

# CONSTITUTION

of the  
Springfield Plateau Grotto of the National Speleological Society

## Article I.

The name of this organization shall be the Springfield Plateau Grotto of the National Speleological Society.

## Article II.

The purpose of this organization shall be the same as that of the National Speleological Society (NSS), which is: to study, explore, and conserve cave and karst resources; to protect access to caves; to encourage responsible management of caves and their unique environments; and to promote responsible caving. The Springfield Plateau Grotto (SPG) intends to help organize NSS members in the northwestern Ozarks area of Missouri and Arkansas to promote the objectives of the NSS. The SPG also intends to educate landowners and the public about conserving caves and protecting groundwater.

## Article III.

- A. The Springfield Plateau Grotto (SPG) shall be governed by an Executive Committee made up of the following officers who all must be members of the NSS and elected annually by the members of the SPG: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer-Membership Recorder, and MSS Director.
- B. The Executive Committee shall have complete power to manage the business, to formulate bylaws, to make decisions, to raise funds in any manner not inconsistent with the policies of the NSS, and to perform all other necessary functions.
- C. Decisions or actions of the Executive Committee may be overruled by a 2/3 majority vote of the voting members who are present at a meeting.
- D. A Board of Directors consisting of three SPG members who are also members of the NSS shall aid in the governing of the grotto. These three directors shall be appointed by the President for five-year terms and ratified by a simple majority of the voting members present at a meeting. The President may appoint a replacement if a director resigns, moves away, dies, or otherwise vacates his or her post.

## Article IV.

- A. Formal meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held at such times and places as are determined by the Committee and shall be published and open to all members. No binding decisions can be made without a quorum of at least three Committee members.
- B. Business meetings shall be held at such times and places as are determined by the President and shall be published and open to all members. No binding decisions can be made without a quorum of at least three Executive Committee members and at least 25% of the total membership.
- C. A petition signed by 2/3 of the membership shall be mandatory upon the Executive Committee to call a special meeting for the purpose stated in the petition.
- D. Formal meetings of the Board of Governors shall be held at such times and places as are determined by the Executive Committee and shall be published and open to all members. No

binding decisions can be made without a quorum of at least three Committee members and at least two Directors.

Article V.

Full membership is limited to members of the NSS.

Article VI.

The Constitution and Bylaws of the NSS shall be binding on the SPG. Any action inconsistent therewith shall be null and void.

Article VII.

Any NSS, Missouri Speleological Survey (MSS), or Missouri Cave and Karst Conservancy (MCKC) properties shall revert to the respective organization in the event of dissolution of the Springfield Plateau Grotto. All other property and funds shall revert to the MCKC.

Article VIII.

*Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* (the newest complete edition) shall be consulted to resolve issues of procedure.

Article IX.

Amendments to this Constitution shall be made by 2/3 favorable vote of those voting members present at any meeting called by the Executive Committee.

Adopted May 10, 2006

Revised July 12, 2006

# BYLAWS

of the  
Springfield Plateau Grotto of the National Speleological Society

## I. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### A. Executive Committee members shall:

1. Consist of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer-Membership Recorder, and an MSS Director.
2. Be members of the National Speleological Society (NSS) and at least 18 years of age.
3. Be elected by a simple majority of the votes cast by the eligible voters of the Springfield Plateau Grotto (SPG) during the business meeting of each December.
4. Assume office in the first business meeting in January
5. Conduct business matters of SPG in an orderly fashion.

### B. The President shall:

1. Preside at all SPG meetings.
2. Make and carry out an agenda for the meeting.
3. Appoint committees and individuals as necessary.
4. Make arrangements for meetings.
5. Not have the power to vote on any motion or election candidate except to break a tie vote.

### C. The Vice President shall:

1. Assist the President.
2. Preside in the President's absence.
3. Be program chairperson, and as such shall ensure the meetings' programs are arranged and ready for orderly presentation.

### D. The Secretary shall:

1. Record minutes of business and executive meetings and send a copy to the Newsletter Editor for publication.
2. Be responsible for notifying members of meetings and functions.

### E. The Treasurer-Membership Recorder shall:

1. Be responsible for SPG funds.
2. Collect dues and distribute membership cards to members.
3. Collect and retain the Membership Application (Appendix A), the Release and Assumption of Risk and Liability form (Appendix B), and a signed copy of the Statement of Principles (Appendix C).
4. Furnish a membership contact information list to members upon request.

