



NSS-CDS BOD Meeting – September 21, 2026

BOD Quorum (at least 4 directors): Yes

BOD Present: Fred Stratton (FS), Daniel Alix (DA), Shannon Perry (SP), Steve Dalcher (SD), John Rutledge (JR), Jenny Dillaman (JD), Chris Brock (CB), Renee Power - Board Member Emerita (RP)

Members Present: Adam Hughes (AH), Chad Dalton (CD), Tessa Skiles (TS), Josh Dillaman (JD2)

Meeting Convened – FS

Meeting called to order by FS at 7:01 PM EST.

Minutes Approved – FS

FS made a motion to accept the minutes from August 17, 2026. DA seconds. All in favor. Motion passes.

Secretary Report – SP

- SP finalized minutes from August meeting. SP will post to website following this meeting.
- SP working with CD on Midwest Workshop social media. Remaining ICDC posts will be scheduled later in the year to promote upcoming conferences.
- SP developing a longer-term content strategy for general social media content.
- Website News tab: SP asked for content direction for the News tab, which has not been updated beyond board meeting Zoom links.
 - SP proposed removing outdated content and posting a short summary (top five points) of each board meeting within about a week, with full minutes posted once approved. Could also be shared on social media.
 - Board suggestions: current community and organizational updates, program director highlights, civic involvement and partnerships (e.g., Diepolder, water conservation) with calls to action, and a history of multi-year projects.
 - FS: Kevin (website) will contact AH soon to begin a broader site cleanup, starting with events and duplicate photos. FS asked the board to consider how the website fits with email, social media and Underwater Speleology.
 - Consensus: Clean up the News tab first; SP to then propose a plan for that section. Keep it simple to update.



Treasurer's Report – DA

**Report attached.*

Cash in Bank (as of September 15, 2026)

Checking: \$43,676.32

Savings (Training Fund): \$6,948.73

Savings (Meeting House Fund): \$4,869.22

Total Cash-in-Bank: \$55,494.77

Please note that these balances reflect activity in early July, as well as some late-June activity that was not included in my previous report.

Operation Manager's Report – AH

**Report attached.*

- Multiple merchandise orders placed after the August meeting for restock and new inventory. Hoodie order was placed late but is now in.
- Insurance: Organizational coverage is now in place, retroactive to the start of the current board term.
- Supporting SP and CD on the Midwest Workshop. AH reported registration is about double prior years and encouraged the board to continue discussions with CD and the current team about the event's future.

Program Director Reports – JR

- Ridge walking project: JR is in contact with Jamie Lichner; group email sent. Next step is reviewing LiDAR maps for possible scouting locations.
- Black Lagoon (deck rebuild): Posts are still in the water (per FS), so it may be treated as a repair. Likely an October/November project; date TBD. JR will update Ken Sallot from board emails.
 - FS reports plans are from engineer Sidney Ruetz. Design includes platform, stairs with an extra stringer, and handrails on both sides running into the water. Ken had requested handrails after a student wearing doubles fell (not injured).
 - SD reports bill of materials reviewed with Sidney Ruetz; discrepancies corrected; final review pending. BOM expected ready for purchase this week. Construction targeted mid-to-late October; estimated 1 to 1.5 days.
- Cow Springs - ongoing trespassing: People are bypassing the gate via a trail and move logs/rocks placed to block it. JR plans to walk the property this weekend with a sheriff's deputy to view the gate and no-trespassing signs.
 - Suggestion (including from a deputy): cattle fence with T-posts at the front of the property.
 - JR intends to propose new trail cameras to the board once he finds a suitable set. Current cameras fail on battery power (batteries replaced about three times); built-in solar panels are not charging.
 - Per FS: The tree-mounted camera faces north; subscriptions cost \$60/month (\$720/year). FS asked JR to look into south-facing solar panels.
- Diepolder: JR is working with TS, Brian Buescher, Fino BP and David Maruca on the property's future and a positive outcome; likely to involve multiple organizations. JR



suggested NSS-CDS issue a public statement acknowledging awareness of the situation (without taking a position), as he is receiving questions.

