

NSC Alliance Washington Report, Volume 1, Issue 5, April 7, 2010

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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

NSC Alliance Asks Congress to Support Increased Funding for NSF

NSC Alliance President Dr. William Brown recently provided written testimony to the House and Senate Appropriations subcommittees responsible for funding the National Science Foundation (NSF). The testimony, provided on behalf of NSC Alliance, encourages Congress to provide at least the \$7.424 billion requested by the President for the National Science Foundation (NSF) for fiscal year (FY) 2011. The Administration's budget request for NSF would provide important funding for several initiatives of interest to the natural science collections community, including an investment in digitization of specimens. Unfortunately, the budget also proposed a cut to the Informal Science Education program within the Education and Human Resources Directorate. The NSC Alliance expressed concern with this proposed cut and encouraged Congress to work to restore this funding and to provide additional support for this important initiative.

To read the complete NSC Alliance testimony, please visit <http://nscalliance.org/?p=266>.

More Institutions Ask Congress to Include Collections in Legislation

The California Academy of Sciences and Tulane University Museum of Natural History have joined with other national collections to request that the House Science and Technology Committee include science collections in the reauthorization of the America COMPETES Act.

Other institutions that have joined with NSC Alliance in making this request include The Field Museum, American Museum of Natural History, and Arizona State University.

To learn more about this campaign, please visit <http://nscalliance.org/?p=262>. If your institution sends a letter and would like to have it included on the NSC Alliance website, please email a copy to rgropp@aibs.org.

NPS Finalizes Policy to Require Benefits-Sharing Agreement for Research

The National Park Service (NPS) has finalized a policy that requires researchers using specimens collected from national parks to enter into a benefits-sharing agreement with NPS if their research produces discoveries or inventions with a commercial application. Under the new rule, researchers with commercially successful discoveries would provide monetary or non-monetary compensation, such as scientific equipment or lab work, to the national park on an annual basis, subject to the terms of their benefit-sharing agreement.

The decision was published in the Federal Register (<http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/2010-7871.htm>) on April 7, 2010. The decision is an outgrowth of several commercial applications of scientific discoveries made in national parks, the most notable being the invention of PCR from the study of a microorganism discovered in Yellowstone National Park.

The new policy will not affect current requirements or the application process for obtaining a permit to conduct research in a national park, as the benefits-sharing agreement would be initiated after permitted research was conducted.

More information is available at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov> (select “Washington Office” from the park menu and then follow the link for benefits-sharing).

FWS Seeks Comments on Permits for Migratory Birds

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is seeking public comment on the agency’s application and reporting requirements for the take of migratory birds. Several permits issued by FWS that regulate the disturbance and taking of migratory birds are scheduled for government review this year. Of potential interest to scientists are forms 3-200-6 (import/export of migratory birds), 3-200-7 (scientific collection of migratory birds), 3-200-10d (special exhibition for education), and 3-200-15, 3-200-16, 3-200-71, 3-200-72 (disturbance and taking of eagles and nests). Additionally, a new permit (3-200-82) is proposed to regulate the import and export of eagle specimens for temporary scientific or exhibition purposes, such as a museum display.

The FWS seeks comments about the necessity of the collection of information, ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected, and ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents.

Comments must be submitted by June 7, 2010. For more information, please visit <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/2010-7807.htm>.

USGS Coalition Testifies Before Congressional Committee

On March 25, 2010, Dr. Robert Gropp testified before the House Subcommittee on Interior and Environment Appropriations on behalf of the USGS Coalition. The coalition asked Congress to provide the USGS with \$1.3 billion in fiscal year (FY) 2011 funding, just under a \$200 million increase over the current funding level.

The NSC Alliance is a long-standing member of the USGS Coalition. The coalition, co-chaired by the American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS) and the Geological Society of America (GSA), is an alliance of more than 70 organizations dedicated to the continued vitality of the unique combination of biological, geological, hydrological, and mapping programs of the USGS. The USGS Coalition works to increase federal investments in USGS science.

Gropp's prepared remarks to the Subcommittee begin on page 45 of the record now available at: http://appropriations.house.gov/Witness_testimony/INT/Witness_Testimony.3.25.10.pdf

EPA Launches Science Matters Newsletter

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Research and Development has launched the inaugural issue of Science Matters, a newsletter devoted to sharing the innovative environmental and human health science conducted by EPA scientists, engineers, and partner organizations. Science Matters will be published bimonthly. For more information, please go to: http://epa.gov/ord/sciencenews/science-matters/april2010/science-matters_april2010.htm

President Selects Nobel Laureate for OSTP Science Post

On March 22, 2010, President Obama selected Dr. Carl Wieman to serve as the next Associate Director of Science in the White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). Wieman, who was among the recipients of the 2001 Nobel Prize in physics, is a member of the faculty at the University of British Columbia at Vancouver and the University of Colorado at Boulder. He has been a proponent of science education reform, including serving as the founding chair of the National Academy of Sciences Board on Science Education. If confirmed by the Senate, Wieman would lead the Science division of OSTP, which formulates and coordinates federal research and development policy, as well as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education policy.

Join Collection Colleagues on LinkedIn

A new online group has formed to encourage networking among natural science collections leaders. This group offers an opportunity for individuals from collections across the nation to identify and discuss common public policy issues, or other common challenges they face as natural science collections professionals.

To join this group you must first join LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com). There is no cost for creating a profile on this site. Once you have registered, simply search the Groups function for

“Natural Science Collections Leadership.” Membership in this group is limited to natural science collections professionals, but there is no cost to join or participate in group discussions or events.

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.