

February 1991

## TCMA Activities Newsletter

Texas Cave Management Association (TCMA)

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# ACTIVITIES NEWSLETTER

*Solutions To Cave Related Problems*

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Volume 2, No. 1

February 1991



The **TCMA Activities Newsletter** is the official publication of the Texas Cave Management Association, a Conservancy of the National Speleological Society. Distribution is free to TCMA members. Associate membership costs \$10 annually. Lifetime membership, in equal \$25 installments, is \$100. Send membership requests to TCMA, P.O. Box 310732, New Braunfels, TX 78131. 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.

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

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*Officers*

- Mike Walsh** Executive Director
- Claire Snider Secy.-Treasurer
- Carl Ponebshek** Board Chairman
- Doug Allen Directors
- Mike Warton**
- Jay Jorden
- Jack Ralph
- Mike Walsh

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**TCMA MEETING**

Tuesday, March 5  
**7:30** p.m.  
 Mr. **Gatti's** Restaurant  
 Interstate 35 at William Cannon  
 Austin, Texas

**COVER:** Pen-and-ink drawing.

**TCMA Meeting Notice**

from Mike **Walsh**

The next meeting of the Texas Cave Management Association Board of Directors will be at **7:30** p.m. Tuesday, March 5, at the Mr. **Gatti's** Pizza, located near Interstate 35 and William Cannon Drive in South Austin, Texas.

Food will be available during the board meeting. Discussion will include the recent Whirlpool Cave activity and meetings with Austin officials on several caves.

Please plan to attend if at all possible. See you there!

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**TSA Winter Board Meeting**

by Jay Jorden

More than 120 cavers from across the state participated in the Texas Speleological Association's winter Board of Governor's meeting, hosted by the Texas Cave Management Association at Whirlpool Cave. The January meeting at Austin was designed to acquaint cavers with the Whirlpool project, and a number explored the cave during the weekend of Jan. 25-27.

The Whirlpool Cave Preserve was packed with vehicles **for** the weekend, with a huge spaghetti feed by TCMA board member Carl Ponebshek and friends. The \$5 fee for the weekend included the dinner Saturday night and camping. Peter Strickland of Austin even provided a hot tub on site!

A number of trips were made to other South Austin caves, including Midnight and Maple Run. Work was also performed at the Whirlpool grounds. Electricity and water **was** provided from a nearby house in the Whirlpool Cave Neighborhood Association.

On Sunday, both the TSA and **TCMA** had business meetings. (Please see separate article on the TCMA minutes.) Kathy **Winfree**, **TSA** treasurer, reported that the group had about \$1,015 in one bank account, and \$550-600 in another. However, the **Texas Caver** has been expensive to print lately, with one group of issues costing \$967 or so. Doug Allen, TSA president, read the minutes from the previous meeting at the Texas Old Timers' Reunion. Ed Cevcik said sales of National Speleological Society publications were going well. At that previous meeting, \$190 in donations were collected for the **Caver**.

Allen said he had decided to clear the slate of standing committee heads and re-evaluate their effectiveness. Personnel were needed on the Conservation Committee, with Jack Ralph, Scott Rote and Linda **Palit** involved earlier. Cevcik was reassigned to his NSS publication duties. Jay Jorden was reassigned to the TSA Logo Committee, with the task to get prices for more patches. **Terry** Holsinger was put on the Cave Task Force. Holsinger gave an update on current TSA participation in Texas Parks and Wildlife Department projects. The TSA also received a report from **Caver** editors Keith **Heuss** and **Oren Tranbarger**, who itemized costs and said more articles

were needed. Linda **Palit** proposed a flyer on **TSA** membership be prepared. Allen proposed a Publication Assistance **Committee**, with Austin and San Antonio components, to help with preparations for the Caver. Holsinger and Gill Ediger were to be involved. Using the Caver for mailing announcements was discussed, but some said that it wasn't a timely medium for this. Also discussed was whether the publication should have a so-called "fall bleed cover," which is a more expensive way to print photographs. A motion was made and seconded to purchase supplies to do halftones for the Caver and other work. The status of back issues was explored, along with what price to charge for them.

