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AIBS*news*

FEBRUARY 2007/VOLUME 57 NUMBER 2

Changes at AIBS Education and Outreach Office

AIBS is pleased to announce that Samantha Romanello Katz joined the staff in January as director of the Education and Outreach Office. Susan Musante, the outgoing manager and head of the office, has left AIBS to work on community education projects near her Virginia home in the Shenandoah Valley. She leaves AIBS a broad portfolio of successful and respected programs to build upon.

Until moving to the AIBS headquarters office, Katz was based in Colorado, working on education and training activities for several organizations: Science Environment for Ecological Knowledge, the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis, and the Long Term Ecological Research Network Office. She holds a BA in English and a BSc in environmental studies from the State University of New York at Buffalo; an MSc in curriculum and instruction from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale; and a PhD in natural resources from Ohio State University.

Katz has extensive knowledge, training, and experience in coordinating science and environmental programs, including project management and facilitation; budgeting and leveraging projects; sourcing, scheduling, and managing trainers; and designing and developing curricula. She has nine years of experience in leading and supervising workshops in science and environmental education program development at the local, state, and national levels; six years in teaching at the college level; and five years in university administration. In 2000, she was a John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellow. During her year at the Department of Commerce, she was special assistant to the chief scientist of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) on education-related affairs. She helped to coordinate and focus a national education program for NOAA and worked closely with the chair and executive director of the NOAA Science Advisory Board to develop, plan, and execute top-level government meetings.

Additional staffing for the AIBS Education and Outreach Office will be provided by Abraham Parker until March 2007, when he moves to another job, and by Sharon Potter, who is also the Webmaster for the AIBS education Web site, ActionBioscience.org.

BioOne Launches New Full-Text Collection: BioOne.2

BioOne, an online aggregation of science journals that AIBS cofounded, announced the successful launch of its new full-text collection, "BioOne.2." BioOne.2 comprises 41 titles from 26 publishers in the fields of organismal and integrative biology, including the Harvard University Museum of Comparative Zoology, the Field Museum, and the Carnegie Museum of Natural History. BioOne.2 is also home to a number of prestigious international publications, including six titles from Japan's UniBio Press. Please visit BioOne at *www.bioone.org* for a complete list of titles and publishers.

Many of the titles in BioOne.2 have never before been available online. All participating titles will be available in full-text XML, providing a sophisticated, fully linked online presence. Institutions may subscribe to BioOne.2 either in combination with BioOne (at a discount) or as a separate subscription.

"We are delighted to launch BioOne.2 and provide this important content with a community-based home on the Web," said BioOne executive director Susan Skomal. "BioOne.2 is an excellent reflection of BioOne's mission, providing publishers with a not-for-profit electronic publishing alternative, and libraries with high-quality aggregated content at reasonable rates."

Public Policy Office Welcomes New Staff

As the Public Policy Office prepares for a busy 2007, marked initially by the start of the new 110th Congress, it is with great pleasure that AIBS welcomes two new public policy associates: Megan Kelhart and Holly Menninger.

Kelhart joined the Public Policy Office in August 2006 after completing her masters of natural resources degree at Virginia Tech. Kelhart's graduate study focused on amphibian conservation in northern Virginia. Before joining AIBS, Kelhart worked on Capitol Hill for members of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Menninger joined the Public Policy Office in January 2007. A past AIBS Emerging Public Policy Leader Award finalist, Menninger successfully defended her dissertation, "Terrestrial–Aquatic Linkages in Human-Altered Landscapes," in December 2006. Her doctoral research was completed with Margaret Palmer in the Behavior, Ecology, Evolution, and Systematics program at the University of Maryland. Menninger has several years

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of experience with scientific outreach and communication activities with a variety of audiences, including national electronic news media outlets.

NEON Design, 2007

A sequence of important decisions made in February and March 2007 will determine the final design of the National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON).

In October 2006, the NEON Project Office announced an RFI (request for information) inviting members of the ecological research community to submit ideas about how they would use NEON observational and cyberinfrastructure resources to address the science goals of the NEON Integrated Science and Education Plan (ISEP). Most of the networked facilities funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) have used a similar call to advance their projects from a conceptual experimental design to the site selection phase. NEON has learned much from their experience in employing this approach, and has requested that information about specific deployment sites be part of its RFI submissions.

