

National Speleological Society
Administrative Vice President's Report
 Board of Governors Meeting • Blacksburg, VA
 March 17, 2018

Prepared by: Katherine L Crispin, Ph.D.
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Convention 2018 – Helena MT	Doug Warner	
Convention 2019 – Cookeville, TN	Maureen Handler	
Convention 2020 – Elkins, WV, tentative	Rich Geisler, tentative	
NSS Salons	Blake Jordan	blandevoid@gmail.com
	Paul Jorgenson	KE7HR@cox.net
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Cave Ballad Salon	Roland Vinyard	balladsalon@caves.org
Fine Arts Salon	Carolina Shrewsbury	fineartsalon@caves.org
Multimedia Program Salon	Dave Bunnell	multimediasalon@caves.org
Cover Art Salon	Blake Jordan	coverartsalon@caves.org
Print Salon	Wm Shrewsbury	printsalon@caves.org
Photo Salon	Dean Wiseman & Cady Soukup	photosalon@caves.org
T-Shirt Salon	Dave Decker	tshirtsalon@caves.org
Symbolic Emblems Salon		emblemsalon@caves.org
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:

- Convention 2018 is in good shape. Convention 2019 is making progress.
- A presentation has been submitted for Convention 2020 for the dates July 27-31, 2020 in Elkins, WV. A vote to accept should be expected at Summer BOG.
- New (or revitalized) Cave Management committees are underway in Contemporary Cave Use and Advisory Committee for Research
- Paul Winter has agreed to be the new Chair of the Roundtable of the Cave Conservancies
- Dr. Jeff Karr has agreed to be the new Chairman of the Cave Conservancies Committee
- Thanks to the hard work of Julie Schenck-Brown, Tom Griffin, Kevin Reeves, Jay Clark and Angie Ballard our Shelta Cave Preserve has now expanded! A neighbor has generously donated his property to protect the cave in perpetuity and expand the natural preserve area. Thank you all!

CAVE MANAGEMENT DIVISION REPORT SUMMARY

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

March 2018

The Cave Management Division Chief report:

I referred two skilled and enthusiastic cavers, Kelly McNamara gingercaver@gmail.com, and Greg Roemer groemer@gmail.com to Will Urbanski to help with the CCUS project.

Dr. Will White asked me to update the Recreational Caving article in the Encyclopedia of Caves Edited. Also, I will be working with María Alejandra Pérez on another article for the Encyclopedia with a tentative title of "The Cultures of Caves."

A special NSS Convention cave management research session is planned for Monday afternoon 30 July 2018 in Helena, Montana.

Cultures of Caves: An Invitation to a Special Convention Session

María Alejandra Pérez (maria.perez@mail.wvu.edu) and John M. Wilson (jmwgeo@gmail.com)

"We explore, we study, we protect." This is the NSS motto. However, think about it, we have not always explored, studied, or protected in the same way. Moreover, cavers in different places do these things differently. Finally, who is "we," anyway? Who does it include, how, and why? What could we do to broaden that "we" to ensure the future of caving and the long-term protection of cave and karst resources? These are some of the questions that keep us up at night. As a couple of cavers fascinated by the cultural and historical qualities of caving, we have put together a special session titled "The Cultures of Caving: Broadening the Study of Humans and Caves." (This is not the first time that either of us has been involved to have a session such as this be part of the convention program, but that is another story. Here we are at it again.) The meeting will take place on Monday afternoon 30 July 2018 at the Helena, Montana, NSS convention. This event is an invitation to think of caving from a cultural and historical perspective, and to examine what has changed and what has remained the same when it comes to humans exploring, studying, and conserving caves. The idea of the session is to inform and build bridges between people interested in caves, their histories, their past cultural features, and the potential to develop for the future. Please contact either session co-chair if you have an idea for a presentation and you are wondering if it would be a good fit.

To give you a sense of themes, this is how our session is shaping up:

María Pérez will kick off the session with a brief introduction to the "Cultures of Caving" theme (refer to Chapter 26 of the 4th edition of *Caving Basics* for an in-depth report of what she has in mind).

John Wilson will share with us a summary of selected cave-related human science research. María Pérez and John Wilson will report on their ongoing study of caver villages, which this year will focus on the history of the Kirkwood Community of Austin, Texas. We are very excited to feature a panel of Kirkwood cavers that have agreed to participate and share their

experiences. This panel is still in the process of coming together, but so far, we count on two participants, Frank Binney and Bill Steele. Binney's presentation is titled *Kirkwood: Gateway to the Golden Age of Mexican Caving* while Steele will share with us how Kirkwood was a launching pad for both Montana wilderness caving and Huautla Expeditions. Be on the lookout for other interesting Kirkwood panelists who will broaden our perspective of what all went on in Austin, Texas in the 70s onwards.

María Pérez will then turn to her ongoing project on the history of collaboration between US and Cuban cavers. This National Science Foundation project has kept her busy during the last three years.

Dr. Wilmer Pérez will share stories and photographs highlighting his long experience as a caver in his native Venezuela. This presentation will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Society of Venezuelan Speleology.

Will Urbanski and Kristine Ebrey will be sharing with us their insights on the value and future of the Contemporary Cave Use Study. Technological advances are allowing a revitalization of this study, which will advance caver organizations. (See CCUS report below for more information on this project)

Table of BOG Report Deadlines

Action and Level	General rule for BOG report deadlines	Actual dates for 17 March 2018 BOG meeting
Reminder notice to Committee Chairs	Sixty days or earlier before the next BOG meeting	15 January 2018
Budget request to AVP	Two weeks before the EC meeting on 2 Feb 2018	15 January 2018
Chairs send reports to Division Chiefs	Forty days before the next BOG meeting	5 February 2018
Division chiefs send reports to AVP	Thirty-five days before the next BOG meeting	10 February 2018
Departments and officers send reports to BOG list The Final Deadline	Thirty days before the next BOG meeting	15 February 2018
Board of Governors meeting	BOG meeting date	17 March 2018

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. The largest conservancies are doing exceptionally well, and the very smallest are struggling in some cases.

Cave Conservancy Roundtable – Paul Winter – pawwinter@gmail.com

Jonathan B. Beard has resigned as chair of the Cave Conservancy Roundtable. Paul Winter, (62053RL) (FE) pawwinter@gmail.com, 1208 W. Pine Grove Road, Furnace, PA 16865-9408, 412-849-6824 has agreed to serve as the chair of the 2018 Roundtable. This session will be held at 2:00 PM on Friday, 3 August 2018. Some of the topics discussed last year were: field houses – enabling caving/conservation activities, how to buy a cave, general land purchasing advice, persuading someone to sell his or her cave, general advice for purchasing a cave property, conserving cave properties, successfully managing a cave, and liability insurance and directors/officers insurance.

Contemporary Cave Use Study - Technology Division Chief, Will Urbanski, Membership Committee Chair Kristine Ebrey, and John M. Wilson acting chair jmwgeo@gmail.com

The Contemporary Cave Use Study is in the revitalization process to bring cavers to the NSS community and advance the knowledge of the human use of caves. 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.

