

# NCRC BORC Meeting Minutes

February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Location:** In-Person @ 7760 Haven St. Las Vegas, NV 89123 and Virtual via Zoom

## Call to Order

8:30am PST by Gretchen Baker

Recording Secretary: Laura Demarest

## In Attendance

**In Person:** Gretchen Baker (NC), Mel Eady-Pumplin (TC), Brian Ekey (Medical), Zeb Lilly (Diving), David Angel (WR), Sarah Truebe (SW), DJ Walker (SC), Marty Reames (NSS Liaison), Carrey Bull, Billy Chrimes, Harold Chrimes, Ron Davis, John Hickman, Molly Lucier, Rebecca Land-Segrest, Scott McCrea, Rich Pumplin, Steve Reames

**Zoom:** Jess Deli (CR), Greg Moore (NE), Brandon Powers (SE), John Punches (PNW), Tony Smith (ER), Laura Demarest, Roger Mortimer, Stephen Mosberg, Nate Skelton, Bill Franz, Don Paquette, Casey England, Berta Walker

32 total

**Proxies:** Jessica Deli for Greg Moore and John Punches (as necessary), Sarah Truebe for Rene Ohms

Gretchen welcomed everyone, conducted roll call, and discussed meeting logistics.

**Proposed changes to meeting agenda** - None

## **Approval of 2022 September and October BORC meeting minutes**

*SC moved to accept both September and October meeting minutes. Diving seconded. Approved by acclamation.*

## **Officer Reports** *(Note: full reports are via links and also at end of meeting minutes)*

1. **National Coordinator** – Gretchen Baker ([Report is in Google Drive – Appendix A](#)) – Gretchen summarized overarching goals for NCRC, finances, and some recent highlights, including various trainings and social media/website updates. In addition, the recent accident that occurred at an OCR was briefly mentioned. No lawsuit has been filed at present, but all precautions are being taken to consult with the NSS lawyer and follow NCRC SOGs. Lessons learned will be shared in the future as investigation continues and there will likely be updated safety protocols for future NCRC events. Thanks were given to those who have served on NCRC Committees and have helped with resource development. Assistance with website content is still needed if anyone would like to volunteer.
2. **Training Coordinator** – Mel Eady-Pumplin ([Report in Google Drive – Appendix B](#)) – Mel gave updates on recent developments, including changes to haul system commands, recent trainings, and updated curriculum. She also shared news about upcoming trainings, the selection of five new IQ students, and recent SPAR test for some instructors. Evaluation will be needed to determine which Instructors will be dropped for lapsing participation. Instructor email addresses with caves.org suffix coming soon and more resources will be migrated over to Google Drive. A lot of productive brainstorming occurred at the Instructor retreat, such as determining seminar audience, developing the mission statement, and

brainstorming what overall content for cave rescue training looks like. Work continues on improving communication and planning more trainings to meet high demands.

3. Medical Officer – Brian Ekey ([Report in Google Drive – Appendix C](#)) – Curriculum development continues, new L1 curriculum has been approved. New L2 material was piloted at the Texas regional, and updated L3 material will be piloted in Mentone. Ongoing work continues to make improvements and incorporate many great ideas.
4. Diving Officer – Zeb Lilly ([Report in Google Drive – Appendix D](#)) – held a meeting for interested divers at the National Seminar in Virginia to discuss coordinating resources and planning future trainings.

### **Regional Coordinator Reports**

1. Caribbean Region – Roberto “Bull” Miranda ([Appendix E in Google Drive](#)) – Fall 2022 Weeklong seminar in Puerto Rico was postponed. It is tentatively scheduled for this year but there is no date confirmed at this time. There are ongoing efforts to recover from hurricane impacts but the aim is to hold a seminar in October after hurricane season.
2. Central Region – Jess Deli ([Appendix F in Google Drive](#)) reported several OCRs were conducted – one requested by agency personnel in Wisconsin was cancelled due to lack of participation. An October OCR in Missouri was well-attended with over 60 students (cavers and agency) and a wait list. In December two day-long classes were offered for ‘In-Cave Rigging/Anchoring’ and ‘Cave Modification for Rescue’. Both classes filled up within two hours of registration being opened and were well-received. Optional digging kits were provided for students to purchase. In January an ICEE (In-Cave Emergency Exercises) was offered with a full roster (and wait list) of students for this overnight class. Jess is currently working to source alternatives for wool blankets, which are getting harder to find and become heavy when wet. Experimentation with battery-heated vests and sleeping bags/pads is ongoing with good results. Demand is very high for courses in this area – Jess described how she announces registration ahead of time and how quickly they fill up. Tony asked for more information about the heated vests.
3. Eastern Region – Tony Smith ([Appendix G in Google Drive](#)) – completed an Eastern region staff meeting and discussed upcoming training. An OCR is scheduled in April in Elkins and the class is almost full. New hardware is being purchased, AlertSense has been replaced with TexCom, and the webpage has been updated. The Covington, VA weeklong in 2022 was a success with 95 students and 50 instructors and staff. The budget cleared \$15,000 and Tony said the college would be happy to host again at the same site in the future. Two rescues were reported last year – one lost person in Island Ford cave and another was an ankle injury in Crossroads cave which the local fire department resolved.
4. Northeastern Region – Greg Moore ([Appendix H in Google Drive](#)) – SPAR and OCR classes were held in 2022 with good response and high demand. There is also interest in hosting an ICEE class in the region in the future. They will continue to offer a SPAR each year and are planning to put in another bid for a future regional and/or weeklong. They have also been updating their gear cache. No incidents to report.
5. Pacific Northwest Region – John Punches ([Appendix I.1](#) and [I.2](#) in Google Drive) – no incidents to report and no classes in 2022. Four people from their region went to Italy for rescue training – info included in attached report. There is intention to hold a SPAR in summer but syncing up instructor schedules is

difficult. John indicated that he is unlikely to continue serving as PNW Region Coordinator due to increased work demands.

6. Rocky Mountain Region – Sarah Truebe on behalf of Rene Ohms ([Appendix J in Google Drive](#)) – a rescue was reported in South Dakota involving a stuck caver and successful extraction. There was one OCR in July and one in November. Interagency discussions about Black Hills cave rescue response after the most recent incident have been beneficial.
7. South Central Region – DJ Walker ([Appendix K in Google Drive](#)) – recently hosted a regional weeklong in January. The demand for classes continues to remain high. Lottery registration methods were discussed as being a more fair way to conduct sign-ups in the future. Diversity for enrollment was also discussed to make sure that all regions and demographics are being accommodated as much as possible. DJ has been Chair of Instructor Development Committee, but Scott McCrea has expressed interest in assisting. Local gear has been assembled into ‘squad kits’ for more efficient deployment. Thanks to Mel, 2023 IQ candidates are being on-boarded well or have received quality feedback on how to improve if not selected for IQ. There was also an OCR in West Texas last fall that went well. The local instructor cadre continues to develop, with discussions about succession planning. There are future plans to purchase an NSS-owned equipment trailer, and the state division of emergency management reached out to indicate increased priority for cave rescue training and protocol.
8. Southeastern Region – Brandon Powers ([Appendix L in Google Drive](#)) Five rescues were reported in 2022 including one notable incident in March in Chattanooga Caverns with overdue cavers. This rescue involved interesting logistical issues due to an active railroad tunnel in the cave entrance. No NCRC trainings were offered in 2022, although Walker County (Allen Padgett) offered a multi-agency training that was popular. Brandon also offered a similar multi-agency training in Cumberland Caverns. There is an upcoming SPAR class scheduled in March and Brandon would like to plan more in the future due to high demand. New SPAR equipment has been ordered for the gear cache, as well. Extensive inspection was recently conducted so efforts will be made to replenish for future trainings. Ben Schweighart has been appointed as equipment manager to assist. Gretchen mentioned that increased emphasis on gear inspection will be encouraged in the future. Brandon is looking forward to having more instructors and assistance in the region to help with planning future training events.
9. Southwestern Region – Sarah Truebe ([Appendix M in Google Drive](#)) reported 3 incidents, one involving a show cave and elevator malfunction. No NCRC trainings were offered. Work is being done for rescue preparedness and a new emergency response system. There was an upcoming OCR training scheduled in March but will need to be postponed due to bat hibernation. Awareness level trainings for various agencies are planned. Goal is to have enough trainings to build up funds in order to supplement national weeklong scholarships for students in the area. Inspection of gear caches and updates to equipment are ongoing. WNS policies make having students and instructors from different areas a challenge.
10. Western Region – David Angel ([Appendix N in Google Drive](#)) 2 seminars were held in 2022 with plans for SPAR in Nevada and modular L1 class in 2023. There is also a request for a specialty blasting class. Gear inspections are ongoing and funding will be used to replace an abundance of rope in the near future.

## **Staff/Committee Reports**

1. **International Delegate Report** – Eddy Cartaya ([Appendix O.1](#) and [O.2](#) in Google Drive) Eddy could not attend this year so Michael Raymond attended ECRA and submitted a very interesting and detailed report (O.1) with a wide variety of information. Roger Mortimer attended ICAR and submitted a report (O.2). The scaffold knot has become the preferred knot in many circles in Europe. Continued emphasis on mental health aspect of rescue is also advised.
2. **Scholarship Report** – Marty Reames ([Appendix P in Google Drive](#)) reported \$8,854 is available and gave an overview of the number and distribution of these awards. The BORC recently approved using up to \$9,000 for scholarships next year. Based on the current number of applicants, the committee is working to decide how to handle future requests and how much funding to provide for each applicant.
3. **Database Coordinator Report** – Greg Moore ([Appendix Q in Google Drive](#)) will update the database in the next week to reflect the most up-to-date numbers. No major changes to functionality – regional coordinators should have access to be able to search for instructors and students in their respective areas. Greg asked that everyone please use the latest version of the spreadsheet (v1.3) when possible.
4. **International Exchange Program** – Mark Dickey ([Appendix R in Google Drive](#)) – much of the report is from Gretchen and Rene summarizing their trip to Hungary as exchange students in 2022. Gretchen suggested that instructors who are interested get on the wait list for future trainings because they fill up quickly.

**2023 Seminar Update** (Mentone, AL - May 12-20<sup>th</sup>, 2023) Rebecca Land Segrest is currently organizing this seminar. More updates to come after the SE region SPAR class in March. Ron Miller and Tripp Litchfield have been helping with local cave access. At this time, 130 individuals have registered for the seminar including 41 instructors. Online registration is currently closed to curtail new entries overloading the wait lists. Rebecca has been gathering volunteers and is getting requests from wait listed students who wish to assist if possible. She is looking for a Secretary volunteer to handle administrative duties during the week of training. More information for instructors will be forthcoming.

**Closed Session** – to discuss the Hudson Award recipient and Education Committee candidates. Once decisions were made, the BORC meeting reconvened. The Hudson award will be announced publicly at the NSS Convention.

**Elections (partially closed session)** – Brandon solicited interest for positions and the notice was circulated via social media.

1. **BORC Positions elected:**
  - *Diving Officer* – Zeb Lilly
  - *Northeastern* -- Greg Moore
  - *Southwestern* -- Sarah Truebe
  - *Western* -- David Angel
2. **Education Committee Position at large:**
  - *Three Positions for 2023-2026* –Carrey Bull, Casey England, and Rebecca Land Segrest were selected for the Education Committee and Stephanie Suen will be encouraged to be involved with the EC as an assistant.

3. 2023 Election Search Chair – David Angel was selected.

**2023 Budget** – ([Document 3 – attached](#)) – Berta gave an overview of current NCRC finances. Gretchen shared the proposed budget for 2023-2024 and is working with Berta to migrate data into Quickbooks. *Motion: SW moved to approve the budget as presented +/- \$1,000 in changes at the discretion of the National Coordinator. SC seconded the motion. 2023 Budget was approved by acclamation.*

**Education Committee Action Items** – Mel gave an overview of Education Committee progress and shared a recent motion that was passed. Mel wanted to clarify that piloted material is an optional step that must be followed up on with a formal vote by the EC and the BORC to make a curriculum change official. Mel also discussed the Instructor Retreat with a focus on a curriculum revamp and provided a summary of the changes being discussed. More input and work will be needed to continue furthering development of these materials. *Training moved to pilot new Medical training material for Level 2 at the Texas regional, as presented by Dr. Ekey here: (see referenced attachments to L2 Medical Operations PPT v221213 and L2 Medical Operations LP v221212). Medical seconded. Online vote conducted in January 2023. Motion passed.*

*Medical moved for a vote of confidence to encourage the TC and Education Committee to move forward with the 'complete revamp' as presented. SC seconded. Motion passed by acclamation.*

### **Old Business**

1. Image Replacement – Marty shared NSS information from Travis Camp regarding updating the media library and updated legal materials that are still being developed by the NSS. Discussion revolved around the need to get moving with some kind of copyright permission for the NCRC.
2. Website Updates – Ian Moore is helping Peter Johnson move the NCRC website to the new caves.org website. The old website will still be used for a few more years to direct traffic to the new site until it is appropriate to phase it out. Gretchen would also like to establish a Website Content Committee Chair soon.
3. NCRC YouTube Channel – Content is being created during the Las Vegas retreat and will be added soon.
4. Certification – Casey has made updates for Levels 1 and 2 based on TX regional training and recent comments on the material.
5. Instructor Tenure Gifts – Mel is still determining what the budget might be to continue these gratuities and mentioned that assistance will be needed in the future to follow up with Instructors to track tenure and eligibility. Marty suggested that tenure gift coordination could be added to the responsibilities of the NSS Liaison and that should could assist with this. Billy clarified that the topic of additional NCRC merchandise would be a separate aspect that will be discussed further.

