

NSC Alliance Washington Report, Volume 2, Issue 14, November 15, 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.

NSC Alliance Announces New President, Board of Directors

The polls have now closed for the 2011 NSC Alliance elections. The new officers and board will take office on 1 December 2011. The new leadership team is:

Officers

- Larry Page, President
Florida Museum of Natural History
- Scott Schaefer, Vice President
American Museum of Natural History
- James Croft, Treasurer
The Field Museum
- Scott Gardner, Secretary
University of Nebraska State Museum

Board of Directors

- Warren Allmon, Paleontological Research Institution
- Robert J. Baker, The Museum at Texas Tech
- Hank Bart, Tulane University Museum of Natural History
- William Brown, Brookings Institution
- Joseph Cook, University of New Mexico Museum of Southwestern Biology

- Priscilla Grew, University of Nebraska State Museum
- James Hanken, Harvard University Museum of Comparative Zoology
- Leonard Krishtalka, University of Kansas Biodiversity Institute
- Dave Mindell, California Academy of Sciences
- James Solomon, Missouri Botanical Garden
- Bonnie Styles, Illinois State Museum
- Quentin Wheeler, Arizona State University

Breaking News: Congress Recommends Budget Increase for NSF

Last night, Congressional leaders released their final plan for fiscal year (FY) 2012 spending for the National Science Foundation (NSF) and a multitude of other federal agencies. The conference report, which represents the compromise between the House and Senate passed appropriations bills, would provide NSF with \$7.0 billion, an increase of \$173 million above FY 2011, but significantly below President Obama's requested budget. Research and Related Activities would receive an increase of \$155 million above last year. More details will be provided in an upcoming policy report.

OSTP Seeks Public Input on Open Access to Data and Publications

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy is seeking recommendations on approaches for ensuring long-term stewardship and public access to digital data and peer-reviewed scholarly publications that result from federally funded research.

Information is sought on ways to encourage public access to data and articles while protecting intellectual property, actions to improve compliance with federal data stewardship and access policies, the types of peer-reviewed publications that should be covered by the public access policies, and the appropriate duration of an embargo period after publication, among other topics.

The request for information is a result of the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act, which was enacted early this year. That law requires the establishment of a working group within the National Science and Technology Council to coordinate the policies of federal science agencies related to the dissemination and stewardship of research, including data and publications.

Comments will be accepted on public access to publications through 2 January 2012; more information is available at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2011-11-04/html/2011-28623.htm>. Comments regarding public access to data will be accepted through 12 January 2012; more information is available at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2011-11-04/html/2011-28621.htm>.

NSF: Describing the Conduct of Science in the Information Age

The National Science Foundation (NSF) Directorate for Social, Behavioral, & Economic Sciences (SBE) recently issued a Dear Colleague Letter (NSF 12-010) on "Describing the

Conduct of Science in the Information Age.” The notice advises the scientific community about “funding opportunities at the National Science Foundation for the research community to propose research workshops that identify and develop data, models, and tools to help inform” how science is done in the information age.

The letter reads:

New digital technologies and datasets are transforming the practice of science. Science is now increasingly computational, data-intensive, and collaborative because digital technologies provide new ways for scientists to identify and contact key research partners to begin collaborations; to create scientific information, data, and knowledge; and to disseminate, replicate, and reuse it. These same technologies are creating opportunities for funding agencies to promote scientific collaboration, to demonstrate the benefits of science, and to foster the replication and reuse of scientific information.

At the same time, US science agencies are being asked to use evidence to inform policy and operational decisions: developing data sets, measuring outcomes, and evaluating performance. These agencies are also asked to identify cost-saving efforts that will improve operational efficiency and reduce redundancy.

One way in which these goals can be advanced is to change the way in which scientists document their activities and resulting outcomes by using new technologies and incentive structures. Examples of new approaches include the national platform developed in Brazil and the institutional platform VIVO. Two National Science and Technology Council interagency groups - Research Business Models and Science of Science Policy in conjunction with the Federal Demonstration Partnership - are investigating approaches to reduce researcher burden by facilitating semi-automatic collection of data of the type required for proposal biosketches and grant technical reports. The effort includes consideration of a persistent researcher ID to reduce name ambiguity.

The purpose of this Dear Colleague Letter is to advise you about funding opportunities at the National Science Foundation for the research community to propose research workshops that identify and develop data, models, and tools to help inform this effort.

Workshop proposals that address the following research issues are particularly encouraged:

- Advancing scientific communication both nationally and internationally by:
 - fostering the replication of scientific research,
 - ensuring attribution for the intellectual contributions of researchers,
 - enabling the location and identification of collaborators across disciplines, and
 - developing platforms that facilitate the reporting and dissemination of scholarly activities and outputs.
- Advancing the measurement of scientific activity both nationally and internationally by:
 - identifying sources of information about researchers' productivity and impact, and
 - developing ways in which researchers' scientific activity can be automatically captured and validated.

