National Speleological Society
Administrative Vice President's Report
Board of Governors Meeting ● Denver, CO
October 22, 2017

Prepared by: Katherine L Crispin, Ph.D.
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Video Salon	David Socky	videosalon@caves.org

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 21 committees and various subcommittees.

Mike Hood is still working on getting the Education Division back into shape. This should be one of our shining stars of the NSS, but currently we are sadly lacking. The biggest need is to get content created. This will be an ongoing focus for the remainder of this year and into the next – I anticipate high coordination between Education, Conservation and Management – all three are closely linked and they should present a uniform appearance as our "public face". We should be **the** go-to source on the internet for anything cave related.

It is an ongoing evaluation to determine committees that are repeatedly failing to report. Additionally, some committees may be combined or eliminated to better serve the needs of the NSS.

Here are some of the highlights of the Department of the Administrative Vice President:

- A bid is in process for the 2020 Convention. There have been a couple of interested parties for 2021.
- A couple of grants are in process (or complete) for cave conservation projects
    - Central Belize Corridor preserve - $1000
    - Peraçu, Brazil - $1250 – trail deliniation
- A grant was given to SCCi to help acquire the Deleo entrance
- We are still in need of a new WNS liaison – for now, Val and I have been fielding grant applications and other pressing issues, but we really need someone
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CAVE MANAGEMENT DIVISION REPORT SUMMARY

Prepared by John Wilson - Division Chair - jmwgeo@gmail.com

October 2017

The Cave Management Division Chief recommends: NSS BOG adjust their policies and procedures for disposing or managing any real estate that is donated to the NSS that does not have cave or karst features. The role of the Cave Management Division is cave and karst management. Our expertise and work focus is in the long-term property management of land with cave or karst features. We are not prepared to market real estate or manage property unrelated to caves for short periods. Real estate held for profit appreciation or rent is a valid function for the NSS; however, the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for profitable real estate management are significantly different from those needed to be successful at cave and karst management.

Cave Conservancies Committee - John M. Wilson - jmwgeo@gmail.com
We do not know of any proposed new Cave Conservancies. Most of the present NSS Cave Conservancies appear stable or growing modestly.

Cave Conservancy Roundtable - Jonathan B. Beard – mokanman@att.net
There was some confusion in convention scheduling as to when and where the Conservancy Round-table discussion would be held, and this may have resulted in a smaller participation by representatives of the conservancies. The published Program guide and email announcements indicated the room number as 1222, but this was changed the afternoon before the Friday round-table discussion was to occur. However, I didn't know what room it was changed to until arriving a bit before the meeting. I was then directed to the room 1106 and hung a handwritten sign for the round-table discussion. Slowly attendees filtered into the room. Some attendees had believed the meeting would be held later, some sooner, and at one point I was told that the conservancy round-table discussion and the NSS preserves meeting would be combined. At another point I was told some NSS preserves managers were meeting somewhere else. The chosen topic was discussed at length after other concerns/issues were discussed, and this was mixed with discussions by NSS preserves participants.

Minutes Cave Conservancy Round Table, 6/23/2017
Round-table chair Jon Beard opened the meeting shortly after noon.
Attendees:

Name	Organization	Email
Jon Beard	Missouri Caves & Karst Conservancy	mokanman@att.net
Mitch Berger	Northeastern Cave Conservancy	mitchb@mit.edu
Chuck Bitting	National Park Service, Buffalo National River	chuck_bitting@nps.gov
Diane Cousineau	Southeastern Cave Conservancy	dcousineau@earthlink.net

Paul Damon	Mid Atlantic Karst Conservancy	paulsr@paul-n-paul.com
Emily Davis	NSS Property Manager; NCC Office Manager	emily@speleobooks.com
Mark Hodge	Butler Cave Conservation Society	markhodge@virginiacaves.org
Ellen Hofler	Appalachian Cave Conservancy	ellenhofler@gmail.com
Cait McCann	City of Austin, Wildland Conservation Division	caitmccann@austintexas.gov
Gary Moss	Cricket Maze Cave Association	gmossKVR@gmail.com
Jim Sherrell	Missouri Caves & Karst Conservancy	JimSHerrell@sbcglobal.net
Bill Stringfellow	Southeastern Cave Conservancy	bill.stringfellow@SCCI.org
Bill Walden	Manager of NSS Wells Cave Nature Preserve	wdwalden@windstream.net
Michael Warner	NSS Property Manager; NCC Office Manager	mike@speleobooks.com
John M. Wilson	Appalachian Cave Conservancy	jmwgeo@gmail.com
Paul Winter	Butler Cave Conservation Society	pawwinter@gmail.com

Prompts

1. Finding and training the next generation of cave stewards.
2. What activities are being undertaken for outreach to landowners?

Discussion on Field Houses – Enabling Caving/Conservation Activities

- A field house can be useful for hosting events and improving attendance. Primitive camping can dissuade people from participating in projects, especially people coming from a distance.
- An example was given cave volunteers staying in a cabin with large woodrats up a 4WD road. It was very much "primitive camping." Small groups used it to undertake projects. Once the activities were moved to a place with running water and amenities, it led to much larger involvement and volunteer activities.

Discussion on How to Buy a Cave

Fundraising –There are many ways to fundraise successfully.

- NSF – National Speleological Foundation – can be used to help increase funds via long-term trust funds.
- Grants gateways can open up larger sources.
- The NSS offers some support for funding of caves.
- Land Trust Alliance – Open Space Institute
- Land Trust Bank
- A benefactor can buy the cave and donate it.
- Surface use of property by non-cavers can be high in certain areas. This segment of people may be interested in fundraising to preserve lands and greenspaces, but not the caves per se.
- Owning a popular cave draws interest to a conservancy and makes it more likely people will support it financially.
- The SCCi has a permit system to access its cave preserves: it has a "donate now" button and people do use it.

General Land Purchasing Advice

- Make sure mineral rights are still tied to the property. Some rights can be given along with the deed.
- Keep eyes out on local property records.
- Always have property surveyed when you buy it. Very critical to have proper survey.
- Have a lawyer review any transactions to ensure things are properly documented and transferred.
- Land donations from owners who want to protect the land are an opportunity.
- The general public have more money to commit than the caving community. Find out what resources are on the property that can serve the broader public.
- "Preserve" maintenance can be a good activity for those interested in birding, native species, and as a tool for local schools educating young people. School or science class may be interested in supporting a cave or property through various means.
- Outreach to other groups is very important and can help fulfil charitable purpose.
- 501c3 non-profit should actively consider what public benefit is being provided. i.e., A hiking trail on the property benefits the public.

Persuading someone to sell his or her cave

- It is critical to maintain a good relationship with the landowners.
- In at least one instance, letting the owner name the future nature preserve was the critical detail that persuaded them to sell the cave.
- Patience is extremely important. Play the long game… Decades sometimes.
- Nuisance properties can be offered for free if the owner sees them as a burden

Some general advice for purchasing a cave property

- The large valuable properties can be burdensome for a conservancy to purchase. How to work with reluctant landowners?
- Complications with heirs if there is not enough estate planning.
- Capital gains offset on a property. Donation to reduce tax burden. Essential to stay in touch with the landowners. Send Xmas cards every year.
- After a land is timbered or loses value, the owner may be open to sale.
- "Legacy" such as honoring them with a name of the preserve. Landowners retaining rights to historic sites can be important.

Conserving Cave Properties

- Showing the community and getting them involved can help create a sense of ownership and show them what a resource caves are.
- Government designations "National Natural Landmark" can provide some protection, but often there are exceptions.
- Consider outreach to local teachers and schools to educate the populace.
- Some "conservancies" are willing to transfer properties. Conservation easements are not always in perpetuity. It can be a case-by-case basis, so use caution.
- Kiosk is important, and people love to see them. The kiosk should explain, "Why did we buy it?" It also might fix a problematic party spot and prevent unauthorized access. Make a simple kiosk out of wood and cover with Plexiglas to protect a

single, professional sheet of paper with everything on it; however, a poster in a single sheet looks nicer. Make sure your logo is included.

Effectively Managing a Cave

- Formal transition policies do not easily address specific issues: each cave is unique.
- Using email and mail for management works for 90% of cave management.
- The online permit system used for all SCCi caves automatically handles certain aspect, while still using manages for certain requests. Some are automatic, and some require approval. It records relevant information like names and phone numbers of people going to the cave.
- High trespassing rates can be dealt with by enforcing property lines and reducing access. For instance, using rip-rap for blocking the private road. Forcing people to walk or park in visible areas. Enforce property lines.
- A partnership with local grottos to lead trips is fine. Some concern exists for "leading" trips, which could be a liability issue. Trip leader trainings can assist with leadership opportunities.
- Scout rules should be reviewed and are online. There is a requirement for maximum trip size and ratio that scout leaders must adhere to.
- Community involvement can be of great benefit to the preserve. Showing them the cave and property can give them a sense of ownership and stewardship.
- Multiple Managers of caves can prevent issues from a single contact falling off the map.
- Have a younger caver be an assistant to learn the process. Getting new people involved is very important. Takes a certain mindset to manage a cave.
- Stopgap members can step in temporarily to assist members.
- Insurance can provide reassurance to someone who is nervous about liability.

Liability Insurance and Directors/Officers Insurance

- By incorporating, there is liability.
- Commercial caves have insurance for taking people into caves.
- Most states have a recreation/general obligations/sportsman's law. General liability insurance policy is to help front the costs of mounting a defense. Using the sportsman law, you should win. However, the costs to fight a suit can be very large.
- General Liability insurance can be essential for land owning conservancies. This helps prevent bodily injury claims from impacting your mission to protect caves. Director and Officer Insurance deals with employment practices, claims of discrimination, harassment, neglecting of duties, etc. It is also important since general liability will not cover allegations of this nature.
- Personal Liability Insurance can also be considered to assist, and is usually not a very expensive annual cost. Your insurance agent can advise between the differences between a land trust/conservancy vs. a caving club.
- The NSS has a landowner defense fund that can be activated to assist a landowner being sued. Again, cost of defending is the true reason for insurance.

- Consider having a lawyer analyze the liability of the conservancy in the states that it plans to own land.

Conservancy Retreat Weekend

There is interest in a "Conservancy Meetup Weekend" at a central location for 2.5 day meeting. It will hopefully occur in the next few years for discussing current issues, problems, best practices, successful events, best practices, etc.

Unanswered Question

- How many caves are owned by a.) Cave conservancies, 2.) Other conservancies, 3.) Cavers, 4.) Non-cavers?

Conservation Administration

- BOG changed rules for a conservancy. Requirements are lessened. No rules about how to approve a conservancy are specifically called out.
- There have not been any recent requests for conservancy status. Until an issue arises, the situation will remain as it is now.

Round-table/NSS preserves meeting was adjourned approximately 4:00 p.m.
Discussion recorded by Paul Winter

Contemporary Cave Use Study -

The committee is working with Information Technology Division Chief, Will Urbanski and Ad Hoc Membership Committee Chair Kristine Ebrey to evaluate the practicality of cave visit data entered by cavers and other cave visitors into an NSS maintained database. The proposed system would provide information for scientific study of cave use as well as contact information of non-NSS cavers who might be asked to join the NSS. If the CCUS database can be established and promoted as envisioned, all of the following people and groups will benefit, Cave managers, NSS membership committee, Speleologist primarily human and social scientist studying caving, Conservationist, Project cavers, and Grotto leaders. Cavers also benefit by having a record of their caving history and having a convenient means to enter data using a computer, or mobile device and retroactively record past caving data.

A research project using the CCUS format was completed in 2003 by Louis Geoffrey Schropp (Deceased) entitled Shawnee Caves Cave use Study FY 2003 Report to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. It appears that the CCUS committee was never informed of its publication. The 67-page report is available on the internet at,
https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/grants/Documents/WPFGrantReports/2003038W.pdf
The position of chair of the Contemporary Cave Use Study Chair is vacant. NSS leaders are asked to assist in finding a person who would be appropriate to chair this committee. The results from the work of this committee will help the NSS leadership better understand how caves in the United States are being used by cavers and the public. Anyone interested in helping with the CCUS committee should contact me by email jmwgeo@gmail.com or phone 808-929-8256. John M. Wilson

Cave Management Advisory Committee for Research

At this time, we are searching for a person to serve as chair of this committee.

Show Caves Coordinator - Gordon Smith, Chairman 812-945-5721 showcaves@caves.org
The following motion was approved at the March BOG meeting, "Show Caves Liaison Act 40-929 Crispin moved: The position of Show Caves Liaison is renamed to Show Cave Coordinator and moved to the Cave Management Division in the department of the Administrative Vice President."

NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee Report

September 11, 2017

Prepared by
Julie Schenck-Brown, Chair of the NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee and
Tom Griffin, Vice-Chair of the NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (Membership Listed at the End of Report)

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Tom Griffin, Vice-Chair of the Eastern Region a1topcatdesign@gmail.com

Rick & Gaylene Speaect, Vice-Chairs of the Western Region
rick@cavetopia.com and gaylene@cavetopia.com

OVERVIEW

The NSS reestablished the Landowner Relations Network Committee (LRNC) in 2016 with the principal goal of interacting with and supporting private landowners (the NSS already has a government liaison that works with caves owned and maintained by public entities). The LRNC works with grottos and internal organizations of the NSS to provide support for questions and inquiries that private landowners have about their caves. Our mission statement is:

> *The NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee has been established to work on private sector landowner relations at a national level and facilitate access to the resources of the NSS for the purposes of cave conservation, cave access, cave preservation, and cave acquisition.*

Through this mission, members of the LRNC establish relationships with landowners of known caves that see frequent visitors, and visit owners of closed caves to re-establish relationships for cavers. Members also assist landowners that have questions about their caves and karst features and are not sure how to proceed. Thus, members of the NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee serve as a liaison between the NSS, grottos, and landowners, by supporting current relationships that grottos maintain with landowners and providing resources when there is no local presence.

PROGRESS

Landowner Relations Network Committee Awards

Since the previous report, the NSS LRNC Certificate of Appreciation for landowner-caver relations was awarded to the following landowner:

- John Attaway who has encouraged the survey and exploration of his caves, with his kindness and generosity serving as the main inspiration for all who participated. John was even the first male surveyor to help the Psycho Survey Bitches, an all-female survey group that was founded during the survey of Red Trillium Cave, one of the many caves he owns. John has also initiated arrangements with the Southeast Cave Conservancy, Inc. (SCCi) to donate his caves and ensure perpetual protection and conservation.



LRNC Certificate of Appreciation Recipient, John Attaway, with the Psycho Survey Bitches (L-R Anne Grindle, Maureen Handler, John Attaway, Julie Schenck-Brown, Bambi Dunlap)

Pending applications for the NSS LRNC Certificate of Appreciation are anticipated for landowners in Florida who have been identified for recognition by the Flint River Grotto, as well as Dr. Latterell who owns Molers Cave in West Virginia and Mr. Steven Williams, owner of Whitings Neck Cave in West Virginia; these applications are being submitted by members of the LRNC; applications are also being solicited from cavers who are not members of the LRNC.

Special thanks again to Amber Lehmann who designed the LRNC Certificate of Appreciation to recognize landowners. These certificates are printed in Huntsville at C&A Printing, who are very generous to supply a greatly reduced rate that is less than half the price of the big box store printing companies; a special thanks to Chuck and Angi Rogers, owners of C&A Printing, who have supported cavers for years.

The inaugural NSS award for Outstanding Landowner-Caver Relations was presented to Mr. Grant Carey, owner of Cave of the Winds in Colorado, during the 2017 NSS Convention Awards Banquet. The presentation was made by Geary Schindel, NSS President, since the NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee Executive Committee (Julie, Tom, Rick, and Gaylene) was not able to attend. In advance of this recognition, Mr. Carey was notified via letter from the LRNC Chair and invited to the 2017 NSS Convention as a guest, but was unable to attend. Thus, Geary mailed the award with a handwritten note to Mr. Carey.



Articles in the NSS News and Regional Caving Publications

- Rand Heazlitt's article, *Landowners: The Future of Original Exploration and the NSS*, was featured in the August 2017 issue of the *NSS News.* This article highlights landowners who allow access to the Binkley's Cave System in Indiana, one of the Nation's longest and most active survey projects.
- An article that describes the work of Mr. Grant Carey, landowner of Cave of the Winds in Colorado to ensure access, education and conservation for cavers and who is the inaugural recipient of the NSS Outstanding Landowner-Caver Relations Award has been submitted to the NSS News and will be printed this year. This article is was written by Richard Rhinehart, who is an LRNC member.
- An article written by Julie Schenck-Brown that is titled, *Landowners Make the Difference in TAG* is scheduled for publication in the *40th Annual TAG Fall Cave-In Guidebook*, which is an 88-page bound book with a printing run of 1,500 copies. The article describes the purpose of the LRNC, highlights a few TAG landowners, and discusses the work of the southeastern members of the LRNC.
- An article written about the kindness and generosity of John Attaway, cave landowner and NSS member, was written for the Sewanee Mountain Cave Fest Guidebook, which had a printing run of several hundred copies.
- Members of the NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee are encouraged to contribute updates and articles to the *NSS News*, but are also solicited for articles by the Chair and Vice-Chairs.

Brochure

- The content for the NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee has been approved by the LRNC Executive Committee and was sent to Amber Lehmann for design layout. Amber anticipates having a draft by the end of September, with printing anticipated in October.
- This brochure will be distributed to landowners and cavers.
- The brochure will be printed, and a PDF version is also being developed for download from the NSS website.
- We are still requesting that members submit photos to LRNC@caves.org for consideration of publication in the brochure or other articles.
- Per Dr. Kat Crispin, NSS AVP, money has been allocated in the annual budget to print the LRNC brochures.

Business Cards

- The content for the NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee business cards has been collected and sent to Amber Lehmann for design and layout.
- Members of the NSS Landowner Network Relations Committee will be provided business cards to distribute to landowners and cavers. These cards will provide contact information for the NSS, plus an area for a LRNC member to include their name and contact information.
- Per Dr. Kat Crispin, NSS AVP, money has been allocated in the annual budget to print the LRNC business cards.

Facebook Group

- Please join us on Facebook at **NSS Landowner Relations Network** to share your stories of landowner-caver relations, especially successes and lessons learned!
- This group is officially sanctioned by the NSS and is open to all cavers and landowners.
- Similar to the LRNC brochure, we need photos of landowners with cavers and their cave. But, please do not include specific locations (GPS coordinates, driving directions, etc.)
- We also need someone within the LRNC who has a more dedicated presence to Facebook, thus being able to provide updates every few days to keep content fresh.

Annual Meeting

- Members of the NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee Executive Committee were not able to attend the 2017 NSS Convention, thus there was no annual meeting scheduled.
- We anticipate having a meeting at the 2018 NSS Convention.

Holiday Cards for Landowners

- If there is money in the budget, we want to propose sending holiday cards to landowners. As this list could be rather exhaustive if grottos from across the country provided contact information, perhaps just mail the cards to the award recipients? This could remind the landowners that we still think of them after the award and encourage others to submit nominations for awards.

NSS Webinar

- Debbie Spoons has been contacted about our plans to develop a webinar on landowner relations and reports there are several dates open on her calendar; Debbie runs the controls on the Go to Webinar program, but the LRNC is responsible for developing and presenting the program.
- A decision was made to postpone the webinar until the brochures and business cards are printed and available to LRNC members as well as interested cavers and landowners.

Proposed New Cave Location Policy for NSS Board Consideration

- The LRNC was contacted by Richard Rhinehart, who is a members of the Committee to ask for support to present a motion to the BOG regarding an update to the NSS Cave Location Policy. In addition, Richard has asked that the NSS LRNC provide an official announcement of support for this motion. However, the LRNC Executive Committee thinks it is best to remain neutral on any policies related to cave access as our interest is working with landowners and cavers who may have diverse and conflicting views. Members of the NSS BOG who serve on the LRNC are welcome to introduce the motion and vote accordingly. In addition, this motion should be considered by Dr. Kat Crispin, NSS AVP, as her position manages several divisions related to cave access, conservation and education.

PROJECTS IN THE EASTERN REGION

Prepared by Tom Griffin, NSS 24333
Eastern Region Vice-Chair for the NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee

On paper my update for the NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee (LRNC) doesn't look like much. Since the re-establishment of the LRNC, I am more aware of the landowners of the caves we have been visiting. Not that I didn't meet with them previously as I have always enjoyed talking with landowners. I like spending time talking to the landowners or care takers of properties with caves, trying to understand the cave's history, how they became owners of the property and cave, as well as getting to know them. One issue that is still difficult is finding out what will happen to the cave or property when the owner moves on from this earth.

Most of us from the Eastern Region are very much aware of the access that cavers lost at Mystic Cave, Pendleton County WV. When Pricilla Teter was alive and lucid she was always talking with her cavers. Harry the care taker of the property made sure we all had a place to park. He also made sure that the cavers would visit Ms. Teter as Harry always said she loved her cavers. Then Ms. Teter passed with no talk of what may happen to her house, property or cave after her death. The executor took over the property along with six kin folk.

After several months, it was discovered that Mr. Steven Callen purchased 138 acres of property to include Mystic Cave. While Mr. Callen is an NSS member who lives in Morgantown, WV, has kept Mystic Cave closed since he purchased it. I spoke to Mr. Callen and while he sounded very interested in preservation and conservation of the cave, he also started to talk about how he needed to get a return from his purchases. Mr. Callen mentioned that he knew this was an important cave for those that have visited Mystic and also mentioned being in conversation with the local DNR about gating the cave. While

the DNR would like the cave gated, a study found that gating the cave would not be a wise decision. At this time, Mystic Cave is still closed. My opinion of Mr. Callen is he would sell the cave for the right price or hand over the management of the cave to the right person.

The situation at Mystic Cave reminded me of the importance of the NSS LRNC, as well as my position. And I want to thank Dr. Kat Crispin, NSS AVP, and Julie Schenck-Brown, Chair of the NSS LRNC for bringing me onboard.

A summary of my other activities include:

- Contact the Eastern Region Ambassadors of the NSS LRNC who were initially selected by the by the AVP. I am also working to identify grotto representatives in my region, so when the LRNC Chairman has a project that needs support, questions answered, or if a call comes into the NSS HQ about a landowner, we will have a local representative we can reach out too.
- Contact the landowner Boyles Cave, who is in her 80s or early 90s and owns two caves. The landowner has a property manager that watches over the property while cavers are on the property. Mr. Ron Sines is the manager, he is working on getting me history on the owner, property and cave.
- A second project is Whitings Neck Cave, which has been owned by the Williams family. Mr. Steven Williams is the only remaining family member and is currently living on the property. Whitings Neck has always been open to any caver that came along and the owners' only request was not to be bothered and not block the access to their home. Mr. Williams said as long as he is around Whitings Neck will always be available to all cavers. Tri State Grotto and NSS member Bob Bennett is working with Mr. Williams to ensure cavers will have access. Again the original owners have passed on, its fortunate that they had a sibling that was willing to be as gracious as they were. Otherwise, we may have lost another nice cave.
- Back in the 1970s, hundreds of cavers would visit Molers Cave. The cave and the surrounding 120 acres have been owned by Dr. Latterell since 1972. Dr. Lattrell was a Professor at Shepherd College, which is now a University. The cave was gated in 1993 and closed for science research only. The cave had not been entered for 8 years until Bob Bennett and I visited Dr. Latterell, who requested that we help him get the gate open. Bob and I also changed the locks and took him, as well as his girlfriend into Molers. At the time Dr. Latterell was about 86 years old and his girlfriend, Mary, was about 85 years old. This was about 2 years ago and we need to follow up rather than wonder what will happen in the future.
- Dyers Cave, which I was just shown recently. When I asked about visitation for the cave, I was told the owner was elderly and does not live in the house next to the cave anymore. The daughter is the main contact.
- The owner of Baker Quarry is in his 80s and owns 2300 acres along with many other properties. Tri State Grotto manages the Quarry and cave, and I asked grotto contact for this cave about access after the current owner passes, who mentioned he had no idea. The grotto representative from the Tri State Grotto was also unsure of how to approach the owner, but did approach him and was told a lawyer handles affairs related to his estate.

These are just a few caves in my back yard all owned by people in their 80s. How many other caves will we lose by not getting to know our landowners or asking these possibly sensitive questions? Another good reason to have our NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee.

