NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

BOARD OF GOVERNORS MANUAL

As of the October 17, 2026
Special Meeting

Edited by: PAUL DAMON - November 1972 to March 1974
TOM REA - March 1974 to June 1975
JIM CRAIG - June 1975 to June 1986
TOM REA - June 1986 to September 1992
DAVE SENG - September 1992 to June 1994
KATHY WELLING - June 1994 to November 1996
VINCE KAPPLER - November 1996 to Present

Questions or errors should be directed to
boardsec@caves.org

INTRODUCTION

This manual includes all policies governing the operation of the National Speleological Society Board of Governors (BOG) as of the restructuring that became effective on July 01, 2024. Previous versions of the BOG Manual can be found here: https://legacy.caves.org/nss-business/bog/Previous_BOG_Manuals.shtml The Secretary of the Board, reporting to the Chair of the Board, maintains this manual.

Every action approved by the Board of Governors that serves to establish new policies, revises the governing body, or establishes new administrative procedures is an "Act" and is recorded in the BOG Manual. Longer acts that include detailed procedure are referred to as “Appendices” but are still full acts in all their power and effect.

The initial two digits of an act’s number designate in which section of the Acts it is cataloged in, the second grouping of numbers in an act are sequentially increasing with each new act approved. (Example: 02-504 can be found in the 2nd section of the Acts which is related to Directors, and was the 504th approved act since the inception of the NSS). Beginning in March 2006, BOG actions that created new Acts, amended Acts, or amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws are annotated *month-day-year: meeting minutes agenda item number*. (Example: 03-25-06:24d references the March 25, 2006 Board of Governors Meeting, agenda item 24d.)

There is a current version of the BOG manual in the board’s cloud storage, as well as all previous versions post 2024 restructuring.

Table of Contents

Articles of Incorporation

Constitution

Bylaws

Acts

Section 02	Directors
Section 03	Meetings
Section 04	Meeting Agenda
Section 05	Meeting Minutes
Section 07	Publications
Section 08	Bylaw Changes
Section 10	Discipline
Section 15	Fiscal Matters
Section 16	Budget
Section 17	National Speleological Foundation
Section 18	NSS Funds
Section 19	Grants and Scholarships
Section 25	Business Office
Section 26	Real Property
Section 27	Symbolic Devices
Section 28	Membership – General
Section 41	Affiliations
Section 48	Congress of Grottos
Section 50	Conservation
Section 56	Convention
Section 60	Field Activities
Section 63	Fundraising
Section 65	International
Section 68	Library
Section 83	Publications
Section 86	Public Relations

Appendices

Appendix D	Internal Organizations
Appendix J	Operational Directives
Appendix P	Social Activities
Appendix Q	COG Procedures
Appendix S	NCRC Charter
Appendix X	Nominating Committee
Appendix AU	Fellows
Appendix AV	Financial Review
Appendix BF	Anti-Harassment
Appendix BJ	Code of Conduct
Appendix BP	VTC Charter
Appendix BR	Code of Ethics
Appendix BT	Directors Report

Appendix BU **Personnel Job Descriptions**

Organizational Chart

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

Certificate of Incorporation No. 26672

We, the undersigned, all citizens of the United States, and a majority citizens and residents of the District of Columbia, desiring to associate ourselves as a corporation pursuant to the provisions of Title 5 of Chapter 5 of the Code of the District of Columbia, do hereby certify as follows:

First. The name or title by which this corporation shall be known in law shall be THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

Second. The term for which it is organized shall be Perpetual.

Third. The particular business and objects of said corporation shall be to promote the science and study of speleology throughout the United States of America.

Fourth. The number of its trustees, directors, or managers for the first year of its existence shall be five (5).

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, we have this ninth day of January, 1941, hereto set our hands and seal

W. J. Stephenson, Alden E. Snell, James A. Fowler, E. Anthony Eno, H. James Cole

Address: 4912 43rd Place, N.W.

Washington, D.C.

The National Speleological Society is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization under the provisions of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations to the Society may therefore be deducted from an individual's Federal Income Tax. The Society's Federal I.D. number is 54-6026867.

The Internal Revenue Service has ruled that individual chapters or grottos are not covered by the Society's exemption. They must obtain their own exemption if they desire that status.

CONSTITUTION OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

I. The name of this organization shall be the National Speleological Society.

II. The purpose of this Society shall be to promote interest in and to advance in any and all ways the study and science of speleology, the protection of caves and their natural contents, and to promote fellowship among those interested therein.

III. The government of this Society shall be by a Board of Governors which shall have full power to conduct and supervise all business of the Society, draft and adopt the Bylaws of the Society, make changes therein, appoint officers for the Society, and perform all other functions incident to the proper conduct of the Society.

IV. The life of the Society shall be perpetual or until terminated by a majority vote of the membership upon recommendation of the Board of Governors.

V. Membership in this Society shall be open to any persons who are interested in speleology and have complied with conditions of membership set forth in the Bylaws.

VI. Charter members of this Society shall be all members of the Speleological Society of the District of Columbia as of January 1, 1941, and all members of any other society, whose main purpose is the study of speleology or exploration of caves, which gives notice in writing to the Board of Governors of the Speleological Society of the District of Columbia prior to January 1, 1941, that its membership desires to be included in this organization.

VII. The first Board of Governors shall be composed of the members of the Board of Governors of the Speleological Society of the District of Columbia, together with the officers of any other organization complying with the provisions of Article VI of this Constitution.

VIII. Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by either the Board of Governors or by petition of five percent of the regular or higher membership of the Society. Proposed amendments will be mailed to all regular or higher members of the Society. Amendments will be adopted by a two-thirds favorable vote of all ballots returned within ninety days of the mailing.

IX. The organization of this Society shall become effective as of January 1, 1941.

Amended:
June 1972
Article IX: 07/14/14:4

Editor's Note
In previous editions of this manual, there was an editing error in Article III which is now corrected.

BYLAWS OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

I. MISSION STATEMENT

A. 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.

II. MEMBERSHIP - DUES

A. Applications for membership must be accompanied by payment of dues or a life-membership fee. Applicants must signify that they support the goals and conservation policies of the society.

B. The Board of Governors, by 2/3rds vote, shall establish membership classes. The Board of Governors shall define the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of each membership class. Notwithstanding the rights and privileges of any membership class so established, the right of a member in good standing, 18 years of age or older, to vote or hold office in the Society, serve on Society committees, and to serve on the Board of Governors, shall not be restricted in any manner.

C. The Board of Governors, by 2/3rds vote, shall establish dues and payment plans for each membership class, and other fees as shall be needed to implement this bylaw.

D. The Board of Governors, by majority vote, may provide special recognition for Members who elect to be so recognized in exchange for additional fees, as set by the Board of Governors.

E. A serial number will be assigned to each member at the time of admission to the Society. Upon granting a request for reinstatement of a former member his original membership number will be reinstated.

III. AWARDS - GRANTS

A. The Board of Governors, or division, or individual, to whom the Board has delegated the responsibility, may select recipients for awards and grants as specified in the Acts of the Board.

B. An award is defined as a tangible or intangible recognition and appreciation for past actions of the recipient. A grant is defined as an amount of money given to a recipient to assist future actions and may have its use restricted by the Board of Governors as specified in the Acts of the Board.

C. Honorary Membership is awarded by the Board of Governors to an individual for outstanding contributions to the field of speleology. Only one Honorary Membership may be awarded each year.

D. William J. Stephenson Outstanding Service Award is conferred by the Board of Governors to an individual member in recognition of outstanding service to the Society and its goals. Only one Outstanding Service award may be conferred each year.

E. Fellows are individual members of the Society who have been so designated by the Board of Governors for service over a number of years to the Society or the goals of the Society in speleological research, exploration, conservation, or administration. The number of fellows shall not exceed fifteen percent of the total Society membership.

F. NSS Members not in good standing are ineligible for any award or grant. A person who is no longer an NSS member and whose good standing was revoked at the time their membership expired is ineligible for any award or grant. A person who has been expelled from the NSS is ineligible for any award or grant.

G. The Awards Committee shall maintain criteria by which awards are granted. Changes to

the criteria need approval by the Board of Governors.

IV. ASSESSMENTS – GIFTS

A. No special assessment may be made against the members of the Society. Voluntary contributions may be solicited by the Board of Governors for specific purposes.
B. Gifts and bequests may be made to the Society in any form or amount and for any use compatible with the purposes of the Society. The Society may transfer such gifts and bequests, or any other of its funds or property, to the National Speleological Foundation to be administered for the benefit of the Society.
C. Members and nonmembers may be charged for Society publications not included with their memberships, for attending Society events, and for using its property, library, and other resources and data.

V. BOARD OF GOVERNORS

A. The Board of Governors is responsible for:
    1) The long-term strategy and direction of the society
    2) Hiring of the Executive Director
    3) Oversight of the operational components of the society
B. The Board of Governors consists of twelve to fifteen directors. The directors serve three-year terms. On July 1st 2024 the currently seated directors compose the entirety of the board.
    1) Each year, three directors are elected by a vote of the membership. Those directors take office at the start of the *summer meeting* of the Board as defined in V.E.3. A tie for third place must be broken by an immediate ballot of those sitting directors who are not tied for third place.
        a. Ballots will be sent only to members in good standing, who have paid their dues and are eligible to vote. New members joining after the mailing of the ballots will not receive them.
        b. The number of votes cast for each candidate determines which are elected for three-year terms and which for shorter terms to fill vacancies. In the event of ties for the shorter terms, they are broken by an immediate ballot of directors, excluding any under interim appointment or any tied for third place.
    2) Each year, one director is appointed by the sitting board by a majority vote at the spring meeting. The nominating committee surfaces candidates for this as per V.B.4. That director takes office at the start of the *summer meeting* of the Board as defined in IV.E.3.
        a. On July 1st 2024 the board appoints an interim director to an initial term ending at the start of the next *summer meeting* of the Board as defined in V.E.3.
        b. On July 1st 2024 the board appoints an interim director to an initial term ending at the start of the next *summer meeting* of the Board after the 2025 summer meeting as defined in V.E.3.
        c. On July 1st 2024 the board appoints an interim director (Finance) to an initial term ending at the start of the next *summer meeting* of the Board after the 2026 summer meeting as defined in V.E.3.
    3) Once seated, all directors have the same rights and responsibilities regardless of whether they were appointed or elected.
        a. In the event that one or more vacancies develop, the Board must appoint interim director(s) to fill those vacancies. The interim director fulfills the

remainder of the vacating director's term.

4) Candidates for director are selected from among eligible Society members by a Nominating Committee of at least three members, appointed annually by the Chair of the Board and approved by the Board.
    a. Any eligible member may be nominated by a petition signed by twenty-five members eligible to vote.
    b. The ballot for electing directors must provide for write-in votes.
    c. An incumbent completing, appointed, or elected to two contiguous full terms, as director, is not eligible, or be appointed, to run for reelection for one full term after the end of their elected, or appointed terms. Directors completing 6 or more contiguous years of any combination of terms are not eligible to run for reelection until a full, three year term has passed after their last term in office. Persons ineligible for additional terms shall not be appointed to Director vacancies under Bylaw Section V.B.(3)(a) nor as proxies under Bylaw Section V.E.(5)
    d. The deadline for receiving ballots shall be no later than forty-five days before the elected directors will take office. Ballots shall be made available to voting members at least thirty days before the deadline for receiving ballots.
    e. An announcement shall be published in the NSS NEWS, and otherwise distributed to all voting members, at least forty-five days before the deadline for receipt of nominations. The announcement shall identify the nominating committee, state the number of positions to be filled and the term of office of each, solicit suggestions for candidates, and state the procedure and deadline for nominations.

C. No member may serve simultaneously as a director and as a direct report to the Executive Director.

D. The Board elects a Chair from among themselves to preside over meetings of the Board.
    1) The Chair of the Board (COB) shall be elected by the sitting board members annually, prior to the end of the calendar year or whenever a vacancy may occur. The incoming COB shall be seated on January 1st of the following year. The COB shall be chosen from a group consisting of all seated board members. A candidate for COB may not run for such position if they have one (1) year remaining in their aggregate available terms, as defined in section V.B.(4)c.
    2) The Chair of the Board directly manages the Executive Director (ED).

E. Board of Governors Meetings
    1) The Board of Governors may be convened by action of the Board, by the Chair of the Board, or by petition of at least one third of the Board members.
    2) The Chair of the Board, or a Board member they designate presides over meetings of the Board.
    3) There is an annual meeting of the Board of Governors at each annual convention, which must be divided into an opening session on the first day of the convention, an adjourned session near the end of the convention, and such special sessions as are called by the Chair of the Board. This meeting is known as the Summer Meeting.
    4) Directors must be forwarded notice at least two weeks in advance of meetings of the Board of Governors.
    5) Any member of the Board may appoint a proxy to speak and vote for them at a meeting of the Board of Governors. The proxy must be a member of the Society who would be eligible to serve on the Board of Governors. The proxy may act at one meeting for only one director. The Chair of the Board must be notified of

such proxy appointment prior to the meeting, or the proxy should file written authorization from their principal at the time of the meeting. The authorization should state whether or not discretionary voting powers have been given to the proxy.

6) Division Heads may attend each meeting of the Board of Governors and have the privilege of speaking on matters relevant to the organization's function but have no vote.
7) A group of members chartered by the Society (an Internal Organization) has the right of sending a representative to a meeting of the Board of Governors for the purpose of presenting or discussing matters relating to the group. The representative has the privilege of speaking on matters relevant to the organization's function but has no vote.
8) Any member of the Society may attend meetings of the Board of Governors and may be granted the privilege of the floor at the discretion of the Chair of the Board or their designee, but has no power to vote.
9) Special meetings of the Board of Governors may be called at such times and places as approved by the Board of Governors. The entire membership must be sent notices as to the date, place, and purpose of any such meetings at least two weeks in advance thereof.

F. Actions of the Board
    1) Robert's Rules of Order, as Newly Revised, governs procedures of the Board of Governors. It is the parliamentary authority for the Board of Governors.
    2) Each action approved by the Board of Governors that serves to establish new policies, to revise the governing body, or to establish new administrative procedures will be designated as an "Act." Longer acts may be referred to as appendices and stored at the bottom of the document, but are still full acts in all their power and effect. The Chair of the Board or their designee maintains a record of all Acts. The record is made available to at least all members of the Society.
    3) If three percent (3%) of the voting members of the Society have signed a petition within a 13-month period requesting a referendum on a proposed Act, the Act must be submitted to the voting membership along with the next NSS election of Directors that has a deadline for nominations of at least 30 days after the signed petition has been given to the Chair of the Board of Governors, unless the Act has been approved by the Board of Governors since the circulation of the petition. If the proposal receives a majority favorable vote of ballots returned and marked concerning the proposed Act, the Act will become effective when the elected Directors are seated.

G. Removal
    1) Directors may be removed from office for cause by disciplinary proceedings with a formal hearing by the Board of Governors as provided for in the parliamentary authority.
    2) Directors may be removed from office at the pleasure of the membership by a recall vote. If three percent (3%) of the voting members of the Society have signed a petition within a 13-month period requesting a recall vote on a specific Director, and the petition has been given to the Chair of the Board 30 days prior to the annual NSS election of Directors, the recall proposal shall be placed on the ballot. A majority of those voting shall prevail.
        a. A recall vote is not placed on the ballot if the director's term is expiring whether or not they are running for re-election.
    3) A Director who fails to participate, in-person or remotely, in two out of three

successive Board of Governors meetings may be removed from office by a 2/3 majority vote of the Board of Governors.

VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A. The Executive Director is responsible for all operational components of the society.
    1) The Executive Director is a full-time paid employee of the society.
    2) The Executive Director reports to the Board of Governors but is managed directly by the Chair of the Board. They are hired by the Board.
    3) Executive Director candidates are identified by the Nominating Committee. The use of a recruitment firm is encouraged. A sufficient number and quality of candidates must be presented.
    4) The final step in hiring is accomplished through board action requiring approval by a majority of board members.
    5) Executive Director compensation is set by the board.
    6) In periods of vacancy in the role of Executive Director, the chair of the board exercises the full authority and power of the executive director until such time as an executive director or interim executive director is seated.
    7) The sitting chair of the board cannot be considered for the position of executive director.
B. The Executive Director proposes a budget to the Board on an annual basis. The Board then approves or modifies and approves that budget.

