The Lloyd and Ethel Hoff Underground Nature Preserve

Berome Moore Cave System Property Rules

And Management Plan

Perry County, Missouri

March 2019

INTRODUCTION: The Missouri Caves and Karst Conservancy, Inc. has purchased one acre forming the Lloyd and Ethel Hoff Underground Nature Preserve. This includes the entrance to the Berome Moore Cave System (PRY045). The Conservancy has agreed, via a Memo of Understanding, that the cave and property will be managed by Middle Mississippi Valley Grotto Inc. (MMV), a chapter of the NSS who have managed the cave since its discovery in 1961. MMV will continue to manage Berome Moore Cave in order that it will be available for scientific study and recreation by responsible cavers while at the same time protecting the cave and its ecosystem for future generations of cavers. MMV will also manage the surface property to enhance the overall natural setting while protecting the sub-surface resources. MMV will also maintain the 800 foot long and 18 foot wide easement and gates and locks. The 911 Emergency address is Berome Moore Cave 1061 PCR 906

HISTORY OF THE CAVE: The history of Berome Moore Cave begins with the discovery of Tom Moore Cave. Tom Moore discovered the entrance to the cave on his father’s farm in 1919. Tom Moore Cave has the distinction of being the first entry, PRY001, for Perry County in the cave files administered by the Missouri Speleological Survey. Berome Cave was discovered on October 29, 1961 by Tex Yokum, Stan Sides, and others. It was named after Tom’s son Berome who had let cavers graciously enter Tom Moore Cave for years.

Since the time of discovery of the Berome entrance, Middle Mississippi Valley Grotto, of which Tex Yokum was a member, has managed the cave. A gate, using a 55-gallon barrel, was constructed about 100 feet into the cave at the most constricted point between the sinkhole entrance and the main cave. The gate was installed to prevent unauthorized access, which could result in significant human impact, including graffiti, trash, and vandalism. Over the decades, the cave has been used for several purposes, including surveying the extent of the cave, conducting scientific research, providing educational trips, and accommodating a limited number of recreational trips.

On April 12, 1980, Devon Jones and Roger Hoff, one of the landowner’s sons, with the guidance of Jim Sherrell and others, made the connection between Tom Moore Cave and Berome Cave, resulting in what is now the Berome Moore Cave System. Bob Cline, Rick Haley, Bill Rudolph and Rich Schleper extended the upstream passages to other possible entrances. On August 21, 2010, Jim Sherrell and Don Dunham, on behalf of MMV, approached the landowner and negotiated an agreement to purchase an acre of land encompassing the Berome Moore entrance.

In June, 2013, The barrel gate was removed and a new steel gate was installed using BCI (Bat Conservation International) standards.

SUBSURFACE RESOURCES: The Berome Moore Cave System has over 21 miles of surveyed passage, with much more to be surveyed. The entrance to Berome Moore Cave is a 25-foot diameter sinkhole. At the base of the sinkhole, the cave forks into two passages. The left side goes to the Tom Moore section; the right side leads to the Berome Moore section of the cave, which is secured by a locked, steel gate. A few feet beyond the gate, the cave opens to an enormous chamber that extends 1,200 feet up and down large piles of breakdown, past a waterfall, over a pit, and into Base Camp. Over the years, this part of the cave has been developed, with the creation of a trail, accompanied with lighting, a bridge over the pit passage, and the Base Camp, which contains a few amenities such as benches, table, propane stoves, and level, dry floor space for sleeping for cavers on extended studies. The Base Camp also has an extended water system with a sink and a rock countertop to make camp more comfortable. The in cave pit toilet was removed in 2012 after a vault toilet was built on the surface. Beyond Base Camp, the cave is undeveloped. Berome Moore contains a variety of passages, such as Mainstream, a large trunk passage through which all incoming waters eventually join. There are additional passages that parallel Mainstream. In addition, there are a few areas in the cave that are maze-like, including the appropriately named “The Maze”, which can sometimes be confusing, even to the most experienced caver. The cave also has low water crawls, tight passages, breakdown rooms, and narrow canyon passages. The cave has a variety of speleothems. A few hand lines are permanently placed to help with some climbs.