### F. The MSS Director shall:

1. Represent SPG at Missouri Speleological Survey (MSS) Board of Directors meetings.
2. Keep records of all MSS functions and give an MSS report at the first SPG business meeting following the MSS function.
3. Prepare and submit the annual MSS report by the deadline.
4. Keep the grotto records up to date with the NSS and submit the annual report.

### G. A Board of Directors is required in order to be incorporated in the state of Missouri. The Board of Directors shall:

1. Act as an advisory body.

2. Represent the Grotto at selected meetings, conferences, and seminars. One or more Directors may represent the Grotto.
3. Assist the Executive Committee in the governing of the Grotto.
4. Directors cannot be members of the Executive Committee.
5. Serve without compensation.
6. Shall vote with the Executive Committee as a combined Board of Governors in disciplinary actions.

## II. MEMBERSHIP

- A. It is the responsibility of each member to provide SPG with an up-to-date e-mail address.
- B. Full SPG membership is restricted to full NSS members who are at least 18 years of age.
  1. Qualifications:
    - a. Receipt of a copy of SPG Statement of Principles (Appendix C).
    - b. Membership Application form (Appendix A) is completed.
    - c. Release and Assumption of Risk form (Appendix B) is completed.
    - d. Sponsorship by a Full Member in good standing.
    - e. Must participate in a combination of three business meetings and three SPG-sponsored caving events.
    - f. Voted a member by a majority of Full Members present at a meeting.
  2. Full Member Privileges:
    - a. May hold an elective office.
    - b. Full voting rights.
    - c. Full library privileges.
    - d. Full SPG equipment use privileges.
    - e. Receive all SPG publications.
- C. Associate membership is given to all non-full NSS members and non-NSS members who pay regular dues.
  1. Qualifications: Same as Full Membership.
  2. Associate Membership Privileges:
    - a. Full voting rights except that which affects the NSS.
    - b. Full library privileges.
    - c. Full SPG equipment use privileges.
    - d. Receive all SPG publications.
- D. People who are Associate Members can become Full Members by joining the NSS. People who are Full Members become Associate Members by not maintaining their membership in the NSS.
- E. Honorary Membership
  1. Nomination for Honorary Membership: A motion is made and seconded to give Honorary Membership status. A simple majority is needed to pass the motion.
  2. Honorary Membership privileges: same as a Full Member if the Honorary Member is also a member of the NSS or same as an Associate Member if the Honorary Member is not a member of the NSS. Honorary Members do not have to pay dues.
- F. Each new member begins as a Probationary Member, with exceptions given to those as determined by SPG.
 

Probationary Member privileges:

  1. Full library privileges

2. Cannot speak at a meeting unless called upon by the President or Chair.
  3. Receive all SPG publications.
- G. Family-dependent Associate Membership can be granted for individuals under the age of 18 provided that:
1. At least one of his or her legal parents or legal guardians is also an SPG member.
  2. The member parent or guardian must be present and is responsible for the care of the underage member:
    - a. During events in which SPG participates.
    - b. During transportation to and from these events.
  3. The Family-dependent Associate Member privileges: same as Probationary Members.
- H. Subscribers have the following privileges:
1. Limited library privileges.
  2. Receive publications for which subscription fees have been paid

### III. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- A. A Nominating Committee of three SPG members shall be appointed in October by the Executive Committee. Members of the Executive Committee cannot be members of the Nominating Committee. If a member of the Nominating Committee accepts a nomination for office that member is immediately removed from the Nominating Committee.
- B. The Nominating Committee shall propose a list of nominees for the various offices including the Executive Committee. Any member may submit additional nominations prior to the close of nominations at the election meeting in December. Self-nominations shall be accepted.
- C. After the Nominating Committee has submitted its report, an Election Commissioner will be appointed by the Executive Committee. None of the members of the Executive Committee or any nominee may be the Election Commissioner. A former member of the Nominating Committee may be the Election Commissioner. The Election Commissioner shall supervise the election, including the production of ballots.
- D. The membership shall be notified of the list of nominees for elected office and the Election Commissioner by their names being published in the newsletter prior to the election meeting. The election shall be held at the business meeting in December.
- E. Those members who wish to vote absentee shall send a request for an absentee ballot to the Election Commissioner so he or she receives the request by November 30.
- F. Members shall return the absentee ballot to the Election Commissioner so it arrives before the election. The Election Commissioner shall bring the ballots to the December meeting.
- G. The officers shall be elected by a simple majority of voting members. If no candidate receives a simple majority, the two candidates receiving the most votes for that office shall be selected for a run-off election at the same meeting.