Note: FS posted an update on the NSS-CDS FB Group about the 06 October Public Information Workshop conducted by Coastal Engineering, a firm hired by Scouting America.

Program Director Reports – SD

- Wall of Honor: SD provided Sidney requested clarifications and specifications today; Sidney to revisit in about 7 to 10 days.
 - SD asked to involve the board on location, ideally walking the grounds with a majority of the board. FS responded it's best to walk the site after Sidney provides a basic footprint, then mark candidate locations with cave line and wooden stakes.
- Drew property (630 acres adjacent to Cow Springs): Following the board-approved letter in August, SD sent it via Susan Carr (owner's representative) to the Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD). SRWMD's board approved the purchase and allocated \$500,000; working to raise another \$2.5 million. Intent is to remove the agricultural water pivot.
- Manatee Springs: Ranger is open to replacing the pool ladder and requested specs and photos. SD to send tomorrow.
- Troy Springs and Peacock Springs (both under Nick Brown):
 - Troy Springs work already put out for bid; no visible progress as of last week.
 - Olsen overlook deferred to North Florida Springs Alliance; awaiting their feedback. SD expects late fall or early spring.
- Cow and Edwards waiver system: New system with 7-day advance reservations and automated waiver signature. Early issues fixed. JR and SD had stopped receiving waiver copies; believed fixed.
- Trespassing / social media influencers: Individuals have been jumping the gate at Cow Springs and filming. JR contacted the Suwannee County Sheriff's Department, which notified them; JR is following up.
 - This evening, the same group ("Babes in Caves") posted video at Edwards in the crevice with river flow SD described as seven knots. SD will contact the Sheriff's Department tomorrow.
- Telford survey: Following earlier talks with SRWMD, SD will begin the permit process for a new survey and involve SRWMD. SRWMD has requested preliminary data on systems it monitors, but the scope (e.g., water quality) needs clarification; any telemetry equipment would need to be provided. SD to follow up this month.
- Conservation Subcommittee: SD noted former board member Gayle Hall's outreach on Indian Springs (DEP is discussing a possible reopening to diving) and Diepolder, and asked the board for feedback on how to align her efforts with NSS-CDS work so the organization speaks with one voice.
 - SD suggested a possible larger role for Gayle, such as chairing the Cave Access Committee or the Landowner Relations Committee, working with JR.
 - FS recommended coordinating through the Conservation Subcommittee, led by Chelsea Dinon, which reports to JR.
 - JR to contact Chelsea to set up regular communication, especially on Diepolder.
- Diepolder / Sand Hill Scout Reservation:



- SD sent the board a call to action he will post as an individual on Facebook forums (the board cannot be politically active).
- About 1.5 years ago, talks with Sand Hill Scout Reservation nearly secured access before stalling. SD believes there is now a good chance to regain access.
- SD has consulted Ted McCoy (former Diepolder guide). Ted will join SD and JR at the 6 October meeting; SD encouraged board members to attend.
- FS asked what action the organization should take. SD recommended stating facts without taking a position: Diepolder's scientific uniqueness (saltwater rather than freshwater dissolution; only other known example nearby is Weeki Wachee, aquifer condition, record drought, continued water bottling withdrawals, and data center proposals).
- FS noted Mr. Diepolder's will (1960; transferred to the Scouts on his death in 1978) stipulated no commercialization, while the Scouting America Planned Development District (SAPDD) is commercial. It was noted the will lacked a conservation easement.
- Action: FS to rework the statement wording (drawing on SD's points) and issue it this coming week.

