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AIBS NAMES EMERGING PUBLIC POLICY LEADER *Rutgers University Graduate Student Receives Award*

WASHINGTON, DC – The American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS) has selected **Wesley Brooks**, a Ph.D. candidate at Rutgers University, to receive the 2011 AIBS Emerging Public Policy Leadership Award (EPPLA).

“AIBS is committed to fostering a productive dialogue between policymakers and scientists,” said **AIBS Executive Director Dr. Richard O’Grady**. “We applaud Wesley Brooks for exemplifying this commitment through his work.”

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 will bring Brooks to Washington, DC in March to meet with his Congressional delegation and to attend a briefing on the federal budget for scientific research. These events are in conjunction with the annual Biological and Ecological Sciences Coalition (BESC) Congressional Visits Day. Brooks will also receive a certificate and one-year membership in AIBS, which includes a subscription to the journal *BioScience*.

“By participating in the 2011 Congressional visits event, Wesley Brooks is playing an important role in bridging the communication gap between our nation’s policymakers and the scientific community,” said **AIBS President Dr. James P. Collins**. “He is a great role model for graduate students interested in working at the intersection of biological research and public policy.”

“I believe that this award will provide me with the momentum, knowledge, and interpersonal connections necessary to effectively transition from my graduate research to a long-term career in public service and science advocacy,” said **Brooks**.

Brooks is pursuing a Ph.D. in ecology and evolutionary biology at Rutgers University. His thesis research explores how fish and plant community properties affect the susceptibility of those communities to invasion by non-native species. He hopes that his research findings will identify lower cost alternatives for the control of invasive species. While in graduate school, Brooks interned with the National Center for Environmental Economics at the Environmental Protection Agency, where he contributed to the development of a computer model to more accurately project the costs of climate change. He was also a Governor’s Executive Fellow through a program at Rutgers’ Eagleton Institute of Politics. Prior to graduate school, Brooks worked as an ecological consultant at the Key West Tropical Forest and Botanical Garden in Key West,

Florida, where he collaborated with government agencies and others to share plant population data across conservation areas. He earned a bachelor's degree in biology and political science from Duke University.

This year, AIBS will also recognize as EPPLA Honorable Mention **Michael Jay Walsh**, a Ph.D. student in biological and environmental engineering at Cornell 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. AIBS is sustained by a robust membership of some 200 professional societies and scientific organizations; the combined individual membership of the latter exceeds 250,000. AIBS advances its mission through coalition activities in research, education, and public policy; publishing the peer-reviewed journal *BioScience* and the education website ActionBioscience.org; providing scientific peer review and advisory services to government agencies and other clients; convening meetings; and managing scientific programs. Website: www.aibs.org.

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