Upcoming projects include one at Hill Country State Natural Area. Ron Ralph with **TPWD** said he was involved but that cavers would have to get the ball rolling for official action to occur. **TCMA's** involvement in this was also discussed. The Big Bend Ranch in far West Texas, with two mountain ranges, rivers and a railroad, was also mentioned as a possible project site. It takes 16 U.S. Geological Survey maps to cover the area of **300,000** acres that doubled the Texas park system. Ponebshek moved and Jorden seconded that **TSA** should pursue an updated Memorandum of Understanding with the **TPWD**.

Cavers had a good time at the winter **BOG** meeting and **TSA** members thanked the **TCMA** for hosting the gathering. Plans for many more such events were discussed.

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## TCMA Minutes

by Jay Jorden

Present: Carl Ponebshek, chairman; Mike Walsh, Doug Allen, Jay Jorden

Absent: Clair Snider, Jack Ralph, Mike **Warton**

Call to order: 11 a.m. Sunday, Jan. 27, 1991

Carl commended Mike Walsh, Doug Allen, Lee Jay Graves and Mike **Warton** for their hard work preparing the Whirlpool Cave Preserve for the Texas Speleological Association's winter Board of Governor's meeting. More than 125 people attended the event, which began Friday, Jan. 25. Carl said that Doug and Mike had information on negotiations with the Austin electrical utility later.

Walsh reported that an earlier Texas Cave Management Association cleanup and work project at the site had been successful. He said that a map of the area had been produced and a landscaping plan arranged. The preserve's utility as a meeting site has also been proven and Texas **grottos** may make more use later. About \$600 raised by **TSA** at the winter **BOG** meeting probably won't financially aid **TCMA**, but the cave management group relies upon the regional organization for many of its manpower resources.

Allen said that much work remains to be done, although the cave entrance had been improved, with rocks and gravel placed around the concrete work. The rock berm around the entrance has been completed. Arrangements were made with a local

homeowner for electricity and water, and a Whirlpool Cave Neighborhood Association has been formed. Another homeowner who lives near a church has offered his house to the cavers, and the more that the neighborhood is involved in **TCMA's** work, the more secure the area will become. A letter has been sent to area residents about **TCMA**.

Taxes and Insurance: **Walsh** reports that property taxes for Whirlpool have been paid. He said that the property valuation had been reduced to \$8,000 per acre and the total taxes of \$201.30 have been paid. A distinct possibility also exists, he said, for gaining property tax exemption from the city of Austin. A request has been made, but a final determination has not yet been made. On the **TCMA's** Section 501(c)(3) tax exempt status with the Internal Revenue Service, Walsh said that it has been about three years since the agency granted such provisional status. Documents have now been submitted for a final, permanent determination of tax exempt status, and about 90 days are required for that to be completed. There's no indication of any problem with that, and the news is awaited.

Electric Utility Negotiations: Allen next reported on the status of negotiations with the Austin electric company. He said that recently, a representative contacted him about the utility's search for a site for relocation of a power substation, and that two such sites were adjacent to the Whirlpool property on the Convict Hill Road side. He said he and Walsh attended a planning meeting about one month ago where the **proposal** was discussed. There are several such sites. Allen said the message delivered to the utility was basically that the **TCMA** would not agree to location of a site that would bring high-tension **lines and/or** poles over the preserve. Allen also raised concerns about possible pollution to the cave, creek and aquifer from utility equipment, oil from transformers, etc. The utility, in an attempt to appease **TCMA**, has proposed (a) a land swap of sorts in which the approximately 1.5 acres on the other side of the Brush Country Road overpass that **TCMA owns** would be traded for an equivalent space on the rock wall/Convict Hill Road side of the Whirlpool Preserve, thus allowing the utility to place **poles/lines** on the other side of Brush Country and giving the cavers the historic rock wall and tent camping space, along with a greenbelt, and (b) allowing **TCMA** to do consulting work for the other proposed utility substation sites on cave inventory, etc. Additionally, Walsh said that **TCMA** could propose in the negotiations that if the substation is located at the Convict Hill Road site and the land swap proceeds, the utility could further sweeten the deal by providing an electric drop for the Whirlpool Preserve and possible water and sewer connection variances.

