MAR Spring Field Meet set for May 14-16, 1999.  
PCC Meeting to follow

The Mid Appalachian Region Spring Field Meet will be held at the Lazy "A" Campground, Martinsburg, WV on May 14-16, 1999. A meeting of the Pennsylvania Cave Conservancy will follow the Meet. You will find the directions on page 5.

Cave Visitation Policy Sparks Controversy

See Pages 6-8
Minutes of the MAR Business Meeting
February 27, 1999

The meeting was called to order at 1:45 p.m. at the home of Jay Herbein, Harrisburg, PA. The meeting started late in order to give everyone ample time to arrive as traffic was backed up due to the closure of I-81.

Baltimore Grotto moved to accept the 1998 minutes as printed. Motion seconded by Pennsylvania Cave Legislation Trust Fund. A vote was taken and the motion passed.

Greater Allentown Grotto (GAG) made an amendment to the 1998 minutes to reflect that Bald Eagle Grotto is still functional and in good standing with the NSS. There was a published apology to Bald Eagle Grotto for the incorrect statement in the 1998 minutes.

Treasurer’s Report: Printed copies were distributed. Because Bette White, the Treasurer, was not present, Keith Wheeland explained the report. A motion was made by Baltimore Grotto to accept the report. Seconded by Pennsylvania Cave Legislation Trust Fund. A vote was taken and the motion passed.

Field Meets:
Spring 98: Hosted by GAG at the Old Dutch Mill Campground. 153 people attended. There was a rope course; Dribilbis and Onyx Caves were open; PCC held their spring meeting. GAG thanked everyone who helped with the event.

Fall 98: Nittany had a written report in the last Breakdown. There were 205 people in attendance, setting a MAR attendance record. A good time was had by all.

MAR Breakdown:
Keith Wheeland will have the next issue out before the Spring MAR field meet. April 10th is the deadline for submissions. Send articles to Keith Wheeland.

Incorporation:
Dale Ibberson has blank forms; the cost to file is $150.00. There was no discussion on the issue so Dale will pursue the process.

Old Business:

Bulletins:

CCLUM (Clinton, Columbia, Lycoming, Union, Montour): Keith Wheeland read a letter from Keith Christenson reporting that he is working on the bulletin. The area write-up will include 100 site descriptions. The history section is complete, the geology will be written by Will White, the biospeleology section is pending. The bulletin should be about 100 pages with approximately 4 oversize maps.

Fayette County: Kim Metzgar reported that 12 new caves were discovered and mapped; Jim Kennedy is working on the bulletin in Texas; Jay Reich should finish the mapping of Laurel Caverns soon (the survey stands at 3 ½ miles) and the bulletin should be out this summer.

Hosterman’s Pit: Nothing new

Hillside Quarry: Kim Metzgar reported that the battle is finally over after 8 years; The Pennsylvania Environmental Hearing Board sustained an appeal filed by the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy and the Hillside Community Association and threw out the quarry permit granted by the Department of Environmental Protection to Tasman Resources.

Pennsylvania Cave Database: Nothing new

Cave Conservation: Judi Stack reported The Caves of Pennsylvania slide show is 99.9% complete; she still needs to write a script for 2 parts. Dale Ibberson and Judi reported that Bernie Smeltzer’s cave slides have been identified for the
most part; the plan is to put the best of the slides onto video and store the slides. One tray still needs to be identified. It was suggested that the slides be made into an NSS program.

**Cave Register:** No report

**ER NCRC:** Information was made available at the front table for those interested. Information is also available on the internet.

**Game Commission:** Judi Stack is waiting to get the official letter from the PA Game Commission, but it was not ready at the time of this meeting. Apparently the Game Commission is having difficulty dealing with cavers in the southeast area of the state. Once Judi has the official letter she will distribute it to all the grottos in the state. Until this issue is resolved the policy will remain as written.

**Increase in MAR Fees:** Kim Kehs reminded grottos that the $1 increase in registration fee at MAR meets goes into effect this year. It is now $5.

**PCC (Pennsylvania Cave Conservancy):** There will be a meeting after the MAR Business Meeting.

**Cave Bucks:** Several grottos in the region participate in Cave Bucks to support various conservancies.

**Spring 1999 MAR:** Commander Cody Caving Club reported they will host the meet in the panhandle of West Virginia; they will have a spaghetti feast and a live band Saturday night; there will be hiking, caving, canoeing; and possibly passes into a local commercial cave.