PROJECTS IN THE SOUTHEASTERN REGION

- The TAG Closed Cave List is being updated with plans to have copies available at the TAG Fall Cave-In. This is a very popular handout that lists landowner contact information for special access caves, as well as an abbreviated list of caves that are closed for hunting season or the foreseeable future.
- In preparation for the TAG Fall Cave-In, landowners are being contact via handwritten cards from the Dogwood City Grotto and with in-person visits to remind them of a possible increase in cave visitation over the event weekend.
- Samantha Tyler of the LRNC reports that the Flint River Grotto has identified several landowners as candidates for the LRNC Certificate of Appreciation. The Flint River Grotto has also been active in the past year with projects focused on promoting landowner relations, including:
  - Florida Caverns State Park clean up on National Public Lands Day (Sep. 30th) to clean the algae growth caused by the lights in the show cave.
  - Participating in Cavern's Cultural Celebration by Friends of Florida Caverns Oct. 7th
  - Local cave clean-ups (Power Pole, Glory Hole)
  - Digging out sand crawl in Climax Cave in S. GA.
  - Surveys and re-surveys in Jackson Co. led by Mathew Bull (Power Pole, Loop Cave)
  - Assisted in restoration project at the newly acquired NSS property Sims Sink in Suwanee Co.
  - Clean up at Waterfall Cave in S. GA after a non-caver fell and EMS responded
- Both Brad Long and Lesley Colton, who are members of the LRNC, had made contact with the landowners at Crownover Saltpeter Cave to ask them to consider allowing access again to this very popular cave. The landowners still deny access, but Brad and Lesley will continue to monitor the situation.
- The possibility of accessing Guys Cave, an extremely popular multi-drop in TAG is still being pursued Andy Zellner, a member of the LRNC.
- With the proposal for the 2019 NSS Convention to be held in Cookeville, TN, local LRNC member, Teri Stephens, is ready to serve as the main POC for landowner relations as she has been making regular contact with landowners in this area about the Convention.
- A photo trip to Varnedoe Cave, AL was completed with Julie Schenck-Brown, LRNC Chair; Nathan Williams, Cave Photographer Extraordinaire; and Alexander Dobrowolski to capture photos of the cave for the landowner. Nathan is furnishing copies of the photos to Mike Friday, the landowner. Nathan also has plans to return to take photos of Mike in his cave.
- The property containing Solution Rift and Sawmill Well has been reported to be up for auction due to failure of the family to pay property taxes. The property contains over a dozen caves and was owned by the late Charlie Smith, a friend of cavers, who left the property to his adult children, who had also welcomed cavers. Access to these caves is not known at this time, but outreach will be conducted to evaluate future access.

PROPOSAL

- Previous discussion has proposed an option for landowners to leave a message at the NSS Office after hours on a dedicated extension, such as "Press 3, if you're a landowner." This effort is being coordinated by the NSS OVP and the NSS AVP. However, an update to this proposal would be to have the phone message forward to the LRNC Chair and Vice-Chairs. Thus, this will need to be evaluated by the NSS OVP as to whether or not this is possible.

NSS ACQUISITION COMMITTEE
Tom Griffin, Chairman
Julie Schenck-Brown, Vice-Chair
September 11, 2017

The NSS Acquisition Committee has a few ongoing projects as well as a new prospect in Tennessee. Julie Schenck-Brown is taking the lead on this possible purchase with more information coming after a site visit that has been confirmed for September 30, 2017.

Note from AVP Crispin: I have chosen to redact the acquisition committee report. Upon publication of my previous report to the BOG, a situation arose which resulted in the NSS losing out on a possible key acquisition. To this end, I am choosing to be highly selective as to what is publicly disseminated prior to paperwork being signed. I regret that this is necessary as I had hoped that NSS cavers would be more sensitive and respectful to landowner relations. Anyone who would like a more complete report is welcome to contact me personally.

CONSERVATION DIVISION REPORT SUMMARY

Prepared by Val Hildreth-Werker and Jim C. Werker, Division Chiefs
werks@cunacueva.com werks@zianet.com

Conservation Division Summary/ Highlights

- At ICS in Australia, Val & Jim presented outcomes of our First International Cave Conservation Management/Restoration Course in Brazil, plans for 2nd course, and Conservation Course for Guides taking place at Peruaçu while we were attending ICS. The Werkers drove the Outback, visiting and consulting with cave managers and specialists at several Australian cave systems.
- Jim & Val will attend October 2017 NCKMS in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. We plan to use two of the registration slots associated with NSS Sponsorship. Before NCKMS, more speleothem repair and resto at Floyd Collins Crystal Cave and other venues at Mammoth Cave National Park, KY.
- Annual Conservation Issue of NSS News 2018: Send notice of intent and articles to werks@cunacueva.com by January 15 deadline.

Biological Response Committee/ White Nose Syndrome Liaison Report

The NSS is looking for cavers to join the Biological Response Committee. We also need someone to chair the committee. Contact AVP@caves.org or werks@cunacueva.com

Cave Vandalism Deterrence Commission

Sarah Richards, Chairman vandalismdeterrence@caves.org or srichster@gmail.com

- No report received for this period.

Conservation Committee

Conservation Committee – Val & Jim werks@cunacueva.com

A few reports came in for this period. Internet communication was unreliable while we were in the Outback. I'm not certain my requests made it to all the Conservation Team inboxes. And I wonder if all the reports actually found my inbox. We'll go with what has come in at this point, since we've just made it back home and I have a death in the family – Val, Sept 23.

Conservation Sub-committee Reports Received This Period

Conservation Group and Grotto Awards

Kathleen Lavoie, Chairman lavoiekh@plattsburgh.edu

- 2017 Group Award and Grotto Awards were presented the USFS Sandia Ranger District and to Sandia Grotto of Albuquerque for the Sandia Cave Restoration Project on the outskirts of Albuquerque.
- Nominate Your Group/Grotto by submitting articles to the NSSNews Conservation issue and by posting project reports on NSS Social Media venues.

Brochures Coordinator

Cheryl Jones cs.jones@verizon.net

- Nothing to Report

NSS Conservation Network

Steve Smith stevenlsmith@usa.net

- Great place to get rapid alerts out!! (Infrequent sends intentional).

- E-mail list quickly disseminates info to IOs and interested individuals.
- Send e-mail updates to stevenlsmith@usa.net

NSS Conservation Website Coordinator
Plans in the air to coordinate pertinent pages through new IT personnel for enhanced go-to presence.

Conservation Grants
Val Hildreth-Werker werks@zianet.com
- Awarded Conservation Grant to initiate Park Guide Cave Stewardship Training in August 2017 and enable hands-on speleothem inventory and trail demarcation in the dark zone of Gruta do Janelão.
- Three delivered. Save-the-Caves Conservation Grants approved for 1) $700 conservation activities in Puerto Rico 2) $500 matching funds for cave gate in PA and 3) $1000 Montana high school caving club to continue GIS monitoring inside eight Arizona caves, compare to baseline data collected 20 years ago, publish magazine-format report, and continue the research program, Hans Bodenhamer, Bigfork High School.
- All have agreed to submit for Annual NSS News Conservation Issue.

Conservation Outreach-Ed with Cave Simulators
Dave Jackson jacksondmit@cavesim.com
We are trying to reach more students with our message of cave conservation. Please send Dave your ideas for schools, museums, or parks which might be interested in having CaveSim for an educational event. We travel all over the Lower 48 states.
- Plans: Upcoming events with the CaveSim trailer:
  - Aragon Elementary School, Fountain, CO, 9/27/2017
  - TAG Fall Cave-In, 10/6-10/8/2017
  - CoolScience Festival (free public event with SRT Tower only), UCCS, Colorado Springs, CO, 10/14/2017
  - Fernbank Science Center (free public event), Atlanta, GA, 10/14/2017
  - NCKMS, Eureka Springs, AR, 10/19-10/20/2017
  - Science Museum Oklahoma, Oklahoma City, 10/21/2017
  - The University School, Colorado Springs, CO, 10/24-10/25/2017
  - Colorado Association of Science Teachers, Denver, CO, 11/27/2017
  - Kartchner Caverns Cave Fest, 2/3-2/4/2017
- Progress (photos: www.cavesim.com/news):
    - Completed 4 weeks of Vertical Caving Camp at CaveSim CityROCK. Taught boys & girls ages 8-14 about cave conservation and how to use: rack, Frog, Prusik, Sked. All participants rappelled and ascended the 40' CaveSim pit. Great verti gear from IMO, GGG, and Petzl. Did one day of real caving each week.
    - Completed vertical caving program at CaveSim CityROCK for Air Force Academy youth center.
    - Completed 11 events with the CaveSim trailer:
  - eleSTEMary teacher training workshop (free event), Colorado Springs, CO
  - WhatIF Festival (free public event), Colorado Springs, CO, 9/9/2017
  - 4th of July celebration (free public event), Woodland Park, CO, 7/4/2017
  - PGR (program for profoundly gifted children), Colorado Springs, CO, 7/3/2017
  - Caver birthday party, Manitou Springs, CO, 7/1/2017
  - UNITE Pre-Collegiate Success Program, including SRT lessons, trailer, and electronics lab, Colorado Springs, CO, 6/28/2017

- Full STEAM Ahead summer science program, Manitou Springs, CO, 6/27/2017
- COMPASS after school program for low-income children, Aurora, CO, 6/26/2017
- NM Museum of Natl Hist & Science (free public event partnered w/ great volunteers from local grottos), Albuquerque, NM, 6/25/2017
- Pajarito Environmental Educ. Center (free public event partnered w/ Beth Cortright), Los Alamos, NM, 6/24/2017
- Convention. Hands-on science programs for JSS including "Make your own waterproof caving flashlight" using basic raw materials, and advanced electronics lab and demonstrations for older kids.

- Completed teacher training at US Air Force Academy for about 15 educators. Taught cave and karst lessons.

- Problems (opportunities!): If you like what we're doing, and you'd like us to bring CaveSim to a regional event, please contact Dave. If you, your grotto, or your business would like to sponsor CaveSim events (including Convention), contact Dave.

Regional Conservation Representatives – Reports Received This Period

Arizona Regional Association – Steve Smith stevenlsmith@usa.net

Overall ARA report:

- ARA Cooperation with the National Forests in Arizona - Representatives from all Arizona grottos continue to work with the staffs of several Arizona National Forests to develop and sign Forest-level 'Challenge Cost-Share Agreements' (CCSA). These CCSA's should make proposing, coordinating and executing projects (including conservation work) much easier.
- Cavers from Escabrosa Grotto, Southern Arizona Grotto, and Cochise County Cavers continue to work with the Coronado National Forest to develop and implement a comprehensive Management Plan for SP Cave (Huachuca mountains).

Escabrosa Grotto (Tucson)

- Organized and accomplished an effort to remove 'scratched/engraved' graffiti from the walls of Hidden Cave. Stiff nylon brushes, along with elbow grease, were sufficient to remove most of the graffiti. 10 participants donated 66 manhours.
- Throughout the summer of 2017, Escabrosa Grotto continued its multi-year project to non-intrusively track Fringed Myotis (Myotis thysanodes) maternity usage in Onyx Cave. On July 29 over 250 bats were counted exiting the entrance, and on August 26 over 100 were tallied. This is an ongoing project.

Cochise County Cavers (Sierra Vista)

- Yawning Chasm Cave - Several CCC cavers assisted a University of Arizona professor and a UA graduate student is collecting microbiological samples, as well as assessing the overall biological status of the cave. The results from this investigation will likely add additional 'ammunition' to efforts to ensure the cave's conservation and protection. 80 combined hours of donated volunteer time.

Southern Arizona Grotto (Tucson)

- Coordinated with local Boy Scout troops and church youth groups to accomplish over 75 manhours of trash/litter and graffiti removal from several caves in the Santa Catalina mountains.
- SAG members assisted in the Yawning Chasm Cave investigation, mapping the cave and assisting in photographing mushrooms at the bottom of the entrance pit for research purposes.
- SAG members conducted a litter cleanup and replaced some deteriorating plastic flagging tape in Cave of the Bells.

Central Arizona Grotto (Phoenix)

- Central Arizona Grotto submitted a $76,000 volunteer value proposal to the Coronado National Forest as part of a Challenge Cost Share Agreement (CCSA). The CCSA includes a proposal to remove (primarily) spraypaint graffiti from Peppersauce Cave. The documents are in the final review stage, and it's hoped that the project can begin at the end of September 2017.

- An Anabat date logger was placed by Arizona Fish & Game in Redman Cave in March 2017 and retrieved by CAG cavers in September. The data logger was to track a Fringed Myotis (Myotis thysonodes) maternity colony, although no bats were seen or heard on the data logger recovery trip.
- CAG cavers visited Coon Springs Cave and took guano samples & photographs for Arizona Fish & Game biologists.

Southwestern Region – Janice Tucker (NM) janice.tucker@live.com
Sandia Cave Project –ABQ Sandia Grotto (via Janice Tucker)
- Progress: Sandia Grotto won the Conservation Award for this project! Also, Forest Service District won the Group Award for this project!
- Plans: Continue to monitor and protect the cave - consider setting up trail cameras to identify people who continue to vandalize the cave.
- Problems: Maintain clean of graffiti requires continued monitoring and cleaning.

