

## BCCS MEMBERSHIP POLICY

### Introduction

The Butler Cave Conservation Society, Inc. (BCCS) has changed a little since its birth in 1968. For one thing, it has about three times as many members now as it had then. At the time of the 1968 Regular Annual Membership Meeting there were only eleven members. It is interesting to note that ten of these people are still members today.

The growth of the BCCS membership can be traced by a study of the minutes of its ten Regular Annual Membership Meetings, and is shown graphically in Figure 1. The lower line represents the actual number of members as a function of time. As will be seen from the following discussion, the membership of the BCCS is limited. The upper line in Figure 1 represents the official membership limit. This business of limiting the membership of the society to a specific number seems to be quite unusual for a caving related organization, and constitutes the subject of a disquisition in a companion article in this newsletter. The subject of this article is the official BCCS membership policy. It is intended to answer some of the questions which have been raised at BCCS expeditions concerning membership.

### The BCCS Membership

The membership of the BCCS is prescribed in the By-Laws of the Butler Cave Conservation Society, Inc., Article II - Members. The eight sections of Article II are presented below along with some brief comments. This material is being included here primarily for the benefit of non-members who have not, in general, had ready access to such information concerning the BCCS. Society members will, of course, be thoroughly familiar with these provisions of the By-Laws.

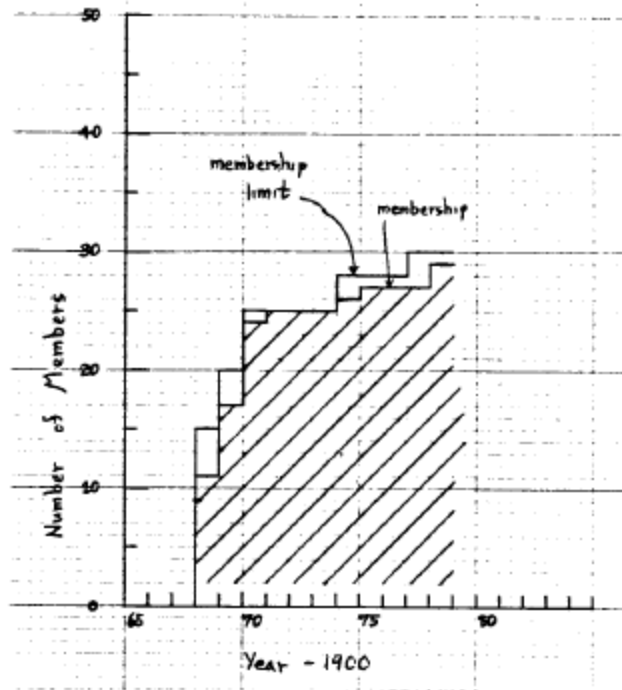


Figure 1. The BCCS Membership data are shown from 1968 through 1978. The upper line is the membership limit discussed in the text. The lower line shows the actual number of members as a function of time.

Article II, Section 1. CLASSES OF MEMBERS. The Corporation shall have one class of members and the qualifications of the members shall be that the members are all persons who have applied for membership in the Corporation, and who have been accepted as members by the directors, and who are in good standing in accordance with the By-Laws and other regulations of the Corporation.

There are no family members, junior members, or associate members. All members are of equal rank. The qualifications of the members are left purposefully vague, the exact definitions being left to the determination of the Board of Directors.

Article II, Section 2. ELECTION OF MEMBERS. Members shall be elected by the Board of Directors. An affirmative vote of a majority of all members of the Board shall be required for elections. In order to be considered for membership by the directors and to remain members in good standing of the Corporation, a person must abide by the By-Laws and other regulations of the Corporations.

The existing members do not elect new members; the Board of Directors has this responsibility. The number of directors is seven (Article IV, Section 2 of the By-Laws), hence an affirmative vote of four is normally required for admission to membership. Some slight guidance in determining who shall be considered for membership and who shall retain membership is given here.

Article II, Section 3. VOTING RIGHTS. Each member shall be entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to a vote of the members.

Article II, Section 4. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP. The Board of Directors may, 1) by an affirmative vote of a majority of all of the members of the board, suspend or expel a member for cause after an appropriate hearing; 2) and they may, by majority vote of those directors present at any regularly constituted meeting of the Board of Directors, terminate the membership of any member who becomes ineligible for membership; or 3) they may suspend or expel any member who shall be in default in the payment of dues for the period fixed in Article XII of these By-Laws.

The society must have a means of expelling members in flagrant violation of the By-Laws and regulations of the Corporation. The period fixed in Article XII is four months. In the society's ten year history, no member has been suspended, expelled, or terminated. The four-month rule has not been strictly enforced. The By-Laws say that the board "may" do these things; it does not say that the board must do them.

Article II, Section 5. RESIGNATION. Any member may resign by filing a written resignation with the secretary, but such resignation shall not relieve the member so resigning of the obligation to pay dues, assessments, or other charges theretofore accrued and unpaid.

A few members have resigned. There has not, I believe, so far been a problem with unpaid dues.

Article II, Section 6. REINSTATEMENT. Upon written request signed by a former member and filed with the secretary, the Board of Directors, by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of the board, may reinstate such former

member to membership upon such terms as the Board of Directors may deem appropriate.

Notice that it requires the affirmative vote of five members of the Board of Directors to be reinstated, and that reinstatement may be conditional. This allows for the reinstatement on a probationary basis of members suspended, expelled, or terminated under Article II, Section 4.

Article II, Section 7. TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP. Membership in this Corporation is not transferable or assignable.

You cannot sell or buy, give away or be given, will or inherit membership in the BCCS. You can only become a member via the provisions of Article II, Section 2 of the By-Laws.

Article II, Section 8. LIMITATION OF MEMBERSHIP. The total membership of the Corporation shall be limited to twenty-five, or such other number as shall be deemed appropriate by a unanimous vote of the whole number of directors.

This is the means whereby the membership of the BCCS is limited. The current "such other number" is thirty. [As of September 2013, the limit is 55.-Ed.] That the Board of Directors has been willing to periodically increase the limit is obvious from Figure 1. All seven of the directors must vote in favor of any change in the limit. This is intended to give a small minority of the society a large influence over the course of the development of the society. There are numerous ramifications of Article II, Section 8 related to the makeup of the Board of Directors, which are beyond the intended scope of this discussion.

#### Some Final Comments

The eight sections of Article II presented above constitute the official BCCS membership policy. They tend to be vague, thus providing the Board of Directors considerable discretion in membership matters. An important point which must be made here is that to a very great extent the destiny of the BCCS is in the hands of the Board of Directors. One of the most important decisions which the members of the society have to make is who shall be the members of the Board of Directors.

The complete set of By-Laws contain fifteen separate articles describing the structure of the Corporation and the manner in which it is to conduct its affairs. It is just possible that some non-members might be interested in the entirety. A complete copy of this fascinating document may be obtained from the author at the BCCS expeditions.

Fred L. Wefer

Editor's Notes:

1. This article originally appeared in *The BCCS News*, Volume 4, 1978, pp. 19-22.
2. As of September 2013, the By-Laws are available on the BCCS Website.