

In this Issue:

- NSC Alliance 2019 Collections Policy and Advocacy Meeting: Register Now
- Congress Completes FY 2019 Appropriations, President Declares Emergency
- Science Committee Leadership in the New Congress
- *Atlantic* Article on Insect Disappearance, Role of Collections
- Training Course for Biological Infrastructure Project Leaders
- NSF Announces New BIO Director
- Job Opening: NEON Biorepository Collections Manager
- Learn to Communicate and Influence like a Pro: AIBS Communications Boot Camp for Scientists

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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 <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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### **NSC Alliance 2019 Collections Policy and Advocacy Meeting: Register Now**

Registration is now open for the NSC Alliance 2019 membership meeting, Collections Policy and Advocacy. The meeting will be held in Washington, DC, on April 2-3, 2019. Learn more about the meeting, including a draft agenda, and register at [http://nscalliance.org/?page\\_id=1084](http://nscalliance.org/?page_id=1084). All NSC Alliance member institutions are encouraged to participate. In addition to being an opportunity for NSC Alliance members to network and exchange information with each other, this meeting provides a platform for the community to interact with federal program officers and lawmakers. The meeting will explore opportunities for the community to work collectively to promote new investments in natural science collections, and opportunities to inform or reform policies impacting collections. NSC Alliance members are also invited to share information about initiatives or programs at their institutions. Information about submitting an abstract is available on the meeting website.

NSC Alliance members participating in the meeting are also invited to join NSC Alliance and the Biodiversity Collections Network during the morning of April 4 for a report release at the National Press Club. The event marks the public release of a new community-informed vision document discussing how collections contribute to research and education.

Questions about the meeting can be directed to Robert Gropp at [rgropp@aibs.org](mailto:rgropp@aibs.org) or 202-628-1500 x 250.

## **Congress Completes FY 2019 Appropriations, President Declares Emergency**

Congress has passed a bipartisan spending and border security package that includes fiscal year (FY) 2019 funding for the federal agencies that were shuttered during the 35-day partial government shutdown in December 2018 and January 2019. Included in the spending package was \$1.375 billion for barriers along the U.S.-Mexico border. President Trump agreed to sign the legislation, but declared a national emergency to transfer funds from other government programs to fund wall construction.

Congress completed its work on FY 2019 appropriations by passing the spending package, which includes seven funding bills for Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies; Commerce, Justice and Science; Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies; Financial Services and General Government; Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies; Homeland Security; and State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs.

The spending package provides:

- \$8.1 billion (+\$308 million) to the National Science Foundation, with \$6.5 billion (+\$185 million) for Research and Related Activities.
- \$5.4 billion to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, a decrease of \$484 million from FY 2018.
- \$21.5 billion to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, an increase of \$764 million from FY 2018.
- \$985 million (-\$213 million) for the National Institute of Science and Technology.
- \$13 billion (-\$95 million) to the Interior Department in FY 2019, with \$1.3 billion (+\$14 million) going to the Bureau of Land Management; \$3.2 billion (+\$20 million) to the National Park Service; and \$1.58 billion (-\$17 million) to the Fish and Wildlife Service. The bill also provides Interior with \$14.1 million in new funding for the departmental reorganization initiated by former Secretary Ryan Zinke.
- \$1.18 billion (+\$12 million) to the U.S. Geological Survey, with \$157 million (-\$850,000) for the Ecosystems Mission Area.
- Level funding of \$8.06 billion to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in fiscal year (FY) 2019. The bill provides an additional \$791 million for toxic waste site clean-up and water infrastructure. Congress rejected the President's request for a \$2 billion budget cut for the agency. The bill also does not include the funds requested for "workforce reshaping" at EPA.
- \$3.16 billion for agricultural research, including \$1.7 billion (+\$341 million) for the Agricultural Research Service, \$1.47 billion for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (+\$63 million), and \$415 million (+\$15 million) for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative.
- \$1.04 billion (+\$150,000) to the Smithsonian Institution.

In an explanatory statement accompanying the FY 2019 Agriculture-Rural Development-Food and Drug Administration appropriations bill, appropriators have expressed concerns over the unknown costs of relocating the Economic Research Service (ERS) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) outside the national capital region. The statement reads, “Insufficient information and justification relating to the reorganization and relocation make moving forward on these proposals premature at this time.” Appropriators have directed the Department of Agriculture (USDA) to include cost estimates for the proposed relocation in its budget justifications for FY 2020. According to Agriculture Secretary Perdue, USDA is currently reviewing proposals by communities and universities to host the ERS and NIFA operations and is on track to complete the move by the end of 2019. Last year, 107 stakeholder organizations [urged](#) Congress to scrutinize the proposal to relocate NIFA.

