

## Colorado Cave Survey Meeting

**January 27, 2021 7:00-8:30**

**Location: C Y B E R S P A C E**

Google Meet link: <https://meet.google.com/euw-ywhf-xgn>

**Attendees:**

Blue O'Brennan  
Kristen Levy  
Derek Wolf  
Rick Rhinehart  
Gerard G.  
Rob McFarland  
Paul Fowler  
Ken Headrick  
Jennifer Zedalis  
Jim Lawton  
Derek Bristol  
Zach Englebert  
Christine Kirkland  
Ken Newton  
Chris Carter  
Paul Slayback  
Ben Smith  
Lori Shindel  
Danny Piccone

### Meeting Agenda

1. Previous minutes
2. USFS Updates
3. CCS Cave Updates
4. Committee Reports
5. Bat Working Groups
6. Officer Elections
7. CCS Digital Media Policy
8. Topics from the floor

### USFS caves:

#### **USFS Region 2 COVID-19 Response**

COVID-19 limitations to FS cave access ended in June, 2020. Practicing social distancing and mask wearing is still recommended.

#### **Fixin' cliff cave and karst conservation**

On July 21<sup>st</sup>, Kristen went with Lacie Jurado (FS), and Paula Peterson (FS)

On July 22<sup>nd</sup>, Kristen, Lacie, and Jeff began installing signs and discussed buffer zones. They also talked to some climbers along the way.

On July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Blue, Jeff (Access Fund), and Lacie (FS) went to Deep Creek to install “No Climbing” signs on to rock faces near caves and to put tags on established climbing routes prohibiting their use. We discussed options for more permanently removing/disabling the routes on follow-up trips, but COVID-19 prevented any progress.

Last update from Lacie 9/9/2020:

Hey all!

Bummed the train had to come to halt on the hard work you all have put forth. Just wanted to give a shout, as I have been thinking of you all. Just a quick update from me;

Finishing signage- Thanks to Jeff’s Boulder contact, I put in an order for the entrance signs, the Amphitheatre signs, and some better no climbing zone signs. I also got some hardware that will allow me to use a 4\*4 post at the top of Roybal’s gully to post the entrance sign. I prefer this method because it will be easily replaceable and it will look nice. The easy descent on the “north” end of the climbing area I still plan on using the tree. Aluminum nails are supposed to be preferred, as long as we don’t nail them in 100% of the way. I will try and come up with something to use as spacers behind it so it can sit flat and not rock around. I believe I can take care of both of these signs myself, this fall, if weather/fire/access allows. As far as climbing zone signs, I am curious to see how the ones we put up are going to winter. I will re-evaluate in the spring to see how our methods held, and will probably put off mounting the Amphitheatre one until this time.

Getting routes down- I would of course love to get one trial run in before the end of the “season” but that window is closing fast especially with the restricted access due to the fire. I hope we can pick this up early next summer if we can’t get to it this fall. Maybe a Fall 2021 totally finished end goal. In the mean time I will work on getting 5.14 strong so we don’t have to aid all the routes, HA!

### **Exception permits on WRNF**

Exemption permits were submitted for Spring and Groaning Caves, but not accepted until 9/24/2020 because FS staff were preoccupied with the Grizzly Creek fire.

### **Deep Creek Stakeholders Group**

(Possible updates from Ken Newton)

### **CCS-Managed Caves**

#### **LaSunder Cave**

Stuart Marlatt – No permitted trips to the cave due to COVID-19 concerns.

#### **Fly and Marble Caves**

In July 2020, the caves were reopened for permitted access with additional COVID-19 guidelines. Full permitting and guideline information can be found at:

<http://coloradocavesurvey.org/managed-access-caves/fly-and-marble-caves/>

The access management team is:

Christine Kirkland (liability waiver coordinator) [agnew200@yahoo.com](mailto:agnew200@yahoo.com)

Talmage Trujillo [ttrujillo@salidaschools.org](mailto:ttrujillo@salidaschools.org)

### **Active Committee Reports**

#### **Mid-Continent Quarry Proposal**

(Possible updates from Rick Rhinehart)

### **Bat Working Groups**

#### **Mountain Prairie WNS Coordination Meetings/Region 6:**

Purpose: To discuss white-nose syndrome (WNS)-related topics including WNS strategic planning, communications, surveillance, grants, and research projects. This meeting is specific to states in the USFWS Region 6 (Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming).

Donna Frazier has taken over attending the phone meetings and Christine Kirkland is a backup for when Donna cannot attend. They will coordinate with each other and submit reports to be shared.