CCUS Proposed Management structure

A. Software Development and Management Section, Chair - Will Urbanski

Develop the software for the CCUS program that allows the administrator to do the following tasks in addition to many more functions:

1. View cave visitations for a given cave
2. Edit and must approve visitation before records saved in the database become permanent
3. Manage the cave list such as consolidating cave names
4. Correct errors in cave jurisdiction listings
5. Add caves to the list of each state
6. Limit or ban people with unscrupulous intent or those who misuse of the system
7. Establish procedures to protect privacy
8. May extract cave visitation data in CSV and JSON

B. Science Research Section - Chair to be appointed

This chair will supervise and:

1. Analyze the information gathered
2. Write articles and publish the findings

3. Advise the NSS on the demographics of caving
4. Advise NSS leaders on ways to use the CCUS information to strengthen the NSS
5. Use the information collected to describe the caving phenomena, the caving experience, and demographic factors
6. Create graphic and mathematical pictures of the caving society in its element
7. Use the information to determine the validity of proposed scientific hypotheses
8. Recruit other capable science researchers as appropriate

C. Public Relations and Promotion Section – Kristine Ebrey

This chair will supervise and:

1. Determine a process to encourage cavers to use the CCUS database for posting cave trips
2. Help cavers understand the many advantages of using the CCUS online database for personal caving record keeping
3. Arrange for creating cave signs to post for selected caves explaining the CCUS
4. Arrange for social media to encourage cavers to use of the CCUS system
5. Arrange for CCUS promotion in the NSS News
6. Coordinate CCUS help for NSS conservation effort
7. Encourage CCUS use by the NSS nature preserves, other cave managers, grotto leaders, cave survey projects, NSS regions
8. Help the membership committee understand the caver target audience in any particular area for NSS recruitment
9. Help find potential cavers to communicate the NSS story with the potential to recruit of new members

The construction of the CCUS cave list – bottom-up instead of top-down is a viable option for cave lists in CCUS. We have the option of initially listing just a few caves in most states that we know are popular caves. Moreover, we could let the database expand on its own. Construction of a list of caves by county and state is not likely to happen quickly; however, such a list is not essential or necessary for CCUS to function. The CCUS work started around 1970 with one cave in which I put a cave register. Eventually, over two hundred caves had registers in about 15 states. The leaders of state cave surveys were not concerned about CCUS as the registers mostly went into popular caves. On the other hand, state or region cave surveys were documenting all caves. To illustrate by example how the revised CCUS project will proceed, let us assume that no state surveys will supply a list of caves by county. Initially, the CCUS application or app will have only a few caves listed. The first person using the app goes to the start page, sets up his or her account, username, and password and has the option of entering additional demographic and personal information. The caver is prompted to go to the state page and click the appropriate state. The county list for that state appears if we have it in the database. The person then clicks the county and goes to the cave list, which may not have any caves on it. In our example, a form to enter a cave name appears next. At a minimum, the person puts in the cave name and maybe a little information to help us determine if this is the correct cave name and county. The caver then clicks to the next page to enter his or her data in the CCUS cave trip form. Some of these fields may populate if the caver has entered demographic and personal

information on their entry page. Otherwise, the information may be entered here, and corrections to previously posted data can be made if information does not apply for this cave trip. The caver may answer some specific questions about the cave trip such as date, number of cavers in the party, length of trip in time, etc. and list other things in the text field. There is no reason to list all the caves in a county or state in the CCUS database. We will mainly be interested in popular caves, ones with many visitors. For membership or science purposes, the vast majority of caves have almost no visitors in a given year. Therefore, it is not cost-effective or worth our time to place signs or monitor the least popular caves. However, it is OK for cavers to enter data from less popular caves if they wish to. The software would allow that to happen and those cavers would input specific cave information. Once the project is successful in getting a modest number of cave trips, and contact information is entered, it is plausible that people with cave lists will supply some caves to the CCUS database. The NSS membership committee will get prospects, and the scientist will get useful information with a database with only a modest amount of popular caves listed, provided many people enter their data in the system when they cave.

Cave Management Advisory Committee for Research – Blake Jordan,
blakenjordan@gmail.com

The goals for the Cave Management Advisory Committee for Research (CMACR) are listed below. Some of these goals may become priorities and others may become inactive depending on the preferences of the AVP and the NSS. The knowledge, skills, and abilities of the committee members may also be a factor in setting priorities of this committee

- Primary Purpose: Review proposed and ongoing cave management research for NSS endorsement and affiliation
- Secondary purposes: Identify areas of need for cave management research and study
- Encourage science-based cave management research
- Advise potential researchers and facilitate their work as is appropriate
- Help find resources that may be available to fund or otherwise assist this research
- Be open to identify suitable mentors and institutions for cave management study
- Be open to or recommend qualified people to evaluate research proposed methods as needed
- Serve as or recommend qualified peer reviewers
- Clarify the rationale to appropriate editors for publication of cave management research.
- Refer proper funding requests to the NSS Research Advisory Committee, The NSS Board of Governors, or other suitable committee or institution

Two academic studies have expressed interest in applying but have not done so to date. They are CCUS and the Caver Village Study.

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.”

Progress: I attended the National Caves Association annual meeting at Mark Twain Cave in September and the NCKMS meeting in Arkansas in October. While at the NCKMS meeting, I was able to visit the following Show Caves: Cosmic Caverns, Talking Rocks, Bluff Dwellers Cave, Spanish Treasure Cave, Bull Shoals Caverns, Blanchard Springs Cavern and Mystic Caverns. No specific problems were identified. In December, I visited the Jaguar Paw Cave System in Belize and Cumberland Caverns in Tennessee.

Plans: I will be visiting Grotto Hato in Curacao in February and also Cumberland Caverns. The building at the National Cave Museum at Diamond Caverns is finished and the long process to compile and curate the museum holdings has started. I also plan to visit Crystal Onyx Cave, Kentucky, a cave that has been open to the public

NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee Report

February 6, 2018

Prepared by

Julie Schenck-Brown, Chair of the NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee

LRNC@caves.org

OVERVIEW

The NSS reestablished the Landowner Relations Network Committee (LRNC) in 2016 with the principal goal of interacting with and supporting private landowners. 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 endeavor to establish a relationship with cave landowners that see frequent visitors, and reach out to landowners of closed or limited-access caves to bring goodwill from the NSS.

PERSONNEL

Julie Schenck-Brown, Chair

Tom Griffin, Vice-Chair of the Eastern Region
Rick & Gaylene Speaect, Vice-Chairs of the Western Region
Chuck Porter – NY
Peter Youngbear-VT
Kim Fleischman—MD
Earl Suitor – VA, WV
Bill Walden – southeastern KY
Teri Stephens – middle TN (Knoxville-Cookeville)
Dave & Valerie Howell – central AL
Brad Long & Lesley Colton—northern AL, southeastern TN and GA
Andy Zellner – northern AL, southeastern TN
Shane Stacey—northwestern AL / Muscle Shoals / western TN
Samantha Tyler—FL/ southern GA
Geary Schindel – TX
John Wilson – Hawaii
Jean DeVries – Michigan

Landowner Relations Network Committee Awards

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

Mr. and Ms. Daniel Crabtree who for several years has helped the Appalachian Cave Conservancy (ACC), an NSS conservancy, maintain an attractive and safe access area for the ACC-owned Gilley Cave property. In his nomination, Buford C. Pruitt, Jr. writes that the Crabtrees ongoing volunteer efforts include mowing the right-of-way and parking area, monitoring for potential trespassers, and providing information about the local neighborhood that is important in making land management decisions.

Dr. Richard Latterell who over the years has endured hundreds of scouts and cavers who visit Moler's Cave in West Virginia. In 2005, Dr. Latterell put his property under a perpetual conservation easement, ensuring protection of the cave, which is home to at least two endangered species. Bob Bennett and Tom Griffin, along with Tri-State Grotto, nominated Dr. Latterell for the LRNC Certificate of Appreciation for all his hard work and friendship to cavers, biologists and geologists for the last 45 years.



Dr. Richard Latterell, owner of Molers cave, and recipient of the NSS LRNC Certificate of Appreciation (R), with his friend Mary (L) and Tom Griffin, Vice-Chair of the NSS LRNC

Milton Starnes who befriended members of the Appalachian Cave Conservancy (ACC), an NSS conservancy, to construct a bat-friendly gate and manage access. There are three ACC Board members, two of which are also NSS members, who work very well with this elderly (78 years old) cave owner. Thus, in his nomination, Buford Pruitt, Jr. describes the relationship between Mr. Starnes and the ACC as a textbook example of the perfect cave landowner and how NSS members and NSS conservancies can work successfully with one.

