



NSS RULES FOR CAVE ACCESS: TYTOONA CAVE NATURE PRESERVE

The National Speleological Society (NSS) is a non-profit membership organization dedicated to the scientific study of caves and karst; protecting caves and their natural contents through conservation, ownership, stewardship, and public education; and promoting responsible cave exploration and fellowship among those interested in caves.

The NSS Nature Preserves are our commitment to future generations and ensure cave conservation, access, education, and exploration. Each NSS Nature Preserve is managed by a team of NSS members who provide oversight, maintenance and help regulate access while serving as the public interface of the NSS.

The following guidelines have been established to protect cave and karst resources, promote good relations, and provide an enjoyable visit. Please observe the rules and encourage others to do the same so the unique and outstanding cave and karst features found on NSS properties may continue to be enjoyed by all.

I understand and acknowledge:

That all visitors must obtain an access permit and sign a release and disclaimer before entering the cave. Additionally, individuals under the age of 18 years must have a parent or legal guardian sign an indemnity agreement and waiver. A permit may be obtained by contacting the Preserve Management team at TytoonaPreserve@caves.org.

That the persons visiting the preserve or caves are not required to be NSS members but are encouraged to join and support our mission of conservation, exploration, research, and fellowship. When requesting a permit, the identity of the caver who will guide and be responsible for the activity of the group must be provided. A permit will be issued in that person's name and they will be responsible for ensuring that all group members abide by the terms of the permit and the management plan.

That even permitted caves are completely "wild" and no improvements have been made or are desirable. I understand that a visit to a wild cave may involve certain risks including but not limited to those listed herein. I desire to visit this Cave and will do so completely at my own risk and pursuant to the Pennsylvania Landowner Liability Act.

That any cave may be physically demanding and declare that I am fit and able to engage in the necessary activity to access a cave's features. I also acknowledge that a cave may contain passages, rooms or pits that may be dangerous to access and/or may not be known and there is a possibility of becoming lost. If a cave requires vertical rope work, I am sufficiently healthy and capable of completing the activity and not endangering myself or other group members.

That caves may flood, and that it is impossible to predict the time lag between rainfall and flooding in the cave. I will not enter the cave when the weather is questionable, or ground thaw could occur. Doing so could result in death by drowning, hypothermia, or entrapment.

That steep, slippery mud banks, exposed climbs, and loose rocks may occur in various locations in caves and may pose hazards.

That water in a cave may be polluted by unknown means and may be dangerous to my health if ingested or by contact.

That the minimum group size for cave visitation is 3 people. To minimize impact on the cave, the property and wildlife, group size is limited to no more than 12 people on a cave trip. Group sizes for surface activities are set by the NSS preserve management team.

That parking is limited to designated areas and trailheads or public roadways. I will not block driveways or other vehicles.

That camping in a cave or on the preserve is not allowed. Fires of any type are prohibited.

That all visitors are required to pack out all waste and leave nothing in the cave or on the Preserve.

That all visitors are required to pack out all waste. Only research-dedicated equipment, guidelines, and sampling plot markers shall be installed and left within the cave. Other research materials may be installed and left in the cave or above-ground on the preserve only with written permission from NSS Preserve Managers and after obtaining approval for the research from the NSS Cave Management Research Committee.

That loud noise could disturb wildlife, other visitors and neighbors in surrounding houses and neighborhoods.

That smoking and vaping in a cave is not allowed, and that alcohol, recreational drugs or other intoxicating substances are prohibited during any caving activity as well.

That the use of caves or karst features on NSS property may not be used for any commercial activity or purpose including guided or commercial caving or other similar activity known as "cave for pay." Groups affiliated with a class, or educational institution are welcomed and encouraged to visit the preserve.

That the collection, removal, altering, and/or destruction of any cultural or historical resources, including but not limited to, human remains, cave art/drawings, or other archaeological resources or features is not allowed. Any observation of a cultural or historical artifact should be reported to the NSS Preserve Managers with specific location information, a description of the object(s) and photographs.

That the collection or removal of wildlife, plants, minerals, or other items found on in the cave or on the property, including scientific specimens is not allowed without the express written permission of the NSS Preserve Managers and the NSS Preserves Committee.

That the modification of a cave or property, including the digging out of crawlways or entrances, placement of bolts or other artificial anchor, ladders, or other gear is prohibited without express written permission of the NSS Preserve Managers and the NSS Preserves Committee.

That equipment and clothing will be properly decontaminated using accepted methods as outlined in the current US Fish & Wildlife Service “National White-Nose Syndrome Decontamination Protocol” (available at www.whitenosesyndrome.org) prior to entering a NSS Cave. Likewise, I will thoroughly clean and decontaminate all my equipment, clothing, and boots AFTER any cave visit.

That changing clothes in any public area upon exiting the cave may be a potential privacy violation of other preserve attendees or NSS neighbors.

That the Blair County Sheriff’s Office (814)693-3100 should be contacted if any disturbances, vandalism, or illegal activities are observed. Upon informing the appropriate authority, the NSS Preserve Managers shall be notified as soon as possible. Additionally, any site problems in or around the cave, the cave opening or the land surface area above a cave and its entrance shall be shared with the NSS Preserve Managers at the first available opportunity.

Failure to abide by these “rules for cave access” may result in immediate removal from the property and/or result in future access denials and/or appropriate civil or legal recourse or compensation for damage or abuse to the cave system or features.

I acknowledge that I have read the provided access rules and understand them.

Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Signed Name: _____