### **[BREAK FOR LUNCH at 11:30 am PDT – Resume at 12:30 PST]**

6. Regional Gear Caches – Regions can apply for funding to replenish local gear caches. Currently \$35 is charged per weeklong student for 'gear fee' but that could be increased to raise additional money for gear. The BORC can opt to allocate additional funding to the regions requesting funds for updated gear. Some discussion ensued about other sources for this funding in the future. If a region is interested in acquiring funding to make necessary cache updates, contact Gretchen. *SC moved that NCRC extend regions the opportunity to receive \$1,000 in this Fiscal Year, capped at \$6,000 worth of dispersant. Medical seconded. Motion passed by acclamation.*

7. NCRC Conflict of Interest Form – Gretchen gave an overview of SOG407 and asked if this form should be signed annually, if it should be extended to all instructors (and possibly specialists or other NCRC affiliates), and whether the form should be modified in any way. Discussion ensued and feedback was collected. *Medical moved that it was necessary to group together and reconstruct the code of conduct and conflict of interest forms to be signed by any representative of the NCRC speaking on behalf of the NCRC. Diving seconded. Motion passed by acclamation.*  
  
*SC moved to update the code of conduct to ensure it reflects that the code of conduct applies at all times to anyone remotely associated with NCRC. Medical seconded. Motion passed by acclamation.*
8. Google Platform for NCRC – Billy shared the advantages of using the Google Platform to better organize resources, instructor materials, and archived content. This will also make sharing, distributing, and editing documents easier. In addition, there are several other Google Platform tools that can help with meetings and program development. The instructors will also be given an @caves.org email address to be used for NCRC communications as well. More information will be formalized and distributed soon.

### **New Business**

1. Bids for 2024 and 2025 National Seminars – Marty presented a proposal for 2024 Weeklong to be held at Camp Pinnacle in NY on behalf of Greg Moore. The tentative dates would be August 17-24<sup>th</sup>, 2024. *SC moved to accept the proposal to host the 2024 National Seminar in New York. Western seconded. Motion passed by acclamation.*  
  
Tony spoke about an option to host again in Covington, VA in 2025. Some discussion relating to shuttles and transportation logistics ensued. Dates TBD *SC moved to accept Eastern Region's offer to host the 2025 National Seminar. Diving seconded. Motion passed by acclamation.*
2. Seminar Recognition – Appreciation awards were distributed to instructors who set up seminars. This is one of the big benefits of being an NCRC Instructor—you can set up and teach seminars where you want (with approval, of course!). This takes extra work, but helps spread cave rescue knowledge throughout the country. Awards went to: Marty Reames, Billy Chrimes, Rene Ohms, Mark Dickey, DJ Walker, Jess Deli, Anmar Mirza, Tony Smith, Glen Hugus, Harold Chrimes, Carrey Bull, Casey England, Greg Moore, and Molly Lucier.
3. Updated Liability Waiver – The NSS lawyer suggested an additional paragraph be added to the NCRC liability waiver to increase protection. It is found in the Instructors>Forms folder.
4. Teaching NCRC material outside of an NCRC training – a closed session was held to discuss the matter. No motions were made in regard to this topic.
5. SPAR Leads – Currently there is high demand for the class. SPAR lead instructors must pass a SPAR lead exam, take and teach a SPAR class, and have a letter of recommendation. At the moment, it is required that there must be 2 SPAR lead instructors present to hold a class in a region. Mel led a discussion with other SPAR leads and asked for feedback on the matter. It was proposed that the second SPAR lead instructor not be a firm requirement, though strongly recommended. The second instructor should be an NCRC instructor who has both taken and taught a SPAR class and has a high level of familiarity with the material. *The Training Coordinator moved to recommend reducing the number of leads from 2 to 1 for SPAR courses as the*

*'SPAR lead' is currently defined. Instead, a 2<sup>nd</sup> instructor (green shirt, not specialist) who has either taken and taught a SPAR class or taught a SPAR class at least twice and has sufficient knowledge of the skillset can serve as a second. They would NOT have to complete the SPAR lead instructor physical exam. Whereas Training recommends and prefers a second SPAR Lead instructor, a course may be approved and continue with 1 SPAR lead and 1 Assistant SPAR instructor, as described. Should the case occur that the SPAR lead cannot participate in a training (injury, COVID, et.), if a 2<sup>nd</sup> SPAR lead is in place, the training may be held, but if the 2<sup>nd</sup> is only qualified as an Assistant SPAR instructor, then the course would have to be cancelled. Western seconded. Motion passed by acclamation.*

6. NCRC Meeting at NSS Convention – Scheduled to be held Monday morning of Convention (June 26<sup>th</sup>). Gretchen asked for suggestions on any specific topics or material to be covered.
7. International Delegates – Gretchen would like NCRC to continue to be involved in international rescue discussions and asked for others' experiences with attending international conventions. Roger suggested that any available instructor willing to travel could attend as a representative of NCRC. Gretchen gave information about various international organizations and conventions that may be of interest and asked if this should be an elected or appointed position with a three-year term or if it would be preferable to evaluate annually. *Medical moved that interested parties should notify the National Coordinator of their interest on a yearly basis and delegates will be appointed by the National Coordinator. SC seconded. Motion passed with acclamation.* Additional discussion ensued regarding how much cost NCRC might cover and the consensus was that the National Coordinator could use discretion if the allocated budget was not exceeded.
8. SPAR – combined with item #5 above
9. Course Approval Process – Mel described the approval process and indicated that a flyer should be submitted along with the request for a training to ensure that regional courses are in alignment with the national curriculum and consistency is achieved. Templates could be added to the shared Google Drive to assist with local planning efforts. Some discussion occurred regarding other means of advertising and promotion. It was suggested that a formal motion was not needed, but that those planning local trainings could share their promotional materials with the Training Coordinator for prior review and approval.
10. Paperwork Archival/Retention – Mel gave an overview of how student evaluations and other documentation is currently maintained by NCRC and asked for discussion about what should be retained and if there is any policy regarding these materials. It was discussed that there may already be an existing policy on this topic. Information emailed from Greg was shared by proxy Jess and outlined his responses for each question that was cited. Mel addressed the questions about IQ green shirts and now that there is 'provisional status', the shirts have been held until an IQ student is approved by the BORC. IQ Instructors recommend IQ students to the BORC for official approval. Some of these questions will be revisited in the future as past policies are reviewed.
11. Instructor Tenure Gift Coordinator and Merchandise Website – Tenure gifts have been well-received and will continue. Mel would like assistance with coordinating instructor tenure gifts in the future. There was also discussion about setting up a merchandise website so that instructors could periodically order more green shirts and other future items as they become available. Marty offered to assist with coordinating instructor tenure gifts as the NSS Liaison. Jess suggested that the NSS may be able to set up a merchandise page for this purpose and Billy mentioned that this would also be possible with the Google Platform, though

someone will need to handle the physical storage and shipments of these items, which is considered to be a separate task beyond the scope of what Marty volunteered to assist with.

12. Gear Caches – Gretchen discussed the national cache and associated budget. Harold discussed the current state of the NCRC cache and gave an overview of what items have been replaced recently. Ropes will be on schedule for replacement soon (10-year limit for the cache). Gretchen suggested that in the future we will need to source more income for updating gear caches and may consider increasing the student fee. *SW moved that we increase the equipment fee paid by students in any weeklong seminars using the national gear cache from \$35 to \$55 per student starting in 2024. Diving seconded. Motion passed by acclamation.*
13. Other – Scholarships – Marty asked if there is a need to fund scholarships for regional trainings. Additional funding is available, but should emphasis continued to be placed on assisting students with national seminars or should more funding be allocated for regional use in the future? Discussion ensued. It was decided that \$2,000 in scholarships to be earmarked for regional seminar participants this fiscal year.
14. SOG Committee – Edits continue, and progress updates were provided. Contact Sarah if you are interested in helping with this committee in the future.
15. Next BORC meeting: April 17<sup>th</sup>, 6:05 pm PDT

## **Announcements**

### Calendar

- May 12-20, 2023 – NCRC National Seminar in Mentone, Alabama
- June 26-30 – NSS Convention, Elkins, WV
- October 12-15, 2023 – Home – European Cave Rescue Association (ECRA) in Portugal
- October 17-22 - International Commission for Alpine Rescue (ICAR) in Italy
- November 3-6 – International Technical Rescue Symposium (ITRS) in St. Louis

Meeting adjourned at 4:04 pm PDT

*Respectfully compiled and submitted by L.Demarest*





NATIONAL CAVE RESCUE COMMISSION  
of the National Speleological Society  
6001 Pulaski Pike  
Huntsville, AL 35810-1122

Gretchen Baker  
National Coordinator  
PO Box 34  
Baker, NV 89311  
435-406-1041

GretchenBaker@caves.org  
National Coordinator Report  
February 2022-January 2023

### Progress

- 5 BORC meetings (Feb, Apr, Aug, Sept, Oct), all with meeting minutes (thank you, Bonny, Laura, Marty, and Carrey!), plus general meeting at NSS Convention in South Dakota
- 2 Instructor Zoom meetings (May 26 and November 21, 2022)
- NCRC finances are set up to more easily manage (thank you Christy and Kristine!); Berta Walker has graciously stepped up as our NCRC Finance Officer
- The 2022 National Seminar was held in Virginia (after two years of Covid cancellations); it was organized very well and the site worked great
- [NCRC Facebook page](#) active again with regular posts
- Gave talk to IQ students
- Public [NCRC YouTube channel](#), developed, currently has videos showcasing different types of training and some of the pre-requisites for classes. Instructors can access additional videos, which are linked via a file archive on the Groups.io page. [instructors@ncrc.groups.io | Files](mailto:instructors@ncrc.groups.io)
- Congrats to the 2022 NSS Award Winners: Steve Hudson Cave Rescue Award to David Ashburn; Fellows of the NSS to David Angel, Ron Davis, and Scott McCrea; and President's Certificate of Appreciation to Marty Reames for her help with image replacement project
- Reviewed [SOGs](#) and made suggestions to the SOG committee
- Represented NCRC to the NSS and various organizations, businesses, and individuals and made appropriate communications
- Led an OCR in Nevada (12/2022) and taught at Level 3 at the National Seminar (07/2022)
- Attended Hungarian T2 cave rescue class as part of the NCRC Exchange program
- NCRC website is migrating to the caves.org platform with the help of Pete Johnson and Ian Moore; this platform is run on Wordpress, so theoretically more people will be able to make changes
- Presented at ITRS on [Caver Preparedness](#).
- Spoke about NCRC on Matt Pelsor's *The Caving Podcast*
- Have been working on an article with some other instructors for the *NSS News* about optimizing the Frog system for cave rescue.
- Thank you to Carrey Bull who spoke about the NCRC at the International Show Cave Association/National Caves Association conference in San Antonio the last week of September to promote show cave-NCRC partnerships.
- Thank you to Amanda Mortimer for offering a post-accident zoom meeting for those who wanted to attend.
- Many regional trainings throughout the year, all well-attended.

### Plans

- Continue BORC meetings as needed in addition to the winter meeting
- Hold 2 Instructor Zoom meetings in 2023
- Teach at various cave rescue seminars

- Continue working on updating Standard Operating Guidelines
- Further develop NCRC website to be more student centric
- Continue to represent NCRC as needed to NSS, grottoes, and other rescue organizations
- Continue thinking/discussing how NCRC can fit into the global cave rescue scene
- Continue thinking/discussing/showing how NCRC can develop and teach state-of-the-art cave rescue techniques
- Support instructor development and retention

### **Problems**

- Accident at an NCRC training in December 2022 resulting in a serious injury. This is under investigation and lessons learned are planned to be shared at the appropriate time. The NCRC has worked with the NSS president, lawyer, and insurance representative to address this accident and support the injured party.
- Still ironing out regional bank account access issues.
- Can be difficult to meet the demand for cave rescue classes. A few classes have waitlists and some sell out in as little as a few minutes.

