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June 1995

### TCMA Activities Newsletter

Texas Cave Management Association (TCMA)

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# TCMA PROJECT AND MEETING NOTICE

Texas Cave Management Association



The next board meeting of the Texas Cave Management Association will be combined with a work project at Lost Oasis Cave in Austin. The Board of Directors' meeting is scheduled at 10 p.m. Saturday, June 24, on the property located in Shady Hollow Estates in southern Travis County. Overnight camping will be available in the area, with the work project scheduled all day on Sunday, June 25, beginning at 9 a.m.

TCMA members and other interested persons are invited to attend the project. **Weed** and brush clearing, perimeter repair, and general cleanup of the property are planned. A visit to the nearby Whirlpool Cave Preserve is **also** possible. Lost Oasis should be open later in the day.

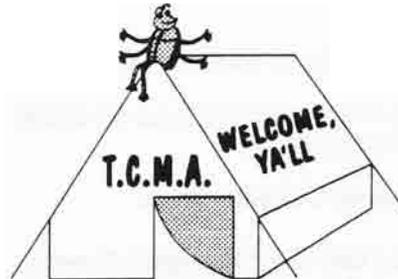
For more information, please contact the cave manager, **Nico** Hauwert. He is reached at (512) 282-8441, work; and (512) 443-8023, home.

## **CAVER DIRECTIONS**

To get to the property, take Interstate 35 south across the Colorado River, then about five miles to the Slaughter Lane exit. Go right (or west) on Slaughter about three **miles**, past Manchaca Road. Turn left (or south) on **Brodie** Lane, then go about 1.5 miles to Green Emerald Street. Go right on Green Emerald about one-half mile--or one long **block--to** Lost Oasis Road, then right to Bailey Middle School. Parking is available near the school entrance along Lost Oasis Road. The cave property is visible behind a gate and chain link fence.

Please bring extra lawn chairs; portable shade is **also** advisable. Drinks will be available; some restaurants are nearby. Agenda items should be sent to Secretary Carolyn **Biegert** at TCMA, P.O. Box 202853, Austin, Texas **78720-2853**. Her number is (512) 458-9606.

See you there!



# MINUTES OF TCMA BOARD MEETING

February 18, 1995, Campwood, Texas

Carl **Ponebshek** called the meeting to order at 7:45 A.M.

**Directors and Officers Present:** Carl **Ponebshek**  
William Russell  
Jay **Jorden**  
Noble **Stidham**  
Bill Sawyer  
Jim **Wolff**  
Carolyn Biegert  
Gary **Napper**, proxy for Ron Ralph and Rune **Burned**

**Directors Absent:** Bruce **Anderson**  
Mike **Warton**  
Bob "Rune" **Burnett**  
Ron Ralph

## Secretary's Report:

Minutes of the October 22-23 meeting were not available.

## Treasurer's Report:

**Offices** and directors received copies of the Financial Reports for April through December 1994, fiscal 1994, and January 1995 in the mail.

**Motion:** Carl **Ponebshek** moved that the Treasurer's financial reports for April 1994 thru January 1995 and for fiscal 1994 be approved. Seconded. Approved.

In a written correspondence, the Treasurer requested that the following items concerning the TCMA's funds also be discussed.

1. Status of Buttercup Creek Monitoring Grant: \$876.00 remain from the 1994 grant and an additional \$1,272.00 has been deposited. Is monitoring being done? Carl **Ponebshek** reported that he has received several detailed reports from **Wharton and Associates**. He will forward them to Noble **Stidham** for publication the TCMA Newsletter.

2. TSA Honorarium: Jay Jorden reported that he is working with the Center for Nonprofit Management on ideas for investing this money for TSA so that it can be relieved from the TCMA account.

3. RASS bat grant: Jay Jorden stated that he would write to RASS and ask if TCMA can me the money for other cave management activities. He also suggested that the money could be used to produce a general brochure that would also mention bats.