VII. PERMANENT DIVISIONS, COMMITTEES, AND COMMISSIONS

A. Permanent divisions and commissions shall be established to accomplish the work of the Society. These entities comprise the operational arm of the society.
    1) Divisions and Commissions report to the Executive Director.
    2) An organizational chart is maintained by the Executive Director. Board approval is required for changes to the organizational chart at the division level or above.
B. Any questions of conflicting jurisdiction of Divisions or commissions shall be resolved by the Executive Director.
C. Commissions: The duties of each commission are to study, promote interest in, and work toward the advancement of all matters pertaining to its field of activity.
    1) The chairs and members of permanent commissions are appointed by the Executive Director with the approval of the Board of Governors. Commissions may appoint teams to accomplish the work of the commission.
D. Divisions
    1) The managers of the permanent Divisions are appointed by the Executive Director with notification sent to the Board of Governors. Each manager shall promote the activities of the Division and select the personnel unless otherwise directed by the Executive Director.
E. Committees
    1) Committees are organizational work structures formed of board members and non-board members to support the fundamental purposes of the board. They report to the Chair of the Board.
    2) Committee chairs are appointed by the Chair of the Board and confirmed through a majority vote of the board.
    3) The Nominating Committee is responsible for overseeing search activities conducted by a recruiting firm for candidates for Executive Director when a vacancy occurs. The nominating committee manages the NSS director election process.
    4) The Bylaws committee is charged with keeping the published Bylaws current.

They consider all proposals for bylaw revisions and report upon them to the Board to ensure that all bylaw proposals are consistent with the Articles of Incorporation, the statutes of the state of Alabama, and the Constitution of the Society, or to recommend action necessary to create such consistency. They ensure that new acts of the board are not in conflict with the bylaws and constitution.

5) The Financial Review Committee assists the board in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities relating to: (i) the integrity of the Society's financial statements, (ii) the Society's systems of internal control, (iii) the independence and performance of the external and internal review functions and (iv) the Society's compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.
6) The Strategic Planning Committee leads and facilitates, for the Board, the development and maintenance of a comprehensive strategic plan for the future of the NSS. Strategic Plans are approved by a ⅔ vote of the Board of Governors every five years. Changing the strategic plan before the five years have elapsed since the last plan approval requires a ¾ majority vote.

VIII. CONVENTIONS - GROTTOS CONGRESS - SPECIAL MEETINGS

A. An annual convention is held at a place and time approved by the Board of Governors. A notice of the annual convention must be forwarded to all members at least one month in advance of the date thereof.
B. There must be a congress held, at least once a year, for the purpose of affording the membership an opportunity to present their views on all problems relative to the operation of the Society. It is conducted according to formal rules adopted by the Congress.
    1) The Congress must provide for representation of both internal organizations and individual members.
    2) The Congress has the power to pass resolutions; which resolutions must be considered by the Executive Director before the next Board of Governors meeting. The Executive Director's report for that meeting shall discuss the resolutions.
    3) The Congress meets at the annual convention and at such other times as its rules may provide.
C. Special meetings of the Society may be called at such times and places as approved by the Board of Governors. The entire membership must be sent notices as to the date, place, and purpose of any such meetings at least two weeks in advance thereof.

IX. INTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS

A. Internal organizations are groups that have been chartered by the Society to further promote the purposes of the Society. The privileges and responsibilities of internal organizations, as well as the criteria by which they are chartered, shall be as set forth in the "Policy for Internal Organizations", as approved by the Board of Governors.
    1) A chapter (Grotto, Student Grotto) is an internal organization made up of individuals who reside in the same general locality or who cave together and maintain community by means of electronic or other communications.
    2) A Regional Association (Region) is an internal organization made up of individuals and organizations in a general geographic area.
    3) A Speleological Survey (Survey) is an internal organization made up of individuals and organizations engaged in gathering speleological data in a general geographic area.

4) A Special Section (Section) is an internal organization made up of individuals involved in a common study or interest related to speleology.

X. PROPERTIES AND FINANCE

A. The Society may acquire real and personal property, including equipment, literature, and other materials for use by and on behalf of the membership.
B. The Society may act as an agent on behalf of any member in the transfer of rights affecting photographs, literary compositions, and other speleological material under conditions approved by the Board of Governors.
C. Approval or amendment of National Speleological Foundation (NSF) contracts requires a ⅔ vote of the Board of Governors.

XI. PUBLICATIONS

A. The Society will issue and distribute regular publications consisting of a JOURNAL and NEWS and is empowered to issue and distribute special publications subject to regulations governing the subject matter, publication dates, sales, and distribution as prescribed by the Board of Governors.
B. Copies of publications issued by internal organizations will be made available to members of the Society upon payment of the requisite subscription fees, and additional copies will be distributed as prescribed in the "Policy for Internal Organizations".

XII. LIBRARY

A. The Society will maintain a library of speleological subjects and topics for use of members including technical publications, textbooks, charts, maps, photographs, prints, reprints, transparencies, periodicals, both domestic and foreign.

XIII. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

A. A member not exempt from paying dues shall be automatically dropped for failure to pay.
B. By a two-thirds vote, the Board of Governors may expel or discipline a member for disregard of accepted safety or conservation practice or the rights of a cave owner or for other conduct detrimental to the Society. A member subject to expulsion is entitled to a private hearing before the Board.
C. Members may be disciplined by the Board of Governors, or a body to which they delegate, by measures short of expulsion. Other disciplinary measures include but are not limited to censure, suspension, restriction of privileges including attendance at certain activities, abrogation of *good standing*, and revocation of awards.
D. Disciplinary procedures including hearings shall be carried out as described in the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised. The Board shall ensure that the Accused is informed of all rights and procedures.
E. The NSS shall have a code of conduct. Changes to the code of conduct must be approved by the Board of Governors

XIV. AMENDMENT OF THE BYLAWS

A. These bylaws may be amended only by:
    1) Unanimous approval of those present at a Board of Governors meeting at which three quarters of the Board members or their personally appointed proxies are present; or
    2) Presenting the proposed amendments in writing to the Board of Governors at least one meeting prior to their consideration, or by mail to each member of the Board at least one month prior to their consideration, and approval of two thirds of the Board members or their personally appointed proxies present at the next

Board meeting. Under the above two procedures only minor changes of language from that presented may be allowed at the time of adoption.

3) If 5 percent of the voting members of the Society have signed a petition within a fifteen- month period requesting a referendum on a proposed amendment to these Bylaws, the amendment must be submitted to the voting membership along with the next NSS election of directors that has a deadline for nominations at least thirty days after the signed petition has been given to the Chair of the Board, unless the proposed amendment has been previously approved by the Board of Governors as provided above. If the proposal receives a two-thirds favorable vote of ballots returned and marked concerning the proposal the amendment will become effective when the elected directors are seated.

XV. DISSOLUTION

A. In the event of dissolution, the assets of the organization shall be distributed to the National Speleological Foundation. However, if the National Speleological Foundation is not then in existence or no longer is a qualified distributee or unwilling or unable to accept the distribution, the assets of the organization shall be distributed as may be determined by the Board of Governors or by a court of competent jurisdiction upon application of the Board of Governors to a fund, foundation, or corporation organized and operated exclusively for scientific or educational purposes which would then qualify under provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as they now exist or hereafter may be amended.

Adopted 03-10-24:5.6

Amended:
VI. 6 and 7 added 10-30-24:4.6
V.B.4(c): Amended 02-10-25:6.1
XII.C: Amended 02-10-25:6.3
III. F: Added 03-01-25:5.1
X. Bylaw title changed, part C added 03-01-25:6.10
VII. E.6: Amended 03-01-25:8.1
V. B.4(c): Amended 05-12-25:6.1
III. G: Added 10-04-25:6.1
V.B.4.(d): Amended 10-04-25:8.1
V.D.1: added 06-23-25:6.4

Section 02 --- Directors

02-504 Indemnification of Directors and Officers 06-13-22:17, 11-07-92
The Society shall, except as hereinafter limited, indemnify any officer or director of the Society who is made a party, or who is threatened with being made a party, to any action, suit or proceeding, whether civil or criminal in nature, in any court of law or equity or in any binding arbitration wherein the results can be enforced by legal or equitable action, provided that such suit, action or proceeding is reasonably related to any act or omission or alleged act or omission arising through, from or because of status as an officer or director of the Society. It is the intent of this resolution of indemnification that both the expense of defense, including attorney fees, and any liability for the payment of judgment, order or decree shall be the subject of the indemnification herein contemplated. This obligation of indemnification shall apply to officers and directors and to former officers and directors for acts or omissions or alleged acts or omissions arising during their term of office. The obligation shall apply to any heir, devisee or legatee of any director or officer or former officer or director to the same extent that it would have applied to such person were they alive. This obligation of indemnification shall not apply if it is established in any final judgment, decree or other adjudication that the acts giving rise to the action, suit or proceeding were done in deliberate bad faith, were deliberately dishonest or resulted in any financial gain, profit or advantage to the person indemnified, or though whom the person indemnified derives this right of indemnification, was not legally entitled. This obligation of indemnification shall not extend beyond the amount of the limits and limitations of any policy of insurance which the Society maintains to insure against liability arising under the obligations contemplated by this resolution of indemnification. For the purpose of this board act, “officer” refers to all officially appointed positions of the NSS.

02-821 Elections 07-20-09:10
Once ballots are sent in a Board of Directors election, any official statements or announcements by the NSS regarding candidates or the election shall be communicated to the membership only by the Chair of the Nominating Committee.

02-948 Director Annual Report 06-17-19:17
The Chair of the Board delivers an annual report (following the template as an example in Appendix BT) aligning with the fiscal year outlining the directors’ board level efforts to the membership by May 1 for the purpose of helping the membership make informed voting decisions.

02-949 Director Committee Participation 03-25-23:10, 06-17-19:18
Every director, within 12 months of taking office, is required to be active in an NSS board level committee(s) throughout their term as a director.

02-999 Director Travel Reimbursement 03-31-25: 6.1
Effective fiscal year 2026/2027, directors are eligible to request up to $1,000 per fiscal year for travel reimbursement to Board meetings. The Chair of the Board approves this reimbursement. Documentation is required for all reimbursable expenses. Lodging and meals costs are not eligible for reimbursement. Reimbursement must comply with all applicable laws.

02-1002 Human Resources Budget 07-10-26:8.6
Funds will be divided evenly among sitting board members each fiscal year. Unused funds may be transferred amongst directors upon agreement. Board members must present their desired training, program, educational materials, etc. to the chair of the board at least 30 calendar days prior to need for funds. The chair of the board must approve or deny any request and communicate this to the Secretary-Treasurer for appropriate fund disbursement.

Section 03 --- Meetings

03-199 Number of Meetings 06-16-69
There shall be two Board meetings between conventions.

03-363 Closed Board Meetings 03-24-79
A closed portion of each Board of Governors meeting will be scheduled and included in the meeting agenda.

03-445 Conflict of Interest 03-01-25:6.7, 06-28-85
The Executive Director, Directors of the Society, and Division Heads, must disclose any personal financial interests that could potentially influence their decisions. They must recuse themselves from any votes or decisions that touch on personal financial interests; this includes financial interests of any immediate family members, romantic partners, or business partners. The Executive Director and Directors of the society must not directly supervise immediate family members.

03-484 Acts of the Board 08-04-89
Acts of the Board, as defined in bylaw V.F.2, that establish policies and procedures of a duration such that they terminate prior to the following Board meeting will not be added to the BOG Manual unless by order of the Board at the time of adoption of the Act. All other acts of finite expiration will be included in the BOG Manual.

SECTION 04 --- MEETING AGENDA

04-093 Style Guide 03-01-25:7.2, 04-19-21:7, 03-23-85, 02-02-57
Agenda for a meeting of the Board of Governors must contain the following sections at a minimum: roll call, past meeting minutes to approve, division head and board reports, comments from the membership, unfinished business, new business, closed session of the board, open discussion, adjournment. The agenda must be a shared cloud hosted document accessible to all board members; they must have at least privileges to suggest edits or comment.

04-203 Congress of Grotto 03-27-99, 11-01-69
A report from the Chairman of the Congress of Grottos shall be an official part of the agenda of the closing session of the Board Meeting at each NSS National Convention.

04-211 Real Property 03-16-96
Reports from the Executive Director for all real property (real estate) of the Society shall be presented at all scheduled meetings of the Board of Governors.

04-472 Open Discussion Sessions 12-04-21:6, 03-16-96, 02 20-88, 04-04-87
The agenda for each Board of Governors meeting must include an open discussion time for a duration to be determined at the time the motion is taken up.

SECTION 05 --- MEETING MINUTES

05-061 Meeting Recordings 03-17-07:24c, 11-05-05, 3-20-82, 11-18-72, 2-4-56
Recordings of Board meetings should be retained until the minutes are approved by the Board. The recordings may be reviewed only by the Board members or proxies, the persons responsible for developing the written minutes, and those responsible for making the recordings. Following approval of

the minutes by the NSS Board the recordings are to be destroyed.

05-121 Contents 03-25-06:23a, 12-28-63
Minutes shall include only motions; disposals of motions; other action taken; oral updates to written reports; issues and comments presented during Open Discussion period; reports from the closed sessions; a list of Board members present and proxies; disclosures of conflict of interest and their deposition, and other information pertinent to the meeting and business conducted. Written reports shall be included as attachments to the minutes.

05-771 Meeting Minutes 03-25-06:24a
The Chair of the Board ensures that the final version of the approved meeting minutes includes the Act numbers assigned to each motion passed.

05-774 Board of Governors Manual Proofing 03-25-06:24d
After meeting minutes are approved, the Chair of the Board ensures that Secretary to the Board makes any additions, changes, and/or deletions therein approved to the Constitution, Bylaws, and Acts (and appendices) of the Board of Governors manual.

SECTION 07 --- ENDORSEMENT OF PUBLICATIONS

07-266 Literature Endorsement 11-03-73
Copies of any book, report, or statement for which NSS endorsement or approval is sought must be supplied to every member of the Board at least thirty days prior to the meeting at which the endorsement or approval is to be considered. The Board reserves the right to subject such articles to an independent review process of its choosing to consider such matters as overall merit, technical correctness, and conformance with the Society's policies prior to the granting of endorsement.

07-281 Wild Cave Locations 10-21-17:12, 07 13-15:38, 08-16-74
The NSS opposes providing wild cave locations in publications, videos, postings, or information intended for the general public except where the presentation of such information better serves the mission of the Society.

SECTION 08 --- BYLAW CHANGES

08-190 Style Guide 03-16-22:6, 11-16-68
The Board of Governors adopts the following style guidelines to be used when proposing new and amending existing constitutions, bylaws, and Board Acts.
• Use the word “must” instead of “shall.”
• Establish acronyms at first use. You can’t assume all readers will know what an acronym means.
• Do not capitalize titles or officers, such as director or president, unless used directly before a name (President George Washington).
• When discussing nouns made of multiple words, such as nature preserves, establish a short form in parentheses. For example, “The NSS owns 22 nature preserves (preserves) throughout the US. These preserves . . . .”
• Use gender neutral language (they/them/their/theirs) whenever possible. For example, instead of “He said . . .,” use “They said . . ..”
• Use gender neutral “chair” versus “chairman/men.”
• Continue to use the traditional carats for inclusion (blue <<…>>) and removal (red ~~>>…<<~~) with the addition of strikethroughs for removal (>>remove this<<), so that we do not rely solely on color and

confusing symbols to indicate intention.
• Approved acronyms include: National Speleological Society (NSS), Board of Governors (BOG), Executive Director (ED), Secretary-Treasurer (S-T).

08-204 Bylaws Committee 03-25-23:13b, 10-21-17:10, 11-01-69
A Bylaws Committee is created whose duty it shall be to keep the published Bylaws current, consider all proposals for bylaw revisions and report upon them to the Board, and to ensure that all bylaw proposals are consistent with the Articles of Incorporation, the statutes of the state of Alabama, the Constitution of the Society, and the Acts of the Board, or to recommend action necessary to create such consistency. This is a board level committee reporting to the Chair of the Board.

SECTION 10 --- AUTHORITY

10-253 Discipline 11-18-72
When issues are raised under Bylaw XIII (Discipline of Members), or in the event of other accusations of a serious nature, the Chair of the Board is authorized to appoint an investigating panel, whose duties shall be to ascertain the issues and to attempt to settle the problem by mutual agreement or, if that fails, to bring the question to the Board of Governors with a recommendation for suitable action.

SECTION 15 --- FISCAL MATTERS

15-017 Negotiable Funds 07-10-26:8.8, 03-16-96, 03-23-74, 07-08-50
Checks, drafts, post office money orders, postal notes, or other negotiable instruments coming into the hands of anyone else must be promptly transmitted to the Secretary-Treasurer or their designee. The NSS federal ID number will be used on the account. Checks themselves may be imprinted any way the Division desires.

15-018 Negotiable Funds 10-21-78, 03-23-74, 07-08-50
No cash, checks, or other negotiable instruments intended for the NSS or its Division shall be negotiated by anyone other than the Executive Director or their designated agents.