**LIST OF MOTIONS PASSED BY THE BORC, February 2022-January 2023:**

*Motion: Instructor Development and Retention Committee moved that the BORC approve \$500 for 2022 Instructor Tributes. PNW seconded. No discussion. Motion passed.*

*Motion: PNW moved to approve the annual budget as amended. SC seconded the motion. 2022 Budget was approved.*

*Motion: Training Coordinator moved to approve the amended Level 1 'Up and Down' Lesson Plan. NE seconded the motion. Motion passed.*

*Motion: PNW moved to approve changes to SOGs 104, 202, 205, 406, and 407 as presented, to strike 206, and to amend 305 to say "Additional details about requirements for SPAR seminars can be found in SOG 303." SC seconded the motion. Motion passed.*

*Motion: TC moved to trial the new Level 1 and Level 2 Certification Books in Virginia. Central Region seconded the motion. Motion passed.*

*Motion: SWR moved that each region is authorized to request up to \$1,000 of national budget to supplement regional gear caches in 2022. Diving seconded the motion. Motion passed.*

*PNW motions to accept SOG 303 edits, SW seconds. Motion passed.*

*Motion: Training moves to extend the recertification expiration date an additional year for instructors that were current as of 2017, 2018 and 2019, until Dec. 31, 2023. Motion passed by acclamation.*

*Motion: Training moves to approve the 2022 IQ students (Cathy Borer, Steph Petri, Tom Wood, Kyle Gochenour, Brandon Power, Sarah Truebe) as provisional instructors. Motion passed by acclamation.*

*SC moved that we set registration at \$1,100 per student including providing a book to L1 students, PNW seconded, motion passed.*

*Northeast Moves that the BORC guarantee a minimum of \$9000 in scholarship funds for the National training. Money first to come from the NCRC Scholarship fund and any difference to be made up from the NCRC National Fund. A minimum of 20 scholarships at \$200 be offered with additional funds to be offered per the recommendations of the scholarship committee, SC seconds, motion passed.*

*TC moved that the BORC approve the Education Committee decision on Haul Command Changes as presented, SC seconds, motion passed.*

*MOTION for BORC ACTION: The Training Coordinator and Education Committee move to adopt curriculum proposed for Level 1 Medical rewrites as presented here: [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1viciXvvVqg8P1-iWt0JDnH5WX\\_tICJTv?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1viciXvvVqg8P1-iWt0JDnH5WX_tICJTv?usp=sharing). Online vote in July 2022. Motion passed.*

*MOTION: Training moves to pilot new Medical training material for Level 2 at the Texas regional, as presented by Dr. Ekey here:*

*[L2 Medical Operations PPT v221213](#)*

*[L2 Medical Operations LP v221212](#)*

*Medical seconds. Online vote in January 2023 and motion passed.*

**THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HAVE SERVED ADDITIONAL ROLES IN THE NCRC THIS PAST YEAR!**

- Appointed
  - Certification Coordinator – Casey England
  - Communications Committee Chair – Steve Reames
  - Curriculum Coordinator – Rich Pumplin
  - Database Manager – Greg Moore
  - Editor-Cave Rescue Manual – Anmar Mirza
  - Election Coordinator – Brandon Powers
  - Financial Officer – Berta Walker
  - Hudson Award Committee Chair – Roger Mortimer
  - International Delegate – Eddy Cartaya, Roger Mortimer
  - International Exchange Program Coordinator – Mark Dickey
  - Logistics Officer – Harold Chrimes
  - Recording Secretary – Bonny Armstrong
  - Scholarship Committee Chair – Marty Reames
  - Social Media Coordinator – Tim White
  - Training Secretary – Carrey Bull
  - Webmaster – Ian Moore
  - Website Content Committee Chair - Vacant
  
- Elected
  - Education Committee (6):
    - Cathy Borer, Carrey Bull, Billy Chrimes, Casey England, Scott McCrea, Stephen Bishop
  - Board of Regional Coordinators
    - Diving Officer – Zeb Lilly
    - Medical Officer – Brian Ekey
    - National Coordinator – Gretchen Baker
    - Training Coordinator – Mel Eady-Pumplin
    - Regional Coordinators
      - Northeast: Greg Moore
      - Eastern: Tony Smith
      - Southeastern: Brandon Powers
      - Caribbean: Roberto “Bull” Miranda
      - Central: Jessica Deli
      - Southcentral: DJ Walker
      - Rocky Mountain: Rene Ohms
      - Southwestern: Sarah Truebe
      - Western: David Angel
      - Pacific Northwest: John Panches

## APPENDIX B – TRAINING COORDINATOR

*NCRC Winter 2023 BORC meeting Training Coordinator Report page - 1 -*

NCRC officer report: Training Coordinator  
Winter BORC meeting: Feb 25th, 2023  
Submitted by: Melody Eady-Pumplin

Progress: Since taking on the role of Training Coordinator in 2/26/2022:

- The Education Committee has held 12 regularly scheduled monthly zoom calls and also held a work meeting Dec 10, 11, 2022.
- The EC continues to review older lesson plans and offer updates to curriculum focusing on L1 and L2.
- The TC has attended an additional 10+ virtual meetings with instructors and sub committees.
- The TC has reviewed 18 course requests including various OCRs and custom classes. All custom classes were approved after receiving basic training materials and schedules. One (1) SPAR course was denied due to lack of qualified instructors according the current course criteria.
- Received and replied to over 1240 emails at the caves.org email account and numerous more on my personal gmail account. Various phone calls, messenger and texts conversations.
- New Medical Lectures were approved and implemented for L1.
- New Medical lectures was approved for a pilot and delivered for L2. Full approval will be sought before the 2023 national seminar.
- Commands for haul systems were addressed and updates were approved into the curriculum.
- During the 2022 convention the NCRC had an annual meeting with various current discussions and a brain storming session revolving around the topic of anchors.
- The National seminar was held in Virginia with an extra-large (50 students) Level 1 class, L2, L3 and IQ.
- The 2022 IQ class yielded 6 new provisional instructors including: Brandon Powers, Steph Petri, Cathy Borer, Sarah Truebe, Tom Wood and Kyle Gochenour.
- Upon the conclusion of the VA seminar, all instructor and course evaluations were scanned, uploaded and shared with the recipient and lead instructors.
- A weeklong training was held in Texas (Jan 2023) which included full classes for L1 and L2.
- A SPAR lead instructor test was offered in Texas. DJ Walker and Casey England recertified. Tommy Polson and Russell McCullar completed the physical test and are working on the remaining portions to complete their certification.
- Unfortunately, we had to cancel the planned 2022 regional weeklong L1, L2 seminar in Puerto Rico due to a hurricane and power outages at the training site.
- The 2023 seminar was filled in record time once registration opened even with the increase in costs to the training.
- The TC invited 6 IQ candidates for the 2023 seminar. The remaining applicants were sent constructive feedback on ways to improve along with a copy of that feedback to their regional coordinator.
- A NCRC YouTube channel was launched and 8 training videos currently are posted.

Plans:

- Assist with the 2024 National Seminar in Mentone, AL as TC.
- Continue reviewing the current training materials.
- Move to the Google Platform (with assistant from Billy Chrimes and NSS support) to offer emails, teaching modules and instructor tests as part of remote training in the near future.
- At the time of filing this report, preparing to coordinate and facilitate at the Instructor Retreat in Las Vegas preceding the Winter BORC meeting. This retreat includes kicking off a multi-year plan to reorganize the NCRC curriculum as a unit instead of by levels.

Problems: • Some of the challenges we encounter are typical for a volunteer organization including: improving means of better communication, prompt follow through from EC and BORC on committee assignments, holding each other accountable for assigned jobs.

Actions and discussions for the BORC meeting:

- 1) Recommend to reduce the number of leads from 2 to 1 for SPAR courses as the "SPAR lead" is currently defined. But have a 2<sup>nd</sup> instructor (green shirt not specialist) that has taken and taught a SPAR class serve as a second. They would NOT have to complete the SPAR lead instructor physical exam. Whereas training recommends and prefers a second SPAR Lead instructor, a course may be approved and continue with 1 SPAR lead and 1 Took-one-taught-one (TOTO?) instructor. Should the case occur that a SPAR lead cannot participate in a training (injury, Covid, etc.) in the case of a 2<sup>nd</sup> SPAR lead is in place the training may be held, but if the 2<sup>nd</sup> is a TOTO then the course would have to be canceled.
- 2) Discuss what constitutes violating intellectual property of the organization. How much of an approved NCRC class can get taught outside of NCRC approval and be considered a copycat or separate training? Defining this is important and should not be different if a class is for-profit or not.
- 3) Discuss the need to update our current course approval process to include a course flyer. This will help eliminate surprises or outdated information being promoted for a class.
- 4) Codify what paperwork has to be kept for trainings and what is disposable for our records and database. For example: Do we keep student tasks books? Do we need to keep student test scores? Why do we track instructor recertification test scores? Where should course and instructor evaluations be kept? What is the best way to relay presentation feedback to the Education Committee? IQ shirts?
- 5) Recommend the establishment of an Instructor Tenure Gift Coordinator position and Instructor website for purchasing items- Mel needs help with Tenure gifts and how to best open a website for instructors.

Respectfully submitted,

-Mel

Melody Eady-Pumplin

NCRC Training Coordinator

ncctraining@caves.org melgarita@caves.org

## APPENDIX C – MEDICAL OFFICER



Brian D. Ekey, DO  
brianekey@gmail.com

22 Jan 2023

Board of Regional Coordinators  
National Cave Rescue Commission  
c/o: Gretchen Baker, National Coordinator  
gretchenbaker@caves.org

### Re: Medical Officer Report 2023

**Progress:** The medically minded cavers of the NCRC have been hard at work on multiple projects including the continuation of the **Medical Interest Group (MiG)** online. The Mig began in July of 2019 and has met consistently every two months for the past **three and a half years**. Overall the MiG has discussed and made recommendations on over twenty specific medical concepts and curriculum questions.

The **Medical Matrix** task force concept and direction document is also alive and well. It has provided direction and details for new lectures and learning objectives across Levels 1, 2, and 3. A total medical curriculum rewrite of all three lectures for **Level 1** and both lectures for **Level 2 has been completed**, and L2 has recently undergone pilot testing in Texas. The matrix also lays out new, from scratch rewrite for L3; which is also on track to be pilot tested this year in Mentone. In addition, the medical matrix is expanding into **OCR and SPAR** recommendations. Special mention to Greg Moore also for his work to bring the future “Tip of the Spear” (TOTS) medical weeklong class to life!

The **SOGs of the NCRC** were reformatted, cataloged and prepared for update. The SOG committee continues the updating process. Medical SOGs including **vital signs** and patient expectations were updated to match the current MiG opinion.

**Problems:** Medical struggles with excellent input and suggestions without nearly enough time or manpower to implement everything. Scheduling priorities limit the rate of work output. Conflicting historical attempts at medical progression through the levels also limited the ability to simply update or reuse current lectures. Consistent direction and help from members of the MiG will solve many of the problems associated with limited manpower.

**Covid** also became an acute problem for everyone involved with the NCRC. Several members including Dr. Roger Mortimer and all the affected regional coordinators deserve special recognition for their work with Medical to chase the ever changing recommendations.

**Plans:** Medical will continue to solicit participation in the **Medical Interest Group**. Medical will continue to **Develop New Curriculum** from the medical matrix. Medical will continue to work with the NCRC and the NSS to develop safe **Covid guidelines**.

Respectfully,

Links: NCRC Medical Interest Group - <https://groups.google.com/q/ncrc-mig>  
NCRC Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) - [https://bit.ly/ncrc\\_sogs](https://bit.ly/ncrc_sogs)

## **APPENDIX D – DIVING OFFICER**

To: NCRC BORC  
From: Zeb Lilly, Diving Coordinator  
Date: February 25th, 2023  
Subject: 2023 Diving Coordinator Report

### **Activities:**

Attended 2022 BORC Meetings  
Taught a level 1 class at the National Seminar in Low Moore VA  
Held a meeting of the sump divers present at the National Seminar to plan and coordinate future training.

### **Plans:**

Continue to maintain and update the sump diver callout list  
Continue coordinating with the IUCRR to ensure appropriate resources are available for sump rescue incidents.  
Teach at the National Seminar in Mentone



## APPENDIX E – CARIBBEAN REGION



## NATIONAL CAVE RESCUE COMMISSION

---

*Of the National Speleological Society of the United States*

### CARIBBEAN REGION

Roberto "Bull" MIRANDA PALACIOS  
*Regional Coordinator*

PO Box 29705  
San Juan, PUERTO RICO  
00929  
Tel. +787-922-2647  
E-Mail [miranda.roberto@outlook.com](mailto:miranda.roberto@outlook.com)  
February 23, 2022  
San Juan, Puerto Rico

To: BORG  
RE: Caribbean Region Winter report 2022.

Dear BORG:

1. No Incidents to report.
2. No activities performed on 2022. Hurricane FIONA didn't allow to perform Regional Week Long Seminar.
3. Regional Seminar NCRCPR2023
  - a. We are under the assumption that "Go ahead" to perform NCRCPR2022 is valid to NCRCPR2023.
    - i. If not, please advice
  - b. Its been coordinated. Dates are unknown since camp priorities are for Adventist Church Members. However the month of October was suggested.
  - c. Were: Camp Elias Burgos, Rd 146, Km 8.8, Ciales PR 00638.
  - d. Possible Issues and doubts:
    - i. Not enough instructors on the region.

Respectfully,

Roberto "Bull" Miranda  
NCRC Coordinator

## APPENDIX F – CENTRAL REGION



**NATIONAL CAVE RESCUE COMMISSION**  
of the  
**NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**  
A NASAR Affiliate

Jessica Deli  
Central Region Coordinator  
2002 13<sup>th</sup> St.  
Bedford, IN 47421

Home: 812-278-9577  
Cell: 812-345-5012  
email: [jess.deli14@gmail.com](mailto:jess.deli14@gmail.com)

Date of Report: February 28, 2023

### Trainings

October 2022: Orientation to Cave Rescue

- Perryville, Missouri
- Perryville Fire Department and SEMO Grotto
- Over sixty cavers, fire, and other agency personnel attended.

