

## **NSC Alliance Washington Report, Volume 2, Issue 12, September 23, 2011**

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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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#### **Action Alert: Contact Senators Today – Urge Them to Restore Funding for NSF**

The United States Senate Appropriations Committee has approved legislation that would slash funding for the National Science Foundation (NSF). Under the Committee's proposal, the Research and Related Activities account at NSF would be cut by \$120,875,000 in the coming fiscal year. This is the account that provides funding for NSF's various research directorates, such as the Biological Sciences Directorate, Geosciences Directorate, and so forth.

Additionally, both the House and the Senate have developed appropriations legislation that would cut funding for Education and Human Resources programs at NSF, but the House would cut roughly \$6 million less than the Senate.

If enacted, these cuts would be damaging to NSF programs and counter to bipartisan pledges of support for scientific research and education.

Importantly, the Senate spending plan provides significantly less funding to NSF than the appropriations bill approved by the House Committee on Appropriations. Under the House plan, Research and Related Activities would receive roughly \$5.6 billion in the next fiscal year, about \$43 million above the current funding level.

If the Senate fails to increase funding for NSF, it is almost guaranteed that the agency will receive a significant budget cut in the coming fiscal year. It is important that Senators hear from

their constituents today. Please contact your Senators today to urge them to oppose the Senate Appropriation Committee's proposed cuts to NSF.

If you will be in Washington, DC, in the coming days, please make time to stop by your Senators' offices to express your concerns. You may also schedule an appointment to meet with your Senators at one of their offices in your state (visit <http://capwiz.com/aibs/dbq/officials/> to locate Senate offices in your state).

Please contact both of your Senators today! A prepared letter is available at <http://capwiz.com/aibs/issues/alert/?alertid=53834971> and a targeted letter for Maryland residents is available at <http://capwiz.com/aibs/issues/alert/?alertid=53867986>. If you have a working relationship with a Senate office, please consider calling or visiting the office to express your concerns.

### **NSF Funding Opportunity: Collections in Support of Biological Research**

The Collections in Support of Biological Research (CSBR) Program provides funds for improvements to secure, improve, and organize collections that are significant to the NSF/BIO-funded research community. Support is also provided to secure collections-related data for sustained, accurate, and efficient accessibility of the collection to the biological research community. Supplemental funding is also available to transfer collection ownership responsibilities or consolidate or combine existing collections.

The CSBR program provides for enhancements that secure and improve existing collections, result in accessible digitized specimen-related data, and develop better methods for specimen curation and collection management. Requests should demonstrate a clear and urgent need to secure the collection, and the proposed activities should address that need. Biological collections supported include established living stocks/culture collections, vouchered non-living natural history collections, and jointly-curated ancillary collections such as preserved tissues and DNA libraries.

Full proposals are due by 16 October 2011. For more information, visit [http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm\\_summ.jsp?pims\\_id=503651&WT.mc\\_id=USNSF\\_39&WT.mc\\_ev=click](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=503651&WT.mc_id=USNSF_39&WT.mc_ev=click).

### **Senate Panel Votes to Slash Funding for NSF**

On 15 September, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved a spending plan for the National Science Foundation for fiscal year (FY) 2012 that would cut \$161.8 million from the agency's budget. The recommended level, \$6.698 billion, is a 2.4 percent reduction from FY 2011 and is less than NSF received in FY 2010. The Senate spending plan was approved with bipartisan support in a 29-1 vote.

Under the Committee's proposal, the Research and Related Activities account at NSF would be

slashed by \$120.9 million in the next fiscal year. This is the account that provides funding for NSF's various research directorates, such as the Biological Sciences Directorate.

Funding for NSF research could be reduced further under the Senate plan. The legislation allows the agency to transfer up to \$100 million from the Research and Related Activities account to the Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction account in order to fully fund the Ocean Observatories Initiative and to start construction of the National Ecological Observatory Network.

Funding for Education and Human Resources programs at NSF would be cut by \$32.0 million, a 3.7 percent reduction.

Notably, the Senate spending plan provides significantly less funding to NSF than the appropriations bill approved by the House Committee on Appropriations. Under the House plan, Research and Related Activities would receive roughly \$5.6 billion in the next fiscal year, about \$43 million above the current funding level.

Since the current fiscal year ends at the end of September, Congress is currently working on stopgap legislation to keep the federal government operating until the legislative body completes its work on appropriations. Enactment of a Continuing Resolution to temporarily fund the government has been held up by disagreement between the chambers over disaster relief funding.

