



TCMA PASSAGES

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TCMA acquires Wilcox cave preserve

By Jay Jorden

Looking back, 2016 was a great year for Texas cavers for a lot of reasons – plenty of great trips along with big-time exploration and mapping. Also, the Texas Cave Management Association (TCMA) has been successful in acquiring caves for Texas cavers, including our latest acquisition: the Wilcox Cave Preserve in Williamson County.

This deal, completed in December 2016, follows TCMA's acquisition of Avery Ranch Cave in late 2015. The new preserves are both in far north Austin. They help ensure that unique cave resources in Central Texas will continue to be protected.

TCMA, the state's oldest non-profit organization, is an all-volunteer group dedicated to the study and management of Texas cave resources. It depends on donations for funding acquisition efforts. TCMA closed on the Wilcox property following negotiations that began earlier

Meet our new TCMA officers and directors for 2017

Please join us in congratulating and welcoming our new TCMA President **Gregg Williams** and Vice President **Jim "Crash" Kennedy** as well as new directors **Lindsey Adamoski**, **Christi Burrell** and **Amy Morton**. All are from the San Antonio/South Central Texas area.

Gregg, a lifetime Texas resident and long-time Bexar Grotto member, has been an active caver for at least eight years. He's an avid outdoorsman as well with an eye for conservation. "My dedication to the caving community and the region, coupled with my drive to further
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this year.

"After months of negotiations, we received the Wilcox Preserve, which includes at least three caves. These exceptional resources may also be habitats for endangered species," said John P. Brooks, outgoing TCMA president of Dallas, adding the final settlement in the property closing was reached early in December. "This real estate came as a donation from the development company that had owned it."

Current TCMA officers and directors, including
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Wilcox Cave No. 1 entrance on new TCMA preserve

TCMA at TSACON!

DON'T MISS our:

- **Silent auction** Saturday, **LIVE auction** Saturday night
- **Breakfast** at 8 a.m. Sunday, followed by annual **members' meeting**

Please join TCMA if you're not a member. Stop by the TCMA tent and get to know us!

Wilcox cave preserve acquired by TCMA

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new President Gregg Williams of San Antonio, are working to develop a management plan for the property.

Covering more than four acres in the North Austin suburb of Cedar Park, the cave preserve was once part of a large ranch that had been subdivided over the last 40 or more years. Until two years ago, the property served as the headquarters of the Texas Cave Conservancy (TCC), another cave-focused conservation organization which has since been dissolved. Known as the Wilcox tract, the new site was originally developed by Mrs. Bertha Wilcox in the 1970s and later acquired by Fox River Austin Properties LP for use in endangered species mitigation. Fox River worked with the TCC from 2003 to 2014 to protect and preserve the caves on the property. The TCC consulted with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) in conservation activities, including the protection of caves on the property and performing fire ant removal to ensure the endangered species' viability. This spring, Fox River approached the TCMA with a proposal to donate the property. Shout-outs for amazing work

The TCMA gratefully acknowledges the efforts of Drew Thompson and Rich Zarria, who were instrumental in the Wilcox acquisition. They represented TCMA at a conference of conservancies and land trusts and worked behind the scenes to make the deal possible. The TCMA



John Brooks (left), outgoing president and Gregg Williams, incoming leader

Acquisitions Committee has also been of tremendous help.

Additionally, TCMA would like to thank Austin Realtor Bradley Pounds, who assisted with preparing contracts on a pro bono basis. He has been a great friend of the TCMA and an excellent resource in dealing with the recent acquisition efforts.

These efforts also included acquiring Avery Ranch Cave in far North Austin. Discovered in 2001 by contractors excavating a sewer line with a rock trencher at a housing subdivision, the cave had no existing entrance and was in pristine condition when cavers entered it for



Avery Ranch Cave

the first time. Avery Ranch Cave was originally acquired by the TCC, which worked with landowners, state regulators and the USFWS to gate the entrance and protect the resource. The preserve was also fenced to manage access. Annually, the cave was opened to the public for "Cave Day," which proved very popular.

Hundreds of residents in surrounding neighborhoods have visited the cave over the years.



Cave Day at Avery Ranch

TCMA plans to continue and accelerate this-community outreach. Founded in 1986 as a 501(c)3 organization, TCMA was the first organization in Texas dedicated to the preservation of caves and our underground resources. TCMA owns nine cave preserves across Central and Southwest Texas, including Robber Baron Cave in San Antonio; Ezells Cave, San Marcos; and the Deep and Punkin Cave Preserve, Edwards County.

TCMA is one of 34 land trusts in Texas directly involved in protecting land for its natural, recreational, scenic, historical, or productive value. Statewide, TCMA is affiliated with the Texas Land Trust Council, Texas Speleological Association, and Texas Speleological Survey. Nationally, TCMA is affiliated with the Land Trust Alliance, National Speleological Society and Bat Conservation International.

Meet our new TCMA officers and directors

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the caving community and its relations with landowners and the general public, means I will do the best job possible representing the TCMA in all aspects," Gregg said. "I feel grateful to be part of such a diverse and talented caving community."



Gregg Williams

Gregg succeeds John Brooks in the president's role and is very keen to accelerate TCMA's cave acquisition program along with promoting effective landowner relations and developing projects at TCMA's nine preserves, helping each them reach their fullest potential. **Jim** succeeds Gregg as vice president – and is also a director. Additionally, Jim is the TCMA Preserve Committee chair, with emphasis on assisting the many preserve managers, improving our standards, and developing management plans for our properties. A cave biologist who spent 18 years working for Bat Conservation International, Jim founded

Kennedy Above/Under Ground LLC in 2013, engaged in karst and bat management. He is a past TSA president and a Texas Speleological Survey board member.