#### **Colorado WNS Working Group**

Paul Fowler attends the Colorado interagency WNS working group phone conferences chaired by Tina Jackson (CPW). The main item to report from there is that despite considerable testing in the last year, there are still no positive Pd or WNS results for Colorado.

#### **Colorado Bat Working Group (CBWG)**

Works cooperatively to conserve bat species and habitat in Colorado. Participants include Kirk Navo (CPW), Rob Schorr (CNHP/CSU), Dan Neubaum (CPW), Jeremy Seimers (CNHP/CSU), Tina Jackson (CPW). Paul Fowler attended the annual seminar meeting they run, on September 20<sup>th</sup> at the CPW office in north Denver. Papers on many aspects of bats were presented by people from Colorado and neighboring states.

#### **Clear Creek Canyon Project**

(Possible updates from Shannon Glazer)

Goal: Develop a relationship with Jefferson County Open Space regarding cave management and promote exploration and conservation in Clear Creek Canyon.

New temperature loggers were reinstalled in CJs Cavern this past October. Shannon recently submitted a report summarizing CJs data collected thus far, from 2011 to 2018, to the Jefferson County Open Space Program. This data shows that temperatures and evaporation rates are increasingly stable the further the loggers are from the entrance door. A yearly report is required to retain a permit to collect data. The report was approved, which means that data logging will be continuing. If anyone is interested in getting on the email list for any upcoming data logger trips to CJs, please email her at [shannon.glazer@gmail.com](mailto:shannon.glazer@gmail.com).

Project members:

Shannon Glazer [mock5turtle@hotmail.com](mailto:mock5turtle@hotmail.com)

Dan Castellari [cavesr4all@yahoo.com](mailto:cavesr4all@yahoo.com)

Dave Lambert [cavelambert@gmail.com](mailto:cavelambert@gmail.com)

#### **CCS website**

Still paid through 2021. Will need to be re-upped in spring 2022

### **CCS Elections**

2020 Officers of the Colorado Cave Survey

Chair Blue O'Brennan BlueOBrennan@gmail.com  
 Vice-Chair Kristen Levy KBLevy@Comcast.net

2021 Officers of the Colorado Cave Survey

Chair Blue O'Brennan  
 Vice-Chair Rob McFarland

**Voting Membership of the Colorado Cave Survey**

(Please inform the Survey of any changes at your respective grottos.)

Colorado Grotto	Chair: Jon Schow	<a href="mailto:acojon@gmail.com">acojon@gmail.com</a>
	Survey Rep: Chris Carter	<a href="mailto:ccarterskis@yahoo.com">ccarterskis@yahoo.com</a>
Front Range Grotto	President: Kevin Manley	<a href="mailto:kevin.manley@colorado.edu">kevin.manley@colorado.edu</a>
	Survey Rep: Ben Smith	<a href="mailto:bensmith.alps@gmail.com">bensmith.alps@gmail.com</a>
Northern Colorado Grotto	Rep: Kristen Levy	<a href="mailto:kblevy@comcast.net">kblevy@comcast.net</a>
	Chair: Jim Lawton	<a href="mailto:quinoa@frii.com">quinoa@frii.com</a>
Southern Colorado Mountain Grotto	Chair: Dustin St. Germaine	<a href="mailto:varikdragonking@gmail.com">varikdragonking@gmail.com</a>
	Rep: Christine Kirkland	<a href="mailto:agnev200@yahoo.com">agnev200@yahoo.com</a>
Timberline Grotto	Chair: Ken Newton	<a href="mailto:cavekids@comcast.net">cavekids@comcast.net</a>
	Survey Rep: Carey Hunter	<a href="mailto:mushmc20@netzero.com">mushmc20@netzero.com</a>
Colorado Western Slope Grotto	Chair: Ken Headrick	<a href="mailto:cavecritters@gmail.com">cavecritters@gmail.com</a>
	Rep: Rob McFarland	<a href="mailto:robmcfarland@me.com">robmcfarland@me.com</a>
School of Mines Grotto	Chair: Danny Piccone	<a href="mailto:dannypiccone@mymail.mines.edu">dannypiccone@mymail.mines.edu</a>
	Rep: Paul Slayback	<a href="mailto:Pslayback@mymail.mines.edu">Pslayback@mymail.mines.edu</a>

**CCS Digital Media Policy**

In talking with the grotto reps, we have decided that the CCS should have formal guidelines on what we do and do not support posting online. The CCS will form this policy through discussion with all grottos and interested cavers. Here are the kinds of questions we hope to answer:

- What policies related to social media and digital publication are needed to best protect caves?
- What is the CCS stance on posting cave names, locations, maps, and other identifying information online?
- Under what circumstances is it appropriate/inappropriate to post cave information online? (ex: scientific papers, social media posts, etc.)