15-019 Other Financial Operations 03-20-04, 06-28-02, 08-05-96, 06-29-84, 10-21-78, 07-08-50
Individual divisions may open bank accounts to conduct Society business only with the permission of the Executive Director, or their designee, and the division head will have signature authority on such accounts. The NSS federal ID number will be used on the account. Checks themselves may be imprinted any way the division desires.

15-020 Bonding 07-10-26:8.9, 08-07-98, 08-05-96, 03-16-96, 08-18-72, 07-08-50
The Secretary-Treasurer is responsible for bonding Society employees and members, including NSS National Convention Treasurers, who have access to significant Society funds on a regular basis.

15-181 Financial Report 03-15-80, 08-24-68
To keep the general membership informed of the financial state of the NSS, of its income and outgoing, of the uses made of the expenditures, and of reasonable future expectations, the Executive Director will write an annual informative report of the financial position of the NSS to be published in the NSS NEWS.

15-360 Contracts and Deeds 03-23-13:16, 10-21-78
The original copies of all Society contracts and deeds shall be kept per our records retention procedure. Original Society event contracts must be sent to the office within one month of the event's close.

15-428 Securities 07-10-26:8.10, 06-29-84
The Secretary-Treasurer is authorized to establish securities accounts with brokerage firms and to sell securities donated to the Society and its various funds. The Board of Governors must pass a motion for new fund accounts.

15-494 Federal Tax Identification Number 07-10-26:8.11, 08-03-92
Any NSS division, activity, or individual that uses the NSS's federal tax identification number must comply with all procedures outlined in Section 15 of the NSS Board of Governors Manual.

15-495 Tax ID Reporting Requirements 07-10-26:8.12, 08-03-92
NSS Divisions, Committees, and Commissions that use the NSS federal tax identification number shall report their income and expense activity monthly to the NSS Secretary-Treasurer.

15-509 Review of NSS Checking Accounts 07-10-26:8.13, 07-01-24:8.1, 03-17-18:17, 08-05-96, 03-16-96, 04-17-93
The Secretary-Treasurer must work with the Financial Review Committee to ensure the Internal Financial reviewers are provided access to properly review bank accounts monthly. The Secretary-Treasurer must arrange to have bank account statements sent to the committee and those with direct responsibility for managing or reviewing the account.

15-510 Financial Review 11-09-19:14, 08-09-13:22, 07-08-05:11, 06-28-02:12, 04-17-93
The NSS must engage the services of a certified public accountant or accounting firm to conduct an annual financial review of the NSS accounting and bookkeeping records in conformity with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (US GAAP audit). The Board, or a designated review committee, must approve the selection of the reviewer.
The Board must review and approve the reviewed financial statements.

15-573 Signature Authority 07-10-26:8.14, 07-27-07:34, 06-28-02, 03-16-96
The Secretary-Treasurer may open and close bank and other financial institutions/accounts on behalf of the National Speleological Society Inc., consistent with the Acts of the Board and the budget approved by the Board of Governors, as necessary to manage NSS funds appropriately.
The Board of Governors hereby passes such formal resolutions as may be necessary to establish these accounts on behalf of the National Speleological Society with signature authority granted to the Executive Director, the Secretary-Treasurer, and agents designated by the Executive Director.

15-617 Capital Purchases 07-10-26:8.16, 08-07-98
NSS capital items that cost more than $1500.00 may be procured only with Board approval. In an emergency the Chair of the Board may authorize an NSS division or commission to procure a capital budget item up to $10,000.00.

15-676 Liability Insurance 07-10-26:8.17, 07-08-05, 10 05-02, 06-30-00
The Society shall maintain general liability insurance with a minimum coverage of two million dollars. The general liability policy will include coverage for the annual convention.

15-700 Financial Review 11 09-19:15, 04-07-01
Any contract for financial review shall contain clauses guaranteeing performance for cost not to exceed a fixed amount.

15-759 Errors and Omissions (E&O) Insurance 07-10-26:8.18, 07-08-05
The Society must maintain Directors' and employees' Insurance with a minimum coverage of one million dollars. Such insurance shall cover any act or omission or alleged act or omission arising from their status

as an NSS director, employee, division chair, or person authorised to act on behalf of the NSS, provided their actions were not taken in bad faith or dishonestly.

15-776 Financial Report 07-10-26:8.19, 07-01-24:8.2, 08-07-06:6
The NSS Secretary-Treasurer will include a financial report that includes the latest financial information, budget to actual comparison, and the values of all NSS and NSF held funds as part of their report for Board of Governors meetings and as quarterly reports to the Financial Review Committee.

15-838 Fund Calculations for Grants and Distributions 07-10-26:8.20, 04-17-10:26
NSS and NSF controlled funds, used for grants and distribution budget line items, are calculated based on the closing balance on December 31st of the previous year.

15-885 Rental Income of NSS Facilities 07-10-26:8.21, 03-15-14:26
Rental income, attributed employee cost, and expenses of NSS facilities must be accounted for and maintained separately from other financial activities. Income shall be used for surpluses may be transferred to operations or funds as determined by the Facilities Division Chief with approval of the Board of Governors.

SECTION 16 --- BUDGET

16-040 Budget Restrictions 07-10-26:8.22, 06-30-00, 04-02-54
The Secretary-Treasurer is instructed to refuse payment of any amounts over the budget. The only exception may be in those instances where refusal to pay an invoice from an outside supplier would negatively impact the National Speleological Society credit rating. In such instances, the Secretary-Treasurer shall inform the Board who incurred the obligation on behalf of the National Speleological Society, so the Board can decide if further actions are necessary.

16-083 Budget Period 07-10-26:8.23, 11-02-96, 08-03-92, 06 29-84, 06-23-75, 11-22-58
Expenses are budgeted for one fiscal year only unless specifically exempted. No division may carry an unused balance into the following year. Money budgeted for publication of the NSS News, Journal of Cave and Karst Studies shall be escrowed until the publications for which the money was budgeted are published.

16-115 Budget Process 07-10-26:8.24, 08-07-98, 02-20-88, 02-25-84, 08-18-72, 02-23-63
The budget for the next fiscal year must be approved by the Board at its spring meeting. The proposed budget must be submitted to the Board, including projected income and expenses for the following fiscal year, proposed transfers from the operating budget to restricted funds, proposed capital budget, and a cash flow analysis.

16-635 Travel Report 07-10-26:8.26, 07-12-99
The Executive Director develops a Travel Report showing the amounts, funding source, and general purpose for the use of the travel funds. This will be a policy level report and no member names are to be included in the report.

16-797 Research Advisory Department Budget 07-10-26:8.27, 03-15-08:15
Each year the annual budget shall allocate the full 5.5% of the Ralph W. Stone Research Fund, as specified in Board Act 19-138, for the grants administered by the Research Advisory Department (RAD).

16-1000 NSS Travel Policy Budget 03-31-25:6.2
Travel policy for non-board level volunteers and employees is managed by the Executive Director (ED).

The annual budget must have a line item under the ED for each division head for travel. Reimbursement must comply with all applicable laws. Travel must be booked at cost-conscious rates.

SECTION 17 --- NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

17-879 Amendment to Articles of Incorporation 03-15-14:9, 08-07-92:49
The Board of Governors authorizes the Trustees of the National Speleological Foundation to cause paragraph six of the Articles of Incorporation of the National Speleological Foundation to be amended so as to read as follows:
Vacancies which occur in the board of trustees of the corporation shall be filled by appointment which shall be made by a vote of the remaining trustees of the corporation.
The amendment of the Articles of Incorporation of the National Speleological Foundation, dated Dec. 10, 1993, and Certificate of Amendment by the Government of the District of Columbia, dated Jan. 3 1994, are acknowledged, and accepted by the NSS.

SECTION 18 --- NSS FUNDS

18-137 Life Membership Fund 07-10-26:8.29, 07-27-07:32, 03-23-02, 03 16-96, 11-14-64
The purpose of the fund is to serve as a source of income to the Society sufficient to provide life members with the services normally furnished to regular members. All payments for or toward life or family-life membership shall be placed in the Life Membership Fund. Annually, the Foundation returns to the Society all net income from the Life Membership Fund up to 100% of the current regular membership rate plus related surcharges for each living life member, not to exceed 5.5% of the Fund's total value.

18-367 Save-the-Caves Fund 07-10-26:8.32, 03-17-07:20, 03-23-02, 04-07-01, 03-27-99, 06-23-97, 11-21-81, 11-17-79
The fund shall be used to support the general conservation goals of the Society. This fund is part of the Holding Fund that is managed by the National Speleological Foundation reference NSF NSS Attachment M.

18-524 NSS A/V Library Restricted Fund 07-10-26:8.35, 03-27-99, 11-07-98, 08-60-93
The purpose of the fund is to provide funds for NSS A/V Library programs, equipment, or equipment maintenance. These funds may be spent by the A/V Library Chairman, subject to Executive Director approval. All funds (fees in excess of postage cost) raised through the A/V Library rental program will go to this restricted fund. This fund is part of the Holding Fund that is managed by the National Speleological Foundation reference NSF NSS Attachment M.

18-525 NSS Library/Museum Restricted Fund 07-10-26:8.36, 03-17-18:13, 03-15-03:19, 03-23-02, 10-20-01, 07-27-01, 11-07-98, 08-06-93
The purpose of the fund is to provide funds for NSS Library or Museum to acquire speleologically significant publications and memorabilia to be housed in the NSS Library and/or Museum and the preservation of cave and karst-related publications and memorabilia, cataloging, storage, protection, library/museum services to users, and Internet access. All expenditures are subject to the Executive Director’s approval. This fund is part of the Holding Fund that is managed by the National Speleological Foundation reference NSF NSS Attachment M.

18-540 Holding Fund 11-06-93
A Holding Fund, designated as Attachment M, is established with the National Speleological Foundation for the purpose of managing excess cash funds on an ongoing short-term basis.

18-604 NSS News Restricted Fund 07-10-26:3.38, 03-23-02, 11-08-97
The fund is established for the purpose of augmenting the publication budget of the NSS News. At the end of the fiscal year any unexpended NSS News advertising income shall be transferred to this fund. This fund may be spent by the NSS News editor, subject to approval of the Executive Director. This fund is part of the Holding Fund that is managed by the National Speleological Foundation reference NSF NSS Attachment M.

18-605 Journal Restricted Fund 07-10-26:8.39, 03-23-02, 11-08-97
The fund is established for the purpose of augmenting the publication budget of the Journal of Cave and Karst Studies. At the end of the fiscal year any unexpended Journal advertising income and page charges will be transferred to this fund. This fund may be spent by the Journal editor, subject to approval of the Executive Director. This fund is part of the Holding Fund that is managed by the National Speleological Foundation reference NSF NSS Attachment M.
.

18-629 Cave Education Restricted Fund 07-10-26:8.40, 10-05-02, 03-23-02, 03-27-99
The fund is established to promote cave and karst education programs and resources. The Executive Director may fund grant proposals from this restricted fund promoting cave and karst education programs for primary and secondary students, provided the grant funding amount is listed in the Annual Budget approved by the Board of Governors. Additionally, the Executive Director may fund the publication of The Guide to Responsible Caving provided the funding amount is listed in the Annual Budget approved by the Board of Governors. This fund is part of the Holding Fund that is managed by the National Speleological Foundation reference NSF NSS Attachment M.

18-655 Landowner Assistance Restricted Fund 07-10-26:8.45, 03-20-04;19, 03-18-00
The fund is established to preserve access to caves and favorable caver-landowner relations, the Board of Governors may authorize expenditures from this fund for assistance to landowners who sustain damage or distress incidental to the caving activities of any person. This fund is part of the Holding Fund that is managed by the National Speleological Foundation reference NSF NSS Attachment M.

18-686 NSS Reserve Fund 07-10-26:8.46, 03-23-19:23, 10-21-17:40, 06-19-17:28, 11-04-00
The fund is established to smooth the normal variation in annual fiscal year NSS Operations surpluses and deficits. At the end of each NSS fiscal year surplus from normal operations in that fiscal year will be deposited in the NSS Reserve Funds, the funds can be transferred from the NSS Reserve Fund to the NSS Operations to cover any NSS Operations deficit or cash flow needed in a fiscal year. The Secretary-Treasurer shall notify the Board of any transfers. This fund is part of the Holding Fund that is managed by the National Speleological Foundation reference NSF NSS Attachment M.

18-747 *American Caving Accidents* Restricted Fund 07-10-26:8.57, 03-20-04
The fund is established for the purpose of augmenting the publication budget of the *American Caving Accidents.* This fund is part of the Holding Fund that is managed by the National Speleological Foundation reference NSF NSS Attachment M.

18-800 Bat Research and Protection Restricted Fund 07-10-26:8.58, 03-17-18:12, 03-15-08:31
The purpose of the Fund is to provide funding for NSS Bat Research and Protection Grants, and for public education and outreach regarding bats. These funds may be spent by the Research Advisory Department chair, and for public education and outreach regarding bats, subject to Executive Director approval. This fund is part of the Holding Fund that is managed by the National Speleological Foundation reference NSF NSS Attachment M.

18-982 Management Fund 07-10-26:8.61, 03-19-22
The fund is established in the amount of $1,000,000. from monies in the Operational Fund with additional

contributions as unrestricted donations allow. Withdrawal of the fund may not exceed 5% of the total value of the fund annually and will be available to the Executive Director to be budgeted for use to offset operating costs for the administration of the NSS. The fund will be jointly established with concurrence by the Chair of the Board and the Secretary-Treasurer.

18-1001 Geosciences Research Fellowship Fund 12-8-25:6.3
The Dr. Albert and Ethel Ogden Geosciences Research Fellowship Fund, Attachment Y to the NSS-NSF Contract, is created and will be managed by the National Speleological Foundation. Additional donations to the fund are permitted without further board approval.

SECTION 19 --- NSS GRANTS and SCHOLARSHIPS

19-138 NSS Research Fund 03-07-15:21, 10-25-14:20, 03-15-08:19, 03-23-02, 07-02-82, 11-14-64
The purpose of the NSS Research Fund is to provide income to the Society with which to support research activities. This fund is a logical extension of the Ralph W. Stone Research Fund, which it replaces, and will be tracked in subsections to fund individually named grants and fellowships, as per the Acts creating those grants and fellowships. Initial subsections shall include the Ralph Stone Fund and the David Morehouse Fund. The Fund was established by donors. The Fund is managed as a temporarily restricted quasi-endowment fund. Annually the Society may withdraw up to 5.5% of the total fund's value for this purpose as defined by the Acts. The S-T is requested to negotiate appropriate amendments to agreements with the National Speleological Foundation.

19-321 NSS Cave/Karst Conservation and Restoration Grant 11-05-05, 11-07-98, 04-17-93,07-01-88, 11-08-86, 02-25-84, 11-22-80, 10-23-76
The Conservation Division is authorized to award up to $5,000 annually from the Save-the-Caves Fund to make grants of up to $1000 to Internal Organizations, Conservation Task Forces, Conservancies, or to individual NSS members for specific projects that involve cave or karst conservation, restoration, or cleanup.

The Conservation Division is responsible for establishing the application, review, and award process. Recipients of these grants shall submit written reports to the Society as stipulated by the Chairman of the Conservation Division.

To be considered for a grant award, applications must include adequate description of one or more of the following: scientific investigation of cave or karst conservation problems;
speleological research that will directly contribute to cave or karst conservation; the remediation of ecological problems in cave, karst, or pseudokarst areas; hands-on, in-cave efforts to restore cave passages to a former ecological state equipment and supplies for conservation or restoration projects that include hands-on participation from cavers; or public outreach to inform and raise awareness of cave and karst values.

Requests for cash-match grants will receive preference.

19-378 Ralph. W. Stone Graduate Fellowship in Cave and Karst Studies 03-07-15:22, 03-15-08:20, 03-20-04, 08-04-03, 03-21-98, 10-21-95, 07-02-82, 03-15-80
A maximum of two annual grants, known as the Ralph W. Stone Graduate Fellowship in Cave and Karst Studies, consisting of an amount specified in the NSS Operating budget will be given to a graduate student preparing a thesis on a speleological subject. These grants will be funded from the Ralph Stone portion of the NSS Research Fund, and the total grants in any year will not exceed 5.5% of that portion of the NSS research Fund. Applications for this Fellowship shall be solicited from the membership by the

Research Advisory Department (RAD). The recipient will be selected from the applicants by a team of at least three NSS members appointed by the Chairman of the RAD with the concurrence of the Executive Director. The members of this team shall be professionally active in speleological research but need not be regular members of the RAD. Each recipient will be selected by the Executive Director upon the recommendation of the RAD and will be announced at the annual NSS convention. The Chairman of the RAD shall notify, in writing, the recipient(s) of the Fellowship and arrange for each recipient to receive a check for the designated amount of the Fellowship. The only obligations required of the recipient will be to give credit to the Society when the work is published and to donate two copies of the publication to the NSS Library. Priority will be given each year to applicants who previously have not received the Ralph. W. Stone Fellowship.

