August 3, 2026
National Speleological Society
Board of Governors

Dear Members of the Board of Governors,

We write to you as a group of long-standing members of the National Speleological Society out of our commitment to the Society's integrity, financial health, and long-term reputation. Our primary concern is with the governance and financial controls that safeguard the Society and the trust of its members

Recent events have given us, and many fellow members, reason for concern: the discovery of multi-year embezzlement of Society funds, now the subject of a police investigation; the subsequent concentration of the Executive Director and Treasurer roles into a single position; and the absence of posted board minutes since 2025. Individually and together, these raise legitimate questions about the safeguards protecting the Society's assets and the confidence of its membership. We strongly urge the Board to act on the measures below. Each one stands on its own and can be implemented promptly.

1. **Separate the Executive Director and Secretary/Treasurer roles immediately.** No individual should simultaneously hold both positions. This concentration removes essential checks and balances on Society spending and reporting and is inconsistent with best business practices
2. **Recuse the individuals who held financial and/or personnel oversight during the embezzlement period from all positions of financial authority in the Society,** including the interim Executive Director role, Secretary/Treasurer, and any other related positions until an independent review finds no culpability or conflict of interest. This is a standard safeguard, not a finding of wrongdoing, and it protects the Society and the individuals alike.
3. **Commission an independent forensic accounting investigation** of the Society's finances and financial governance, with findings and recommended changes to bylaws and procedures reported to the membership.
4. **Appoint a qualified Interim Executive Director from outside the current governing group.** Qualified members, including past presidents and officers, have indicated a willingness to serve immediately, some without compensation.
5. **Restore transparency and financial controls,** specifically by (a) posting the board minutes absent since 2025, including closed-session summaries; (b) moving direct supervision of paid employees from volunteer positions to the Executive Director; (c) establishing a clear chain of command for paid staff; and (d) instituting background checks for staff and for volunteers in sensitive positions.

We raise these concerns directly with you, the Board, because we believe the Board should have the opportunity to address them before they are brought more widely, both internally and the membership at large. We respectfully request a written response from the Board within 15 days of the date of this letter. Should these concerns go unaddressed, we are prepared to bring them to the full membership as a formal petition. We would much prefer to work with you toward a resolution that protects the Society as well as the trust and perception of its members.

With respect and appreciation for your service,

Concerned NSS Members