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AIBS*news*

APRIL 2008/VOLUME 58 NUMBER 4

Call for Posters: AIBS Annual Meeting, 12–13 May

The 2008 AIBS annual meeting, to be held 12–13 May, will explore the theme of climate, environment, and infectious diseases. Relationships among climate, the environment, and human health are manifested in infectious disease patterns, notably seasonality. Vector-borne diseases, such as malaria, dengue, avian influenza, and SARS, are known to be closely linked to the environment and, more recently, to climate. Investigators in the United States and abroad have studied interactions among climate, climate change, and the environment extensively, and the AIBS annual meeting will address these issues.

The meeting will take place at the Westin Arlington Gateway hotel in Arlington, Virginia. The program chair is 2008 AIBS President Rita Colwell, of the University of Maryland at College Park. Registration and poster submission forms are online at *www.aibs.org/annual-meeting/annual_meeting_2008.html*.

Program and Schedule

Opening Remarks

- 2008 AIBS President Rita Colwell, University of Maryland, College Park

Keynote Speaker

- Terry L. Maple, president and CEO of the Palm Beach Zoo, and co-author, with Newt Gingrich, of *A Contract with the Earth*

Plenary Speakers

(in order of presentation)

- James E. Hansen (National Aeronautics and Space Administration): "Global Warming: The Threat to Life"
- Durland Fish (Yale University): "Environmental Determinants of Lyme Disease Risk"
- Howard Frumkin (National Center for Environmental Health): "The Public Health Response to Climate Change"
- David Rogers (University of Oxford): "Infectious Diseases and the Environment"
- Stephen Morse (Columbia University): "How Could Climate Change Affect Avian Influenza?"
- Andrew Dobson (Princeton University:) "Disentangling the Role of Climate, Immunity, and Biotic Interactions in the Dynamics of Infectious Diseases"
- Duane Gubler (University of Hawaii): "The 20th Century Emergence and Spread of Epidemic Dengue/Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever: Is Climate or Environmental Change Responsible?"
- Stephen Hoffman (Sanaria Inc., Rockville, Maryland): "The Role of Radiation Attenuated *Plasmodium falciparum* Sporozoite Vaccine in Global Malaria Eradication"

Endnote Speaker

- 2008 AIBS President Rita Colwell

Special Sessions

- Special Session 1: "Science and Society: The Art of Communication"
  Convenor: AIBS

  Moderator: Ira Flatow, host of National Public Radio's *Talk of the Nation: Science Friday*

  Participants: Robert Morris (author of *The Blue Death: Disease, Disaster, and the Water We Drink*) and Kim Stanley Robinson (author of *Sixty Days and Counting*)
- Special Session 2: "Climate Change and Human Health: Developing Collaborations with the Public Health Community"

  Convenor: National Council for Science and the Environment

Workshops

- Workshop 1: "Your Classroom: Integrating Case Studies and Evolution to Help Students Understand Infectious Disease"

  Convenors: Biological Sciences Curriculum Study and the National Association of Biology Teachers
- Workshop 2: "A Scientist Walks into a Bar: Using Science Cafés to Reach the Public"

  Convenors: WGBH Educational Foundation and the Coalition on the Public Understanding of Science

I N S I D E

Call for Posters: AIBS Annual Meeting, 12–13 May

COPUS Participants Gear Up for Nationwide Celebration of Science in 2009

AIBS Names 2008 Emerging Public Policy Leaders

An Update for the NEON Community

Recent Articles Online at *www.actionbioscience.org*

Recent Public Policy Reports Online at *www.aibs.org*

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COPUS Participants Gear Up for Nationwide Celebration of Science in 2009

The Coalition on the Public Understanding of Science (COPUS) is preparing to shine the national spotlight on science in 2009 and beyond. COPUS, an organization established in 2007, is planning events to celebrate the Year of Science 2009 (YoS09). The goal of this national, year-long celebration of science is to engage the public and improve understanding about the nature and process of science.

COPUS is a grassroots network composed of more than 200 participating organizations representing universities, scientific societies, science centers and museums, government agencies, advocacy groups, media, educators, businesses, and industries, and it formed in response to recent concerns about national scientific literacy.

In concert with the formation of the national coalition, regionally based hubs are forming in communities from coast to coast, including a 10th regional hub that recently formed in Boulder, Colorado.

"I see this regional hub as a way for me to connect with others in my community to leverage resources in support of public outreach and sharing of the joy and wonder of the science I am exposed to every day in my work," said Chris McLelland, liaison for the Boulder hub to the national network.

COPUS participants are crossing traditional scientific disciplinary boundaries and partnering with others within their communities to develop activities, programs, and special events in support of YoS09. By working together to coordinate programs and events that explore the overarching YoS09 theme "How We Know What We Know," COPUS participants are aiming to engage the general public in dynamic ways that will make science personally meaningful and locally relevant.