William Russell, in attendance, pointed out that the issue is not whether the utility will locate a substation on the Convict Hill side of Whirlpool, but what other development will occur there. The area is penciled in for multifamily dwellings (apartments, condos, etc.) Allen said that he was skeptical of utility assurances that (a) no hazardous waste spill would occur because retaining walls or **tanks** would be built, (c) no transformers and other dangerous equipment would be stored there, and (c) no **PCBs** (polychlorinated biphenyls) would be used. It was mentioned that Mike **Warton** was doing karst studies in the area. Keith **Heuss**, also present, said that as an employee of Lower Colorado River Authority, he noted some substations had had problems with vandalism and **sabotage**,

and oil from one transformer leaked into the North San Gabriel River.

**M/Keith Heuss, s/Don Broussard** that **TCMA** oppose the construction of the electric utility's power substation adjacent to the Whirlpool Preserve. The motion was approved, with the only nay vote by Walsh. Jorden also proposed that TCMA research whether a consultant (attorney, if necessary) in utility procedural matters was available to help TCMA fight the substation. Walsh pointed out that a Barton Creek environmental group was against the proposed sites adjacent to Whirlpool.

**Newsletter Report, Patches:** Jorden reported that the first 1991 **TCMA Activities Newsletter** would be published and distributed in February. Allen and Ponebshek said they would submit material for it, including earlier meeting minutes and a report from the cave task force meeting with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Jorden said it was possible that that issue would be produced by laser printer. It was also mentioned that an article on the Edwards Aquifer protection efforts might be submitted. He also said he was securing the latest price list of a Taiwanese patch embroidery company to get TCMA patches made. The first attempt resulted in the money order being returned because prices had gone up for the work.

**Treasury Report:** Walsh reported that the treasury has about \$2,800, of which \$2,000 is grant money for the engineering publication and another \$750 or so is earmarked for the bat publication. Discussion followed of plans for both those publications. Walsh said TCMA has about 100 members. **The** treasurer, Clair Snider, was absent, but Walsh reported that not much money had been spent since the last report. Most improvements to Whirlpool Preserve had been by volunteer efforts. Plans are also under way for publication of the 1989 management symposium proceedings. Walsh also said the **TCMA's** T-shirts sold out. Plans **are being** made for more to be printed.

**Cave Acquisition Committee:** Jorden reports that he has contacted a representative of the Fair Hole development company twice by phone and twice by letter. The representative was interested in the idea of deed transfer or a conservation easement but said he would have to talk with his board of directors. Ponebshek said he would contact the representative directly, since he lives in that area of the state. Material will be forwarded to him. Also, Jorden said he researched deed records at the Williamson County Courthouse and found ownership information on Cobb Cavern northwest of Georgetown. Walsh said that a caretaker of the property had visited Whirlpool and that Mike Grimm knew the man's name. Attempts will be made to contact the caretaker and get more information. Jorden also reported on a trip he and Danny **Sherrod** of Burleson made to the Sore Ped Cave area near Georgetown. The cave's situation is reported as sensitive, but attempts will be made to contact the owners later. Walsh said he has been researching information on Harrison Cave near Sonora, and found a publication on the cave, which is owned by an oil company. Walsh has also visited 50- to 60-foot deep Midnight Cave in the Austin area, near a sports field, and **Driscoll** Cave, in the Whirlpool vicinity, which has 200 feet of depth potential. **Warton** has set up a meeting. **Warton** has also done work on

