

## **NSC Alliance Washington Report, Volume 1, Issue 7, May 14, 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](mailto:rgropp@aibs.org)

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### **NSC Alliance Comments on Rule Regarding Culturally Unidentifiable Native American Human Remains**

On May 12, 2010 the Natural Science Collections Alliance (NSC Alliance) submitted comments to the Department of the Interior regarding a rule that outlines procedures for the disposition of culturally unidentifiable Native American human remains in the possession or control of museums or federal agencies. NSC Alliance called for the rescission of the rule, as the rule “is arbitrary and capricious, manifestly contrary to the requirements of the North American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act ... and patently illegal under any reasonable standard of agency or judicial review.”

The rule goes into effect on May 14, 2010. For more information about the rule, see <http://nscalliance.org/?p=258>.

The complete text of the NSC Alliance comments is available at [http://nscalliance.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/nsca\\_nagpra-reg-comment\\_may122010.pdf](http://nscalliance.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/nsca_nagpra-reg-comment_may122010.pdf). Comments from NSC Alliance members are posted at <http://nscalliance.org/?p=277>.

### **White House Moves to Streamline Grant Reporting**

The White House has announced that it will “streamline” paperwork requirements for federal grantees. New guidelines issued by the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) direct all federal agencies that fund research grants to use a uniform form for collecting annual progress

reports from science grantees. “Ensuring that there are common standards across agencies will ensure that researchers spend less time managing paperwork and forms, and more time producing research results across all science and technology fields sponsored by the Federal Government,” said OSTP Director Dr. John Holdren.

### **House Appropriations Chairman to Retire**

Representative David Obey (D-WI), chair of the House Appropriations Committee, announced on May 5, 2010 that he would not seek re-election to a 22nd term this fall. “I am bone tired,” he said in a statement to the press. “I am, frankly, weary of having to beg on a daily basis that both parties recognize that we do no favor for the country if we neglect to make the long-term investments in education, science, health, and energy that are necessary to modernize our economy and decline to raise the revenue needed to pay for those crucial investments. I do not want to be in a position as Chairman of the Appropriations Committee of producing and defending lowest common denominator legislation that is inadequate to that task and, given the mood of the country, that is what I would have to do if I stayed.” Rep. Obey has served as the top ranking Democrat on the Appropriations Committee since 1994.

### **Connect to Collection Colleagues**

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

To join this group you must be a member of [LinkedIn](#). 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 is limited to natural science collections professionals, but there is no cost to join or participate. Please contact Robert Gropp at [rgropp@aibs.org](mailto:rgropp@aibs.org) if you have any questions.

### **NSB Grants Final Approval for NEON**

The National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) gained final approval from the National Science Board on May 5, 2010. The Board voted to authorize the National Science Foundation (NSF) director to award NEON, Inc. a five year contract to construct the observatory network. Construction can begin once Congress appropriates funding. The President’s budget request for fiscal year 2011 includes \$20 million for NEON in the Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction account of NSF.

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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](http://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](mailto:spotter@aibs.org).