

# *Have a Prosperous and a Happy New Year!*



Winter, 2022  
Newsletter

(Edited by Gary Bush)

Janice Gott,  
RKC Publicity  
6161 Grand Vista Ave.  
Cincinnati, OH  
45213-1719

## ***Protecting Kentucky's Interior***

### **Greetings from the Rockcastle Karst Conservancy Chair, Mary Gratsch**

Despite the lingering effects of the COVID pandemic RKC has continued to grow and mature. In 2021 we added 4 new life members. RKC was able to take its first dividend this past spring from its new National Speleological Foundation (NSF) Life Member Fund. This dividend allows us to receive an amount equal to the yearly dues of the Life Members. These monies will help with our day to day business expenses.

Thanks to a Vehslage Grant from the NSF, a grant from NSS's Land Acquisition, and numerous individual contributions, the loan for our Sloans Valley Cave Preserve has been repaid, although we still need to fundraise for needed improvements and a maintenance fund.

RKC was only able to have one fundraiser this year. Our Karst-O-Rama presence was able to raise \$90 in donations, \$5 for a merchandise purchase, and \$497 from the Raffle. All those monies were deposited in our Land Acquisition Fund. We also had 3 membership renewals. Many thanks for all who tolerated the heat to attend KOR and supported RKC!

I'd like to thank all of our Preserve managers, committee members and Friends of GSP for their continued support and hard work in seeing to the preservation and maintenance of our Preserves. Thanks also to the many individuals who have helped with improvements and maintenance of Great Saltpetre Cave and campground. Your hard work is very noticeable and appreciated!

As 2021 draws to a close, let us hope that we can resume 'normal' activities in 2022. It will be refreshing to once again be able to hold 'in person' meetings, large caving events, school field trips and Open House.

In closing I will make an appeal for donations for our Land Acquisition Fund. If you are still looking to make a donation, please consider contributing to RKC. We never know when the next amazing cave may become available for the RKC to purchase.

### **More News from the Board .....**

The RKC Board welcomed back Director and Chair, Mary Gratsch, and Director and Vice-Chair, Patrick Gibson. The other two Officer and Director positions also remain unchanged: Secretary, Janice Gott, and Treasurer, Werner Jud. Gary O'Dell rounds out the Board of Directors as the Director-At-Large.



***Help Save Our Vanishing Karstlands !!!  
Donate to the RKC Cave Acquisition Fund !!!  
Your Dollars Will Last for Years !!!***

### **GSP Open House will be held May 14 & 15, 2022 ... COVID Permitting.**

Saturday, May 14, 2022 - 10am to 4pm

(Note: The Open House is always the weekend after Mother's Day.)

Sunday, May 15, 2022 - 10am to 4pm

(Please check *rkci.org* in the Spring for updates about Open House.)

Great Saltpetre Cave was a significant source of saltpeter for gunpowder during the War of 1812. The property has been an important part of the Rockcastle County community. Come and enjoy it. Join us for:

- Guided tours of the Cave. They're free!
- Free soup beans and corn bread.
- BBQ and Food concession stand, operated by the Livingston Fire Department.
- Souvenir concession stand.
- A relaxing and peaceful Crooked Creek and miles of hiking trails.

The public is welcome and encouraged to attend. Bring the whole family for a great day of interesting fun. The free cave tours last 45 to 60 minutes. The cave has electric lights. The cave floor is generally flat. Dress for the cave environment - comfortable shoes and a sweat shirt. The cave is 57 degrees year-round. Bring a flashlight, if you wish. Bring a picnic lunch or patronize the Livingston Fire Department's tasty BBQ concession stand.

## RKC Membership Status Impact

As of January 2nd, 2022, the membership of RKC stands at 123 members. We have 73 Life members, 8 Sustaining members, and 42 Individual members. Our Life Member Endowment Fund continues to provide an on-going source of income from the generous, up-front contribution from those members. Our Sustaining members also provide continuing revenue to meet our growing needs.