Workshop proposals that include domain scientists in any science or engineering field, as well as Science of Science and Innovation Policy (SciSIP) researchers, are strongly encouraged.

This is not a new program. Investigators should follow the guidelines of the SciSIP program description (http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=501084) to ensure that eligibility requirements are met, and to e-mail a SciSIP program officer to discuss prospective proposal topics. All proposals under this funding opportunity should be submitted to the SciSIP program [09-7626] by August 9, 2012 with the proposal title preceded by the text "DCL WORKSHOP". These proposals will then be evaluated on an ongoing basis.

Sincerely,

Dr. Myron Gutmann
Assistant Director
Directorate for Social, Behavioral, & Economic Sciences

SciSIP Program Officer Contact Information:

Dr. Julia Lane
Phone: (703) 292-5145

Dr. David Croson
Phone: (703) 292-7369

NAGPRA Review Committee to Meet

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Review Committee will meet on 9-10 May 2012 in the Ballroom of the La Fonda on the Plaza hotel, 100 East San Francisco Street, Santa Fe, NM 87501.

This meeting, open to the public, will include the “appointment of the subcommittee to draft the Review Committee’s Report to the Congress for 2012, and discussion of the scope of the Report; and National NAGPRA Program reports.” According to the official meeting notice, the meeting may also include “requests to the Review Committee for a recommendation to the Secretary of the Interior, as required by law, in order to effect the agreed-upon disposition of Native American human remains determined to be culturally unidentifiable; presentations by Indian tribes, Native Hawaiian organizations, museums, Federal agencies, and the public; requests to the Review Committee, pursuant to 25 U.S.C. 3006 (c)(3), for review and findings of fact related to the identity or cultural affiliation of human remains or other cultural items, or the return of such items; and the hearing of disputes among parties convened by the Review Committee pursuant to 25 U.S.C. 3006 [[Page 69283]] (c)(4). The agenda and materials for this meeting will be posted on or before April 20, 2012, at <http://www.nps.gov/nagpra>.”

Additionally, stakeholders are invited to submit a request to present on the following two topics: (1) The progress made, and any barriers encountered, in implementing NAGPRA and (2) the

outcomes of disputes that have come before the Review Committee pursuant to 25 U.S.C. 3006 (c)(4). “The Review Committee also will consider other presentations by Indian tribes, Native Hawaiian organizations, museums, Federal agencies, and the public. A presentation request must, at minimum, include an abstract of the presentation and contact information for the presenter(s). Presentation requests must be received by March 2, 2012.”

The following excerpt from the official Federal Register notice announcing the meeting provides additional information and guidance about the meeting:

The Review Committee will consider requests for a recommendation to the Secretary of the Interior, as required by law, in order to effect the agreed-upon disposition of Native American human remains determined to be culturally unidentifiable (CUI). A CUI disposition request must include the appropriate, completed form posted on the National NAGPRA Program Web site and, as applicable, the ancillary materials noted on the form. To access and download the appropriate form--either the form for CUI with a “tribal land” or “aboriginal land” provenience or the form for CUI without a “tribal land” or “aboriginal land” provenience--go to <http://www.nps.gov/nagpra>, and then click on “Request for CUI Disposition Form.” CUI disposition requests must be received by February 24, 2012.

The Review Committee will consider requests, pursuant to 25 U.S.C. 3006 (c)(3), for review and findings of fact related to the identity or cultural affiliation of human remains or other cultural items, or the return of such items, where consensus among affected parties is unclear or uncertain. A request for findings of fact must be accompanied by the completed form posted on the National NAGPRA Program Web site and, as applicable, the ancillary materials noted on the form. To access and download the form, go to <http://www.nps.gov/nagpra>, and then click on “Request for Findings of Fact (Not a Dispute) Form.” Requests for findings of fact must be received by January 27, 2012.

The Review Committee will consider requests, pursuant to 25 U.S.C. 3006 (c)(4), to convene parties and facilitate a dispute, where consensus clearly has not been reached among affected parties regarding the identity or cultural affiliation of human remains or other cultural items, or the return of such items. A request to convene parties and facilitate a dispute must be accompanied by the completed form posted on the National NAGPRA Program Web site and, as applicable, the ancillary materials noted on the form. To access and download the form, go to <http://www.nps.gov/nagpra>, and then click on “Request to Convene Parties and Facilitate a Dispute Form.” Requests to convene parties and facilitate a dispute must be received by January 9, 2012.

Submissions may be made in one of three ways: 1. Electronically, as an attachment to a message (preferred for submissions of 10 pages or less). Electronic submissions are to be sent to: David_Tarler@nps.gov. 2. By mail, on a single compact disc (preferred for submissions of more than 10 pages). Mailed submissions are to be sent to: Designated Federal Officer, NAGPRA Review Committee, National Park Service, National NAGPRA Program, 1201 Eye Street NW., 8th Floor (2253), Washington, DC 20005. 3. By mail, in hard copy. Such items are subject to posting on the National NAGPRA Program Web site prior to the meeting. Items submitted at the meeting are subject to posting after the meeting.