**Fall 1999 MAR:** Flyers available at the front table; York Grotto will have a history book available since the meet is in conjunction with their 40th anniversary; the guidebook will have several new unpublished or newly updated cave maps; the banquet will be on site followed by the debut of The Caves of Pennsylvania slide show.

Jay Herbein reviewed some housekeeping rules prior to the break. **Break 2:30 till 2:50**

**New Business:**

**Masters of the Night:** Karen Bange reported that Bat Conservation International has been touring the country with a 6,000 square foot bat exhibit and the display is coming to Bethlehem, PA from February 13 till May 2, 1999.

**Tytoona Cave Fund:** Derek Flagg reminded everyone that the cave fund is still accepting money and donations should be sent to Mike Cullinan or to the NSS.

**Westmoreland Bulletin:** Kim Metzgar brought up for discussion splitting the monies set aside from the sale of the Westmoreland Bulletin (when the bulletin was sold $2.00 was to be have been set aside for cave conservation efforts). There was some discussion whether this had actually been done. Kim made a motion that the accumulated money be split between MAKC and PCC. Franklin County Grotto seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion passed.

Kim then made a clarification to the motion to read that if any money is available, it be split between MAKC and PCC. Pennsylvania Cave Legislation Trust Fund seconded the motion. A second vote was taken and the clarified motion was passed.

**Indian Cave:** Dean Snyder, representing Bert Ashbrook, brought to the attention of the MAR that the *Bath Home News*, in Bath, PA published a map of Indian Cave taking away Bert’s title block and name and taking full credit for the map. Dale Ibberson made a motion to authorize Bert to contact the publisher of the publication to ask them to correct the credits and publish a retraction. Pennsylvania Cave Legislation Trust Fund seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion passed.

**NSS 2000 Convention:** Craig Hindman reported for Bob Gulden who is in charge of pre- and post convention trips; anyone interested in helping lead trips, contact Bob.
Idaho Convention: Kim Kehs read from a letter sent by Evelyn Bradshaw with a proposal for a meeting at the Idaho Convention. This meeting is for regions across the country to share ideas and problems in their areas.

Cave Signs: Judi Stack made a motion to allow the purchase of cave signs for posting in places other than caves. York Grotto seconded the motion. A discussion followed reminding everyone that the signs still cost $10 regardless of the posting location. It was agreed the signs would be of use in educating the general public if posted in non-caving locations. A vote was taken and the motion passed.

COG: Carol Tiderman stated that Congress of Grottos has a website and issues can be sent to them in this manner.

Spring 2000 MAR: No grottos volunteered to host. Kim Kehs asked grottos to consider volunteering. Kim will continue to pursue the issue.

Fall 2000 MAR: Loyalhanna Grotto tentatively agreed to host. They will confirm this in the spring. The event would be in Westmoreland County.

Spring 2001 MAR: Franklin County Grotto volunteered to host.

Fall 2001 MAR: Central New Jersey Grotto volunteered to host.

Bat Quilt: Judi Stack is making a bat quilt to be auctioned at the NSS 2000 Convention. If anyone is interested in making a quilt square, talk to Judi.

Kudos: Nittany Grotto was complimented by everyone on the fine Fall MAR. 50th anniversary T-shirts are still available.

Mapping Programs: Ed Kehs informed everyone that some new street/topo mapping programs on the market have directions/locations to caves on them.

MAR Business Meeting No. 35: It was noted that this is the 35th Business Meeting to be held at Jay Herbein’s home. Everyone thanked Jay and Kathy for their hospitality through the years.

Motion to end the meeting was made by Baltimore Grotto. Seconded by Pennsylvania Cave Legislation Trust Fund. A vote was taken and passed.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Bange
MAR Recording Secretary

Representatives at the meeting: Baltimore Grotto, Pennsylvania Cave Legislation Trust Fund, York Grotto, Nittany Grotto, Greater Allentown Grotto, Central New Jersey Grotto, Franklin County Grotto, Loyalhanna Grotto, WVass, Commander Cody Caving Club, Philly Grotto, Huntingdon County Cave Hunters.