December 2022: Cave Modification for Rescue

- Richard Blenz Nature Preserve, Indiana
- Central Region's all new cave rescue course! This course focuses on the various aspects to modify cave passages during a rescue operation. We talk about digging sediment, gravel, rock, etc and how to break rock utilizing techniques including brute force (just hitting it with a hammer), hammer and chisel, wedges and feathers, etc. Our focus includes conservation considerations, minimal alteration techniques, and the safety aspects involved during these types of delicate operations. This is a small, one day, class (minimum of 5 to a maximum of approximately 10 students) and be held primarily outdoors and aboveground where students will have the opportunity to perform hands on techniques to split rocks using the methods taught during the course. We might venture into a local cave to discuss techniques that \*could\* be utilized at specific locations to give the students a more realistic scenario (i.e. a rock fell here and is blocking the passage, what do you do? or a patient is wedged in this crevice, what techniques could you use?). No in-cave modifications are planned at this time. A micro-shaving demonstration (demo only) will be performed and discussed to allow students to better understand the process, it will NOT be the focus and techniques/'how to' will not be taught.

December 2022 : Beginning Anchoring and Rigging

- Richard Blenz Nature Preserve, Indiana
- Central Region's new course! This one day event bring students underground to practice beginning rigging challenges. Provide students the opportunity to learn anchoring and simple mechanical advantage systems in the underground environment and put together concepts and designs.

January 2023: In Cave Emergency Exercises (ICEE)

- Sullivan Cave, Indiana

-Central Region's all in-cave course. This course is geared towards newer cavers or those whose vertical skills lack proficiency. Students and instructors spend 24-36+ hours in cave and learn to overcome challenges including finding and making camp, conservation during extended stay in cave (including bodily waste disposal), as well as a multitude of skills and techniques in assisting a patient throughout a rigorous cave environment.

### **Work in Progress**

Outreach to local cave owners/managers to increase awareness of rescue resources.

Increase presence in Region via outreach, training, social medial, etc

### **Plans**

Dates yet to be determined

2 Orientation to Cave Rescue Trainings

1 Cave Modification for Rescue

1 In Cave Emergency Exercise

1 Level 1 Regional (sending out feelers)

### **Problems**

-None

### **Other**

-Huge influx of students who have completed Level 1 or higher are stepping forward and assisting/teaching/mentoring at various regional seminars!

-The Region has been looking for alternatives to the two blankets and tarp method for patient packaging. Wool blankets are difficult and pricy to obtain; are very bulky and difficult to take into small passages; become very heavy when wet. Four inexpensive heated vests have been purchased and utilized in trainings in the Region.

Price: Ranges from \$60-\$100

Battery operated: easily obtainable, USB connection, can be purchased locally

Multiple heat settings: 3-5 settings (104°F to 160°F)

Various material and thicknesses (cotton, fleece, poly)

Adjustable sizes

Various button location for easy access by medic or patient

Machine Washable

-These vests allow thinner polyester filled sleeping bags to be used in lieu of wool blankets.

-Looked for other battery operated heaters and are working with a few different varieties to see how they withstand the cave environment. A few are starting to look promising!

-The vests have been a success and now we've moved on to heated sleeping bags and heated sleeping pads. Average cost is ~\$50 for each and they run off the same battery types as the vest. The sleeping bag is large and roomy, which allows for a variety of patient sizes. The sleeping pad is smaller and more manageable than the bag and may provide enough heat when used in conjunction with a vest or in a warmer cave.



# National Cave Rescue Commission

of the  
National Speleological Society  
Eastern Region

Tony Smith  
Eastern Region Coordinator  
100 Stephen Circle  
Bridgewater, VA 22812-1424  
Home: (540) 828-4091  
Cellular: (540) 280-0755  
E-mail: eastern@ncrc.info

## Report to the Board of Regional Coordinators February 25 2023

### Eastern Region Coordinator Report

- Working with VDEM and Cave rescue teams in the Region. Along with AMRG - search team
- Completed ER Staff Fall Meeting Sept.4<sup>th</sup> 2022 at the OTR site. At said meeting discussed successful national weeklong training, OCR to be held in Elkins WV April 23, and upcoming Convention. Purchasing hardware for SR Cashes. Switched from AlertSense to TexCom as an alerting system.
- ER Web Page updated
- Training Report:
  1. Successful Weeklong held at Dabney Lancaster Community College in Covington VA. With a total of 95 students, along with 50 instructors including staff in attendance. Classes were well received by all, great instructors, good food, good classrooms, good caves and cliffs. Class budget cleared approximately \$15k.
- Rescue Report:
  1. Lost report in Island Ford cave- found within 10min.
  2. Ankle Injury in Crossroads cave -resolved by local fire department.

## **APPENDIX H – NORTHEASTERN REGION**

### **2022 Northeastern Region Report**

**Submitted:** Greg D. Moore

January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2023

#### **Training**

The Northeastern Region hosted both a SPAR class and an OCR in 2022. Both were completely full.

The SPAR class was held at Camp Pinnacle. This continues to be a solid location for our SPAR and Level 1 or other types of classes due to availability of food and dorms at a fairly reasonable price.

Thanks to a last minute surge from the RPI Outing Club (also an NSS Grotto) we had a completely full OCR class. We used the Onesquethaw fire hall in Clarksville as a base. Several students have expressed interest in further training. Several former students utilized as specialists.

We expect to continue to hold 2 or more trainings a year, generally 1-2 OCRs, 1 SPAR (when lead instructors are available), and possibly on alternating years, a regional.) There seems to be adequate interest to support such a tempo and with the use of Camp Pinnacle, a good location to host such. We are also talking with Central Region about hosting an ICEE class if we can find a cave that will work well for the needs.

#### **Incidents**

None I'm aware of.

#### **Expansion of Gear Cache**

Additional ropes and other equipment was purchased as we continue to expand our gear cache for future trainings. Over the past 4 years, we have gained a decent gear cache and rarely need to supplement it, especially for Level 1 trainings. We will continue to purchase further gear though to expand our training capabilities

#### **National Seminar**

The Northeastern Region will be putting in a bid to host the National Seminar in 2024 under separate cover.

## **APPENDIX I.1 PACIFIC NORTHWEST REGION**

NCRC PNW Region Report, Ammended

2/25/23

John Punches

Progress:

No rescues reported to me.

No NCRC classes since last report.

Four persons associated with PNW Region attended an exchange program in Italy, as a follow-up to Italian cave rescue personnel attending a PNW region 6-day SPAR in 2019. See attached CNSAS report from Eddy Cartaya.

Plans:

Regional personnel are considering hosting a SPAR course late summer, 2023. No commitment at this point in time, as our schedules are challenging.

I do not intend to run for PNW Regional Coordinator when my current term ends.

### Exchange Program with Italian CNSAS

In 2019, the Pacific Northwest region hosted an exchange program with several members of the European Cave Rescue Association. ECRA president, Dinko Novosel, and Italian CNSAS rescue leaders Michele Pazzini and Gianpaolo Scrigna attended the 6 day SPARX here at our training center in Redmond, Oregon. (I met Michele and Gianpaolo at ICAR 2018 when I was there to present on the NCRC request to join ICAR. They were immediately drawn to us by our SPAR program.) The reason these folks attended the SPARX was that their entire philosophy for cave rescue is essentially SPAR based, differing greatly from the “French Technique” which is to rig the cave top to bottom and the patient never stops moving. “Italian Technique,” used in many rescues for deep caves throughout Europe is based on minimum manpower and gear, focusing on SRT skills, counterweight, and closed loop rigging tactics.

The Italian CNSAS has 3 levels of cave rescue training in their national program as well. Their level 3 is their technical riggers / leader course, or called TSR course. They agreed in 2019 to give us 3 or 4 slots at their next TSR (level 3 course.)

Then COVID happened...so it did not occur until this past June 2022.

Myself, Andrew Blackstock, Becca Stubbs and Scott Linn attended. Prior to participating we had to be registered in the Italian Alpine Association there. Part of the skills to note is that mountain rescue is considered a primary / base skill, as most of their caves are in mountainous areas. The TSR course was held in the Dolomites, (Cavedago) and featured many deep caves. In the past, snow travel has been needed to access the course caves. Some of the caves used in the course had lengthy climbs and even a via ferrata course to access.

To ensure that we (the USA team) was up to date and familiar with the techniques used by the CNSAS, they asked that we attend a 4 day build-up / pre-course seminar. The schedule for this is posted below. The pre-course training was conducted at Padriciano, (near Trieste) the local CNSAS station, a Second World War refugee center. This area is saturated with deep caves.

This was extremely useful, and included their basic litter rigging with the Italian litter. It is basically a hybrid of the Petzl Nest, but with many improvements, and custom built by Kong. One notable add on is a custom helmet with a flat back (occipital) that velcros onto the litter. Obviously everything is SRT based, with one rope on the litter. Redundancy is focused on likely points of failure, like anchors and litter bridles.

All Cave rescue responders are issued and wear 4 or 5 bolt hangers and nuts, wrench, a 3 meter length of 10mm or 11mm rope to build a load sharing anchor, a Petzl Pro-traxion, and a piece of technora cord. The litter always gets a backup bridle made of technora cord called a “cavalota.” By everyone being equipped the same, it allows anyone who happens to be at the right location to build anchors, counterweights, litters, etc.

If you want to reference what WAS the CNSAS basic cave rescue riggers guide, you can download it for free here:

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/4q54w3vcjnl4g8m/caving\\_rescue\\_techniques\\_2015.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/4q54w3vcjnl4g8m/caving_rescue_techniques_2015.pdf?dl=0)

One thing that was interesting, is the CNSAS brought us maybe 6 bound copies of this book when they came in 2019. We obviously spent a great deal of time reviewing it in the months preceding the course. Gianpaolo then told us not to spend too much time with the book because they had had a “revolution.” We assumed that meant they had reverted to heavier, quantitatively redundant techniques, but it was exactly the opposite. They had changed much of it to just single rope and gone to smaller teams of 3.

One of the presentations during the pre-seminar was a mountain rescue demo and equipment familiarization. This included some patient packaging, litter carry techniques, etc. They also showcased a canyoneering rescue litter that is used to get patients through waterfalls or dips.

The USA team that attended were also Mountain Rescue Association team leaders as well as NCRC trained cave rescue techs or instructors. We made a presentation on some techniques we use here, some glacier / alpine cave rescue techniques, etc. I delivered a program on glacier cave expeditions and rescue pre-planning, highlighting a lot of what we now do with the NASA rover-testing expeditions to the Canadian glacier caves.

The entry skill test to gain entry into the TSR course is typically done in a 400 meter deep multi-shaft cave with dozens of SRT obstacles (rebelays, deviations, traverses, J-hangs, etc.) and then perform a pick off at the bottom. The cadre did not tell us this was a requirement until AFTER we had completed the cave that day.

The TSR course itself (held high in the Dolomites...Cavedago) started with a cliff day where all their counterweight litter raise techniques were practiced. The cliffs were pre-bolted with 5 to 7 rebelays through which the litter had to be hauled up and then lowered down in teams of 3 or 4. Another station was simply to practice the litter orientation technique from vertical to horizontal and back again. It is essentially done with the SRT climber attaching to the litter and raising the foot up, and re-securing it with the “parking line” all litters have.

“Parking lines” are rope tails that hang off the litter and are used to facilitate passing rebelays, edges, etc. It is just attached to the bridle and the free end used to create a Münter Hitch tie off to facilitate weight transfers.

All other days were done in deep multi-shaft caves, again with each team of 3 or 4 going a different way with an instructor. Gianpaolo or Michele was assigned to the 2 teams that had USA folks. We were split apart.

One day was focused on horizontal litter progression through dry and wet passages. There was a large emphasis on human anchors for this. Again, the emphasis is very SPAR philosophy based. There was also a class on their model of cave rescue management. They do not call it ICS, but it was functionally the same thing, with span of control being a critical metric.

There was a separate partial day that covered the pike and pivot CNSAS uses. It is very interesting and clever, with the pike rope attached to the FOOT of the litter. The single hauler using counterweight at the Petzl Protaxion anchor does all the work to get it there and then assists with setting the foot line. They then assist from below. It creates a very dramatic pike.



Schedule for the pre-course seminar: (the links to the cave names in most cases lead to maps and cave descriptions.)

Day	morning	afternoon	evening
Thursday 23		Venice airport 6.30PM	Dinner at Padriciano - welcome event
Friday 24	free time	visit at <a href="#">park skocjanske / grotta di San Canziano</a>	Visit to Trieste, and to the <a href="#">oldest caver group of the world</a> , dinner at a local restaurant
Saturday 25	multi shaft cave progression -250m ( <a href="#">grotta nell'Orto</a> or <a href="#">abisso del Cristallo</a> )		Alpine rescue team meeting / alpine stretcher presentation / dinner at Padriciano
Sunday 26	Short visit to <a href="#">grotta Impossibile</a>	Rescue techniques presentation / training	Dinner at Padriciano (or pizza??)
Monday 27	Cave rescue training at <a href="#">VG 88 Abisso di Ferneti</a>		Dinner at Padriciano
Tuesday 28	free time	Trip to TSR course venue ( <a href="#">Cavedago TN, Dolomites</a> )	Dinner at the course venue

The caves should be used in the TSR course were:

[Grotta Battisti](#), [Grotta Lamar](#), [Grotta Bigonda](#), and [Grotta Freezer](#).

