

NSSCDS BOD MEETING January 12, 2025

Quorum- Yes

BOD Present- Fred Stratton (FS), Steve Forlenza (SF), Steve Dalcher (SD), Gayle Hall (GH), Renee Power (RP), Chris Brock (CBr).

BOD Absent- Jamie Chandler (JC).

Members Present- Cameron Mahaffey (CM), Adam Hughes (AH), Autumn Jefferson (AJ), Shane Paradis (SP), Shannon Perry (SPr).

Meeting called to order by FS at 1936 hours.

FS made a motion to accept minutes from December 8, 2024 BOD meeting. Seconded by SD. All in favor. Motion passed.

Training Report

CBr made a motion to approve standards changes. FS seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

CBr made a motion to approve cavern courses 1-3. FS seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

CBr requested that BOD discuss the price point for eLearning and when do we want to officially release the new platform.

Training Report, January 2025

1. End of Year Certifications Report:

We certified 133 divers in 2024. As a comparison, 165 were certified in 2023

Top 10 Producers:

Chris Brock – 23

Ken Sallot – 12

Jim Wyatt – 11

Max Kuznetsov – 11

Timmy Young – 9

Paul Heinerth – 8

Roger Williams – 6

Elena Kryzhanovskaya – 6

Igor Vrhovec – 6

Joerg Hess – 5

2. The following instructors have not been renewed for 2025. Both Adam and I have sent them emails asking them to renew.

Harry Averill

John Kieren

John McCain

Ted McCoy

Bill Oestreich

Colt Smith

3. Standards Changes:

- a. I have attached 3 Cavern Course documents for your approval:

- The first document is for a Cavern Course with single tank only. This course is designed for the “overhead curious” and will not count towards a cave rating. It is basically a cleaned up version of what we do now.
- The second document is for a Cavern Course taken in double tanks, side mount or rebreather. This is a cave preparatory cavern course with some credit possibly being given to the student (instructor discretion).
- The final document are the instructor requirements for candidates wanting to teach this program

- b. Please approve or reject the following standards changes to current courses:

- Apprentice Cave Standards:

Section 2.4.8 - Dry Land Exercises (add a letter H).

H. Students will be familiar with repairing a broken line.

- Cave CCR Standards

Section 2.7.8 – Limits of Training (add a second sentence to letter B.)

B. Divers must have no less than 1.5 times the open-circuit bailout gas needed to exit the cave based on a 21.25 L/0.75 ft³ per minute SAC rate and a 10m/33 ft per minute swim speed. Upon collecting actual data for SAC and swim speed, students may use this data for planning purposes.

- c. Instructor Crossover Institute 1/16/25 for Cameron Mahaffey

- d. Lamar Hires has requested to step back from consistent participation in the Training Committee. He has requested to serve as an advisor to me and attend meetings at his

discretion. I of course approve of that decision and will continue to value his counsel. I have added Josh Dillaman as a regular member of the Training Committee. Josh brings a younger, fresh perspective to the group and as he continues his work to become a Full Cave Instructor, will undoubtedly have been a tremendous resource for us moving forward.

e. E-Learning Update:

- CB to meet with editorial team on 1/13/25 for the latest update
- Editorial work is done for all but two chapters.
- Test questions have been prepared for all but 2 chapters
- Completed content was uploaded to the LMS by Autumn and pictures are being inserted as editors specify needs and Jennifer Dillaman submits photos. The expectation is for all content to be uploaded for testing by 1/19/25

f. Demo of a chapter from LMS with quiz questions by Autumn

Awards

SF made a motion to accept the Recognition awards as written. The timeline will be amendable as needed. FS Seconded. 5 yay (SF,FS,SD,CBr,RP) and 1 nay (GH). Motion passes.

GH- Conservation award vs Instructor award. CBr not in favor of an instructor award but will ponder alternatives. RP- Instructor award not needed. RP would like to continue with the conservation award.

SF- will work on the structure of Awards and Recognition room for web page with Teri and Howard. Consult with GH as needed.

NSS CDS Recognition Awards

Proposed

Three award categories are to be presented during the International Conference each year.

