

2007 Report of the Botanical Society of America Representative to the Natural Science Collections Alliance

The annual meeting of the Natural Science Collections Alliance was held in Washington, DC on 14-15 May at the Capitol Hilton Hotel. The meeting was held jointly with the American Institute of Biological Sciences. The theme of the meeting was "Collections for the Future: Forecasting Biological Phenomena." Attendance at the meeting was much lower than the 2006 joint meeting with the Society for Preservation of Natural History Collections in Albuquerque. A number of speakers provided insightful discussions of forecasting distributional ranges of taxa based on climate change models and data from natural history collections. Two presentations, in particular, highlighted new projects will be of importance to BSA. The first was Jim Edward's presentation on the Encyclopedia of Life. There is considerable financial and institutional support behind this project which suggests that it has a better chance of succeeding than previous attempts of similar projects. This project could have tremendous impact on public education and on science, and BSA is encouraged to follow developments and to encourage its members to participate. The second talk on a project that will be of interest to BSA was presented by Hank Bart (Tulane) and me. We have received funding for a NSF Research Coordination Network Grant titled "Building a Community of Natural History Collections." This project will help foster collaboration and cooperation among Natural History Collections so that they may better serve the scientific community and the public. More details will be released later this summer, and the BSA will be encouraged to appoint a societal representative to the Core Participants of the RCN.

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