

# AIBS Presidents' Summit, 11 - 14 Nov. 1999

## Eleven Synthesis Group Proposals

Note: The eleven initiatives below ("the Airlie Accords") were arrived at upon the final day of the Summit via discussions among the breakout groups and the group-as-a-whole during the preceding days of the Summit. Each initiative is envisaged as a project suitable for collaboration among AIBS and its member societies. In the pages below, the presidents/leaders from each of the societies attending the Summit have indicated which of the initiatives they are prepared to recommend to their society.

### **Initiative 1: Making the case for the biological sciences**

#### ***Context (what's it about, why important?):***

1. Exploring life on earth and how the living world works is critical to human health and human economy.
2. Educate voting public and government officers why research in biological sciences is important to society.
3. We are facing acceleration of change locally, regionally and globally. We don't know how to plan for the consequences.

#### ***Desired/Potential Outcome or Result:***

1. Increased funding by government and NGOs
2. Higher level of biological awareness and literacy in voting public and government.
3. Demonstrating the relevancy of biological sciences for other fields and vice versa.

#### ***Description (what activities?):***

1. Demonstrating biological successes – crucial case examples
  - Mini-examples (synthesis) of important successes
    - Posters
    - Publications like "Issues in Ecology" or possibly BioScience
2. Looking forward to how biological sciences will help us face, understand, resolve, and address future challenges.

***Timing:***

1. Articulation
  - 6 months – internal (AIBS/societies) preparation of product
  - 12 months – raise visibility in next Congress (because economic times are good)
2. Implementation
  - 12 months to indefinite after date of production.

***Funding (needed and possible sources):***

1. Funds needed for workshops, working group, and production of documents/posters, congressional briefings, and website.
  - Sources: private foundations with science programs

***Possible Next Steps:***

1. Convene working group/workshop to provide the information and fill in specifics.
2. Individual societies discuss the initiative for “advice and consent.”
3. Develop a set of posters/educational materials
  - Real Products: print and electronic
4. Identify strategy to disseminate this information to government and NGO’s. Identify and educate “messengers.”
5. As soon as it’s ready (12 months), organize a press conference to announce/launch the initiative.

***Organizations offering to solicit interest in the "making the case for biology" initiative from their leadership and members:***

American College of Toxicology  
American Bryological and Lichenological Society  
American Fisheries Society  
American Phytopathological Society  
American Society of Agronomy  
American Society of Naturalists  
American Society of Plant Physiologists  
Animal Behavior Society  
Association of Tropical Biology  
Association of College and University Biology Educators

Association of Ecosystem Research Centers  
Association of Systematics Collections  
BIOSIS  
Botanical Society of America  
Cooper Ornithological Society  
Ecological Society of America  
Entomological Society of America  
Entomological Society of Canada  
American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists  
International Society for Ecological Economics  
Mycological Society of America  
National Association of Biology Teachers  
North American Benthological Society  
Organization for Tropical Studies  
Organization of Biological Field Stations  
Phi Sigma Biological Sciences Honor Society  
Poultry Science Association  
Society for Economic Botany  
Society for Mathematical Biology  
Society of Protozoologists  
Society of Toxicology  
Weed Science Society of America

## Synthesis Group Proposals

**Initiative 2:** Facilitate member societies' understanding of funding opportunities for complex bioscience research.

***Context (what's it about, why important?):***

1. Members are out of the loop and are interested. It's important for agencies to get a broader range of responses.
  - Smaller societies do not get the messages.

***Desired/Potential Outcome or Result:***

1. More funding for a broader array of projects.
2. Better proposals from widest range of investments.
3. Enfranchise members.

***Description (what activities?):***

1. Compiling initiatives.
2. Providing timely information to a wide range of society newsletters, media and newsletters from the members.
3. AIBS should email articles about funding issues or other articles and news from the Hill, so they can be reprinted in society newsletters.

***Timing:***

ASAP and ongoing.

***Funding (needed and possible sources):***

1. All of this pipeline is funding
  - For smaller societies, leaders need to learn about new initiatives.
  - AIBS should have "funding people" come to the council to talk about future funding.