If you have an Individual membership, please consider upgrading to a Sustaining membership. For as little as \$5.00 per month, your contribution continues to increase your support ... and you get the additional benefit of not having to remember to send in your dues every year. At \$5 or \$10 per month, you won't even notice it on your credit bill, as it's about the same cost as a small lunch. Give it a try.

## Introducing the Rockcastle Karst Conservancy Legacy Endowment Fund An Investment in the Future

### INVEST IN RKC'S FUTURE WITH AN ENDOWED GIFT

Like all gifts that benefit RKC, endowed gifts help to permanently protect caves and karst lands in Rockcastle County, Kentucky and its surrounding areas through education, land acquisition and resource management. Endowments are particularly powerful because they deliver a dependable, perpetual source of funding. Your gift to the endowment is an investment in the future—one that makes a real difference in preservation and protecting access to caves.

### WHAT IS AN ENDOWMENT?

The Rockcastle Karst Conservancy Endowment Fund is established with the Blue Grass Community Foundation. Endowed funds are unique in that the total amount of the gift is invested. Each year, three to six percent of the endowment is distributed to benefit RKC. The rest is reinvested to ensure growth, maintaining the fund's spending power far into the future. In this respect, an endowment is intended to be a perpetual gift. Considered a measure of an organization's long-term strength, an endowment is essential if RKC is to remain a leading karst conservancy. A contribution can also be established through an estate or planned gift and is a great way to link your legacy with RKC's future.

### WHY SHOULD I MAKE AN ENDOWED GIFT?

Endowments provide a consistent and permanent funding source that supports RKC's mission for generations to come.

### BENEFITS TO RKC?

An endowed gift is made with the intention to preserve the principal value in perpetuity. Because of their permanence, endowments are among the most advantageous sources of funding for RKC. Like all Not-For-Profit organizations, RKC is subject to the volatility of the economy. RKC, however, must endure despite market ebbs and flows. Endowments help ensure income flow even if other funding sources become less reliable. Consistent funding provides RKC's board the assurance they need to excel when a need arises.

### BENEFITS TO YOU?

The perpetuity of your endowed gift will help RKC sustain support for its mission, and you will feel satisfaction in knowing that you have invested in something you care deeply about. Through your endowment, you may also build a stronger connection with the organization that benefits from your generosity. Endowments are an excellent way to honor someone special or to memorialize a loved one. Your family will enjoy a long relationship with RKC built around support for something you value.

### IN CONCLUSION.

Endowments are a particularly powerful investment in RKC's future because they deliver a dependable, perpetual source of funding. The Rockcastle Karst Conservancy Legacy Endowment Fund was established with Blue Grass Community Foundation for the specific purpose of strengthening the organization for the future. Endowed funds are unique in that the gift is invested. Each year, a percentage of the endowment is distributed to benefit RKC. The rest is re-invested to ensure growth, maintaining the fund's spending power far into the future. In this respect, an endowment is intended to be a perpetual gift.

For additional details please contact one of the following:

- ◆ Sean Cain at 859-608-0560
- ◆ Blue Grass Community Foundation at 859-225-3343
- ◆ Go to this link for the BGCF Donation Page:

<https://bgcf.givingfuel.com/donate-now>

On their page, type "Rockcastle" in the "Choose a Fund" box and select the RKC Legacy Endowment Fund. A small continuing donation is very easy on the pocketbook, but provides a fast-growing donation for the fund. Select any other fund options, then Checkout and smile!

\*\*We can also provide suggested Bequest or Trust Language to be used in your Will, Trust, and Beneficiary Designations.

The FoGSP didn't see a whole lot of activity from 2020 - 2021. Concerns regarding being able to maintain safe social distancing dissuaded the group from conducting any picnics or gatherings at the Great Saltpetre Preserve. Due to the lack of activity, members' dues were decided by the FoGSP committee to be carried on through the next calendar year.



