

Updated on 3/23/2021: ANY OTHER VERSIONS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED OBSOLETE

NSS CONVENTION MANUAL

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. DATES	1
2. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE	1
3. PERSONNEL	3
4. REGISTRATION	5
5. FACILITIES	13
6. ACTIVITIES	20
6.1 Scheduling	20
6.2 Meetings	20
6.3 Sessions	23
6.4 Evening Events	27
6.5 Junior Speleological Society (JSS)	31
7. FIELD TRIPS AND FIELD CAMPS	32
8. SALONS AND DISPLAYS	35
8.1 Salon Display Areas	36
8.2 Salon Awards Show	37
8.3 Salon Critiques/Workshops	39
9. SALES	40
10. CONVENTION PUBLICATIONS	42
11. PUBLICITY	46
12. FINANCE	49
13. PAPERWORK	52
14. CONSERVATION	53
15. HEALTH AND SAFETY	53
16. SPECIAL SERVICES	55
17. THE PLANNING PROCESS	57
APPENDICES	
Appendix 1: Glossary	59
Appendix 2: Resources	60
Appendix 3: Board Acts Concerning Conventions	61
Appendix 4: Information From Past Conventions	71
Appendix 5: Sample Documents	72
Appendix 6: Supplemental Salon Information	73
Appendix 7: Computers	78
Appendix 8: Equipment Cache	79
Appendix 9: Convention Manual History	80

Appendix 10: Convention Fiscal Policies	81
Appendix 11: Salon Guidelines	88
Appendix 12: Sponsorships and Grants	110
Appendix 13: Tourist Councils/Chambers of Commerce	113
Appendix 14: COG Rules	114
Appendix 15: Vegetarian Meals	117
Appendix 16: JSS Vertical Training and Safety	118
Appendix 17: Caver Co-op	122
Appendix 18: Junior Speleological Society	125
Appendix 19: Personnel Descriptions and Duties	129
Appendix 20: NSS Convention WNS Guidance	156
Appendix 21: Safety Procedures for the Vertical Section	158
Appendix 22: The Art of Writing the Abstract	166
Appendix 23: Symbolic Devices	167
Appendix 24: Virtual Convention	168
Appendix 24 Communications	179

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This *Convention Manual* was developed to help the NSS Convention hosts and to prevent the re-creation of the wheel.

It is required that this information be reviewed and followed as noted.

It is suggested that convention chairs send appropriate sections to their committee chairs.

Chain of Command: All questions, issues, requests etc., are routed through the Convention Development chair, who reports to the NSS Administrative Vice President (AVP).

1. DATES

The convention chair, with the approval of the Board of Governors (BOG), determines convention dates. Although it will never be possible to avoid all conflicts, every effort should be made to avoid conflicts with other major caving events, such as the International Congress of Speleology, which is held the last 3 weeks in July or the first 2 weeks in August. The Schedule of Events, printed monthly in the *NSS News*, is a reference for such events. The somewhat traditional dates of **21 June through 21 August** are set in an effort to avoid most school conflicts for cavers who are teachers or students and those who have children. School schedules are now such that July dates will offer the highest possible attendance. Local seasonal weather conditions, insect populations, cave conditions, etc., must also be taken into consideration when selecting dates. Convention dates will also be constrained by the availability of facilities. **DO NOT SCHEDULE BEFORE OR AFTER THE AFOREMENTIONED DATES.**

Officially, the convention runs from Monday through Friday, with a few days of pre-convention activities, including a Geology Field Trip and perhaps a few days of post-convention activities. The campground should be open from early Saturday to Saturday, although a few people would appreciate having it open a day earlier. If possible, suggest a convenient alternate camping place for people who arrive before the convention campground is open.

As soon as the date for a convention has been confirmed by the BOG, the convention chair should notify the *NSS News*, so that the convention can be added to the Schedule of Events. Basic information should include the date, location, name, address, email address, and phone number of the convention chair.

2. ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE

As the convention date approaches, it will be possible to make a more accurate prediction of attendance. In general, you can expect approximately 65% to 75% to pre-register at the discounted rate and 75% to 80% of the final attendance figure to pre-register by the cutoff date. This number can vary with more remote sites.

Pre-registration may be higher if the convention offers significant incentives for early registration. Because most pre-registration will occur in the last 2 weeks before the pre-registration discount deadline, it is important to set the pre-registration deadline early enough that major decisions, such as how many guidebooks or T-shirts to print, can be made after the deadline. Six weeks is barely enough lead time. Ten weeks allows more of a safety margin.

Convention Size	Approximate Attendance
Small	500–750
Medium	750–1000
Large	1000–1600

Note: Day passes, not included in the above, are counted as five day passes equals one attendance.

3. PERSONNEL

The following is a more complete list of the responsibilities of each of the key Convention Committee members. For larger conventions, or when there are large numbers of capable volunteers, many of these jobs can be split among several people. Most commonly there will be additional sub-chairs who have more tightly focused responsibilities. The convention chair coordinates the activities of each of these key chairs. The individual chairs are, in turn, responsible for their committees and coordinate the activities of their sub-chairs.

Every staff member should be made aware to keep any complaints or problems in house. Post positive messages only to the outside.

Organizational Structure

Each Convention Committee **MUST** have a well-defined organizational structure, with committee chairs reporting directly to the convention chair. Some conventions will prefer to have relatively few committee chairs reporting directly to the convention chair, while others will prefer to have fewer layers in the committee structure. For example, the Registration chair could report directly to or through the treasurer. While the exact structure is not important, it is essential that there be clearly defined lines of authority and responsibility. Without them, disagreements and decision making can lead to counterproductive squabbles and even hostilities. The extent to which the chairs participate in decision making outside their own committees will also vary from convention to convention. Each Convention Committee should determine its own organizational structure.

Volunteers

Obviously, each of these jobs also requires a reasonably large number of “gofers,” **especially for initial setup**. Line up as much additional help ahead of time as you can. Don't be afraid to solicit help outside your grotto, region, or state. It is recommended you customize the available timeline that details how many volunteers will be needed for each task from set-up until breakdown. Volunteers will often come forward to help when they see a need; they should be encouraged and thanked. Even if people offer to work just one shift, you will find that service invaluable. During the convention, don't hesitate to ask for volunteers, and state the specific need, through the daily newsletter. A volunteer sign-up book helps solidify commitments to help. Try to keep volunteer shifts to 2 or 4 hours.

Chair

The convention chair is ultimately responsible for the smooth workings of the entire convention process. They must be able to work well with people, as well as coordinate the varied activities of the convention staff. Regular communication with the entire staff is mandatory. The convention chair is the senior manager for the convention and should not take on other roles. They should be a leader and an organizer. The chair should always support the staff. **If you need absolute control of ALL decisions, this is not the place for you.**

Vice-chair (preferred over co-chair)

The vice-chair works closely with and assists the chair, in all phases of convention planning. The vice-chair should be able to take over any or all phases of the chair's job in case of emergency or incapacitation of the chair.

Co-chair (alternative)

A co-chair splits the responsibilities with the chair. If this option is selected, the two co-chairs must clearly define who is responsible for which aspects of the convention. One of the co-chairs must be designated as the official contact, and be prepared to respond to questions.

It is extremely important that the co-chairs work closely together to avoid having two simultaneous conventions. If a clear-cut division of duties is established, for example, where one co-chair handles all administrative functions, while the other handles all campground and caving-related activities, conflicts tend to be avoided. Both co-chairs should keep their communications lines open and active.

Treasurer

Because of the requirements for financial responsibility, the chair and treasurer must not be the same individual. The treasurer must be familiar with standard bookkeeping and accounting techniques and be computer literate. The treasurer should know how to prepare and track budgets, handle large sums of cash, and prepare financial reports that must be submitted periodically to the NSS Secretary-Treasurer (S-T). The convention treasurer acts as the chief financial officer and needs to make sure each department submits a budget and stays within it. They will be responsible for handling a cash flow on the order of \$60,000 to \$200,000. The treasurer must be able to work closely with the Registration chair. The treasurer must be willing to learn and use the NSS chart of accounts and Intuit QuickBooks Online. The treasurer will be responsible for setting up a merchant services account for processing credit card receipts. **See Appendix 10, Section 8** for more information. The treasurer is also responsible for developing procedures for handling all financial transactions, including credit cards, both at registration and in other convention activities. **Possible Subcommittee:** Vendor Liaison, Caver Co-op.

Registration Chair

The Registration chair should be in charge of both pre-registration and on-site registration during the convention. The Registration chair must be able to work closely with the treasurer. The Registration chair should be computer literate and able to make extensive use of computer software as part of the registration process. **Possible Subcommittees:** Symbolic Devices (T-shirts, mugs, etc.), Pre-registration, and On-site coordinators.

Facilities Chair

The Facilities chair is responsible for both camping and meeting facilities and for providing audio-visual equipment for all activities. If the convention staff is large enough, AV equipment is best handled by a sub-chair. The Facilities chair will reserve space in the vendor area for the NSS Bookstore and the Caver Co-op. The Facilities Chair must

work closely with local contacts to arrange the use of facilities and campground and to assure that they are used in an appropriate manner.

The Facility Chair will need to arrange for the rental of any equipment not available at the convention site based on advance requests from the session chairs.

The Facilities Chair should try to anticipate problems before they arise and have contingency plans ready. **Possible Subcommittees:** Campground, A/V, Salon Support, Security, BOG/Congress of Grottos (COG) Liaison, Clean Caving Coordinator.

Publications Chair

The Publications chair is responsible for the convention guidebook, the convention program, the daily newsletter, and possibly a geology guidebook. This person **MUST** be willing to devote many hours of pre-convention time to the task. This job includes soliciting, collecting and editing material, formatting the publications, and arranging for printing. Much of this work can be done through subcommittees and it is advisable to delegate the editorship of the major publications.

The Publications Chair is responsible for overseeing all of it but, when possible, should let a pro do the real work. Although this job is extremely time-consuming, it is mostly complete by the time the convention starts. All that remains is the daily newsletter, which can be delegated.

The Publications Chair should be grammatically literate, have some graphic arts skills, have access to a computer, and be a good proofreader. The ability to harass and cajole in order to obtain material before the deadline is also helpful. This person should also work closely with the convention treasurer, due to the need for funding the publications before the convention begins. **Possible Subcommittees:** Convention Guidebook, Geology Field Trip Guidebook, Program, Daily Newsletter

Publicity Chair

The Publicity Chair is responsible for the series of *NSS News* articles and publicity for the convention and for public relations in and around the convention site. The chair must be able to work with local press, radio, and TV during the convention week. (All interviews with the press during the convention are referred to the NSS President).

Program Chair

At some conventions, the Program chair is responsible for the overall scheduling of all convention activities. At others, the Program chair is responsible only for session scheduling, and another officer, usually, the convention chair, assumes responsibility for overall scheduling. The Program chair **MUST** work closely with the rest of the convention staff and Section chairs to determine space and time requirements for meetings, sessions, workshops, etc. Time and space **MUST** also be allocated for standard convention events such as BOG and COG meetings and for special events and evening entertainment. The Program chair works closely with the Facilities chair to allocate available space and with the Publications chair to produce the convention program.

The Program chair's most difficult task is to minimize conflicts. This can be more of an art than a science. **See Section 1.6** for information for additional scheduling information.

The Program chair **MUST** be familiar with the requirements of each individual activity and with the specific Board acts regarding convention facilities. In particular, the Vendors and the COG have detailed needs. **(See Acts: 56-217, 56-267, 56-346, and 56-459 in the Appendix .3)** In addition to requirements specified in Board acts, the chair of each special event will be able to provide specific requirements for their events. Someone should be assigned to work closely with each event chair.

The Program chair is responsible for the contents of the convention program. They can either write it themselves or channel information to the Publications chair. This includes collecting abstracts of papers, session descriptions, detailed session schedules, etc. It should be noted that the Program chair is responsible for collecting this information, not generating it. That is the responsibility of the session chairs.

The Program chair must make sure that one or more calls for papers for each session appears in the *NSS News* and that a point of contact is identified for each session so that those wanting to give papers know where to send their titles and abstracts. For some sessions, for example US and International exploration, it may be necessary to appoint someone on the Convention Committee to be session chair and to receive abstracts since for their session, there is no NSS section that will organize the session.

The Program chair must also make sure that submitted papers are appropriate for their sessions, that the 250-word abstracts submitted are accurate and summarize the paper, and that the abstracts for technical and scientific papers are sent to the Editor of the *NSS Journal of Cave and Karst Studies* for inclusion in that publication.

Logistics Chair

Every convention is faced with numerous small tasks that do not easily fit into the realm of a single committee—moving several tons of guidebooks from the printer to the convention site, doing airport pickups and deliveries, procuring building materials, fetching BOG lunches, etc. While these can be assigned to other committees, some conventions have chosen to have a Logistics chair whose job is to deal with all the loose ends. **Possible Subcommittee:** BOG/COG Liaison **(See Appendix 19.)**

Other Staff

All session chairs and other significant program planners of NSS Conventions should be considered convention staff and listed in the program and any other place that the convention staff is listed. Some examples are the session chairs of major sessions such as US exploration, international exploration, geology and geography, biology, vertical session, Salons, and any other session that has five or more presenters.

4. REGISTRATION

The success of the convention depends a great deal on a well-designed and smoothly operating registration process. Registration policies, such as how to handle refunds and

bounced checks, should be developed long before the convention. All registration staff must be familiar with these policies. Well-defined policies and procedures will prevent many problems and will help resolve those that do arise. These policies and any other registration processes should be well-documented and reviewed thoroughly and understood by anyone who will be staffing the registration desk. The Registration chair should not feel obligated to be at registration the entire time it is open, nor is it desirable.

Registration Overview

The Registration chair and staff are responsible for:

- 1.) Conducting pre-registration
- 2.) Conducting onsite registration
- 3.) Collecting all registration fees
- 4.) Producing identification badges
- 5.) Producing and selling convention symbolic devices, such as guidebooks, T-shirts, patches, pins, mugs, etc. **Pre-ordered items MUST be pulled from the items for sale prior to the opening of registration.**
- 6.) Assembling and distributing registration materials consisting of convention publications, tickets, badges, housing instructions, etc.
- 7.) Maintaining complete and accurate registration records
- 8.) If requested by the convention treasurer, providing credit card services for convention activities that do not have their own merchant service accounts, such as the Caver CO-OP.
- 9) Verifying those claiming to be NSS members are current members.
- 10.) Allow time for a dry run of registration to verify everything is working properly before attendees arrive

While not required, it adds a nice touch to provide “official greeters” to orient and assist people on arrival. An “Ask Me” person, who has no other duties at registration but to answer questions, is a great asset to the staff and attendees.

Registration Accounting and Record Keeping

For each registrant, the registration accounting system must be able to track all services requested, all fees collected, and any amounts still outstanding or refunds due. People will make mistakes on their registration forms, no matter how carefully you design them. Record what people want and collect or refund the difference when they arrive.

NO CASH REFUNDS ARE PERMITTED.

Each committee will need to know how many people are using its services and, in some cases, who those people are. The Howdy Party and Banquet need head counts (and separate counts for vegetarian meals, unless you include your vegetarian fare with the main serving line). The Publication chair needs to know how many guidebooks and programs to print, etc. The Geology Field Trip, JSS, and the Vertical Workshop will want a list of attendees, as well as a count, so that they can send out advanced information. The information required will vary from convention to convention. Prior to beginning pre-registration, the Registration chair, treasurer, and each individual committee chair should meet to determine what information is required.

All funds collected by the RegFox program will be directly deposited into the conventions bank account,

You will use the NSS's merchant processing services . **See Appendix 10 Section 8** for more information.

Registration Forms

Registration forms should be clear and easy to fill out. They should include sign-ups for add on activities such as the Geology Field Trip, Junior Speleological Society (JSS), and Vertical Techniques Workshop. The form should also have a box for age so that minors' badges can be appropriately coded. **See the Web Section** for more info.

The registration form should be available online at the convention's website, at least 6 months before the convention, typically in January or February.

In addition, when the registration goes live, after the prior convention, grottos and other organizations should be notified. This practice reaches people who might otherwise be unaware of the convention. It also prompts grottos and the I/Os to publicize the convention.

Non-NSS members and foreign cavers often request information about the convention. You should prepare a standard packet of registration materials and respond promptly to such requests. Also, refer foreign cavers to the NSS International Secretary.

Paper registration forms must be destroyed, after the books are closed with the NSS, to protect the individuals' credit card information.

Registration Fees

Registration fees, in US dollars, should cover all convention expenses. The convention should not be viewed as a money-making event, but neither should it lose money. If in doubt, err towards the side of a modest profit (10%). Fees for non-NSS members should be higher than those of NSS members. The difference should be the cost for the attendees to join the NSS.

Careful budgeting can make the convention affordable without losing money. The convention should establish a refund policy for those who pre-register, but don't attend. Fees should not wildly fluctuate from one convention to the next. Look at previous convention fee schedules as a blueprint for what you should be charging. Pricing can be staggered by age groups and you should consider the waiving of the fee for children under the age of three.

People joining the NSS, for the first time, receive a **non-transferable, non-replaceable** coupon, issued by the office, entitling them to a one-time, \$50 reduction in the registration fee for a future NSS Convention.

Day Passes

Day pass prices should be set at a schedule that is more than one-fifth of the full week price. **Day passes are for 24 hours—8 a.m. to 8 a.m.** Day passes do not include Howdy Party, Banquet, or guidebooks. These **MUST** be purchased separately but in

addition to a day pass.

Onsite NSS Membership Process

For non-member registrants who want to join the NSS, convention registration staff will register new members during convention week.

By Thursday afternoon, the operations manager will obtain a list of new members from the Registration chair (preferably an electronic copy, but a print-out will suffice).

This list should contain the member's name, mailing address, date of birth, contact phone/cell, email address, membership type, and the amount paid.

No monies will exchange hands between the operations manager and the Registration chair; the membership monies will be transferred to the office once the convention books are closed (the accounting manager and S-T will handle the accounting).

Registration Policies

At every convention, the registration committee must deal with a few unhappy or irate individuals demanding special treatment or consideration. These problems can most easily be resolved if the Convention Committee has established registration policies well in advance and they have been published in the pre-convention publicity and the convention program. Keep in mind that there will always be some problems you can't resolve. Try your best, but don't worry if an occasional attendee goes away grumbling. You can't please all the people all the time. It is not unusual to find that 5% of the people at a convention are responsible for 95% of the problems and many of the 5% are the same year after year. If you're particularly perplexed, consult previous convention staff. They can help identify the perennial malcontents.

Special Accommodations (Americans with Disabilities Act)

The registration information and registration form must indicate the last date special needs, such as a sign language interpreter, can be requested. We suggest 30 days before pre-registration closes.

Registration Required (NSS Policy)

Everyone attending an NSS Convention and participating in convention events MUST register and pay a fee in accordance with the extent of participation (for example, pay for full registration, for day pass only, for Banquet only). This includes convention staff, paid contractors, and non-NSS volunteers.

Exceptions are as follows:

1. NSS Office staff register but do not pay a registration fee. It is credited later.
2. Government officials (for example, local dignitaries), government employees attending meetings of the Steering Committee of the National Cave and Karst Management Symposium, local landowners, guest speakers, and others as determined by the convention chair may receive complimentary day passes in accordance with Act 56-631.
3. Paid contractors who do not participate in any convention activities do not have to register and do not pay a registration fee.

4. Unpaid non-NSS volunteers (for example, off-duty policemen, medical personnel, family members not otherwise involved in the NSS) who provide services that would otherwise be contracted out by the Convention Committee do not pay a registration fee. Such people cannot participate in any convention activity unless they pay for the activity, (for example, attending a party or buying a day pass). The Convention Committees are urged to use such people as little as possible and make maximum use of Convention Committee staff to perform these services.
5. **Members of UIS-recognized organizations can register at the member rate if they provide proof of said membership.**
6. Others as determined by the convention chair and approved by the NSS Administrative Vice President (AVP).

Comment: The basic principle here is that with some limited exceptions, everyone who takes advantage of our convention activities should pay for this. On rare occasions, a Convention Committee may have to use non-NSS people to help out or may be able to use a volunteer to perform a service that would otherwise be paid for. In these cases, the people involved don't have to pay a registration fee but they also derive no benefit from convention activities. Like everyone else, if they want to go to a convention event, they'll have to pay for it.

Liability Releases Required (NSS Policy)

Everyone attending an NSS Convention and participating in convention events MUST properly execute the appropriate NSS Convention Liability Release(s): ADULTS, CHILDREN, or Both. This includes convention staff, paid contractors, and non-NSS volunteers. The Registration staff must NOT issue any NSS Convention badges to anybody, until after they have fully completed and submitted the appropriate NSS Convention Liability Release(s). All minor's badges require the "Children" NSS Convention Liability Releases, executed by the parent/guardian, preferably in the presence of the Registration staff.

Recommended Process for Implementation of Assured Liability Releases

The Registration staff normally have the traditional tables ready with prepared badges, plus the bags and swag, etc. They should have on hand sufficient copies of the NSS Convention Liability Releases for Adult and Children. The first table for Arrivals could simply have the two stacks of forms, pens, and instructions to "Please fully complete . . . first."

When the liability forms are completed, Arrivals can go to the Sign-In tables (often several, typically segmented by the first letter of the last name).

The Arrival hands in their fully completed liability form(s) before they ever get a badge.

Then the staff compares the liability form(s) name(s) and info with their prepared badge name, etc., and fills in their badge number on the form(s).

Only IF the form(s) match, and are fully completed, then the staff uses a unique rubber

stamp to stamp the badge itself (in a convenient and visual spot, easy for Vertical and JSS instructors and trip leaders) and stamp the upper right corner of the form(s) (right beside the attendee's printed name).

Stamp Notes: The rubber stamp is typically a small self-inking symbol device and is very popular for this type of need. We need less than a 3/4-inch diameter area on the badge for the stamp; it must be visible to Vertical and JSS Instructors, and trip leaders, etc. We suggest a small bat or a smiley face (both work well elsewhere for caver events).

To simplify the process, we are planning on buying Registration three stamps (one per Sign-In table). Only after the staff have verified the Arrival info, completed form(s), and badge, and stamped both, then the Arrival is issued the (stamped) badge, gets their bag and swag, and is magically transformed into an Attendee!

Then the staff tucks the completed liability forms into a Registration "Liability Releases" folder. Preferably in the "Last Name" sequence for easy searching. Also, the staff will be collecting liability forms from Trips and Camps, and possibly additionally from Vertical Section and JSS, etc., as suitable. The Registration staff are responsible for overall collection and retention of the liability releases, until disposal (to be determined).

Registration will collect and retain all NSS Convention Liability Releases. Vertical and JSS, trips, and other appropriate events will be provided prompt reference to, and if desired, copies of such releases upon request. The Vertical and JSS, trips, and other appropriate events are authorized to implement supplemental Liability Releases as required for specialized situations and applications, in addition to the NSS Convention forms.

Refunds

The convention should establish a refund policy. Before a publicized cutoff date, fees should be fully refundable. After that date, fees can be partially refundable, depending on how the withdrawal affects convention finances. Money for meals, rooms, etc. should be returned, if at all possible. Convention publications and souvenir items **SHOULD** be mailed in lieu of full refunds.

Pets

If pets are allowed, establish policies concerning pet registration fees, areas where they are off-limits, procedures for monitoring behavior, and enforcing rules. Stipulating that pets must be on a leash, attached to a person or an immovable object, and that owners must clean up after their pets are not unreasonable. Most convention sites are not the best place for critters to be left alone all day. Lack of shade and/or water can be dangerous for any animal. Certified Service Animals are always allowed.

Badges

The most important thing on a badge is the person's name. Be sure to print it in **LARGE LETTERS (24 pitch minimum)**, so that it can be easily read. Nicknames should be in addition to, not instead of a person's real name. Badges should also show the person's

NSS number and convention registration number—this is needed for the auction and so folks can brag about their low number. Additional information, such as internal organization (I/O) affiliation is nice but optional. Badges can be color-coded to indicate people with specific responsibilities, such as NSS Board members, convention staff, and medical personnel. A color code on the badge designating the owners' Region or a Region logo can help connect new and experienced cavers from the same areas.

Color coding or rotating the badge can also identify minors to reduce problems with underage drinking. NSS and staff badges should include the position held. Consider making a batch of generic badges for rotating volunteer positions, such as Registration, Campground, Security, that will be used only when the person is on duty. **Neck pouches are popular for containing badges.** New NSS members could have a special icon on their badges.

The NSS Convention Chair, or their designee, as they deem suitable, may authorize selected VIPs, Local Officials, Public Safety, Invited Guests, et al, admittance with special VIP or equivalent Badges, and with an appropriate escort by NSS Convention Staff or designee. In the event of actual emergency situations, Public Safety and Cave Rescue personnel, et al, shall be granted prompt and temporary access without a Badge.

The NSS Convention will employ the NSS Convention Liability Releases for Adults and Minors.

Issuance of the NSS Convention badge may be considered a valid token that the user has properly registered. However, assurance of properly executed and submitted required liability release forms requires more than a reliable process.

Communications

Many attendees leave spouses, children, or older relatives at home. They may need to stay in touch with their jobs. It is essential that the convention provide some form of communication services. Registration personnel should be prepared to take messages and post them on the bulletin board. In emergencies, they should be willing to locate individuals and relay messages directly. In addition, there should be pay phones at both the campground and meeting sites in areas where cell phone coverage is limited. It is recommended you note limited cell phone service in your pre-convention material in the *NSS News*.

Staff radios are an invaluable resource; however, disbursement of them needs to be controlled. Currently the NSS owns 24 radios, six of them will be needed by the Photo Salon Committee on the day of the Salon. Family band radios are useful within the school or campground—both if the facilities are close to each other. The use of ham (amateur) radios has also become very popular among cavers. A ham station usually sets up at convention. See Appendix 25

Somewhere near, but not too near, the registration desk there should be a sizable bulletin and message board for the use of members, with appropriate scribbling and

tacking paraphernalia. If you provide small note pads for messages, people won't use up lots of space, putting short messages on big pieces of paper.

Pre-registration

Pre-registration provides attendees with their first indication of how “together” a convention staff is. These impressions can influence people who are undecided about attending. Acknowledge registrations promptly, with an email that tells people what they have signed up for. Cash checks regularly. Answer emails, letters, and phone calls. The more interested the convention staff is in providing a service, the more the word will spread that “this is really going to be a fantastic convention.”

Online registration via the web has been very successful and should be started after the close of the previous convention. Approximately 75% of the attendees will pre-register—most in the last 2 weeks prior to the discount cutoff date. Approximately 90% will pre-register before on-site registration opens.

Pre-registration records also help the Convention Planning Committee. Keep them up to date. Having tentative attendance figures helps in negotiations with caterers and other suppliers. They can help determine how many Geology Field Trip buses to run, how many T-shirts to order, etc. It is recommended that the cutoff date is at least 10 weeks before the convention start date.

On-site Registration

There should be a centrally located registration desk at convention headquarters. This desk should be open continuously from the Saturday before the convention through the beginning of the Howdy Party on Monday evening. The location of the registration facility should be publicized in the *NSS News* and stated on signs leading people to the convention. After Monday, if the registration desk is not going to be open around the clock, its hours of operation and instruction for late arrivals should also be clearly posted. **In remote locations, where most attendees are not likely to drive directly through and arrive in the wee hours, registration can close on Sunday night and reopen on Monday morning.**

Registration should be designed to serve a maximum number of people in a minimum amount of time. People will be arriving, tired and cranky, after long drives. Make their initial experience a pleasant one. Registration materials should be assembled ahead of time for those who have pre-registered and they should have an express check-in line. For others, desks or tables for filling out forms are essential. These should be located nearby, but not so as to interfere with those in line.

Special attention should be paid to orienting first-timers. Reception groups or select old hands could be assigned to take these people under their wing and make their first convention a pleasant and memorable experience.

Symbolic Devices

Every convention identifies itself with a logo blazoned on T-shirts, patches, pins, mugs, etc. These are usually sold at the Registration Desk or at a table nearby. Deciding how

much to order can be a real problem. Refer to the Convention Development Committee for T-shirt sales history. It is best to be conservative with ordering and to take into account price breakpoints.

You should be able to defer a final decision on quantities until your pre-registration deadline when you have a much better idea of what you need. Your suppliers might make the patterns or silkscreens in advance—you should leave enough time between pre-registration and the convention for their products so they can produce the needed quantities. Discuss this possibility with the suppliers. The RegFox program will be used by each convention group. **(See Appendix 23.)**

Drop Shipping

Some attendees who fly to the convention may wish to camp. Given the additional baggage costs, they may prefer to drop ship their camping gear to the convention site. If possible, set up a location near registration so their packages can be stored and then collected upon arrival.

5. FACILITIES

Before you go too far, be sure you have the commitment of the person at the top of whatever facilities you are looking at and the commitment that you will have the full cooperation of all departments in their organization. The convention site should provide meeting facilities, camping, and food in close proximity. The area should be clearly defined headquarters, most commonly near the registration area, where people can gather, socialize, and obtain information. Parking space should be plentiful.

There should be hotels, motels, or dormitories available for those who do not want to camp. If the campground and sessions must be separated, the distance involved should be minimized. A shuttle bus system must be provided if these facilities are more than a mile or two apart. Shuttle service is mandatory for any activities that involve alcohol and are not within walking distance of the campground. In no case should daytime meeting sites be separated by more than a short walk. Having such meetings several city blocks apart or in widely spaced buildings on campus is not desirable.

Before a contract is signed, find out if there are any limitations on bringing in caterers or beverage suppliers.

The local Tourist Council or Chamber of Commerce may be able to assist you in locating facilities, negotiating contracts, and obtaining the best prices. They also will make sure the town businesses know a big event is planned and to be prepared. They may also have funding available. **(See Appendix 13.)**

Air-conditioned facilities are preferred but are not mandatory. If the convention climate is unusually hot or humid, air conditioning is strongly encouraged.

Handicap access to all convention activities must be available.

Signage

Signs should be set up by Friday night. They must be a minimum of 8"x10". A bat

sticker will help the sign to be recognized at night.

Directions

Keep them simple, direct, and easy to follow. Have someone who does not know the way test them. Shortcuts can be learned once folks reach the site. Most folks will have GPS capability on their cell phones, but not all will. Make it easy for them, especially at night after a long day of driving in unfamiliar areas.

Campground

A large campground, preferably within walking distance of convention headquarters and no further than 15 miles from the convention meeting location, is essential. The ideal campground has adequate toilet and shower facilities, a site for vendors, shaded space for tents and RVs, and a gathering area. The camping area should not be so large that people lose contact with each other, nor so small that they feel crowded. If there are trees, people will tend to cluster under them, requiring less tent space. Areas prone to flooding should be identified, posted, and possibly marked off as a restricted area. The campground location should ensure the safety, security, and privacy of campers (and of the local citizenry) and should conform to all local health and safety regulations. Most conventions choose to control campground access and to provide security guards. At a minimum, security guards should be present on nights when most people are likely to be away from the campground. Using local, off-duty police, sheriffs, or firemen is good for public relations and it frees the staff to enjoy the convention events.

The campground should be divided into “quiet,” and “rowdy” areas, although finer subdivisions, like “quiet at night” and “quiet in the morning,” are possibilities.

Some sort of sheltered gathering area should be available on a 24-hour basis. This should be well removed from the quiet area since it will undoubtedly be the scene of late-night revelry.

It is especially important that the campground conforms to all relevant health and safety requirements. Do not try to circumvent these requirements. Local authorities have the power to shut down nonconforming facilities. The hassle of getting permits and facing inspections is nothing compared to the possibility of discovering the last minute that you don't have a campground.

Campfires are nice but **MUST** be approved in advance. If allowed, arrange for fire pans.

Parking

The campground **must** have ample parking and people should be able to park **reasonably close** to their tent sites. Conventions that have provided “only walk-in to tents” should expect and be prepared for constant enforcement problems and unending complaints, unless you publicize this fact well in advance.

Additional handicapped parking places may be needed.

Check to see if there will be fees associated with parking in any area.

Cavers are resourceful, and armed with advance notice, will improvise around these situations.

Facility Convention Size	Small 500 attendees	Medium 750 attendees	Large 1000+ attendees
Land Required	10 acres	15 acres	20 acres
Toilets	12	20	25
Showers	7 each sex	10 each sex	15 each sex

Toilets

The ideal campground has numerous flush toilets and showers in close proximity to the tent areas. This ideal is seldom achieved. If adequate flush toilets are not located within about 50 yards of the camping, port-a-potties must be provided. **See Section 15** on Health and Safety for additional information on restrooms and port-a-potties.

Pumping should be arranged to occur while attendees are at sessions. Locate the port-a-potties in small groups, close to where tents and people will cluster. They should be easily accessible for cleaning and pumping. As the week progresses, it is highly likely that you will find that you need more units in some places and fewer in others. Don't hesitate to have the port-a-potties moved, but do negotiate the fee for this service ahead of time. Make sure you have someone responsible to make sure they stay supplied with toilet paper.

Showers

If you find it necessary to build temporary showers or rent shower trailers, be sure to consider both safety and the environment. Dumping large quantities of soapy water into the local watershed is not acceptable. Try to arrange a connection to a local sewer or storm drain or build a leach field. A co-ed facility is acceptable. You must provide separate facilities for those who are not comfortable in a mixed environment.

Hot Tub

The hot tub is enjoyed by many attendees, but it is not mandatory. Unfortunately, it is also often a source of problems. To avoid some of them, the hot tub should be in an isolated location, with an ample source of water, preferably in or near the noisy campground. The Convention Committee should designate the location. Some facilities will not allow a hot tub to be set up. You must verify the site owner will allow it on their property. The convention registration form and/or a registration table container may ask for hot tub donations. A large compound for both showers and the hot tub, which share a water heater and drainage, is a mutually beneficial arrangement. Any inappropriate behavior should be reported to security or the convention staff. Attendees can be banned from the hot tub area.

In some areas, it may be necessary to have the hot tub inspected by local health

authorities.

Safe Needle Disposal

Conventions will provide safe needle disposal facilities. Needle collection locations must be publicized in convention campground materials, using signage at campground facilities, and must be clearly labeled as a biohazard.

Motels and/or Dormitories

The number of people who prefer private accommodations is increasing. If possible, inexpensive rooms in dormitories or hostels are highly desirable. If dorms are available, the rooms should be checked and any damages documented, to avoid charges after we use them. In addition, there should be nearby motels, hotels, or bed-and-breakfasts to accommodate those who require these facilities. A discounted rate can be negotiated, in most cases, since the room will be occupied for a week and the motel occupancy will increase. Information about motels, hotels, and bed-and-breakfasts should be mentioned in the *NSS News* and printed on the website as early as possible. Include names, addresses, phone numbers, price ranges, and locations relative to the convention. When these facilities are limited, they fill up fast. It is not unusual for people to reserve 6 months to a year in advance. Motels should also be no further than 15 miles from the sessions.

Convention Business Areas

Registration

When people have completed the registration form (at a table within the Registration area), there should be lines for them to register. These lines are also for pre-registrations that need changes made. Lines for those who pre-registered may be designated by their last name of the person who registered (such as A–F).

There should be an express line for people who registered ahead of time and do not need to make changes.

An information center outside, but adjacent to registration, is helpful with menus, brochures, etc. It should have a message board and perhaps some comfortable chairs. There should be a public phone, especially in areas with limited cell service. If practical, this area should be located away from the mainstream registration area.

Convention Office

During the week, the convention staff will need a place to meet and discuss problems, or just to retreat from the chaos. A secure, private area, near the registration desk, is most convenient, although having one elsewhere offers more privacy. This space is closed to non-staff. Storage for registration materials could be located here. If renting a copy machine, it might be located here or in Registration. Otherwise, with permission, use the copy machine in the facility's location.

For the security of financial records, reports, money, and checks, the treasurer should have a separate and lockable room.

Editor's Center

The daily newsletter editor should have a location where there is power for a computer setup, a large table, and chairs.

Duplicating Facilities

Numerous convention activities require copying services, often at odd hours of the day or night. If duplicating facilities are not available as part of the facilities rental package, the convention should consider renting a high quality, medium speed, machine for the week. Office supply stores will frequently be willing to rent one cheaply, in exchange for being the exclusive supplier of paper and toner for the machine. It should be set up at registration or in a locked room, with a specific person designated to provide access and assistance. The convention should provide free copying for the BOG, COG, and daily newsletter. (Warning: Most medium-speed copiers cannot handle the continuous printing requirements of the daily newsletter. This is best done at a print shop or by renting high-speed copiers.) Copying services should be offered to other official convention functions. A nominal fee will be charged for non-convention or session-related needs.

Meeting Rooms

The Facilities Committee is responsible for managing all meeting sites during the week. At least one committee member should be on site any time that meetings or sessions are in progress. This person should be prepared to rearrange meeting sites and to provide and maintain AV equipment, rented if necessary. Spare equipment and projector bulbs should be available on a moment's notice. There should be a clearly marked convention office so that this support person can be easily located when assistance is needed (a radio or personal cell phone can be used for this also.) A master schedule of rooms being used and the times they are occupied, as well as a list of available rooms for last-minute meetings, should be maintained by the facilities chair and be available at Registration in the event of the need to move to larger quarters or a location is suddenly unavailable.

Convention Room Needs by Convention Size

Facility Capacity (person)	Square Feet	Small 500 attendees	Medium 750 attendees	Large 1000+ attendees
Small Rooms (20–50)	160–240	3	3	4
Mid-sized Rooms (50–100)	400–800	3	4	4
Large Rooms (100–200)	400–800	2	2	3
Auditoriums (200–1,000)	1,600–8,000	1	2	3

Section Meetings

Each NSS Section will most likely want to have a meeting, luncheon, or both. Section meetings can be as small as a dozen people or as large as several hundred. The Section chairs should provide information about the Section's meeting requirements to the convention staff as early as possible.

Sessions

Technical sessions are organized by the Sections or by convention staff. The Facilities chair or the Program chair should contact them to determine space and equipment requirements. Whenever possible, all sessions should be in the same building or within a short walk of each other. PowerPoint projectors are needed in most sessions. Frequently they can be provided by or rented from the facility where you are holding the sessions. Session chairs should bring a laptop or make arrangements to have one for their session. There have been issues with certain computers, such as gaming computers, not syncing up with projectors. An HDMI cable or other adapter may be needed. If a large screen is not available for the large sessions, see if the Salon Committee can provide one.

Session chairs are not necessarily the same from year to year and can be hard to track down after the convention closes.

Workshops

Each workshop has separate requirements. Typically, tables or other working surfaces are needed.

Auditorium/Gymnasium

Auditorium or gymnasium accommodations are needed for the following activities:

Photo Salon

The Photo Salon has very specific facility needs. These are described in detail in **Appendix 11: Salons and Displays**.

BOG

Board of Governors meetings have special facilities requirements. These are described below in

Section 6: Activities.

COG Meetings

The Congress of Grottos needs a facility that seats approximately 50 people, preferably in a tiered room. **(See Section 6: Activities.)**

Geology Session

Because attendance at the geology sessions and meetings can run as high as 150 to 700 people, it is best to schedule it in a large room such as an auditorium.

International Exploration Session and US Exploration Session

These two sessions frequently draw well over 500 people and require a larger, auditorium-style room.

Vertical Contest, Vertical Techniques Workshop, and Rebelay Workshop

The Vertical Contest and Vertical Techniques Workshop have similar requirements and usually use the same room. They require a high-roofed building (25'), such as a gymnasium, with a suitable arrangement for anchoring ropes. **See the Vertical Contest in Section 6: Activities**, for more detailed requirements. The Vertical Techniques Workshop needs multiple rig points and a rappelling location. The Rebelay Workshop needs a two-level platform and rigging points.

Banquet Hall

The Banquet hall **MUST** be large enough to comfortably seat the entire expected attendance indoors, or in a large tent. A stage with a podium that can be seen and clearly heard by everyone is mandatory. Also, there must be a head table visible to everyone. **See the Banquet section** below for more detailed requirements. For large conventions, consider having a couple of screens at different locations so folks in the back can see what's happening up on stage too. Also, pay attention to acoustics in large spaces.

Vendor Space

If possible, indoor vendor spaces should be air-conditioned and individually securable. They should have ample lighting and electricity for adding machines or computers, etc. Most conventions supply tables and partitions for large rooms. If the convention is not going to do so, vendors should be warned ahead of time, so they can bring their own tables or make arrangements to rent. Outdoor vendors need electricity and a secure area, located near the social center of the campground to ensure good walk-by traffic. A surcharge should be applied to vendors with large power consumption, such as those with sewing machines.

Display Space

Each Salon has its own requirements. Display space should be well-lit and secure. The longer the viewing hours, the more people will have an opportunity to visit.

Lockable display space is needed for the items to be auctioned. The Auction Committee will place items in display cases when available. If not, the NSS Bookstore will display the items.

Keys

Since it is necessary to provide locked doors for vendors, displays, the treasurer, etc., arrangements should be made for door keys to individual rooms and the building. Will room keys be issued to select individuals or will arrangements have to be made to have rooms unlocked and locked? Will there be a fee associated with locking and unlocking doors?

Parking at Sessions

Advise, in advance, if parking is not close to the session sites or if there is a fee. Additional handicapped parking places may be needed. Parking regulations should be plainly posted and enforced. Check to see if there will be fees associated with parking in any area.

