



Research Advisory Committee (RAC) Chair

NSS Conservation and Science Division, Cave Science Department: Volunteer (5-10 hours/month)

Do you want to share your passion for caves and caving with others? The National Speleological Society (NSS) is looking for a dedicated volunteer to serve as the **Chair of the Research Advisory Committee**. A core part of our Society's mission is to stimulate, recognize, and sponsor the study of caves and karst. To do this, the NSS has endowed funds and donor bequests to be used for cave and karst research by graduate and undergraduate students, educators, and post-doctoral researchers. The NSS Research Grant programs bestow awards across many scientific disciplines, including Biology, Geosciences, Geochemistry, Archaeology, Paleontology, Paleoclimatology, Karst Hydrogeology, Geospatial Sciences, Anthropology, etc.

The Research Advisory Committee (RAC) reports into the Cave Science Department in the Conservation and Science Division. The RAC Chair works with and directly reports to the Conservation & Science Division Head. The Chair will oversee a Committee to administer the Research Grant programs and NSS Projects. The NSS Conservation and Science Division consists of the Cave Management Department, Cave Conservation Department, and Cave Science Department.

Key responsibilities

- Recruit, coordinate, train, and empower RAC volunteers, and ensure the RAC has at least three (3) members.
- Create a positive, enjoyable, and safe environment for volunteer members of the RAC.
- For the Research Grants program: coordinate the process from solicitation to post-award process, including submission deadlines, qualification requirements, criteria for grant review, selection and grantee notification, and grantee reporting requirements. Grants currently include the NSS Research Grant (act 19-379), Ralph Stone Graduate Fellowship (act 19-378), Secondary & Post-Secondary Educator Grant (19-798), the Bat Research Grant (act 19-801), and the Morehouse Fellowship (act 19-900). The RAC may also manage other grants in the future, as they become established as new endowments. Report progress to the Division Head.
- For the NSS Projects program: solicit, review, approve, and notify official project applicants, maintain communication with each NSS Project for periodic updates that are reported to the Division Head.
- Hold regular RAC meetings to develop and revise Grant and Project procedures, review submissions, and select Grant and Project awardees, as well as to review Grant post-award progress and final reports, and Project reports.
- Raise awareness of and promote NSS research grant and fellowship programs, as well as awardee outcomes, through print and online channels (website, social media) by working with others (Education, Marketing & Media), as needed.
- Work with the Division Head on annual budgets.

Preferences

- Background in a cave science related discipline(s), with personal experience as a researcher, publishing scientific papers, navigating academia, coaching student researchers, and reviewing grant applications.
- Possesses strong networks in the cave science community.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Strong organizational and project management skills.
- Adaptive interpersonal skills, with a dependable, enthusiastic, and positive attitude.
- Genuine passion for the NSS's mission and understanding how we can promote and contribute to cave science.

Volunteering is a rewarding way to give back to the NSS and help spread our mission. Ready to make an impact? Apply today! Applications should be sent by February 1, 2026. Contact us at emilyp@caves.org.