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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.

NSC Alliance in the News

The concerns of the collections community, including living and stock collections, about the National Science Foundation's (NSF) decision to suspend funding for the Collections in Support of Biological Research program has captured the interest of the science media.

Barbara Thiers, Vice President of the NSC Alliance was interviewed by *Nature* about the funding hiatus. "There's no point digitizing if we don't take care of the collections themselves. You certainly can't get any DNA out of an image."

Science Insider covered the campaign initiated by NSC Alliance and other scientific organizations to reverse NSF's decision. On March 24, NSC Alliance, the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections, and the American Institute of Biological Sciences [sent a letter to NSF](#) urging the agency to "reconsider this action, which can jeopardize the long-term care, stewardship, and accessibility of these irreplaceable biological specimens and their associated data."

In response to the concerns raised by the scientific community, NSF officials have said through the media that "it's premature to assume that this particular program will disappear, given that the collection program has gone through this process in the past and reappeared as a very vital and important part of our research resource activities."

Read the *Science* article at <http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2016/03/biologists-ask-nsf-reconsider-plan-pause-collections-funding-program>.

Read the *Nature* article at http://www.nature.com/news/biological-specimen-treasures-threatened-by-funding-pause-1.19599?WT.mc_id=TWT_NatureNews.

NSC Alliance Urges New Funding for NSF

The NSC Alliance has provided testimony to the House Appropriations Committee requesting that Congress provide the National Science Foundation (NSF) with at least \$8.0 billion in fiscal year 2017. This would represent an increase of \$536.5 million for the agency over the current funding level, and could enable the agency to increase its funding rate by about one percent.

NSC Alliance argued: “Scientific collections are a vital component of our nation’s research infrastructure. Whether held at a museum, government managed laboratory or archive, or in a university science department, these scientific resources contain genetic, tissue, organismal, and environmental samples that constitute a unique and irreplaceable library of the Earth’s history. The specimens and their associated data drive cutting edge research on significant challenges facing modern society, such as improving human health, enhancing food security, and understanding and responding to environmental change. Collections also inspire novel interdisciplinary research that drives innovation and addresses some of the most fundamental questions related to biodiversity.”

The testimony also highlighted some examples of how NSF investments in collections have resulted in new discoveries.

Read NSC Alliance’s testimony at <http://nscalliance.org/?p=897>.

NSC Alliance Calls for Funding of Interior and Smithsonian Collections

The NSC Alliance has called on Congress to adequately fund the preservation, curation, and digitization of natural history collections in fiscal year 2017. In testimony to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior and Environment, NSC Alliance expressed support for the new funding President Obama has requested for Interior and Smithsonian collections.

For fiscal year 2017, \$2 million in new funding has been requested for the Department of the Interior’s Cultural and Scientific Collections program. Smithsonian Institution requested an additional \$2.1 million for digitization of collections, an additional \$2.7 million to strengthen curatorial staffing, and an additional \$1.5 million to address deficiencies in the preservation of collections.

Read the [NSCA House Interior testimony](#).

NSF Initiates Search for New GEO Assistant Director

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has initiated a national search for an Assistant Director for Geosciences (GEO). The Assistant Director will lead a directorate comprised of four divisions: Atmospheric and Geospace Sciences, Earth Sciences, Ocean Sciences, and Polar Programs.

Dr. Ralph Cicerone, President of the National Academy of Sciences, will head the search committee. Nominations are sought for candidates with the following qualifications: outstanding leadership; a deep sense of scholarship; a grasp of the issues facing the geosciences in the areas of research and education; experience developing and overseeing complex scientific facilities; and the ability to serve effectively as a key member of the NSF management team. Recommendations of individuals from any sector - academic, industry, or government - are welcome.

Please send your recommendations, including any supporting information that you can provide, to the AD/GEO Search Committee via e mail (geosrch@nsf.gov) or at the following address: National Science Foundation, Office of the Director, Suite 1205, 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22230. Recommendations should be submitted by May 20, 2016.

Mammals Collection Manager at The Field Museum

The Field Museum in Chicago, Illinois is seeking a collections manager for the mammal collection. This large, actively growing collection is home to many research and education initiatives by both resident and extramural scientists.

Duties include overseeing all aspects of specimen preparation, identification, care, and organization of specimens; training, supervision and coordination of staff, students, and volunteers in their collection-related activities; assistance to visitors in their use of collection, processing of recently collected specimens, as well as supervision of outgoing and incoming specimen loans, loan recalls, and loan returns, all conducted in consultation with curator(s) of mammals.

Primary responsibilities include the maintenance of records relevant to the collection (electronic catalog, loan invoices, accession files, permits, field notes), providing the public, professionals, and officials with information they need from the collection (including digitizing specimens), and updating records as the collection grows or identifications change.

The Collection Manager of Mammals interacts with the Museum's Science Action, Integrative Research, and Learning centers, as well as with Exhibits programs. The position involves a heavy public engagement component through collections tours, donor engagement, and museum programming, grant writing, liaising with federal and state authorities as needed, and working with other mammal collections and researchers. The Collection Manager will have opportunities

to conduct collection-based research, but these will be secondary to collection management responsibilities.

The full job description is posted at <https://www.fieldmuseum.org/about/careers?id=58135>. Applications must be submitted through the website. Questions can be directed to Dr. Ben Marks (emarks@fieldmuseum.org).

Young Investigator Fellowship for Botanical Collecting Expedition to Samoa

The National Tropical Botanical Garden (NTBG) is organizing a six-week botanical expedition to the two largest islands in the Independent State of Samoa, Savai'i and 'Upolu. The field work will focus on the goal of botanical exploration of poorly known and botanically diverse habitats on these islands and to document and provide data critical to interpreting patterns of plant diversity in this unique floristic area as part of the Flora of Samoa project being authored by Dr. W. Arthur Whistler, a NTBG Senior McBryde Research Fellow.

The trip is expected to take place in mid-2016 (between late May and mid-July) and last approximately six weeks. All travel, food and lodging expenses will be covered. The successful applicant must be able to undertake strenuous, hikes with loaded backpack under potentially adverse weather conditions, sometimes including multi-day hikes with remote camping.

The successful applicant will have the opportunity to participate and learn many aspects of field techniques, identification of plant families and genera in Samoa, as well as collecting botanical specimens both for herbarium and for DNA repository, greatly extending the possible accomplishments of the expedition. This will provide critical hands-on experience for the student and also allow them to be part of a project which will result in the publication of an important book on the Samoan flora. Applicants should be a currently enrolled undergraduate, graduate student or post-doctoral student and possess a passport valid for a minimum of six (6) months after the intended date of departure from Samoa (mid-July 2016).

All applicants should submit the following:

1. A statement why the applicant would benefit from the experience (max. 1 page).
2. Specific project or taxonomic group in which they are interested, if any (max. 1 page).
3. Curriculum vitae including background and experience in botanical field work.
4. Names and email addresses of three references.

Please submit proposals by end of day, March 31. Proposals should be e-mailed to NTBG's Director of Science and Conservation, Dr. David Lorence (lorenced@ntbg.org) and copied to McBryde Chair, Dr. Warren L. Wagner (wagnerw@si.edu). Proposals will be evaluated and results announced in April 2016.

New Address for IMLS

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is moving to a new headquarters. The agency's new address – effective March 23 – is 955 L'Enfant Plaza North, SW, Suite 4000, Washington, D.C. 20024-2135. The IMLS email addresses and telephone numbers will remain the same.

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.