4. Bruce asked that he be reimbursed for \$32.00 in stamps.

**Motion:** Jay moved to reimburse Bruce for \$32.00. Seconded. Approved, unanimously.

**Executive Director's Report:** None.

## Whirlpool and Lost Oasis Manager's Report:

Jim **Wolff** reported that the lock at Whirlpool had corroded and was replaced. New keys (or combinations) will be distributed when a new lock is chosen. The gate at Whirlpool also needs to be replaced. Jim will contact Mike **Warton** about a price.

A new trash barrel is needed at Whirlpool. The City of Austin Parks Department has promised to get a new trash barrel and picnic table, but there has been no word on these items lately. William Russell will remind Lee Stone that this promise was made. Carl **Ponebshek** recommended contacting **Pete Strickland** or Gill **Ediger** about getting a trash barrel. Jim also reported that name signs need to be made for Lost Oasis Cave. The signs will have the TCMA P.O. Box number on them. Carolyn **Biegert** reported that TCMA has received notice that a tax exemption for Lost Oasis Cave Preserve has been granted. Finally, Jim reported that Nico Hauwert is the new site manager for Whirlpool and Lost Oasis. He will report to Jim **Wolff**.

Motion: William Russell moved that Nico Hauwert be authorized to handle money for Whirlpool and Lost Oasis management. Seconded by Noble **Stidham**. Approved, unanimously.

## Old Business:

See Treasurer's Report and Whirlpool and Lost Oasis Manager's Report.

## New Business:

1. Carl announced that due to health reasons, he may have to resign as TCMA Board Chairman. He will try to complete his term (through 1995). If he is unable to serve during that time, Carl would like Jay Jorden to serve as Chairman until a new President and Chairman of the Board can be chosen. Jay agreed. Carl also reported that he would like to continue to work with TCMA as a member of the Advisory Board.

2. Jim **Wolff** suggested that TCMA nominate and elect a new President and Vice President every two years.

**Motion:** Jim **Wolff** moved to nominate two people for President and Vice President at the next Board meeting and that these nominations be repeated every two years. Seconded by Jay Jorden. All but William Russell voted for. William and Jay pointed out that there is already language in the Constitution and By-Laws to elect a President and Vice President whenever we want to. William Russell made a friendly amendment that TCMA resolve to reconsider officers every time we have Board elections. Approved.

3. Carl reported that there is a new ordinance in San Antonio protecting caves. He feels that developers may be more willing to work with us in the future. The *Bexar Grotto* is going to work on purchasing or getting caves donated to TCMA. Carl suggested that **Dan Hogenaur**, a professor at UTSA, might be a good addition to the Board. He has approached the *Madras about Madra's* Cave near Helotes. Dan is also willing to talk to UTSA about three caves on UTSA property. Jim warned about taking on too many caves because of funding and management problems. Jay reminded that TCMA needs to begin an aggressive membership drive to raise money for management.

4. William Russell brought four topics before the Board. (1) He would like TCMA to decide what type\* of caves they should be trying to acquire and manage. It was generally decided that caves with recreational, historical, and endangered species value should be sought. (2) William reported that the gate at

Shady Hollow Cave has been breached. He would like TCMA to consider pursuing ownership **and/or** management of Shady Hollow Cave **and** Sink. (3) William suggested that TCMA pursue a *contract* with the National Wildflower Research Center to manage Wildflower Cave, which is located on their new property in **South** Austin.

**Motion:** Jim **Wolff** moved that TCMA seek to manage Wildflower Cave. Seconded by Jay Jorden. Approved, **unanimously**.

William **and** Carolyn **will** look into establishing a contract for the management of Wildflower Cave. (4) William reported that a lab at UT wants to study what animals **eat** by analyzing the DNA in their systems. He suggested that TCMA **could** write a **grant** proposal for this project to be conducted in **one** of **our** caves.

