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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. Anyone interested in receiving copies of the NSC Alliance Washington Report may subscribe at www.NSCAlliance.org -- it's free!

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 Testimony Asks Congress to Support Funding for NSF

On March 20, 2015, the NSC Alliance provided testimony to the United States Senate Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations. NSC Alliance expressed support for the Administration's fiscal year 2016 budget request which, if enacted, would provide \$7.724 billion to the U.S. National Science Foundation.

Next NSC Alliance Board Meeting Set: May 2015

The next meeting of the NSC Alliance Board of Directors will take place in Gainesville, Florida on Monday, May 18, 2015. The meeting precedes the 2015 Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections ([SPNHC annual meeting](#)) at the University of Florida.

NSC Alliance, NIBA RCN and iDigBio Cosponsor Meeting on 21st Century Collections

The NSC Alliance, Network Integrated Biocollections Alliance Research Coordination Network and iDigBio have joined together to plan a plenary program that will kick off the 2015 annual meeting of the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections.

The program will begin at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 19, 2015.

The program includes:

8:30: *In Defense of Specimen Collecting, Natural History Collections, and Bioethics*
Larry M. Page, Director, iDigBio, Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida

9:00: *Evidence of Evolution: Darwin's Cabinet of Curiosities*
Susan Middleton, Research Associate, California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco

9:30: *Endless Forms, Most Useful*
Erin Tripp, Curator of Botany, Museum of Natural History, and
Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, University of Colorado

10:00: Break

10:30: *WeDigBio—Public Participation in Digitization of Natural History Collections Hits its Stride*
Austin Mast, Associate Professor, Department of Biological Science, Florida State University

11:00: *Time to Grow a Pair: Institutional Leadership, Taxonomy and Natural History*
Quentin Wheeler, President, College of Environmental Science and Forestry, State University of New York

11:30: *Building a Networked National Community for Collections*
Robert Gropp, Interim Co-Executive Director, AIBS, and Public Policy Office, NSC Alliance, Washington, DC

Information about the session and the broader program is available from the conference website at <https://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/spnhc2015/home/>.

NSF Issues Plan for Public Access to Data

The U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) has released its public access plan for data, "[Today's Data, Tomorrow's Discoveries, Increasing Access to the Results of Research Funded.](#)"

The plan is in response to a 22 February 2013 directive from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). That memorandum, Increasing Access to the Results of Federally Funded Scientific Research, directed Federal agencies with more than \$100 million in research and development (R&D) expenditures per year to develop plans to make publicly available to the "greatest extent and with the fewest constraints possible and consistent with law" the "direct results of federally funded scientific research."

The NSF plan seeks to meet the objectives outlined by the White House through an open, flexible, and incremental approach that will:

- Integrate publications, data, and other products of NSF funding into a single management system;
- Build on current policies and practices;
- Leverage resources in other Federal agencies, universities and research institutes, and the private sector;
- Provide a platform for innovation; and
- Broaden access to NSF-funded research findings with necessary and appropriate safeguards.

NSC Alliance Asks OMB to Deny DOI Proposal

On 5 March 2015, the NSC Alliance joined other members of the natural science collections community in asking the White House Office of Management and Budget to deny or delay the Department of the Interior's request to require non-federal collections to comply with a new information request. Although the NSC Alliance recognizes and appreciates the Department's need for information about its collections, the proposed request seems burdensome. The NSC Alliance also expressed its concern that the proposal appears to have been developed without any consultation from the institutions from which the information is sought.

The [comments](#) are available on the NSC Alliance website.

Global Data-Sharing Initiative Grows

In 2013, 100 international leaders met to launch the Research Data Alliance (RDA) to foster the open sharing of data from scientists "across technologies, disciplines and countries." The effort quickly mushroomed to 2,600 members from more than 90 countries. The U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF), the European Commission, and the Australian government support the RDA.

Some 400 participants attended the RDA's 5th plenary March 8-11 in San Diego, as part of its regular semi-annual in-person gathering. "RDA-developed tools will have a tremendous impact through science, and the plenary provides a place where interested communities from around our world get an opportunity to test-drive the tools," said NSF program officer Bob Chaddock.

RDA encourages its members to rapidly develop tools and products within a 12- to 18-month timeframe. For example, Data Type Registries are being established to create machine-readable data that will be accessible to researchers. As [NSF explains](#), the Registries have "an archive of common data structures that researchers can turn to when deciding how to organize their data. The creation of such a registry will support the accurate use of data to reproduce experiments, confirm findings and interoperate among data sets."

At the plenary, participants were urged to adopt these and other tools being developed by RDA working groups.

The next RDA plenary will be held in Paris, September 23-25, and will focus on research data for climate change.

National Medal of Science Nominations Open

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy recently opened the nominations for this year's National Medal of Science and National Medal of Technology and Innovation. To view the eligibility requirements or to submit a nomination, visit the National Science Foundation website. <http://www.nsf.gov/od/nms/nominations.jsp>

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.

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.