Vertical Caving Skills Checklist

Caver Name: _____ **WUSS #:** _____

Introduction

The purpose of the Vertical Caving Skills List is to give cavers with a desire to explore vertical caves a foundation of skills, at basic and advanced levels. This is not designed to teach cavers everything there is to know about vertical caving technique, nor does it make someone physically capable for every cave. It is designed to give cavers a good, solid base from which they can hone their skills and develop experience.

Level 1 is designed to prepare a caver to be able to get themselves up and down a rope with easy rigging (i.e. no difficult obstacles).

Level 2 prepares a caver to be able to handle most situations one may experience while on rope including, crossing knots and rebelays.

Level 3 introduces cavers to basic rigging and useful knots.

Level 4 prepares a caver to handle advanced rigging including setting up haul systems and other rescue techniques.

***NOTE* - To qualify for a level, the caver needs to demonstrate each task without any outside assistance.**

Level 1 (Basic Vertical)

- ☐ Know how to put on a seat harness properly, as well as all required ascending and descending equipment.
- ☐ Demonstrate how to rappel, including proper threading of the device and proper lock off procedures.
- ☐ Demonstrate how to ascend using a complete and safe climbing system.
- ☐ Demonstrate how to belay a rappeller safely.

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Level 2 (Advanced Vertical)

- ☐ Demonstrate how to safely change-over while on rope from rappelling to ascending.
- ☐ Demonstrate how to safely change-over while on rope from ascending to rappelling.
- ☐ Demonstrate how to solve common problems encountered on rope (i.e. cross knots, rebelays and traverses).

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Level 3 (Basic Rigging)

- [ ] Demonstrate basic rigging and show how to dress the rig properly.
- [ ] Demonstrate basic climbing and rigging knots and how to dress them.
  - [ ] Figure Eight (Including variations)
  - [ ] Bowline Knot
  - [ ] Water Knot
  - [ ] Alpine Butterfly
  - [ ] Clove Hitch
  - [ ] Prusik Hitch
  - [ ] Double Fisherman's
  - [ ] Square Knot
- [ ] Demonstrate how to pad and protect the rope.
- [ ] Demonstrate how to inspect vertical equipment and what to look for when determining whether it is safe to use.
- [ ] Explain the concepts of rigging the drop and proper use of the equipment.

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Level 4 (Advanced Rigging and Rescue)

- [ ] Demonstrate how to get yourself out of different potential problems while on rope.
- [ ] Demonstrate how to do a pick-off and explain when it would be safe and unsafe to do one.
- [ ] Demonstrate how to rig a multi-pulley haul system properly.
- [ ] Demonstrate how to rig a multi-point anchor.
- [ ] Demonstrate how to rig a rebelay including the proper knot usage.

Officer Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Advisor Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

DISCLAIMER* - Rappelling, ascending, and caving are inherently dangerous sports and should be experienced only after receiving proper training. Most importantly, all skills described in this checklist should be practiced in a safe and controlled environment with direct instruction from a knowledgeable teacher. Accidents may still occur even if a caver is deemed as competent in a particular section. In no way can the author, Wittenberg University Speleological Society, Wittenberg University, or the National Speleological Society be held accountable for any accident(s) due to gear malfunction, improper instruction, or unforeseen acts of God.