National Speleological Society

Administrative Vice President's Report

Board of Governors Meeting Cincinnati, Ohio, April 17, 2010

Ray Keeler, AVP@caves.org

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INTRODUCTION / SUMMARY

The Department of the AVP consists of 4 Divisions (Cave Management, Conservation, Conventions and Education) and two Commissions (National Cave Rescue and Vandalism Deterrence). Contained within are 19 committees and various subcommittees.

The complete Division reports are presented. Many members on the committees are working very hard to complete their tasks and reports. These reports will be included in the permanent AVP report to act as long term references.

Progress:

Here are some of the Administrative VP highlights:

- The USF&WS did not accept the $18,000+ grant proposal to monitor up to 75 caves in 11 states.

Issues:

- NSS Preserves in the northeast and Virginia, with the exception of the Tytoona Preserve in Pennsylvania, are closed for the winter due to WNS.

Cave Management Division

John M. Wilson – Division Chief, jmwgeo@gmail.com
(this is a new email address)
9504 Lakewater Ct., Henrico, VA 23229
phone) 804-741-4274

Cave and Karst Acquisition Committee - Kim Metzgar - kimmakc@aol.com
I had no requests and nothing to update unless there was additional information on the Crystal Cave acquisition.
Kim

Cave Conservancies Committee - John M. Wilson - jmwgeo@gmail.com
No report received.

Contemporary Cave Use Study – Lisa Hall - caverlisa@hotmail.com
The CCUS is not expanding into any new areas at this time because of lack of funding.
I am having a difficult time retrieving the records from past years, but when I do receive them I will be looking for help with the effort to enter data so we can make the most of what we have.
Nothing else to report at this time.

Lisa Hall.

(Keeler note: The USF&WS did not accept the $18,000+ grant proposal to monitor up to 75 caves in 11 states. It is expected that $200 will be made available from the AVP discressionary funds to help this committee. I will work to get the register transfer completed).

REPORT OF THE NSS NATURE PRESERVES COMMITTEE CHAIR

March 15, 2010

Spring 2010 NSS Nature Preserves Report
Gary Moss, Chairman - kd4itj@amsat.org

The following is the NSS Nature Preserve report for the April 2010 NSS Board meeting. We have ten of the thirteen preserves reporting only missing reports from Great Expectations Cave Nature Preserve in WY, Mill Creek Sink Nature Preserve in FL and Warren Cave Nature Preserve in FL. In general the Preserves seem to be functioning well. Below are the detailed reports from the ten reporting Preserve Committees.

Barton Hill: Thom Engel necaver@earthlink.net

Bat Count: I don't think the count will occur soon. We have a lot of snow and warm temps with rain. It'll probably be a week or two before the count. The cave has been closed for the season.

Progress -- We have had long standing issues with ATVs and snowmobiles. Last year we caught some kids on ATVs and kicked them off the property. (They were unlicensed, which is required in New York to leave one's own property and their ATVs were unregistered. It was the speed that was the major issue.) Their mother complained, saying we had no right to kick ATVs off an "official" snowmobile trail. Meeting was held with local snowmobile club president and the woman. He explained that ATVs were NOT entitled to use snowmobile trails. We explained, that they had no permission to cross the property. This is an issue because you will recall that our neighbor (who moved to Montana last year), Neil Bauman, sued the NSS over cavers moving from our property to his. Bottom line: Neil is gone. The snowmobilers have honored their agreement to not use the property and ATV traffic is down. We may revisit the snowmobile issue in a year or two. I see nothing wrong with allowing access as long as they stay on the road, move at appropriate speeds, and have permissions to access neighboring properties.

Plans -- The ladder at Gage will be fixed this year. We are still discussing what needs to be done with the cabin. I have conflicting proposals and plans and need to sort these out.

Problems -- None to report.

Donald K. Russell Nature Preserve – Clayton Russel

Jan. 10,2010
Donald R. Russell Nature Preserve Report

The status of the preserve is normal in that the bat population is holding steady if not increasing. The Longeared bat census was estimated at around 400 by the Fish and Wildlife service. This census was done in December 2009. The Gray bat population seems normal by observation of guano piles. The area was devastated by an ice storm last year and is recovering. There is nothing else new to report that I can think of.

Clayton Russell
NSS 9487



Great Expectations- Bob Montgomery WYOCAVER@aol.com

GREAT EXPECTATIONS CAVE NATURE PRESERVE
SPRING 2010 REPORT

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: GREAT EXPECTATIONS CAVE NATURE PRESERVE
2. PURCHASE DATE: JANUARY 30, 2003
3. DEED LOCATION: NSS OFFICE
4. DONATED FUNDS: YES
5. ACREAGE: 40 ACRES
6. PURCHASE PRICE: $200,000.00
7. LIABILITY RELEASE: YES
8. AREAS OF IMPORTANCE: RECREATION, HYDROLOGY, MINERALOGY

PRESERVE REPORT:

PROJECTS:

This year's proposed projects, for the preserve will include a surface archeology survey, a surface plant survey (including noxious weed and proposed treatments), fence repair and construction, and repair and maintenance of the Great X Cave gate.

These and other projects on the Great X Cave Preserve will be scheduled for this year's field season, which starts in July.

PROBLEMS:

The fall before last, while entering Great X Cave on a trip which I was leading, there was a rock that shifted immediately above the gate so that it could not be closed. The rock was stabilized and everyone exited the cave. We then pried the rock loose and it fell into the entrance crack. It was moved further into the cave and stabilized. The area above the gate was examined and no further loose rock was observed. When the gate was closed it was noticed that a large gap existed above the gate, which a small individual could possibly fit through. We determined that the gate can be swung about 15 degrees and a new hole for the locking bar be installed to solve the problem.

During this trip, it was noted that the gates in the fences on the preserve had been left open at some time shortly before our trip and a cow had entered and died on the property. I suspect that lazy individuals on 4 wheel ATV's are the culprits here. The gates were closed and we again wired them shut. I guess that the "No Trespassing" signs posted at the gates don't mean much to these people. We intend to repair the fences and lock the gates.

In addition, it was noted that there are several areas infested with Canadian Thistle on the property. Since these are a noxious weed we will attempt to eradicate them over the next several years.
PLANS:

In addition to the above mentioned plans, which were not completed last year due to early snowfall, this year we intend to cut some dead timber on the property above the cave entrance. A conservation trip is being discussed to do a clean up in the Milky Way area of the cave. The management plan is currently being reviewed and revised to more accurately reflect the level and type of usage of the property and caves. A rescue plan is being developed and there are plans to place a rescue cash in the cave. There is also a proposal to more accurately map and sketch the section of the cave from the entrance to the end of the Great Hall and to the Cephalopod Malt Shop.

SUMMARY:

Overall this last year was mostly uneventful. Usage of the cave was been about the same as previous years with only one through trip. This through trip was a small group of experienced cavers with a leader who has done several previous through trips. Even with an experienced leader there were several problems with route finding, and a potential problem with the Great Exit being plugged. This trip reaffirmed the policy, that through trips have an experienced leader, and they follow all the policies regarding through trips. I have not had any contacts from individuals interested in through trips to the cave this year.

John Guilday Caves Nature Preserve Report - Dave West d270@bellatlantic.net

6 March 2010

The preserve remains closed to the public because of White Nose Syndrome (WNS). The annual bat count was conducted on Friday February 26 for Hamilton and New Trout Caves. The planned count in Trout Cave was delayed due to weather preventing the participation of West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USF&W) personnel, and was conducted later in the following week. In Hamilton Cave, only 30 bats were observed in an area where a count in excess of 400 had become the norm. Numbers were also down in Trout, where the number of Indiana bats was cut almost in half. New Trout Cave seemingly continues to be unaffected by WNS for reasons

we cannot explain, and actually set a record high count, albeit not by a great number. Both Hamilton and Trout continue to show evidence of WNS. No significant mortality was observed in any of the caves, and it is not certain whether the bats have moved on to healthier sites or passed on after departing the Preserve. The Preserve will remain closed until we have other guidance from WVDNR or USF&W.

Respectfully submitted,
Dave West
Preserve Manager

Kingston Saltpeter Nature Preserve – Larry O. Blair
caveob@yahoo.com

NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.
DEDICATED TO THE EXPLORATION, STUDY AND CONSERVATION OF CAVES

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Kingston Saltpeter Cave Nature Preserve

COMMITTEE REPORT
March 9, 2010

This report will serve as the official record of the Kingston Saltpeter Cave Nature Preserve, a.k.a. the Kingston Saltpeter Cave Preserve of the National Speleological Society for the time period since my last report dated September 26, 2009.

Many "old timmers" in this area and also as reported in the local newspaper, state this has been one of the worst winters in memory in Georgia as to rain and snow. This occurring after years of record droughts! Due to such this report will reflect that it has affected our activities at the Preserve this winter.

On October 3, 2009 Committee members Kevin and Shannon Glenn visited the property. They strengthened an area of the fence wire around the Big Entrance to the cave proper. They reported that a recorded seven inch rain in the area in just one day had produced ruts and erosion on the Big Entrance slope! No new trash or litter was located.

The new year found the Glenns on the Preserve. They found no evidence of any trespassers, all gates were O.K. A good number of bats were seen in hibernation.

The property was again checked by the Glenns. Everything was in good order. Again there was no outward indications of any trespassers. Also Cedar Hole, a shallow pit in the forming process was checked. This karst feature located in the Preserve has at times exhibited spurts of rapid growth. However, on this visit everything seemed to be as found on the last visit to this remote section of the property. Water rips that I had installed previously are holding, see KSC Report for October 13, 2008 for example. This trip took place February 27, 2010.

On all of these trips, the Glenns have found no indication of WNS, White Nose Syndrome in the bats in Kingston Saltpeter Cave! On April 8th. of 2009...almost a year ago...myself and other members of the KSC Committee closed the cave after much deliberation concerning WNS. I will most likely "open" the cave back up when our one year moratorium expires unless guidelines to the contrary are received by our committee. Of course we will still be aware of the potential of WNS.

I have been in contact with two individuals lately who have past ties to the cave. One made several trips into the cave back in the early 1980's and another person whoes family owned the property at one time. These conversations have been of interest.

In closing I will say that everything is as it should be at the Kingston Saltpeter Cave Nature Preserve. We look forward to more visits with better spring and summer weather. All is well!

Respectfully submitted,
Larry O. Blair

AFFILIATED WITH THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

McFail's Cave Nature Preserve – Tom Rider tcrider@nycap.rr.com

February 18, 2010
Progress: McFail's Cave is closed for the season.

preserves in the Northeast. There were 10 trips into the cave this season w/ two more planned early next week for a total
of 12. This does not count 1 trip into the cave early last spring to check on the bats. The property and trails are
in good shape. Several trees that had fallen across the trails last winter were
removed.