Information about NAGPRA, the Review Committee, and Review Committee meetings is available at <http://www.nps.gov/nagpra>.

Science Policy Opportunity for Graduate Students

Applications are now being accepted for the 2012 AIBS Emerging Public Policy Leadership Award (EPPLA). This award recognizes graduate students in the biological sciences who have demonstrated initiative and leadership in science policy. EPPLA recipients receive first-hand experience at the interface of science and public policy.

EPPLA Winners Receive:

- A trip to Washington, DC, to participate in the Biological and Ecological Sciences Coalition (BESC) Congressional Visits Day, an annual event that brings scientists to the nation's capital to advocate for federal investments in the biological sciences, with a primary focus on the National Science Foundation. The 2012 event will last for two days and may be held between March and May. The official dates will be announced in 2012. Domestic travel and hotel expenses will be paid for the winners.
- Policy and communications training, and information on federal science budgets and the legislative process.
- Meetings with Congressional policymakers to discuss the importance of federal investments in the biological sciences.
- A 1-year AIBS membership, including a subscription to the journal *BioScience* and a copy of "Communicating Science: A Primer for Working with the Media."
- A certificate and membership in the EPPLA alumni network.

Application Process and Requirements:

The 2012 award is open to U.S. citizens enrolled in a graduate degree program in the biological sciences, science education, or closely allied field. Applicants should have a demonstrated interest in and commitment to science policy and/or science education policy. Prior EPPLA winners and AIBS science policy interns/fellows are not eligible.

To apply:

Send a cover letter, statement, resume, and letter of reference to publicpolicy@aibs.org no later than 5:00 PM Eastern Time on Friday, 20 January 2012. The subject line of the e-mail must include "EPPLA 2012" and the applicant's name. All documents should be included as attachments, with each file named as name_document (e.g., Sarah_Smith_Resume). A single PDF document is recommended.

Cover letter: Describe your interest in science policy and how participation in the Congressional Visits Day will further your career goals. Confirm your ability to travel to Washington, DC, to participate in meetings.

Statement: In 500 words or less, articulates the importance of federal investments in fundamental biological sciences research, such as that supported by the National Science Foundation. A successful statement will communicate to a non-scientist the benefits of biological research to the United States and draw upon the applicant's experiences and research. The statement may reference local issues and concerns that may be of interest to your Congressional delegation.

Resume (1 page limit): The resume should emphasize leadership, policy, and communication experience — this may include graduate, undergraduate, or non-academic activities, relevant education, work experience, honors and awards, and scientific society memberships. Conference presentations and scientific manuscripts will not be considered in the evaluation of the application.

Letter of reference: A reference letter should be provided by an individual who can attest to your leadership, interpersonal, and communication skills, and who is familiar with your interest in or experience with science policy. The reference should send the letter to publicpolicy@aibs.org by no later than 5:00 PM Eastern Time on 20 January 2012.

Applicants will be notified by the end of February of the decision of the selection panel. Information about past EPPLA recipients is available at http://www.aibs.org/public-policy/student_opportunities.html. Please direct questions to publicpolicy@aibs.org.

New Fish Species Discovered in Overlooked Coral Reefs

As much as coral reefs have captured the interest of scientists and the public, little is known about reefs that occur more than 200 feet below the surface. These mesophotic, or “middle light,” reefs are the interest of Carole Baldwin, curator of fishes at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. Baldwin has been studying such reefs in the Caribbean Sea and searching for new fish species. While marine life in the Caribbean has been well surveyed, mesophotic reefs have not. Much of this knowledge gap is a result of the difficulty of visiting such ocean depths, which are generally too deep for scuba diving. Discovering multiple new species in the Caribbean was “a huge surprise,” Baldwin said. “Everyone thought, ‘Been there, done that.’ ”

Baldwin's efforts were chronicled in an article published by the Washington Post on 31 October 2011. Read the article at http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/deep-reef-twilight-zones-slowly-yield-their-secrets-to-explorers/2011/09/22/gIQA TnuwZM_story.html.

EOL Requests Student Assistance

The Encyclopedia of Life (EOL, www.eol.org) is a global collaboration among scientists and the general public to make authoritative information and literature about named species freely accessible online.

EOL has launched a focused effort to assemble rich content for taxa of particular public interest (http://eol.org/info/priority_taxa_on_eol). Thus, EOL is asking faculty who teach higher level courses to request that they consider a new opportunity to have undergraduate and graduate students research and synthesize information about species on EOL's high priority taxa list and then summarize this information in an overview suitable for the general public. The faculty member would be responsible for reviewing student work.

If interested in participating in this activity for the upcoming semester, quarter or trimester, please send an email to: education@eol.org.

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.

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.