One of the most exciting discoveries in Berome Moore was Pleistocene jaguar tracks, still preserved to this day, in one of the stream passages close to Base Camp. Appropriately, this passage was named Cat Track Passage. In addition to the tracks, Berome Moore Cave also provides a habitat for the federally endangered grotto sculpin and the rare pink planaria. It is illegal to disturb endangered species.

MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL: Within this document, the following MMVBB individuals have management responsibilities:

• **MMV Berome Board (MMVBB)** – The MMVBB shall consist of five MMV members: the MMV Chairperson, A Director, a Cave Manager, a Property Manager, and a Data Manager. Any board member may assume one of these roles. Although one member may occupy more than one role, the board should strive to have one role per person. MMVBB members may assist each in order to provide productive management,

When a board position is vacated, the remaining board members must select a new board member to fill the empty seat at the next MMVBB meeting. All board members must be approved by the MMV Board. The MMV Board should review and re-approve all MMVBB members every three years. All MMVBB members must be members in good standing with MMV Grotto and the MCKC.

The MMVBB position occupied by the MMV Chair is governed by special rules. Should the MMV Chair resign his position in the grotto, he will no longer hold the MMVBB position reserved for the MMV Chair. In order to preserve a balance of power, the MMVBB Director may not be the MMV Chairperson.

All persons on the MMVBB board have equal responsibility to see that all aspects of management are addressed and being performed.

• **Berome Moore Project Director** will preside at MMVBB meetings, which will be conducted quarterly, direct the Cave Manager, the Data Manager and the Property Manager, and will act as the primary liaison between MMV and MCKC The Director will provide a monthly report at MMV meetings, and prepare an annual report to MCKC. The Director is responsible to set dates and arrangements for the regular MMVBB meetings.

• **Property Manager** – The MMVBB appointed individual whose primary responsibility is to oversee the Preserve’s surface acreage, road, and infrastructure, including maintaining the entrance gate/lock and the electrical system. • **Cave Manager** – The MMVBB appointed individual whose primary responsibility is to oversee the cave. This includes arranging access (after approval by the MMVBB), monitoring impact, and maintaining usage records. Copies of all records must be regularly forwarded to the other board members

• **Data Manager** – The MMVBB appointed individual whose primary responsibility is to collect historical data, visitation notes, photos, trip reports, and survey data. A computer, scanner, software etc, has been purchased for this task. The equipment remains the property of the MMVBB and is to be available for use by any MMVBB member.

• **MMV Chairperson** – The MMV Chairperson is the liaison between the MMV Grotto and the MMVBB.

The Project Director, Cave Manager and Property Manager will all have a copy of the Berome Moore cave gate key. Other keys may be given out by the unanimous vote of the entire MMVBB as needed. Keys for specific uses may be loaned as needed.

All copies of the keys remain property of the MMVBB and must be surrendered when requested by MMVBB. NO copies of the cave key can be made without written permission of the MMVBB.

MMVBB has installed a coded Lockbox for emergency cave access. The code to the box will be given out as necessary with approval by the MMVBB. Locks to the cave and the code to the Lockbox will be changed as needed as determined by MMVBB.

No person or group may enter Berome Moore cave without prior approval of the MMVBB, All members of the MMVBB must notify the rest of the board via email before entering the property and submit a brief report after their trip.

SUBSURFACE MANAGEMENT: Berome Moore Cave will continue to be managed as it has over the past few decades, including keeping, and maintaining all the developed features, such as the gate, lighting and Base Camp. Game Cameras are utilized above ground and within the cave.

SURFACE RESOURCES: The property consists of one acre of cleared farmland. The property is approximately 160 feet (north and south) and 272 feet (east and west). The cave entrance is located in the sinkhole bounded by a few trees. A power line traverses the property with a power pole supplying electric to the property. ALL VEHICLES MUST PARK ON THE GRAVEL.

SURFACE MANAGEMENT: All Vehicles visiting the preserve must park within the preserve boundary and on the gravel. Access or Camping is allowed only with the prior approval of the MMVBB. **All firewood must be brought in. No wood may be collected from adjacent properties. The Group leader must bring in any firewood that will be used during your stay. Purchase firewood locally due to tree diseases.**

Hunting is prohibited. Discharging of firearms, fireworks, or other explosive devices is not allowed. Digging or other surface modifications are prohibited without prior approval of the MMVBB.