Plans: No immediate plans. As mentioned in my last report, consideration should be given to performing a more formal bat count sometime in the near future. The last bat count was performed over 25 years ago.

Problems: No problems to report.

Mill Creek Sink Nature Preserve - Robert Anderson randerson007@windstream.net

No report received.

Richard Blenz Nature Preserve – Anmar Mirza anmar.mirza@gmail.com

Progress: Please find attached a copy of the final report for the 2008-09 survey of Indiana bat winter hibernacula in Indiana. As in previous years, this survey was conducted by Virgil Brack, Jr. of Environmental Solutions & Innovations through funding provided by the Wildlife Diversity Section of the Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife. The report contains specific information about the bat population in Buckner Cave (Richard Blenz Nature Conservancy) on pages 54-56.

Feel free to contact me at the address, phone number, or email address listed below if you have any questions or comments about the report or its' contents. If you want a hard copy, just let me know. Thank you for your continued support in our Indiana bat recovery efforts. Scott Johnson

Scott Johnson
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Bloomington, IN 47401
phone: (812) 334-1137
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email: sjohnson@dnr.IN.gov

Below is page 54 – 56 of the report. The full report is attached as a separate electronic file. Gary Moss

5.6 Monroe County

5.6.1 Buckner Cave

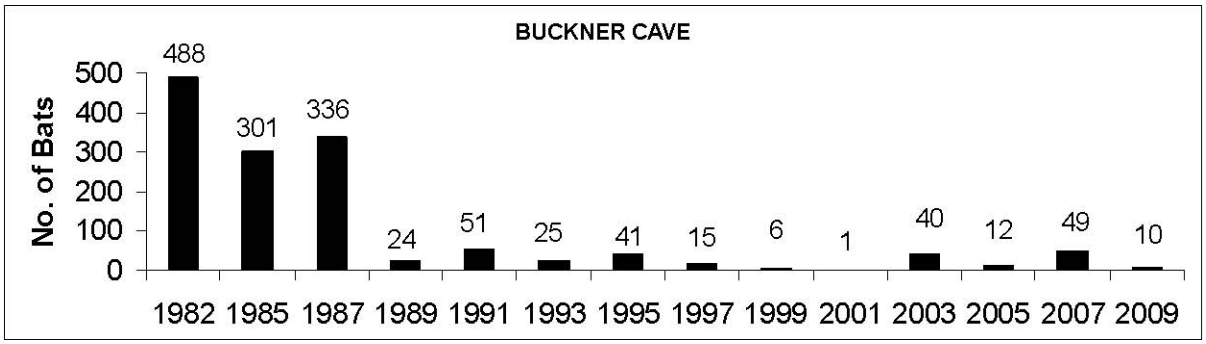
This is the most well known cave of the Garrison Chapel Valley, and one of the most visited and heavily vandalized. The Richard Blenz Nature Conservancy (RBNC) was incorporated in 2005 to manage the cave and property, and help control some of these issues. Recent management changes have significantly reduced visitation and all but eliminated vandalism. However, winter visitation is still allowed so disturbance of hibernating bats is ongoing. Ownership of the cave recently passed to the National Speleological Society, but management will remain with RBNC.

The entrance to Buckner Cave is on a north facing slope. The cave is extensive, with 2.7 miles of passages. The entrance passage is broad and downward sloping into the first room, which is long and narrow with a high ceiling. The back of this room is filled with breakdown to the ceiling. From this room, passages lead in three directions, all of which begin at constricted entrances.

Portion of Cave Visited: Only the entrance passage and first room were searched for bats (Map 18). Previous surveys in deeper and warmer portions of the cave did not locate Indiana bats.

Date: 17 January 2009.

Number of Indiana Bats: Ten Indiana bats were found (Table 2), a number similar to recent surveys, but less than the early and mid 1980s' survey results (Table 3). Eight historical records between 1950 and 1980 indicate the population was typically between 300 and 500 bats (Brack et al. 1984). Human use of the cave likely affects use by the bat and likely has for decades and perhaps centuries.



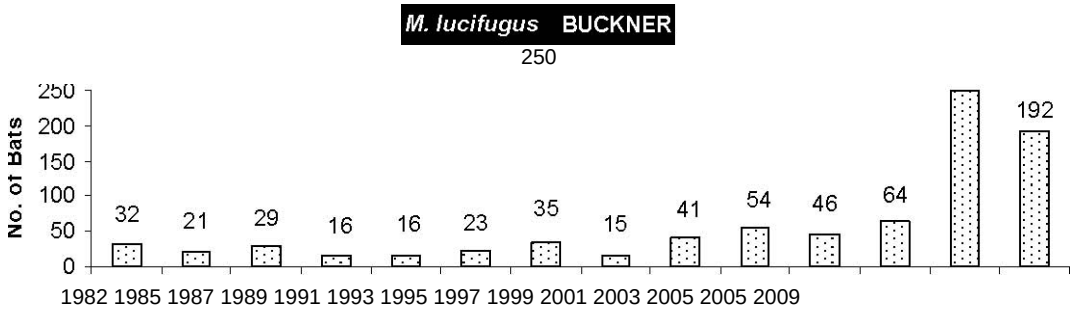
Location of Indiana bats: In recent years, two "traditional" roosts were used. The first was a crack at a height of about 4 feet on the left wall as the entrance passage opens into the first room. Burnt bat carcasses were found here during the 1997 survey. No bats have been found at that roost site since that incident. The second "traditional" roost is a crack on the ceiling on the right hand side at the back of the first room. This roost is very nondescript and is easily overlooked. Even when you know it is there, it can be difficult to find. The crack was above easily recognized wall graffiti but in 2007 this graffiti was removed as part of an ongoing restoration project making locating the crack even more difficult. Similar to previous surveys, all bats found in 2009 were in this crack.

Hibernaculum Temperatures: The ceiling temperature where the Indiana bats were hibernating was 1.8°C, which was cooler than usual.

BUCKNER

Year	1982	1985	1987	1989	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	$\bar{X}$	SD
Temp. °C	3.0		2.6	7.0	4.7	2.26.1	0.6-4.4	1.0	6.0	3.6	1.9	3.7	6.2-6.6	1.8	4.1	2.4
No. Bats	488	301	336	24	51	25	41	15	6	1	40	12	49	10	100	155

Other Species of Bats: There were more eastern pipistrelle bats than in any survey to date; numbers of big brown and little brown bats were within the range of past surveys (Table 3). A northern bat was observed during the survey.



Equipment or Safety Considerations: Human visitation is relatively high, and in the past, the greatest danger was from humans. That may be changing due to management efforts by RBNC. Nevertheless, do not leave anything of value in an unattended vehicle.

Pesi 184.02 55 2009 Hibernacula Survey

Plans: None listed

Problems: None

Schoharie Caverns Nature Preserve Report - Christa Hay christahay@yahoo.com

Progress: I was hoping to send this report after the official NYS Department of Environmental Conservation bat count occurred. Due to weather and individual schedules the count has not occurred. It could be happening tonight (March 12, 2010) as long as weather holds.

The cave closed October 1, 2010 due to WNS. We had our first incident on October 3 with cavers going into the closed cave. I was very upset as I know the person involved and had spent the day with him and reiterated not to go in the cave. The incident was reported by others staying at the cabin and I contacted the people involved. I have banned the trespassers for a year from the property.

This past year saw a continuance in maintenance work on the cabin. This mainly was putting a frame around the new windows that were put in the previous year. Usage was about the same for the spring summer months but due to WNS the cabin obviously saw less usage in the winter.

The NSS received a thank you gift of a small hatchet from a boys group called Core-4 (Geoff Roesch, Danny Ramos, Sergeui Medvedev and Sergy Zabarin).

The problem with the website (http://www.caves.org/preserves/schoh/schohari.html) has been corrected.

Plans: Upcoming plans are to finish up the window frames, work on the driveway (getting heavily rutted), and do some brush clearing to try to bring the old tenting area back to life.

The cave will be opening May 15 unless there is any new information concerning WNS.

Problems: None

Christa

Shelta Cave Nature Preserve Report – Ronny Miller ronnymiller@comcast.net

December 2009 – March 2010

Keeler note: The Millers have been acting as the Interim Chairs. There is a motion on the agenda to confirm the Millers as the Shelta Cave Preserve Chairs.

Progress: The Shelta Cave Preserve Manager responsibility has changed hands from Paul Meyer to Ronny, Pati, and Chris Miller. We have worked with Paul for many years on Shelta Cave and will continue to include him in the management plan in the future. His experience with Shelta Cave is invaluable and he has graciously agreed to lend assistance when called upon.

The Shelta Preserve Committee members attended the Alabama Bat Working Group meeting in January. Representatives from Federal and Alabama State conservation agencies, University of Alabama in Huntsville, Alabama A&M University, Bat Conservation International, Southeast Cave Conservancy, and the NSS were present. The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) hosted the meeting. White Nose Syndrome (WNS) is a major topic with Alabama caves at this time. Caves in north Alabama have been grouped based on priority with respect to WNS and impact importance by the ADCNR. Shelta Cave is listed as a priority 2 cave. The ADCNR has requested a winter status report for all priority 2 caves. The Shelta Preserve Committee surveyed Shelta Cave on 27 February 2010. The survey resulted in a total of 24 bats. This is the largest number of hibernating bats recorded in recent years. All bats located were tricolors (*Perimyotis subflavus*). The bats were found in two distinct groupings in Jones Hall. High water levels hampered the survey. An additional colony of myotis bats that was discovered last winter could not be located this year due to the flooding in the cave. The water level was over 21 feet at the time of the survey. The water level at this time last year was at 0 feet.

Plans: Continue monitoring of the cave for bats. Monitoring of evening egress will resume in April and continue through September.

Problems: There was evidence (muddy footprints) that unauthorized persons climbing over the fence are entering the cave. A simple piece of metal covering the lock boxes should help make this less inviting in the future. We will need to investigate what costs will be involved in resolving this problem. There was no sign of vandalism in the cave as a result of the unauthorized entry.

Tytoona Cave Nature Preserve Report - Garrett Czmor gczmor@verizon.net

March 2010

Progress: The cave and property continues to be in great condition. Minimal garbage is found along with fewer visitations. Due to the concerned issue of WNS, most cavers have placed a self-imposed ban of caving at any recognized bat sites. Tytoona is perhaps one of the few caves left as a refuge for cavers. No bats were noted during this period and obviously no signs then of WNS.

I should note for the year 2009, my committee members and I have made at least 17 trips to Tytoona for management purposes (clean up, maintaining brochures kiosk, cave and property monitoring, maintaining register, cave management, etc.).

In addition, we have a record of at least 128 people who have visited the cave in 2009. However, we do not have register book data from 4/18/09 to 8/11/09, as this book was apparently stolen from the cave. Visitation is usually higher during the period that is now missing, so one might estimate the visitation figure to be at least two to three times higher than what the recorded figures show. Even with the estimate thrown in, visitation is low. It appears that the average visitor's age is 28 years old and average group size is about three persons. All but two said they were from Pennsylvania and of course, the main reason for exploring the cave was "exploration" (2^{nd} place – recreation, 3^{rd} place – education). The average time visitors spent in the cave was noted as 1 and 1/2 hour.