### IV. FINANCES

- A. SPG shall solicit and accept dues from all its members, except Honorary Members, for its operation. The amount of these dues is to be determined by the Executive Committee and approved by a simple majority of members voting.

- B. Renewal dues shall be payable by or on the first business meeting in January to the Treasurer-Membership Recorder. Renewal after March 15 shall result in change of membership to Probationary or Subscription.
- C. Members who join during January through June will pay a full year's dues. Members who join during July through December will pay half for that year.
- D. Use of SPG treasury funds cannot exceed \$200 annually to subsidize social activities unless approved by the Executive Committee. This includes catering and rental of entertainment facilities. SPG funds cannot be used to purchase of alcoholic beverages.
- E. SPG may solicit and accept grants and donations.

#### V. MEETINGS

- A. Business meetings shall be held at least once per month as arranged by the President at a specified public place.
- B. Special meetings may be called by the Executive Committee.
- C. A petition signed by 2/3 of the voting membership shall require the Executive Committee to call a special meeting for the purpose stated in the petition.
- D. Formal Executive Committee meetings where decisions can be made shall be open to all members. Prior notification shall be sent to voting members by e-mail.
- E. Informal, non-binding meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held to allow the Executive Committee to discuss and plan.
- F. No binding decisions in a general meeting can be made without a quorum of at least three Executive Committee members and at least 25% of the total voting membership.
- G. No binding decisions in an Executive Committee meeting can be made without a quorum of at least three Executive Committee members.
- H. No binding decisions in a Board of Governors meeting can be made without a quorum of at least three Executive Committee members and at least two Directors.

#### VI. EQUIPMENT

- A. SPG equipment is available for use to any member upon request. Equipment shall be returned in proper working condition and be clean.
- B. Any NSS, MSS, or Missouri Caves and Karst Conservancy equipment shall revert to the respective organization in the event of the dissolution of SPG. All other SPG equipment shall be donated evenly to the NSS, the MSS, or another appropriate organization.

#### VII. LIBRARY

- A. SPG shall maintain a library.
- B. Any member may use the library.
- C. Library policy shall be set by the Librarian.
- D. The Librarian shall be appointed by the President for a term of one year.
- E. Library privilege by a Subscriber is limited to books, periodicals, and audio-visual equipment that do not contain sensitive cave location information.

#### VIII. NON-APPROVED CAVERS

- A. Cave locations, cave catalogs, or marked topographic maps must never be provided nor shown to non-approved cavers.

- B. It will be SPG policy to volunteer to guide approved cavers to area caves so long as arrangements have been made in advance.
  - 1. For first visits, only gated caves or caves that are already heavily visited and thus “safe” to show shall be used to screen cavers for possible future visits.
  - 2. SPG members who accompany non-approved cavers on cave trips shall stress:
    - a. the importance of the use of proper equipment.
    - b. adherence to rules of safe and proper caving.
    - c. the NSS slogan (Take nothing but pictures, Leave nothing but footprints, Kill nothing but time).
    - d. the importance of safety.
    - e. cave conservation.
- C. All non-member caving requests shall be referred to an SPG officer if the cavers are unknown.

#### IX. PUBLICATIONS

- A. SPG shall publish two electronic periodicals:
  - 1. A monthly internal newsletter.
  - 2. A quarterly magazine-format journal.
- B. The President shall appoint the Editors for terms of one year.
- C. All members shall receive both publications.
- D. Subscriptions to either or both of the publications are available to paying non-members for a subscription rate to be determined by the Executive Committee.

