

[Link to Comms Division 25/26 operational goals](#)

Division Team:

Team	Name	Email
Division Chair	Jolene Creighton	jcreighton@caves.org
Social Media Dept	VACANT	
	Holly McClintock	hollymcclintock.caves@gmail.com
	Hayden Harper	haydenharper@gmail.com
	Jennifer Young	pr.caving@gmail.com
Website Dept	Pete Johnson = Chair	pete@caves.org
	Josh Schultz	jschultz@caves.org
Email & Newsletter Dept	Jay Mrazek = Chair	mrazek.jay@gmail.com
NSS News	Joel Despain = Managing Editor	jdespain@caves.org
	Adam Weaver = Production Editor	adam@caves.org
	Sarah Marquart = Proofreader	srmarquart@gmail.com
	Jim Kennedy = Underground Update Editor	cavercrash@gmail.com
	April Gocha = Spelean Spotlight	april.sandy.gocha@gmail.com
JCKS	Malcolm Field = Editor in Chief	field.malcolm1@gmail.com
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	Sarah Marquart = Proofreader	srmarquart@gmail.com
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Gov Liaison	VACANT	
	Joel Despain	jdespain@caves.org
	Lee-Gray Boze	lboze@caves.org / leegray@gmail.com
	Josh Schultz	jschultz@caves.org
	Pete Johnson	pete@caves.org
NCA & CPN Liaison	Nicole Ridlen	nicoleridlen@gmail.com
Bat Conservation International Liaison	Keith Christenson	tropicalbats@hotmail.com
Karst Waters Institute Liaison	Dave Decker	dave@swgeophys.com

Communications Division Report:

Jolene Creighton, jcreighton@caves.org

The Communications Division oversees Media & Marketing, Publications, and Partnerships (and the respective committees that fall under these categories). The following is a synopsis of the top-level Communications Division progress and issues.

Progress

- Had a discussion with the Executive Director and Chair of the Board about moving Govt Liaison Committee so it reports directly to the ED. All parties were aligned on this. The Comms Division Chair will continue to participate in the committee, but the ED will now be responsible for setting the high-level strategy (regarding what the priorities are, how to tackle them, what to leave to other organizations, etc).
- Onboarded a new member of the social media committee to at least make one post a week
- Onboarded a Chair for the newsletter committee to oversee the publication of the monthly email and assist with other messages.
- Hired a contractor to assist with site restructuring and content + SEO revamp so we could make some progress on that despite the fact that we haven't found volunteers to assist with the website or marketing

Plans

- Finish the plan for the new website site map, navigation, and restructuring by the end of Q4 and be well on the way to implementing.
- Continue to find ways to supplement volunteer work with paid contractors.
- Science & Conservation division says the new WNS policy is drafted and under review. We will distribute that as soon as it is finalized.

Problems

- Can't meet goal to "Develop clear written social media strategy for the NSS" because Social Media Chair position is vacant
- Can't meet goal to "Develop plan for annual report" because Annual Report Chair position is vacant.
- Can't meet goal to "Develop marketing plan encompassing SEO, Google ad spend, PR" because Marketing Chair is vacant
- There is and has been an ongoing issue sourcing volunteers to assist with work. Many committees don't have chairs, and some committees with chairs aren't

actively participating. This prevents many committees from making much (sometimes any) progress. I have met with a number of volunteers who say they are interested, but these meetings often don't go anywhere.

- I could use a lot more support finding volunteers. So far, I have sourced all of my own volunteers. It is very difficult to try to manage this and also get things done, especially given the number of vacant positions. We may really need to think hard about relying more on paid contractors if we can't find a way to source volunteers.

Report of the Social Media Committee:

Holly McClintock, hollymcclintock.caves@gmail.com

Hayden Harper, haydenharper@gmail.com

Jennifer Young, pr.caving@gmail.com

Chair position vacant. None submitted

Report of the Website Committee:

Pete Johnson, pete@caves.org

Josh Schultz, jschultz@caves.org

None submitted

Report of the NSS News Committee:

Joel Despain, Managing Editor, jdespain@caves.org

Adam Weaver, Production Editor, adam@caves.org

Sarah Marquart, Proofreader, srmarquart@gmail.com

April Gocha, Spelean Spotlight Editor april.sandy.gocha@gmail.com

Jim Kennedy, Underground Update Editor, cavercrash@gmail.com

Progress

- The August issue is in the hands of our members. Since switching to the new printer in Q2, we have not had any issues getting the issues to members at the start of the month.
- The September issue has been edited and compiled, and Adam will soon be

doing the layout.

- The October issue is progress and will be the Convention 2025 wrap-up issue.
- We received a lot of positive feedback on the various special issues dedicated to specific caves, regions, or topics and so have planned more (see below).

Plans

- The November issue will be a special thematic issue on caves in Wayne County, Kentucky.
- The January issue will be another thematic issue focused on the NCRC.
- After 36 issues, Joel Despain is stepping down as the Managing Editor of the News after December 2025.
- Adam will be overseeing both content and production starting January 2025. This is anticipated to smooth processes, as it will make aligning the written content + photography easier since the layout will be considered from the start.
- Sarah's work has proven to be very beneficial, and so she will be assisting with more editing (as opposed to just copyediting) starting in January 2025 to assist Adam once Joel leaves.

Problems

None to speak of.

