

Tab 1

# CCS Meeting Minutes 01/26/2026

## CCS Winter Meeting and Annual Elections, January 26, 2026

- The meeting began at 6:00pm with greetings, gratitude, and request for permission to record the meeting for transcription of minutes.

## Updates on USFS caves and projects

Jen Z. noted that:

- CCS/WRNF fall meeting was held on Nov. 25, 2025 - detailed minutes available on CCS website.
- An updated Significant Cave nomination form is available with minor changes: [Significant Cave Nomination form 2025](#)<sup>1</sup> WRNF(Alex L.) had intended that around 15 caves be nominated for Significant Cave status by the end of January 2025, but these are pending submission in early 2026.
- Spring Cave Exception trip reports and bat observations were submitted for the 2025 TG project at Spring Cave - thank you Ken Newton! No trips were made under the WRNF Exception permit to Groaning Cave in 2025, and the cave register needs to be recorded and submitted to WRNF by the first trip of the 2026 season. A new logbook should be installed at that time.
- The 2026 Exception Permit request for Spring and Groaning Caves will need to be submitted to WRNF by April 30, 2026 of this year.

## **Fixin' Cliff, Lime Creek, and Hadley Point Conservation Issues**

- Kristen Levy (NCG) reported that Jeff Bosboom, of the Deep Creek Climbing Coalition (DCCC), is awaiting funds from the Access Fund for the removal of the remaining 14 routes planned for the summer of 2026. She suggested that if he does not get that accomplished early this season, that cavers could aide with the restoration efforts. She also noted that the area is seeing regeneration with the road closure.
- Ken Newton(TG) and Bill Duncan (TG) reported on TG's success with bolt removal and erasure at Spring cave, and offered to assist with the bolt removal projects at Hadley Gulch and the Fixin block with coordination of WRNF. Rob M. (CWSG) offered to check Hadley when conditions were good.

## **Fulford Cave**

- Possible annual restoration trip to be planned for early summer when accessible, coordinated with WRNF and the SPA. Volunteers welcome and date TBD.

## **Groaning Cave**

- The Groaning culvert replacement project was successfully completed over two weekends in June with lots of great volunteers from many Grottos. Thank you to Paul Slayback for handling the reimbursement paperwork with the SPA.
- A new combo lock changeout location was installed on Steve and Marty Reames's property up Coffeepot road. A third combo lock will be provided to help with any maintenance or repair issues. Feedback requested for any improvements.

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### **Spring Cave**

- Ken Newton (TG) led and organized the project to remove the rusted second ladder from the cave and install a new three section aluminum ladder, and Bill Duncan (TG) removed and restored two of the illegally bolted climbing routes (approximately 12 bolts) in the Spring cave entrance. Plans are to continue this effort in 2026 under another volunteer agreement with WRNF. Volunteers welcome! WRNF is open to the removal/replacement of the deteriorating first ladder (funding unsure) and monitoring of the conditions for possible galvanic corrosion of the zinc fasteners and aluminum second ladder.

### **Boom & Boom Boom Gravel Pits**

- WRNF is planning to re-activate the two gravel quarries along FSR 600, Coffee Pot Rd for road maintenance starting in 2026.

### **Sweetwater Cave - no new update**

#### **Holey-lujah Cave**

- WRNF has a Challenge Cost Share agreement with Randy Irmis at the Utah Natural History Museum to conduct a paleontological survey of the bones for paleoclimate data, and WRNF plans on gating the two entrances to protect the cave with gating and survey beginning in 2026. The CCS has requested continued access for science and exploration.

#### **Knox Knasty Pit**

- Alex L.(WRNF) had requested cavers' assistance with shoring up or improving the plastic culvert near the entrance to aid in future biota and hydrological studies. Questions were brought up about entrance modifications by the FS without environmental studies and caution was advised. It was noted that the FS had Ozark Underground Labs conduct a dye drop here previously.

### **WRNF Cave Closures and R2 Response to WNS positive in Colorado**

- Jen Z. related that WRNF intends to continue monitoring FS caves for seasonal bat use and signs of WNS. Bat monitoring at Premonition Cave was not conducted in 2025, and WRNF would like to try access through private land access from the east during the 2026 season. CCS continues to offer caver assistance and support. WRNF continues to maintain the ongoing closure order, i.e. requiring permits to access caves on the closure list.

### **Karst LiDAR Mapping Project and WRNF/CG SPA**

- WRNF(Alex L.) has been working with the CSMG and Colorado Grotto under the Supplemental Project Agreement (SPA) to locate, document and protect caves in the Forest. Kevin M. (FRG) shared that there would be another Groaning Cave survey blitz late June/early July as an SPA project and asked if anyone hadn't been contacted yet for mileage reimbursement from last year, to reach out to Paul Slayback. Applications for 2026 SPA projects should be directed to Paul Slayback.