Mike Cardin who owns several significant caves in Marion County, TN. Sewanee Mountain Grotto has led beginner trips to Mike's caves more than a dozen times. And Mike continues to accommodate these grotto trips and Boy Scout trips, even making arrangements with family members to open the gates or entrusting cavers with the access code. In her nomination, Kristine Ebrey describes Mike as a fantastic landowner that definitely deserves recognition for allowing access to so many caves.

Steve Williams who welcomes hundreds of cavers and spelunkers each year, as they explore Whiting's Neck cave. Tom Griffin and Bob Bennett, along with Tri-State Grotto nominated Mr. Steve Williams for the LRNC Certificate of Appreciation, as a "thank-you" for enduring the many years of keeping the cave open to cavers. This Certificate also provided support to Mr. Williams who had an incident with a caver who parked in front of his gate. Both Tom and Bob met with Mr. Williams after the incident and information was disseminated throughout regional and grotto email groups to remind cavers of Mr. William's request to not block his gate.

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.

PROGRESS

Work continues on the brochure that will be distributed to landowners and cavers. Amber Lehmann is completing the final layout and Kat Crispin, NSS AVP, approved printing 1,000 brochures after a bid was obtained from C & A Printing. The brochure will also be available as a PDF download from the NSS website.

Julie Schenck-Brown was approached by landowners in Tennessee regarding assistance with developing a release for a Boy Scout trip. Working with Jay Clark, NSS General Counsel, an indemnity release was created for minors, while a release of information was created for the adults. The landowners were very appreciative of Jay's pro bono assistance and plan to host Scout trips annually to their cave.

Special thanks to Samantha Tyler for serving as a moderator for the Group and increasing posts for the NSS Landowner Relations Network Facebook Group. All cavers are invited to join to share stories of landowner-caver relations, especially successes and lessons learned!

An article titled, *Landowners Make the Difference in TAG* was published in the 40th Annual TAG Fall Cave-In Guidebook, which had a printing run of 1,500 copies. The article described the purpose of the LRNC, highlighted several TAG landowners, and discussed the work of the southeastern members of the LRNC. Copies of this Guidebook were given to the landowners featured in the article.

Photos taken by Nathan Williams for Mike Friday, owner of Varnedoe Cave, and a previous LRNC Certificate of Appreciation recipient, were presented to Mike as a Christmas present. Plans are also being made to take Mike back into his cave, so Nathan can obtain additional photos that feature Mike as a landowner who caves.

PLANS

Business cards for LRNC members are also being designed by Amber Lehmann and will be completed after the brochure.

The LRNC Executive Committee needs to schedule a meeting at the 2018 NSS Convention.

Money was requested in the budget to mail holiday cards to recipients of the NSS LRNC awards, including the Certificate of Appreciation and the Award for Outstanding Landowner-Caver Relations.

Julie Schenck-Brown and Tom Griffin are planning to develop a webinar presentation for the NSS LRNC and will follow-up with Debbie Spoons to schedule. This webinar was delayed until the completion of the NSS LRNC Brochures.

Samantha Tyler is planning to reach out to David Obi and Steve Nemeth to discuss collaboration on a closed cave list for Florida.

Members of the NSS LRNC will reach out to landowners to support Andy Zellner's efforts to revitalize the TAG Closed Cave List.

Teri Stephens will continue to work with Chuck Sutherland to meet with landowners and discuss the 2019 NSS Convention in Cookeville, TN.

Members of the NSS LRNC will continue to solicit nominations for the LRNC Certificate of Appreciation and annual award for Outstanding Landowner-Caver Relations.

PROBLEMS

The NSS LRNC has not received any referrals from the NSS Office in over a year, thus there does not appear to be much support for the Committee, except from a few members.

Most of the initial members on the NSS LRNC have not been responsive to email communication about the Committee. Thus, the member list was culled to only include members who have been actively participating in and reporting on activities related to landowner relations.

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." It was previously reported that this effort was being coordinated by the NSS OVP and the NSS AVP, but it has still not been implemented. An alternate request was also submitted last year to have calls forwarded to the LRNC Chair and Vice-Chairs. This still needs to be evaluated by the NSS OVP as to whether or not this is possible.

Cave Acquisition Subcommittee of the NSS Nature Preserves

21) Dissolution of Act 26-578 Cave and Karst Acquisition Committee Crispin moved: Act 26-578, Cave and Karst Acquisition Committee is rescinded. The Nature Preserve Committee will henceforth handle all acquisition related matters. Board Secretary note: The sentence, "The Nature Preserve Committee will henceforth handle all acquisition related matters" is also being added to act 26-577

NSS ACQUISITION COMMITTEE REPORT

TOM GRIFFIN / JULIE SCHENCK-BROWN
CHAIRMAN / VICE CHAIR 2-08-2018

The acquisition committee has had a few projects on going with a new prospect,

1. Secret Cave. Julie Schenck-Brown will give a verbal report and elaborate on Secret Cave and Link avenue acquisition that expands the Shelta Cave Preserve.
2. June of 2017 Anmar Mirza wrote about a possible purchase of 26 acres joining the current RBNC Preserve, this did fall through. This purchase was contingent on the divorce of the owners.
3. Keith Dunlap, Treasurer of the Indiana Karst Conservancy sent a proposal for a \$2500.00 dollar grant. I have attached the full proposal which includes the budget and site maps.

AVP Note: There have been a few inquiries into grant requests to assist acquisitions from regional cave conservancies

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

- Annual Conservation Issue of NSSNews is complete and will be the April 2018 issue featuring several UNESCO World Heritage Site Cave Parks. Kudos and thanks to Dave Bunnell for his ever-present efficiency, enthusiasm, and beautiful layout!
- Jim & Val repaired a Kings Palace 4.5-foot, 45 pound stalactite that fell in multiple pieces when a assistant inadvertently bumped it during a GQStyle photo shoot featuring Brad Pitt. Our repair and rehanging required several days of work. See the intro story in April NSSNews Conservation Issue. Jim Werker summed it up with his cowboy humor, "This Brad break was the Pitts."
- To no avail, we've made multiple contacts to find someone to agree to Chair the Biological Response Committee and WNS Liaison. The cavers, the caves, and the bats need someone to step up to this position.
- We are writing chapter on conservation for Guads Photo Book, a joint NCKRI/UIS International Cave Photographers publication.

Cave Vandalism Deterrence Commission

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

- No report received for this period. (ValNote: I've noticed that Sarah has posted several good statements on her Cave Vandalism Facebook Group)

Conservation Committee

Conservation Committee – Val & Jim werks@cunacueva.com

After a surprise visit of shingles for Christmas, Val is back on track and moving forward.

Conservation Sub-committee Reports Received This Period

Conservation Group and Grotto Awards

Kathleen Lavoie, Chairman lavoiekh@plattsburgh.edu

- Nominate Your Group/Grotto by submitting articles to the NSSNews Conservation issue and by posting project reports on NSS Social Media venues, and of course, send your nominations to me.