The Gwonk
Lazy “A” Campground, Martinsburg, WV
May 14 thru 16, 1999
Hosted by the Commander Cody Caving Club

- **Panhandle Caving at its Best (wild & commercial)!**
- **Hiking, Biking on the C&O Towpath Canal!**
- **Canoeing on the Potomac!** (bring your boat)
- **Civil War Battlefields, Historical Sites, Flea Markets & More!** (all to be included in the MAR Guidebook)
- **Vendor(s)!** (one now - hopefully more later).
- **Dinner Saturday Nite!**
- **Continental Breakfast Sunday Morning!**
- **The Brush Mountain Boys Bluegrass Band Saturday Nite!**

**Directions:**
- Figure out the best way to get to the junction of I-70 & I-81 at Hagerstown, MD
- Head **SOUTH** on I-81 to **EXIT 5** (Martinsburg, West Virginia).
- Head **WEST** on Route 51 to Route 45 (follow campground signs)
- Turn **LEFT** onto Route 45 to State Route 7.
- Turn **RIGHT** onto Route 7.
- Entrance road to site is a few miles up Route 7 on the right next to a firehall.
- Camp Phone # 304-229-8185.

**COST: $23 before April 15, 1999, $28 at the Gate.**

Youths (5 - 12 years of age): $10 in advance, $13 at the gate

Make check payable to “Judy Obetz” and send to: 802 Wharton Court, Newton Square PA 19073
Be sure to include all pertinent info (address, phone, number of people, their ages, etc).

*Latest information? Stop by our website at http://www.erols.com/frickedh/CCCC*
Ms. Judi Stack, Chairperson  
PCG/MAR Cave Management  
1132 Piketown Road  
Harrisburg, PA 17113  

Dear Ms. Stack:

This is in response to the Mid-Appalachian Region (MAR) of the National Speleological Society's desire to develop an access policy with the Pennsylvania Game Commission regarding gated caves on state game lands.

Your proposal has been discussed and reviewed by both Harrisburg and Regional office staff. Based on this review, we have determined that even limited public access to gated caves would have an impact on endangered and threatened species and also unique geological, historical and archeological features. Gates have been erected on certain Commission managed caves in order to protect these sensitive sites. Also, public access to these caves would not be compatible with the Commission's management of these resources. Therefore, we cannot approve MAR's request to allow limited public access to gated caves on state game lands.

Of the many caves located on state game lands, only four are gated. State Forest lands also have a number of caves that are accessible to the public. These ungated caves should afford ample accessibility for educational, recreational and rescue training purposes.

If there is a legitimate reason to enter a gated cave for scientific research purposes (bat inventory, PNDI, etc.) we would support those efforts. If your organization would be interested in assisting the Commission in this endeavor, we would be willing to meet and discuss a research policy with you that would benefit both the Commission and MAR.

If you have any questions in regard to our comments or need any additional information, please contact Roland Bergner at (717) 787-9612.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Gregory J. Grabowicz, Director  
Bureau of Land Management  

cc: Regional Directors  
Cal DuBrock  
Jerry Hassinger  
Jim Hart

An Equal Opportunity Employer
James A. Hart  
Assistant Curator of Mammals  
The Shippensburg University Vertebrate Museum,  
Shippensburg, PA 17257  
(717) 532-1145 jahart@ark.ship.edu

Gregory J. Grabowicz, Director  
PGC Bureau of Land Management  
2001 Elmerton Avenue  
Harrisburg, PA 17257

Dear Mr. Grabowicz,

I read with increasing concern your letter of 26 February, 1999 pertaining to access to gated caves on PGC State Gamelands. I feel very strongly that the letter needed a reply addressing the negative impact that this policy may have with our ongoing research into discovering new and important Indiana bat (Myotis sodalis) Hibernacula and to the continued protection of hibernating bat populations throughout Pennsylvania. This policy will also have a decided impact on the perception of the general caving community of conservation practices within Pennsylvania.

