



BREAKDOWN

Volume 40, Number 3, January 2026

The *MAR Breakdown* is the journal of the Mid Appalachian Region of the National Speleological Society. It is published three times a year; prior to the annual business meeting and prior to the Spring and Fall field meets.

Subscriptions-

Event notices and *MAR Breakdown* newsletters are distributed electronically. When you attend a field meet, the email address provided on your registration form is added to the distribution list. You may also add yourself to distribution by going to <http://eepurl.com/P2f5j> and completing a short registration form.

Meetings and Meets-

The annual business meeting is held the last Saturday in February. Each spring and fall there is a field meet. Watch for dates.

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MAR BUSINESS MEETING SET FOR FEBRUARY 28, 2026 PCC MEETING TO FOLLOW

**The Mid Appalachian Region Business
Meeting will be held at Mt. Laurel Church of God,
Harrisburg, PA on Feb 28, 2026 at 1:30 p.m.**

**You will find additional information and
directions on pages 2-3**

**A meeting of the Pennsylvania Cave
Conservancy (PCC) will follow the MAR
Business Meeting**



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MAR BUSINESS MEETING
February 28, 2026 at 1:30 pm
Mount Laurel Church of God
1295 Piketown Road, Harrisburg, PA 17112

The next MAR annual business meeting will be held at the Mt. Laurel Church of God. The church is located at 1295 Piketown Road, at the intersection with Sleeping Hollow Road and Appalachian Trail, in W. Hanover Township, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania (just East of Harrisburg). This MAR business meeting will be "in-person", with the option of online call-in. A link for the call in option can be accessed at <https://mar.caves.org/busnmtg.htm>



The meetings will be held in the Large Meeting Room located down stairs from the main church. The entrance to the room is at the small handicap parking lot on the lower level of the church. Ample parking with snow removal is at the top of the hill across from the cemetery and the church. **PLEASE DO NOT PARK IN THE FIRE HOUSE PARKING LOT!**

A path up the steps and to the right side of the church leads down to the handicap parking lot and the hall entrance. Use the side entrance door, it will be marked "MAR".

The MAR meeting attendees will have use of the large meeting room with kitchen and clean modern bathrooms next to the meeting room. The rest of the hall will be off limits.

We do not have use of the small meeting room (previous location pre-COVID), stage, or any equipment we do not own. Tables and chairs will be provided but we must set them up and take them down. Also, no open flames please! Judi Stack will provide the tablecloths for the tables as well as signs for the recycling, trash, and entry door. Recycling containers for plastic bottles and aluminum cans will be placed near the kitchen. PLEASE use them to reduce the amount of trash that must be disposed of. These containers will be marked RECYCLING or TRASH. Everyone's cooperation will be greatly appreciated!

Please don't forget to bring a covered dish for the after-MAR meeting (before PCC meeting) meal. A sign-up sheet is available to help MAR cavers plan for the event. The sign-up sheet can be found on the MAR website (https://mar.caves.org/busnmtg_foodsignup.htm). Please consider a dish that you wish to bring to the meeting to share with other hungry cavers. Also be sure to bring your non-alcoholic beverage of choice. The MAR will, once again, be providing warm beverages (coffee/tea/hot cider) for the meeting attendees. Please Note: alcoholic beverages are **NOT** permitted on the church grounds.

Directions:

From the East on Interstate 81 Southbound and/or Interstate 78:

Exit Interstate 81 at Exit 77 (Route 39). Bear right onto Route 39 West (Linglestown Road).

From the West on Interstate 81 Northbound:

Exit Interstate 81 at Exit 77 (Route 39). Bear left onto Route 39 West (Linglestown Road).

Once on Route 39 (Linglestown road), proceed 0.6 mile to N. Fairville Ave. (Pass McDonalds, Perkins, and various truck stops). Make an immediate right onto N. Fairville Avenue at the Hotel/Motel and proceed approximately 2.8 miles from Route 39. Bear left several times to stay on N. Fairville Avenue (there are several jogs in the road). Turn Right onto Piketown Road and proceed up over mountain approximately 0.7 miles to the intersection with Sleepy Hollow Road and Appalachian Trail. The Mt. Laurel Church of God is located on your right side (east of Piketown Road) and the West Hanover Fire Company is located across the street on the left side (west of Piketown Road). Additional church parking is available at the lot diagonally across the intersection from the church. A cemetery is located across the street from the additional Church parking lot area.

