planned/scheduled at the moment (as of meeting; see Upcoming Trips & Events).

Secretary: Laura Jaynes had not yet sent out the August minutes, but avowed to do so email for a motion to accept at the next meeting.

Treasurer: Bill Gee reported the August beginning treasury balance as \$3170.15 (Commerce Bank). August transactions included a deposit of \$140.00 (dues, t-shirts and mugs), payment of \$95.97 to John McGuire (bat house materials), \$125.00 to Fond Memorials (bat house plaques), \$11.37 to Lowes (bat house material), a credit of \$11.37 (returned unused bat house material) and a \$5.00 bank fee. The August ending treasury balance was \$2984.18. The beginning and ending August PayPal balances were \$0.00. There was no September activity to report as of September 7th.

Quartermaster: D.J. has the helmets, Pic has just about everything else.

Fundraising: T-shirts, coffee mugs, beanies and patches are available for purchase. The mugs are serving as our New Member gifts. Contact Pic at picwalenta@aol.com for more information.

Presentations: Anyone interested in giving a meeting presentation, let Pic know! Please see Upcoming Events for other scheduled presentations and future meetings.

Carroll Cave Conservancy (CCC): Bill Gee is pretty much done revamping the CCC website, check it out: www.carrollcave.org. A survey trip in August added 3-400 feet to Carroll Cave, making 20¼ miles of cave. No new known news on the landowner relations front. The Bat Census trip is scheduled for October 29th, Bill needs minimum of two more participants.

Missouri Speleological Survey (MSS) & Missouri Caves and Karst Conservancy (MCKC): Ken Grush sat as proxy for Jim Cooley at the most recent MSS meeting over September 8-9th at Current River State Park. Jim sent out Ken's report via email on September 11th. MSS newsletters (i.e., "The Liaison") are now available to everyone in the world on-line at <https://www.mospeleo.org/newsletter>. Contact Jim Cooley at coolstoi@kc.rr.com for more information.

Novice and Scout trips: See Trip Reports for details on the recent Cleveland Cave trip. More novice trip leaders are needed, especially for large scout groups who want to rappel also. Please contact Jack Peters jack@peters2000.com for more information.

Hickory County: Gary Johnson shared that a survey trip to Vanderman is in the works for October 10th. Elkton Cave is for sale, MDC has shown interest in purchasing the property.

Cloud 9: Lee Krout not present.

White Nose Syndrome: See <https://caves.org/WNS/> for the most current map of WNS's reach.

Trip Reports and Other News

Cleveland Cave: D.J Hall led a trip to Cleaveland, a few of the participants were present at the meeting. They all enjoyed their time, it was a new experience for many!

Cathedral Cave: Pic Walenta reported that the Off Trail Tour the previous weekend was a good trip. It took a while with a slower group, but was good.

Kanopolis State Park: Gary Johnson shared of his visit to this Kansas state park, it was a very interesting and neat experience. The park is not too far off I-70, roughly 3 hours away.

New Meeting Time and Place Reminder: Meetings are held on the **3rd Tuesday of each month from 6:30-8:30pm**, at the **Anita B Gorman Conservation Discovery Center (4750 Troost, Kansas City, MO 64110)** in the Lewis & Clark room.

MVOR Sponsorship: KCAG will be sponsoring MVOR in Fall of 2020, in conjunction with Missouri Bat Census. Location will be Noel, MO with numerous privately-owned caves and the commercial Bluff Dweller's Cave. Volunteers for committees are needed.

New Business

Meetup: We're now on Meetup. Pic "donated" the purchase of the first 50 members, we have reached that. It seems we may need to upgrade; the cost would be an additional \$89 for 6 months of unlimited members (a \$149 total including the cost for 50 members). A volunteer is needed to manage use of this platform for the Grotto.

Unfinished Business: None.

Pic Walenta verified there was no further unfinished business. The meeting adjourned, whereupon members repaired to Minsky's Pizza, 5105 Main Street, KCMO, for great food and even better company.

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UPCOMING TRIPS & EVENTS

October 12th -14th -- CRF Buffalo National River Work Trip (Lower District)
Rush, Arkansas
Cave monitoring, bio-inventory, and survey
NPS Toney Bend Facility, Meals provided
If interested contact Kayla Sapokta, 479-970-0917, kayla.sapokta@gmail.com

October 13th -- Mega Trail building at Round Springs
Ozark National Scenic Riverways
Help the OTA (Ozark Trail Association) build a portion of the trail from Round Springs to Echo Bluffs
If interested contact Dave Tobey, District Interpreter, 573-323-4236 or Ozark National Scenic Riverways Facebook page.