While the FoGSP did not participate in any group events at the Preserve itself, the group did conduct two roadside cleanups of Mullins Station Road.



In conjunction with Rockcastle Solid Waste, FoGSP policed a three-mile portion of the road on October 17, 2020 and again on May 16, 2021. The Rockcastle Solid Waste program offered \$100 per mile of roadside cleanup to any willing non-profit group, so the FoGSP ended up earning \$600 in total for the group.

The October 17<sup>th</sup> cleanup yielded 128 bags of garbage, and the May 16<sup>th</sup> cleanup yielded 86 bags.

The spoils included tires, couches, bits of cars, and a coffee table (which I am still using), among other things. Friends of GSP hopes to conduct an independent cleanup of GSP's adopted stretch of highway 1004 this spring and host a picnic for participants at the preserve.



Perhaps you can join us to help improve the environment along Big Cave Road ... and have some fun while doing it.

For more information about the Friends Group contact: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/friendsofgsp>



Are you looking for a way to give back to RKC? This is perhaps the easiest way possible to support RKC. Anytime you place on order on Amazon, RKC will receive a donation from Amazon. This donation will directly support RKC's mission ... and it costs you nothing extra. The instructions for selecting RKC as your designated charity are below.

Here's how to sign up for AmazonSmile:



**On your Computer:**

Click or copy this link:

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/20-1169061>

-- or --

1. Visit **smile.amazon.com**.
2. Sign in with your Amazon.com credentials.
3. Choose "Rockcastle Karst Conservancy Inc" to receive donations, Click Select.
4. Start shopping!
5. Add a bookmark for **smile.amazon.com** to make it even easier to return and start your shopping at AmazonSmile

**On your Smartphone or Tablet:**

Turn on AmazonSmile in the Amazon Shopping app.

1. Make sure you're signed up for AmazonSmile (use your web browser to visit **smile.amazon.com**)
2. Download or update to the latest version of the Amazon Shopping app for iOS or Android.
3. Open the app and find "Settings" in the main menu (☐)
4. Tap on "AmazonSmile" and follow the on-screen instructions to turn on AmazonSmile in the app.

# Preserve News

**Great Saltpetre Cave Management Committee**

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**Chaired by Scott Pavey**

2021 has proven to be another year full of uncertainty and struggles at GSP. In February, GSP was hit with an ice storm followed by a flood knocking out the electric and washing away the sauna, hot tub, and a port-o-let.



COVID kept things delayed and or canceled throughout the year, slowing visits to the preserve until mid-June, before starting to pick back up in the fall. This gave the committee and a group of volunteers a great opportunity to perform some upgrades and work on some projects around the property.

The committee was forced to cancel the Spring Open House, due to COVID and reschedule the event for October the 2nd and 3rd which ended up being canceled due to a outbreak in Rockcastle county. Kevin Lorms and COG are now getting ready for a Spring Open House scheduled for May 14 & 15, 2022.



The shelter house roof was showing 20-plus years of weather and was in dire need of repair, so James Clements and his crew installed a new roof. James also repainted the kitchen floor to make it look as good as COG's upgrades.

In April, we experienced an extremely high water bill and, after some investigation, we found that the water line between the tractor barn and kitchen had ruptured. Using the original weekend scheduled for Open House work weekend, we decided to tackle the problem.

Jeff Werner set up a donation of equipment from Ohio Cat to help with the digging. That weekend we replaced the water line from the tractor barn to the kitchen, installed the electric wire and conduit from the panel to the pole and from the second pole to the mondo, and installed a drain pipe on the far end of the shelter house. After a few more weekends of work, the power to the point is now complete.



In August, GCG hosted a very successful KOR with 325 attendees.

