

## AIBSnews

Source: BioScience, 57(8) : 712-715

Published By: American Institute of Biological Sciences

URL: <https://doi.org/10.1641/B570814>

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# AIBSnews

SEPTEMBER 2007/VOLUME 57 NUMBER 8

## Rita Colwell Awarded 2006 National Medal of Science

AIBS congratulates Rita R. Colwell, AIBS president-elect, who was recently awarded the 2006 National Medal of Science. President George W. Bush presented the nation's highest honor for scientists to Colwell and seven fellow recipients at a special White House ceremony on 27 July 2007.

The award recognizes Colwell "for her in-depth research that has contributed to a greater understanding of the ecology, physiology, and evolution of marine microbes, most notably *Vibrio cholerae*, the causative agent of pandemic cholera, and which has elucidated critical links between environmental and human health." Colwell's efforts have led to actions that significantly improved drinking water quality and reduced the number of deaths in cholera-affected regions of the world, including Bangladesh and India.

Regarding the prestigious award, Colwell remarked, "It is a very much appreciated affirmation of my research on marine microorganisms, including *Vibrio cholerae* and related vibrios, over the past 20 years."

Colwell is currently a Distinguished University Professor at the University of Maryland at College Park and at Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, and a senior advisor for Canon US Life Sciences, Inc. From 1998 to 2004, she served as the 11th director of the National Science Foundation. She is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, and she received the Order of the Rising Sun award from the Emperor of Japan.

In 2008, Colwell will begin her term as president of AIBS. She is also the program chair of the 2008 AIBS annual meeting, "Climate, Environment, and Infectious Disease," which will be held 12–13 May 2008 in Washington, DC.

## AIBS and COPUS Cosponsor Science Communication Workshop at Joint ESA/SER Meeting

COPUS (Coalition on the Public Understanding of Science) and AIBS were pleased to cosponsor "Communicating Science to the Public: The Where, Why, and How of Engaging Nonscientists," a special full-day workshop held on 5 August 2007 in San Jose, California, during this year's joint meeting of the Ecological Society of America and the Society for Ecological Restoration.

The workshop, organized by the ESA Student Section, introduced attendees to the skills necessary for successfully communicating science to the public and explored how to identify avenues of communication, both traditional and non-traditional. The lineup of 13 speakers—including AIBS Director of Public Policy Robert Gropp—discussed how to communicate with a variety of groups, including local organizations and school groups, print and broadcast media, and policy-makers.

Gropp's presentation, "Nurturing the Public Understanding of the Nature of Science," highlighted the important role that the nationwide COPUS network plays in promoting local science organizations and programs that, in turn, contribute to improving the public's understanding of science.

Gropp also encouraged the largely student-dominated audience to engage their graduate student groups, academic departments, universities, and scientific organizations in COPUS.

Learn how to get your group involved at [www.copusproject.org/](http://www.copusproject.org/). For more information about the workshop, go to [http://rydberg.biology.colostate.edu/communicating\\_science/](http://rydberg.biology.colostate.edu/communicating_science/).

## AIBS, BEN Representatives at NSDL Meeting

Samantha J. Katz, AIBS director of education and outreach, attended the National Science Digital Library (NSDL) Pathways Meeting, held 1–2 August 2007 in Boulder, Colorado. Katz was one of the three representatives from BiosciEdNet (BEN) who attended the meeting.

NSDL, established by the National Science Foundation, is a free online library of resources for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education and outreach. BEN is the NSDL portal for teaching and learning in the biological sciences. AIBS is one of the 11 founding collaborators of BEN.

For further information, contact Samantha J. Katz (e-mail: [skatz@aibs.org](mailto:skatz@aibs.org)).

## 2007 ASM/AIBS Public Policy Intern Named

Once again this fall, the AIBS Public Policy Office will host a graduate student public policy intern. The three-month position, funded by the American Society of Mammalogists (ASM), is an oppor-

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tunity for a graduate student to experience firsthand how federal science policy is formulated. Joshua Smith, who studied in the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences at South Dakota State University, has been selected for this year's position.