YoS09 activities being developed include free public lectures and programs at museums and science centers; opportunities to spend a day with a scientist or participate in a research project; roundtable discussions about important local science issues; and radio spots, editorials, and online resources that highlight the nature and process of science. Also in the works are connecting COPUS-affiliated scientists with the K–12 community and creating local Science Cafés.

In addition to ongoing public understanding of science activities, participants are registering their YoS09 events in the COPUS Program and Resource Directory where members of the public can search for resources and activities by topic, audience, date, and location. COPUS is also developing Web 2.0 tools to make the directory accessible through interactive online bumper stickers.

COPUS planners declared 2009 the Year of Science because it coincides with the anniversary of a number of important scientific events in history, including the 150th anniversary of the publication *On the Origin of Species* and the 200th anniversary of the birth of the book's author, Charles Darwin; the 200th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, founder of the National Academy of Sciences; the 400th anniversary of the publication of Johannes Kepler's first two laws of planetary motion; and the 400th anniversary of Galileo's first use of a telescope to study the skies.

During the week of 3 March, representatives from nearly all of the first 10 COPUS regional hubs met at the University of South Florida–St. Petersburg to discuss strategies and best practices for community-based outreach, ways to celebrate YoS09, and common needs that may be supported by COPUS at the national level.

COPUS is a joint program of AIBS and other scientific organizations. To learn more, visit *www.copusproject.org* or contact Sheri Potter by e-mail (spotter@aibs.org).

AIBS Names 2008 Emerging Public Policy Leaders

AIBS announced the recipients of the 2008 Emerging Public Policy Leader Award: Cheryl Logan of Stanford University and Caroline Ridley of the University of California–Riverside.

Logan and Ridley receive an AIBS membership, including a subscription to *BioScience,* and will travel to Wash-

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ington, DC, in April to participate in a congressional visits event sponsored by the Biological and Ecological Sciences Coalition. They will meet with members of Congress and their staffs and attend briefings on federal funding for research by senior members of the science policy community.

Cheryl Logan is a doctoral candidate in biological sciences at Hopkins Marine Station of Stanford University. She was awarded a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship in 2005 to study the effects of environmental change on marine fishes. Logan's dissertation research examines how long-jawed mudsuckers, a common estuarine fish, are able to adapt to changes in water temperature that might occur with climate change or heat effluent from power plants. She is also active in the Partnership for Interdisciplinary Studies of Coastal Oceans, a research consortium involving marine scientists from four universities along the western coast of the United States who are working collaboratively to develop a comprehensive understanding of how coastal marine ecosystems function.

Caroline Ridley is a doctoral candidate in plant biology at the University of California–Riverside. She was awarded a US Environmental Protection Agency Science to Achieve Results Fellowship in 2005 to support her doctoral research investigating how hybrids of cultivated radish species and a wild cousin have developed into a weed that has successfully invaded areas prone to human and natural disturbance throughout California. Ridley hopes that an understanding of the genetic and evolutionary factors that have led to this new invasive radish hybrid will inform invasive plant management throughout the state. Ridley is a member of AIBS, the Society for the Study of Evolution, and the California Invasive Plant Council.

"AIBS is committed to improving the public understanding of science and communicating its value to society," said Executive Director Richard O'Grady. "We applaud Cheryl Logan and Caroline Ridley for exemplifying this commitment through their work."

Allison Leidner, a PhD candidate in zoology at North Carolina State University, and Yiwei Wang, a PhD candidate in environmental studies at the University of California–Santa Cruz, received honorable mention.

An Update for the NEON Community

On 18 February 2008, National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) Board Chair Jim MacMahon and Chief Executive Officer David Schimel sent the following letter to the broad NEON community of ecologists and educators. It describes the funding outlook for NEON, changes in the National Science Foundation (NSF) standards for its Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction (MREFC) projects, additions to the NEON staff and board of directors, and other project developments.

Dear Colleagues:

It has been quite a while since we have communicated with you. This is largely due to two factors. First, much of the recent work of NEON has involved getting our business systems in place, hiring new staff, writing NSF proposals to keep the funding stream flowing, and getting the new Boulder, Colorado, office up and running. Second, we had to negotiate a new cooperative agreement with the NSF, which has required multiple exchanges between NEON and the NSF to work out important details. We are pleased to announce that the cooperative agreement is likely to be completed within a week or two. Our cooperative agreement includes items such as reports required, a schedule of deliverables, personnel hires that must be vetted by the NSF, and so forth.

We thought we would divide the rest of this letter into sections to make it easier for you to track the ongoing developments of NEON, Inc.

Funding. On 6 December, a proposal for about $20 million was submitted to the National Science Board (NSB). They voted to authorize the director of the NSF, at his discretion, to award NEON, Inc. up to that amount. The award would not include any construction funds. Rather, this award would be to complete the design of NEON and to fund project management. The NSF director has taken the recommendation of the NSB under advisement and we hope to receive a letter of award in the near future. The Cooperative Agreement, mentioned above, is the award mechanism that will be used to implement the director's decision.