SURFACE ACCESS: Drive-in access to the property is via an easement. The gates should be closed at the county road to discourage unauthorized access to the nature preserve. All gates should remain closed upon entering or exiting the property. All gates must be locked when the property is unoccupied.

CAMPING: The expectations of those camping on the property are that the campers will be well behaved, quiet and maintain a low profile. Camping will be arranged only through prior approval of the MMVBB. Camping will be restricted to designated areas only. Campfires will only be allowed in the designated fire ring. ALL TRASH MUST BE PACKED OUT, and the site left in as good or better shape as it was found. People violating these basic requirements may be permanently banned from future use. The trip Leader must notify the Project Director and managers of anything that needs attention, injuries on the property, or other events out of the ordinary. Failure to report incidents will be cause of denial of future requests.

CAVE ACCESS POLICY:

BEROME MOORE CAVE VISITATION REQUESTS

The cave may be available to organized, responsible cavers. Requests will be made through a “Group Leader”; those wishing to visit Berome Moore Cave must have their Group Leader contact the entire MMVBB to request access. beromemooretriprequest@yahoogroups.com the request MUST be made a minimum (14 days) in advance to be considered. Access is not guaranteed. The MMVBB reserves the right to question the group leader with any questions or concerns regarding the trip request. The MMVBB will determine if the GROUP LEADER needs an MMVBB assigned TRIP LEADER, or if the GROUP LEADER can be the TRIP LEADER.

Before entering the cave, all persons entering the cave **MUST** sign a liability release, follow surface and subsurface rules established by the MMVBB, and agree to protect the cave’s natural resources. The Group Leader and the Trip Leader are responsible to make sure this requirement is fulfilled.

The requestor of the trip will be known as the GROUP LEADER. The Group leader is responsible to see that conservation and safe caving practices are followed as defined by the established rules. The Group leader is responsible for the pickup and return of the cave key, as well as the filing of a trip report. The trip report MUST and signed Liability release form must be returned to the MMVBB cave manager within 7 days, Minimum group size is no less than four. Recommended maximum group size is no more than 12.

All trips must have a Group leader responsible for the party. The MMVBB will confirm or deny the Group Leader. The MMVBB will assign a trip leader. The Trip leader should be a member of MMV who is familiar with the cave, an experienced caver, familiar with the portion of the cave they are visiting, but not an MMV member, may be granted permission to be the both the Group Leader and the trip leader, if approved by the MMVBB. MMVBB will maintain a list of approved trip leaders; Trip leaders must have significant prior experience in caving and in Berome Moore Cave.

Prior to entering the cave, the Group leader will receive a liability waiver/information form to be signed and followed by everyone on the property. Participants under 18 years of age must have a parent signature on the liability-waiver/information form. A parent is required to accompany their child under the age of 12 into the cave NO EXCEPTIONS. The parent must sign their name and their Childs name, age and relationship on the liability release. The trip report MUST and signed Liability release form must be returned to the MMVBB cave manager within 7 days,

The Group leader is responsible for having every participant read and sign a copy of the liability wavier/information form, and return the waivers to MMVBB. The Group Leader and trip leader will also inform all participants of the visitation rules before entering the property. The rules cover appropriate precautions while changing clothes, keeping a low profile, precautions related to the weather, and information pertaining to emergencies. Any improper behavior reported to the MMVBB will result in denial of future visits. The Group leader must describe the difficulties and challenges required to complete the trip.

Participants are required to state any concerns with their ability to complete the trip.

The Group Leader is required to submit a completed Trip Report form to the MMVBB within 7 Days, (one week), of the trip. If the trip report is not received within 7 days the Group Leader will be denied further requests.

It is suggested that multiple trip participants be familiar with the cave in case of incapacitation of the trip leader.

The Trip Leader reserves the right to inspect everyone’s cave gear to suggest that the gear is adequate enough to withstand the rigors of the trip. The trip leader’s examination is a courtesy only and not a guarantee of performance. If in the Trip Leader’s opinion a participants gear is not adequate for the trip, The Trip Leader may deny access to that person.

