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CaveTalk

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL CAVES ASSOCIATION

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July 2011

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From the Desk of the NCA President

Good Afternoon,

I hope everyone is busy, busy, busy with customers these days and hopeful all had a great Memorial Day weekend. I wanted to take a moment and bring everyone up to speed on some WNS news. As some may be aware of, USFWS held their 4th annual WNS symposium in Little Rock on May 17th, 18th, and 19th! At the last minute we received an invitation to participate and the Executive Committee felt it would be in our best interest to have a presence. Here's some of what I learned and the relationships that developed.

First, WNS is now confirmed in 17 States and 4 Canadian Provinces. Science has now confirmed that Gd, with almost 100% certainty, originated in Europe. They have also been able to confirm the fungus is the causative agent for the Bat mortality. If you recall, there was much discussion regarding a weakened immune system having allowed the fungus to take over. Another fact, we still have no documented research that confirms human transmission of the fungal spores, although still a possibility. There does seem to be some work being done on this topic but no formalized conclusions. I would recommend reading Peter Youngbaer's article published in the April edition of NSS News. It seems to be very accurate and reflects the current state of WNS quite well! For your convenience we've placed a copy in this edition of CaveTalk. (*Please see attachment.*)

During the conference, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released its final *National Plan for Assisting States, Federal Agencies, and Tribes in Managing White-Nose Syndrome in Bats*. It should be noted, and was mentioned many times, this document is to be used as a "roadmap" for States to work with as they see fit and it was not a mandate for States to comply. This is also a "living" document and could be changed many times over during the next few years as the disease evolves. The federal "lead" for this document is a gentleman by the name of Jeremy Coleman. We had a very positive conversation and he, himself, is very aware of personal property rights and how WNS is impacting commercial caves. He also views NCA's role as extremely valuable especially in terms of outreach and education! Jeremy invited us to be "Stakeholder" in the federal process which I graciously accepted. I felt this was a significant inroad to be part of the process and involved in communications in the future. One very specific section

of the national plan is titled Disease Management. There is a subcategory under Disease Management making specific reference to commercial caves. NCA has been asked to have a seat on the steering committee for Disease Management as well. Again, I graciously accepted!

The above paragraphs are some of the good things that came out of the symposium! The bad things are, now that the National Plan has been released, States are going to get very motivated to complete their own! My personal guess is, based on conversations, Missouri's WNS Management Plan is next on the table and we hope the voice of reason prevails.

In conclusion, I left the conference feeling our biggest concern would be action taken at the State level. It seems the Federal agencies have opened the door for the States to develop their own management plans. I strongly encourage all members in affected states and those in the WNS "path" to develop close relationships with their respective DNR's. The NCA Board is working on more legislative material and also looking at producing additional education material as the disease evolves. If you have any input or questions please don't hesitate to contact either Greg Beckler or myself! I still feel the path we've taken of education and outreach over the past 4 years is the proper direction. NCA has established lasting relationships with NSS, BCI, and USFWS that positions us as part of the process. The sad reality is research and education may not be able to stop or even slow the spread of this tragic disease. As our organization weathers this storm be sure to remain positive, good things are in store for the Show Cave industry! I hope everyone has a great summer and looking forward to seeing all in Virginia!

All the Best,



Eric Evans
President, NCA



NCA INSURANCE COMMITTEE

Since 1992, the NCA has had an insurance program to benefit our members. Many members have experienced the enhanced coverage, premium savings and excellent program service. The program has always tried to make certain the special needs of cave owners in the services and coverage provided. If you are not a current member, we feel we have been instrumental in making the insurance industry more aware of the outstanding risk we are as cave operations and we hope you consider coming into the fold.

We are very fortunate to have Keith Dobrolinsky and Pat O'Sullivan as our broker team. In the past three years since taking the program over from our previous broker, they have accomplished much in helping our membership and taking the insurance program to the next level. Both of these men are working on your behalf. Thank you Keith and Pat.

SAFETY MANUAL

Your Insurance Committee has been working diligently for the past year and a half on preparing a Safety Manual to benefit our entire membership. In this manual we will help you identify potential hazards and show you how to reduce your risk while maintaining a fun and exciting cave experience. We plan to have our Safety Manual debut at the 2011 Convention in Luray, VA. Our goal is to hand out a binder which you will take back to your cave and updated hand-outs will be mailed periodically. During the convention we will spend about 45 minutes on this program with Q & A time.

Assurance Safety Consulting has been working with the NCA Insurance Committee on this Safety Manual and now we plan to offer the membership three Webinars. Many thanks go out to John Schumacher and Ryan Kaderavek at Assurance for their assistance in these projects. We hope you will participate. We encourage

owners and managers to attend the live webinar broadcasts. All webinars will be posted on the NCA website following the live broadcasts so they will be available for your staff training when you need them.