***Possible Next Steps:***

1. Bring to Council Meeting on Sunday.
2. Invite NASA, USDA, etc, to provide AIBS with a written (e-mail) or oral update.
3. Offer AIBS as a conduit for pipeline funding agencies to give information

***Organizations offering to solicit interest in the "funding opportunities" initiative from their leadership and members:***

No tally was taken on this initiative; it is assumed that all member societies would be interested in participating.

## **Synthesis Group Proposals**

### **Initiative 3: Exploring life: Initiation of new funding opportunities**

#### ***Context (what's it about, why important?):***

1. Mega funding to expand the pool.
2. The way to increase the funding pool is to initiate a new umbrella program (e.g. the human genome project).

#### ***Desired/Potential Outcome or Result:***

New major funding initiative.

#### ***Description (what activities?):***

1. Organizational meeting in March.
2. Consultation with member societies.
3. Call for collaborative pre-proposals.
4. Approach funding agencies and foundations.
5. Prepare and submit proposal.

#### ***Timing:***

1. March - initial meeting and brainstorming.
2. June - consultation with members.
3. August - pre-proposals
4. November - approach funders.
5. January - proposal

#### ***Funding (needed and possible sources):***

Seed money for initial meetings, member consultation, strategy documentation and pre-proposal from agencies or private funding. Proposal writing from interested funder(s).

#### ***Possible Next Steps:***

Call meeting before or after March meeting.

***Organizations offering to solicit interest in the "exploring life" initiative from their leadership and members:***

American Bryological and Lichenological Society  
American Fisheries Society  
American Phytopathological Society  
American Society of Agronomy  
American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists  
American Society of Naturalists  
Association for Tropical Biology  
Association of Ecosystem Research Centers  
Association of Systematics Collections  
Botanical Society of America  
Cooper Ornithological Society  
Ecological Society of America  
Entomological Society of America  
Entomological Society of Canada  
International Society for Ecological Economics  
International Society for Ecosystem Health  
Mycological Society of America  
National Association of Biology Teachers  
North American Benthological Society  
Organization for Biological Field Stations  
Society for Economic Botany  
Society for Mathematical Biology  
Society for the Study of Evolution  
Society of Protozoologists  
Society of Nematologists  
Society of Toxicology  
Southern Appalachian Botanical Society

# **Synthesis Group Proposals**

## **Initiative 4: Public Issues Council**

### ***Context (what's it about, why important?):***

Majority of societies polled indicated that they wanted a voice in Washington.

### ***Desired/Potential Outcome or Result:***

To serve as the coordinating body on public policy issues in AIBS. Structure TBA.

### ***Description (what activities?):***

1. Output from Council. Recommendations for:
  - Roundtable topics
  - Delegate to ad hoc committees
  - Reach operational consensus for action within AIBS membership
  - Recommend letters from presidents, etc.
  - Commission white papers/fact sheets

### ***Timing:***

One year – allow time for Boards to formulate details.

### ***Funding (needed and possible sources):***

1. Including:
  - Ear-mark surcharge dollars from societies' indiv. member dues to be forwarded to AIBS to fund the operations
  - Ear-mark increased fees for societies to belong to AIBS to fund the operations
  - Acquire outside funding

### ***Possible Next Steps:***

Recommendations from the AIBS Council

Learn about the Consensus Conference structure that FASEB uses for its members

Discuss again at March meeting

***Organizations offering to solicit interest in the "public issues council" initiative from their leadership and members:***

American College of Toxicology  
American Fisheries Society  
American Phytopathological Society  
American Society for Gravitational and Space Biology  
American Society of Agronomy  
American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists  
American Society of Plant Taxonomists  
Association for Tropical Biology  
Association of Ecosystem Research Centers  
Association of Systematics Collections  
Botanical Society of America  
Cooper Ornithological Society  
Ecological Society of America  
Entomological Society of Canada  
International Society for Ecological Economics  
International Society for Ecosystem Health  
Mycological Society of America  
North American Benthological Society  
Organization of Biological Field Stations  
Poultry Science Association  
Society for Ecological Restoration  
Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology  
Society for the Study of Evolution  
Society of Protozoologists  
Society of Wetland Scientists  
Weed Science Society of America

## **Synthesis Group Proposals**

### **Initiative 5: Expanded AIBS public policy office functionality**

#### ***Context (what's it about, why important?):***

AIBS has recently established a part-time public policy office function. This should be expanded to approx. two full-time staff who can provide public policy services to all AIBS members.