Little Manhole – Janice Tucker
- Plans: Goal to repair a broken stalactite and train cavers in speleothem repair.
- Progress: None
- Problems: Need to follow up on this issue.

Robinson's Cave Restoration – Steve Peerman
- Successful continuation on graffiti evaluation and testing methods for removal over Labor Day weekend SWR project.
- 80 grit sandpaper proved most successful.
- Plans: More work.

Carlsbad Caverns CRF – William and Tammy Tucker
- No update this time.

Carlsbad Caverns Cable Camo Project – Lois Manno
- Background: Working in conjunction with Rod Horrocks in the Cave Resources Office, monthly teams of 7-10 cavers from around the state. Sandia Grotto is claiming the volunteer hour (I am a Sandia member) but this is open to all cavers with restoration training.
- Objective: Use techniques developed by Rod and refined by the teams to cover up and camouflage black cables from the new lighting system (currently visible from the visitor trail) - a priority project for the park.
- Plans: Camo techniques are successful and will continue on a roughly monthly basis through 2017 and into 2018. We hope that people who have been trained on earlier cable camo trips will lead their own crews, expanding the effort.
- Progress: Our work has been concentrated in the Big Room, working from the Underground Lunchroom outward along both sides of the Big Room Loop. We have managed in many areas to make the cables visually "disappear" with impressive results.
- Problems: Occasionally we get crossways with park issues beyond our control (double-booking of the lodging where we stay, or the elevators being down). Other than that, progress is moving forward.

SWR Work Day, Carlsbad Regional – April 22, 2017
- Plans: Assist with Carlsbad Caverns (NPS) lint picking and remove a blob of concrete from the land over Parks Ranch Cave (BLM)
- Progress: Approximately 10 cavers assisted ongoing lint removal at Carlsbad with Ellen Trautner from the NPS leading. 5-7 cavers worked on concrete removal with Jim Goodbar from the BLM and BLM provide a truck for removal of the concrete blob once it was broken up.
- Problems: No major problems identified, however it was interesting to discover that Guadalupe Mountains NP sends their camping overflow to Parks Ranch. Friday and Saturday night, several campers reported being sent there. We'd like to see more teams but it is up to Rod to decide when this will be feasible.

Mid Atlantic Region – Douglas Soroka (PA) snowshoe7@verizon.net
Heavy travel schedule – will report next time.

Rocky Mountain Region
Chloe Beck (CO) chloebeck@utexas.edu
Camille Pullham McKinney (UT) cami_mckinney@nps.gov
Expect to receive full report next time, per usual thorough report from Chloe.

Southeastern Region – John Hoffelt (TN) MossyGuy@comcast.net
Allen Padgett (GA) on_rope@windstream.net
Sean Roberts (FL) sean_roberts@netzero.net Vacant (AL)
- No reports received.

Virginia Region – Janet Tinkham (VA) janete@shentel.net
Note received from Janet: No data to report for this quarter

Western Region – Joel Despain jddespain@fs.fed.us ; joeldespaincaves@gmail.com
Joel has agreed to come back onboard as Western Conservation Rep! Thank you and welcome back, Joel.
No report received.

NSS Conservation Task Forces
Vacant – No current need for appointment of Overall CTF Coordinator
No inquires for new CTFs. CTF reports listed here.

Hawai'i Cave Conservation Task Force
Tomislave Gracanin tnv@att.net.
Asa Aue asaaue@gmail.com
Fred Stone fred@hawaii.edu
No report received.

High Guads Restoration Project (HGRP) CTF
Jennifer Foote, highguads@gmail.com, http://www.hgrp.org/,
www.facebook.com/High.Guads.Restoration.Project
- Aaron Stockton has returned as the USFS Cave Specialist and is excited about getting more volunteers working in the Forest.
- The email list has been moved to Google. Sign up for the new email list at: https://groups.google.com/d/forum/high-guads-restoration-project
- We had a trip in July with 17 participants. We did exit bat counts, surveyed, epoxied, monitored, and worked on trails in Wonderland, Cottonwood, Great Disappointment, Hell Below, Sitting Bull Falls, and Hidden.
- Tentative Future dates include: Sept 30-Oct 1, 2017; Feb 24-25, 2018; April 28-29 2018. Email highguads@gmail.com for more info, we need to know who is coming a few weeks in advance to finalize permits.

Klamath Mountains CTF
Steve Knutson SssKnutson@aol.com
Expect to receive full report next time, per usual thorough report from Knutson.

Ozark CTF
Kathy Kriska katcntrygrl@sbcglobal.net
No report this time.

Twin Lakes CTF
John Durall TwinLakesCCSTF1@aol.com
Steve Gentry, Lead Advisor SGentry177@aol.com
Twin Lakes is on stand down status at this time.

Washington Cascade Mountains Bat Conservation Task Force
Dr. William R. (Bill) Halliday, Founder wrhbna@bellsouth.net
No big news from WA state since the March 31, 2016 press conference last year.

NSS Mammoth Cave Restoration Project
Bill Copeland, Director restocaver@yahoo.com
Expect to receive full report next time, per usual thorough report from Bill.

External Conservation Organization Networking Updates

No updates received for this period. NSS Conservation Division networks with activities worldwide.

CONVENTION DIVISION REPORT SUMMARY

Prepared by Carol Tiderman - ctider@ymail.com

HIGHLIGHTS

- 2017 turned a profit despite the lower than planned attendance
- 2018 is close to having contract for the AVP to review and sign
- 2018 will offer international caving
- JSS is working on ways to operate within their budget

Convention Division

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.
- Hosted a Convention Planning Meeting at the 2017 Convention
- Hosted a Convention Debrief Meeting at the 2017Convention
- Working with group hosting the 2018 Conventions in Montana
- Working with group planning to host the 2019 Convention in Tennessee
- Working with group planning to host the 2020 Convention in West Virginia
- Working with groups considering hosting future Conventions
- Created a yahoo group of past convention chairs.
- Joined the Convention Ad hoc Committee
- Working with JSS Chair on ways to keep within their budget.
- Have asked AVP to pursue a list of criteria, from the NSS Legal Committee, to be checked on by convention attorney

PLANS

- Attend convention committee planning meetings (any year's) whenever possible,
- Continue working with confirmed groups
- Continue working with groups yet to be confirmed
- Continue to solicit new host groups
- See if JSS can schedule their event so vehicles are not needed every day. If the convention is near a large town, it might be possible to pick up vehicles early in the morning and limit use to 2 or 3 days.

PROBLEMS

- Finding hosts for 2021 and beyond.

2017 NSS Convention – Blake Jordan

The 2017 NSS Convention in Rio Rancho New Mexico was successful even with the low numbers. We began very low in Registration numbers from the beginning of the year, which influenced our decision to pare back the spending on all levels. Initially our projected attendance was 800 to 1000, but the actual count came to 584 with 55 individuals purchasing day passes by Friday of Convention week. We planned for 660 at a maximum for the banquet and ended with about 630 for the Friday banquet. We enjoyed working with both UNM West and the Santa Ana Star Center to host our event. We had such a great team for the 2017 NSS Convention Committee that everything seemed to run smoothly all week. All of our efforts combined from the planning meetings to running convention went well. Whenever there were difficulties, we would make the best solution for the situation and charge onward.

I have included the 2017 NSS Convention Reports from the Operations VC, Trip Coordinator, JSS, Decon Unit, Geology Trip Report and Convention Treasurer Reports for your review. As of 9/11/2017 the Convention Treasurer reported a balance of $12,426.52, three outstanding checks totaling $85.80 and final shipping costs of something around $300 (which have yet to be determined) will leave us about $12,000 in the black. The major expenses were the operating costs for the Santa Ana Star Center, which included the catering, port-a-poties, tents, water meter, sound equipment rental, screen & projector rental (for the arena) and catering.

The 2017 NSS Convention was definitely one unique experience that I would consider doing it all again if all the staff were as competent as our staff. Kevin Lorms (VP & Facilities Chairman) was very instrumental in connecting with both facilities, especially the Santa Ana Star Center, in which he had worked and knew the SASC staff well. Kevin also interfaced with the Beer Vendor Marble, that he had worked with prior, which was to our advantage. Scott Christensen (Operations Chairman) kept us on task at the planning meetings and made sure all aspects of the convention ran smoothly. Scott also worked with Eric Weaver (Trip Coordinator) with the Loaner Gear, which was successful. The Convention Radios were invaluable and were a contributing factor in making the communications almost effortless. I don't see how we would have done the job without having them as the main convention communication devices for the staff. Ron Lipinski was Chair of Communications and did a great job on keeping track of the radios as well as consistently testing the channels for the best signal for the convention staff. Dave Decker ran a very informative Geology trip despite the fire in the Jemez Mountains. Dave implemented a backup plan that worked out for the alternative route. Our Volunteer Coordinator, Meg Fleming, did a fine job on tracking and finding places for needed volunteers.

Kate Bach stepped in as Convention Treasurer in March and ran a tight ship. She gave me the current numbers, helped out at Registration as well as making deposits in a timely fashion.

There were some aspects of the convention that did not go as smoothly. First was the Registration Chair, Alison Chambliss, and her husband Terry, who was the Registration software designer, in combination did not work out well. The registration software was confusing, caused some to become frustrated with the process and give up or get turned off altogether to wait to register at convention. While this Registration Team was at convention, they did not show until midday and were not available to answer the onsite questions as well as problems that occurred. Alison on more than one occasion had conflict with registration volunteers that didn't turn out well. I would not recommend them for being Registration Lead in the future until they can tackle some of these issues that I have pointed out. Second was the WNS situation and the Decon Unit. I thought we were held hostage by NM BLM to pay for the Decon Unit and required to have Decon at Convention. Initially, Knutt Peterson (BLM Cave Specialist Roswell) in connection with the Fort Stanton Cave Study Project wanted us to pay $5000 for the rent of the Decon Unit, which in our opinion was too much. We ended up paying a total of $1500, which in my opinion as well as others on the convention committee thought that their minimum was overreaching. Last was Linda Starr (Publications Chair) who was the major complainer about how the Convention was running under budget and the cost of the Guidebook printing. We believe that it could have been done cheaper with the same result. It was my fault not to give her guidelines in the beginning when the registration numbers were still very low. I gave her the 800-count budget number instead of the 500-count budget number. I recommend that the minimum projected registration number be 500 instead of the 800 when a low attending convention may be the outcome.

We are in the process of closing the 2017 NSS Convention Books and should be done by the end of the month of September at the latest. All we are waiting on are the outstanding checks and the shipping of the leftovers (Guidebooks, T-Shirts, Patches and Shot Glasses) to the NSS Office. As Convention Chairman, I want to thank all those who made this a successful convention!

Respectfully Submitted, Blake N. Jördan,
Chairman 2017 NSS Convention Committee

Trip Report NSS Convention 2017

There were three caves available for led trips within the Rio Puerco Bureau of Land Management (BLM) jurisdiction during the National Speleological Society's (NSS) 2017 Convention. These caves were Hummingbird Cave, Shelf Cave, and Ojito Cave. These caves

were limited to six person trips, which included the trip leader. Access was obtained through a Special Recreation Use permit. Beyond the 6 person trip restriction, it was expected that decontamination procedures based on the National White Nose syndrome Decontamination protocol was applied. A Decontamination Station was available during the NSS Convention and uncontaminated loaner gear was also available. Trip Leaders were given decontamination kits for use after leaving the cave. Additionally, it was requested that there were no un-led trips to these caves. For Hummingbird and Shelf Cave I was able to monitor this, as I drove on Highway 53(the parking area for access to the cave) during the AM and PM of each day. My staff also travelled this same route and was watchful of additional cars in the area. Daily trips were offered to these caves; however, only four trips went out to Hummingbird cave and only one trip went to Shelf Cave. No trips went out to Ojito Cave, this appears to be related to the above average temperatures experienced throughout New Mexico that week.

The first trip to Hummingbird Cave was on Monday and included five people in total. Trip leader was Troy Fisher. There were no reports of accidents or incidents that occurred. There were no reports of signs of vandalism, graffiti, or litter.

The second trip to Hummingbird Cave was on Tuesday and included five people in total. Trip leader was Marc Heins. There were no reports of accidents or incidents that occurred. This trip also stopped briefly at Shelf Cave. Neither caves showed signs of vandalism, graffiti, or litter.

The third trip to Hummingbird Cave was on Thursday and included six people in total. Trip leader was Harry Goepel. There were no reports of accidents or incidents that occurred. There were no reports of signs of vandalism, graffiti, or litter.