Brochures Coordinator

Cheryl Jones cs.jones@verizon.net

- It's a shame there was not a check-out/in system for the lost NSS tabletop display. Policy should be established with a paper trail. Until I'm told to create new display panels I'm on hold. Sounds like Peter's obtaining funding.
- Plans: Revise and reprint the Lava Tubes brochure. It was last reprinted in 2005.
- Progress: We expect it to go to press in the spring.
- Problems: None

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 and werks@zianet.com

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

- Peruaçu Park Guide Cave Stewardship Training happened in August 2017. A Save-the-Caves Conservation Grant was awarded and successfully delivered (thanks to the onsite assistance of Augusto Auler) to enable the Bambui Research Group to train Guides in hands-on speleothem inventory and trail demarcation in the dark zone of Gruta do Janelão. See Alt and Moura article on Janelão in April 2018 NSSNews.
- Three more approved and delivered Save-the-Caves Conservation Grants. Reports received on two.
 - 1) \$700 conservation activities in Puerto Rico / Detailed accounting report received after the hurricane / There is now much more work to do after the fall 2017 flooding and inflow of debris.
 - 2) \$500 matching funds for cave gate in PA / Val needs to receive a report from PA .
 - 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 / See article in April 2018 NSSNews / Hans, the Big Fork Cavers, and the area Grotto are planning great activities for teenage JSS during the Montana.

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: We have 31 days of events scheduled with the CaveSim trailer, including:
 - Austin Texas CaveFest, Feb 10, 2018
 - Six days of school programs in Grove, OK, late April 2018
 - Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, Kentucky, Aug 31- Sept 2, 2018
- Progress (photos: www.cavesim.com/news):
 - Completed 14 days of events with the CaveSim trailer:
 - Aragon Elementary School, Fountain, CO, 9/27/2017. A great program for a Title I school.
 - TAG Fall Cave-In, 10/6-10/8/2017. CaveSim was open for 32 hours in 2.5 days! Huge thanks to Jeff Martin, DCG, PMI, and so many others for making this program possible.
 - 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. Big thanks to Forrest Wilson for working with us on this event.
 - Hillside Montessori School
 - NCKMS, Eureka Springs, AR, 10/19-10/20/2017. A big thanks to Chuck Bitting, Jim Goodbar, Crash Kennedy for working with me on this event.
 - Science Museum Oklahoma, Oklahoma City, 10/21/2017. Another great free public event.
 - The University School, Colorado Springs, CO, 10/24/2017. Pre-K through High School program!
 - Colorado Association of Science Teachers, Denver, CO, 11/27/2017. Teach our teachers!
 - Completed 2 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 after training the kids in CaveSim.
- 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 Rocky Mountain Region

Chloe Beck (CO) chloebeck@utexas.edu

Camille Pullham McKinney (UT) cami_mckinney@nps.gov

- January 13: Cavers helped clean up and remove tools from William's Canyon's Swirling Mist Cave.

- January 8: A California man is rescued following a fall in Utah's Little Brush Creek Cave in the Uintah Mountains. Rescuers included Uintah, Wasatch, and Utah County Search and Rescue teams, Vernal Fire, Salt Lake Fire, Gold Cross, Classic Lifeguard, U.S. Forest Service, Utah Cavers Association, and the National Cavers Association.
- January 7: Colorado's Glenwood Caverns announces it is hosting the National Caves Association annual convention in September 2018.
- January 7: Historic Sweetwater Indian Cave in Colorado is listed for sale.
- December 21: Colorado's White River National Forest releases Environmental Assessment for logging project in Lime Creek cave region south of Eagle. Logging will begin in 2018.
- December 2: Colorado Grotto members work with Jefferson County Park Service to address continued break ins at CJ's Crystal Cavern in Golden, CO and provide suggestions for preservation.
- November 1: Local cavers meet with BLM in Cody, Wyoming to discuss cave management, including historic Spirit Mountain Caverns. Final proposals on permitting and gating to be published November 2018.
- The National Speleological Society at its October 21 board of governors meeting in Denver adapted a new wild cave location policy. The new policy reads: "The NSS opposes providing wild cave locations in publications, videos, postings, or information intended for the general public except where the presentation of such information better serves the mission of the Society."
- October 26: BLM Wyoming is partnering with Bat Conservation International to document bat colonies in the state's abandoned mines.
- October 10: The Northern Rocky Mountain Grotto's Cave Camp saw 125 cavers attending.
- September 30: Local cavers and volunteers worked with Jefferson County Park Service to remove several bags of trash from Clear Creek Canyon's Fault Cave.
- September 30: South Dakota's Jewel Cave hosted several National Public Lands Day volunteer service projects.
- September 29: Boulder, Colorado caver Dr. Norman Pace honored with prestigious Massry Prize for his microbiological studies.
- July 2017: Popular Hubbard Cave in Glenwood Canyon gated by the White River National Forest to protect Townsend Bat colony.

Virginia Region – Janet Tinkham (VA) janete@shentel.net

- July 2017 Dave Socky, Bill Balfour and Nick Flora conducted graffiti mitigation during 3 separate trips into Lowmoor Cave, Alleghany Co, VA.
- October 2017 Rocky Parsons of Greater Randolph Organization for Speleological Science (GROSS) reported cleaning out and disposing of construction material from a sinkhole in Wolf Creek, Monroe County, WV in October. About a ton of material was removed and it took approximately 5 hours to complete the project.
- West Virginia Cave Conservancy is currently working on an educational project to produce a pamphlet "Caves and Karst of the Virginias" that will describe the sensitive nature of caves and the related hydrology. The goal is to complete the project within the next few months and print approximately 5000 copies for distribution.
- September 23, 2017 A conservation trip to the Sinks of Gandy Cave in Randolph Co., WV took place during the Fall 2017 meeting of the Virginia Region (VAR). Gordon Birkhimer organized a group of VAR cavers to perform graffiti removal at this heavily traveled cave.
- From Ken Walsh of Triangle Troglodytes: I am happy to report that thirteen cavers returned on

11/11/2017 to the WVCC property **Hancock Cave** (Smyth County, Virginia) for graffiti removal (and a very brief bat count). We used wire brushes to scrub spray paint and also water to create mud for filling over scratches. We left in place the historic signatures from the 1800s but continued our long-term effort to remove newer graffiti from the main passages. I'm even more delighted to report that our eight-year efforts have met with resounding success, and the 2.5-mile long cave appears to no longer have any walls filled with arrows and signatures. I'd still encourage visitors to carry a scrub brush along and cover wall scratches where appropriate, but I'm willing to call this a finished project. I'm very glad that the TriTogs (with the help of Walker Mountain Grotto members) have been able to complete the project.

- November 18, 2017 10 volunteers came out to the New River Cave Preserve, a cave property owned by the National Speleological Society, located in Giles County, Virginia. They did some trail work, reinstalled a rope railing that had been stolen on the cliff near the cave entrance, and cleared brush and debris from the river access on the NSS property.
- December 31, 2017 Ken Walsh led a group of Triangle Troglodytes into Lowmoor Cave, Alleghany Co, VA and performed additional graffiti cover up.

NSS Conservation Task Forces

No CTF Reports received this period. Several usually send excellent updates.

NSS Mammoth Cave Restoration Project

Brian Hunsaker, Director macarestocamp@gmail.com

Many thanks to Bill Copeland restocaver@yahoo.com as Director of the Mammoth Project for many years—Bill has handed the reigns to Brian Hunsaker. Welcome to the 3P Reports and Team NSSConservation!

- 37 participants on Saturday, March 3rd.
- 33 participants on Sunday, March 4th
- 296 person hours donated.
- 1000 feet of wire removed from the cave.
- 200 feet of wire coiled for removal.
- 50 feet of lead jacketed wire excavated and prepped for removal.
- One electrical panel disassembled and staged for removal.
- 100 pounds of concrete removed from the cave.
- HEPA vacuum tested successfully for use by lint crews.

External Conservation Organization Networking Updates

One update received for this period. NSS Conservation Division networks with activities worldwide.

