

Florida Cave Survey Constitution

Adopted September 25, 2005

1. Name
 - 1.1. The name of this organization shall be the "Florida Cave Survey," hereafter known as the FCS.
2. Goals
 - 2.1. The goals of this organization shall be consistent with those of the National Speleological Society (NSS), with the additional purpose of systematically collecting and maintaining information of all kinds on the caves and karst features of Florida.
 - 2.2. The Constitution, Bylaws, and other policies of the NSS shall be binding upon the FCS. Any actions of the FCS or of the Executive committee of the FCS inconsistent with the same shall be null and void.
 - 2.3. In the event of dissolution, all FCS property, including cave files, shall be donated to the National Speleological Society.
3. Organization
 - 3.1. The FCS shall be governed by an Executive Committee (all NSS members) elected annually by the general membership and consisting of:
 - 3.1.1. The Chair.
 - 3.1.2. The Data Director.
 - 3.1.3. The Librarian.
 - 3.1.4. The Secretary-Treasurer.
 - 3.2. The Executive Committee shall have complete power to appoint additional officers, to raise and approve the use of funds, to manage the business, and to perform all necessary FCS functions.
 - 3.3. All decisions by the Executive Committee must pass by at least 3 votes.
4. Meetings and Elections
 - 4.1. The Executive Committee shall meet at least twice a year, at times and places determined by the Committee.
 - 4.2. Special meetings of the FCS may be called at any time by the Chair or by three (3) members of the Executive Committee and must be called by the Chair on receipt of the written request of 25% of the Regular Members of the FCS. Notice of the time, place and purpose of the meeting shall be given to each member of the FCS not less than fifteen (15) nor more than 45 days before the meeting.
 - 4.3. No official Executive Committee business may be decided with an attendance of less than three FCS Executive Committee officers.
 - 4.4. There will be two annual meetings of general membership, one in the spring and one in autumn.
 - 4.5. Officer elections will be conducted via mail-in ballot, with the process for ensuring a fair and timely election and the schedule of the mail-outs of the ballots and candidate platforms to be proposed by the Rules Committee and adopted as part of the bylaws upon an affirmative vote of the majority of the members

present at the Spring meeting. The ballots are to be submitted to the official FCS address on or before the seventh day prior to that year's annual Autumn meeting, or at that year's annual Autumn meeting, and will remain unopened until they are counted by the person(s) designated to tally the votes.

- 4.6. Only active Regular members are eligible to vote.
 - 4.6.1. A proxy vote is allowed for voting at FCS meetings provided that an official notice is given to a board member prior to the start of the meeting. A Regular Member is allowed to hold only one proxy vote.
- 4.7. Election of officers may be by secret ballot if requested.
- 4.8. The presence of 25% of the Regular membership at the meeting shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of electing officers.
- 4.9. A plurality of voting Regular members shall determine the election.
- 4.10. The Chair shall be elected first. In turn, three Regular members shall be elected as the Data Director, the Librarian, and the Secretary-Treasurer.

5. Duties of the Officers

- 5.1. The Chair of the FCS shall:
 - 5.1.1. Preside over the FCS and Executive Committee meetings.
 - 5.1.2. Appoint replacement officers who will serve until the next scheduled election when vacancies occur on the Executive Committee.
 - 5.1.3. Transact official correspondence and perform routine administrative duties of the FCS.
 - 5.1.4. Represent the FCS in all official matters.
 - 5.1.5. Disburse funds for the payment of routine FCS expenses of a kind previously approved by the Executive Committee.
- 5.2. The Data Director of the FCS shall:
 - 5.2.1. Keep the official data list of Florida Cave Survey.
 - 5.2.2. Retain and maintain electronic copies of Florida cave maps.
 - 5.2.3. Retain and maintain electronic copies of the Florida cave narrative files.
- 5.3. The Librarian of the FCS shall:
 - 5.3.1. Retain and maintain paper copies of Florida cave maps.
 - 5.3.2. Retain and maintain paper copies of the Florida cave narrative files.
 - 5.3.3. Retain and maintain books, paper survey data, and other archival material related to Florida caves for the Florida Cave Survey.
- 5.4. The Secretary-Treasurer of the FCS shall:
 - 5.4.1. Keep minutes of regular and Executive Committee meetings.
 - 5.4.2. Maintain necessary records and correspondence of the FCS.
 - 5.4.3. Collect FCS dues and fees and keep a record of the FCS finances, submitting an annual financial statement to the membership.
 - 5.4.4. Have the power to disburse funds for the payment of routine FCS expenses of a kind previously approved by the Executive Committee.
- 5.5. Officers may resign by submitting a written statement to the Chair and by surrendering to them all FCS property in their possession.

6. Membership

- 6.1. All members must be active NSS members in good standing.