From Rick R - Current NSS policy: "The NSS opposes, in general, disclosing specific wild cave locations in any manner available to the general public except where releasing the information better serves the interests of the Society. The NSS encourages sharing other information about caves that promotes education and conservation with the general public."

Kristen – We don't share cave location information in order to limit people who do not have the knowledge to practice safe caving and cave conservation. Cave maps and locations make people over-confident when approaching caves.

Rob - PUBLICATION OF CAVE LOCATIONS: 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 such publication.

Derek B. – CCS is an I/O of the NSS, so we should mirror their policies, and they already have policies on these topics. I am concerned with the CCS or other organizations telling people what they should/shouldn't do. There are positive outcomes from sharing photos, etc, online.

Kristen – We want to protect caves, and that may mean keeping them down-low. We have to be responsible with how we share information.

Derek W. – Maps show sensitive areas, Colorado has a large number of ungated caves. Fulford cave maps have been redacted. Publication of maps is a conservation and safety issue.

Ben S. – There are also copyright issues.

Kristen – Does that mean people should ask for permission from original drafters?

Ben S. – That's my understanding, but I'm not a lawyer.

Derek B– I haven't posted any maps that I don't have copyright authority over.

Derek W. – Another concern is maps made with others' survey data.

Chris – The NSS has a pretty good statement, general and simple. It's a slippery slope to nit-pick things. The simpler we keep things, the easier it is to follow. There are good aspects of posting pictures from inside of caves to get people excited. Maps without location data could go either way. If it's your data and it gets people excited, then there's no harm.

Kristen – If you have the name, you can find it on Google.

Derek W – Fixin is a specific example which is known well by climbers. Having the location and the map could pose conservation and safety issues.

Blue – Can we all agree that any requests by land owners are to be respected?

Kristen – We have to respect what land-owners want. Does the Federal Cave Resource Protection Act apply? It was requested by cavers to limit the publication of cave location information.

Derek B. – There’s nothing in FCRPA that limits private citizens. I agree that we should respect land owners’ wishes.

Kristen – Why did we ask land owners to protect locations?

Derek B. – NSS already protects locations.

Kristen – Photos are mostly fine, but photos with cave locations and other information online can provide access.

Rob – We need to tackle why we want this policy before we try to establish a policy. Do we want this policy to protect us if land owners ask if the CCS supports someone publishing information in an unpopular way?

Kristen – We want to protect caves

Rob – The NSS policy is too vague. Since this keeps coming up, we need a more specific policy.

Motion: The CCS forms a policy on publication of digital media online.

In favor	Opposed	Abstain
NCG	TG	CG
CSMG		
CWSG		
FRG		
SCMG		

Ken Newton – This sounds like we’re telling people they can’t speak, this sounds like a violation of free speech.

Post meeting note: Let’s keep in mind that the purpose of a CCS policy will be to suggest what cavers should and should not do, not to enforce what cavers can and cannot do. The CCS does not have -or want- any means of enforcing policy, just of declaring our official stance. During the meeting, we seemed to generally agree that one tenet of any media policy should be that we discourage people from breaking the law or any agreement with land-owners by publishing information.

Parameters:

- Photos of cave entrances
- Photos within caves
- Cave maps
- Cave maps without permission from cartographers
- Cave GPS coordinates

- Cave names
- Trailheads
- Information prohibited from publication by public/private land owners

Means of publication:

- Scientific reports
- Social media posts
- Public videos
- Trip reports
- Intra-grotto presentations
- NSS/Caver-focused publications
- Educational materials for non-cavers
- Private Websites
- Books
- Interviews/Media relations

Ben – Policy should consider the sensitivity of caves, nature of the cave. More people will get behind a policy that takes this into account.

Kristen – Yes, cave significance/designation should be factored in.

### **Topics from the Floor**

None

### **Cave Survey Communication**

The Colorado Cave Survey maintains an extensive website at:  
[www.coloradocavesurvey.org](http://www.coloradocavesurvey.org)

A Google group is maintained for making announcements and discussing CCS business. An

email sent to the group automatically goes out to everyone subscribed. For those interested, this is the best way to keep apprised of what is going on with the CCS. A person can unsubscribe without assistance whenever he or she wishes. To subscribe, please email the CCS Chair.