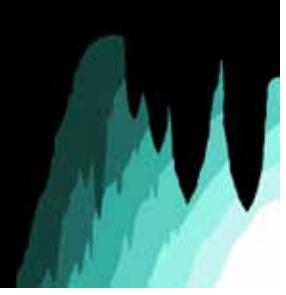


# Western Cave Conservancy

Protecting the West's Last Frontier

Vol 3 No 3

Fall/Winter 2006



## OUT & ABOUT WITH THE WCC

The fall quarter has been a busy one for the WCC board and volunteers. We've had several opportunities to meet with old friends, get acquainted with new folks, keep up with the latest conservancy news, and get input from our members on current issues.

WCC had a presence at the National Speleological Society (NSS) Convention in Bellingham, Washington, the NSS Western Regional Meeting in San Diego. We sent representatives to the Cave Conservancies Forum in West Virginia, and made a presentation at the October meeting of the San Joaquin Valley Grotto (an NSS chapter). Thanks to Bruce Rogers and Dan Snyder, we now have, for our information table, a wonderful new display poster that has been used twice already, first at the NSS Convention and again at the San Diego Regional. Another important contribution was the production of the Rippled Cave slide show by John Hargreaves. He had the assistance of several volunteers for two days of modeling and lighting chores, along with a great deal of work on cave map images by Rich Sundquist and Dan Snyder.

### NSS Convention 2006

Our new display table was set up early in the week and staffed as much as possible by Denise Aalbu, with the help of Morley Hardaker, Ric Gates and others. The WCC helped the Western Region



**Above:** WCC Volunteers serving beer and other refreshments at the NSS Convention in Bellingham, Washington.

**Below:** WCC's Display at the NSS Western Regional Meeting in San Diego.



Photo: Daniel Snyder

host the Wednesday night party. Volunteers in WCC T-shirts toiled long hours into the night serving beer. Finally, WCC Vice President Rolf Aalbu attended the Cave Conservancies Roundtable. In addition to sharing news of our recent acquisition of Rippled Cave and assistance with the gating of Nutty Putty Cave in Utah, he brought back useful information from the other presentations. Especially interesting were some ways that

other conservancies raise or earn money, the existence of "bridge loans" from the NSS Foundation and the importance of forging a good relationship with the Nature Conservancy.

### Western Regional 2006, San Diego

This was the maiden voyage for the Rippled Cave Slide show. Martin Haye and I each gave a portion of the introductory presentation and then we ran the show. It was a virtual tour of the cave from the parking area to the entrance, down to the register and through the three main branches of the cave. Then the tour went back outside

to visit the cliffs and show some vertical practice, followed by a descent into the Big Room entrance and exploration of this last area of the cave. Each section was separated by a plan view of the cave map with the upcoming section highlighted in a different color so viewers could track their way through the cave. After the slide show, we answered some questions and make a strong pitch for donations to help pay off our loans. Earlier I had gathered pledges for up to \$1500.00 in matching funds for money received during the Regional event. While that amount was optimis-

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tic, we did take in a little over \$500 and with the match we came in with a total of over \$1000. Not too shabby!

### Cave Conservancies Forum

In mid-September Directors Marianne Russo, Jerry Johnson and Martin Haye went to Lewisburg, West Virginia to attend the second Forum (they are held every two years). It is a small gathering—usually 30 to 35 participants—representing most of the U.S. cave conservancies. There were many interesting and useful presentations. Especially welcome were the workshops on cave management plan preparation. We have already put this information to good use, as we are currently preparing the first complete draft of the Weller Preserve (Rippled Cave) Management Plan. We also had good news about general liability insurance, which up until now has been virtually impossible to get. It looks like the Texas Cave Conservancy has successfully purchased coverage, so perhaps we will be able to do so also. We took good notes on other issues like tracking the dollar value of volunteer hours and new views on organization of the board. Martin Haye and I gave a formal presentation about the Rippled purchase process, focusing on the numerous difficulties it presented and the lessons we learned from them. Finally, this forum offered a great opportunity to network with the other conservancies and keep up with the latest news.

### San Joaquin Valley Grotto Meeting

Martin Haye attended the Grotto's October meeting and presented the Rippled Cave Slide Show. At its conclusion, he answered questions about the cave, the access policy, and the WCC. Grotto members were very interested in getting a chance to visit the cave and being able to lead their own trips in the future. We look forward to taking this slide show and the draft management plan on the road in the near future. If this is of interest to you, please contact me at [mrusso@westerncaves.org](mailto:mrusso@westerncaves.org).