The RFI responses will enable NSF and the NEON design team to optimize the construction of an ecological observation network that includes specific site-level components and measurements to answer each grand-challenge question in the ISEP. Although the responses do not redefine or alter any aspects of NEON science, they are a vital component of the implementation strategy.

A central challenge for NEON is to stratify its observing system across a highly complex and fragmented landscape, yet still be able to derive general results that apply broadly. The NEON management strategy is to link detailed, bottom-up input from the community with an integrated science vision that will enable the observatory to infer general principles from a standardized set of measurements gathered at many sites.

Site selection and evaluation. The NEON Project Office has now received responses to the RFI and forwarded them to NSF for consideration. During the week of 5 February, NSF will convene a formal RFI evaluation panel at the US Geological Survey's EROS (Earth Resources Observation and Science) Data Center in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Members of the board of directors of NEON, Inc., CEO David Schimel, and NEON Project Office staff will observe the proceedings. At the end of the process, NSF will present its site recommendations for consideration by NEON.

During the week of 12 February, the NEON design team will meet with independent experts in Boulder, Colorado, to further evaluate the candidate sites. That prioritized list will be presented to the NEON, Inc., board in late February for a final decision about the sites that will be included in the network. Beginning in March, NEON Project Office staff and expert colleagues from the ecological research community will begin visiting candidate sites to evaluate their readiness for NEON deployment from legal, engineering, and scientific perspectives.

The preliminary design review. From 30 April to 4 May, NEON is scheduled for its preliminary design review (PDR) before an NSF panel. The PDR is an important NEON milestone, a rigorous assessment of the project's design details and an evaluation of the NEON response to recommendations from the NSF conceptual design review conducted in November 2006. The PDR panel will examine every aspect of NEON—from its proposed science and education plan to cyberinfrastructure, data handling, budget, and management practices—to determine whether the project is ready to go before the National Science Board. A positive recommendation from the National Science Board is required for NEON to be considered for funding within the NSF Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction portfolio.

Tiger teams pitch in. The NEON Project Office has been fortunate to receive valuable input from the ecological community through every step of the observatory design process. Now, six teams of experts are assisting NEON

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BioScience

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jrasanen@aibs.org
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703-790-1745

AIBS

ActionBioscience.org:
editor@actionbioscience.org

Education Office:
education@aibs.org
202-628-1500

Executive Director:
rogrady@aibs.org
202-628-1500

Meetings and Conference Services: *sburk@aibs.org*
703-790-1745

Membership Records:
admin@aibs.org
703-790-1745

Membership Services and Benefits: *droyston@aibs.org*
202-628-1500

Public Policy Office:
rgropp@aibs.org
202-628-1500

Science Office/NEON:
bwee@aibs.org
202-628-1500

Scientific Peer-Review Services:
sglisson@aibs.org
703-674-2500

Web/IT Services:
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in its preparation for the PDR by closely reviewing key details of network design. The NEON "tiger teams," and their chairs, are (1) Education (Charlene D'Avanzo, Hampshire College), (2) Fundamental Sentinel Unit (Tom Hobbs, Colorado State University), (3) Tower Systems (Hank Loescher, Oregon State University), (4) Site Permitting (Thomas Jorling, NEON, Inc., board member), (5) Airborne Observation Platform (Mike Lefsky, Colorado State University), and (6) Land-Use Analysis Package (Johannes Feddema, National Center for Atmospheric Research).

The focus of each tiger team varies. The Education team, for example, is tasked with translating the high-level vision for NEON education into the specific elements of a suite of national education initiatives that will use NEON data as a resource for teachers, students, and citizen scientists. The Site Permitting team is evaluating a host of legal and regulatory issues associated with deploying NEON instruments at sites across the nation. Each of the other four teams addresses one of the observatory's data-collection systems.

The Fundamental Sentinel Unit (FSU) team, for example, led by Tom Hobbs of Colorado State University, is focused on observations of responses of biodiversity and ecosystems to climate and environmental change. These observations are formed by a set of measurements taken in the field at each site. The raw field measurements must be translated into data products to be useful to the scientific community.