Diepolder Conversation Continued - TS

- TS has been invited by Eric Cupps (Save Sandhill PR lead) to meet with Scouting America executives on Thursday. TS asked for any input within the next few days and will keep JR informed.
- The upcoming public workshop is mainly for the record, but turnout from divers and organizations matters. The Planning and Zoning Commission meeting is where personal and public testimony backed by data is most important.
- No conservation easement exists. TS sent information to every Florida land conservancy about a month ago and completed an ecological evaluation. The property is within the 2024 land conservation opportunity areas; TS hopes it will fall within a high-priority area in the upcoming third Florida Wildlife Corridor update or the Florida Ecological Greenways Network.
- TS outlined possible options: split fee-simple purchases (e.g., 10 to 15 acres owned by a cave diving organization, the rest by Scouting America under a conservation easement, with split entrance fees), or a land conservancy purchasing part of the 604 acres proposed for rezoning. TS offered connections to land conservation contacts.
- TS cautioned that applicants may make unverifiable claims about use of sale proceeds; public momentum against the rezoning should continue regardless.
- FS asked about Save Sandhill's web/social presence. TS mentioned active website and social media; Eric has about 30 years in TV news production (Fox); TS and Eric are working on PSAs and videos.
- FS: NSS-CDS statement to go out via social media. Next UWS issue (about to go to press) will include a paragraph drawn from TS's post; a fuller article planned for the following issue.
- Craig Pittman article (Thursday): Pittman asked TS for a contact on the history of the Diepolder diving ban. FS suggested Ted McCoy; SD and CB agreed. SD to send a letter of introduction connecting Ted and TS.



Training Director Report – CB

**Report submitted prior to the meeting.*

- Monthly certification report sent to the board.
- Minor website issues this month were fixed quickly by Howard.
- Former instructor Colt Smith has returned to the teaching roster.
- Four inquiries this month about becoming CDS instructors (two in Missouri); CB is in contact with them.
- Standards updated to fix discrepancies between general and course-specific standards; now posted. CB will notify instructors tomorrow.
- November: CB in Mexico for two weeks, including an Instructor Institute the first week (candidates interested) and Trimix ratings work with two instructors there.

NSS-CDS Midwest Workshop Update (4 Days to Workshop) – CD, AH

- CD reports things are ready to go.
- Call with caterer tomorrow to finalize numbers. Caterer will deliver food to the hotel and host the Friday night social on its patio.
- Costco run Wednesday for Friday/Saturday beverages; truck loading Tuesday.
- FS raised discussing appetite for future workshops and an NSS-CDS presence in the middle of the country.

2026 DEMA Show (2 Months to the Show) – RP, SP, DA

- Hotel and booth logistics complete; electrical and carpet secured. Finalizing packing lists.
- Silent auction package being assembled (promotional; no monetary return to NSS-CDS).
- Merchandise: in-person items plus purchasable packages shipped to buyers' homes (reduces inventory carried).
- T-shirt design in progress; will be sent to BOD for approval.

The 2027 Winter Workshop – T - 4 Months – FS

- Cave survey workshop / MNEMO: Building on an idea from SD, FS proposed bringing back Michael Poucher's afternoon cave survey workshop, a popular session, and incorporating the organization's new MNEMO survey device into it.
- JR contacted Dr. Patty Spellman (2023 workshop speaker); she has agreed to speak.
- SD helped contact Teddy Garlock (Explorer of the Year) to speak on exploration; awaiting commitment. If unavailable, other explorers will be approached.

Wes Skiles Water Stewardship Award – FS

- Ross Ambrose and Jim Skiles informed FS that NSS-CDS has been selected for the Wes Skiles Water Stewardship Award (nonprofit category).
- Presentation dinner: Thursday, 22 October, Cade Museum, downtown Gainesville. FS will share details with the board.
- Two tickets available to the dinner. FS proposed he accepted on the organization's behalf, with the second ticket to AH (both local to Gainesville). 7 to 10 minutes to present (photos; mission; cooperation with other organizations; water stewardship).

