

National Speleological Society

Training & Education Division

FALL 2026 REPORT

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Training Department

National Cave Rescue Commission

Progress

- NCRC successfully tested it's new curriculum at the Texas Regional Weeklong training in February where afterwards a few changes and updates were made.
- The full rollout of the new curriculum was delivered at the National Weeklong Training in Mentone, AL in May. This new curriculum with it's philosophy of program delivery and progression of skills and knowledge puts NCRC, once again as the leading technical rescue training origination in North America.
- The Instructor Qualification (IQ) class in Mentone had 6 students with the BORC approving 5 to become provisional instructors.
- NCRC has implemented a new equipment inspection and inventory process for the National equipment as well as for Regional equipment.
- The approved budget for equipment was transferred from the NSS to NCRC and distributed. The National equipment cache was updated before the Mentone Seminar and Regions have/are updating their equipment caches to match the new curriculum.
- Classes taught:
- Weeklong - 3 Level1, 2 Level 2, 1 Bridge, 1 IQ) Total: 7 - 130 students
- OCR: 8 - 180 students
- SPAR: 2 - 30 students
- Total classes: 17
- Total students Approx: 340 (280 were forecasted)

Plans

- Classes approved for 2026 but not yet delivered - 5 more with around 210 students.
- Regional Level 1 and 2 Seminar, Southeast Region, Sewanee, Tennessee, April 2027
- NCRC National Seminar, Mentone, Alabama, May 2027
- 2027 projected students: 600

Problems

- SPAR classes continue to be in high demand, and challenges continue with limited instructor availability for implementation.

Vertical Training Commission

Progress

- From 4/1/26 through 9/18/26, VTC held 10 courses, with 76 students.
- VTC has been working with the Interim NSS Code of Conduct Committee Chair on it' Volunteer Code of Conduct and to harmonize their procedures with the latest NSS Code of Conduct procedures. VTC created this code a few years ago, because they believed that they need to hold their volunteers to a higher conduct standard than what NSS may require from the entire NSS membership, because their volunteers are representing VTC (and of course NSS) in their interactions with students and with each other. They require their volunteers to acknowledge this code annually, and also when they register for a course.

Plans

- The VTC is working on setting up an annual schedule(ideally automated) to send their Volunteer Code of Conduct out to all VTC volunteers, and have the acknowledgments recorded in Airtable.
- Four courses with roughly 30 students are approved and scheduled to occur within the next two months.
- The VTC will be taking over vertical training from the Vertical Section at NSS Conventions starting in 2027.

Problems

- Insurance – but there was a premium decrease.

Safety and Techniques Committee

Progress

New *NSS News* article in progress. Early 2027 delivery date targeted,

Plans

Additional articles for the S&T Committee Project in the *NSS News*

Problems

n/a

Education Department

Progress

- Diana King from Huntsville, AL has been working at the new Department Head since March 2026.
- The Vertical Section has/is moving from being its own 501c3 to coming under the NSS and the Education and Training Division as an Education Commission.

Plan

- The Vertical Section (VS) will serve as a community and forum for NSS members with an interest in vertical caving.
- The VS will maintain *Nylon Highway* and other appropriate communication channels as resources for technical articles and historical information.
- They will maintain productive relationships with the Vertical Training Commission, Safety & Techniques Committee, National Cave Rescue Commission, grottos, regions, and other NSS groups when their work intersects with the interests of vertical cavers.
- The Vertical Section Session at NSS Conventions (which has been a great success) will continue to provide opportunities for members to exchange information about new ideas, equipment, techniques, and approaches related to vertical caving.

Problems

- VS bylaws, mission statement, purpose, etc. to be updated.
- Some VS leadership are unhappy with Convention training being taken from them.
- Transition to the VTC for Convention training.
- Transfer of VS equipment and trailer to the NSS.

Webinar Team

Progress

n/a

Plan

- Webinars planed for 2027

Education Grants & Scholarship Team

n/a

Brochures and Display Team

Need to reprint the Guide to Responsible Caving.