

Place-Based Biological Research

Every day, biological and environmental research and education programs are being conducted at over 1,100 sites around the nation. Whether at a field station or marine laboratory, a natural science collection, or a zoo, aquarium, or botanic garden, place-based science provides insights into our nation's most pressing issues.



Types of Institutions

- **Field Stations:** Whether on the coast or inland, research stations contribute to our understanding of climate change, monitor long-term environmental changes, and develop remediation and restoration techniques for degraded ecosystems. Although many field stations are affiliated with universities, some are partnered with federal programs, such as the National Science Foundation's Long Term Ecological Research Network.
- **Natural History Museums:** Natural science collections consisting of plants, animals, rocks, soil, and tissue and cell cultures are libraries of Earth's history. These irreplaceable resources inform our understanding of everyday problems, such as the development of strategies to conserve biological diversity, combat the spread of invasive species, prosecute wildlife poachers, and inform public health responses to emerging diseases.
- **Zoos, Aquaria, and Botanic Gardens:** These institutions expose the public to the diversity of our natural world and, in many cases, conduct genetics and biological conservation research. Education programs at zoos, aquaria, and botanic gardens instruct over 12 million students and provide training to thousands of teachers each year.

Federal Investments

Place-based research institutions benefit their community, their state, and the nation. Research conducted at these facilities informs policy-makers, creates jobs and generates revenue for local economies, and helps educate students and the public at large. In short, the nation benefits from place-based science.

The limited federal support for these institutions is spread across the budgets of many agencies, including the National Science Foundation, the Departments of Agriculture, Energy, and Interior, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the National Institutes of Health. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provides much needed funding for science infrastructure and research, although Congress prevented zoos and aquaria from competing for stimulus funds.

Please help to ensure that place-based science is adequately supported in the FY 2011 budget and in future appropriations.