### **NSF Names New Assistant Director for BIO**

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has selected a new Assistant Director for the Directorate for Biological Sciences. Dr. John C. Wingfield will assume the post that has been held in an interim capacity by Dr. Joann Roskoski since October 2009. Wingfield joined NSF from the University of California at Davis in September 2010 as Division Director of Integrative Organismal Systems.

Wingfield is an environmental endocrinologist. His research centers on the neural endocrine mechanisms underlying organism-environment interactions. Of particular interest to Wingfield are the neural pathways for environmental signals affecting seasonality, mechanisms of coping with environmental stress, and the social modulation of hormone secretion. This research also interfaces with how animals deal with global climate change, endocrine disruption and conservation biology.

“It is indeed a great honor and a challenge to be appointed Assistant Director for BIO,” said Wingfield. “This is a transformational time for biological sciences in the post-genome era as we try to understand life on Earth from its most fundamental components at the molecular levels to functioning organisms interacting with their environments, and with each other, at ecosystem scales.”

From 2003 to 2005, Wingfield served as President of the Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology, and from 2006 to 2010 he was President of the XXV International Ornithological Congress.

Wingfield received his Ph.D. in Zoology and Comparative Endocrinology from the University College of North Wales, U.K. in 1973.

### **NSF BIO to Host Webinar on New Procedures for Submission, Review of Research Grants**

The National Science Foundation (NSF) Division of Integrative Organismal Systems (IOS) will hold a webinar on 30 September 2011 about recent changes to its research proposal submission and peer review process.

Effective immediately, IOS and the Division of Environmental Biology (DEB) will implement an annual cycle for proposals (see <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2011/nsf11078/nsf11078.jsp?org=NSF>). The first round of preliminary proposals will be accepted in January 2012. The Division of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences also changed its funding cycle (see [http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=nsf11056](http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf11056)).

The IOS webinar will be held from 2:00-3:30 pm on 30 September. For more information and to register for the webinar, visit [http://www.nsf.gov/events/event\\_summ.jsp?cntn\\_id=121737&WT.mc\\_id=USNSF\\_13](http://www.nsf.gov/events/event_summ.jsp?cntn_id=121737&WT.mc_id=USNSF_13).

To view a recording of DEB's recent webinar on the new funding cycle, visit [http://www.nsf.gov/events/event\\_summ.jsp?cntn\\_id=121479&org=BIO](http://www.nsf.gov/events/event_summ.jsp?cntn_id=121479&org=BIO).

### **NSC Alliance President Offers Commentary in Nature**

NSC Alliance President, Dr. William Brown, has published a commentary, "Conservation: Invest in a DNA bank for all species," in the 25 August 2011 issue of *Nature*.

An excerpt from the article:

To complement its efforts to conserve nature in the wild, the Convention on Biological Diversity should develop a comprehensive and adequately funded global effort to preserve intact genomes and viable cells for every known species and for new species as they are discovered. Super-cold freezing is the current method of choice, from a whole rhino skin to a bacterium.

Freezing tissue costs US\$200–300 per species, with negligible maintenance costs. Preserving material from all the roughly 1.8 million known species would cost about \$540 million. The United States spends more than \$1 billion every four days on the war in Afghanistan. So less than \$1 billion to preserve the DNA of all known species on Earth, with whom we share billions of years of evolutionary history, seems like good value.

To view the full article (fee may apply), please visit <http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v476/n7361/full/476399a.html>.

### **USGS Coalition Honors Senator Bingaman**

On Wednesday, September 21, 2011, the USGS Coalition honored United States Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) with the Coalition's Congressional Leadership Award. The Award was presented during the USGS Coalition's annual reception on Capitol Hill.

The NSC Alliance is a founding member of the USGS Coalition and NSC Alliance director of public policy Robert Gropp is a co-chair of the group. In addition to remarks by Senator Bingaman, Suzette Kimball, deputy director of the USGS, thanked the Senator and the USGS Coalition for the years of effort both have given to elevating the profile of the USGS among policymakers.

Well over 200 individuals attended the event. Lawmakers other than Senator Bingaman that attended the reception included one of last year's award recipients, Rep. James Moran (D-VA), Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-MD), and Rep. Madeleine Z. Bordallo (D-GU).

For more information about the USGS Coalition, please visit [www.usgscoalition.org](http://www.usgscoalition.org).

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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).