

TENNESSEE CAVE SURVEY CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

Adopted November 6, 1976

Amended September 30, 1989; September 28, 2002; October 20, 2018, September 25, 2021,
October 25, 2025

- I. **Name**

The name of this organization shall be the "Tennessee Cave Survey," hereafter known as the TCS.
- II. **Goals**
 - A. The goals of this organization shall be consistent with those of the National Speleological Society (NSS), with the additional purposes of:
 - 1. Systematically collection and maintaining information of all kinds on the caves of Tennessee.
 - 2. Strongly encouraging and promoting the protection of Tennessee caves from significant adverse environmental impact, consistent with reasonable access for exploration and study.
 - B. The Constitution, Bylaws, and other policies of the NSS shall be binding upon the TCS. Any actions of the TCS or of the Executive committee of the TCS inconsistent with the same, shall be null and void.
 - C. In the event of dissolution, all TCS property, including cave files, shall be returned to a designated successor organization.
- III. **Organization**
 - A. The TCS shall be governed by an Executive Committee (all NSS members) elected every other year by the general membership and consisting of:
 - 1. Two Co-Chairmen (one from East Tennessee and one from West Tennessee).
 - 2. Four additional members to be called Directors, one each to maintain the following files or functions: Map Book, Narrative File, Bibliography, and Meeting Director. These posts can be held by any member.
 - 3. Two Directors-At-Large (one from East Tennessee and one from West Tennessee).
 - 4. The Secretary-Treasurer.
 - B. The Executive Committee shall have complete power to appoint additional officers, to raise and approve the use of funds, to manage the business, and to perform all necessary TCS functions.
 - C. To carry out the functions of the TCS, Tennessee shall be split into two divisions:
 - 1. East Tennessee, consisting of Bradley, Meigs, Rhea, Cumberland, Morgan, Scott, and all counties to the east.
 - 2. West Tennessee, consisting of Hamilton, Bledsoe, Van Buren, White, Putnam, Overton, Fentress, Pickett, and all counties to the west.
- IV. **Meetings and Elections**
 - A. The Executive Committee shall meet at least twice a year, at times and places determined by the Committee. Upon receipt of a petition signed by 15 or more members, however, a special meeting for the purpose stated in the petition shall be mandatory upon the Executive Committee. Meetings shall be open to all members. B. Elections shall be held every other year at the Fall Meeting of the TCS.
 - C. Only active members are eligible to vote.
 - D. Election of officers may be by secret ballot if requested.
 - E. The two Co-chairmen shall be elected first, one to represent each division of the TCS. A simple majority of voting members shall determine the electee.
 - F. Next the Map Book Director, Narrative File Director, Bibliography Director, and Meeting Director shall be elected. These posts can be held by any member.
 - G. In turn, two members shall be elected as Directors-At-Large, one from East Tennessee and one from West Tennessee.
 - H. Finally, a Secretary-Treasurer shall be elected.
- V. **Duties of the Officers**
 - A. The Co-chairmen of the TCS shall:
 - 1. Preside over the TCS and Executive Committee meetings in the absence of the Meeting Director.

2. **Appoint, when vacancies occur, replacement executive officers to serve until the next scheduled election.**
3. **Appoint committees and committee heads which they deem necessary.**
4. **Maintain the cave files or designate a member to do so.**
5. **Transact official correspondence and perform routine administrative duties of the TCS.**

B. Duties of the Directors:

1. **The Map Book Director shall:**
 - a. **Keep the master Map Book file.**
 - b. **Collect all new Tennessee cave maps.**
 - c. **Rework a cave map to publishable quality.**
 - d. **Prepare a map supplement annually for members.**
 - e. **Disseminate mapbooks only through the secretary-treasurer for TCS members only, or as directed by the Executive Committee.**
2. **The Narrative File Director shall:**
 - a. **Keep the master narrative file.**
 - b. **Edit narratives for grammatical errors and accuracy.**
 - c. **Disseminate narrative files only through the secretary-treasurer for TCS members only, or as directed by the Executive Committee.**
3. **The Bibliography File Director shall:**
 - a. **Keep and maintain the master bibliography.**
 - b. **Prepare and publish bibliography as directed by the Executive Committee.**
 - c. **Disseminate bibliography only through the secretary-treasurer or as directed by the Executive Committee.**
4. **The Meeting Director shall:**
 - a. **Plan the meeting.**
 - b. **Solicit and schedule speakers for the program.**
 - c. **Obtain a suitable facility in which to hold the meeting.**
 - d. **Inform the membership of date and location of the meeting.**
 - e. **Preside over the meeting.**
5. **The Directors-at-Large shall:**
 - a. **Represent their division of Tennessee in matters that come before the Executive Committee.**

C. The Secretary-Treasurer of the TCS shall:

1. **Keep minutes of regular and Executive Committee meetings.**
2. **Maintain necessary records and correspondence of the TCS.**
3. **Collect TCS dues and fees and keep a record of the TCS membership and finances, submitting an annual financial statement to the membership.**
4. **Have the power to disburse funds for the payment of routine TCS expenses of a kind previously approved by the Executive Committee.**
5. **Disseminate mapbooks, narrative files, the bibliography, and other TCS data as directed by the Directors.**

D. Officers may resign by submitting a written statement to the Co-chairmen and by surrendering to them all TCS property in their possession.

