

The Great Saltpetre Cave Preserve

Greater Cincinnati Grotto

Blue Grass Grotto

Dayton Underground Grotto

Central Ohio Grotto

Strategic Plan for Great Saltpetre Cave Preserve

Mission

To provide, protect, and preserve a place where people can experience the value of caves and enjoy their discovery, exploration and history as well as their relationship to the environment. Great Saltpetre Cave Preserve offers opportunities for fun, education and participation to youth and adults.

Objectives

1. Improve relationships with our neighbors for mutual benefit and help.
2. Provide a safe, comfortable place for rustic & primitive camping with opportunities to experience the solitude of nature.
3. Continue discovery of the Great Saltpetre Cave and its scientific, exploration, and educational aspects.
4. Preserve the natural resource for future discovery and enjoyment.
5. Be known as a model preserve, an example worth emulating.
6. Ensure the Preserves finances are reliably and securely managed.

Obstacles

1. Insufficient volunteers and motivation & rewards for service.
 - a. Lack of younger stewards.
2. Interpersonal conflicts among the leadership negatively affect the enthusiasm with which volunteers become involved or maintain their involvement with the management and care of the Preserve.
3. Occasional negative perception by neighbors or community.
4. Driving distance for many volunteers.

Plans:

1. Recruit more volunteers
 - a. New Members: Take a new member caving, THEN introduce them to GSP.
 - b. Current Members: Promote new discoveries in Great Saltpetre Cave and scientific exploration & study.
 - c. Canvas the members and create a database of skills, talents, and expertise.

2. Convert Suspicion to Support (Become Better Neighbors)
 - a. Continue working to further neighbor relations.
 - b. Continue updating history of the Preserve.
 - c. Write quarterly articles for Mt. Vernon Signal.
 - d. Continue Open House.
 - e. Pig Roast or something for neighbors.
3. Public Relations Program:
 - a. Cave Protection and vandalism prevention
 - b. Develop a brochure (tri-fold?)
 - c. Start a "Friends of GSP" program
 - d. Prepare a new map of the cave including a wider range of information.
 - e. Develop these outreach efforts for:
 - i) neighbors
 - ii) local area
 - iii) future partners
 - iv) parents/chaperones with school field trips
 - v) all others
4. Encourage Discoveries & Scientific Studies
 - a. Allow digging in approved areas following proper Archaeological procedures and protocol.
 - b. Require documentation.
 - c. Offer fellowships which include requirement for copies of all documentation to be shared.
5. Facilities and Infrastructure (list of projects)
 - a. Update Management Plan
 - b. Provide adequate sanitary facilities.
 - c. Repair or replace deteriorated asphalt entrance road.
 - d. Formal Educational Center for year round use.
 - i) Include appropriate equipment & furnishings.
 - ii) Requires an Educational Coordinator.
 - e. Refresh signage throughout the Preserve.
6. Development (Fundraising) - future resources
 - a. In all grant applications or other requests, express the needs in project terms.
7. Ensure the continuation of a caretaker living on the property.
 - a. Review long term plans and ideas with caretaker.
8. Develop Educational Programming for GSP
 - a. Expand School field trips, especially once we have a Formal Education Center.
 - b. Develop activities to use the property and to teach outdoor studies.

Advantages of adopting this Strategic Plan:

1. Improved communication
2. Focus effort & resources on issues of priority
3. Stimulate volunteers
4. Establishes goals and guidelines with which to verify and document consistency of stewardship
5. Establishes boundaries (limitations on activities)

6. Good for adaptation elsewhere
7. May attract funding for projects
8. Pro-education

Disadvantages:

1. Increased usage & management challenges.
2. Increased human resource needs.
3. Will need to review and update the Preserve's Liability Insurance Policy when moving forward with Plans.

Action Steps:

1. Recruit Volunteers to Manage these (and similar) Plans.
2. Explain Strategic Plan to all stakeholders.
 - a. Grottos: Turn the Strategic Plan into a program for the Grottos.

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Strategic Plan Update Committee included: Jerry Brandenburg, Bob Dobbs, Gary Bush, Sean Cain, Tama Cassidy, Dennis Green, Neena Jud, Werner Jud, Darlene Kisner, Bob Roth, Mike Wuerth, Danny Young, and Dan Zubal.