Webinar #1 May 2, 2011 **Why Didn't I See That?**
Awareness of safety issues as a guest visits your property.

Webinar #2 June 6, 2011 **Perils in Paradise**
Dealing with Cave Tour Safety

Webinar #3 July 11, 2011 **Stumbling in the Dark**
Dealing with Natural Tours

All Webinars will be live on these dates at 11am Eastern, 10am Central, 9am Mountain, and 8am Pacific.

I would like to thank the NCA Insurance Committee members who have spent numerous hours via conference calls and attending the mid-winter meetings to work on these projects for our membership. These folks include: Brad Wuest, Denise Bell, Jim Richards, Susan Berdeaux, and Gordon Smith. Our past Chairman and committee member Steve Runkle deserves many thanks as well for his invaluable help. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or anyone of our capable committee members.

If you are a member of the NCA Insurance program, we thank you for your participation. If you are not a member, we would like you to consider joining and we would be happy to talk with you.

Bob Holt
Committee Chairman



NCA on Facebook

Don't forget that the NCA has its very own Facebook page! Does your cave "Like" us? How about your staff? Remember that your cave may post your event or comments on the page. This is just one more tool for the NCA family to get your message out to each other and to the public.



Property Rights Groups:

Several NCA members have asked questions concerning property rights. Most of the groups I have found serve a local area or focus on education - the groups listed below look like the best place to start.

Coalition for Property Rights - seems to focus on education about property rights

www.proprights.com

407.481.2289

2878 S. Osceola Ave.

Orlando, FL 32806

Citizens' Alliance for Property Rights

718 Griffin Ave. #7

Enumclaw, WA 98022

206.335.2312

info@proprights.org

Stewards of the Range - work to protect property rights, especially against Federal actions
americanstewards.us
P. O. Box 1190
Taylor, TX 76574
512.365.2699

Stewards of the Range seem to be associated with the American Land Foundation (defend property rights for real property, 800.452.6389) - both are based in Taylor, TX.

Patty Perlaky
Region 9



Region 3 Update:

Region #3 wants to say Hello and YIPPEEE it's summer! We are the Indiana and Ohio region and like many other regions across the United States this spring, we have had some major weather challenges. The rivers have flooded, over and over again, tornados, hail and the list goes on. But we have survived and now we are pressing into summer. Many of our caves are very busy this summer and did not have time to get back with me but for the most part the region has had a promising spring and so far summer looks pretty good.

Jim Richards with Bluespring Caverns reports that they opened for the first time in many years during spring break. They had a pretty good turn out during the spring break time period but then the rains hit and they were unable to give tours from April 20th to May 11th. Those of you that are not familiar with Bluespring Caverns they are a river cave and when they get a lot of rain the river floods the cave. Jim also reports that Memorial Day Saturday was a bit slow and Sunday was about where they expected it to be but then on Monday the high water prevented them from giving tours.

Eric Evans with Ohio Caverns reports that traffic is up about 5% over last year! Walk-in attendance is about level with last year to-date. Memorial Day weekend was about the same as last year. Squire Boone Caverns had a rough spring. The Ohio River backed up the valley and flooded our entrance road for 12 days this spring. We were able to reschedule many of the school field trips but not all so we ended up down in attendance for the spring. But Memorial Day weekend showed very positive and our group reservations are coming along very nicely.

A very exciting project that the three Indiana Caves have taken on is the Indiana Cave Trail. Bluespring Caverns, Marengo Cave and Squire Boone Caverns reinvented their cave trail from a few years back. This year when they finish the cave trail they get a "special" Cave trail t-shirt. The spring turn out was very good and there were several trail cards turned in during Memorial Day weekend. If anyone would like to know specifics on how we did this project just give me a call and we'll help you get started in your region! Here's to a great summer for everyone and I hope to see everyone in September at Luray Caverns!

Claudia Yundt
NCA – Region #3





Retail Committee Update

It's summer already and we are all busy with visitors and selling lots and lots of merchandise! Here's a brief update on what's been happening!

Awareness Bracelets

Awareness bracelets were ordered months ago and were ready to ship when Chinese customs decided to hold the container for inspection. It looks like the bracelets will be here around mid June. For those of you that placed your order I will get them out the same day they hit my door! We did correct the saying for this second run and they now say, "Bug Patrol We use Sonar". The lettering will also not be printed on the bracelet but the letters are actually cut into the bracelet. If you would like to order some for your cave gift shop please just send Claudia an e-mail, Claudia@squireboone.com. You can get them in any quantity and they will be .55 cents each, same as last year!

