

## Andrew Belski (NSS 12646), Montana

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I am a 48-year-old caver that has been a part of the caving community for the better part of 42 years. I grew up in New Mexico in a caving family and was brought up in the Pecos Valley Grotto. Throughout my years of caving, I have been lucky to participate in the early years of exploration in Lechuguilla Cave and spent my 20's exploring the caves of the Guadalupe Mountains and the gypsum caves in central New Mexico (GYPKAP). My interests tend more toward project caving heavy on survey and cartography than sport caving. I have spent the last 25 years in Northern Montana raising children and caving primarily in southern Alberta and British Columbia, Canada and southern Mexico while building an environmental engineering company performing natural resource restoration in the Northwestern United States.

I am a member of the Northern Rocky Mountain Grotto of Montana and the Alberta Speleological Society of Canada. I was the Vice Chairman of the 2018 NSS Convention in Helena Montana and was in charge of all campground activities.

My platform and primary concern for the NSS is our financial longevity and membership loss. The average age of our membership is getting quite old and we continue to see a lack of younger cavers join the society. I would like to focus my efforts on studying our financial output to attract the younger generation into our society. In addition to the ongoing education of cave and bat conservation, I would like to see incentive-based scholarships available for members who go thru proper training in rigging, rescue and leadership. These scholarships could possibly be for additional training or educational opportunities. We could also provide some form of scholarship/grant to assist younger trained cavers to go on international expeditions. I would like to see an opportunity for properly trained members to buy into a group rescue insurance plan. We could have more articles on how to cave in the NSS news.

I am sure I do not have all the answers, but I think bringing in our younger generation to the society is our future and I am willing to give it my best effort. The NSS has been my family for a long time and I hope to see it continue for generations in the future.

I am very open to ideas and would enjoy hearing your ideas on this matter.

Cave on.....Andy