Karst Environmental Education and Protection (KEEP)

December 2017 - Louisville, KY

Proposed I-66 Rears its Head Again in South-Central KY Karst Land

Eleven years ago, “KICK-66,” a public interest coalition that included KEEP, submitted extensive and critical comments on a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed I-66 highway segment from London, KY to Somerset, KY. This highly controversial new construction project would have bisected a 33-square-mile karst drainage basin that features the Sinking Valley cave system. A new bridge was proposed over the Rockcastle River, a scenic and wild river. Governmental agencies, such as the US Environmental Protection Agency, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service, also seriously questioned the need for the project given its serious impacts to the environment and threatened and endangered species. The project then appeared abandoned, with a Final EIS never issued.

Bad projects never go away, however, they just go subterranean...for awhile. Thanks to alert reading by a caver, we recently found that the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) has listed a “KY 80 Upgrade” project from London to Somerset in the current state highway plan. This proposal would use an existing alignment for KY 80 but upgrade the road and existing Rockcastle River bridge to interstate standards (in other words, it would be “I-66”). While that might sound like a better alternative, the upgrade would still pose serious impacts, associated with the six new interchanges that would be built along the 23-mile project and the requirement for expansive new frontage roads along each side of the upgraded highway.

KEEP’s next step is to contact the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to discuss the fact that the DEIS is too stale to rely upon for decision making on this project and determine what course the FHWA and KYTC plans to take for public involvement in the “new” I-66 project.

CONVENTION DIVISION REPORT SUMMARY

Prepared by Carol Tideman - ctider@ymail.com

AVP note on 2016 – after all bills have been received and paid, the 2016 Convention lost money – several grants that were promised never materialized

AVP note on 2017 – after all bills have been received and paid, the 2017 Convention lost money – see S-T report for more details

2018 Helena MT

- Has 19 USFS caves for access during entire week of convention
- Will offer Introduction to Wilderness Medicine
- Will offer Orientation to Small Party Rescue
- JSS will provide separate activities for age groups 8-12 and 13-17.

PROGRESS:

- Communicating with the confirmed groups.
- Checking on their progress and passing along new information, filling requests for data, history and other materials and answering any questions.
- Working with group who will be hosting the 2018 Convention in Helena MT
- We have a group who will be hosting the 2019 Convention in Cookesville TN i
- We have a group offering to host a Convention in Dailey WV in 2020
- Have asked the Vertical Section to update their section in the Convention Manual
- Have asked the Salon Committee update their section in the Convention Manual
- Have asked the Treasurer to review and update, as needed, the financial section of the Convention Manual
- Have requested a figure to put in the Convention Manual regarding the number of Convention Guide Books the office wants, so we can do not overstock them.
- Put a call for convention hosts in the NSS News
- Submitted an article, regarding hosting a Convention, to the NSS News editor.

PLANS

- Attend convention committee planning meetings (any year's) whenever possible - this is facilitated with phone in and go to meeting options
- Continue working with confirmed groups
- Continue working with group yet to be confirmed

- Continue to solicit new host groups

PROBLEMS:

Currently there is no group offering to host for 2021 and beyond

2018 Convention Progress Report Sept 2017 - January 2018 Doug Warner – chair

Progress

Registration:

- Rene Ohms is trained and fully engaged as the Registration Chair
- 107 registrants as of 1/30/2018
- NEON is still the registration system, but NEON account creation has been down-played to make the process more user friendly very
 - ✧ RegFox has been completely configured to begin working as our preferred registration system as soon as we get the approval
 - ✧ RegFox allows easy tracking for mailing in checks, so no paper forms are planned for this convention
- RegFox “currently registered” integration to the web site is nearly complete
- Submittable abstract submission platform is configured and available as soon as we release our “call for papers” for sessions, scheduled in March

Financial Management

- Campground and Fairgrounds contracts signed, down payments made
- PayPal account created to accept grotto payments for convention scholarships
 - ✧ Scholarships to be managed via coupon codes on RegFox
 - ✧ PayPal configured to automatically deposit into main convention account--it was created exclusively to use as a convenient online deposit tool
- Monthly financials continue to be reported to the NSS treasurer & bookkeeper
- Guidebook complete (200 pages) and submitted for initial bids
 - ✧ Projecting 750 copies from China @ \$6.90/copy (\$5175). Budgeted 500 @ \$12.50 (\$6250)
 - ✧ Preview: <http://nrmg.org/nss-2018-convention-guidebook-preview/>

Promotional:

- First convention NSS News article published
- Second convention NSS News article sent to NSS News 1/31

- Sponsor package created and sent out to several potential sponsors
 - ✧ secondary supporting pamphlet (focused on regional advertisers) in draft stage
- Facebook page continues with regular updates
- Instagram account recently added to cover an additional social channel
- Numerous (and ongoing) updates to the convention web page

Equipment & Facilities

- Campground map complete
 - ✧ Siting of all major campground elements complete
 - ✧ Layout focused on creating natural and artificial sound breaks for 3 volume zones: loud, medium, quiet
 - ✓ Property borders a 4-lane state highway, so “quiet” is relative
- Initial work on transportation bids and porta johns started
- One shower tent purchased (supplying 1/3 of needed shower stalls) and fully set up for evaluation.
 - ✧ Additional shower tents in process of purchase, and alternate plans beginning should they not be available within budget or timeframe
 - ✧ NOTE: shower tents are in addition to locker room showers at HS
- Sufficient shower water heaters purchased to supply 4/3 of needed shower stalls (3 for use, 1 for backup)
 - ✧ Water supply is for very low flow (0.5gpm/shower). This is sufficient for showering, but not luxurious
- Campground does not have permitted drainage system for greywater; initial enquiries for renting and daily pumping a drain tank have been quoted and final bids are pending. Thus low flow system is very important.
- Fellows and New members off-site facility chosen, initial food and beverage pricing discussed and is clearly within budget
- Meals planned with caterer, finalizing details on serving staff, plate size, etc.
- Balancing best regional food options vs staying on budget
- Beverage planning started, checking for alternate sources (via grotto member with special pricing access)
 - ✧ Working out details for including hard alcohol during Howdy & Campground parties, provided by vendor who will operate cash bar at banquet
- Food truck planning for morning & lunchtime started, nothing yet firm. Only one breakfast food truck known in town.
 - ✧ No food service planned at high school; instead will make food trucks available on site.
 - ✧ Food trucks will be self-supporting--no impact to convention budget

Volunteers & Staff

- Approximately 50 volunteers currently working on various pre-planning activities.
- Initial designs for opening ceremony, working out details
- Two special events are fully committed:
 - ✧ Introduction to Wilderness Medicine (8 hours, Sunday)

☆ Orientation to Small Party Rescue (4 hours, Thursday)

- Schedule of events nearly complete. Big items in place, smaller sessions still in flux.

Date	Daytime Events	Major Events	Evening Events
Saturday, July 28	· Campground and registration open at noon		
Sunday, July 29		· Geology Field trip · Introduction to Wilderness First Aid	
Monday, July 30	· Opening Ceremony · Regular sessions begin	· Vertical competition begins afternoon	· Howdy Party
Tuesday, July 31	· US Exploration · Regular sessions continue	· Vertical competition continues	· Fellows and New Members Reception
Wednesday, August 1	· International Exploration · Regular sessions continue	· Vertical training	· Auction · Campground Party
Thursday, August 2	· Geology Session · Biology Session · Regular sessions continue	· Orientation to Small Party Rescue	· Photo Salon
Friday, August 3	· Regular sessions continue		· Banquet
Saturday, August 4	· Campground closes at noon		

Misc

- We have been offered the opportunity to provide a coffee table book (@ \$5/ea up to 800 available, retail is \$15 and currently on sale at NPS sites) on intermountain west caving as part of our package. Will consider, depending upon budget.
- 19 USFS caves for access during entire week of convention. Agreement with USFS submitted and working through channels. No problems expected--USFS cave access for our region is managed by a USFS staff member who is also a grotto member who helped