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- \$500 honorarium (check presented at the dinner). FS proposed donating it to the NSS Mill Creek Sink Defense Fund (goal \$10,000; \$5,705 raised as of yesterday). No decision required tonight.
- TS said her dad would love to see the honorarium go to the Mill Creek Sink fund, but NSS-CDS has earned it and the choice is the board's. TS congratulated NSS-CDS, saying she couldn't think of a better organization to receive the award. She noted this is the final year of the event (with the Rotary Club), "going out with a bang," and said the family would enjoy hearing how NSS-CDS has grown since Wes's involvement.

Next BOD Meeting

The next Board meeting will be at 7:00 P.M. Eastern / 6:00 Central / 4:00 Pacific on Monday, 19 October 2026.

Meeting Adjourned – FS

FS make motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:14 PM. DA seconds. All in favor. Motion passes.

August 31, 2026 – Support Letter to SRWMD – Motion

Sent via email by Steve Dalcher – Electronic Vote

SD made a motion for the BOD to submit a letter of support to Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD). At our August meeting the BOD expressed support in the SRWMD interest in purchasing the land adjacent to Cow Springs with the intent on removing the irrigation system from use to conserve aquifer resources.

Jennifer Dillaman seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

August 31, 2026 – Approval of Midwest Workshop T-Shirt Design – Motion

Sent via email by Shannon Perry – Electronic Vote

SP made a motion to approve the T-Shirt design for the Midwest Workshop.

Dan Alix seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.



Operation Manager's Report – AH

Managers Summary

August was a very expensive month, probably the most expensive month we have had year-to-date. That said, there is nothing unusual or concerning about this. We generally see some of our largest expenses in the months after and leading up to a major event, and this year is no different.

We are showing a loss of approximately \$5,000 for the month. Again, this is pretty normal for this time of year, especially with the Midwest Workshop right around the corner.

Some of the larger expenditures over the last month include:

Insurance – approximately \$1,556: This was our final insurance payment and includes coverage for all board members, including errors and omissions coverage. This is important coverage to maintain so board members are protected personally when acting on behalf of the organization.

PO Box Renewal – \$425.70: This has been a topic of discussion in the past because our PO Box is more expensive than average. We have explored moving to another one, but doing so would mean changing our mailing address with the IRS, the state, and everywhere else we have it on file. It is certainly not something we should avoid forever, but the administrative headache is the main reason we have stayed with this PO Box for so long.

Website Work – \$1,176.06: We paid Howard for website-related maintenance to update the Cow and Edwards waivers and to create the 7-day Cow reservation system.

Tulum Underworld – \$1,842.37: This was for the travel expenses associated with the grand prize winner from the February 2026 Winter Workshop and was previously approved by the board.

Those four items alone totaled approximately \$5,000.13, which puts the month's overall loss into a little more perspective.

Midwest Workshop

A lot of my time over the last couple of weeks has been spent on logistics for the Midwest Workshop. This has included tracking registrations, confirming shirt sizes, working with Shannon and the shirt printer, and making sure everything is paid for and arrives on time. Andy has been awesome to work with, and Shannon gave us a great contact here. I think we should continue using him whenever possible. As of this morning, he is fully paid for the shirts.

Overall, planning has gone well. Financially, we are probably around break-even or maybe slightly in the red right now, but given that this is the first Midwest Workshop we have held in a long time, I don't think that is concerning. Even at its height in the past, I don't remember seeing much more than 30–40 people attend. We currently have around 55 people registered, which is a great turnout and gives us a much better benchmark for future events.



Going forward, I would recommend increasing admission by around \$10–\$15. Historically, this was more of a traditional workshop with relatively simple expenses. This year it is structured much more like a traditional conference, with shirts, multiple speakers, a multi-day schedule, and lunch costing approximately \$13 per person. For this year, I think the most important thing is making sure attendees feel like they got their money's worth and using what we learn to better budget and price the event going forward.

Even if we ultimately break even or lose a little on registration, I expect raffle and store sales to help make up the difference. Fred will be there with store merchandise and everything needed to accept payments, which brings me to one other recommendation. I think we should cover Fred's travel expenses. I have asked him about reimbursement several times, but he hasn't pursued it. He isn't just attending as a board member. He is bringing the store, merchandise, and payment equipment and will be actively generating revenue while he is there. I can pretty confidently say that without Fred there, we would be leaving money on the table. Covering his travel expenses makes sense to me. Just my two cents.

