National Speleological Society

President’s Report
Board of Governors Meeting

July 1, 2024

Version 1.0

Submitted on June 20, 2024

The Department of the President consists of one division and 19 permanent committees, as shown below:

**Department of the President**

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<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>John Moses</td>
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<td>Karst Inf. Portal Liaison</td>
<td>Carol Ann Davis</td>
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<td>KWI Liaison</td>
<td>Dave Decker</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kwiliaison@caves.org">kwiliaison@caves.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land Trust of North Alabama Liaison</td>
<td>Julie Schenck-Brown</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lnalialiaison@caves.org">lnalialiaison@caves.org</a></td>
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President’s Report Highlights

The following is a synopsis of the activities in the President’s department.

Committee Highlights:

- The MPA with the Forest Service was finalized and published in last month’s NSS News
- We are creating a new committee under the president, ‘Transition committee’
- Nominating Committee finalized the 2024 Director Election
- The awards committee has received all recipients as approved by the BOG
- The vertical tower fundraising campaign is over $24,000 and we have a matching donor
- The Transition Committee is meeting weekly and making amazing progress including advertising for the available positions now that the organizational structure has been identified.
- The NSS was able to assist in bringing 1 Cuban Caver and 4 Vietnamese Cavers over for the 2024 NSS Convention!
- I have created a sub-committee under Social Media committee that has been doing any AMAZING job posting content. Our existing social media committee has their hands full with moderating our groups hence the sub-committee
- The MOU between the NSS and Vietnam has been finalized and signed.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristine Ebrey
President
National Speleological Society
Awards Committee:
Bill Steele, Chair (8072RE) FE LB CM AL awards@caves.org (speleosteele@aol.com)

NSS Awards Committee members:
Bert Ashbrook (25104RE) FE;
Mike Backe (18670RL) FE;
Hazel Barton, Ph.D. (38664RE) FE;
John Benton (106890 FE PH
Bill Bussey (21820RE) FE;
Tony Canike (44230RE) FE;
Val Hildreth-Werker (28963CL) FE;
Roy Jameson (14123RE) FE;
Nina Martin (41664RL) FE;
Marian McConnell (37358) FE, AL;
Gary Moss (10046RL) FE;
Don Paquette (8545RL) FE, SH, CM;
Rene Ohms (45868RE) FE. LB;
Savannah Sawyer (63912) FE
Geary M. Schindel (15827RL) FE;
Dave Socky (16334RL) FE, AL;
Linda Starr (11384 RE) FE;
Bill Steele (8072RE) FE LB CM, AL;
Carol Tiderman (10604RL) OS;
Todd Warren (22176) FE

Progress

Following the Spring 2024 NSS BOG meeting and approval of Awards Committee recommendations of the 2024 award recipients, all recipients were contacted by committee sub-committee chairpersons and encouraged to be present to receive their awards at the Awards Banquet at the convention on July 4th.

As of the date of this report all photos of recipients have been received by Bill Steele and forwarded to Dave Socky for him to prepare a slide show for the convention Awards Banquet. All is on track.
Plans
An in-person Awards Committee meeting is planned to be held during the NSS Convention.

Issues to Consider
No issues at this time.

Board Arrangements Secretary
Vacant

Business Development
Vacant- Chair
businessdevelopment@caves.org

Plans: No report.

Progress:

Problems: This position has been inactive for some time.

Congress of Grottos
COG@caves.org
Craig Hindman

I put out a last call for issues, Due May 15.2024.

1. The NSS to Print copy of The Membership, like before.


3. harder penalty for The NSS code of conduit.

There was a 4th but the grotto didn't know what issues ment. I nformed them to keep there back issues of their news letters.

The call went out over facebook.

This year the call went to every IO, that gave a contac e-mail for.
Let me know if you need the issues from 2023. If you or Pete are going to give an update on the issues passed in 2023?

I'm still not sure how who get my report for the Friday board meeting.

If I follow the chain of command. My report should go to my Div, Head. Who should give it to the ED. Who should give it to the chair of the Directors. Who then pass it on to the BOG. ????

I have heard that some members of the board had an issues to bring before the COG but haven't heard from them. FYI the only issue I see passing is the printed member list but not as before with all the boiler plate. the other I do not believe will pass.

Can't say what might come from the floor?

**Fundraising Committee**

Miki Manning (70570)
863-602-0869
fundraising@caves.org

Committee members: Carol Tideman, Dennis Melko and William Jackson.

Progress: The Vertical Tower Fund is up to $24,492! Which means we’re are only $508 from our donor match goal!

Pete Johnson and I worked together to publish the Vertical Bill page on our website, and it is live!

Bob Hoke and Bill Jackson were able to manipulate YM data into a spreadsheet compiling cumulative donations from individuals and groups (like grottos) since 2019, thus making it possible to identify new Stephenson Donors who should be added to our master list. This a huge accomplishment.

