



## **Stacy Gantt-Blackwood (NSS 60309), Oklahoma**

I began caving in southern Oklahoma back 2007, becoming a member of the National Speleological Society in 2008. I helped to reactivate the Arbuckle Mountains Grotto and have served as an officer nearly every year since. I am a member of the Cave Diving Section and have been traveling to Florida several times training to become a cave diver. In 2014, I became an extraordinary woman caver in the group of Extraordinary Women Leaders in Speleology.

I received my Bachelor of Science from East Central University where I studied Environmental Health Science with undergraduate research focused on 'remediation of leaking septic systems in karst aquifers'

and postgraduate research focused on the analysis of elevated levels of carbon dioxide inside caves.

I am an active caver and spend nearly every weekend exploring and studying caves in the Arbuckle Mountains. I travel regularly and help with cave and karst research across the western USA, and more recently, in Florida and the Caribbean. My main interests in karst, caves, and caving is conservation, research, exploration, safety, and education. My regular contributions include cave photography, trash removal, bat counts, collecting fungus samples for biomedical research, water-level monitoring, and countless miles of ridgewalking.

In my day-to-day life I work as a customer service representative at a bank and regularly help customers manage their finances. I think my finance management skills, together with my background in environmental science, and leadership skills, would be useful as a board member of the NSS. I spend most of my time caving in the more arid regions of the western USA, and feel I could offer a perspective that may be less-represented on the NSS board. In the eastern USA, it seems that groundwater quality is a major concern, but in the western USA, groundwater quantity is our major concern. I am also a staunch advocate for the protection of wilderness and preservation of public lands in the west. I think that the increasing rhetoric by members of congress to transfer or sell public lands could jeopardize access to caves and the NSS will need to become involved to protect cave access for our western grottoes. Should this be required, I would be the first board member to make the motion for the NSS to oppose such legislation.