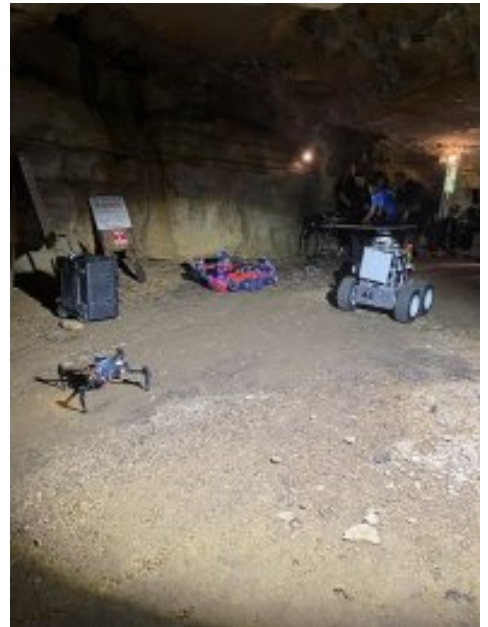
The ticket house renovation is moving along. The interior walls and ceiling are studded up and ready for electric and wall coverings.

The patio behind the ticket house is also moving along, the stone retaining wall is complete, the fire ring is installed, the stone floor is about 75% done, and the back wall is around 80% painted. A few more good weekends and it should be ready for use.

In September, Jerry Brandenburg was on Mullins Station road and was approached by a couple of college students from Switzerland who were looking for a cave to test some robotics in. Jerry was glad to introduce them to GSP. Turns out they were a group of robotic engineers in a DARPA competition in Louisville, competing for a 2-million dollar first-place prize and were willing to give GSP their data in exchange for use of the cave. This data is exactly what Jared needs to develop a virtual reality tour of the cave.



(GSP Committee continued ...)



The group arrived September the 17th with 5 robots ... 2 that walked, 2 that flew, and 1 that drove. They tested about 9 hours, crashing 2, but said that the day was a success. At the competition on September the 24th, they received first place.

And lastly, the GSP committee has decided that it is time to adjust the camping fees and change the combination on the gate as of January 1st, 2022, neither of which has been done in years. I would like to thank everyone who volunteered to help with everything that that was done this year.

Your GSP chairman,  
Scott

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### **Misty Cave Bat Survey**

### **Committee Chaired by Sean Cain**

On Wednesday, January 25, 2021, I met a group of biologists led by Gregg Janos of Copperhead Environmental to perform the bi-annual bat survey that was annual as we completed one last year. I had previously led a tour with Gregg in February of 2020. Bats were found throughout the cave, but two clusters were found in the main passage at the first intersection. It's amazing how the clusters were in the same spot in 2016.

The following results were recorded from the surveys. The first number being the 2020 survey and the second the 2021 survey.

Indiana - 30/26  
Little Brown - 6/4  
Tri-Colored - 33/10  
Big Brown - 0/3  
Virginia Big-Eared - 0/3  
Rafinesque's Big-Eared - 0/1  
Total - 69/47



It is great to announce the no White Nose Syndrome (WNS) was discovered in the cave. During the 2020 survey WNS was discovered on two bats and swab samples were taken from all to be tested.



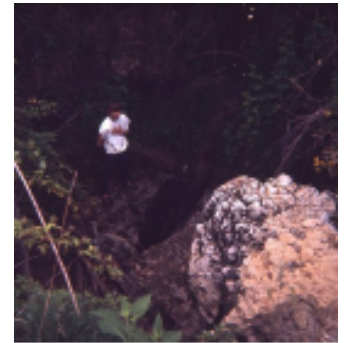
As a reminder. Misty Cave is closed to all access from November 1<sup>st</sup> to May 1<sup>st</sup>. There will be “NO” entry allowed during the closed period without permission from the Misty Cave Preserve Committee. Thanks again to all those who support and help with this wonderful preserve.