**Amazing Maze Cave**, which has several pits and potential for up to 10 miles of passage. Gating plans have been made there. The TCMA has also contacted The University of Texas about a couple of caves, including 0-9 Water Well in West Texas. Russell discussed Maple Run Cave, saying that contact had been made with Lee Stone and a tentative management contract submitted to city officials. He said that two San Antonio women own Blowing Sink, in the Whirlpool vicinity. Ponebshek volunteered to contact them. Russell was to do more research in this area.

**Granite Sculpture:** **Don Broussard** of Austin reports that his family is willing to place a large (more than two ton) granite sculpture on the Whirlpool Preserve. This arrangement has previously been approved by the TCMA board. However, Russell points out that the proposed location might be within the 100-year floodplain. Research needs to be done to determine whether this is true. A proposed lease has been drawn up (please see a copy elsewhere in this issue.) More research was promised on the floodplain question and the proposed lease.

**Elections:** Walsh reports that he and Mike **Warton** were elected to the TCMA board in the latest elections. The next TCMA board meeting will be Tuesday, March 5, at 7:30 p.m. at the Mr. **Gatti's** on William Cannon in Austin.

Respectfully submitted,

Jay Jorden

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## Notes from Cave Task Force Meeting

from Doug Alien

**Editor's Note:** The following are notes from the Cave Task Force meeting **Dec. 15, 1990** that included representatives from the Texas Cave Management Association, Texas Speleological Association and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The meeting took place at Colorado Bend State Park. **Disclaimer:** Meeting dialogues were for background and not yet ready for public dissemination.

Present: John Williams, June **Secrist**, Mike Herring, Jesse **Tarin**, Bruce Blaine, Doug Allen, Keith Heuss, **Ron** Ralph, Terry Holsinger, Mike **Warton**, Lee Jay Graves, Carl Ponebshek and nine other people

Call to order: 10 a.m.

**Colorado Bend State Park:** Work at the park by cavers was reviewed by Keith Heuss. He outlined details of the extensive project. State representatives said they need about one year lead time before opening the **German** Falls natural area to surveying and inventorying. They said they were pleased with progress of the work to date. Volunteers for the project were informed that some **tax** deductions were possible for their work and that more incentives for their labor might be forthcoming in upcoming legislation.

**German Cave:** The status of the most notable cave in the Colorado Bend area was discussed, including the possibilities of gating and signing at the entrance or elsewhere and a permit system. Doug Allen recommended that a gate be installed from

the outset, before German is opened to the public. Mike **Warton** said that a gate meeting Federal standards for bats, etc., would cost about \$2,500. The possibility of "outfitters' permits" at the cave was discussed.

**Archaeology:** Ron Ralph said that cavers must recognize, report and "be stewards" of any archaeological sites discovered. The **TPWD** also must be made aware of findings. Ralph recommended an educational seminar to give cavers information on what to look for in archaeology. An "Archaeology Acquaintance" meeting was tentatively scheduled for May at Colorado Bend State Park for such caver training.

**Future Project Proposals:** After a lunch break, Ralph said he was trying to acquire a "graffiti removal machine" for cave cleanup work. The Lubbock Area Grotto members have expressed interest in getting involved with Central Texas cave projects. The newly acquired Big Bend Ranch was discussed, with a possible TSA fall project there limited to open public portions of the park property. Officials said follow-up work is needed at Hill Country State Natural Area. Ralph said he possesses information on earlier work there.

An interim use plan is in effect with TPWD. Volunteers are needed to lead and coordinate renewed projects, including re-evaluation of resources, photodocumentation, mapping, biological collections, etc. Some caver projects for TPWD must be finished before others are begun. Ralph has a systematic resource cave form for possible distribution.

