

The National Cave and Karst Research Institute—An Update

*Ronal Kerbo
National Cave Management Coordinator
National Park Service
Denver, Colorado*

Abstract

The Geologic Resources Division of the National Park Service is providing a steering committee chairman for the remainder of the fiscal year for start-up of the National Cave and Karst Research Institute. This role has been added to the current duties of the Science and Technical Services Branch's National Cave Management Coordinator. Among several tasks before the first meeting of the Institute Steering Committee was to:

- refine the stated mission, goals, and objectives of the Institute,
- develop a draft position description for an interim institute director,
- draft recommendations for alternatives for the structure of the Institute, and
- participate in finalizing the organizational model.

The first meeting resulted in a draft of the institute director's position description, a refined mission statement, and a set of recommendations for the start up of the Institute. A summary of the recommendations from the steering committee members is that the Institute, in order to foster sound science, will:

- create a Chief of Science on staff,
- appoint a science advisory board,
- function as a central clearinghouse for research on federal lands,
- keep no cave locations or sensitive information,
- support issue-driven science supporting resource management,
- not support research projects that are not locally approved,
- be interdisciplinary and include all aspects of speleology, and
- require all research to promote sustainability in karst systems and resources.