From the North on S.R. 322:

Exit S.R. 322 at the North Front Street exit (Fort Hunter). Proceed several hundred feet and turn left onto Fishing Creek Valley Road (S.R. 443 East). Proceed approximately 7.3 miles and turn right onto Sleep Hollow Road. Proceed on Sleepy Hollow Road for approximately 1.8 miles to intersection with Piketown Road. The church is located directly in front of you at the intersection.

PCC Officer Elections

There will be a PCC meeting February 28, 2026 following the MAR Business Meeting. It is at this meeting that PCC officers are elected. Anyone wishing to run for office can put their name on the ballot by contacting any PCC officer.

Cave conservation and protection can only happen if we all work together towards the same goals.

Get involved with PCC!

Hosts Needed for the 2027 Spring and Fall MARs!

As of January 2026 there is no grotto, or individual, slated to host the 2027 Spring or Fall MAR Field Meets. If you are interested in hosting one of these events, a helpful guide to hosting a MAR field meet can be found on the MAR website (<https://mar.caves.org/hosting.htm>). Think about it - can you or your grotto host an event? If there are no volunteers there will be no field meet. If you're interested in hosting an event, please contact a MAR officer.

Fall 2025 MAR Field Meet - Huntingdon, PA

September 26-28, 2025 by Paul Winter

Nittany Grotto hosted a medieval-themed Ye Old MAR Fall Field Meet September 26-28, 2025 at Lincoln Caverns. Ann Dunlavy and the Lincoln Caverns staff provided a wonderful site and there was good weather. There was ample camping, with a lively central area with the vendors, party tent, main fire ring, registration, and other activities.

The event used Zeffy's All-in-one fundraising software to manage online ticket sales. There were 96 who bought tickets by the preregistration deadline, with 44 more buying full priced tickets and 26 that took advantage of the "dinner only" option on Saturday, bringing total attendance to 161.

Terrance Lovell, Gary Dunmire, Jeff Morrisey, and Paul Winter cut and split firewood sourced by Jeff in Huntingdon County. Due to a partial burn-ban in effect, fires were kept to metal rings for the weekend, so the fire never reached the planned-for size and there was wood left over.



On Saturday, over 85 people went caving to multiple central PA classics such as Alexander Caverns, Halls, Kooken, McAllisterville, McClure, Milroy, Nelsons Pit, Penn Aqua, Rupert, and Ruth. Friday night had black-light tours in Lincoln Caverns.

Outstanding Stitches and MAKC had wonderful storefronts onsite.

Doan's Bones catered the event.

Corey Hackley gave a presentation about the ongoing exploration and survey of the Sliding Rock Cave system after dinner Saturday evening.

Steamy and Hotsy made an appearance Saturday night.

PCC sold 90 breakfast tickets in total, raising \$360 for PCC and \$90 for MAKC from their PCC Breakfast Fundraiser.

The event was a success and we thank everyone who attended and helped make it a success!

Save the Date! - 2026 Spring MAR!

Bald Eagle Grotto (BEG) will be hosting a **Pirate-Themed** 2026 Spring MAR Field Meet on May 8-10, 2026 at the McClure Bean Soup and Festival grounds in McClure PA. More details will be posted on the MAR web site as they become available:

<https://mar.caves.org/fieldmeets.htm>



Pennsylvania Cave Conservancy, Inc.

P.O. Box 373, Neffs, PA 18065

Minutes of Regular Meeting – September 28, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 9:36 am by President Ryan Cale at Lincoln Caverns, Huntingdon, PA on Sunday, September 28, 2025. Ryan introduced the PCC officers and thanked all the PCC representatives for taking the time to attend the meeting.

