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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.

Trump Administration Announces Science Priorities

In a recent memo from the White House, federal agencies were directed to prioritize military superiority, national security, economic growth, energy, and health in their fiscal year (FY) 2019 budget submissions for science. Moreover, agencies are encouraged to focus on research investments that “best serve the American people and are budget neutral.”

The memo is a significant departure from the FY 2017 research and development (R&D) budget directive issued by the Obama Administration, which prioritized climate change, clean energy, Earth observation, advanced manufacturing, and innovations in the life sciences.

Although public health was included as a priority by both administrations, the emphases are different. For 2017, basic research in areas such as neuroscience, the microbiome, and infectious disease were emphasized. Conversely, the 2019 directive stresses disease prevention, treatment, and cure, especially “solution for an aging population.”

The memo directs that “when considering new research programs, agencies should ensure that the proposed programs are based on sound science, do not duplicate existing R&D efforts, and have the potential to contribute to the public good. Agencies should also identify existing R&D

programs that could progress more efficiently through private sector R&D, and consider their modification or elimination where Federal involvement is no longer needed or appropriate.” In regards to science education, agencies should work to expand the scientific workforce “to include all Americans, both urban and rural, and including women and other underrepresented groups.”

There was no mention of curation of scientific collections in the FY 2019 funding memo. Collections had been included in these memoranda dating back to the George W. Bush Administration.

National Fossil Day is October 11

The National Park Service is planning for the annual celebration of National Fossil Day, which will take place on October 11, 2017. National Fossil Day is a nationwide celebration that will include paleontology activities planned by partner organizations across the United States.

NSC Alliance has once again partnered with the National Park Service to promote the event. The Alliance is also distributing a [short document](#) about the scientific value of fossil collections.

The participation of local museums, universities, and other scientific organizations is central to National Fossil Day. Help your local community learn about local paleontological and natural resources by participating in the event.

To join as a partner for National Fossil Day, visit <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/fossilday/events.htm>.

Nominations Sought for National Academies Study

An expert panel is being convened by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. A new Climate Communications Initiative aims to facilitate rapid and effective communication of evidence-based insights to the public and decision-makers. Individuals with expertise in climate science, climate impacts and economics, potential response options, science communication, social media engagement, or science education are needed to serve on the advisory committee. Nominations are due by September 15, 2017. Learn more at <http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/3749724/cci-cte-noms>.

Controversy Over USDA Science Nominee

Members of Congress are calling for the nomination of Sam Clovis to be Department of Agriculture Undersecretary of Research, Education, and Economics to be withdrawn. Reports have recently come to light of Clovis' incendiary remarks when he hosted a conservative talk radio show.

News outlets have found clips of Clovis promoting the birther movement about President Obama and calling then-Attorney General Eric Holder a “racist black.”

Senators Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Brian Schatz (D-HI) said in a joint statement, “President Trump should withdraw the Clovis nomination immediately - not only because he is a proud ‘skeptic’ of climate change and wildly unqualified for the position of USDA Chief Scientist - but also as a gesture to the American people that this administration is serious about rooting out the most hateful voices in our society.”

If the nomination is not withdrawn, the Senators will “vehemently” oppose the nomination.

The scientific community has expressed concern that Clovis does not meet the qualifications to hold the position. The 2008 farm bill requires that the President make the appointment “from among distinguished scientists with specialized training or significant experience in agricultural research, education, and economics.”

Climate Advisory Panel Terminated

The Sustained National Climate Assessment Advisory Committee has been disbanded by the Trump Administration. The committee’s charter expired on 20 August and was not renewed. The 15 member panel was tasked with long-term planning for climate adaptation.

The administration claims that the panel’s dissolution will not affect the completion of the fourth National Climate Assessment. It could, however, affect the ability of state and local governments to access information pertaining to climate mitigation and adaption, according to Dr. Richard Moss, outgoing chair of the committee. According to Moss, the committee translated information from the climate assessment report and made it “more useful” to end users.

“We were trying to encourage greater dialogue between the scientific community and stakeholders so they could better understand and interpret the science,” said Dr. Jerry Melillo, who led the last three climate assessments. “Anything that diminishes our ability to convey that information to the public makes the American people the losers in this kind of situation... This may be part of a bigger picture and larger strategy with which this particular administration de-emphasizes the importance of science in making decisions, especially with climate change.”

Hotline for Scientific Integrity Concerns

The Union of Concerned Scientists has a new hotline for federal employees and contractors to confidentially report any incidents that may impact the role of science in federal decision-making. The Science Protection Project is looking for cases where scientific reports were pressured to be watered down, violations of federal scientific integrity policies, reduced or suspended data collection, and other examples of inappropriate conduct relating to science within

a federal agency. Learn more at <http://www.ucsus.org/center-science-and-democracy/promoting-scientific-integrity/ucs-science-protection-project>.

Expand Your Broader Impact Skills: AIBS Communications Boot Camp for Scientists

The Natural Science Collections Alliance is pleased to offer the following special opportunity for its members. NSC Alliance members will receive a discount on registration for an upcoming science communications workshop organized by the American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS).

AIBS is offering a professional development program designed to enhance the communication skills of scientists, particularly those interested in communicating with decision-makers and the news media. The program is an excellent way to develop new communication skills and identify effective methods for broadening the impact of research and education programs.

The AIBS Communications Training Boot Camp for Scientists expands on AIBS' highly successful media and science policy training workshops. The Boot Camp meets the needs of everyone from graduate students to senior researchers and program administrators to newly elected professional society leaders.

The Boot Camp is an intensive, two-day, hands-on training program that will be held in Washington, DC on October 9-10, 2017.

Participants will learn:

- How to translate scientific findings for non-technical audiences
- How to tell a resonant story that informs decision-makers
- How to prepare for and participate in a news interview
- How to prepare for and engage in a meeting with a decision-maker
- How to protect your scientific reputation
- How to identify and define the audience you need to reach
- What decision-makers want to hear from a scientist
- What reporters are looking for in an interview
- How to leverage social media
- How the nation's science policy is developed and implemented

Participants will also have the opportunity for formal and informal discussions with science policy and communications experts working in Washington, DC. A course outline is available [here](#).

Because of NSC Alliance's strategic partnership with the American Institute of Biological Sciences, individuals nominated to participate by an NSC Alliance member institution save \$55 on the registration rate.

Learn more about the program and register now at https://www.aibs.org/public-policy/communications_boot_camp.html.

Enter the 2017 Faces of Biology Photo Contest

Enter the Faces of Biology Photo Contest for your chance to win \$250 and to have your photo appear on the cover of the journal *BioScience*.

The competition, sponsored by the American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS), recognizes scientists who use imagery to communicate aspects of biological research to the public and policymakers.

The theme of the contest is “Faces of Biology.” Photographs entered into the competition must depict a person, such as a scientist, technician, or student, engaging in biological research. The research may occur outside, in a lab, at a natural history collection, at a field station, on a computer, in a classroom, or anywhere else research is done.

The First Place Winner will have his/her winning photo featured on the cover of *BioScience*, and will receive \$250 and a one year membership in AIBS, including a subscription to *BioScience*. The Second and Third Place Winners will have his/her winning photo printed inside the journal, and will receive a one year membership in AIBS, including a subscription to *BioScience*.

The winning photo from the 2016 contest was featured on the cover of the April 2017 issue of *BioScience*.

Submissions must be received by 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on 1 October 2017.

For more information or to enter the contest, visit <http://www.aibs.org/public-programs/photocontest.html>.

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.