- Explorer of the Year (named in honor of Brett Hemphill)
- Volunteer of the Year
- Lifetime Achievement Award

Nominations may be made by membership, or by the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors will vote for one winner in each category.

Criteria

Must be a current member of NSS – CDS in good standing

May not be a current Board member

Awards

Brett Hemphill Explorer of the Year Award

- Finds a previously unknown cave system, or participates in going exploration of a known cave system. May be in the role of leader, or as part of an organization
- Gains lawful access to cave systems by establishing a relationship with and receiving authorization from the landowner.
- Participates in line laying, photo documentation, and survey of the system.
- Produces maps using data derived using accepted cave mapping techniques. The map quality is Grade 3C or higher.
- Recipients are awarded a free 1 year membership to NSS – CDS, a plaque, feature in UWS, and recognition on the website and Facebook page.

Volunteer of the Year Award

- The Outstanding Volunteer Award is presented to a volunteer who has shown exceptional service, creativity, dedication, cooperation and commitment to the NSS-CDS. This recognition serves to highlight and inspire strong community relationships, including innovative approaches to improving our organization and encouraging others to engage in volunteer activities.
- Participates in volunteer activities, including Cavengers at Workshop/Conference, dive site workdays, other activities as identified.
- Contributes time, resources, and expertise to further NSS – CDS mission.
- Creates a supportive environment through idea generation, problem solving, and positive interactions
- Promote and recruits others to help with NSS CDS projects.
- Recipients are awarded a free 1 year membership to NSS – CDS, a plaque, feature in UWS, and recognition on the website and Facebook page.

Lifetime Achievement Award

- Exhibits a strong history of exploration, conservation, education, and safety.
- Has made significant achievements with community-wide impact in one or more of these cave diving and related activities:
 - Exploration including linking one system to another or extending line in a known system.
 - Innovations in the design and manufacturing of equipment particularly that enhances diver safety and performance or contributed to preserving cave systems.
 - Refinement of procedures and protocols that have advanced the art and science of cave diving techniques, raised proficiency and enhanced safety.
 - Documentation of cave surveys such as cartography of previously unmapped systems and updating old surveys with more precise data.
 - Contributions to cave related sciences such as hydrology, geology and biology. That includes discovery of new species, published scientific papers, lectures and presentations to advance knowledge of the karst environment.

- Original writing or artwork related to cave diving including NSS-CDS training materials, journals, magazines, blogs, books, photography or videography.
- History of leadership and service within NSS- CDS.
- Recipients are awarded a Lifetime membership to NSS – CDS, a plaque, feature in UWS, and recognition on the website and Facebook page.

Nomination Process

- Candidates may be nominated by sending an email to (Awards@nsscds.org) including the nominee’s contact information and a brief statement of why they should be awarded (May use Forms instead).
- Nominations must be received by April 7
- Board members will vote for the winner at the April 13 meeting
- Awards will be presented at the International Conference

Treasures and Operations report.

RP- Made a motion to accept the 2025 budget. SD seconded. All in favor. Motion passes.

AH-Marketing Manager/Advertising Mgr. volunteer- Andrew McKnight. He has a background in this area. AH would like to employ his services on a voluntary basis. All agreed.

AH- Porta potty is up \$7.00 per month at Cow. SD is sourcing for Edwards and will handle the pricing/contracting for all CDS properties. SF suggested that we obtain 3 bids to see if the increase is in line with industry increases.

AH-Attached are the December 2024 financials for the NSS-CDS, and below is my manager's report. The financials are as of "Year to Date". However, my manager's reports will reflect mostly on the month I am reporting (in this case December), and year-to-date if relevant.

Cash in Bank:

Checking: \$20,415.12

Savings (Meeting House Fund): \$10,668.47

Total Cash-in-Bank: \$31,083.59

Manager’s Report:

The month of December was incredibly busy for the online store. As is normally the case each year, December saw the most online merchandise sales compared to any other month during 2024. We also had an influx in student registrations, as well as instructor renewals. I needed to process certs, renewals, and ship orders nearly every day to keep up and ensure everyone got their merchandise in time for the holidays.

