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Policy News from NSC Alliance

Through the NSC Alliance partnership with the American Institute of Biological Sciences, we are pleased to provide NSC Alliance members with the following public policy update. If you have any questions or require additional information regarding any of the following items, please contact NSC Alliance director of public policy Dr. Robert Gropp at 202-628-1500 x 250 or at rgropp@aibs.org.

National Science Board Report Aims for Grantees to Make Data More Available

The National Science Board recently released a new report, “Digital Research Data Sharing and Management.” The report makes five recommendations regarding the accessibility of research data collected during projects funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF). Among the recommendations is a proposal to require grantees to make data and methodologies available in peer reviewed publications.

To support this goal, NSF should implement a data management plan that outlines the timeline for researchers to share their data. “Investigators should have the opportunity to analyze their data and publish their results within a reasonable time.” NSF is also recommended to encourage “individual scientific communities to establish data sharing and management practices that align with NSF data policies.”

Download the report and learn more about submitting public comments at http://www.nsf.gov/news/newssumm.jsp?cntnid=122702&WT.mcid=USNSF62&WT.mc_ev=click. Public comments are due by 18 January 2012.

NSC Alliance Requests Discussion of Permits for Scientific Specimens

On 6 January 2012, the NSC Alliance requested that the U.S. government pursue a discussion of how to improve the permit validation process for scientific specimens on the agenda for the sixteenth regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The comments were in response to a request for public input by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding resolutions, decisions, and agenda items for the meeting, which will be held in March 2013 in Thailand.

The comments from NSC Alliance address the problems that some researchers have had in validating import/export permits for scientific specimens, which at times has resulted in the damage or loss of specimens.

Read the comments from NSC Alliance at <http://nscalliance.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/nsca-ltr-cites-final.pdf>.

Former NSCA Board Member Named ‘Tar Heel of the Year’

Dr. Betsy Bennett, director of the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, has been honored with the title of Tar Heel of the Year by The News and Observer, a North Carolina newspaper. The award is given to “a strong leader who has had wide and lasting impact in North Carolina,” according to paper.

Dr. Bennett “has a high energy level and a passion for what she does,” said John Drescher, executive director of The News and Observer. “She is a consensus-building visionary with the people skills of a politician; she was once an elected school board member in another community. She’s been a highly effective leader of a growing state institution.”

Read the full profile of Dr. Bennett at <http://www.newsobserver.com/2012/01/01/1745457/betsy-bennett.html>.

Plan to Participate in the 2012 BESC Congressional Visits Day

Each year, the Biological and Ecological Sciences Coalition (BESC), a group co-chaired by AIBS, hosts a Congressional Visits Day in Washington, DC. This event is an opportunity for scientists to meet with their members of Congress about the importance of federal support for biological research and education. Event participants advocate for federal investments in biological sciences at federal agencies, such as the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Department of Agriculture, among other federal agencies.

This year’s event will be held on 28-29 March 2012 in Washington, DC. The first day of the event includes presentations on the federal budget and a communicating with policymakers

training program that will prepare participants for meetings with congressional offices. The second day is spent on Capitol Hill meeting with members of Congress and their staff.

Scientists and graduate students who are interested in communicating the importance of federal investments in scientific research and education to federal lawmakers are encouraged to participate in this important event.

Space is limited and registration is required. Due to space limitations, we may not be able to accommodate all interested parties.

BESC is not able to pay/reimburse participant expenses associated with participating in this event.

Learn more and register at <http://www.aibs.org/public-policy/congressionalvisitsday.html>.

Graduate Students: Apply for the 2012 AIBS Emerging Public Policy Leadership Award

The Emerging Public Policy Leadership Award (EPPLA) recognizes graduate students in the biological sciences with an interest and aptitude for working at the intersection of science and public policy.

EPPLA winners will receive a free trip to Washington, DC to participate in the 2012 BESC Congressional Visits Day on 28-29 March 2012.

Applications must be received by 20 January 2012.

Information about the application process is available at: http://www.aibs.org/public-policy/student_opportunities.html.