#### X. LOSS OF MEMBERSHIP

Individuals shall forfeit membership:

- A. By failure to maintain payment of dues.
- B. By acts or behavior deemed as improper by the Board of Governors.  
Failure to abide by the SPG Statement of Principles:
  - 1. Vandalizing caves, cave features, cave wildlife, cave gates, or signage.
  - 2. Caving under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
  - 3. Possessing, distributing, or using illicit drugs.
  - 4. Angry outbursts or using profanity at meetings.
  - 5. Failure to abide by our cave secrecy policy.
- C. By loss of SPG membership of legal parent or guardian, an underage member shall forfeit membership.
- D. By conduct detrimental to Springfield Plateau Grotto and/or the National Speleological Society. Disciplinary action under this provision shall be taken only upon a 2/3 vote of the Board of Governors by a secret ballot. Disciplinary action shall be initiated only upon presentation to the Executive Committee of a written petition for disciplinary action, submitted by at least two members of SPG who are not related and not in the same household. Upon receiving such a petition, the Executive Committee shall take such actions that are deemed necessary to notify the accused member(s), in writing, of the petition, and of the place, date, and time at which the petition will be considered by the Board of Governors. The accused member(s) shall have the right to speak on their own behalf. Such considerations shall take place no sooner than 21 days and no later than 70 days after the petition is received by the Executive Committee.

#### XI. AMENDMENTS OF BYLAWS

Amendments to the Bylaws shall be made by 2/3 vote of the voting members present at the meeting. Proposed amendments must be submitted in writing to the Executive Committee for consideration. Any proposed amendments shall be introduced during the “new business” section of any meeting. These amendments will then be published in the Newsletter and voted on during the next calendar business meeting.

#### XII. VOTING:

All voting by the membership shall be conducted by those eligible members present at the meeting. There shall be no proxy voting of any kind. Any tie vote shall be broken by a vote of the President.

#### XIII. FILLING VACANT SEATS ON THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Any vacant seat on the Committee shall be filled by a special election as soon as possible.

- A. Nominations shall be received at a meeting.
- B. Names of the nominees shall be published in the newsletter.
- C. Seats shall be determined by a majority vote of the members at the following meeting.

#### XIV. FILLING VACANT SEATS OF REGULAR APPOINTED POSITIONS:

Any vacant seat of a regular appointed position shall be filled by appointment from the President.

#### XV. REMOVAL OF ELECTED OFFICERS:

- A. Removal shall be made by petition for recall election signed by at least 40% of the voting membership.
- B. Recall election shall be conducted at the following meeting after publication of the petition in the newsletter.
- C. Officer(s) shall be recalled by a 2/3 majority vote of the voting members present at the meeting.
- D. Replacement of recalled officer(s) shall be according to article XIII of the Bylaws.

## Appendix A Springfield Plateau Grotto Membership Application

New Membership \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ If so, last year of membership \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_@spgcavers.org E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Year I First Entered a Non-commercial Cave** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of Caves I Have Visited** (Check One): 0 \_\_\_\_\_ 1-5 \_\_\_\_\_ 6-10 \_\_\_\_\_ 11-25 \_\_\_\_\_  
 26-50 \_\_\_\_\_ 51-100 \_\_\_\_\_ 101-500 \_\_\_\_\_ Over 500 \_\_\_\_\_

**I Am Interested In** (Please Check All That Apply):

Cable Ladder Climbs _____	Single Rope Techniques _____
Wetsuit Caving _____	Cave Surveying _____
Cave Photography _____	Cave Diving _____
Cave Studies: Biology _____	Cave Studies: Geology _____
Cave Rescue Techniques _____	Cave Restoration _____
Other(s) _____	

**I Have Experience In** (Please Check All That Apply):

Cable Ladder Climbs _____	Single Rope Techniques _____
Wetsuit Caving _____	Cave Surveying _____
Cave Photography _____	Cave Diving _____
Cave Studies: Biology _____	Cave Studies: Geology _____
Cave Rescue Techniques _____	Cave Restoration _____
Other(s) _____	

**I Have Current Membership In** (Please Check All That Apply):

**NSS** \_\_\_\_\_ (# \_\_\_\_\_) **MSS** \_\_\_\_\_ **MCKC** \_\_\_\_\_ **BCI** \_\_\_\_\_ **ACCA** \_\_\_\_\_  
**CRF** \_\_\_\_\_ **Other Grottos:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other Cave-Related Organizations: \_\_\_\_\_