The fourth trip to Hummingbird Cave was on Friday and included four people in total. Due to an injury unrelated to caving or the Convention, the planned trip leader cancelled and I filled in. There were no incidents during the trip. A small accident occurred on returning to the car, where one person fell and scraped his leg on the lava. I offered him the use of a first aid kit but he declined since the injury was only mild. As reported by the other trip leaders, I saw no signs of vandalism, graffiti, or litter. This was my first trip to Hummingbird Cave and I would like to provide some observations and concerns. Based on my experience with the lava tubes of El Malpais, I would consider Hummingbird Cave a significant cave. While much of the cave has lost much of its primary features due to breakdown, it certainly contains some primary features. The cave contains some minerals, primarily gypsum but possibly some mirabilite. The cave is of significant size and lies on the fringe of the lava, which commonly indicates a high likelihood of cultural use. In close proximity to the entrance is the remains of a rock wall. This location is

unusual to me based on observations of other rock walls in El Malpais. Another unusual feature at the entrance is the placement of a log to hold back debris from falling on the path. I would suspect that this placement is at least historic and most likely prehistoric. In the first chamber of the room there are two areas where rocks have been moved. I am not quite clear whether this may have been for a utilitarian or ritual purpose. Throughout the cave I noticed charcoal torches. I am aware that a large water vessel was found in this cave 4-5 years ago, seeing the described reinforces the significance of this cave to me. Several of our caves in close proximity to this cave contain culturally-significant features. I would recommend an archaeological survey of the cave and surrounding area, if it has not already been done or if possible. A cave in close proximity to Hummingbird Cave has been significantly looted and it would be a shame to lose anything that remains cached in the cave. If access continues at Hummingbird Cave, I would encourage it to become a permitted cave. We currently have five caves in El Malpais National Monument that are by permit and have the remainder closed to the public. Since we currently have a collaborative effort between BLM and NPS at the El Malpais Visitor Center, the process is already in place to do this (implementing may be a more difficult task). This would also assure that decontamination procedures are being used by visitors to the cave. These are only thoughts based on a three hour trip in the cave and only meant to encourage discussion if there is an interest.

Overall, the trips to BLM caves during the NSS Convention appear to have gone on without issue. The limited number of trips and small size should have done little to diminish the nature of the wilderness in the area. There does not appear to have been any unauthorized trips to the cave. Decontamination procedures appear to have been applied before and after the cave trips. There were no serious accidents and no incidents of inappropriate behavior on the trip. Several of the people I have spoken to about their trips have indicated that they enjoyed the trip and have greater appreciation of lava tubes.

Best regards,
Eric Weaver
Natural Resources Branch Chief
El Malpais and El Morro National Monuments
Eric_weaver@nps.gov

2017 Convention of the National Speleological Society

Post-Convention Report is available as a separate document

2018 NSS Convention – Doug Warner

Progress

- Registration:
  - Registration (online and paper) initiated
    - 63 registered attendees as of 9/7
- Financial Management
  - See attached Financial Report - hybrid report - bank reconciliation and P&L (appendix)
  - Final budget approved
  - Bank account created, initial funds transferred, with access by Treasurer and Chair (and National accounting personnel)
  - $17,672.95 balance as of 9/7
- Promotional:
  - Final video produced and shown at convention
  - Promoted 2018 at 2017 convention; ~ 50 hours of booth presence, central to vendor and session area, often with 2 people staffing. Strong presence by Anna Strange, Helena Tourism.
    - Distributed promotional pens, flashlights(!), stickers, pamphlets, and had multiple drawings for day hike books of Yellowstone and Glacier parks.
    - 

  - All facebook followers of prior conventions transferred to 2018 convention facebook page.
    - 3011 followers as of 9/8
    - Currently posting new content approximately 2x/week
  - Launched website: http://nss2018.caves.org
    - Many changes and versions now live, including online registration, list of current registrants, pie charts of expenses, convention video &

interactive map, Helena lodging & room blocks, NSS campground, and contact info

- Equipment & Facilities
    - Transported all traveling gear to MT from NM, now in storage in MT
    - Continued progress toward getting contracts for:
        - Schools (waiting on their final staffing costs before they send contract)
        - Fairgrounds (down payment sent, once received they will send contract)
        - Campground (contract received, will provide down payment once reviewed)
        - Caterer (caterer chosen & initial meetings completed; currently working up menus and pricing)
    - Finalized all hotel room block agreements
    - School floor plan in hand and provided to Vendor and Session chairs
    - Clarified alcohol process with MT Dept Revenue
- Volunteers & Staff
    - Connected many MT volunteers with their 2017 NM counterparts
    - MT-bar lawyer retained
        - Currently reviewing Campground contract
    - Initial set of special sessions gathered, with some commitments from instructors
        - Working on getting more formal information ready for special paid sessions
    - Geology field trip coordinator chosen and vague plan proposed. Working on details.
    - Keynote speaker chosen
    - Sessions chair has preliminary schedule drafted & timelines provided to US & Int'l exploration chairs
    - Coordination with national JSS and plans (and assigned volunteer leader) for Sr. JSS
    - Continuing to update and jostle existing volunteer list
- Misc
    - Received in-kind sponsorship of Submittable software for receiving submissions for presentations. It is an unlimited license and can be reviewed for use by all parts of the NSS (e.g. News, JCKS, etc). There is no commitment to pay on our side if we don't want to use it past this convention.
        - Anyone who wants to try this software is welcome to contact me. I have full admin access to create accounts and workflow.
        - I have set up initial workflow and distinct areas for:
            - US Exploration
            - International Exploration
            - Geology
    - Met with Police, Sheriff, and Fire to inform them about convention

        - They requested a follow up meeting 1 month before, and a tour of the campground Saturday morning.
    - Chair is a member of the Convention ad-hoc committee discussing improvements to the convention process, focusing on making conventions more successful in the future.

Plans

- Money & Registration
    - Final downpayments to all venues/caterers/etc
        - Pending contract review
    - We will be inputting financials through Quickbooks in the future, aligning with NSS general ledger accounts
    - Paper registration NOT yet published on website until we have a better internal process for data entry. We understand the need for a paper form, but are very reluctant to make paper registration available at this point due to the extra data entry on our side with current limited staffing.
- Promotional
    - Regular information campaigns to all registered users
    - Start working on NSS News article (due: Nov 15)
    - Figure out what email tool to use for promotional email
- Equipment & Facilities
    - Get updated costs/equipment list for showers
- Volunteers & Staff
    - Formalization of special events
        - Add to registration form as appropriate
        - Recruiting session leaders
    - Main session planning
        - Preparation for call-for-papers
        - Refining schedule
- Misc
    - Develop a post-event end user survey with Jean DeVries. This will be a pilot study that can be used on an annual basis to improve the Conventions and the attendees experience.

Problems

- Money & Registration
    - NEON - this works for registration, but has MANY quirks in configuration and usability. 21 items tracked on a “problems list” to relay to NEON (appendix). We need to hold them over a barrel to get them to resolve these issues for the future. What leverage do we have?
    - Manual data entry is challenging to learn.
    - “Call for credit card” on paper forms from Rio Rancho turned out to be time consuming

- Promotional
    - NA
- Equipment & Facilities
    - Quirks of MT law make serving hard alcohol more difficult than originally indicated. Many options still exist, but the researched special permit does not apply to our organization. [It would apply if we are a 501(c)8 Fraternal Organization, but not for a 501(c)3 nonprofit]
        - This is not the case with beer/wine--that is $10/day for a 501(c)3 and easy to get.
        - Question out to the MT lawyer--I think I have a loophole that will let us serve hard alcohol without special permits (especially if we already have the beer/wine permit)
- Volunteers & Staff
    - Registration chair stepped down due to cave expedition overlapping with 2018 convention
        - Most of the local members are already committed. Working on finding a replacement.
    - It is not clear how to tell the MT attorney to review contracts in the context of the national organization--what should he be reviewing for that has been desired in the past?
        - Do I even have our national attorney look at the contracts?
    - No information on Geology session chair--multiple information requests sent via various channels
- Misc
    - I really hope we don't have forest fires like this next year. But that is why we are building showers and not renting them……

Appendix Preliminary Financials:

NSS 2018 Convention
August 31, 2017 Bank Reconciliation

	As of August 31, 2017	Quantities	
Registration Income			
Event Ticket Price	$ 10,050.00		Quantities include in-kind, (NSS office, Auction bids)
Guidebook	$ 576.00	35	
Geology Trip	$ 1,840.00	26	
T-shirt - Small	$ 36.00	2	
T-shirt - Medium	$ 54.00	3	
T-shirt - Large	$ 126.00	9	
T-shirt - XLarge	$ 126.00	9	
Tshirt-XXLarge	$ 100.00	5	
Convention Pin	$ 136.00	20	
Convention Patch	$ 136.00	20	
Sub Total	$ 13,180.00		Reconciled with NEON
NSS Auction of Registration	$ 1,400.00		
Grant Receipt	$ 1,000.00		
Starting Deposit -Donation	$ 100.00		
Phantom Deposit	$ 1.00		
Total Revenue	$ 15,681.00		
Expenses:			
Bank Fees	$ 66.36		
Net Surplus	$ 15,614.64		
Check Deposited but Not Regist	$ 330.00		
	$ 15,944.64	Balanced with Bank 8/31/2017	.01 off????

NEON Feature requests:

Significance (1 = highest)	Description
1	Section dividers needed for all event fields. Includes event custom fields and event sessions.
1	Badge/registration number should be configurable by each event, and allow manual override.

1	Conditional ticket groups: no way for an early registration vs normal registration deadline for ALL users, including not logged in.
1	Event sessions vs. merchandise. A t-shirt, printed guidebook, or pin is not a session, but there is no merchandise offering to place t-shirts and other memorabilia.
1	Ticket prices: should have the option to allow one of the options to be a set of checkboxes, each with a different rate. We have a week-long event where people could choose multiple day passes.
1	Event sessions: price does not display on registration form, must include price in the title.
1	Event sessions: description displays inconsistently. When does it show and when not? Usually NOT on the registration form, so how do attendees see it?
1	Separate fully customizable acknowledgement emails for each event.
2	Editing event custom fields should not always result in a re-order of the fields. Re-ordering should be a separate action, preferably via the main event page where they are used.
2	The combination of event registration form and custom fields is confusing. Those should be separate configuration areas on the main event page.
2	Event edit first-page should not be a click-through for each update of the event form. Most of the time is spent on configuring the second page.
2	System settings include too many things. Ex: Without the right permissions, someone can create an entire event, but is unable to modify the automated emails for that event!
2	Better formatting of all event fields. Includes event custom fields and event sessions. Ex: radio button options across multiple questions are difficult to read.
2	Custom reports include many fields by default, there is no way to opt out or select the exact fields to include
2	Administrator process for registering an event attendee has no configuration for making the process match the simplicity of the end-user side (billing options, account creation process, etc)
2	Attendee custom fields do not display when registering an attendee via admin
3	Event description should not appear on the event configuration main page--that is edited on the first page and only takes up space on the event form page.

3	Allow light formatting on individual event fields. It would be nice to have a clickable link or bold or other simple formatting.
3	Event custom fields "Read-only (prevent logged-in constituents from editing this field)" should apply to non-logged in users as well.
4	Ability to delete events via same role as can create events.
4	Default Email auto response for a multi-day event doesn't include dates, but does include times. Makes no sense.