Plans: The summer email targeting new life memberships will be sent this June. The committee aims to send out one fundraising email per quarter, planned giving in the spring, life memberships in the summer, Giving Tuesday in the Fall, and Sustaining donors in the Winter.

We will be reaching out to Mr. Kenneth Laidlaw to follow up on his proposed Vertical Bill’s Tower donation of $25,000 (what we based our match campaign off of).

Problems: We need an attorney to review our planned giving language.

Dave Hughes has not reached back out regarding Vertical Bill auction items. Status is unknown.
We intended to purchase industrial margarita machines to be used at events for fundraising (donate for a refillable cup). This idea was approved by the committee, the president, and vetted by our attorney, Jay Clark, however, funding was never approved. This is a good idea that should be explored in the future with the consideration that permits and volunteer staffing will need to be acquired.

To our knowledge no progress has been made whatsoever by the OVP on the Vertical Tower plans. This is disappointing as we have spent a lot of fundraising energy on this project and our membership expects to see progress.

We have been made aware that insurance for the tower may be a problem. This should be followed up on before any serious money is spent on plans or construction.

Overall I have a learned a lot as the fundraising chair, but along with the rest of us, I am eager for an Executive Director to be hired. There is so much funding left on the table that I have not been able to tap, either because of lack of time, knowledge, or experience. For example, we have not received a single grant since I have been fundraising chair. I look forward to being a resource for the new ED.

**Government Liaison**

Adam Weaver and Lee-Grey Boze - Chair
govtliaison@caves.org

**Committee Members:** Rich Bohman (AZ), Pat Kambesis (KY), Neil Marchington (OR), Jo Schaper (MO), Ben Tobin (KY)

The Government Liaison committee is currently restructuring under the leadership of the new chairs. The final review of the FS\NSS MPA has approved and signed. We are currently reviewing many topics that have been brought before the NSS Government Liaison committee and will be reported once a resolution or action has been taken.

An MOU between the NSS and Vietnam (originally started in 2023) has been finalized and signed.

**International Secretary**

John Moses, Secretary (7009 CR)(FE), 915-539-6047
johnmosesgsb@gmail.com; intlsecretary@caves.org

**Committee Members:** David Larson (13906RL)(FE), Santa Barbara, CA; Tom Lera (14821RL)(CO,PH,FE), Orlando, FL
Progress:

A proposal was made by the NSS International Secretary and approval was received from the board of the Fort Stanton Cave Study Project to sponsor the NSS exhibit at the 2025 International Congress of Speleology (ICS). A base amount of $500 was earmarked for use on photo wall display (but could be supplemented if needed) and virtual reality cave tour (Cavetrek) hardware and software loaned for the event.

Plans:

The NSS is the official organizational representative of the USA to the International Union of Speleology (UIS). The UIS hosts a speleological congress every four years. The 19th International Congress of Speleology will be held in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, July 20 - 27, 2025. Brazilians attending the past 18th ICS asked that the NSS bring its exhibit and virtual reality cave tour to Brazil for the next Congress. The Brazilian promotional video is on YouTube:

https://youtu.be/gwjhHEKEDUQ

Grant monies may be available through the International Secretary Committee to assist with international speleological participation and research projects. Visit the NSS web site for proposal.

Problems:

Request was received from Korean student caving group for assistance in attending the NSS 2024 Convention. We were not able to secure an NSS sponsor.

Karst Information Portal Liaison

Carol Ann Davis
Kipliaison@caves.org
borchert@usf.edu

The person responsible for this position has changed and I’m working on reestablishing contact.

Karst Waters Institute Liaison

Dave Decker (3111RL, FE) - Representative
5117 Fairfax Dr. NW
Albuquerque, NM 87114
kwiliaison@caves.org
dave.decker@caves.org
Legal Committee
Jay Clark (3896RE, CM, FE) - General Counsel
W) 205 397 2900
legal@caves.org

Progress: This committee has been reviewing various contracts in support of the President and OVP and also serving as an ex officio member of the ad hoc anti-harassment initiative.

Plans: Continue to support the society in legal matters. The Legal Committee is working with the National Speleological Foundation to review and update contracts between the two organizations.

Problems: None at this time.

Land Trust of North Alabama (LTNA) Liaison
Julie Schenck-Brown (30493RL, FE) - Representative
256-599-2211
ltnaliaison@caves.org

NSS - Land Trust of North Alabama Liaison Report
Submitted by Julie Schenck-Brown, NSS 30493 RL, FE
Summer 2024

In 2019 the Land Trust of North Alabama (LTNA) and the National Speleological Society (NSS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to promote education and management of cave and karst resources at LTNA Preserves. The Land Trust has preserved over 10,000 acres of important natural lands in North Alabama and offers more than 80 miles of public trails to relax, exercise, and connect with nature at one of their 10 preserves. In addition, they own 55 caves that are accessible to NSS members via a permit system, which I help manage. As progress continues under the direction of this MOU through relationships established with LTNA staff and Resource Advisory Committee members who continue to be incredibly supportive and enthusiastic about the Society’s work, this report provides a summary of recent activities.

