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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 <http://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](mailto:rgropp@aibs.org).

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### **New Congress, New Science Leadership**

By now it is no longer news that the 2018 mid-term elections have shaken up Washington, DC. The United States Senate will continue to be controlled by the Republicans while the Democrats have taken control of the House of Representatives. The full ramifications of the power shift will continue to emerge over the next two months as each party in each chamber works to identify their leadership teams and articulate their legislative and oversight agendas for the coming Congress. For now, however, it is possible to identify a few significant changes in each chamber that relate to members who have historically played important roles in science-related issues.

Notably, Florida is once again in the national spotlight as Governor Rick Scott (R-FL) seeks to claim victory in the tightly contested race for U.S. Senator. Scott has filed lawsuits against Democratic-leaning counties contending widespread voter fraud. News reports also note that Scott, the current Governor, is using his authority to direct state law enforcement agencies to investigate three counties. If Scott wins the election, he will replace current Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL), a former astronaut and the current senior Democrat on the Senate Committee on

Commerce, Science and Transportation. Nelson has long worked to address ocean and water policy issues, especially red tides.

On the other side of the Capitol, a number of Republicans who influenced science policy in recent years have retired or were defeated. Of note, Representative John Culberson (R-TX) was defeated. Culberson has been the chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science where he has played an important role in securing funding for such agencies as the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Although the Democrats have not yet selected who will Chair committees in the next Congress, Representative José Serrano (D-NY) is currently the senior Democrat on the subcommittee. Leadership of the full Appropriations Committee will also change. The panel is currently led by Representative Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ). New York's Representative Nita Lowey is the currently the senior Democrat on the panel and the likely frontrunner to helm the committee in the new Congress.

With respect to the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, it is anticipated that Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) will lead the panel when the Democrats take control. Representative Johnson is currently the senior Democrat on the panel. Chairman Lamar Smith (R-TX) retired from Congress, which means that he will not transition to the senior Republican position. Representative Frank Lucas (R-OK) has announced an interest in the senior Republican slot on the panel, but he is not alone among Republicans positioning themselves for the senior minority slot on the committee. Representative Randy Weber (R-TX), a member of the House Freedom Caucus, has also expressed his desire to fight for the senior Republican post on the committee. Other Republicans who would have been in contention have lost their bids for re-election.

### **NSC Alliance 2019 Collections Policy and Advocacy Meeting: Register Now**

The NSC Alliance is pleased to announce that registration is now open for its 2019 membership meeting, Collections Policy and Advocacy. Learn more about the meeting, including a draft agenda, and register at [http://nscalliance.org/?page\\_id=1084](http://nscalliance.org/?page_id=1084). All NSC Alliance member institutions are encouraged to participate. In addition to providing an opportunity for NSC Alliance members to network and exchange information with each other, this meeting provides a platform for the community to interact with federal program officers and policymakers. The meeting will explore opportunities for the community to work collectively to promote new investments in natural science collections, and opportunities to inform or reform regulatory policies impacting collections.

Questions about the meeting can be directed to Robert Gropp at [rgropp@aibs.org](mailto:rgropp@aibs.org) or 202-628-1500 x 250.

### **Save the Date: Digital Data in Biodiversity Research Conference**

iDigBio has announced that the third Digital Data in Biodiversity Research Conference will be held on June 10-12, 2019 at Yale University, New Haven, CT in collaboration with Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History.

The 2019 conference will focus on methods, protocols, and analytical tools for the use of digital data in biodiversity research and encompass the uses of such data across all disciplines within the biological and ecological sciences. Special emphasis is placed on the use of digitized specimen data and big data analytics.

Registration and the call for presentations will open in January 2019. Please mark your calendars and watch for announcements here:

<https://www.idigbio.org/content/save-date-methods-protocols-and-analytical-tools-specimen-based-research-biological-sciences>

### **President Nominates USFWS Director**

President Trump has nominated Ms. Aurelia Skipwith as Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Ms. Skipwith currently serves as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks in the Department of the Interior. She worked for Monsanto Co. for about six years, after which she briefly worked as a research and legal intern at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. She has also worked as Assistant Corporate Counsel at Alltech, Inc. and co-founded agricultural consulting firm AVC Global.

