

## **AIBSnews**

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# AIBS *news*

MAY 2006/VOLUME 56 NUMBER 5

## Limited Number of Gratis Seats Available for AIBS Annual Meeting

"Biodiversity: The Interplay of Science, Valuation, and Policy" is the theme of the 2006 AIBS annual meeting, to be held 24–25 May 2006 at the Westin Grand Hotel in Washington, DC. Plenary lectures and discussion groups of scientists, policy experts, economists, and journalists will approach the topic from several interwoven perspectives.

Plenary speakers are

- Stephen Bocking (Environmental and Resource Studies Program, Trent University, Canada): "Defining Effective Science for Biodiversity Policy"
- Jamie Rappaport Clark (Defenders of Wildlife): "The Endangered Species Act under Attack: The Dynamic Interplay between Science and Policy"
- Daniel Esty (Law School and School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, Yale University): "From Science to Policy: Biodiversity Protection, Metrics, and Results"
- Shahid Naeem (Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Environmental Biology, Columbia University): "Applications of Biodiversity Research to Human Well-being"
- Richard B. Norgaard (Energy and Resources Group, University of California, Berkeley): "Values and Valuation in a Rapidly Changing World"
- Stephen Polasky (Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior, University of Minnesota, St. Paul): "Valuing Ecosystem Services"

Panels and discussion groups will be held throughout the day on 25 May. The first discussion group, entitled "Communicating about Science in Public and Policy Arenas," will be led by Chris Mooney, Washington correspondent for *Seed* magazine and author of *The Republican War on Science*, and Matthew Nisbet, of the School of Communication at The Ohio State University. The second discussion group, "Valuing Ecosystem Services," will be led by plenary speakers Daniel Esty, Richard B. Norgaard, and Stephen Polasky. The third group, "The

## SPECIAL PROGRAM CONTENT AT ANNUAL MEETING

*Chris Mooney, author of The Republican War on Science, will lead a discussion session entitled "Communicating about Science in Public and Policy Arenas." Co-leader is Matthew Nisbet, School of Communication, The Ohio State University, who will speak on "Framing Science: Understanding the Battle over Knowledge."*

Endangered Species Act: Science Influencing Policy and Policy Influencing Science," will be led by plenary speaker Jamie Rappaport Clark and by J. Michael Scott, Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, University of Idaho. The fourth group, "The Value of Monitoring and Assessing Biodiversity," will be led by Francisco Dallmeier, director of the Smithsonian Institution Monitoring and Assessment of Biodiversity Program; Mark Jones, of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission; and Jennifer Sevin and Alfonso Alonso, both with the Smithsonian Institution Monitoring and Assessment of Biodiversity Program.

Attendees interested in working toward expanding career, professional development, and service opportunities in the biological sciences for women, minorities, and persons with disabilities are welcome to register for the Diversity Luncheon. Participants will have the opportunity to talk with the AIBS leadership, interact with members of the AIBS Human Resources Committee, and network with others who want to create a more diverse scientific community. The guest speaker for the Diversity Luncheon is Robert Stanton, former director of the National Park Service.

In addition, the annual meeting will be preceded on 23–24 May by an AIBS business meeting for the general membership, combined with a meeting of the AIBS Council of member societies and organizations, to discuss AIBS activities, plans, and priorities.

All sessions will take place in the Westin Grand Hotel, 2350 M Street, NW,

Washington, DC 20037 (three blocks north of the Foggy Bottom Metro Station, on the edge of Georgetown).

See the meeting Web site at [www.aibs.org](http://www.aibs.org) for reduced May registration prices, including a limited number of gratis seats on a first-come, first-served basis.

Register now!

## AIBS and NESCent at the 2006 NSTA National Conference

AIBS shared a booth with the National Evolutionary Synthesis Center (NESCent) in the exhibit hall during the annual National Conference on Science Education hosted by the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) in Anaheim, California, 5–9 April 2006. In addition, AIBS and NESCent staff gave separate presentations at the event.

This occasion marked the 54th year of the national conference and the launch of an enhanced program. Over 11,000 edu-

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cators attended the four-day event. Educators had a choice of six strands to follow, ranging from “Using Technology to Enhance Student Learning” to “The Many Faces of Inquiry” to “Science and Literacy.” Learning opportunities included Professional Development Institutes, short courses, a first-time-ever Science for Young Learners Day, and International Science Education Day.