Website

Howard is fully squared away regarding payment for his recent website work. I sent him another check approximately a week or two ago for around \$550, which he has not cashed yet. Assuming he cashes it soon, that expense will show up on the September financials.

Looking Ahead

Despite the last month or two being expensive, we are heading into what is normally a stronger part of the year financially. I am fairly confident most of the major expenses are now behind us.

Store sales generally start picking up as the weather gets cooler, and instructor renewals will begin in November. Instructor renewals are a significant source of revenue for us each year, and we also tend to see membership renewals increase toward the end of the year.

Now that we have automatic renewals in place, I have a much better feel for when we can expect membership revenue to come in. Based on what I am seeing, a significant number of those automatic renewals are scheduled during the final quarter of the year.

Historically, the three or four months following a conference are relatively quiet from a revenue standpoint, so I expect the financial picture to swing back in the other direction as we move through the remainder of the year.

Other Items

The electric bill for DEMA has been paid. Dan handled the payment, and the total was \$147.29.

Lee Ann Wagner donated \$60 specifically for mulch for COW. Those funds will be earmarked for that purpose and should not be used for anything else.

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The blue books have also been extremely popular lately. I'm not sure if there was a campaign, article, or something else that recently featured them, but we are selling considerably more than usual. Typically when I see a random spike like this, I eventually find out they were featured or popularized somewhere. Either way, we completely ran out, so I placed another large order to replenish inventory.

Closing

That's it for me! Overall, this was an expensive month, but nothing outside of what I would expect given where we are in the event cycle. Most of my attention lately has been focused on getting the Midwest Workshop materialized, and so far I think everything is coming together really well. Attendance is significantly higher than what we historically saw for this event, and this year should give us a good benchmark for planning it going forward. With most of the major expenses behind us and our stronger revenue months coming up, I think we are in a good position heading into the final quarter of the year.



Training Director's Report – CB

Training Report September 2026

Certifications :

YTD – 74

2025 YTD – 99

YTD Courses with Certifications:

Apprentice Cave – 20

Cave Diver – 19

CCR Trimix – 2

Cave Trimix - 1

CCR Cave – 5

Cave Survey - 1

DPV Cave Diver – 6

Tec Cavern – 4

Stage Cave - 11

Top Producing Instructors:

Ricardo Castillo 9

Chris Brock 6

Timmy Young 5

Rob McGann 3

Cristina Zenato 5

Ken Sallot 3

Josh Dillaman 3

Rob McGann 3

Paul Heinerth 5

Steve Dalcher 3

Max Kuznetsov 6

Joerg Hess 7

Brian Kakuk 6

Training Committee:

A couple of instructor issues with the training platform and a few other issues with technology this month but Howard fixed the problems rather quickly.

A few typographical issues in standards were addressed this month and a new copy is now on the website.

NSS-CDS BOD Meeting Minutes



Treasurer's Report - DA

CAVE DIVING SECTION OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Statement of Activity YTD Comparison
January-August, 2026