Ms. Skipwith has a B.S. in biology from Howard University, M.A. in molecular genetics from Purdue University, and J.D. from the University of Kentucky College of Law. The USFWS Director position has been vacant since President Trump took office.

### **NSB Issues Statement on Security and Science**

The National Science Board (NSB) released a statement on October 24, 2018, emphasizing its support for President Reagan's National Security Decision Directive-189 (NSDD-189) and recommending "that all institutions conducting fundamental research supported by NSF embrace transparency and rigorously adhere to conflict of interest and conflict of commitment policies."

The 1985 directive, NSDD-189, established the definition of fundamental research as "basic and applied research in science and engineering, the results of which ordinarily are published and shared broadly within the scientific community, as distinguished from proprietary research from industrial development, design, production, and product utilization, the results of which ordinarily are restricted for proprietary or national security reasons."

The NSB statement reads in part, "While there are domains where openness can be detrimental to national competitiveness or security, the National Science Board (NSB) strongly reaffirms the principle behind NSDD-189: "our leadership position in science and technology is an essential element in our economic and physical security. The strength of American science requires a

research environment conducive to creativity, an environment in which the free exchange of ideas is a vital component.””

NSB also urges that “the development of any new policies that restrict fundamental research beyond NSDD-189 engage all relevant stakeholders and consider both risks and benefits.”

Read the statement:

[https://www.nsf.gov/nsb/news/news\\_summ.jsp?cntn\\_id=297039&org=NSB&from=news](https://www.nsf.gov/nsb/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=297039&org=NSB&from=news)

## **Nominations Sought for Experts on Invasive Alien Species**

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), is seeking experts to participate in an assessment addressing the threat that invasive alien species pose to biodiversity, ecosystem services, and livelihoods and the global status of impacts of invasive alien species by region.

IPBES is an independent intergovernmental body open to all member countries of the United Nations and is a leading group for assessing the state of the planet’s biodiversity. IPBES provides a mechanism for the scientific and policy communities to synthesize, review, assess, and critically evaluate relevant information generated worldwide by governments, academia, scientific organizations, and other stakeholders.

IPBES is inviting governments and relevant organizations to nominate experts on invasive alien species in one or more of the following disciplines: natural sciences; social sciences; or the humanities; be indigenous and local knowledge experts or have expertise in indigenous and local knowledge systems; or be policy experts practitioners. All nominees should have experience in working within interdisciplinary and/or international contexts. Governments or organizations should submit their nominations by February 1, 2019.

Experts interested in being nominated by a government should contact their IPBES National Focal Point (<https://www.ipbes.net/national-focal-points>) regarding their country-specific processes and deadlines and submit their application forms by January 11, 2019.

For information on how to submit nominations, go to:

[https://www.ipbes.net/sites/default/files/em\\_2018\\_22\\_call\\_experts\\_ias\\_20180921\\_tsu3.pdf](https://www.ipbes.net/sites/default/files/em_2018_22_call_experts_ias_20180921_tsu3.pdf)

## **Researchers to Sequence 66,000 Known Species in U.K.**

Researchers have launched a project to sequence the genomes of all known species of eukaryotic organisms in the United Kingdom (U.K.). The U.K. effort to sequence all 66,000 species of its animals, plants, fungi, and protozoa has been named the Darwin Tree of Life project. This project will be part of the larger international effort, the Earth BioGenome Project (EBP), which aims to sequence, catalog, and characterize the genomes of all of Earth’s known 1.5 million species of eukaryotes over a period of ten years.

EBP includes a working group of 25 scientists, who have developed a strategy to coordinate genome sequencing efforts around the world, including those focused on taxonomic groups, such as vertebrates or plants, and those focused on geographical boundaries, such as the U.K. effort.

“We feel it is the next moonshot for biology,” says EBP Chair Harris Lewin, a genomicist at the University of California, Davis. The project is intended to serve many purposes, including providing new insights into evolution, assisting in biodiversity conservation, and informing improvements to agriculture and medicine.