As a result of this increased activity, the section saw a net profit of almost \$5k for the month of December alone when including instructor renewals, memberships, etc.. This makes December the second most profitable month of the year, after the month of May when the International Conference was held.

Going into January, I would expect this trend to continue since the WW is held this month, and we will soon be opening ticket sales for the ICC Grand Prize.

In addition to increased store sales, December is the month for instructor renewals. Unfortunately, we did not see as many instructors renew for this year compared to prior years. As of 1/6/25 we have 28 active instructors current through the end of 2025. The following is a list of instructors who have yet to renew for 2025, causing their status to now be lapsed/inactive:

Harry Averill, Jonathan Kieren, John McCain, Edward Mccoy, Robert McGann, Bill Oestreich, Conrad Pfeifer, Olivier Prats, Phillip Short, and Colt Smith.

I spoke with Chris about these instructors this morning, and we plan to reach out to them today again about renewing. If they renew this month, I will backdate their status to 1/1/25 so there is no lapse.

With the WW coming up, the month of January is already becoming another busy month. Based on the numbers so far, and statistics from prior years, I estimate that we will have around 150 people in attendance at the WW in two weeks.

Some other miscellaneous things worth mentioning:

I have seen a huge increase in hat sales over the last 2 months. I ran out and needed to place another order to restock. They must be very popular because I am selling a ton of them right now.

I renewed our DEMA membership for 2025 in December. I also made the first registration payment for our booth in Orlando this year. The payment was due early January 2025, so I just paid for it.

In December I also renewed our FDACS license. (This is a requirement to operate as a non-profit in Florida) and renewed our Resale Certificate with the Florida Department of Revenue for 2025. In January I intend to file our 2025 Annual Report with Florida. I will do this after the WW when I have more time to dedicate to it. As of today, we are in compliance with all our annual reporting requirements for 2025.

Properties

GH- made a motion to request all applicants for Abe Davis, Henry Nicholson, and Sheck Exley awards be NSS-CDS members.

SF seconded.

All in favor; none opposed. Motion passed

GH-Program Director 1 Report

1.12.2025

Clear Cut/Meeting House

December 17 meeting cancelled; another meeting with Lance Kelly, Park Manager scheduled for 2/4/2025, 10 am at Emerald.

- a. Assess basin over cave entrance for access point.
- b. Look at Cherokee
- c. Sidney Ruetz, Joerg Hess, Chris Brown to attend.

Committees

Safety

Accident Analysis – no update

Lines and Markers

- a. Ken Sallot asked for criteria and scope of work.
- b. Fred wrote a draft (awaiting guidance from Jeff Loflin with the DEP/State Parks) Ken sent feedback.

Science

Conservation

Committee met 12/17 via Zoom

- a. Bobby Scharping (BB), Chelsea Dinon created a one-page document to describe the sensor project
- b. Bryan Buescher met with EPD head; interested in sensors with more parameters. They are checking with their water quality specialist, Stacy.
- c. Also per BB, Tara Forrest Developer was asked to redesign the stormwater system or it will fail (per the City). County set aside \$1m for this project. Needs a 1 page proposal for the Sensor Project for the NSS, and he will run it by the County. Next meeting January 14.
- d. Chelsea Dinon obtained a SRWMD contact – Leon Marshall – and shared with BB.
- e. Bobby also sent budget request to Emily P. Davis at NSS.

Geology

We did some mapping with the SUNFISH AUV at Jackson Blue Spring in April. There is an article about that here: <https://dwe.ai/blogs/news/deepwater-exploration-collaboration-with-sunfish>. We mapped the cave geometry and location and took chemistry samples inside the cave as well. We are continuing our work with the Florida DEP to map more caves with the SUNFISH AUV which has also been instrumented with a new nitrate sensor. We are planning on mapping Lafayette Blue Springs this year. We had great support from the Woodville Karst Plain folks. We have a paper in preparation on our water chemistry data, and Vickie Siegel from SUNFISH presented our work from Jackson Blue at a national conference this December. This work is being conducted by Dr. Spellma.