Gift Show Update

The IGES (Sevierville) show will be Nov. 3 – 7, 2011. Smoky Mountain Gift Show (Gatlinburg) show will be Nov. 4 – 7, 2011. When you make your plans to visit the two Tennessee gift shows please keep in mind that the IGES sponsored dinner for the NCA's Buyers will be on Friday November 4th. IGES will be providing us a shuttle from the Event Center to Partridge and Pear Restaurant in Pigeon Forge. Traffic on Fridays is pretty bad so they will be taking us there via shuttle and back roads (much quicker).

Penny Books

The NCA Penny books for your penny press machines are available. Please get with Diane to order! We have plenty in stock and ready to ship to you!

NCA Playing Cards

A few people have asked me about the playing cards. You can contact the printer at Impact Photographics 800-950-0110 ext. 19 Matt will be your contact. You can also e-mail him at matt@impactphotographics.com The cards come in groups of 40 at \$2.10 per pack. Impact also has other items that are cave related, just ask Matt when you call.

NCA's Buyers Group

The NCA Buyers group is growing every month. If you have not joined us yet and you would like to join, just drop Claudia an e-mail and let her know you would like to be apart of the group. It's just an easy way for the cave gift shop buyers to share information and ask questions!

New Projects

We are moving along with the bat postcards and our newest project (probably ready for 2012) are recycled reusable bags with cave designs. A big thank you to the NCA Buyers Group for all their help and input on this new project.

2011 NCA Convention

Luray Caverns has a fantastic convention planned for us this September! The Marketing Committee has been working with Rod and their buyer Shawn to set up a catalog show for the 2011 convention. The Luray group and the marketing committee were hoping to have a regular vendor show but it just was not able to happen, so a catalog show it is! And as always the catalog show will be on the first day of check in! Please plan time on the first day to collect the catalogs and samples for your gift shop buyers to look at.

Have a wonderful summer!!

Claudia Yundt
Claudia@squireboone.com



NCA 2011 Convention Planning

The NCA 2011 Conference planning is underway and things are right on schedule for an incredible convention. Please mark your calendars for September 19 – 23, 2011 and join us in Luray, VA at the historic Mimslyn Inn. Watch for Registration Packets in the mail after the July 4th weekend and get your registration in early to take advantage of the early bird discount.

While the Mimslyn Inn is already fully booked for the convention, there are other great places to stay in or near Luray. Luray Caverns Motels are holding blocks of rooms for NCA members. Please give the reservation office a call at (540) 743-6551 option 4 to inquire about rates and to make bookings. Also, the Best Western of Luray, which is directly across the street from the Mimslyn Inn, has rooms available. The Best Western may be reached at (540) 743-6511. For other lodging, such as Bed & Breakfasts or campgrounds, please call our Luray Page County Chamber of Commerce at (888) 743-3915 and they will be happy to give NCA members their best suggestions.

Conference organizers have some great day trips planned such as visiting Thomas Jefferson's home Monticello in nearby Charlottesville. Later that day, attendees will visit NCA Member, Grand Caverns, which opened for tours in 1806, making it the oldest continually operating show cave in the U.S. Other things in the mix will be a tour of Shenandoah Caverns and dinner at their new Yellow Barn, a tour of New Market Battlefield and beautiful Luray Caverns. This will be a tremendous Conference and we at Luray Caverns are glad to be your hosts in September.



Recertification of NCA Alpha Radiation Plans

Thanks to all who have completed the recertification of the NCA Alpha Radiation Plan. If your cave is not listed below please contact Steve Thompson or Steve Runkle as soon as possible. Plans recertified:

Black Chasm	Bluespring Caverns	Bluff Dwellers	Boyden Caverns
Bridal Cave	Bristol Caverns	California Caverns	Cameron Cave
Cathedral Caverns	Cave of the Mounds	Cave of the Winds	Crystal Cave, WI
Cumberland Caverns	DeSoto Caverns	Diamond Caverns	Fantastic Caverns
Glenwood Caverns	Hana Lava Tube	Howe Caverns	Jacobs Cave
Lake Shasta Caverns	Lost River, KY	Mark Twain Cave	Meramec Caverns
Mercer Caverns	Moaning Caverns	Mystic Caverns	Natural Bridge Caverns
Natural Stone Bridge and Caves	Ohio Caverns	Perry's Cave	Raccoon Mountain Caverns
Sequoyah Caverns	Smallin Civil War Cave	Squire Boone Caverns	Talking Rocks Cavern
War Eagle Caverns			





Announce to your guests that you are one of “Americas Best Show Caves” And Help promote other NCA Members. This counter brochure rack was custom made exclusively for NCA members and is available at cost. Order yours today for only \$69.95 plus shipping costs. Please contact Diane with your order.



Happy Independence Day!