19-379 Research Grants 03-07-15:23, 03-15-80
A program of research grants and awards for speleological research is created, to be managed by the Research Advisory Department (RAD). The names of recipients will be announced at the annual Convention. The Division Head will notify, in writing, each recipient of such a grant or award, and arrange for the recipient or recipient's institution to receive a check for the designated amount of the Grant, and specify to the recipient those conditions under which the grant is made. This program will be funded by the RAD budget, which will be supplemented by any portion of the amount currently available from the Stone portion of the NSS Research Fund not needed for the Ralph W. Stone Graduate Fellowship Grants.

19-431 International Cooperation Fund 08-07-06:17, 0 4-04-92, 08-04-89, 08-07-87, 06-25-84, 10-29-83
The NSS International Support Fund is renamed the NSS International Cooperation Fund. The NSS International Cooperation Fund Policy is approved. The International Cooperation Fund agreement with the National Speleological Foundation is approved.

19-482 Sara Corrie U.S. Exploration Fund 07-30-18:18, 08-09-13:18, 03-23-02, 11-10-90, 07-13-90, 08-04-89
The purpose of the Sara Corrie U. S. Exploration Fund is to provide income to the Society for grants to fund group cave exploration in the United States. The fund was established through donations and is managed as a temporarily restricted quasi-endowment fund. Each fiscal year an amount up to 5.5% of the total fund value is used for this purpose. Grants should be very easy to obtain with a minimum of restrictions and paperwork.

19-706 NSS Cave Rescue Training Restricted Fund 03-17-18:5, 06-29-12:28, 03 23-02, 07-27-01
The NSS Cave Rescue Training Restricted Fund is established to provide scholarships to individuals to cover registration fees associated with cave rescue training administered by the National Cave Rescue Commission (NCRC), with the purpose of improving the cave rescue infrastructure. The fund consists of donations.

The contract with the National Speleological Society (NSF) to manage the Rescue Training Fund is accepted. Existing funds will be transferred to the NSF.

Selection of individuals to receive scholarships will be at the discretion of the NCRC. Scholarships will be awarded based on the potential of selected recipients to improve the cave rescue infrastructure at any level, including roles as individual rescuers or in leadership positions. The NCRC Board will establish criteria for the award of the scholarship. The NCRC National Coordinator may authorize payments from this fund with the approval of the NSS Executive Director. The scholarship award may cover all or part of the registration fees (including food and camping) for a NCRC rescue training course chosen by the applicant. The Fund was established, and is periodically enhanced, by donors. The Fund is managed as a

temporarily restricted quasi-endowment fund. Annually the Society may withdraw up to 5.5% of the total fund's value for this purpose.

19-732 International Cave Exploration Fund 03-15-03
The assets of the Joe Ivy Endowment for Cave Exploration are combined with those of the International Exploration Fund to create the International Cave Exploration Fund. The Joe Ivy Endowment for Cave Exploration fund and the International Exploration Fund are terminated.

19-798 Secondary and Post-Secondary Educator Grant 03-15-08:17
The Secondary and Post-Secondary Educator Grant is established and will be administered by the Research Advisory Department with input from the Education Division.
The Secondary and Post-Secondary Educator Grant is established for the purpose of investing in the future of karst science by supporting projects initiated by and/or overseen by educators of secondary students and post-secondary undergraduates. Proposals submitted for consideration will be reviewed by the Research Advisory Department with input from the Education Division.

19-801 NSS Bat Research and Protection Grant 03-15-08:32
The NSS Bat Research and Protection Grant is created. The Grant program will be set up and administered by the Research Advisory Department, who will promote the program, solicit grant requests, review applications, award the grants, and ensure program guidelines are followed. The grant may be awarded for research projects or to fund projects to protect bats, including gates, signs, and literature. Non-scientific terms and conditions shall be set forth with the advice and consent of the Executive Director-Grant recipients will be encouraged to publish the results of the funded research or details of the project in an NSS periodical. Copies of any paper(s) resulting from the research will be given to the NSS Library. The grant is funded by the NSS Bat Research and Protection Restricted Fund.

19-900 David F. Morehouse Fellowship for Geochemical Research of Carbonate Rocks 03-07-15:24
The David F. Morehouse Grants for Geochemical Research of Carbonate Rocks is established. This Fellowship, available to university students, will be administered by the Research Advisory Department RAD) and funded by the earnings of the Morehouse portion of the NSS Research Fund. It will be granted only in years when the cumulative growth of the Morehouse money is sufficient to issue a substantial grant, as determined by the RAD

SECTION 25 --- BUSINESS OFFICE

25-043 Grotto Directory 05-15-54
A directory of grottos, including their publications and the name and mailing address of the officer of each Grotto, to whom communications should be addressed, must be maintained.

SECTION 26 --- REAL PROPERTY

26-808 NSS Nature Preserve Documentation 08-15-08:6
The Executive Director is directed to document the terms under which each of the NSS Nature Preserves or other real estate, became NSS property. This documentation will include information about how and when each property was acquired, whether donated or purchased; what costs were involved and how said payments were raised. The purpose of this documentation is to properly categorize each piece of real estate as an unrestricted, temporarily restricted or permanently restricted asset, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). The Executive Director will report back to the Board on progress regarding this documentation at each board meeting until the documentation is complete.

26-935 Divesting of Property 10-21-17:20
Any real estate donated, granted, or bequeathed to the NSS that is devoid of cave or karst features shall be the responsibility of the Executive Director to divest from the Society.

26-980 NSS Preserves Cave for Pay Policy 03-19-22:17
Consistent with Sportsman's laws and other applicable state statutes, the NSS prohibits individuals, businesses, or corporations from charging a fee to profit from visiting any NSS Nature Preserve. Operating expenses associated with educational classes and outreach programs hosted by the NSS, public and private schools, colleges, universities, non-profit organizations, Parks & Recreation programs, and conservancies may be permitted provided that the trips have educational and conservation goals inherent to the NSS mission. Individuals, businesses, or corporations must contact the preserve manager to receive authorization prior to visiting.

SECTION 27 --- SYMBOLIC DEVICES

27-255 Symbolic Devices 03-24-73
Changes to symbolic devices are subject to the approval of the Board of Governors.

SECTION 28 --- MEMBERSHIP - GENERAL

28-300 Contributions 06-09-23:2, 03-23-19:12, 07-30-18:25, 11-08-97, 03-18-95, 06-29-84, 07-02-82, 06-27-75
Members who contribute to the Society in addition to their dues are entitled to the following designations in appreciation of their contribution:

Amount	Designation
<$300	Contributor
<$1500	Supporter
<$3000	Friend
<$6000	Mentor
<$15000	Sponsor
≥$15000	Patron

The Chair of the Board, upon approval of the Board, may designate a member, institution, grotto, or other entity as a Benefactor of the NSS for lifetime of substantial financial contributions. A list of members recognized as Benefactors shall be maintained on the Fundraising Chair's webpages.

28-352 Membership Drive 03-23-13:19, 03-15-80, 08 10-79, 06-23-78
In order to improve our financial position, improve membership services and publications, and increase support for research and conservation, it is the goal of the NSS to increase its membership as rapidly as possible by all means consistent with the Strategic Plan and Mission

28-389 Dues Structure 03-13-21:15, 09-30-21:5, 06-19-17:21, 03-25-17:12, 10-24-15:26 & 27, 10-25-14:15, 08-09-13:30, 08-02-10:17, 11-08-08:12, 03-15-08:28, 11-06-04:4, 04-07-01:19, 07-12-99:5, 20, 10-21-95, 04-04-87, 06-29-84, 07-20-82, 07-26-81

Membership Class	Act 28-	Annual Dues
Regular	891 & 892	$50.00
Regular (Electronic Publications)	892	$40.00
Introductory*	892	50% of Regular

Family Regular	895	$13.00
Institutional	891, 892, & 962	$110.00
Landowner**	966	$40.00
*Electronic publications and age restrictions.		
**Landowner members can opt in to receive printed publications if desired.		
Membership Recognition		**Additional Fee**
Life	893 & 894	$1000.00
Family Life	389	$500.00
Conservation - Regular	389 & 893	$100.00 plus Regular dues
Conservation - Life	893 & 894	$1000.00 plus Life Member fee

Persons living in the same household as a regular member may join the NSS as a Family Member and pay dues equal to 25% of the (paper) dues, rounded to the next dollar.

The spouse of a Life member who wishes to be recognized as a Life member shall pay a fee of ½ of the Life membership fee. In the event of a divorce from the Life member, the family member shall pay the remaining ½ of the Life member fee in effect at the time of initially becoming a Life member. A payment plan may be adopted at the member's request

Conservation Life Members will be Life or Family Life Members who pay an additional fee as provided by Act of the Board of Governors.

The difference between the dues for a Conservation Life Member and those for Life or a Family Life Member will accrue to the Endowment Fund. The expenditure for conservation and educational activities will be equal to or greater than the amount of the difference between annual conservation dues and regular member dues that were paid during the preceding fiscal year.

Family Life Members or spouses of deceased Life Members who contribute $1,000 to become Conservation Life Members will receive the status of ordinary life Members with all the privileges of a Life Member.

28-558 Non-Discrimination in Membership 10- 21-17:5, 10-15-94
An individual's right to be a member, employee, or volunteer in the NSS shall not be denied on the basis of the applicant's age, race, sexual orientation, gender, gender expression or gender identity, religion, disability, national origin, genetic information, pregnancy or maternity, or military status.

28-891 Membership Classes 10- 24-15:24, 10-25-14:6
The following Membership Classes are established, effective April 1, 2015.

Regular members are individuals at least eighteen years of age who have all the privileges of Society membership, including (but not limited to) the right to vote, serve on Society committees, Divisions, commissions, and to serve on the Board of Governors.

Institutional members are organizations or corporations, but not individuals, which have all the privileges of regular members, except the rights to serve on the Board of Governors.

28-962 Preservation Network Membership 09-30-20:5
The Preservation Network Membership class is defined as: An organization, show cave business, or other entity that has agreed to participate in the Cave Preservation Network (CPN). This membership category

is not intended for individuals. Members under this category have all the privileges of regular members, except the right to vote in society elections or hold elected office. Annually, one member of each CPN participating organization may use the NSS Convention discount. The strong fundraising aspect of the CPN negates the need for annual membership dues. Membership in this category will be available through nomination by the Membership Division Head and approval by the Executive Director, and participation will be reaffirmed annually by the Membership Division Head no later than January 15th of each year.

28-971 Sustaining Contributor Program 07-24-21:42
A regular monthly print and electronic membership class is approved. The cost of each monthly membership will include administrative costs for the use of credit and debit cards. Membership will extend for as long as monthly payments are provided. New members will be provided with an NSS number and all the rights and privileges of regular membership.

28-997 Member Contact Information 03-01-25:5.2
Member email addresses and phone numbers are shared via an opt-out method. All other contact information is shared via an opt-in method.

SECTION 41 --- AFFILIATIONS

41-996 Affiliations 03-10-24:5.1
The Executive Director has the authority to negotiate organizational affiliations with other like-minded organizations. All MOUs, affiliations, or other formal partnership agreements must pass NSS legal review. The Society must not enter MOUs, affiliations, or other formal partnerships without Board approval. The NSS liaison(s) responsibilities will be assigned by the Executive Director. The MOUs and other partnership agreements are listed in the relevant Appendix.

SECTION 48 --- CONGRESS OF GROTTOS

48-413 Report to the Congress of Grottos 07-01-83
The Chair of the Board of the NSS must report, at the opening of the Congress of Grottos, on the actions taken by the Board of Governors on the resolutions passed by the previous year's Congress of Grottos.

SECTION 50 --- CONSERVATION

50-238 Conservation Action 10-23-99, 03-31-71
Conservation Task Forces (CTF) are created by the NSS to focus on major local level cave conservation issues. The activities of NSS members who work together as a CTF are coordinated by the Conservation Division. The primary focus of CTFs is to address both short term and long-term problems that can have an adverse effect on caves, karst and pseudokarst, and to take actions to protect the assets of caves, karst and pseudokarst. Primary CTF activities include but are not limited to: mitigating the effects of development; protecting caves, their inhabitants, and their contents; protecting karst aquifers; monitoring the impacts of cave visitation; working with private landowners and government land managers to protect caves and karst; and educating the public.

50-960 Cave Preservation Network 09-30-20:03
The NSS Board of Governors recognize the NSS Cave Preservation Network (CPN). The CPN is a collaboration of the NSS, the National Caves Association (NCA), and numerous private cave owners.

This program is meant to preserve caves and cave access. It strives to improve and expand the relationship between private cave owners and the NSS. In addition, the CPN works to educate the public about cave exploration, preserves, conservation, and research, as well as the merits of organized caving. Partner organizations of the CPN work to advance these goals through fundraising for the Cave Preservation Fund.

SECTION 56 --- CONVENTION

56-006 Advance Funds 11-08-08:17, 07-08-05, 03-16-96, 06-27-86, 08-18-72, 12-04-71, 05-22-48
The Convention Department will be granted an advance to aid in organizing the Convention after their preliminary budget has been approved by the Executive Director.

56-125 Convention Manual 07-14-14:23, 11-04-00, 04-04-87,10-11-75, 06-17-64
The Society maintains a NSS Convention Manual. The Manual defines the responsibilities of the various organizations involved in conducting an NSS convention, and provides background information to guide the host organization in their planning process. The NSS Convention Manual will be maintained and distributed by the Convention Development Department Chair. The Chair solicits revisions and suggestions from convention staff and those officers and Department involved in convention planning and operations at least once each year, and keeps the manual updated with information received. Deviations from the guidelines in the manual must be approved by the Membership Division Chair. Any issues not resolved will be referred to the Executive Director, whose decision will be final.

56-293 Convention Department Honorarium 03-10-24:5.1, 10-21-17:17, 08 09-13:23, 7-27-01, 08-07-98, 11-16-74
A $3000.00 convention Department honorarium will be included in the Convention budget to recognize the Department's efforts and unreimbursed expenses to host the annual NSS National Convention. The Department honorarium may be disbursed or used in any way that is deemed appropriate by the Convention Chair.

56-611 Convention Budgets 07 13-15:54, 08-07-98
All bids submitted for NSS National Conventions include draft financial projections showing major expected expense and income categories. The Budget Template must be approved by the Executive Director.

56-614 Convention Budget Approval 11 08-08:16, 08-07-98
Within one year after the Board of Governors accepts an NSS National Convention proposal, the Convention Chair submits a preliminary convention budget to the Executive Director (ED) for approval. In the event that this approval is received more than eighteen months prior to the convention, the Convention Chair submits a final budget to the ED for approval eighteen months prior to the convention Subsequent revisions to the budget exceeding 5% must be approved by the Executive Director.

56-683 Convention Auction Funds 11-04-00
Annual distribution of the undesignated proceeds from the NSS Convention Auction is determined by the Executive Director and advertised at the auction.

56-778 Convention Accident Insurance 11-07-10:14, 08-07-06:8
Conventions will self-insure against accidents to registrants up to $5000. Conventions-budget a fee per registrant to cover costs.

56-818 Convention Budget Planning 07-18-16:11, 04-04-09:21

Convention budgets should include the provision for a modest surplus estimated as at least 10% of expected revenue from registration.

56-934 Bookstore and Office Convention Expenses 10-21-17:15
Conventions budget reasonable and appropriate shipping and travel expenses for the NSS bookstore and staff to attend the convention. Actual expenses must be reimbursed to the staff by the NSS office, and transferred to the NSS general fund by the convention through reconciliation at the close of the convention books. Convention staff should work with NSS staff to determine estimated costs prior to budgeting.

56-981 Registration Fee Supported Bookkeeper and Event Planner 03-19-22:25
Twelve percent of registration costs will be dedicated and used to hire temporary professional bookkeeper(s) and a convention event planner. The bookkeeper will work for the Executive Director. The Convention Event Planner will be directed and work for the NSS Convention Department Chief. The Executive Director establishes the authority to establish bank accounts, accrue funds, account for income and expenses, and dispense funds for the conventions. The Convention Department Chief is responsible for defining the role of the Convention Event Planner and will continue working with potential convention host grottos, city officials, vendors, and contractors for every convention. This cost will be included in the convention budget similar to the insurance cost. The additional income will be allocated for the sole purpose of a paid bookkeeper to manage concurrently operating conventions as well as the Convention Event Planner. In the unlikely event, there is an overage vs billed service, the money will be held in an account for conventions that are a financial loss. This takes effect for the 2024 convention.

SECTION 60 --- FIELD ACTIVITIES

60-398 Co-sponsorship of Events 11-21-81
The Executive-Director is authorized to execute agreements with other organizations for the NSS to co-sponsor events that further the goals and purposes of the Society. A decision to co-sponsor an event must be reported to the Board at its next regular meeting.