#### ***Desired/Potential Outcome or Result:***

1. Available to those member societies and organizations that want and need it.
2. Responds to public policy issues.
3. Flexible: matches response to issue, degree of consensus, and member needs.

#### ***Description (what activities?):***

(Not all activities for every issue: not always same response).

Where appropriate:

1. Advocacy and strategy development
2. Track and report on legislation, Hill testimony, Federal Register commentary periods and regulatory issues, agency developments, etc.
3. Information provision
  - For decision and regulation makers
  - For member society and organizations: current policies/issues and emerging trends (a specific proposal follows)
4. Liaison and synergy with other public policy offices (other member orgs., FASEB, AAAS, etc. as appropriate).

#### ***Timing:***

Existing AIBS capacities could be expanded in 1+ years.

#### ***Funding (needed and possible sources):***

1. Ear-mark surcharge dollars from societies' indiv. member dues to be forwarded to AIBS to help fund the office and staff (e.g., \$1 per indiv. member/year for interested member societies and organizations (but need to be sensitive to international members)).
2. Ear-mark increased fees for societies to belong to AIBS to help fund the office and staff.
3. Acquire outside funding (e.g., foundations--Pew?)

***Possible Next Steps:***

1. Determine extent of interest
2. Develop feasibility study for March meeting
3. Develop public issues council to provide marching orders

***Organizations offering to solicit interest in the "public policy office" initiative from their leadership and members:***

American College of Toxicology  
American Fisheries Society  
American Phytopathological Society  
American Society of Agronomy  
Association for Tropical Biology  
Association of Systematics Collections  
Entomological Society of America  
Entomological Society of Canada  
International Society for Ecological Economics  
Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology  
Society of Protozoologists  
Society of Toxicology  
Society of Wetland Scientists  
Weed Science Society of America

## **Synthesis Group Proposals**

**Initiative 6:** Integrating member society science to address emerging issues in public policy & outreach

***Context (what's it about, why important?):***

We need AIBS to be a proactive leader using the integrative science capacity of its constituents to inform public policy makers and general public on critical needs.

***Desired/Potential Outcome or Result:***

1. Bring integrated science to the attention of the public on emerging issues.
  - Products: white papers – can support other products such as outreach, pr, and education.

***Description (what activities):***

1. Develop forum to address two target issues of mutual and emerging importance per year.
2. Issues have high social and biological relevance needing better information, visibility and potential with the “greater group.”

***Timing:***

Spring/Summer 2000 to develop further before seeking funding.

***Funding (needed and possible sources):***

1. Foundation/agency for forum and travel costs – include funding for production of white papers.

***Possible Next Steps:***

1. Steering group

***Organizations offering to solicit interest in the "integrating member society science" initiative from their leadership and members:***

American College of Toxicology  
American Fisheries Society  
Entomological Society of America  
Entomological Society of Canada  
International Society for Ecological Economics  
International Society for Ecosystem Health  
Mycological Society of America  
Society for Economic Botany

## **Synthesis Group Proposals**

**Initiative 7:** Active citizen scientist/member organization – public policy participation, capacity building, and support program

***Context (what's it about, why important?):***

1. Need to improve member and organization capability to participate in policy debates and policy formation – legislative and agency processes.

***Desired/Potential Outcome or Result:***

1. Improved capacity
  - Public leadership capability for member organizations to intervene in process to defend member organizations' interest and interests of AIBS members.