5. **Bin Sawyer** is **going** to look into putting TCMA **T-shirts** and bumper stickers in the **gift** shop at Caverns of **Sonora**. Other board **members** will check with other commercial cave owners. This **could** be a **fundraiser** for TCMA.

6. Jay wants to establish **an** interpretive center where TCMA **could** display information **on** caves **and** distribute membership brochures. **Board members will** contact the Wildflower Research Center, UT, Austin Parka Department, **and** Real Estate **Offices**.

7. Noble **Stidham** reported that he is **donating** Survey Books that he printed to be **sold** for 50¢ each as a **fundraiser** for TCMA.

**8. Motion:** Jay Jorden moved to have a TCMA Board meeting at the TSA Spring Convention. **Seconded** by William **Russell**. Approved.

9. Jim **Wolff** suggested that TCMA Board have a meeting before the TSA Spring Convention **and** take more time to discuss philosophical **matters**. Jay Jorden offered his property **near** Georgetown as a site.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:00 A.M.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:  
Carolyn M. **Biegert**, Secretary

## CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

by Fred **Wefer**

There are currently no candidates for the position of Chair of the Conservation Committee. The reason is simple. Nobody has volunteered. Since this position requires BOG approval, unless a qualified candidate steps forward soon it will be too late to fill this position at the upcoming BOO Meeting at the 1995 NSS Convention.

Should that happen, the next opportunity would be the Fall BOG Meeting, sometime in **October**. I will run another announcement in the **NSS** News after convention.

## TEMPORARY CHANGES IN EFFECT

I am sure that you have **noticed** the change in the appearance in the Activities Newsletter. I **must** explain.

I am moving my office **and** **thus** all my printing stuff. Press **and** all. It **will** be a month or **maybe** two before the press **and** I **will** be **fully** operational **again**. I am looking forward to the first printing in the new location which, by the way, is also the location of the new LAG climbing tower (or Pole Hinge, as it is locally known).

I will be located in south Lubbock on 98th street, one block west of Interstate **87**. My new **telephone/fax** number will be **806-748-0105**. My current number is still good until the **end** of the month. At that time, Ma **Bell** will advise callers of the **new** number.

Come and help me **carry** stuff,

Noble **Stidham**, ed.



# THE "MARIGOLD" CAVE PRESERVE CEDAR PARK AREA OF WILLIAMSON COUNTY, TEXAS

An Historic Report prepared by Mike L. Warton, Biologist & Karst Specialist

April 1, 1995

"MARIGOLD CAVE" was discovered on Memorial Day, 1988, as area caver Mr. Bill Larson dug his way down a narrow shaft to intersect an open low bedding plane. At that time, the entrances to the cave were located in an undeveloped section of the "Buttercup Creek" residential subdivision, and just preceding the onslaught of environmental wave of investigations in karst lands for regulatory reporting issues.

The cave's two entrances were located within lot areas, as the subdivision streets had been installed within the previous year. The main entrance to the cave existed only as a large 50 foot in diameter sinkhole which was naturally filled with erosional materials. Bill had noticed this feature in 1987, and had made some attempts to dig into the cave by way of the main entrance. However, such attempts were repeatedly thwarted as roaming children of the subdivision would find the digs and occasionally play around the sink and inadvertently push rocks back into the holes, etc.

After a while, the word was out about this feature, as concerned neighborhood parents placed calls to the developers about this big hole that their children might get injured in. This situation progressed to a point that some of these parents banded together and brought in additional fill to plug off the sink. However, this did not cure the problem as the children themselves continued digging in the sink area.

Finally, the situation reached a peak point where so many demanding calls had been placed that a backhoe was brought out and several scooped loads of fill were dumped into the sink. The digging activity within the big sink essentially halted. It was after this point that the small, rarely noticed far western side sink was excavated leading into the cave below.