SECTION 63 --- FUNDRAISING

63-438 Valuation of Donations 03-23-85
Donors shall be responsible for any values assigned for tax contribution purposes to equipment, publications, real property, or other materials contributed to the NSS. The Society is not responsible for any such evaluation made by its staff or members.

63-463 Fundraising Organization 11-08-86
NSS funds are organized and grouped under the four following headings: General, Save-the- Caves, Exploration, and Research. These are collectively known as the Primary Funds. The main focus of the Fundraising Manager is to solicit contributions to the Primary Funds. In addition, the existence of the various other funds (Secondary Funds) will be publicized and contributions specifically designated for these funds are solicited

63-470 New Funds 04-04-87
Proposals for new funds must state the following:

The primary fund to which it belongs;
The level and duration of active Fundraising required by the Fundraising Manager;
The initial amount that is requested from the NSS;

The recipient fund for surplus or closing balances;
Fundraising solicitations will state these points to prospective donors.

SECTION 65 --- INTERNATIONAL

65-393 Delegates to the International Union 11-21-81

The Executive Director appoints one delegate and one alternate to the International Union of Speleology (UIS) to represent the United States. This delegate is known as the International Secretary. The Executive Director advises the UID of the confirmed delegates prior to any International Congress.

65-394 Representatives to UIS Departments and Commissions 11-21-81

The Executive Director appoints at least one but not more than two representatives to each department or commission of the International Union of Speleology. The International Secretary consults the appropriate NSS Sections and Divisions before making appointments.

SECTION 68 --- LIBRARY

68-165 Library Policy 03 18-67, 11-14-64

A library is an essential component of the National Headquarters. The library is to be a collection devoted solely to speleology and closely related works and the existence of the library is for the benefit of the members.

68-622 Library Donations 11-07-98

The NSS Library may not accept donations or gifts with stipulations or conditions unless a suitable endowment accompanies the donation. The library, with the approval of the Executive Director, has the right to donate, sell, auction, or give away any book or item in its inventory as necessary for the maintenance of the library, unless an endowment accompanies the item.

68-846 Regional Library Affiliation 11-07-10:11

An organization with a cave library may affiliate with the NSS as an NSS Regional Library by agreeing with the purposes of the NSS and applying in writing with the Library Team. The Library Team will establish the standards for acceptance as a Regional Library.

SECTION 83 --- PUBLICATIONS - THE JOURNAL OF CAVE AND KARST STUDIES

83-310 Loan Agreements 03-20-82, 02-28-76,

The Executive Director is authorized to enter into loan agreements for the purpose of financing planned NSS publications and similar capital investments. Such authority shall be limited to those investments itemized in the approved annual Capital Budget and subject to any loan limitations contained therein. All loans are subject to the following provisions:

(1) All income from the sale of the item, except for an allowance for postage and handling, is to be used to repay the loan and interest.
(2) The NSS may use other funds to repay the loan at its option.

83-647 Publication Contracts 10 23-19:21, 10-23-99

No one enters into a contract, oral or written, for the NSS to publish a non-serial publication or an extraordinary overprint of an NSS periodical unless approved by the Executive Director. Once a publication is approved, a written contract between the author(s) and the NSS will be reviewed and signed by the Executive Director prior to publication.

SECTION 86 --- PUBLIC RELATIONS

86-559 Cave Owner Liability 03-18-00, 10-15-94

The NSS assumes a leadership role in representing caver interests on landowner liability issues associated with cave accidents. Our goal is to foster an environment in which the cave owners are held harmless for accidents in their caves during trips for which the landowners received no fee.

86-844 NSS Statement of Values 08-02-10:20

The following NSS Statement of Values is adopted as the beliefs that embody our values as an organization. Cavers and Caving - The NSS believes that:

1. Caving is a specialized pursuit best undertaken by knowledgeable and responsible persons using safe equipment and techniques.
2. It is the embodiment of the knowledge, experience, and efforts of its members, that member volunteers must be appreciated, and exemplary contributions to caving should be recognized.
3. Speleology is advanced by discovery, exploration, and survey, and these contributions are ideally accomplished with minimal impact to the caves.
4. Its purposes are furthered by the formal study of caves and karst and through the publication of speleological information.
5. It is, through its members, the best source for information on access to caves.
6. Its goals are best served by respecting the wishes and rights of landowners, both public and private.

The Caves - The NSS believes that:

1. Cavers have a responsibility to preserve caves and karst for the benefit of future generations through low-impact use and the protection of highly sensitive areas.
2. There is an ongoing need for outreach and education addressing the importance of caves and karst.
3. It serves a vital national leadership role as an advocate for the conservation of the natural and cultural aspects of caves.
4. Land use planners can benefit from expert consultation in order to avoid inappropriate development over and adjacent to caves and aquifer recharge zones.
5. It is important to establish, strengthen, and promote enforcement of cave protection legislation at all levels of government.
6. Its purposes are advanced through the encouragement and practice of responsible cave stewardship.

The Society - The NSS believes that:

1. Its goals can be furthered by adding and retaining members.
2. Fellowship among cavers at events such as caving projects, NSS conventions, regional caver gatherings, and local grotto meetings promotes a stronger organization.
3. It serves to unite cavers and caving groups into a national organization for a common purpose, and it will continue to build and maintain affiliations with other entities that have complementary goals.
4. Its organizational effectiveness depends on a free exchange of ideas and information between members and leadership.

5. It serves as a national resource for cave- and caving-related information and advice. Its governance and administration must be thoughtful, ethical, and accountable to its members.

APPENDICIES

APPENDIX D
April 10, 1965
Amended 03-25-23:12, 03-13-21:13, 10-22-11:17, 03-15-08:27 A&B, 03-05-05

POLICY FOR INTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS

1. The purpose of the Internal Organizations (IO) of the National Speleological Society (NSS) shall be to promote interest in and to advance in any and all ways the study of Speleology and to promote fellowship among those interested in it.

2. Every IO shall have complete freedom of action in its organization and fiscal policies, except no IO shall engage in any activity which is detrimental to speleology, conservation, safety, or the best interests of the NSS. Such activity is sufficient cause for revocation of the organization's charter by the Board of Governors.

3. IOs may be chartered upon submitting the following documents to the IO Team:
   A. An acceptable Constitution and Bylaws showing the date of adoption and signed by an officer of the new organization.
   B. An application in duplicate bearing the signatures of the charter members indicating which are members of the NSS. In the case of regions and surveys this will include the names of charter member organizations.
   C. A brief history of the organization.
   D. Other information requested by the Team.

4. Occasionally a group may request a grotto or chapter charter in an area where a chapter already exists. The NSS does not encourage the formation of additional chapters in an area where one already exists, so these applications will be handled according to the following guidelines: Unless it is obvious that the new group has been in contact with the existing grotto(s), they will be referred to the existing grotto(s), and the existing grotto(s) will be informed of the inquiry from the new group. The new group will be informed of our reluctance to charter another grotto in the same area, and the existing grotto(s) will be asked to contact the new group and invite them to participate in their activities. If, after a reasonable time, the IO Team feels that the grotto chartering is justified, the chartering may proceed.

5. The membership of IOs shall conform to the following requirements:
   A. All persons who serve on the governing board of an IO must be a member of the NSS in *Good Standing* except in the case of Surveys where representatives of state entities or other conservation organizations may serve on the board regardless of their NSS membership status.
   B. Full membership in IOs shall be open only to members of the NSS.
   C. IOs may, at their option, have members who are not members of the NSS and who are limited to a year or less on this status.
   D. Membership in grottos (or chapters) shall consist of at least five members of the NSS who have designated that grotto as their Primary Affiliation.
   E. The formal name of a Student Grotto shall indicate that the organization is a Student Grotto (or Chapter).
   F. Membership in sections must consist of at least ten members of the NSS.

G. Membership in regions must consist of at least two grottos and may have one or more of the following:
    1. Individual members
    2. Non-NSS organization

H. Membership in Surveys shall consist of one or more of the following:
    1. Individual members
    2. Grottos or Sections
    3. Non-NSS organization

I. In a College or University Outing Club*, the caving chairman must be a member of the NSS and will be responsible for communication with the NSS.

6. Each IO shall have the following responsibilities to the NSS:
   A. They shall submit an annual report to the Internal Organizations Team, containing the mailing address of the organization, a list of the organization's officers with their respective NSS numbers, the names of two organization members (with email addresses or telephone numbers) who are to be listed as contacts in caves.org, the URL of the organization's Web site (if any), if the organization has changed its constitution or bylaws since the last report, and whether copies of the organization's publication are being submitted as per section C of this paragraph. If the constitution or bylaws have been changed, copies of the new documents must be provided to the committee. The Team may request additional information, but the completion of it must be labeled as optional. Reports must be submitted prior to a date set by the IO Team.
   B. In formal usage and in the event of incorporation, append to its name the words ".... a Chapter (Regional Association, Speleological Survey, Special Section) of the National Speleological Society." In the event that one of the above terms is used in the name, only the words ".... of the National Speleological Society" need be used.
   C. Two copies of each publication (if any) shall be submitted to the NSS Library. At least one copy and preferably two copies shall be furnished to the NSS Cave Files Team, and it is recommended that one copy be furnished to the U.S. Geological Survey.
   D. Each IO shall cooperate with the Society in establishing sound conservation and safety practices, and assist in or carry out other activities which further the purposes of the NSS.

7. All Internal Organizations, which comply, with the provisions of this policy shall have the following privileges accorded to them:
   A. Each Internal Organization shall, upon request, receive one copy of each issue of the *NSS NEWS* and the *JOURNAL OF CAVE AND KARST STUDIES*.
   B. IOs shall be entitled to representation at the Congress of Grottos in accordance with established rules of the Congress.
   C. Any IO will be permitted a non-voting representative at any meeting of the Board of Governors for the propose of presenting or discussing matters relating to the organization.
   D. Each IO may receive assistance from the Society such as cave location data, slide shows, library materials, and exhibition materials to aid in the activities of the organization.

8. Each IO shall be classified by the IO Team as being active or inactive. Active organizations will be those organizations which have fulfilled the requirements of Article 6. Only active organizations may receive the benefits listed in Article 7.

*Footnote to 5.I: A college Outing Club is defined as an organization which regularly engages in more than one outdoor activity and which is recognized as a student activity by a college or university.

APPENDIX J
Amended 11-9-13:21, 7-18-11:17, 3-17-07:24d+f, 3-25-06:23b, 7-12-99:25, 26

BOARD OF GOVERNORS OPERATIONAL DIRECTIVES

The procedures used by the Board of Governors in conducting the business of the Society rest upon the bylaws of the Society, the Acts of the Board, and Robert's Rules of Order - Newly Revised. There is also custom or tradition, known to the many individuals who provide continuity to the operation of the Society but which is not formalized.

I. Arrangements

A. Board meetings are traditionally held at a location where an NSS grotto may act as the host. Invitations are solicited from grottos individually and through the Administrative Memo and the NSS News. The Board Arrangements Team provides the "Guide to Arranging for an NSS Board of Governors Meeting" to interested grottos.

B. The host grotto makes all local arrangements, provides local transportation, and sends notification of the meeting to nearby members and grottos (in addition to notices in the NEWS). The names of persons to contact to arrange local accommodations, being met at the airport, etc., will be sent to all board members well in advance of the meeting.

II. Agenda

A. The agenda for a board meeting is prepared by the Chair of the Board. Its format is subject to the provisions of the Acts of the Board and Robert's Rules of Order - Newly Revised. The agenda for a meeting at which the Chair of the Board changes is prepared by the outgoing Chair of the Board. A preliminary agenda shall be prepared and distributed to the Board a minimum of one month prior to the meeting. A final agenda shall be prepared and distributed to the Board a minimum of two weeks prior to the meeting, and every effort shall be made to have all motions presented in the agenda. The preliminary agenda shall be placed on a public area of the NSS Web site, and replaced by the final agenda when it is completed.

B. Proxies, Minutes Approval, Reports, and Appointments

1. Proxies must be designated individually by absent board members. (See Bylaw IV.E).

2. All corrections to draft minutes should be submitted to the Recording Secretary. Changes in context or in voting will be brought to the Board's attention. Typographical errors will be corrected immediately.

3. Reports about the activities of most teams are usually included in the appropriate division head’s. Matters of special import or topicality will be reported upon individually. The Acts of the Board require that reports from the Chairman of the Congress of Grottos and the Treasurer for the real property teams are to be presented at all board meetings.

4. A recess will normally be scheduled for a closed meeting of the Board.

C. Motions

1. Motions may be introduced by any member of the Board of Governors, subject to the provisions of the Bylaws, Acts of the Board, and Robert's Rules of Order - Newly Revised.

2. All motions changing or requiring a change in the bylaws must be submitted to the Bylaws Committee in advance of being submitted for inclusion in the agenda.

3. Motions will be presented in full in the written agenda unless they are lengthy or require attachments. In these cases, the agenda will include only an identification of the subject. The full motion and attachments should be sent directly to the board members by the author.

4. Motions for board action should not contain discussion of the question, but only a statement of the question. "Whereases"--which are, properly, discussion--are only appropriate in resolutions that the board is asked to adopt for distribution outside the Society. In most such cases, these resolutions should be sent directly to the board members by the author with the agenda for the meeting only mentioning their prospective presentation.

D. New Business
1. Additional business will be an agenda item. Motions included in Additional business are the ending items of the agenda and should be addressed after the “Committee of the Whole”. Appropriate matters to introduce in additional business are:
a. Motions arising from board discussion of previous motions or discussion.

b. Urgent matters not included in the agenda due to lack of time.
At the insistence of a Board Member, motions not meeting these two criteria shall be included in additional business.

E. The agenda should not be used to communicate with other board members. Matters concerning the existing operation of the Society should be discussed with the executive director, division heads, etc., and communicated to other board members prior to introducing a relevant motion on the agenda, unless circumstances require bypassing normal prior discussion.

III. Reports
Reports form a necessary and important part of every meeting. In general, any report to be presented to the board must have been given a place on the meeting agenda.
A. Structure of a Report
1. No report shall include within the body of its text motions requiring immediate board approval. The body of the report should be limited to informational material not requiring board action or, at most, actions suggested for future consideration.

2. Any motions evolving from a report, to be brought for action at the time the report is presented, shall be listed separately and individually at the end of the report, but not as a part of it. Each such presented motion may be acted upon separately in the normal manner.

B. Motions relating to a report
1. Any motions evolving from a report, to be brought to the board for action at the time the report is presented, shall be presented to the Chair of the Board for incorporation into the printed agenda for that meeting by the deadline announced for the reception of agenda material. If this is not done, these motions shall be placed under new business and acted upon as time permits.

C. Acceptance of a Report
1. Every report presented at a regular, announced meeting of the Board of Governors shall be considered received by the board by virtue of its presentation. No formal vote will be required.

2. The author of a report presented at a regular, announced meeting of the Board of Governors may request a formal vote of acceptance from the board if they desires. In general, this will be for making the report an "official statement of the Society".

3. Reports listed in the agenda will be attached to the minutes for that meeting. Other reports allowed for presentation by the board will only be included in the minutes if a formal motion to that effect is adopted.

D. Reports should be prepared in standard "Attachment" format and lettered as directed in the minutes. The original of each report should be submitted to the Recording Secretary before the meeting.

IV. Robert's Rules of Order as Newly Revised
A. Robert's Rules of Order, as newly revised, prevail at Board of Governors meetings except where superseded by a special board act.

B. The Chair of the Board will normally act as parliamentarian unless he chooses to appoint a parliamentarian to assist him. As Robert's Rules are designed to expedite the business of the meetings, board members should become familiar with them.

V. Minutes
A. Draft minutes will be distributed to Board members by the Recording Secretary as soon as possible after the meeting, preferably within 14 days. Board members will be asked to submit corrections and suggestions to the Recording Secretary within 7 days. After making all necessary corrections the Recording Secretary will submit to the Chair of the Board a copy of the comments and corrections related to the business conducted, as well as the final draft minutes for approval by the Board at the next regular meeting. The final draft will be posted to the NSS Business page of the NSS Web site as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days after the meeting. The draft version will be replaced by the final version approved at the following meeting. Only corrections relating to the content of minutes of the previous meeting will be brought before the Board for approval. The NSS recording secretary is responsible for ensuring the minutes are posted online.