An article in the April issue of the NSS News, which is the annual conservation issue, highlighted the work completed last fall by the Huntsville Grotto to remove an old hunting blind on the scenic karst landscape of the LTNA Bethel Spring Preserve. The large structure was located over a mile from the parking area and trailhead; however, all the material was removed by eleven volunteers from the Huntsville Grotto, including: Becky Williams, Chris Cargal, Joe McCulley, Jimmy Farrar, Michael Johnson, Sikes Richardson, Keith Gilmore, Josh Morehouse, Maxwell Grisham, Mark Ostrander, and Julie Schenck-Brown. The LTNA was extremely appreciative.

Specific duties completed this quarter include attendance at bi-monthly LTNA Resource Advisory Committee meetings, to represent the NSS with a focus on cave science, cave conservation and access, as well as preserve management. Related to the latter, permitting of cave exploration,
science, and survey at LTNA Preserves continues. Cavers have generally requested permits in sufficient time, and the sustained incidents of cavers visiting LTNA caves without a permit appears to have leveled off. This could be attributed to updates in the Alabama Cave Survey files, as well as discussions at grotto meetings.

During recent Resource Advisory Committee meetings, the condition of a spring house on the LTNA Hickory Cove Preserve has been discussed. As David Young, Resource Advisory Committee member and former LTNA Board member, and Andy Prewett, LTNA Land Manager, have concerns about the preservation of this historic structure, I was asked if I knew anyone that could assess the structure. Through my contacts with NSS members, specifically Scott Shaw who is an archaeologist, I was able to arrange for Ben Hoksbergen to meet David and I and assess the structure. Ben followed up with a detailed report and recommendations. Both David and Andy were grateful for this contact that I secured with the assistance of Scott.

Although recreational caving at LTNA caves has leveled off this quarter, Dr. Matt Niemiller from the University of Alabama – Huntsville continues to conduct research at Muddy Cave. This research has been highlighted by the recent discovery by Dr. Niemiller and his students who located a new species of cave-dwelling bristletail. Their results were published in the journal, Subterranean Biology. Other work at LTNA caves included the survey of Water Tower Cave and Colvin Pit by Chris Cargal, Julie Schenck-Brown, Becky Williams, and Jon Zetterberg, following the annual Alabama Cave Survey meeting in May.
Jon Zetterberg at the entrance of Water Tower Cave

The LTNA is still exploring the use of signage, which they have previously not wanted as it could encourage cave exploration by non-cavers. In addition, Micah Sims and other cavers from the Cullman Grotto have volunteered to install the signs specifying that caving permits are required. Work on the caves and karst section of the LTNA Management Plans, including LiDAR and aerial maps produced by Jon Zetterberg continues for the LTNA Bethel Springs Nature Preserve, the LTNA Green Mountain Nature Preserve, and the LTNA Hickory Cove Nature Preserve. The data shared between the LTNA and the NSS is also being migrated to the LTNA Google Drive created by the NSS IT team and will provide access to Jon Zetterberg, as well as Andy Prewett, LTNA Land Manager, and Marie Bostick, LTNA Executive Director.

Other activities that are planned include the evaluation of potential LTNA acquisitions for caves and karst features, including coordination with Jon Zetterberg to produce georeferenced LiDAR maps; managing permit requests for cave exploration, science, and survey at LTNA Preserves, as well as advocating for special use permits if no adverse effect is anticipated. In addition, I hope the promotion of the LTNA-NSS partnership as it relates to cave management, conservation,
research, and the permit system within the North Alabama community will inspire such relationships with other land trusts and conservancies.

**Membership Committee**
David Brumbaugh
Membership@caves.org

Pending

**National Cave and Karst Research Institute (NCKRI) Liaison**
George Veni
nckriliaison@caves.org

**Nominating Committee**
Anna Pearce – Chair
nominating@caves.org
540-315-2643

Committee Members: *Nathan Farrar 59222 (CM FE), Alex Sproul 8086RL (FE) and Mike Hood 24166RL (FE)

**Progress**: The election for new directors has ended
**Plans**: None
**Problems**: None

**The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Liaison**
Vacant
tncliaison@caves.org

**Public Relations Division**
Amanda Willis 36144RE - Chair
pr@caves.org

**Philosophy**: The Public Relations Division is undertaking a long-term effort which could be described as “The Three E’s: Engage, Educate, and Energize.” We will continue to promulgate this philosophy across the entire NSS Community.

No report given yet.
Recording Secretary
Rebecca McNabb
recording@caves.org

**Progress:** Finalizing all minutes up to May special meeting.

**Plans:** None

**Problems:** None

Secretary to the Board
Vince Kappler (7274CL, FE)
973-579-2116
boardsec@caves.org

Pending