**BLM Caves** - BLM/CCS Fall 2025 meeting was postponed due to government shutdown and internal BLM cave specialist meeting postponed again. BLM/CCS Fall meeting held Jan. 23rd, 2026- minutes available on CCS website.

**Updated MOU with BLM/CCS** - The BLM and CCS are working together to create a broad MOU agreement detailing expectations of both parties, more specific cave management plans

for individual caves, as needed, guidelines for research and annual monitoring plan for cave resources, guidelines for significant cave nominations and cave confidentiality, an establishment of a reimbursement process for volunteer expenses incurred during volunteer research, monitoring, and conservation activities, and the inclusion of tribal consultations regarding cave resources. A broad monitoring plan for all caves noting impacts of visitation, access, biota use, conditions (water levels, temperature, humidity), formations, and any other change was requested by BLM. Rob M. expressed that the CCS relationship with the BLM has improved significantly so that these conversations are possible, and that a carefully worded agreement would be helpful in continuing this relationship.

#### **LaSunder Cave - Stuart Marlatt (CG):**

- Stuart M. reported four trips in 2025 - one Admin trip in April (3 ppl), a TH trip in June (6 ppl), FRG trip in August (6 ppl), and a WSG trip in October (4 ppl). Trips noted the rope swollen by moisture and difficulty on rappel with microracks and frog systems. Replacement with a smaller diameter dri-rope and a new rope pad and/or redirect rigging, and lubrication of lock are planned for an early 2026 maintenance trip, date TBD.
- Stuart M. and caver volunteers began photo monitoring, and plan on changing the trail marking system to reflective markers (many needed) or lightweight plastic chain with stakes or ties to keep it in place. Kevin M. (FRG) suggested packing twine as a possibly rodent proof solution. Cavers can then remove any PVC flagging that can be safely retrieved, possibly bringing in extensible poles to retrieve PVC tape from delicate off-trail areas. Alan C. (BLM) is supportive and has limited funding (~\$300) for materials. Stuart has an impact survey to be included with the biannual report for 2024-25 and requests that future trips which report any possible damage should include photos and location for verification.

#### **Twenty Pound Tick Cave**

- CCS discussed with the BLM to allow monitoring at the cave entrance and has also suggested hydrological and environmental studies in the cave be considered.

#### **Witch's Pantry Cave**

- CCS will ask WRNF if the paleontologist team working on the FS caves this season can assist in a Paleontological survey of WP with the BLM's facilitation. Note: WRNF responded that their agreement is agency specific.

#### **Great Horned Owl Cave**

- Rob M. noted that nearby housing development is increasing and that monitoring for biota use and visitation impacts continues to be important. A possible bat hibernacula/swabbing survey request for CPW planned.

#### **Anvil Points Cave**

- Rob M. (CWSG and access coordinator) noted that the current access procedure for Anvil Points is to contact the BLM Rec Planner (Alan C.) with dates at least two weeks out. The BLM will set up an escort through the gate/scales for access to parking at the GarCo landfill. All trips are required to adhere to the GarCO landfill hours of operation. Annual monitoring of Anvil Points is suggested.

#### **Private Caves**

## **Fly and Marble Caves**

Christine Kirkland (SCMG) & Talmage Trujillo(SCMG):

- Christine K. has stressed that potential trip leaders for Fly and Marble cave must have been on at least two trips in the last 5 years and must let their trip leader know of their intent to lead on their respective trips, so that the existing trip leader can confirm that the proposed trip leader knows how to navigate the caves and adhere to the rules of the landowner management agreement. This will ensure good relations and future access.
- Proposed change:
  - “2. All trips must be led by an approved trip leader. All prospective trip leaders must have visited the caves at least two trips previously in the last five years, must make their request to lead known during one of these trips so they may be vetted and guided by another qualified trip leader, and must have conversations with a Fly and Marble Cave Access Coordinator to ensure they understand and can follow the rules regarding access before being added to the trip leader list.”
  - Kevin M. suggested that current trip leaders maintain status as such by expressing interest in continuing as trip leaders and by participating on trips within the last five years.

## **Active Committee Reports**

**Deep Creek Stakeholders Group** - no new updates on the Deep Creek Wild and Scenic River designation - Ken Newton (TG)

**Mid-Continent Quarry Proposal** - Rick Rhinehart (FRG): Mid-Continent Quarry at Glenwood Springs.

- Rick R. shared his communications with Travis Marshall, Senior Environmental Protection Specialist with the State of Colorado Active Mines Program about corrections to the rock bolting and site stabilization proposal at the reclaimed RMI quarry site, noting access by the public and the location of caves near the quarry.

**Clear Creek Canyon Project** - Shannon Glazer (CG)

- The Sea to Summit bike trail project near Golden will include a new steel door for CJs with the lock for the main door at the end of a tube.

## **Bat Working Groups**

**Colorado Bat Working Group (CBWG)** Paul Fowler (CDS):

- Nationwide, there are 40 states with positive WNS tests. There have been good results in lab tests with vaccines and with certain fungicides, and the USGS is scaling up to produce and field test more vaccines.