This original route into the cave was a small, low, and constricted passage opening onto a low interior room known as "Knob Hall". Along the back wall of this chamber is a rock joint which was too narrow to descent, but drops directly into the top of a 60 foot deep vertical shaft later to be named "Blue Moon Pit".

I can easily imagine the excitement of this find at the time. An excavation into the floor at one end of the joint eventually accessed a route to the top of this beautiful shaft. Hidden from sight below and around a corner was the top of a second similar pit named "Pit No. 2".

As exploration continued, much more cave was found beyond the top of these pits, and in the far southern extent of the cave, a third entrance to the cave was found leading to the surface in a small dome shaft. This shaft however, was constricted, and only dim rays of sunlight were seen from within. This entrance was later located at the surface but was not excavated open as another entrance was not needed. Later, a home was built placing this entrance in the back yard area of the house. The home owner had no desire to open it, and it became completely covered over again. This home owner happened to raise honeybees and placed a row of hives along his back fence near the entrance point. Further, he kept a Doberman pincher dog as a pet. We did not perceive that there would be any problem with anyone trying to get into the cave through this entrance and indeed there has never been any associated problem.

A large boulder placed over the only accessible entrance to the cave became an effective hiding device for this entrance. For the next few years area cavers continued their exploration in the cave and were not detected by area kids and residents. During this period the "Blue Moon Pits" were explored using vertical equipment and the cave was first mapped by Peter Sprouse.

As time progressed the development area and the protective regulation provisions for karst lands continued to develop. At one point, the houses were coming so close that it was feared that the cave would be destroyed and built over.

In January of 1991 I was already set up as an environmental contractor and was contacted by the subdivision owners about performing a study of this cave specifically. During the month of February 1991 we made a thorough study of "MARIGOLD CAVE" and re-mapped it as well.

The cave proved to contain the endangered invertebrate species "Rhadine Persephone" (Tooth Cave Ground Beetle), and was evaluated as an "Intermediate Range Point Recharge Feature". An ongoing relationship with the subdivision owners began to develop as we gradually began to inform them of the extent of the natural resources and caves on their properties. Throughout this process they were and are to be commended for their environmental awareness and willingness to do the right things in these areas of concern.

In 1992 we were requested to gate the cave. This request was a result of a firm commitment to protect and save the cave. We

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The cave proved to contain the endangered invertebrate "Rhadine Persephone" and the cave was evaluated as an "Intermediate Range Point Recharge Feature".

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informed them that the right thing to do would be to excavate the main **natural** entrance so that the integrity of **this** feature would be restored. **Remediation** for the sake of endangered invertebrate **species** habitat, as well as preserved function of **point recharge ability** commanded **this**.

Our **recommendations** we followed in full trust of our evaluations as we began the project of excavation and protective gating of the two entrances. **This** approach proved indeed to be the best environmentally **correct** remedy for the integrity of this cave. **The** gating project began with the manufacturing of a large access **type** gate and a **non-access** type grid for the second **entrance** which **would** no longer be **needed** for access. Little did we know how much more there was to be discovered about this cave system.

Previous mapping confirmed the connection of the main entrance into the cave, so there was no concern that we would not be able to connect. A very labor intensive excavation at the **main** natural entrance of the cave began. The gates were on standby, **ready** for installation immediately upon **completion** of the dig. The dig continued for a total of three days. **The** dig was one of the most fruitful digs ever, as a very new extensive region of the cave was discovered extending to the north of the main entrance.

The day of this **discovery** will **not** be forgotten. A small tunnel through flowstone extended to the north approximately 12 feet beneath the lip of the entrance shaft, and on the **same** perspective **level** as the **other known** sections of the upper cave. Caver Charley **Savvas** was the first one to enter this **tunnel**. It extended as a **crawway** for approximately 40 feet to the north, opening on to a well decorated **room** of standing size.