***Description (what activities):***

1. Day training sessions after AIBS meetings.
  - Policy intervention
  - Leadership
2. 3-5 day-long training
  - AIBS logistical support to those who have received training

e.g.: ESA's Aldo Leopold Leadership Training as evidence of interest and “Rolls Royce” model

***Timing:***

1. Start early and small, learn and expand ASAP

***Funding (needed and possible sources):***

1. Foundations, individual members, member organization.
2. Part-time AIBS support person and office space.

***Possible Next Steps:***

1. Gather information on AAAS fellow training, Aldo Leopold program, training sessions by other societies, and training materials and providers.
2. Draft proposal to foundations detailing AIBS program/role.

***Organizations offering to solicit interest in the "active citizen scientist" initiative from the leadership and members:***

No tally was taken on this initiative.

## Synthesis Group Proposals

**Initiative 8:** Evolution Initiative:  
“Evolution is the Fundamental Principle of Biology”

***Context (what it's about, why important):***

1. Need to counteract efforts to remove evolution from K-12 curriculum standards.
2. Need to educate public about evolution.
3. Attack on evolution challenges validity of scientific method.

***Desired/Potential Outcome or Result:***

1. Keep macroevolution/microevolution in Biology and Science curriculum K-12.
2. Keep strong focus on evolution in textbooks.
3. Educate public/prevent replacement of term “evolution” with “change over time.”

***Description (what activities):***

1. Organizational meeting in March 2000 at meeting to develop plans for workshop – seek funding.
2. Workshop to develop initiative.
3. Targets of message
  - Textbook publishers
  - PTA
  - School boards
  - Teachers
4. Links with NABT, AIBS Education Committee, AIBS Public Policy Committee
5. Develop media strategies
  - TV commercial?
  - Programs?
6. Disseminate NAS/SSE info to targets/links to Evolution website

***Timing:***

1. Short term effort –
  - to counteract current political efforts on local school boards
2. Long term effort
  - public education (evolution link with AAAS, NAS, NSF, etc.)

***Funding (needed and possible sources):***

1. To support workshop for planning initiative
2. To disseminate evolution materials prepared by NAS, SSE, others?
3. To develop new media
  - TV commercial, TV program?

***Possible Next Steps:***

1. Ask member societies to seek ideas from members
2. Seek funding
3. Gather information about current K-12 curriculum standards regarding evolution
4. Link with AIBS – Packard high school text review

***Organizations offering to solicit interest in the "evolution" initiative from their leadership and members:***

American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists  
American Society of Naturalists  
Animal Behavior Society  
Association for Tropical Biology  
Association of Southeastern Biologists  
Association of Systematics Collections  
Biological Sciences Curriculum Study  
BioQUEST Curriculum Consortium  
Botanical Society of America  
Cooper Ornithological Society  
Ecological Society of America  
Entomological Society of America  
Entomological Society of Canada  
International Society for Ecological Economics  
Mycological Society of America

National Association of Biology Teachers  
Phi Sigma Biological Sciences Honor Society  
Society for the Study of Evolution

# **Synthesis Group Proposals**

## **Initiative 9: AIBS “Millennium” Fellows**

### ***Context (what’s it about, why important?):***

Underrepresented groups, especially people of color, do not choose a career path related to organismal biology. In an effort to increase the number of minorities considering a career related to organismal bio, the AIBS Millennium Fellows program is proposed.

### ***Desired/Potential Outcome or Result:***

Provide exposure to scientific meetings where organismal biologists who can serve as role models are present.