**Western Bat Working Group (WBWG)** - Paul Fowler (CDS) reports on quarterly meetings

- Fall WBWG meeting 12/09/25 - Shawn Thomas, from BCI's Subterranean Team, presented on Subterranean Habitat Protection & the Biological Legacy of Abandoned Mine Lands (AML), which aims to preserve and protect bats and habitat. BCI's program started in 2008, and has done over 9,000 AML surveys in the west, with ~25% of abandoned mines receiving long-term protections to maintain bat habitat. January WBWG meeting was held on 1/21/26 focusing on guidelines and awareness about bat welfare when handling.

## **New Topics**

### **Proposed TG hosted 2026 Gauntlet vertical ropes course weekend**

- Ken Newton (TG) reports that TG is planning on holding the 2026 Cave Gauntlet Ropes course likely in western Colorado and is asking if there's interest from other grottos for assistance and planning. Pat L. (CWSG) offered assistance and Ken N. noted that a local gear stash would be helpful. Website is <https://gauntletsrt.org/gear/>

### **Proposed Porcupine Cave cave management/gating - private landowner**

- Richard R. (FRG) has asked if CCS would be interested in possible cave management conversations with the private landowners of Porcupine Cave, where gating is of interest to the landowners and future grotto and NSS access may be an option. The cave is currently vulnerable, being some distance from the owners and adjacent to a mountain subdivision, has possible bat use as habitat, and may benefit from monitoring studies for WNS coordinated with CPW. Discussion was had on a possible barrel style gate at the mine/cave boundary and possible funding from the NSS Save the Caves Fund. Rick R. offered to lead conversations with the sons of the widow landowner.

### **Proposed Colorado hosting of National Cave & Karst Management Symposium 2027**

- Respectful discussion was had as to whether Colorado grottos would still be interested in hosting the 2027 NCKMS with a possible location being the CMC campus in Rifle. Info at [NCKMS.org](http://NCKMS.org). Donna F. was contacted and declined further interest understandably. It was agreed that many Colorado volunteers would be needed and coordination required. Rob M. offered further assistance and volunteers help from CWSG to honor Mike Frazier's vision.

### **Proposal for CCS Bylaw change- creation of Digital Archivist/Librarian position for digital cave publications and corrections to reference language.**

- Paul Fowler (NCG) has been working diligently on finding clerical corrections and updates for the CCS Bylaws, some streamlined language and clarifications for positions and representation.
- Rick Rhinehart (FRG) has been collecting and scanning older grotto cave publications for a historical archive and would like to share individual folders with the CCS and original grottoes so they have the content available. There is a question as to whether an amendment to the CCS Bylaws and Constitution should be made to create a newly elected position of CCS Librarian/Archivist to manage and coordinate sharing of these files within the framework of the existing CCS Confidentiality agreement, while considering the importance of digital confidentiality and avoiding copyright violation issues. Discussion was had and a motion to create two committees was made.
  - First committee of a "CCS Librarian/Archivist Committee" to discuss and define the details of creating a new Position of CCS Librarian to create and maintain cave files and coordinate access.
  - Second committee of "CCS Bylaws Revision and Updates Committee" to discuss updates and revisions to the CCS bylaws and the inclusion of a Cultural Succession/Mentee position to encourage volunteer preparedness for Chair positions.
  - Both committees passed unanimously and Committee chairs would be decided at their first meeting.

- Volunteers for CCS Librarian Committee are Richard Rhinehart, Kristen Levy, Jesse Rochette, Chad Pedigo, Duncan Byrne, and Rob McFarland.
- Volunteers for CCS Bylaws Revision Committee are Jesse Rochette, Chad Pedigo, Paul Fowler, Rob McFarland, Beth Caughran and Jennifer Zedalis.

### **Proposal for CCS Bylaw change - CCS Cultural Succession Planning**

- Proposal by Chad P (TG): In addition to the roles of Chair and Vice Chair two "Mentee" or "Tyro" positions would be added to the CCS elected official roles. These two positions would be in-training to learn the bylaws of the CCS and provide support to the Chair and Vice Chair when needed. This may include but is not limited to: Attend CCS meetings, attend meetings with stakeholders ie BLM, FS, and private landowners. Helping with official functions, taking notes in meetings, or helping organize events with our Colorado grottos.
- Discussion was had and it was agreed that not only is this a good idea but should be included for further discussion with the CCS Bylaw Committee.

### **CCS Elections**

- Call for nominations for 2026 Chair/Vice Chair tickets
- Chair : Jesse Rochette (SoCoMoGro) and vice Chair : Chad Pedigo (TG)
- Voting was unanimous in support of this ticket. Congratulations, Jesse and Chad!

**Meeting adjourned at 8:33pm**

Tab 2



Tab 3



Tab 4



Tab 5



Tab 6



Tab 7



Tab 8



Tab 9