An initial yelp of excitement **was** heard, shortly followed by a yell, the likes of which I've never heard. In one **corner** of the room lay the top of a deep vertical pit with the audible **roar** of running water issuing. **Savvas** quickly had approached the top of this pit and shown his **light** down a sculpted and scoured clean **verticle** shaft for approximately 60 feet to the top of a **running** streamway. In his excitement Charley yelled so hard that an immediate **nosebleed** resulted. Hence, **this** new shaft received the name "Nose Bleed Pit".

Exploration at this time only **extended as far as** dropping the pit to **confirm** that the **stream passage** at the **bottom** extended both in upstream and downstream directions, and would likely require a **wetsuit** to explore much further. The main entrance to the cave was gated with a heavy **duty** large 2 X 3.5 foot pit door gate while the old cave entrance **was** gated with a **non-access** type grid.

Excavations in the main entrance as well as other explorations continued after the the gating project since a high level of interest in the cave remained. During the **course** of these explorations, a **second** shaft **near** the first **was** found and named the "Submarine Pit". **This** large shaft also intersects the cave stream passage a short distance downstream of the first. **The**

downstream passage was pushed for an approximated 30 feet to a clay embankment which had to be dug **out**. **This** effort involved several work trips into the cave. Digging **efforts** are still on-going in **this** section.

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Beyond this point a high dome shaft named "Topless Pit" **was** discovered. **While** digging efforts were still **on-going** in the downstream section an upstream push occurred and much to the surprise of **cavers** Doug **Alien** and **Charley Savvas**, they broke through several hundred feet upstream to the north.

Numerous climbs along this high **joint-controlled** passage led to upper cave levels. Chattering and stumbling in the coldness and without **wetsuits**, the two reached a point where the upstream passage **became** a scoured-smooth walled conduit passage of walking size. Waist deep in water, they hung a piece of **orange survey flagging from the ceiling**, and turned around to start the long grinding trip out. Since that time, no **one** has returned to that point to **see** what lay ahead. None of the new section of the cave **has** yet been surveyed.

In February of 1993 further studies were performed at the cave site and a **4-lot** area arrangement was **set aside** as a protective preserve **area**. Upon my recommendation, the **Texas** Cave Management Association was elected to receive a site **management** contract for "MARIGOLD CAVE", and two other smaller nearby **caves**. During the **approximately** two and one-half years of site **management**, a lot of surface related work has been accomplished. I took the position of preserve manager and have **maintained** these sites to the satisfaction of the **owners**, who have **continued** to **renew** the **management** contract on a yearly basis.

During this time, most of the site's attention has involved **surface** related work. In-cave work has **been** limited to endangered invertebrate species studies and entrance **area** activity. Much remains to be done in this cave now that a preliminary range of study obstacles are near completion.

The **discovery** of the cave stream passage was a major find, as these types of conduits are seldom found accessible in the Northern Edwards Plateau. It was with this discovery that "MARIGOLD CAVE" **became** a "major" cave and has led to a **greater understanding** of how it relates with other caves of the area as put of a greater and interconnected "Living Hydrogeologic System".

Due to structural faults in the area and involvement of other limestone formations other than the **Edwards**, the caves of the "Buttercup Creek" Karst are quite different than anywhere else on the Northern Plateau. Presently, the area holds the county's depth record as well as having some of the longest caves in the county. **Project** work in the whole of this cave system has been occurring in **conjunction** with putting together a **sound** plan to protect not only endangered invertebrate species but point recharge loss as well.

The "MARIGOLD CAVE" preserves are supported by their owners, the "Buttercup Creek" Neighborhood Association, and the Texas Cave Management Association. ■

# CAVING IN CAMPWOOD

by Jay Jorden

Ranchers rolled out the red carpet for the Texas Speleological Association in late February as the TSA's winter Board of Governors' meeting expanded into two days of caving. The southwest Texas town of Campwood, a ranching and recreation hub for parts of three counties, was the focus of activity for February 18 - 19.