My lab group also made progress on characterizing the causes of spring and river discharge changes along the lower Santa Fe River. We worked with folks at the Suwannee River Water Management District to quantify how much of the changing flows were from pumping, climate variability, and upstream (upper Santa Fe) land use. We are collaborating with the water management district this year to finish up this work by analyzing the long-term hydrological data for the middle Suwannee River.

Biology

Dr. Sawick and Nicholas Coppola providing a presentation/proposal at Winter Workshop that will provide a suggestion for a research project that could incorporate NSS-CDS citizen science participation.

Cartography

No updates

SD- Orange Grove steps on hold. Edwards steps are in progress. A few other springs are potential upcoming projects for the CDS.

Annual Report 2024

Of

Properties Subcommittee

2024 was a busy year for the Properties Subcommittee. A total of three hurricanes over a 13 month window left most of the dive sites in North Florida needing a great deal of work in order to be accessible again. The Properties Subcommittee led the charge on several cleanup efforts: There were four workdays at Madison Blue Springs, Three work days at Peacock Springs, one work day Cow Spring and one work day at Edwards Spring. One workday was conducted at School Sink.

One new dive site was added to access by our membership. Edward's Spring was added in August 2024 and there are other property access ventures still in the works that will hopefully come to fruition in 2025. We also have plans to assist North Florida Springs Alliance with the replacement of the stairs at Orange Grove in the Spring of 2025.

The year 2024 was busy for the Properties Subcommittee. A total of three hurricanes (Idalia, Debby and Helene) over a 13-month window left most of the dive sites in North Florida needing a great deal of work in order to be accessible again. The Properties Subcommittee led the charge on several cleanup efforts and coordinated overdue maintenance and repair at our own Cow Springs property. There were 14 total workdays comprised of:

- four work days at Madison Blue Springs
- three work days at Peacock Springs
- five work days Cow Springs
- one work days at Edward's Spring
- one work day at School Sink

NSS-CDS volunteers donated over 2,000 man-hours of labor doing the projects, including over 1,600 man-hours in two state parks. The work included building and repairing 10 diver benches at Peacock, four at Madison and three at Cow; removing and replacing 200' of two-rail fencing in Peacock; laying 160 concrete pavers in the changing rooms at Cow; and repairing and replacing over 75' of fencing at Madison.

We installed two trail cameras, two each, at Cow, Mill Creek Sink and School Sink to help determine the level of non-member trespassing in order to develop deterrence strategies. We also added monthly monitoring subscription charges into the budget.

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DEMA 2025- FS, CBr, RP and Emy Stratton will represent. The booth has been reserved by SF at 2024 conference. AH has paperwork and has paid downpayment and renewed DEMA dues.

Winter Workshop

SP- 1 week away. Still have sponsors coming in. Tee shirts have been ordered. Numbers look similar to last year.

GH- What happens if we go over the occupancy load for the building? 150 person limit. SP- Will do what we have to do comply with the local fire code. FS- next year look for larger venue if needed.

International Conference

Ian/Courtney- Joerg Hess providing Liberty side mount training. Joe Bosquez setting up try dives. AH making the banner.

SD/RP Tulum Underground 2/20-2/27 dates for 2026 conference. Cave camp has been running here for years. We will follow the same design. We are presently looking for speakers.

FS- Motion to Adjourn meeting seconded by SD. Next meeting February 16, 2025.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/->

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CAVE DIVING SECTION OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Profit and Loss