The mapping project of the whole Tytoona / Arch Spring system is completed and maps have been printed. Four large maps (32" X 48" each) comprise the whole system. Original sized copies have been sent to Richard Blenz for the NSS Cave Files, the NSS Dive Section and to Professor Will White. Professor White is writing a bulletin on the Karst drainage of Sinking Valley.

Ray Keeler loaned a "Hobo" data collector which was placed in the cave 4/17/09 and was removed on 12/30/09. The Hobo sent to Ray for data compilation.

I accompanied the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy land steward in conducting their annual conservation property inspection. To date, I have not received any report back.

Plans: The project to maintain the wooden steps down the sinkhole will see completion this year.

Problems: None reported this period

Warren's Cave Report - William Oldacre oldacre@afn.org

No report submitted.

Wells Cave Nature Preserve Report - Larry C. Simpson wellscavecommittee@caves.org

March 9, 2010

Progress: Wells Cave remains closed due to WNS prevention. In February we did a check for flying bats at the Wells Cave Entrance but did not go inside. About 40 caves were checked in Pulaski & Rockcastle Counties in Kentucky by several teams. No evidence of WNS was found so far.

Plans: Wells Cave is closed until further notice.

Problems: None reported.

Conservation Division

Jim C. Werker & Val Hildreth-Werker Division Co-Chairs
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Spring 2010 Report

NSS Conservation Division
Jim C. Werker & Val Hildreth-Werker, Division Chiefs werks@cunacueva.com

Vision for the NSS Conservation Division
Promote strategic collaborations to advance global cave/karst protection and conservation awareness.
Mission · Develop cooperative partnerships for resource protection, conservation outreach, and rapid response karst advocacy · Implement strategies to reach greater diversity of populations in advancing cave/karst ecosystem awareness and promoting karst groundwater protection · Network cave/karst conservation issues to protect spelean values through cavers, caving organizations, agencies, and targeted stakeholders · Promote conservation protocols and practices nationally and globally.

WNS Nationwide Press Release—Sent March 1 to all I/Os and Grottos through Conservation Network for immediate release.

Regional Conservation Specialists—Conservation Specialists have been on board for about six months. All submitted material for the fall 2009 report. Most submitted regional conservation material for this report. See below.

Partnerships in Washington, D.C—Working with USDA-FS Washington Office, Region 3, Lincoln National Forest Leadership, and Guadalupe Mountains Ranger District Leadership to promote placement of new FS National Cave Coordinator upon Jerry Trout's upcoming retirement.

Floyd Collins Crystal Cave Repair/Restoration—Continuing cooperative work with Mammoth Cave National Park and the Cave Research Foundation, Jim and Val are conducting more

restoration/repair in the gypsum encrusted passages of Crystal Cave. Launching this 5-year study in the repair of important historic passages, May 2009 was recognized as an Explorers Club Flag Expedition. September 2009 marked the second expedition. Third expedition will be in 2010. See March 2010 NSS News.

NSSNews—NSS NEWS 2010 CONSERVATION ISSUE covers the spectrum of cave/karst conservation with articles spanning nationwide concerns and issues. Coordinated and edited by Val and Jim. Annual conservation pieces will be in March and April issues.

NSS Conservation Committee
Jim C. Werker & Val Hildreth-Werker, Co-Chairmen werks@cunacueva.com

NSS Convention Vermont Conservation Day—NSS Conservation invites **abstract submissions** for all **Conservation, Restoration, and Management Sessions** at the 2010 NSS Convention to be held August 2-6, in Essex Junction, Vermont. Send abstracts by May 1, 2010 to Val Hildreth-Werker: werks@cunacueva.com

Cooperative Conservation and Grant Opportunities—We are seeking opportunities to apply for corporate or foundation grant awards targeting ecosystem restoration, biodiversity indicator species, program development, and public information outreach. Please notify Val if you run across opportunities . werks@cunacueva.com

NSS Conservation Specialists
Six months into their roles, the Conservation Specialists are providing a tremendous array of cave/karst project information.

- Provide reports or networking updates outlining cave/karst conservation issues and project updates. The nature of these reports will vary as they reflect the resources and concerns of the differing karst areas.
- Some regions include states supported by populations of cavers outside the regional caving groups that typically deal with familiar issues in their regional karst-similar locals. Due to geographic location and karst diversity, specifically the caves and cavers in the states of Florida, Hawaii, and Utah each need their own recognized Conservation Specialist.

Arizona Conservation Specialist
Steven Smith (AR) stevenlsmith@usa.net

- Central Arizona Grotto (Phoenix area): The Peppersauce Cave Conservation Project, in association with the Central Arizona Grotto, and assisted by the Escabrosa, Southern Arizona Grotto, and Cochise County Cavers, started a multi-trip cave restoration project at Peppersauce Cave (Santa Catalina Mountains) on February 20th, 2010. This project included new informational signage near the entrance of the cave, sandblasting to remove new spray paint graffiti, installing "OUT" signage to reduce the need for spray paint arrows (in the weak minds of those that do so), and general trash removal. The Peppersauce Cave Conservation Project (assisted by the Grottos of Arizona) won an award for their efforts in this cave nearly a decade ago. This new effort is an ongoing attempt to reduce the human impact on the cave and allow visitors a more natural experience.
- Escabrosa Grotto (Tucson): Onyx Cave: Since our last report there have been two restoration trips cleaning mud-covered formations, to include rimston dams, stalagmites, shields, columns, and

draperies. Number of people on the trips ranged from 4-8. In addition, we have also repaired several broken formations. Peppersauce Cave: "Party" cave in these parts, Peppersauce is heavily vandalized with trash, graffiti, and the occasional human feces. This cave also has a lake that smells of urine, floating/sunken trash and God knows what else. A team of ten grotto members rigged up a retrieval system to haul garbage out of the lake. Trash hauled out of the cave and picked up around the parking area filled the bed of a pickup truck.

- Colossal Cave: A commercial cave we annually visit to perform lint removal. Eight grotto members used shop vacs, brooms, brushes, and a lot of hard work to make a considerable difference in the cave. However, being a tourist cave, the cave walls, floors, and features collect enough lint in one year that an area previously cleaned often looks a year later like we were never there! This will be an ongoing forever project.
- Aztec Cave: A small tectonic cave that had chalk drawings (graffiti) on the walls. Eight grotto members used soft brushes and a little water to remove the chalk.
- Cochise County Cavers (Sierra Vista): Grotto members participated in our annual cleaning of Pyaett Cave where trash was picked up and graffiti removed. Recently, some members went to Morning Glory Cave and helped Pete Fine re-flag some of the trails. We will be putting in new registers in all the caves in Cave Canyon (Huachuca Mountains) within the next two weeks.

Mid-Atlantic Conservation Specialist
Doug Soroka (PA) snowshoe7@verizon.net

- Few responses from my contacts. East coast snow and WNS has curtailed almost all grotto activity.
- Greater Allentown Grotto has had a single conservation clean up at each of its two commercial caves that they work with, Lost River Caverns in Hellertown PA and Crystal Cave Kutztown PA. Both work days concentrated on lint removal along the commercial tourist trails. Note that in Crystal a photographic trip was conducted to document newly re-discovered signatures of historic value. These were documented so other historical names –not yet discovered will not be disturbed during cleaning processes. The cleaning team observed signatures in their natural settings under different lighting conditions so further work in other locations could reveal un-known signatures of historic value. Grotto has discussed WNS in January and February and it's implications to caving this coming summer.
- York Grotto – WNS Panel Discusssion at MAR event with **Dr. DeeAnn Reeder,** an Assistant Professor at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania who has been heavily involved with research into the causes of White nosed Syndrome in Pennsylvania. Dr. Reeder is a member of the Mammal Technical Committee of the PA Biological Survey.
  Peter Youngbaer, the Liaison on White Nose Syndrome for the National Speleological Society and manager of the WNS webpage for the NSS. He is President of the Vermont Cavers Association and testified before Congress on WNS (August 2009 NSS News, p 10).
  Greg Turner, a Wildlife Biologist with the Wildlife Diversity Section of the Pennsylvania Game Commission. His primary focus is to survey, monitor, and manage the state's protected mammals including among others all bat species.

Missippi Valley – Ozark Conservation Specialist
William R. Elliott (MO) Bill.Elliott@mdc.mo.gov
No report received.

Northeast Conservation Specialist
Mike Warner (NY) mike@speleobooks.com

- "Bat Buzz," a WNS panel discussion was held on Saturday 13 March in the Little Theater, Berkshire Museum, in Pittsfield, Mass. Al Hicks, NY State Wildlife Biologist, and Peter Youngbaer, NSS WNS Liaison, gave a comprehensive presentation on WNS and answered questions.
- The donation of Bentley's Cave to the Northeastern Cave Conservancy (NCC) was completed in December and Jonah Spivak has been appointed the preserve manager.
- The NCC is drafting a purchase contract for Merlin's Cave to be reviewed by the NCC Executive Committee and submitted to the owner. The NCC anticipates a June 30 closing.
- The NCC is assisting NYS DEC with WNS related bat surveys, documenting the numbers, species and distribution of bats within each site.
- Regional cavers are assisting the 2010 NSS Convention in Vermont by establishing a clothing and gear lending cache to allow visiting cavers access to caves without moving potentially contaminated items between regions.

Northwest Conservation Specialist
Hester Mallonee (OR) hestermallonee@yahoo.com

- The annual Cascade Grotto Presidents' Day Oregon Caves cleanup weekend went splendidly. Two large old rotting iron remnants of a former ladder/stairway were removed from a flowstone slope without doing further damage, and an aesthetic restoration will soon follow. Some areas of the Upper Cave currently under maintenance cleaning were given their annual attention. Some areas of the Upper and Middle Cave received initial cleaning. A catch basin and filter were installed to help reduce visitor foot dirt impact in the Paradise Lost staircase area. At NPS staff request, grotto members provided input re: potential future visitor-impact prevention/reduction measures, including some with which we could potentially assist.
- I should note that the NPS at ORCA has instituted a new practice which seems initially to be beneficial to their small bat population. Species monitoring efforts have led to a realization that sometimes, bats enter their normal hibernation area, i.e., the Lower Cave, before the tourist season ends, and/or stay in it after the visitor season resumes. So, during the "shoulder season", i.e., the beginning and end parts of the visitor season, they have started having the tours enter the cave at the 110 entrance, skipping the Lower Cave. 2009 was the first year for a returning bat count subsequent to a full year of this practice. The count was up a little, supporting the idea that this may be a good practice in future when in cases where bats are observed to extend their season in the cave. And guides have told me that they don't feel the visitors' interests are prejudiced by this alteration, because what they can't see in the Lower Cave is made up for by a more in-depth viewing and discussion of the Upper Cave.
- The Rimstone Project at Oregon Caves continues apace. Except for an area which we deliberately have left covered by fill for now (as a protective measure) near the entrance to the room, the excavation and removal of debris, rubble and contaminants is complete, after five-plus years of recurrent visits by the three of us (self, plus daughters Hester C. and Rosemary T.). The primary current focus continues to be, as it has been from fall 2008, the structural stabilization of the truncated flowstone in the right rear of the area, which formerly provided lateral support to the entire area. This work is unfortunately slow, because the cramped space means most of the work is done on hands and knees, and the preferred access is by rope up the flowstone climb in the rear passage behind the project site, to avoid having to crawl or stem over the restoration. Stainless

steel hardware cloth, stainless steel all-thread, and cement are used, including architectural reconstruction cement (Emaco FS). This area is not visible to visitors, but if it is not repaired, at a future time there is a risk of slumping and damage/destruction of the formations in the visible part of the room, together with the restoration which those areas will be receiving. As a secondary focus, infill and repair of the trench that was cut through the righthand part of the visible rimstone has begun.