6. ACTIVITIES

The more varied a convention is, the more interest it will usually generate and the more satisfied attendees will be. Some events can reflect the convention theme, which is usually related to local history or culture. Try to leave at least one evening free, or very casual, so that people have time to socialize and relax.

6.1 SCHEDULING

It is one thing to arrange for lots of activities. It is another to schedule them so that people participate in the ones they want with minimal conflicts. In particular, due to the large number of sessions, it is necessary to schedule some of them against the BOG and COG meetings. The following sessions should not be placed in the same time slot: BOG, COG, National Cave Rescue Commission, or any session business meeting.

The *BOG Manual* states that these conflicts should be avoided if possible.

- BOG and Geology or Exploration
- Geology and Biology (There is a large overlap of speakers and audience.)
- Archaeology, Anthropology, Paleontology, History, and Geology
- Human Sciences, Conservation and Management, and Lechuguilla Exploration and Research Network (LEARN)
- Cartography and Electronics
- Geology, US Exploration and International Exploration (All require a large facility.)
- Print Salon, Photo Salon, and Video Salon Workshops

The evening schedule at most conventions is:

Monday	Howdy Party
Tuesday	Special Event (cave tour, local attraction, etc.) (everyone welcome) Fellows and New Members Reception (limited to those who qualify)
Wednesday	Auction, Campground Party (The auction should start at least an hour before the party.)
Thursday	Photo Salon
Friday	Banquet

6.2 MEETINGS

Opening Ceremony

The convention is usually kicked off with a brief ceremony Monday morning. It is held immediately before the BOG meeting at the same location. However, if the convention locality offers another interesting site, it can be used instead. The opening ceremony should introduce the local dignitaries and convention chair and provide a brief preview of things to come. A possible agenda for this ceremony follows. In no case should it last more than about 20 minutes.

- 1.) NSS president: Introductory Remarks
- 2.) Introduction of and remarks by local (or other) dignitaries and convention chair
- 3.) Official Welcome

- 4.) Last-minute information
- 5.) Introduction of convention staff
- 6.) A program (optional)
- 7.) A brief (emphasize brief) presentation that reflects the convention theme

Board of Governors (BOG) Meeting

The BOG meeting is the official annual business meeting of the NSS. It begins Monday morning and is usually continued on Friday. Within this framework, the BOG meeting may consist of a variety of open and closed sessions.

The BOG consists of 17 people—the 12 elected directors, the president, 3 vice presidents and secretary-treasurer. In addition, the recording secretary sits at the meeting table. It is essential that these people be seated so that they can converse easily among themselves. They must have sufficient table space to spread out laptops, notes, and other material. The U-shaped configuration with at least 40 linear feet of table space works best. It is not acceptable to seat the BOG in two tiers, where some members would be sitting behind others. Air conditioning, comfortable chairs, and adequate lighting are also important. Power strips **MUST** be provided for the laptops. Ice water (and possibly other drinks and snacks) **MUST** be made available for the BOG by the convention Facilities chair. It is optional to provide them for the audience. A convention staff member **MUST** be assigned to the BOG. This person will take lunch orders and handle any special needs of the BOG during the open meetings. Lunches can be provided or the BOG members will pay for them.

With the exception of the closed meeting of the directorate, BOG meetings are open to all NSS members. For open meetings, there should be ample room to seat spectators (typically 100).

All BOG meetings are recorded, with the exception of the closed meeting. The NSS Logistics Committee will provide the needed equipment. The convention Facilities chair should work closely with the Convention Development Committee to assure suitable BOG accommodations.

Annual Business Meeting

The first session of the BOG meeting is the annual business meeting, held Monday morning, following the opening ceremony. It is an open meeting, and is an opportunity for members to observe firsthand how the Society operates. It is not unusual for 100 members to attend this meeting. The NSS president should open this meeting by introducing the BOG members.

Organizational (Closed) Meeting

The organization session, which is usually held immediately after the annual business meeting, is a closed meeting. While it can be held in the same room as the open meeting, a smaller private meeting room is preferred. Seating arrangements should follow the above guidelines, although the U shape is no longer needed since there is no audience. This meeting may or may not be recorded, at the discretion of the BOG.

The BOG often eats lunch during this meeting. Some conventions choose to provide a lunch for the BOG, or ask a local grotto or Region to do so. Usually, the Board members place their orders and provide payment in the morning, and the Logistics chair or the Facilities chair brings the food in.

Additional Meetings

The Board will require facilities for at least one additional session, a continuation of Monday's open session, usually held on Friday morning. If the agenda makes it likely that the meeting will run past lunch, arrangements similar to those on Monday should be made. This is an open meeting. On occasion the BOG will need to have additional meetings, either open or closed. The Facilities chair should be prepared to respond to such special requests.

Congress of Grottos Meeting:

The Congress of Grottos (COG) is an advisory body, consisting of representatives from each internal organization (I/O) in the NSS. The COG discusses issues of importance to the members and recommends items for consideration by the BOG. The meeting is well attended and requires a facility seating about 50. Members of the BOG often attend this meeting.

The meeting is presided over by a chair, elected at the previous year's Congress. The COG chair is responsible for determining COG representation and developing issues. The I/O chair provides placards and ballots. The COG secretary is responsible for producing typed minutes of the meeting and providing a copy to the BOG's recording secretary for inclusion in Friday's BOG agenda. Copies for the Board members are also desirable.

The convention's responsibility for the COG is minimal. Provide a suitable room with a table and three chairs for those running the COG meeting. Also, provide access to a computer and duplicating services for both copies of the issues and minutes.

Section Meetings

Each official NSS Section will probably have a business meeting, in addition to a technical session, during the week. Some sections will combine their meeting with a breakfast or lunch; others will request a meeting room. The individual Section chairs should inform the convention Program chair about the requirements for their meetings, which vary greatly in size and format.

Special Meetings

Space for special meetings may be requested by various groups. Such meetings could be on anything from cave lights to convention planning. The International Union of Speleology (UIS) often schedules a meeting for those interested in international activities. The Program chair may add such special meetings to the schedule and should have a few spare meeting rooms for last-minute special meetings that are not on the program.

Special Interest Breakfasts and Luncheons

Many NSS sections and I/Os like to combine their business meetings with breakfast or lunch. In addition, less formal special interest groups, such as the newsletter editors, surveys, etc. like to have lunches. When acceptable, some groups eat in their meeting rooms. Others depend on the convention to provide a private dining area, or a special group of tables for each group. Food service or some other catering provision should be available. People who want to participate in the meeting but not use the food service should be able to do so. These special breakfasts and lunches should be scheduled ahead of time and announced in the program and possibly the daily newsletter.

Past NSS presidents have been having a private luncheon and will need a room.

Luminary Series

Tuesday through Thursday a special presentation is made during the lunch break. An auditorium or large room is needed. Presentations last about an hour. If afternoon sessions are being held in the same room, it may be necessary to schedule the talk to assure the room is available for the afternoon sessions. Times and the luminary should be advertised in the program and the daily newsletter.

6.3 SESSIONS

Sessions are the heart of the convention's scientific program. Each NSS Section usually arranges a session for the presentation of formal papers. In addition, special sessions can be added by the Convention Committee or by other individuals. These special sessions frequently highlight local discoveries and projects. Abstracts of these papers should be printed in the convention program. The Program chair is responsible for contacting the chairs of the various Sections to determine who will be running the session. If the convention plans to present special sessions or symposia, the Program chair is responsible for locating appropriate session chairs. The Program chair works with the individual session chairs to determine what size room and how much time to allot for each session, what audio-visual equipment to provide, and other requirements.

If a session is not chaired by someone in a section, (for example, US Exploration), then the Program chair is responsible for finding a chair for that session.

The section chairs are responsible for issuing a "Call for Papers." They collect papers, review them, and forward abstracts to the Program chair. **Abstracts are limited to 250 words. (See Appendix 22.)** Ideally, they also provide the Program chair with a paper-by-paper schedule with a timetable. These timetables should be adhered to. Substitute papers or breaks should fill any "no show" gaps, rather than rescheduling the program. The Section chairs are responsible for running their sessions and obtaining abstracts for papers that had not been submitted earlier. These abstracts will be published in the *NSS Journal of Cave and Karst Studies*. Since soliciting papers and collecting abstracts requires a long lead time, **it is helpful to identify section chairs a year before the convention.** However, this is often not possible. When the chairs have been identified, their names and addresses should be published in the *NSS News*. Finally, the rooms used for sessions where darkness is required for PowerPoint viewing should have a light trap entry to avoid disrupting the presentation from light or clanking doors.

Classes and Workshops

The convention can offer a wide variety of workshops and classes. Various NSS sections and committees are frequently willing to teach such classes. The sponsoring group will set the workshop fees. Any workshop profits should be returned to the sponsoring group, if it is an NSS I/O. Otherwise, profits should be retained in the convention treasury. Profits should never be returned to private individuals. The following courses and workshops are held at most conventions. Use your imagination to think of others.

Vertical Techniques Workshop

The Vertical Techniques Workshop is sponsored by the Vertical Section. It teaches the basics of vertical caving in a safe, well-lighted, indoor environment. A combination of lecture and hands-on experience provides participants with the opportunity to try a variety of equipment and techniques. The workshop is usually held on Thursday afternoon and takes 4 hours. Attendance is limited. It usually uses the same facility as the Vertical Contest, except they usually request multiple rig points and a rappelling site. Thursday, usually from 12:00 to 5:00 (**See Appendix 21.**)

Photography Workshops

Photography Workshops are sponsored by the Photography Section. They vary from convention to convention, depending on interest and available instructors. Instruction can include lectures and discussion on the basics of cave photography.

A field session in a cave may be scheduled with classroom work or instead of classroom work.

Surveying and Cartography Workshops

Some conventions offer Surveying and Cartography Workshops, sponsored by the Cartography Section. The Surveying Workshop teaches surveying basics, including compass reading, station placement, and keeping book. The Cartography Workshop teaches the basics of drafting maps.

Convention Development Workshop

The Convention Development Workshop provides an opportunity for those considering hosting a convention to get together with the Convention Committee and past convention organizers to ask questions and develop plans for hosting a convention. Typically, maybe 20 people attend. The workshop is usually held on Monday afternoon.

Convention Debrief Workshop

The Convention **Debrief** Workshop provides an opportunity for past, present, and future convention organizers to get together, answer questions, and discuss issues. Attendance is typically 30 people. The workshop should be held on Thursday afternoon, so that some of the current year's staff will be able to attend and speak to some specific things that went right or didn't quite go as planned.

Grotto Internal Organization (I/O) Publication Workshop

The workshop is an opportunity for the editors of grotto and regional publications to discuss problems and trade techniques. Sometimes there is a unifying theme, such as desktop publishing. If the workshop follows the judging for the Graphic Salon, participants can examine and discuss newsletter covers.

Photo Award Salon Workshop

The Photo Award Salon Workshop is held from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon the morning after the Awards Salon. The workshop will show photos that were not shown during the Photo Awards Salon for lack of time. These photos will first be projected for viewing only. Then after a short intermission, some of the photos will be projected again, photographic techniques will be discussed and entries will be critiqued by the Salon judges and the audience. The workshop requires a dark room capable of holding at least 50 people. It should be set up with one projector and a 6' x 6' screen.

Print Salon Workshop

A 2-hour-long workshop should be held the day after the Evening Salon Program. It should not conflict with the Photo Award Salon Workshop. During the workshop, the prints will be critiqued by the Salon judges and the audience.

Video Salon Workshop

A 3-hour-long workshop should be scheduled the day after the Award Salon. The workshop will show videos not shown the night before due to lack of time. Photographic techniques may be discussed and entries may be critiqued by the Salon judges and the audience.

Cartographic Salon Workshop

An hour and a half-long workshop (10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon) should be scheduled the day after the Award Salon (usually Friday morning). During the workshop, the maps will be critiqued by the Salon judges and the audience. Note that all covers are encouraged to attend.

Caving Short Course

Although it has not occurred recently, some past conventions offered a caving short course, covering basics such as equipment, safety rules, conservation issues, and introductory geology. Some future conventions may want to consider resurrecting this idea if a suitable organizer can be located.

Vertical Contest

The Vertical Contest is a highly competitive timed ascending competition. It is run by the Vertical Section. The convention must provide a suitable location for this activity.

Safety must be the first concern when setting up the facility for the Vertical Contest. Participants in the vertical contest should be in good health and aware that they are competing at their own risk. Participants must sign liability waivers. A responsible adult must sign the waiver for minors. Contest organizers are responsible for supplying the waiver. An EMT should be available at the contest site (**See Appendix 21.**)

Monday: To prepare for the Vertical Climbing Contest, access is needed to a gym or similar facility with a ceiling height of at least 20 feet at 8:00 a.m. to rig ropes. The Climbing Contest begins around 1:00 p.m. and goes until 5:00 p.m. that day. Sessions do not blend well in the same area due to the cheering and encouragement for the climbers.

The following equipment is needed:

6 tables and 8 chairs for the paperwork

A way to access the ceiling for rigging—a “man lift,” scaffolding, etc.

Floor covering to protect the surface (for example, gym mats)

At least two places to rig racks for belaying the climbers (The strongest supporting poles under bleachers might be used, if nothing else is available .)

An EMT person quickly available

Air Conditioning is essential; however, several fans are preferable to no air movement.

Tuesday: Climbing contest continues 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Sign-up sheet is cut off early enough to let the final climber complete the climb by 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday: Vertical Section meeting and Vertical Session from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., preferably at the same location.

Requires:

Large classroom or equivalent

Chalkboard or equivalent

AV equipment

Microphone

Head table and chairs for the officers

Vertical Techniques Workshop

The rigging for the vertical training class will be done on Monday and will require 10 to 12 rigging points for the learning stations. This is done under the supervision of the leader of the Vertical Section Workshop.

Vertical Rebelay Course

The workshop usually uses the Vertical Contest site on Thursday afternoon. They typically request anchors for multiple ropes and a place for beginners to practice rappelling. The course requires a vertical or nearly vertical structure at least 8 or 9 feet tall and 15 feet long, with a minimum of two platforms each at least with a 2-foot-wide ledge at the top. The top of the structure should be easily accessible. Historically, this requirement has been met in a variety of ways, such as bleachers, walls, and scaffolding, although scaffolding is preferred. **(See Appendix 21.)**

Speleolympics

The Speleolympics is an obstacle course designed to test caving skills. It is usually held outdoors and often involves mud and water. It is a family activity and a favorite among children. The contest is usually divided into categories by age and sex. The convention is responsible for setting up the course and running the contest. A special chair should

be appointed for this activity. The object is to make the course fun rather than excessively difficult. The course should emphasize skill and delicacy rather than brute strength. Above all, the Speleolympics course should be safe. An EMT should be available at the contest site. Permission to alter the landscape is essential and it must be returned to its original condition, as agreed.

Other Contests

Other contests can generate enthusiasm and spice up activities. Possibilities include cave rallies, four-wheel drive competitions (be careful of any environmental implications here), chili cook-offs, and cave swill contests. You name it and someone will be likely to participate.

6.4 EVENING EVENTS

Howdy Party

For many people, the Howdy Party marks the beginning of the convention. It is held on Monday evening and consists of an informal meal (**See Appendix 15 for vegetarian**), followed by a party with a live band or other entertainment. The Howdy Party is included in convention registration. It has often been stated that the Howdy Party sets the tone for the entire week. A successful party means a successful convention. Have temporary badges for those who arrive after registration closes. Collect their names for registration.

Location

It is best to hold the Howdy Party within easy walking distance of the campground and other lodging. If the Howdy Party is to be held at a site removed from the general convention area, it is **MANDATORY** that transportation be provided for those attending.

Drinks

Alcohol and soft drinks (some decaf) are included in the cost of the Howdy Party. Make sure there are plenty of soft drinks and cold water (does not have to be bottled water) wherever alcohol is served. Alcohol consumption by minors has been a problem at many Howdy Parties. Convention badges should be age color coded or rotated and include information the attendee is under age. Servers should check IDs for this information. Canned beer allows grab and go; however, kegs moderate consumption. Arrange for "brew crew" help in advance of the Howdy Party; volunteer servers don't have to be on the convention staff.

Serve only **name brand** carbonated soft drinks. If possible, get a beverage dispenser instead of cans. The local beverage distributors should be able to assist in this area. If using cans, please consider having recycling bins nearby. (You'll have to check to see if the local area offers recycling.)

Drink Matrix: 3 drinks in the first hour. 2 drinks for the second hour. 1 to 2 drinks after that.

In some areas it is possible to have beverages donated to a nonprofit organization by major manufacturers in exchange for advertisement in the program and displaying their banner at the beverage station.

Check with local authorities for regulations, permit requirements, or restrictions regarding serving alcoholic beverages. Also check on noise ordinances.

Music

The Howdy Party band should play a variety of music so that there will be something for everybody to enjoy. People should be able to dance to much of the music. However, areas need to be available for those who wish to socialize without shouting. These areas should be within a reasonable distance from the beverages. If the Howdy Party is held near the campground, a time should be established when the music will reduce in volume, typically midnight, and it should be enforced. **(See Board Act 56-654.) This applies to ALL evening parties.** Speakers must be located so the sound does not bleed into the quiet area—this is **required**. Security should enforce quiet hours at the evening events and, if necessary, in the quiet campground.

Banquet

The Banquet marks the formal end of the convention. It should be a memorable event. The Banquet should be held in a pleasant setting that will accommodate all attendees in one location. Provide generous portions, on time, served rapidly. Multiple food serving lines **MUST** be used. Following the Banquet, the awards ceremony should be paced to give adequate recognition to the recipients without bogging down in long introductions and speeches by the recipients. A capable emcee can help keep things moving and **quell incipient rowdiness**. Apart from this general outline, the convention chair is free to include any other reasonable events. Above all, remember, the Banquet should emphasize the NSS and its functions.

Round Tables:

60" seats 8-10 people
66" seats 8-10 people
72" seats 10-12 people
84" seats 12-14 people
96" seats 14-16 people

Rectangular Tables:

6' x 30" seats 6-8 people
8' x 30" seats 8-10 people

A sound system is essential for a successful Banquet. In addition, a large screen and equipment are needed and they should be set up and tested ahead of time. Consider having an extra (or two) large screen so those in the back can see what's happening in the front. Be aware that large crowds will continue to talk while the awards are given out; this makes it hard for many to hear. Consider having speakers set up around the space.

Banquet Chair

The Banquet chair works with the caterer, the facilities chair, and program participants to assure that all arrangements are in order and everyone is familiar with their individual responsibilities.

Emcee

The emcee and the convention chair plan the evening's events together. The emcee paces the evening, keeping things moving, on time, and on track:

- Welcomes everyone
- Introduces those at the head table
- Makes any announcements
- Toast to those who have passed (usually presented by Elaine Hackerman)
- Directs the audience in going for food—starting with the head table—then table x to x, etc.

After the meal, the emcee:

- Makes any announcements, including convention chair's recognition of staff, etc.
- Introduces Award Committee chair
- Announces the passing of the hat(s)
- Requests folks to gather up tables and chairs if necessary

The Guest Speaker

The Board of Governors prefers that there is not a Banquet speaker.

Awards Chair

The Banquet is also the time for announcing the Society's important awards and honors. These include the Honorary Membership, Outstanding Service, the Certificate of Merit, Fellowships, and a number of other awards in recognition of contributions to speleology and/or the NSS. The names and pictures of the awardees are projected for the audience. Awards for convention activities, such as contests, should be made at another time, so that they do not detract from the importance of the above awards. The Awards chair should be prepared to keep the program moving and interesting. Don't be afraid to tell them how much time they are allocated, then negotiate to something reasonable for both.

Other Presentations

Usually, the outgoing and incoming NSS presidents and the convention chair make a few brief remarks. The convention chair symbolically passes the hat to the incoming convention chair. The hat has been passed physically as well as figuratively. One hat is a helmet with the convention pins, and the other satirizes the current convention and is usually quite outrageous. People seem to enjoy this custom and convention chairs are encouraged to continue it.

Head Table

The head table should be large enough to seat the speaker, the convention chair, the emcee, officers of the Society, local dignitaries, and outgoing past officers. Spouses should be able to accompany these guests. If the available facilities do not allow such an arrangement, adjustments should be worked out in advance with the NSS president. If on a raised platform, a table skirt is required.

The Meal

In planning the menu, keep in mind that cavers are a diverse group, with a wide variety of tastes. There should be a variety of food for people to pick and choose. There should also be a vegetarian option (**See Appendix 15**), for which people can sign up ahead of time. A nice touch is to incorporate the vegetarian entree into the main menu. Make

sure your caterer knows using bacon fat, lard, and other such items are not acceptable when preparing vegetarian foods. Many non-vegetarians will partake of the extra entree and the registration and Banquet staff will have one less detail to address. Another option is to make the Banquet in some way reflect the local environment. Those in a minority group, like vegans, will supplement their needs if they are aware of the menu.

Nothing dampens the Banquet like running out of food. Be sure to emphasize to the caterer that covers are big eaters. **Have servers put food on people's plates, rather than letting them help themselves.** This reduces waste, assures that food is fairly divided, and almost always guarantees seconds. **The other option is to take the amount you would spend on servers and use it to buy extra food.** Another downer is long waits in line and trying to juggle plates, drinks, and often children as you go through the line. Consider allowing people to seat themselves first, with bread and salad already on the table. A few tables at a time can then get into the serving lines. **A rule of thumb is to start with one 1-sided serving line per 100 attendees.** When setting up the seating arrangements be sure to plan a path for going to and returning from the service lines. This will prevent congestion and speed up serving. Quality paper plates and compostable utensils are an acceptable option to china plates and metal utensils.

Consider letting your security volunteers go through the line first. That way they can eat and then get back to work. Having them eat last when there might not be as much food or as many choices because some things ran out is not a good way to treat volunteers.

Leftovers can be sent to a soup kitchen or similar facility.

Wine: Have on the table when the room is entered. Note: **Uncorking fees can cost more than the wine.** Also, non-wine drinkers have expressed they would like soda, tea, and/or lemonade available when wine is served.

Speleo-auction

The NSS Bookstore receives and displays auction items during the first part of each week, if lockable cases are not available. Members donate a wide variety of Speleo-memorabilia, including old publications (**NSS News, Bulletins, Journals, & grotto publications must be at least 30 years old**), antique caving equipment, crafts, etc. It has become customary to auction off registration #1 and #2 for the convention 2 years away. The Auction Committee may decide not to auction off any items they feel do not fit in with the above criteria or that are deemed inappropriate. These items will be returned to the donor.

The Speleo-auction has become a major fundraising event for the Society. **As such, it should not be scheduled opposite any other event,** beginning after supper (with other events starting later). The auction is held on Wednesday evening, since this allows attendees several days to examine the merchandise. The auction items are displayed on six 6- to 8-foot tables, a record keeping table, a checkout table, 4 chairs and, if possible, comfortable seating (not bleachers) for approximately 100 convention attendees. A sound system is required. The auction can last up to 5 hours. The auction **MUST** be held in an air-conditioned space, unless approved by the Convention

Development chief. The NSS Fund Raising Committee is responsible for soliciting items for auction. The NSS Executive Committee determines where the proceeds of the Auction are to be directed. All items are a 100% donation.

Fellows and New Members Reception

This is an event for those who qualify, plus NSS officers and the Membership Committee chair. Preferred time 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Tuesday. Refreshments of light fare or a dessert bar and beverages. Rather than serving all the food as people come through the door, have plate refills ready to avoid all the food being taken before everyone arrives. This is an event for socializing between Fellows and new members. **No band or loud music please.**

Special Events

Many conventions host an additional evening event, such as a campground party, a trip to a local attraction, a commercial cave tour, or a riverboat trip. There is sometimes an additional charge for this activity and the number of participants can be limited if necessary. Snack food and beverages may be served at the campground party.

It is tradition, but not mandatory, for the Terminal Siphons to be invited to play at a Campground Party. They normally do not bring their instruments to convention. If possible, borrow the needed items from local cavers; otherwise, funds need to be allocated to rent equipment for them—budget for about \$500. Although they should contact you, you may need to contact them to find out what is needed.

The convention does not provide food or beverages on Tuesday and Thursday night.

6.5 JUNIOR SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY (JSS)

The Junior Speleological Society (JSS) was started in 1991 to provide structured activities for caver kids. There **MUST** be a JSS staff person on each convention staff to make sure that JSS needs are taken care of, arrangements made, etc., and to work with the national JSS chair. The JSS provides a much-needed service to the kids, to their parents and to the convention at large. The entire program is handled by the JSS and their adult advisers.

Everything the convention JSS coordinator does is in coordination with the National JSS Chair. They must pass a background check. They will determine the ages they will plan for during the convention and provide this information to the convention correspondent for the *NSS News* and the convention webmaster.

The suggested registration fee for ages 7 to 17 is \$200, which includes all standard things the JSS plans during the convention. The convention will reimburse this fee to the JSS chair, minus any meal costs associated with the Howdy Party and the NSS Awards Banquet. The JSS fee is treated similar to a field trip. Also, the JSS budget will be part of the convention budget. The convention staff person responsible for JSS coordination and logistics should work closely with the national JSS chair to ensure that there will be a full JSS program, that appropriate facilities are made available for JSS

activities, and that arrangements are made for JSS functions (for example, setting up field trips, obtaining tickets for commercial events, renting vehicles or buses, obtaining meals). They should also work together on the JSS budget including estimating the costs of JSS activities and expected JSS attendance. The cost of participating in JSS activities at the NSS Convention will be given on the convention registration form and will be a line item on that form.

The primary goals of the JSS are age/skill level appropriate educational activities and enjoyment. Such activities may include (but are not limited to): caving, cartography, computer science, environmental science, first aid training, photography, speleo art, and vertical workshops. Social activities may include (but are not limited to): teen and pre-teen overnights, barbecues, swimming parties, and softball games.

The JSS is **not** a daycare service. The building should not be considered to be a daycare center, nor any activity as any form of childcare.

The JSS convention activities are in themselves a small version of the main convention. Some supporting services of the main convention can be shared (for example, registration, communications, medical services, photocopying). Other services will be duplicated but limited to use only by the JSS (for example, transportation, building needs, arts and crafts).

At the 2010 Convention, the first “Science for Early Birds” was held. Various scientists gave 30- to 45-minute, age-appropriate presentations every morning. It was a big hit with the JSS attendees and their parents. Some non-parents also dropped in. (**See Appendix 18.**)

7. FIELD TRIPS AND FIELD CAMPS

Most conventions provide a variety of caving activities. Pre- and post-convention camps are usually staged in areas along the most common travel routes. They should include camping facilities if they are more than a few miles from the convention site. Day trips take in the caves closer to the convention site. Field trips and field camps are best organized by a grotto or other group not directly involved with the convention. This relieves the burden on the Convention Committee and allows other groups to showcase caving areas that otherwise might not be featured.

Field trip plans should be published in the *NSS News* and included in the convention program. Each trip should be graded as to level of difficulty and length of trip. The pre-registration form should include sign-ups for trips that have special fees or requirements. For all trips, sign-up sheets and information for participants should be posted near the registration desk. More informal trips can be organized throughout the week and announced in the daily newsletter.

All field trips should be organized with safety and conservation as primary goals. Observe the following guidelines.

1. All trips should have competent leaders and other personnel who are familiar with the caves.

2. All arrangements with cave owners should be made in advance, including release forms, if required.
3. In some cases, it may be advisable to rig, or at least to pre-rig (for example, set up anchors), vertical caves in advance. This will facilitate moving large groups or large numbers of groups through the cave and assure the use of standard rigging points and rigging. On the other hand, it may encourage unofficial or unauthorized trips.
4. Whether or not pre-installed, all rigging should be properly tested and frequently inspected and its use must be carefully monitored.
- 5 All trips should start promptly.
6. The trip leader should log participants into and out of the cave, and make sure no one is left behind.
7. The convention should have a rescue plan. All trip leaders should be familiar with it.
8. The trip leader must have copies of the current NSS Convention (OR Special Events) Liability Releases, for both Adults and Minors. All participants must submit fully and properly completed forms to the trip leader BEFORE any participation. The trip leader must safely retain the releases until able to deliver them to the Registration Staff for retention. [Note: As of mid-2019, there are two sets of NSS Liability Releases (each with Adult and Minors variants):
 - a) One for NSS Convention-specific and sponsored activities, and includes essentially everything, including pre/post trips and camps, etc.
 - b) One for NON-Convention-sponsored special events. Examples: Grotto and Regional events, government events, and certainly pre/post-convention trips and camps which are NOT convention sponsored.
 - c) These two sets have identical wording, except for applicable domain.

Geology Field Trip

The Geology Field Trip is usually held Sunday, to avoid conflicts with the formal program. The trip should be planned and guided by a geologist familiar with the area and emphasize unique local features. Although it is tempting to try to show people as much as possible, it is preferable to show fewer sites well, rather than rushing through more or having an extremely long day. 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. is more than adequate.

Publicity

The Geology Field Trip should be included on the registration form and the trip should be announced in the *NSS News*. The Geology Field Trip is often full, with a waiting list, so sign-ups should be a first come, first served basis. Because many participants may be arriving at the last minute, they should be notified in advance about where to meet, what equipment to bring, etc.

Transportation

If possible, air-conditioned tour buses with storage space for caver's equipment and rest rooms should be used. A built in public address system is highly desirable. If cost or availability exclude tour buses, school buses can be substituted. However, make a serious effort to obtain the most comfortable, roomiest buses possible.

Occasionally, when buses were not available, when back roads were too steep or narrow for buses or when field trip sites did not have adequate parking for buses, the

Geology Field Trip has been conducted using rented 15-passenger vans or private cars. The latter is an extremely poor option and should be used only if absolutely necessary. If it is used, every effort should be made to encourage car-pooling and to use multi-passenger vehicles rather than individual cars.

Planning

The Geology Field Trip chair should plan the itinerary carefully. Drive the entire route several times, at a moderate speed (buses cannot travel as fast as cars on back roads). It takes time to unload and reload the buses. Allow a half hour overhead at each stop. Measure the mileage between stops carefully and double check it. Be sure that each site can accommodate the buses and has a safe place for people to congregate, away from freeway traffic, etc. If the buses do not have restrooms, plan several potty stops during the day.

Environmental Concerns

Think about the impact the field trip will have on the environment and plan accordingly. Even though most cavers are happy to use the bushes, 100 people doing so at one location can have highly negative results. If there are no rest rooms, consider bringing in a port-a-potty. Will a large crowd of people thrashing through the bushes damage the plants? Plan to mark trails to minimize impact. Are there trash receptacles along the way? If not provide garbage bags.

Cost

The price for the Geology Field Trip should be set to cover all its expenses. These include bus rental, meals, the geology guidebook, entrance fees for parks, etc. Even though high-quality buses will add considerably to the expense, people will be more than willing to pay the extra cost. The field trips are not meant to make a profit. Breaking even is the goal.

Guides

Each bus should have a knowledgeable guide who can provide running commentary during the trip.

Bull horns should be used at each site to enable people to hear over wind, passing cars, and idle chit chat.

Meals

The Geology Field Trip should include a lunch stop and a lunch. Box lunches are best; be sure to provide options for vegetarians. It is important to keep the lunches refrigerated to avoid the possibility of food poisoning. Long lunch stops eat into trip time. Make sure that everyone can be fed in under an hour. Be sure to include lunches for the bus drivers and all guides. A scheduled stop with a catered meal also works well. If the trip starts early or if a quick breakfast is not available near the staging site, consider providing a continental breakfast. If the trip is very long or hot, a snack and an afternoon drink. **Lots of iced water should be available on trips.**

Safety

One or more medically trained people and a first aid kit should be on each bus. When buses are not used, communication between vehicles is important to contact medical personnel on the trip and have access to the first aid kit(s).

Biology Field Trip

The Biology Field Trip is optional. Sometimes it is combined with the Geology Field Trip, with one bus being designated for those with an interest in biology. On the other hand, it can be a separate trip, either on Sunday, or at some other time during the week. If it is not part of the Geology Field Trip, it can be conducted in private vehicles.

Pre- and Post-Convention Trips

Pre-convention trips are usually held the weekend prior to the convention, typically Friday, Saturday, Sunday, in areas attendees will be driving through. Post-convention trips are held the weekend after the convention. Since most people are eager to get on the road, it is not wise to over plan post-convention trips. Nonetheless, some people will be interested, so if you have areas you would like to feature, don't hesitate to plan a few.

Individual grottos can be responsible for these trips, each in different favorite areas, thereby offering a variety of trips. These trips can be relatively independent of the convention. The sponsoring groups can charge a small fee to cover expenses.

Day Trips: Caving

Trips during the week should be limited to caves near the convention so that participants can return in time for the evening activities. Special tours or discount rates for commercial caves in the convention area have elicited enthusiastic responses at past conventions.

A disinfection station and loaner gear should be available because of white-nose syndrome (WNS).

Day Trips: Non-Caving

The convention staff should provide information about local non-caving activities such as hiking trails, swimming sites, boating, parks, museums, winery tours, mine tours, railroading, etc. Although the convention is not obligated to organize these trips, it is a nice touch, and provides local color.

8. SALONS AND DISPLAYS

The NSS chartered Salons to encourage cave-related art in a variety of media. Each Salon has its own chair, who coordinates that Salon, including soliciting entries, displaying the art, providing for judging of the art, and granting awards. The NSS Salon Committee chair(s) is/are responsible for working with the individual Salon chairs to develop consolidated publicity announcements, coordinate Salon convention requirements, and produce an integrated Salon awards program for the convention.

Each annual NSS Convention is responsible for providing facilities and services to support the Salons. The convention is not responsible for Salon publicity. Salons for

week-long displays usually like to start setting up on Sunday. Salon participants need to be able to pick up their entries and awards on Friday. Both the convention program and the daily newsletter should announce when and where Salons are located and the schedules for the Salon workshops at the end of the week.

There are three parts to the NSS Salons, each of which has its own requirements:

- a. Salon Display areas (Monday through Friday)
- b. Salon Awards Show (Thursday)
- c. Salon Critiques (generally Friday)

Convention Salon Support Person

The convention staff should include one or more Salon Support chair(s), who are familiar with the overall organization of the convention. Each person can be responsible for one or more of the Salons. The Salon Support chair may be the Facilities for smaller conventions.

These people are on call before and during the convention to make sure the facilities are adequate and to solve last-minute problems. They should have keys to all locked Salon facilities. They should expect to spend Sunday helping to set up the Fine Arts, Print, Cover Arts, T-Shirts, Symbolic Emblems, and Cartographic Salons; most of the day of the evening Salon awards program helping to set up the equipment for the program and preparing the facility (almost always Thursday); the following day helping with the various Salon workshops; and early Friday afternoon helping to pack Salon equipment for shipment to the next convention or a storage site. **(See Appendix 11.)**

8.1. SALONS DISPLAY AREAS

Salons require display space during the week. The nature of the display space reflects the nature of the Salon. Most of the Salons require setup time on Saturday or Sunday to prepare the display space.

In addition, the Multimedia and Video Salons may need a room or a kiosk for on-demand display of their entries. Generally, the Video Salon has more entries each year, so is likely to need an on-demand display area. The Multimedia Salon has not often needed a display space.

Location

The Display Salons should be located near each other, preferably in an area that will draw a steady stream of viewers. If they are near the sessions, people can visit them between papers. If they are elsewhere, extended viewing hours can enable people to see them in the evening hours. Having the display areas near each other encourages coordination between the Salon chairs for security and coverage. It is preferable to always have at least one person on hand to supervise the Salon display space.

Other Displays

Auction donations should be on prominent display in lockable cases until Wednesday afternoon.

Other non-commercial displays can greatly enhance a convention. Selections of items from individual collections, such as carbide lights and vertical equipment, or exhibits from local agencies, such as the Forest Service, may be displayed. All displays should be protected by cases or be located in rooms with controlled access. It should be emphasized to those providing the displays that, while every effort will be made to ensure their safety, neither the NSS nor the convention can take responsibility for their protection. Exhibitions of related activities such as vertical techniques, canoeing, scuba-diving, or rock-climbing, will also be of interest to cavers. Look for local special interest groups to help stage them.

8.2. SALON AWARDS SHOW

The Salon Awards Show and Photo Salon is the single best-attended event of the convention. It consists of the awards winners for each Salon, plus the Photo Salon event and Multimedia and Video Salon winners. **The Salon is presented twice**—once as a rehearsal-type show with no narrative and once as a full program.

The Salon should be scheduled for approximately 3 hours on Thursday starting between 6:00 and 9:00 p.m. The doors should be opened from an hour to 30 minutes earlier to allow advanced seating. The Salon Committee will work with the convention chair to provide music for the seating time and during intermission, if one is scheduled.

The rehearsal-type show is typically scheduled at least an hour to an hour and a half before the start of the full program show. Many people like to attend this show because it takes less than half the time of a full show.

The NSS Salon coordinator needs a high-quality representation of the convention logo. The upcoming convention should launch its publicity campaign by providing the coordinator with a copy of its logo and promotional show. The Salon coordinator should know early in the week what media will be used. The following convention staff usually will present a short teaser program.

The Convention Committee must provide the Salon Committee with an address for advance shipping for the display screens and projector.

As soon as possible, the convention needs to provide the Salon Committee with a sketch of the facility or room in which the Salon Awards Show will take place, including ceiling heights (the screen usually requires 20 feet), the location of electrical outlets, light switches, doors, any permanently lit exit signs, planned queuing area, availability of nearby restrooms, air-conditioning, etc. By April, if not before, the two committees should have reached agreement on these facilities.

Do not schedule any events in the same room(s) as the Salon Awards Show during the day of the program(s). The Salon Awards Show Committee will need the room “closed off” and dedicated to the Salon Awards Show entirely from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. to set up equipment and perform a program rehearsal.

Preferred Seating

The convention should put considerable effort into providing an ideal setting for the Salon Awards Show. An air-conditioned room large enough to seat all convention attendees, preferably with comfortable theater-type seating on a gradually rising floor is highly desirable. If this is not available, the Salon Committee can work with raising the screens (to enhance sight lines for a flat-floored room) or other techniques. The earlier the Salon Committee understands the limitations of the venue, the better they can plan for it.

Alternate Seating

If a non-theater type room must be used, plan the audience seating (or screen placement) to minimize the distance between the audience and the screen and avoid wide rows that cause extreme viewing angles. When planning seating, remember that the front-projector platforms block the view of those who sit behind them and affect the hearing of all who sit near the projectors. If rear-projection can be used, it is preferable. If bleacher seats or folding chairs are used, keep the amount of time the audience must sit down prior to the start of the Salon Awards Show to an absolute minimum.

An outdoor arena is not suitable for the Photo Salon unless the Salon Coordinator(s) or a designated person has been able to approve the venue.

The Environment

The Salon Awards Show works best if the venue is dark during the Salon, especially during the Photo and Video Salon portions of the show. If windows or doors must be left open, light traps should be constructed to block all ambient light.

If it is not possible to provide an air-conditioned room, serious attention must be paid to the comfort of attendees. If the local climate provides cool evenings (low 70s at the time the Salon will be held), the Salon should be scheduled to start after total darkness (normally 9:30 p.m. daylight savings time), so that all windows and doors can be open to allow ventilation.

The room should be quiet. Ventilation fans can make considerable noise and interfere with the audio portions of the program. Be sure to check out any fans, air-conditioning, or other noise sources such as open windows.

Emcee

The NSS Salon Coordinator designates an emcee who coordinates the various Salons to provide a joint presentation. The NSS Salon coordinator(s) will also arrange with the NSS Convention chair for music prior to the show and during the intermission, if one is scheduled. The Salon Awards Show Background Music coordinator will provide CDs with the Salon background and special purpose music.

Occasionally a second presentation, "The Best of the Rest," is given the day following the Salon Awards Show. This is totally at the discretion of the Salon chair, who will arrange it with the Convention Committee in advance of the convention.

8.3. SALON CRITIQUES/WORKSHOPS

Most of the Salons host critique sessions or workshops where the Salon entrants can talk to the judges and learn how the year's entries were judged for the Salon.

Cartography

The Cartography critique session is on Friday morning in the Cartography Salon display area; plan for it to take at least 2 hours.

Cave Ballads

Cave Ballads generally hosts a "listening session" sometime during the week. See more information for the Cave Ballads session under the Salon display section.

Cover Arts

Cover Arts generally does not have a critique session.

Fine Arts Critique

Fine Arts Salon critique session is Friday morning in the Fine Arts display area; plan for it to take at least 2 hours.

Multimedia

Multimedia generally does not have a critique session.

Prints

Prints Salon critique session is Friday morning in the Prints display area; plan for it to take at least 2 hours.

Photo

Photo Salon critique session is scheduled for a room with a digital projector and a screen, seating at least 50 people, on Friday morning, and will take at least 2 hours.

Symbolic Emblems and T-Shirts

Symbolic Emblems generally does not hold a critique session. **Video**

Video Salon critique session is scheduled for a room with a digital projector and a screen, seating at least 50 people, on Friday morning, and will take at least 2 hours.

Speleo Art Workshop

The Speleo Art Workshop is a fee-paying course that covers a total of 3 full days in one room. Equipment is provided. Tables, chairs, and water (perhaps a sink) are needed. One day is a field trip. Needs a cave where they can draw and have a little caving experience. This can be a wild cave or show cave.

