

## National Speleological Foundation Vehslage Grants Program

### **Background and Purpose of Vehslage Grants**

The National Speleological Foundation's Vehslage Grant program supports speleological research and exploration, cave and karst resource conservation, education and public awareness about caves and karst, and significant property acquisitions. Although there are no formal limits on the amount awarded, the Foundation typically budgets up to about \$10,000 in grants annually.

The Foundation determines award amounts based on the merits of the proposal, the amount of the request, the quality of the written application, the applicant's perceived ability to successfully complete the proposed work, the number of other applications received, other sources of funding available to the applicant, and the amount of Foundation funds available. Recent examples of successful applications include:

- Sponsorship of a Ph.D. candidate's research in karst hydrology
- Acquisition of a significant karst watershed
- Development of a public education program about karst resources
- Gathering baseline data for the study of white nose syndrome in bats
- Sponsorship of a cave management conference

Vehslage Grants are not intended to fund an organization's normal operating budget, nor are they intended to pay for travel expenses nor projects completed before the application is submitted. Vehslage Grants are typically awarded for projects that would not occur, but for the receipt of the grant. Academics should be aware that the Foundation disfavors awarding Vehslage Grants subject to university administrative and overhead fees.

A large bequest to the National Speleological Foundation from the estate of Gene Vehslage made the Vehslage Grant program possible. Gene Vehslage served as an Foundation trustee and as president of the National Speleological Society ("NSS"). In 1978 he received the NSS's William J. Stephenson Outstanding Service Award. Vehslage Grants *do not* come from funds that belong to the NSS or to any other Foundation client, and they are awarded independently of the NSS's grant programs.

### **The Application Process**

Successful applications require significant effort to compile and write. Most applicants are tax-exempt nonprofit organizations; however, individuals and organizations without tax-exempt status are also eligible.

An application form (available at [www.speleofoundation.org](http://www.speleofoundation.org)) must accompany each application, along with the attachments described in the form. The form is self explanatory; however, applicants should feel free to contact the Foundation's Grant Committee with any questions, or

to receive comments and suggestions for improving a draft application. Applications can be submitted by email (pdf files are preferred); however, any printed publication which accompanies an application should also be submitted in hardcopy.

Applicants and prospective applicants are encouraged (but not required) to make a short in-person presentation to the Foundation's Board of Trustees. A presentation significantly increases the chances that an application will be granted. It is often convenient to make such a presentation at the Foundation's summer meeting, which is held in conjunction with the NSS's annual convention. Applicants and prospective applicants should contact the Foundation's Grants Committee in advance to reserve space on the agenda or to inquire about other opportunities to make a presentation.

The Foundation considers applications annually at the fall meeting of its Board of Trustees. Applicants can guarantee consideration in the fall by submitting a complete application by the Monday following Labor Day. In special cases, the Foundation will consider applications at other times of year; however, the applicant must make a compelling case, in writing, for expedited consideration, in addition to the complete written application.

### **Awarding of Grants**

After the Foundation's Board of Trustees acts on a grant application, but before a grant is awarded, successful applicants will be required to agree in writing to a set of terms and conditions. Although these terms and conditions will vary depending upon the applicant and the exact nature of the project being funded, typically they involve (1) accounting for the money spent, (2) reporting results to the Foundation upon completion of the project, including copies of any publications and status reports if the project is not complete within a reasonable time, (3) appropriate recognition for the National Speleological Foundation Vehslage Grant program.

Unless the application notes otherwise, the Foundation expects that projects funded by Vehslage Grants will be completed within one year from when they are awarded.

### **More Information**

The Foundation's Grants Committee consists of Ted Kayes, Jeanne Gurnee, and Larry Southam. Questions about the Foundation's Vehslage Grant program and the application process can be directed to any member of the committee or to:

NSF Grants Committee  
c/o Ted Kayes, Chair  
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