Featured presentations addressed a variety of significant topics. “Kitzmiller v. Dover—The Trial of Intelligent Design” was moderated by Eugenie Scott, executive director of the National Center for Science Education. When the school board for Dover, Pennsylvania, added a statement to the science curriculum indicating that “students will be made aware of gaps/problems in Darwin’s theory and of other theories of evolution including, but not limited to, intelligent design,” Dover parents filed suit. The trial was the first to address the inclusion of intelligent design in public schools. Attendees heard from Bryan Rehm, a plaintiff and science teacher; scientists who were called as expert witnesses (e.g., Ken Miller, Brown University, and Barbara Forrest, Southeastern Louisiana University); attorneys; and others involved in the case. They recounted the challenges, stakes, strategy, and successful outcome of this important trial, sure to have major implications for science teaching in the future. Other featured speakers included JoAnne Vasquez, president of the National Science Education Leadership Association, who examined the newly released *2006 Science and Engineering Indicators* (published by the National Science Board), and Dylan Thomas, director of the Learning and Teaching Resource Center in Princeton, New Jersey, who summarized the research evidence showing that the use of student assessments is one of the most powerful ways of increasing student engagement and achievement in science classrooms.

Oksana Hlodan, editor of ActionBioscience.org, an AIBS education resource, presented “Issues and Internet in Class Activities.” The one-hour presentation covered two topics: (1) how to plan a lesson around “hot” issues in the biosciences

(e.g., cloning, deforestation, evolutionary transitions, and climate change) to enhance student learning and critical thinking skills and (2) how to evaluate a science Web site for credibility and usability. Participants indicated that both the topics and the resources provided helped meet their teaching needs.

NESCent staff gave a presentation to attendees of the program sponsored by the Society for College Science Teachers, an affiliate of NSTA, titled “Enhancing Evolution Education through Evolutionary Synthesis.” Greg Gibson, Kristin Jenkins, and Jory Weintraub, of the NESCent Education and Outreach Group, introduced NESCent goals and activities. The Durham, North Carolina-based collaboration of biologists, educators, and computer scientists at three universities in North Carolina’s Research Triangle (Duke, NC State, and UNC-Chapel Hill) is taking a synthetic approach to the study of evolutionary biology, combining traditional evolution research with recent advances in genomics, bioinformatics, and computational biology to unify and solidify understanding of this field. The group elaborated how a synthetic approach can provide a more comprehensive, interdisciplinary framework for teaching, discussing, and thinking about evolution. It also introduced mechanisms through which biologists and computer scientists can collaborate with NESCent.

### **BEN Award Granted**

The BiosciEdNet.org (BEN) Collaborative, managed by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), was recently awarded a grant from the National Science Foundation’s National Science Digital Library, one of four “Pathways” grants, to build a biology collection. AIBS, which is a founding partner in the BEN Collaborative, received a subaward from AAAS. Other collaborators include the BioQUEST Curriculum Consortium, Ecological Society of America, American Society for Microbiology, Botanical Society of America, Society for Toxicology, and Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology.

The subaward will allow AIBS to catalog all of its digital education resources and make them searchable in BEN. In coming months, AIBS staff will identify resources to be included in BEN and conduct outreach to the community through workshops and exhibits at national and regional science education meetings.

For more information, see the press release at [www.aaas.org/news/releases/2005/1014ben.shtml](http://www.aaas.org/news/releases/2005/1014ben.shtml) or contact Susan Musante (e-mail: [smusante@aibs.org](mailto:smusante@aibs.org)), AIBS education and outreach program manager.

### **Biologists Educate Congress, Recognize Representatives**

More than 50 scientists and graduate students were in Washington, DC, in March to participate in a congressional visits event sponsored by the Biological and Ecological Sciences Coalition (BESC) and the Coalition on Funding Agricultural Research Missions (CoFARM). AIBS helped form BESC and is now one of the group’s cochairs.

The two-day event kicked off with a policy training session at which participants received an insider’s perspective on the administration’s fiscal year 2007 budget request. Providing the update were Kei Koizumi, budget analyst at the American Association for the Advancement of Science; James Collins, assistant director for biology at the National Science Foundation; Anna Palmisano, deputy administrator for competitive programs at the US Department of Agriculture; Dan Byers, deputy chief of staff at the White House’s Office of Science and Technology Policy; and David Goldston, chief of staff for the House Committee on Science.

After the briefing, participants ventured to Capitol Hill to attend a BESC/CoFARM-sponsored reception honoring Representatives Vernon J. Ehlers (R-MI) and Rush Holt (D-NJ). The congressmen were recognized for their long-standing efforts to promote science and science education policy. Introducing the pair for BESC, AIBS director of public policy Robert Gropp commended Ehlers for his efforts to advance legislation addressing aquatic invasive species and

Holt for his efforts to promote science education, including public statements in support of evolution education.