From a campsite along the Nueces River, dozens of cavers fumed out over two days to leads provided by area ranchers, in collaboration with the local Chamber of Commerce.

Developing good relations with ranchers in Real and surrounding counties is important. The area is near the Brackettville site of the 1994 National Speleological Society Convention and is a leading mohair-producing region. Sheep, goat, and cattle herds produce almost all of Real County's \$6 million average farm income.

The TSA event was co-hosted by the Texas Cave Conservancy. A group of Texas Cave Management Association members and others, in a Sunday visit to one ranch, mapped several hundred feet in a cave that a rancher had rediscovered on a hillside. The amiable rancher, who had earlier bulldozed a road to near the cave, was then lowered more than 50 feet into a pit by means of a line tied onto a vehicle. On this weekend, impressed by cavers' use of rope and vertical equipment, the rancher made his first rappel - and remarked how smooth it was... down the shaft. Personal on the trip included William Russell, Jerry Atkinson, Bill Sawyer and Noble Stidham.

During the weekend, a group of cavers also visited Devil's Sinkhole, which was a convention cave last year. Other cavers went to Turkey Pen Cave and other caves. Much ridgewalking was accomplished, including a search for the fabled "Blowhole" on one ranch. On that property, cavers saw the added attractions of petroglyphs and dinosaur footprints along a creekbed. So friendly and cooperative were the area's ranchers that at least one caver heard about cave leads during a gas station stop!



Saturday evening and Sunday morning were busy times for meetings, with the TSA and the two Texas cave conservation groups all gathering for discussions. During the TSA business meeting, a vacant editorship for the Texas Caver was filled. Terry Holsinger and Chris Veeland, both of Austin, will work together to co-edit alternating issues of the publication with Noble Stidham of Lubbock. Chris and Terry fill the vacancy of Austin caver Keith Heuss, who resigned to pursue other interests.

Breakfast during the meeting featured eggs and sausage, with plenty of salsa to keep participants alert!

The weekend was marred only by a rabid wildcat's visit to the Nueces River camp, where it frightened residents and eventually was cornered by an animal control officer who sustained some injuries. No cavers were hurt, although one was surprised on a visit to the shower building to see the cat ambling out!

Many return trips are planned to the area, which has now become a hotbed of Texas caving and conservation efforts.



**TEXAS CAVE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
**FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

**JUNE 1994**

Beginning balance:			\$ 3,743.95
Less expenditures:			
06/06/94#185 Washington Insurance	\$ 384.00		
06/06/94#186 Washington Insurance	66.00		
06/25/94#188 Jim Wolff	200.00		
06/30/94 S/C	3.00		
Total expenditures:			653.00
Ending balance:			\$ 3,090.95
Central Bank & Trust 06/30/94	\$ 3,165.95		
Less Outstanding Checks	75.00		
Adjusted Bank Balance:	\$ 3,090.95		
Grant balances:			
RASS Bat Grant		\$ 750.00	
Wrey Trust		92.87	
Buttercup landscape		500.00	
Buttercup Monitoring		876.00	
Total Grant Funds:			\$ 2,218.87
Balance of funds in general account:			\$ 872.08

**APRIL 1995**

Beginning balance:			\$ 4,268.53
Eris deposits:			
04/24/95	\$ 25.00		
Total Deposits:			\$ 25.00
Total to be accounted for:			\$ 4,293.53
Ending Balance:			\$ 4,293.53
Central Bank & Trust 04/30/95	\$ 4,293.53		
Grant Balances:			
RASS Bat Grant		\$ 750.00	
TSA (OTR Site Trust)		500.00	
Wrey Trust		92.87	
Buttercup Landscape		500.00	
Total Grant Funds:			\$ 1,842.87
Balance of funds in general account:			\$ 2,450.66

Respectfully submitted,  
J. Bruce Anderson  
Treasurer