Current volunteer list (and vacancies):

Primary Role	Sub-Role	Sub-sub-role	Volunteer Name
Executive Operations			
Chair			Doug Warner
Vice Chair			Andy Belski
Finance			Tina Shirk
	Registration		
		Registration Assistant	Pat Seiser
		Registration Assistant	Randy Parson
Major convention activities leaders. Additional volunteers needed close to event.			
Events			Andy Belski
	Howdy Party		
	Campground Party		
	Banquet		Amanda Hagarty

	Fellows/New Members		Dean Wiseman
	Fine Arts		
	Auction		Carol Tiderman
	Music Organizer		Andy Belski
Major facilities lead roles. Additional volunteers needed close to event.			
Facilities			Carrie Voss
	Vendors & Consignment		Nina Martin
	Communications		Ian Chechet
	Food & Drinks		Demetrius Fassas
	Transportation		Jenna Kaplan
	Insurance & Legal		
	Volunteer coordinator		
	Misc		
		Vertical Session Liaison	Terry Mitchell
		Speleo Art Liason	
		BOG Liaison	
		Child Care (optional, not budgeted)	
	Sessions		Pat Kambesis
		Special Sessions	Carol Vesely
		MT caving history	Ron Zuber/Maryalice Chester

		International Exploration	Brian Gindling
		US Exploration	Will Urbanski & Cyndie Walck
		Photo/Video Salon	
Pre-event marketing.			
Marketing & Promotion			Ken Fichtler
	Website		Mark Rabin
	Graphic Artist		
	Merchandise		
		t-shirts/mugs/etc	
		Pins/Patches	Dave Decker
	Social Media		Ellen Whittle
			Carl Froslie
	Video		Ellen Whittle
			Zuzana Gedeon
	Advertising & Sponsorships		Ian Chechet, Ellen Whittle, Taylor Woods
	Publications		
		Cave & Geology Guidebook	Hans Bodenhamer
		Cave & Geology, Canada section	Gavin Elsley
		Convention Program Guide	Pat Kambesis
		Proofreader/editor	Maryalice Chester

		Daily Newsletter	Ken Stahley
JSS organization. Multiple volunteers needed during convention.			
JSS			Ann Brooks
		Input on Sr JSS activities	Hans Bodenhamer
Activity lead organizers. Additional volunteers needed during convention.			
Workshops & Field Trips			Colin Massey
	Daily cave trips		Jason Balenski
	Geology		Hans Bodenhamer (Chas Younge)
	Wilderness Medicine workshop		Ryan Morgan
	Cartography Workshop		Kate Graham
	Cave Rescue Workshop		Bonny Armstrong
	Photography Workshop		Dave Bunnell
	Project Underground		Amanda Hagerty
	Speleology for Cavers		
	Vertical Workshop		Kurt Waldron
			Kyle Fedderly
.			
Logistics Chair			Ian Chechet

Campground leaders listed. Many additional volunteers needed just before and after event.			
Campground Operations			Andy Belski
	Campground Infrastructure		James Cummins
		Crew Lead	David Worthington
		Hot Tub/Sauna	Juan Laden
		Water/Showers	Juan Laden
		Electrical & phone	
		Toilets & Trash	
		Campsite layout	
		Event tent siting, construction, removal	
		Campground cleanup	
	Trip Coordinator		Jason Ballensky
	Security		Mike Fraiser
	Medical		Ryan Morgan
Unassigned			
			Jeremy Bruns
			Andy Armstrong

JSS - Zachary Schudrowitz

1) Limit vehicle rental to the number of official coordinators. ie 1 coordinator = 1 vehicle. 2 coords = 2 vehicles. Never renting 3-4 vans again. This'll also simplify "who's on the insurance?" This'll also mean parents will have to drive more = unhappiness. But that's reality and I've slowly pushed that way policy wise by requiring parent attendance for 8 and under. We simply can't bus everyone everywhere.

2) Concessions stand fundraiser worked in Missouri. Kris Nicolussi gave JSS all the money from that. Not physically of course. I'm sure it was given to the convention treasurer and Mr. Barnes shuffled it where it needed to go. And a concessions stand doesn't have to be "for JSS only". A tuning fork is striking me in the head that concessions stands make money and therefore run into contract issues with the facilities not making their own money.

3) I'll need actual reg & dollar numbers. From emails with Doug Warner pre-reg is $150 & full reg $175 per kid - $40 for howdy & banquet. Those $ numbers are handy to know now vs after convention. I've been asking coordinators to simply count the number of kids that show up and go from that. A solid email from Reg with the actual number of "official" children will refine my dollar tracking.

4) More free Caving/Parks, less theme parks, museums, movies. 2017 ran pretty slim with 1 big paid admission to Meow Wolf (theme park. i think). $160 for 19. Pretty sweet but I don't think that covered parents which I actually encourage because we need the parents there to keep track of all the kids.

5) Acknowledge that we don't drag on the convention for T-Shirts. I'm gonna have to put in an order for t-shirts that'll amount to $600-800. That first order has lasted 2-3 years and the kids got actual kid shirts. Not Adult Male Smalls. I finally tossed the 20+ 2013 Shippensburg shirts that went to no one. JSS t-shirts are not convention specific and have been reused.

General Summary

This is the second year I have not attended convention, but advised from afar. This year's coordinator Paula Provencio stepped up early and that helped greatly. We conferred mainly on paperwork and what to expect. She did most of the scheduling and

deserves all the credit for running the program during convention. To my knowledge, there were 19 children that attended the program and that's a healthy number. Overall, it is easy to say it was a good year sitting here in Texas. If there are any details questions about this year's program I have to direct you to Paula.

The Future

A suggestion was made to me by a few folks that we should have a program geared towards the older kids. This is not a new idea and has been rattling around in my head since I started with JSS. To have a parallel program for the older kids comes down to one need – another JSS Local Coordinator. The Local Coordinator does the work picking trips, caves, venues, and ordering pizzas. That coordinator has the schedule in his or her head and is managing one group. To ask that one coordinator to run a parallel program that he or she can't be present for is too much. A second Local Coordinator is needed if the convention wants a teenager program. These two Coordinators would certainly work together planning, but when the vans leave at 9 am they'd go different directions. This point bleeds into my next point.

I'm not a recruiter. I have the personality of a hermit crab and don't know cavers across the country. We've been lucky that 2017 & 2018 had local folks step up very early. Please ask for volunteers very early and I can cc the next lucky bloke on all our emails and answer questions to prep them.

For the 2018 Convention I have a shortlist of tasks to accomplish.

1. Buy 1st Aid kit

2. Make a reasonable donation to CaveSim

3. Buy more t-shirts

The t-shirts will show up on next year's expense report, but I'll buy enough to last 2-3 conventions. Dave Jackson requested a donation in addition to reimbursement for supplies he purchased for the waterproof flashlight workshop. I don't consider this an unreasonable request. I'll compare CaveSim to other commercial venues and come up with an equivalent dollar number. JSS General Report & Expenses Dave is a steadfast

resource and always has something new for the kids. I'd like to continue seeing him at convention supporting the JSS program.

2017 September – NSS Salons Committee Report

2017 Convention Report

We had a small turnout for all the salons this year, probably due to the small registration numbers, which was caused by many contributing factors.

7 Display Salons (Judging Sunday; Display Monday through Friday): Cartography, Cover Arts, Crafts & Design, Fine Arts, Prints, Symbolic Emblems, T-Shirts, Video

Workshops: Fine Arts workshop was cancelled. Writer's workshop on Friday was very successful.

2 Salon Awards/Photo Salon Shows (Thursday Evening): *Quiet* and *Full Awards Presentation*

Show 1: A 'Quiet' Show (5:30pm to 7pm) PowerPoint & Videos. 90 Minutes. Limited talking (Intro music 5-5:30pm, show 5:30 to 7:00pm).

Audience was estimated 225 – this show is popular for the early crowd (early to dinner, early to bed) and families with younger children as well as the more seasoned types.

Show 2**:** All Categories, Winners and Awards were presented by Salon Chairs. Blake Jördan was MC, Cover Art Chairman, and the 2017 Convention Chair. 150 minutes (Intro Music at 7pm to 7:30pm, Show from 7:30pm to 9:30pm)

Audience was estimated around 200 people. There was an error in the credits showing Dave Lester as Co-Chairman for Salon. See below for Personnel Changes in the NSS Salons Committee.

NSS Salons web site – Alex Sproul displays each year's winners, generates interest in next year's salon entries and provides entry forms that can be found at each Salon webpage within the caves.org website under NSS Salons.

NSS News – Dave Bunnell is in the process of featuring the 2017 Salon Award Winners in the NSS News and which will publicize the 2018 salon entry requirements and deadlines in February or March 2018.

Social Media (Facebook): was used exclusively because the NSS Social Media Team were attending another event, but the 2017 NSS Convention Facebook page and website did a great job in disbursing information regularly.

2017 and Upcoming Changes

Salons Committee members will work with the **2018 Helena, MT NSS Convention** staff to provide the best Salons and Salons Award Shows as possible. On Friday at the beginning of the Banquet, one of the projectors that the Salon Awards uses cascaded to the ground and broke. The crash was caused by a power supply cord that had not been completely taped down and was snagged, causing the accident. We are on the hunt for a replacement. We are also discussing projection screen replacement in the future. The NSS Salon Awards Screens are over 30 years old and some of the hinges are showing age.

Personnel Changes: The Salons Committee and backstage staff are undergoing more changes for the core group. Back in 2015 Cady Soukup planned to retire from the NSS Salons Committee Co-Chairmanship starting at the 2016 NSS Convention. Both Cady Soukup and Dave Lester retired at this year's convention for being the NSS Salon Co-Chairs. Blake Jördan and Paul Jorgenson serve as Co-Chairs for the NSS Salons starting officially this year. Dave Lester will stay on as Stage Manager and Dave Socky as Technical Manager. Cady Soukup will still be around consulting where needed for the next year.

Salon Changes: The Brochures & Pamphlets Salon moved from Dave Decker (Symbolic Emblems & T-Shirts) to Blake Jördan. The Salon is currently called the Posters & Pamphlets Salon, but may be modified in the future to change with the growing category of Publications.

NSS Equipment

One of the Optoma digital projectors became unusable at the end of the 2014 NSS Convention. One of the other Optima digital projectors crashed to the floor at the 2017 NSS Convention and seems not to be repairable at the moment. Currently we have one Optima digital projector in good working order, which is being stored with Dave Socky as well as the NSS-Owned video cables and other related equipment.

The Optoma projectors are rated at 4200 lumens with a native resolution of 1024 by 768 pixels. They are not HDMI capable (a useful, more modern interface with higher resolution). We continue to monitor HDMI projects over 4000 lumens but have not seen a good deal yet for what we want.

Blake Jördan handed the two NSS-Owned 12'x12' projection screens with rear & front projection surfaces, stands and curtains to the 2018 NSS Convention Staff for transport to Montana, storage and later use at the Helena 2018 NSS Convention site. Blake Jördan will transport them back to Virginia for storage in wait for the next Conventions in the East.

As I stated earlier, we are on the hunt for a replacement digital projector or two that have HDMI capabilities to keep up with the changing digital age. We are also discussing projection screen replacement in the future. The NSS Salon Awards Screens are over 30 years old and some of the hinges are showing age.

Blake N. Jördan

EDUCATION DIVISION REPORT SUMMARY

Mike Hood, Education Division Chief – education@caves.org

Programs and projects within the Education Division continue to develop, though slower than I would like. Some of the issues to be addressed are:

- How will the $400K donation for NSS education programs be used and what programs will this fund?
- With the appointment of Will Urbanski as the new IT division chief, what changes will be made with Tony Canike's plans to redesign the education division web pages?
- How should we design education modules, rubrics, lesson plans, and other cave and karst-related resources that don't conflict with copyrights of other entities? Should we seek a MOU with other organizations to use their products, or do we find funding to hire experts to write and design our own? I would like to develop a "one stop shop" for educators to be able to go to our web page and download the materials needed for the classroom.

Additionally, I was surprised to read in the draft minutes of the summer Board of Governors meeting the JSS has been moved to the Convention Division. While I have no issue with this and see it as a good fit, I was blindsided by this move as no one contacted me for input or a heads-up this was going to be done.

Education Grants and Scholarships Committee - Pamela Tegelman Malabad
No report received – 2nd time.

Webinar Committee - Debbie Spoons
Nothing to report at this time.

Youth Group Liaison Committee – Allen Maddox
No report received.

Safety and Techniques Committee - Scott McCrea
No report received – 2nd time.

Environmental Education Committee – Kyle Mills
No report received – 2nd time.

National Cave Rescue Committee - Anmar Mirza

PROGRESS

Work is progressing on getting the NCRC database on line and available to persons with a need to know (while addressing privacy issues). This is speeding up and simplifying resource management which is one of the charges of the NCRC by charter of the NSS.

The Small Party Assisted Rescue (SPAR) class curriculum is making progress and how instructors are to be certified has mostly been sorted out.

Approximately 350 people have been trained in cave rescue by the NCRC this year so far. It should be noted that students receive a discount for classes for being NSS members. This discount is greater than the cost of the NSS membership and on the online registration for NCRC classes there is a link to the NSS to join right then, so the NSS gets numerous new members every year directly because of NCRC trainings.

The NCRC curriculum update is mostly complete and is now undergoing fine-tuning.

The 2017 National Seminar held in Oregon was a success. The site is being considered as one of the fixed sites for use on a four year rotation.

PLANS

Plans are being made to present more NSS Webinars to build a library of cave rescue related material. Work with Debbie Spoons to provide her with NCRC personnel to lead webinars.

A series of cave rescue training videos are being discussed.

Find additional fixed sites around the country for the rotation of the seminar locations. The National Seminar has very specific requirements that are not common and thus finding suitable locations is difficult. The Mentone Alabama site thus far is the only one. The 2015 seminar held in Park City Kentucky at Park Mammoth Resort that was used is a possibility but the biggest lack is classroom sites. The caves and cliff sites were very well received and the logistics of having everything needed on site and not having to drive to locations lent much more instructional time.