Monetary compensation of the Group Leader or trip leader (cave-for-fee) is strictly prohibited. Berome Moore is not a commercial cave. The trip leader may participate in group meals, carpool arrangements, or other incidental transactions involving money, but none of these shall affect or influence cave access. Donations to the Berome Management Fund is suggested, but not required. Access is not guaranteed. Access depends on availaibility to provide or allow trip leader status as determined exclusively by the MMVBB.

Visitors should offer donations to the Berome Fund as the Nature Preserve has no other funding.

The release forms will be kept on file for up to two years and a new liability release signature may be required each time the cave is visited during this period. The Cave Manager will maintain a log of trips and visitors to the cave to assess visitation impact on the resource.

MMVBB will receive copies of all scientific studies or survey information acquired on a trip in a timely manner.

The Group Leader will acknowledge that he has read, understands and agrees to this Management Plan before the date of the trip.

All visitors must review the following rules and sign liability release waivers before entering onto -**The Lloyd and Ethel Hoff** Underground Nature Preserve. Anyone entering the property without prior permission may be considered trespassers and may be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. These rules must be followed by everyone to protect the property, the cave, MCKC, MMV, management board, and all visitors. It is also important to follow these rules to maintain a good relationship with the adjacent landowners and the Perry County community. Remember you are a guest on this property and represent all cavers that came before you and will come after you. Please be on your best behavior.

CAVE RULES.

**All cavers will follow the NSS safe caving guidelines, including the following: Never cave alone. Wear a helmet. Carry three sources of light. Wear suitable, lug-soled boots.** Beyond Base Camp or Cat Track Passage, there must be a minimum number of four in the party. Cat Track Passage is closed for bat hibernation from November 1st through April 1. A sign is installed in Cat Track passage. No one may proceed beyond the sign without permission on their permission form.

1. Follow all rules on this document and cave permit, and follow the requests of the MMVBB, Property Manager, and Cave Manager.

2. Keep a low profile at all times while on the property – no shouting, drunkenness, bonfires, honking, nor anything else that might be considered boisterous behavior. If your behavior **might** be noticed, in a negative way, by the neighbors, it is forbidden.

3. Use caution entering the Mainstream area of the cave during high water conditions. Check the weather conditions before entering the cave. Heavy rains have the potential to trap people in the far regions of the cave.

4. Do not enter the cave under the influence of alcohol or other substances.

5. No smoking or pets allowed in the cave.

6. The group and trip leaders MUST have a prearranged person aware of the trip and set up a time to call to inform that all have exited the cave safely.7. No one shall enter or exit other Berome Moore entrances, either known or unknown, without prior prearranged permission from the MMVBB.

8. The GROUP LEADER is responsible to pick up all trash, clothing, turn off all water and Electric.etc. before leaving the property. NO TRASH IS TO BE LEFT ON THE PREMISIS, Empty all Trashcans. If you find trash on the premises when you arrive, let the MMVBB know.9. Lock all gates (including the cave gate) behind you so unauthorized entry does not occur. duplicate the key.

10. Pack it in – Pack it out. No one may make permanent improvements to Base Camp, or leave, or take items at or from Base Camp without prior permission of the MMVBB. NO TRASH IS TO BE LEFT IN THE CAVE OR THE SURFACE.

11. Berome Moore is positive for White Nose Syndrome.

12. Do not touch or remove any formations.

13 .Any person who does not agree with the decisions of the MMVBB may request an appeal to the MMV Grotto at a regularly scheduled MMV Meeting.

**Failure to follow these rules or to leave the property when requested by a MMVBB board member or trip leader may result in prosecution for trespass and/or other actions.**

PERIODIC REVIEW OF THIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

This document will be reviewed bi-annually. It may be amended for cause if needed between review dates by the MMVBB with the knowledge of both MCKC and MMV.

HISTORY OF THIS DOCUMENT

Date of Implementation: March 2019 (last prior review/update) \_September 2018\_\_\_\_\_

Next Review Date: \_\_\_\_March 2021.