The following officers were present: **President** Ryan Cale **Vice President** Elijah Yearick
Treasurer Tom Griffin **Secretary** Gretchen Schock

Representation was as follows:

Bald Eagle Grotto	--	Huntingdon Co. Cave Hunters	--
Baltimore Grotto	Kim Fleischmann	Nittany Grotto	Gary Dunmirer
Bucks County Grotto	--	Out of Bounds Grotto	--
Central New Jersey Grotto	Amos Mincin	Philadelphia Grotto	Amos Mincin
Commander Cody Caving Club	--	Seven Valleys Grotto	Joe Schock
Franklin County Grotto	Pat Minnick	York Grotto	Troy Wheland (proxy)
Greater Allentown Grotto	Dwight Kempf	MAKC (Associate)	Dave Field

Secretary Report: Gretchen (Red) Schock stated the previous PCC meeting minutes from 22 February 2025 had been published in the April 2025 MAR Breakdown and asked if there were any changes/corrections. Dwight Kempf moved and Kim Fleischmann seconded to approve the meeting minutes as published in the April 2025 MAR Breakdown. The motion passed.

Treasurer Report: Tom Griffin reviewed the PCC account activity since the last meeting (provided below). Amos Mincin moved and Kim Fleischmann to accept the Treasurers report. The motion passed.

Pennsylvania Cave Conservancy

Financial Summary

2-22-25 through 9-28-25

<u>Interest Checking Account</u>		<u>Date</u>
Checking Balance	2/22/2025	F&M Trust Bank checking
Deposit		PCC T-shirt Sales x 11
Deposit		Donation – Alexis & JD
Deposit		Interest
Deposit		Interest
Deposit		Central New Jersey Grotto Donation
		Alexander Sink Cleanup 4/26/2025:
Withdrawal - check		Wrays Landscaping (Dumpster Fee)
Withdrawal - check		Hope Brooks (drinks,plates, etc for crew)
		\$22.12 **not cashed yet**
Withdrawal - check		Rick Smith (Nitrile Gloves, Commercial trash bags)
Deposit		Interest
Deposit		Interest
Deposit		Interest

Deposit	Interest	7/31/2025	\$0.03
Deposit	Interest	8/31/2025	\$0.03
Ending Balance :			\$1,664.72

Money Market Account:			Date
Beginning Balance	2/22/25		2/22/2025
Deposit	Interest	2/28/2025	\$22.20
Deposit	Interest (3.22%)	3/31/2025	\$24.30
Deposit	Interest (3.19%)	4/30/2025	\$22.66
Deposit	Interest (3.16%)	5/31/2025	\$23.27
Deposit	Interest (3.17%)	6/30/2025	\$22.59
Deposit	Interest (3.17%)	7/31/2025	\$23.40
Deposit	Interest (3.16%)	8/31/2025	\$23.46
Ending Balance :			\$8,876.63

COMBINED TOTAL : **\$10,541.35**

Web Page: The PCC officers met with Dave Fricke on August 31, 2025 to discuss the way forward for the PCC web site. Dave Fricke offered to work with the NSS to bring the old PCC site information up to date and secure a functional/maintainable url through the new NSS web services.

PCC Breakfast: The PCC offered their fund raising pancake breakfast Sunday morning of the 2025 Fall MAR. Ryan thanked everyone who helped to prepare the breakfast as well as all those that purchased tickets to support the effort. Between pre-registration sales (thank you Nittany Grotto) and those purchased on site, 90 PCC breakfast tickets were sold. The breakfast supplies were donated by the PCC officers, therefore, \$360 was earned for the PCC and \$90 for the MAKC, who was kind enough to provide coffee/tea for the breakfast. An additional \$23 was collected for the PCC by several generous donors. Thank you to everyone for another successful event!

PCC Brochure: Dave Briggs has the supply of PCC brochures. The PCC officers plan to obtain the brochures from Dave so that they can be made available during future caving events.

Mail: no report.

Christmas Cards: Kim Kehs assumed the task of sending the PCC Christmas Cards beginning in 2018. Please contact Kim if you know of a landowner you would like added to the PCC Christmas card list.

