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AIBS*news*

JANUARY 2010/VOLUME 60 NUMBER 1

National Survey of Natural History Collections Launched

The Web site *www.CollectionsWeb.org* has initiated a new survey to inventory all US natural history collections, produce a comprehensive database of this information, and establish a baseline for periodically assessing status and trends. The collected data will be shared with the natural science collections community for use in research or grant writing.

In recent years, efforts by the federal government have improved our knowledge of the number and status of natural history collections in the United States. Reports released by the Interagency Working Group on Scientific Collections and the National Science Foundation (NSF) provide valuable information about federally held science collections; however, these surveys reached less than half of US natural history collections. The CollectionsWeb survey will complete the knowledgebase of collections in this country.

As a partner organization of the NSF-funded Research Coordination Network grant, "Building a Community of Natural History Collections," AIBS is promoting this initiative to its members. Please complete the CollectionsWeb Survey of US Natural History Collections at *www.museum.tulane.edu/collectionswebsurvey/*.

APGA Joins Campaign for Collections

AIBS member organizations continue to join the effort to secure a presidential executive order for scientific collections. The campaign, launched last summer by the Natural Science Collections Alliance, an AIBS member organization, has generated at least 17 organizational endorsements. Most recently, on 10 November, the American Public Gardens Association lent its support to the effort.

COMING SOON

AIBS will soon publish an electronic newsletter. We need your e-mail address to send it to you—please verify your contact information at *www.aibs.org/individual-membership.*

For more information about this campaign, please visit *http://nscalliance.org/?p=144.*

AIBS at the White House

On 23 November, AIBS director of public policy Robert Gropp attended a White House event at which President Obama announced a new national initiative, Educate to Innovate.

This national campaign is "an effort to help reach the administration's goal of moving American students from the middle of the pack to the front in science and math achievement over the next decade," according to White House documents. At the event, the president announced five public-private partnerships that have committed to helping unleash the power of media, interactive games, hands-on learning, and community volunteers to reach millions of students. The goal is to inspire them to become the next generation of scientists, engineers, inventors, and innovators.

The president also issued a call for the private sector, which includes scientific associations, to work with the nation's community colleges to improve science education and ensure that students have the skills required for the 21st-century workforce or to continue onto a four-year college program.

According to President Obama, Educate to Innovate is a response to his call to action issued during an April 2009 speech to the National Academy of Sciences.

Earlier in November, AIBS sent the president a short letter describing some of the community-based education initiatives AIBS has helped to cultivate in recent years through programs such as the Coalition on the Public Understanding of Science and the Year of Science 2009. To read this letter, visit *www.aibs.org/position-statements/20091120_aibs_writes_to.html.* For more information about AIBS education programs, visit *www.aibs.org/home/index.html.*

AIBS Accepting Applications for 2010 EPPLA

AIBS is now accepting applications for the 2010 Emerging Public Policy Leadership Award (EPPLA). This award recognizes graduate students in the biological sciences who have demonstrated initiative and leadership in science policy. EPPLA recipients receive first-hand experience at the interface of science and public policy.

In 2010, winners will receive fare for domestic travel to Washington, DC, to participate in a Congressional Visits Day event that showcases the importance of federal investments for fundamental bio-

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Recent Articles Online at *www.actionbioscience.org*

Recent Public Policy Reports Online at *www.aibs.org/public-policy-reports*

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logical research supported by agencies such as the National Science Foundation. Winners will also attend a Capitol Hill reception recognizing a member of Congress for his or her work to advance the biological sciences through public policy, and will discuss with members of Congress the importance of federal investments in the biological sciences. Winners will receive a one-year paid AIBS membership, including a subscription to *BioScience* and a copy of *Communicating Science: A Primer for Working with the Media,* and will become a part of the growing EPPLA alumni network.

The 2010 EPPLA is open to US citizens enrolled in a graduate degree program in the biological sciences, science education, or closely allied field. Applicants should have a demonstrated interest in and commitment to biological science policy or science education policy. Prior EPPLA winners and AIBS science policy interns or fellows are not eligible.

Application details can be found at *www.aibs.org/public-policy/student_opportunities.html.*

New Outreach Coordinator/Informal Educator Section Events at NABT Conference

The newest section of the National Association of Biology Teachers, Outreach Coordinator and Informal Educators, was launched at the 2009 Professional Development Conference in mid-November. AIBS participated in the section's events. A symposium for this group on the first day of the conference provided resources and programs that address the unique challenges of teaching biology without classrooms. AIBS staff members Susan Musante and Oksana Hlodan interacted with colleagues at a poster session the next day and shared information about AIBS outreach and informal education programs that offer resources and networking opportunities to the informal teacher and learner.

Biologists, Educators Recognize Excellence in Evolution Education

The National Association of Biology Teachers (NABT) recognized Leonard C. Yannielli, professor of biological sciences at Naugatuck Valley Community College in Waterbury, Connecticut, with the 2009 Evolution Education Award during the NABT annual professional development conference from 11–14 November in Denver, Colorado.