Smith received his undergraduate degree in biology from East Tennessee State University in 2000. He then spent three and a half years working on fisheries- and wildlife-related projects before returning to graduate school at South Dakota State University in 2004. During the hiatus from academia, Smith participated in the reintroductions of the Canada lynx to Colorado and the Mexican gray wolf to Arizona and New Mexico. He has also been involved with research efforts looking at black bear ecology in Virginia and at wolf–elk interactions in Alberta, Canada. “These positions allowed me to see firsthand the importance of having a strong voice for our natural resources,” Smith said.

For the past three years he has worked with his graduate advisor, Jonathan Jenks, studying the American marten in the Black Hills of South Dakota. The research has assessed factors affecting range expansion, the efficacy of survey techniques, and the genetic viability of this reintroduced population.

Smith completed his graduate program in August 2007. Of the policy internship, he says, “As my time in South Dakota draws to a close, I find the prospect of working as the ASM intern appealing on several levels. First, as a prospective scientist, I feel it is our responsibility to disseminate our findings not only to our peers but also to the general public and our elected officials. Second, exposure to such a wide array of individuals and the opportunity to build on existing skill sets is priceless as I look ahead to my future in the wildlife community. I appreciate the confidence that AIBS and ASM have shown in hiring me for this unique position, and I look forward to my time working with these institutions.”

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### AIBS Education Office Names New Associate

Brian Stagg, who graduated from the University of Maryland at College Park in May with a BS in environmental science and policy, began work at AIBS on 6 August as education and outreach associate. Stagg will focus primarily on student chapters and diversity programs—particularly on increasing participation and membership.

Stagg interned at Friends of the National Zoo the last two summers and has experience teaching at the K–12 level.

### Science Café Web Site Launched

COPUS is delighted to share the news that the WGBH Educational Foundation, in association with the scientific research society Sigma Xi, has launched a Web site at *www.sciencecafes.org* to promote the growing science café movement in the United States.

At science cafés, scientists and engineers share their expertise with the general public in a relaxed, friendly setting; discussions are typically held at local restaurants, coffee shops, or pubs. Topics have been wide-ranging, from bird flu, human space flight, chaos, and global warming to the Irish potato famine, green building, the ivory-billed woodpecker, honeybees, and dark energy and dark matter.

The Web site, which was created with the help and input of many science café organizers, is designed to assist in all aspects of planning and promoting café events, from publicizing and supporting them to choosing topics, speakers, and venues; it also features an interactive map to locate where cafés are being held.

“By taking science to the people, science cafés help to personalize and demystify complex subjects, bringing science into everyday conversation, where it truly belongs,” said Laura J. Nigro, who runs Sigma Xi’s Public Understanding of Science program. “This partnership combines NOVA scienceNOW’s compelling videos [*www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/science now/*] with the educational outreach of WGBH and Sigma Xi’s unprecedented access to the nation’s top researchers,” she added.

"It has been a delight to watch the popularity of science cafés grow in the United States with the support of our organizations," said Julie Benyo, director of educational outreach for WGBH. "From a handful of cafés a few years ago to more than 50 in the US today, the café format has proven that people of all ages and backgrounds enjoy talking over the latest developments in science."

For additional questions about this project, contact Laura J. Nigro (e-mail: [scicafe@sigmaxi.org](mailto:scicafe@sigmaxi.org); telephone: 800-243-6534) or Ben Wiehe at WGBH (e-mail: [ben\\_wiehe@wgbh.org](mailto:ben_wiehe@wgbh.org); telephone: 617-300-3980). To join other COPUS members to develop a science café in your community, contact Sheri Potter (e-mail: [spotter@copusproject.org](mailto:spotter@copusproject.org)).

COPUS encourages you to check out a science café in your area (see [www.copusproject.org/find\\_listings/](http://www.copusproject.org/find_listings/)), and to register your science café in the COPUS network (<http://copusproject.org/register/>) and in the Public Understanding of Science program and event database ([www.copusproject.org/find\\_listings/](http://www.copusproject.org/find_listings/)).

### BioOne Joins SERU Pilot Program

BioOne ([www.bioone.org](http://www.bioone.org)) is delighted to announce its participation in the innovative SERU (Shared Electronic Resource Understanding) pilot program, sponsored by the National Information Standards Organization ([www.niso.org/committees/SERU/](http://www.niso.org/committees/SERU/)). BioOne joins an inaugural group of publishers, libraries, and consortia that have agreed to use SERU on a trial basis.