"For example, field measurements of small mammals will include the histories describing when and where individual animals are trapped," says Hobbs, who chairs the Department of Forest, Rangeland, and Watershed Stewardship at Colorado State. "These raw observations must be translated into quantities that are informative, such as survival rate, changes in abundance, and age structure of the population. Each requires a numerical recipe (algorithm) to accomplish the translation from raw data to useful information."

Dr. Tom Hobbs of Colorado State University leads a NEON tiger team focused on data products generated by Fundamental Sentinel Unit measurements.

As part of the translation process, Hobbs's tiger team is working to understand the uncertainty associated with each data product generated by an FSU measurement, describe the data products, and sketch the algorithms needed to produce them. The group will also refine NEON protocols for sampling a variety of organisms, ranging from soil microbes and algae to ground beetles and deer mice.

"We have had very productive initial discussions," says Hobbs. "We may recommend some additional members for the FSU group who have expertise in migration and food web tracers and aquatic biogeochemistry."

Recent Articles Online at *www.actionbioscience.org*

Original article in English

- "Re-wilding Megafauna: Lions and Camels in North America?" interview with Connie Barlow, writer and editor

Lesson for classroom activities

- "What Is a Species?" lesson adapted from the activity "Species: An Evolving Concept," developed by the Biological Sciences Curriculum Study (BSCS) for the evolution symposium sponsored by AIBS, BSCS, and NESCent (National Evolutionary Synthesis Center) at the 2006 national conference of the National Association of Biology Teachers

Spanish translations of previously posted articles

- "Rompecabezas Genómicos Viejos y Nuevos" [Genomic Puzzles Old and New], by T. Ryan Gregory, University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada
- "Nuevas Amenazas Ponen en Peligro a las Grandes Ballenas" [New Threats Endanger Great Whales], from the World Wildlife Fund

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

Public Policy Report for 8 January 2007

- New year, new Congress
- Public Policy Office welcomes new staff
- Cobb County evolution case finally resolved
- Climate change and the White House
- EPA requests nominations for ecosystems and resources advisory committee
- New in *BioScience:* "Post Postdoc: Are New Scientists Prepared for the Real World?"
- From the *Federal Register*

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AIBS is "on the ground" in Washington, DC, working for its members on research, education, and public policy initiatives at the local, national, and international levels. We collaborate with AIBS member societies and organizations as well as with other scientific associations. We report to AIBS members through *BioScience*, public policy and education news reports, and other outlets. Networking services to link AIBS members to one another include AIBS meetings, online directories, and e-mail reports.

Listen and be heard

AIBS public policy staff edit the "Washington Watch" column in *BioScience* and provide expert analyses of legislation and other developments while representing biologists' interests to policymakers, and vice versa; recent topics addressed include evolution education and research funding. AIBS education staff write the "Eye on Education" column in *BioScience* and have worked recently on textbook assessments and undergraduate curriculum reform.

American Institute of Biological Sciences

Read BioScience

A blend of peer-reviewed articles, feature stories, and reports written for researchers, K–16 teachers, and students alike, *BioScience* publishes every month and is ranked among the top 8 journals of 65 in the biology category of ISI's *Journal Citation Report*. It includes "AIBS*news*," "Washington Watch," and "Eye on Education" and is provided to all members, in print and online, as part of AIBS dues.

Attend annual meetings

The AIBS annual meeting's format since 2000 has featured a theme-driven program with plenary lectures by some of the world's most eminent biologists, combined with informal discussion sessions for the meeting attendees, plenary speakers, and other discussion leaders. Recent themes are biocomplexity (2001), evolution (2002), bioethics (2003), and invasive species (2004).

View online lectures in the AIBS Virtual Library

Individual members of AIBS have free access to the AIBS Virtual Library of plenary lectures recorded at AIBS annual meetings from 2000 onward. Presentations from the AIBS National Roundtable Series are also online. You can view synchronized audio, video, slides, and transcripts of the presentations. CD-ROMs of the recordings are available for purchase.

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