B. Minutes shall include only motions; disposals of motions; other action taken; oral updates to officers' written reports; issues and comments presented during Open Discussion period; reports from the closed sessions; a list of Board members present and proxies; disclosures of conflict of interest and their deposition, and other information pertinent to the meeting and business conducted. Written reports from Division heads and committees shall be included as attachments to the minutes

APPENDIX P
June 19, 1971
Amended March 5, 2005

DEFINITIONS AND POLICIES FOR SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

Certain activities by groups of Society members that promote the purposes of the Society may be designated as official Society functions. The activities described in this policy, while they consist of Society members, are not Internal Organizations of the Society by this designation. They will be known collectively as ``NSS Activities." The names of some of these activities are widely used generic terms. It is to be understood that this policy refers only to such activities specifically recognized by the Society. These activities and the policies relevant to them are as follows:

NSS EXPEDITIONS
A trip to a remote area with the goal of substantial original exploration or discovery may be designated a National Speleological Society Expedition. The trip purposes, plans, and leaders must all be approved by the Board of Governors of the Society in advance.

NSS PROJECTS
A group of members or an existing Internal Organization of the society may be designated a Project of the National Speleological Society if its scientific, technical, research, or project goals would be advanced by such a designation.

CONSERVATION TASK FORCES
A group of Society members, or an existing internal organization of the Society may be designated a Conservation Task Force of the NSS. The basic objectives of a conservation task force are the investigation of one or more cave conservation problems, the reporting and publicizing of their findings and conclusions, the development of recommendations for local or national action, and implementing suitable action to resolve the problem. A conservation task force is organized to address a specific defined problem. The task force is expected to be dissolved when the problem disappears, is resolved, or becomes moot.

CONSERVANCIES
A group of individuals or organizations dedicated to cave conservation and having as one of its goals the acquisition, lease, and management of caves and karst properties may be designated a Conservancy of the National Speleological Society.

POLICIES
The following policies may apply to NSS Activities:
1. Each NSS Activity may identify itself as ``The (chosen name) . . . (Conservation Task Force, etc.) . . . of the National Speleological Society'' or as ``The (chosen name), a (Conservation Task Force, etc.) of the National Speleological Society." It may incorporate at its own discretion.

2. Except for conservancies, all members of the organizing body of such NSS Activities (committee, board, officers, Divisions, etc) must be members of the Society. All officers of a conservancy must be members of the Society.

3. Any group seeking an official designation as a Society Activity should bring its request to the Board through the appropriate Division of the Society. The authority to make certain designations has been delegated by the Board to division discretion as noted below.

Activity	**Arrangements Made By**	**Designation Conferred By**
Expedition (US)	US Exploration Team	Board of Governors
Expedition (Int'l)	International Exploration Team	Board of Governors
Project	Research Advisory Team	Research Advisory Team
Task Force	Conservation Team	Conservation Division
Conservancy	Cave Conservancies Team	Board of Governors

Other teams will be consulted as necessary. The teams having responsibility for each type of NSS Activity will establish suitable procedures and determine the format and content of an application.

4. Any NSS Activity may raise funds in any manner consistent with the purpose and practices of the Society, but normally through voluntary contributions, group membership dues, equitable distribution of expenses associated with the Activity, fees for goods and services, etc. The Society cannot acknowledge or otherwise verify donations made to NSS Activities unless the donations are received by the Society office or treasurer and recorded in the Society books.

5. The Society shall have no legal or financial obligation to such NSS Activities unless established by contract. Likewise, no NSS Activity shall have legal or financial obligation to the Society other than that established by this policy. The Society may, through its regular procedures, be the recipient of contributions designated for use by any of the above Activities and may make awards and grants to these groups.

6. Each NSS Activity will report frequently (at least annually) or at the completion of an expedition, or project, to the Society membership through the sponsoring team. Interim reports to the team or the Board may be requested. Significant accomplishments or results by an Activity should be submitted to the editor for possible publication in the *News* or *Bulletin*.

7. The designation of the above NSS Activities shall terminate upon the submission of a final report, the completion of the group's purposes, dissolution of the group, petition by the group for termination, or determination by the Board of actions contrary to Society policy. The entity, which conferred the designation (Board or Division or Team) may terminate it upon evidence of inactivity.

8. Policies and plans of NSS Activities will be established by cooperation between the group and the Division of the Society. The separate and independent nature of conservancies is recognized, although those groups may bring problems to the Board for arbitration if they wish.

9. The Board of Governors may elect to review the official status of any NSS Activity at any time.

10. The designation of NSS Activity shall not confer upon the Society any right of control over, or responsibility for, the equipment, methods, or techniques employed by the group, or the acts, omissions, or decisions of any of the participants.

APPENDIX Q

RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE CONGRESS OF GROTTOS

I. The name of this organization shall be the Congress of Grottos of the National Speleological Society.

II. The Congress shall meet each year during the annual convention of the NSS.

III. Representation at the Congress of Grottos (hereafter referred to as COG) shall be determined in the following manner:

- A. Each Grotto (Chapter), Section, Regional Association, and Survey shall be entitled to representation according to the following schedule: two votes for 5-15 NSS members, three votes for 16-25 NSS members, four votes for 26-35 NSS members, and so on.
- B. In determining the number of votes to which an Internal Organization (I/O) is entitled, no NSS member may be counted as a member of more than one I/O.
- C. The NSS membership database shall be used to determine representation.
- D. Each I/O is entitled to a minimum of two votes.
- E. Any collection of eight or more NSS members who are not members of a Grotto may receive representation according to the same schedule as for Grottos with the provision that the NSS member has designated no Primary Affiliation in the NSS database.

IV. A. The COG shall be composed of delegates who are members in good standing of the NSS.

B. Each I/O and grouping of NSS members may appoint any number of delegates up to a maximum of the number of votes to which it is entitled.

C. I/O's may, in order to ensure their representation at COG, appoint as delegates proxies who are not members of the I/O, provided written authorization is presented.

D. In the event that delegate and proxy methods are not possible, votes may be submitted in writing to the Chair of the COG. If, during the course of discussion on the floor, a resolution is amended so as to change its original intent, the written vote will not be cast.

E. Delegations need not cast their votes as a unit but may split the vote so as to indicate the desires of the membership. Grottos may instruct their delegates how to vote or may allow them discretionary voting power.

F. Distinctive placards will be provided, bearing the name of the I/O and the number of votes to which it is entitled.

G. Voting shall be done initially by the show of placards. The Chair may, at his or her discretion or upon the request of any delegate, call for a roll call vote.

V. Any NSS member may attend the COG to express their views and shall be entitled to speak if recognized by the Chair.

VI. The Board of Governors of the NSS are requested to attend COG, as observers, to be advised of the views of the membership. Delegates may address questions to the Chair of the Board regarding their Division if it is germane to the discussion.

VII. The COG shall elect a Chair of the COG to preside at meetings of the COG during his or her term of office, and also a Vice-Chair.

A. The Chair and Vice-Chair shall be nominated and elected by the assembled Congress at its meeting during the annual convention.

B. These officers shall serve from the close of one annual convention to the close of the succeeding annual convention.

C. No one may be elected Chair who has not attended at least one COG prior to election.

D. A Chair or Vice-Chair who becomes a Board Member of the Society during their term shall complete the term with the COG but may not be re-elected.

E. If the Chair of the COG vacates the office during the term, the office shall be assumed by the Vice-Chair.

VIII. The agenda of the Congress shall consist of resolutions submitted for its consideration.

A. Resolutions may be submitted by any I/O or grouping of eight or more NSS members. The COG encourages the BOG to refer significant issues to the COG for consideration.

B. An Issues Committee shall be appointed by the Chair of the COG and by the Chair of the I/O Team of the Society to determine the issues confronting the Society and to propose resolutions intended to reveal the views of the membership. The Issues Committee shall provide the I/O's, in good time, with information and discussions concerning these issues.

C. The Issues Committee shall, in correspondence with the proposer of a resolution, establish clarity of the wording of a resolution, consistency of a resolution with the Constitution, Bylaws, and Acts of the BOG of the Society, and shall resolve conflicts or overlaps between resolutions submitted.

D. The agenda shall be submitted to all I/O's in sufficient time to allow the resolutions to be discussed before the annual convention.

E. If time permits, resolutions will be allowed from the floor of the Congress after all other business has been taken care of.

F. The purpose of the COG being advisory and not legislative, resolutions need not be stated in advisory form but may be phrased in a multiple answer format to better express the views of the membership.

IX. No Division Head, Director, or Chair of a permanent committee of the NSS may serve as a delegate unless no other individual is available.

X. These rules may be amended by a majority vote of the Congress provided that such motions to amend appear on the agenda.

XI *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* shall govern all procedures not covered by the above rules.

(Adopted by the Congress of Grottos in 1969 with amendments in 1972, 1973, 1976, 1980, 1993, 2002, 2003, 2017, 2022, and 2024.)

APPENDIX S
November 17, 1979
Amended 7-7-98, 3-15-03

NATIONAL CAVE RESCUE COMMISSION CHARTER

A. The National Cave Rescue Commission (Commission) is located in the Education Division and is charged with the following responsibilities:

1. To act as spokesman for the Society regarding cave rescue. (It shall be understood that it is the policy of the Society to maintain a low-profile during rescue operations to the extent possible and to avoid bringing awareness of ongoing rescue activities to public notice.)

2. To serve as a technical resource for the Society on matters of cave rescue.

3. To develop and maintain a professional level liaison with federal, state, and local authorities whose resources or mission may affect cave rescue. In addition, to develop and maintain an active liaison with organizations interested in cave rescue.

4. To develop a national standard curriculum in cave rescue operations and systems for the Society members.

5. To develop certification standards for NCRC Instructors to provide qualified persons to teach Commission approved training under.

6. To assist Internal Organizations and cave rescue organizations in general with the education and training of their members in cave rescue operations and systems.

7. To coordinate with the Cave Rescue Section to present current cave rescue information to Society members.

8. To establish and maintain a database of individuals with training in cave rescue.

9. To establish and maintain an inventory of specialized rescue equipment, owned by the Society or otherwise available, which may be used by the Commission for training or used for rescue and to report the status of Society owned equipment to the Society upon request of the Education Division Head.

10a. To hold at least one meeting of the Commission each year at the NSS convention. This meeting will be open to the public and provide a forum for the Commission to present recent accomplishments and future plans to the Society membership and solicit membership feedback.

10b. To hold at least one business meeting per year. The agenda of any business meeting shall be distributed to all members of the Board of Regional Coordinators at least 30 days prior to the meeting. A copy of the agenda shall be available to any NSS member upon request and posted on the NCRC web site.
10c. Minutes of all meetings will be taken and these minutes shall be submitted to the Education Division Head, and to all members of the Board of Regional Coordinators within 30 days of the meeting's conclusion. A copy of the minutes shall be available to any NSS member upon request and posted on the NCRC web site.

11. To conduct periodic National Cave Rescue Seminars (Seminars), separate from the Society convention, and to encourage regional and local cave rescue seminars.

12. To perform other duties relating to cave rescue as assigned by the Education Division Head or Executive Director.

B. The Commission shall be governed by a Board of Regional Coordinators which shall consist of a National Coordinator, Training Coordinator, Medical Coordinator, Cave Diving Coordinator, and several Regional Coordinators. Regional Coordinator positions shall be established or modified by the Education Division Head, upon recommendation of the Board of Regional Coordinators, subject to the approval of the Executive Director.

C. The terms of Regional Coordinators shall end on a staggered basis such that approximately the same number of positions become vacant each year at the start of the opening session of the Board of Governors meeting held at the national convention.

D. Members of the Board of Regional Coordinators shall serve for terms of three years. The NCRC Board of Regional Coordinators shall recommend a candidate for each open position to the Education Division Head. The Education Division Head shall appoint or reappoint members of the NCRC Board of Regional Coordinators subject to Board of Governors approval. There is no limit on the number of consecutive terms a member of the Board of Regional Coordinators may serve.

E. The National Coordinator will act as executive officer and director of the Commission and will preside at all meetings of the Commission. He will also be responsible for appointing a Financial Officer, committees, and/or staff to accomplish the various tasks and goals established by the Commission, and shall regularly report the status of Commission activities to the Education Division Head.

F. The Training Coordinator will oversee the Commission's cave rescue training activities and implement training policies and procedures as developed by the Board of Regional Coordinators

G. The Medical Coordinator will advise the Board of Regional Coordinators on matters of patient care and medical protocols, and oversee medical aspects of the Commission's cave rescue training curriculum and activities consistent with the policies of the Commission.

H. The Cave Diving Coordinator will advise the Board of Regional Coordinators on matters of cave rescue/recovery diving and serve as the primary liaison to organizations involved in cave rescue/recovery diving.

I. The National Coordinator, Training Coordinator, Medical Coordinator, Cave Diving Coordinator, and all Regional Coordinators shall be members of the National Speleological Society on the date of their appointment and shall remain Society members for their entire term.

J. The National Coordinator, Training Coordinator, Medical Coordinator, Cave Diving Coordinator, or any of the Regional Coordinators may be removed by the Education Division Head, (subject to approval by the Executive Director) or by a vote of two-thirds of the members of the Board of Regional Coordinators.

K. The financial operations of the Commission shall be governed by a budget developed by the Board of Regional Coordinators, subject to amendment by the Education Division Head and approved by the

Executive Director. The National Coordinator, or the National Coordinator's designee, shall approve all expenses. All financial accounting and disbursements for the Commission shall be handled in accordance with the Acts of the Board of Governors and financial processes and reporting requirements established by the Secretary-Treasurer of the Society.

L. The Commission is authorized to solicit contributions and grants to the Society to support programs and activities of the Commission. Such contributions and grants shall be used in accordance with any stipulations attached to them and shall be managed in such a way as to provide a detailed accounting of their use. All such contributions become the property of and will be under the control of the Society. They will be accounted for in the Society financial statements and can be disbursed only under the rules for financial management established by the Board of Governors for the Society.

M. The Society and the Commission will sponsor the periodic National Cave Rescue Seminar. The Board of regional Coordinators will appoint a chairman of the seminar whose duties will be to coordinate the organization of and to conduct the seminar. The chairman of the seminar will appoint a treasurer of the seminar, subject to the approval of the National Coordinator and the NSS Secretary-Treasurer, whose duties will be to handle all seminar funds, keep adequate records, and provide financial reports to the NCRC Financial Officer and National Coordinator, and to the Executive Director, Education Division Head, and Secretary-Treasurer.

N. The budget of the seminar must be submitted to and approved in advance by the NCRC National Coordinator, NSS Executive Director, Education Division Head, and the NSS Secretary-Treasurer. All funds received or disbursed for the seminar will be accounted for separately from other Society or Commission funds. No funds designated for the seminar shall be used for other Commission activities or functions. Any excess of revenue over expenses generated in the operation of a National Seminar shall accrue to the national NCRC account and shall be subject to the rules governing that account. Any deficit resulting from the operation of the seminar shall be absorbed by the NCRC national account provided the budget was approved in advance as described above. In the event the Society directs the Commission to operate a seminar determined by the Commission to be likely to result in a deficit, any resulting deficit shall be reimbursed to the Commission by the Society.

O. The Commission may receive an advance from the Society to aid in the organization of a seminar. Such advance shall be repaid to the Society following the seminar.

P. Neither the National Cave Rescue Commission nor any of its committees shall be a rescue team. A rescue team trained or supported by the Commission is not an NCRC rescue team and may not use ``NCRC'' in its name. No individual is authorized to represent themselves an NCRC rescuer or as a member of an NCRC rescue team or to otherwise imply that they are performing a rescue under the auspices of the Commission.

APPENDIX X
July 1,1983
Amended 12-08-25:6.1, 10-04-25:8.2, 07-24-21:12, 03-31-12:21, 08-15-08:9, 07-27-07:22, 11-05-05, 08-04-03

NSS NOMINATING COMMITTEE POLICY

I. DIRECTOR ELECTIONS

A. Section V.B(4) of the Bylaws of the National Speleological Society will apply.

B. The Nominating Committee is encouraged to solicit candidates for director from a broad geographic and interest base.

C. The Nominating Committee will verify a person is eligible to be a Director before nominating the person to be a candidate for election or accepting their petition to be a candidate.

D. The ballot will not be marked by the Nominating Committee so as to preclude a secret ballot.
E. NSS elections for Director will be confidential. Members will not be required to include their name or NSS number on ballots.
F. The Nominating Committee will solicit platform statements and personal photographs from each of the candidates. The Nominating Committee may establish rules governing their scope and form. If provided, they will be included with election material mailed with the ballot.
G. Unless authorized to be on a ballot by a board act or bylaw the election material accompanying the ballots will include nothing besides voting instructions, the biographical information and platform statements submitted by the candidates, and a list of the present directors, with their names and states of residence. The list of directors will indicate which incumbents' seats are being filled by the election and which have terms that continue beyond the current year.
H. NSS election ballots will be emailed. A provision for alternative voting methods for members without online access will be made upon request.
I. No candidate for Director may receive marked ballots nor be a teller.
J. Interim results of elections will be secret and known only to the official teller of the election.
K. Final election results will be announced first to the candidates, then to the Board of Governors, and subsequently to the Society membership. The candidates and the Board of Governors will be informed of the election results no less than 30 days preceding the current year NSS National Convention.
L. The chair of the Nominating Committee will make available at the convention, for review by any of that year's candidates, the final tallying sheets for the election and all ballots. Following the convention, the Committee's records and ballots will be sent to the Archivist and should be kept in the archives for not less than two years.
M. When required, the Chair of the Board may put a Bylaw or act referendum, along with a pro and a con position statement, on the ballot to be voted on. The same general procedures for the Director's election will apply to the Bylaw or act referendum, except that the final results will be given first to the Chair of the Board for action, then to all the other members of the Board.
N. Each year, a complete, list of the ballot results will be emailed to the NSS Archivist, in care of the NSS Office, to be placed in the NSS Archives.

