

Youth Group Caving Regional Coordinator Guidelines

The purpose of an NSS Youth Regional Coordinator is to provide informational assistance to cavers, grottos, and youth group leaders so they may conduct safe and appropriate cave-related experiences. In addition to caving trips, these experiences may include presentations on ethics, geology, biology, techniques, and safety, as well as other topics of speleology.

Regional Coordinators:

- adhere to all guidelines, policies, and requirements of the National Speleological Society (NSS).
- Adhere to all guidelines, policies, and requirements of the appropriate youth group organization.
- treat all youth groups with equal consideration.
- make themselves available to grottos within their region, to assist them in working with youth groups.
- make themselves available to youth groups within their region, to assist them in conducting safe caving trips and learning about caves.
- Promote responsible caving practices for youth groups.
- Promote responsible caving practices by grottos and cavers when working with youth groups.

Regional Coordinators do not:

- receive any certifications in horizontal or vertical caving techniques that the NSS recognizes, and that would allow them to promote themselves as specially qualified to lead youth groups caving on behalf of the Society or for any other organization.
- Conduct activities as a Regional Coordinator.
- have any obligation to take youth groups into caves.
- have any obligation to give presentations to youth groups or grottos.
- pressure grottos or cavers into working with youth groups.
- Set policy for grottos or for youth groups outside of those established by the NSS and the appropriate youth group.
- receive compensation or require donations for time, equipment, land use, or expertise for themselves or for any other individual or organization. However, individuals who are also Regional Coordinators may decide for themselves whether to accept meals, lodging, and gas from youth groups to help offset any trip expenses they incur.

Regional Coordinators encourage youth group leaders to:

- Take youth groups into a commercial cave before entering a wild cave.
- learn how to conduct safe and responsible wild-cave trips for youths,
- know and adhere to the national and local policies and guidelines established by their parent organization and the National Speleological Society.
- Follow responsible caving practices.

Regional Coordinators encourage grottos to:

- Develop a policy on youth group caving
 - Does the grotto take youth groups into caves?
 - Is the grotto willing to give presentations about speleology?
 - Establish a grotto contact for youth groups.
 - What, if any, equipment does the grotto provide?
 - How often will the grotto work with youth groups?
 - How, if at all, will the grotto work with the Regional Coordinator?
 - Establish any specific requirements for working with youth groups.
- Dedicate a portion of the grotto website for Youth Group inquiries, including a policy statement:
 - State the grotto policy for working with youth groups
 - List a contact person (this could be the Regional Coordinator, especially if the grotto does not take youth groups caving)
 - Include a link to the NSS Youth Group Liaison Committee website.
 - Include a link to the Youth Groups section on the NSS discussion board
 - Include a link to local commercial caves and those offering "wild" caving trips; perhaps linking to the. "Wild Cave Tours and Sightseeing Trips" section of the NSS Youth Groups Web page.