For many years now, cavers have been increasingly supportive of the Wildlife Diversity Sections continued surveys of hibernacula throughout the state. In many cases, field biologists would not have located nor gained access to these sites if it weren't for the assistance of the caving community. Cavers are becoming more educated to the effects of entry during the critical winter hibernation period on the population's of bats in caves and have imposed moratoriums on the entry to certain caves throughout the state. It could definitely be said that without the help and support of the many caving organizations across Pennsylvania, the PGC Wildlife Diversity Section would not have been able to take the state to the front in terms of bat related conservation. Many of the individuals that helped to build the gates that protect and conserve bat habitat, such as the one at Schofer's Cave, were unpaid volunteer cavers. I myself have helped to build several of these gates and can attest to the quality of work and time invested by these volunteers. To work for over 12 hours on a weekday when they could be working at their own job seems to me to be a sacrifice that they made in order to support the conservation programs that we hold as necessary to preserve endangered and threatened bats and other species. The loss of this volunteer base would be a great hindrance to the continued conservation of Pennsylvania's bat populations.

I will agree that all cavers are not ethically minded nor do they all have high conservation ideals. Just as it has taken many years to get the public to begin to accept as important the conservation of those species that are not glamorous, such as bats and other small mammals, it has also taken quite a bit of time and education to get the caving community to begin to accept gating as a necessary conservation policy. If we deny cavers access at the times of year that have the least or no impact on the species present, then we may, in the long run, negate much of the work that we have accomplished in turning around caver perceptions of conservation ethics. As a member of an organized caving group, I am well aware of the diverse nature of cavers, a group which encompasses people from all walks of life. Just as many hunters are mindless to the conservation needs of the sport they profess to love, so too, are many cavers. We must do more to promote the education of those people that are not as well versed to the needs of the many species we have assumed responsibility for. By doing so, the need to continue to gate caves or restrict access on habitat will lessen as more and more people realize their responsibilities to the environment around them.

If our plan is to truly protect endangered and threatened species, why not close, in a comparable manner, State Gamelands that have on them endangered or threatened species such as woodrats (Neotoma magister), West Virginia water shrews (Sorex palustris punctulatus) or various nesting bird species. Realistically, this is not an option because of the pressure that would come to bear on the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Would the PGC embrace total closure of gated caves if the caving community were as vocal and strong as the hunting public? Public relations are not served by denying access by the public to habitats where visitation during certain times of the year is not unwarranted. Anything that creates negative publicity for the PGC at this time does not help to increase the public's perception of what it is the PGC stands for.

Pennsylvania State Gamelands have been set aside for the enjoyment by all people, not just the hunting and fishing public. While the creation of Special Wildlife Management Areas and Propagation Zones are established to protect
sensitive habitat from disturbance, the creation of these zones is based on sound scientific advice. Whereby portions of these same lands can be opened under direct Executive Authority (See Title 58, Chapter 135, Subchapter C, Section 135.101 and Section 135.162; see also Title 34- PA CSA, Section 728) and on the advice of scientific counsel, this does not seem to be the case with caves. When the caves on State Gamelands were gated, it was only intended to deny entry to the caves during the critical hibernating period, not over the course of the entire year. This state does not have any bats that use caves during the summer months. The nearest occurrence of Townsend's big-eared bat (Corynorhinus townsendii virginianus), a species which forms maternity colonies in caves, is to the south in West Virginia. The effects of summer activity in caves on the various invertebrate species present is unknown, although probably negligible. It is known, however, that summer visitation of Aitkin Cave, owned by The Nature Conservancy, has very little effect on the invertebrates present. It is ironic that a cave such as Aitkin Cave, harboring one of the few remaining hibernating populations of Indiana bats in Pennsylvania, has a policy of limited summer visitation. The policy is such that, after contact with the Philadelphia TNC office and signing of waivers, cavers, under the leadership of either a TNC employee or a designated party, are permitted to access the cave. This does not create any problems for TNC in terms of time or money invested and has been fairly well received by the caving community. I see no reason why such a policy could not be arranged concerning caves on State Gamelands. The argument that "public access to these caves would not be compatible with the Commission's management of these resources" does not hold up to scientific scrutiny.

