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National Speleological Society Announces Move to Virtual Convention for 2021

NSS Headquarters, Huntsville, AL — The National Speleological Society formally announces that the 2021 NSS Convention will be on a virtual platform and will not be held in Weed, California this year. “We regret to inform the membership of this decision but will continue to move forward with an online format similar to the 2020 Virtual Convention,” stated President, Geary Schindel. Information from the CDC indicates the COVID-19 Pandemic will continue to be a major health concern throughout 2021. Rather than risk the health of our members and the citizens of Weed, the decision was made by a consensus of the board to move the event to an online meeting.

The 2020 virtual convention was a success and we believe the 2021 virtual convention will also be as engaging as the year prior. The virtual convention does have a number of advantages, it allows more and longer session presentations, allows members not able to travel, to also attend the convention, and it allows for the recording and presentation of the event.

Administrative Vice President, Adam Weaver stated “I give this directive with a heavy heart and want to take this time to recognize the hard work of Matt Bowers and his staff have accomplished in the efforts of having an in-person event. Carol Tideman, Convention Division Chief, and I have been amazed and honored by the tenacity with which you and your staff have pursued an in-person offering, against what are the most difficult circumstances that any convention host staff have faced. The global pandemic, and the ability of our membership to safely and logistically attend an in-person event in either June or July of this year are at the center of this decision. All empirical evidence indicates that an online event decision at this time is the best choice for the society, and our membership.”

Weaver also stated that “I believe that the 2021 NSS Convention can still be a great success. In 2020, the online offering had more than 3,000 attendees, our message of conservation, exploration, and fellowship reached more members than ever before. In 2021, with the specific marketing abilities exhibited by the convention team, I believe this could be the most highly attended convention ever. It is my hope, and Carol’s as well, that circumstances never necessitate the need of an online only convention again, so let’s make this second and hopefully final online offering, a fantastic and memorable experience for our membership.”

Dates and schedule updates will follow as soon as they are available.

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For over 70 years, the National Speleological Society has promoted safe and responsible caving practices, effective cave and karst management, speleology, and conservation. Our members are bound together by their love of caves, their desire to learn about the underground wilderness, and their commitment to protect it for future generations.

NSS membership offers worldwide caver camaraderie, networking opportunities, and access to information about discoveries and developments in caving, speleology, equipment, and techniques through our publications, annual conventions, grottos, internal organizations, and NSS-sponsored projects, expeditions, and surveys.

With 7,000+ members and more than 200 grottos (chapters), the National Speleological Society is the largest organization in the world working every day to further the exploration, study, and protection of caves and their environments, and foster fellowship among cavers.