- Trash has been removed from various local caves. This is a constant when we visit caves available to the public.

Ohio Valley Conservation Specialist

Bill Walden (KY) wdwalden@windstream.net

- Plans continue to gate Wind Cave in Wayne County, Kentucky to protect endangered Indiana bats and to prevent damage to well-preserved saltpeter vats, which date to the War of 1812. This is a joint project of the ACCA, BCI, KY Dept of F&W, and cavers. January 2010 Chris Clark and Bill Walden measured the entrance room for a gate. Project pending funding. Contact is Chris Clark at the ACCA clark_c17@yahoo.com.
- The Ohio Valley Region (OVR) did a sinkhole cleanup in Logan County, Ohio October 3,4 2009. Volunteers for this cleanup gathered 1.5 tons of material from three of the four sinkholes and recycled 410 pounds of metal. This project is not completed. It was suggested by Bill Walden that local grottos continue this project. Contact is Bill Walden wdwalden@windstream.net.
- March 27, 28 - Greater Cincinnati Grotto is sending 40 people to Mammoth Cave for Restoration work. Contact is Harry Goepel hgoepel2@cinci.rr.com.
- The Buckner Cave (Indiana) cleanup continues with phase 3. In phase 3 we have been cleaning up sand over spray left from phase 2 and wire bushing graffiti in the Stream Passage. We will continue these activities, and we will finish sandblasting the far end of the Volcano Passage using a small air compressor. For more information visit http://www.bucknercave.org/graffitiRemoval.php. People wanting to help with this project, should contact Bill Baus through website.
- Bat monitoring for WNS is being done in the Wells Cave NSS Preserve, Pulaski County, Kentucky by Lee Florea and members of the Wells preserve committee. Contacts are Larry Simpson larrycsimpson@gmail.com and Lee Florea lee.florea@wku.edu.
- Caves in Jackson, Rockcastle, Pulaski, and Wayne counties, KY are being checked for WNS. Contact is Brooke Slack Brooke.Slack@ky.gov. Brooke is the bat specialist with the Kentucky department of Fish and Wildlife Services. No signs of WNS!

Rocky Mountain Conservation Specialists

Rick Rhinehart (CO) nss@rockymountaincaving.com
Camille Pullham (UT) camille_pulham@nps.gov

- Cavers from the Colorado and Front Range Grottos are planning a clean up at Clear Creek County's Fault Cave west of Golden in April. The Jefferson County-owned granite cave is reported to have some of the most intensive graffiti of any location in the county park system. In addition to collecting trash that accumulates in the popular cave, the removal of some of the graffiti will also be attempted.
- At its January board meeting, the Williams Canyon Project of the NSS decided to provide special designation for a new section found last year in Huccacove Cave. The Enchanted Canyon section was discovered through a digging project and is one of the most fragile passages currently known

in the many caves of Williams Canyon. The special designation will limit access to the region to cavers who have learned the routes through the passages, and who are aware of the fragility. The conservation section of the project will be installing an environmental gate at the entrance of the section this spring, to reduce airflow from Hall of the Mountain King, another new room in the cave.

- The Denver Museum of Nature & Science is intending to excavate a large bone deposit in Williams Canyon's Land of the Swirling Mist Cave. The project depends on the development of a memorandum of understanding with the owning Cave of the Winds. A preliminary excavation of a few of the bones has identified a rich Pleistocene-era bone deposit, including many extinct animals such as horse and sloth. The scientific dig project will be assisted by the Williams Canyon Project and could be the most important cave dig in Colorado paleontology since the 1980s digs at Porcupine Cave in South Park, north of Buena Vista.
- The Williams Canyon Project is working with National Park Service in a bid to designate the Cave of the Winds and caves of Williams Canyon as a National Natural Landmark. Several caves across the United States have been previously designated as Natural Landmarks, including New Mexico's Fort Stanton Cave and Black Chasm in California. Designation provides some limited protection for the natural feature, but no federal funding or management is offered. The lengthy designation process involves a thorough investigation and approval by the Department of the Interior in Washington.
- For the 2011 National Speleological Society Convention: in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, current planning includes establishment of White Nose Syndrome decontamination stations for cavers going to area caves on US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands. Cooperation with the USFS and BLM will be key in scheduling trips for convention participants, with the protection of Colorado's bats from WNS a primary consideration. There is also discussion of providing WNS information to participants of the Saturday evening public session in Glenwood Springs, which will be held in Glenwood's Two Rivers Park.
- The Colorado Cave Survey established formal liaisons with NSS 2011 Convention Committee to coordinate bat protection from White Nose Syndrome at the July event. The Survey is also working with the White River National Forest to protect caves in Lime Creek area north of Aspen during an upcoming timber harvest. A previous harvest in the same region in the 1970s dumped slash from the timbering into sinkholes and cave entrances. Current plans are to identify all cave and karst features in the harvest area for protection from timbering.
- The Bureau of Land Management in Glenwood Springs has announced a requirement for visitors to LaSunder Cave in Deep Creek Canyon north of Glenwood to undergo decontamination prior to entering. The well-decorated cave also is the home to bats during the summer season. As a part of the management plan for the cave, trips from Colorado's NSS grottos are limited to maximum of ten annually.
- The Wildlife Experience, a nature museum in Parker, Colorado, opened a new exhibit in 2009 called Globeology. The exhibit includes several walk through dioramas of different land regions, such as temperate forest, desert and savannah. The temperate forest includes an artificial limestone cave exhibit, complete with a relatively realistic animatronics caver that answers questions from visitors about the cave, cave science, caving and conservation. The exhibit also includes interactive computers with information about caves and cave life. A nearby exhibit on abandoned mines in Colorado includes detailed information about bats in the state, including video of the large colony at the Orient Mine in the San Luis Valley.

- In Utah, the National Park Service announced its intent to remove a large, potentially dangerous rock from above the entrance to Timpanogos Cave. The National Monument east of Provo is a popular destination for visitors, involving a steep hike from the valley floor to the cave entrance. Investigations of the entrance region identified a rock mass that potentially could catastrophically collapse, endangering the trail below and anyone who might be in the vicinity. The removal of the rock will improve safety for visitors.
- The Thanksgiving 2009 tragedy at Utah's Nutty Putty Cave made national news, with the death of caver John Jones ultimately resulting in the internment of the body within the cave and the permanent closure of the cave to all visitors. Although cavers and many other Utah residents argued for removing the body and closing only the dangerously-tight squeeze near Chris's Crawl, the Utah County Sheriff's department, along with John Jones's family and the owning Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration determined the dangers of the cave outweighed the risks of a body recovery. On December 4, contractors sealed the cave with a thick concrete plug, entombing John Jones within the cave, now considered a grave site.

Southeast Conservation Specialists
John Hoffelt (TN) MossyGuy@comcast.net
Deirdra Hahn (AL) DHahn@adem.state.al.us
Albert A. Krause (FL) aakrause@cox.net
Report sent but was not attached. Waiting for resend. Will forward when it arrives.

Southwest Conservation Specialist
Kathy Peerman (NM) speleobabe@comcast.net
Note received – we send sincere condolences to Kathy who is dealing with the aftermath of several deaths.

Texas Conservation Specialist
Linda Palit (TX) lkpalit@sbcglobal.net
Note received – full report next time.

Virginia Conservation Specialist
Meredith Hall Weberg (VA) merecaver@yahoo.com
No report received.

Western Conservation Specialist
Joel Despain (CA) joel_despain@nps.gov
No report received.

NSS Karst Partnership Forum (Subcommittee)
Merideth A. Hildreth, Coordinator planning@zianet.com
KPF Follow-up Progress – Moving Forward with Tangible Results
- Karst Protection Ordinances provided by KPF are posted on KIP, giving planners access to karst planning guidelines to prevent costly development disasters, groundwater contamination, flooding, subsidence, and collapse. Go to karstportal.org and type "ordinances" in keyword search. (New KIP platform was launched March 10, 2010).

- Planners are receiving direct e-mail KPF Got Karst? newsletters with notification of these resources.
- KPF newsletters have a new permanent home on KIP. Go to karstportal.org and type into keyword got karst. (Or click Browse Resources. Find Publications Got Karst Newsletter.) http://purl.fcla.edu/usf/dc/k26.78
- KPF is setting up a Karst Central Web resource to provide Web-based materials and PowerPoints for communities, planners, and cavers to use when conducting workshops and meetings, providing public information, and supporting media distribution.
- KPF is staffing our NSS karst exhibit booth at the American Planning Association 2010 National Planning Conference - New Orleans, April 8-12. For maximum exposure, we reserved a space at the front of the exhibit hall. Over 5,000 planning professionals from across the nation will attend the conference. Event outcomes will appear in summer report.
- Planners visiting the APA booth will fill out KPF contact/info sheets. Mike Walsh is scheduled to make follow-up phone calls April 19-20. Merideth Hildreth will maintain direct e-mail contact with newsletters and updates.
- KPF core member Mike Walsh has identified a list of 96 counties with karst development pressures. Cavers can assist these counties with karst-related land management and advocacy for cave preserves. Opportunities may arise for cavers to manage caves or to acquire ownership of significant caves at little or no cost.
- KPF coordinator is responding to information and assistance requests coming in from across the country.
- KPF appreciates $1000 grant award from NSF to support purchase of media-support equipment for the NSS Karst Outreach Booth.

