



Marion O. Smith Outstanding Discovery Award

This award was established by the Tennessee Cave Survey in 2023 to honor the legacy and contributions to Tennessee caving by the late Marion Otis Smith, NSS 9164 (1942-2022). Marion began caving in 1966 and never stopped. He documented his visitation to 8,291 separate caves (many of which were previously unknown), making him the most prolific cave explorer of all time. He pushed hard, and contributed tremendously to the Tennessee Cave Survey. In his spirit, this award recognizes an individual or group for an outstanding discovery related to caving in Tennessee.

Nominations for the award may be submitted at any time via email to tennesseecavesurvey@gmail.com, but should be submitted no later than June for consideration that year. Nominations should include a paragraph explaining the outstanding discovery and the contributions of the nominee. The TCS Grant Committee will evaluate all nominations, and The Marion O Smith Outstanding Discovery Award may be awarded on a merit basis at the Fall Business Meeting. The award itself will be a framed certificate. Additionally, recipients will be listed on the TCS website and announced in the Tennessee Caver.

Criteria:

1. The discovery being considered must be related to caving in Tennessee. This requirement is intentionally broad to allow the consideration of various types of discovery. Examples might include, but are not limited to discoveries such as: a remarkable cave; contribution to our understanding of TN caves in various scientific disciplines such as hydrology, paleontology, biology, geology, etc.; discovery of extensions or unknown features in a documented cave; or really any discovery related to TN caving that the nominator considers outstanding.
2. The nominee is not required to be a member of the TCS or of any caving organization.
3. The nominee may be an individual or a group that jointly participated in the discovery. In the event the recipient is a group, a single certificate may be presented.
4. The TCS Grant Committee is responsible for evaluating the merits nominations and this award is bestowed solely at their discretion. Outstanding discoveries are not routine; likewise, this award is not expected to be presented routinely.