NSS-CDS BOD MEETING May 18th, 2026

Quorum - Yes

BOD Present - Fred Stratton (FS), Renee Power (RP), Steve Dalcher (SD), Joerg Hess (JH), James Chandler (JC), Chris Brock (CB).

BOD Absent- Jennifer Dillaman (JD)

Members Present - Adam Hughes (AH), Josh Dillaman (JD2), John Rutledge (JR2), Shannon Perry (SP), Chad Dalton (CD) and Barbara Dwyer (BD)

Meeting called to order by FS at 1904 hours.

FS made a motion to accept the minutes from 20 April. SD seconds. All in favor. Motion passes.

Secretary's Report

JD was not present. FS provided a brief update.

— JD has been working on preparing for the newly adopted raffle process, and coordinating Conference marketing with JR and SP. FS transferred several donated prizes and certificates to JD and JD2 to prepare for the Conference and Social prize drawings.

Social Media Report

Justin Reams (JR) was not present. FS provided a brief update. JR made social media posts for the upcoming Conference including posts related to sponsor and speakers. FS relayed that JR reports consistently rising numbers in likes, shares and engagements indicative of increasing exposure and interest.

Underwater Speleology Report

BD reported that the next issue of *Underwater Speleology* is coming together and is slated for publishing at the end of June.

BD noted that feedback from the previous issue was generally positive. Some members expressed interest in seeing more hands-on content and additional stories related to sump diving and cave diving history.

Treasurer's Report

Renee Power presented the Treasurer’s Report.

As of **May 13, 2026**, account balances were reported as follows:

Account	Balance
Checking Account	$55,631.93
Training Savings Fund	$6,940.02
Meeting House Fund	$4,863.48
Total Cash in Bank	**$67,435.43**

Manager’s Report

*Full report attached.

AH provided the Operations Manager’s Report.

AH reported that this is an expensive time of year due to conference preparation, but also the time of year when the organization typically generates the most revenue. He noted that several major expenses have already been paid, including venue-related costs, food, shirts, and hall rental.

AH reported that approximately $10,000 in expenses had been paid in recent weeks, but revenue from conference registrations, raffles, and related activity has helped offset those costs.

AH estimated that attendance for the upcoming conference will likely be in the range of approximately **200 to 250 attendees**, with around 150 registered at the time of the meeting, plus expected volunteers, sponsors, and walk-ins.

AH also reported that the organization is in good financial condition heading into the conference, though the final outcome of the next few weeks will significantly impact the organization’s financial position for the coming year.

It was also noted that a check from Divers Alert Network had been sent to Rembert Farms. Jonathan Rembert will mail it to the Section.

Program Director 1 Report

JH provided the Safety and Science Committee Report.

JH reported that a previously discussed issue at school Sink had been discussed with Bob Beckner and resolved.

The Board also discussed whether there was any urgency in moving forward with line-related work at Edward's Sink. JH reported that the site is lightly used, with only a small number of divers in recent months, and that no urgent safety concerns had been reported regarding the mainline.

It was discussed that Ken Sallot may proceed with the project on his own schedule unless a more urgent issue develops.

A concern was also discussed regarding high flow outside the entrance, which can make decompression difficult. No immediate action was identified, though the possibility of a tow rope or similar aid was briefly mentioned.

FS reported that he and member Nate Davey used scrap wood to install vertical supports under the lower ends of the Orange Grove stair stringers at no cost to the Section.

Meetinghouse Funds Discussion

The Board briefly discussed the Meetinghouse Fund and the status of Meetinghouse access. JH noted that the issue remains with DEP / Tallahassee and is tied to the management plan process. The Board discussed whether, if Meetinghouse remains stalled, the organization should consider redirecting attention toward other access opportunities while still remaining true to the purpose for which funds were raised.

JH agreed to periodically bring the issue up in future conversations with Lance Kelly and related contacts, as appropriate.

Program Director 2 Report

SD reported no new updates beyond the prior discussion regarding Orange Grove and related access matters. SD thanked FS and Nate Davey for their work supporting the Orange Grove stairs.

Training Director's Report
Report attached.

Chris reported that certifications remain generally in line with the same period last year, slightly lower but still within normal

Pod Diver TV Interview Proposal

The Board discussed a proposal from **Joe Cocozza of Pod Diver TV** to provide media coverage at the upcoming conference.

Joe explained that he is a journalist, broadcaster, cave diver, and technical diver, and that he produces a serious podcast focused on technical and cave diving. He stated that his intent would be to cover the conference as an independent journalist for Pod Diver TV, not as an official representative or public relations agent of the NSS-CDS.

Joe discussed the possibility of creating a “sound scene tour” of the event, speaking briefly with vendors, sponsors, attendees, and speakers as appropriate. He also discussed the possibility of recording or rebroadcasting the Lamar and Woody presentation, subject to approval.

The Board discussed several issues, including:

- If Joe would be covering the event for his YouTube channel or the NSS-CDS.
- Whether the organization currently has a media policy.
- Whether media access should be granted generally or limited.
- The difference between independent journalism and NSS-CDS-controlled public relations content.
- Whether interviews could interfere with speakers, vendors, attendees, or the flow of the conference.
- Whether any media created could be shared with NSS-CDS for future promotional use.