SERU seeks to address the problematic status of many publisher-library subscription transactions, currently dominated by extensive negotiated licenses. These formal licenses increase the cost of sales for both parties, delay researchers' access to content, and perpetuate the often-adversarial nature of the subscription economy. Many publishers and libraries have therefore called for a new, best practices approach that streamlines and simplifies the electronic resource acquisition process, while still protecting copyrights.

SERU has answered this call with a recommended practice document for

trial use, which outlines a "framework of shared understanding and good faith." The "statements of common understanding for subscribing to electronic resources" include definitions of acceptable and inappropriate use, confidentiality and privacy, service and performance expectations, and archiving and perpetual access standards.

"The SERU license simplifies the subscription transaction and reduces costs for both publishers and libraries, and, in doing so, fits perfectly into BioOne's mission and market niche. We're delighted to be a part of such an important program," said BioOne Executive Director Susan Skomal.

Libraries and consortia in North America that wish to subscribe to BioOne will be given the option to forgo a traditional licensing agreement and operate under SERU recommended practices. BioOne's sales and marketing partner in North America, Amigos Library Services ([www.amigos.org](http://www.amigos.org)), will continue to manage these transactions. Interested libraries should contact Carrie Esch (e-mail: [cesch@amigos.org](mailto:cesch@amigos.org)).

### AIBS Cosponsors Capitol Hill Science Exhibition

In June, AIBS cosponsored the 13th Annual Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) Capitol Hill Science Exhibition and Reception. The event has become a major forum to showcase the important science, education, and training programs supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF). This year's reception, "The Path to Innovation: Scientific Discovery and Learning," drew a record crowd of nearly 500 individuals from congressional offices, NSF, and the broader Washington, DC, science policy community.

In addition to cosponsoring the event, AIBS hosted a display featuring the National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON). An MREFC (major research equipment and facilities construction) account project, NEON is a continental-scale research platform for discovering and understanding the impacts of climate change, land-use change, and invasive species on ecology.

CNSF is an alliance of more than 100 organizations, including AIBS, united by a concern for the future vitality of the national science, mathematics, and engineering enterprise. CNSF supports the goal of increasing the national investment in NSF's research and education programs in response to the unprecedented scientific, technological, and economic opportunities facing the United States.

### Recent AIBS Education Reports Online at [www.aibs.org](http://www.aibs.org)

- AIBS education events calendar launches
- Fourth annual evolution symposium at NABT: Evolution in Human Populations
- Updates to AIBS Student Chapter program
- IUBS conference: Sustainable Development, Ethics, and Education for the 2020s: What Challenges for Biology?
- 2007 Healthy Sprouts Award
- No Child Left Inside bill
- Fourth international conference on environmental education: Tbilisi Plus 30
- Science and Engineering Alliance works with NEON to broaden representation
- US House of Representatives launches Diversity and Innovation Caucus
- *New York Times* article on creationist book
- PBS TeacherLine
- NSTA Web seminars

### Recent Articles Online at [www.actionbioscience.org](http://www.actionbioscience.org)

#### "Students Speak Out" article

- "The Global Decline of Mollusk Populations," by Christine E. Parent, PhD student in biology at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada

#### Lessons for classroom activities

- "Why? The Nature of Science," by Oksana Hlodan, to accompany the article "Why Should You Be Scientifically Literate?" by Robert M. Hazen, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia
- "Identifying Angiosperms," by Oksana Hlodan, to accompany "Flowering Plants: Keys to Earth's Evolution and Human Well-being," an interview with Pamela Soltis, University of Florida, Gainesville



## Recent AIBS Public Policy Reports Online at [www.aibs.org](http://www.aibs.org)

### Public Policy Report for 6 August 2007

- Congress completes competitiveness legislation
- House passes FY 2008 science appropriations
- State Department names new science adviser
- House amends financial services legislation: limits administration regulatory policy
- House subcommittees continue probe of SREL closure
- Employment opportunity: AIBS public affairs representative
- From the *Federal Register*