II. EXECUTIVE SEARCH

A. The search for an Executive Director, when a vacancy occurs, must be conducted with a 3rd party executive search firm.
B. The cost of using a search firm may be large; however, it is critical that the correct candidate is found. A candidate guarantee of 6 months to 1 year is required.

APPENDIX AU
October 18, 2003
Amended 07-30-18:40

NSS FELLOW AWARD SELECTION PROCESS

The Awards team shall solicit nominations of Society members to be awarded Fellow by notice in the *NSS News* and on the NSS Web Site. The deadline for receiving nominations is November 15 of the year preceding that in which the Fellowships will be awarded.

The nomination list shall be sent to all members of the Awards team and the Board of Governors, who will be given a minimum of two weeks to submit comments on the candidates. During this time frame, the NSS office will verify the membership eligibility of the candidates.

After the close of the comment period, copies of nominating materials and comments on eligible candidates shall be sent to all members of the Awards team. Each candidate will be evaluated using a numerical scale of one to ten.

Completed ballots shall be returned, within the deadline established. The candidates shall be ranked according to the candidate's average score. The team shall recommend the candidates whose score falls above the natural break point in the final candidate ranking. In accordance with Bylaw III.E., the total number of awarded Fellows should not exceed 15% of the membership. Candidates with a high ranking, but not awarded a Fellow, will be considered the following year, and their nominators will be encouraged to submit further supporting information. The complete list of candidates, with the team's recommendations, shall be distributed to the Board at least 30 days prior to the spring Board of Governors meeting.

During the spring meeting, the Board shall select the recipients of the Fellow Award in closed session. Recipients should be members appearing on the team's list of eligible candidates.

APPENDIX AV
March 25, 2006:21
Amended 07-01-24:8.3, 11-09-19:15, 08-09-13:21, 08-15-08:31

FINANCIAL REVIEW COMMITTEE POLICY and REVIEW COMMITTEE CHARTER

Purpose
The primary function of the Review Committee (the "Committee") is to assist the Board of Governors (the "Board") of the National Speleological Society (the "Society") in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities relating to: (i) the integrity of the Society's financial statements, (ii) the Society's systems of internal control, (iii) the independence and performance of the external and internal review functions and (iv) the Society's compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. The Committee shall maintain free and open communication among and between the Committee, independent reviewers, internal reviewers, and the Society's management. The Committee shall take all appropriate actions to set for the Society the overall tone for quality financial reporting, sound business risk practices, and ethical behavior.

Composition & Independence
The Committee will consist of no less than five, but no more than eight persons, a minimum of three must be members of the board. A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of Committee members.

Committee members, to the extent permissible under applicable law, must be: (i) independent of the management of the Society (including its component units and related organizations) and (ii) free of any professional, financial or personal relationship that would impair such independence.

A majority of Committee members shall be financially literate and, if possible, at least one member shall be a financial expert. Financial literacy is defined as being able to read and understand fundamental financial statements. Financial expert means a person who has one or more of the following: (i) an understanding of generally accepted accounting principles related to not-for-profit organizations and the related financial statements and disclosures, (ii) experience applying such principles, (iii) experience preparing or reviewing financial statements, (iv) experience with internal controls or (v) an understanding of review committee functions.

Committee Membership Selection
The Chair of the Board, with the concurrence of the Board, is responsible for the selection of the chair of the Committee. The chair of the Review Committee, with the concurrence of the Chair of the Board is responsible for selecting members of the committee. The Chair of the Committee is responsible for managing the affairs of the committee. No member of the committee is allowed to have signature authority on any society bank account.

Duties and Responsibilities
The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring the preparation, presentation, and integrity of the Society's financial statements and for the appropriateness of the accounting principles and reporting policies used by the Society.

The principal duties and responsibilities of the Committee regarding review matters are:

Internal Financial Review Process
- Appoint and oversee internal financial reviewers for:
  - Operations accounts
  - Convention accounts
  - Salons
  - Junior Speleological Society
  - National Cave Rescue Commission
  - Vertical Training Commission
- Ensure monthly reports from all internal reviewers are completed;
- Communicate any challenges and concerns to the board;
- Work with the Executive Director, Secretary-Treasurer, Bylaws Committee, and Planning Committee to ensure existing Acts related to finances best suit the strategic direction of the organization and propose modifications, removals, and new acts as necessary for board approval.

Annual Budget Process
- Review draft Budget to:
  - Ensure all items are linked to strategic and operational goals.
    - Baseline items that do not directly meet operational plan activities but are foundational to all activities should be identified as separate if necessary. (Insurance, rental expenses, building maintenance , etc.)
  - Provide questions to the executive director and Secretary-Treasurer with ample time to allow for a response.
  - Provide a budget review summary to the Board 30 days before the Spring meeting.
- Review quarterly actuals to ensure that they match the budget:
  - Review and clarify discrepancies.
  - Verify National Speleological Foundation reports are provided promptly and meet requirements.

External Review Process
- Ensure the completion of the annual external Financial Review
- Determine a frequency for external audits
- Appoint, compensate, oversee, and retain the Society's independent external reviewer. The independent external reviewer shall report directly to the Committee.
- If the Committee believes that the independent external reviewer can provide tax services to the Society, such as tax compliance, tax planning and tax advice, without impairing the reviewer's independence they may allow for this.
- Pre-approve all review and non-review services provided by the independent external reviewer.

The independent external reviewer is specifically prohibited from performing the following services:

Bookkeeping
Financial information systems design, implementation, or operation
Appraisal or valuation services
Actuarial services
Internal review outsourcing services
Management functions or human resources services
Investment banking services
Legal services

- Provide sufficient opportunity for the independent external reviewer and the internal reviewer to meet privately with the Committee.
- Confer with the Executive Director, Secretary-Treasurer and the independent external reviewer to determine whether the independent external reviewer is satisfied with the disclosures in and content of the Society's financial statements, including the nature and extent of any significant changes in accounting principles. Make inquiries of the Executive Director, Secretary-Treasurer and the independent external reviewer concerning the effectiveness of the Society's system of internal controls.
- Review with the Executive Director, Secretary-Treasurer and the independent external reviewer, and their judgments about: (i) the quality and acceptability of the Society's accounting principles, (ii) the consistency in the application of accounting policies, (iii) the reasonableness of significant judgments, (iv) the degree of aggressiveness or conservatism in applying accounting principles and (v) the clarity and completeness of the financial statements and related disclosures.
- Review and approve the annual financial statements of the Society and, if applicable, the review report on Federal Awards as required by the Single Audit Act as amended or succeeded.
- Review with the Executive Director, Secretary-Treasurer and the independent external reviewer all matters required to be communicated to the Committee under generally accepted reviewing standards, including communications under Statement of Reviewing Standards No. 61 "Communications with Review Committee," as amended or succeeded.
- Maintain adequate policies and guidelines for receiving complaints regarding accounting controls and reports of financial fraud. Receive briefings on any financial fraud situation or whistleblower complaints from the Society's management.
- Monitor the Society's conflict of interest policies, principles of employee conduct and fraud policy.

APPENDIX BF
November 11, 2018:27
Amended 03-23-19:17, 18, 03-19-22:22b

NSS ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

This Anti-Harassment Policy applies to all events sanctioned by the National Speleological Society. Internal organizations within the Society are independent organizations and may create their own policies. To remain compliant with the NSS Charter, they must also have in place an Anti-Harassment Policy, agree to implement the NSS policy, or be subject to the policy of a parent/host institution, or risk loss of association with the NSS.

The National Speleological Society is dedicated to providing a safe and harassment-free environment for our members and attendees at our events, on social media, and within our organization. We will not tolerate harassment in any form. Any attendee that violates this policy will be told to leave the event and may be subject to further disciplinary action at the discretion of the NSS Board of Governors, pursuant to Bylaw XIII.C-E. Discipline of Members.

Harassment includes but is not limited to inappropriate comments, inappropriate sexual behavior that warrants intervention, unwanted advances and touching, invasion of personal space in a sexual manner, deliberate intimidation, and unwelcomed sexual advances. In addition, harassment includes unwanted verbal, physical, cyber, or aggressive behavior. If an incident of harassment is reported, the event staff, volunteers, or NSS representatives will take corrective action against any offenders at the time of the incident, ranging from verbal warnings to expulsion from the area and/or event and a referral of the offender to the NSS Board of Governors for consideration of discipline from the Society.

We value all of our members and attendees that come to caving events and want to ensure that safety and well-being of all participants is a top priority. Any person being harassed or witnessing another person being harassed should contact a staff member immediately. We will make every effort to assist and provide protection for our members and attendees.

Complaints about harassment may also be directed, in confidence, to the Executive Director and/or Chair of the Board.
The NSS Board of Governors will only act on official, written reports of direct and personal attacks in regards to the Anti-Harassment policy. All complaints will be fully investigated and follow the policies and procedures outlined in this policy.

Cross Reference: Appendix BJ, NSS Code of Conduct

APPENDIX BJ
July 25, 2020:10
Amended 03-25-23:10, 11, 03-19-22:21a

NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
CODE OF CONDUCT

Why Have a Code of Conduct?

The National Speleological Society (NSS) is dedicated to the exploration, study, and protection of caves and their environments. Just as importantly, it is also predominantly a community of friends. To create the best community in the world for caving and to foster an inclusive environment where everyone feels capable of pursuing our goals, it is critical to have a shared understanding of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behavior. It is impossible to further the goals of our society if harassing behaviors are allowed to persist within the confines of our activities. The NSS works as a self-directed, community-driven organization because of the trust shared among NSS cavers. Reporting Code of Conduct violations helps identify when this trust is broken and prevents incidents from happening in the future.

Accordingly, all NSS members, as well as guests and visitors, are expected to show respect, kindness, and courtesy to each other in all interactions, whether at official NSS events, in our online community, or in

other contexts.

The NSS Board of Governors created this Code of Conduct from the feedback and suggestions of NSS members, evaluation of similar policies from other organizations, and a review of how the NSS currently handles violations of our policies. The intent is to lay out what is considered unacceptable actions that require reporting, inquiry, and potential disciplinary action resulting from violations of Board Act 28-558 (Non-Discrimination in Membership). More generally, this document exists to ensure that everyone has a common understanding of behaviors that do not "show respect, kindness, and courtesy to each other" at NSS-sponsored events. Inquiries and disciplinary actions associated with the Code of Conduct are administered by the Executive Director and the General Counsel of the NSS and can be escalated to the Board of Governors for additional action.

Scope
Unacceptable behaviors, as defined below, by NSS members, guests, and visitors are not tolerated when representing the NSS in any capacity, including, but not limited to, participation in official NSS events and online on NSS internal communities (for example, Cavechat.org, NSS Facebook Group, NSS Slack, or other online groups officially associated with the NSS). While not required, we encourage NSS Internal Organizations (I/O) to adopt and enforce this Code at the I/O level.

The NSS community and experience often extends outside official NSS events. NSS members go on caving trips together, attend meetups or conferences as a group, and communicate on other social media forums. Abusive or unwelcoming behavior among NSS members still has a profound effect on individuals and on the community when it happens outside of official NSS events. When reported, the NSS General Counsel, in consultation with the Executive Director, will investigate reports and recommend outcomes of the investigations to the Chair of the Board if necessary and the Board of Governors.

This Code of Conduct is not intended to be a formal legal process; instead, this is a compilation of behaviors that violate our existing policies, a description of how and when to report violations, and a description of how the General Counsel and Executive Director of the NSS will respond to reported violations. The Board of Governors will review this Code of Conduct and update it as necessary based on past cases and member feedback.

The following definitions apply to the individuals referenced in this Code of Conduct:

- **Complainant**: An individual, group, or I/O that initiates a report
- **Respondent**: A member or group that is the subject of the report or investigation
- **Witness**: An individual who can provide written or oral testimony in connection with a report

Definitions of Unacceptable Behaviors
The following types of behavior are considered unacceptable at official NSS events, both online and in-person. Engaging in any of the conduct below repeatedly, or in a way that creates discomfiture, constitutes a potential violation of the NSS Code of Conduct. Understanding the unique nature of caving, politely explaining physical/technical limitations of an activity (for example, a caving trip), without offensive or unnecessary commentary, does not constitute harassing behavior under this Code of Conduct.

Harassment—Including, but not limited to, offensive verbal comments or physical actions related to age, physique, disability, ethnicity, sex characteristics, gender identity and expression, education, socio-economic status, nationality, personal appearance, race, religion, or sexual identity and orientation.

Sexual Harassment—A subset of harassment that specifically includes unwanted behavior or words that

are sexual in nature, including but not limited to, displaying sexual images in public spaces, stalking, inappropriate physical contact, and unwelcome sexual or persistent romantic attention.

Threats—Statements or actions that imply, explicitly or implicitly, intent to harm.

Blatant "-isms"—Statements that are explicitly antagonistic to a person's identity. This includes, but is not limited to, statements about age, physique, disability, ethnicity, sex characteristics, gender identity and expression, education, socio-economic status, nationality, personal appearance, race, religion, or sexual identity and orientation (for example, racist, sexist, or homophobic statements).

Reporting
If you or someone else is in immediate danger from criminal activity (for example, physical assault, sexual assault, theft), a dangerous physical situation (for example, fire, serious injury, fear that someone will hurt themselves or someone else), or have witnessed a crime, please contact law enforcement immediately—call 911. For other immediate needs at an official NSS event that are not of criminal or harassing concerns, follow the contact procedures provided by the event organizers or the NSS Membership Division Head by phone (available from caves.org).

If you experience or witness any behavior that appears to be a violation of this Code of Conduct, please report it using our form.

Where and How to Report

Please report all Code of Conduct violations using our form. The information that the form requests includes:

- **Your name—**This is incredibly helpful for us to be able to follow up with you and ask questions to better understand the situation. All reports are confidential; however, the form allows you to report anonymously. We take every report seriously—please report anonymously only if absolutely necessary. Anonymous reports often limit the ability of the General Counsel to investigate the report to the extent necessary. If you can, please consider providing an email address so that we can follow up with you about the report via our third-party reporting tool, which anonymizes your contact information, meaning that we will never see your email address.

- **A detailed description of what happened—**Whenever possible, please include the names of all individuals present at the time of the violation. If the violation happened online, please take a screenshot and include this evidence in your report.

- **Where and when the incident happened—**Any information that will provide detailed context for the incident.

- **Current status—**This lets us know the current state of the situation. Please let us know if there have been subsequent conversations or actions with parties involved in the complaint since the reported actions occurred.

- **Any other relevant context—**Do you have examples of a pattern of similar behavior from this person before? Do you have a relationship with this person outside of the NSS?

Confidentiality
All reports will be kept confidential, to the extent possible, and on a need-to-know basis among those

involved in the investigation and disciplinary process, except as agreed on with the complainant and others named specifically in the report. When incidents are discussed outside this group, including with the respondent and witnesses, the details will be anonymized as much as possible to protect the complainant's privacy.

However, we recognize that many incidents occur in interactions where anonymization is not possible. If you have concerns about retaliation or the personal safety of the complainant or witnesses and do not want us to share the details of your report with anyone (including the respondent), please let us know explicitly in your report. Although we will not be able to take direct action in this case, with your permission we will collect statistics on the prevalence of such incidents within the society.

In some rare cases, we may decide to share an update about a major incident with the entire NSS community. If that is the case, the identities of all parties involved will remain confidential unless those individuals instruct us otherwise.

Enforcement
This policy is intended to protect members through the use of reasonable due process procedures. Recognizing that each case is different, the NSS is dedicated to applying discipline in a fair and consistent manner.

The NSS Board of Directors will only act on official, written reports of direct and personal attacks in regards to the Code of Conduct. All complaints will be fully investigated and follow the policies and procedures outlined in this policy.