- 6.2. Florida Cave Survey membership shall consist of two levels: Associate membership and Regular membership.
- 6.3. Prospective Associate members of the FCS must meet all of the following qualifications:
 - 6.3.1. Candidate must have to a significant degree in Florida or have contributed substantially to the knowledge of Florida caves.
 - 6.3.2. Candidate must be recommended and approved with regard to his responsible (caving) conduct and his awareness and practice of proper cave conservation procedures.
 - 6.3.2.1. Recommendation shall be by any two members in good standing of the FCS or any two members of another NSS internal organization.
 - 6.3.2.2. Approval of a candidate for an Associate membership shall be by any two members of the Executive Committee, who will indicate their approval of the candidate by signing the candidate's membership application.
 - 6.3.3. Pay currently required dues, as set by the membership. Dues are payable at the annual Autumn Meeting of the FCS.
 - 6.3.4. New members will be accepted as Associate Members during which time the associate member will be required to make contributions, or their equivalent, as determined in 6.3.5, for acceptance as a Regular member. A review of member status will be held prior to the next official FCS meeting.
 - 6.3.5. A combination of at least three of the following will be recognized as acceptable contributions for Regular Membership recognition: Improvement and/or updated information of land owner relations and/or cave access to any cave currently without said access; A new map or document, new to the FCS, where the associate member is notated or recognized as a member of the survey party, cartographer, author or co-author; Any document (to include maps) that are new to the FCS, of which the associate member is not recognized as an author; An update to individual cave records which result in the improvement of current data found in the Index, as logged by the Data Manager. Associate members who fail to meet the above requirements will be retained as Associate Members at the current membership rate for the balance of their paid year, but will not be provided any data documents. If submissions are made that meet the above requirements over the balance of the full year, the Associate Member will then be eligible for Regular Membership.
- 6.4. Approval of a candidate Associate member for Regular membership shall be by any two members of the Executive Committee, who will indicate their approval of the candidate by signing the candidate's membership application.
- 6.5. Associate and Regular membership is subject to the approval of the Executive Committee which may establish additional qualifications to those listed above.
- 6.6. Founding Members are those attendees of the FCS organizational meetings that occurred prior to official establishment of the FCS and were also approved for inclusion by the Executive Committee.

- 6.7. Experienced cavers that have made significant contributions to FCS goals and databases may be approved by the Executive Committee as Regular Members without the Associate Membership prerequisite.
- 6.8. Membership is restricted to individuals. The Executive Committee shall consider the appeal of outside groups in extraordinary circumstances.
- 6.9. Only Regular members may vote in FCS elections or other FCS matters.
- 6.10. An individual's membership may be terminated for the following reasons, subject to three quarters vote of the Executive Committee:
 - 6.10.1. Non-payment of dues. Members more than six months in arrears on dues payments must reapply for membership; members may be dropped routinely from the FCS by the Secretary-Treasurer for non-payment of dues.
 - 6.10.2. Expulsion for misuse of FCS cave files; i.e., dissemination of FCS files in a manner contrary to the guidelines discussed in Section 7.
 - 6.10.3. Expulsion for conduct detrimental to the FCS or in violation of the NSS policy on cave conservation.
- 6.11. Each member subject to expulsion may demand, and receive, a personal hearing before the Executive Committee.

7. FCS Cave Files

- 7.1. The term "cave," as used hereafter, is defined as "a natural cavity which equals or exceeds one or more of the following dimensions:
 - 7.1.1. Horizontal length of 30 feet.
 - 7.1.2. Total vertical extent of 30 feet.
 - 7.1.3. Vertical drop (pit) of 30 feet.
- 7.2. Cave-like features which do not meet these criteria will be termed "karst features."
- 7.3. The FCS shall maintain a computer file, coded in a standard format approved by the Executive Committee, for the purpose of providing the members with listings of current information about Florida caves.
- 7.4. Each new reported cave with an accurate location shall be assigned a sequential four digit cave number by the Data Director. Once assigned, a number is never reassigned.
- 7.5. Cave data will be categorized as:
 - 7.5.1. Non-Sensitive Data: Information for which there are no access restrictions in that it poses negligible risk of harm to caves or karst features and their contents, or to the owners of such features. This applies only to data specifically released by the Executive Committee and may include number of caves per county, cave lengths, and similar statistical data unless classified as proprietary by the land or data owner.
 - 7.5.2. Sensitive Data: Information restricted from distribution in that it poses possible risk of harm to cave or karst features and their contents, to the owners of such features, or to individuals that may enter such features. Such information includes but is not limited to the precise locations of the features, the names and addresses of the cave owners, cave maps, and other specific data.

- 7.5.3. Proprietary Data: Information of any kind given to this survey by the owner of a cave or karst feature, the owner's representative, or the person who has developed the data, with the condition that it shall not be released without the written prior consent of the same.
 - 7.6. All non-proprietary information in the FCS files is available to all Regular FCS members.
 - 7.7. Dissemination of FCS Cave File information to non-Regular members:
 - 7.7.1. The general policy of the FCS shall be to discourage widespread dissemination of cave information, especially locations, to other individuals or groups where:
 - 7.7.1.1. they have little need for it,
 - 7.7.1.2. their responsible use of the information is not reasonably certain,
or
 - 7.7.1.3. where adverse environmental impact on the caves or landowner relations is a serious possibility. In all instances, no more information shall be released than that required to fulfill genuine need.
 - 7.7.2. The Chair shall have the power to answer affirmatively routine requests for unrestricted information addressed to the FCS by responsible individuals or groups, if a limited number of caves or a small region is involved.
 - 7.7.3. Requests by non-FCS members or groups for large or block amounts of information shall be referred to the Executive Committee for approval.
 - 7.8. Original contributions to the Florida Cave Survey become part of the permanent collection; however they remain the property of the contributors. Utilization of data and maps compiled in the Florida Cave Survey cannot be used for financial gain without the written consent of the contributor.
8. Changes to Constitution
- 8.1. Amendments and changes to the FCS Constitution shall require a two-thirds favorable vote by those Regular members present at the annual meeting.
9. Changes to Bylaws
- 9.1. The Bylaws of the FCS shall be created by the Rules Committee.
 - 9.2. Adoption of FCS Bylaws and subsequent amendments to those Bylaws shall require a majority favorable vote by those Regular Members present at annual FCS meetings.