	Total
Revenue	
Donations Income	160.00
E-Learning Revenue	1,450.00
Instructor Fees Income	400.00
International Conference Income	
Dive Rite Shopping Spree Raffle Sales	4,725.00
Door Prize Raffle Sales	8,665.00
Event Registration	11,900.00
Seacraft GO! Raffle Sales	7,310.00
Sponsor Income	1,500.00
Total for International Conference Income	\$34,100.00
Membership Dues	15,500.00
Merchandise Sales	7,120.28
Midwest Workshop Income	
Midwest Workshop Registration Income	1,760.00
Total for Midwest Workshop Income	\$1,760.00
Student Registrations	875.00
Winter Workshop Income	
Winter Workshop Grand Prize Raffle	2,300.00
Winter Workshop Raffle Ticket Sales	1,252.00
Winter Workshop Registration Income	300.00
Winter Workshop Sponsor Income	500.00
Total for Winter Workshop Income	\$4,352.00
Total for Revenue	\$65,717.28
Cost of Goods Sold	
BOD Polos	94.02
Books - Blueprint for Survival	389.08
COGS - Books	1,245.86
COGS - Coffee Mugs	541.00
COGS - Flags	1,680.00
COGS - Pods	310.00
Stickers - Logo/Round	540.39
Total for Cost of Goods Sold	\$4,800.35
Gross Profit	\$60,916.93
Expenditures	
Awards Expenses	363.81
Certification Card Printing Costs	
Card Printer Supplies	543.14
Total for Certification Card Printing Costs	\$543.14
DEMA Expense	
DEMA - Cart Fee	-88.25

CAVE DIVING SECTION OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Statement of Activity YTD Comparison
January-August, 2026

	Total
DEMA - Registration Fees	691.20
Total for DEMA Expense	\$602.95
FDACS Reporting	61.25
Insurance Expense	1,556.25
International Conference Costs	
Beer - Conference	712.25
Breakfast - Conference	229.36
Catering - Conference	3,100.58
Cavenger Shirts - Conference	127.00
Coffee & Dining Supplies	160.18
Drinks & Materials	672.57
Event Liability Insurance	121.92
Food - Social	1,198.55
Ice	94.39
Misc. Event Supplies	372.95
Seacraft GO! Cost	4,750.00
Shirts - Conference	2,910.00
U-Haul Rental	247.95
Venue Cost & Cleaning Fees	2,500.00
Total for International Conference Costs	\$17,197.70
JMCo Annual Filing Expense	3,500.00
Midwest Workshop Expenses	
Midwest Workshop - Venue	649.35
Total for Midwest Workshop Expenses	\$649.35
Office Administrator	8,000.00
Office expenses	
iContact Email Membership	445.03
Merchant (Credit Card) Fees	2,078.48
Misc Supplies	916.30
Printer Toner	135.48
Small Equipment - Mnemo Survey Tool	947.77
Total for Office expenses	\$4,523.06
PA Equipment	1,253.46
PO Box Renewal	425.70
Postage & Shipping	1,303.29
Property Taxes	58.96
Repairs & maintenance	
Clearcut Construction	1,104.15
Cow Porta Potty	536.75
Cow Repairs	107.00
Edwards Construction	657.73
Total for Repairs & maintenance	\$2,405.63

CAVE DIVING SECTION OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Statement of Activity YTD Comparison
January-August, 2026

	Total
Small Equipment - Card Printer	2,005.42
Software Expense	
Checkstock	261.57
Microsoft 365	103.92
QuickBooks Online Fees	616.50
Voting Software	99.00
ZOOM Meeting Subscription	351.84
Total for Software Expense	\$1,432.83
Uncategorized Expense	15.08
UWS Expenses	
Adobe Publishing Software	559.84
Layout & Drafting Fees	1,800.00
Total for UWS Expenses	\$2,359.84
Website Expense	
Hosting Fees	276.00
Webmaster Fees	1,600.00
Website Design & Maintenance	1,771.09
WooCommerce Fees	746.98
Total for Website Expense	\$4,394.07
Winter Workshop Expenses	
Winter Workshop - Credit Card Fees	558.22
Winter Workshop - Food	2,592.55
Winter Workshop - Grand Prize Raffle Cost	3,242.37
Winter Workshop - Misc Supplies	647.67
Winter Workshop - Shirts	860.65
Winter Workshop - Soda	133.30
Winter Workshop - Venue	850.00
Total for Winter Workshop Expenses	\$8,884.76
Total for Expenditures	\$61,536.55
Net Operating Revenue	-\$619.62
Other Revenue	
Interest Income	27.57
Total for Other Revenue	\$27.57
Net Other Revenue	\$27.57
Net Revenue	-\$592.05