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AIBS NAMES 2009 EMERGING PUBLIC POLICY LEADERS *UC-Berkeley and SUNY-ESF Graduate Students Receive Awards*

WASHINGTON, DC – The American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS) has selected **Adam Roddy**, a graduate student at the University of California at Berkeley, and **Anna Maria Stewart**, a graduate student at the State University of New York (SUNY) - College of Environmental Science and Forestry, to receive the 2009 AIBS Emerging Public Policy Leadership Award (EPPLA).

Since 2003, AIBS has recognized the achievements of biology graduate students who have demonstrated an interest and aptitude for contributing to science and public policy. AIBS is a scientific society based in Washington, DC, with a membership consisting of roughly 5,000 individual scientists and nearly 200 professional societies and scientific organizations. The combined membership of the latter is approximately 250,000 individuals.

Roddy and Stewart receive a certificate, membership in AIBS, several AIBS publications, including *Communicating Science: A Primer for Working with the Media* and a subscription to the journal *BioScience*. Additionally, AIBS will bring Roddy and Stewart to Washington, DC, in April to attend a federal research budget briefing, meetings with members of Congress, and a reception. The events are in conjunction with the annual Biological and Ecological Sciences Coalition (BESC) Congressional Visits Day.

“I am excited to participate in the Congressional Visits Day because...as a scientist, I want to emphasize the importance of funding basic research because of its application to environmental policy and its educational value,” said **Roddy**. “A strong interface between scientists and politicians fosters the development of sound policies.”

Roddy’s Ph.D. research in integrative biology examines flower physiology and phenology – or the timing of development in relation to climate. Roddy is working to understand how flower water requirements may relate to broader ecosystem dynamics, such as the water cycle. Roddy has been active in outreach throughout his academic career. He has organized a public seminar series on the teaching of evolution, helped produce science materials for middle school students, and worked with educators to develop high quality community schools in Kenya. Roddy earned his bachelor’s degree in biology from Swarthmore College in 2006. At Swarthmore, he received the Leo M. Leva award for outstanding biology undergraduates.

“As a young scientist conducting research at the intersection of science and public health policy, participation in the Congressional Visits Day is an invaluable opportunity for me to observe and

engage in the public policy process,” said **Stewart**. “The EPPLA is a critical step towards achieving my ultimate goal of becoming a scientist who advises intergovernmental agencies.” Stewart states that she strives to conduct transformative, interdisciplinary research that will inform public policy.

Stewart’s Ph.D. research in environmental and forest biology focuses on the effects of climate and socioeconomic factors on the distribution of dengue fever. She is developing a model to identify current and future human populations at risk of dengue fever in Ecuador. This research should help public health policymakers to mitigate and anticipate future epidemics. In addition to work toward her PhD in ecology, Stewart is also a Master’s student in Public Administration at Syracuse University. Her undergraduate degree is in environmental biology from Syracuse.

Stewart received a National Science Foundation GK-12 teaching fellowship in 2007 to support local high school science education. She mentored students in a class on the global environment and helped develop a guide for high school science research. She is also the Vice President of the SUNY-ESF Graduate Student Association, and has served on numerous advisory and planning councils throughout her graduate career. Stewart is a member of the International Society for Ecological Modeling and AIBS.

“AIBS is committed to fostering a productive dialogue between policymakers and scientists,” said AIBS Executive Director **Dr. Richard O’Grady**. “We applaud Adam Roddy and Anna Maria Stewart for exemplifying this commitment through their work.”

“By participating in the 2009 Congressional visits event, Adam and Anna are playing an important role in bridging the communication gap between our nation’s policymakers and the scientific community,” said AIBS Director of Public Policy **Dr. Robert Gropp**.

This year, AIBS will also recognize as EPPLA Honorable Mentions **Kimberly Lellis-Dibble**, a Ph.D. student in environmental science at the University of Rhode Island, **Jessica Corman**, a PhD student in biology at Arizona State University, **Jonathan Hickman**, a PhD candidate in ecology and evolution at Stony Brook University, and **Christopher Patrick**, a PhD student in ecology at Notre Dame University.

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ABOUT AIBS

The American Institute of Biological Sciences is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) scientific association dedicated to advancing biological research and education for the welfare of society. Founded in 1947 as a part of the National Academy of Sciences, AIBS became an independent, member-governed organization in the 1950s. Today, headquartered in Washington, DC, with a staff of approximately 50, AIBS is sustained by a robust membership of some 5,000 biologists and 200 professional societies and scientific organizations; the combined individual membership of the latter exceeds 250,000. AIBS advances its mission through participating in coalition activities in research, education, and public policy; publishing the peer-reviewed journal *BioScience* and the education Web site ActionBioscience.org; providing scientific peer-review and advisory services to government agencies and other clients; convening meetings; and managing scientific programs. Web site: www.aibs.org.

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