The BORC is discussing standards and recommendations for certifications in cave rescue. A test of the tester certification process will be conducted at this year's national seminar.

Additional curriculum development and realignment is in the works.

A SPAR manual is being developed.

The NCRC once again will be a co-sponsor of the annual ITRS (International Technical Rescue Symposium) conference.

PROBLEMS

WNS continues to be an issue in both finding locations for training as well as consuming much time during training for decontamination requirements. This has had a major impact to the detriment of the students.

Seminar costs, while very low with regard to similar professional rescue training (approximately ¼ the cost), continue to be above the reach of many of the newer, younger cavers who would

most benefit from them. More scholarships and other grants directly to students would be helpful. NCRC already manages its money in the most efficient manner possible and the seminar cost is as low as it is because instructors and staff subsidize a large portion of it. The typical weeklong seminar costs $600 and includes food and lodging for the 8 day training. If not for the contributions of the volunteers the seminar would not be able to be held for under $2000 per participant.

NATURE PRESERVE COMMITTEE SUMMARY

October 2017

Prepared by Tom Griffin – Preserves@caves.org – Preserve Chairman
a1topcatdesign@aol.com

The NSS Preserves committee has 15 Preserves. In general there are no major problems with the preserves; however some do have some repairs that will cost some money. Some preserves have just minor maintenance activities while other are involved in many projects.

A suggest was made by several preserve managers that we provide signage along the surveyed boundaries (especially for those that are new!). Or, at least at the entrances to the cave and the kiosk. Possible verbiage: *"Welcome to _____, a nature preserve of the National Speleological Society."*

A very quick summery of most of the preserves is below. For more detail see the full Preserves committee report.

Donald R. Russell Preserve: no new report – 2nd time.

Great X Preserve: No report.

James Gage Preserve: Just wanted to report that the outhouse relocation/reconstruction and driveway project has been completed and that we should pay Vedder Excavating the remaining portion of his fee.

John Guilday Preserve: From Earl: I am in touch with Alice Guilday, John Guilday's wife & Allen McCrady who worked with him. We are working on some minor archeology stuff at Trout. I have been in touch with Ray Garton & Dave West as well about this. Unfortunately, Fred Grady is not well and can't be a part of it. However, it should be an interesting report. I am also writing the NSS News article on the preserve, which will include current events, past history and biographical information & photos on John Guilday.

Kingston Saltpeter Preserve: Report has been received. Larry O. Blair is the Preserve Chairman. Kevin Glenn lets him know we need reports since Larry is not online. Apparently my emails have been going to Spam. Kevin will have Larry send a report. It will be mailed so the report will not be available until after the 15th if it arrives. Kevin is contacting Gary Busch; apparently the Kingston email has been hacked.

McFails Preserve: nothing new.

Mill Creek Preserve: Charles Robinson said he will send a report in a couple of days.

New River Cave Preserve: no report submitted – 2nd time

Richard Blenz Nature Preserve: possible additional land acquisition

Schoharie Caverns Nature Preserve: Standard level of visitation, No lawn service this year since the contractor kept changing the price, Department of Conservation put up 2 sport cameras to see what activity is in the area during the closed season.

Shelta Preserve: Kevin still has plans to build a kiosk, nothing else to report. Bill Torode is cleaning the trails and would like someone to video the trails at Shelta.

Tytoona Cave Nature Preserve: Other than signs being removed, normal maintenance.

Warren Cave Nature Preserve: no report for *THREE* BOG meetings. Warren Cave Preserve has a gate that NSS Pres, Geary asked me to check on. James Hamlin responded to the original email stating he was out of the area. He has been requested to submit a report 2 times for the BOG meeting.

Wells Cave Nature Preserve: He noticed new survey markers, not sure who is surveying. He has requested Preserve signs and did not get them.

William J. Stephenson Nature Preserve: Kevin is working on building a kiosk

DONALD R. RUSSELL NATURE PRESERVE

Clayton Russell – drussellcommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME:	Donald R. Russell Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION:	Adair County, Oklahoma
3. ACQUISTION DATE:	September 1, 1991
4. DEED LOCATION:	NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS:	Donated by Mr. Donald Russell
6. ACREAGE:	20 ACRES
7. LIABILITY RELEASE:	YES
8. AREAS OF INTEREST:	Biology and Ecology

PROJECTS:

Annual inspection with bio count and resurvey of caves on the property. In the process of resurveying adjacent Three forks cave and will continue to preserve caves.

PROBLEMS:
None
PLANS:
To make annual bio count and resurvey preserve caves with a more accurate map.
SUMMARY:
The bio count so far Jan. 17, 2017 approx 400 Ozark Big eared bats in the hibernaculm, one cluster of approx 250, and three other clusters of 50 each. These numbers are consistent with those since 1991. Feb 6, 2017 Linda Bearpaw cave 28 pipistrels, the gray bats do not hibernate here, but guano piles were fresh from previous summer use.

GREAT EXPECTIONS NATURE PRESERVE

Bob Montgomery – greatxcommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME:	Great Expectations Cave Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION:	Gray Bull, Wyoming
3. ACQUISTION DATE:	January 30, 2003
4. DEED LOCATION:	NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS:	Yes
6. ACREAGE:	40 ACRES
7. LIABILITY RELEASE:	YES
8. AREAS OF INTEREST:	Recreation, Hydrology, Mineralogy

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:
Robert Montgomery – Preserve Manager
John Scheltens
Mike Hanson
Marc Ohms
Dan Austin
Carl Bern
Paul Spackman

- No report received

JAMES GAGE KARST PRESERVE

R.W. Simmons – jgagecommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME:	James Gage Karst Preserve
2. LOCATION:	Schoharie County, New York
3. ACQUISTION DATE:	January 20, 1995
4. DEED LOCATION:	NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS:	Yes
6. ACREAGE:	40 Acres of land and 310 acres of cave rights
7. LIABILITY RELEASE:	Yes
8. AREAS OF INTEREST:	Recreation, geology and history

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

Robert Simmons – Preserve Manager
Emily Davis
Mike Warner
Vacant – Cabin Registrar

PROJECTS:

This year's proposed projects for the preserve (and anticipated dates for completion) are:

1. Perform routine trail maintenance and parking area maintenance (on-going).
2. Re-write of the preserve management plan (on-going).
3. Review and cost out various options for the cabin (on-going).
4. Clean out cabin of old furniture, mattresses, paneling, insulation and other items (Fall 2017).
5. Post the preserve boundaries with new signage (Fall 2017).

PROGRESS:

Balls Cave reopened for the summer season on May 1, 2017 and will be closed for the winter on October 1, 2017. Balls Cave remains closed through the winter hibernation period due to the wintering bat population and the historical presence of the federally threatened Northern Long-Eared Bat. The other two significant caves on the preserve (Greens and Keyhole) have not been identified as NLE Bat hibernacula. Keyhole Cave, which requires a special permit due to its difficulty, is also closed in winter due to potentially dangerous ice buildup. Greens Cave remains open year round, but is rarely visited due to its small size.

LADDER: The access ladder was removed and replaced over the weekend of July 7-9, 2017. Materials costs were included in annual preserve budget and came in under budget.

SURVEY: A new and complete survey of the preserve was completed. The survey will be filed on the Schoharie County land records. Now that the metes and bounds of the preserve have been

defined, we will be posting the new boundary markers along the property lines in the forested area of the preserve to provide a better visual demarcation of the property.

OUTHOUSE: A local construction firm was retained to reconstruct the system with a concrete tank in accordance with local health regulations. The existing wooden superstructure was reused. Final payment to Vedder Excavation for this and the parking area work has been made.

PARKING AREA: The parking area was partly covered with processed stone several years ago. Additional crushed stone was added to the parking area and driveway and graded to harden and repair these areas. This work was performed concurrently with the outhouse work this past summer.

PROBLEMS:

CABIN: The Gage Cabin consists of a 20X30 foot, single-story, wood frame, on-slab rustic building. The Cabin is in overall poor condition and is in need of extensive repair, replacement or removal. Based on the condition of the Cabin its use has been curtailed indefinitely until such time as it can be replaced. An asbestos/lead paint survey has been completed to assess building issues, prior to renovation or removal. No asbestos containing materials were identified and the lead levels were below the waste thresholds so no special handling/disposal will be necessary for demolition or renovation wastes. The current budget includes disposal dumpsters, assuming the cabin can be taken down with local caver labor. Cabin demolition will not be performed until the replacement concept is approved and funded, so we do not risk being grandfathered under the local zoning regulations. This fall, a complete clean out of the cabin interior will be performed in preparation for eventual demolition.

MANAGEMENT PLAN: The Management Plan has not been substantively updated since it was written for the original acquisition of the property by the National Speleological Foundation (NSF) in 1987. The plan was written before the onset of WNS and before the acquisition of the Cabin. A complete re-write of the management plan is underway and will be presented to the Board for review prior to the spring 2018 Board meeting.

KIOSK: The informational kiosk at the gateway leaving the Cabin/parking area is in poor condition and will be replaced. The utility of the current kiosk is minimal and replacement with signage/bulletin board construction is recommended. The signage on the kiosk will be updated to reflect the name change to the James Gage Karst Preserve.

ACCESS ROAD: The majority of the access road remains in overall good condition. Several of the more remote sections of the roadway are constantly growing over with vegetation and require steady upkeep to keep the roadway open for potential rescue vehicles, should the need arise.

PLANS:

1. Complete the Re-Write of the management plan for the preserve and submit to the board for approval.
2. Replace the Kiosk.

3. Begin the clean out in preparation for the eventual demolition of the existing cabin and design and price out a suitable replacement. Significant fund raising for the replacement structure will likely be necessary.
4. Post property boundary markers, after leaves fall.

SUMMARY:
A lot of work has been completed this year and the preserve is in much better condition and more user friendly than in years past. The replacement of the cabin will likely require a significant fund raising effort as well as utilize available volunteer efforts of local members and neighbors.

THANKS:
Special thanks go out to Craig, Kara, Ellie and Nora Douglas; Matt, Jen, Owen and Sadie Harris, Buster Miller, Charlotte Bouvier, Emily Davis, Mike Warner and Wes Ostrander for their hard work and volunteer efforts replacing the cave access ladder this summer.

BUDGET:
No new items are being added to the previously submitted preserve budget request at this time. The line items for the survey, outhouse, driveway and ladder work can be zeroed out, now that those projects have been completed.

PHOTOS OF COMPLETED WORK ON NEXT PAGES





JOHN GUILDAY CAVES NATURE PRESERVE

Earl Suitor – jguildaycommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: John Guilday Caves Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION: Franklin, West Virginia
3. ACQUISTION DATE: March 15, 1983
4. DEED LOCATION: NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS: Yes
6. ACREAGE: 41.6 Acres
7. LIABILITY RELEASE: Yes
8. AREAS OF INTEREST: Recreation, archeology and history

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

Earl Suitor– Preserve Manager
Cheryl Suitor
Jeff Jahn
Rob Lee
Eric Berge
Alex Mawdsley

PROBLEMS

Currently no problems

PROGRESS

The hill is coming back nicely.

- I am working with John Guilday's associate Allen McCrady to collect data in Trout Cave for a scientific paper he is doing.
- I am in contact with John Guilday's wife & daughter in Massachusetts, and am working on a NSS News article about the preserve & John Guilday.
- Working with Guilday family to possibly facilitate a preserve visit and meet & greet dinner for any interested NSS members.
- Kiosk brochures replenished.
- Rehab of slippery trail above kiosk planned this Fall (log steps).
- Biota survey of NSS Flood Cave planned this Fall.
- Have been in contact with Craig Sthiler WVDNR bat biologist and am trying to determine a time of night the Virginia Big Eared Bats (summer residents) may be out eating and some supervised visitation of Trout Cave may occur.

• The Summer VBEB's live beyond the register room and Dave West has my permission to continue his dig in the front of the cave near the Sodalis Chamber.

KINGSTON SALTPETER CAVE NATURE PRESERVE (GA)

Larry O. Blair - kingstoncommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: Kingston Saltpeter Cave Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION: Bartow County, Georgia
3. LEASED DATE: June 21, 1983
4. DEED LOCATION: Leased Property from Felburn Foundation
5. DONATED FUNDS: N/A
6. ACREAGE: 40 Acres
7. LIABILITY RELEASE: Yes
8. AREAS OF INTEREST: History, Archeology

Note by AVP Crispin: Report has been received Sept 17, and scanned to image/pdf. However, I will have to retype it into this summary as it is not an OPF document.