After receiving their awards, the representatives addressed the visiting scientists and students. Ehlers reminded the participants why their presence on Capitol Hill is important to broader efforts to secure funding for the basic sciences. Holt inspired the crowd by discussing the importance of strong science education for all students. Holt also discussed why evolution should be part of a quality science education.

On the second day of the event, scientists fanned out across Capitol Hill in multidisciplinary teams to visit with their members of Congress. Ultimately, these teams visited House and Senate offices representing 20 states.

Thirteen scientists from AIBS and AIBS member societies participated in the event, including the 2006 Emerging Public Policy Leader Award recipients Madhura Kulkarni of Cornell University and Christopher Hofmann of the University of Maryland at Baltimore County. The delegation also included representatives of the Organization of Biological Field Stations, Cornell's Center for the Environment, the Long Term Ecological Research Network, and graduate students from the University of Maryland at College Park and SUNY Stony Brook.

### **AIBS Gives Congressional Testimony on FY 2007 Budget**

In March and April, AIBS gave testimony to House and Senate appropriations committees in support of the president's FY 2007 budget request for the National Science Foundation. The president's request would provide NSF with \$6.02 billion in

the coming budget year, which would include a 5.4 percent increase for the biology directorate and funding for the National Ecological Observatory Network.

AIBS has also provided testimony in support of the US Geological Survey, asking Congress to increase funding for the Department of the Interior's science agency to \$1.2 billion. More specifically, AIBS encouraged Congress to forgo cuts proposed for the USGS budget and to provide important new funding for the USGS Biological Resources Discipline.

The full text of the testimony is available at [www.aibs.org/position-statements](http://www.aibs.org/position-statements).

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

#### **Original articles in English**

- "Climate Change and Speciation of Mammals," interview with Anthony D. Barnosky, vertebrate paleontologist and curator of the Museum of Paleontology at the University of California–Berkeley
- "Biomedical and Biodefense Uses for Ricin," interview with Ellen Vitetta, professor of microbiology and director of the Cancer Immunobiology Center, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas

#### **Spanish translation of previously posted article**

- "Plantas con Flores: Clave para la Evolución de la Tierra y para el Bienestar Humano" [Flowering Plants: Keys to Earth's Evolution and Human Well-being], interview with Pamela Soltis, curator of the Laboratory of Molecular Systematics and Evolutionary Genetics at the University of Florida, Gainesville

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

- AIBS annual meeting updates
- New education resources in *Action Bioscience.org*
- National Evolutionary Synthesis Center: Education and outreach
- Call for contributions: *Encyclopedia of Earth*
- Professional development opportunity in Costa Rica
- Be an expert for Environmental Education Week
- Upcoming conferences

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

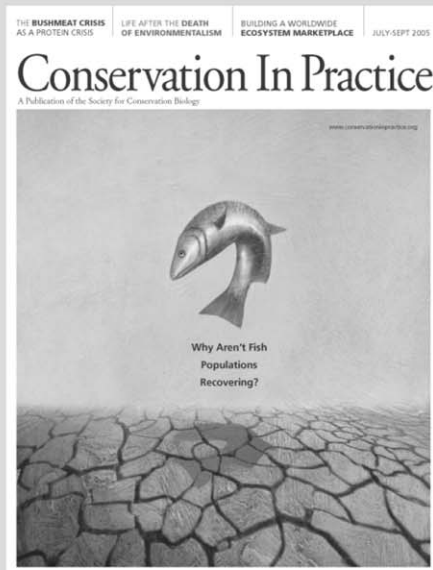
#### **Public Policy Report for 10 April 2006**

- AIBS submits congressional testimony on FY 2007 budget
- Ehlers/Holt "Dear Colleague" letter on NSF
- US Fish and Wildlife Service reports a net gain in US wetland acreage
- New in *BioScience*: "Evolution after Dover"
- From the *Federal Register*

#### **Public Policy Report for 27 March 2006**

- Action alert: Please contact your members of Congress today to support NSF funding
- Public comment opportunity: Ocean policy
- Biologists visit Congress, honor Congressmen Ehlers and Holt
- Lawsuit against UC evolution Web site dismissed
- President nominates Idaho governor for top spot at Interior
- American Society of Mammalogists–AIBS Graduate Student Policy Internship
- From the *Federal Register*





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