Deadline Approaching for Visiting Scholars Program at iDigBio HUB

The NSF-funded iDigBio project is pleased to announce a Visiting Scholars program available at the national headquarters (HUB) at the University of Florida, Gainesville, starting in 2012. Emphasis will be placed on early-career professionals in the areas of collections and informatics, with a demonstrated interest in digitization.

The iDigBio Visiting Scholars program is envisioned to support short-term (typically 1 to 3 months) visits and residencies (e.g. junior faculty on sabbatical or during summer leave). During the visit, the incumbent would be expected to work on a project and produce a deliverable that advances the national digitization effort in research and/or education. Examples of possible activities might include development of a paper or grant proposal; an iDigBio workshop; a proposal for an undergraduate or graduate course on a relevant topic that could serve as a prototype; and/or an outreach project that communicates the importance of collections digitization to the public.

During their visit, the incumbent would be expected to give a seminar and be encouraged to be involved in related HUB activities. The incumbent would be expected to submit a short final report of activities and offer input to the project evaluators.

The Visiting Scholars program includes a monthly stipend of \$7,500 (up to \$22,500 for an individual visit); travel/relocation funds (up to \$2,500); high-quality, shared office space at the HUB; and access to University of Florida resources (e.g. internet, libraries, collections, etc).

Applications for the Visiting Scholars program should include: (1) cover letter (no more than 2 pages) describing: (a) how this opportunity would help to advance your career, and (b) the activity, project, and deliverable that you would work on during your time at the HUB; (2) brief budget (items and explanation), following the guidelines above; and (3) complete CV.

This program is open to U.S. citizens and permanent residents. The deadline for receipt of the first round of applications is 1 February 2012. This application should be sent to Jason Grabon (jgrabon@flmnh.ufl.edu), iDigBo Project Manager.

NAS Report Summarizes Issues for Biodiversity Management

In 2009, 400 people gathered for a two-day symposium on the challenges facing scientists, environmentalists, and natural resource managers in conserving and managing biodiversity and ecosystems. The National Academy of Sciences released a summary of the symposium in December 2011.

“Twenty-First Century Ecosystems: Managing the Living World Two Centuries After Darwin,” looks at eight key themes that emerged from the event. These include understanding, assessing, protecting, and managing biodiversity and ecosystem function; increasing capacity to inform policy with science; increasing society’s ability to manage and adapt to environmental change; strengthening international institutions and U.S. engagement; and accounting for the value of nature.

“The purpose of the symposium was to capture some of the current excitement and recent progress in scientific understanding of ecosystems, from the microbial to the global level, while also highlighting how improved understanding can be applied to important policy issues that have broad biodiversity and ecosystem effects,” writes Dr. Peter R. Crane, chair of the committee that planned the symposium.

Read the report at http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=13109.

GBIF Seeks Applications for Young Researchers Award

The Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) is offering two research awards to graduate students pursuing research involving biodiversity data. The 2012 Young Researchers Award is intended to foster innovative research and discovery in biodiversity informatics.

Two awards of €4,000 will be available to graduate students in a master's or doctoral program at a university in a GBIF Voting Participant country, such as the United States and Mexico, or Associate Participant country, such as Canada.

Research proposals must clearly demonstrate how data enabled by GBIF are being incorporated in the applicant's work. The proposal should include a project description, a budget, literature cited, and the applicant's curriculum vitae including contact information at the home institution.

Proposals will be reviewed by the Head of Delegation of a GBIF Voting or Associate Participant country. Students are encouraged to contact their academic advisors, the [GBIF national node in their country](#), or members of the Science Committee regarding the deadline for proposal submissions at the national level. Contacts of the Heads of Delegation are available at www.gbif.org/communications/directory-of-contacts/governing-board-of-gbif/.

For further details, please download the [full call for proposals](#).

The Natural Science Collections Alliance is a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit association that serves as an advocate for natural science collections, the institutions that preserve them, and the research and education that extend from them for the benefit of science, society, and stewardship of the environment. NSC Alliance members are part of an international community of museums, botanical gardens, herbariums, universities, and other institutions that house natural science collections and utilize them in research, exhibitions, academic and informal science education, and outreach activities. Website: www.NSCAlliance.org.

Note: You are receiving a copy of this electronic report as part of your membership in the NSC Alliance. Contact the Alliance office with any email address or member representative name changes send an email to spotter@aibs.org.