In Trieste, the cave's temperature were 12C°, in Cavedago the temps ranged from 5C° to 2C°.

See the below dropbox link for a few of the PPT's and a canyon rescue video they sent us.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/gpwzvg3c2zn8ux7/AADzfsY7emOliY4d8BEGO3N1a?dl=0>

[See below link to CNSAS newsletter pages 20-23, and 32-33.] [https://www.cnsas.it/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/N.-80-Rivista-CNSAS-ottobre\\_2022\\_web.pdf](https://www.cnsas.it/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/N.-80-Rivista-CNSAS-ottobre_2022_web.pdf)

This is an incredibly competent, fast moving, and technically proficient cave rescue group that operates nationally. Their instructors are extremely competent and professional. As with most European units, they are quasi-federalized and have a good deal of funding, vehicles, buildings, etc. They are merged with mountain rescue in most cases, but do have their own caches of gear more specialized for cave operations.

We will be having members of CNSAS here in the USA this year to assist with the next NASA glacier cave study in the moulin caves of Athabasca, Canada. We plan to record and share some presentations and will make sure these are sent to NCRC.

ICAR will also be in Italy this coming year, so this will be a great year to attend and work this team again.

Thank you very much.

Eddy Cartaya  
 NSS # 31578  
 541-213-6257

## **APPENDIX J – ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION**

### **National Cave Rescue Commission**

#### **2022 Rocky Mountain Regional Report**

Winter Meeting 2023 – Submitted by Rene Ohms

##### **Recent Rescues**

- October 7-8, 2022 – Rescue in Mystic Cave, South Dakota. A group of cavers were pushing a tight lead at the end of Mystic Cave, trying to connect Mystic and Rushmore Caves. A 16-year-old member of the team fit through the constriction and around an S-bend, and was able to turn around in a small room beyond. He was unable to fit around the bend when he tried to exit, and was also unable to back up into the room where he had turned around. After several unsuccessful attempts to free him, one of the cavers left the cave to get help. 25 local cavers, Custer County Search and Rescue, Pennington County Search and Rescue, and Keystone Ambulance Service responded. Access to the patient and the work area was extremely limited due to the tight passages, and it took all night to enlarge the passage enough for the patient to get out. He was able to squeeze back through the bend with assistance at 5:45 a.m. After resting and eating, he was able to cave out under his own power.

##### **Regional Training**

- OCR: July 30-31, 2022 @ Mammoth Crystal Cave Preserve, South Dakota (audience = primarily cavers)
- OCR: November 5-6, 2022 @ Jewel Cave National Monument (audience = local SAR teams and NPS personnel)

##### **Local SAR Team Coordination**

.October 13, 2022: Mystic Cave Rescue After Action Review – an AAR was held to discuss the Mystic Cave Rescue, which brought together the cavers and agency personnel who had responded to the incident. This was a good opportunity to identify needs for a more clear cave rescue response framework in the Black Hills and begin working together more closely.

# **APPENDIX K – SOUTHCENTRAL REGION**

## **National Cave Rescue Commission**

### **South-Central Regional Report**

#### **Winter Meeting 2023**

DJ Walker

#### **Recent Events/Activities**

- Organized and registered students for our 2023 Regional Seminar. Classes filled in 1.5-minutes with a very long waitlist.
  - Something I did this year was reserve a small number of slots in each class for a lottery. This worked really well. SE-Region also did this for their SPAR.
- I still chair the Instructor Development Committee, but the committee has taken no action. I would like to explore passing this position to someone else. Scott McCray had expressed interest in participating, but I have not talked to him about Chairing.
- We assembled “Squad Kits” for the regional seminar to help with logistics management and equipment deployment.
- Interacted with several IQ candidates as they prepared their packets. I want to express gratitude to Mel for an outstanding job with feedback after the process!
- Conducted an OCR in West Texas in the Fall.

#### **Plans**

- Continue to grow our SC-Region Instructor Cadre.
- Succession planning for the SC-Region BORC Member position.
- The enclosed trailer our equipment is stored is privately owned and is “falling apart”. We will be exploring storage/trailer options over the next 1-2 years.
- Tentative dates for 2024 SC Regional are being worked on. Will seek approval soon.
- We hope to conduct an OCR in West Texas.

## APPENDIX L – SOUTHEASTERN REGION

# **2022 Southeastern Regional NCRC Report**

January 16, 2023

### **2022 Rescues:**

- January - Kenna Pit, Huntsville Cave Rescue Unit, Stranded climber on rope.
- February- Tumbling Rock, HCRU, CHCRS, caver with broken ankle near Christmas tree formation.
- March – Chattanooga Caverns, CHCRS, CFD, over due cavers, search.
- July – Hughes Cave, HCRU, over due cavers, search.
- October – CHCRS assisted Childersburg Rescue Squad, searching random caves

### **Trainings:**

- No in person NCRC trainings were conducted in the region 2022.
- Walker Co. Cave/Cliff, CHCRS Cave/Cliff, HCRU, Knox Co. trained together at Ulla cave.
- Cumberland Caverns MA training - CHCRS, Knox Co., HCRU, Walker Co. Cave/Cliff, AMRT, Warren Co. Rescue, McMinnville FD.
- CHCRS hosted MA training @ Snail Shell Cave with Williamson Co. FD and TFACA.

### **Rescue Preparedness:**

- The gear cache is located at Chattanooga/ Hamilton County Rescue Headquarters in Chattanooga, TN. and easily accessible.

### **Outreach:**

- Made contact with a few cave rescue teams in the region to build relationship and provide information of NCRC resources.
- Updated social media outlets with publications of NCRC updates and opportunities.

### **Future Plans:**

- Host a modular level 1 class in Chattanooga, TN area.
- Complete a thorough inspection of the gear cache.
- SPAR class scheduled for March
- Presentations to Grottos, groups, or organizations when requested.
- Create a common database for Southeastern Rescue teams to report cave rescue incidents.

**Needs:**

- More up to date equipment in the gear cache for larger class offerings.
- More SPAR instructors in the region.

**Appointees:**

- Tim White – Treasurer
- Ben Schweighart – Equipment Manager
- Kyle Gochenour – Scholarship Judge

## APPENDIX M – SOUTHWESTERN REGION

### 2022 Southwestern Region NCRC Report

February 25, 2022

#### 2022 Rescues

- 6/18/22 - Peppersauce Cave.
  - Page went out: “17yo male stuck in rabbit hole. Pinal County Sheriff has requested assist from SMEs. Interface with Pinal on Arrival. Set up entrance control ASAP and offer to be a runner to get more info.”
  - Follow up info: Oracle Fire went into the cave, went back to the ladder, subject at bottom, had fallen and passed out. Was asked to “climb up to us” - turns out he had a tension pneumothorax, broken ribs, broken collarbone. SMEs were turned around before getting there, follow up with Oracle Fire and more training is pending.
- 8/31/22 - Lava River Cave - no details, ankle injury, Coconino SAR responded
- 10/25/22 - Grand Canyon Caverns - Elevator malfunction; eventually the five trapped people were hauled out the elevator shaft.

#### Progress

##### Trainings

- No in-person official NCRC trainings in 2022 in the region.

##### Rescue Preparedness

- Cave Subject Matter Expert program continues for Arizona cavers who have skills to navigate for AHJ personnel in caves
- Awareness-level trainings for Southern Arizona Rescue Association and Central Arizona Mountain Rescue Association (not NCRC).
- Migrated AlertSense paging system to Konexus/Everbridge system with Pima County (AZ).

##### Outreach

- Planned presentation at 2023 AZ SAR conference on planning for low-probability high consequence events.

##### Plans

- Roswell, NM OCR (permits in progress)
  - March 2023 (TBD)
- Specialty awareness training for agencies when requested (usually one evening and one day, not official NCRC training)
  - Southern Arizona Rescue Association/Cave SMEs: June 2023
  - Border Patrol Search, Trauma, and Rescue (BORSTAR): March 2023
- 
- Run enough trainings to be able to offer annual scholarships to supplement national scholarships for L1 attendees
- Improve accident/incident reporting across the region to the ACA or at least to the RC to submit to ACA
- Submitted request for rescue equipment to NSS (via National Coordinator) to update ropes and webbing in SWR gear cache.

##### Problems

- COVID-19
- WNS policies for clean/dedicated non-WNS gear prevents usages of some caves in Arizona and New Mexico
- Cave access for rescue classes is difficult in Arizona due to no response at Forest Service level
- Financial setup for the SWR is challenging to navigate.

## APPENDIX N – WESTERN REGION

### 2022 Western Region NCRC Report

#### Recent underground rescues

- Well recovery performed by water company
- San Diego Dog rescue performed by fire
- Mule rescue in the Mojave by local LEO/Fire

#### Incidents

- Training incident at an OCR where a student fell and was injured

#### Progress

##### Events

- OCR – Hawaii
- OCR – Baker, NV
- Monthly region meetings

##### Rescue Preparedness

- Networking with SBSAR Cave Team and other teams
- MRA + NPS MOU is great news
- 

##### Outreach

- Local SAR groups
- Website updates
- Ad hoc training with local grottos and previous students
- Local Grottos / Lots of interest

#### Plans

##### Events

- SPAR Southern Nevada
- Special Blasting class with SBSAR Cave team
- Modular L1, Fresno

##### Cache

- Ropes will need refreshed in not too long
- Organize and build gear cache for Hawaii
- Need to keep up on trailer maintenance and cleaning

#### Problems

- COVID-19
- 2023 OCR plans fell through with SEKI (due to cave access)
- 2022 LABE plans fell through (needed more instructor interest)
- Could use more instructors
- Financial stuff

#### Appointees

- Gear Cache – John Bowling
- 5 sub-region coordinators

#### Instructor support for other regions

- Texas and Nationals

# ECRA 2022 Trip Report

### Executive Summary

The annual European Cave Rescue Association conference was held in Rudice in the Czech Republic from 30 SEP – 1 OCT. Michael Raymond, Mark Dickey, Jessica Van Ord, and Emilie Hollingsworth from the U.S.A. attended. The conference provided a good chance to renew relationships and talk about cave rescue techniques and experiences. The only organizational development of note is that with Covid winding down, ECRA decided to start charging dues again for non-voting members; NCRC will need to pay 50 Euros per year, which I believe to be well worthwhile.

### Lessons Learned

The following bulleted list contains the many new piece of knowledge that I picked up at the conference. It also contains comments on ECRA.

- Israel and a second Spanish cave rescue organization joined ECRA.
- ECRA doesn't have a location yet for the 2023 conference.
- There was a continued push at the conference to get the EU to formally recognize ECRA. In the last few years there have been problems with rescue teams & individuals traveling uninvited to other countries and trying to participate in rescues, which ends up causing all sorts of political problems.
- An abrasion study found that tubular webbing abrades much faster than rope. We use webbing because it's cheap to replace, but during an actual rescue we should use rope instead.
- The Swiss report that they keep all the medical supplies in white caving bags so they're easily distinguishable. This helps make sure the bag(s) stay near the patient. Multiple groups reported that color-coded caving bags make it easier to find needed material.
- Rescue teams are now using hand held ultrasounds in caves. They can be bought for ~\$3k. They're used to help find veins and check on lung status.
- The Czechs report that some of their caves have layers of iron ore between the cave and the surface. This prevents the use of cave radios.
- It appears that local anesthesia is now being used to numb specific arms or legs during rescues. This makes it easier to get the patient out of the cave, including because fewer sedatives need to be used. It also reduces the incidence of breathing problems associated with the sedatives.
- A Swiss study shows that the average age of injured cavers is going up. The incidents per 100k hours of doing an activity remains very low though, with 5 hours for caving or driving, 18 for mountain biking, 78 for skiing, and 200 for soccer.
- A study of toxic fumes in caves after blasting found that CO can remain stable for many weeks. As a rule of thumb, if the CO level is low, then there are unlikely to be high levels of other gasses associated with blasting. The most successful solution for removing CO is to vacuum it out of the cave. Caving lights are not properly insulated in order to prevent sparks in explosive gas environments.
- During a rescue that uses blasting, be sure to use the freshest possible explosives. This will help reduce the amounts of toxic gasses produced.
- In the diving section, everyone was adamant that rebreathers not be used while performing strenuous work, like swimming with patients. This is to prevent over breathing the rebreathers and causing CO2 problems.
- The Slovenians have been practicing using an underwater scooter to tow a patient. This keeps the divers from having to do heavy work, and so they can use rebreathers. A rope from the DPV to the patient's litter is tied to



the litter's carabiner with a Munter hitch being minded by one of the litter attendants. If there's a problem, the minder just releases the rope, and the DPV driver will sense the loss of the load, and stop.

