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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.

Become a Part of the Biodiversity Collections Network

Express your organization's support for a national collections initiative. To date, 23 museums, scientific societies, research institutions, and other groups have signed on as Supporting Organizations of the Biodiversity Collections Network (BCoN). Supporters commit to working towards the development of a sustainable national community. BCoN is an initiative launched by the NSC Alliance, American Institute of Biological Sciences, and Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections with support from the National Science Foundation. BCoN is working toward the goal of creating a new, sustainable community of practice that will ensure that all U.S. biodiversity collections are digitally available for research, education, informed decision-making, and more. Contact Robert Gropp at rgropp@aibs.org to become a member (there is no cost). To learn more about BCoN, please visit at bcon.aibs.org.

Call for Nominations: 2016 National Medal for Museum and Library Service

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is seeking nominations for the annually awarded National Medal for Museum and Library Service. This prestigious award recognizes museums and libraries that make significant and exceptional contributions in service to their communities.

All types of public or private non-profit museums of any discipline as well as, arboretums, nature centers, aquariums, zoos, botanical gardens, libraries and planetariums are eligible for this award.

Around 30 finalists are featured by IMLS during a six-week social media and press campaign and winners are honored at a ceremony in Washington, DC. Several Natural Science Collections Alliance members are among the past recipients.

Nominations for the 2016 award are due by October 1, 2015. Museums or libraries may be nominated by anyone and institutions may self-nominate.

For further instructions, contact information and the nomination form, please go to <http://www.ims.gov/applicants/detail.aspx?GrantId=13>

Report Identifies Ways to Enhance Complex Data Integration Across Research Domains

The integration of data from two or more domains is required for addressing many fundamental scientific questions and understanding how to mitigate challenges impacting humanity and our planet, according to a new workshop report from the American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS). The publication identifies key barriers to complex data integration and offers recommendations for the research community, research funding organizations, and others.

The workshop, which was held in March 2015 in Arlington, Virginia, brought together more than two-dozen experts in genetics, genomics and metagenomics, biology, systematics, taxonomy, ecology, bio- and eco- informatics, and cyberinfrastructure development. The workshop report summarizes use cases that highlight barriers and solutions to complex data integration; impediments, technical problems, and crosscutting issues related to integrating data; and, recommendations and next steps required to achieve better data integration. The National Science Foundation supported the workshop.

“There are incredibly important but terribly complex questions in the areas of human health and environmental sustainability for which society needs answers. We need to better understand how humans or agriculturally important species respond at the genetic level to environmental stresses, for example. To do this, researchers need to be able to find, access, and integrate data ranging from genetic to environmental,” said Dr. Robert Gropp, Interim Co-Executive Director of AIBS and a workshop organizer.

The report includes recommendations related to governance, education and training, data discovery and access, evaluation of data for fitness of use, and the process for data integration.

The full report, “Enhancing Complex Data Integration across Research Domains: A Workshop Report,” is available for free from AIBS at www.aibs.org/public-policy/complex_data.html.

NAGPRA Training Programs Offered This September

The National Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) Program is partnering with the National Preservation Institute to offer in-depth training on preparing for and writing NAGPRA grant proposals. The program will be held twice during the month of September 2015. Learn how to assess the needs of a NAGPRA program, identify fundable projects, and write successful Consultation/Documentation and Repatriation grant proposals.

The first session will be held 9-10 September 2015 in Oklahoma City, OK. The deadline to register is 17 August. The event will be repeated on 29-30 September 2015 in Indianapolis, IN. The deadline to sign up for that session is 14 September.

Scholarships and travel grants are available.

Learn more at <http://www.npi.org/register.html>.

New Genealogy of Life Program Announcement

The National Science Foundation has released a new program announcement for the Genealogy of Life (GoLife) program. The program aims to resolve the phylogenetic history of all life's lineages using an open access, dynamic format and to synthesize as much organismal data as possible with this genealogy of life.

Research proposals are due in March 2016. View the program announcement at <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2015/nsf15102/nsf15102.pdf>.

Webinar Series on Value of Vertebrate Digitization

iDigBio will be offering a four-part webinar series on the value of digitizing vertebrate collections. The webinars will emphasize the imaging of reptiles, amphibians, mammals, birds, and fishes. The online events may be of interest to vertebrate zoologists, curators, collections managers, and others.

September 8, 3-4 pm EDT
The Value of Digitizing Mammal Collections
Cody Thompson, University of Michigan

September 15, 3-4 pm EDT
The Value of Digitizing Fish Collections
Andy Bentley, University of Kansas Biodiversity Institute and President of SPNCH

September 22, 3-4 pm EDT
The Value of Digitizing Herpetology Collections
Chris Phillips, Illinois Natural History Survey, University of Illinois

September 29, 3-4 pm EDT
The Value of Digitizing Bird Collections
Carla Cicero, UC Berkeley and Lead PI for Vertnet

All events will be accessible from <https://idigbio.adobeconnect.com/vertdigitization>. No special software is required. Click “Enter as Guest”, enter your name, and login.

All webinars will be recorded and made available at
https://www.idigbio.org/wiki/index.php/Vert_digi_interest_group.

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.