

## **NSC Alliance Washington Report, Volume 5, Issue 2, February 18, 2014**

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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. With proper attribution to NSC Alliance, all material from these reports may be reproduced or forwarded. We encourage you to share this report with colleagues at your institution.

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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### **Champion of Science to Retire from Congress**

U.S. Representative Rush Holt (D-NJ) announced on February 18, 2014 that he would be retiring at the end of his current term. Holt has served in Congress since 1998. He is one of a handful of scientists in Congress. Holt has a Ph.D. in Physics and is a former professor of Swarthmore College.

“There is no hidden motive for my decision,” Holt, 65, said in a statement Tuesday. “As friends who have worked with me know, I have never thought that the primary purpose of my work was re-election and I have never intended to make service in the House my entire career. For a variety of reasons, personal and professional, all of them positive and optimistic, the end of this year seems to me to be the right time to step aside and ask the voters to select the next representative.”

Congressman Holt has championed research and science education. He is currently the sponsor of a resolution in recognition of Darwin Day, which celebrates the birthday and scientific accomplishments of Charles Darwin. In 2006, the Biological and Ecological Sciences Coalition (BESC) recognized Holt with their BESC Award; NSC Alliance is a member of the coalition.

### **Invitation to NSC Alliance Members**

A symposium, ‘Collections for the 21st Century,’ sponsored by iDigBio and the NSC Alliance, will be held on May 5-6, 2014, in Gainesville, Florida. It will emphasize the value of collections data in meeting challenges facing biodiversity and human societies. The symposium will feature a full day of talks on May 5 and a half–day of talks on May 6. A workshop or other activities yet to be determined will be held on the afternoon of May 6. Those who register will be kept informed of the event details as they develop.

The NSF-funded Advancing Digitization of Biodiversity Collections program has been a tremendous boost to the collections community and will make data available for new and exciting uses in research and education. But, we need to take the initiative and demonstrate ways in which the data are being used now so that scientists and others make use of data as they becomes available, and administrators provide support beyond that provided by NSF. Digitized data are useful only if their value is known.

Registration for the symposium is free, but all travel-related expenses are the responsibility of each participant. Information on accommodations at a discounted rate will be provided when you register. Attendance will be limited to 80 persons so please register soon if you plan to attend. Register online at: <https://www.idigbio.org/content/collections-21st-century-symposium>.

### **National Science Board Highlights Trends in U.S. R&D**

The United States is still the global leader in science technology, at least for now, according to the newly released *Science and Engineering Indicators 2014*. For those who prefer to see the glass as half empty, China and other Asian nations have continued to make significant gains over the last decade that jeopardize U.S. predominance in science. The major Asian economies collectively perform more research and development (R&D) than the U.S.

“The first decade of the 21st century continues a dramatic shift in the global scientific landscape,” said National Science Board Chairman Dan Arvizu. “Emerging economies understand the role science and innovation play in the global marketplace and in economic competitiveness and have increasingly placed a priority on building their capacity in science and technology.”

In addition to global competitiveness, the report addresses trends in federal research funding from 2001 to 2011. During this time period, federal support for R&D increased by 34 percent after inflation; that figure does not reflect budget sequestration or budget cuts implemented over the past two years. An increasing share of federal funding was allocated for development, rather than for basic or applied research. Although most scientific fields have seen little variation in federal funding over a decade, the environmental sciences saw the largest decline (-23.1 percent).

The report is available at <http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/seind14/>. Tools that analyze trends in each state are expected in late February.

## **Experts Needed for International Assessments of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Issues**

Nominations are sought for experts to serve as advisors to the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). The U.S. government and other nations are collecting the names of scientists who could serve on expert panels. The Ecological Society of America is soliciting names and will forward its nominations to the U.S. government.

Nominations are sought in the following areas:

- Pollination and food production;
- Production and integration of assessments;
- Scenario analysis and modeling of biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- Methods for valuing biodiversity and nature's benefits to people; and
- A catalog of policy support tools and methodologies.

IPBES is a global program intended to strengthen the role of science in decision-making related to the conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

The deadline to apply to ESA has been extended to 21 February 2014. Learn more at [http://www.esa.org/esa/?page\\_id=10615](http://www.esa.org/esa/?page_id=10615).

## **Deadline Approaching: Participate in the Biological and Ecological Sciences Congressional Visits Day**

Scientists and graduate students interested in communicating the importance of federal investments in scientific research and education to lawmakers are invited to participate in the Biological and Ecological Sciences Coalition (BESC) Congressional Visits Day in Washington, DC.

This event is an opportunity for scientists to meet with their members of Congress to discuss the importance of federal funding for biological research and education. Event participants advocate for federal investments in biological sciences research, with a primary focus on the National Science Foundation, as well as other federal agencies.

BESC is co-chaired by the American Institute of Biological Sciences and the Ecological Society of America.

This year's event will be held on 9-10 April 2014 in Washington, DC. The first day is a 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.

There is no cost to participate in this event, but space is limited. BESC and its member organizations are not able to pay/reimburse participants for their expenses.

Learn more about the event and express your interest in participating at [http://www.aibs.org/public-policy/congressional\\_visits\\_day.html](http://www.aibs.org/public-policy/congressional_visits_day.html). The deadline to sign up is 5 March 2014.

### **NSC Alliance 2013 Accomplishments**

In 2013, the NSC Alliance engaged in a number of notable activities to raise the profile of natural history collections with policymakers, researchers, and the general public. Read all of NSC Alliance's accomplishments from 2013 at <http://nscalliance.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/nsca-2013-summary.pdf>.

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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).

The NSC Alliance Washington Report is a publication of the NSC Alliance. For information about membership in the NSC Alliance, please contact [spotter@aibs.org](mailto:spotter@aibs.org).