**Sloans Valley Cave Preserve Committee — Co-Chaired by Joe Morgan and Mike Herrington**

Visitation to the Crockett Pit Entrance to Sloans Valley Cave has been steadily increasing. The annual Lake Cumberland Fall draw down means that the best times for visiting the system are here! With lake levels down many of the connection trips are possible.



The Preserve Co-Managers, Joe Morgan and Mike Herrington have the Preserve looking like a park. Mike purchased a small mower to make it easier to keep the grass near the Crockett Entrance mowed. The newly graveled parking area has proven to be a great asset, especially during a wetter than normal summer.



Garbage Pit Entrance - ca. 1969



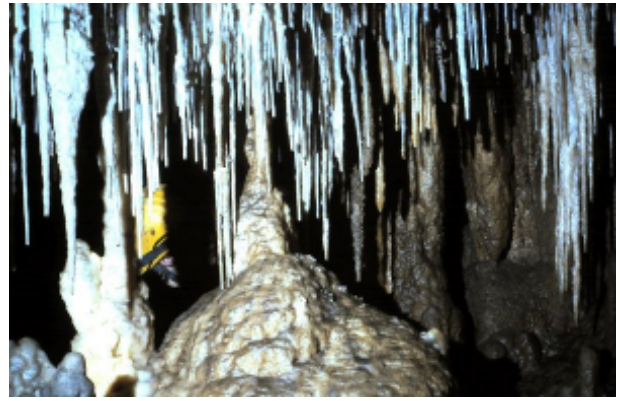
We still have plans to build a change area/kiosk where the old greenhouse stood. Besides providing a secluded area to change clothes there would be a wall to display information about RKC, the National Speleological Society, cave conservation and cave safety. We are hoping the price of lumber drops soon as we can begin construction. Hopefully we can plan several work days next summer.

**The Cave Preserves of RKC**

(Photos by Nathan Williams, Gary Bush, Mary Gratsch, Tammy Otten, A.Hadock)



Great Saltpetre Cave Preserve



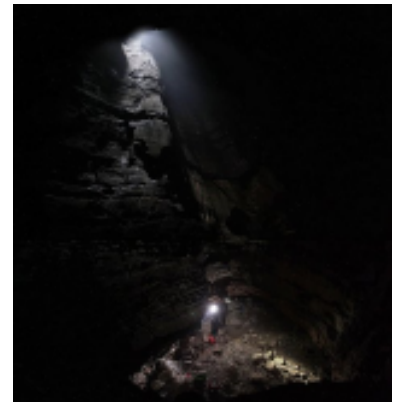
Sloans Valley Preserve



Cornhole Cave Preserve



Misty Cave Preserve



Skylight Preserve



**Join RKC**

*We can't do it without YOU!!!  
We can't do it without YOU!!!*

**The Rockcastle Karst Conservancy**  
Membership Application Form  
Apply on-line at: [www.rkci.org](http://www.rkci.org)

**Membership Categories and Dues**  
(Circle Membership Type)

**Memberships for Individuals – Voting**

Individual Member \$15 / year (Apr. 1–Mar. 31)  
Lifetime Member \$300 / one time

— OR —

Sustaining Member \* \$5 - \$50 / month\*  
(Credit Card Charge via PayPal)  
\* Sustaining Memberships can only be done on-line  
(Go to [www.rkci.org](http://www.rkci.org))

**Institutional Memberships – Non-Voting**

Institutional memberships for groups that would like to support RKC are also available:  
**Supporting** - Non-profit, grottos, and youth organizations—\$25/year  
**Supporting** - All other organizations — \$50/year

**Make all checks payable to: Rockcastle Karst Conservancy**

**Mail Completed Form to: Rockcastle Karst Conservancy**  
c/o Werner Jud  
1044 Vacationland Dr.  
Cincinnati, OH 45231-4749

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name - Please print clearly: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State & Zip+4: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

RKC is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, non-profit organization.

**Please Join or Renew Now !!!**