

ANNUAL REPORT

SUBJECT: Highlights of Natural Science Collections Alliance Activities-2003
TO: BSA Council
FROM: Laurence E. Skog, BSA Representative to Natural Science Collections Alliance
DATE: 11 July 2002

During 2002-2003 the Natural Science Collections Alliance [NSCA], formerly the Association for Systematic Collections [ASC] held its annual meeting in Berkeley, California sponsored by the UC Berkeley Museums, 5-6 June. The theme of the meeting was “Natural Science Collections: New challenges & new opportunities” to look at how the collections and the institutions that hold them are evolving at a rapid pace in today’s world of information technology and virtual objects, global marketplace and faltering economy, and the fading distinctions between university and freestanding museums.

The annual meeting included an array of programs including six tracks of presentations, panels and poster sessions on diverse topics such as biodiversity conservation, digital libraries, and sharing science. Featured was NSCA’s new communications toolkit – Dinosaurs to DNA: The Power of Natural Science Collections—to use in building awareness by funders and public officials of the value of collections. Tours of the U.S. Department of Energy Joint Genome Institute and the California Academy of Sciences were offered to attendees.

Within the NSCA organization change occurred with the stepping down of Director Roberta Faul-Zeitler in mid-May. At this point, a new director has not been named.

Throughout the year NSC Alliance continued to distribute, in addition to the printed monthly newsletter, called the Alliance Gazette, an on-line bi-monthly newsletter of NSCA activities, called Washington Initiative, which highlighted recent news about systematic collections, as well as actions in Congress affecting members. The electronic newsletter is available to NSCA member institutions and societies, and can be sent to interested recipients on request. This source is particularly valuable in highlighting funding sources available from NSF. Information on NSCA, the annual meeting, and the electronic newsletter detailing the NSCA activities for 2002 is available at the NSCA website at www.nscalliance.org.