Several Board members expressed support for the concept of increasing media coverage and improving the organization’s communication strategy. Others expressed concern regarding editorial control and the lack of an existing media policy.

No final decision was made during the open meeting. The matter was deferred for further Board discussion in executive session.

2026 NSS-CDS Midwest Workshop (MW26) Update

CD reported that some registered attendees had asked about T-shirt sizes, as the registration process did not include a place to provide shirt size information. AH responded that the number of current registrants is small enough that attendees can be contacted directly by email to collect sizes.

The Board discussed possible shirt vendors. Adam noted that NSS-CDS has recently had a positive experience with a new printer connected through SP. Per shirt price is $11 to $13 for larger orders, slightly higher for smaller runs. SP will connect Chad with the shirt vendor contact.

CD also asked when marketing for MW26 should begin. The Board discussed that the Midwest Workshop likely serves a different demographic from the International Cave Diving Conference and that broader marketing could begin soon.

CD will submit and article to BD for the June issue of *Underwater Speleology*, about three months before the workshop.

The Board also discussed banner production, potential use of a Mexico-based vendor, reserved campsites, and the possibility of bringing NSS-CDS materials and store items to the MW26 if logistics permit.

International Cave Diving Conference

Food, Beverages, and Store

AH reported that food arrangements are on track for Sonny's BBQ and that Lee Ann Waggoner has been very helpful with beverage planning for water, beer, and soda. AH will pick up donuts on Saturday morning.

AH, JD and SP will set up and run the NSS-CDS store. AH plans to obtain the U-Haul earlier than in past years and load as much as possible ahead of time. The goal is to reduce Friday travel and setup demands, with ice being the main Friday errand.

Beer

SD agreed to coordinate with Halpatter regarding beer for the conference. The Board discussed obtaining a couple of kegs and making sure at least one option is broadly approachable rather than only selecting specialty beers. Steve indicated that he could provide or coordinate the necessary keg setup, including use of a keg bucket and a kegerator.

Event T-Shirts

SP reported that the shirts should be delivered before 01 June and that the final design looks strong and should be well received.

Marketing

FS reported that Justin Reams has continued sequencing and posting conference-related marketing items on the NSS-CDS page and group.

Cavengers

RP posted team leaders and task assignments in the Facebook group with positive feedback. Added Nate Davey to Cavengers list. Completing setup by 1200 will enhance our volunteers' experience.

Sponsors and Raffle Prizes

FS reported that Shearwater donated $2,500 worth of gear including seven GPS-enabled Swift transmitters, a Perdix 2, and additional swag, including dry bags and hats. Shearwater is sending two representatives to the event.

FS received and tested the new Rockville Audio PA system. It includes four speakers and four wireless microphones. FS reports the system will fill the Main Hall from front to back with clear, powerful sound. .

JR requested time to set up and test the audio/video system before the event, preferably on Thursday. The Board discussed coordinating with Rembert Farms regarding early setup.

FS reported that speakers have been asked to send their presentations in advance so JR can upload and test prior to the event. JR and Shane Paradis will cover AV duties.

JD, JR and SP coordinating marketing and planning of new raffle prize process.

Election Cycle Update

FS reported that the election closes on 23 May. After receiving results from Kelly Jessop on May 24, FS will notify the BoD and then the membership.

Next Meetings

The next Board meeting will be held in person in the Main Hall at Rembert Farms following conference cleanup. The Board will seat the 2026–2027 Board of Directors and address any member issues brought forward.

The regular June Board meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 15, 2026, at 7:00 PM Eastern / 4:00 PM Pacific.

Adjournment

FS made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2029. SD seconded the motion passed.

Executive Session

The Board went into Executive Session at 2029 to discuss the request by Joe Cocozza to conduct interviews of International Cave Diving Conference attendees for his Pod Diver TV YouTube channel.

Discussion
The Board discussed in further detail the issues raised earlier during the open Board meeting.

Result
FS made a motion to decline Mr. Cocozza's request citing the lack of sufficient time to plan, potential disruption of Conference proceedings, and the current lack of an overall media policy to ensure such requests are in the best interests of the NSS-CDS. JC seconded. No further discussion. All in favor. The motion passed 6-0.

Adjournment

FS made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2029. SD seconded the motion passed.

Extra Notes

1. Joerg Hess (JH) resigned his position on the Board of Directors via email on 31 May 2026. FS accepted his resignation via email on behalf of the Board of Directors on 31 May 2026.

2. FS called John Sustarich as the # 4 vote recipient in the 2026 election to gauge his willingness to serve. Mr. Sustarich declined due to personal reasons on 31 May 2026. FS called Daniel Alix, the # 5 vote recipient. Mr. Alix confirmed willingness to serve. FS made a motion to appoint Daniel Alix to fill JH's term. CB seconded. A brief discussion focused on ensuring that we followed NSS-CDS Bylaws to the letter before we proceeded to a vote. The vote was 6-0 in favor. The motion passed.