On Friday there is the Writers Workshop. It needs a room booked for the day for literary enthusiasts.

9. SALES

Rooms for indoor vendors and other sales-type events should be 250 square feet. The table below tells how many rooms will be needed for what event. Remember to provide space for any vendors who want to set up outside or at the campground.

Minimum Vendor Space	Small Convention 500 attendees	Medium Convention 750 attendees	Large Convention 1000+ attendees
NSS Bookstore	2	2	3
Caver Co-op	2	2	3
Other Vendors	6	10	16

Since sales involve large sums of money, they are best managed through the convention treasurer. Ideally a separate Vendor chair, who reports to the treasurer, will be responsible for Vendor Sales. The treasurer and Vendor chair should work together to develop and publish clear policies for the operation of all Sales activities. These should be similar to the policies of past conventions. **See Appendix 2, Resources, Vendor Sales Info**, for a contact. Vendors, and their employees, must register and pay convention fees. Outside specialty vendors, who set up for a few hours, like those selling maple syrup, do not have to register.

All vendors (except the NSS Bookstore, Caver Co-op, and NSS I/Os that sell solely to their own membership at official sessions), including those who sell out of their cars, **MUST** pay a vendor fee. The convention, may, at its discretion, establish a special fee for tailgate vendors. Vendors need their own liability insurance.

It is most important that the facilities be accurately described to the vendors ahead of time. If tables need to be rented, the vendors **MUST** be notified of the fee in advance. If they know what they are getting, they can adapt and bring extra tables, lights, etc. If they get hit with surprises after a long drive at the start of an intense week, they will not be happy.

NSS Bookstore

The Convention Facilities chair is responsible for providing a room and tables for the NSS Bookstore. The Bookstore sells Society publications, other miscellaneous publications, cave maps, symbolic devices, etc. The NSS office manager ships this merchandise to the convention the week before. The convention must provide a shipping destination and transport the goods from the shipping destination to the Bookstore's convention site.

The NSS Bookstore should be **located in the most prominent location (the first vendor to be seen)** whenever possible and be near the meeting site, where people can browse between sessions and other activities. The sales area should be open at specific, publicized hours.

Caver Co-op

The Convention Facilities chair is responsible for providing a room and tables for the Caver Co-op. The Caver Co-op provides people or groups, who have a small quantity of merchandise to sell, with a convenient way to do so without having to keep shop all week. Merchandise may include publications, caving equipment, T-shirts, artwork, etc. The Caver Co-op should be **located in the second most prominent location available**.

The staff member in charge of the Caver Co-op is responsible for scheduling staff to run the Caver Co-op; if volunteers or consignees are not willing to cover a time slot, the room should be closed for that time. All merchandise must be brought to the convention at the designated time and place. The owners or their representative are also responsible for picking up remaining merchandise on Friday afternoon.

The convention should develop a system for recording inventory, tracking sales, and distributing the proceeds. The convention charges a fee for this service. Typically the fee is either 20% of the gross or 10% and 4 hours time in the Caver Co-op. The Caver Co-op can accept credit payments, using the convention's merchant service account. Prior to the convention, the Caver Co-op organizer, the convention treasurer, and the Registration chair should develop a process for handling these credit card charges and **they should go directly into the convention account.** The treasurer will deposit all proceeds and write checks to consignees (this provides an audit trail—no cash payments should be made). Self-addressed envelopes should be provided by the consignors for use in payment. The convention treasurer should collect excess cash daily. **(See Appendix 17.)**

Indoor Vendors

While there is no requirement that vendors be permitted to sell at conventions, the membership has come to expect this service. Vendor fees should be established by the Convention Committee, based on the cost of providing space and other facilities. Smaller vendors can share a single space if they so desire. In the event of a disagreement over vendor charges, the decision of the convention chair is final. (Vendors should neither be subsidized or gouged—they should be paying for what they get.) **(See Board Act 56-267.) On average, the fee starts at \$225 to \$250.** Special rates can be set up for **verified** 501(c)(3) nonprofit groups.

Vendor space should be located near the meetings, where people can browse between sessions. Vendor Spaces should be securely lockable when the sales area is not open.

Outdoor Vendors

The convention should provide a vendor area and electrical hookups in the campground. (There have not been outdoor vendors for several years.)

Vendor fees should be established by the convention committee, based on the cost of providing space and other facilities. Extra charges are generally attached to large power consumers. In general, vendors are responsible for their own security; however, the convention should provide security during the Howdy Party, Photo Salon, and Banquet.

The outdoor vendor area usually functions as a social area and is open far into the night. A water supply and port-a-john or flush toilet in close proximity to the vendors is appreciated.

10. CONVENTION PUBLICATIONS

For the program and guidebook, investigate the possibility of on-demand printing.

Convention Guidebook

The NSS Convention guidebook is a major publication of the Society and careful attention should be given to its production. The guidebook is usually 8-1/2 x 11 inches and should be perfect bound with a four-color cover. It is not part of any other publication such as the *NSS News*.

The NSS Logo should appear on the cover and the title page should state that the guide is "Published by the NSS." The guidebook **MUST** indicate that it is an NSS copyrighted publication. The copyright must be registered using the following process. Go online to [HTTP://WWW.copyright.gov/](http://www.copyright.gov/) and click on Electronic Copyright Office. The fee is \$35 (as of 2021) and can be paid by credit card or an electronic transfer from a bank account. The online form asks for the ISBN but that question does not have a red star, thus it is optional. We don't want to put an ISBN on the guidebooks. **A digital copy of the guidebook must be sent to the NSS Office.** Sensitive material or creators who do not want their material digitized can be redacted from the digital version if necessary.

Contents

The guidebook generally includes cave descriptions, maps, geology and biology briefs, and local natural history. Advertising is not allowed in the guidebook. The BOG has expressed the opinion that cave locations or directions to the caves **MUST** be omitted from this publication. It can include comments on conservation, landowner relations, local history, and other pertinent information. Reproduction of copyrighted material can be done **ONLY** with the permission of the owner of the material. You should be aware that fold out maps add considerably to the cost of the book and are most easily included between full signatures. A packet of folded maps is more economical. Be sure to discuss the options with your printer. Optionally, the guidebook may contain the itinerary and mileage log for the Geology Field Trip, although this is often printed as a separate document. Other local, self-guided trips can also be included. No advertisements are allowed in the guidebook. **ALERT: At some point the guidebook will be placed on the Karst Information Portal (KIP) and the NSS website.**

The Special Publications Committee

The Special Publications Committee is not responsible for the production of the guidebook, but is a valuable source of help and advice. The guidebook editor should obtain a copy of *Style Guide for NSS Publications* from the committee and follow its requirements. In addition, the committee chair can supply a list of qualified printers and a sample quote request.

Working With the Printer

Start working with the printers as soon as you have a rough idea of how large the guidebook will be. Get quotes when you have finally determined the size of the book, and how many pictures it will contain. The number of pages is quoted in terms of the next full signature (usually 32 pages, but always a multiple of 4). Plan on using full signatures, even if you have blank pages (for notes?) at the end, since printing a book with a partial signature requires extra work by the printer, which can often add over \$100 to the job. In addition to looking for a good price, be sure the printer is someone you can work with and someone who is willing to go a little farther to help a novice. The guidebook will probably cost 10 to 15% more than the quote, because of standard

business practices of charging for overruns and extras. The editor should work closely with the printer to determine printing schedules. Three bids are required, so shop around. Check out quantity price breaks.

Printers now have the capability of printing directly from a computer disk, this is a high-quality option and very cost competitive. The copy should be prepared with a top end word processor or page layout program and printed on a laser printer. The printer will return "blue line" proofs several weeks before the book is due to be completed. Check them to be sure that pictures are in the right place and right side up. Be sure to return the proofs, with any corrections within the time agreed on.

Quantities

Plan to print guide books based on pre-registration quantities; all excess copies go to the NSS Bookstore. **If the excess has to be shipped to the office, funds need to be budgeted to cover the cost.** The NSS does not pay for the excess books. The NSS Operations Vice President has determined they would like no more than 20 books.

Guidebooks are to be listed as an option, like symbolic devices.

Standard practices allow the printer to deliver the number of books ordered, plus or minus 10%. Be sure you order at least 10% more than the maximum number you anticipate needing.

Determining how many guidebooks to print can be very difficult before the pre-registration deadline. As a rule, 60% of the total expected attendees get a guidebook. In some cases, printers may be willing to take the camera-ready copy and produce the blue line proofs, and then sit on the plates for a few weeks until you can determine exact numbers. Because all the pre-press work has already been done, final production will require less time. Be sure to leave enough time after pre-registration for printing, binding, and delivery of the guidebook.

Convention Program

The convention program contains information to help people get through the week. It should be printed shortly before the convention to assure that its information is up to date. Consider using a printer at the convention site, if a suitable one exists. Negotiate the latest possible date for getting camera-ready copy to the printer, which will still guarantee a delivery date before registration opens. As with the guidebook, three bids are required.

The program contains schedules of sessions and activities, abstracts, maps of convention facilities and the surrounding community, and a guide to local services. Avoid using special names for session rooms, it causes a lot of confusion since neither local building staff or directories can provide assistance. If you have uncertainty regarding room number, as you go to press, leave it blank and supply the information at Registration and in the daily newsletter. The program should be designed for quick, economical printing. Most programs run 50 to 100 pages, with a monochrome cover and are saddle stitched. Plan on printing about 15% more than you think you need. During

the week some people will lose them and want to buy another. Additionally, and somewhat surprisingly, the NSS Bookstore will sell between 50 and 100 in the years following the convention. A template is available from the Convention Development chair.

The Schedule

The schedule is the single most important part of the program. It should contain a detailed schedule of all planned events, giving time, place, a brief description, and, if applicable, the name of the person in charge. In most cases, the description of activities in this *Convention Manual* should provide a good starting pointing for the descriptions in the program.

There should also be a one page, “week at a glance,” summary giving abbreviated information. This schedule should be either at the center fold or on the back cover where it will be easy to find. Activity information should be organized in several different ways, so that people can determine when a given paper is being presented, what papers are at a given session, when a certain person is speaking, etc.

Maps

The program should contain maps of the campground, meeting sites, the town, and any other relevant location. These maps should show the relationship of these places to each other and provide orientation information.

Abstracts

Abstracts should include the author’s name, the title of the paper, the time and place of presentation, and a short description of the paper. Abstracts can be organized alphabetically by authors’ name or by session, but there should be a cross reference so that they can be located through either index. **Set a firm deadline for receiving this material.**

Advertising

Advertising is optional. Selling advertising space in the program can help defer costs, inform attendees about available services, and enhance community relations. An advertising chair (who might also be the Vendor chair), is responsible for soliciting advertising, collecting fees in advance, and obtaining camera-ready art from the advertisers. Local businesses, such as restaurants, laundromats, and auto service centers may well want to advertise. Most convention vendors will also want to do so. If you take this route, try to encourage those advertising to offer a special item or convention week sale. Generic ads are frequently skipped over.

Advertising fees should more than cover the cost of printing them in the program. Set the price for a full-page ad at about twice the cost of printing a full page (cost per page x number of copies). The price for a half page should be slightly more than half the cost for a full page. A quarter page should be slightly more than half a half page. etc. This is a LOT of work and the revenue it produces is small in relation to the labor involved to solicit the material. If you are tight on staff, this should be considered very carefully. A list of sponsors should be listed in the program.

Daily Newsletter

The convention should email or print a daily newsletter providing information about program changes, trip schedules, the day's events, and any other current news. There should be a separate editor for this newsletter, since the guidebook and program editors may be thoroughly burned out by convention time. The convention staff, often the volunteer editor for the daily newsletter, usually chooses a name for the newsletter that reflects the local environment. There should be an in-box at registration where attendees can drop off announcements, ride requests, etc. The newsletter should be distributed no later than 10:00 a.m. at both the campground and meeting site. It is therefore necessary to arrange to have it printed overnight. This can be done by locating an amenable local printer, or by obtaining the use of a duplicating machine. If you use a printer, be sure that prices and schedules are agreed on ahead of time.

The newsletter can be a powerful tool for making things run smoothly. Use it to announce program changes, to solicit additional volunteer help, and to ask for cooperation in cleaning up the campground and other sites after the convention. In recent years, convention staff have also posted daily versions of the newsletter online; this can be updated by the minute as things change or locations for talks are finalized.

Geology Guidebook

The Geology guidebook can either be printed as part of the convention guidebook or as a separate publication. The decision should be based on both cost and convenience. Only a few hundred copies of a separate guide are needed, but there are additional expenses for covers and binding. If the geology guide is included in the convention guidebook, more copies must be printed and the resulting book may be excessively bulky and unwieldy. Each convention will have to make its own decision.

The Geology guidebook or the Geology Field Trip section in the convention guidebook, should be prepared by the Geology Field Trip chair or other knowledgeable geologists involved with the trip. These people should work with the Publications chair to assure the overall quality of the book or section.

Biology Guidebook

On rare occasions a separate biology guide books may be appropriate. Usually the information can be incorporated into the convention or Geology guidebooks.

11. PUBLICITY

Active advertising may start in years prior to the actual event provided it does not detract from or appear to compete with the next convention. All conventions are NSS Conventions and host groups should support each other's events.

Internal Publicity

Pre-convention publicity should include information about the convention site and facilities, the caves and geology of the area, the programs and sessions scheduled, and local attractions. In particular, information about hotels, motels, and dormitories should be published early. Information about weather and camping conditions should appear

shortly before people start leaving home. People also like to know about the availability of restaurants, stores, laundromats, and medical facilities. Any special situations should be indicated to allow attendees to prepare for them. For example, no parking at the campsite; a dry county; a long drive for food, service, or lodging; or no pets allowed at the campground.

The *NSS News*

Convention publicity is printed in the *NSS News*. Articles must be prepared well in advance because the *News* requires a 2-month lead time. The Publicity chair should work closely with the *NSS News* editor to establish a publication schedule, including the types of articles to be printed and their size. Remember that the *NSS News* is on a very tight budget and has a great deal of material to print in addition to convention publicity. Don't expect or plan on unlimited space. You can expect to have 8 to 10 pages available to you over the 6-month period.

Publicity should consist of a series of articles, each dealing with a different aspect of the convention. These articles promote the convention and provide members with planning information. A few of these articles can be lengthy, but most should be kept short to allow the *News* to print more caving articles. The convention chair should review publicity from recent conventions for useful ideas. Remember, the *NSS News* is not responsible for convention publicity or its timing—you are. Consider reviewing previous year's publicity for ideas.

Deadlines

Be sure to observe the deadlines for submitting material to the *News*, typically 90 days. Remember that if you want it to appear in the March *News*, the editor must have it sent in by January. If possible, submit your material well in advance of these deadlines. Material can be sent to the *NSS* editor via email.

Submit photographs covering aspects of the convention (local attractions, buildings, caves, etc.) and allow the editor as much freedom as possible in their use. Clear, sharp black and white prints, 5" X 7" or larger, are most useful. Color photos can be used if necessary, but require more preliminary processing.

The *NSS News* prefers not to start convention publicity more than 6 months ahead of time because if they do, too great a portion of total *News* pages ends up dedicated to the convention. If you want to start sooner, say 9 months ahead, discuss it with the *News* office. They may be able to work out a compromise. Here is a possible publication schedule that is consistent with the *News's* preferred policy:

Months Before Convention	Article
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6	First Notice: Where to find the Registration Form and a one-page attention getter with one or two photos. Showcase some planned convention highlights
5	Short Feature: Basic convention facts and a preliminary schedule of events
4	Major Article on caves in the convention area (this is a caving article, not specifically convention publicity)
3	Major Article: Information about field trips, camps, etc.; include photos
2	Short Feature: Local attractions and how to get there; reminder to register. Short Article: Last minute updates, last chance to generate enthusiasm; how to locate registration on late arrival late
1	People are already on their way

Convention Preview Show

The Photo Salon at each convention normally concludes with a program promoting the upcoming conventions. This show should spotlight the convention area, facilities, and available caving. Copies of this show can also be circulated through the NSS AV library to grottos and other I/Os. The convention committee should provide a high-quality slide of their convention logo and the convention program to the salon coordinator by April of the year before so they can include it in the Photo Salon of the preceding convention.

Website

Putting registration, all available convention information (session schedules, registration list, etc.) lodging information, local attractions, pre- and post-convention cave trip information, changes and updates, contact people, and any other data you consider important gives attendees immediate access to your convention. It is a popular service and will keep the number of phone calls or emails to the staff down. Contact the NSS webmaster for information on obtaining free site space. It is **MANDATORY** to use the "caves.org" domain.

Social media is another vehicle for communications. Major items posted on social media **MUST** also be posted on the website. Most conventions nowadays have a Facebook page at the very least.

The local Chamber of Commerce can provide both services and travel brochures. State Tourist Councils or Travel Bureaus are good sources of maps as well as statewide brochures. Both types of agencies can often provide file photographs that could be used in publicity.

Public Relations

Throughout the planning stages and during the convention itself, it will often be necessary to provide information to the general public. Talking with the Chamber of Commerce, obtaining permits from towns and schools, and providing press releases to local newspapers and television news shows are all public relation tasks. It is essential that these presentations be consistent with NSS goals and policies. The following

guidelines will help with this job. Additional questions can be directed to the NSS Public Relations Committee chair.

The NSS promotes the exploration, study, and conservation of caves. It actively avoids glamorizing caving as a sport. The NSS welcomes people who are involved with caving , but does not encourage the general public to explore caves without proper gear and training. Direct them to information on locating a local grotto.

Local Public Relations

Keep local grotto members informed about convention plans. Begin your negotiations with the Chamber of Commerce. As professional boosters, they are in a position to make life easier for you. Work closely with local businesses, school and university officials, law enforcement agencies, and public and private cave owners. Make sure they understand what an NSS convention entails and what the benefits are to the community. Meet with local editors and broadcasters and enlist their support in generating support for the convention.

Be very open and honest with the local authorities. Don't try to hide things, especially alcohol related.

Regional Public Relations

Keep regional caving groups, whether NSS affiliated or not, informed about convention plans. Contact regional newspaper and magazine editors. It is better if articles contain our viewpoints on safety and conservation.

National Public Relations

Rely on NSS publications to provide the membership with convention details. Contact other scientific organizations and have the convention put on their calendars. Encourage their members to participate.

Contact officials of technical societies and provide them with abstracts of convention papers from previous conventions. Encourage them to send representatives to the convention. Emphasize the opportunity for acquiring information about the sciences and the conservation of caves. DO NOT refer to the adventure of caving. DO NOT refer to the social aspects of caving. DO NOT encourage the general public to attend an NSS Convention.

Exceptions

Some convention activities are also newsworthy. Local editors would like to include events, such as caving in the city sewers or the Speleo-rodeo, in their coverage of the convention. This type of coverage is acceptable, but in general we should focus the attention on the scientific and technical aspects of our activities, rather than the social.

In case of convention emergency, contact the NSS president and/or AVP immediately for assistance and directions. Make every effort to keep the media out of any emergency situations.

Follow-up

Convention Debrief Meeting: Several convention staff members and the convention chair should plan on attending the Convention Debrief Meeting near the end of the convention.

Convention Roundup

Convention proceedings, awards information, and a summary of activities should be forwarded to the *NSS News* as quickly as possible. The convention should also have a number of people take large numbers of snapshots for the *NSS News*. There is usually an issue with a convention “spread” a couple months after the convention ends, but you and the photographers must remember to submit your material timely.

Lessons Learned

A short review, including suggestions for future conventions, is forwarded to the chair of the Convention Development Committee. Information regarding attendance and symbolic device sales (broken down by pre- and on-site figures, is to be included for the information database. Inquiries regarding articles and/or broadcasts generated by the convention should be forwarded to the chair of the NSS Public Relations Committee.

12. FINANCE

The convention treasurer must be familiar with Intuit QuickBooks Online. Convention books will be kept using the standard chart of accounts of the NSS. The treasurer is responsible for developing procedures for handling receipts and expenditures. The treasurer will also work with the Registration chair to develop a system for accurately tracking registration transactions. **(See Appendix 10.)**

Advance

Once the preliminary budget has been approved, the convention chair may obtain an advance (normally \$2,500) for use in running the convention. This loan is available from the NSS S-T on request and payback should be planned for in the convention budget. This advance is usually adequate to cover startup costs until pre-registration money starts coming in. If you do need additional seed money, discuss the problem with the AVP. The BOG may be willing to advance additional funds, or it may be possible to obtain a no-interest loan from some of the NSS larger I/Os or from private individuals.

Although early pre-registration should be encouraged to help the cash flow, don't start prior to the previous year's convention. Doing so has the unfortunate side effect of inducing some people to skip the earlier convention in favor of the later one.

Sponsorship's and/or grants may be available through local businesses, tourist councils, or associations. Several conventions have taken advantage of these sources of income to offset the cost of convention. **(See Appendix 12.)**

Bookkeeping

All convention bank accounts should bear the name of the convention chair, the convention treasurer and the NSS S-T; however, checks should require only one signature. Bank statements are available online as a PDF and should be pulled

monthly. As a matter of policy, the convention treasurer should write most of the checks, although on occasion the convention chair may also do so.

Although most of the cash receipts at a convention come through registration, there are other sources such as ice sales, babysitting, Caver Co-op, special luncheons, etc. In addition, most expenditures are not directly related to the registration process. It is therefore recommended that each function at the convention which handles money have a separate account in the chart of accounts and that receipts and expenditures be tracked to these cash centers. The treasurer should collect these funds daily. If the Co-op is using a scan device, it should do a direct deposit to the conventions account.

The treasurer **MUST** have a private, secure place to handle money and prepare bank deposits. During the first few days of registration, provisions should be made for night deposits. If there are any questions about security, the treasurer should request an armed escort from local authorities for the night deposits.

Budgeting

Budgeting often seems to be a mixture of magic and alchemy. Use attendance figures and expense reports from recent conventions as a starting point. Make adjustments for local conditions and for those things you can accurately predict. Be conservative when estimating attendance and estimate costs in the anticipated mid range, rather than at the lower end. Allow a contingency reserve for unexpected expenses. This style of budgeting leaves a significant safety margin for unanticipated expenses. If, as the convention nears, your anticipated profit begins to grow, you can convert it into extra value for attendees: use a high grade of T-shirt; ask the caterer to serve a better cut of meat; provide an extra, such as ice cream at the campground party, etc. Once convention starts, upgrades become harder to arrange. A modest profit, of about 5%, for the convention surplus fund is desired.

Insurance

In recent years, insurance for conventions has become a serious issue. The NSS has obtained its own policy covering liability, to which each convention can attach a rider to fit local requirements, if necessary. The price of basic liability coverage is \$7,000. This amount should be included under “expenses” in the convention budget.

Accident Insurance

Coverage for accidents is also required and, as of this printing, is \$4 per person. Verify with the NSS insurance contact.

Purchase of Capital Assets

Any assets that are not consumables and will become a permanent part of the items going, from convention to convention **MUST** be approved. Purchases under \$500 must be approved by the Convention Development chair and the AVP. Expenditures over \$500 must be approved by both the Convention Development chair and the BOG. Whenever possible, items should be rented instead of purchasing. Items can be rented from cavers—consult the Convention Development chair for rates. Another option would

be to purchase items, like printers, from a thrift store and auction them off, to be picked up on Friday afternoon or leave for the facility.

Honorarium

The host group(s) receive an honorarium of up to \$3,000 for their efforts in hosting the convention. While the NSS places no restrictions on the use of this honorarium, it may be helpful to discuss its dispersal in advance. Many Convention Committees use it to throw a party for all the volunteers. The honorarium is a budget item and must be provided for in financial planning. **(See Board Act 56-203.)**

Contracts

Copies of all contracts signed with facility providers (campground, school, caterers. etc.) MUST be provided to the responsible NSS officers (AVP and S-T), the Convention Division Chief, and the NSS Office. Please keep the officers aware of contract negotiations and terms and do not hesitate to ask for their assistance since these **contracts are with the NSS**. The NSS is legally responsible for complying with the contracts signed by the convention committee and NSS officers must be aware of contract conditions. It is suggested \$1,000 be budgeted for local legal review of major contracts (facilities) terms and conditions. If pro bono legal advice is available, that can be a viable option. Legal review is required prior to the NSS officer signing contracts. Penalty clauses for non-performance should be included in major contracts. Escape clauses should be written into every contract. This allows us to get a full refund in the event of a catastrophe, such as a global pandemic. (Hey it's happened!) The original copy of EVERY contract MUST be sent to the NSS Office within 30 days of the close of the convention.

Travel Expenditures:

Conventions could not occur without the dedicated support of a volunteer workforce. Everyone who is officially involved with a convention should keep a detailed log of their expenses that are convention related, for example, mileage, meals, lodging etc. Use these records for personal tax deductions, as they are not covered in the chart of accounts and cannot be reimbursed from the convention income.

Refunds

No cash refunds will be made under any circumstances. Whenever possible have those needing refunds provide an addressed mailing envelope.

Taxes

Check with local and state authorities to determine if any sales taxes apply to the NSS convention or the vendors. Work with the vendor liaison if any sales licenses are needed by the vendors. It may be possible to set up one license to cover all the vendors.

NSS Staff

An amount, up to \$6,000, is assigned in each year's NSS budget to cover the cost of the staff's transportation, lodging, and merchandise shipments to and from convention. The price will vary with location and must be included in the convention budget.

Cash for day 1: Registration and Caver Coop and change for vendors all week

\$250 in \$50 bills (5)
\$2,000 in \$20 bills (100)
\$1,000 in \$10 bills (100)
\$500 in \$5 bills (100)
\$250 in \$1 bills (250)
\$4,000 total

Caver Co-op requests \$150 in starter funds.

Excess cash and checks can be handled with night drops at the bank. You don't want to tie up time getting funds during the day once convention starts.

13. PAPERWORK

Convention Bids

Obtain a copy of the current NSS Convention Bid form from the NSS convention committee.

Interim Reports

The convention committee **MUST** provide periodic status reports to the AVP and the BOG **via** the Convention Development chair. If you keep minutes of planning meetings, send those to the Convention Development chair.

Final Report

The final report for the convention should be submitted to the NSS S-T and the AVP as soon after the convention as possible. A preliminary report should be available by the Fall BOG meeting, but it is unlikely that you will be able to wrap up all the loose ends by then. A final report should be possible by the Spring BOG meeting. If not, there should be an explanation. A copy **MUST** also be sent to the Convention Development chair to aid in future financial planning. At the NSS BOG meeting following the convention, the NSS S-T will present the financial report for approval.

All convention reports become part of the BOG minutes. If you prepare a long report, with detailed suggestions for future conventions, also prepare an executive summary, suitable for inclusion in the BOG minutes.

Letters

After-convention letters should be obtained from the host site and/or Chamber of Commerce regarding their reaction to our group and our stay there. It is always nice if they state they would like to have us come back.

14. CONSERVATION

Although hosting a convention does not require that you file an Environmental Impact Statement, the convention must pay a great deal of attention to its environmental impact. No matter how responsible individual cavers may be, a group as large as a convention can place a great deal of stress on caves. It may be necessary to limit trips

into or even to close some caves in the convention area during the time of the convention. It is also important to take into account the impact of large numbers of campers using an area not normally used for camping. If a potential problem exists, money should be budgeted for remediation.

Security

A staff of volunteers should be assembled to provide security at the campground. **While on duty, security staff must be sober.** It is a good idea, and good public relations, to enlist local law enforcement personnel (paid) to cover security during the Howdy Party, Photo Salon, and Banquet. Convention Security should not engage in physical force under any circumstances. In the event of an altercation that cannot be resolved verbally, a local law enforcement agent should be contacted.

15. HEALTH AND SAFETY

First Aid

A prominently marked first aid tent should be centrally located in the campground. It should be staffed at all times. The first aid tent needs a source of ice and, if it is provided with a large ice machine, can serve as a source of ice for the campground.

There should be qualified first aid personnel in the first aid tent, at the vertical contests, Speleolympics, and any other strenuous activities. Try to line up your first aid personnel ahead of time, but don't hesitate to advertise for more volunteers in the daily newsletter.

Health care professionals identified by a specific badge color or T-shirt must be licensed or registered in the state in which the convention activity is conducted. If some activities are held in other states, this may require multiple badge colors. This nuisance is a legal necessity. Badge/T-shirt colors should be published in the program and daily newsletter.

Local Medical Resources

Determine the location of hospitals and medical clinics near the convention site. Everyone on the convention staff should be familiar with these facilities and their location should be included in the program. Emergency numbers should be available at the registration desk. Meet with the emergency room staff before the convention, so that they are aware of our presence and the potential problems.

It is a plus if you can obtain the name and phone number of a doctor and a dentist, who would be available for small emergencies on short notice.

Cave Rescue

Using the [Caver Alert Information Sheet](#) (CAIS; located on the National Cave Rescue Commission—Eastern Region's website) for all cave trips leaving from the convention would be a great help in the event of a rescue. This sheet provides information such as trip leaders and participants, vehicles, cell numbers, and the cave and areas in the cave planned to visit.

No convention wants to mount a rescue. Unfortunately, it is sometimes necessary. Therefore, every convention should have a rescue plan. Since the first point of contact after an accident is liable to be the registration desk or security, all registration and security personnel should be familiar with the rescue plan and be able to deal effectively with requests for help.

The convention plan should identify what resources are available, what resources the convention should provide, and what additional resources can be gleaned from convention attendees. Whenever possible, the plan should make use of local cave rescue resources. There is no reason for the convention to reinvent the wheel if a fully competent Cave Rescue Team is available. If local resources are inadequate, the plan should be more comprehensive. In either case, key personnel should be identified and a procedure for rescue call out should be established.

The plan should facilitate rapid access to rescue services while screening out and minimizing unnecessary callouts. To this end, the plan should provide trip leaders with guidelines for deciding whether to attempt a self-rescue or to initiate a rescue callout. Likewise, registration staff should understand that many initial requests for help can be met with less than a full callout and should know how to screen the initial call and gather the additional information before calling the rescue team.

Second only to assuring a successful rescue, a primary goal of any cave rescue plan should be to avoid publicity. The plan should therefore specify procedures for dealing with the media.

Restrooms

All restrooms and showers must be cleaned daily. Many sites will include cleaning in the rental fees, others will not. Make sure your facilities contracts specify who is responsible. If the cavers are responsible, organize a cleaning crew to assure that it's done daily. If the site is responsible, make a daily check to be sure the job is being done.

Port-a-potties

Must also be pumped and cleaned daily. Twice if the environment dictates. They should have their deodorants changed daily. Port-a-potty operators are often unreliable. Be sure your contract specifies clearly what level of service you are asking for and monitor the service to make sure you get it.

Pumping should be scheduled while attendees are at sessions, not first thing in the morning while there will be a heavy demand to use them. A rule of thumb is to provide one port-a-potty per 50 people camping.

Contracts for both toilets and port-a-potties should specify who is responsible for cleaning and providing toilet paper and how much is needed. A thousand people will go through about 50 rolls (1,000 sheets each) every day. Even if paper is included in the

rental fees, the convention should have a supply on hand to cover emergencies and shortages.

Garbage

Poor campground sanitation can result in a serious fly and rodent problem. Decide ahead of time how you want to handle garbage. You can place individual cans around the campground—empty and reline them daily; you can ask people to bring their bagged garbage to a conveniently located dumpster; or you can combine both techniques. In either case, the campground should hand out garbage bags for general use. These can be available either at registration or in the first aid tent. Use Friday's daily newsletter to encourage people to clean up their own sites and dispose properly of garbage before leaving. If possible, have the dumpster well lit for the use of those leaving Friday night.

Recycling

Many municipalities offer recycling services. Every effort should be made to arrange for this service.

Handicapped Access

Although cavers tend to be a surprisingly healthy lot, there are members of the caving community with limited mobility. Every effort should be made to make the Howdy Party, Banquet, sessions, and Photo Salon accessible. As many other activities as possible should also be accessible.

Mobility

On large campuses, renting golf or similar carts should be considered for staff use during setup, throughout the week, and for tear down.

Security

A staff of volunteers should be assembled to provide security at the campground. **While on duty, security staff must be sober.** It is a good idea, and good public relations, to enlist local law enforcement personnel (paid) to cover security during the Howdy Party, Photo Salon, and Banquet. Convention Security should not engage in physical force under any circumstances. In the event of an altercation that cannot be resolved verbally, a local law enforcement agent should be contacted.

16. SPECIAL SERVICES

Ice

Besides being a convenience for campers, it is needed by the first aid tent. A local ice supplier will usually lend the convention an icebox in exchange for being the exclusive ice supplier. Ice deliveries can be on a regular basis or on request. This can be operated by the first aid tent.

Smoking

Mark off designated smoking areas well away from entrances to buildings. Smoking should never be allowed inside buildings; chances are that it is not legal anyhow.

Pets

If the facility allows pets, there is a requirement that pets in the campground be kept on a leash, affixed to a person at one end and the pet at the other. This eliminates a source of potential disputes (tents are valuable and should not replace fire plugs) as well as a potential safety hazard. In recent years, a pet registration fee has been charged to discourage owners from bringing their pets. Policies should be established for handling pets that are not cleaned up after or allowed to run free.

Certified Service Animals are always allowed.

Social Areas

One or more recreational or bull session sites should be open at all times. Evening movies on caving or other outdoor and adventure topics have been popular at past conventions.

Bus, Train, and Plane Pickup and Delivery

This is an optional service, but very nice to offer if you have the volunteers to handle it. Pickup service should be requested **prior** to the convention. Publish a number or name for people to contact. Allow buffer time in your schedule to allow for late flights. Contact information regarding public shuttle services should be provided in your pre-convention publicity.

Ride Sharing

Using social media, a site should be set up to facilitate attendees to contact people looking for a ride from transportation hubs to the convention sites.

Child Care

Child care is a tremendous service to weary parents who would like to go caving or attend sessions. It is also a service to others who do not want sessions interrupted by crying babies and rioting children and parents who refuse to take them out of the room or can just tune the noise out. If child care is available, parents should be encouraged to take advantage of it.

Child care service **MUST** be provided during the Photo Salon and the Banquet. (It will be more likely to be used during these events if it is provided for by the convention at no charge.) Often a local senior citizen's or youth group will agree to provide child care for a fee to be paid by the parents. Be sure any child care facility you arrange complies with local and state laws. Provisions for child care should be announced in the *NSS News* and on the website.

Duplicating

Beyond the needs discussed elsewhere, some attendees may want access to duplicating services during the week. If possible, designate a place where copying can

be dropped off and picked up. a nominal fee should be charged for non-current convention copying.

Food Service

A food service plan (à la carte or meal plan), especially for just breakfasts and lunches will be highly appreciated and well used. College cafeterias will often provide such a service. Another option is multiple food trucks. Also provide a communal eating area.

WI-FI

Let folks know in your pre-convention publicity if the facility has Wi-Fi or other access to the internet.

Computers

Let folks know in your pre-convention publicity if the facility will have computers available for attendees to check their email.

Cell Service

If there is no cell service or limited carriers in the area, this should be advertised to the attendees in advance.

Nursing/Napping Room

Efforts should be made to provide a small room where parents can put a kid down for a nap or to nurse their children. Also, a place for diaper changes, if there is no facility in the rest rooms.

17. THE PLANNING PROCESS

Contingency Planning

One watchword for convention planning is "Expect the unexpected." Herein follows a list of some disasters to consider when doing contingency planning. It should also start you on thinking up disasters of your own. The process of disaster planning will help you cope with the unexpected, even when it is almost totally unlike what you planned for.

Caterer cancels

Rain, flood, lightning, heat, or violent wind

Health Department closes the campground

Prolonged power or A/C failure

Double the expected attendance

Cops raid campground for underage drinking

Printer fails to deliver guidebooks

The video projectors are not color balanced

Global pandemic

Fire or explosion

Food poisoning at Howdy Party

Banquet Hall burns down

Unexpected site unavailability

Half the minimum attendance

Domestic violence in the campground

There are no complaints all week

Grass fire in campground

Planning Timeline

The exact timeline for convention planning will vary widely from convention to convention. It is extremely helpful to chart out all your activities on a large calendar. First enter the known dates: *NSS News* deadlines, your pre-registration cutoff, etc. Make a list of all the things that must be done and estimate how long each will take, both in elapsed time and in people hours. Work backward from the deadlines and allow

enough time for the tasks to be done by the available people. This will enable you to set reasonable dates for the convention chair to get information to you and to negotiate production schedules with publishers, T-shirt vendors, etc. Be sure to allow enough time for people to do a good job, rather than rushing.

Once you have this schedule, do frequent reality checks against it. When you discover you've left something out (which you undoubtedly will) adjust the calendar to accommodate it. If things are getting too far behind, look for more help. If you must, look for places to cut corners before things reach a crisis stage and you have to make a panicked decision.

Frequent communication by committee heads is essential. Group meetings can be in person or via conference calls. However, the last several meetings before the event should be attended by as many of the staff as possible and the balance should be participating via the phone, Zoom, or Skype.

Online communications—every group **MUST** have a Google-type group or use Zoom calls for staff communications. More than one group can be established such as one for the officers, one for the committee chairs, and one for all the staff. The Convention Division chair **MUST** be on the groups as a monitor.

In the final analysis, good planning and communications makes a good convention and a reasonable schedule can be an invaluable guide to good planning.

Appendix 1: Glossary

BOG

The Board of Governors is the governing body of the NSS. It consists of 12 directors elected at large by the NSS membership and four officers. The officers are elected by the 12 directors. The officers are the President, Executive Vice President, Administrative Vice President, and Secretary-Treasurer. In addition, an appointed, non-voting recording secretary attends most BOG meetings to record minutes.

COG

Congress of Grottos is an advisory body that makes recommendations to the BOG. It consists of representatives appointed by each grotto, I/O, and section in the NSS. Each I/O is granted a certain number of representatives based on its membership.

I/O

All grottos (chapters), regions, sections, and surveys of the NSS are Internal Organizations.

UIS

International Union of Speleology. This is an international organization, composed of speleological organizations from around the world. The NSS is a member of the UIS. The UIS holds a convention somewhere in the world once every 4 years. The NSS hosted the 1981 UIS in Bowling Green Kentucky. Since then, there have been UIS meetings in Spain (1986); Hungary (1989); China (1993); Greece (2005); Kerrville, Texas (2009); Czech Republic (2013); and Australia (2017).

Appendix 2: Resources

***Members Manual* and the Member Portal**

The NSS *Members Manual* is a rich source of names for section and committee chairs, grotto contacts, etc. Don't forget to make use of it. You may also look up people and committee contacts on the Member Portal on the NSS website.

Convention Contacts

People are valuable contacts. Refer to the previous year's program for the names to contact and the *Members Manual* or the Member Portal for current phone numbers.

Past Convention Chairs

The chair of conventions past has done it all before. They can provide extremely valuable insight and guidance to the current Convention Committees. So don't hesitate to contact them.

- 2020 Virtual Convention: Rich Geisler and Meredith Hall Weberg
- 2019 Cookeville, Tennessee: Maureen Handler
- 2018 Helena, Montana: Doug Warner
- 2017 Rio Rancho, New Mexico: Blake Jordan
- 2016 Ely, Nevada: Matt Bowers
- 2015 Waynesville, Missouri: Joe Nicolussi
- 2014 Huntsville, Alabama: Julie Schenk-Brown
- 2013 Shippensburg, Pennsylvania: Craig Hindman
- 2012 Lewisburg, West Virginia: Jeff Bray and John Pearson
- 2011 Glenwood Springs, Colorado: Dave Lester

Appendix 3: Board Acts Concerning Conventions

ACT SECTION 03—MEETINGS

03-141 Expenses, 3-23-85, 4-20-68, 10-27-67, 10-28-61

Directors and Officers shall continue to attend all meetings at their own expense. Members of Society committees shall continue to attend Board meetings, conventions, and committee meetings at their own expense without reimbursement.

ACT SECTION 15—FISCAL MATTERS

15-020 Bonding, 08-07-98, 08-05-96, 03-16-96, 08-18-72, 07-08-50

The Secretary Treasurer is responsible for bonding Society employees and members, including NSS National Convention Treasurers, who have access to significant Society funds on a regular basis.

15-494 Federal Tax Identification Number, 8-3-92

Any NSS committee, activity, or individual that uses the NSS's federal tax identification number must comply with all procedures outlined in Section 15 of the NSS Board of Governors Manual.

15-495 Tax ID Reporting Requirements, 8-3-92

NSS Committees and Commissions that use the NSS federal tax identification number shall periodically report their income and expense activity to the NSS Secretary-Treasurer at intervals to be established by the Secretary-Treasurer.

15-617 Capital Purchases, 8-7-98

NSS committees and commissions that seek to procure capital items are encouraged to use the normal NSS budget process to gain approval of the capital budget items. NSS capital items that cost more than \$500.00 may be procured only with Board approval. The appropriate NSS officer may approve the procurement of capital budget items that cost less than \$500.00. In an emergency the NSS President may authorize an NSS committee or commission to procure a capital budget item up to \$10,000.00.

ACT SECTION 28—MEMBERSHIP

28-607 NSS Convention Discount, 06-29-12:27, 07-27-07:14, 03-21-98

Effective September 1, 2007, people joining the NSS for the first time shall receive a non-transferable, non-replaceable New Member Discount Coupon worth \$50, applicable toward the registration fee for an NSS Convention.