The statement about caves on other gamelands and in State Forests shows a bit of confusion on the part of the PGC. If we are in fact trying to conserve bat populations and other wildlife, why would it be suggested to look elsewhere for caves to enter. The fact is that some of these same caves that remain open are much more important to the continued survival of PA bat populations then is a cave such as Schofer's or Strangford. Lemon Hole Cave, located in Westmoreland County, is owned by the Bureau of Forestry and remains un-gated. It is significantly more important then either of the two previously mentioned caves and yet does not receive the protection that some of the caves of lesser importance on State Gamelands have. While this may not be the problem of the PGC, it is and remains a problem for myself and many other biologists that realize how fragile these environments are at certain times of the year. The PGC, as the agency responsible for the management and conservation of bats, should be taking a proactive stance that is at least marginally acceptable to all parties involved. As such, the PGC should continue gating caves on State Gamelands and supporting the gating of other important hibernacula on other state owned lands and on private lands. This policy should not be one of total exclusion, but a policy of access as advised by the biologists in the field. As such, these policies should be managed by sound science and not by deciding that it is a “non-issue” that is not as important as pheasant stocking or border cutting; an issue that is too trivial to be bothered with. It is paradoxical that many of the cavers that are denied access to a cave on PGC property are also hunters.

I realize that the decision to exclude the caving public from caves on PGC property was made by personnel at the regional offices and not on the advise of biologists in the field. I would hope that in the future, decisions of this nature can be looked at in terms of all parties involved. I, as a field biologist, caver and hunter, would hope that a state agency such as the Pennsylvania Game Commission would take into consideration all discussions relating to such a decision as this and then respond in a manner that is appropriate. If this approach is taken, the public's perception of the PGC as guardian of the state's bird and mammal wildlife would take on a decidedly positive nature.

Sincerely yours,

James A. Hart, Mammalogist, The Vertebrate Museum
National Speleological Society Member 22070 (Inactive)

cc/ Hassinger, Bergner, Butchikoski, Stack

KEITH CHRISTENSON ’94

MAR Breakdown Volume 14, Number 1, April 1999
York Grotto formed 40 years ago August 1959. Many things have changed over the past 40 years, yet one thing still remains the same: cavers love a good party! Come help York Grotto celebrate its 40th anniversary. The celebration will be held in conjunction with the 1999 Fall MAR. The date is October 8 – 10, 1999 and the location is McVeytown, Mifflin County.

Registration begins Friday afternoon and the party will start Friday evening. Saturday will be a day of caving, hiking, canoeing, non caving activities or just hanging around and visiting with old friends. Saturday evening will be the banquet, MAR officer elections, guest speakers and the debut of the new, updated slide show Caves of Pennsylvania. Coffee and doughnuts will be available both mornings. The PCC meeting will be Sunday morning followed by pack up, clean up and head for home.

Nitty Gritty Details:
➢ No frills camping  ABSOLUTELY NO OPEN FIRES ALLOWED  
   (Bring your own drinking water)
➢ Registration fee includes guidebook, dinner, beverages and continental breakfast
➢ Chance to win door prizes
➢ Refunds are available, if requested by September 24, 1999
➢ Register before OTR and get a discount
➢ Make checks payable to The York Grotto and mail to:
   York Grotto
   807 Lee Court
   Enola, PA 17025-1559
➢ Questions? Call Dale Iberson (717) 238-2198 OR Karen Bange (717) 539-2107
The meeting was called to order by President, Pat Minnick at the home of Jay Herbein, Harrisburg, Pa. Saturday February 27, 1999 at 4:15 p.m.

The following officers were present.

President        Pat Minnick
V. Pres.          Karen Bange
Secretary         Keith D. Wheeland
Treasurer         Dale Iberson

Representation was as follows:

Bald Eagle Grotto       --
Baltimore Grotto         Craig Hindman
Bucks County Grotto      Rich Rosevear
Central New Jersey Grotto John Tudek
Commander Cody Caving Club Mike Mostardi
                           (Alternate)
Franklin County Grotto  Pat Minnick
Greater Allentown Grotto Dean Snyder
Huntingdon Co. Cave Hunters Derek Flaig
Loyalhanna Grotto        Tom Metzgar
Nittany Grotto           Keith Wheeland
Philadelphia Grotto       Mike Mostardi
Pittsburgh Grotto        --
York Grotto              Karen Bange/Dale Iberson

Kim Metzgar represented the Mid Atlantic Karst Conservancy. Other individuals present were Ryn Agnew, Doug and Hazel Medville, Carol Tiderman, Anne Shepard, and Paul Steward.