Jim is deeply interested in cave conservation and management on a global scale, having chaired the steering committee for the biennial National Cave and Karst Management Symposium, representing the National Speleological Society. Jim coordinates and participates in digging, survey, and exploration projects all across Texas and Mexico. A Fellow and Life Member of the NSS, Jim spent four years on the instructional staff of the National Cave Rescue Commission.

Joe Ranzau of Boerne remains our treasurer as well as a director.

Jay Jorden of Celina is secretary.

Lindsey, a very active Bexar Grotto member **Lindsey Adamoski** and a member of TCMA since 2015, won the Texas Speleological Association's Chuck



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Texas Cave Management Association - a 501(c)3 nonprofit since 1986

Visit us online! <http://www.tcmacaves.org/>

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Membership information

Membership Fees:

Regular - \$15.00

Associate (Students under 21)
- \$10.00

Institutional (Non-profit) -
\$50.00

Corporate - \$100.00

Life (Regular Rate) - \$500.00

Joining is easy! Go online at
www.tcmacaves.org - or send a
check to:

Texas Cave Management
Association Inc.
PO Box 7427
Austin, TX 78713

Officers

Gregg Williams, president
Jim Kennedy, vice president
Jay Jorden, secretary
Joe Ranzau, treasurer

Directors

Lindsey Adamoski
Christi Burrell
Pam Campbell
Michael Cicherski
Galen Falgout
Lee Jay Graves
Jay Jorden
Jim "Crash" Kennedy
Amy Morton
Denise Prendergast
Joe Ranzau
Drew Thompson
Gregg Williams

Committee Chairs

Acquisitions – Allan Cobb
Archives - Denise Prendergast
Budget - Ron Ralph

Communications – Jay Jorden
Database - Denise Prendergast
Finance - Joe Ranzau
Fundraising – Pam Campbell
Insurance - Joe Ranzau
Membership – Bennett Lee
Nominations – Galen Falgout
Preserves Management - Jim Kennedy

Preserve Managers

Deep and Punkin - Don Arburn
Ezells Cave – Michael Cicherski
Godwin Ranch – Andrea Croskey
Lost Oasis – Drew Thompson
Robber Baron – Joe Mitchell
Rolling Oaks – Bennett Lee
UT Lands (Amazing Maze, O-9 Well) –
Ben Hutchins
Avery Ranch – Matt Turner
Whirlpool – Rich Zarría

TCMA: <http://www.tcmacaves.org/>

Bennett Lee, webmaster
Passages editor - Jay Jorden
Associate editor - R.D. Milhollin

Meet our new TCMA officers and directors

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Stuehm award that year for new and exceptionally exuberant cavers.

She has participated in several service projects including Bamberger Ranch, the LaChance Dig, private cave survey, the Texas Hydrogeo Workshop, and the Robber Baron Open House.

Christi, a Georgia native who finished high school in San Antonio, returned to the Alamo City in 1987 and started caving that same year.



Her first cave was Robber Baron, followed by Logan's and then Benders Water Cave – now Twinkie's. She has since explored caves all over Texas and Southern New Mexico and other states.

Along with her passion for caving, Christi also enjoys hiking, camping, backpacking, rock hounding and canoeing.

Christi has always believed in participating and also in giving back, having worked in the non-profit space for 20-plus years. She previously held office in the TSA because of her need to get involved and contribute to the organization's work.

"I truly appreciate all of the conservation work that has been done by the TCMA," Christi says. "I feel that with all of my years working for nonprofit organizations, I have a unique knowledge of the legal and financial boundaries of nonprofit groups."

Along with husband Mike Burrell, also a caver, the couple lives on the property of Cave Without a Name in Boerne, where Mike has been working for several years. Christi works at First Presbyterian Church, San Antonio.

In her three years of caving, **Amy** has fallen in love with the underground world and become quite obsessed with the activity. She has been in 50+ caves in 10 states, two expedition trips to Mexico and a tank haul in Main Drain (Utah). Also, Amy has organized big events for

the Greater Houston Grotto, such as trips to Logan's and CM Cave.

Because of her avid love for the activity, Amy loves to give back to the caving community. She is also TSA vice chair.

Amy's recent move to the Hill Country has enabled deeper engagement in caving. All these new officers and directors join the following board members with unexpired terms:

Pam Campbell of San Antonio, December 2017; Michael Cicherski of New Braunfels, Galen Falgout of Austin (all terms expiring in December 2017); and Lee Jay Graves of Austin, Jay Jorden of Celina (Dallas area), Denise Prendergast of Austin, Drew Thompson of Austin (all terms expiring in December 2018).



Amy Morton

TCMA calendar

Work weekend

May 12-13

Deep & Punkin Caves Nature Preserve

TCMA Strategic Planning Meeting

May 19-21

Dolan Falls Preserve, Texas
Nature Conservancy

Cave Day

Date TBD

Avery Ranch Cave

Open House

Date TBD

Wilcox Cave Preserve

39th Texas Cavers Reunion

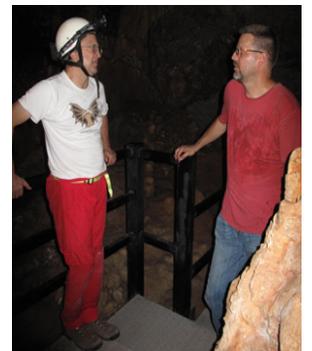
October 12-15 (tentative)

Paradise Canyon; Medina, Texas

Robber Baron Cave Open House

November 11

San Antonio, Texas



R.D. Milhollin provides context to Avery Ranch Cave visitor