

## **National Speleological Society**

Office of the Administrative Vice President, Ray Keeler, VP

Education Division, Dianne Gillespie, Chair

Safety and Techniques Committee

**Report submitted 06/25/2010 to Dianne Gillespie by Aaron Bird, STC Chair**

"The Safety and Techniques Committee (STC) promotes safe caving practices through the study and refinement of techniques, with a secondary emphasis on analysis of equipment. The committee works with grottos, government agencies, and National Parks on developing caving guidelines, hazard analyses, and accident investigation. Recommendations, results, and educational material are passed on to the NSS membership through the STC column in the *NSS News* and through workshops at the NSS Convention."

*Report of STC Activities from March through June 2010:*

### **I. STC Chair Position**

- A. Aaron Bird was confirmed as *Chair* of the STC at the April 2010 BOG meeting in Cincinnati.

### **II. STC Membership Campaign**

- A. An Advisory Board has been assembled by Aaron Bird for the STC.
  - a. Kurt Waldron – accepted invitation
  - b. Bruce Smith – accepted invitation
  - c. Tim White – accepted invitation
  - d. Hazel Barton – accepted invitation
  - e. Charles Fox – accepted invitation
  - f. Jay Kennedy – accepted invitation
  - g. Joel Despain – accepted invitation
  - h. Jennifer Neemann – accepted invitation
  - i. William Shrewsbury – will participate remotely
  - j. Allen Maddox – accepted invitation
  - k. Christian Berghold – accepted invitation
  - l. Jennifer Neeman – accepted invitation
  - m. Gary Bush – accepted invitation
- B. Facebook Page for NSS STC now has 228 members (as of 06/25/2010)

### **III. Initiatives based on STC Focus Areas as Defined by Current and Previous Boards of Governors**

- A. Regarding directives of ACT 91-330.iii.(1) assistance to NSS IOs: Contact has been made with Thomas Evans from Cascade Grotto who recently had two articles published in the *NSS News* related to safety and techniques. A plan is underway to assist Thomas and Cascade Grotto with development of laminated info cards for cavers to bring along on cave trips. The cards will contain information about uses of equipment in certain scenarios that cavers may encounter during cave trips. Thomas and Cascade will lead

## **National Speleological Society**

Office of the Administrative Vice President, Ray Keeler, VP

Education Division, Dianne Gillespie, Chair

Safety and Techniques Committee

**Report submitted 06/25/2010 to Dianne Gillespie by Aaron Bird, STC Chair**

this effort. The STC will support in any way needed. Target completion date is September 2010.

- B. Regarding directives of ACT 91-330.iii.(1) assistance to NSS IOs, dissemination of information, and workshops: A plan is underway with David Kampwerth of the USFWS and Peter Youngbaer (NSS WNS Liaison) to set up, staff, and support a WNS Decontamination Station at the 2010 NSS Convention in Essex Junction, VT. WNS decon workshops will also be delivered at the Convention. Finally, a best practices decon video will be created during the workshops in order to promote the best deconning practices according to USFWS guidelines. This effort is currently underway.
- C. Regarding directives of ACT 91-330.iii.(3) short articles: an article has been submitted to the NSS News focusing on the benefits of the long-term safety culture. Dave Bunnell has indicated that the article will be published in the August or September issue of the News.
- D. Regarding directives of ACT 91-330.iii.(8) research and development: a caving safety “near hit” questionnaire and database are currently in development. A rough-draft questionnaire will be submitted to the STC Advisory Group by August 2010.
- E. Regarding directive of conducting research on equipment: Committee member Dianne Gillespie has completed a product test on the Scurion P4 and P7. Gillespie will submit a report and article for the NSS news this Fall.

#### **IV. Safety and Techniques Session at 2010 NSS Convention (Workshops directive)**

The STC Session will be held on Tuesday morning of convention week in room N-3. There will be three presentations, a background session on the STC and current initiatives, and two periods of open discussion. The scheduled presentations are as follows:

- a. Human Exposure Hazards of WNS Decontamination – Aaron Bird
- b. The STC: A look back and the path forward – Kurt Waldron
- c. Historical Perspective of the STC in the 1950s and 1960s – Rane Curl

#### **V. Proposed: Karst Information Portal as repository for STC-related materials**

- a. No recent progress on this initiative