### Public Policy Report for 23 July 2007

- Texas: A mess again
- Are you sick of politicization of science? So are former surgeons general

- Congress moves toward conference on competitiveness legislation
- AIBS president-elect to receive 2006 National Medal of Science
- A ten-year science plan for USGS
- Employment opportunity: AIBS public affairs/policy representative
- Interior shuffle continues
- From the *Federal Register*

### Public Policy Report for 9 July 2007

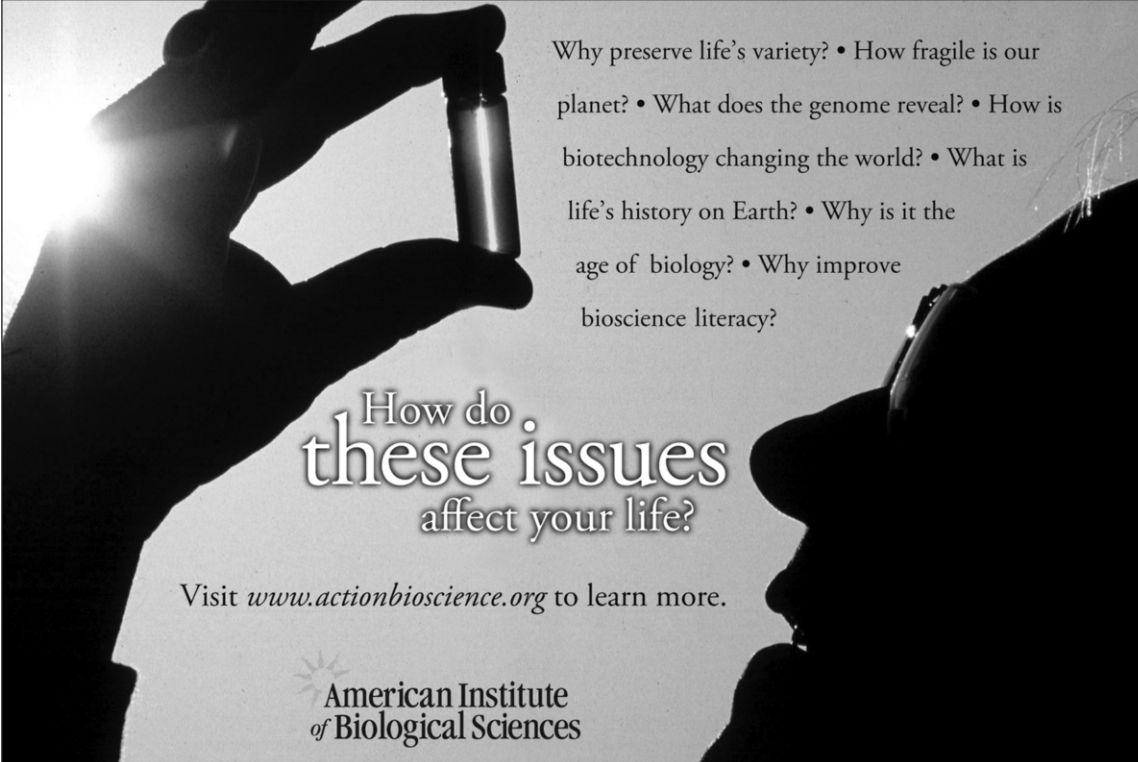
- President Bush vetoes another stem cell bill, Congress and states respond
- House committee approves alternative energy legislation
- Science appropriations update: NSF, NOAA, NASA
- Senate committee calls for EPA to reopen libraries
- Employment opportunity: AIBS public affairs/policy representative
- New in *BioScience*: "National Wildlife Refuges: Death by a Thousand Cuts?"
- From the *Federal Register*

### Public Policy Report for 25 June 2007

- Interior and environment appropriations update
- Homeland security science appropriations
- Business and higher ed call for solutions to the STEM ed teacher problem
- GAO confirms cloudy media policies at fed agencies
- Employment opportunity: AIBS public affairs representative
- Weed scientists: Sustain efforts to combat invasive species
- EPA requests input on endocrine disruptor list
- New in *BioScience*: "Congress Considers NSF Authorization"
- From the *Federal Register*

doi:10.1641/B570814

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