

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME

Male  Female

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

COUNTRY

DATE OF BIRTH OCCUPATION

PHONE

E-MAIL ADDRESS

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY

GROTTO AFFILIATION (if any)

ARE YOU A FORMER NSS MEMBER? YES  NO

IF SO, NSS NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ YEAR JOINED \_\_\_\_\_

### INFORMATION ON FAMILY MEMBERS

NAME

Male  Female

DATE OF BIRTH OCCUPATION

PHONE

E-MAIL ADDRESS

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY

SIGNATURE

NAME

Male  Female

DATE OF BIRTH OCCUPATION

PHONE

E-MAIL ADDRESS

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY

SIGNATURE

***I support the purposes of the National Speleological Society and its Policy for Cave Conservation. I have read and understood the cave conservation policy and will uphold its fundamental principles. Please accept my application for membership.***

**SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_**

Mail form with a check or money order payable to the National Speleological Society, or complete the credit card section below:

Pay by credit card: \_\_\_ Visa \_\_\_ MC \_\_\_ Discover  
Card number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_

**National Speleological Society  
2813 Cave Avenue  
Huntsville, Alabama 35810-4431**

## NSS Cave Conservation Policy

The National Speleological Society believes: that caves have unique scientific, recreational, and scenic values; that these values are endangered by both carelessness and intentional vandalism; that these values, once gone, cannot be recovered; and that the responsibility for protecting caves must be assumed by those who study and enjoy them.

Accordingly, the Society works for the preservation of caves with a realistic policy supported by effective programs for: the encouragement of self-discipline among cavers; education and research concerning the cause and prevention of cave damage; and special projects, including cooperation with other groups similarly dedicated to the conservation of natural areas. Specifically: all contents of a cave, formations, life, and loose deposits, are significant for their enjoyment and interpretation. Therefore, caving parties leave a cave as they find it. They provide means for the removal of waste, limit markings to a few small and removable signs as are needed for surveys, and especially, exercise extreme care not to accidentally break or soil formations, disturb life forms or unnecessarily increase the number of disfiguring paths through an area.

Scientific collection is professional, selective, and minimal. Collecting mineral or biological material for display purposes, including previously broken or dead specimens, is never justified, because it encourages others to collect and destroys the interest of the cave.

The Society encourages projects such as: establishing cave preserves, placing entrance gates where appropriate, opposing the sale of speleothems, supporting effective protective measures, cleaning and restoring over-used caves, cooperating with private cave owners by supplying them with knowledge about their cave and assisting them in protecting their cave and property from damage during cave visits, and encouraging commercial cave owners to make use of their opportunity to aid the public in understanding caves and the importance of their conservation.

Where there is reason to believe that publication of cave locations will lead to vandalism before adequate protection can be established, the Society will oppose publication.

It is the duty of every Society member to take personal responsibility for spreading a consciousness of the cave conservation problem to each potential user of caves. Without this, the beauty and value of our caves will not long remain with us.



## Membership

photo by Diana Cielit/Marc Tremblay



## **What is the NSS?**

- With over 12,000 members, the National Speleological Society does more than any other organization to study, explore, and conserve cave and karst resources; protect access to caves; encourage responsible management of caves and their unique environments; and promote responsible caving.
- The NSS supports cavers and cave owners, initiates legislation in favor of caves, encourages responsible management of Federal and state owned karst lands; and develops cave management symposia and workshops for resource and land managers.
- The Society publishes cave-related books and journals, owns the nation's largest speleological library, and promotes educational programs about caves.
- Grants awarded by the NSS encourage and support research, conservation, education, exploration, and cave science.
- The NSS conducts cave rescue courses, promotes responsible caving practices and the use of safe techniques, and sponsors a comprehensive cave diving instruction program.
- The NSS does all this with hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours, and with the financial support of membership dues, NSS Bookstore profits, and generous donations.

## **How the NSS is organized**

- NSS members belong to one of 200 local chapters, called "grottos," which offer caving trips, projects and activities, experience, skills training, knowledge, and camaraderie.
- Grottos are part of an NSS Region.
- NSS Sections focus on specialized fields of speleology, such as geology, biology, cave diving, photography, conservation, and cartography.
- NSS Surveys, Conservancies, and Projects study, protect, or map a single cave system, or they focus on caves within a particular area.

## **NSS office services**

- The NSS Bookstore stocks books about caves and caving, and is open to non-members as well as NSS members.
- The NSS Audiovisual (AV) Lending Library and a comprehensive library of speleological publications are available for members' use.
- The NSS office handles inquiries, supplies information, and supports the work of the Society.

## **NSS publications**

- Members receive the *NSS News* each month, the *Journal of Cave and Karst Studies* three times a year, the *Members Manual* annually, and, *American Caving Accidents* as issued.
- A year's collection of significant caving articles from over 150 grotto newsletters is published in the *Speleo Digest*.
- The NSS publishes books on speleological topics, including caving skills and cave rescue, surveying, conservation, history, and photography.
- The NSS Web site provides a wide range of information on the Society and its internal organizations and properties; information on cave conservation, science, safety and techniques; a database of library holdings; access to the NSS Bookstore and AV library; and information related to NSS business and management. It also hosts a lively caver discussion forum.