ACT SECTION 56—CONVENTION

56-006 Advance Funds, 11-8-08:17, 7-8-05, 3-16-96, 6-27-86, 8-18-72, 12-4-71, 5-22-48

The Convention Committee will be granted an advance to aid in organizing the Convention after their preliminary budget has been approved by the Executive Committee.

56-105 Registration, 6-16-61

The Convention Chairman is instructed to enforce registration at the Convention.

56-125 Convention Manual, 7-14-14:23, 11-04-00, 4-4-87, 10-11-75, 6-17-64

The Society will maintain an NSS Convention Manual. The Manual will define the responsibilities of the various organizations involved in conducting an NSS Convention, and provide background information to guide the host organization in their planning process. The NSS Convention Manual will be maintained and distributed by the Convention Development Committee Chair. The Chair will solicit revisions and suggestions from convention staff and those officers and committees involved in convention planning and operations at least once each year, and keep the manual updated with information received. Deviations from the requirements in the manual must be approved by the Convention Development Committee Chair. Any issues not resolved will be referred to the AVP, whose decision will be final. Current Acts of the Board, Appendices to the Acts, and EC administrative policies related to conventions will be incorporated in the manual.

56-189 Convention Guidebook, 11-4-00, 8-18-72, 8-22-70, 11-16-68

The size of the Convention Guidebook is to be 8-1/2 by 11 inches. The Convention Guidebook will be numbered autonomously from any other publication.

56-192 Surplus Revenue, 3-1-69

Any surplus revenue from the Convention will accrue automatically to the Convention Surplus Designated Fund, regardless of the nature and number of other organizations cooperating in the conduct of the Convention. Similarly, deficits in legitimate operating expenses entailed by the Convention Chair, after planning his expenses as carefully as possible with the Administrative Vice President and the Treasurer will be made up by the Convention Surplus Designated Fund.

56-258 Convention Sites, 3-23-73:

It is recommended that convention sites be selected to move successive sites to widely separated locations.

56-267 Vendors, 08-09-13:20, 03-15-03, 11-05-77, 11-03-73

A policy concerning vendors at NSS or NSS member-sponsored activities is established: (1) The organizing committee of an NSS activity may, at the committee's discretion, welcome vendors at the activity as providing a service to the participants. Vendors will abide by any reasonable monetary and regulatory edicts. (2) No vendor may use the name of the National Speleological Society for any purposes, without the permission of the NSS. (3) The National Speleological Society or its representatives are not responsible, in any manner, for merchandise sold by vendors at NSS or NSS member-sponsored activities. (4) It is recognized that the NSS has the authority to charge reasonable fees and establish certain regulatory measures for vendors operating at their activities. (5) Non-profit 501(C)(3) organizations whose purpose aligns with NSS goals and is related to caves or caving activities will be allocated space, as available, at no cost to promote their organization provided their activities do not compete with vendors who paid for space.

The following recommendations are to be policy for NSS activities and are suggested guidelines for member sponsored events: (a) Provide facilities for the display and sale of products; (b) charge an event registration fee to vendors and their helper(s); (c) provide security to prevent theft while these areas are unattended; (d) a flat-rate fee will be charged if the vendor is permitted to sell merchandise elsewhere at the activity (f) the organizing committee may judge the appropriateness of the items to be offered for sale and reject inappropriate items. Such judging shall take place if any requests to do so are received from any member of the NSS.

56-274 Convention Bid Publication, 3-23-74

Convention bids are to be circulated to all Board Members and to NSS organizations active in the vicinity of the proposed convention at least 30 days in advance of the meeting at which they are to be considered. (Bids will be voted on at the BOG meeting following the meeting where they are presented.)

56-293 Convention Honorarium, 10-24-18, 08-09-13;23, 7-27-01, 8-7-98, 11-16-74

A \$3000 convention honorarium will be included in the Convention budget to recognize the committee's efforts and unreimbursed expenses to host the annual NSS National Convention.

The honorarium will be granted when the following conditions are met:

1. All REMAINING Convention Merchandise due to the NSS Bookstore has been received.
2. Financial reporting has been completed
 - a. All accounts are balanced and up to date
 - B. All income and expenses are reported in the NSS General Ledger format
 - C. The completed Convention Quickbooks file has been delivered to the NSS bookkeeper and Secretary-Treasurer
 - d. Convention statistics are reported to the Convention Statistician via a method agreed upon prior to Convention.
3. The Convention Finance Officer and Secretary-Treasurer will determine when these items have been met.
 - a. \$3,000 if all the above items are completed within 90 days of the last day of the convention.
 - b. \$2,000 if all the above items are completed within 120 days of the last day of the convention.
 - c. \$1,000 if all the above items are completed within 150 days of the last day of the convention.
 - d. After 150 days, no Honorarium will be granted since a 150-day or longer delay will cause the society a delay in finalizing the books for the auditors>>

The committee honorarium may be disbursed or used in any way that is deemed appropriate by the convention Chairman.

56-304 Convention Proposals, 10-25-14:18, 03-21-96, 10-11-75

An informative article soliciting convention proposals shall be published in the *NSS News* at least three years prior to that convention year. The article shall include an address to contact for bid forms and a copy of the Convention Manual for Annual Conventions. The preparation of such an article and the processing of convention proposals shall be the responsibility of the Convention Development Committee

56-307 Convention Manual, 11-4-00, 10-11-75

The NSS National Convention Manual shall require that Convention Committees consider carefully the environmental and socio-economic impacts of a convention and take whatever actions are necessary to mitigate adverse effects.

56-328 Convention Non-commercial Displays, 3-26-77

The Convention Committee may, at their option, accommodate non-commercial displays on cave related subjects from organizations outside the Society. If this incurs a cost, the Committee may pass this cost on to the outside organization.

56-337 NSS Committee Displays, 11-5-77

The Board of Governors requests that the Executive Committee arrange for exhibits and displays from NSS Committees for use at conventions.

56-346 Convention Scheduling, 6-23-78

The NSS Convention Committees are requested to schedule no business meetings of sections concurrently with meetings of either the Congress of Grottoes or the Board of Governors.

56-412 Convention Bid Expenses, 3-21-96, 7-1-83

The Convention Development Committee budget shall, beginning with fiscal year 1984-85, include \$200 to be used to offset expenses for convention bidders that are not selected for the convention.

56-496 Surplus Convention Items, 08-09-13;19, 8-3-92

The Convention Committee shall make arrangements with the NSS Bookstore Manager for shipping to the NSS Bookstore, at the convention's expense, all surplus guidebooks, programs, T-shirts, and related convention items within 30 days of the close of the convention.

56-539 Convention Insurance, 7-12-04, 11-6-93

The NSS Insurance Committee shall obtain NSS Convention insurance for medical payments and liability for injury, death, or property damage for at least one million dollars. This will be paid for out of convention revenue.

56-547 Convention Proposals Submitted to the Board, 11-8-08:15, 8-9-96, 3-5-94

Offers to host NSS Conventions may be considered by the Board no more than five years prior to the proposed convention

56-548 Convention Scheduling, 3-5-94:

NSS Conventions shall be scheduled to avoid conflict with the International Union of

Speleology Congress meetings when the UIS Congress schedule has been published prior to the scheduling of the NSS Convention.

56-552 Liability Waivers, 6-24-94

Completion of a general liability waiver, approved by the NSS Legal Committee, will be required for participation at NSS Conventions.

56-576 Convention Deficiencies, 10-25-14:19, 11-02-96

All persons making convention proposals should clearly identify any known deficiency in their proposal from the standards established in these acts, the Convention Manual, and significant traditions. The Chairman of the Convention Planning Committee shall immediately report subsequent deficiencies to the Administrative Vice President. The Administrative Vice President will inform the Board of Governors of any significant and uncorrected deficiencies.

56-596 Junior Speleological Committee, 6-23-97

The Junior Speleological Society Committee, in the department of the Administrative Vice President, is responsible for the administration, content, and implementation of NSS youth educational and recreational activities, including youth activities at NSS Conventions. The JSS Committee shall coordinate with the Convention Development Committee to determine the budgetary and facility support required from Convention Committees for JSS activities.

56-611 Convention Budgets, 07-13-15:54, 08-07-98

All bids submitted for NSS National Conventions shall include draft financial projections showing major expected expense and income categories. The Budget Template shall be approved by the Executive Committee and must be adhered to in all Convention bids.

56-612 Convention Chart of Accounts, 8-7-98

All NSS National Convention budgets shall follow the standard NSS-supplied Chart of Accounts (COA) listing specific expense and income categories.

56-613 Convention Treasurer, 8-7-98

The Chairman of the NSS National Convention is responsible for appointing the NSS Convention Treasurer. The NSS Convention Treasurer shall provide financial reports to both the NSS Convention Chairman and agents of the NSS Secretary-Treasurer. The NSS Secretary-Treasurer is responsible for establishing financial processes and reporting requirements for NSS Conventions. The Convention Chairman, or his agent, must approve all convention expenses before payment.

56-614 Convention Budget Approval, 11-08-08:16, 08-07-98

Within one year after the Board of Governors accepts an NSS National Convention proposal, the Convention Chairman shall submit a preliminary convention budget to the Executive Committee (EC) for approval. In the event that this approval is received more than eighteen months prior to the convention, the Convention Chairman shall submit a final budget to the EC for approval eighteen months prior to the convention. The

Administrative Vice President (AVP) shall include these budgets in his report to the Board following EC acceptance. Subsequent revisions to the budget exceeding 5% must be approved by the AVP and the Convention Chairman.

56-615 Convention Committee Personal Expenses, 7-27-01, 8-7-98

All Convention Staff activities associated with preparation of an NSS National Convention are carried out on a volunteer basis. Travel related expenses (for example, travel, lodging, meals) incurred by Convention Staff are not reimbursable except at the discretion of the Convention Chairman from the NSS approved convention committee allowance.honorarium , after it is awarded. (See Act 56-293.)

56-616 Final Convention Report, 8-7-98

A final NSS National Convention report shall be submitted to the NSS Administrative Vice President for inclusion in his report to the Board of Governors at the Spring meeting following the close of the convention. The report should include a description of "lessons learned" as a result of the convention experience. A final NSS National Convention financial report shall be submitted to the NSS Secretary-Treasurer at the same time, for inclusion in his report to the Board of Governors. The Financial Report shall compare actual and budgeted income and expenses in accordance with the NSS Chart of Accounts.

56-624 Convention Bids, 11-7-98

Acceptance of an NSS Convention bid by the Board of Governors will not occur at the same meeting of the BOG during which the bid is presented.

56-625 Convention Sites, 7-12-99, 3-27-99

A representative of the Convention Development Committee may receive reimbursement for travel expenses incurred, up to the amount budgeted by the Board, for travel to and examination of potential sites for future NSS National Conventions. A report on the suitability of the sites visited will be provided by the Convention Development Committee Chairman to the Board following visits to these sites. Funds for this travel reimbursement will come from the Convention Surplus Restricted Fund.

56-631 Complementary Convention Day Passes, 7-12-99

The NSS Convention Chairmen are encouraged to offer complimentary day passes for public relations purposes, particularly to those people involved in cave management, such as members of state and federal agencies and private cave owners, as well as government officials.

56-644 NSS National Convention Registration and Fee Policy, 10-23-99

NSS National Convention Registration and Fee Policy is adopted. (See Appendix AO.)

56-654 Noise Level at Convention from Amplified, All-Night Music, 3-18-00

NSS Convention staff shall ensure compliance with all municipal and/or county noise ordinances. Convention staff shall enact effective measures to separate campground areas from those areas where amplified music is permitted. Convention staff shall ensure that quiet areas for campgrounds are designated and enforced. In the event

sufficient separation of the camp and the party areas is not feasible, Convention staffs shall set and enforce a curfew on amplified music.

56-683 11-4-00 Convention Auction Funds, 11-04-00

Beginning in 2002 the NSS Executive Committee shall recommend the distribution of the undesignated proceeds from the upcoming NSS Convention Auction as part of the annual budget process and report their recommendation at the spring meeting for Board review. Unless the Board moves to modify, such recommendation shall be implemented.

56-685 Sales of Convention Guidebooks by Vendors, 07-13-15:28, 11-07-09:17, 11-04-00

Any vendor with a principal who is an NSS member may sell NSS Convention guidebooks to NSS members if they have a current signed vendor memorandum of understanding on file at the NSS Office.

56-690 Convention Development Committee, 11-04-06:6, 11-04-00

The Convention Development Committee is established, reporting to the Administrative Vice President. The Committee is responsible for: a) soliciting from NSS internal organizations and members proposals to host an annual NSS Convention; b) visiting the proposed convention sites and working with the proposing organization to prepare a satisfactory proposal; c) providing its analysis of proposals submitted to the Board for consideration; d) after a host is selected, working with the host organization to help them take advantage of lessons learned from past conventions, guide their planning process, mentor key Convention staff members, and integrate their efforts with other NSS committees who have an active role in NSS Conventions; e) maintaining and distributing the Convention Manual.

56-778 Convention Accident Insurance, 11-07-10;14, 8-7-06

Conventions will self insure against accidents to registrants up to \$5000. Conventions after 2020 will contact the S-T for the current costs and budget that amount registrant to cover costs

56-810 Policy on Placing Convention Guidebooks on the Web, 07-13-51:59, 03-31-12:18, 08-15-08:27

Beginning with the 2016 NSS Convention guidebook, Convention Guidebooks will be posted on the NSS website members' area two years after the conventions for which they were published. Convention guidebooks will not be published on the Karst Information Portal without redaction of sensitive material.

56-827 Convention Abstracts on the Karst Information Portal, 11-07-09:14

The NSS will allow the Karst Information Portal (KIP) to host the digital archive of abstracts from NSS Conventions. Furthermore, the NSS will allow abstracts from NSS Conventions to be publically available on the KIP (pending specific redaction's).

56-828 Convention Guidebook Sales, 107-13-15:30, 11-07-09:16

NSS Convention Guidebooks may be sold only to current NSS members.

56-861 Redacting Convention Guidebooks, 03-31-12:27

An NSS Convention Committee shall have the option of redacting portions of the NSS Convention Guidebook that it deems sensitive, before the guidebook's publication on the web.

56-904 Policy on Placing Convention Guidebook Table of Contents on the Web, 07-310-15:28

The Table of Contents for Convention Guidebooks will be posted on the Karst Information Portal web site.

56-910 JSS Convention Fee Reimbursement, 07-13-15:52

The registration fee for Convention attendees who will participate in the Junior Speleological Society (JSS) program as students will be set at the rate determined by the JSS and Convention Chairs. The Convention must reimburse this fee to the JSS Chair, minus any meal costs associated with the Howdy Party and the NSS Awards Banquet. The JSS account shall be maintained at \$5,000. Any shortage to this account shall be supplemented by the Convention Surplus Fund. Excesses to the JSS account shall be moved to the Convention Surplus fund for use by the NSS.

56-915 Convention Social Media Sites, 03-19-16:7

Any Social Media sites which were created for the purposes of a given Convention, with the exception of traditional web page websites, shall be deactivated within three months of the final day of Convention. Any imagery or content created and/or shared on these sites will be specifically made available for preservation by the Archives Committee. These social media sites, and their respective audiences, are considered to be property of the National Speleological Society. As such, any audience that was generated by the social media site shall, whenever technically possible, be merged into the equivalent social media site for the following year's event. The Social Media committee will be responsible for the implementation of this act.

56-933 NSS Event Registration, 10-21-17:3

All NSS activities which require registration shall use a widely recognized and supported registration system which provides simple links to the NSS accounting and tracking programs, as specified by the Executive Committee.

56-934 Bookstore and Office Convention Expenses 10-21-17:15

Conventions shall budget reasonable and appropriate shipping and travel expenses for the NSS Bookstore and staff to attend convention. Actual expenses shall be reimbursed to the staff by the NSS Office, and transferred to the NSS general fund by the convention through reconciliation at the close of the convention books. Convention staff should work with NSS staff to determine estimated costs prior to budgeting.

56-941 Convention Number Zero, 07-30-18:44

Convention Number Zero will be granted in perpetuity to Richard (Dick) Blenz (5671CL OSFE) in memory of his lifelong generosity to the Society

56-942 Convention Steering Committee 11-10-18:21

The Convention Steering Committee is created in the office of the Administrative Vice President. The committee must consist of a chair appointed by the AVP and have a minimum of four other serving members, two of whom must be the previous two convention chairs. In addition, the AVP, the Secretary-Treasurer, must serve as ex-officio members of this Committee.

ACT SECTION 66 -IT

66-874 Committee, Convention, and Commission Websites

All NSS committee, convention, and commission websites must reside on a server managed by the IT Division. Websites should utilize a subdomain subdomain.caves.org) or subdirectory (caves.org/subdirectory) of caves.org.

ACT SECTION 83—PUBLICATIONS OTHER

83-292 Copyright, 11-16-74

All Society publications are to be copyrighted.

83-658 Society Publications, 3-18-00

All NSS Publications shall clearly and prominently identify the National Speleological Society as the publisher on the cover.

APPENDIX AZ July 17, 2011:10 (Refer to Act 66-853) Amended 10-22-11:16 POLICY FOR POSTING OFFICIAL MATERIAL REPRESENTING THE NSS

The publication, distribution, or posting of an official document, announcement, or statement in print or electronic form (including venues such as the NSS website, Twitter, and/or Facebook) represents the Society to the membership and to the world. In this context, "official" is defined to mean a document, announcement, or statement intended to directly represent NSS policies, positions, or business activity. For this reason, such communications are expected to be as accurate and appropriate as possible in order to reflect positively on the Society, its members, and the community of cavers and speleologists.

Therefore, it is the policy of the Society that documents, statements, and announcements of an official nature must:

- Be factual in nature;
- Reasonably and accurately represent society business;
- Not disparage or ridicule any individual or group;
- Not include confidential NSS material.

Official documents, statements, announcements, or other material of an official nature not generated by the BOG, an officer, or their committee, shall be reviewed by the president prior to publication, distribution, or posting. Another officer, in the event that the president is unavailable, shall perform this function. The Board may delegate this review authority to persons other than the president for specific publications,

announcements, statements, or other material as may be deemed necessary and appropriate.

Any portion of such material deemed inappropriate may be subject to editing and/or removal by an officer or their delegated authority. The Board may override the decision of any officer or delegated authority by majority vote.

This policy applies only to official documents, statements, and announcements related to NSS business, such as minutes, reports, memoranda, letters, policy statements, announcements, and other official communications or material of an official nature, and is not intended to apply to personal and individual expressions of ideas or opinions by members of the Society in un-official and non-business contexts, such as on CaveChat or social networking sites, in letters to the Editor, or the like. The Society encourages and supports the free expression and exchange of ideas among its members.

Appendix 4: Information From Past Conventions

Registration statistics have been compiled for the last 10 conventions. This information is available through the Convention Development Committee.

Appendix 5: Sample Documents

The following are available from the Convention Development Committee on Google Docs:

Convention Proposal Forms
Budgets
Time Lines
Registration Forms
Contracts
Publicity Forms
Final Reports
Program Template
NSS Liability Release ADULTS NSS
NSS Liability Release CHILDREN NSS

Note: For non-convention sponsored activities, such as pre- and post-convention trips and camps, Regional or grotto events, government events, and other non-convention related uses, please use:

NSS Liability Release Special Events ADULTS-v1.1-Final-[Date]

NSS Liability Release Special Events MINORS-v1.1-Final-[Date]

Appendix 6: Supplemental Salon Information

For the list of current contacts, go to: <http://www.caves.org/committee/salons/>

Photo Salon Equipment

The Photo Salon Committee provides its own equipment. They are equipped for front and rear projection.

The Awards Salon program is on Thursday evening of convention week. There are usually two showings. The first is a short version in which only the program itself is shown. No emcee or speakers for the different Salons. The short program is usually about 1.5 hours, and is usually from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Length and timing will vary from year to year. The second showing is the full Awards program and includes the emcee and announcements of winners for each Salon. Winners, if present, are given their awards. This showing is usually around 2 hours—typically from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., but can vary from year to year.

Awards Salon Equipment

The Awards Salon Committee provides its own equipment. They are equipped for front or rear projection. They supply the screens, projectors, and other needed equipment. See the spreadsheet for details on Awards Salon NSS and personal equipment.

The Convention Committee Should Provide

1. Location for the Awards Salon. The location must be able to accommodate at least 80% of the NSS attendees. The location must be available for the Awards Salon staff all day Thursday, and preferably Wednesday afternoon and evening. This allows the staff to set up, test, and rehearse the system so that a quality program can be presented.
2. Theater audio system, including speakers for the audience, amplifiers, microphone for the emcee and a podium. The convention committee should provide an intermediate set of speakers to avoid overdriving the front speakers and to enable those in the rear to hear.
3. Audio interface cables that will connect the computer and video equipment into the house audio system.
4. Backstage speakers that allow the Awards Salon staff the ability to hear what is happening from the podium.
5. Volunteers for security/crowd control during the Awards Salon program.

Check with the Awards Salon Committee to determine exact requirements before renting or borrowing the above listed items.

Quantity	Equipment	Type	Manufacturer	Model	Size/Length	Owner	Salon?	Location Stored	Usage/Storage
1	Video Projector	SXVGA	Epson	POWERLITE G7905U		NSS	YES	NSS HQ	Main 16:9 projector with spare bulb
1	Projector Short Lens		Epson	ELPLw05		NSS	YES	NSS HQ	Projector lens for short throw.
1	Projector Case					NSS	YES	NSS HQ	Used to store and project the EPSON G7905U projector
1	Rear Projector Screen	16:9	AV Stumpfl	S64	24' x 15'	NSS	YES	NSS HQ	Large rear projection screen.
1	Video Switcher	HDMI	Roland	V-1HD		NSS	YES	NSS HQ	Switch HDMI sources for projector
2	Video Projector	XVGA	Optima	TXR774		NSS	No	DRS/P Jorgenson	Used to project Awards Salon program (One is broken; Dave Socky has a good one.) (May be used for Banquet)
2	Projection Screen Frames				12' by 12'	NSS	No	NSS HQ	Used to display Awards Salon program (May be used for Banquet)
2	Front Projection Screens				12' by 12'	NSS	No	NSS HQ	Used to display Awards Salon program (May be used for Banquet)
2	Rear Projection Screens				12' by 12'	NSS	No	NSS HQ	Used to display Awards Salon program (May be used for Banquet)
2	Video Switches Video/RGB Scaler	Extron Electronics	IN1508			NSS	No	DRS	Input different sources in order to switch the output to projectors.

1	Display Adaptor Video Display Splitter	Matrox	Triple Head2Go			NSS	No	DRS	Used to split one computer display into two display signals for 2 projectors
4	Projector Shutters					NSS	No	DRS	Used to mechanically cover the projector light when switching inputs (only 2 used at a time; others are spares)
1	Salon Controller					DRS	No	DRS	Controller for switchers, projector shutters, and DVD players
1 lot	Salon Controller Cables					DRS	No	DRS	One lot of cables between controller and equipment
1	Color Calibration X-Rite	ColorMunki				NSS	Yes	DRS	Color calibrate Photo Salon images
1	Audio Mixer 4 Channel	Radio Shack	SSM-1750			NSS	Yes	DRS	Use for audio mixing
1	Cable, Audio	RCA	male-male		100 feet	NSS	Yes	DRS	Video from stage front camera to backstage
2	Cable, VGA 15-pin DIN		male-male		50 feet	NSS	No	DRS	Computer to video projector (may be used for Banquet)
1	Cable, VGA 15-pin DIN		male-female		25 feet	NSS	No	DRS	Computer to video projector
1 lot	Cables and Adaptor Audio and Video					NSS	Yes	DRS	Connect video and audio gear
Radios						NSS	Yes		Used for communications and

									control during the Awards program
1	TV/Monitor 15-inch Flat Screen					DRS	Yes	DRS	Monitor Blu-Ray/DVD player
1	TV 36-inch Flat Screen					DRS	Yes	DRS	Backstage monitor
1	AV Selector S-Video, 4-channel Recon					DRS	Yes	DRS	Switch between DVD players
1	AV Distribution Amp S-Video, 4-channel Cable	Electronics AV-400SV				DRS	Yes	DRS	Distributed video to projector and monitor
1	DVD Player	Panasonic DMR EA18				DRS	Yes	DRS	Source for Video Salon
1	BluRay Player	Sony				DRS	Yes	DRS	Source for Video Salon
1	Headphones (good)					DRS	Yes	DRS	Monitor video audio
1	Tripod (lightweight)					DRS	Yes	DRS	Use to monitor stage front from back stage
1	Video Camera Mini DV	Sony				DRS	Yes	DRS	Use to monitor stage front from back stage
1	Laptop Computer	Microsoft Surface Pro4				DRS	Yes	DRS	Use for main program and Photo Salon
1	Laptop Computer	Dell Studio				DRS	Yes	DRS	Use to control switching between inputs

1 lot	Cables and Adaptor Audio and Video					DRS	Yes	DRS	Connect video and audio gear
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DRS=Dave Socky; HQ=Headquarters

NSS Equipment Not Used in Awards Salon Program

Quantity	Equipment	Manufacturer	Model	Owner	Storage
2	Monitor, video	Panasonic	cr-1382y	NSS	DRS
2	VCR SVHS	Panasonic	ag-1960	NSS	DRS
1	Time base corrector digital	I.DEN	ivt--7	NSS	DRS
1	AV Mixer Digital	Panasonic	WJ-MX12	NSS	DRS
1	Edit Controller 1 input/1 output	FutureVideo	EC1000Pro	NSS	DRS
1	Video Titler Analog	Videonics	TM-1	NSS	DRS

DRS=Dave Socky

Appendix 7: Computers

As conventions have become more complex, it has gotten progressively more difficult to run a convention without computers. At a minimum, an accounting package (Intuit QuickBooks Online), a spreadsheet (NSS Chart of Accounts), and a program (RegFox) are needed. The NSS is standardizing these functions, contact the NSS operations vice president and the S-T for the programs.

Appendix 8: Equipment Cache

For many years, each new convention committee had to assemble all the miscellaneous equipment needed to run a convention. These items have been broken down into small lots and put into plastic containers that can be moved from site to site in cars or pickups. Display stands for the print Salon can be moved from convention to convention or the staff can opt to build new ones.

Much of the equipment is being routed to the NSS headquarters and will be dropped shipped to and from the convention.

Consumable items that are not worth the cost to ship should be redistributed to the region or the host site. For example: pens pencils, cheap extension cords, note pads, band-aids, etc.

If the convention staff cannot find enough vehicles to transport the materials to the next convention area, the rental of a U-Haul-type vehicle should be built into their budget.

Appendix 9: *Convention Manual History*

This NSS *Convention Manual* is a major rewrite of the original that had served the NSS for almost 25 years.

6th Draft—December 2020 by Carol Tideman and Meredith Hall Weberg: Includes copy editing, formatting, gender-neutral terms, capitalization consistencies (for example “Chairman” to “chair”), inclusion of Appendix 24 on virtual conventions.

5th Draft - July 1997 by Carol Tideman: Suggestions by Dave Socky, Gene Harrison, Elaine Hackerman, Buford Pruitt, Dave Decker, and George Veni

4th Draft—June 1993, by Peri Frantz: Suggestions by Bill Bussey, Thom Engel, Jeanne Gurnee, W. Roswell Jones, William R. Halliday, Bill Mixon, Tom Rea, and John Wilson

3rd Draft—March 1993, by Peri Frantz: Suggestions by Bill Frantz, Wayne Marshall, and Tom Rea

2nd Draft—February 1993, by Peri Frantz Suggestions: Thom Engle, Bill Frantz, Jeanne Gurnee, Wayne Marshall, Tom Rea, Lee Stevens, Paul Stevens

1st Draft—November 1992, by Peri Frantz

An abbreviated history of the original *Planning Guide for Annual NSS Conventions*
Revised: August 1991 by William G. Fritz

Revised: March 1990 by William G. Fritz, Chair: Suggestions by Paul and Lee Stevens

Revised: February 1989 by William G. Fritz, Chair NSS Convention Planning Committee: Suggestions by Evelyn Bradshaw, Paul and Lee Stevens, Kathleen Hornaday, Doug Rhodes, Kendrick Day, William Frantz, and many others at conventions

Revised: October 1982 by William G. Fritz, Chair, NSS Program and Activities Committee: Suggestions by James Dawson, Nick Noe, Larry Fisher, and many others at conventions

Original: July 1968 by John E. Cooper, Chair; John R. Holsinger, John A. Stellmack; Marjory Shaw Schmidt

Appendix 10: Convention Fiscal Policies

The following defines NSS Convention fiscal policies. Through these policies we seek to preserve NSS assets, comply with state and federal laws, and assure complete and accurate accounting information. The accounting information is required for the NSS to file State and federal Internal Revenue Service tax documents and allow a professional audit firm to certify that NSS's accounting records conform to generally accepted accounting practices and properly state our finances.

- 1) The convention chair and the convention treasurer are both responsible for NSS Convention finances.
 - a) The treasurer is responsible for signing convention checks. The convention chair, or their agent, is responsible for approving all convention expenses before payment.
 - b) Both are responsible so that two independent people are involved in each fiscal transaction; a standard practice to mitigate the risk of fraud, waste, or abuse. The treasurer should not be related to the convention chair.
- 2) The treasurer is appointed by and reports directly to the convention chair.
 - a) The convention chair reports to the NSS AVP via the Convention Development Chair.
 - b) The NSS Secretary-Treasurer (S-T) is responsible for establishing financial process and reporting requirements for NSS Conventions. Authority to handle NSS funds comes from the S-T.
- 3) A proposal to host an NSS Convention must include a draft budget showing major anticipated expenses and income.
 - a) This "bid budget" must be based on the standard NSS Convention chart of accounts however, detail items may be rolled up into group-level lines without providing the detail, and activities that are self-supporting, such as the Geology Field Trip, may be presented at the top level only.
 - b) In addition to the bid budget, the convention chair must submit preliminary and final budgets for approval. **See Board Act 56-614 Convention Budget Approval** for details. The final budget establishes the convention's registration fees.
 - c) Both the AVP and convention chair must approve subsequent revisions to the budget exceeding 5%.
 - d) A \$3,000 honorarium may be included in the convention budget and may be used in any way deemed appropriate by the convention chair. See board act **56-274**. The S-T will issue payments for that determined by the host group.
 - e) The BOG must approve capital items costing more than \$500. The AVP may approve the procurement of capital items costing less than \$500.
- 4) The treasurer will establish convention checking and savings accounts.
 - a) These accounts will be opened after April of the year preceding the convention.
 - b) The account name will be in the form of "20XX NSS Convention."

- c) The account must cite the NSS Federal Tax Employer Identification Number (EIN).
 - d) The treasurer, NSS president, and S-T must be signatories on all NSS Convention bank accounts. The convention chair may be a signatory.
 - e) Banks must be instructed to send the original of their periodic statements to the NSS office (6001 Pulaski Pike Avenue, Huntsville AL 35810-1122). The NSS Office will send copies of these statements to the treasurer and others (independent account reconciler, etc.) designated by the S-T in a timely manner.
 - f) If funds are available prior to having a bank account, send them to the office to deposit into your account.
- 5) The S-T will authorize HQ staff to write a \$2,500 check to the convention bank account for startup expenses. The \$2,500 should be considered a loan and not considered when calculating convention gross revenue. Additionally, the S -T will authorize HQ to write a check for Registrations 1 and 2 that were auctioned off at an earlier convention. The money for Registration 1 and 2 is not a loan and goes toward the convention's gross revenue.
- 6) The convention AVP may sign contracts that implement an NSS Convention (for example, contracts for campground, sessions facility, Banquet caterer) only after legal review.
- 7) All checks and credit card payments for convention products and services must be payable to the NSS Convention.
- a) Provide receipts for all income.
 - b) Attribute income to the proper revenue account.
 - c) Regular deposits are necessary, particularly during the convention.
- 8) The treasurer and his agents may accept Visa and MasterCard credit card payments before and during the convention using a convention merchant services account established for the purpose.
- a) Upon request, the NSS office will provide the equipment and instructions for its use.
 - b) The treasurer is responsible for establishing a merchant services account for processing credit cards. It is highly recommended that this account use the same merchant services processor as the NSS Office, although the convention will have a separate account with this provider. Receipts will be deposited directly into the convention's designated account, and processing fees will be drawn from the account. Monthly merchant services statements should go to the NSS Office, which will forward them to the treasurer. In some limited cases, there may be valid reasons for selecting different merchant services providers. If this is the case, both the NSS S-T and AVP must be consulted, and must approve, before another service can be used.
 - c) The treasurer and his agents **must** process the NSS credit card processing account.
- 9) Payments made on the convention checking account:

a) All convention payments must be made by check and documented by payment voucher or invoice. No cash payments are permitted. Do not pay anyone prior to receiving written documentation that justifies payment. That documentation may be an invoice, collection of receipts, or a detailed list of expenses incurred (what was bought, from whom, when, for how much).

b) Payment in advance should be avoided but when necessary it should be done only after receiving a detailed list of expenses (what will be bought, from whom, when, for how much). **All convention reimbursement checks for \$500 and above MUST be written by the NSS S-T.**

c) Instruct convention staff receiving goods to verify the order correctness, check for damage, count the items, and deliver packing slips and invoices to the treasurer.

d) Attribute payments to the proper expense account.

e) Obtain the Social Security Number (SSN) for those individuals that the convention pays more than \$600 for honorariums and services (using a W-9 Form). These people do NOT include those who are simply reimbursed for the expenses they incurred in support of the convention. The NSS Office will report this income to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and provide the individual an IRS 1099 form the following January.

f) Travel-related expenses (for example, travel, lodging, meals) incurred by the convention staff are not reimbursable except at the discretion of the convention chair from the convention honorarium.

g) Checks written during the convention should have a "Void after 90 days" stamped on them.

h) Checks should never be made out to "cash."

10) T-shirts, hats, or other similar items may be provided free to convention workers.

The tax-exempt status of the Society should be used to avoid sales taxes when appropriate. The NSS tax identification number should be used where appropriate. Instruct convention vendors to collect and pay any state and local sales taxes directly.

12) After the convention, the treasurer should immediately follow up on outstanding matters and strive to close the books within 3 months following the convention.

a) NSS membership dues received during convention should be forwarded to the NSS Office.

b) Convention bills should be paid quickly.

c) Bad checks and credit card problems should be resolved quickly.

d) Funds in excess of anticipated needs should be transferred to the NSS Office as soon as possible.

e) Contact the AVP as to the disposition of convention supplies, materials, equipment books, pins, badges, T-shirts, and any other items not sold. The convention accounting will show these items are transferred to the NSS at no cost to the NSS. Shipping charges are to be paid out of convention funds.

- f) When closing convention bank accounts transfer all funds to the NSS Office.
- g) The treasurer should retain all financial records for 4 years following the convention. **This does not include the registration forms. They must be destroyed immediately after the books are closed with the NSS.**

13) The treasurer will:

- a) Provide monthly fiscal reports beginning 1 year before convention;
- b) Provide quarterly reports before then;(a)
- c) Provide a statement of account transaction activity to the person designated by the S-T to independently reconcile the account. The independent reconciler will compare the activity indicated in the bank statement with that reported by the treasurer. If the reconciler has questions, the treasurer should respond. The independent reconciler will report their findings to the ST;
- d) Provide a statement of revenues and expenses compared to the budget using the NSS Convention chart of accounts to both the NSS Convention chair and agents of the NSS S-T; and
- e) Provide to the NSS Office, before the end of each calendar year, the SSN and amount paid for those individuals that the convention pays more than \$600 for honorariums and services. The NSS Office will use this information to submit 1099s to the individuals by February 1. Missing that deadline will incur the NSS a penalty.

14) The treasurer's final report is a valuable planning tool for future convention treasurers. It should include accurate financial reports, an analysis of issues encountered, statistics of the various types of registrations (for example, early, on-site, NSS member, non-member, children), revenue from sales and quantities sold, credit card payments, and other information as requested by the S-T.

15) The S-T will:

- a) Send the treasurer an authorization letter providing them with the NSS's EIN and documentation necessary to open a checking account using the NSS's EIN. This will occur in April of the year preceding the year of the convention;
- b) See that bank statements received by the NSS Office are copied and forwarded to the treasurer in a timely manner;
- c) Coordinate with the treasurer the transfer of funds to and from the NSS Office. This includes the start-up loan and final fund transfer;
- d) Handle federal tax issues including the production and mailing of 1099-MISC forms, and the reporting of interest from savings accounts;
- e) Define what financial reports are needed and on what schedule they are to be provided to the S-T. The S-T will monitor and review the reports;
- f) Work with the treasurer in establishing a budget. This will include reasonableness, accuracy of expense and income figures, and general completeness;

- g) Secure bonding for the treasurer;
- h) Secure liability insurance for the convention. This will be paid for out of convention revenue;
- i) Provide the treasurer with a chart of accounts to be used. The treasurer may add additional categories to the convention chart of accounts with S-T approval based upon unique convention attributes and the need for consistent NSS Convention accounting over the long term;
- j) Instruct the NSS Office merchant service provider to supply the equipment and training to the treasurer for credit card processing when requested;
- k) Arrange for the treasurer's final report to be available to future convention treasurers; and
- l) Add to, modify, and/or delete items in the Policies and Procedures document when appropriate.

NSS Convention Treasurer Expectations, Requirements, and Policies

As the treasurer for an NSS convention you are expected to have skills in the following:

- Bookkeeping/accounting skills
- Spreadsheet skills
- Simple financial statement preparation
- Accounting software (specifically Intuit QuickBooks Online)
- Commitment to provide monthly reconciliation and accounting reports to the NSS S-T or office.

Accounting Software System

Convention finances must be conducted in Intuit QuickBooks Online. A copy of this software will be provided by an NSS representative.

Preparing Intuit QuickBooks Online: The treasurer is expected to input the NSS general ledger numbers before inputting financial transactions. You can pull them from the convention budget spreadsheet. It is also a good idea to input the convention budget into Intuit QuickBooks Online for comparison later.

Inputting Monthly Financial Information: The treasurer will be inputting monthly financial information into Intuit QuickBooks Online. These are in the form of simple journal entries and are typically sourced from two types of activities:

- Journal entries from the registration database. Items are entered into Intuit QuickBooks Online as monthly totals, for example, monthly totals for merchandise, pins, registration, Geology Field Trips, etc.
- Journal entries for any checks/payments, bank fees etc.

You will want to make sure you include appropriate “memo” info when making these journal entries for ease of audit trail and tracking. Obviously, the Intuit QuickBooks Online cash account must be reconciled with the bank statement.

Checking/Deposit Accounts

The NSS S-T will direct or assist you to create a checking account. The S-T will also provide guidance on the proper selection of authorized signatures. The treasurer will want to have access to a copy of the monthly bank account and is responsible for reconciling the bank account to monthly accounting transactions and the registration data.

Signatures: The treasurer, S-T, or chair will most likely be signers on the account. The treasurer controls most of the check writing, but in the case of reimbursement to the convention chair or convention treasurer, the S-T must issue the check (signer). Of course, all checks should be accompanied with receipts, invoices, etc.

Credit Card and Electronic Payment Platforms

The S-T must be informed of any electronic payment platforms. The NSS prefers to work with existing contractors, so you should include them very early in this discussion. The S-T will be the authorizing signature on any contracts, or at least will give permission for any new electronic payment platforms.

Monthly Reports Required

The treasurer will be accessing or creating the following reports on a monthly basis:

1. Statements for credit cards or other electronic payment platforms.
2. Microsoft Excel “dump” of the registration data by month. The treasurer will need to download this from the registration platform.
3. Formatted report of the above registration data that is used to reconcile the bank account and source of data that are used for journal entries into Intuit QuickBooks Online. Expect significant manipulation of the Microsoft Excel data to maneuver into a customized format you can work with. This is your source data for much of the bank account reconciliation and Intuit QuickBooks Online entries.
4. Bank Account Reconciliation: Use a spreadsheet to track on cash. You will use the registration databases and bank statements for this report.
5. Review of Electronic Payment Transactions: You may want to glance at this or least have the report available should you encounter difficulty in reconciling the bank statement.
6. Intuit QuickBooks Online accounting reports for each month end:
 - a. General ledger
 - b. Trial Balance
 - c. Profit and Loss
 - d. Balance Sheet

e. At some point you will want to create a profit and loss statement that is tracked against the budget. Obviously, this is not useful until enough activity occurs to generate relevant cost comparison.

Filing of Monthly Report Tracking

The treasurer should have reporting/filing system to accommodate the following:

1. Bank statement to include copies of all checks
2. Electronic payment transactions, for example, credit card statements
3. Dump of registration data
4. Formatted registration data for accounting purposes
5. Bank account reconciliation
6. Intuit QuickBooks Online reports from above

This information should be emailed to the NSS Office or NSS S-T every month upon completion.

Registration

The treasurer will work closely with the Registration chair and have password access and good working knowledge of the registration database and report writing.

Manual Registration: In some infrequent cases members will want to complete a paper form rather than registering online. It is suggested that this registration form should be sent to the treasurer's physical address. The treasurer then emails the scanned forms to the Registration chair for inputting into the Registration database. Logically, this seems to be the best process for paper forms with check payments (directly to the treasurer for depositing). This process needs to be identified so there is a physical address on the paper registration forms.