NSS Grotto Conservation Network (Subcommittee)
Steve Smith, Coordinator StevenLSmith@usa.net

- GCN address list is continually updated as IO Chairs and Conservation Chairs change.
- Continues to be a valuable tool for quickly "spreading the word" on time-sensitive conservation issues to IOs. During this reporting period, messages were sent out concerning:
- Peter Youngbaer's (NSS WNS liaison) position on the Center for Biological Diversity's recommendation thatall caves on Federal lands should be closed to caving to help control the spread of WNS.
- Jim Werker and Val Hildreth-Werker (NSS Conservation Co-Chairs), forward of public meeting notice Lincoln National Forest (NM) management staff to discuss cave management, volunteer, and stewardship issues for world class caves on the Guadalupe Ranger District.
- Scott Fee's (NSS Combined Federal Campaign coordinator) request that IOs provide him with information on their conservation activities so the NSS application can remain a recipient of CFC charitable donations.

Cave Conservation Online (Subcommittee)
Hilary Lambert, Coordinator Hilary_Lambert@yahoo.com

- In July 2009 Hilary Lambert presented her paper at ICS-NSS Convention (Kerrville, TX) titled "Cave Conservation Online" describing the Web-based course developed from the NSS volume *Cave Conservation and Restoration* (Hildreth-Werker and Werker 2006). Next steps and courses will be announced during 2010

NSS Brochures (Subcommittee)

Cheryl Jones, NSS Brochures Coordinator cheryl.caver@verizon.net
Mike Dale, Graphic Design

- Plans: Update the WNS brochure
- Nothing else to report.

Conservation Web Site (Subcommittee)
John M. Wilson, Webmaster jmwgeo@gmail.com

- The Web site http://www.caves.org/committee/conservation/ continues to receive improvements and changes.
- Bob Simmons has agreed to update the Conservation Division Web pages. Welcome aboard Bob.

Volunteer Value Online Database (Subcommittee)
Jennifer Foote, Chairman bigredfoote@yahoo.com;
Mark Lankford, Co-Coordinator mlankford65@yahoo.com

- The database has been built and the data entry form is online http://www.caves.org/volvalue/volvalue.php
- Werkers are coordinating with Todd Chaves to host on the KIP site.
- Potential users of data reports include: Grottos, NSS Projects, NSS Task Forces, other I/Os, NSS annual report, CFC application, 3P reports/officer reports, agency records and reports.
- Feedback from potential users is essential for completing project design.
- Need to initiate and evolve static report format that will serve the data users.
- Participation and feedback are critical to success in documenting Volunteer Value.

Conservation Grants / Save The Caves (Subcommittee)
John Pearson, Chairman jpearson@rcc.com

- For the record, John E. Pearson has asked to step down as conservation grants administrator due to other pressing issues. He agreed to stay on until another person could be recruited, but has not had time to recruit anyone.
- Three grant requests were received.
- Great Salt Petre Preserve. A grant for $1000 for the installation of environmentally sound composting outhouse facilities to protect ground water and surrounding karst was granted. Pearson was not diligent in acting on this grant due to work load and other personal pressing issues.
- Peppersauce grant proposal. This proposal was never submitted correctly by its proponent. The Werkers forwarded the brief grant request from Ray Keeler to Pearson, who was not copied in. Pearson will not act on incomplete or informal grant application submissions. Pearson also questions the appropriateness of acting upon a grant applied for by Keeler, the Society's AVP in charge of conservation grants, and suggests that if application is made, Keeler recuse himself from the proposal and have others pass final approval or denial so no accusations of conflict of interest can be raised by outside auditors.
- Missouri Chapter of The Wildlife Society inquired about a possible conservation grant to organize a student workshop. Pearson replied that the request appeared to be more of an educational grant than a conservation grant. Pearson also stated that he couldn't fully evaluate the proposal until formal application was made and invited such application to be made for comment.

Problems. Pearson's work load and other issues such as the recent WNS outbreak in West Virginia, working on the Greenbrier County Comprehensive Plan, the Beech Ridge wind turbine project

opposition, co-chairman of the NSS 2012 convention and its requisite fund-raising and recent computer issues prevent him from devoting the appropriate amount of time to do the job of Grants Administrator correctly. He feels he should publicly apologize to Neena Jud of the Great Salt Petre Preserve project for his delays in acting on their request and considers the Society's minutes an appropriate venue for such apology.

Geocaching Committee
David Irving, Chairman daveirving@earthlink.net
Nothing to report.

NSS Cave Vandalism Deterrence Reward Commission
Jay Jorden, Chairman jjorden@texoma.net; jjorden@gmail.com
Current commission members: Gale Beach <raybeach@earthlink.net>; Tom Rea <tomrea@ccrtc.com>; John Wilson <jmwgeo@gmail.com>; Aaron Atz <atz@netpointe.com>; Thomas Lera <frontier2@erols.com>

Progress: The commission is currently gathering information on a successful prosecution of a vandalism case in Indiana. A woman scratched her name and date on the ceiling of a cave, and faced charges of "unlawful acts relating to caves." She pleaded guilty. The commission is set to make a recommendation on a reward as soon as possible. Also, the panel is following up on the prosecution related to Grassy Cove Saltpeter Cave in eastern Tennessee.
Problems: None noted.
Plans: The commission will continue to review all successful prosecutions of cave vandals in order to identify those in which a vandalism deterrence reward can be applied. Objectives include rewarding vigilance in reporting and prosecuting cave vandals and publicizing the Society's conservation objectives. We envision other means of publicizing the commission's activities.

Mammoth Cave Restoration Camp Committee
Roy Vanhoozer RVanhoo@aol.com

- Volunteers with the restoration camp continue working through a list of restoration projects approved by the National Park Service (NPS). Projects range from lint removal and trail repair to removing large wooden staircases and old pipes, wire, and concrete and other artifacts.
- 61 volunteers attended the November weekend restoration camp held Nov. 7-8, 2009. Several tons of concrete debris, wire and wood were passed by hand up the fire tower steps and then carried approximately 1/4 mile and out of the cave to a dump truck. Additionally, crews worked in the Giants Coffin area laying a new telephone wire and repairing the trail tread.
- The next scheduled restoration camp is the first weekend in March 2010.

Problems: Volunteers continue to follow guidelines provided by the NPS for decontamination of caving gear and tools to prevent/inhibit the spread of White Nose Syndrome. Volunteers from Pennsylvania, West Virginia and many other states regularly attend the camps.

Conservation Task Forces
Conservation Task Forces (CTF) under the coordination of the Conservation Committee are created to focus on local cave conservation issues. Since the Federal Cave Resources Protection Act of 1988 was passed, more CTFs are being recognized by local agencies as the primary representatives of the caving community on conservation issues. If you are involved in a conservation project and think your work

would benefit from CTF designation, please contact the Conservation Task Force Coordinator or the NSS Conservation Committee, werks@cunacueva.com

Boone Karst CTF
Robert "Chris" Hacker, 1714 Arundel Court, Loveland, OH 45140
SMGCaver@earthlink.net or Robert.Hacker@DHS.gov, 513-383-8954 Mobile (best)

Germany Valley CTF

No report received.

Hawaii Caves CTF
Fred Stone, P.O. Box 1430, Kurtistown, HI 96760, 808-966-7361
Francis Howarth, Hawaii Biological Survey, Bishop Museum, 1525 Bernice St., Honolulu, HI 96817 808-848-4164, fhowarth@bishopmuseum.org.

High Guads Restoration CTF

Jennifer Foote, 1723 Avenida Cristobal Colon, Santa Fe NM 8750, highguads@yahoo.com.
Learn more about this group through their Web site www.hgrp.org.

Klamath Mountains CTF
Steve Knutson, KMCTF
P.O. Box 111, Corbett, OR 97019, sssknutson@aol.com, 503-695-6552

- The main work now being done by the KMCTF is that of Tom Kline, trying to get the huge Marble Valley project into a GIS format. Project includes over 30 miles of cave survey and over 25 miles of interlocking surface traverse. Now that GPS is sufficiently accurate for this location mechanism, we are working to get good GPS coordinates on the myriad entrances and holes. Tom has software that can print known points and bar codes so that folks can walk that area between known points and sketch in additional data, and then that sheet be scanned into the software to include the sketched data.
- The Oregon Caves still refuses to communicate. I thought public servants were required to interface politely with the public, but not the NPS. Word on the grapevine is: it isn't feeling like the land expansion will take place. We have done congressional liaison now, to try to prevent that expansion as it will include the new Cave Next Door, almost surely to its detriment. The Forest Service reportedly has done a number of new projects in that area, as if to say...hey, this is our land and we can do right by it. Time will tell.
- The dig on Cave Next Door is back in action, again spearheaded by David Hodges. He is down to -70 feet and working in loose material that at that depth he figures is blocked cave passage. The lower part of the timber-shored shaft is being secured with the installation of culvert sections, fastened together.
- We still hope for a new MOU with the FS for Marble Valley, but plan on doing a lot of work on Tom's GIS this summer, getting data.

SERA Karst CTF

Jim Wilbanks P.O. Box 34, Rising Fawn, GA 30738, Jimgail69@earthlink.net, 706-462-2316
Maureen Handler, 900 Old Sewanee Rd, Sewanee, TN 37375, tnshotgun@earthlink.net.
Yahoogroup is sktfcommittee@yahoogroups.com and their website is www.sktfi.org

- The SERA Karst Task Force has continued its work as another year has passed. This year saw personnel changes as Michael Gilbert came on the committee as SERA vice chair taking John Attaway's position. John continues to be an avid volunteer. Marty Abercrombie of Chattanooga and Dierdra Hahn of Birmingham were appointed. They will attempt to fill the shoes of Brian and Lynn Roebuck whose energy and wisdom will be missed.
- One of the new things we did last year was to design and print our tee shirt. Due to the generosity of Jerry Wallace, the Sewanee Mountain Grotto and the Dogwood City Grotto we have a shirt to be proud of. We entered the shirt in the tee shirt salon this year at convention where it won second overall. It lost to the ICS's official shirt.
- We finished our commitment to Coal Bank Road in February. More than forty tons of garbage and recyclables were removed from the Blue Spring watershed during both cleanups.
- We planned to conduct a roadside cleanup at SERA. Daugherty Gap Rd was nearby and accessed the newly opened Mountain Cove area. As the time approached, the entire area sprouted poison Ivy and we delayed the cleanup until this winter. Last month, most of the upper part of the road washed away. There are no plans to reopen it. The committee manned a kiosk on vendor row and highlighted the new tee shirt design.
- This fall at Halloween Brad Barker did a tremendous job organizing a cleanup at Tumbling Rock Cave for the SCCI. Brad printed detailed maps showing what work to do where. Historic or archaic areas were left alone and only out arrows in the trail or on dirt were removed. Everything on Jay's list was accomplished and Brad even found free food from local restaurants. SKTF tee shirts were distributed to all the volunteers.
- We have continued to seek out likely targets and assess them. We have another fine cleanup planned this week. We are actively assessing other potential targets, but need your help. If you know of a highly visible karst related dump site, let us know. Found a trash filled entrance near a road? Let us know.
- We had about $1600 dollars income and about $1300 dollars in expenses. In addition, we have just received a donation from DCG for $300 to help fund our WNS decontamination station. The Dogwood City Grotto and the Sewanee Mountain Grotto have been regular contributors to our efforts. They have funded many of our projects. Thank you DCG and SMG.
- At SERA this summer, we will be hosting a caver's conservation symposium which will highlight experts in the conservation field for a short course in cave conservation. The Symposium is aimed for the average caver to understand what is going on in the caves they visit, how to mitigate any damage and when to call for help. The symposium will showcase experts in indentifying hydrologic biologic, historic and archaic assets in caves. A presentation on WNS and an overview of the SCCI's current efforts will also be included.
- The best thing about this whole venture is the volunteers. Most cavers care enough to volunteer and be there.