October 13th -- Spooky Cave Tours, 6 to 8:30 PM, every 30 minutes

Onondaga Cave, Leasburg, MO.
Fee attached, geared towards adults, but everyone is welcome
Highly recommended if you have a group to make a group reservation
If interested check website at <https://mostateparks.com/event/72671/spooky-cave-tours-onondaga-cave>

October 16th -- KCAG Monthly Meeting
6:30 PM - 8:30 PM
Anita B Gorman Conservation Discovery Center
4750 Troost Ave. Kansas City, MO 64119
Lewis and Clark Room
Knots for Caving vs. Rock Climbing
Presenter- Richard Cindric

October 20th -- Chouteau Grotto Annual Picnic

Camping, Cave Restoration, fellowship, and GOOD food
Hosted by Rita Worden at her home, this also includes Pony Express Grotto
Meat is furnished, bring a side dish
RSVP Required! -- to Rita Worden, wordenr12323@yahoo.com

October 27th -- Carroll Cave Annual Bat Census Trip
Camden County, about a 3-hour drive
Moderate to a difficult trip, wetsuit recommended, up to 12 hours in the cave
If interested contact Bill Gee, bgee@campercaver.net

October 27th - Berome Moore Cave Survey
Perry County, about a 5-hour drive
Currently the second longest cave in MO.
Surveyed at 21.35 miles
If interested contact Chad McCain, chads93gt@hotmail.com

November 3rd-4th - November 9th -- CRF Cave Gating Project
Volunteers needed for all or part of the project
CRF project to build a fence style cave gate around the sinkhole entrance to Butler Hollow Cave,
in Barry County, Missouri
If interested contact Jim Cooley, 816-753-8111, (text OK) for details, coolstoi@kc.rr.com

November 9th -12th -- CRF Ozark Division Annual Meeting
Hamilton Valley Research Center, Mammoth Cave
Must be a CRF member to attend, to become CRF member see the web site at <http://www.cave-research.org/MembershipInfo.php>
Caving, bunkhouse quarters, first come, camping and banquet.
If interested contact Pic Walenta, 816-665-5588, picwalenta@aol.com or Kayla Sapokta, 479-970-0917, kayla.sapokta@gmail.com
Will send out the flyer on a separate email.

November 13th - 15th -- (AIM WILD), Arkansas, Illinois, Missouri Wilderness Stewardship Program
Shawnee National Forest, free admission
Learn specialized skills required for working in, managing and stewarding federally designated wilderness areas.
Currently, Pic is also on a waiting list for Wilderness First Aid course
If interested contact Pic Walenta, 816-665-5588, picwalenta@aol.com

November 16th - 18th -- Coldwater Cave Project
Coldwater Creek Conservation Area - Northeast Iowa - Approximate 6-hour drive
Iowa's longest cave, over 17 miles. Coldwater has some of the most beautiful impressive formations found
Wetsuit mandatory, 7mm recommended
Entrance to the cave is down 90' ladder
If interested contact Pic Walenta, 816-665-5588, picwalenta@aol.com

November 18th -- Perkins Cave Novice Trip
Camden County, Privately owned cave
2000' long -- can be a very sporty cave with loads of mud
If interested contact Kristen Godfrey, 913-244-5512, [Vogel kris@yahoo.com](mailto:Vogel_kris@yahoo.com)

November 20th -- KCAG Monthly Meeting
6:30 PM - 8:30 PM
Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center
4750 Troost Ave. Kansas City, MO 64110
Lewis and Clark Room
Studies of Ozark Cave Fish (*Amblyopis Rosae*)
Presenter -- Matt Niemiller PH.D.
Cave Biologist at UAH
First "Go to Meeting" Program

November 23rd - 25th -- CRF Buffalo National River Work Trip (Upper District)
Ponoca, Arkansas
Cave monitoring, bio-inventory, survey
NPS Steel Creek Facility, meals provided
If you have vertical gear, bring it!
If interested contact Kayla Sapokta, 479-970-0917, kayla.sapokta@gmail.com

December 1st -- Berome Moore Cave Survey
Perry County, about a 5-hour drive
Currently the second longest cave in MO Surveyed length, 21.35 miles
If interested contact, Chad McCain, chads93gt@hotmail.com

December 7th - 10th -- OT Back Pack Courtois Section III
No Caves, just Cavers, and a few very fun other people
Harmon Springs to Hazel Creek Trail Head - Advanced Trip (24 miles)
If interested contact Pic Walenta, 816-665-5588, picwalenta@aol.com

December 19th - 23rd -- CRF Buffalo National River Work Trip (Upper District)
Ponoca, Arkansas
Cave monitoring, bio-inventory, survey
NPS Steel Creek Facility, meal provided
If interested contact Kayla Sapokta, 479-970-0917, kayla.sapokta@gmail.com

December 28th -- Novice Trip to Stark Caverns
Located near Lake of the Ozarks, Eldon, MO, about 2.5 hours
Charlie Star, cave manager, has invited KCAG to explore wild sections of the Caverns, at no charge. He is wanting to build relationships with area cavers. No Grotto has committed to updating the map of 1962. He has offered this to KCAG, if anyone is interested in taking on this project.
If interested contact Jack Peters, 93-669-7179, jack@peters2000.com or Pic Walenta 816-665-5588, picwalenta@aol.com

December 29th -- Berome Moore Cave Survey

Perry County, about a 5-hour drive

Currently, the second longest cave in MO Surveyed length, 21.35 miles

If interested contact, Chad McCain, chads93gt@hotmail.com