The U.K project was announced on November 1, 2018 during the official launch of the \$4.7 billion EBP project. It was also announced that a Memorandum of Understanding to work towards the common goals of the EBP has been signed by 17 participating institutions, including the Beijing Genomics Institute in Shenzhen, China; the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew, U.K.; University of California, Davis; Max-Planck Society; and the Wellcome Sanger Institute in Hinxton, U.K. Additionally, 15 other regional and national projects, including the 10,000 Plant Genomes Project and the Darwin Tree of Life Project, are affiliated with the EBP.

### **Public Comment: Interior Request to Destroy Records**

The Department of the Interior (DOI) has sent a request to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) asking permission to destroy records pertaining to marine conservation, fishing, endangered species, non-endangered species, critical habitats, land acquisition, oil and gas leases, among others.

The request applies to a large number of such records at all agencies within DOI, including the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Geological Survey. It covers documents that date back more than 50 years, and any future documents created related to the above-mentioned topics.

Agencies routinely send “Requests for Records Disposition Authority” to NARA, providing details of documents, a proposed timeline for when these can be destroyed, and whether certain documents need to be permanently preserved at the National Archives. Once the request is appraised by NARA, the request and appraisal are announced in the Federal Register. These documents can then be requested by email, after which there is a 30-day period to submit public comments to NARA.

This particular record destruction request is targeted at records that would normally be preserved at NARA. The request has received considerable attention because of its potential impact on research, including research related to endangered species, natural resources, and water quality. Upon requests from the public, the deadline to submit public comments has been extended from October 29, 2018 to November 23, 2018. Comments on this request can be submitted via email to [request.schedule@nara.gov](mailto:request.schedule@nara.gov).

The DOI request, NARA appraisal, and a detailed guide to the documents covered by the request can be accessed here: <https://altgov2.org/doi-records-destruction/>

### **Job Opening: Program Specialist at IMLS Office of Museum Services**

The Office of Museum Services at the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is seeking a Program Specialist. In this full-time permanent position, the incumbent will participate in grants management work involving Federal grants and cooperative agreements and provide grants-related assistance and services to both applicants and awardees. The position requires working on various phases of the receipt and processing of museum grant applications as well as the monitoring and assessing of awardee performance.

The deadline for submitting applications is November 15, 2018. For more information on the required qualifications and how to submit your application, go to: <https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/515727800>

### **Enhance your Interdisciplinary and Team Science Skills**

Reports abound from professional societies, the Academies, government agencies, and researchers calling attention to the fact that science is increasingly an inter-disciplinary, transdisciplinary, inter-institutional, and international endeavor. In short, science has become a “team sport.”

There is a real and present need to better prepare scientists for success in this new collaborative environment. The American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS) is responding to this call with a new program for scientists, educators, and individuals who work with or participate in scientific teams.

Team science is increasingly common in 21st century biological, life, and environmental sciences. Collaboration is no longer limited to sharing ideas with the biologist in the lab next door. The questions confronting science often require teams that may include a mix of computer and information scientists, physical and social scientists, mathematicians, ethicists, policy and management experts, as well as community stakeholders and citizen scientists. Adding to this complexity, teams span programs within organizations, cross organization boundaries to form institutional consortia, and often include international partners.

This intensive, two-day, interactive, professional development course was designed by scientists and experts on collaboration and teamwork to provide participants with the knowledge and skills required to become productive and effective members of scientific teams. From its first offering the course has evolved to include a greater focus on team planning and teamwork, and less time allocated to university administration of interdisciplinary teams.

Nothing teaches collaboration like practicing collaboration. This is not a course that asks you to learn in isolation. It is a microcosm of scientific collaboration, with extensive hands-on learning as part of a scientific team, with scientific case studies and examples.

This course is designed for anyone involved in collaborative scientific endeavors. Team leaders will find the course especially helpful. Because participants will work on “real-world” team science concerns, we encourage multiple members of a team to attend together. We can also customize the course and bring it to your university, department, lab, or research team. This course provides the right foundation from which your team can successfully accomplish your goals.

The program will be held on January 14-15, 2019 in Washington DC. NSC Alliance members are eligible to register for the program at a significantly discounted registration rate. Learn more at [https://www.aibs.org/events/team\\_science\\_event.html](https://www.aibs.org/events/team_science_event.html).

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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 [dbosnjak@aibs.org](mailto:dbosnjak@aibs.org).