

**Brian Boom, President and CEO - All Species Foundation**

**POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE  
ALL SPECIES FOUNDATION TO  
A US-WIDE BIODIVERSITY OBSERVATION EVENT DURING  
THE IBOY (2001-2002)**

The All Species Foundation is a recently created not-for-profit organization dedicated to facilitating the complete inventory of species of life on Earth within the next 25 years. Information on the Foundation may be found at the web site: [www.all-species.org](http://www.all-species.org).

We propose two ways for our participation in the US-wide biodiversity observation event being envisioned by DIVERSITAS during the IBOY. The first is to serve generally in an information clearinghouse role with respect to inventory efforts underway in the United States. The other to stage an event focussed on new tools and technologies being brought to bear on species discovery.

**Biotic Inventories Search Engine.** This idea is to build upon the initial surveys conducted by DIVERSITAS of existing biodiversity resources by databasing that information, and then adding it to the effort now underway by the All Species Foundation to serve as a clearinghouse for all information available on biotic inventories. We have begun to work towards creating on the Foundation's web site a robust search engine for such information worldwide, so that component relating to US-based efforts would be readily available for consultation and use by IBOY participants in the biodiversity observation event in this country. Regardless of the specific event(s) that IBOY decides to pursue, the resource information would be available for planning coordinated activities, forging new partnerships, and generally making for a more substantial and informed situation than in past decentralized events (e.g., BioBlitz days).

**Workshop on Tools and Technologies for Taxonomists.** This idea is to hold a meeting, perhaps with a tradeshow format, for showcasing the latest, state-of-the-art tools and approaches to species discovery, from field to laboratory. This focus is consistent both with what the Foundation regards as one of its major thrusts and with what the IBOY organizers aspire to do with drawing attention to the fact that modern-day species discovery involves more than butterfly nets and plant presses. Digital imaging of specimens, GPS units, waterproof handheld computers, DNA sequencing innovations, etc. are as much a part of 21<sup>st</sup> century biodiversity studies as more traditional tools, and the public and media need to know that. The workshop (or appropriate subsets of it) could be webcast live and the event could be publicized on the web sites of as many US-based organizations (names of which would be collected during the above-mentioned exercise) as possible. Press releases would go out to the standard science and conservation news entities.

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**Ellen Censky, Director - Connecticut State Museum of Natural History**

**PROPOSAL: CROSS-COUNTRY BIOBLITZ**

**EVENT:** Designed as part contest, part festival, part scientific endeavor, the BioBlitz is a celebration of the diversity of life in our backyards. It brings together scientists from across a region to conduct a 24-hour inventory of a chosen area. The public is invited to participate in this event and to interact with scientists. A central public staging area monitors the progress of the survey via tally boards of the number of species found, videos of field activities displayed on large screen monitors, scientists identifying the plants and animals, and other related activities. The BioBazaar, which occurs in an area near the biodiversity survey staging area, involves local organizations with nature oriented interests that interact with the public on an educational level. In addition to displays of local biodiversity, other activities in the BioBazaar could include nature walks, demonstrations of survey techniques, and discussions of what is being found, with the emphasis placed on activities that highlight the ecosystem services that biodiversity provide.

The Cross-Country BioBlitz would take place in target cities across the country. Each event would occur on the same day, at the same time, following the same format. Base camps could be linked via the web, TV remotes, or other means to facilitate communication between sites. Each BioBlitz would have a closing ceremony (possibly linked to each other) where the final tally would be announced. A major hook for attracting media attention would be the race aspect of the BioBlitz (race against time) and the natural competition aspect that would arise between BioBlitzes to see who can record the most species in the 24-hour period.

Participating cities would be chosen based on their size and proximity to media centers. Large cities have more people to attract to the event hence the message reaches a larger audience. Large cities often have large museums or universities to tap into for organizing the event and for their expertise in conducting the survey. Large cities are generally either media centers or close to national media centers. The closer to a media center, the easier it is to get press coverage. And finally, most people do not think about biodiversity existing in the middle of a city. Potential cities could be Washington DC, Chicago, Los Angeles, Seattle, Houston, Denver, Atlanta, Miami, New York (Connecticut). Other cities should be encouraged to do a BioBlitz but there would not need to be the same level of coordination with them.

**COMMUNITIES INVOLVED:** Research scientists from universities, museums, governmental agencies, and societies should conduct the survey. This insures that the survey adheres to high scientific standards. Museum education staff and nature-oriented organizations could provide the complimentary activities. Residents of each of the cities as well as legislators would be invited to attend the BioBlitz during specific hours. In addition, teachers could be targeted with specific invitations sent to schools. Teachers would attend during the same time as the general public but there could be a tent/table where additional information or curricula on biodiversity would be available.

**STRATEGY FOR PARTICIPATION:** A small IBOY committee would make personal contact with specific organizers in each target city to secure participation and coordination. Guidelines on how to conduct a BioBlitz would be sent to all participating organizations (cities) to insure that all BioBlitzes are conducted in the same way. Each organization (city) would be responsible for inviting and insuring the participation of scientists, nature organizations, residents, legislators, and local media as per guidelines. National media would be coordinated by the IBOY Committee.