### ***Description (what activities):***

1. March 2000 annual meeting program for local undergrad, minority students.
  - Program ideas
    - Poster session attendance
    - Behind the scenes at the Smithsonian
    - IMAX
    - Diversity mixer
    - Career options presentation

### ***Timing:***

Work to begin immediately

### ***Funding (needed and possible sources):***

1. AIBS staff time
2. Proposal to Packard Foundation

### ***Possible Next Steps:***

1. Determine details of program (quantity, cost, etc.)
2. Identify local advisors and students
3. Proposal preparation

***Organizations offering to solicit interest in the "millennium fellows" initiative from their leadership and members:***

American Society of Agronomy  
Association of Ecosystem Research Centers  
Association of Southeastern Biologists  
Botanical Society of America  
Cooper Ornithological Society  
International Society for Ecological Economics  
Phi Sigma Biological Sciences Honor Society  
Society for Economic Botany  
Society for Mathematical Biology  
Society for the Study of Evolution

# **Synthesis Group Proposals**

## **Initiative 10:** Collaborative biological resources for K-12 teachers

### ***Context (what's it about, why important?):***

Initially, a needs assessment from teachers as to how AIBS member societies can help. This would be done by regional focus groups bringing teachers together with AIBS members and facilitators

### ***Desired/Potential Outcome or Result:***

Development of crucial resources needed for the enhancement of biological instruction in each region.

### ***Description (what activities):***

1. Identify teachers to be brought to meeting
2. Identify AIBS members in the area that could come to the meeting
3. Hire facilitators to run the focus groups
4. Assess the needs identified, prioritize, and develop actions to be taken.

### ***Timing:***

March 2001

### ***Funding (needed and possible resources):***

1. Travel for teachers/members
2. Assessment and coalition of needs identified as well as resources available

### ***Possible Next Steps:***

1. Survey societies to find out what resources might be available
2. Write a proposal for funding

***Organizations offering to solicit interest in the "collaborative biological resources" initiative from their leadership and members:***

American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists  
American Society of Plant Physiologists  
Animal Behavior Society  
Association of College and University Biology Educators  
Biological Sciences Curriculum Study  
BioQUEST Curriculum Consortium  
BIOSIS  
Botanical Society of America  
Entomological Society of America  
Entomological Society of Canada  
Mycological Society of America  
National Association of Biology Teachers  
Society for Economic Botany  
Society for Mathematical Biology  
Society of Protozoologists  
Society of Toxicology  
Southern Appalachian Botanical Society

# **Synthesis Group Proposals**

**Initiative 11:** Evaluate & propose models of undergraduate curricula in biology

***Context (what's it about, why important?):***

1. Although models of undergraduate curricula are available, wide endorsement for biology majors including future high school biology teachers have not been obtained. In addition, the last 10 years have seen an erosion of organismal biology in education. In contrast, chemistry and physics already have models in place.

***Desired/Potential Outcome or Result:***

1. Place emphasis on the most effective practices and procedures for fostering education excellence and active learning in lab and field experiences. Develop means to evaluate biology programs and curricula.

***Description (what activities):***

Convene a summit involving representatives from AIBS member societies as well as those from FASEB to generate a product (journal, pamphlet) for guiding the implementation of curricula for undergraduate majors. Develop a consensus of what biology majors should learn/know as graduates of model programs.

***Timing:***

Now – ASAP

***Funding (needed and possible sources):***

1. NSF
2. Packard
3. Sloan

***Possible Next Steps:***

1. Convene meeting of appropriate individuals to develop a proposal. Ask member societies to develop characteristics of excellence for individual disciplines.  
Review available curricula and models
2. Determine existing resources.

***Organizations offering to solicit interest in the "undergraduate curricula" initiative from their leadership and members:***

American Bryological and Lichenological Society  
American Fisheries Society  
American Society of Agronomy  
American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists  
American Society of Plant Physiologists  
American Society of Plant Taxonomists  
Association of College and University Biology Educators  
Biological Sciences Curriculum Study  
BioQUEST Curriculum Consortium  
Ecological Society of America  
Entomological Society of Canada  
International Society for Ecological Economics  
Mycological Society of America  
National Association of Biology Teachers  
North American Benthological Society  
Phi Sigma Biological Sciences Honor Society  
Society for Economic Botany  
Society for Mathematical Biology  
Society for the Study of Evolution  
Society of Nematologists  
Society of Toxicology  
Society of Wetland Scientists

Expect interest among all AIBS and FASEB members, particularly their education committees and member societies (e.g. NABT). Benefits all biology educators.