- In 2021 a Swiss sump diver doing a climb past several sumps fell ~15M and soon died. The Swiss were able to do a recovery through the sumps to remove the body from the cave.
- For sea caves in volcanic areas, divers must be aware that some air bells will be full of toxic gasses
- Last year a Hungarian sump diver was prevented from swimming home when his bubbles caused a mud slide that blocked the 40M deep passage he was in. Once it was clear he was not returning, the cavers wanted to take the search for his body nice and slow. The government got involved though and pushed them very hard for a swift resolution.
- For the helicopter moving of scuba cylinders, air crews seem to prefer that cylinders be empty. They're OK with simultaneously moving a compressor to fill the cylinders on-site. The compressor should have a full gas tank in order to avoid dangerous gas fumes.
- Full Face Masks (FFMs) can be difficult to fit onto divers because we all have different shaped faces. It's recommended to put a latex hood onto the patient and then seal the FFM over it. The hood will help compensate for face-shape issues.
- The diving practice this year, and all the presentations, showed patients being moved face up. This is a big contrast to last year, and what I assumed was accepted practice, that while moving a patient face up makes it easier to check on them, it's physiologically worse than face down.
- The diving session has been poorly organized both years I've attended ECRA. I visited the medical session, and they had an agenda, different speakers, were taking minutes, and putting together a list of action items. For the diving session, I had no idea what we were doing and things kept changing. The ECRA divers do seem to try to get together once a year outside of the conference, but the value of the diving activities at the conference is pretty minimal.

### **Action Items**

- Dr Brendon Sloan from the UK is going to get me a copy of the plans for their new blanket system, which they demo'd at last year's conference

## APPENDIX O.2 INTERNATIONAL DELEGATE REPORT

### ICAR report

October 10-15 I attended the International Commission on Alpine Rescue (ICAR) as the NCRC delegate. I mostly attended the medical commission meeting. Below are my observations that might be interesting to NCRC.



Hypothermia Day in Lausanne. Lots of discussion on resuscitation from avalanche. Most will die of asphyxia in the first hour, but a small percentage can breathe and their cardiac arrest comes from hypothermia. Those have been resuscitated neurologically intact. Critical though to get to a facility doing extracorporeal oxygenation of some sort. And only works if can do CPR the whole time which pretty much requires mechanical CPR machine. Intermittent CPR works for the very hypothermic (<math><20^{\circ}\text{C}</math>). This might have some implications in extreme cases of in-cave hypothermia. If cardiac arrest comes from hypothermia, then CPR might be indicated if we can manage to extract the person while doing CPR. I don't think this affects our curriculum at all but we always get the CPR question from students and this gives a more informed answer.

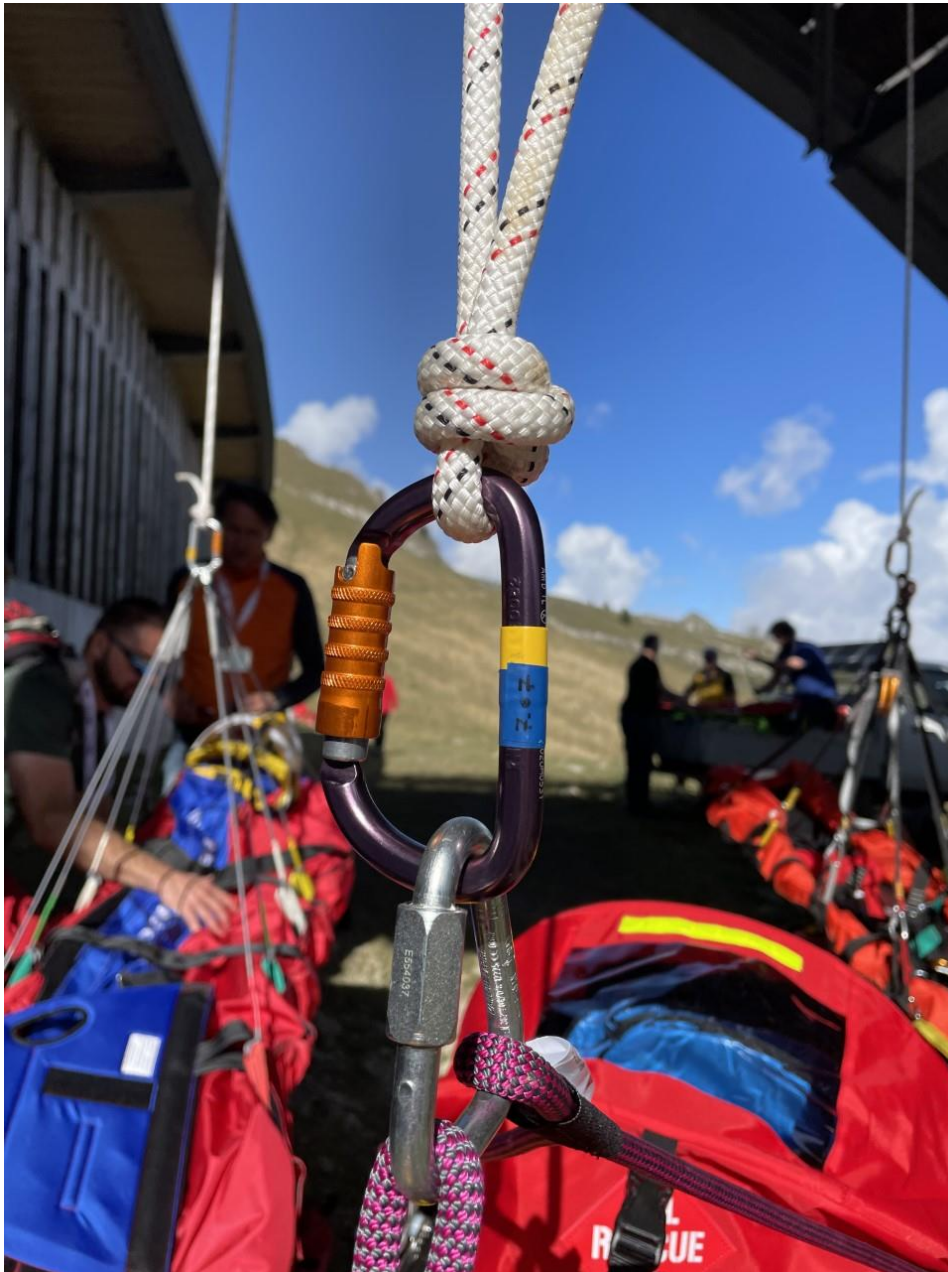
Practical day. 8 stations

Anti-spin product by Vita Aerospace. Product to strap under a litter to prevent spin. Uses 4 fans with a gyroscope. Cancels spin of a litter being hoisted. Can also be directed by Bluetooth to hold at a particular angle to line up with the helicopter. Worked quite well in the demonstration. Near immediate stop of spin. Totally inapplicable for NCRC but fun to watch. For only \$250,000 we could have one too.

Litter petting zoo. Four different litters, all aimed at being hoisted by helicopter (the European way of doing everything). None particularly useful for us, though I did admire the one with integrated vacuum splint. I liked the Kong tag line. 100 meter long with last 10 meters a different color, 50# auto-release built in, snap release the medic can pull on to drop the line back down. Looked like a good product. The fun thing was that each litter now comes with a fin that can be manipulated by a litter attendant to control spin as well. Much less than \$250,000. Again, not too applicable to us.

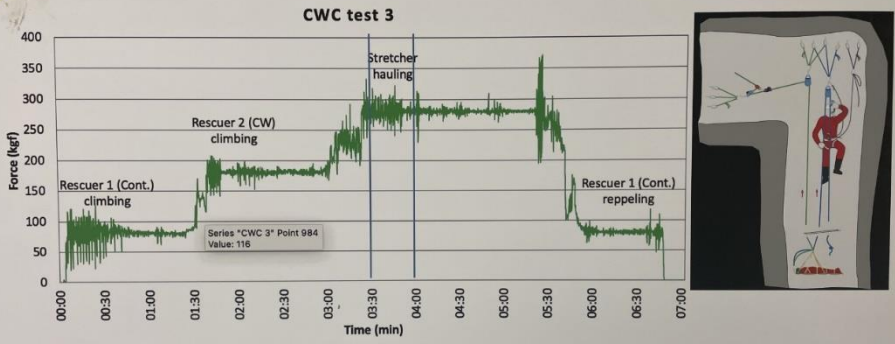


I noticed that all the attachments for the litters at the zoo were scaffold knots. This makes for a much more compact attachment which is attractive to our uses. I asked the Swiss running that site and they said that was their standard now. We might want to play with these.



Counterweight hauls. This was labeled as a demonstration by ECRA. Demonstration of three different counterweight hauls. They did not do a rappelling counterbalance. They did present some data on anchor forces with these techniques.

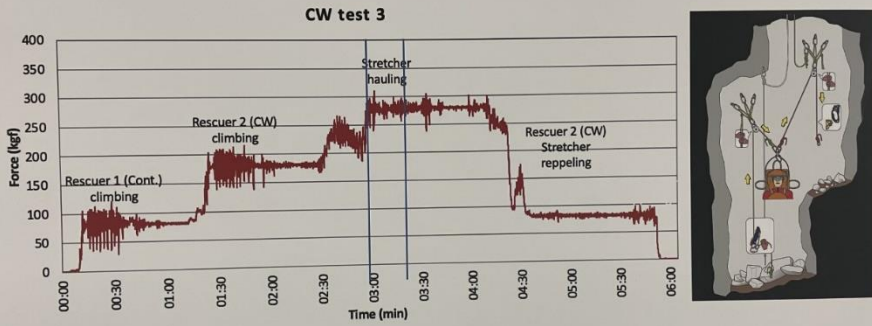
## Counterweight with 5m cow-tail



Darko Bakšić<sup>1</sup>, Danijel Frleta<sup>1</sup>, Christian Sutter<sup>2</sup>, Andy Scheurer<sup>2,3</sup>, Dinko Novosel<sup>1,3</sup>  
<sup>1</sup> Hrvatska Gorska Služba Spašavanja  
<sup>2</sup> Speleo-secours Suisse  
<sup>3</sup> European Cave Rescue Association

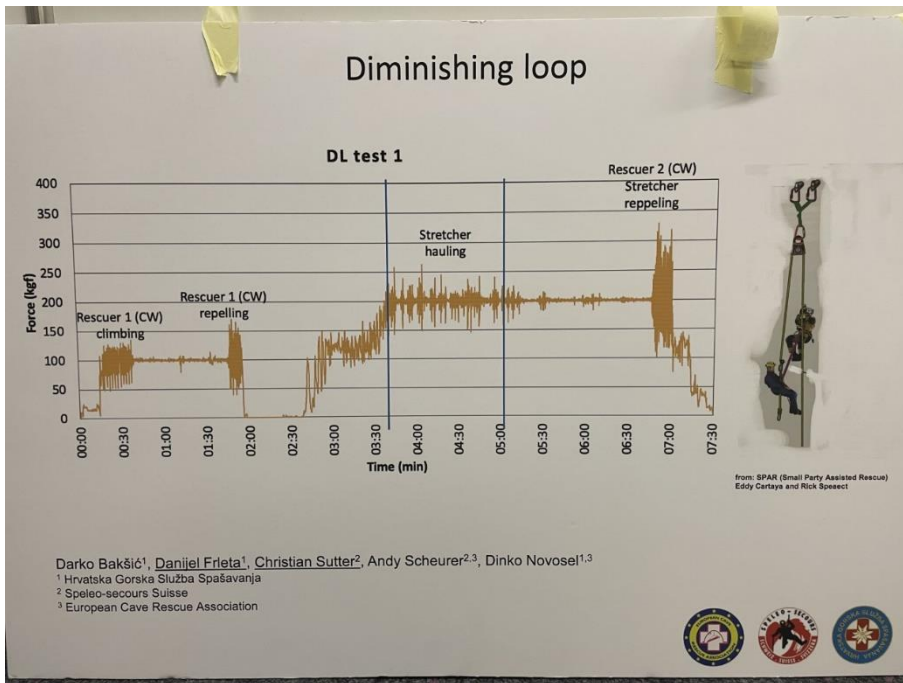


## Counterweight with controller



Darko Bakšić<sup>1</sup>, Danijel Frleta<sup>1</sup>, Christian Sutter<sup>2</sup>, Andy Scheurer<sup>2,3</sup>, Dinko Novosel<sup>1,3</sup>  
<sup>1</sup> Hrvatska Gorska Služba Spašavanja  
<sup>2</sup> Speleo-secours Suisse  
<sup>3</sup> European Cave Rescue Association





I did chat with them about ECRA (Swiss and Slovenian and German I think). They don't see a competition between ICAR and ECRA. They do see ECRA as European and have little interest in expanding it to be international. This was largely related to thinking it would not be possible to work together if there started to be meetings on different continents (financial issue). A lot of their motivation to have an association is to work out mutual aid concerns regionally. At Zakopane, Poland the hosting organization, TOPR, put on a cave rescue thing for interested persons attended by Eddy and I and Teton County SAR and the French, Spanish, and Romanians. Apparently one rescue group is part of ECRA but TOPR is not and holding their event at ICAR had some political motivation. Perhaps meaningful to the Europeans but it escaped me at the time.