VI. Membership

A. Prospective members of the TCS must meet all of the following qualifications

1. **Candidate must cave to a significant degree in Tennessee and contribute substantially to the knowledge of Tennessee caves.**
2. **Candidate must be a member of the National Speleological Society in good standing during their tenure as a TCS member.**
3. **Candidate must be recommended and approved with regard to their responsible (caving) conduct, their awareness and practice of proper cave conservation procedures, and their assent to not share any TCS data with non-members (those inquiries must be referred to a TCS Officer or the Data Sharing Committee).**

- a. Recommendation shall be by:
 - 1. Any two members in good standing of the TCS, or
 - 2. Any one member in good standing of the TCS and one member of another NSS internal organization, or
 - 3. Any one member in good standing of the TCS, if candidate presents evidence of prior contributions to the TCS.
- b. Approval of a candidate for membership shall be by any two members of the Executive Committee (i.e. Officers), who will indicate their approval of the candidate by signing the candidate's membership application.
- 4. Pay Currently required dues, as set by the membership. Dues are payable at the annual Fall Meeting of the TCS.
- 5. Membership is subject to the approval of the Executive Committee, which may establish additional qualifications to those listed above.
- 6. Candidate must complete a Membership Application and return it to a TCS Officer or the TCS Secretary/Treasurer at a TCS Meeting. All member and officer signatories on a TCS Membership Application form must sign the application during a TCS meeting in the presence of a TCS Officer.
- B. Membership is restricted to individuals. The Executive Committee shall consider the appeal of outside groups in extraordinary circumstances.
- C. Each member is entitled to one vote at elections.
- D. An individual membership may be terminated for the following reasons, subject to two-thirds vote of the Executive Committee:
 - 1. Nonpayment of dues. Members more than six months in arrears must reapply for membership. They may be dropped routinely from the membership by the Secretary-Treasurer.
 - 2. Expulsion for misuse of TCS cave files, including but not limited to the sharing of any portion of the data with non-members and the general public, publication or reprinting of data online, creation of hard copies outside of those for personal use, negligent safeguarding of TCS files in hard or soft copy, or sale of data in any form.
 - 3. Expulsion for conduct detrimental to the TCS or to cave conservation.
 - 4. Misrepresentation of any information on a TCS Membership Application.
- E. Each member subject to expulsion may demand, and receive, a personal hearing before the Executive Committee. Should an expelled member wish to join TCS, they may reapply but approval will be subject to two-thirds vote of the Executive Committee.
- F. "Expired" members shall be defined as those who have not paid dues for over 5 years. Expired members may rejoin TCS via the standard application process, with recommendations required as described in VI(A)3.

VII. TCS Cave Files

- A. The Co-chairman (or other TCS member designated by him) of each division of the TCS shall maintain a file containing all available information (locations, descriptions, maps, etc.) on caves in counties within the respective division. Cave files may also contain useful information on other interesting solutional and topographic features.
- B. The term "cave," as used hereafter, is defined as "a natural cavity which equals or exceeds one or more of the following dimensions:
 - 1. Horizontal length of 50 feet.
 - 2. Total vertical extent of 40 feet.
 - 3. Vertical drop (pit) of 30 feet.
- C. The TCS shall maintain a computer file, coded in a standard format approved by the Executive Committee, for the purpose of providing the members with listings of current, nonrestricted information about Tennessee caves.
- D. Each new reported cave with an accurate location shall be assigned a county cave number by the keeper of the files for the division in which it is located. Once assigned, a number is never reassigned, although it may be retired.
- E. All information in the TCS files is available to all TCS members for scrutiny or duplication.
- F. Dissemination of TCS Cave File information to nonmembers:

1. The general policy of the TCS shall be to discourage widespread dissemination of sensitive cave information, especially locations, to other individuals or groups where:
 - a. they have little need for it,
 - b. their responsible use of the information is not reasonably certain, or
 - c. where adverse environmental impact on the caves is a serious possibility. In all instances, no more information shall be released than that required to fulfill genuine need.
 2. Generally, the TCS considers the effort toward more protective legislation for caves a more desirable approach to cave conservation than the release of cave locations en masse to government agencies or private industries. Potential or imminent threats to specific caves or cave areas may justify contrary TCS action.
 3. The Co-chairmen shall have the power to answer affirmatively routine requests for unrestricted information addressed to the TCS by responsible individuals or groups, if a limited number of caves or a small region is involved.
 4. Requests by non-TCS members or groups for large or block amounts of information shall be referred to the Data Sharing Committee for approval, in accordance with the TCS Data Sharing and Use Policy.
- G. Data files and content are the property of the Tennessee Cave Survey and copyrighted by the Tennessee Cave Survey. A copyright will appear in published files where feasible. Datasets maintained by the TCS are copyrighted.

VIII. Amendments

Amendments and changes to the TCS Constitution and By-Laws shall require a two-thirds favorable vote by those members present at the annual Fall meeting.