

National Speleological Society

White Nose Syndrome Policy

Approved by the Board of Governors, April 17, 2010
(Replaces the former statement issued April 8, 2009)

The NSS recognizes the serious nature of white-nose syndrome (WNS) and its devastating effect on bat populations in the eastern United States. The Society is committed to advancing scientific knowledge of WNS, helping to determine its cause, and limiting its impact on cave organisms. At the same time, the NSS will promote responsible study, management, and access to cave resources based on demonstrated risks and the latest available data. The NSS has a responsibility to its current members and cavers of tomorrow to do what it can to ensure that any restrictions on cave access are based on demonstrated threats, sound evidence, and recognition that risks are site- and strategy-specific.

The NSS has been a leader in contributing expertise and considerable resources – both financial and human – to WNS investigations, and believes it is important to continue to do so. Through its appointed NSS WNS Liaison, it is essential that the Society continues to work closely with federal and state agencies, conservation organizations, and legislators; participate in WNS symposia, conferences, meetings, and strategy sessions; and effectively represent the Society and its members with these groups and the media. The NSS will strive to influence cave use policies and research priorities, and encourage the dissemination of scientific information.

The NSS places a priority on educating its members and the public about WNS, and encourages members and grottos to be effective, proactive partners in this effort. To support this work, the NSS will remain an important source of up-to-date WNS information and educational materials.

The Society regards knowledgeable cavers as natural partners in the collaboration necessary to address WNS, and the best advocates for the conservation of caves and all cave resources, including bats. Therefore, the Society believes that protecting the strength, influence, and vitality of the NSS and its internal organizations is critical to protecting caves and their resources, now and in the future.