- construct the proposal.
- Initial medical plan created.
- JSS activity planning nearly complete. Separate offerings for 8-12 vs 13-17yo.
 - ✧ 13-17 age group led by Bigfork High School Cave Club with light adult supervision.
 - ✧ Primarily waiting on syncing with main convention schedule (e.g. caving with the President)
 - ✧ JSS van usage pared back to minimum (2 days?), augmented by availability of Bigfork HS van for the week

Plans

Money & Registration

- RegFox registration system intended to be exclusive registration starting first week of Feb
 - ✧ Numerous donation options available within the form
 - ✧ Questionnaire on form to connect to email marketing campaigns for various groups (e.g. first time attendees, etc) for targeted content
- Grottos (conservancies, surveys, and similar IO) will be contacted for opportunity to offer their own scholarships (1st half Feb)
- Early Registration deadline May 31
- Vendor registration packet should go out in early Feb
- Call for papers scheduled for March
- Final convention schedule to be completed and published online
 - ✧ Program guide to go to publisher ca. May or June
 - ✓ Still need to get printing quotes
- Need final quotes (and schedule) for printing MT caving magazine to include registration packets in all

Promotional

- Sponsors will be actively recruited starting Feb
- Pre- and Post- convention trips starting to be collected and will be posted on website soon
- Several additional (1 per month) NSS News articles planned
- Researching email and SMS campaign tools to use before and during convention to market to and inform registered attendees of relevant activities and opportunities

Equipment & Facilities

- Major campground activities to happen starting late March/early April once snow is gone from site
 - ✧ Electrical options - siting of stage is far from known electrical, need to evaluate electrical drop vs generator costs
 - ✧ Plumbing options - several changes to plumbing system need design (e.g. addition of pressure tank, routing water supply to showers)

- ◇ Water potability test needs to be completed
- GoFundMe for hot tub/spa funding planned for spring

Volunteers & Staff

- RegFox questionnaire for volunteers will connect to email marketing campaign for those saying they are interested in volunteering

Misc

- Researching a weekly pass rate for nearby (1 mi west) Broadwater Hot Springs for attendees who want to purchase

Problems

Money & Registration

- NEON, while functional, is a very suboptimal registration tool. RegFox offers more capabilities, supports greater program capacity, and better looking registration forms
 - ◇ For some reason the change of tools requires EC approval, which has caused us to delay changing over for several weeks.
 - ◇ Misinterpretation of email instructions caused an internal NSS hiccup when creating the PayPal account to accept grotto payments for scholarships from grottos

Promotional

Equipment & Facilities

- ◇ Helena Schools has not provided us with a viable contract yet.
 - ✓ School business person disregarded the supplied spreadsheet of room requirements by date, and instead listed all rooms for all dates creating an overly expensive rental cost, but exceptionally expensive staffing cost
 - ✓ Working with business person, the rooms by date should now be correct and more closely match our estimated budget
 - ✓ Working with the custodial staffing person, should have accurate staffing hours added shortly; staffing budget was an underestimate, but we should be able to get close. In addition, staffing costs are conservatively quoted, but billed at actual amounts.
 - ✓ Unable to connect with auditorium AV staff for Photo Salon (5x reached out via email and phone). Quoted staffing was approximately 3x more than needed/budgeted for.
- ◇ Winter prevents some campground onsite planning, forcing more activity in the spring.
- ◇ Only 18 of 20 requested rooms are available on main floor of the high

school. Need to work with school rental person to identify specific rooms to use.

- ✧ Rooms on separate floor will likely be JSS and another (unspecified) room that doesn't require regular access; likely location for both is near stairwell and elevator. both
- ✧ Not all rooms have been available to measure, posing difficulties for vendor chair to create detailed room rental rates. 2 representative rooms (one larger, one smaller) have been measured, which should allow approximate sizing estimates.

- **Volunteers & Staff**

- ✧ Life happens. Need to continue to manage volunteer staff changes and availability based on job changes, etc.

- **Misc**

2019 Convention Progress Report - Maureen Handler - chair

Progress

We had meetings with:

- Dr. Oldham, the President of TN Tech, and his staff on Jan 29. We expect draft contract language soon to review. They were excited about the idea of us holding our convention there. We discussed our space needs and the need for a guarantee of the space for the convention
- Randy Pryor, the Putnam County Executive on Jan 29. We have already received the County's draft contract language and will be reviewing this. Putnam County is a dry county. Cookeville is wet. In order to have beer at the campground, the facility will be rented to the City and they will then rent it to us. Since the event is not open to the public, and we are not selling beer, this should happen without any problems. Due to the economic impact we will have on the City and County, Mr. Pryor indicated that the campground rental fee may be waived. We would still have to pay for utilities and trash removal (dumpsters owned by the county are on site already)
- Ricky Shelton, the Mayor of Cookeville, and his staff on January 29. They are VERY excited about this event. It will be the largest convention of it's kind in Cookeville ever! They are bending over backwards to accommodate our needs. I am waiting on draft contract language from there for the campground rental.
- We met with the Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency on January 22 to discuss transportation needs. They have sufficient vans and drivers for the Geology Field Trip and shuttles from the campground to the university (2.3 miles between the 2)

- We met with the Cookeville Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Bureau. They are VERY excited about us coming and the economic impact we will have to the area. They are working on branding for us (Cookeville has a mascot bear who will be caving to use as their logo and to incorporate into ours). They are also interested in advertising in the 2018 program. I will reach out to 2018 convention staff to see what pricing is and when final mark ups are needed. They will also assist us with getting hotel/motel discounts
- Convention PR staff. We had a meeting on January 28 and are moving ahead with our promotional video.

We have begun investigating caterers and their costs for our food needs.

Plans

- We have a registration staff meeting scheduled for February 10
- We have a geologist/cave trip staff meeting scheduled for February 11
- We will finalize our room/space needs at the University so we can get a contract for NSS/Convention legal to review so we can finalize the contract and get our final pricing.
- We will work on getting a contract for the campground so we can have the NSS/Convention legal review this and we can finalize our pricing.
- We will be meeting in February (date not set yet) with the University Dorm coordinator for dorm rentals and the University food services to discuss a breakfast/lunch meal plan

Problems

The only problem we still have is a facility for the banquet. We are looking at various options. We can always put up a tent at the campground for this, but we are still looking for a different place to put up a tent. We are exploring wineries, golf courses and City parks. The Chamber of Commerce is also exploring options as well.

2018 January - NSS Salons Committee Report – Blake N. Jördan, Co-Chairman: NSS Salons

2018 Convention Preparations

8 Display Salons (Display Monday - Friday): Cartography, Cover Arts, Posters & Brochures, Crafts & Design, Fine Arts, Prints, Symbolic Emblems, T-Shirts, Video, and Photo.

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

The Salons Committee plans to provide 2 shows. The convention staff plan to provide tickets for the shows to count attendees.

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

Audience estimated at about 40% people - this show is steadily increasing in popularity.

Show 2: All 11 Salons, winners, and awards presented by Salon chairs. 145 minutes (intro music 7:00 to 7:30pm, show 7:30 to 9:30pm). Audience estimated at about 50% of the total registrations.

Audience estimated at about 250 people.

NSS Salons web site - Alex Sproul displays each year's winners, generates interest in next year's salon entries, and provides entry forms on the website. NSS News - David Bunnell is in the process of featuring Salon award winners in the **NSS News** which will publicize the 2018 salon entry requirements and deadlines in February or March 2018.

Social media (**Facebook, Google+, Twitter**, etc.) will be used as a reminder to entrants of upcoming deadlines and to increase awareness of the Cave Arts and Music Salons and workshops offered.

Arts and Letters Section will be sponsoring the Writers Workshop and a possible one-day workshop from Carolina Shrewsbury.