How Did You Come to Know About SPG? \_\_\_\_\_

**Persons to Be Contacted In Case Of Emergency:**

Name _____	Relationship _____	Phone _____
Name _____	Relationship _____	Phone _____

Physical Limitations \_\_\_\_\_

Allergies or Other Chronic Medical Conditions We Should Know About \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix B**  
**Springfield Plateau Grotto**  
**Release and Assumption of Risk and Liability**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, desire to participate in and with the activities of the Springfield Plateau Grotto (SPG). I understand that caving is a physically strenuous and hazardous activity, involving climbing, walking, and crawling underground upon slick or crumbling surfaces at times in confined and constricted spaces, through cold water and in poor or no light. I further understand that there are the hazards of traveling in rough terrain, accident, illness in remote places, the forces of nature, and general risks of travel. I understand that the Springfield Plateau Grotto has no control or direction whatsoever of the activities in which I have or will participate in association with SPG.

Whereas, I plan to participate upon my own initiative in the activities set out above, and in consideration for being allowed to participate with SPG, I do hereby, for myself and all who may hereafter claim through me or for me, forever release and discharge the Springfield Plateau Grotto, its officers, members, and assistants from all claims, demands, actions, judgments, and executions which I may have or acquire and subsequently claim to have against the foregoing for personal injuries and property damage I may sustain which arise out of or in connection with the above stated organization whether or not the accident or damage was caused by negligence of the SPG or any of its members.

Also, I further hereby covenant and agree with the above listed parties that no suit or action in law or equity shall be instituted for the above reasons by me or others in my behalf or in my right.

I have read the foregoing release and assumption of risk and liability and fully understand it. I execute it voluntarily and with full knowledge of its significance. By signing, I acknowledge receipt of a copy of this document.

Sign Name \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

(If the signee is under 18 years of age, the signature of a parent or legal guardian is required.  
Signature of parent or guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_)

Signature of Witness #1 \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Witness #2 \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### Springfield Plateau Grotto Statement of Principles

The following statements are the principles or ethics by which Springfield Plateau Grotto (SPG) conducts itself in order to protect and preserve caves and the access to caves and to enjoy orderly, productive trips and meetings. In order to join SPG or to take part in trips or other functions, participants are expected to conduct themselves in conformity with these Principles:

1. I will do all I reasonably and legally can to protect caves from destruction. This means that I will never vandalize caves, and I will seek to prevent others from doing so. Vandalization includes taking part in improper or unauthorized defacing of a cave or its features, harming cave-related wildlife or ecosystems, damaging cave gates or signs, or using tobacco products in a cave.
2. I will cave in a reasonable and safe manner and not under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Caving while impaired is both dangerous and a bad example for others.
3. I will protect myself, SPG, and my fellow cavers by not possessing, distributing, or using drugs in an illegal manner during SPG events or functions in which SPG participates. SPG seeks to work harmoniously with private landowners and public officials and must maintain a good public image as well as be safe from legal sanctions.
4. In order to enjoy efficient and productive meetings, it is essential that they be conducted in an atmosphere of civility and mutual respect. Angry outbursts or profanity violate this civility and interferes with members enjoying the meetings and the Executive Committee governing properly and are therefore not allowed. Since meetings may be held in public places, guests and the general public should not have to witness such behavior.
5. The elected officers and their appointed deputies govern the course of the meetings and all should abide by their decisions about appropriate conduct. Those exhibiting offensive or disruptive behavior or exhibiting disregard for the proper venue for the settling of disputes or disagreements will be asked to behave themselves. If they continue, they may be escorted out of the meeting place or event location.
6. An important way to preserve caves is to keep their locations secret from the general public and those who might vandalize them. All SPG members must take precautions when dealing with others outside of the grotto concerning sensitive caves and their locations. This same precaution should be taken when taking non-members on SPG sponsored cave trips. In cases where it is not clear whether the mention of a cave or a cave location should be given, the member must first contact SPG's Trip Committee Chairman or, if it is a project cave, the leader of that project.

I, the undersigned, have received a copy of SPG's Constitution and Bylaws, and have read and understand the grotto's goals and ethics. I agree to abide by these Principles and realize that following these goals and ethics is a condition of my membership and participation on cave trips and grotto events. I understand that violating the Principles may result in disciplinary action by the SPG Board of Governors, up to and including expulsion from the organization.

Sign Name \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_