Cave rescue is handled in different ways in Europe. A lot of times cave rescue is the responsibility of mountain rescue teams which are likely to be professional (the French model) but other countries have rosters of trained volunteers who would be called to do the grunt work of cave rescue while a professional mountain rescue team handled overhead (the Swiss model).

Prioritization. Need to alternate between focused/unfocused (small picture/big picture). Listen to your colleagues. Listen to your gut. Set achievable goals (we've preached this for decades now).

Some countries charge for rescue, others don't. Switzerland charges for just about anything, but it's a service likely covered by your homeowner's insurance, but if it doesn't, you'll get a bill. Outdoors people hedge their bets by paying for a subscription to the local helicopter service. And apparently the local fire departments work on the same model. You will get a bill if your house catches on fire and they show up. Not applicable to us as mainly volunteers but interesting to note.

Report by a member of the CNSAS, the Italian cave rescue group. They are a volunteer group with government backing for their activities. This was a 20 year retrospective on RESCUER injuries while training or on missions. He reports 783 injuries from 1999 to 2019.

96% trauma  
 4% medical/environmental  
 (2% death)

Even spread on season. More in Alps as one might expect.

44% "high energy" falls (I interpret as fall from height)

28% "low energy" falls

39% lower extremity

19% upper extremity

9% head/neck

which matches US caver data close enough. They did not include any data on PTSD but the speaker says it definitely happens

Further analysis of deaths 1954 to 2022

25 deaths, 22 in rescues, 3 in training

Most are single in category with things like gas, hypothermia, hit by rock, fell on glacier. Eight were helicopter related, 7 in two crashes (hit wires, whiteout) and one fell from a broken winch.

One post-hoc not counted in the 25 but felt to be a suicide related to service in rescue.

If I read it right (I don't read Italian very well) they have about 7000 people on their whole country call out list (seem. This seemed high. I tried to verify with the speaker who confirmed the number but I still suspect a miscommunication. The Swiss use about 250 volunteers for their country's needs. The Italian government is paying \$1,600,000 a year in insurance for them. They also are now requiring physicals for anyone that is part of the network.

What do I take from this?

They operate in more difficult above ground terrain than we do. Their underground injury profiles are similar to ours, setting aside that it is rescuer v rescuee. I'll walk up to the cave myself, thank you very much. Gee it would be nice to have workers' comp insurance through the government. Our curriculum is pretty reasonable and safe. We need to continue to prioritize mental health aspects of rescue.

Presentation on mental health of rescuers. Psychological first aid is preferred approach in field for rescuees and rescuers. Team and individual resilience based on 4 anchors: Recognizing stress in ourselves, Team culture, treating stress in the field (psychological first aid), and preparing for major incidents (have resources available when bad things happen). Our current curriculum currently covers 2 of the 4 anchors.

**APPENDIX P SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT**

To: NCRC BORC

From: Marty Reames, NCRC Scholarship Chair

Date: February 20th, 2023

Subject: 2023 Report on NCRC Scholarship Program

This document is the 2023 annual report to the BORC on NCRC’s Scholarship program. The funds are in an endowment fund managed by the NSS. At the beginning of each fiscal year for the NSS, April 1st, the amount of money available for NCRC scholarships will be determined. This amount will vary from year to year based on market conditions and to ensure the principal of the fund is not touched.

Scholarships awarded

For the 2022-2023 NSS fiscal year, \$8,854 has been available for the NCRC Scholarship fund. Per the 2022 NCRC Scholarships BORC Report, half of the funds were allocated to the National training and half of the funds were available for Regional week-long.

<b>NCRC Scholarship Funds Available</b>			
<b>NSS Fiscal Year</b>	<b>National Training</b>	<b>Regional Week-long</b>	<b>Total Scholarship Funds available</b>
2019-2020	\$1,125	\$375	\$1,500
2020-2021	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$6,000
2021-2022	\$4,250	\$4,250	\$8,500
2022-2023	\$4,427	\$4,427	\$8,854



The following table shows the scholarships **awarded** for the 2022-2023 NSS Fiscal year.

<b>NCRC Scholarship Funds Awarded</b>				
<b>Training</b>	<b>Total Amount Available</b>	<b>Total Amount Awarded</b>	<b># of Scholarships Awarded</b>	<b>Amount per scholarship</b>
Nationals in Virginia	\$4,427	\$2,188	7	\$312.50
SPAR in New York	\$1,240	\$1,860	6	\$310
Used from 2020 & 2021 awards (delayed due to covid)		\$1,460		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$5,667</b>	<b>\$5,508</b>	<b>13</b>	

For the National training in VA, all seven applicants who turned in a completed application received scholarships. There were two applicants who did not turn in completed applications.

For the SPAR class in New York in May 2022, only four scholarships were requested for the training. However, as there were six applicants and as there was a surplus of funds available in the scholarship fund, the scholarship committee decided unanimously to award two additional scholarships, providing funds to everyone who completed an application.

Scholarship judges for 2023

For the 2022 calendar year the following individuals served on the NCRC Scholarship committee:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Region represented</b>
Andy Armstrong	Rocky Mountain Region
Ron Davis	Western Region
Tony Smith	Eastern
Carrey Bull	South Central
Scott Stepenuck	Northeastern

Everyone on the committee has been very helpful and responsive; thank you for your time.

Each year, representation will first be requested by a couple of regions who did not have representation during the previous year and then additional spots will be filled by scholarship judges who are willing to serve an additional year. For the 2023 calendar year, the following individuals have volunteered to serve on the NCRC Scholarship Committee:

Name	Region represented
Kyle Gochenour	Southeastern
Ron Davis	Western
Tony Smith	Eastern
Carrey Bull	South Central
Scott Stepenuck	Northeastern

Scholarship plans for NSS 2023-2024 Fiscal Year

Per the October 24th, 2022 BORC meeting, \$9,000 is to be used for National scholarships, even if doing so means that we need to use NCRC General Funds to cover some of the scholarships. At the time of writing this report, 16 applicants have requested funds for the National training. Provided the scholarship committee elects to award a full scholarship to each applicant (to be determined by mid-March), the amount of funds used would be \$8,800. Given that we'll likely receive a similar amount of funds from the NSS endowment fund for NCRC scholarships for the NSS 2023-2024 fiscal year, Nationals would use up the entire amount of scholarship funds available, leaving no funds for Regional training. **Should NCRC General Funds be used for part of the scholarships to Nationals to ensure scholarships are available for Regional events?**

Scholarships for Regional events are available upon request. See attachment A for the request format. Please send the request as far in advance as possible to ensure there is enough time for the Scholarship committee to review the availability of funds, to provide sufficient time for students to apply, and to allow the Scholarship committee time to review the applications.

Feel free to contact me at any time with questions or comments.

Thank you,  
Marty Reames  
NCRC Scholarship Chair  
NSS #53414  
[scholarships@ncrc.info](mailto:scholarships@ncrc.info)  
719-357-9261 (Google Voice)

## Attachment A

### NCRC Regional Training Request

Thank you for your interest to have NCRC Scholarships available for your upcoming regional training. The NCRC Scholarship program has funds available to provide scholarships for the annual Nationals training as well as for a handful of week-long regional training classes each year. To request scholarships for a regional training, email the following information to: [scholarships@ncrc.info](mailto:scholarships@ncrc.info)

Has the training been approved by the National Training Coordinator?

What are the dates of the training?

Where will the training be held?

Which level(s) will be offered?

What is the cost?

What is the maximum number of students for the training?

How many scholarships would you like to request?

How much money would you like to offer per scholarship (please note that scholarships can only go up to half of the cost of the student's registration)?

Once the information is sent, please allow a couple of weeks for the information to be disseminated among the NCRC Scholarship committee for discussion. Several factors need to be considered including the amount of money available for the fiscal year and other regional trainings.

Thanks,  
Marty Reames  
NCRC Scholarship Chair

## APPENDIX Q – DATABASE COORDINATOR REPORT

### Database Coordinator Report for 2023

Database Coordinator: Greg D. Moore

Submitted: 2023-01-23

#### Overview

An update on student access to the database: After I update the database after an event, I tend to send an semi-automated email to students showing them how to access their student records. More are taking advantage of this. We continue to be plagued by missing data, especially from early courses. There's not much that can be done about this.

I have sent an updated list of instructors to Mel for review. By the time of the BORC meeting this list is expected to be approved and will be on the website.

#### Classes Taught Last Year

The database shows 8 classes were taught last year: (up from 5 the previous year)

- 2 OCRs
- 1 National
- 2 other
- 1 SPR

#### Individual Breakdown

- Did not obtain, need to find the query.

#### Student Breakdown

- DNC - 3
- Level 1 students – 47
- Level 2 students – 25
- Level 3 Students – 12
- IQ students – 6
- TOFE Students – 0
- OCR students - 33
- SPR students – 15
- ICEE students – 0
- Other – 24
- Specialists - 18
- Staff – 7
- Instructors 55

## Database contains

- 7828 individuals. Some go as far back as the first National taught (an increase of 110 from the previous year)
- 417 total courses taught (we have data for 367) – also note some courses have been recategorized as data has been corrected.)
  - 42 Nationals
  - 94 Regionals
  - 231 OCRs
  - 28 SPR
  - 15 “Other”
  - 4 ICEE

## Class Totals Over Years

(Note this is total spots filled not distinct students)

- DNC – 49
- Level 1 – 2886
- Level 2 – 1085
- Level 3 – 524
- IQ – 198
- TOFE – 86
- OCR – 4511
- SPR – 371
- SPR-X – 12
- ICEE – 27
- Other - 63

## Other Updates

Thanks to efforts by Victoria Airey, some small errors in class form were corrected. New one is version 1.3. Please make sure to use that one.

## Future plans

- Allow more self-service options
  - Primary Goal – grant Training Coordinator ability to update instructor information
  - Secondary Goal – grant regional coordinators ability to upload their own student lists (this will require that they fill out the most recent forms 100% correctly)
- Possible integration with RegFox
- Try to track down more incomplete data

## Reminders

For all courses except National, please make sure to use spreadsheet available **on main NCRC website**. This is part of the required paperwork that should be submitted when a course is completed.

If you have questions about how to fill it in, please contact me. By using this, it becomes about a 15 minute process for me to be able to update the database.

Please do not add blank rows or additional columns. This can mess up the import. If you **MUST** add columns, add them to the far RIGHT.

NCRC # != NSS # when filling this out. If you don't know your NCRC number (and most don't) please leave it blank. Not all students have NSS Numbers, so we can't use that.

All BORC members should have a login, see me if you don't.

If you have course data that has not been submitted, please submit it to [paperwork@ncrc.info](mailto:paperwork@ncrc.info).

**THE NATIONAL CAVE RESCUE COMMISSION**  
**INTERNATIONAL INSTRUCTOR EXCHANGE PROGRAM**

---

**BORC Status Report: 01/25/2023**

---

**Committee Members:**

Mark Dickey	Chairperson	Appointed Volunteer
Gretchen Baker	Member	May 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2022 – May 14 <sup>th</sup> 2025
Rene Ohms	Member	May 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2022 – May 14 <sup>th</sup> 2025
Eddy Cartaya	Member	Volunteer

---

**Exchange Organizations:**

Hungarian Caving Instructor Committee (HCIC)	Established 2015	6 Exchanges
--	------------------	-------------

---

**Committee and Program Activity/Actions:**  
(since the last report)

05/18/2022: Gretchen Baker and Rene Ohms attended the HCIC Technical 2 held from May 11<sup>th</sup> through May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

11/22/2022: The NCRC's 2023 Weeklong Seminar was announced to exchange organization.

01/19/2023: The Hungarian Caving Instructor Committee has announced the availability of the 2023 Technical 2 course, held April 29<sup>th</sup> – May 7<sup>th</sup>.

---

**Completed Instructor Exchanges:**

HCIC Technical 2 Szögliget, Hungary	May 11 - 18, 2019
Gretchen Baker attended	
Rene Ohms attended	

## Available Instructor Exchanges:

HCIC Technical 2 in Szögliget, Hungary

April 29 – May 7, 2023

D.J. Walker and Russel McCullar unable to attend. Marty Reames notified.