The border security package provides only a fraction of the \$5.7 billion requested by the President for a border wall, and also bars construction of the wall on five border sites in South Texas. By declaring a national emergency, the Administration plans to tap into military construction funds or even disaster aid to secure the remainder of the funding.

The President’s national emergency plan has raised concerns of executive overreach among lawmakers of both parties. Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) expressed concerns that a future Democratic President could use a similar strategy to declare an emergency over climate change. “Today’s national emergency is border security,” he said. “But a future president may use this exact same tactic to impose the Green New Deal.”

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) said, “We think the president would be on very weak legal ground to proceed on this, and I’m sure that if he chose to do that, that we would test it in the courts. And you’ve heard a lot of Republicans express a similar sentiment.” Democratic lawmakers in the House are considering a resolution of disapproval to block the President’s emergency declaration. The resolution might pass in the House, but Senate Leader Mitch McConnell has said that he would support the President’s declaration. If the resolution does pass in Congress, the President can veto it. Congress would then need a two-thirds majority in both chambers to override the veto.

The President’s declaration is now also facing legal challenges from several groups, including Texas landowners. A coalition of 16 states, led by California, are suing to block the President from reallocating funds to pay for the border wall. The Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife, and the Animal Legal Defense Fund have also filed a suit against the Administration alleging that the declaration is unlawful.

### **Science Committee Leadership in the New Congress**

The names of lawmakers chairing congressional committees with jurisdiction over science in the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress have been announced.

The House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, chaired by Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX), has announced the leadership of its 5 subcommittees. First-term members of Congress will chair four of its subcommittees: Representative Haley Stevens (D-MI) will lead the Research Subcommittee; Representative Lizzie Fletcher (D-TX) will chair the Environment Subcommittee; Representative Kendra Horn (D-OK) will head the Space Subcommittee, and Representative Mikie Sherrill (D-NJ) will lead the Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee. The energy subcommittee will be chaired by Representative Conor Lamb (D-PA).

The Ranking Member on the House Science Committee is Representative Frank Lucas (R-OK). Republican leaders on the Science subcommittees include Representative Jim Baird (R-IN), Ranking Member on the Subcommittee on Research and Technology; Representative Roger Marshall (R-KS), Ranking Member of the Environment Subcommittee; Representative Brian Babin (R-TX), Ranking Member of the Space Subcommittee; Representative Ralph Norman (R-SC), top Republican on the Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight; and Representative Randy Weber (R-TX) Ranking Member on the Energy Subcommittee.

House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Nita Lowey (D-NY) has announced the Chairpersons leading the various Appropriations Subcommittees: Representative Sanford Bishop (D-GA) will chair the Agriculture-Food and Drug Administration panel; Representative Jose Serrano (D-NY) will lead the Commerce-Justice-Science panel; Representative Betty McCollum (D-MN) will chair the Interior-Environment panel; Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) will head the Labor-HHS-Education panel; and Representative Marcy Kaptur (D-OH) will chair the Energy and Water Development panel. Representative Kay Granger (R-TX) will serve as the top Republican on the House Appropriations Panel.

The House Natural Resources Committee will be chaired by Representative Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ). The lawmakers helming the panel's subcommittees include Representative Deb Haaland (D-NM), a freshman, who will head the National Parks, Forests and Public Lands Subcommittee; Representative Jared Huffman (D-CA), who will chair the Water, Oceans and Wildlife Subcommittee; and Representative Alan Lowenthal (D-CA), who will chair the Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee. Representative Rob Bishop (R-UT) is the Ranking Member on the Committee.

### ***Atlantic* Article on Insect Disappearance, Role of Collections**

A recent article published by the *Atlantic* titled "Is the Insect Apocalypse Really Upon Us?" explores the claims that insects will become extinct within a century.

The author, Ed Yong, interviewed several entomologists on the alarming claim. An excerpt from the article reads: "The data on insect declines are too patchy, unrepresentative, and piecemeal to justify some of the more hyperbolic alarms. At the same time, what little information we have tends to point in the same worrying direction. How, then, should we act on that imperfect knowledge? It's a question that goes beyond the fate of insects: How do we preserve our rapidly changing world when the unknowns are vast and the cost of inaction is potentially high?"

