

NSS National Headquarters Commission Status Report September 29, 2010

The headquarters commission comprises: John Scheltens, chair; Dave Luckins, secretary; Tom Rea, treasurer; Steve Ormeroid; Bert Ashbrook; and OVP Wm Shrewsbury, *ex officio*.

The Commission continues to evaluate potential sites for the new office. The Commission met Sept 10-12, 2010 in the Mammoth Cave area. Meetings were conducted in the board room of Diamond Caverns and at the CRF Field Station in Hamilton Valley. Weekend overnight accommodations were graciously provided by CRF at Hamilton Valley.

Numerous properties were visited and analyzed for potential sites. We met with landowners that were available and even visited a cave on one of the properties (a nice 3,000 ft. dry borehole). The Commission met in closed door session with the owners of Diamond Caverns who are located just outside the front door of Mammoth Cave National Park. The owners of Diamond Caverns are Gordon Smith, Roger McClure, Larry McCarty, Stan Sides, Gary Berdeaux and their respective spouses. They are all long time supporters of the NSS. Their knowledge of the NSS combined with their collective knowledge of the local area, both above and below ground, has been extremely helpful. The Commission extends their thanks and appreciation to the owners of Diamond Caverns for their hospitality and gracious assistance in helping us find a new home for the NSS.

Jim Currens, hydrologist and long time caver from this area, has also been instrumental in locating potential sites and contacting local landowners. Jim met us there and took us to several potential sites having entrances to the Mammoth Cave system.

John and Bert also met with the Mayor of Cave City, Mr. Bob Hunt, who was willing and wanting to help us relocate to the Mammoth Cave/ Cave City area. He volunteered to help us in any way to facilitate locating our headquarters and would like to have an in depth meeting with us.

It is well worth noting that there is an overall welcome-ness from cavers and government of the area to locate here. This includes NSS members, local cavers, CRF, Diamond Caverns, and local government. Although we have not had any official meetings with the Mammoth Cave administration, several rangers have expressed personal support and encouragement to locate here to include volunteering to help.

The Commission continues to interface with the Strategic Planning Committee chaired by R.D. Milhollin. Close coordination is important. Answering the questions of where the NSS wants to be 5, 10 and 20 years from today has a direct impact on size, contents, design, layout and location of the new headquarters. Key parameters being evaluated include the NSS's need for greater involvement in public awareness and education; closer ties with the scientific community; greater political interface with federal governing agencies; and partnerships with other conservation, scientific and educational organizations. The Headquarters Commission wants to be able to propose a location and structure that will allow the NSS to meet not only it's current needs but allow the NSS to grow into meeting it's goals as set forth under the strategic plan.

The Commission is also investigating whether a potential site exists near Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Kentucky. WKU is near the Mammoth Cave area and is well noted as one of the leaders in speleological research programs.

The Commission next meets in Huntsville, Alabama on Oct 8-10. A meeting has been arranged for the Commission to meet with University of Alabama officials for possible location on the university campus. We will also be looking at available existing buildings in the research park directing adjacent to the UA campus near the NASA Space center. We will also be evaluating the existing NSS office site on Pulaski Pike and the recently acquired property along Link Ave. Saturday evening (Oct. 9) the Commissioners will travel over to the TAG Fall Cave-In. We are scheduled to give a presentation to interested cavers on the work of the Commission and to solicit local caver input.

A progress report of the Commission activities will be presented at the Nov. 6th BOG meeting in Grand Rapid, Michigan. At this meeting a 5-year budget will be presented.

Respectfully submitted,

John Scheltens, Chair
NSS Headquarters Commission