The Evolution Education Award is cosponsored by AIBS and the Biological Sciences Curriculum Study (BSCS) and awards innovative classroom teaching and community education efforts to promote the accurate understanding of biological evolution. Professor Yannielli received a plaque, a $1000 prize, and a set of resources provided by AIBS and BSCS to support the teaching of evolution.

"AIBS, BSCS and NABT are doing important work with this award, as it says loud and clear that evolution education is important," Yannielli said. "I'm humbled to be recognized by peers and feel I'm sharing the honor with many educators who have toiled courageously under very difficult situations."

Yannielli has been teaching biology courses that have placed emphasis on evolution and evolutionary origins for more than 41 years. His microbiology courses, for example, highlight the evolutionary interplay between microbes, humans, and disease, thereby encouraging students to shed egocentric approaches to thinking about evolution.

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Recent Articles Online at *www.actionbioscience.org*

Original article in English

- "Darwins, Demons, Demiurgers and the Anguish of Discovery," by John Buckeridge, of RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia. Buckeridge suggests there is more to Darwin's story than science or faith alone. Humans are spiritual beings, but it is not an imperative that we excise science in pursuit of spirituality, or vice versa. Read the article at *www.actionbioscience.org/evolution/buckeridge.html.*

Recent "Technology: An Educational Issue?" blog posts

- K12IMC.org: Tech Resources

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- Foldit: Protein Folding Game

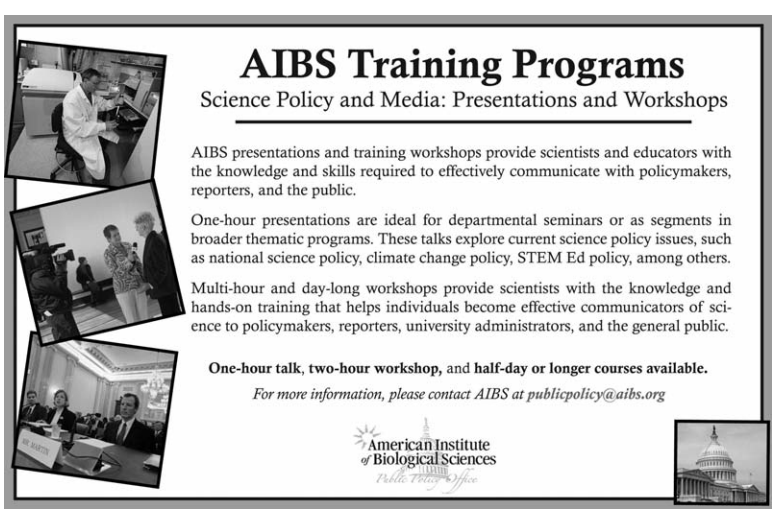
Spanish translation of a previously posted article

- "Cómo Enseñar Anatomía y Fisiología en la Autopista Virtual" [Teaching Anatomy and Physiology on the Virtual Highway], by Karen Smith, a biology teacher at Holton Governor's School and Southwest Virginia Community College. In this article, Smith describes the multiple advantages of virtual learning and presents educators with ideas about implementing virtual schools or courses. Read the article in Spanish at *www.actionbioscience.org/esp/educacion/smith.html* or in English at *www.actionbioscience.org/education/smith.html.*

Recent Public Policy Reports Online at *www.aibs.org/public-policy-reports*

Public Policy Report for 24 November 2009

- **President announces new science education initiative.** At a White House event on 23 November, President Obama announced a new national science education initiative. On hand for the launch of Educate to Innovate was AIBS director of pubic policy Robert Gropp.
- **AIBS to host Webinar: "Alternative Science Careers: Science Policy."** A growing number of individuals are interested in employment that allows them to apply their scientific skills and training to the resolution of societal problems. Whether an individual's interests are in education, health, environment, or the nation's investment in scientific research, a public policy career is one way that scientists can convert their education into action.
- **National Park Service says scientists must share.** The National Park Service (NPS) plans to require researchers using specimens collected from national parks to enter into a benefits-sharing agreement with NPS if their research produces discoveries or inventions with some valuable commercial application.
- **International study: Financial benefits in conservation.** Investing in conservation can bring huge financial returns, according to a new report from The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) study. The TEEB study, backed by the United Nations, grew from a 2007 meeting of the environment ministers of the G8 nations and five major newly developing countries.
- **Attention graduate students: AIBS accepting 2010 EPPLA applications.**
- **House passes measure to prevent aquatic invaders.** The House of Representatives passed HR 3618 on 17 November, a bill that would require ships operating in US waters that engage in international voyages to use an antifouling system on their hulls to control or prevent the attachment of unwanted organisms.
- **Birds collected by Darwin to be used to restore extinct population.** An international group of researchers have extracted DNA from two mockingbirds collected by Charles Darwin during his voyage on the HMS Beagle in the hopes of reintroducing an extinct subpopulation to the Galápagos Islands.
- **Biosecurity draws attention from Congress, scientists.** Security at biological research facilities that work with biological select agents and toxins could be strengthened under a bill passed by the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee on 4 November.



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