Sloans Valley CTF

Hilary Lambert hilary_lambert@yahoo.com
Intermittent reports received.

Networking Updates to the NSS Conservation Division
The following updates are included to facilitate networking and improve the exchange of information between the NSS Conservation Division and conservation-focused agencies and organizations with national or regional scope.
Updates are received and included here intermittently. Various entities send updates as appropriate.

The Nature Conservancy—Activity Networking Update to NSS Conservation
Cory Holliday, Cave and Karst Program Manager cholliday@TNC.org 615-383-9909
Cave and Karst Landowner Incentive Program Coordinator
The Nature Conservancy of Tennessee, 2021 21st Ave. South Ste. C400, Nashville, TN 37212

The following TNC chapters have reported recent conservation strategies relating to caves and karst.

- **Colorado** Assessment and evaluation of protection projects in eastern plains region. Work included inspecting small caves with petroglyphs and pictographs.
- **Florida**
  - Participated in meetings for the Florida Springs Task Force and Volusia Blue Springs Working Group.
  - Currently discussing the possibility of formally providing CAP training to one or more priority springs working groups (e.g. Rainbow Spring and Manatee/Fanning)
  - Coordinating with USFWS and the Florida FWC commission to develop and implement one or more on-the-ground restoration projects to improve access for Florida manatee to priority spring(s) in Florida
  - Participation in FWC genetic assessment of Florida's 14 recognized cave crayfish species.
- **Tennessee**
  - Coordinated with multiple agencies to finalize the TN White Nose Response Plan in fall 2009.
  - Banded bats and took hair samples for radio isotope analysis at Wolf River Cave in November 2009. This was in cooperation with the SCCI and the Upper Cumberland Grotto.
  - Organized and performed gray bat hibernation surveys in January 2010. This was a multi-agency coordinated effort led by TNC and assisted by BCI, and members of the Nashville grotto and the Spencer Mt. grotto.
  - Currently monitoring caves for WNS throughout TN. This effort is well supported by multiple grottos including the Mountain Empire Grotto, The East TN Grotto, the Flittermouse Grotto, and the Upper Cumberland Grotto.

Convention Division

Carol Tiderman ctider@ymail.com
7600 Pindell School Road
Fulton, MD 20759-9725
410-792-0742

Progress

- Communicating with the confirmed groups. Checking on their progress and passing along new information, filling requests for data, history and other materials and answering any questions.

- Working with the group who will be hosting the 2010 Convention in Vermont
- Working with the group who will be hosting the 2011 Convention in Colorado
- Working with a group proposing to host 2012 Convention in Fairlea WV.
- Working with group considering hosting the 2013 Convention
- Sent an article to Dave Bunnell, for the NSS NEWS, soliciting host groups.

Plans

- Attend convention committee planning meetings (any year's) whenever possible,
- Continue working with confirmed groups
- Continue to solicit new host groups.

Problems: None at this time

2009 Report
Hazel Medville – NSS Convention Chair

Keeler note: The final ICS report (more in depth) is in the President's report, including more details on the $52,882.89 check sent to the NSS from the ICS.

This is the last 2009 report. The combined NSS Convention/ICS was a success for all the attendees as well as showing a profit for the NSS after all advances were re-reimbursed and that if the US hosts another ICS then the 2009 combined event was successful and should be strongly considered as a model for a future event.

2010 Report
Keeler note: As of March 20th, there are 80 cavers registered for the 2010 Convention.

2010 NSS Vermont Convention

Well here we are 5 months before convention. The activity of planning has been steadily picking up with more meetings being held with the convention site. This in turn is helping the site to understand our needs better and is helping with some cost concessions on their part. The planning for the campground on site is now also moving along much faster with our chairs Neil and Emily Smith. The next meeting with the site will concentrate mostly on the campground. Such as meeting with the local fire chief about fire permits if needed and addressing any concerns he may have.

More and more folks are contacting us about volunteering during convention week. This is a great thing. We have two regional grottos that have volunteered to help the caterer to serve food at the Howdy Party and the Banquet. In turn the caterer will deduct from our final bill. And while I'm on the food subject, the caterer, Rick's, has been officially signed for both meals. So at this moment the food cost is lower than in our budget with his promise of doing the meals as all you can eat.

The JSS planning is solid. They have their itinery set and organized. All they need now is for the kids to arrive.

I guess I should mention planning going on around WNS. We are still planning on have lead cave trips in the area. So with that in mind and the fact that the world will be paying attention to us we are putting together a gear stash. Norm Berg is heading this with the outlook of this possibly becoming a normal part of convention. The idea is that people in the region will donate gear for the week so that folks that want to see one our beautiful marble caves won't have to buy all new gear, and will help us all to follow the protocols of the NSS and Fish and Wildlife. We have already had a good response from our region. Also along these lines, the decon station. We have an excellent location for the station as you enter the campground. Our facilities chair/WNS liaison Peter Youngbaer has been contacted by F&W about them running the decon area. Mr. Youngbaer is following up with this. I feel that it would be very positive to have them involved and will help with relations in the future. The idea has been floated of inviting the Center for Biological Diversity to have a table at convention. I'm not sure how that would go over.

I've been going around to the local businesses in Essex promoting the convention and selling ads for the program. The response thus far has been very positive.

So in conclusion I feel that planning is going well. No major issues to report, just hoping for a perfect Vermont summer with no snow.

Ken Moore

Chair-2010NSS

Junior Speleological Society

Rick & Faye Bowersox Co-Chairs
321 Pinecliff Dr
Las Vegas, Nevada 89145-5259
Phone: (702) 242-6995
Fax: (702) 242-6916
lavabeds@cox.net

Keeler note: There is a motion on the agenda to confirm the Ed Kehs as the new JSS Chair.

Progress:

- I have been in contact with both Ed Kehs and the JSS liaison Jane Youngbaer. A preliminary list of activities has been established and I am working with Ed Kehs to put together a schedule. The basic needs of the JSS has been sent to the convention staff and good progress has been made to fulfill these needs
- A building has been selected for the JSS
- Equipment is being transferred from my location in Las Vegas, Nevada to Ed Kehs location in Quakertown PA.
- The JSS educational programs for convention is being revised and upgraded with the help of Carol Tiderman.

- Our regular program of repelling and ascending will be part of the vertical program this year. Six new commercially built ascending units are now owned by the JSS/NSS and will be transferred to the new Chair.

- Ed Kehs has been in contact with the 2011 NSS Convention Organizing Committee and initial planning has been started. Ed Kehs will update this information in the fall of this year.

- The JSS bank account is stable and idle at $2,394.88 following the 2009 ICS/NSS summer convention.

- The 2009 convention still owes the JSS for the registration fees paid for the children who attended. This will be taken care of as soon as my schedule allows the time to assemble the numbers and report to Peri Frantz, Carol Tiderman, Ray Keeler, George Veni et al.

Plans:

- Planning for the 2010 convention will continue and a planning trip will be made to the area sometime before the end of the year.
    - Activities will be expanded again to meet demand as needed during the convention.

- Planning for the 2011 NSS Convention will continue with a trip planned to the area by Rick Bowersox sometime in the summer of 2010.

- I am in the process of transferring out of the financial responsibility for the JSS.

Problems:

- We are further behind schedule than I would like to be, but with the transition of the Chairmanship this cannot be helped.

Personal Note:

I have recommended that the name of Edward C. Kehs Jr. (31186) be placed before you for your consideration as the new JSS Chairman. I strongly believe that Ed is the best candidate to succeed me in this position. Ed has been at my side for every convention since 2000 in Daily, WV. His knowledge of the existing activities will allow him to retain consistency while adding his own unique vision to the program.

It has been a pleasure to have worked with so many of you over the years. It is only because my growing career needs that I must step back and let someone else step up to take the lead. The members of the NSS are the finest group of people that I have the honor to be associated with and I consider many of you as family. Faye and I will continue to work to support the JSS under the new leadership, in the hope that this will provide for a brighter future for our Society.

Respectively Yours,

Rick & Faye Bowersox

2011 NSS Convention Committee Report

Dave Lester – Co-chair d.lester@usa.net
Marty Morey – Co-chair skiandcave@gmail.com

Progress: Our full committee met in February. Our focus was on the things that we need to complete in the upcoming quarter and items that need to be done before the Vermont Convention. Our committee chairpersons and their staffs are on track and all major items are on schedule.

One key emphasis is on getting our registration materials and website ready well in advance of the 2010 convention.

Budgets have been carefully reviewed in each area, and we have worked to refine our options in several areas that can have significant cost impact. These include Banquet site, Bus transportation, Howdy party details, Field trip plans, Campground needs, and a number of other details. Using this information we substantially updated our preliminary budgets and plan to submit our final budget that determines the registration prices before the Spring BOG meeting. The EC has OK'ed the preliminary submittals to date and Peri has authorized NSS 2011 to open its bank account and will make the convention seed funds available. We will be depositing the money earned at the Auction at the ICS for sale of #1 and #2 registrations and some materials that were donated and auctioned to benefit NSS 2011.

Our campground layout is being platted and we are looking at traffic flow, quiet areas, and possibilities for open fires if there is not a complete fire ban. We are working closely with the Glenwood Springs Park and Recreation Department as well as the City offices.

With substantial support from our Vice Chair, Rob Kolstad, have completed an extensive review of options for our Banquet and are working with the historic Hotel Colorado to refine the banquet details and costs. This location offers a number of advantages including more affordable prices for quality food and service than other venues under consideration and shortened transportation needs, including proximity to the free city bus routes, and walking distance from our campground. We expect to have some innovative approaches for the Banquet and a very interesting venue.

Our final logo designs are being refined and we will have those materials ready for our promotional and registration items by the BOG meeting.

Our committee chairpersons are working with their groups to complete the items identified as needed before NSS 2010.

Plans: We will complete the final budget and set the registration prices in the upcoming weeks. Our staff is completing the Teaser Video to be shown in Vermont which will also be made available to each grotto. We are refining our Banquet plans, and formalizing our agreements with venues that we will be using. We are gathering community information brochures and creating materials to be handed out to interested Cavers in Vermont. Specific objectives have been established for near-term goals and our long-term planning documents are being updated and refined to provide guidance in the upcoming months. We continue to benefit from our approach of staffing each key position with co-chairmen, one

with previous convention experience and one with new ideas and approaches. This also allows us to transfer knowledge and convention planning expertise to the next generation.