McFAILS CAVE NATURE PRESERVE (NY)

Peter Haberland and Jason Siemion - mcfailscommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: McFails Caves Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION: Schoharie County, New York
3. ACQUISTION DATE: August 11, 1965 – First NSS Preserve
4. DEED LOCATION: NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS: Yes
6. ACREAGE: 2 Acres
7. LIABILITY RELEASE: Yes
8. AREAS OF INTEREST: Recreation, hydrology, geology

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: Peter Haberland and Jason Siemion

PROJECTS:

The management plan was submitted to the BOG

PROBLEMS: None at this time

PLANS: The most pressing need at the preserve is to refurbish the kiosk. This entails purchasing new Lexan sheets to protect the posters and likely re-printing posters. We also still plan on: 1. Installation of property boundary signage, 2. Installation of reflective trail markers, and 3. Parking area upgrades (if the property owner is amenable) during the next few years.
SUMMARY: Ten trips have been taken into McFails Cave and three into Hanors-Disappointment this caving season. One of the trips included a dive of the upstream sump. Less than 50 feet of passage was found during the dive with the water entering the cave through a too tight bedding plane opening. Two additional trips are scheduled for late September with one tentatively going to the furthest reaches of the cave beyond the Asia Dome. Accomplishments Since Last Report: Maintaining the parking area and trails took up most of our volunteer time at the preserve. The Acks Shack crawlway was cleared.

MILL CREEK SINK NATURE PRESERVE (FL)

Charles Roberson – jcroberson67@gmail.com – millcreekcommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: Mill Creek Sink Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION: Alachua, Florida
3. ACQUISTION DATE: December 6, 1993
4. DEED LOCATION: NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS: Donated by City of Alachua, Florida
6. ACREAGE: 8.58 Acres
7. LIABILITY RELEASE: Yes
8. AREAS OF INTEREST: Cave diving site only - recreation, hydrology, geology, biology

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

PRESERVE MANAGER: Charles Roberson

GUIDES: Rob Anderson, Ward Beecher, Doug Chappell, Rick Crawford, James Draker, Wayne Kinard, Bill Main, Mark Messersmith, Jerry Murphy, Kelly Jessop, Jeff Petersen, Charles Roberson, Robert Schulte.

AVP note: no report submitted, however, there is ongoing negotiation with Florida government entities about a change of status to conservation easement – Geary Schindel is taking the lead on this project

NEW RIVER CAVE NATURE PRESERVE (VA)

Wil Orndorff – newrivercommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: New River Cave Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION: Radford, Virginia (Giles County)
3. ACQUISTION DATE: May 2014
4. DEED LOCATION: NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS: Yes/Fund raising sufficient to complete purchase of cave
6. ACREAGE: 13 Acres
7. LIABILITY RELEASE: No, Sign in and out procedure defined in management plan
8. AREAS OF INTERST: Biological, geological, historical, and recreational

PROJECTS:

Major trail repairs and a new Kiosk. The portion of the preserve along the river front is slowly being converted into a usable camping area where out of town NSS cavers can stay when visiting New River Cave and other caves in the area.

PROBLEMS:

Graffiti continues to be an issue at this ungated cave. The notion that casual visitors would treat the cave with more respect after construction of the kiosk and the nice trail has proven to be false. Unfortunately, it is looking like construction of a cave gate may be necessary for responsible stewardship of this resource.

PLANS:

Further investigation into perpetrators of vandalism (graffiti) in 2017, with goal of prosecution under the Virginia Cave Protection Act.

- Develop and implement graffiti removal plan.
- Develop estimate of cost for gate construction.

RICHARD BLENZ NATURE PRESERVE (IN)

Anmar Mirza – blenzcommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: Richard Blenz Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION: Bloomington, Indiana
3. ACQUISTION DATE: 2008
4. DEED LOCATION: NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS: Donated by Richard Blenz
6. ACREAGE: 41.3 Acres

7. LIABILITY RELEASE: Permit
8. AREAS OF INTERST: Recreation, hydrology, geology

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

Anmar Mirza – Preserve Manager

Dave Everton

Sam Frushour

Progress:

Plans:

An article for the NSS News as requested is being prepared.

Problems:

There have been two instances of new graffiti. We were unable to trace the origins but unapproved visitors are suspected.

SCHOHARIE NATURE PRESERVE (NY)

Manager: Christa Hay **-** christahay@yahoo.com 518-237-1165

Cabin Reservations: Peter Teresco pteresco@nycap.rr.com

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: Schoharie Nature PreserveRichard Blenz Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION: Schoharie County, New York
3. ACQUISTION DATE: 2008 (1994?)
4. DEED LOCATION: NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS: Donated by Richard Blenz
6. ACREAGE: x Acres – Property survey is needed!
7. LIABILITY RELEASE: No
8. AREAS OF INTERST: Recreation, hydrology, geology

- The property saw standard level of visitation this year. As always September is the busiest month due to college groups and the cave closing October 1st.
- I did not post the property before leaf-on as stated in the spring report but will work on that before next year. I can still use the services of the surveyor for this task.
- The lawn service did not happen this year. I had a verbal contract with New Looks Landscaping but every time he sent the contract he changed the price to our verbal agreement. I might need to use him next year if I cannot find another company.
- I did not have any cleanup days this year but several groups did some basic cleanup while staying at the cabin.

- Department of Environmental Conservation places two camera traps on the property to test if they would be good for monitoring the cave during closed season. I attached a few of them to the document. Some are funny but there are a few that show that people are visiting the cave during closed season and hunting, or at least crossing the property to hunt. I'm not sure DEC will use the cameras this season since they were supposed to transmit the photos but the signal was weak so they had to physically collect them.

SHELTA CAVE PRESERVE REPORT (AL)

Kevin Reeves & Bill Torode– sheltacommittee@caves.org
Phone 256.534.7809

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: Shelta Caves Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION: Huntsville, Alabama
3. ACQUISTION DATE: September, 1967 (2nd owned preserve)
4. DEED LOCATION: NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS: Yes
6. ACREAGE: 12 Acres
7. LIABILITY RELEASE: No
8. AREAS OF INTEREST: Recreation, Ecology, History, Hydrology,

Bill Torode currently checking on property Kevin Reeves Manager.

PROJECTS: Review the preserve management and caver access plans and adjust as needed

PLANS: Planning to build a kiosk, working on designs now.

Continue to visit the cave at least 1x per month.

Working on an article about both cave preserves. Working with a cave photographer for pictures.

SUMMARY: Bill continues to remove brush and dead limbs/trees/cut grass as required.

SIMS SINK NATURE PRESERVE

Buford C. Pruitt, Jr. – bpruitt570@gmail.com

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: SIMS SINK NATURE PRESERVE
2. LOCATION: Suwannee County, FLORIDA
3. ACQUISTION DATE: early 2017
4. DEED LOCATION: NSS OFFICE
5. DONATED FUNDS:
6. ACREAGE: 2.0 ACRES

7. LIABILITY RELEASE: YES
8. AREAS OF INTEREST: BIOLOGY
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:
BUFORD PRUITT, JR. - PRESERVE MANAGER

PROJECTS:

1. NSS preserve boundary signs were obtained and Paul Moler installed them.
2. Matthew Bull has completed the underwater survey of the cave and is expected to complete the final map shortly (preliminary map attached). Bull also confirmed that the two solution pipes on Pruitt's property to the immediate south of the preserve do not connect into Sims Sink Cave.
3. Kelly Jessop plans to remove the old diving lines and replace them with new lines that will allow multiple researchers to make repeatable census counts of cave crustaceans over time (see attachment).
4. Photographs of the property, including underwater shots in the cave, have been collected by Buford Pruitt and Lisanne Aerts. Gary Bush has posted them to the NSS Sims Sink Preserve web page.
5. Kelly Jessop and Adam Hughes made a reconnaissance dive into the cave to evaluate potential water quality and crayfish census methods. Jessop used a Hydrolab sonde to collect physical parameters (dissolved oxygen, temperature, oxidation-reduction potential, pH, and conductivity.
6. During his cave mapping survey dives, Matthew Bull estimated at least 100 crayfish. Bill Streever made three visual counts on June 30, 2017, revealing a mean count of 121 (S.D. = ~15) Procambarus erythrops. Streever also noted that there was a reasonable distribution of sizes, except for an absence in the <1.5 cm size class, and that all were Procambarus erythrops (Troglocambarus maclanei is also known from the cave).
7. Paul Moler reported that he observed an Eastern diamondback rattlesnake (Crotalus adamanteus) on the preserve in 2008 and Bill Streever mentioned that he saw an Eastern ratsnake (Pantherophis alleghaniensis) on site this year.
8. Platform wood waste was hauled away to landfill by Tevis Kouts.

PROBLEMS:

1. Already excavated platform soil may need to be relocated.
2. Additional dead wood, brush, and laurel oaks should be removed prior to additional plantings.

PLANS:

1. Continue clearing nuisance plant material within preserve.
2. Continue planting quality hardwoods within preserve.
3. Stygomorphic crustacean research is planned for 2017.
4. Prepare feature article on this new NSS nature preserve for the NSS News

SUMMARY:

Ecological and infrastructural rehabilitation of the preserve continues.

TYTOONA CAVE NATURE PRESERVE (PA) -

Garrett Czmor - tytoonacommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME:	Tytoona Cave Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION:	Tyrone, Pennsylvania (Blair Valley)
3. ACQUISTION DATE:	December 23, 1997
4. DEED LOCATION:	NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS:	Yes, Huntingdon County Cave Hunters
6. ACREAGE:	6.8 Acres
7. LIABILITY RELEASE:	Yes for Cave Diving only
8. AREAS OF INTEREST:	Recreation, Ecology, History, Hydrology,

PROJECTS:

- Brochures are being restocked at the kiosk on a monthly basis along with any minor garbage removal.
- Two more no trespassing signs (prohibiting off-trail usage) were replaced due to weather damage.
- Started placing NSS boundary markers on the property. More will be placed later in the fall.
- Water proofing the wood is in progress. The liquid needs at least 24 hrs to dry. Our very unpredictable weather has hampered this work when help was available.

PROBLEMS:

We had two incidents where visitors made a small rock dam in front of the entrance. We dismantled them both times.

PLANS:

We might review the old "Tytoona" brochure and design a newer one this year.

SUMMARY:

Overall, the cave and property is in great shape. More water entered the cave this summer than what is usual. Our summer had much more rain and usual dry periods were wet. With vacations over and kids back to school, visitation has dropped off significantly.

WARREN CAVE NATURE PRESERVE (FL)

James Hamlin, Ph.D. - warrencommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: Warren Cave Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION: Alachua County, Florida
3. ACQUISTION DATE: June 3, 1991
4. DEED LOCATION: NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS: Donated by Nature Conservancy
6. ACREAGE: 4.01 Acres
7. LIABILITY RELEASE: No
8. AREAS OF INTEREST: Recreation, Ecology, History, Hydrology, Biology

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

James Hamlin, Ph.D. – Preserve Manager
Les Cochram
Erik Amsbury
Buford Pruitt
Irv Sterling

No report submitted

WELLS CAVE NATURE PRESERVE (KY)

William (Bill) Walden – wellscommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME: Wells Cave Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION: Pulaski County, Kentucky
3. ACQUISTION DATE: April 2003
4. DEED LOCATION: NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS: Yes
6. ACREAGE: 3 Acres
7. LIABILITY RELEASE: No
8. AREAS OF INTEREST: Recreation, Ecology, History, Hydrology, Education

PROJECTS:
PROBLEMS:

PLANS:

- Cut up the two downed trees next to the kiosk.
- Scrub the kiosk and paint it. I'll pay for the paint.
- Remove vegetation between the kiosk and the driveway.

WILLIAM J. STEPHENSON NATURE PRESERVE (AL)

Kevin Reeves & Bill Torode – stephensoncommittee@caves.org

PRESERVE INFORMATION:

1. PRESERVE NAME:	William J. Stephenson Nature Preserve
2. LOCATION:	Huntsville, Alabama
3. ACQUISTION DATE:	2013
4. DEED LOCATION:	NSS Office
5. DONATED FUNDS:	Yes
6. ACREAGE:	60 Acres
7. LIABILITY RELEASE:	No
8. AREAS OF INTEREST:	Recreation and Education

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

Bill Torode currently checks on the property as Preserve Supervisor. Kevin Reeves is the Preserve Manager.

PROJECTS: Kevin is working on a Kiosk

SUMMARY: Bill continues to remove brush and dead limbs/trees/cut grass as required.

Bill, Kevin and others have walked the trails up the hill and removed brush on the paths to the caves.