T-shirts: The PCC t-shirt price was reduced to \$5 during the May 2023 PCC meeting. Please contact Tom Griffin or Red Schock if you are interested in purchasing a shirt. Tom and Red plan to make the t-shirts available for sale at upcoming caving events. Six (6) PCC t-shirts were sold during the Fall MAR weekend. Sizes available are Small, Medium, and Large. Gary Dunmire asked if there would be interest in a new design for future PCC t-shirts. Amos Mincin moved to solicit submissions for a new PCC t-shirt design. Gary Dunmire seconded. The motion passed. Dwight Kempf suggested the burden of storage, etc be taken into consideration while determining if the group would like to pursue future t-shirt orders.

PA Cave Database: no report.

OLD BUSINESS:

Project and Caves of Interest List:

Alexander Caverns Conservation Project: Tom Griffin reported that the Alexander Caverns cleanup, organized by Rick Smith/Bald Eagle Grotto, was a successful event. Attendance was

good, despite the cold, rainy start to the day. Many hands made quick work of cleaning the area. PCC assisted with the project expenses. Additional details and photos were provided in the August 2025 issue of the MAR Breakdown. Thank you to all who assisted!

Cleversburg Sink Conservation Project: Franklin County Grotto (FCG) will be hosting a conservation project at Cleversburg Sink in Cumberland County on Saturday, October 25, 2025. The PCC has offered to assist with expenses related to the project efforts, which will include replacing several of the rotting railroad tie steps leading to the cave and reinforcing/enhancing the cave gate.

Tytoona Cave Preserve: Opportunities for volunteer work are ongoing at the preserve site. Contact the Preserve Manager for additional details.

Wind Cave: Discussion concerning the potential for organizing a future clean-up effort at Wind Cave ensued, focusing on trash collection/removal. Eli Yearick offered to reach out to the appropriate contacts with Lancaster County Conservancy to determine the likelihood of the PCC hosting a conservation event, possibly in 2026.

Cave Conservation Reporting: Tom Griffin is serving as the MAR point of contact to collect conservation reports for Val Hildreth, NSS Cave Conservation Committee Chair. Tom encourages all grottos and cavers in the MAR region to report cave conservation efforts to him (caver182@gmail.com) for inclusion in the annual MAR conservation report to the NSS. Tom is collecting data on any conservation activity that any individual or group took part in throughout the year. Some examples include trash/graffiti cleanup in or around caves, cave gate installation/repair, constructing fence for landowner, providing karst education at events, leading scouts or school groups on field trips, etc.

NEW BUSINESS:

2026 Spring MAR: Bald Eagle Grotto (BEG) will be hosting the 2026 Spring MAR the weekend of 8-10 May. Additional information will be posted on the MAR website as it becomes available (<https://mar.caves.org/fieldmeets.htm>).

2026 NSS Convention: From July 6-10, 2026, the NSS will host the society's 83rd annual convention in Corydon, Indiana. This week-long event includes extensive presentations across all disciplines related to cave science. Additional information can be found on the convention website <https://caves.org/convention/2026-nss-convention/>.

Next meeting: The next meeting of the PCC will be held on Saturday, February 28, 2026 at the Mt. Laurel Church of God, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania following the MAR Business meeting. For directions and details, please see the MAR Web Site (<https://mar.caves.org/busnmtg.htm>).

Kim Fleischmann moved and Amos Mincin seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed and meeting was adjourned at 9:59 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Gretchen (Red) Schock, Recording Secretary

Save the Date! - 2026 Fall MAR!

York Grotto will be hosting the 2026 Fall MAR Field Meet on Sept 25-27, 2026 at the Newville Lions Club Fairgrounds in Newville, PA. More details will be posted on the MAR web site as they become available: <https://mar.caves.org/fieldmeets.htm>