January - December 2024

	TOTAL
Income	
DEMA Income	
DEMA Membership Renewals	1,200.00
DEMA Merchandise Sales	853.34
DEMA Shirt Sales	1,689.50
Total DEMA Income	3,742.84
Donations - Volunteer Workday	190.00
Donations Income	340.00
Instructor Fees Income	2,695.00
International Conference Income	
Choptima Raffle Sales	10,085.00
Door Prize Raffle Sales	4,180.00
Event Registration	7,150.00
SF Tech Raffle Sales	6,145.00
Sponsor Income	900.00
Total International Conference Income	28,460.00
Membership Dues	17,632.24
Merchandise Sales	15,147.89
Student Registrations	2,750.00
Winter Workshop Income	
Winter Workshop Merchandise Sales	1,085.55
Winter Workshop Raffle Ticket Sales	1,380.00
Winter Workshop Registration Income	3,725.00
Winter Workshop Sponsor Income	400.00
Total Winter Workshop Income	6,590.55
Total Income	\$77,548.52
Cost of Goods Sold	
BOD Polos	256.72
Books - Blueprint for Survival	384.61
COGS - Books	519.36
COGS - Grim Reaper Signs	1,334.20
COGS - Hats	532.25
COGS - Hoodies	2,314.00
COGS - T-shirts	718.00
Stickers - Logo/Round	263.05
Total Cost of Goods Sold	\$6,322.19
GROSS PROFIT	\$71,226.33
Expenses	
Awards Expenses	240.96

CAVE DIVING SECTION OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Profit and Loss

January - December 2024

	TOTAL
Certification Card Printing Costs	
Card Printer Supplies	237.50
Total Certification Card Printing Costs	237.50
DEMA Expense	
DEMA - Electric	125.00
DEMA - Membership Fees	400.00
DEMA - Misc Supplies	69.42
DEMA - Registration Fees	695.00
DEMA - Shirts Expense	1,622.40
DEMA - Travel & Lodging	1,928.34
Total DEMA Expense	4,840.16
FDACS Reporting	138.13
Insurance & Annual Filings	2,507.83
International Conference Costs	
Breakfast - Conference	281.40
Catering - Conference	2,836.01
Coffee & Dining Supplies	210.92
Drinks & Materials	477.10
Food - Social	687.57
Ice	172.47
Lunch for Volunteers - Social	312.83
Misc. Event Supplies	467.47
Name Badges	130.00
SF Tech Drysuit Cost	2,500.00
Shirts - Conference	3,193.05
Tables	207.88
U-Haul Rental	144.85
Venue Cost & Cleaning Fees	1,382.00
Total International Conference Costs	13,003.55
Merchant Fees	2,941.57
Office Administrator	12,000.00
Office Expense	
Card Reader	79.99
DoorDash - Mark Schroder	60.00
iContact Email Membership	232.73
Misc Supplies	393.44
Printer Toner	107.49
Total Office Expense	873.65
PO Box Renewal	452.58
Postage & Shipping	3,304.87

CAVE DIVING SECTION OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Profit and Loss

January - December 2024

	TOTAL
Property Taxes	328.78
Repairs & Maintenance	
Cow Porta Potty	1,455.00
Cow Property Signage	95.08
Cow Repairs	655.22
Spypoint Camera Subscription	150.00
Surveillance Equipment	1,149.70
Tree Removal	900.00
Total Repairs & Maintenance	4,405.00
Software Expense	
Checkstock	199.66
Microsoft 365	119.88
QuickBooks Online Fees	745.00
Voting Software	99.00
ZOOM Meeting Subscription	328.78
Total Software Expense	1,492.32
UWS Expenses	
Adobe Publishing Software	839.76
Layout & Drafting Fees	2,400.00
Total UWS Expenses	3,239.76
Volunteer Lunch	244.97
Website Expense	
E-Learning Layout Fees	7,500.00
Hosting Fees	425.25
Website Design & Maintenance	1,162.50
WooCommerce Fees	1,491.40
Total Website Expense	10,579.15
Winter Workshop Expenses	
Gift Card for Lamar	50.00
Winter Workshop - Food	989.19
Winter Workshop - Merchandise Costs	770.74
Winter Workshop - Misc Supplies	464.89
Winter Workshop - Shirts	1,208.30
Winter Workshop - Soda	167.46
Winter Workshop - U-Haul Rental	57.94
Winter Workshop - Venue	535.00
Total Winter Workshop Expenses	4,243.52
Total Expenses	\$65,074.30
NET OPERATING INCOME	\$6,152.03

CAVE DIVING SECTION OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Profit and Loss

January - December 2024

	TOTAL
Other Income	
Interest Income	62.47
Total Other Income	\$62.47
NET OTHER INCOME	\$62.47
NET INCOME	\$6,214.50