## **Training**

- Sessions in vertical and general caving skills, speleo-specialties, and general speleology are offered at annual conventions, regional caver events, and grotto meetings.
- The NSS National Cave Rescue Commission conducts training seminars and certification courses.
- The NSS Cave Diving Section offers internationally recognized certification courses.
- Books, brochures, and audio-visual programs are available for use in training activities.

## **Conservation**

- Cave and karst preservation is a priority of the Society, and every year, NSS members volunteer thousands of hours to restore and preserve caves.
- NSS Task Forces work throughout the United States to protect and study caves and karst.
- The NSS Save the Caves Fund, supported solely through donations, is used exclusively to support cave conservation and preservation projects and programs.

## **Management**

- The NSS works with private landowners, conservation organizations, and Federal and state agencies to protect caves and promote responsible access policies.
- The NSS encourages framing Federal and state laws to protect caves and karst.
- The biennial National Cave and Karst Management Symposium and Cave Conservancy Forum are sponsored by the NSS.

- 13 nature preserves that protect caves are owned or managed by the NSS throughout the United States, each with its own management plan. Most are open for NSS members to visit.
- Through grants and loans, the Society supports land purchases by regional cave conservancies and other organizations to preserve and protect caves and karst.

## **Education**

- Grottos work on local levels with schools and youth groups to offer cave and karst education.
- The NSS works closely with organizations such as the National Park Service to develop materials and training programs for educators.
- The Junior Speleological Society provides special activities and training for cavers under 17.
- The NSS provides standards and guidelines to enable leaders to safely conduct youth group caving programs.
- A range of NSS grant programs encourages and supports research, conservation, education, exploration, and cave science.

## **Special events**

- Annual, week-long national NSS conventions offer opportunities to meet other NSS members and visit caves in different parts of the United States. Conventions include scientific and technical sessions, international Photo and Fine Arts Salons, rope work seminars, geology field trips, and Junior Speleological Society activities.
- Regional caving events, held throughout the year, offer opportunities for cave exploration, touring, and study; cave and karst conservation; skills training; and fellowship among NSS members.

## **Cooperative programs**

- American Association for the Advancement of Science
- American Geological Institute
- Bat Conservation International
- International Union of Speleology
- Karst Waters Institute
- National Caves Association
- National Cave and Karst Research Institute
- National Park Service
- Project Underground
- The Nature Conservancy
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Geological Survey

## **Why join the NSS?**

- You want to learn about latest cave discoveries and advances in speleology.
- You want to explore and survey caves, and conserve the fragile underground wilderness.
- You want to keep caves accessible to cavers.
- You seek the camaraderie of people who share a passion for knowledge, exploration, and conservation of caves
- You want to stay abreast of developments in caving, surveying, techniques, and equipment.
- You know that the future for caves depends on the strength that comes from many individuals working together, and you want to be a part of it.
- You believe it is important to support the Society's programs to conserve, protect, restore, and study caves and karst.



## **Becoming an NSS member**

To become a member, apply online on the NSS Web site, or complete the attached application form and forward to the NSS office.



**CONTACT US**

National Speleological Society  
 2813 Cave Avenue  
 Huntsville, AL 35810

Telephone: 256-852-1300  
 Fax: 256-851-9241  
 nss@caves.org  
 www.caves.org

**Membership categories and annual fees\***

**Individual and Institutional Members**

Receive the monthly caving magazine, the *NSS News*; the scientific *Journal of Cave and Karst Studies* three times a year; *American Caving Accidents*; and the annual membership directory. Membership also entitles you to audiovisual and printed library privileges and NSS Bookstore discounts.

**Regular**

(Over 17 years old)  
 (\$70 for 2 years \ \$103 for 3 years) .....\$36

**Conservation**

(Regular plus additional cave conservation support.) .....\$100

**Associate**

(Under 17 years old or full-time students.  
 May not vote or hold office.)  
 (\$49 for 2 years \ \$72 for 3 years).....\$25

**Sustaining**

(\$214 for 2 years \ \$319 for 3 years).....\$108  
 (Regular membership, with \$79 credited toward Life membership each year.)

**Life**

(Regular membership privileges for life.) .....\$720\*\*

**Conservation Life**

Additional endowment support by any Life member..... \$1000

**Institutional** (For example, educational and scientific organizations and show caves.) .....\$75

**Limited**

(Over 17 years old, privileges of Regular membership, but without the *NSS News* and the *Journal*.)  
 (\$29 for 2 years \ \$42 for 3 years) .....\$15\*

**Family Members**

Family members have the privileges of individual membership, but do not receive publications. To qualify for the family discount, Family members must reside at the same address as an NSS member other than a Family member, and they must pay dues at the same time as that member

**Family Regular** (17 and over)

(\$13 for 2 years or \$19 for 3 years) .....\$7

**Family Associate** (Under 17. Optional for full-time students. May not vote or hold office.)

(\$13 for 2 years or \$19 for 3 years) .....\$7

**Family Sustaining** (\$85 for 2 years / \$127 for 3 years)

(\$40 credited toward Family Life Membership each year. Must be married to a Life, Sustaining, Honorary or Outstanding Service member.) (\$85 for 2 years / \$127 for 3 years) .....\$43

**Family Life** (Must be married to a Life, Outstanding Service, or Honorary member.) .....\$360

\*International mailing surcharges: Canada/Mexico \$9, All other \$15.

\$5.00 International mailing surcharge for Limited membership.

\*\*Rates discounted for ages 60 and above.