**PUBLICITY:** Local committees would coordinate media coverage at local levels. Press releases would be sent and radio and TV stations alerted. National media coverage would be coordinated by the IBOY Committee. At the international level, National Geographic Television (Producer Lawrence Cumbo) has expressed interest in covering such an event for *Explorer*. It might also be possible to interest National Geographic Cable in doing live, remote coverage of the event. In addition, BioBlitzes could be linked via live internet. **Post-event Publicity:** Follow-up articles in newspapers or popular magazines (e.g., National Geographic, Smithsonian Magazine, Discover Magazine) could report on the findings, making a more detailed analysis of what was found [e.g., rare species found in cities, same species found in all cities (invasive species)].

**FUNDING:** On average, it costs about \$6,000 to run a BioBlitz. Funding would need to be secured for/by local organizers. Community Foundations and local companies are a great source for funding, especially because the BioBlitz is a positive community event. One proposal could be written and then adapted to meet the requirements of different cities and different funding agencies. Additional funding would be necessary for coordination between cities.

## **Robb Cowie – Biodiversity Project**

### **Potential IBOY Events from the Biodiversity Project**

#### **1. “Biodiversity – the Real Fabric of Our Lives:” the Biodiversity Quilt**

This project would organize a national Biodiversity Quilt, similar to the AIDS quilt. The quilt would be a celebration of local biodiversity from across North America and would be comprised of panels submitted by individual quilters and quilting clubs (a contest could be organized – in partnership with fabric manufacturers, quilting stores and clubs – to encourage quilters to submit panels). The quilt would be first assembled and displayed in Washington, DC, with an accompanying press conference, then would tour the country and be displayed at museums, zoos, aquaria, nature centers, schools and other locations.

This project would be aimed at raising biodiversity awareness among women, a key audience. Opinion research tells us that women care about biodiversity, but are less informed than men. The project would produce a “Biodiversity Quilt Kit,” which would provide information about biodiversity and what consumer and lifestyle choices individuals and families can make to protect it. This kit would be distributed to quilters. Funding for the project could come from foundations, federal and state scientific, environmental and arts agencies, and from corporate sources such as the Cotton Association and fabric manufacturers.

#### **2. De-bunking biodiversity “myths”**

The purpose of this project is to refute widely held “myths” about the resiliency of nature, causes of extinction, and related topics. The lead organizations in this project will contract with a media relations firm to develop a media outreach campaign to disseminate information from leading biodiversity scientists to key media through meetings with editorial boards, placement of op/ed articles, appearances on appropriate news/information programs, etc. The project could also develop educational material aimed at high school and college students.

The project could draw spokespersons from the Union of Concerned Scientists, the Ecological Society of America and the Society for Conservation Biology and other leading scientific organizations and institutions. In addition, the project could take advantage of a wide network of environmental communicators to encourage wide distribution and dissemination of the message through editorials and features in magazines, newsletters and the Web. Funding would likely come from foundations, or organizations such as NEETF or NSF.

#### **3. Consumer Choices and Biodiversity: Agenda-Setting Summit**

American over-consumption is one of the global drivers of biodiversity loss. But at this time, there is no coordinated effort to help Americans understand which consumer choices will make the most difference in saving species and habitat and demonstrating the impact our choices can make. This project would convene a working session of leading organizations working in

environmentally related consumer education to identify the “reach, teach and make a difference” actions that will have both a significant impact on biodiversity conservation and will help consumers gain a new level of understanding about the impact of their choices on the natural world. At this summit, solutions to the challenges of promoting a consumer agenda, such as the lack of “eco-friendly” brands and certification processes will be discussed. We would also examine target audiences, and messages that would be essential to designing an education campaign that promotes “biodiversity friendly” consumer choices.

The meeting would involve groups such as the Consumer Choice Council, Center for A New American Dream, Co-op America and the Rain Forest Alliance, along with interested scientific organizations that could help identify priority consumer campaigns and substantiate their potential impact. Support would likely come from Foundations, and eco-friendly businesses.