Closeout

- Address New Members coupons.
- Clear list of any outstanding checks and deposits.
- Documentation that all outstanding expenses are addressed or clear documentation on what has not been addressed with a reason why it has not been addressed.
- Insurance payment issued to NSS.
- Expenses for NSS Office staff completed. This is part of the budget and should be part a Final Income/Balance Sheet report.
- All merchandise returned to NSS Bookstore.
- Any unused checks and deposits returned to HQ.
- All supporting documentation to HQ.

Appendix 11: Salon Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to support NSS Convention staff as they plan for hosting NSS Salons. Individual NSS Salon Committee sub-chairs may provide the convention staff with updated requirements for their respective Salons as their requirements become better defined. In the absence of such additional information the convention staff should plan for the following.

DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR NSS SALONS

NSS Salon Committee Chair(s)

The NSS has established an NSS Salons Committee to encourage cave-related art in a variety of media. The NSS Salon chair appoints the individual Salon chairs and has overall responsibility for all Salons. The NSS Salon chair sets the goals and standards for all the Salons, works with each Salon chair to develop consolidated publicity announcements, coordinates Salon convention requirements, and produces the integrated Salon Awards program at convention.

The NSS Salon chair is responsible for appointing or serving as emcee for the Evening Salon Program, and for coordinating the various Salons to provide a joint presentation. The NSS Salon chair will consolidate all audio and visual media, develop the program script, and manage the overall presentation.

Individual Salon Chairs

The chair of each Salon is responsible for conducting their individual Salon, coordinating the judging for the Salon, and granting awards.

The chairs of the various Salons are responsible for providing to the NSS Salon chair their Salon results, audio and visual media for the Salon, and self-portrait digital images of entrants who receive awards in the Salon (if available) for incorporation into the overall Salon Awards program.

The chairs of the individual Salons are responsible for obtaining the ribbons and medals to be used as awards, selecting who will receive awards, and distributing the awards. Upon request the Salon Committee chair can provide generic "NSS Salon" green and blue ribbons to the chairs of the individual Salons. Each Salon chair is responsible for obtaining the Medal Award for presentation during the Salon Awards program, or by mail, for their respective Salon. If the actual award is not available, a dummy award may be used. Cover Arts Salon awards are normally mailed to the person who entered the newsletter cover on behalf of the grotto, usually the editor.

Each Salon chair (or someone designated by them) will come on stage to announce the Salon award winners, and present the medal for their Salon (depending on Salon Awards Show timing).

NSS Convention Staff

The NSS Convention staff is responsible for providing facilities, equipment (display walls or display boards, display tables, and proper lighting for art displays; rooms;

audiovisual equipment; and other necessary hardware and equipment for the art exhibits including the Evening Salon Program and workshops) and services to support exhibiting the Salons during convention.

The costs for this equipment, hardware, facilities, and services should be included in the convention budget under the chart of accounts section for the Salon.

ENTRY RULES AND SCHEDULE

The Salon description, entry rules, and schedule (deadline for submitting entries, judging, etc.) for future Salons are developed by the Salon Committee and posted on the [NSS Salons website](#) by the October preceding the convention. The convention website should link to the NSS Salons website. The Salon Committee will develop an article for the *NSS News*, generally for the January or February issue.

CONVENTION FACILITIES and SUPPORT

General

The convention staff should include a Salons Liaison position. This person serves as the Convention Committee's point of contact with the Salons before convention and is on call during convention week to provide general assistance and solve facilities and equipment problems. The Salons convention liaison needs to be aware of the Convention Committee's plans and overall organization. They should also have a detailed knowledge of the convention facility and how to work with the facility's management. This person should:

- Expect to spend Monday morning of convention week helping the Fine Arts Salon, Print Salon, Cover Arts Salon, Cartographic Salon, Cave Ballad, T-Shirt and Symbolic Emblems Salons set up.
- Provide keys for the Photo, Video, and Multimedia Salons locked room. Be on call most of the day of the Salon Awards program (Thursday) to help set up the equipment for the program and prepare the facility.
- Help pack Salon equipment for shipment to the next convention or a storage site.
- Observe what goes on behind the scenes to set up the Salons during the prior convention.

Exhibits

The Cartographic, Cover Arts, Fine Arts, Print Salon, T-shirt, and Symbolic Emblems Salons should be located in adjacent areas.

Cartographic Salon

The Cartographic Salon requires a large, well-lit area with a wall or free-standing display boards on which approximately 50 maps of various sizes (some very large) can be taped or tacked for display. This requires about 150 linear feet of well-lit, 10-foot-tall display wall. A key should be provided to the Cartographic Salon chair early Monday morning and the chair can return it late Friday. If a key cannot be provided, then a person with the key should be on-call and easily accessible.

The Cartographic Salon Committee is responsible for displaying and taking down the maps. The room should be available from early Monday morning of convention week

through 6 p.m. Friday afternoon. Most maps are delivered to the Cartographic Salon chair on Monday morning and the committee normally works until late Monday night hanging them. The judging normally occurs on Tuesday and may last until very late on Tuesday and/or Wednesday nights. Thus, the committee must have access to the Cartographic Salon area on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday nights.

Cave Ballad Salon

The convention is responsible for providing, equipping, and scheduling a room for the Cave Ballad Salon Workshop. The Salon requires a room with a CD player, overhead projector, and chairs for an audience of 50 people. The room should be available for a 1-hour session scheduled between Monday noon and 4 p.m. Friday. The Cave Ballad Salon Committee is responsible for providing the ballad CD and hosting the listening session.

Cover Arts Salon (CAS)

The Cover Arts Salon requires a large, well-lit area with a wall or freestanding display boards on which approximately 200+ newsletter covers can be taped or tacked for display. They are usually displayed in three rows—sometimes four—to get them all in. So the display area should be at least 5 feet high by 50 feet wide. The CAS Committee is responsible for putting up and taking down the newsletter covers. When no one from the committee is able to attend the convention, the committee will make prior arrangements with the convention staff to put up and take down the newsletter covers. The room should be available from early Monday morning of convention week through 6 p.m. Friday afternoon.

Fine Arts Salon (FAS)

The Fine Arts Salon requires a large, well-lit room that can be locked. The key should be provided to the FAS Committee chair early Saturday morning and the chair can return it midday Friday. If a key cannot be provided, a person with the key should be on call and easily accessible.

Approximately 100 art objects will be displayed on shelves or tables or hung using nails or other attachments capable of holding their weight. This requires about 200 linear feet of well-lit, 10-foot-tall display wall or freestanding display boards, and several tables. There must be sufficient open space in the room to accommodate the freestanding display boards and tables and allow people to circulate around them.

The FAS Committee is responsible for setting up, hanging, and taking down the art. The room should be available from Saturday morning of convention week through 1 p.m. Friday afternoon. Most art objects are delivered to the FAS Committee chair on Saturday morning and the committee normally works until, at the latest, Sunday night displaying the entries. The judging normally occurs on Monday and may last until late Monday night. Thus, the committee must have access to the Fine Arts Salon area Monday night.

The FAS Opening on Monday will ideally (depending on the convention facilities) include wine and cheese refreshments. (If alcohol is prohibited depending upon the host

facility, then soft drinks/juices are substituted.) NSS FAS staff are responsible for obtaining the refreshments, plates, napkins, etc. (reimbursed with NSS FAS funds) and ensure all diligence to prevent spills, etc. and protect the carpet, etc. The NSS FAS Salon Opening may combine with the Print Salon Opening, in coordination/cooperation with that Salon's staff.

The NSS FAS Salon often hosts an artists' workshop and a collaborative art project. They will need space for the artists to work.

Print Salon

The Print Salon requires a large, well-lit room that can be locked. The key should be provided to the Print Salon chair by Saturday afternoon and the chair can return it Friday afternoon. If a key cannot be provided, a person with the key should be on-call and easily accessible.

Approximately 100 prints will be hung using push pins or other attachments capable of holding their weight. This requires about 200 linear feet of well-lit display wall or freestanding display boards. This can be provided as two 100-linear-foot rows of prints, one above the other, if the display space is tall enough to allow two rows of prints to be conveniently viewed. There must be sufficient open space in the room to accommodate the freestanding display boards and allow people to circulate around them.

The Print Salon Committee is responsible for hanging and taking down the prints. The room should be available from Saturday afternoon before convention week through 2 p.m. Friday afternoon. Most prints are delivered to the Print Salon chair by noon on Sunday and the committee normally works until late Sunday afternoon hanging the entries. The judging normally occurs on Monday morning and may last until late Monday night. Thus, the committee must have access to the Print Salon area Monday night. While judging takes place on Monday, the print Salon space/room should be closed to all but those involved in the judging and quiet enough for the judges to concentrate. The Print Salon judging and the Fine Arts Salon judging can take place simultaneously.

Symbolic Emblem Salon

The Symbolic Emblem Salon requires a large, well-lit area with a 50-foot-long wall or free-standing display boards and tables on which approximately 40 symbolic emblems (grotto patches, decals, pins, mugs, posters, brochures, etc.) can be displayed. Displays on walls or freestanding display boards will use nails or other attachments capable of holding their weight. The T-shirt and Symbolic Emblems Salon Committee is responsible for displaying and taking down the symbolic emblems. The room should be available from early Monday morning of convention week through 6 p.m. Friday afternoon.

T-Shirt Salon

The T-Shirt Salon requires a large, well-lit area with a wall or freestanding display boards on which approximately 40 T-shirts can be displayed using nails, push pins, or other attachments capable of holding their weight. This requires about 100 linear feet of well-lit display wall. This can be provided as two 50-linear-foot rows of T-shirts, one

above the other, if the display space is tall enough to allow two rows of shirts to be conveniently viewed. The T-Shirt & Symbolic Emblems Salon Committee is responsible for displaying and taking down the T-Shirts. The room should be available from early Monday morning of convention week through 6 p.m. Friday afternoon

Video Salon

The convention staff are responsible for providing a TV and DVD player on a stand or in a kiosk-type of display in a public location for continuous showing of NSS Video Salon entries. The Video Salon Committee is responsible for providing the videos.

Meetings, Critiques, and Workshops

Cartography Salon Critique

The Cartography Salon Critique will be held during a 2-hour time period on Friday morning at the Cartography Salon exhibit area. During the critique, the maps entered in this year's Salon will be critiqued by the audience and Salon judges, and cartography techniques will be discussed. Salon entrants may pick up their entries and awards. The Cartography Salon Critique must be held in the morning, so that the maps can be donated to the NSS Bookstore before they close up and leave the convention in the early afternoon.

Fine Arts Salon Meeting

The convention staff are responsible for providing and scheduling a room capable of holding 30 people from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Monday for the annual meeting of the Fine Arts Salon Subcommittee.

Fine Arts Salon Workshop

The Fine Arts Salon Workshop will be held during a 1-hour time period on Friday morning at the Fine Arts Salon exhibit area. During the workshop, the art entered in the Salon will be critiqued by the audience and Salon judges, and art techniques will be discussed.

Multimedia Salon Judging

The convention staff are responsible for providing, outfitting, and scheduling a darkened room capable of holding 5 people for a 4-hour session sometime between Monday afternoon and Tuesday evening, as coordinated with the chair of the Multimedia Salon (some years the Salon entries are judged prior to convention). The Multimedia Salon judging requires a digital projector and screen for viewing the entries.

Photo Salon Critique and Workshop

The convention staff are responsible for providing, equipping, and scheduling a darkened room for the Photo Salon Critique and Workshop. The room should be set up with a digital projector, screen, and chairs for holding an audience of 50 people during a 2-hour time period on Friday morning. Salon images not included in the evening program will be shown and the merits of various slides analyzed by the Salon judges (if present). The room should be set up with one digital projector and a 6-foot x 6-foot screen.

Print Salon Workshop

The Print Salon Workshop will be held during a 2-hour time period on Friday morning at the Print Salon exhibit area. During the workshop, the prints will be critiqued by the audience and Salon judges, and photographic techniques will be discussed. The Print Salon Workshop should be scheduled so that it does not conflict with the Slide Salon Workshop.

Video Salon Review Session

The convention staff are responsible for providing, equipping, and scheduling a room capable of holding 50 people from 9:00 a.m. to noon on Friday morning to project the video entries not shown during the Evening Salon Program. This room should be set up with one DVD player, one video projector, and a screen. A large-screen TV (25-inch or more) may be used in place of the digital projector and screen if necessary.

THURSDAY EVENING SALON AWARDS PROGRAM

(Updated 9/27/2018 by Dave Socky and Carol Tideman)

General

The Salon Awards Program should be scheduled for two showings on Thursday. The first showing is usually about 1.5 hours and normally would start at 5:30 p.m. and finish around 7:00 p.m. The second showing is normally around 2 hours, starting at 7:30 p.m. and running until 9:30 p.m. The first show does not include any talk by emcees or Salon chairs. Only the program for the Awards and Salons is shown. Do not schedule any events in the same room(s) as the Evening Salon Program during the day of the program. The Salon Committee will need the room closed off all day on Thursday and if possible, on Wednesday evening for setup. Please coordinate with the Salon Committee chair if there are any issues with this timing.

As soon as possible, the convention chair should provide the Salon chair with digital photos and a schematic sketch of the room to be used for the Salon awards show, indicating the following:

- stage dimensions
- room ceiling height
- electrical outlets near where the equipment will be set up
- light switches and type of lighting
- doors and permanently lit exit signs
- planned queuing area before Salon
- planned audience seating
- availability of nearby restrooms
- handicapped access

Venue (Location of Salon)

The venue must be large enough to seat half the convention attendees for the case when there will be both a short and long program.

Do not use a non-air-conditioned room or a gymnasium or similar non-theater type room for the Evening Salon Program if possible.

The convention chair should rent, or otherwise obtain, chairs and arrange audience seating so as to:

- Minimize the distance between the audience and the screens
- Avoid wide rows that cause extreme viewing angles for some of the audience
 - Enable easy movement between rows for audience members

Rear projection should be used if space is adequate to set up the projectors 30 to 35 feet behind the screens. **(See the “Rear Projection Requirements” section below.)** Contact the Salon chair if there are issues with rear projection. The only situation in which front projection would work is if there is a projection booth for the projector and the theater can supply a front projection screen that is at least 24 feet wide and 15 feet high. For a projection booth, it must be assured that the NSS projector will work or that the theater supplies a projector of appropriate power.

Theater

An air-conditioned theater large enough to seat all convention attendees is a highly desirable facility for holding the Salon. A capacity of half the convention attendees is suitable for the case where there will be a short and long program. The theater should have these attributes:

1. 35-foot-deep stage with curtains
2. Professional audio system
3. Comfortable audience seating on a gradually rising floor
4. Quiet air-conditioning system
5. The capacity of being made totally dark (except for fire exit signs)
6. Spot lights
7. House communications headsets for backstage command/control
8. On-stage platforms, stage access from left or right side, lecterns with a light, and microphones

Non-theater Type Room

If a non-theater type room must be used, the room must be capable of being made totally dark during the Salon program.

If an air-conditioned room is not available and the local climate provides cool evenings (low 70s at the time the Salon will be held), the Salon must be scheduled to start after total darkness (normally 9:30 p.m.), so that all windows and doors can be opened to allow ventilation. In such cases, light-traps must be constructed over all doors or other openings that will allow outdoor lights to enter the Salon room. An outdoor arena is not suitable for the Evening Salon Program unless cleared by the Salon chair.

The room should be quiet, without noise from fans, air-conditioning, or windows that will be open during the presentation. As soon as possible, the convention chair should confirm the room is dark in the evening, quiet when the ventilation system is operating

as it will be during the Salon program, and confirm availability of air-conditioning. If bleacher seats or folding chairs are used, keep the amount of time the audience will need to sit prior to the start of the Salon Awards Program to an absolute minimum.

Rear Projection Requirements Summary

1. There must be at a minimum 35 feet between the screen and the back of the stage.
2. There must be at least 20 feet of overhead clearance at the front of the stage where the screen will be set up.
3. The width of the stage where the screen is set up must be at least 35 feet.
4. Blackout curtains are needed for each side of the screen to the stage wall on left and right.
5. A 5- to 10-foot platform for the projector is required at the back of the stage.

Details

A projector platform (or stage risers) 5- to 10-feet high, depending on the venue, should be set up 30 to 35 feet behind the screen. The platform should have an area of at least 3 feet x 6 feet and, if made up of more than one unit, then the units must be locked together. Industrial scaffolding is preferred. Stacked tables are NOT steady enough for use. The front of the stage must have at least 18 feet of clearance for the screen. Theater curtains or 18-foot-tall (the height of the screen) dark drapes (supported by a frame) should be placed either side of the screen. If neither is available, the Salon chair will work with the convention chair to work out a way to prevent the audience members from seeing the video projector lights.

Equipment for Every Salon

Shipping costs should be included in the convention budget under the chart of accounts section for the Salon.

The Salon Committee equipment list has the most recent Salon equipment, where it is located and who is storing it. Personnel holding equipment may change from 1 year to the next. "Volunteer" equipment owned by Salon Committee members changes from 1 year to the next. Please refer to the Annual Salon Committee Report for the most recent equipment list. Please consult with the Salon chair to determine what will need to be shipped (and thus determine shipping costs).

Equipment owned by the NSS or Salon volunteers

1. 7,000-lumen high-definition projector with spare bulb
2. Short throw projector lens
3. Rear projection screen (24 foot wide by 15 foot high)
4. 4-channel video mixer to drive the projector with cables
5. Laptops and BluRay players

6. Audio mixer with cables
7. CD player
8. Microphones
9. Backstage TV monitor and video monitor

Backstage Command/Control Summary

1. The NSS-owned radios must be available Thursday for the Salon if required.
2. The backstage control will need 5 to 6 tables and 10 to 15 chairs.
3. A backstage speaker driven from the theater sound system is needed.
4. Two to four electrical outlets will be needed to power the projector and other equipment. These outlets should be from at least two separate circuit breakers.
5. At least one audio connection from backstage to the theater sound system is required.

Radios

If the venue does not have an in-house headset communications system, the Salon Awards Program staff will need to have access to radios.

Ten radios were purchased by the NSS Salon Committee in 1993 for use during the Evening Salon Program and general NSS Convention use. They are maintained between conventions by Earl Suitor

Upon request, he can ship them to convention just before the event. This cost should be part of the convention budget.

The Salon Committee has a nationwide itinerant mobile business radio frequency license until 2023. A temporary license can be obtained for additional business frequencies for use during convention week.

If the convention staff decides against using the NSS radios and instead rents or obtains others, the NSS radios should be made available to the NSS Salon Committee during the Evening Salon Program unless the Salon Program facility has an in-house communications system. Four to eight of the radios (depending upon the layout of the auditorium and the support personnel needed) are required from late Thursday afternoon to support the Evening Salon Program. The radios **MUST** have headsets for quiet use backstage and amongst the audience.

The radios are deployed as follows:

- Stage Manager
- Program Computer Operator
- Video/Computer Operator
- Audio Board Operator

- House Lighting Operator
- Spot Light Operator(s)
- Quality Control Operator(s)
- Other radios deployed as necessary (musicians, etc.)

Sound System

One or two lecterns (each with microphone holder and reading lamp) placed on stage to the sides of the screens are needed. The microphones (supplied by the Salon staff) will be either wired or wireless and will connect to the audio mixer backstage.

All program sound will be controlled from backstage by one audio operator, who gets a radio for communications. If there are two lecterns, there must be a safe way to access each lectern for the Salon chairs making presentations. Normally, there is only one lectern.

The NSS does not own audio equipment that is needed for a theater sound system. It must be rented or supplied by the theater. The rental must be included in the convention budget if it is not part of the theater venue planned for the Salon Awards Show. The rental should include:

1. Speakers adequate for the facility
2. Amplifiers with appropriate inputs and power to drive the speakers.
3. Mixer for multiple inputs
4. Back stage speaker driven by the theater sound system

Spotlights

A spotlight system is required for each lectern. Spotlights are required for the Salon award presenters and winners if they come to the stage.

House Lights

It is useful to have full control over house lighting to warn the audience prior to seating, to bring the house lights down for the show, up for intermission, and warning at the end of intermission.

Secure Room

A locked room for Salon preparation and storage is required with at least two keys. The room must be secure and suitable to store the electronic equipment required for the Salon between Saturday when we arrive at convention and Friday at the end of convention. If keys cannot be provided, a person with the facility key must be on call and easily accessible each day until the day of the Salon Awards program.

The room should have at least six chairs and two tables for the Salon staff to use to prepare Salon awards show material. The room will be used by the Salon Committee to complete the PowerPoint files used during the Salon Program. Dave Socky and others may also use the room to store photographic and video equipment.

SALON AWARDS

The chairs of the individual Salons are responsible for obtaining the ribbons and medals to be used as awards, selecting who will receive awards, and distributing the awards. Upon request, the Salon Committee chair can provide generic "NSS Salon" green and blue ribbons to the chairs of the individual Salons. Each chair is responsible for obtaining the Medal Award for presentation during the Evening Salon Program, or by mail, for their respective Salon. If the actual award is not available, a dummy award can be used.

Cover Art Salon awards are normally removed from the winning covers on Friday morning at Convention by a member of the grotto. If any ribbons remain, the Cover Arts Salon chair will mail them to the editor of the winning cover. All covers are then turned over to the *Members Manual* chair.

ENTRANT FEEDBACK

Each Salon chair is responsible for communicating with the entrants in their Salon and providing them feedback and the detailed criteria used for judging the Salon entries.

POINTS OF CONTACT

Contact information for NSS Salons is located on the NSS Salons website:
([HTTP://WWW.caves.org/committee/salons/](http://www.caves.org/committee/salons/))

SALON PUBLICITY

The Year Before

The convention staff of the following year's convention need to provide the NSS Salon chair with the following before the prior convention:

Convention Logo

An electronic file of the upcoming convention logo suitable for PowerPoint, to project at the end of the prior convention's Salon Program and at the beginning of the convention's program.

Convention Video

Each Evening Salon Program normally concludes with a slide or video program on the upcoming convention. The upcoming convention should provide either the convention photo/video program or a description (length and projection equipment required) of the program to the Salon Chair by April of the year before so he can plan to include it in the Salon program of the preceding convention.

NSS News and NSS Website

The NSS Salon chair will coordinate and send the *NSS News* and post on the NSS Salon website and NSS Discussion Board a consolidated announcement and solicitation of entries for all Salons. A draft will be circulated to all Salon chairs for comment the September before each convention.

Convention Program

The convention staff is responsible for including information on the Salons in the convention program:

1. "NSS Fine Arts Salon: Cave- and karst-related drawings, paintings, sculpture, and other art forms not covered in the other NSS Salons will be exhibited and available for sale from 2 p.m. Monday through noon Friday (state its location).

The Fine Arts Salon opening reception on Monday includes wine and cheese-type refreshments."

If alcohol is prohibited depending upon the host facility, then soft drinks/juices will be substituted. The NSS FAS Salon opening may combine with the Print Salon opening, in coordination/ cooperation with that Salon's staff.

2. "NSS Print Salon: Photographic prints of cave-related subjects will be exhibited from Tuesday morning through noon Friday in (state its location)."

3. "NSS Cartographic Salon: Cave- and karst-related maps will be exhibited from noon Monday through noon Friday in (state its location)."

4. "Cover Arts Salon The best covers from newsletters of NSS-affiliated organizations that were distributed in (insert the previous year) will be exhibited from noon Monday through noon Friday in (state its location)."

5. "NSS T-Shirt Salon: T-shirts of cave-related subjects will be exhibited from noon Monday through noon Friday in (state its location)."

6. "NSS Symbolic Emblem Salon: Symbolic emblems (patches, decals, pins, mugs, etc.) related to caves or caving will be exhibited from noon Monday through noon Friday in (state its location)."

7. "NSS Cave Ballad Salon: Ballads related to caves or caving will be presented (a 1-hour time period) in (state the location)."

8. "NSS Salon Awards Program: The NSS Salon Awards Program will be held Thursday starting at 8 p.m. (or state other actual time) at (state the location and describe any special arrangements for transportation and parking). The doors to the auditorium will open (state the time, from 1 hour to one-half hour before the program) for admission. The program will include the best entries in the NSS Photo, the Multimedia Photo Salon, and the Video Salon. The top winners of each Salon will also be announced."

9. "NSS Photo Salon Workshop: A Photo Salon workshop will be held (state a 1 1/2 hour time period on Friday morning) at (state the location). During the workshop, the slides entered in this year's Salon will be critiqued by the audience and Salon judges, and photographic techniques will be discussed. Salon entrants may pick up their entries and awards."

10. "NSS Print Salon Workshop: A Print Salon workshop will be held (state a 1 1/2 hour time period on Friday morning) at the Print Salon exhibit area (state the location). During the workshop, the prints will be critiqued by the audience and the Salon judges, and photographic techniques will be discussed. Salon entrants may pick up their entries and awards." (Note: The Print workshop should be scheduled such that it does not occupy the same time slot as the Slide or Map workshop.)

11. "NSS Cartography Salon Workshop: A Cartography Salon workshop will be held (state the a 2-hour time period on Friday morning) at the Cartography Salon exhibit area

(state the location). During the workshop, the maps entered in this year's Salon will be critiqued by the audience and Salon judges, and map drawing techniques will be discussed. Salon entrants may pick up their entries and awards." The Cartography Salon workshop must be held in the morning, so that the maps can be donated to the NSS Bookstore before the store packs up and leaves in the early afternoon.

12. "NSS Fine Arts Salon Workshop: A Fine Arts Salon workshop will be held (state a 2-hour time period) on Friday morning at the Fine Arts Salon exhibit area (state the location). During the workshop, the art entered in this year's Salon will be critiqued by the audience and Salon judges, and art techniques will be discussed. Salon entrants may pick up their entries and awards."

13. "Video Salon Session: Because of their length, most entries in the NSS Video Salon will not be shown in their entirety during the Thursday Evening Salon Program. However, all Video Salon entries will be shown on Friday morning starting at 9 a.m. at (state the location)."

14. "Annual meeting of the NSS Fine Art Salon (FAS): Monday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Discuss FAS business and vote on the new committee for the next year's NSS Convention. (State the location.) This is an open meeting to all NSS Convention attendees who have an interest in the NSS FAS."

EXAMPLE OF NSS SALON ANNOUNCEMENTS

NSS Cave Arts and Music Salons

The NSS Cave Arts and Music Salons promote and recognize excellent cave-related art, artists, and musicians. The Salons are open to everyone, regardless of caving affiliation or attendance at the Convention. Entries for each Salon are exhibited at the NSS Convention; for several Salons, only the best entries will be shown. The highest awards for each Salon are presented, and a portrait of the winner shown, during the convention's Thursday evening Salon Awards Program. For further details, please reference the [NSS Salons Information website](#).

ENTRIES

Detailed rules of entry are provided below for each Salon. All entries must be the original work of the entrant(s), and must relate to caves or caving, or (in a few Salons) to karst. Entries that incorporate the work of others without their permission, promote unsafe practices, violate NSS conservation policies, or may be detrimental to good relations with cave owners, will not be accepted. Entries that have been awarded or exhibited in past NSS Salons may not be entered again.

INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED WITH ENTRIES

Each Salon has its own entry form. Please refer to the Salon website to download the entry form. If you have questions, please contact the Salon chair.

JUDGING

Entries are judged by a panel of judges on the basis of artistic and technical merit, impact, "caver appeal," and other criteria based on the Salon's history and type of entry. Some Salons are judged prior to the NSS Convention, some during the convention.

Further rules and criteria are outlined below, described further on the individual Salon websites, or may be obtained directly from the chair of each Salon.

RETURN OF ENTRIES

Entries will be returned to the artist if requested at the time of entry, unless otherwise specified in the Salon rules. Entrants are encouraged to donate their entries to the NSS. Entrants (or their previously designated agent) may pick up their own entries in the Salon exhibit area at the close of the Salons. Please specify in writing BEFORE the convention if you want someone else to pick up your entry. Entries may be returned by mail if they are sent in reusable packaging materials and include the cost of postage and other special fees (registered post, insurance, etc.).

RIGHTS AND CONDITIONS

The NSS Salons support Pro Imaging's Artist's Bill of Rights for photography competitions. All entrants retain copyright and all moral and intellectual rights to their work. Credit and copyright notice will be included with all images displayed.

Digital copyright information will not be removed from any image; likewise, if no such digital information is included, no information will be added. All photographic entrants are encouraged to include digital data in the Exchangeable Image File Format (EXIF). Salons may request certain limited usage rights for the purpose of recognizing the winners, providing media coverage of the NSS Convention, or promoting the next such Salon/contest.

Rights and Conditions are on the Salon entry forms. All such rights are optional for each entrant and each entry, and are granted individually by the entrant on the Salon's entry form. The entry form Rights and Conditions boxes must be checked and the form signed by the entrant for the entry to be accepted for showing. Indicate agreement with any or all by marking the box(es) on the entry form and signing it.

All entries will be handled and displayed with the utmost care, but the organizers do not bear any responsibility for loss or damage however caused. The entrant bears the responsibility for insuring their own works if they deem it necessary.

Ballad Salon

CATEGORIES

Entries may be in one of three categories: Traditional (new words written to an existing song), Original (completely original words and music), and Avant-garde (non-standard).

ENTRIES

Please submit an entry form with each entry (available for download from the [Cave Ballad Salon website](#)).

Entries should be submitted in digital form, either by email, FTP download, or on a CD through the mail. Please include a self-portrait with your entry or entries, preferably in digital form, but slides or prints are acceptable.

JUDGING CRITERIA

Judging will occur prior to the by an international panel based on the factors published on the website, including scores for Technical, Artistic, Caver Appeal, and Humor aspects of the music.

Cartographic Salon

Cave cartographers are invited to submit entries for the Cartographic Salon. This competition blends technical expertise and artistic depiction. No entry fee is required. Maps may be submitted for judging or for display only. Categories are not yet finalized but will encompass digital and hand-drawn maps depicting caves and karst features. No more than five maps may be entered by any cartographer. Judging will occur during the convention by an NSS team of experienced cave cartographers. All maps will be displayed. The rules and judging criteria are below.

ENTRY RULES

All maps must be representations of caves or karst-related features. Enter copies of maps, not the originals. There is no restriction on methods of presentation; innovative techniques are encouraged. All mailed entries must reach the convention address or be delivered to the Cartographic Salon exhibition area at the convention by noon on Sunday. If space allows, maps may be displayed in the Salon but not judged, at the entrant's option.

JUDGING CRITERIA

Judges will look for mandatory features and quality factors and assign appropriate point values to each factor. The judges may divide the maps into categories.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

Mandatory and quality factors are described in detail on the [Cartography Salon website](#), as are judging methods and scoring details (see below).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Contact the Salon chair or reference the [Cartography Salon website](#).

Cover Art Salon

The purpose of the Cover Art Salon is to exhibit and encourage excellence in the design and images on the covers of cave publications. Covers will be judged in one of three categories: (1) Computer Enhanced, (2) Non-Photographic, and (3) Photographic. Please note the category on the back of each cover. The Computer Enhanced category includes: (1) covers that were distributed only in an online format instead of the traditional paper format, and (2) cover photographs that were obviously manipulated by computer from the way they were originally printed or shot. Print online covers on paper before submission.

ENTRIES

All entries must be mailed accompanied by the entry form. Please make checks or money orders payable to "NSS." Covers must be from newsletters or other publications of NSS-affiliated organizations that were distributed in the prior 2 years and never before entered in this Salon. Entries should be mailed unfolded and unmounted in a

large envelope, preferably with a cardboard stiffener. Entries will be considered donations to the NSS and not returned.

ENTRY FORM

The information on the entry form will be used as a display card beneath your entry. Please cut out each display card prior to mailing so that it is ready for display. All entrants retain copyright and all moral and intellectual rights to their work. Credit will be included with all items displayed.

JUDGING

Judging will be done prior to the convention. Judges reserve the right to alter categories where deemed necessary. If you have questions, email coverartssalon@caves.org.

Fine Arts Salon

The Fine Arts Salon is the venue for exhibiting speleologically inspired artwork. Artwork can be in any medium, from painting and sketching to digitally altered photography, computer graphics, pottery and sculpture, textiles, and mixed media. There will be SpeleoArt workshops and events held in conjunction with the exhibition.

APPLICATION TO EXHIBIT

Artists may use one of two application methods:

1. Online form from the [SpeleoArt website](#).
2. Postal form: Download from the [SpeleoArt website](#) and mail to the Salon Coordinator.

ENTRY FORMS

All entry forms must be submitted with digital images ONLY—no original artwork. Each digital image must have the following information embedded in its metadata: Name of artist, dimensions of the piece, category to be judged in (if judging is desired), medium. The firm deadline for postal entry forms to arrive will be listed on the website. Original artworks submitted at the convention site will not be accepted unless the entry form arrived by the posted deadline. Include a self-portrait for the awards ceremony, preferably a digital image. The Fine Arts Salon judges on Sunday afternoon, with the Print Salon. Artists will have until 9 a.m. Sunday morning to drop off artwork. The opening will be at the usual time Monday at 12 noon.

Entries will be previewed and artists will be notified of acceptance by mail or email. Additional information, and the convention address to which to send artwork, will be supplied with notification of acceptance.

ARTWORKS

The number of artworks is limited to four per person. The size of artworks will be limited to space available for each individual artist. Artwork over 60 cm x 60 cm must be approved by the coordinator. There is provision for artwork to be displayed but not judged if the artist so wishes. We will provide up to an extra four artworks to be

displayed if room is available; these artworks will not be judged. We encourage the exhibition of artwork that has won awards in previous shows; these will not be judged.

FEE*

Send the entry fee with the entry form or with the artworks to be exhibited.

CATEGORIES

Art will be judged in six categories, further described on the [SpeleoArt website](#):

1. Paint/Pastel
2. Sketch
3. Mixed Media: use of more than one medium
4. 3D
5. Textile
6. Multimedia-digital medium.

JUDGING

Judging will be done at the convention. Judging for the Fine Arts Salon Award is done by art and speleology professionals. Judging for the SpeleoArt Award is by caver ballot. Judges' choice is final. Awards will be announced and handed out on Awards Night at the Salon Awards Program during Convention Week.

SELLING ARTWORKS

We encourage artists to make all exhibited artworks available for sale. SpeleoArt will deduct a 20% commission from all art sold.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Contact the Salon chair at fineartsalon@caves.org

Multimedia Program Salon

The Multimedia Program Salon accepts multiple-image computer presentations less than 15 minutes in length, which can include music, narration, animations, or video. Video may not occupy more than one-third of the length. Presentations can be submitted on either CD or DVD. Further information, entry, and technical details, and judging criteria are available on the [Multimedia Program Salon website](#).

MULTIMEDIA PROGRAM

A good multimedia program begins with good images, presented in an interesting way that engages the viewer and maintains interest. Its purpose can be educational or simply to set a mood. Ultimately, it should entertain, whether it informs or not.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

All entries must be mailed to the Salon chair by the deadline posted on the web. Include a self-portrait, as a digital image. Please contact the Salon chair to make inquiries about the Salon. (You may also upload it at yousendit.com or use an FTP site, but give notice that you will do that in an email.)

JUDGING

Judging will be done prior to the convention by an NSS panel. All entries will be judged, but only the best entry will be shown on Salon night. Other entries Accepted for Show will be shown at another time during the convention. Entries will be judged on four factors: Image Quality (1 to 10 points); Image Selection (1 to 10 points); Presentation Impact (1 to 10 points); Presentation Technique (1 to 10 points).

SOURCES FOR SOFTWARE

There are a growing number of programs available for making multimedia programs. Some of these are inexpensive for their power, and one of them For a list of programs, please refer to the [Multimedia Program Salon website](#).

Photographic Salon

The Photographic Salon celebrates the ethereal beauty of projected images of caves and caving. Cave-related slides and images are projected once, during the Thursday night Salon Awards Program, with a background of instrumental music written for the occasion. Images or slides must be of caves, cave-related subjects, or cave-related humor.

CATEGORIES

There are 5 categories. 1. Story Series (maximum of 20 slides, include a caption for each slide in the series, considered a single entry); 2. Cave Photo (cave entrance, passage, formations); 3. Caver Photos (the focus is on the person or action); 4. Humor; 5. Science Photos (focus on the scientific aspect of caves; please submit an explanation of the reason the photo was taken and/or the subject of the research).

ENTRY FEES

There is a limit of 30 digital images per photographer. If you wish your entry/entries returned by mail, you must provide postage cost and reusable packaging. Entry fees are payable by check or money order payable to "NSS."

ENTRIES

All entries must be mailed to the Salon chair by the deadline posted on the website. Please complete the entry form (available from the [Photo Salon website](#), which asks you to assign each image a Category, a Number, and a Title. We encourage you to include a short description of the image (location, participants, unusual stories associated with the image or trip). Please also send a self-portrait digital image. Please check the artist's Rights and Conditions release boxes and sign the form before sending it in.

DIGITAL ENTRIES

Submit digital images on a CD, DVD, or thumb drive in standard file format (JPG) in the highest resolution available. Digital image files must be given a file name similar to the image's title and, if possible, the photographer's entry number, for example, 01-NiceCavePhoto.jpg. Digital entries are encouraged to include digital data in the Exchangeable Image File Format (EXIF).

JUDGING

Judging is done prior to the convention. Judging criteria are given on the NSS [Photo Salon website](#). Each category is judged separately, although there is a single "Best in Show" award for all entries in the Photo Salon.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For answers to questions, contact the Salon chair.

Print Salon: Exhibition of Photographic Prints

DEADLINE

All entries must be delivered to the Salon chair at the NSS Convention Print Salon exhibition area or mailed to NSS Convention. Please include your email address on the outside of the package so that we can let you know by email that your package has arrived. If mailing, please send it so it arrives no later than the deadline posted on the website.

JUDGING

Judging will occur on Sunday. Entries received after 10 a.m. will not be judged.

ENTRIES

Refer to the [Print Salon website](#) for the latest details and the entry form. Each entry should include a hard copy of the Print Salon Entry Form and a CD, DVD, or thumb drive containing a high-resolution JPG or TIF digital file for each print entry, a digital file of a head-and-shoulders self-portrait, and a brief (~100 words) text file about yourself. Each entry, or group of entries, must include return postage or a note indicating that you will pick up the prints at the end of the Salon, the name of a designated person to pick up the prints, or the notation "Donated to the NSS."

CATEGORIES

There are three entry categories Color, Black and White, and a new Scientific category.

ENTRY RULES

No photographer may enter more than 10 prints, of which no more than 8 may be entered into any one category. The entry fee is \$1 per print. There is no fee if the print is donated to the NSS. Prints may be created digitally (using a computer) or traditionally (in a darkroom). Prints must measure at least 20 cm x 25 cm (8 inches x 10 inches), but be no larger than 51 cm x 61 cm (20 inches x 24 inches). All prints must be mounted, but not framed. They may be matted at the discretion of the entrant. All prints must be titled. There must not be any lettering on the print. A small title card (samples are on the website above) with the Title and Entry Category ONLY will be displayed with each print during judging. If one is not included with the print a handwritten one will be made for it.

A full info card, to be shown AFTER judging, should also be included with each print. The following information should appear on the info card: Title of the print; name of the photographer(s); Entry Category; and a Print Description, which may be up to 100 words of description and could include the cave/expedition/project, special conditions, etc. Details of the photo such as exposure settings, flash type, software, and other technical data may be in addition to the 100 words but should be kept as short as possible.

DISPLAY ONLY

Entrants may offer prints for display in addition to those entered for competition. In addition to the 10 prints permitted for competition, you may offer up to 5 more for display only. These prints will not be judged, only admired. If space is limited, the chairs of the Salon may be unable to display them. Prints entered for judging will have priority.

“Display only” prints must be postmarked by the deadline posted on the website. Prints submitted for display must be mounted, but not necessarily titled or matted. They may also be prints that have been exhibited in other competitions. They may not be larger or smaller than the size requirements for those accepted for judging.

SALES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For questions concerning entries or sales of prints, please email the Salon chair.

Symbolic Emblems Salon

The Symbolic Emblem Salon is a judged exhibition of symbolic emblems (posters, logos, patches, decals, pins, etc.) related to caves or caving. All symbolic emblem designs must be representative of a caving- or karst-related organization (such as a caving club, grotto, section, or conservancy) or of a caving-related or karst-related event (such as a caving club event, grotto event, section gathering, meeting, conference, or convention). The Salon chair will decide if a proposed entry fits the description of a symbolic emblem and is accepted for judging. Items that the Salon chair determines do not fit the description may be accepted for display in a nearby area. If in doubt, please contact the Salon chair in advance to discuss your proposed entry.

HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRIES

All entries must be mailed to the Salon chair. For each entry, complete and print the entry form available for download from the [Symbolic Emblems Salon website](#) to mail with your item. Entry forms will be available for completion in the display area for items delivered at the convention. Entries will be considered to have been donated to the NSS unless otherwise specified when submitted.

ENTRY FEES

Fees for entries delivered at the convention may be paid in cash at that time. Fees for entries submitted in advance may be made by check (drawn on a US bank) or money order in US dollars payable to “NSS.” T-shirt Salon entry fees are separate from the Symbolic Emblem Salon entry fees.

JUDGING

An NSS panel of judges will judge all entries during the convention. Symbolic emblem entries may, at the entrant’s option, be submitted for display but not judging.