NCRC National Weeklong in Mentone, Alabama

May 12 – 20, 2023

---

## Approved NCRC Exchange Instructor Waitlist:

D.J. Walker approved on 02/22/2019 (pending for the 2023 HCIC T2 course)

Russell (James) McCullar approved on 02/22/2019 (pending for the 2023 HCIC T2 course)

Marty Reames approved on 03/14/2019 (pending for the 2024 HCIC T2 course)

---

## Instructor Exchange Historical Report:

Name	Exchange	Course	Date	Report Submitted
Mark Dickey	1st Exchange	HCIC Technical 2	Sep 19-27, 2015	Yes
Dénes Nagy	2nd Exchange	NCRC Level 2/3	May 7-14, 2016	Yes
Andy Armstrong	3rd Exchange	HCIC Technical 2	Apr 6-15, 2018	Yes
Bonny Armstrong	3rd Exchange	HCIC Technical 2	Apr 6-15, 2018	
Carlos Laó	3rd Exchange	HCIC Technical 2	Apr 6-15, 2018	
András Hegedűs	4th Exchange	NCRC Level 2	May 12-19, 2018	Yes
Eszter Varga	4th Exchange	NCRC SPAR-X	May 12-19, 2018	
Mark Dickey	Independent	HCIC Technical 2	Apr 27-4, 2019	N/A
Jessica Van Ord	Independent	HCIC Technical 2	Apr 27-4, 2019	N/A
Tamás Németh	5th Exchange	NCRC Level 2	Apr 10-5, 2019	Yes
András Németh	5th Exchange	NCRC Level 2	Apr 10-5, 2019	
Gretchen Baker	6 <sup>th</sup> Exchange	HCIC Technical 2	May 11-18, 2022	Yes
Rene Ohms	6 <sup>th</sup> Exchange	HCIC Technical 2	May 11-18, 2022	

---

## Appendix Index:

Appendix A 2022 NCRC Instructor Exchange Report (6<sup>th</sup> Instructor Exchange) 7 pages

# Hungary 2022 International Exchange Report

Gretchen Baker and Rene Ohms

## Background

The first Hungarian-US NCRC International Exchange occurred in 2015. Past trip reports can be found at: [International Instructor Exchange Program - Google Drive](#) (accessible to current NCRC instructors). The 2015 report by Mark Dickey gives an excellent overview of how the Hungarian cave training system is set up, with Basic Training, Technical 1, Technical 2, Trip Leader, and Expedition Leader training. In addition, more information about their training programs can be found on the Hungarian cave training website: <http://oktatas.barlang.hu/>

Rene Ohms and Gretchen Baker indicated interest in participating in the Hungarian-US Exchange in February 2019. It worked out for us to participate in 2022. Prior to arriving, we talked with Mark Dickey and Dénes Akos Nagy to prepare for the trip.

## Quick Itinerary

**4 May 2022:** Rene and Gretchen arranged to arrive on the same flight on May 4th. We missed our connecting flight and arrived later that day. Judit Nagy picked us up from the airport and took us to her and Dénes' new house north of Budapest, and Juju brought dinner over.

**05 May 2022:** Sight-seeing day began with sleeping in and trying to get adjusted to jet lag. Then Gretchen lost her phone/wallet, which was fortunately recovered later that day at the local police station. We learned how to navigate the local train system into Budapest (quite easy, but a suburban and Budapest train ticket are both required, which we didn't figure out at first). We went to Szemo-Hegy Mountain Cave, where Juju got us on the last tour of the day (while others were loading ropes for the T2 course). It was interesting seeing how thermal waters had created the cave and how the cave had been developed for tourism during the Russian occupation (with corresponding ugly cement "stabilizers" in the cave). There are hundreds of caves under the city of Budapest! Thermal waters still provide for many hot baths, just at a lower elevation.

We set off for Szogliget, our base camp for the class, about 8 pm, stopping on the way at a big grocery store to get food for the week. Prices were cheap by US standards, and we stocked up on lunch food and snacks. We arrived about 11:30 pm in Szogliget and set up a huge borrowed tent behind the grotto building. This tent gave us plenty of room to both sleep and store our luggage.





Photo: Szogliget

**07 May 2022, Saturday:** Classroom day was held at the new cave rescue building, just down the street. Dénes and Panni gave us some English-only lectures and we also attended some lectures in both Hungarian and English.

**08 May 2022, Sunday:** Field Day. Rene went to the cliffs located near Aggtelek. Gretchen went up the mountain to small caves. It's about a two-hour hike up the mountain through some of the most beautiful forest. At breaks in the hike we practiced knots.

**09 May 2022, Monday:** Field Day. Gretchen went to the cliffs, Rene went up the mountain to small caves.

**10 May 2022, Tuesday:** Field Day. Everyone went up the mountain to deeper caves, Rene to Alma'si, Gretchen to Cave of the Owls. We learned more about local geology on the hike up.

**11 May 2022, Wednesday:** Quarry Day. Close to Szogliget we rotated through stations on pickoffs, breaking into a loaded line (we were shown Spanish pendulum technique with

carabiners (microTraxion makes it much easier, by the way), and then a convert to lower method with a haul), and a fake highline station. We also took breaks for drop tests. The drop tests were conducted on the cliff by dropping a heavy weight onto the load. This was a very chill day and allowed some rest from hiking up the mountain.



Photo: Two of the caves that were used for the course.

**12 May 2022, Thursday:** Gretchen to Slovakia Cave, Rene to Cliffs. Driving into Slovakia was like driving into another US state, no border patrol, just a sign. We met up with the Slovakian cave representative to get the permit and drove into Kras National Park. It was gorgeous.

**13 May 2023, Friday:** Rene to Slovakia Cave, Gretchen to Vecchem Cave. We rigged Vecchem Cave "to 95%," a term they use saying it's really good, good enough for beginners, who were going to come the next day. We descended to 200m hall (including some old metal ladders that were installed when they were first exploring the cave—quite a feat to maneuver them in!). I was impressed that all six of us could get out 200m in less than two hours.

**14 May 2022, Saturday:** Cliffs, Baradla Cave, Radjacko Cave. While others had some final checkoffs to do, Rene and I were treated to a tour of beautiful Baradla Cave in Aggtelek. This is a tourist cave, and has a river like Mammoth and other features that reminded me more of Carlsbad. It was trippy seeing so much in just one cave, and we only saw a tiny part, including the huge hall where they have orchestras play, and lots of high leads with ropes rigged. A through trip can be done in this cave from the main entrance to another tourist entrance, but we didn't have the proper permission for that. So instead we went to Radjacko Cave, which was not

very far away and had been developed into a tourist cave, but was not being used as such due to a lack of staff. We entered through a mine and then went up and down lots of steep stairs to see a beautiful cave with a diving lead.

**15 May 2022, Sunday:** We had an invite to go with the beginners to Vecchem Cave. Instead we chose to get cleaned up and went with Tamas back to Budapest and went to a thermal bath.

**16 May 2022, Monday:** Sightseeing day. Juju was going to show us around, but he got Covid, so we went on our own to Buda Castle, St. Stephens Basilica (wow, very touristy on that side of the river!), and river cruise. There is so much to see in Budapest that we only brushed the surface. Then took taxi to hotel near airport for early flight.

**17 May 2022, Tuesday:** 6:35 am flight out of Budapest, flights home went smoothly.



Photo: View of Parliament Building during boat tour on the Danube - highly recommended!

## Take aways

*Hungarian Language.* You don't need to know much. Thank you (Koszonom), cheers (Egeszegedre), cave (Barlang), beer (sor), wine (bor), and Hungary (Magyar) take care of most of it. Hungarian is generally only spoken in Hungary and by Hungarians. All the countries that surround Hungary have a different language. English is used by all to some extent, although some Hungarians are hesitant to use it, even though they are so much more proficient in it than we are in Hungarian.

*Cave/Rescue Safety.* Different things are stressed, generally due to the techniques used.

Approach Lines were highly stressed, and the way to enter the "safety zone" to rig the pit. They almost never just rig a tree and use a rope pad, it's a tree to bolts or natural anchors so the rope won't touch the wall.

Girth hitches and wrap 1 pull 1 with slings or half-inch webbing is common, even for traverse lines that will see a lot more forces. We didn't talk about forces the entire week.

Helmets during vertical practice in trees are optional, alcohol policy vastly different, gloves not required. But you better use the correct type of hanger 😊

No safety for rappel tests.

*Alpine SRT.* Gretchen was already fairly familiar with this due to alpine caves in the West, but rigging rebelays was newer for Rene. We got lots of practice getting rebelay loops just the right length and installing hangers (many are removed each trip, and in some caves the bolts are also removed with the hangers). The bolts are usually about 1 inch long. Rene also got some good practice with rigging traverses.

*Rigging/Rescue.* The course is more of a rigging course than a rescue techniques course. You'll learn a lot about European rigging! For rescue techniques, you will do a few different types of unconscious patient pickoffs. The direct haul technique is their go-to. During the field day at the quarry, you'll also haul a patient up to you (presuming you are at an anchor). "What happens next" (after either doing a pickoff or hauling a patient up to you) won't be covered.

*Magical forest.* It's about a 2-hour hike up to the vertical caves. It's not super steep or high elevation, but you'll be carrying a 40-50 pound pack, so you need to be in good shape. There are stops for knot practice (small bights!), geology lessons, and eating wild sorrel. The forest is so beautiful, and we didn't see anyone else hiking.

*Szogliget.* Charming little town. We enjoyed some walks around it. The grocery store next to the rescue hut is well stocked. Pub is fun. Frequent buses coming and going.

*Wifi.* Our phones didn't work in Hungary. We were really grateful for wifi and Dénes' and Judit's house and hotspots from Dénes, other students, and a phone that Juju loaned us. We realized partway through that we were going through data fast because our phones were backing up our

photos. We turned that off until we got back to regular wifi. We didn't really need internet while in Szogliget, but it was nice to have it so we could make phone calls home. WhatsApp is very useful. You can make phone calls with it and also send full size photos and videos. Getting around Budapest and navigating the train system would have been very difficult without data. Although Juju was very kind and loaned us a phone that had data, it's a good idea to come prepared with an international plan of some kind.

*Money.* Even though Hungary is part of the EU, they don't use Euros, but instead Forints. Changing \$20-\$40 at the airport will give you enough small bills for little things, otherwise use a debit or credit card. Most businesses prefer the kind that you tap (but can accept a chip card if needed). Exchange your money at the airport when you arrive; there was not an opportunity to stop and do it anywhere else during the trip. The exchange rate was something like 380 forints to \$1, which made for challenging conversions. Most everything was quite a bit cheaper than in the US, so we just got what we wanted and would fit in our bags.

*Shopping.* We had fun going to Decathlon in Budapest (they have stores all over) and buying some Forclaz pants for about \$35. SPAR is a grocery store and we had to get a photo there. Paprika is a Hungarian product and easy to buy as souvenirs.

*Food.* Breakfast was often bread with cheese and meat. We packed our own lunches with what we'd bought at the grocery store on the way to Szogliget. If you end up short on anything, the small grocery store next to the caver hut has a decent selection. Dinners were usually prepared for us and were tasty with meat (often chicken) and a carb (rice or potatoes) and veggies mixed in. We enjoyed all the food. For a dinner we had to prepare ourselves on the second night in Szogliget, we picked duck that was extremely tasty. There is a fully stocked kitchen at the caver hut. Snack foods bought from the grocery or convenience store were quite similar to the US, although if you're fond of a particular kind of trail mix, take that. Although we arrived in Szogliget on Friday night, the provided meals didn't begin until Sunday night. We brought easy things like oatmeal packets and bananas for breakfast Saturday and Sunday morning.

*Drink.* For the first few days, coffee wasn't available at the caver hut. There might be some on one of the shelves in the kitchen when you arrive, but if you're the type that needs to have coffee every day you might want to buy some at the grocery store on the way to Szogliget. Instant coffee will be easiest; there wasn't a regular coffee maker or a french press. There was an espresso machine at the hut that everyone used after the first couple of days. Bottled water comes in 1.5 L bottles. There are many delicious beers and wines at the local pub. You can buy a drink there and bring it back to the hut, then return your glass later that night or the next day. The Hungarian drink is palinka, which is very strong. Expect to be offered many shots of palinka!

We found this a very valuable experience to learn more about how Europeans do vertical caving. While we expected their vertical gear to be identical, we found some variation. They can choose what kind of harness and chest harness they use as long as they are caver versions. Most use vertical rope for their long and short cowstails. Both big and small crolls are seen. We saw a variety of footloops. Everyone was using a Petzl Stop as their descent device.

We can't thank the Hungarians enough for this amazing opportunity. We appreciate them taking the time to instruct us (and translate for us; they helped us learn some new techniques and reinforce points that we might otherwise not spend much time with.

The caves are gorgeous, and the Hungarian cavers are fantastic!

We heartily recommend this exchange for NCRC instructors who would like to broaden their rigging skills and see how caving is done in a different part of the world.

## 2023-24 NCRC BUDGET

	<b>National</b>	
<b>Income</b>		
Merchandise Sales	0	
Donations & Sponsorships	50	
Interest Rec'd	0	
Seminar Income (regfox)	86000	includes books
Seminar Fees paid to National	4000	from regional training
Books	2300	small profit from book sales
Rescue Scholarship fund: NSS	9000	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>101350</b>	
<b>Expenses</b>		
Dues & Licenses		
Communications	250	Groups.io
Education & Training	2500	icar and ecra registrations
Equipment	9000	Gear cache
Insurance (Certification fee) to NSS	2500	Was \$1500 in 2022
Merchandise Expense		
Merchant Processing		
Office Supplies & Expenses	0	
Postage & Mailings	50	
Printing & Publications	2000	rescue manual
Professional Fees	500	icar
Property Tax	0	
Scholarships Granted	0	
	0	
<b>Seminar Expenses</b>		
Food	60000	
Facilities	14000	
Supplies	500	
Books		\$2,000
t-shirts		
Regfox	3100	
Transportation	1000	
Misc Seminar Expenses	3000	
Seminar Fees paid to National		\$8000, but is covered in expenses above
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>98400</b>	
<b>Net Income/(loss)</b>		
	<b>2950</b>	