Report of the JCKS Committee:

Malcolm Field, Editor in Chief (and Book Reviews editor), field.malcolm1@gmail.com

Scott Engel, Production, sengel@caves.org

Board of Editors

Paul Burger (Exploration)

Sarah Keenan (Microbiology)

Julian Lewis (Life Sciences/Conservation)

Salisa Lewis (Life Sciences/Conservation)

Greg McDonald (Paleontology)

George M. Crothers (Anthropology & Social Sciences)

Benjamin Schwartz (Earth Sciences, On Temporary Leave)

Mario Parise (Earth Sciences)

Carol Wicks (Earth Sciences)

Yongli Gao (Earth Sciences)

Jim Mead (Paleontology, Temporary)

Bert Ashbrook (Copyeditor)

Meredith Weberg (Copyeditor)
Sarah Marquart (Copyeditor)

Advisory board

Penelope Boston
Derek Ford
Louise Hose
Wil Orndorff
Gareth Davies
Dorothy Vesper
Leslie Melim
Bill Shear
Luis Espinasa

Progress

- The Spring 2025 issue of the Journal went out on time with one very extensive Paper dedicated to John R. Holsinger and a short introductory paper. This special dedicated paper was of sufficient size as to justify publishing a single paper in this issue.
- Sarah Marquart was previously completing one article a month. We arranged for her to complete most copyediting assignments within two weeks following assignment to help address the backlog.
- In July 2025 Marcos Penteadó requested permission to reprint Figure 4 from “Schubert, B. W., and Kaufmann, J. E., 2003, A partial short-faced bear skeleton from an Ozark cave with comments on the paleobiology of the species: Journal of Cave and Karst Studies, v. 65, no. 2, p. 101–110.” in a forthcoming paper. Permission was granted. A subsequent request was made to be allowed to include Figure 4 on the expected Wikipedia page. An amended permission was granted.

Plans

- We are attempting to source more contractors to assist with copyediting, as copyediting these papers is a very slow slog.

Problems

- Publishing four times a year is now becoming challenging because of reduced submissions and poorer-quality submissions. If our copyediting turnaround times improve we will likely receive more submissions.
- At this time, Malcolm is fulfilling the role of Book Review Editors.

Report of the Special Publications Committee:

Scott Engel, Production, sengel@caves.org

Progress

- OnRope is still progressing slowly. The current target is to have it done before the 2026 convention.

Plans

- In discussion with Dave Hughes regarding publishing his Beyond C-3 project
- In discussions with Dean Wisemann about the possibility of having the VCT manual translated into Vietnamese.
- Researching lower cost options for printing small quantities of books (<200).

Problems

Report of the Govt Liaison Committee

Joel Despain, jdespain@caves.org

Lee-Gray Boze, lboze@caves.org

Pete Johnson, pete@caves.org

Josh Schultz, jschultz@caves.org

Progress

- Our ability to respond to timely matters has improved dramatically. We published several pieces alerting membership and about the proposed public land sale to encourage political activism.
- We also got two articles placed in major media outlets—*Futurism* and *The Daily Beast*—though these were ultimately shelved when the sale was cancelled.
- We fully executed a modification to 25-PA-11100500-021 to add \$3,000 in funding and extend the expiration date of the agreement with Alaska Region Grants to 12/31/2028.
- We uploaded the new Significant Cave Nomination Worksheet to the NSS website since it does not yet exist on the FS website and distributed the new sheet to membership and IOs

- Wrote an Open letter to to Kristi Noem Regarding the Waiving of the 1988 Federal Cave Resources Protection Act + distributed to membership and IOs
- Established new organization of GLC and reporting to Executive Director

Plans

- Awaiting Executive Director to review all progress + establish priorities

Problems

- We could use a lot more volunteers to assist + are in need of a formal Chair

NCA (National Caves Association - Show Caves) & Cave Preservation Network Liaison

Nicole Ridlen nicoleridlen@gmail.com

Progress

- Jolene and I worked together earlier in the year to give some structure to the Cave Preservation Network, creating options for show caves and other organizations to support the NSS cave conservation, education & outreach initiatives in a way that benefits both organizations and increases visibility of the NSS. We now have a three tier option for businesses and organizations to join the CPN.
- Jolene has established a procedure for a communication channel between the main NSS office and myself, so I am aware of all donations that come in, and I will send Thank You letters, write articles for the NSS News and NCA newsletter, "Cave Talk", so both organizations' members are aware of our collaborations.
- Current 2025 CPN partners are: Ruby Falls, Glenwood Caverns, Lincoln Caverns, Cumberland Caverns, and Bluff Dwellers Cave. I have updated the website accordingly, and a banner was displayed at the NSS Convention in Cobleskill.
- I have written two articles about the CPN network/ importance of show caves, and have a 3rd in the pipeline.

Plans

- I plan to work with those who post on the public-facing NSS page to make social media posts about the current CPN partners and how their support benefits the NSS' initiatives.

- I have several more articles I will be working on about the current CPN partners
- The FALL 2025 NCA convention is hosted by Luray Caverns and is in Harrisonburg, VA. I will be displaying the CPN banner again there
- I am a speaker at the 2025 NCKMS symposium in Ely, Nevada and plan to again display the CPN banner there.
- The 2025 Cumberland Caverns Cavers' Christmas is on Sat Dec 6 th . All proceeds will be donated to the NSS through the CPN partnership. Registration is live here: <https://bit.ly/453h3YK>

Problems

- Still needing better communication from the headquarters/bookkeeping. A monthly or quarterly report showing all donations from the CPN partners so I can send them thank you cards would be wonderful. This would allow me to not only express gratitude, but also give me the needed data to know who I need to touch base with to see how I can support them.

Report of the Bat Conservation International Liaison

Keith Christenson, tropicalbats@hotmail.com

None submitted

Karst Waters Institute Liaison

Dave Decker dave@swgeophys.com

None submitted