## **Jeff Flocken, Director of Education & Outreach - Conservation International**

IBOY Media & Outreach Event (This summit could also take place in the USA)

- 1) Representatives from IBOY could stage a one-day workshop and media event tied to the 2002 Earth Summit (Rio +10) planned for September, 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The event would bring attention to the importance of biodiversity, and use the already existing infrastructure surrounding the Earth Summit to supply an audience and garner media attention. As biodiversity is not on the agenda for the Summit, this would allow environmentalists the opportunity to present biodiversity issues in a controlled and pro-active light.
- 2) The event would be staffed by communication, media, and scientific representatives from the NGO and academic communities. The event could be tailored to an audience of media, Earth Summit participants, local schools, local educators, international educators, scientists, or some hybrid thereof.
- 3) Members of the IBOY outreach group could assist IBOY staff in procuring a location, speakers, and agenda for the workshop and media event. As members of the IBOY steering committee and participants may already be present in South Africa for this event, the opportunity to gather key persons should juxtapose with the larger Summit attendee list. Additionally, since many groups will most-likely be concerned about the lack of attention biodiversity is getting in the formal Summit, this workshop may be the perfect remedy for allaying fears the issue will be completely over-looked during this potentially huge event.
- 4) Members of the IBOY outreach group would need to access their own communications tools and resources to get out word about the workshop – both within the greater environmental community and the Summit participant group. Associations, coalitions, and environmental networks could be utilized for this purpose.
- 5) A media event, or press conference, would need to be orchestrated in coordination with the workshop. The press conference would have to address international, U.S., and local press audiences to allow for maximum coverage of the issue of biodiversity and how it relates to the Earth Summit.

# Memo

**To:** Diane H. Wall  
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**CC:** Gina Adams  
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**Date:** 6 September 2001

**Subject:** US-Wide Biodiversity Observation Year Event

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## Proposed Biodiversity Observation Year Event

**Nature of Event:** Half-price day at the zoo to celebrate IBOY and showcase biodiversity.

**Hosts:** Zoos across the nation.

### Strategy to Secure Participation:

Contact zoo directors through the American Zoo and Aquarium Association ([www.aza.org](http://www.aza.org)). Zoos would disseminate information about IBOY and conduct educational tours on site that highlight species being studied by IBOY projects (for example, species listed in ARKive's Global Digital Library of Images and Recordings of Endangered Species).

### Resources for Securing Participation:

If the event is sanctioned and promoted by the AZA, some zoos may direct their education departments to post IBOY posters and conduct IBOY-focused tours and/or walkabouts. Because on-site educators and volunteers are already familiar with the endangered species at their facility, they need only be educated about IBOY and its activities. Although zoos would take in reduced revenues from admission fees, they might make up the deficit through increased attendance and the purchase of food and souvenirs. Furthermore, the event may attract local newspaper and/or television news coverage for the zoo.

**Publicity:** Zoos likely would publicize the event locally through newspapers, mailings to subscribers, and possibly radio ads.

**Nancee Hunter, Geography Action! Project Manager**  
**National Geographic Society (NGS), Geography Education Outreach (GEO)**

**IDEAS FOR THE OBSERVATION EVENT:**

The Society's Geography Education Outreach program (GEO) would like to use the IBOY event to highlight the concept of biodiversity within our Public Lands program.

**Background:** Each year, GEO takes on a different conservation theme through an educational outreach program known as *Geography Action!* This initiative promotes geography education through the development of classroom lessons, hands-on learning activities, professional development training institutes, contests and surveys. The program begins in early spring, with the launch of a comprehensive web site, and continues with summer activities and back-to-school events. The third week of November (Geography Awareness Week) serves as a "celebration" point for the program, although many educators continue to use the materials throughout the remainder of the school year. *Geography Action!* is a program which depends on outside sponsorship/partnership monies and resources.

**Geography Action! Public Lands 2002:** In the year 2002, *Geography Action!* will focus on Public Lands (including city, state, and national parks) and related issues. Timing of the *Geography Action!* activities is such that a US-wide observation in the summer would fit wonderfully. (We would like to request that the event not be held in September as we have another large event that will be occupying most of our time). Also, an invasive species component would work well within our general Public Lands theme.

The annual theme of *Geography Action!* spills over into other NGS grantmaking activities, publications and programming. So if the IBOY US-wide biodiversity observation was to become part of our *Geography Action!* program, there would be opportunities to feature it in NGS children's magazines and television/channel programming. Other examples of NGS resources that could be used for securing participation include: Alliance Network, listserves (e-groups) from past *Geography Action!* programs, *Geography Action!* web site and mailings, etc. There is also potential to extend the event beyond the USA, through NGS international programming.



Here are some ideas that I would like to discuss further at the meeting in hopes of making some connections between our program and IBOY:

- Developing reciprocal links between IBOY-related web sites and our *Geography Action!* Web site.
- Regional “special events” to celebrate IBOY taking place on Public Lands.
- The development of a national Bioblitz on Public Lands. We would especially like to include a Public Lands BioBlitz as a *Geography Action!* activity.
- Developing relationships with the following communities as participant and/or partners in the event: both non-traditional and traditional educators and students, land-management organizations (i.e. NPS, BLM, FWS, FS, etc.), related government agencies (EPA, BIA, NRCS, etc.) Public Lands Interpretive Association, media groups, community centers, parks and recreation departments, after-school programs, National Association of Interpreters, Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Council (other related organizations), Interpretive Centers, Universities, Native American Organizations, etc.
- We would like to find a person who is involved in IBOY, familiar with Public Lands, (possibly invasive species), as well as education outreach, who could serve on a panel of advisors for development of our *Geography Action!* program for 2002.