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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](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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### **White House Memo Says Collections are a Priority**

Federal agencies have been directed to prioritize the curation of scientific collections in their fiscal year 2017 budgets. This directive was included once again in the annual R&D priorities memorandum from the White House's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP).

The guidance from the White House will be used by federal agencies as they formulate their annual spending plan for the upcoming fiscal year.

“Preserving and improving access to scientific collections, research data, other results of Federally-funded research, open datasets, and open educational resources should be a priority for agencies,” states the memo.

The guidance has been included in recent years and is one outcome of the Interagency Working Group on Scientific Collections and an NSC Alliance campaign to promote increased collaboration between federal and non-federal collections.

### **Talks from NSC Alliance Sponsored Plenary Session at 2015 SPNHC Conference Now Online**

The NSC Alliance, the Biodiversity Collections Network (formerly Network Integrated Biocollections Alliance Research Coordination Network), and iDigBio sponsored the Plenary Session at the 2015 Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections conference in Gainesville, Florida.

Talks from the opening session were recorded and are being posted online. The first set of talks are now online and may be accessed [here](#).

### **Senators Gear Up for COMPETES Reauthorization**

The Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee will seek input from the scientific community prior to developing its legislative plan for federal research and development policy priorities. Freshmen Senators Cory Gardner (R-CO) and Gary Peters (D-MI) will lead the outreach efforts.

According to a press release issued by the committee, they will seek “a bipartisan path for reauthorizing federal research and development programs carried out by agencies last authorized by the COMPETES Act.” The 2010 reauthorization included the National Science Foundation, Department of Energy Office of Science, Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy, National Institute of Standards and Technology labs, and Office of Science and Technology Policy.

The Senators will convene an innovation and competitiveness working group to solicit input from academia, business, non-profits, and government agencies on ways to reduce administrative burdens and strengthen partnerships between academia and the private sector.

Senators John Thune (R-SD) and Gardner wrote in an op-ed, “we will ensure that this recommitment to U.S. competitiveness is premised on realistic and stable budget policies that will allow for more efficient long-term planning by the research community and other stakeholders.” Thune is chair of the Commerce Committee.

The public can provide input at [sciencepolicy@commerce.senate.gov](mailto:sciencepolicy@commerce.senate.gov) until 21 August 2015.

### **Call for Abstracts: Biodiversity Information Standards Conference**

The 2015 Biodiversity Information Standards Conference is seeking abstracts that address the conference theme of applications, standards, and capacity building for sustaining global biodiversity. The conference will be held from 28 September to 3 October 2015 in Nairobi, Kenya. Subprograms will include digitization, semantic technologies, phyloinformatics, outreach and collaboration, epublications, trait data, and conservation informatics. Information on how to prepare and submit abstracts in response to the call is provided at <http://www.tdwg.org/2015-conference/>.

## **Call for Abstracts: Using Digitized Data in Geological and Paleontological Research**

Abstracts are sought on research uses of digitized geoscience data, recent advances in data-publishing and mobilization, and uses of digitized data for outreach and education. The session will be held during the Geological Society of America's annual meeting in Baltimore, Maryland on 1-4 November 2015.

The session will highlight paleontology and geology research that has utilized publicly available digitized data. Topics to be addressed include an accounting of publicly available digital datasets; research methods and techniques; strategies for ensuring long-term storage, maintenance, and on-going accessibility of large digital datasets; digital dataset security; advances in technology and software for data analysis and manipulation; strategies for ensuring and improving data quality; current gaps and deficiencies in publicly available digital datasets and strategies for rectification; research uses of data generated by current ADBC TCN collaboratives; and recent research outcomes from digital datasets.

Session sponsors include iDigBio, Paleontological Society, Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections, GSA Geoinformatics Division, EarthCube C4P, and iSamples.

Abstracts are due by 11 August at <https://gsa.confex.com/gsa/2015AM/cfp.epl>.

## **Slate.com Article on Butterfly Collections**

A recent article on Slate.com discusses the value of collecting butterflies for natural history collections. "The Most Favored Insect" by Andrew Warren of the Florida Museum of Natural History makes a case for why butterfly collecting is still relevant in modern science.

Several new species of butterflies were recently identified because of genetic analysis. Warren writes, "new species remain to be discovered even among the best-studied faunas, and that ongoing collecting coupled with the study of museum collections continues to play an important role in revealing biodiversity. While specimens of all three of these new butterfly species existed in museum collections before they were formally recognized as new, all of them were initially revealed as unique through differences found in recently collected material."

[Read the article on Slate.com.](#)

## **Save the Date for the USGS Coalition Reception**

NSC Alliance through its membership in the USGS Coalition will be supporting the coalition's annual Capitol Hill reception. The event will recognize the leadership of two lawmakers in supporting the scientific mission of the United States Geological Survey. NSC Alliance members who will be in Washington, DC on 29 September 2015 are invited to attend. Please contact Julie Palakovich Carr at [jpalakovichcarr@aibs.org](mailto:jpalakovichcarr@aibs.org) for more information and to RSVP.

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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).

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