



## CAVE VISITATION POLICY

SCCi members have committed enormous amounts of money and time to help protect caves and fragile cave ecosystems. Introduction of foreign substances into our caves can have unintended consequences to cave life. In addition to concerns regarding White Nose Syndrome (WNS), some caves have microscopic life that is unique to that cave, and that can be decimated by material introduced from other caves.

The SCCi Board of Directors has adopted this policy in order to help reduce the potential that cavers could inadvertently impact our cave ecosystems by carrying soil, water, or other substances from one cave to another. If you have any questions, please contact an SCCi board member or the appropriate SCCi property manager.

### **All SCCi Cave Preserves**

- Clean and disinfect all clothing and gear, following the attached Clean Caving Procedures (Attachment 1), before and after caving on any SCCi cave preserve.

### **Permitted SCCi Cave Preserves**

- Complete and return the Clean Caving Permit Questionnaire and Compliance Statement (Attachment 2) to the SCCi Property Manager. This procedure is in addition to following the Clean Caving Procedures and any permit requirements contained in the preserve management plan.

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Attachments:

Attachment 1. Clean Caving Procedures

Attachment 2. Clean Caving Permit Questionnaire and Compliance Statement



## CLEAN CAVING PROCEDURES <sup>1, 2</sup>

### **Step One: Get the Mud Off!**

Remove as much excess mud as you can while you're still at the cave entrance. Go back to your vehicle, get out a big trash bag and put everything in it. Seal it up and take it home.

### **Step Two: Clean your Gear**

Pre-clean submersible gear by hosing it down really well. Use a scrub brush and mild soap if necessary to remove all the sediment. When there's no more visible mud coming out, machine- or hand-wash with a mild cleanser. For non-submersible gear (such as cameras and other electronic gear), remove all visible mud by wiping with a damp cloth or scrubbing, then go straight to Step Three.

### **Step Three: Disinfect your Gear**

Once your gear is clean, you still need to make sure there aren't any microscopic hitchhikers waiting for a free ride into another cave. You can use a variety of methods, including the following:

#### **Hot Water Bath**

Soak your gear in hot water that is at least 122°F (50°C) for at least 15 minutes. This method is easy, and it uses no chemicals other than water. Top-loading washing machines can be used, if the hot water heater is set high enough. Tubs or baths also work, using either hot tap water straight from the tap, or hot tap water supplemented by heated water. For more information, see [www.scci.org/CleanCaving.html](http://www.scci.org/CleanCaving.html).

#### **Chemical Solution Bath**

Soak your gear for at least 10 minutes in a bath or tub one of the following solutions:

- *Lysol I.C. Quaternary Disinfectant Cleaner* – use 1 oz. per gallon of water;
- *Professional Lysol® Antibacterial All-purpose Cleaner* - use 1 oz. per gallon of water;
- *Household bleach (6% hypochlorite, or HOCl)*- use 1 part bleach per 9 parts water.

Rinse your gear thoroughly after removing it from the bath, being careful not to let it touch any potentially contaminated surfaces. Soft gear and clothing may be run through a washing machine.

The recommended Lysol products are available from janitorial supply stores and online sources; household bleach is widely available at grocery and other retail stores. If you don't get a lot of silt and clay in your tub, Lysol baths have been demonstrated to be effective for at least a month, even with repeated use (Barton, personal communication, 2011). Bleach solutions can weaken nylon and other materials, and must be discarded within 24 hours, because the diluted bleach breaks down quickly.

#### **Non-Submersion Methods**

For gear that cannot be submersed in water, use one of the following methods:

- *Lysol Disinfectant Wipes*: Wipe all surfaces. After 10 minutes, wipe dry with a clean cloth or towel.
- *Formula 409® Antibacterial All-Purpose Cleaner*: Spray at full strength on all surfaces. After 10 minutes, wipe dry with a clean cloth or towel.

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<sup>1</sup> These procedures are intended to be an easy-to-follow summary of procedures published by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in March 2012, which are available at: <http://www.fws.gov/whitenosesyndrome/cavers.html>.

<sup>2</sup> **Safety Disclaimer:** You're responsible for using any of these methods safely. Be sure to follow manufacturer's recommendations, label instructions, Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs), and common sense.



**CLEAN CAVING  
PERMIT QUESTIONNAIRE AND COMPLIANCE STATEMENT**

Due to concerns regarding the possible inadvertent introduction of foreign substances, including the fungus responsible for White Nose Syndrome (WNS) (*Geomyces destructans*), into caves owned or managed by the Southeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. (SCCi), the SCCi Board of Directors has instituted some new requirements for access to our caves that require permits.

The SCCi takes clean caving very seriously. In choosing to keep some preserves open, we must be more proactive in our management. This includes collecting data about visitors to our preserves and advising all visitors of the importance the SCCi places on following clean caving practice.

Thank you for your understanding and compliance with these requests and procedures. We are doing our best to balance the management and protection aspects of cave conservation in accordance with the SCCi mission and purpose. We appreciate your help and your continued support of the SCCi.

Please complete the following (use additional pages if needed):

**Complete Personnel List and Recent Caving Experience**

	Name	Residence (City, State)	In the past two years, have you visited any caves that are currently WNS-positive?		Name	Residence (City, State)	In the past two years, have you visited any caves that are currently WNS-positive?
1.				7.			
2.				8.			
3.				9.			
4.				10.			
5.				11.			
6.				12.			

**Compliance Statement**

I have read, and have advised all participants of, the SCCi Cave Visitation Policy. All participants hereby agree to comply with the requirements of the policy, including the Clean Caving Procedures, and understand that future permits to **any of us** may depend on full compliance by **all of us**.

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Signature of Trip Leader                      Printed Name                      Date