**Memorandum of Understanding: The TSA's** memorandum of understanding with TPWD has expired. But TPWD officials don't necessarily need another MOU from the cavers, since they had only requested the earlier one for official standing, etc. It is not needed for work to be done. The plan was to bring up with TSA membership at its Board of Governors' meeting in January whether a new MOU is needed. (**Editor's note:** at that January meeting, it was agreed that **TSA** should pursue such an MOU with the department.) June **Secrist** said she has standard MOU forms which **can** be used.

**Earth Day Projects:** Last year, an Earth Day project was held at the Colorado Bend park. Its superintendent, Jesse **Tarin**, said he would like an even bigger event this year, with more cave cleanups, local media coverage, a tent, displays, etc. Lee Jay Graves suggested broadening **TSA** work to multiple park sites, besides Colorado Bend. Other Earth Day projects, tours and programs for parks were discussed.

**Devil's Sinkhole:** The parks department said Devil's Sinkhole remains closed, with scientific access only. Officials said resource protection there is paramount, with recreational caving not allowed. A use plan is not yet in place.

**Kickapoo Cave:** This cave, **TPWD** said, is also closed until enough funds become available for it. There had been discussion of guided wild cave tours and bat flight observation. But the presence of an endangered species on the surface is a major consideration on closure.

The meeting ended at 2 p.m.

## Proposed Lease

from reports

This Lease Agreement is made effective as of the <st day of <>, 1991, by and between the TEXAS CAVE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION ("**TCMA**") and DON BROUSSARD ("Tenant"). The parties agree as follows:

1. **PREMISES.** TCMA, in consideration of this Agreement, leases to Tenant a spot of land, located at WHIRLPOOL CAVE, <address **MoPac**>, Austin, Texas, for the placement of a granite sculpture. Placement of the sculpture will be at the expense of the Tenant. Location of the sculpture will be at the discretion of the TCMA.

2. **TERM.** The lease term shall commence on <month, **day**>, 1991, and shall terminate on a date not to exceed 99 years.

3. **POSSESSION.** Tenant shall be entitled to possession on the first day of the term of this **Lease**, and shall yield possession to TCMA on the last day of the term of this **Lease**, unless otherwise agreed by both parties in writing.

4. **MAINTENANCE.** Tenant shall have the obligation to maintain the sculpture in good repair at all times.

**TCMA's** obligation for maintenance shall include all maintenance and repair with respect to parking lots, driveways, sidewalks, railings and grounds surrounding the granite sculpture.

5. **TAXES.** All taxes attributable to the premises or the use of the premises shall be paid by TCMA.

6. **REPAIR.** Should the sculpture need repair due to damage by vandals, such damage will be the responsibility of the Tenant.

Damage to the sculpture due to unlawful TCMA activities, if any, will be repaired by TCMA.

7. **NOTICE.** Notices under this **Lease** shall not be deemed valid unless given or served in writing and forwarded by mail, postage prepaid, addressed as follows:

LANDLORD:  
TCMA **CHAIRMAN**  
< address >, TX < rip code >

TENANT:  
Don Broussard  
P.O. Box 653  
Dripping Springs, TX 78620

Such addresses may be changed **from** time to time by either party by providing notice as set forth above.

8. **ENTIRE AGREEMENT/AMENDMENT.** This Agreement contains the entire agreement of the parties, and there are no other promises or **conditions** in any other agreement, whether oral or written. The Agreement may be modified or amended in

writing, if the writing is signed by the **parties** obligated under the amendment.

IN **WITNESS** WHEREOF, the parties have executed this Lease **Agreement as** of the date first shown above.

LANDLORD: Texas Cave  
Management Association  
b Y

TCMA Executive Director

TENANT: Don Broussard  
b Y

Broussard

Do



Texas Cave Management Association  
1518 Devon Circle  
Dallas, TX  
(214) 398-9272



**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**  
**RETURN RECEIPT GUARANTEED**



**FIRST CLASS**

