

## John Brooks, 20233RE, Texas

[jpbrooks01@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jpbrooks01@sbcglobal.net)



I prefer to be ridgewalking or mapping a cave in Texas, Oklahoma or Mexico. I dislike speleo-politics, but do it anyway because I want to make a difference in the caving community.

Caves and architecture have collided throughout much of my adult life. From caving, I learned leadership – how to convince friends to undertake long hikes to check shadows in rocky canyons. From architecture, I learned to define problems, resolve complex issues and create unique solutions that meet a communities' needs.

These are my credentials for a leadership position with a national caving organization:

- I am a professional with proven skills to understand define a problem and then offer unique solutions.
- My ability to practice what I preach was proven during my 6 year tenure on the Board of the Texas Cave Management Association, with 4 years as President. I was also the President of the Texas Speleological Society for 4 years. During 40 years of caving, I have held leadership positions in numerous grottos around Texas and Oklahoma.
- I don't have the answers, but I do have the leadership skills necessary to debate and consider organizational goals from a fresh perspective and offer sound advice.

The NSS faces numerous challenges from changing demographics, membership, managing and paying for facilities. Our community of cavers faces challenges from accessing caves, strains on environmental resources, and the encroachment of urban areas into sensitive karst environments. The caves and groundwater are threatened by pollution from industry, urbanization, and the recreational demands of a growing population. This is what I believe:

- The NSS should consider the impacts of urbanization on fragile karst and use our expertise to offer solutions for meaningful changes.
- The NSS as a national organization unites diverse communities of cavers, and its leadership should reflect that diversity.
- The NSS faces challenges that require leadership capable of understanding today's challenges with a vision to steer the organization toward the future.
- The NSS must remain relevant and reach out to younger cavers who will be our future.
- In the future, cave access will depend on cavers organizing to own, lease and manage caves. The NSS can play a role in helping conservancies plan for the long-term financial challenges of acquiring and managing significant resources.
- The NSS should stand with other environmental organizations to oppose partisan political efforts to dispose of and remove protections for public lands.
- Non-profit organizations need to make fiscally conservative decisions about facilities. I disagreed with recent facility decisions and I want to offer my expertise to the challenges that the NSS faces now.

- I believe the NSS should support cave exploration and research in the USA and support international and interplanetary efforts.

I ask for your vote and support in this election. If you require a reference, ask a Texas Caver.