



I love caves. Their variety, their critters, the way they let me package scrambling in the dirt and doing good solid science into one. I'm running for the board of the NSS because I want to be a part of promoting an active and inclusive caving community. I think that caving has enormous potential to shape attitudes towards the natural world and the sciences for the better, and I want to help the NSS make good on that potential in a sustainable way. In the past decade, I've held a variety of research and outdoors leadership positions, working with people of all ages and wildly varying backgrounds. In particular, I've worked with community science initiatives all over the country. I believe these experiences make me well suited to help bring caving and the NSS to a broader audience.

As an outdoor trip leader for the MIT Outing Club, I've worked to expand opportunities to merge hiking with natural history and life sciences. I've led mushroom and plant identification trips and taught best practices for balancing exploration with conservation. As a member of the community biology spaces BioCurious and the Baltimore Underground Science Space I've advertised and taught classes and organized projects aimed at scientific beginners. I've been successful at getting people in the door and at the research bench, doing things they didn't realize were possible.

If elected, I will work to build relationships between the caving and citizen science communities. I believe this will increase awareness of caves as important and utterly fascinating subjects of study, enticing more people to join the NSS.. In addition to the intrinsic value of expanding opportunities for cave science, experience has taught me that connections with the sciences are a powerful driver of engagement. My own first serious experiences with caves resulted from a chance invitation to be involved in cave research, and that experience has powerfully shaped my interest in caving. As an NSS director, I will work to make similar research opportunities more widely known and available.

In my professional life I am a PhD student in the life sciences at Brandeis University, where I study natural variability in the neural determinants of animal behavior, and their relevance to ecology. I hold patents for my work in biological device development and have worked with MIT Lincoln Lab, the Edgeworth Chemical & Biological Lab, the MIT Media Lab, and the Tongass Genomics Initiative. I previously served as a United States soldier, serving one combat tour. In addition, I've worked in education and in hospitality and the outdoor leisure

industry. This range of experiences has taught me to work with people of all kinds, and has given me a well-tested set of tools for building consensus within and across groups and organizations.

As a scientist and outdoor enthusiast, I was raised on tales of a bygone heroic age of discovery in both spheres. Amundson's Antarctic expedition, Marie Curie's groundbreaking investigations of radiation, and many more stories told of a lost era of deep unknowns and inspired amateurism, a time that had been replaced by credentialed, mechanical nitpicking, where the hardest problem facing the young researcher or the aspiring explorer is how to even find unanswered questions or uncharted paths. Not so with caves. Head out this weekend to walk the ridges, and with some know-how and just a little luck, you have a decent chance of finding a cave no one has ever entered before. More than any other environment, caves make actual discovery accessible. If elected as director, I will be honored to help bring that thrilling potential to as many people as possible.