Problems: Chris Daniels, the leader of the band, "Chris Daniels and the Kings," that we have an agreement with for our Howdy Party, has recently been diagnosed with an aggressive form of Leukemia. He is undergoing treatment and we are hopeful this will not be life threatening, nor cause difficulties for our 2011 plans. We are checking on alternative bands. The Kings played at the Colorado 1996 convention and were well received. We hope everything works out for Chris.

We are working to strengthen our registration planning, materials, and staff. We want to be sure we are well prepared for the upcoming opening of registration. We are working to compliment the existing staff with experienced NSS members that have supported prior Convention registration.

Water for our campground could be a concern, but we have two strong solutions in play now and another alternate that could be used if need be. Currently the City is not set up for inexpensive water taps, on a temporary basis, but we have been in discussions with the Park and Rec folks, and others, and believe we may be able to connect to existing water taps on our camping area that have not been used recently. Alternatives include hauling water from the school, or other sites, or making special arrangements for Fire Hydrant connections.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Lester,
Co-Chair NSS 2011

2012 NSS Convention Committee Report
Jeff Bray – wvhodag@earthlink.net and John Pearson jpearson@rcc.com
2012 MayaCon Co-Chairs

February 17, 2010

Progress Since last report:
The 2012 NSS Convention committee has been planning and preparing a brief teaser video to be presented during the 2010 NSS Convention.

The logo contest ended on Dec. 21, 2009 and unfortunately there were no entries received. The co-chairs are now encouraging artists they know to help them develop a logo.

The committee is discussing the location and date for its next meeting, which is planned to be in March or April of 2010.

Staffing and building our team continues.

Short Term Upcoming Goals:
The committee will complete fleshing out all significant volunteer positions.

The committee hopes to produce a working logo in time to be used in our promo teaser this summer.

The committee will be completing its promo teaser to be premiered at the 2010 NSS Convention.

Problems/Action/Communication to NSS BOG:
Deposits are needed to be paid to the fairgrounds and to the two schools that we will be using. The convention staff respectfully requests the release of our seed money so that we can insure our rates at these three important venues. We actually have heard that one venue may have a personnel change, and we feel we especially need to have our deposit in before that change happens.

(Peri will request the EC approve preliminary budget at March EC meeting & direct Stephanie to send a check if approved - Carol)

(Keeler note: Bank accounts have been authorized for opening and this effort is in progress)

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Bray and John Pearson
2012 MayaCon Co-Chairs

Education Division

Dianne Gillespie
Education Division Chief

807 Dennis Way
Carlsbad, New Mexico 88220
Telephone 270-404-2034

gillespie@me.com
dianne.gillespie07@yahoo.com
Report Submitted 1 March 2010

Dianne Gillespie
The NSS Education Division actively supports the Society's role of educating our members, the caving community, youth organizations, government and private agencies and the general public.

Amy Bern NSS Board approved PU board member resigned. Gillespie and Lindberg would like to present Thor Bahrman (45063 RE) for BOG approval as her replacement. Thor Bahrman Pine Mountain Grotto Conservation Officer, has more than 10 years experience in assisting with cave education programs in southeastern Kentucky. Bahrman professionally works as in Information Technology and would be an asset in helping PU redesign its website."

Environmental Education Committee
Chairman, Kriste Lindberg

kriste.lindberg@gmail.com

"This committee works to develop an educational program on caves, to be taught in schools (kindergarten through high school), based on Project Underground." (Act 57-556)

Progress/Plans:
Committee chair has been in discussion with National Cave and Karst Research Institute Education Director Dianne Gillespie and Project Underground Executive Director Carol Zokaites to discuss the role the NSS Environmental Education Committee can play in the national education.

16 December 2009
Lindberg and Gillespie met Mammoth Cave National Park Environmental Education Coordinator (MCNP), Cheryl Messenger and Mammoth Cave International Center for Science and Learning Director Rick Toomey and Education Coordinator Shannon Trimboli. Toommey and Trimboli demonstrated the ability to hold "Skype" meetings, from the underground. Lindberg met with Gillespie and Messenger to discuss NSS involvement in MCNP education programs.

17 December 2009
Lindberg and members Gillespie and Mark Joop met with David Foster of the American Cave Conservation Association and the Arts Council of Horse Cave to discuss a possible project. Foster provided space for the committee to meet. The success of the IKCs Education and Outreach Committee has provided incentive for moving forward and can be used as a boiler plate for other states/areas where applicable. The committee discussed plans on adding structure and vision for the committee and a plan to get more members involved. The chairman is currently working on motion to change the mission of the committee. Once all is further underway, I plan to step back as chair and let new blood take its course. I will still be involved, but in a more targeted capacity. Due to the economy, my time to volunteer is limited, now, as I am working on backup funding sources, including expanding my related artwork business.

January 2010 the chairman authored an article for publication in the NSS News Conservation issue, Gillespie and Zokaites . Soon thereafter, an article was sent to be published in the NSS News conservation issue, which will come out in either March or April.

Committee chair plans to attend the April BOG meeting.

Problems:

The economy has created funding problems for educators to get time off to attend events and more. That given pay cuts and layoffs, time is an issue, as well. Many are taking on second jobs to help get through.

Updates on Environmental Education Committee Partners

Indiana Karst Conservancy

Progres/Plans: In February, the IKC presented and staffed a booth at the Hoosier Association of Science Teachers annual conference in Indianapolis at the Convention Center. We focused on getting the word out on our expansion plan – both as a resource and to recruit more help. Later in the spring, we are planning to hold a Project Underground training. We plan to do more with professional teacher organizations at the regional and national level.

Lindberg is working toward using art skills as tools to help get the word out on conservation endeavors. In January, IKC received funds from the Bloomington-area Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission to create a cave/stormwater/stream mural and related education at a local community center. Articles on this endeavor were submitted to the NSS News and Illuminations, the NSS Arts and Letters Section newsletter. In February, IKC exhibited artwork for sale at the 20th birthday celebration of a sister land trust, Sycamore Land Trust (Lindberg plans to sell and donate more in the future).

Problems: None reported.

Project Underground
Progress: Project Underground (PU) activities continue through the efforts of Carol Zokaites, within Virginia's Department of Recreation and Conservation. In the fall of 2009 Governor Robert McDonnell slashed the state's budget and discontinued many programs in which Virginia's cave program was one of the many causalities. The nation's economic weather will affect future changes within the state of Virginia. Some recent activities:

- Zokaites co-authored an article for the 2010 NSS Conservation Issue with Gillespie and Lindberg.

- Zokaites, and William Ormdorf continue their contributions to the White Nose Syndrome (WNS) research and management efforts within the state of Virginia.

- Zokaites, Ormdorf and Chris Hoson attended the 15th Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Bat Diversity Network and the 20th Colloquium on Conservation of Mammals in the Southeastern United Sates symposium presented in February in Asheville, NC. The PU crew expressed the need for researchers and managers to work with cavers. One outcome of this meeting is the need for a national education campaign for WNS.

- Zokaites in partnership with the Virginia Cave Board is developing a poster for WNS and a press release for the state.

- PU continues WNS information and educational efforts in partnership with Peter Youngbrier for updates to the NSS WNS website.

Plans:

- Project Underground, 4th Edition is scheduled for March 2010 publication. The 4th edition will be printed in a new format, which is conducive to eco-friendly revisions and will include a bat lesson. The bat lesson was developed in partnership with Bat Conservation International and uses bats as a way to teach mathematics concepts.

- 2010 NSSCON workshop has been proposed. Zokaites has been working in collaboration with NSSCON session chairman to invite local educators and education students to attend.

Problems:
Funding is an issue for the PU program, because of the loss of funding from the state of Virginia. Because the NSS Environmental Education Committee is based on developing Kindergarten through 12th grade programs using the PU curriculum, the NSS BOG should discuss possibilities to finically support this program.

Youth Groups Liaison Committee
Chairman, Allen Maddox
nssyouth@caves.org

"Youth Group Liaison Committee, through the Regional Coordinators, partners, and associates, acts as a connection between the National Speleological Society and its mission, and youth organizations seeking to include the sciences and arts of speleology and cave exploration to their program."

Progress/Plans:
Maddox is making progress in getting volunteers in each region to serve as a liaison. Maddox is developing structure and strategic plan for the committee.

Problems: None to report

Education Grants and Scholarship Committee
Chairman, Pam Tegelman Mallabad
am.teg.mal@gmail.com

"This committee is responsible for supporting and administering educational grants and scholarships." (Act 19-704)

Progress/Plans: Two pending requests, both requests require more information from applicants.

Problems: High number of spam in requests.

Safety & Techniques Committee
Interim Chairman, Aaron Bird
bird2@oakland.edu

Keeler note: Aaron has been acting as the Interim Chairman. There is a motion on the agenda to confirm Aaron as the Safety and Techniques Committee Chairman

"The Safety and Techniques Committee (STC) promotes safe caving practices through the study and refinement of techniques, with a secondary emphasis on analysis of equipment. The committee works with grottos, government agencies, and National Parks on developing caving guidelines,

hazard analyses, and accident investigation. Recommendations, results, and educational material are passed on to the NSS membership through the STC column in the *NSS News* and through workshops at the NSS Convention." (Act 91-330)

Progress:

Since previous NSS Board of Governors Meeting:

I. STC Chair Position

A. In Fall 2009, former STC Chairperson, Kurt Waldron, decided to refocus his efforts on the Safety and Techniques Committee as a member, rather than as chairperson. Kurt is very busy with his important career work and wanted the STC to be as productive as possible.

B. Kurt nominated Aaron Bird to be the STC Chairperson. Dianne Gillespie accepted this recommendation and submitted the nomination to Ray Keeler, Administrative VP.

C. Aaron Bird was identified as *Interim Chair* of the STC in early 2010. A formal vote by the BOG is required to formally name a chairperson of this committee.

II. STC Membership Campaign

A. Aaron has initiated an outreach effort to increase membership and involvement of NSS members in the Safety and Techniques Committee

B. A questionnaire was sent by email to NSS members listed as Grotto Officers on the NSS website, in the NSS Members Manual, and on NSS Grotto Websites. A secondary email was sent by Internal Organizations Chair, Keith Wheeland, to ensure full coverage of Grotto Officers.

C. The key language of the message is: *"Our goal is to establish a network of knowledgeable, skilled, and experienced cavers who can help develop curriculum and training programs for cavers and non-cavers. We would very much appreciate it if you could please take a moment and complete the following short questionnaire regarding training and outreach for your grotto… Key outcomes we wish to achieve are reductions in injuries and fatalities, as well as expanding education on cave conservation, particularly in regards to White Nose Syndrome (WNS) among bats."* A URL was included with the email message that took volunteers to a web-based survey asking the following: 1. if grotto members had conducted community outreach programs, 2. if they had used formal curriculum for trainings, and 3. if they would like to involved in STC activities in the future.