RIGHTS AND CONDITIONS

All entrants retain copyright and all moral and intellectual rights to their work. Credit will be included with all objects displayed. The NSS request(s) further rights, which are optional. These rights are documented on the entry form and the [Symbolic Emblems Salon website](#).

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have questions contact the Salon chair.

T-Shirt Salon

The T-Shirt Salon is a judged exhibition of T-shirt designs related to caves or caving. All T-shirt designs must be representative of a caving- or karst-related organization (such

as a caving club, grotto, section, or conservancy) or of a caving- or karst-related event (such as a caving club event, a grotto event, a section gathering, a meeting, a conference, or convention). T-shirts with designs on front and back may be entered as a single design or as two separate designs.

HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRIES

All entries must be mailed to the Salon chair (check the [T-Shirt Salon website](#) for location). For each entry, complete and print the entry form available for download from the [T-Shirt Salon website](#). Entry forms will be available for completion in the display area for items delivered at the convention. Entries will be considered to have been donated to the NSS unless otherwise specified when submitted. Two T-shirts must be provided for all two-sided designs, for display purposes.

ENTRY FEES

Fees for entries delivered at the convention must be paid in cash at that time. Fees for entries submitted in advance may be made by check (drawn on a US bank) or money order in US dollars payable to "NSS." T-Shirt Salon entry fees are separate from the Symbolic Emblem Salon entry fees.

JUDGING

An NSS panel of judges will judge all entries during the convention. At the entrant's option, T-Shirts may be entered for display but not judging.

RIGHTS AND CONDITIONS

All entrants retain copyright and all moral and intellectual rights to their work. Credit will be included with all objects displayed. The NSS request(s) further rights, which are optional. These rights are documented on the entry form and the [T-Shirt Salon website](#).

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have questions, contact the Salon chair.

Video Salon

The Video Salon is a competition among producers of moving-image depictions related to caves, cavers, caving, and cave conservation/restoration. Time permitting, all entries will be shown at the NSS Convention.

ENTRY RULES

The Video Salon is open to anyone, amateur or professional, regardless of affiliation with caving organizations or attendance at the NSS Convention. Entries that have been exhibited in past Video Salons cannot be entered again. All entries must be entirely the work of the entrant, unless credit is included for any/all work of others that is used, indicating that permission has been obtained. Entries must be postmarked no later than the deadline posted on the web. Each entry must be accompanied by an official entry form, available from the NSS [Video Salon website](#).

ENTRY FEES

The fee may be paid by check money order.

ENTRIES

Entries may be submitted in any **National Television System Committee** (NTSC) format: DVD, MiniDV tape, S-VHS, or VHS tape. If you wish to enter a production in any other format (PAL, computer-based file, etc.), please contact the chair in advance.

JUDGING

All entries will be judged prior to the NSS Convention by a panel of jurors who are cavers and experts in the field of videography. Entries will be judged on artistic merit, technical merit, impact, and appeal to cavers.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Entries will not be returned unless reusable packaging and return postage is included. Questions may be directed to the Salon chair.

Appendix 12: Sponsorship's and Grants

Several to many thousands of dollars can be obtained in the form of Sponsorship's and grants. This can be a significant additional source of convention income. Conversely, the amount of effort it takes to obtain Sponsorship's is relatively low, yielding a favorable cost-benefit ratio. The key points to remember are to start well in advance of the convention, obtain government licenses to seek donations (see below), and prepare a sponsorship proposal.

Sponsorship's are the chief operating officer's bailiwick in many nonprofits, and that has been the case with some NSS Conventions. A convention chair has more implied persuasion power than a staff member lower on the organizational chart, although reality might be otherwise. Nonetheless, appointing a different staff member is appropriate if the convention chair cannot do this job. Ideally, the convention chair would make cold calls and sign correspondences, and a second staff member would prepare applications and bird-dog the process.

Organizations setting aside sponsorship funds will have instructions on their websites where you can learn about their guidelines, obtain application forms, and see whether an NSS Convention conforms to their definition of appropriate events. Review their internal schedule for deadlines. You may find that the donation must be budgeted before the sponsor's next year budget is approved, which could mean that your application needs to be in their hands 1 to 2 years prior to convention.

Telephone potential sponsors' representatives to make sure you understand their guidelines, to find out if an NSS Convention is likely to be awarded, and to learn how large a donation they might recommend you apply for. Equally importantly, you should phone them to find out what they have not or will not put in writing on their website. It is much better to make the first few contacts with a potential sponsor via voice vs. email or mail.

Find out from the sponsor's rep what to say and not say in your application and whether there are any sponsor "specials" going on in your convention year that can be taken advantage of by rewording an application or by adding an event to the convention schedule. You can often get a verbal estimate of how much money they might have available in the convention year, whereas they might not put such a thing in writing. Are there any updates to their application process since the last revision of their website?

Prepare a list of potential sponsors, and err on the side of too many. Contact recent NSS Convention and/or sponsorship chairs to find out who donated to previous conventions and which of them might be willing to sponsor yours. Prepare a list of local non-franchise outdoor recreation stores. Are there any local or in-state consulting companies that focus on karst issues? Some state and local environmental agencies may be willing to be sponsors. Local grottos and even local cavers might want to be sponsors.

Franchised outdoor equipment stores like Dick's and Cabella's receive hundreds of requests annually, and are unlikely to sponsor our conventions. Do not ask speleo-vendors for sponsorship, as they already must pay to display their wares at conventions and are at conventions to make money. Plus, they may already donate items for the auction or a raffle.

Some states require a special license before a convention can legally request donations. An NSS Convention may need to incorporate the NSS in the convention state before being able to apply for a license to request donations. If a license is needed, you should obtain incorporation papers at least a year in advance of convention. The NSS must be re-incorporated each year or its incorporation in that state will lapse, which is fine once convention is over.

A sponsorship proposal contains a written (letter) request for sponsorship and the benefits and costs of each level of sponsorship. You can call the levels "Platinum," "Gold," "Silver," "Bronze," or whatever. Each increasing dollar level entitles a sponsor to an ever-larger set of benefits. In determining how many levels to establish, remember that sponsors are likely to contribute the minimum amount for a given level, so more levels may be better than fewer. Here is an example of costs and benefits for three levels of sponsorship:

Silver: \$250 minimum donation:

- Home page link on convention website
- Verbal recognition at Awards Banquet
- Quarter-page ad in program guide
- Daily mention in daily rag
- Sponsor banner displayed prominently all week (sponsors to provide)
- Two day passes for any day, includes evening activities
- Special table seating at Awards Banquet for up to two people

Gold: \$500 minimum donation:

- Home page link on convention website
- Verbal recognition at Awards Banquet
- Half-page ad in program guide
- Daily mention in daily rag
- Sponsor banner displayed prominently all week (sponsors to provide)
- Exhibit space
- One full week registration, includes evening activities
- Special table seating at Awards Banquet for up to four people

Platinum: \$1,000 minimum donation:

- Home page link on convention website
- Verbal recognition at Awards Banquet
- Full-page ad in program guide
- Daily mention in daily rag
- Logo (column width) in daily rag

- Sponsor banner displayed prominently all week (sponsors to provide)
- Exhibit space
- Two full week registrations – includes evening activities
- Special table seating at Awards Banquet for up to four people, four NSS Convention T-shirts, patches, and pins

Most counties have a tourist council, its purpose being to increase the number of visitors and dollars coming into the local community. Among the many things that these councils do, of particular interest to us, is that they help find locally available facilities and equipment, provide day-to-day local knowledge to convention organizers and process tourist grant applications. Tourist grant dollars can be greater than any other sponsorship donation; if so, this potential income source should be given the highest priority of all gift sources.

Remembering that grant applications may have to be submitted more than a year prior to the event, contact the tourist council at least 2 years in advance of convention. Obtain a copy of their tourist grant application form and any accompanying instructions. The council will be most interested in one or two particular metrics, usually bed-nights, on which to base grant allocations. NSS Conventions do very well on that scale because of relatively high attendances multiplied by a relatively large number of nights. Find out what the council's critical metrics are and address them explicitly in your grant application. Address all issues requested by the application; otherwise, it will be returned to you for modification. Do not put yourself into the face-losing position of having to make multiple submissions.

Some states have tourist bureaus similar to local tourist councils and should be contacted for applicability of the convention. Unfortunately, state sponsorship is typically limited to very large events bringing in 50,000 or more people from out of state.

Appendix 13: Tourist Councils/Chambers of Commerce

Many countries maintain an organization tasked with bringing tourist events into their borders and then supporting organizers so that their events are successful. Tourist council staff are small but dedicated. Their directors seem to be chosen as much for knowing nearly everybody in town as for their organizational and managerial skills. They are an invaluable resource, perhaps more so than any other local civic organization.

Contact the local tourist council or Chamber of Commerce as soon as you start considering their bailiwick. Tell them their venue is one of several you are looking at. Be vague with them about your alternative venues, but be a little doubtful about those alternatives, too. This is also the time to start talking to the tourist council about tourist grants and fund amounts because you may never have more leverage than while you are still “looking.”

Tourist council staff may know of better local facilities than you are already looking at. NSS Conventions require all sorts of equipment, and a good tourist council staff will know where to get these things and sometimes can get them for free. Tourist council staff will know which local politicians to invite to the opening ceremony or other activities. In general, they know who you need to talk to about most anything local and are eager to provide introductions.

Early on, tourist council staff will report to their politically appointed directors that the convention may bring several thousand bed-nights to their county. This represents a lot of money for the hotel, restaurant, gas station, and other industries servicing tourists. Their interest in securing the convention will therefore be very high, and pressure to grease your skids will flood out into the local business and government community.

If there is a need for the use of public facilities, a good tourist council staff will know who to approach and will contact that person in advance on your behalf to ensure that the public servant understands the important economic benefits to the county. It is not unusual for an occasional public servant to resent the coming of the NSS Convention or resent the use of “his” turf. A good tourist council staff will know who to contact to override an uncooperative bureaucrat. This happens more often than you might imagine.

Appendix 14: COG Rules

The following comprises Appendix Q of the *BOG Manual* and must be adhered to during the convention.

RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE CONGRESS OF GROTTOS

(Refer to Section 48)

- I. The name of this organization shall be the Congress of Grottos of the National Speleological Society.
- II. The Congress shall meet each year during the annual convention of the NSS.
- III. Representation at the Congress of Grottos (hereafter referred to as COG) shall be determined in the following manner:
 - A. Each Grotto (Chapter), Section, Regional Association, and Survey shall be entitled to representation according to the following schedule: two votes for 5-15 NSS members, three votes for 16-25 NSS members, four votes for 26-35 NSS members, and so on.
 - B. In determining the number of votes to which an Internal Organization (I/O) is entitled, no NSS member may be counted as a member of more than one I/O.
 - C. The NSS membership database shall be used to determine representation.
 - D. Each I/O is entitled to a minimum of two votes.
 - E. Any collection of eight or more NSS members who are not members of a Grotto may receive representation according to the same schedule as for Grottos with the provision that the NSS member has designated no Primary Affiliation in the NSS database.
- IV.
 - A. The COG shall be composed of delegates who are members in good standing of the NSS.
 - B. Each I/O and grouping of NSS members may appoint any number of delegates up to a maximum of the number of votes to which it is entitled.
 - C. I/O's may, in order to ensure their representation at COG, appoint as delegates proxies who are not members of the I/O, provided written authorization is presented.
 - D. If delegate and proxy methods are not possible, votes may be submitted in writing to the Chair of the COG. If, during discussion on the floor, a resolution is amended to change its original intent, the written vote will not be cast.
 - E. Delegations need not cast their votes as a unit but may split the vote to indicate the desires of the membership. Grottos may instruct their delegates how to vote or may allow them discretionary voting power.
 - F. Distinctive placards will be provided, bearing the name of the I/O and the number of votes to which it is entitled.

- G. Voting shall be done initially by the show of placards. The Chair may, at his discretion or upon the request of any delegate, call for a roll call vote.
- V. Any NSS member may attend the COG to express his views and shall be entitled to speak if recognized by the Chair.
- VI. The Board of Governors of the NSS are requested to attend COG, as observers, to be advised of the views of the membership. Delegates may address questions to the Officers regarding their department if it is germane to the discussion.
- VII. The COG shall elect a Chair of the COG to preside at meetings of the COG during his term of office, and also a Vice-Chair.
 - A. The Chair and Vice-Chair shall be nominated and elected by the assembled Congress at its meeting during the annual convention.
 - B. These officers shall serve from the close of one annual convention to the close of the succeeding annual convention.
 - C. A Chair may not serve more than four terms in succession.
 - D. No one may be elected Chair who has not attended at least one COG prior to his election.
 - E. A Chair or Vice-Chair who becomes an Officer or Director of the Society during his term shall complete his term with the COG but may not be re-elected.
 - F. If the Chair of the COG vacates his office during the term, the office shall be assumed by the Vice-Chair.
- VIII. The agenda of the Congress shall consist of resolutions submitted for its consideration.
 - A. Resolutions may be submitted by any I/O or grouping of eight or more NSS members. The COG encourages the BOG and the Executive Committee to refer significant issues to the COG for consideration.
 - B. An Issues Committee shall be appointed by the Chair of the COG and by the Chair of the I/O Committee of the Society to determine the issues confronting the Society and to propose resolutions intended to reveal the views of the membership. The Issues Committee shall provide the I/O's, in good time, with information and discussions concerning these issues.
 - C. The Issues Committee shall, in correspondence with the proposer of a resolution, establish clarity of the wording of a resolution, consistency of a resolution with the Constitution, Bylaws, and Acts of the BOG of the Society, and shall resolve conflicts or overlaps between resolutions submitted.
 - D. The agenda shall be submitted to all I/O's in sufficient time to allow the resolutions to be discussed before the annual convention.
 - E. If time permits, resolutions will be allowed from the floor of the Congress after all other business has been taken care of.

F. The purpose of the COG being advisory and not legislative, resolutions need not be stated in advisory form but may be phrased in a multiple answer format to better express the views of the membership.

IX. No Officer, Director, or Chair of a permanent committee of the NSS may serve as a delegate unless no other individual is available.

X. These rules may be amended by a majority vote of the Congress provided that such motions to amend appear on the agenda.

XI *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised* shall govern all procedures not covered by the above rules.

(Adopted by the Congress of Grottos in 1969 with amendments in 1972, 1973, 1976, 1980, 1993, 2002, and 2003.)

Appendix 15: Vegetarian Meals

Work with the caterer so they clearly understand the use of meat- or fish-based fats and oils, broths, or flavoring is not acceptable.

Bacon or salt pork in the vegetables is not vegetarian.

Vegetarian entrees should be on a par with the meat entrees.

For side dishes, brown or wild rice is preferred to white rice. Frozen or fresh veggies are preferred over mayo-based salads. A substantial tossed salad, with a selection of dressings, is also acceptable.

Vegetarians also prefer whole grain bread over white.

If possible, get a commitment for your menu as part of the signed contract. Include a penalty clause for failure to meet the contract conditions.

Integrating the vegetarian entree into the line with the regular meals simplifies the serving process for everyone.

Announce the menu for Monday and Friday on the website and in the daily newsletter.

Appendix 16: JSS Vertical Training and Safety

NSS Vertical Section Recommended Vertical Safety Guidelines for the Junior Speleological Society

Version 4.1, 2-17-13

These **Vertical Safety Guidelines** for the Junior Speleological Society (JSS) are recommended by the NSS Vertical Section Executive Committee. They are written to apply to any JSS activities involving the use of climbing ropes and life-support vertical equipment, commonly called “vertical” activities, both above and below ground. These guidelines are inspired by the Boy Scouts of America’s **Climb on Safely** procedures, and other applicable references.

Vertical activities can be particularly fun and exciting for JSS youth, but the risk of accidents and serious injuries can be significant unless the events are conducted in a carefully controlled and well-supervised manner. The JSS should comply with these guidelines to minimize the chance of accidents and injuries.

It should be understood that not all possible site-specific conditions can be addressed in a set of general safety guidelines. JSS adult leaders should exercise sound judgment and common sense concerning any situational questions about safe vertical practices. These guidelines are provided with no liability to its authors or the Vertical Section of the NSS.

Unless otherwise specified, the word “adult” in this document means a person at least 18 years old.

A. Supervision. All JSS vertical activities should be supervised by a responsible adult at least 21 years old who understands the risks inherent to vertical activities. At least one additional adult with the same understanding should be present at all times. It is recommended that there be a third adult leader for youth participant groups of 11 to 20 children, and an additional adult for each 10 additional youth in the group. This **activity supervisor** should be responsible for selecting and assigning appropriate vertical instructors and be responsible for ensuring that all vertical activities are conducted in a safe manner. If the **activity supervisor** is not vertically experienced, they should designate a vertically skilled and experienced adult at least 21 years old as the **site safety officer**. If the **activity supervisor** or **site safety officer** leaves the area, they should first designate another qualified person to temporarily assume those responsibilities.

B. Instructors. Persons who instruct or supervise JSS participants during vertical activities should be experienced adults who possess all the basic level vertical skills listed in Chapter 12 of the NSS publication *On Rope*. During dispersed orientation or training sessions involving multiple training “stations,” there should be at least one such qualified instructor at each station with particular knowledge and experience in the vertical skill being taught.

C. Parents’ Permission. A signed, written Parents’ Permission and Liability Release

document should be obtained by the **activity supervisor** for each youth participant in JSS vertical activities. For children under 8 years of age, at least one parent or guardian should actually be present and ready to assist the instructors with the supervision of their child. All adults participating on rope during the activity should also furnish an adult liability release to the activity supervisor.

D. Physical Ability. The success or failure of youth participants in vertical activities can be greatly affected by factors of body shape and weight, strength, and medical health. Vertical instructors and supervisors should make an informal assessment of each child's probable physical abilities and limitations, and modify the activity as appropriate for each participant. This should include dis-allowing participation if, in the adult's judgment, there would be unacceptable increased risk to the child.

E. Emotional Readiness. Beyond physical limitations, there can be emotional and mental factors that may limit a child's ability to participate in JSS vertical activities. A mild degree of apprehension is normal, but no child should be coerced or shamed into trying to do something they are strongly afraid to do. Encouragement is fine, but inappropriate peer pressure should not be allowed.

F. Planning. Plans for the vertical activity should include such considerations as danger areas, safety barriers, participant movement from place to place, equipment availability and suitability, time available, distractions, weather, and other factors.

G. Safe Environment. The suitability of the activity site should be surveyed in advance by the **activity supervisor** and/or **site safety officer** to identify and evaluate possible hazards and to be sure the site can safely accommodate the number of participants involved. Significant possible hazards identified should be mitigated before the activity begins. Structural or natural features used as rigging anchors should be judged to be safe and secure, i.e., they will not fail in use!

H. Safe Equipment. All vertical equipment used in life-support applications, including ropes, webbing, harnesses, helmets, ascending and descending system components, and other materials or devices employed to prevent death or serious injury, should have been manufactured for vertical uses in accordance with the standards of the UIAA (Union Internationales des Associations d' Alpinisme), CE (European Community Norm), or ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials) when applicable. The complete history of each piece of equipment should be known. The equipment should be inspected before and after each use for safe condition and continued serviceability. A record of procurement and use should be maintained for all "life-support" equipment. Equipment should be taken out of service due to damage, wear, or age in accordance with the guidelines provided by the manufacturer.

I. Safe Procedures. As a minimum, the following guidelines should be followed when conducting JSS vertical activities:

1. Rigging. All rigging of life-support ropes, webbing, and other components should be done by experienced adults who have the appropriate rigging skills and experience. Initial rigging should be double-checked by another adult with appropriate rigging skills

and experience. Previously rigged life-support items should be inspected again prior to the beginning of each usage session.

2. Lowering Systems. All ropes used for ascending or descending should be rigged using a locked-off lowering system so that a participant who might become stuck on rope can be safely lowered to the floor or ground.

3. Helmets. All participants and instructors should wear an approved climbing/caving helmet when they are actively conducting vertical activities. Any other person within a “fall zone” should also be wearing a helmet.

4. Checking Gear. After vertical gear is donned, the harness, helmet, and ascending or descending system of all participants should be double-checked for correctness by the instructor at each activity station or site.

5. Edge Safety. Anyone within 6 feet of a vertical edge or drop should be protected by a life-support attachment to a safety line or anchor. This distance should be increased for steep terrain and/or loose footing.

6. Ascending. Anyone ascending or down-climbing rope should be protected using at least two life-support attachments between the rope and the seat harness. To guard against the possibility of a heel-hang, foot stirrups and chicken loops should not be counted for these life-support attachments. The two points of attachment to the climber should be at or above the climber’s center of gravity.

7. Cable Ladders. Anyone ascending or descending a cable ladder or rope ladder should be protected using a “top-roped” safety line attached to the climber’s seat harness. The safety line should be controlled by an experienced adult using an accepted belay system or technique.

8. Rappelling. All rappellers should be equipped with a Quick Attachment Safety and attach it to the rope when not actually moving on descent. Rappellers should wear gloves thick enough to prevent rope burns to the braking hand. All JSS youth rappellers should be protected by a bottom belay operated by an experienced adult. Self-belay systems for rappelling should not be used by the JSS. Because bottom belayers must usually be positioned within the fall zone, if a bottom belay would create a significant risk to the belayer, the rappel site should not be used.

J. Suggested Practices

1. JSS-provided gear should be inventoried and inspected 1 to 2 weeks prior to its use, so that there is time to correct any problems or shortages.

2. Each participant should have or be furnished their own helmet and seat harness, approved for suitability by the **activity supervisor** or **site safety officer**. For above ground training, ascending and descending equipment may be provided by the JSS leadership and shared at the training station, but for actual vertical caving below ground each participant should possess their own approved ascending, descending, and safety gear.

3. Some children and adults have body shapes, i.e., very slim hips and/or large stomachs, such that they might slip out of a normal seat harness if they become

inverted. In such cases, either a full-body harness or some form of supplemental chest harness, which can be made using 1-inch tubular webbing, should be used.

4. Due to light body weight and emotional maturity considerations, the minimum age for a child to rappel should be 10 years old. This age is consistent with Boy Scouts of America guidelines.

5. Descending devices should be selected considering the weight of the rappeller. It has been observed that micro-racks can be problematic when body weight is light so they should not be used by JSS. Learning to use racks and micro-racks is more complicated than simple descenders such as Figure 8s.

K. Discipline. The potential for accidents and mishaps increases greatly in the absence of good discipline. It is important that behavior control of the participants be maintained, and that they know, understand, and respect the rules for the vertical activities. Horseplay cannot be allowed. Instructors should be strict and fair, showing no favoritism. Additional adults may be needed to monitor youth participants who are observing and awaiting their turns on rope. Groups should be kept small so that waiting time is minimized. Some type of low-risk concurrent activity might be needed with very large groups of kids.

L. References. The following references were used for the creation of these guidelines, and should be consulted by JSS adult leaders for additional information.

1. Boy Scouts of America publication No. 430-099, ***Climb On Safely***.

<http://www.scouting.org/scoutsourc/boyscouts/resources/climbonsafely.aspx>

2. NSS publication **ON ROPE** by Bruce Smith and Allen Padgett.

<https://nssbookstore.org/index.php?mode=store&submode=search&searchfor=On+Rope&action=search>

3. NSS Vertical Section **Basic Vertical Training Student's Manual 2012**.

<http://www.caves.org/section/vertical/2012%20Basic%20Vertical%20Manual.pdf>

4. NSS Youth Group Liaison Committee's ***Youth Group Caving: Information for Youth Group Leaders and Parents, - Vertical caving and exposure***.

<http://www.caves.org/youth/YGLC%20Parents'%20Guide%20FINAL%20Jan%2009.pdf>

Appendix 17: Caver Co-op

(Formerly CONSIGNMENT SALES)

As a service to members, the NSS Convention provides the Caver Co-Op, formerly Consignment Sales, for people who do not have the time and merchandise to be vendors and for potential buyers to obtain wanted caving/caver-related merchandise. Consignees are NSS member individuals and IOs.

The space provided should be approximately the size of the NSS Office space: 575 square feet is usually adequate. Caver Co-Op should be close to the NSS Office, within a well-traveled Inside Vendor area.

Use the maximum number of tables placed around the walls + interior rows, with one as a cashier table next to the door. Needed supplies include: pens, pencils, scratch paper, scissors, easy-to-remove price stickers, 75+ bags such as plastic grocery bags and larger, calculators, push pins, hangers (if they want to display tee shirts), column ledger sheets or substitute for individual sales records, cash box (not cash register), envelopes for each check issued by the treasurer. Our members prefer to have their checks on site.

The fees charged for selling merchandise will hopefully offset the cost of square footage used from the cost of leasing the convention site. The fees also encourage consignees to work in Caver Co-Op. Caver Co-Op is given free ads in publications where vendor ads are printed for a fee.

When the hours of check-in, sales, closing, check-out are decided in advance, this can be included in the convention program. It should be broken down by day and announced in the daily newsletter. The vendor chair provides vendor names posted in the hall at each Inside Vendor door. Post hours in the hall at the door. Post "Closed until _:_ a.m./p.m. due to lack of volunteers," when necessary.

The seed money used for change for Caver Co-Op is important. An example of the seed money is: 4 \$5 bills, 20 x \$1 bills, 2 rolls of quarters, 1 roll of dimes, and 1 roll of nickels. If there is no sales tax, then pennies are not needed as merchandise is priced without need for pennies. Each evening, the excess money is turned over to the convention treasurer and a receipt obtained.

A Caver Co-Op registration form should be completed on-site by each consignee. It would be helpful if it includes the following: date, name of consignee, name of merchandise owner and mailing address, phone number (preferably cell) at convention, NSS number, convention number of the consignee, primary IO, day and time to clerk + percent of sales the seller receives, check if not clerking + percent of sales the seller receives, space for inventory list with code number, and deadline on Friday to pick-up unsold merchandise. Space for signature of consignee. Sample statement: "The inventory list (inc. publications by title) including code numbers (i.e., NSS # + 1, 2, 3, etc.) on this form is correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the NSS and representatives of the NSS are not responsible for lost or damaged merchandise. I will

accept a check made out to the owner of the merchandise, if it is ready on Friday. If not, I understand that the check will be mailed to the owner at the above address.”

Usually 10 percent of gross sales is charged when the consignee works 4 hours or more in Caver Co-Op. This sometimes covers the need for clerks. Usually 20 percent of gross sales is charged for those who do not work the allotted time. The chair needs to ask each person to be on time. Hours may be staggered for experienced coverage.

A sign-up sheet noting shifts is needed at time of registration. A reminder slip of times to work is helpful with a message such as: “You are appreciated. It might not show, but our service is provided for our members at each convention. We can only be open with volunteer help, like yourself, so...thanks!” A list of policies, including the above, is helpful to prevent misunderstandings and a copy may be signed as a safeguard. When exceptions are made, this should be kept private.

The chair(s) may check in merchandise on Sunday and can open for sales then or wait until Monday with check-in about 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. with Caver Co-Op opening at 11 a.m.

The chair(s) may choose to be in Caver Co-Op most of the time, but this arrangement should not be required. Clerks and/or chair(s) are cashiers at the discretion of the chair(s). Non-cashiers move around the room, look for pilferage, and keep merchandise neat. Consignees may add to inventory (usually stored under the tables) and arrange or rearrange their merchandise.

The lack of merchandise could be a problem. Information about Caver Co-Op should be submitted to the *IO Newsletter* 3+ months in advance of the convention and possibly be included in an *NSS News* article.

Sometimes an arrangement with the NSS Office provides the service of using credit cards for Caver Co-Op purchases. The customer would take the Caver Co-Op receipt to the NSS Office and bring back both receipts to pick up their merchandise. Checks are accepted in Caver Co-Op with information noted on the front of the check of the person's name from their convention badge (printed on most checks), their NSS number and convention number. The NSS Office deals with bounced checks. Staff will generally provide security. Room will be locked during off-hours. Neither Caver Co-Op nor the convention will be responsible for theft, wanton acts of vandalism, nor acts unanticipated during reasonable care.

A good system in checking out each customer is one person watching or saying the correct code entered on the sales slip and bagging purchase. Saving stickers is not helpful. To balance the day's receipts, use the sales slips. Computers with the right software only helps in tallying and takes an extra person, if all data are entered. Each day it might take hours to balance the cash received to the verification of merchandise sold.

The Caver Co-Op closes on Friday between about noon and 2 p.m. to balance the day's transactions and total each account. Take signs away from doors and post “Closed”

signs. It is preferable for the treasurer to arrive a couple hours after closing to issue checks. When the treasurer chooses to mail checks after the convention, then Caver Co-Op might stay open later and give their full report to the treasurer before the Banquet. Envelopes can be filled out in advance. Merchandise should be picked up (and checks distributed) by 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. to give the chair(s) time to close the room and be ready for the Banquet. Remaining checks may be distributed at the Banquet.

Pickup of merchandise is by the responsible person who checked it in, with the same NSS number and/or convention number on their badge. If someone else picks up merchandise, an authorization by the responsible person is needed.

NOTE: Twice, a person was hired to work in Caver Co-Op. In 1991, one person was given all of net profits, which was OK. In 2005, one person was given a flat fee based on the previous year's net profits, but lack of merchandise made this a bad decision.

Appendix 18: Junior Speleological Society

Personnel

Each convention staff must have a Junior Speleological Society (JSS) Coordinator. This person will work with the JSS national chair/co-chair and the convention chair to develop a convention schedule, arrange local rental, help produce a budget, select sites of JSS activities, and perform other duties as directed by the JSS chair. This person will need to have good communication skills and be able to use those skills in a long-distance setting.

Volunteer staff may include parents, JSS alumni, and previous JSS staff. A list of active volunteers should be maintained by the chair with the help of the coordinator.

Daily staff is to be used as directed by the JSS convention coordinator or JSS chair.

For an hour Monday morning volunteers will watch a video and go over "2 Deep Leadership" with children, parents, and volunteers. Anyone who misses Monday morning will be required to show up early (8 a.m.) and read through the rules, talk about them, and sign a paper that they did so.

Registration

JSS will charge a fee in addition to the main convention registration fee. This fee is determined by the JSS chair, working with the convention chair prior to the printing of that year's registration form. **Currently \$200 is recommended.**

All children (who are minors in that State, typically under 18 years of age) may register for JSS. Children 8 years of age or younger must be accompanied by an assigned adult (parent, guardian, or their designee). The normal JSS age range is 7 to 17 years. Variations in age limits may be arranged in advance with approval of the JSS coordinator and the convention chair, or their designee.

Buildings and Grounds

JSS will need a building located within walking distance (preferred) or a short drive from the main campground. In the event the campground is some distance from the session location, it is desirable to have a JSS location in both places (a barn, tent, or other sheltered location at the campground). The building should have electrical service, water, and a restroom. The structure should be able to be secured at night and when not attended. The building should be able to be accessed by a road or driveway. Most importantly, the facility should be safe and as clean as possible. There should be a guaranteed access to this building in the event a group returns later than planned.

A lawn or open space should be close to the building for outside activities.

Activities

Each day of the convention, a variety of activities should be planned both underground and surface. Local history or special attractions should be emphasized. Activities like Speleo Art can take place at the JSS building or lectures of age-appropriate subjects may also be given. It is the responsibility of the coordinator to produce a schedule of

planned activities to be reviewed by the chair prior to the submission deadline for the publication of the convention program guide. **(See Publications section.)**

The cost of activities requiring an entrance or use fee may be passed along to the parents when appropriate.

Scheduling

The JSS schedule should complement and not conflict with the master convention schedule **(See Section 6.1)**. The JSS building should be open at 8:00 a.m. with the first activities not starting (children leaving the site) before 9:00 a.m. Children should be back each day by 5:00 p.m. so they may eat and clean up for the evening's activities. During the Howdy Party (Monday night) and Campground Party (Wednesday night), the building should be open and attended with appropriate social and educational activities available. On one night of the week, a location (on- or off-site) will be chosen for the teen overnight. A location will be chosen (on-site) for the pre-teen overnight. On Friday evening, a swimming party will be held immediately following dinner, just before the start of the Awards Banquet. This is a JSS tradition. If swimming facilities are unavailable, another special event that accommodates children of all ages will be provided.

Transportation

The JSS prefers a minimum of two 15-passenger vehicles to support the first 60 children. One extra vehicle will be needed for each 20 children thereafter. Minivans with a capacity of eight or less should not be rented. This option can be very expensive if there is not a local rental facility. Full-size school buses should not be used unless the size of an activity demands it and the site of the activity can be reached by a large, low-clearance vehicle. Many areas have 18-passenger school buses available and /or 4-wheel drive school buses. These buses can operate on gravel roads and give the option of separating ages or destinations.

Drivers

The drivers for the JSS convention activities should be known beforehand. The JSS coordinator will have the vehicles and drivers cleared with the insurance carrier before the start of the convention. All parents who volunteer to drive (using their own private cars) must be licensed with an active insurance policy. Copies of their licenses and proof of insurance should be provided to the JSS coordinator in advance. If the drivers operate within the same state, there are no restrictions. If our drivers cross state lines, even in the 15-passenger vans, or they are paid to drive, they must keep a driver's log and have a medical card that indicates that they are physically able to drive in this capacity. Also, they are restricted to 15 hours on duty, 10 hours maximum of that driving and there must be 8 hours of down time (off duty and not waiting) between duty times. States have to follow this baseline of requirements but they may enact stiffer regulations. Every state needs to be checked before the event to assure we meet their guidelines. **Another consideration is to hire school bus drivers to transport the JSS.**

If we rent vans, we are required to purchase insurance from the rental agency.

Property

All equipment purchased with JSS funds will become the permanent property of the JSS Section of the NSS. This material will be the responsibility of the JSS chair to care for during the year and to see that the equipment is delivered to the next convention site.

An inventory will be kept by the JSS chair and available for review.

Sales

At conventions with appropriate accommodations, a snack bar may be incorporated into the overall program. Ice, water, soda, and snacks may be sold at a reasonable profit. All profits shall go to the JSS account.

Publications and Publicity

The JSS chair and convention coordinator should make a strong effort to publicize JSS activities prior to, and during, the convention. The *NSS News*, *JSS Newsletter*, and the JSS internet site may be used as some of the means to promote convention activities.

The coordinator is responsible for ascertaining the submission deadlines for all publications (for example, the convention program guide). Two pages are required in the convention program guide for schedules and information.

Changes in the printed schedule of activities must be reported as soon as possible to the editor of the convention newspaper.

Finance

It is the responsibility of the JSS coordinator to produce a preliminary budget. It will be reviewed and approved by the JSS chair prior to final submission to the appropriate convention staff.

Paperwork

The JSS coordinator is responsible for tracking JSS demographics. The coordinator is also responsible for obtaining the release of the properly completed and signed NSS Convention Liability Release forms, both ADULTS and CHILDREN as appropriate. These forms should address the transportation, medical, emergency information, and other needs. The chair will obtain or provide these forms, if not separately implemented by the Registration staff.

Safety

Each convention coordinator will develop a detailed plan for the possible event of an emergency medical need or rescue. This plan shall be reviewed by the convention chair, convention health and safety/security officer and the JSS chair. **(Also see Appendix 16.)** The coordinator will identify (locate) and list all emergency services able in the area (for example, fire, ambulance, rescue, police, hospitals, etc.).

All off-site activities must have an OSHA-approved¹ first aid kit as standard equipment. **See Section 15** of the *NSS Convention Manual*.

The Planning Process

Since the planning process for JSS activities are similar to the planning process for the main convention, please review the process given in Section 17 of the *NSS Convention Manual*. This section will be of great assistance in organizing the early-stage planning.

The national chair is responsible for assisting with new ideas while helping to maintain traditions. The chair should be considered to be a resource at all stages of the planning process and may be used at any time.

Informal Events

From time to time, requests will be made for informal events such as Ramen Noodle Wrestling.

¹ Occupational Safety and Health Administration

Appendix 19: Personnel Descriptions and Duties

All major positions should be staffed by those who have previously been to an NSS Convention. Arrangements can be made for shadowing those doing the job at a previous convention and this is highly recommended. It is also recommended to have a young shadow to learn the job for conventions.

Vice -chair of Operations Responsibilities

Read the entire convention manual; other responsibilities may be delineated throughout and are not consolidated in any particular area.

Communicate with your predecessor from the previous convention to determine any recurring issues that get passed down from the previous convention, solicit volunteers who commonly return to the same positions, and in general get a better feel for the responsibilities of your position during the convention.

Solicit volunteers to help as required.

Maintain communications with the volunteer coordinator and provide them with volunteer requests as required.

Maintain communication with all staff members in your department; respond to all questions in a timely manner.

Develop a deliverables list and who is responsible for each deliverable.

Develop a timeline (due date) for all deliverables.

Develop a budget for all the divisions within your area of responsibility and submit to the chief financial officer and the convention chair. **(Deliverable)**

Determine the feasibility of pre- or post-convention trips. If the trip(s) are feasible, pass the information to the pre-and post-convention trips coordinator through the trips director.

Maintain open communications with your fellow vice-chairs.

Submit a progress report regularly (no less than once every 3 months from July to July 2 years prior to convention, no less than once every 2 months from July to March the year prior, and weekly from April until the convention) to the convention chair. **(Deliverable)**

Submit an after-action report to the convention chair within 60 days of the end of the convention. **(Deliverable)**

Communications Director Responsibilities

Read the entire convention manual; other responsibilities may be delineated throughout and are not consolidated in any particular area.

Communicate with your predecessor from the previous convention to determine any recurring issues that get passed down from the previous convention, solicit volunteers who commonly return to the same positions, and in general get a better feel for the responsibilities of your position during the convention.

Solicit volunteers to help as required.

Determine any equipment required that the NSS does not already own or that is not being provided by volunteers and provide a detailed equipment list and budget to the vice-chair of operations. **(Deliverable)**

Maintain communications with the volunteer coordinator and provide them with volunteer requests as required.

Conduct a detailed survey of the surrounding area to determine available communication services in order to install phone lines and internet services at the convention registration site, if necessary.

Conduct a survey to establish the cell service limits in the areas and produce a map showing those boundaries.

Contact the owners of the General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS) repeaters facilities and ask for permission to use these facilities.

Conduct a survey of the terrain around the convention site to establish the areas the repeaters can be keyed up from and those areas that are blocked from contacting these repeaters.

Work closely with the emergency services director to establish an emergency communication plan for activation in case of an incident using the Incident Command System.

Work with the Registration chair to incorporate a line item on the convention registration forms that can be filled out by the attendees as follows:

Are You a Federally Licensed (FCC) Amateur or GMRS Radio Operator? Yes No

- Amateur Radio Call Sign: _____
- GMRS Radio Call Sign: _____

Contact individuals who register as GMRS radio operators to ask if they would like to contribute to the convention's communication efforts.

Design and construct a three-sided message board kiosk and implement an on-demand digital message board system that can be updated as needed to keep

convention attendees informed of up -to-the-minute changes in the schedule and any emergency situations in which they may need to be informed.

Work with the transportation director and the Geology Field Trip coordinator to develop a communication system that can broadcast over a short distance between several tour buses for the Geology Field Trip.

Work closely with the facilities director and campground director to design a communication system that will work across the distributed venues using a combination of cell phones, Family Radio Service (FRS) radios, GMRS radios, and amateur radios.

Set up and solicit volunteers to man the Amateur Radio Special Event Station.

Design or solicit designs for a QSL card that represents the convention area.

Inventory, maintain, and distribute the NSS radios for use among the convention staff (particularly the chair and all vice-chairs, the transportation coordinator, the facilities director, the sessions coordinator, the medical officer, the security officer, the fire preparedness coordinator, and the cave rescue coordinator), Photo Salon staff, Geology Field Trip personnel, JSS (as necessary), and other emergency services personnel as needed.

Entertain other radio requests on a case-by-case basis.

Work with Earl Sutor to obtain the NSS radios from the prior convention staff.

Submit a progress report regularly (no less than once every 3 months from July to July 2 years prior to convention, no less than once every 2 months from July to March the year prior, weekly from April until the convention) to the operations vice-chair.

(Deliverable)

Submit an after-action report to the operations vice-chair within 45 days of the end of the convention. **(Deliverable)**

Facilities Director Responsibilities

You will be working with the audiovisual equipment coordinator (speakers, microphones, podiums, computers, projectors, power cords, WIFI).

Work closely with the vice-chair of programs to ensure there are enough rooms for all meetings, classes, sessions etc.

Solicit a volunteer for the audiovisual equipment coordinator who will be responsible for WIFI set up, ensuring that all sessions have working audiovisual equipment, troubleshooting when necessary, and coordinating with the Sessions chair to ensure equipment is available when and where needed.

Coordinating volunteers to help set up, tear down, and move furniture and equipment as necessary.

Work closely with the volunteer coordinator and provide them with volunteer requests for times that you can't fill. They will need an approximate number of volunteers ahead of time so that they can order the appropriate number of T-shirts.

Preparing meeting spaces (moving furniture as necessary, as well as set up and tear down).

Work with the communications director to ensure that both you and your audiovisual equipment coordinator have radios.

Research, secure, contract with local facilities (high school, campground, other buildings as required), and provide to the legal department and the NSS AVP for review. **(Deliverable)**

Vendor spaces: work closely with the vendor liaison and vendors.

Salon spaces: work closely with the Salon chairs.