# The First Weller Natural Preserve Volunteer Work Day

by Denise Aalbu and Marianne Russo

On November 18, 2006, the very first official workday was held at the Weller Preserve. We were blessed with simply perfect fall weather, sunny and mild. Careful planning allowed us to accomplish a lot. WCC

Volunteer Coordinators, Sherry and Dale Hartwig, kept in direct communication with all the volunteers, and the project coordinators, Marianne Russo and Jerry Johnson, got the tasks, the supplies and equipment all organized ahead of time.

Everyone met in Sutter Creek at around 9:30 a.m. to arrange car pools and sign release and volunteer sign up forms. Then our caravan of six pulled out: trucks and cars laden with what looked like a

hardware store full of tools and 19 enthusiastic volunteers. Once at the property parked behind the gate, we consolidated and organized all the gear. There was



Photo: Morley Hardaker

**There's a lot of trash to be picked up from behind the shed.**



Photo: Morley Hardaker

**Ben loads his pickup truck with debris for a dump run.**



**The shed's two free-standing walls are torn down.**

on the building, rakes, shovels, tubs, and buckets for collecting debris, safety gear such as helmets, gloves, glasses and first aid kits, a toilet

facility and plenty of water, other beverages and food for lunch. Once we had all this organized we listened to Marianne explain the work plan. Then Jerry and Dale went over basic safety rules and cautions for us to keep in mind. Activity sheets were handed out and job leaders designated.

We could choose for ourselves which work crew we wanted to be on: building cleanup, garbage detail, or fence building. Scott Redenbaugh supervised the building work, Sherry Hartwig the garbage pick

up and Dale Hartwig the fencing. Marianne acted as overall supervisor and spent her free moments installing new



Photo: Morley Hardaker

### Ric and Greg work on the fence.

“no trespassing” and “no parking” signs at various places along the road. Finally, Ben Robinson and Wayne Cedidla were the “dump” truck owner/drivers, spending much of the day supervising the loading of their large pickups.

The building crew was directed to tear down any loose portions, do some general cleaning, and board up the openings. Garbage detail involved picking up any debris or garbage from all around the building and along the road. Fencing was

to be erected along a portion of the road where the property is flat and thus a likely location for trespassers to park slightly off the road. It was also to be placed in another location near the building. Finally, if we finished all this, we could start clearing a trail up through the central portion of the property away from the cave.

Well, everybody got right to work and by mid afternoon, the jobs were almost done! Marianne quickly put Dan Snyder in charge of trail clearing and sent him, Don Dunn and Bill Frantz off into the woods. By day’s end every single thing on the list had been accomplished, due primarily to the fact that everyone worked so well together and helped out whenever and wherever needed.

Here is what got done:

- ◆ 300 feet of fence was installed (about 250 feet up along the road and 50 more feet along the road at the southeast corner of the property near the building) making the fence continuous from the gate to the road used by our
- ◆ 300 feet of trail was cleared by Dan and his gang, mostly along an old road that was probably used during the time the property was logged back in the 1950s. It is now much more passable.

neighbors at the south end of the parcel.

◆ The building was thoroughly cleaned out inside, the freestanding walls were removed, and the openings were boarded up. Scott made a nifty door from the scrap wood and installed a padlock. We now have a place to store our extra fence posts and other odds and ends!

◆ All the new signs were posted by Marianne, with the help of Jerry and Dan.

◆ Four full-sized pickup truck loads of garbage, consisting of old appliances, pieces of metal, decomposed carpet, glass, wood and general rubbish were removed from the property and hauled to the dump station in Pine Grove. A VERY BIG THANKS to Wayne and Ben for the use of their trucks.

◆ 300 feet of trail was cleared by Dan and his gang, mostly along an old road that was probably used during the time the property was logged back in the 1950s. It is now much more passable.

Our workday ended as the sun was getting low. Everyone scurried around getting tools sorted and returned to the right vehicle. Once toilet tent was decommissioned, we were ready to leave. Almost everyone had time to meet at the Golden Wok in Martell afterward for a delicious Chinese buffet. A delightful end to a splendid and productive day!