The 2009 budget request that the NSF has submitted as part of the president's budget contains a request for $26 million for the NEON Program.

If you look at the NSF budget, you will see that NEON is not in the MREFC portion. No, this does not mean NEON is dead. In fact, it is quite alive. The NSF has developed a new sequence of events and tighter standards for large, complex projects such as NEON. Previously, construction funds could be made available after the Preliminary Design Review. Now, construction funds are not available until after the Final Design Review (FDR). Since we are not to the FDR stage yet, those funds were released to other parts of the Foundation's programs. If we continue on our current path, we will be eligible for MREFC funds after the FDR that likely will occur in 2009.

Clearly, the NSF continues to support NEON as we move closer to the project's construction phase.

Personnel. As you may remember, we lost our project manager and more recently our chief financial officer. Currently, we have interim staff in place for both positions. Now we are pleased to announce that on 8 February, Tony Beasley, the project manager for another NSF MREFC project (ALMA, the Atacama Large

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Millimeter Array), accepted our offer to join us. This is an absolutely critical hire. Beasley has great experience and he will hit the ground running when he arrives in the United States from Chile, where ALMA is being constructed. We have also added a procurement officer and a director of human resources to the Washington, DC, office, and filled several positions in the Boulder, Colorado, office, including key science staff.

By now, we had expected to advertise for the chief of education and the domain chief scientists (DCS). These positions have been put on hold for the time being. We hope to advertise for the chief of education soon. The DCS searches will likely be delayed for a few months and perhaps up to a year, partly because of finances and partly because we are not yet in a position to use their talents to the fullest extent at this time. In addition, it will take considerable preparation time and effort to conduct a thorough search for the 20 DCS positions.

Board of Directors. As you know, we have had a program of inviting interested institutions to become contributing members of NEON. This group now has more than 50 members. These institutions select a representative to communicate with NEON and to attend our annual meeting (we expect the first annual meeting to be scheduled this fall). Also, from this group of representatives, a number are elected to be on the Board of Directors of NEON, Inc. There are two categories of Board members: the at-large directors are elected by the entire Board, whereas the membership directors are voted in by their peers, the NEON representatives. Once elected, there are no distinctions between directors in terms of their rights and duties.

This year's elections added two new at-large directors to the Board: Margaret Leinen (chief science officer of Climos Corporation and former NSF assistant director for the geosciences directorate) and David Douglas (VP of Sun Microsystems). The five Member Directors are Jim Ehleringer (University of Utah), Nancy Grimm (Arizona State University), Margaret Palmer (Chesapeake Biological Laboratory), Debra Peters (USDA ARS Jornada Experimental Range), and David White (Hancock Biological Station).

A consulting firm conducted the election of member-elected directors electronically.

Candidate Sites. NEON Chief of Science Michael Keller has finished all the preliminary work related to the selection of the candidate sites for both core and relocatable sites within each domain. In order to develop exact costs for candidate sites, every site must be visited to estimate its infrastructure needs. Keller has set a schedule for these visits. We must now put forward an accurate budget for NEON by late this year and we must assist the NSF in conducting an environmental assessment of the sites. Without this budget in place, we cannot move forward at a healthy pace to meet stringent requirements for developing a complicated, distributed project like NEON.

As you can see, our lack of communication with you has not been due to lack of hard work by our staff. NEON, Inc. is rapidly developing as an organization and we continue to make progress toward our many goals.

We appreciate your forbearance and support, and hope to have much more NEON news to report in the next few months.

Sincerely,
JIM MACMAHON
Chairman, NEON, Inc. Board of Directors
DAVE SCHIMEL
CEO, NEON, Inc.

Recent Articles Online at *www.actionbioscience.org*

Original article in English

- "Teaching Anatomy and Physiology—Virtual Highway Style," by Karen Webb Smith, Linwood Holton Governor's School, a Virtual School in Virginia

Recent Public Policy Reports Online at *www.aibs.org*

Public Policy Report for 17 March 2008

- AIBS submits congressional testimony in support of USGS, EPA
- Budget process moves forward in Congress
- Senate reviews FY 2009 federal science budget, regrets FY 2008
- Scientist wins special election: Takes former Speaker Hastert's seat in Congress
- McCain growls about bear research
- Now available: AIBS Congressional Directory for the 110th Congress, second session
- Register now for the 2008 AIBS Annual Meeting: "Climate, Environment and Infectious Diseases"
- From the *Federal Register*

Public Policy Report for 3 March 2008

- Support the NSF, consider calling Congress
- Science committee reviews the NSF FY 2009 budget, questions disparity among directorates
- AIBS names 2008 Emerging Public Policy Leaders
- Political science: Physicist makes real run for House
- Harvard endorses open access
- New in *BioScience*: "Theory and Funding for 21st Century Biology—Maybe"
- From the *Federal Register*

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