

NSC Alliance Washington Report, Volume 4, Issue 2, February 14, 2013

In this Issue:

- Head of NSF to Step Down
 - International Biodiversity Platform Takes Another Step Forward
 - Action Alert: Share the Value of Science with Lawmakers
 - Upcoming Natural History Collections Meetings
 - Participate in the 2013 BECS Congressional Visits Day
-

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.

Head of NSF to Step Down

Dr. Subra Suresh, the director of the National Science Foundation, announced on 5 February 2013 that he will leave the agency at the end of March. Dr. Suresh has accepted an appointment as the ninth president of Carnegie Mellon University.

“It has been my extraordinary honor to lead the National Science Foundation, which is blessed with a marvelous cohort of highly talented and devoted staff, as well as hundreds of thousands of innovative grantees and investigators from every field of science and engineering,” said Dr. Suresh in an email to staff. “I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the country in this capacity.”

Dr. John Holdren, Assistant to the President for Science and Technology and Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy said, “Subra has made critical contributions to a broad range of science and technology priorities, including expanding federal investments in fundamental research, accelerating the commercialization of university research, and strengthening our scientific collaborations with partners around the world. He also leaves a crucially important legacy of having expanded NSF’s family-friendly policies, which make it easier for young scientists to balance the challenges of furthering their careers while raising a family.”

Dr. Suresh was confirmed for a six-year term as director of NSF in September 2010. Prior to assuming his current role, Suresh served as the dean of the School of Engineering and the Vannevar Bush Professor of Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

International Biodiversity Platform Takes Another Step Forward

Delegates from dozens of countries met in late January to create the administrative structure for a new international initiative to provide the science necessary to inform policies on conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

During the first plenary of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel was selected. This group of renowned experts will provide oversight and scientific credibility to the initiative.

Although the specific projects that IPBES will weigh in on have yet to be determined, requests are already being fielded by other international entities. The Convention of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity has requested IPBES to contribute to the preparation of the next global assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services, to be launched in 2018, and to help countries to implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. Requests have also been made regarding migratory animals and wetlands. IPBES' work program is scheduled to be addressed at the second plenary meeting.

M. Zakri, Science Advisor to the Prime Minister of Malaysia and Chairman of the Malaysian Professors' Council was "truly honoured and most humbled to be elected as the first Chair of the Platform." M. Zakri has extensive experience in biodiversity governance at the national and international levels.

Action Alert: Share the Value of Science with Lawmakers

Nearly one hundred new lawmakers were elected to Congress in November. Let them — and their returning colleagues — know the value of federal investments in science.

Please take a minute to send a letter to your members of Congress about the importance of biological research and education.

Take action at <http://capwiz.com/aibs/issues/alert/?alertid=62388191>.

Upcoming Natural History Collections Meetings

The Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections has released the preliminary details for its 2013 and 2014 annual meetings. The 28th annual meeting will be held on 17-22 June 2013 in Rapid City South Dakota. The 29th annual meeting will be held on 22-28 June 2014 in Cardiff, Wales. The theme is "historic collections: a resource for the future." More information is available at <http://www.spnhc.org/50/meetings>.

Participate in the 2013 BESC Congressional Visits Day

Scientists and graduate students who are interested in communicating the importance of federal investments in scientific research and education to lawmakers are encouraged to participate in an important upcoming event.

Each year, the Biological and Ecological Sciences Coalition (BESC) hosts a Congressional Visits Day in Washington, DC. This event is an opportunity for scientists to meet with their members of Congress about the importance of federal support for biological research and education.

Event participants advocate for federal investments in biological sciences research, such as that supported by the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Geological Survey, and other federal agencies.

This year's event will be held on 10-11 April 2013 in Washington, DC. The first day of the event 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 register to participate at http://www.aibs.org/public-policy/congressional_visits_day.html. Registration will close on 7 March 2013.

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.