Other spaces: security, medical, registration, BOG, COG, Geology, Biology etc.

Provide a consolidated budget to the vice-chair of operations. **(Deliverable)**

Provide a facilities map with locations of Salons, sessions, meetings etc. to the vice-chair of publications. **(Deliverable)**

Read the entire *Convention Manual*; other responsibilities may be delineated throughout and are not consolidated in any particular area.

Communicate with your predecessor from the previous convention to determine any recurring issues that get passed down from the previous convention, solicit volunteers who commonly return to the same positions, and in general get a better feel for the responsibilities of your position during the convention.

Coordinate with the transportation coordinator, sessions coordinator, and vendor liaison to transport tables and chairs as required.

Work with the environmental services coordinator to maintain cleanliness of the spaces used by the convention staff, attendees, and vendors.

Provide securable storage for items shipped in to the convention shipping address.

Solicit and work with a sign coordinator to provide adequate signage for sessions, Salons, handicap access, etc.

Research local hotels, motels, hostels, bed and breakfasts, and campgrounds to

provide location, costs, and style of accommodations and provide this information to the vice-chair of programs and the webmaster no less than 1 year prior to the convention. **(Deliverable)**

Develop and execute a plan for key distribution and unlocking/locking of securable spaces (treasurer's office, vendor's spaces, registration, auction items storage etc.).

Through the audiovisual coordinator, provide recording equipment and, if necessary, an operator of the same for the BOG meeting. Coordinate with the transportation director to arrange transport from the previous convention site.

Work closely with the Convention Development Committee to assure suitable BOG accommodations.

Make arrangements for a high-speed, high-capacity copier to be on location during convention. This can be part of the facility rental agreement, or rented from an outside source. Ensure copy paper and toner are part of the deal, or make separate arrangements to keep these items supplied.

Copier needs to be available to the BOG, newsletter editor, registration, sign coordinator and other convention staff as necessary. It should NOT be available to just any convention attendee who wants to make copies.

Work with the Vertical Section to acquire a manlift or scaffolding, if necessary, to aid in rigging for the Vertical Contest and Vertical Techniques Workshop.

Work with the campground director, transportation director and Speleo-auction personnel to provide chairs and tables for the Speleo-auction.

Ensure there is a locked space for the Speleo-auction items.

Work with the transportation director and Speleo-auction personnel to provide transportation for the Speleo-auction items from their storage area to the auction site.

Work with the JSS facilitator to ensure available space for JSS meeting and activities.

Solicit a volunteer to be the Salon support coordinator. This person will work directly with the Salon chairs to ensure they are supported as necessary.

Submit a progress report regularly (no less than once every 3 months from July to July 2 years prior to convention, no less than once every 2 months from July to March the year prior, weekly from April until the convention) to the operations vice-chair.

(Deliverable)

Submit an after-action report to the operations vice-chair within 45 days of the end of the convention. **(Deliverable)**

Audiovisual Equipment Coordinator Responsibilities

You will be working for the facilities director.

Oversee the WIFI set up and/or availability.

Work with the transportation director to move NSS-owned audiovisual equipment from the previous convention site to the current convention site.

Work with the transportation director to move NSS-owned audiovisual equipment from the current convention site to the next convention site.

Research and procure all other needed audiovisual equipment as necessary. The school should be a good source for this.

Ensure that all sessions have working audiovisual equipment.

Troubleshoot audiovisual equipment problems as they occur.

Ensure batteries, light bulbs, power cords, chargers, etc. are available for all audiovisual equipment.

Coordinate with the sessions coordinator to ensure equipment is available when and where needed.

Provide a budget to the facilities director for any rental or purchases of audiovisual equipment, consumables, and accessories required to facilitate your responsibilities.
(Deliverable)

Read the entire *Convention Manual*; other responsibilities may be delineated throughout and are not consolidated in any particular area.

Communicate with your predecessor from the previous convention to determine any recurring issues that get passed down from the previous convention, solicit volunteers who commonly return to the same positions, and in general get a better feel for the responsibilities of your position during the convention.

Work with the facilities director to provide recording equipment and, if necessary, an operator of the same for the BOG meeting. Coordinate with the transportation director to arrange transport from the previous convention site.

Work with the Speleo-auction personnel to provide a sound system for the auction.

Work with the Video Salon chair to ensure they are getting the required support to set up for the Video Salon and the Banquet Awards Show. This may include providing a sound system for both shows. Check with the facilities director before renting a sound system, as the venue may have one available.

Submit a progress report regularly (no less than once every 3 months from July to July 2 years prior to convention, no less than once every 2 months from July to March the

year prior, weekly from April until the convention) to the facilities director. **(Deliverable)**

Submit an after-action report to the facilities director within 30 days of the end of the convention. **(Deliverable)**

Sign Coordinator Responsibilities

Work closely with the facilities director and campground director to determine the number and size of signs required to facilitate ease of movement for those with deficient map reading skills.

Determine how much material you will need, printing costs, and other expenses and provide a detailed line-item budget to the facilities director. **(Deliverable)**

Read the entire *Convention Manual*; other responsibilities may be delineated throughout and are not consolidated in any particular area.

Communicate with your predecessor from the previous convention to determine any recurring issues that get passed down from the previous convention, solicit volunteers who commonly return to the same positions, and in general get a better feel for the responsibilities of your position during the convention.

Ensure there is extra material on hand to make signs for forgotten or unforeseen circumstances.

Submit a progress report regularly (no less than once every 3 months from July to July 2 years prior to convention, no less than once every 2 months from July to March the year prior, weekly from April until the convention) to the facilities director. **(Deliverable)**

Submit an after-action report to the facilities director within 30 days of the end of the convention. **(Deliverable)**

Salon Liaison Responsibilities

Work closely with the facilities director and various Salon chairs to ensure the Salons get the support they need during the convention.

Provide volunteers to help set up and tear down the Salons.

Maintain a key to locked Salon spaces and be available to unlock the Salon rooms in the morning and lock them up in the evening.

Liaison for the Salon chairs to the facilities Director.

Work closely with the transportation director and your contemporary in the previous and next conventions to ensure transportation of the Salon easels from the previous convention to the current convention and from the current convention to the next convention.

Provide the Photo Salon chair a sketch or diagram of the facility in which the Video

Salon will be held. The diagram, at a minimum, should show room size, seating arrangement, location of light switches and electrical outlets, doors, permanently lit exit signs, queuing area for announcers, restrooms, and any other requirements that may be passed on by the Photo Salon chair. **(Deliverable)**

Read the entire *Convention Manual*; other responsibilities may be delineated throughout and are not consolidated in any particular area.

Communicate with your predecessor from the previous convention to determine any recurring issues that get passed down from the previous convention, solicit volunteers who commonly return to the same positions, and in general get a better feel for the responsibilities of your position during the convention.

Submit a progress report regularly (no less than once every 3 months from July to July 2 years prior to convention, no less than once every 2 months from July to March the year prior, weekly from April until the convention) to the facilities director. **(Deliverable)**

Submit an after-action report to the facilities director within 30 days of the end of the convention. **(Deliverable)**

Campground Director Responsibilities

You will be working closely with the hot tub coordinator and the environmental services coordinator.

Select the final location of the campground.

Campground layout:

- quiet area
- noisy area
- access points
- lost and found
- location of campground party (work with vice-chair of services on this aspect)
- location of hot tub (work with hot tub facilitator for this)
- location of showers, toilets, and garbage cans
- location of shade tents
- location of Ham Station (work with communications director for this)
- location of medical/security tent (work with emergency services director on this)
- location of ice cart (work with vice-chair of services and medical officer)
- location of RV parking/camping)

Provide a map of final campground layout to publications manager and vice-chair of operations. **(Deliverable)**

Price and reserve contracts for shade tents (work with the vice-chair of services, the Convention Development chair, AVP and the legal department on this aspect). **(Deliverable)**

Price and reserve contracts for fencing and access control as necessary (work with emergency services director and security officer, the Convention Development chair, AVP, and the legal department on this aspect). **(Deliverable)**

Price and reserve contracts for port-a-potties including cleaning, restocking, and moving if necessary (work with the environmental services coordinator, the Convention Development chair, AVP, and the legal department on this aspect). **(Deliverable)**

Price and reserve contracts for garbage cans, recycling, and daily waste removal (work with the environmental services coordinator, the Convention Development chair, AVP and the legal department on this aspect). **(Deliverable)**

Price and reserve contracts for port-a-showers or construction of showers (work with the environmental coordinator, the Convention Development chair, AVP, and the legal department on this aspect). **(Deliverable)**

Oversee the hot tub facilitator and the construction of the hot tub and sauna.

Work with the fire preparedness coordinator in the construction and location of fire pits.

Make sure there is potable water (work with the environmental services coordinator on this).

Ensure that there is always ice available for campers to purchase and for the medical tent.

Decontamination station set up and operation (you can have somebody do this for you, work with white-nose syndrome (WNS) liaison and environmental services coordinator for this).

Select an area for shuttle drop-off and pick-up (work with transportation coordinator and Publications chair to ensure this gets into the guide).

Determine whether vehicles will be allowed near the campsites; if not, provide transportation solutions such as carts, wheelbarrows, etc. (work with transportation coordinator).

Power for RVs? Just a consideration, desired, but not required.

Any other items that may be necessary to coordinate an effective and comfortable camping experience.

Provide a consolidated budget to the operations vice-chair. **(Deliverable)**

Keep the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements in mind.

Develop and execute a plan to break down and clean up the campground.

Solicit volunteers to help set up and tear down the campground.

Maintain communications with the volunteer coordinator and provide them with volunteer requests for times that you can't fill.

Coordinate with the emergency services director regarding fencing and access control.

Determine, based on your schedule of availability, when the campground will open (no earlier than Friday afternoon and no later than Saturday afternoon before convention) and close (no earlier than Saturday afternoon and no later than Sunday afternoon after convention) and provide to the webmaster and the vice-chair of publications.

Coordinate with local campgrounds (are there several nice campgrounds in the area?) for people who arrive early and stay late.

Coordinate with local authorities and any permits that may be required.

Read the entire *Convention Manual*; other responsibilities may be delineated throughout and are not consolidated in any particular area.

Communicate with your predecessor from the previous convention to determine any recurring issues that get passed down from the previous convention, solicit volunteers who commonly return to the same positions, and in general get a better feel for the responsibilities of your position during the convention.

Work with the sign coordinator to provide signage for the campground.

Work closely with the vice-chair of services to aid in the set up and tear down of the campground party.

Submit a progress report regularly (no less than once every 3 months from July to July 2 years prior to convention, no less than once every 2 months from July to March the year prior, weekly from April until the convention) to the facilities director. **(Deliverable)**

Submit an after-action report to the operations vice-chair within 45 days of the end of the convention. **(Deliverable)**

Hot Tub Facilitator Responsibilities

Provide a budgeted list of required items that will be needed to set up the hot tub and sauna to the campground director. **(Deliverable)**

Determine whether a permit and/or an inspection by local health inspectors will be necessary for the hot tub.

Communicate with your predecessor from the previous convention to determine any recurring issues that get passed down from the previous convention, solicit volunteers who commonly return to the same positions, and in general get a better feel for the responsibilities of your position during the convention.

Work with the environmental services coordinator to develop a plan for wastewater management and recycling of materials at the hot tub.

Solicit volunteers to help as required.

Maintain communications with the volunteer coordinator and provide them with volunteer requests as required.

Solicit volunteers to set up and maintain the hot tub and sauna during convention week.

Submit a progress report regularly (no less than once every 3 months from July to July 2 years prior to convention, no less than once every 2 months from July to March the year prior, weekly from April until the convention) to the Campground Director.

(Deliverable)

Submit an after-action report to the campground director within 30 days of the end of the convention. **(Deliverable)**

Environmental Services Coordinator Responsibilities

Work closely with the campground director and facilities director to develop a plan for environmental services to include waste disposal, recycling, wastewater management, electricity use reduction, and alternative power solutions and provide to the campground director. **(Deliverable)**

Work with the facilities chair and legal department on the contract aspects of hiring either the facility custodian or an outside service to keep the areas used by convention staff, attendees, and vendors clean and stocked (particularly bathrooms—toilet paper, soap, paper towels).

Check cleanliness and stocking of campgrounds, port-a-potties, facilities, showers, WNS station, toilets, etc. and report to either the campground director, facilities director or WNS liaison, as required, if they are not being kept clean and stocked.

Work with the campground director and legal department on the contract aspects for the showers and port-a-potties to include a scheduled services time during sessions and how much restocking will occur.

Work with the hot tub coordinator to develop a plan for wastewater management and recycling of materials at the hot tub.

Read the entire *Convention Manual*; other responsibilities may be delineated throughout and are not consolidated in any particular area.

Communicate with your predecessor from the previous convention to determine any recurring issues that get passed down from the previous convention, solicit volunteers who commonly return to the same positions, and in general get a better feel for the responsibilities of your position during the convention.

Solicit volunteers to help as required.

Maintain communications with the volunteer coordinator and provide them with volunteer requests as required.

Determine any resources that you will require and submit a detailed, budgeted list to the campground director. **(Deliverable)**

Submit a progress report regularly (no less than once every 3 months from July to July 2 years prior to convention, no less than once every 2 months from July to March the year prior, weekly from April until the convention) to the campground director. **(Deliverable)**

Submit an after-action report to the campground director within 30 days of the end of the convention. **(Deliverable)**

Transportation Director Responsibilities

Research and reserve a contract with a charter bus company to provide one or two buses for the Geology Field Trip (1 day). Coordinate with the trip director, Geology Field Trip coordinator, the Convention Development chair, AVP and legal department. **(Deliverable)**

Research and reserve a contract with van/car rental companies to provide one or two vans for the JSS day trips (5 days?). Coordinate with the JSS facilitator, AVP and legal department. **(Deliverable)**

Coordinate with the campground director to ensure carts or other modes of transportation are available at the campground to help campers unload vehicles and bring camping gear to their campsite, if vehicles are not allowed on the campgrounds.

Research and reserve a contract with van/car rental companies to provide one or two vans for shuttle route(s). Coordinate with the AVP and the legal department (5 days). **(Deliverable)**

Provide a line-item budget to the vice-chair of operations. **(Deliverable)**

Keep ADA requirements in mind.

Coordinate with the communications director and emergency services director on communications options and emergencies (auto accident, medical issues etc.) respectively.

Solicit volunteers to man the shuttle bus.

Develop a shuttle bus schedule to be posted at Registration, at all shuttle bus stops, and published in the program. **(Deliverable)**

Maintain communications with the volunteer coordinator and provide them with

volunteer requests for times that you can't fill. They will need an approximate number of volunteers ahead of time so that they can order the appropriate number of T-shirts.

Provide transportation solutions for moving tables, chairs, programs, and other random items between different locations within the convention footprint.

Read the entire *Convention Manual*; other responsibilities may be delineated throughout and are not consolidated in any particular area.

If campground and party sites are not colocated, provide adequate transportation between the two for these events (Howdy Party, Campground Party, Banquet) if the shuttle bus doesn't cover it.

Arrange for transportation of items from the prior convention site (radios, Salon easels, audiovisual equipment, etc.) to the convention site and storage in between.

Coordinate with the next convention transportation coordinator or logistics chair to transport those materials to the next convention site at the end of the convention

Coordinate with the JSS facilitator to transport JSS-owned materials from the previous convention site to the current convention site.

Communicate with your predecessor from the previous convention to determine any recurring issues that get passed down from the previous convention, solicit volunteers who commonly return to the same positions, and in general get a better feel for the responsibilities of your position during the convention.

Submit a progress report regularly (no less than once every 3 months from July to July 2 years prior to convention, no less than once every 2 months from July to March the year prior, weekly from April until the convention) to the operations vice-chair.

(Deliverable)

Submit an after-action report to the operations vice-chair within 45 days of the end of the convention. **(Deliverable)**

Emergency Services Director Responsibilities

You will have responsibility to work with and coordinate closely with the medical officer, the security officer, the fire preparedness director, and the cave rescue coordinator.

Work closely with the medical officer to develop a plan to include the number of volunteers required and medical station locations and supplies (coordinate with facilities and campground directors).

Prepare a security plan to include the number of volunteers required and security stations (coordinate with security officers). **(Deliverable)**

Work with your staff to develop and implement an emergency response plan that takes local catastrophic events into consideration. **(Deliverable)**

Coordinate with local medical authorities and the medical officer.

Coordinate with local fire authorities and the fire preparedness coordinator.

Coordinate with local law enforcement officials and the security officer.

Coordinate with local emergency preparedness officials.

Solicit local law enforcement for paid volunteers to man security stations during the Howdy Party, Campground Party, and Banquet; coordinate with the security officer.

Coordinate with the communications director for radios and other means of communication.

Solicit volunteers to man the medical tent; coordinate with the medical officer.

Develop a schedule for manning the medical tent; coordinate with the medical officer.

Solicit volunteers to man security stations; coordinate with the security officer.

Develop a schedule for manning security stations; coordinate with the security officer.

Coordinate with campground coordinator regarding fencing and access control; coordinate with the security officer.

Solicit a volunteer to be the cave rescue coordinator.

Maintain communications with the volunteer coordinator and provide them with volunteer requests for times that you can't fill. They will need an approximate number of volunteers ahead of time so that they can order the appropriate number of T-shirts.

Read the entire *Convention Manual*; other responsibilities may be delineated throughout and are not consolidated in any particular area.

Coordinate with the vertical sessions facilitator and medical officer to provide an EMT [emergency medical technician] or other medically qualified person in case of a fall or other injury.

Prepare a cave rescue call-out plan and coordinate with local cave rescue personnel and the cave rescue coordinator.

Collect budget requirements from the security officer, medical officer, fire preparedness director.

Cave rescue coordinator and your own requirements, then prepare a final budget and submit to the operations vice-chair. **(Deliverable)**

Report any security violations or arrests to the operations vice-chair.

Report any injuries that require transport to a hospital or any situations that can become a learning experience for future conventions to the operations vice-chair.

Communicate with your predecessor from the previous convention to determine any recurring issues that get passed down from the previous convention, solicit volunteers who commonly return to the same positions, and in general get a better feel for the responsibilities of your position during the convention.

Work with the campground coordinator, vice-chair of services, and the medical officer to determine ice requirements for the medical tent and for convention campers.

Coordinate with the transportation director, trips director and Geology Field Trip coordinator on a plan in case of emergency (health issues, bus accident, injury, etc.) during the Geology Field Trip.

Submit a progress report (to include reports from the security officer, medical officer and fire preparedness director) (no less than once every 3 months from July to July 2 years prior to convention, no less than once every 2 months from July to March the year prior, weekly from April until the convention) to the operations vice-chair. **(Deliverable)**

Submit an after-action report to the operations vice-chair within 45 days of the end of the convention. **(Deliverable)**

Medical Officer Responsibilities

You will be working with and for the emergency services director.

Solicit volunteers to man the medical tent in the campground during convention.

Work with the emergency services director to formulate a schedule for the volunteers to include manning the medical tent, providing first aid at the Vertical Sessions and Vertical Contests, and providing first aid at Speleolympics.

Liaison with the local hospital.

Liaison with local dentists to provide dental services if required.

Provide first aid and emergency services as required.

Develop a list of required supplies and determine what is available from the previous convention, then provide a budget for the remainder of the needed items to the emergency services director. **(Deliverable)**

Supervise a volunteer team of EMTs, first responders, and first aid providers during the 5 days of convention.

Work closely with the emergency services director, security officer, cave rescue coordinator and fire preparedness director to develop an emergency response plan for the most likely emergencies to arise during the convention.

Work closely with the emergency services director and communications director to ensure the medical team has appropriate communications during the event.

Work closely with the vice-chair of services and/or the facilities director to provide a tent or other space as required for the medical team.

Work closely with the vice-chair of services to provide ice as required for the medical team and campers.

Ensure that the first aid tent is highly visible and accessible, with signs pointing the way.

Work closely with the campground coordinator to determine the best location for the first aid tent in a visible and easily accessible location.

Maintain communications with the emergency services director and report any injuries that require transport to a hospital or any situations that can become a learning experience for future conventions.

Communicate with your predecessor from the previous convention to determine any recurring issues that get passed down from the previous convention, solicit volunteers who commonly return to the same positions, and in general get a better feel for the responsibilities of your position during the convention.

Work closely with the volunteer coordinator and provide them with volunteer requests for times that you can't fill. They will need an approximate number of volunteers ahead of time so that they can order the appropriate number of T-shirts.

Read the entire *Convention Manual*; other responsibilities may be delineated throughout and are not consolidated in any particular area.

Submit a progress report regularly (no less than once every 3 months from July to July 2 years prior to convention, no less than once every 2 months from July to March the year prior, weekly from April until the convention) to the emergency services director. **(Deliverable)**

Submit an after-action report to the emergency services director within 30 days of the end of the convention – deliverable.

Fire Preparedness Coordinator Responsibilities

You will be working for the emergency services director.

Liaise with the local fire authorities and the fire marshal.

Determine whether the fire marshal, the city or county will require permits for individual fires in the campground or a bonfire.

Develop a fire prevention plan for the campground and provide to the campground director. **(Deliverable)**

Maintain awareness of local fire conditions and be prepared to require dousing of campfires if dry, windy conditions make it necessary.

Develop a campground evacuation plan in the event of a wildfire in the area that threatens the safety of NSS campers.

Work closely with the medical officer, the security officer, and the emergency services director to develop an Emergency Response Plan that incorporates your campground evacuation plan and any other fire related emergencies (vehicle fires, cooking fires, electrical fires etc.) that may occur during convention. **(Deliverable)**

Solicit volunteers as required to complete your duties.

Determine if you require any supplies (fire extinguishers at the campground, fire pans, etc.), and if so, develop a budget and submit to the emergency services director. **(Deliverable)**

Work with the campground director to determine location of fire pans, if required.

Communicate with your predecessor from the previous convention to determine any recurring issues that get passed down from the previous convention, solicit volunteers who commonly return to the same positions, and in general get a better feel for the responsibilities of your position during the convention.

Read the entire *Convention Manual*; other responsibilities may be delineated throughout and are not consolidated in any particular area.

Determine the number of radios required and request radios from the Communications director.

Submit a progress report regularly (no less than once every 3 months from July to July 2 years prior to convention, no less than once every 2 months from July to March the year prior, weekly from April until the convention) to the emergency services director. **(Deliverable)**

Submit an after-action report to the emergency services director within 30 days of the end of the convention. **(Deliverable)**

Security Officer Responsibilities

You will be working with and for the emergency services director.

Develop an access control plan for the campground to include badge checks.

Work closely with the campground coordinator to determine the best location for access control and to determine the amount (if any) of fencing required to adequately secure the campground against casual interlopers.

Liaise with local law enforcement.

Solicit local law enforcement to help man access control points during high attendance events such as the Howdy Party, the Campground Party, and the Banquet, so that NSS security volunteers can attend these events.

Solicit volunteers to man the access control points.

Work closely with the volunteer coordinator and provide them with volunteer requests for times that you can't fill. They will need an approximate number of volunteers ahead of time so that they can order the appropriate number of T-shirts.

Develop a volunteer schedule to man the access control points.

Work closely with the medical officer, fire preparedness director and emergency services director to develop an Emergency Response Plan for the local area in order to quickly and effectively respond to the most likely emergencies. **(Deliverable)**

Report any security violations or arrests to the emergency services director.

Develop a budget that includes hiring off-duty police officers, fence rental, and any other items that may be required to complete your duties and submit to the Emergency services director. **(Deliverable)**

Communicate with your predecessor from the previous convention to determine any recurring issues that get passed down from the previous convention, solicit volunteers who commonly return to the same positions, and in general get a better feel for the responsibilities of your position during the convention.

Work closely with the vice-chair of services to develop a plan to prevent underage drinking at the Howdy Party, Campground Party, and Banquet. Work with the Registration chair to implement the underage drinking plan.

Read the entire *Convention Manual*; other responsibilities may be delineated throughout and are not consolidated in any particular area.

Determine the number of radios required and request radios from the communications director.

If there is a cave rescue, provide liaison between the cave rescue coordinator and the local authorities.

Submit a progress report regularly (no less than once every 3 months from July to July 2 years prior to convention, no less than once every 2 months from July to March the year prior, weekly from April until the convention) to the emergency services coordinator. **(Deliverable)**

Submit an after-action report to the emergency services director within 30 days of the end of the convention. **(Deliverable)**

Cave Rescue Coordinator Responsibilities

Develop a generic cave rescue plan (using National Cave Rescue Commission (NCRC) cave rescue planning criteria) that can be put into action immediately if required and submitted to the emergency services director and trips director. **(Deliverable)**

Read the entire *Convention Manual*; other responsibilities may be delineated throughout and are not consolidated in any particular area.

Communicate with your predecessor from the previous convention to determine any recurring issues that get passed down from the previous convention, solicit volunteers who commonly return to the same positions, and in general get a better feel for the responsibilities of your position during the convention.

Solicit volunteers to help as required.

Maintain communications with the volunteer coordinator and provide them with volunteer requests as required.

Develop a budget that incorporates any items or any paid personnel that will be required to complete your duties. **(Deliverable)**

Determine the number of radios required and request radios from the communications director.

Work with the security officer to liaise with the local authorities in the event of a rescue.

Coordinate with the medical officer in the event of a rescue.

Submit a progress report regularly (no less than once every 3 months from July to July 2 years prior to convention, no less than once every 2 months from July to March the year prior, weekly from April until the convention) to the emergency services director. **(Deliverable)**

Submit an after-action report to the emergency services director within 30 days of the end of the convention. **(Deliverable)**

Trips Director Responsibilities

Work closely with the pre- and post-convention trips coordinator to develop a robust and interesting pre-and post-convention caving experience.

Work closely with the Field Trip coordinator to develop a robust and Geology Field Trip experience.

Work closely with the cave trips coordinator to develop a robust and interesting caving experience.

Work closely with the day trips coordinator to develop a robust and interesting day trip experience.

Consolidate the information provided to you by the trip coordinators and provide it to the vice-chair of publications and the webmaster for incorporation into the program and onto the website. **(Deliverable)**

Read the entire *Convention Manual*; other responsibilities may be delineated throughout and are not consolidated in any particular area.

Communicate with your predecessor from the previous convention to determine any recurring issues that get passed down from the previous convention, solicit volunteers who commonly return to the same positions, and in general get a better feel for the responsibilities of your position during the convention.

Solicit volunteers to help as required.

Maintain communications with the volunteer coordinator and provide them with volunteer requests as required.

Work closely with Registration regarding any trips that are space limited.

Coordinate with the emergency services coordinator to take receipt of the cave rescue plan if one is required. Ensure that your cave trips coordinator is familiar with the plan and able to execute it.

Submit a progress report regularly (no less than once every 3 months from July to July 2 years prior to convention, no less than once every 2 months from July to March the year prior, weekly from April until the convention) to the operations vice-chair. **(Deliverable)**

Submit an after-action report to the operations vice-chair within 45 days of the end of the convention. **(Deliverable)**

Geology Field Trip Coordinator Responsibilities

Work closely with the transportation director to provide bus(es) for the Geology Field Trip.

Work closely with the vice-chair of services to provide coffee and donuts in the morning, water during the day, and a box lunch w/drinks at the lunch stop.

Work closely with the communications director to provide communications between buses if there are more than one and communications back to camp in the event of unforeseen circumstances or an emergency (cell phones don't always work in the boonies).

Work closely with the emergency services director to develop a plan in the event of an emergency.

Determine stops of interest and timing for the Geology Field Trip(s).

Determine the scheduling of the Geology Field Trip(s).

Provide a stand-alone road log and write ups for each of the stops along the Geology Field Trip to the trips director for incorporation into the convention guidebook. This does not include the Geology Train Tour, which comes with its own write-up that is provided to participants. **(Deliverable)**

Determine the cost per participant for the Geology Field Trip and provide a budget to the chief financial officer and the operations vice-chair. **(Deliverable)**

Develop visual aids and/or handouts to help with explanations during each stop.

Recruit another volunteer geologist to staff a second bus, if required or just to help out if desired.

Work closely with the Registration chair to determine the number of available slots and to determine if a second bus will be necessary.

Work with the Registration chair to determine how to distinguish participants in the Geology Field Trip from non-participants (color coded tickets, name badge symbols, etc.).

Develop a standby/overbooking plan in case there are no shows or Registration accidentally overbooks.

Decide whether you want to allow tag-alongs (people driving their own vehicles, following the bus).

At a minimum, when determining which bus company to use, the buses should have A/C, restroom, storage space, and an intercom. Intercom is not necessary if a bullhorn is available.

Submit a progress report regularly (no less than once every 3 months from July to July 2 years prior to convention, no less than once every 2 months from July to March the year prior, weekly from April until the convention) to the trips director. **(Deliverable)**

Submit an after-action report to the trips director within 30 days of the end of the convention. **(Deliverable)**

Pre- and Post-Convention Trips Coordinator Responsibilities

Work with the trips director to determine available caves for pre- and post-convention caving trips. The list of caves should include both horizontal and vertical caves; the difficulty level (which should also be described in detail); and the length of time to drive to, hike to, and see a representative portion of the cave.

Work with the trips director to develop a list of off-limit caves.

Solicit volunteers to lead caving trips and work closely with the volunteer coordinator to ensure these slots can be filled.

Provide contact information to the webmaster for the trip leaders so that convention attendees can ask questions and sign up for the trips. **(Deliverable)**

Provide a write-up of each cave trip to include a description of the cave, any interesting history of the cave, and its level of difficulty to the trips director. **(Deliverable)**

Read the entire *Convention Manual*; other responsibilities may be delineated throughout and are not consolidated in any particular area.

Communicate with your predecessor from the previous convention to determine any recurring issues that get passed down from the previous convention, solicit volunteers who commonly return to the same positions, and in general get a better feel for the responsibilities of your position during the convention.

Submit a progress report regularly (no less than once every 3 months from July to July 2 years prior to convention, no less than once every 2 months from July to March the year prior, weekly from April until the convention) to the trips director. **(Deliverable)**

Submit an after-action report to the trips director within 30 days of the end of the convention. **(Deliverable)**

Cave Trips Coordinator Responsibilities

Work with the trips director to determine available caves for convention caving trips. The list of caves should include both horizontal and vertical caves; the difficulty level (which should also be described in detail); and the length of time to drive to, hike to, and see a representative portion of the cave.

Work with the trips director to develop a list of off-limit caves.

Solicit volunteers to lead caving trips and work closely with the volunteer coordinator to ensure these slots can be filled.

Maintain a caving trip sign-up sheet either near the campground or near registration in a conspicuous area. We strongly suggest you use the [Caver Alert Information Sheet \(CAIS\)](#) located on the [NCRC-Eastern Region website](#).

Provide a write-up of each cave trip to include a description of the cave, any interesting history of the cave, and its level of difficulty to the trips director. **(Deliverable)**

Read the entire *Convention Manual*; other responsibilities may be delineated throughout and are not consolidated in any particular area.

Communicate with your predecessor from the previous convention to determine any recurring issues that get passed down from the previous convention, solicit volunteers who commonly return to the same positions, and in general get a better feel for the

responsibilities of your position during the convention.

Ensure you are in receipt of, familiar with, and able to execute the cave rescue plan provided to you by the cave rescue coordinator through the trips director.

Ensure that all your trip leaders are also in receipt of, familiar with, and able to execute the cave rescue plan.

Submit a progress report regularly (no less than once every 3 months from July to July 2 years prior to convention, no less than once every 2 months from July to March the year prior, weekly from April until the convention) to the trips director. **(Deliverable)**

Submit an after-action report to the trips director within 30 days of the end of the convention. **(Deliverable)**

Day Trips Coordinator Responsibilities

Work with the trips director to determine nearby day trips for convention attendees. The list of day trips should include the difficulty level (which should also be described in detail); and the length of time to drive to, hike to, and see the attraction.

Maintain a day trip list either near the campground or near Registration in a conspicuous area so that convention attendees are aware of other opportunities in the region other than caving.

Provide a write-up of each day trip to include a map and/or directions to the attraction, a description of the attraction, any interesting history of the attraction, a link to the attraction website if available, and its level of difficulty to the publications chair and the website developer. **(Deliverable)**

Read the entire *Convention Manual*; other responsibilities may be delineated throughout and are not consolidated in any particular area.

Communicate with your predecessor from the previous convention to determine any recurring issues that get passed down from the previous convention, solicit volunteers who commonly return to the same positions, and in general get a better feel for the responsibilities of your position during the convention.

Solicit volunteers to help as required.

Maintain communications with the volunteer coordinator and provide them with volunteer requests as required.

Submit a progress report regularly (no less than once every 3 months from July to July 2 years prior to convention, no less than once every 2 months from July to March the year prior, weekly from April until the convention) to the trips director. **(Deliverable)**

Submit an after-action report to the trips director within 30 days of the end of the convention. **(Deliverable)**

Cross Reference List

Volunteer Positions
Vice-chair of Operations

People you should be communicating with!
Convention Development Chair
Convention Chair
Vice-chair of Programs
Vice-chair of Publications
Vice-chair of Services
Chief Financial Officer
Communications Director
Facilities Director
Campground Director
Transportation Director
Emergency Services Director
Trips Director
Volunteer Coordinator

Communications Director

Vice-chair of Operations
Facilities Director
Campground Director
Transportation Director
Geology Field Trip Coordinator
Emergency Services Director
Medical Officer
Security Officer
Fire Preparedness Coordinator
Cave Rescue Coordinator
Volunteer Coordinator
Registration
JSS Liaison

Facilities Director

Convention Development Chair
Vice-chair of Operations
Vice-chair of Programs
Vice-chair of Publications
Vice-chair of Services
Salon Chairs
Communications Director
Transportation Director
Environmental Services Coordinator
Emergency Services Director
Volunteer Coordinator
Vendor Liaison/Vendors
Audiovisual Equipment Coordinator
Sign Coordinator
Registration
Legal Department
Convention Development Committee
JSS Facilitator

Audiovisual Equipment Coordinator

Facilities Director
Transportation Director
Sessions Coordinator
Convention Development Committee
Salon Chairs (specifically the Video and Photo Salon Chairs)
Facilities Director
Campground Director

Sign Coordinator

Salon Liaison

Facilities Director
Transportation Director
Salon Chairs

Campground Director

Convention Development Chair
Vice-chair of Operations
Vice-chair of Publications
Vice-chair of Services
Communications Director
Emergency Services Director
Medical Officer
Fire Preparedness Coordinator
Security Officer
Transportation Coordinator
Volunteer Coordinator
WNS Liaison
Sign Coordinator
Hot Tub Facilitator
Environmental Services Coordinator
Webmaster
Legal Department

Hot Tub Facilitator

Campground Director
Volunteer Coordinator
Environmental Services Coordinator

Environmental Services Coordinator

Campground Director
Facilities Director
WNS Liaison
Hot Tub Coordinator

Transportation Director

Convention Development Chair
Vice-chair of Operations
Vice-chair of Publications
Communications Director
Emergency Services Director
Campground Director
Facilities Director
Audiovisual Coordinator
Geology Field Trips Coordinator
Volunteer Coordinator
JSS Facilitator
Legal Department
Registration
Salon Liaison

Emergency Services Director

Vice-chair of Operations
Vice-chair of Services
Communications Director
Facilities Director
Campground Director
Transportation Director
Trips Director
Geology Field Trip Coordinator
Volunteer Coordinator
Medical Officer

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire Preparedness Coordinator Security Officer Cave Rescue Coordinator Vertical Sessions Facilitator
Medical Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency Services Director Communications Director Campground Director Volunteer Coordinator Fire Preparedness Coordinator Security Officer Cave Rescue Coordinator Local Medical Authorities
Fire Preparedness Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency Services Director Communications Director Campground Director Medical Officer Security Officer Local Fire Authorities Local Fire Marshall
Security Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vice-chair of Services Emergency Services Director Communications Director Volunteer Coordinator Campground Director Medical Officer Fire Preparedness Coordinator
Cave Rescue Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Law Enforcement Officials Registration Cave Rescue Coordinator Emergency Services Director Communications Director Volunteer Coordinator Medical Officer Security Officer
Trips Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vice-chair of Operations Vice-chair of Publications Volunteer Coordinator Geology Field Trip Coordinator Pre-and Post- Convention Trips Coordinator Cave Trips Coordinator Day Trips Coordinator Cave Rescue Coordinator Registration Webmaster
Geology Field Trip Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vice-chair of Services Vice-chair of Publications Trips Director Emergency Services Coordinator Transportation Director Communications Director

Registration

Pre- and Post-Convention
Trips Coordinator

Trips Director
Volunteer Coordinator
Webmaster

Cave Trips Coordinator

Trips Director
Registration
Volunteer Coordinator
Webmaster

Day Trips Coordinator

Trips Director
Registration
Webmaster

Appendix 20: NSS Convention WNS Guidance

Eastern cave access is often controlled by private landowners. Out West, access is usually on government land, and cavers **must** follow agency requirements. **This means NO cave GEAR from White-nose Syndrome (WNS) states is brought out West and decontamination between every cave while visiting most western caves. Contact WNSLiaison@caves.org for additional guidance.**

Lots of publicity warning attendees ahead of time (starting at time of registration) to bring clean gear is recommended. Many southwestern caves do not require more than T-Shirts and jeans, so most gear needed for a “western” set of gear can be affordable. Helmets and vertical gear are the big exception, and cave suits in higher elevations.

Loaner Gear

Contact local grottos; many have loaner gear for new cavers and Boy Scouts, etc. Cavers are cheap and will not pay to rent gear, but may buy cheap coveralls. Some cheap LED headlamps are good enough for most caving. Ensure that there is a way to track loaned gear and owners are reimbursed if gear is damaged (adding another task to Registration will upset Registration staff, but it is a central 24-hour location if you have other volunteers to staff).

Current USFWS Decontamination Protocols

https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/sites/default/files/resource/national_wns_revise_final_6.25.12.pdf

Under no circumstances should clothing, footwear, or equipment that was used in a confirmed or suspected WNS-affected state or region be used in an unaffected WNS state or region. Some state/federal regulatory or land management agencies have supplemental documents that provide additional requirements or exemptions on lands under their jurisdiction.

The most universally available option for treatment of submersible gear is: Submersion in hot water—effective at sustained temperatures $\geq 50^{\circ}\text{C}$ (122°F) for 20 minutes. Formula 409® Antibacterial All Purpose Cleaner spray or Lysol® Disinfecting Wipes should be used on hard non-porous surfaces like electronics.

Onsite Decon Station Needs

Water supply and adequate drainage—preferably a paved/sod area, electricity and lighting, trash cans, and volunteers to supervise safety of hot water and pressure washers.

Suggested Convention Decontamination Station Equipment List

Item	Estimated Cost	Number	Comments
Signage with instructions	10		
Pallets		6?	Get near site since bulky
Hose(s) with sprayer	\$50	2	Borrow?
Pressure washer (+ gas)	\$200	2	Rent?

Scrub brushes	20	10	Dollar store
Table	20		For chemical decon of headlamps/cameras
Tubs for scrubbing	20	4	and possibly soaking gear in chemicals
Soaking chemicals (optional)	6% bleach is only approved chemical for porous surfaces such as clothing; Lysol Quat is the only approved chemical for helmets. So, need multiple bins, and also need a place to dispose of chemical water. Recommend using hot water instead, which all submersible items can be placed in.		
Formula 409® Antibacterial All Purpose Cleaner spray	50	Case	(These are the only approved products.)
Lysol® Disinfecting Wipes	50	Case	(These are the only approved products.)
Toothbrushes and picks	6	6	Dollar store
Drying racks/lines	50		Wire fence? Clotheslines and pins?
Stock tank/tub for hot water with Styrofoam cover	200	2	Also need some PVC piping for draining
Heating unit—propane?	200	2	Turkey cooker or tankless
Thermometer	10	3	
Baskets or bags	50	6	So people can keep gear together and easily remove it from hot water without touching someone else's dirty underwear (Eww, gross!)

Appendix 21: Safety Procedures for the Vertical Section

VERTICAL SAFETY PROCEDURES DURING NSS CONVENTIONS

Version 7.0 Final 16 June 2019 (GH & TM) [Updated from Version 6, 20 July 2013]

A. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

These safety procedures were prepared by the Executive Committee of the Vertical Section of the NSS.

These procedures define the conduct of vertical activities, during NSS Conventions, which are conducted by the Vertical Section in a non-caving environment and under carefully controlled conditions.

This document is not intended for application to vertical activities involving actual caves or to non-convention activities. These procedures are not intended to be all inclusive. It should be understood that not all possible site-specific conditions can be addressed in a set of general safety procedures. Persons in charge of vertical activities must exercise sound judgment and common sense concerning any questions about safe vertical practices. Everyone involved in vertical activities is responsible for using good sound judgement, being responsible for their own safety, and being responsible for the safety of others.

DISCLAIMER. These safety procedures do not create a contract or agreement between the Vertical Section and any activity participant, or with the NSS.

The NSS Vertical Section has consistently demonstrated an excellent safety record covering many years of vertical events during NSS Conventions. Continued attention to safety and constant vigilance at all times in the vertical environment, along with good judgment and simple common sense, as contained in these procedures and other Vertical Section publications, will reinforce our ability to safely conduct and participate in convention vertical activities.