Upcoming Events

2026 MAR Annual Business Meeting	February 28, 2026
Mt. Laurel Church of God 1295 Piketown Road, Linglestown, PA URL: https://mar.caves.org/busnmtg.htm	
2026 Spring MAR Field Meet	May 8-10, 2026
McClure Bean Soup and Festival grounds McClure, PA Hosted by Bald Eagle Grotto URL: https://mar.caves.org/fieldmeets.htm	
2026 Spring VAR Field Meet	May 8-10, 2026
Endless Caverns New Market, VA Hosted by Tri-State Grotto URL: https://var.caves.org/index.php/events/spring-var	
2026 Spring NRO Field Meet	May 15-17, 2026
Thompson's Lake Campground, Thacher State Park East Berne, NY Hosted by Central Connecticut Grotto (CCG) and Northeastern Cave Conservancy (NCC) URL: https://sites.google.com/view/centralconnecticutgrotto	
2026 NSS Convention	July 6-10, 2026
Ohio River Valley Corydon, IN URL: https://caves.org/convention/2026-nss-convention/	
Old Timers Reunion (OTR)	Sept. 3-7, 2026
OTR Site/Campgrounds Dailey, WV (Randolph County) URL: www.otr.org	
2026 Fall MAR Field Meet	Sept. 25-27, 2026
Newville Lions Club Fairgrounds Newville, PA Hosted by York Grotto URL: https://mar.caves.org/fieldmeets.htm	
2026 Fall VAR Field Meet	Fall 2026
Location: TBD Hosted by TBD URL: https://var.caves.org/index.php/events/fall-var	
2026 Bridge Day	October 17, 2026
New River Gorge Bridge Fayetteville, WV URL: www.officialbridgeday.com -or- https://www.nps.gov/neri/	
2027 MAR Annual Business Meeting	February 27, 2027
Mt. Laurel Church of God 1295 Piketown Road, Linglestown, PA URL: https://mar.caves.org/busnmtg.htm	

NSS MEMBER PRICE LIST

Effective October 2018

MID-APPALACHIAN REGION BULLETINS (including reprinted Bulletins)

1-4	Bulletins Caves of Shippensburg Area #1-4 REPRINT		7.00 + postage A
5	Caves of Western PA: REPRINT	29 caves, 19 maps	8.00 + postage A
6	Caves of S. Cumberland Valley REPRINT	93 caves 69 maps+6 large maps	17.00 + postage B
7	Caves of Fulton Co, PA <u>Revised/Corrected</u>	4 caves, 4 maps	5.00 + postage A
8	Caves of Blair Co., PA REPRINT	89 caves, 40 maps	7.00 + postage A
9	Caves of Huntingdon Co., PA REPRINT	94 caves, 36 maps	10.00 + postage B
10	Caves of Snyder Co., PA	20 caves, 14 maps	6.00 + postage A
11	Caves of Centre Co., PA	71 caves, 56 maps+1 large map	10.00 + postage B
12	Caves of Mifflin Co., PA	47 caves, 31 maps+5 large maps	10.00 + postage B
13	Caves of Perry Co., PA	13 caves, 6 maps	10.00 + postage A
14	Caves of Bucks Co., PA REPRINT	24 caves, 6 maps	5.00 + postage A
15	Caves of Lehigh Co., PA REPRINT	25 caves, 13 maps	6.00 + postage A
16	Caves of Northampton Co., PA	24 caves, 13 maps+1 large map	6.00 + postage A
17	Caves of Northumberland Co., PA	20 caves, 10 maps	5.00 + postage A
18	Caves of Berks Co., PA	64 caves, 32 maps	10.00 + postage B
19	Caves of Bedford Co., PA	54 caves, 33 maps	7.00 + postage A
20	Caves of Westmoreland Co., PA	337 caves, 187 maps/10 large maps	29.50 + postage C
21	Karst of Sinking Valley and Kooken Cave Huntingdon and Blair Counties	103 pages with color photos , 4 fold-out maps, 2 large maps	27.50 + postage B
22	Caves of Middle Susquehanna Valley	140 pages with color photos	16.00 + postage D

U.S. Postage:

A \$2.00 postage first copy; \$0.50 each additional to same address.

B \$2.50 postage first copy; \$0.50 each additional to same address.

C \$3.00 postage for each bulletin #20.

D \$3.50 postage for each bulletin #22

MAR Bulletin Orders: Please make checks payable to MAR

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**NOTE:** All checks must be payable in U.S. dollars on U.S. bank or U.S. money order

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*** New MAR Bulletin Order Coordinator - **Olivia McAllister**, NSS 69461 ***

Info on ordering is available at <https://mar.caves.org/bulletins.htm>

Send bulletin orders to: MAR Bulletins
% Olivia McAllister
1208 W Pine Grove Road
Penn. Furnace, PA 16865