

NSS NEWS

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1985 Member's Manual

CONSERVATION RESEARCH GRANTS \$750

The Conservation Committee may grant up to \$750 to qualified individuals or groups for scientific investigation of cave conservation problems or for speleological research which will directly contribute to cave conservation or the solution of environmental problems in karst or pseudokarst areas. Send your grant application to the NSS Conservation Committee Chairman. Describe your project and the intended use of the grant funds.

The Chiquibul has remained essentially untouched for the past millenium. It is both an unrivalled natural karst laboratory and undisturbed archaeological site. Professional looters and new settlement are threats to its fragile isolation, and its scientific assets should be studied before their value is permanently compromised.

A base camp established in the area for 2-3 months would provide the first comprehensive examination the fluvial disaggregation hypothesis of cock pit karst formation, and disclose massive numbers of in-situ artifacts on a scale not before encountered. Crucial to both objectives is the thorough exploration of the cave system and its associated hydrology.

- **Quaternary Paleontology and Paleocology of Crystal Ball Cave, UT** — Timothy H Heaton, 18 East 900 North, Provo, UT.

The purposes of this project are to identify the fossils from the cave, determine the approximate abundance of the different species, and from the data acquired, to reconstruct the late Pleistocene environment of the cave and the surrounding area and correlate the changes that have taken place since that time.

- **Morphological Variation Accompanying Cave Evolution in *Astyanax Fasciatus* (Pisces: Characidae)** — Aldermaro Romero, Department of Biology, University of Miami, PO Box 249118, Coral Gables, FL.

A comparison of 27 morphological traits will be made between surface and cave populations of the characid teleost *Astyanax fasciatus*, living in many isolated cave systems, to determine whether or not (1) there is any evidence that characters that are apparently not directly associated with the cave environment change at the same rate as do traits which are clearly related to the surface and subterranean life (such as eyes), (2) there is any evidence that some traits evolve in different directions, while other traits evolve repeatedly in the same direction (convergence) in different cave systems.



In addition to these funded programs the Society has assisted other activities in the past by recognizing them as Projects or Study Groups of the NSS in order to increase their credibility with government agencies and other organizations from which the project sought cooperation or financial assistance.

The current Projects and Study Groups are described later in this Manual. These scientific activities are but a few in which NSS members are involved. Most such activities are informally conducted and privately financed. Most result in reports given at local grotto meetings and papers published in grotto and NSS section newsletters. Some of these are also published by the Society as part of the *Speleo Digest*, which includes selected material from the publications of Society chapters and independent caving organizations during a calendar year. The *NSS Bulletin* publishes more formal scientific papers and is tailored to meet the needs of the speleologist who must periodically publish in a professional journal. By publishing the *NSS Bulletin*, the Society encourages the professional scientist to conduct and publish speleological work. But the *Bulletin* does more: it raises the sensitivity of the average caver to how and why a cave was formed and what it contains. Each year one issue is dedicated to a specific speleological theme and is written such that a significant portion of the issue will appeal to the average caver with an interest in speleology.

Examples of speleological projects conducted by Society members during the past year are:

- Hamilton Cave (John Guilday Cave Preserve, W VA) has yielded remains of over 40 mammal species including many well-preserved cheetah bones, a tapir tooth and more peccary fossils.
- A temperature profile is being made of Trout Cave, WV under the guidance of Merlin Tuttle, head of Bat Conservation International.
- A US Forest Service sponsored biological inventory of caves in the Mount St. Helens lava caves was completed. Thirty-one vertebrate species were recorded and 187 species of invertebrates. The latter includes 14 species that may be troglitic.

The Society and its various members also sponsor speleology courses, a Convention and other symposia for the presentation of papers. During the past year:

- NCRC Cave Rescue Seminar was held at Wind Cave National Park, SD.
- The NSS Convention was held in Sheridan, WY.
- A National Cave Management Symposium was held in Rolla, MO (October).

Publications

Over the past year the Society's ambitious publications program has required a substantial investment of time and talent by those members who volunteered to author and produce the publications, as well as a substantial financial investment. The program has been pursued in the belief that the membership wants publications on caves, caving and related topics.

Besides publishing monthly issues of the *NSS News*, quarterly issues of the *NSS Bulletin* the *NSS Administrative Memo* and the annual *Member's Manual*, the Society published:

- The 1981 *Speleo Digest*
- Guidebook for the 1984 NSS Convention, *Caves of Wyoming and Montana*.
- 1983 and 1984 *American Caving Accidents*.

Throughout the past year, the various NSS internal organizations continued publication of a variety of newsletters.