Salons Committee members will work with the **2018 Helena, Montana NSS Convention** staff to provide the best Salons and Salons Awards Shows possible.

2017 Progress

Fine Arts Salon chair moved from Carolina Shrewsbury to Carol Jackson. The Fine Arts Salon has offered the Collaborative Workshop during past conventions.

NSS Equipment

At the 2017 NSS Convention in Rio Rancho, NM one of the 2 working Optima projectors crashed to the ground because of someone tripping over a power cord that it was connected to on Friday prior to the Banquet. We found another projector and everything worked well. We are currently down to one working projector and two others are being used for parts. The Screens that we use for both the Awards Show and the Banquet are revealing their age and will need to be replaced soon.

We are looking to upgrade our equipment to a projector with HDMI capabilities for one screen projection, possibly similar to the one that was rented at the 2017 NSS Convention in Rio Rancho for the International Session. Dave Socky has initiated the following funding resources for both a new projector and a screen.

RASS (Richmond Area Speleological Soc)	\$3,000.00	Approved
CCV (Cave Conservancy of the Virginias)	\$2,500.00	Likely to be approved this spring
CCF (Cave Conservancy Foundation)	\$2,500.00	Likely to be approved this spring
NSS AV Fund	\$2,000.00	Available per Peter Youngbaer
(Per board acts - requires AVP approval - Carol) AVP approves		
Total possible funding resources	\$10,000.00	

Once we acquire the new equipment we'll have more options in utilizing the more seasoned equipment for the Friday Banquet use.

JSS DIVISION REPORT - Zach Shudrowitz

I'll be resigning as JSS Chair.

I've become much more involved with my local scout troop for the sake of my neighbor's son Jack. They lost their father in the Middle East about two years ago. Obviously it was devastating for the family, but luckily Jack showed an interest in Scouting. The last 6 months he's picked up the pace with his Scouting and I'm going to match that by becoming an Assistant Scout Master. This will leave little to zero time for JSS.

From what I've seen in emails Hans Bodenhamer & Ann Brooks are both experienced with youth programs. I trust their judgement and they have my ad-hoc JSS Guide. The Guide is not The Bible and in the end they get to make the call because they're running the program. They're ahead of the game already. As Ann stated in an email " I'm a chronically early planner-aheader" which is fantastic. There's also two of them this year. I'm not at all worried about JSS 2018.

I'll look at what I promised to do in my last progress report and confer with you & Convention Treasurer about finances. I can still write checks on the JSS account so I can still send a seed \$500 seed check & reimbursement monies for 2018. Ann asked if I could some emailing and I'm alright with that. Other than that, the program is theirs.

2020 Convention – Elkins, WV – presentation package presented at this BOG – vote on bid will occur at Summer BOG

EDUCATION DIVISION REPORT SUMMARY

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

There hasn't been any significant changes of updates since my fall report. Education initiatives are still being pursued.

Derek Bristol contacted me about his development of several education and training videos he has on YouTube. He has several ideas, and questions, that need to be answered before anything further is done. I won't print the conversations in this report, but can make the exchange, with his comments, suggestions, and questions, available to board members who would like to see them. It's a good start with much potential.

Getting reports from the Education Division chairs continues to be a problem.

Education and Grants Scholarship Committee - Pamela Tegelman Malabad
Plans - There are no plans at this time.

Progress - No grant applications have been submitted for this period. We had two serious inquiries but individuals did not feel their projects reached a K-12 audience well enough.

Problems - Need to get word out about these available grants. In the past couple of years we haven't seen as many inquiries. We also need to make sure that funding is available for grants each fiscal year.

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

Safety and Techniques Committee - Scott McCrea
No report received.

Environmental Education Committee - Kyle Mills
No report received.

National Cave and Karst Management Symposium - Jim Kennedy
No report received.

National Cave Rescue Commission - 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 150 people have been trained in cave rescue by the NCRC this calendar 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 2018 seminar is on track. 2019 is being held in Indiana, 2020 is being held in New York.

Anmar Mirza was reelected as National Coordinator
Jessica Deli was reelected as Central Region Coordinator
Brian Ekey was elected as the Medical Coordinator
Tony Smith was reelected as Eastern Region Coordinator
Eddy Cartaya was reelected as Pacific NW Regional Coordinator

Plans -

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. Discussion is ongoing. We have come pretty close to a working model.

Additional curriculum development and realignment is in the works.

An expanded SPAR manual is in the works.

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

This year the "Manual of U.S. Cave Rescue Techniques, 3rd ed." will be updated. No major changes will be needed but the revision is on a three year cycle and there are a few things that need to update.

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.

AVP Note: The NCRC has submitted a budget that meets my approval.

Youth Group Liaison Committee - Allen Maddox

No report received.

NSS PRESERVE REPORT 2-8-2018
TOM GRIFFIN #24333
CHAIRMAN

NSS Nature Preserves – Tom Griffin – Preserves@caves.org

13 of our 17 Preserves responded. The summary of each starts with the John Guilday Preserve. The complete report sent by each manger starts below the summaries managers.

Included as an attachment, I have the budget request for 3 of the Preserves totaling \$900.00 dollars.

John Guilday – On March 3rd 2018 Kevin Oxenrider, a bat biologist with the West Virginia DNR & a small group of cavers will count the bats in Hamilton & New Trout. A few bat snouts will be swabbed for WNS. Trout Cave gets counted on odd numbered years. A small drapery formation was broken in Hamilton's New Formation Room. It is in two pieces that neatly fit together & will be repaired by me using the techniques outlined in the NSS publication Cave Conservation and Restoration 2006 Ed. Part of this repair it will be done at the Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum so the public can see how we repair speleothems.

- This Spring I plan to fix a part of the trail just uphill from the kiosk that is getting very steep, eroded & treacherous. It will not cost anything. I plan on using my hatchet, chainsaw & mattock to cut downed trees & use them to make steps.
- Some dead trees need to be moved / cut.
- As soon as summer hits in full I plan to continue to assess Trout at night for bat populations and their timing in-and-out of the cave. This has been discussed with Craig Sthiler the head bat biologist with WVDNR, and he agrees with me this is a possibility for a small window to open the cave to cavers. Here is the hypothesis in a nutshell: The endangered bats that live in Trout in the Summer are Virginia Big Ear Bats and are bachelors (this is known). At some point during the night the bats will be out eating bugs & not in the cave. My job is to determine when the bats are out eating. I know they are in there as late as 8 PM. I plan to go there next at midnight and see (?) Hopefully we may have a window..... say open the cave midnight to 3 AM every other weekend. Something along those lines. I would organize that if it looks feasible, and will not harm the bats.

RBNC Cave Preserve – This fall several people undertook to improve the nature trail around the property, it is now clearly marked in most places and the brush cut back.

- One of the local soil and water conservation districts held their public information meeting on the property and the karst features were showcased.
- An article on the cleanup efforts was submitted to the NSS News for inclusion in the Conservation issue.

Kingston Saltpeter – 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.

Tytoona – There were 15 trips made either by committee or myself to inspect the cave and or property to note or implement any maintenance, repairs and trash removal.

- There were two incidents where culprits tried to build a dam in the stream in front of the cave entrance. Both times we removed them.
- One incident of spray paint graffiti (hand railing and erosion wall). This was promptly removed.
- Five no trespassing signs were either added or replaced on the property.
- About ten NSS boundary markers were placed on the property.
- The kiosk and entire hand railing was coated with a water proofing preservative.
- Three students from Juniata College provided volunteer help as a Community Service Project. They applied wax to the entire wood hand rail to help prevent future graffiti from sticking. They also painted the concrete filled barrels that front the property and prevent vehicles from entering. They included on some of the nature green barrels art work of pine trees. Very nice!
- In 2017, two generous donations were made on behalf of Tytoona. On Jan. 27, 2017 Bill & Jeanne Downey sent \$250. On Nov. 12, 2017 Mike & Linda Cullinan sent \$100 donation. Both donations have been forwarded to the NSS headquarters.