The article discusses the need for collecting long-term data on insects and “documenting insect diversity” in order to develop a better understanding of the situation. Dr. Jennifer Zaspel, NSC Alliance Board member and Associate Curator and Head of Zoology of the Milwaukee Public Museum, calls for more support for natural-history museums and digitized collections. “The specimens pinned within their drawers can provide irreplaceable information about historical populations, but digitizing that information is expensive and laborious,” she states.

Read the article: <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2019/02/insect-apocalypse-really-upon-us/583018/>

### **Training Course for Biological Infrastructure Project Leaders**

The Ecological Society of America’s (ESA) Sustaining Biological Infrastructure (SBI) training initiative is offering a short course, “Strategies for Success: Training for Project Directors”, on June 12-14, 2019 at Yale University, New Haven, CT. The course is co-located with the 3rd Annual [Digital Data in Biodiversity Research Conference](#) to be held on June 10-12, 2019 at Yale University.

During the 3-day course, participants will:

- Create a plan to make their project more financially sustainable and successful;
- Learn how to secure funding from private foundations;
- Hone their skills in strategic planning, finances, and communication; and
- Network with colleagues who face similar challenges.

[View the course outline.](#)

Registration deadline is May 17, 2019. Learn more and register at <https://esa.org/sbi/for-participants/june-2019-course/>

### **NSF Announces New BIO Director**

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has announced that Dr. Joanne Tornow will serve as the next Director of the Biological Sciences Directorate (BIO).

Dr. Tornow has worked in program management, leadership, and strategic development roles at NSF for nearly two decades. Tornow has previously served as Senior Adviser for strategic planning in BIO, head of BIO’s Molecular and Cellular Biosciences division, Deputy Assistant Director for NSF’s Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate (SBE), Acting head of SBE, and Head of NSF’s Office of Information and Resource Management. Prior to joining NSF, she was faculty at Portland State University and the University of Southern Mississippi.

Dr. Tornow has been the acting BIO head since January 2018. She received a bachelor's degree in biology from Rutgers University and a Ph.D. in human genetics from Yale University.

### **Job Opening: NEON Biorepository Collections Manager**

The Arizona State University (ASU) School of Life Sciences is accepting applications for an Environmental & Zoological Collections Manager for the [National Ecological Observatory Network Biorepository \(NEON\)](#).

The position will complement existing positions focused primarily on managing cryo and invertebrate collections. Candidates who consider themselves capable of handling environmental and zoological samples, including thousands of frozen and room temperature-preserved soil samples, wet depositions from terrestrial sites, microbial samples; and furthermore, an array of zoological samples - primarily arthropods (insects, arachnids) and vertebrate samples or specimens (e.g., mammals, fish), are strongly encouraged to apply.

NEON a continental-scale ecological observation facility, sponsored by the National Science Foundation and operated by Battelle. Arizona State University will be the primary location for NEON's national biorepository for the next 30 years and will house biological specimens collected from 81 sites across the country and natural history collections.

Email enquiries about the open positions can be directed to Nico Franz ([nico.franz@asu.edu](mailto:nico.franz@asu.edu)).

Apply at

[https://sjobs.brassring.com/TGnewUI/Search/Home/Home?partnerid=25620&siteid=5494#jobDetails=3729081\\_5494](https://sjobs.brassring.com/TGnewUI/Search/Home/Home?partnerid=25620&siteid=5494#jobDetails=3729081_5494)

### **Learn to Communicate and Influence like a Pro: AIBS Communications Boot Camp for Scientists**

The American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS) is offering its Communications Boot Camp for Scientists this March 25-26, 2019. Students and staff affiliated with NSC Alliance member institutions are eligible to receive a significant discount off of the regular program registration rate.

The AIBS Communications Training Boot Camp for Scientists was 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 Boot Camp is an intensive, two-day, hands-on training program.

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.

NSC Alliance members receive a significant discount on the registration fee. Learn more about the program and register now at [https://www.aibs.org/public-policy/communications\\_boot\\_camp.html](https://www.aibs.org/public-policy/communications_boot_camp.html).

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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).

The NSC Alliance Washington Report is a publication of the NSC Alliance. For information about membership in the NSC Alliance, please contact [dbosnjak@aibs.org](mailto:dbosnjak@aibs.org).