The secretary read a summary of the minutes of the meeting of October 4, 1998. The minutes were approved as published.

The Treasurer reported that the amount in the treasury was $1118.94. (Income of $208, and expense of $100)

Old Business:

Dale Iberson reported that the application forms for tax exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the tax code have not been submitted. He promised subsequently that he would have them submitted within six weeks.

The Secretary reported that there was no response from Pittsburgh concerning membership in the PCC.

New Business:

Project List: Nominations for items to be placed on the Project List were opened to the floor. The following items were nominated, discussed and approved to be added to the Project List. Each item was appointed to a committee which is to report back at the next meeting of the PCC.

Long Quarry Cave, Fulton County, Pa.
McClure Cave, Snyder County, Pa.
Deerbone Cave, Centre County, Pa.
Devil's Den, Sussex County, N.J.
Merkel Cave, Berks County, Pa.

Donation: It was reported that a donation of $50 was received from the Enchanted Mountain Cave Group of Allegheny, NY.

Web Page: Central New Jersey Grotto made a motion to implement a Web Page. Seconded by Franklin. Motion approved. Baltimore made motion to authorize up to $50 to be used for the project. Seconded by Central New Jersey. Motion approved.

NSS Conservancy: Nittany made a motion to apply for affiliation with the NSS as an NSS Conservancy, seconded by Bucks. Motion approved. Baltimore made a motion to authorize up to $60 to be used for the project. Seconded by Central New Jersey. Motion approved.

Land-Owner Relations: York made a motion asking member grottos to supply the PCC with names and addresses of cave land-owners and other contacts to be used as a basis for future contacts for the PCC, seconded by Philly. Motion carried.

Next meeting: The next meeting of the PCC will be Sunday May 16 at 10 a.m. at the site of the MAR Spring Meet, Lazy "A" Campground, Martinsburg, WV.

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m. February 27, 1999.
Respectfully submitted,
Keith D. Wheeland, Secy.
M.A.R.k Your Calendar

Spring VAR .................................................. April 30 - May 1
   Natural Chimneys Campground, Mount Solon, VA
   Judy Fisher 304-258-4974 eve. or daytime at 258-1822

Hall's Cave Open House ............................. May 8
   MAKG Sponsorship
   Contact Loyalhanna, Pittsburgh, or Huntingdon Co. Cave Hunters

Nittany Grotto Spring Picnic ......................... May 7-9
   Site near Whipple Dam
   Contact Nittany Grotto

Spring 1999 MAR ......................................... May 14 - 16
   See notice in this issue

Spring 1999 NRO ......................................... May 14 - 16
   Oakland Valley Campground, Cuddebackville, NY
   Tom Oakes - toaks@zoomit.sikorsky.com or 203-735-3803

Butler Cave Conservation Society work weekend .... May 28 - 31
   Butler Cave Campground
   Al Grimm - 504-943-3766

Speleofest .................................................. May 28 - 31
   Hart Co. Fairgrounds, Kentucky
   Alex Hicks - indiancave@juno.com - 502-499-0768

SERA Summer Cave Carnival .......................... June 11 - 13
   Camp Jackson, Scottsboro, AL
   Tim White - kd4goc@hotmail.com - 256-721-9115

NSS Convention .......................................... July 12 - 16
   Filer, Idaho (Near Twin Falls)

Butler Cave Conservation Society work weekend .... July 31 - Aug 1
   Butler Cave Campground
   Al Grimm - 504-943-3766

Butler Cave Conservation Society work weekend .... Sept. 11 - 12
   Butler Cave Campground
   Al Grimm - 504-943-3766
Mid-Appalachian Region Bulletins

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<th>NSS Members Price List</th>
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Postage codes
A US Postage: $1.25 for first copy; $0.50 for each additional copy to the same address.
B US Postage: $1.75 for the first copy
C US Postage: $3.00 each bulletin.

Non-US Postage: $2.00 each first copy, $1.50 each additional copy.
Please make checks payable in US funds to MAR.
Send to Bette White, RR#1, Box 527, Miller Road, Petersburg, PA 16669-9211