Great X – No report.

Schoharie Caverns Nature Preserve – Due to winter and the closing of the cave the property is not busy. New York Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) performed their annual bat survey. I have attached the document at the end of the report. NYSDEC did remove the two camera traps they were testing the year before. The signal is not strong enough to be of benefit.

Shelta & William J. Stephens – Bill Torode, I have been cleaning up fallen trees on the Shelta Cave preserve and putting them out on the street for the city to pick up. I put some of the small plastic preserve signs on the fence around the cave entrances. I opened the cave, Sunday Dec. 31st for NSS members that were here for the New Years Eve Bat party. The cave was a big hit as it was 60 degrees inside and 20 degrees outside. I worked on the trail for three days going up Drake Mountain on The William J. Stephenson Nature Preserve removing fallen trees. Put up new trail markers some plastic preserve signs. A few cavers hiked up the mountain to Reel Pit and Blue Balloon Cave and Tree Root Cave. Everything going ok no problems. Keep Kaving Bill Torode

Warren Cave Nature Preserve – Nothing reported in 3 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.

McFails Cave Nature Preserve – A total of 15 permits were issued for McFails Cave and 5 for Hanors-Disappointment during the 2017 caving season. It is estimated that more than 50 people entered the cave during these trips. There were no known incidents or accidents on the preserve this year. The caves have been closed since October 1st, so not much else to report.

James Gage Karst Preserve – 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 (Spring 2018).
5. Post the preserve boundaries with new signage (Winter 2018).

Donald R. Russell Preserve – No report submitted

Mill Creek Sink – No report submitted

New River Nature Preserve – Continued trail work on an as-needed basis. A workday was completed in Fall 2017 to replace a rope railing near the cave entrance as well as identifying off-camber areas of the trail that will be improved in Spring 2018. A trail cam was installed on the preserve trail to gather demographic information on preserve users. It continues to gather data.

The river frontage was cleared of brush and debris in Fall 2018. It is being converted into a campsite for use by NSS Cavers when visiting New River Cave and other area caves.

As far as the preserve manager and volunteers can tell, there has been no new graffiti since a documentation trip was completed in January 2017. The closing of the old trail, continued kiosk upkeep, and public relations efforts may have contributed positively.

Wells Cave Nature Preserve – Bill was on a bat count with Biologists, the count is in his report.

Sims Sink Nature Preserve – Same as Haggard the emails did not work, Will Urbanski apparently is working on this.

1. We are anticipating Matthew Bull's delivery of the final map of the cave.
2. Kelly Jessop and Sean Denney removed the old guidelines and replaced them with a long-term guideline system.
3. Jessop continues to collect physico-chemical and biological data from the cave as part of a larger project covering the water quality and biology of regional underwater caves and aquifer.
4. Thomas Sawicki continues biological research on the cave's crustaceans, assisted by Paul Moler.
5. I continue to cull the preserve's upland invasive trees and replace them with diverse native species.
6. I began the process of donating to the NSS 1.2 acres of land that is adjacent to the Sims Sink Nature Preserve, which would enlarge the preserve to appx 3.2 acres. Although the cave is not underneath the 1.2-acre addition, the latter does have two solution pipes that drop down to water that I have trapped *Procambarus erythroptus* from in the past. Furthermore, Kelly Jessop reports that there is a potential (grim conditions) passage leading from the south side of the cave toward the two solution pipes. It is important to protect these two karst windows adjacent to the Sims Sink resource. This parcel lies immediately south of the existing preserve and extends from 65th Road eastward to the current eastern edge of the preserve. The existing preserve's dimensions are 240 ft east-west by 360 ft north-south, and the new total would be 240 ft east-west by 580 ft north-south. The donation process will proceed at a pace set by the sale of a 6-acre lot that lies immediately east of the preserve and the addition. The 6-acre parcel was first listed for sale at end-Jan 2018, and there had been no offers to buy as of the date of this report; therefore, no estimate for closing can be given at this time.

Haggard Nature Cave Preserve – Found that the emails would not go through, the committee email was never setup. I wrote the webmaster, Will Urbanski answered up. Apparently he is handling this.

- The preserve currently has more than \$1000.00 available to assist in paying for necessities, such as Property taxes, signage, and improvements to the adjacent landowner's property for a small parking area.
- Plans for the immediate future include printing signs and placing them. 3 signs are needed: One for the parking area. This shall be small and inconspicuous and simply state that you need a permit to park. We need "No Parking Here" signs to post along the road, as the road has turnouts which exist for passing on the one-lane road as it climbs the mountain. In years past, Cavers have parked in these turnouts, and it causes problems for the residents, so we should post it to discourage this. Lastly, we need "Preserve Boundary" signs to establish the preserve's area, and provide basic visitation contacts. I have potential resources that could print these signs at a reduced cost.
- The only problem I am aware of is that the property needs a proper land survey. Before purchase, the property was partially surveyed by the land company to ensure that the cave was located on the property (I have copies of this report) but it would be wise to have the entire tract properly recorded by a surveyor licensed in by the state of Tennessee.

Shelta Cave Preserve addendum by Julie Schenck-Brown:

In October 2016, the NSS was contracted by Mr. Quinton Nelson who was interested in donating his property, which adjoins the Shelta Cave Preserve in Huntsville. Quinton has been an amazing steward of the land, patrolling the Shelta Cave Preserve for unwanted activity, while maintaining a wildlife corridor through his property. After I was asked to begin negotiations with Quinton, I asked Kevin Reeves, Shelta Cave Preserve Manager to assist. Kevin and I met with Quinton over the course of the past year and discovered that the property was owned by Andy Parkhurst, while Quinton resided in the house. As Quinton requested permission to live in the house, but donate the property to the NSS, Kevin and I requested assistance from Angie Ballard, who is a paralegal at a real estate firm, as well as Jay Clark, NSS General Counsel. Thus, this was truly a team effort in which we were ultimately able to reach terms of an agreement which give Quinton a life estate in the property.

On Friday, February 16th, the NSS accepted the donation of a parcel of land that is located at [2506 Link Avenue](#) in Huntsville, Alabama and adjoins the NSS Shelta Cave Preserve. The property which was owned by Andy Parkhurst, and includes a house that is occupied by Quinton Nelson was transferred with an agreement that give Quinton a

life estate in the property. Thus, the NSS will be responsible for paying the property taxes, whereas Quinton Nelson will be responsible for homeowner's insurance and any improvements to the property. The NSS was represented at the meeting by Jay Clark, NSS General Counsel, while I was privileged to recognize Quinton and Andy for their donation through the presentation of a Certificate of Appreciation from the NSS Landowner Relations Network Committee, as well as the Shelta Cave Preserve t-shirts that are available at the NSS Bookstore. As Quinton and Andy both have an aversion to social media, they requested that their photo with me receiving the awards only be published in the NSS News. I also plan to write a short article for the Society News section.

As Jay Clark has stated, this is a great acquisition for the NSS. And we are very fortunate that Quinton is incredibly motivated to talk with other neighbors about donations to ensure perpetual protection of the NSS Shelta Cave Preserve. As acquisitions of this magnitude are not an individual event, I want to recognize and express my appreciation again to Kevin Reeves, NSS Shelta Cave Preserve Manager; Jay Clark, NSS General Counsel; and Angie Ballard for their work and dedication to make this acquisition a reality, as well as Tom Griffin, NSS Preserves Chair; Kat Crispin, NSS AVP; and Geary Schindel, NSS President for their ongoing support. Thanks also to the BOG for voting to accept the donation.