CONSTITUTION OF CHOUTEAU GROTTO

First approved 1959, *revised* 1969, 1972, 1994, 2015, 2023

Preamble

Believing that devotees of any profession or science, such as speleology, should band together for the mutual enjoyment of a common interest, and to further the interests of that science in the world at large, a Grotto is hereby constituted, dedicated to those who profess a genuine interest in the subject with no intent to discriminate any person as to social standing, professional status, or educational attainments; who can without reservation subscribe to these principle, and who will work together for the good of the grotto.

Article I
Name and object

Section I.

This organization shall be known as Chouteau Grotto; a Chapter of the National Speleological Society.

Section 2.

The objective of the Grotto is to stimulate interest and increase knowledge in the science of Speleology and its allied subjects; and to foster a spirit of fellowship among its members and with others interested in speleology.

Article 2
Purpose

Section I.

The purpose of this Grotto shall be to explore, photograph, conduct/participate in scientific studies in speleology , survey and map caves, and to promote good will with land owners and land managers.

Section 2.

To provide information and education on cave conservation, minimal impact caving practices, caving safety, basic and advanced caving techniques.

Section 3.

To promote safe caving practices, the preservation of cave watershed areas, conservation of caves, and their natural content.

Article 3.
Membership

Section 1. Classes of membership shall be :
1) Active member, both NSS and Chouteau dues paid.
2) Associate member, Chouteau dues paid.
3) Honorary member
4) Inactive members

Section 2.

Members shall be encouraged to be members of the National Speleological Society and the Missouri Speleological Survey.

Section 3.

Any person interested in any phase of speleology or its allied subjects shall be eligible for membership in the grotto so long as he/she:
1) Has indicated a desire to become a member.
2) Participates on a recognized indoctrination trip and understands basic caving guidelines.
3) Agrees to follow the NSS Policy on Cave Conservation.
4) Agrees to follow minimal impact caving practices.
5) Will NOT engage in activities detrimental to speleology, conservation or safety.
6) Pays Chouteau dues for membership, associate membership.
7) Pays Chouteau Dues and NSS dues, active member.

Section 4.

Persons under seventeen (17) years of age are eligible for membership.
1) May vote only in Chouteau Grotto elections and business matters.
2) May NOT hold office in Chouteau Grotto or chair a committee.
3) If also an NSS member they may not vote on NSS related matters, or serve on the NSS BOG or chair a committee at the NSS level. NSS Bylaws, I, (11).

Section 5.

To hold an office in Chouteau Grotto; must be an Active Member, Chouteau dues paid and a member of the National Speleological Society.

Section 6.

Any member elected to office who is not in good standing with the National Speleological Society must, within two months, apply for admission to the N.S.S. or relinquish their office.

Section 7.

The grotto may, at its discretion (majority vote), confer Honorary Membership on person/s who merit such distinction.
1) Honorary members shall not be required to pay Chouteau Grotto dues.

2) Honorary members have all rights of full membership, including the right to vote and hold office in Chouteau Grotto if NSS membership is in good standing.

Section 8.

A person shall be dropped from active membership:

1) For failure to comply with the provisions of Article 2, Section 3,
2) By unanimous vote of the grotto upon ample proof that they have, directly or indirectly, brought Chouteau Grotto into ill repute,
3) The member must be notified in writing by Chouteau Grotto Executive Committee,
a) stating the dates of the incident or occasion of violation(s)
b) statement of infraction or actions.
c) Statement of outcome of said actions and negative impact on Chouteau Grotto and or Speleology.
4) The member has a right to a hearing, due process, with the Executive Committee, Chouteau Grotto to defend himself/herself against the charges and accusations.
5) Article 3, Section 8, subsections 3) & 4) must be completed prior to any vote or expulsion.

Article 4.

Officers

Section I.

The officers shall consist of the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and Quartermaster and shall be
known collectively as the Executive Committee of Chouteau Grotto.

Section 2.

The Executive Committee shall hold office for one year and will be elected by ballot at the first meeting of December, at which time the succeeding officers will assume their duties.

Section 3.

The Executive Committee shall have the power to manage the business of the grotto, to formulate by-laws, to raise funds, in a manner suitable to all members, to develop standing committees and ad-hoc advisory groups, and to perform other necessary functions.

Section 4.

Decisions or actions of the Executive Committee may be overruled by a 2/3 majority vote of the members present at the business meeting.

Article 5.
Meetings

Section I.

Meetings shall be held at a time selected by the members of Chouteau Grotto.

Section 2.

The order of business shall be:
1) Call to order
2) Reading of minutes and their approval
3) Treasurer Report
4) Report of committees
5) Unfinished business
6) New business
7) Trip Reports
8)Open floor for members
9) Adjournment
10) Program/speaker/entertainment
At the discretion of the Chairman, the order of business may be altered.

Section 3.

Only active and associate members may vote. (Article 3, Section 2).

Section 4

Special meetings may be called by the Chairman.

Section 5.

Business meetings of Chouteau Grotto shall be governed by "Roberts Rules of Order, Revised."

Article 6

Amendments

This Constitution may be amended or repealed by a 2/3 vote of a quorum consisting of 25% of all active and associate members at any regular meeting, but no amendment shall be entertained unless it shall have been presented in writing at a previous regular meeting, and published in the News Letter or *Foresight* thirty days in advance of the vote.

BY-LAWS OF CHOUTEAU GROTTO

First approved 1959, *revised* 1969, 1972, 1994, 2003, 2015

Article I.
Officers, Duties, and Elections

Section 1.
The Chairman shall preside at the meetings of the Grotto and shall have and exercise such powers as are necessary to carry out his official duties.

Section 2.
The Vice Chairman shall preside at meetings in the absence of, or as designated, by the Chairman. He/she shall provide a program for each regular meeting.

Section 3.
The Secretary shall keep the minutes and correspondence of the Grotto. The Secretary shall keep records of the Grotto.

Section 4.
The Treasurer shall keep the accounts of the grotto. He/she shall report annually to the Grotto, having had the grottoes accounts audited by a committee appointed by the Chairman.

Section 5.
The Quartermaster shall maintain a list of grotto property and a sign out sheet requiring a signature for each piece of equipment.

Section 6.
Officers may be nominated from the floor and by ballot. The can be elected to office by a simple all majority.

Section 7.
All vacancies of office shall be filled by special election.

Article 2
Dues

Section 1.
Membership dues shall be S10.00 per year.

Section 2.
Members with outstanding Chouteau dues after a period of three (3) months have elapsed shall be placed on inactive status.

Section 3.
All members shall complete an information sheet and file it with the Secretary.

Section 4.
Members shall receive a membership card from the Treasurer upon payment of dues. New members shall receive a copy of the Constitution and By-Laws of Chouteau Grotto.

Article 3
Cave Trips

Section I.
Alcoholic beverages, firearms, and fireworks shall NOT be taken into caves.

Section 2.
Members, and guests they invite on trips, will abide by the *N.S.S.* Cave Conservation policies, practice minimal impact caving, and abide by the rules and regulations set forth by land owners, state or federal agencies and their land managers.

Section 3.
Members signing for the club equipment are financially responsible for such equipment if it is damaged. One must be an active member and attend meetings and grotto events regularly to sign out equipment.

Section 4.
Each member shall furnish his own personal equipment including 3 sources of light Candles DO NOT count as one of the three sources of light. Each member should carry a basic first aid kit. If you are on medications (you should have them with you), or have special needs or conditions, the leader of the trip should be made aware.

Section 5.
For trips totaling more than 25 miles or more in one direction, donations should be made by the passengers for gas.