B. TERMS

The terminology in this document employs known and accepted terms within the caving community, and as employed by respected references, while adapted for these specific activities. "Vertical caving" describes moving up, down, and across vertical cave passages and chambers by using specialized skills, equipment, and techniques to reduce the possibility of death or serious injury in the event of a fall, equipment failure, or other misadventure. "Vertical activities" means moving up, down, and across ropes, ladders, obstacles, or other structures, using the specialized skills, equipment, and techniques commonly referred to as vertical caving. "Vertical events" means activities sponsored by the Vertical Section at NSS Conventions and includes demonstrations, training, practicing, and competitions using the specialized skills, equipment, and techniques of vertical caving. "Life support" describes equipment and techniques that are used to protect against death or serious injury in the event of a fall, equipment failure, or other misadventure. The term also can refer to a situation or circumstance that requires the application of such equipment or techniques to enhance safety. "On

rope” is a broad term that refers to a person being attached to a rope, webbing, cable, anchor, ladder, or other devices, for the purpose of life-support safety while conducting vertical activities. It is also a verbal signal employed during vertical activities to warn that a person is claiming the use of the rope and subsequent attachment to it. “Fall zone” is the area underneath an overhead component of the vertical activity, such as a rigged rope, ladder, scaffolding, climber, or rigger, into which an object might fall if it becomes accidentally dislodged during conduct of the vertical activity. “Adult” in this document means a competent person at least 18 years old, unless otherwise specified. In the USA, it is generally 18, but some states vary.

NOTE: Competent:

- Properly or sufficiently qualified; capable: a competent typist.
- Adequate for the purpose: a competent performance.
- Law: Legally qualified or fit to perform an act.

C. RESPONSIBILITIES

Activity Supervisor. Each Vertical Section vertical activity conducted during the annual NSS Convention shall have an Activity Supervisor, who shall be an adult at least 21 years old designated by the Vertical Section Executive Committee. The yearly Vertical Climbing Contest and Vertical Techniques Workshop activity supervisors are described in the Vertical Section Bylaws as Vertical Section officers with titles of contest coordinator and vertical techniques workshop coordinator. Other activity supervisors, such as the rebelay course coordinator, are designated by the Vertical Section Executive Committee as required. All activity supervisors are responsible for the conduct of their respective activities, including vertical safety, and may appoint committee members and/or staff support and instructor personnel to assist them. If the activity supervisors or site safety officers (when designated) leave the area, they shall first designate another qualified person to assume those responsibilities until they return.

Safety Officer(s). The activity supervisors shall designate another adult as the activity safety officer whenever the supervisors in their discretion determine that the safe conduct of the activity will be enhanced by such an appointment. The safety officer shall specifically monitor and enforce safe vertical practices according to these procedures and other applicable safety references. The existence of a designated safety officer does not relieve the activity supervisor, instructors, staff, or participants of safety responsibilities appropriate to their role in the activity. Anyone present can and should call a temporary halt to actions whenever they believe any practice to be unsafe or in violation of these procedures.

Vertical Instructors. When instructors are part of the activity, they shall require that everything happening within their realm of instruction or supervision is conducted in a safe manner and according to these procedures.

Support Personnel. Persons supporting a vertical activity may sometimes not be directly involved with the application of safety procedures. However, if they observe a

safety violation, they shall immediately correct it or bring it to the attention of the instructor, safety officer, or activity supervisor.

Participants. Depending on the nature of the vertical activity, participants may possess a wide disparity in knowledge and experience concerning vertical safety. At the beginning of vertical events, participants shall be given a short safety briefing appropriately tailored to the activity being conducted and to the experience level of the participants. For the climbing contest or similar on-going activities, this safety briefing may be provided in written form for each participant to read individually.

D. GENERAL GUIDELINES.

Safe Environment. The suitability of the activity site shall be surveyed in advance by the activity supervisor and/or site safety officer to identify and evaluate possible hazards. Significant possible hazards identified shall be mitigated before the activity begins. If the hazard cannot be mitigated, the activity shall be postponed or canceled.

Liability Releases. All participants, supervisors, instructors, staff, and support personnel, and any other persons who may use, or assist with, rigging, rope, webbing, ladders, scaffolding, or other materials or structures during vertical activities, or to provide for life support, or potentially may be within operational areas such as fall zones, shall be required to sign a written liability release before participating with such activity, releasing the NSS, the Vertical Section, any coordinators, supervisors, instructors, coaches, staff, support personnel, volunteers, participants, and any owners, agents, employees, lessors, or managers of the facility where the event is conducted.

Participation by Minors. Minors may be allowed to participate in vertical activities appropriate to their age, body size, competence, and skill levels, subject to the final judgment of each activity supervisor. A specific Parental Indemnifying Release must be signed by the parent or guardian of minor participants.

Fall Zone. The fall zone area will be considered to be up to 3 meters (~10 feet) from the bottom of the rope, ladder, scaffolding, or structure, or below climbers or riggers. Anyone physically within a fall zone while a vertical procedure is being conducted shall wear an approved climbing/caving helmet, as described in paragraph 6.a. below, at all such times.

Floor Mats. When available, padded floor mats shall be placed beneath any rope used during the Vertical Climbing Contest. Floor mats may be used during any other Vertical Section vertical activity when they are available, and the activity supervisor deems such use to be appropriate.

Safe Equipment

a. Equipment Standards. All vertical equipment used in life-support applications, including ropes, webbing, harnesses, helmets, ascending and descending system components, carabiners and other links, and any other materials or devices employed to reduce the chance of death or serious injury must have been manufactured for vertical uses in accordance with the standards of the UIAA (Union Internationales des

Associations d' Alpinisme), CE (European Community Norm), ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials), or other appropriate testing or certification organization, when applicable. Activity supervisors may grant exceptions during to this guideline for non-commercial life support equipment if, after careful inspection, they deem such equipment to be safe and suitable for the vertical activity being conducted. Any knots, hitches, or ties employed by users to fabricate life-support vertical systems or components using ropes, webbing, accessory cord, or other parts, must be commonly recognized in vertical caving references as being safe and appropriate for the application.

b. Vertical Section Equipment History. The feasibly complete history of each piece of Vertical Section equipment shall be known. The equipment shall be inspected, before and after each use, for condition and continued serviceability. Equipment shall be taken out of service when an obvious defect is observed or when the manufacturer's guidelines indicate that the equipment should be retired from use.

c. Personal Equipment. Each individual person remains responsible, at all times, for the condition and suitability of their own vertical equipment and for their own safety during any vertical activity or event. This also applies to all Vertical Section and JSS and associated event and activity personnel.

d. Personal Attire. Everyone participating in a vertical event is responsible for wearing clothing and footwear that is suitable for the activity. Personal attire should be free of characteristics that could interfere with the execution of vertical tasks or become a safety hazard. Clothing should not be excessively loose, and it should protect the skin from abrasion by vertical system components. Footwear should support the ankles and protect the foot. Boots or sneakers are recommended, and open-toe footwear is not allowed. Long hair must be secured back, away from components of the vertical systems. Suitability of clothing, footwear, hair restraints, and related items are subject to the approval of the activity supervisor.

Safe Procedures

a. Rigging and Derigging

1) All rigging of life-support ropes, webbing, and other components shall be accomplished by competent adults who have the appropriate rigging skills and experience. Initial rigging shall be double-checked by another adult, also with appropriate rigging skills and experience. All rigging will be inspected and approved by the activity supervisor, safety officer, or designee before it may be placed into service. Previously rigged life-support components shall be visually inspected again prior to the beginning of each usage session.

2) Structural or natural features to be used as rigging anchors shall be inspected by the activity supervisor, safety officer, or other competent designee, with appropriate rigging skills and experience, and such features shall be judged to be safe and secure before any rigging is undertaken using such anchors. Potential rigging locations having sharp or abrasive features should be avoided or appropriately padded to protect all life-support rigging components.

3) When working at a significant height, riggers and de-riggers shall wear an approved climbing/caving helmet and be protected against falls. When using a man-lift or equivalent, such as to place a person within reach of any overhead anchor point, operational and safety guidelines provided by the man-lift or equipment manufacturer, or as locally required, shall be followed.

b. Lowering Systems. All ropes used for ascending or descending shall be rigged using an accepted lowering system that can be locked off. The lowering system shall be unlocked and employed to lower the rope during climbing contests, or if an activity participant becomes stuck on rope. Persons operating a lowering system shall wear a glove thick enough to prevent rope burns to the braking hand.

c. Checking Gear. After personal vertical gear is donned, the harness, helmet, gloves, and ascending or descending system of all participants shall be double-checked for correctness by an instructor, safety officer, or qualified support personnel at each activity station or site. This includes inspection for attire hazards and issues, per paragraph D.6.d above.

d. Edge Safety. Anyone within 2 meters (~six feet) of a vertical edge or drop of significant height shall be protected by a life-support attachment to a secure safety line or anchor. This does not apply to protected locations, such as those fitted with safety railings.

e. Ascending and Down-climbing

1) Rope. Anyone ascending or down-climbing rope shall be protected using at least two life-support attachments between the rope and the seat harness. To reduce the chance of a heel hang, foot stirrups and chicken loops shall not be counted as life-support attachments. The two points of attachment to the climber shall be at or above the climber's center of gravity. Specific exceptions to any part of this requirement may be granted by the activity supervisor when such departure is deemed safe and appropriate. **(See also paragraph E.1.a.2 below.)**

2. Ladders. Anyone ascending or descending a cable ladder or rope ladder shall be protected using a safety line attached to the climber's seat harness. The safety line shall be controlled by an adult using an accepted belaying system employing a higher "top-rope" anchor. The activity supervisor, safety officer, or activity station instructor shall review and approve the belayer's system and technique.

f. Rappelling. Rappellers shall wear gloves thick enough to prevent rope burns to the braking hand. Novice rappellers and participants in the Vertical Techniques Workshop shall be protected using a belay operated by a competent and experienced adult approved by the activity supervisor, safety officer, or activity station Instructor.

g. Mobile Structures. When feasible, scaffolding, rigid ladders, and any other mobile structures used for vertical activities shall be secured against movement or falling by providing secure attachment to a safe and secure anchor(s).

E. EVENT SPECIFIC PROCEDURES

Vertical Climbing Contest. The Vertical Climbing Contests are conducted to provide a rope ascending speed competition under carefully controlled conditions, free of the potential hazards that could be experienced during rope ascending in caves. Many competition climbers use minimized or “stripped down” ascending systems to help increase their climbing speed. The special circumstances provided by the Vertical Climbing Contest procedures, such as the ability of the rope belayer to immediately lower the climber to the floor or ground in case of a mishap, have fostered the development of unique safety rules applicable only to this specific vertical activity.

a. Climbers

Helmet Use. All non-adult climbing contestants shall wear an approved climbing helmet. It is strongly recommended that all adult climbing contestants wear an approved climbing helmet. Adult depend on the State, typically 18 years, but some States vary. Wearing a heavy or non-ventilated helmet could possibly contribute to a body overheating hazard or might impede climbing speed. Therefore, competition climbers may have the option of not wearing a climbing helmet, provided that they sign a specific waiver acknowledging the increased risk and declaring that they are deliberately choosing to not wear a helmet. As another alternative, contest climbers may use a light-weight, well-ventilated, approved climbing helmet provided by the Vertical Section for the climb, instead of using their own personal helmet.

NOTE: As of 2019, USA adult (age of majority) generally = 18 years. However, reportedly Alabama and Nebraska = 19 and Mississippi = 21.

Life-Support Safety Attachments

(a) Competition climbers may have the option of employing only one life-support attachment above the center of gravity, with such attachment being between the rope and the climber’s seat harness, or

(b) Competition climbers may have the option of not employing any above the center of gravity life-support attachment between the rope and the climber, provided that the climber’s ascending system includes secure foot stirrups or chicken loops and a safe and secure chest roller or equivalent that has been inspected for serviceability and correct attachment to the rope by the activity supervisor or a designated safety officer. During the timed portion of the competition climb, the climber’s feet must remain approximately 12 feet or more above the floor or ground.

NOTE: These two exceptions, (a) and (b), apply to contest climbing with a stripped down ropewalker system and to a classic 3-knot system that does not have a safety tether from the foot loop hitches.

b. Timers and Support. Persons at floor level who are acting as timers or other support during competition climbing will not be required to wear helmets or other safety gear, provided they are not physically located within a fall zone.

c. Rope Pullers. Persons applying downward tension on the rope below a competition climber, and within a fall zone, shall wear an approved climbing/caving helmet. This is necessary because items of gear could become detached from the climber and fall.

d. Lowering System Operators. Persons not within a fall zone who are operating the rope lowering systems during competition climbing are not required to wear any personal protective equipment except for a glove thick enough to prevent rope burns to the braking hand. The rope belayers must be extremely attentive at all times and be ready to immediately lower the climber to the floor if a problem occurs.

Rebelay Course. This workshop is for training and practice of vertical maneuvers on rope that may be required in a cave environment.

Any person located within a fall zone at this workshop shall wear an approved climbing/caving helmet. Participants and instructors who are on rope or are positioned at significant height shall wear full “cave-ready” ascending and descending systems, plus safety gear including helmets, gloves, and life-support attachment equipment. Procedure D.7.d. above (Edge Safety) shall be followed.

Rebelay Course participants are required to provide their own personal vertical equipment. Non-commercial items of life-support gear may be allowed in this workshop at the discretion of the activity supervisor or safety officer if, after careful inspection, it is deemed safe for the intended application.

Vertical Techniques Workshop. This workshop provides a brief “hands-on” orientation to a variety of vertical systems, equipment, and techniques in a controlled and safe environment. It is not a vertical training course.

Equipment

Workshop Equipment. Vertical Section-owned ascending and descending systems and equipment specific to each orientation station are provided by the Vertical Section equipment custodian. Additional equipment and resources may be arranged by the activity supervisor.

Personal Equipment. Workshop participants are required to provide their own climbing/caving approved helmet, seat harness and appropriate load-bearing fastening, a locking carabiner, and rope-suitable gloves for rappelling. Participant personal equipment shall be inspected for safety and obvious defects by the instructors at each orientation station. Personally provided ascending and/or descending equipment may be used by participants, provided that such gear is first inspected and approved for use by the activity supervisor, safety officer, or station instructor. ***Each individual participant remains responsible, at all times, for the condition and suitability of their own gear and for their own safety.***

Instructors and Participants. All instructors and participants shall wear an approved climbing/caving helmet during the workshop, except during rest or lunch breaks away from fall zones. Instructors operating at significant height (such as rappelling stations) shall wear appropriate vertical systems and safety equipment. Procedure D.7.d. above

(Edge Safety) shall be followed. Instructors operating at floor level and not on rope are not required to wear any vertical gear beyond the helmet.

F. ACCIDENTS AND MEDICAL EMERGENCIES. In the event of a medical emergency or an accident with injury, appropriate first aid shall be provided. If treatment beyond first aid is required, additional medical assistance shall be summoned in accordance with the health and safety plans and procedures in place for the NSS Convention as a whole.

APPROVED by the Executive Committee of the Vertical Section of the National Speleological Society, Inc. : 16 June 2019

Appendix 22: The Art of Writing the Abstract

Writing an abstract of your paper can be—if done well—more difficult than writing the paper itself. Why? Because you have to distill (abstract) into a very limited number of words all the most important ideas presented in your much longer paper. This requires careful thought, word selection, and efficient sentence construction.

The Purposes of the Abstract

- 1) To entice the reader to attend your talk. To do this, you need to provide the reader with the most important information and conclusions, which you will expand on when you give your full talk.
- 2) To allow a potential attendee to choose between your talk and another talk given at the same time in a different session at the conference—which talk has the best information of most interest to the attendee?
- 3) To give the attendee of your talk a concise summary of your most important ideas and conclusions so that they can give you their full attention and not be distracted by taking notes, and still leave the presentation with a written record of your most important concepts.
- 4) To provide your most important ideas to any reader who, for whatever reason, is unable to attend your presentation. In this way interested parties can contact you for further information and exchange of ideas.

How does the abstract accomplish these purposes?

To accomplish the above purposes, you must boil down your paper—which may be hundreds or even thousands of words long—to its very essential information, what you want your audience to have as take-away points, such as:

- The essential questions you have attempted to answer in your research
- The essential work done to answer these questions
- The essential conclusions you made
- The essential facts sustaining your conclusions
- If space permits (often it does not), the essential data collected

What the Abstract Is Not

The abstract is NOT a list of what you plan to tell the audience. It should not contain sentences such as “In this paper the writer will discuss the speleogenesis of Dead Cow Cave.” Telling the reader what they might hear IF they attend your presentation is of little or no value. It does not fulfill any of the purposes of the abstract.

Appendix 23: Symbolic Devices

Some think there are too many giveaways at the convention and they should be eliminated or for purchase only.

Shirts, pins, and patches are all à la carte. The total purchase should be based on the discounted pre-registration numbers, which represent about 60% of total sales.

Howdy party mugs should not be glass (safety issue).

Having mugs prevents the waste created by using plastic cups and limits litter. We should make every effort during the convention to limit the amount of single-use plastic. The mugs can also be used throughout the week at other events. Reminders to bring your mug can be put in the daily rag. Decent mugs will also be used when the attendee returns home.

Tote-bags should be such that they are useful after the event for shopping, acting as a cave pack, or other purposes. The other option is the yellow plastic NSS bags the office uses at the bookstore.

Name badges are usually neck pouches that keep badges from flipping over and are very useful during the event. These do not tend to get reused. Another option is a badge on a lanyard. If a lanyard is used, get the generic NSS one that can be brought to subsequent conventions. Remind folks in your pre-convention publicity to bring theirs if you go this route.

Wine glasses are a nice touch but some do not need or want them. There is also the issue for those who fly to get them home intact. While not as well suited to wine, the already provided mug will suffice. If you are adamant that a wine glass is necessary, you will find purchasing them will cost about the same as renting.

Window decals, while they may not be needed at every convention, they are very popular and populate the windshield of caver vehicles for years.

Appendix 24: Virtual Convention



TIMELINE

In the run-up to convention, there must be a well-defined date that equals the point of no return (PNR). All large nonrefundable purchases of merchandise, guidebooks, programs, SWAG, etc. must occur after the PNR. All nonrefundable payments and deposits are made after the PNR. All contracts, rental agreements, etc. must have “escape clause” dates before the PNR. The PNR will be approx. 3 to 4 months before convention.

Three weeks before PNR, all Convention Committee chairs must report “go/no go” from within their committee to convention leaders (chairs, vice chairs, treasurer). If no go, the report must be accompanied with explanations of the situation and its severity. Two weeks before PNR, convention chairs must have a go/no go meeting with the NSS administrative vice-president (AVP) and NSS Convention guru. **If a convention is to be postponed or canceled, it must be done no less than 2 weeks prior to PNR to allow time for the full cancellation process.**

CANCELLATION PROCESS

In pretty quick order, you must:

- Inform the convention staff of the decision
- Inform all community contacts of the decision
- Craft cancellation messages for a coordinated posting to the NSS and convention websites and social media outlets
- Execute all escape clauses
- Recover all deposits
- Cancel all orders

EXHALE

Step 1: Embrace the suck . Denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance: you will go through all the stages of grief. It sucks. It really sucks!! You and all the staff have spent years in preparation for an event that won’t happen for any number of reasons— social unrest, civil war, global pandemic. However, the quicker you get through it all and find acceptance, the more time you have to explore the possibility of a *virtual convention*.

Step 2: Contact the convention coordinators . Reach out to all the session, section,

Salon leaders to gauge the interest in contributing content to a virtual convention experience. Some will jump at the chance and some will say no thanks, we'll wait until next year. (Their loss!)

Step 3: Assemble the crew . You need a small but **very dedicated** staff of key positions:

Webmaster: One of two most important and time -consuming jobs. Hopefully you will be able to re-use the 2020 Virtual Convention website and change it enough to make it your own. It worked well and why reinvent the wheel?

Video Editor: Second-most time -consuming job. It would be helpful to have one self-motivated leader and one (or more) helpers to spread the work around. The bulk of the work here takes place at the 6 -week mark prior to the start of the virtual convention and doesn't let u p until opening day.

Publicity: This could be broken out into two (or three) positions. Having one person concentrate on the virtual convention's Facebook page is vital, especially in the couple weeks running up to and during the actual event. You want cav ers and non-cavers to "attend" the virtual convention, so you have to entice them —daily. A second person could concentrate solely on other social media and emails. The NSS is lucky to have a talented Public Relations Division chief who helped the 2020 Virtual Convention immensely.

Information Technology (IT): The NSS has an IT Committee that the virtual convention staff can call upon. It is required that the virtual convention's website be hosted on the NSS's server (or the one it pays for). Luckily, the 2020 Virtual Convention website was able to migrate over. That makes it available for future use.

Program Editor (optional): It is possible with the scheduling created and the abstract info collected for the website to put together an abbreviated program lik e the one that would have been created for the in -person event. This also gives the opportunity to acknowledge the full precancellation staff by name, acknowledge would have been sponsors and vendors, publish the traditional community welcome letters, and other things that don't quite fit the spirit of the website.

If there's enough interest (Step 2) and you have a crew (Step 3), then continue.

VIRTUAL CONVENTION CONTENT

Content will be of two types: prerecorded presentations and live, online events.

Prerecorded Presentations

- Most content will be prerecorded and hosted on the NSS YouTube channel or in an embedded photo gallery.

- Salon entries
- Session presentations
- Award programs (usually held on Thursday night and right after the Friday night Banquet)
- Opening and closing ceremonies
- ??????
- All content is due 6 weeks in advance.
 - Why so early?? People are lazy and won't get it to you unless you give them a deadline. And even then, you'll get some late entries. It will be up to you (convention chair(s), the video editor(s), the webmaster, and the reviewers) whether to accept them or not.
 - Allows you to be the good guy and give extensions to 4 weeks in advance
- Feel free to use the *Guidelines for Presenters* that the 2020 Virtual Convention staff put together. It's a Word document that you are welcome to copy and paste so you can alter it. (If you have better ways of doing things or suggestions, please let the Convention Development Committee know so we can incorporate them.) You can find the *Guidelines* at the end of this appendix.
- All content must be accompanied by an abstract.
- Optional: Have the presenters provide a photo and a short bio.
- Upload them as unlisted so that the public doesn't have access to them just yet.
- All videos are double reviewed for acceptance.
 - Use a spreadsheet to track reviews and processing.
 - If the video editor(s) can't correct any errors, then there is time to send back for a retake.
- Once videos are reviewed and accepted, then material can be embedded into the convention website.
 - You will likely need to create a login-protected section of the website for all this pre-event work.
 - Be sure to prominently inform everyone of this else it will cause confusion

Live Events

- Some live events can be hosted within a virtual meeting platform.
 - Section meetings
 - BOG and COG meetings
 - Special live events (book signings and *Gone Caving!* card game, for example)
 - Lightning Talks
- NSS has a Zoom account already and its abilities can be augmented for the virtual convention.
- All groups intending to host a live meeting are encouraged to host a practice meeting approximately 2 weeks before the actual meeting.
- Virtual convention staff will coordinate meeting time slots.

- The NSS's Zoom account does not allow for concurrent meetings.
- Time consideration should be given for all US time zones and should try to target the evenings for people coming home from work. Note all times are in the time zone of the original convention location (for example, 2020 was East Coast time for Elkins, West Virginia).
- When possible schedule at least 30 minutes of buffer time between meetings for runovers
- Convention staff meeting hosts will open meeting 15 minutes ahead of schedule and meeting coordinator should log in 10 minutes ahead of schedule. Whoever sets up the meeting on the NSS's Zoom account must start the meeting and therefore should be available to do so. You can assign host or co-host duties, but as of this writing (late July 2020), only the set-up person can do polls on the fly, as far as we know.
- Meeting descriptions and links will be posted in the website schedule.

CONCERNS FOR VOLUNTEERS

Webmaster: The sooner you can start building the website (OR reusing the 2020 site), the better. This is clearly an instance of “Don’t wait until the last minute!”

Preload as many prerecorded presentations as possible; spread out your workload, especially if you have a paying job.

Set the website’s timer to launch the presentations at “midnight -oh-one” the day they’re supposed to go live—that way you don’t have to stay up until midnight (though you might anyhow just to make sure . . .)

Try not to get too irritated with the convention chair(s) when they keep giving you changes, especially when the change is “delete this” and 2 days later it’s “please put it back in.”

Video Editor(s): Build in enough time for two different people to preview each video, looking and listening for noticeable errors that might need fixing. A prime example of this from 2020 was halfway through one video up popped a Chrome dialog box that the presenter, reading her report, did not notice for the second half of her presentation. Building in enough time (6 weeks) allowed her to redo the second half.

Have in mind a naming structure that includes “NSSCon20xx” and use that on the NSS’s YouTube channel as well to keep like presentations in their own playlists. See full description of tasks below.

Publicity: Use the NSS’s public relations person. Use anyone and everyone you can. The more, the merrier, but the message needs to be approved by the chair(s) and be consistent across platforms and media. For important messages, send out NSS-wide email blasts, but don’t saturate the audience; you want them to actually open and read the emails.

The NSS has a Facebook page that gets decent traffic. There are other Facebook pages, such as Cavers of Facebook, that get even more. Don't be afraid to repeat the message on several pages.

Information Technology (IT): Use the NSS's IT Committee members. They have a wealth of knowledge that can help. For example, if you need to increase the NSS's Zoom capability, go through the IT folks.

Video Editor(s) Tasks

Summary of Tasks

1. Receive programs from presenters.
2. Do a quick review to see if editing is required. If not, go to Step 5.
3. If needed, edit the program.
4. Export program to a standard format.
5. Upload the program to the NSS's YouTube Channel and set to "unlisted" instead of public, so subscribers to the channel cannot see the program unless they have the link.
6. Send the link to the designated reviewers and to the webmaster for inclusion in the "not yet public" website.
7. Update the "shared" tracking spreadsheet.
8. Keep track of what has been received, edited, and uploaded, and the links to YouTube.
9. If the reviewers request it, edit the programs to resolve problems found by reviewers.
10. Go to Step 4.

Task Steps

- These tasks require that you have a good internet connection with a speed that allows you to upload and download large files in a reasonable and reliable time.
- You also will need a fairly powerful desktop computer or a very good laptop. This is needed because of the editing tasks involved.
- A good video editor is a must. I used the latest *Adobe Premier Pro*.
- A good audio editor helps. There were a number of presentations where I had to extract the audio, and then use *Adobe Audition* to get rid of noise and background hiss. In one case, the narration was done outside, but there was a

lot of traffic noise that was really distracting. *Audition* was able to reduce the traffic noise enough to make the audio usable.

1. Receive programs from presenters.

- a. Presenters will provide programs in many different formats, including PowerPoint with audio, video, Zoom, phone, etc.
- b. Transfer methods are varied too—WeTransfer.com, GoogleDrive, OneDrive, Dropbox, email, etc.
- c. Inform the presenter, usually by email, that you received the program. Before acknowledging, make sure you can read the file and that the audio is there. I received some PowerPoints with no audio, which is useless. Had to ask and wait for another version that had audio.
- d. Keep the original video file and track what has been received. Any editing should **not overwrite** the original.

2. Do a quick review to see if editing is required. If not, go to step 5.

- a. If there is a lot of “getting ready” at the start of the program and/or a lot of trailing space at the end, then the program will need to be edited.
- b. A quick check of the program in an editor should be done to make sure there are no blank spaces or long silences. It is especially useful to have an editor that displays the audio waveform. This can be used to find really low audio levels or long sections where nothing is said.
- c. Normalize the audio level to a max of 0 db.

3. If needed, edit the program (see above).

- a. I used *Adobe Premier Pro* as my video editor.
- b. If a PowerPoint was provided, then use the PowerPoint “Save As” to obtain an **.mp4 video file**.
- c. Use your video editor to edit the resultant .mp4 file.

4. Export program to a standard format.

- a. I exported the edited program to **H.264 file** with an **.mp4 extension**. I typically exported at the same resolution and aspect ratio of the source file.
- b. If there was a mixture of resolutions and aspect ratios, then I would usually use **1920 x 1080P**.
- c. I used a common naming method for the files for uploading to the internet. In this case, all the files had a prefix of “NSSCon20xx —.” The rest of the file name was based on what the talk was.

- d. Made a thumbnail .jpg still image from the talk to use for the YouTube thumbnail image.
5. **Upload the program to the NSS's YouTube Channel and set it to "unlisted" instead of "public," so subscribers to the channel cannot see the program unless they have the link.**
 - a. Upload the file to YouTube.
 - b. Put in an appropriate title name (usually just use the file name). The title of all the convention programs should start with "NSSCon20xx —."
 - c. Check the box that says "not for kids."
 - d. Set the mode to "unlisted" since it defaults to "public."
 - e. Upload the thumbnail image.
 - f. Note the YouTube link and store locally.
 - g. Update your tracking spreadsheet so you know what's been uploaded.
6. **Send the link to the designated reviewers and to the webmaster for inclusion in the "not yet public" website.**
 - a. Send an email to all the pertinent persons with the title and link and if it needs to be reviewed.
7. **Update the shared tracking spreadsheet.**
 - a. This was a spreadsheet on GoogleDrive.
8. **Keep track of what has been received, edited, and uploaded, and the links to YouTube. See sample tracking spreadsheet column headings at the end of this section of the appendix.**
9. **If the reviewers require it, edit the programs to resolve problems they found.**
10. **Go to Step 4.**

Other Ancillary Tasks

Put together the Thursday night Awards Salon.

- There were seven Salons for 2020, plus a short introduction and credit section.
- There were three future convention promo videos.
- Each Salon had its own video file.
- Each Salon was based on PowerPoint, which was converted to a video file.

Film and edit the Luminary speakers.

- Film the Luminary speaker giving their talk.
- Obtain their PowerPoint presentation to incorporate into the program.
- Edit the speaker and merge in the slides from the PowerPoint talk.
- Obtain introduction talk and/or narration from the “introducer.”
- Incorporate the introduction into the Luminary program.
- Export the edited program to a video file for upload to YouTube.

Put together the Friday night NSS Awards Show.

- Interface with the Awards chair to get the main PowerPoint program.
- Interface with the Awards chair to obtain video and/or audio files that pertain to specific awards.
- Help video introductions and/or acceptance talks if feasible.
- For 2020, there were 12 Awards given, plus an introduction, a conclusion, and a bonus section of acceptance videos for Fellows and the minor awards.
- The Awards program was one video file. For 2020, the program was 37 minutes long.

Post-Convention Tasks

- Provide the PowerPoint(s) of all the Salon winners (including the Photo Salon and the video vignettes) to the caves.org webmaster for inclusion on the NSS website.
- Edit Lightning Talks and other live event programs as necessary for addition to the NSS YouTube Channel and/or NSS website.

Sample Tracking Spreadsheet Column Headings

2 Reviews Completed [X this when video has had two reviews by different people]

Name of Video [full name of video is helpful]

Presenter [main presenter, or could be multiple names]

Bio (yes or no) [bios and photos are optional; this says whether presenter sent one in]

Abstract [all presentations must have an abstract; ideally it will be copy edited for both program and website]

URL [where the video can be found so reviewers can review it]

Date Received [convention chair(s) or video editor can receive the videos]

1st Reviewer (i initials/date) [for example, “MHW, 8/2” so you know who reviewed it]

Comments [times where edits are needed and what is needed; for example, “7:27 audio low”]

2nd Reviewer (initials/date) [same as 1st reviewer]

Comments [same as 1st reviewer]

Video Edited (initials/date) [same as 1st reviewer, except initials will be for video editor]

Comments [same as 1st reviewer]

OK to Go Live [video editor gives the go-ahead for webmaster to post, not public yet]

Scheduled (initials/date) [webmaster’s initials with date they’ve set up the video on the website—still not public yet, but ready to go live at the “flip of a switch”]

This description was written mostly by David Socky with input from Alex Sproul, 2020’s team of amazing video editors.

NSS Virtual Convention 2020

Guidelines for Presenters

Plans

- We plan to post descriptions of each presentation video on the Virtual Convention website and on the NSS YouTube Channel Playlist as well.
- They will be in alphabetical order by topic; for example, all the West Virginia Exploration videos will be in a cluster, either by pathname or folder.
- Our vision is to post all the videos on the morning of your day, for example, Monday morning for West Virginia Exploration.
- Each will be a separate file so folks can pick and choose, like they do at real conventions. After that, they are on YouTube forever, so there is no need to rush to watch them.
- We are aiming for the traditional 20-minute presentation. But since they are YouTube videos, if you go a bit over or come up a bit short, that's OK.
- Please include an email address for folks to use for Q&A. You could even create a special Gmail address just for this if you feel it necessary.

Timeline

- Presentations are due to your session or section chair by the original deadlines. See the [Salon website](#) for Salon deadlines. You can send them directly to the convention co-chairs if your session or section chair prefers that.
- Presentations are **due to the convention co-chairs by June 15** for us to have time to review and assemble the virtual programs.

Suggested Platforms

Zoom

- We suggest you use [Zoom](#) to record your presentation. If you need to [download Zoom, watch this video](#) to see how easy it is. (Seems like we're all becoming Zoom experts, right?)
- Schedule a one-person (you!) meeting and use the record option.
- [Watch this video to learn how to save the recording](#) to your computer. You will send it to your session or section chair or the convention co-chairs by the deadline.
- Be sure to **watch your recording** before sending it.
- Use the attached NSS logo as your virtual background if possible; we are aiming for some continuity among the presentations. Learn about [Zoom Virtual Backgrounds here](#). You don't have to use a green screen. Save the NSS logo to your computer and in Settings in Zoom, choose that as your virtual background. If you don't move around and don't have a sweater on the back of your chair, it should be fine.
- If you don't like how it turned out, do it again, no problem. If you haven't waited until the last minute, you should have plenty of time to practice and get it as good

as you can. (We are not aiming for perfection, but we don't want to look like amateurs.)

- If you make a major booboo when you're 15 minutes in, you can just say "cut—repair" and start again from a pause between sentences. It can be edited out so long as it's obvious where you're restarting. But be sure to mention that editing is required when you send it. Be as specific as you can about where the edit should be, like at minute 17:13. Luckily, we have folks who can fix boo boos.
- Practice, practice, practice!

Cell Phone Camera

- You could also use your cell phone camera (which may well have better sound quality than your computer) to record your presentation.
- Use a tripod so there won't be any excess motion, and be sure to shoot *horizontally*.
- Also, try not to move around a lot in front of the camera. It's distracting to watch. We know you're probably nervous, but it's okay. Take a deep breath.
- Practice, practice, practice!
- We would prefer you to use Zoom (or a similar platform) so that your beautiful face shows up on the side as you talk. Plus, it gives the viewer something animated to look out while the slide is stuck.

PowerPoint

- Did you know that Microsoft PowerPoint has a record function? You could use it to give your presentation.
- Please include the NSS logo somewhere on each slide—very small in the lower left or lower right corner would be fine. This is, after all, going to go on the NSS YouTube channel and you're doing this for the NSS Convention.
- A virtual laser pointer, highlighter, and pen are available to highlight the subject being discussed (for example, a feature on a map or photograph).
- Practice, practice, practice!

Tips for PowerPoint or Slides

- If you plan to show slides (and who doesn't?), **please read these tips** . Learn from our experience! (Read, our mistakes!)
- Don't put too many words on each slide.
- Don't put slide content too close to the edges. Leave a healthy margin all around, especially on the right side, which is where your Zoom face will be.
- Don't leave your cursor in the image unless you're using it as a pointer.
- Use the full screen view so the icons at the bottom of your screen don't show. (We don't really need to see how many browser windows you have open.)
- Use the preview option in PowerPoint, so you know what slide is next.
- Time your slide changes to when the topic changes or manually advance each slide, but practice this!

- Don't read your slides. Use them as a reminder of what you want to tell your audience.
- Practice, practice, practice!

Tips for Live Meetings

- Use a decent microphone.
- Mute yourself when you are not talking.
- Speak up clearly and deliberately. Know what you're going to say before you say it.
- Um, don't say um. After. Every. Word.
- Introduce your participants. We all want to know who it is we're watching, especially if they're cute.
- Use some graphics on your "laundry list" slides that are otherwise boring, especially if left up for long stretches. Or break down your lists into individual topic slides as you broach each topic.
- Maybe have a quick practice session before you go live. And then watch it and correct as needed.

General Tips

- If you're new to recording presentations, be aware that your voice modulates, so try to speak at an even tone and loudness.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Set your computer up so that the camera is at eye level; no one wants to look up your nose. You can build a temporary platform from some books or a few years' worth of issues of the *NSS News*. Now you have a reason that you saved them all these years!
- Have your lighting in front of you or overhead for best illumination of your beautiful face. Too bright a light is not good, but neither is too dim.
- Look at the camera as much as possible; it's basically your audience.
- Don't move around too much; it's distracting.
- Practice, practice, practice! (Did we say this already???)
- Have fun with this project.
- Remember that mostly cavers will be watching; cavers are generally a friendly group.

Save the NSS logo below to your computer so you can use it as your virtual

background in Zoom later.



[Guidelines for Presenters] *Submitted by the 2020 NSS Virtual Convention Co-chairs
May 15, 2020*

Appendix 25 Convention Communications

NSS RADIO SYSTEM

WHY DO WE NEED SPECIAL CONVENTION COMMUNICATIONS?

The convention staff needs reliable and effective communications to coordinate and conduct the convention activities, ensure successful and safe operations, and rapidly adapt and respond to both opportunities and incidents. All staff must be able to coordinate with any and all staff, anywhere, anytime.

WHY NOT JUST USE CELL PHONES?

There are several traditional means, each with their own pros and cons. For example, familiar cell phones provide direct one-to-one coordination (or perhaps 3-way) but require good cell coverage, plus prior knowledge of all staff numbers. This fails in many ways, such as if either User has poor or no coverage with their particular provider, or the phone call to a staff member is unexpected and their phone number is unknown. Also, cell phone calls are very ineffective for coordinating with multiple staff to share common operational information, as the multiple calls among multiple people cause confusion and introduce multiple errors.

WHY ARE RADIOS SO MUCH BETTER FOR TEAM-BASED CONVENTION NEEDS AND OPERATIONS?

An excellent alternative is traditional handheld 2-way radios. They provide greatly enhanced local coverage among an unlimited group of users (within radio range) and do

not rely on unpredictable cellular coverage. Also, users do not need to know phone numbers, as they can simply call their intended recipient by their expected function or name, etc. This "radio net" function is essential for instantly and simultaneously informing all staff for common situational awareness in a rapidly evolving convention operational environment. Since this is essentially like a wireless intercom system, everybody gets to know what's happening, or what's needed or being done, and everybody can share and contribute as needed. Handheld radios can be an excellent staff and teamwork enabler.

WHAT IS THE NSS RADIO SYSTEM?

For many years, the NSS has maintained and loaned our own NSS Radio System to support convention operations. It is a modest cache of two dozen commercial grade handheld radios, and they are capable of direct many-to-many coverage among almost all users in a given local area, such as the convention facilities, and/or the campground, etc, without the need for cellular coverage or other infrastructure. While their primary uses are for the convention, the radios may also be available for rescues, special events, or other suitable activities.

WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT THE NSS RADIO SYSTEM?

The radios are licensed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on specific business channels for professional operations, and they are authorized for use across the USA. They are distinctly different from Ham or CB equipment and operations. Therefore, any authorized and qualified staff may operate them, without Ham or other licensing. Of course, every user must be familiar with, or oriented to, the radio care and uses, controls, procedures, legal issues, and operational uses. Also, both convention and staff are expected to exercise due diligence to prevent damage or loss.

WHAT IS INCLUDED, AND HOW SHOULD THEY BE USED?

The NSS Radio System is packed in several deployable weatherproof cases, for protection and transport. Each radio set includes a radio, battery and antenna. There are also optional accessories, such as earphones, speaker-microphones, chargers and other handy items. While the NSS Radio System is normally employed throughout the convention week, it is also equipped to provide special capabilities for the popular salon events. This includes headsets, discrete microphones, and other devices.

HOW DOES THE CONVENTION STAFF BORROW THEM?

Normally each convention staff must coordinate with the NSS radio managers for reservations, planning, uses and other issues.

In addition, each convention staff must plan and provide for:

- One or several designated convention communications staff to manage the NSS Radio System during convention.
- These are simple part-time tasks, but require diligence and modest technical skills.
- A secure location to stage the equipment, perform issue, orientation, charging, and recovery.
- Ensure that all equipment is tracked by simple sign-out sheets.

- Perform pre and post convention inventory.
 - Option - For difficult environments, coordinate for a base station, antennas, etc.
- Note - Normally the excellent candidate is an FCC licensed amateur radio operator "Caver Ham", who is already familiar with Ham 2-meter radios!

WHERE ARE THE RADIOS, AND WHO ARE THE NSS RADIO SYSTEM TEAM & CONTACTS?

The NSS Radio System is managed by the NSS Radio System Team in Virginia.

The NSS Radio System is normally transported to and from the convention via volunteer caver express, or shipping if needed.

For inquiries, reservations, planning, interoperability, special needs or requests, etc,

Please contact:

- Gene Harrison - NSS Radio System Manager & Engineer --- 703-585-4565 bats@starpower.net

- Earl Suitor - NSS Radio System Custodian & Alternate Manager --- 703-431-2661 wvcaver216@gmail.com

(Updated 25 Feb 2021 GH)