Photo: Morley Hardaker

**The shed “after” shot. The building has been cleaned up and secured. The panel with the “keep out” sign is a door.**

## Thank You to All Our Volunteers!

A heartfelt thanks from the WCC Stewardship Committee and the Board of Directors goes out to all of the great volunteers who participated in our Weller Natural Preserve Workday on November 18, 2006. Demonstrations of support and goodwill like this are what make the WCC a success.

Thank you to the following people:

Denise Albu	John Gardner	Greg Wilson-Hartwig
Rolf Albu	Ric Gates	Martin Haye
Wayne Cedidla	Morley Hardaker	Jerry Johnson
Donald Dunn	Dale Hartwig	Paul Lukshin
Bill Frantz	Sherry Hartwig	Scott Redenbaugh

Ben Robinson
Marianne Russo
Dan Snyder
Rich Steffensen

You all did a wonderful job!

There will be more opportunities in the upcoming months to work on the preserve. We are putting together preliminary plans for clearing out the property lines and starting to work on brush control in heavily overgrown areas. If things go as planned we hope to set another date in late January or early February and perhaps another in March or April before fire season starts again. Please consider joining in!

Joel Despain  
Chair, WCC Stewardship Committee

Marianne Russo  
President, WCC

# Rippled Capital Campaign in the Home Stretch

After our last mailing many people responded generously and we are now \$7,700 closer to paying off our debt. This amount includes over \$7,000 in donations and \$689.00 in interest we saved by paying some of our loan debt off earlier. We are now just over \$10,000 from being free and clear! If we can raise this amount in the next four months it will enable us to save over \$1000 more in interest payments. I can certainly think of better things to spend that \$1000 on, can't you?

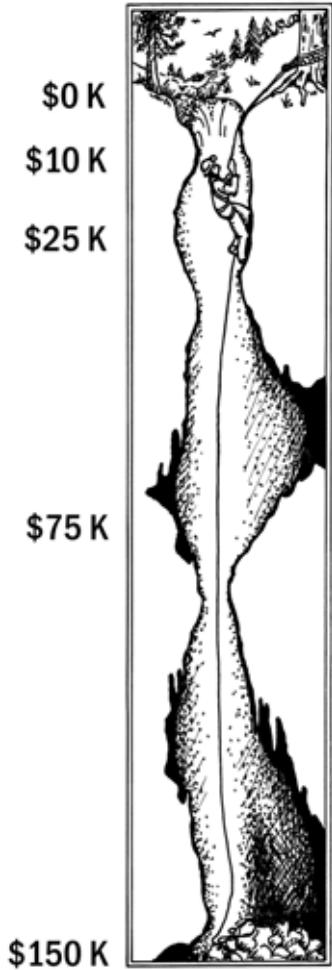
Please consider helping us out now, let's make 2007 the year the WCC pays

off the Rippled bill and starts putting your money to work on other exciting projects!

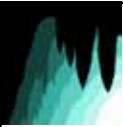
If it's time for you to renew your membership in the WCC, **please consider adding an extra amount to help with the Rippled Campaign.**

If you have already renewed your membership but want to help out with an additional donation here are some options:

- 1) Visit our webpage at [www.westerncaves.org](http://www.westerncaves.org), go to "Join Now."
- 2) Write out a check to the Western Cave Conservancy and mail it to our office address at 213 Elm St. Santa Cruz, CA 95060
- 3) If you would like to use a credit card or have other questions call our Treasurer, Martin Haye at (831) 421-0495 or send an email to [mail@westerncaves.org](mailto:mail@westerncaves.org).



THANK YOU EVERYONE!



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## *A Wonderful Christmas Present from the MotherLode Grotto & the Stanislaus Speleological Association*

On December 16th, a combined Christmas Party and Auction was hosted by Mark and Sharon Bowers for members of the Mother Lode and Stanislaus grottos. After a challenge issued by Paul Lukshin of the Stanislaus grotto in which he pledged all the proceeds from their auction for the WCC the Mother Lode members responded by donating many of their items for the WCC benefit also. An astounding \$1322.00 was raised by their combined efforts that evening!

As WCC President, I want to extend my deepest thanks to both of these grottos and all their generous members. I know the entire WCC Board of Directors along with our volunteer staff and members joins me in saluting these two organizations. Thank you all!

Yours truly,

Marianne Russo  
President, Western Cave Conservancy