After filing a report, a representative of the Code of Conduct team will contact you personally, review the incident, and follow up with any additional questions. The Code of Conduct team must either: 1) refer the parties to the Internal Organizations team if the complaint does not meet the level of NSS involvement, 2) refer the parties to the Internal Organizations team for mediation, 3) notifies parties if a complaint does not warrant further investigation, or 4) refer to the General Counsel's legal team for investigation and oversee the investigation maintaining communication with the parties. The investigation may involve actions including, but not limited to, interviewing all involved in the situation, including witnesses identified by the reporting party and the accused, reviewing material evidence, and other modes of investigation as needed. During this process, if the complainant, respondent, or witnesses have inquiries into the status of the investigation, they should reach out to their Code of Conduct team representative. Mediation is not considered to be discipline, and if appropriate, mediation will be attempted before disciplinary action.

If the complainant, respondent, or witnesses are part of the legal team or Board of Governors, they must recuse themselves from handling the incident.

Likewise, if anyone in the aforementioned groups has a conflict of interest, they must recuse themselves from investigation and adjudication.

If the respondent is found to be in violation of the Code of Conduct, they will be sanctioned, with disciplinary actions ranging from a verbal warning up to, and including, removal from the society. The Code of Conduct team will conduct a hearing before the Board of Governors and will seek 2/3 approval before administering the sanction. Parties are entitled to view the investigation report and submit written statements to the board prior to the hearing.

Cross Reference: Appendix BF, NSS Anti-Harassment Policy

APPENDIX BP
December 4, 2021:24

CHARTER OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
VERTICAL TRAINING COMMISSION

Adopted by the Board of Governors on December 4, 2021
Amended 06/13/25:6.2

Our trainers recognize that the best teachers are always learning from their students and will use the best practices in education for effective training. Our goal is to improve vertical safety for cavers, while resisting efforts to develop vertical training certifications as a mechanism to limit or restrict cave access.

I) ESTABLISHMENT: The National Speleological Society (NSS) hereby establishes the Vertical Training Commission (VTC or Commission). VTC is located within the NSS Education and Training Division.

II) CHARGE: VTC's charge is to:

A) Create a training curriculum to help interested individuals obtain the appropriate and sufficient competencies, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills needed to be safe while using vertical caving techniques.

B) Develop and maintain a vertical training program that provides hands-on experience and training through vertical training courses ("Courses") that are accessible, attainable, and understandable to people of diverse knowledge sets and backgrounds, while maintaining minimal costs and bureaucratic processes.

C) Train competent, safe, and active vertical trainers to be proficient in teaching VTC educational materials.

III) STRUCTURE: VTC will be composed of a National Coordinator, a Secretary Treasurer, Education Coordinator, Regional Coordinators (RCs), Master-Trainers and Trainers. A Governing Board ("VTC Board") will be responsible for managing the overall affairs of the organization, and will coordinate and oversee training operations, including qualification of Master-Trainers and Trainers. The Commission will initially have one standing committee, the Curriculum Committee (CC), which will be responsible for developing and maintaining educational materials for use in VTC vertical training courses.

IV) GOVERNING BOARD:

A) Membership: VTC will be managed by a Board. The VTC Board will be composed of Regional Coordinators and the following officers:

National Coordinator
Secretary -Treasurer Education Coordinator

Each RC and Officer will have an equal vote on the VTC Board.
No individual will serve in more than one officer position simultaneously.

B) Annual Meeting: The VTC Board must hold at least one meeting annually during the NSS Convention.

C) Responsibilities

1) Duties. The responsibilities of the VTC Board are to:

a) Identify the approaches necessary to maximize opportunities for the training of interested cavers.
b) Review and approve materials and curricula developed by the Curriculum Committee.
c) Determine the criteria for the qualification of Master-Trainers; conduct Courses to train Master-Trainers using materials and curricula developed by the Curriculum Committee; maintain a record of current Master-Trainers.
d) Determine the criteria for the qualification of Trainers and ensure material and curricula developed by the Curriculum Committee is available for this qualification; maintain a list of current Trainers.
e) Conduct regional and/or national vertical training Courses as needed for Trainees using curricula developed by the Curriculum Committee.
f) Advise the Curriculum Committee regarding the development of materials and curricula.
g) Nominate individuals to serve as the National Coordinator, Secretary-Treasurer, Webmaster, and members of the Curriculum Committee.

D) Regional Coordinators

1) Each geographical area must be represented by one Regional Coordinator. These regions are enumerated in the VTC bylaws.
2) Nominations: Regional Coordinators are NSS members selected from among the VTC Trainers/Master-Trainers within their region by a majority of votes from this same group. Selections must be sent to the Education and Training Division Head for acceptance and appointment.
3) Terms. Each Regional Coordinator term will be three years.

E) National Coordinator

1) Duties. The responsibilities of the National Coordinator are to:
    a) Oversee the activities of the VTC and coordinate with the Regional Coordinators and Curriculum Committee.
    b) Serve as a NSS liaison, reporting directly to the NSS Education and Training Division Head.
    c) Ensure that at least one meeting of the VTC will be organized annually.
2) Nomination. The Education and Training Division Head must appoint the National Coordinator with input from the VTC Board. The National Coordinator will be an NSS member and will take office once written notice has been given to the NSS Board of Governors and the Secretary of the Board.
3) Terms. Each National Coordinator term will be three years.

F) Secretary-Treasurer

1) Duties. The responsibilities of the Secretary-Treasurer are to:
    a) Coordinate with the NSS Secretary-Treasurer to organize the VTC finances in accordance with NSS policy and practice.
    b) Meet annually with the NSS Education and Training Division Head and VTC NC to build the VTC operating budget into the annual NSS Budget.
    c) Approve all expenses of VTC and ensure that the activities of VTC are financially self-sustaining.
2) Nomination: The National Coordinator must nominate the Secretary-Treasurer who must be confirmed by a majority vote of the VTCBoard. The S-T must be an

NSS member.

3) Term. The Secretary-Treasurer term will be three years.

G) Education Coordinator

1) Duties. The responsibilities of the Education Coordinator are to:
   a) Oversee the activities of the Curriculum Committee and coordinate with the VTC Board.
   b) Organize the necessary meetings of the Curriculum Committee to create and maintain VTC education materials.

2) Nomination. The EC is selected from among current members of the Curriculum Committee and nominated by a majority vote of the CC. The EC is appointed by the NSS Education and Training Division Head.

3) Term.The EC term will be four years.

H) Webmaster.

1) The responsibilities of the Webmaster are to:
   a) Manage a website that provides a means of access to all training materials, including established competencies and training standards to NSS members.
   b) The Webmaster need not be a Master-Trainer/Trainer but will have the same voting privileges for selecting the Regional Coordinator in their geographic region.

2) Nomination. The National Coordinator must nominate the Webmaster who must be confirmed by a majority vote of the Board.

3) The Webmaster term will be three years.

V) CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

A) Membership. The Curriculum Committee must be composed of a minimum of five and up to seven members, including the Education Coordinator. Each member will have a vote on the Curriculum Committee.

B) Qualifications and Experiences,Members of the Curriculum Committee must have the following qualifications and experience:

1) At least two members of the Curriculum Committee must be Master-Trainers.

2) At least one member of the Curriculum Committee must have professional experience in pedagogy.

3) At least one member of the Curriculum Committee must be experienced in advanced vertical caving techniques or have technical expertise with vertical equipment.

4) At least one member of the Curriculum Committee must have international caving experience.

C) Duties: The responsibilities of the Curriculum Committee are:

1) Develop educational materials for three tracks of training:

Master-Trainers: Those individuals who wish to train trainers;

Trainer: Any individual who wishes to train others in vertical techniques through grottos and other NSS organizations;

Trainee: Those who wish to receive training at any level.

2) Evaluate the effectiveness of the education materials and revise them as necessary.

3) Solicit input and recommendations on VTC education materials and effectiveness from all interested parties.

4) Select the individual, confirmed by a majority vote, to serve as the Education Coordinator.

D) Nominations: Members of the Curriculum Committee are nominated from individuals who demonstrate the necessary skills and an interest in serving on the Curriculum Committee. Nominations are approved by a majority of votes of the VTC Board and must be sent to the Education and Training Division Head for acceptance and appointment.

E)Terms. Each Curriculum Committee member term will be four years.

VI) TERM LIMITS, VACANCIES, AND REMOVAL

A) Regional Coordinators:

1) Term Limits. No person may be appointed to a Regional Coordinator position more than three times in any 12 consecutive calendar years.

2) Vacancies. A vacancy for a Regional Coordinator occurs from any of these events: (a) death; (b) they resign; (c) they are removed; (d) conclusion of a one-month grace period after expiration of their NSS membership; (e) they move out of the region they represent; or (f) their term expires.

3) Removal. Regional Coordinators may be removed by a two-thirds vote of the full current membership of the VTC Board. Regional Coordinators serve at the pleasure of the NSS Education and Training Division Head and may be removed by the Education and Training Division Head with or without cause.

B) Officers.

1) Term Limits. No person may be appointed as the National Coordinator for more than two consecutive terms in any 9 consecutive calendar years. The Secretary-Treasurer and Webmaster may be re-appointed for additional terms at the discretion of the NSS Education and Training Division Head with input from the VTC Board.

2) Vacancies. A vacancy for an officer occurs from any of these events: (a) death; (b) they resign; (c) they are removed; (d) conclusion of a one-month grace period after expiration of their NSS membership; or (e) their term expires.

3) Removal. The officers of VTC may be removed by the Education and Training Division Head at any time with or without cause. Any officer may also be removed by a two-thirds vote of the full current membership of the VTC Board. Removal of the Regional Coordinator does not automatically remove that person from serving on the Curriculum Committee.

C) Curriculum Committee

1) Term Limits. No person may be appointed to the Curriculum Committee or as Education Coordinator more than twice in any twelve consecutive calendar years.

2) Vacancies. A vacancy on the Curriculum Committee occurs from any of these events: (a) they die; (b) they resign; (c) they are removed; (d) their term expires.

3) Members of the Curriculum Committee may be removed by two-thirds vote of the full current membership of the VTC Board. Members of the Curriculum Committee may also be removed by the Education Division Head at any time, with or without cause.

VII) TRAINERS

A) Master-Trainers

1) Qualifications. Any NSS member may be qualified as a Master-Trainer upon demonstrating sufficient knowledge, skills, experience, and proficiency in training Trainers in accordance with procedures established by the VTC Board.

2) Requalification. The VTC Board may impose additional criteria for requalification after a fixed period or any other criteria, as determined by procedures established by the VTC Board.

3) Removal. Master-Trainers serve at the pleasure of the Education and Training Division Head and at the pleasure of the VTC Board. Master-Trainers may be removed either by the Education and Training Division Head or by a two-thirds vote of the full current membership of the VTC Board, with or without cause.

4) Privileges. Master-Trainers may conduct Courses to train cavers in the safe use of vertical techniques, to train cavers to become Trainers, and to train Trainers to become Master-Trainers. All such Courses must be conducted with the prior knowledge and approval of the National Coordinator and must use materials and curricula developed by the Curriculum Committee and approved by theVTC Board.

B) Trainers

1) Qualifications. Any NSS member may be qualified as a Trainer upon demonstrating sufficient knowledge and skills to teach a specific vertical training course level in accordance with procedures established by the Board.

2) Requalification. The VTC Board may impose additional criteria for requalification after a fixed period or any other criteria, as determined by procedures established by the VTC Board.

3) Removal. Trainers serve at the pleasure of the Education and Training Division Head and at the pleasure of the VTC Board. Trainers may be removed either by the Education and Training Division Head or by a two-thirds vote of the full current membership of the Board, with or without cause.

4) Privileges. Trainers may conduct Courses to train cavers in the safe use of vertical techniques and equipment. All such Courses must use materials and curricula developed by the Curriculum Committee and approved by the VTC Board.

VIII) VTC OPERATION

A) The NSS Board of Governors may, by majority vote, remove any authority of VTC, veto any action by VTC, or exercise any authority otherwise given to the VTC.

B) All financial accounting and disbursements for VTC must be handled in accordance with the Acts of the NSS Board of Governors and financial and reporting requirements established by the NSS Secretary-Treasurer.The VTC secretary-treasurer must likewise manage VTC finances in accordance with the current practices as specified by the NSS secretary treasurer.

C) VTC may not construct a website outside of the accepted NSS IT structure, and VTC online presence must be in alignment with current NSS website strategies.

D) The VTC Board and Curriculum Committee may appoint additional committees to accomplish the work of the VTC. The VTC Board may establish additional Offices in its Bylaws to address the needs of the VTC, but no other office will have a vote on the VTC Board.

E) The bylaws will govern the operation of VTC and be ratified by the first appointed VTC Board. Thereafter, VTC may amend its bylaws only by a two-thirds vote of the full current membership of the Board, followed by approval of the Education and Training Division Head.

APPENDIX BR
March 19, 2022:15

NSS CODE OF ETHICS

The National Speleological Society (NSS) relies upon employees, elected officials, and appointed volunteers to work to achieve the goals of the Society. These individuals are expected to act in the best interest of furthering these goals when discharging the responsibilities of their position. These individuals may not use their position for their own gain, be it financial or using items developed for the NSS at their place of employment.

Ethical behavior is expected where someone might benefit financially or socially through action or inaction related to their NSS position, beyond any benefit that is associated with that position. It is acceptable that an NSS volunteer may benefit socially or professionally because of respect for their service to the NSS or NSS' goals.

Individuals are also expected to avoid situations where the perception of an ethical lapse is created. Individuals in office who face a potentially ethically challenging situation must recuse themselves from the decision. If that is not possible, the individual must notify the NSS Executive Director or the Chair of the Board whichever is appropriate, in writing in a timely manner. Individuals who run for an elected office or who apply for an appointed office must disclose any relationships that might cause others to have a concern about ethical behavior. Note that having that relationship does not disqualify anyone.

Individuals must:

Avoid accepting any gifts above nominal value that make it appear they influenced an NSS matter.
For example: If a landowner adjacent to an NSS property wishes the NSS to grant an easement and sends the NSS property manager a bottle of whiskey as a gift, the whiskey should not be accepted.

Recuse themselves from any decision that might provide personal financial benefit.
For example: If an NSS-owned building needed to be re-roofed and a member of that property's management committee owned a roofing company, that person must either announce the he or she will not participate in or influence the decision-making process of selecting a contractor, or announce that his or her company will not submit a proposal for the work.

Make clear any relationships with others who hold or are applying or standing for NSS offices. For example: An individual who plans to run for an elected NSS office and has a partner or family member in an NSS office should publicly share the fact of the relationship.

Avoid situations where a single person controls expenditures without oversight.
For example: When a person orders supplies for a NSS activity, another independent person must verify receipt of the supplies so that good stewardship of the funds is not questioned. Receipts for all purchases are required for reimbursement.

Be as transparent as possible about decisions that are questioned.

Violations of this code by employees are governed by the appropriate employment law. Violations of this code by NSS members, except for employee members where the violation occurred within the scope of employment, may be disciplined as per the NSS Bylaws.

APPENDIX BT
January 22, 2023:5

SAMPLE TEMPLATE

DIRECTOR ANNUAL REPORT

The template below is an example of the format that will be used in preparing the Director Annual Report. Go to Director Annual Report Template to download the latest version of the Template.

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ralGm5SdG6dLe2oRQ0mHI4sM_0-34KrD/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=107154391443095821826&rtpof=true&sd=true

Contact the Chair of the Board with questions, comments, concerns, or suggestions for the latest version of the Director Annual Report Template. chairofdirectorate@caves.org

SAMPLE TEMPLATE
starts on following page

	Participation on Board Level Committees				**Board Level Projects**	**Meeting Attendance**			**Volunteer Hours**
	Strategic Planning	Financial Review	Bylaws	Exec Search	Board Acts Review	Summer	Fall	Spring	
INSTRUCTIONS: This report covers the fiscal year (Apr-Mar).	Highlight in green if you serve on one of these committees.				Highlight in green if you participated	Highlight in green if you attended, red if not; notate 'Proxy' if you sent a proxy			Number of hours you have volunteered
EXAMPLE: Phil Smith (2022-2025							Proxy		
(Director) (Term)									

Continue list of Directors and terms ↓									

	Accomplishments
INSTRUCTIONS: This report covers the fiscal year (Apr-Mar).	List 3 bullet points of accomplishments. Include board level motion authored, actions taken on motions, committee activities, and fundraising initiatives. There is a **280-character maximum limit** that will be strictly enforced.
EXAMPLE: Phil Smith (2022-2025)	Phil promoted responsible access to the database for exploration, science, and conservation, while at the same time maintaining the security of the database. He also developed an agreement with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), Division of Natural Heritage (DNH), so they could use cave location info.
Continue list of Directors and terms ↓	

APPENDIX BU
January 22, 2023:8

NSS PERSONNEL JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Job descriptions for NSS Chairs and staff are listed in alphabetical order by Division followed by the date the description was approved by the Board of Governors.

Secretary-Treasurer

Staff

Organizational Chart – Draft

6/1/24 Version

NSS Proposed Org