D. As of 02/15/2010, there were 128 web viewings of the survey with 45 completed, many of which were from NSS members expressing personal and grotto interest for being

involved in developing formal curriculum for safety, education, and conservation outreach.

E. Analysis of questionnaires is not complete at this time. However, selected quotes from the feedback section are of potential interest and are included below.

   a. *"… often we only see new people one time and they never make a grotto trip. I don't know if they were expecting more than what we offer at a meeting… "*

   b. *"Our grotto rotates membership very frequently so it would be hard to find someone to* [participate in STC activities]*."*

   c. *"… the Vertical Section has lots of info but you have to sign up separately by mail, and some of their skills lists are pretty long. I'd like to see a basic one-pager that we can publish in the NSS News and every grotto can hand out and use, that clearly lists what skills and (appropriate for region) gear everybody should have before ever getting on rope in a cave, as well as several basic safety tips."*

   d. *"I would oppose any idea of certification in caving skills per se. Things are very different from one region to another. The idea that you have to be certified to go caving could start bigger problems than it would cure."*

   e. *"New cavers are not such a concern in our region... I would love to know they are being trained but not willing to simply devote time to non-cavers which will never be seen again."*

   f. In regards to formal curriculum, *"…we refer to On Rope 1 and Alpine Caving Techniques a lot."*

   g. Regarding conservation and cave closures, *"Out here in the West, WNS has not yet become a factor. With the latest push to close all caves to entry I would like to express one item: Most of our caves are located on BLM or public property and the majority of the local population would only be angered and spurred to continue what they consider their rightful use of those caves. In essence the government would be restricting the one group trying to educate* [about] *caves…"*

   h. *"WNS is slowly killing our Grotto because we have nothing to offer newcomers. The old members are getting older and it's critical that we get new blood. The flow of new cavers has slowed to a trickle and our Grotto is running mostly on momentum. That will only last a finite time before we fizzle out as an active club."*

Brief Report of Responses to STC Questionnaire as of 03/01/2010

F. 240 total web views

G. 65 completed questionnaires

H. 54 different grottos represented

I. Nearly 70% do at least some form of recruitment. Only a few do diligent recruitment.

J. Most do some form of community outreach.

K. 22% use some form of curriculum for their training programs.

L. 35 respondents provided emails and expressed interest in contributing.

III. STC Focus Areas as Defined by Current and Previous Boards of Governors

Note: The following is taken from the Board of Governors Manual.

A. *"The goal of the Safety and Techniques Committee is "Safety Through Knowledge". Activities of the Committee include analyzing and reporting accidents and near accidents, equipment study and testing, and development of safe caving techniques. (Act 91-330)*
B. *III.The Safety and Techniques Committee of the NSS should be the repository for all information relating to caving safety, techniques, and equipment and is charged with the following activities and responsibilities:*
    a. *(1) Provide assistance to internal organizations in regard to caving techniques, equipment, and safety considerations as requested, and in the establishment of grotto safety committees and educational programs.*
    b. *(2) Upon request provide assistance and advice to other Society committees, activities, and programs in regard to caving techniques, equipment, and safety considerations.*
    c. *(3) Prepare short articles on various caving techniques and/or equipment for distribution to the NSS membership; such activity should be coordinated through the Caving Information Series.*
    d. *(4) Prepare slide show programs on various caving equipment, techniques, first aid, and safety considerations, with distribution to be cooridinated through the Audio-Visual Aids Committee.*
    e. *(5) Provide information concerning caving techniques, equipment, safety, and safety education to the membership upon request and through the NSS NEWS.*
    f. *(6) Conduct valuations on existing and new equipment used in caving and report these evaluations in a clear, objective, and precise manner to the membership via the NSS NEWS.*
    g. *(7) Collect, catalog, and evaluate reports of caving accidents, equipment failures, and similar phenomena; provide non-anonymous information to the*

Editor for publication in AMERICAN CAVING ACCIDENTS; and, at the discretion of the Safety and Techniques Committee Chairman, report or publish such information through other outlets.

h. *(8) Maintain and develop a repository of knowledge and information concerned with caving safety, techniques, and equipment, and conduct research on the improvement of existing caving equipment and the development of new caving techniques and educational methods.*

i. *(9) Work with equipment manufacturers and distributors to mitigate or eliminate safety hazards of equipment.*"

IV. Recent Fatalities in American Caves

There have been two tragic deaths in US caves in the past few months. The first was in Nutty Putty Cave, Utah, where John Jones became stuck in a down-sloping squeeze passage and died on November 25, 2009 after nearly 24 hours of trying to get out with assistance from cave rescuers. His body remains in the cave. Nutty Putty Cave, which was a very popular wild cave in Utah, was declared a tomb by local officials and has been sealed shut with concrete. The second death occurred in Sloans Valley Cave, Kentucky, where Steven Troxell fell into a pit on December 16, 2009. His body was recovered the next day by cave rescuers.

a. It is of note that both individuals were new or non-cavers. Both were caving with friends and family members whose caving experience was likely limited. Also of note, both tragedies may have been averted with simple steps, such as basic training in caving skills and information about the hazards of the caves. Would it have been helpful to have had signage or registers in the caves near these hazards?

b. A review of the NSS Accident and Incident Reports from 2007, 2008, and 2009 -to date- shows a number of fatalities by both cavers and non-cavers in both air-filled and flooded caves. Most of the fatalities are divers in Florida springs and caverns, however, one drowning death was in a Texas cave by the owner/operator of the commercial enterprise Cave Without a Name.

c. Details of the fatalities are typically limited and available through cavechat links to news articles.

d. Over this time period, there have been many more injuries than fatalities in US caves. There have probably been many, many more near misses. It may be useful to conduct more analysis of injuries and begin collecting data from ***near misses***. Perhaps an online survey or reporting tool could be used for getting information about near-miss events.

V. Education Division Session at 2010 NSS Convention

Some ideas for topics in the STC portion of the session may include:

a. Cave-skills training/workshop presentation methods for non-cavers
b. Overview of cave-training efforts in the US and internationally
c. Motivators for unified and collective cave-skills training programs

VI. Proposed: Models for cave-skills training

To reduce the probability of cave-related injuries and fatalities, research has been done to learn about the structure, materials, and operations of successful models of cave-related training organizations.

a. In the US, a very successful model is that employed by the National Cave Rescue Commission of the NSS. This organization's primary purpose is to "…train and track cave rescue resources throughout the United States….The main focus of the NCRC is development and maintenance of a national curriculum in cave rescue operations. It maintains a cadre of qualified cave rescue instructors, who help it deliver cave rescue educational programs at the national and regional levels, in a variety of formats."
b. Outside of the US, very well developed models for cave training exist in the United Kingdom, France, and Austria. Each of these countries has multiple courses in various levels of cave-skills training and cave-rescue training.
c. Curriculum used by the British Caving Association is available on the web at http://www.british-caving.org.uk/?page=7
d. There are many others who also conduct cave-skills training based on the BCA LCLMA model, such as Apex-> http://www.mountainleadercourses.co.uk/Introduction-to-the-LCMLA.php

VII. Proposed: Possible Agenda Items for STC Conference Call

a. Addressing deaths and injuries by non-cavers in US caves
b. Education Division Sessions at 2010 NSS Convention
c. Training approaches for cave-skills development courses
d. What models already exist for a national-level cave-skills course?
e. Are UK or Austrian cave-training models applicable to the US?
f. Increase membership in NSS through cave-skills training offerings
g. Tentative date for STC conference call – January 20, 2010
h. Need to investigate options for conference call or online meeting
i. Karst Information Portal

VIII. Proposed: Karst Information Portal as repository for STC-related materials

a. "The Safety and Techniques Committee of the NSS should be the repository for all information relating to caving safety, techniques, and equipment…"
b. At November 2009 BOG meeting, Todd Chavez was approved as NSS President's liaison to the Karst Information Portal.

c. An effort should be made to identify all cave-safety and techniques related articles, books, and publications. Meta-level data keywords can be placed with the citation to indicate it is a cave safety-related document.
d. Many issues of the Nylon Highway are available to NSS Members on the NSS website.

National Cave Rescue Commission
National Coordinator, Anmar Mirza
anmar.mirza@gmail.com

"The Rescue Commission serves as an advisory training, developmental, and coordinating agency to work with cavers, government agencies, and rescue teams. The Commission provides training programs and will assist in solving specific cave rescue problems. They will also develop or evaluate cave rescue plans and resources." (Act 91-370)

Spring 2010 NCRC Report to the BOG. Anmar Mirza, National Coordinator.

Progress:

The NCRC Training Manual is undergoing continued improvement and refinement.
The NCRC Curriculum in undergoing continued improvement and refinement.
The new level X, renamed the Technical Operations and Field Exercises is ready for pilot testing and is being offered at the Mentone, Alabama National Seminar in May. This is intended as an intermediate step between levels 2 and 3 and discussion is ongoing as to whether to make it a required level or an optional level. Feedback from students and instructors from this level's pilot test will help determine this.
This year's National Seminar is first ever utilizing an online registration system. Early feedback is overwhelmingly positive.
The Instructor Recertification requirements were clarified and an updated Instructor test is being worked on.
The NCRC bank accounts under the NSS EID# are moving towards updated signature compliance per the NSS Treasurer.
Five scholarship awards to attend the National Seminar were made this year. These scholarships go to deserving NSS members based on need and contribution to the caving community.
The Education Committee meets monthly via conference call in addition to the twice annual physical work sessions.
Numerous trainings from 1 day seminars to Orientation To Cave Rescue were conducted across the United States. A weeklong level 1 and 2 regional seminar is being conducted In Puerto Rico in March.

Plans:

The NCRC is still considering the possibilities of fixed sites for 3 of 4 of the National Seminars on a rotating basis. The 4th will be open to bids to allow different areas of the country to host the seminar. There are many difficulties with finding suitable seminar sites.
A self-rescue curriculum is still under consideration for development.
The 2011 and 2012 National Seminar sites are still undetermined.

Problems:

The National Equipment Cache trailer was destroyed on the way to the 2009 seminar. The equipment was largely undamaged, but as this is the second time this has happened in 6 years, it demonstrates the increasing problem NCRC is having with transporting enough equipment to hold a national training seminar. The Equipment Manager was asked to form a committee to make recommendations and the best recommendation was still less than optimal keeping in mind the needs of cost.
NCRC is committed to keeping the cost of the trainings at a level that is conducive to the average caver attending, but this is increasingly difficult to do as site, equipment, and reporting requirements increase.
White Nose Syndrome has severely impacted the ability to find seminar sites as many caves formerly used are closed by state and federal agencies.

Respectfully submitted,
Anmar Mirza, National Coordinator, NCRC