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INTERNATIONAL BIODIVERSITY OBSERVATION YEAR 2001-2002

Letter from the Chair

Dear IBOY Friends,

I am excited to update you on the fast moving developments for the DIVERSITAS International Biodiversity Observation Year (IBOY) 2001-2002. As you know, the IBOY is an unprecedented collaborative effort by the global scientific community, educators and the media.

The IBOY is assembling an outstanding portfolio of projects that demonstrate the many dimensions of biodiversity research, exploration and the benefits they bring society. The global support for the IBOY has been fantastic! In May 2000, the Fifth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity invited parties to find ways and means of collaborating with the IBOY. In October 2000 a resolution in support of the IBOY was adopted by the IUCN World Conservation Congress. Nations across the world are contacting us about nation-wide biodiversity celebrations. The IBOY has also launched new programs for individual researchers.

As we approach the official start of the IBOY in 2001, the Secretariat, Steering Committee and Advisory Board are busily planning and fundraising for a platform of activities, including meetings of the IBOY scientific project leaders and the media. These and other integrating activities will bring projects together to develop a more holistic, science-based understanding of biodiversity and improve communication of science-based biodiversity information to public and policy spheres.

On behalf of the IBOY Steering Committee, I thank you for your support of this important initiative to increase general science-based understanding of biodiversity and its significance to societies. Please feel free to distribute this update to other interested parties.

We would welcome your comments and suggestions to help ensure that IBOY is a global success.

Best wishes,

Diana Wall, Ph.D.

Chair, DIVERSITAS International
Biodiversity Observation Year
(2001-2002)

About the IBOY

A year to focus global attention on biodiversity and the sciences that explore it is being planned for 2001-2002 (Norris, 2000). The International Biodiversity Observation Year (IBOY) is an initiative of DIVERSITAS, the international program of biodiversity science sponsored by IUBS, SCOPE, UNESCO, ICSU, IGBP and IUMS.

The IBOY is a window in time, for programs that examine biodiversity and its links to ecosystems and society, to communicate their findings and the importance of their work to a broad audience. Organizers hope that IBOY will generate the momentum, collaborations and public mandate required to advance international and integrated approaches to biodiversity research and conservation. For example, promoting coordinated, long-term, international biodiversity monitoring programs and new coalitions for swifter incorporation of scientific findings into the media, education and decision-making.

Planning for IBOY began in 1997, as scientists increasingly recognized the need to integrate the different dimensions of biodiversity research, in order to understand the links between biodiversity and sustainable ecosystems and societies. They also perceived an urgent need to communicate what is already known about these links, and to provide accurate, science-based information on how changes

in biodiversity may impact daily living.

An international Steering Committee, chaired by Diana Wall of Colorado State University, and an Advisory Board of preeminent scientists and communicators, is directing IBOY towards its two primary goals, to:

- Promote and integrate biodiversity science, advancing a holistic understanding of biodiversity
- Educate the public about biodiversity, explaining the implications of biodiversity research and the opportunities for further discovery

At the core of IBOY is a diverse portfolio of international research, informatics and education and outreach projects, addressing the questions: What biodiversity do we have and where is it? How is biodiversity changing? What goods and services does biodiversity provide? and How can we conserve biodiversity? Projects are participating in the IBOY at two levels:

Core Network Projects – over 40 projects, across more than 50 countries. Core Projects are international and will have a peak of

activity and products during 2001 or 2002. They will be the focus of the IBOY's publicity and synergistic activities.

PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION – CORE PROJECTS:

Despite the fact that the IBOY does not lend financial support, there are over 40 International Core Projects participating in the IBOY with nearly \$50 million dollars (US) in resources. New proposals for projects are still being accepted. Information on Core Projects can be found at <http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/IBOY/projects2.html>

Approved Small-scale Projects - IBOY will highlight these through a web-based map and directory of global biodiversity research and education projects

occurring in 2001 and 2002.

IBOY does not fund projects, but will showcase them, providing opportunities for networking and cross-collaboration. IBOY helps to communicate their significance to a broad audience. IBOY meetings will bring scientific disciplines together to advance integrated research and will build bridges between science, education and the media to improve transfer of science-based information on biodiversity into public and policy spheres. Other synergistic activities being planned include a television series and accompanying educational materials, media campaign, publications, webpages and participation in national biodiversity events.

We are still accepting proposals for projects and welcome your suggestions and comments for making IBOY a global success.

More information on how to get involved, or details on existing projects, can be found at <http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/IBOY>.

References:

Norris S. 2000. A Year for Biodiversity. *BioScience* 50(2): 103-107

Local to National Participation
August 2000 – Launch of web-based map to highlight smaller-scale, local national and regional activities across the world. Information on these ‘IBOY Smaller-Scale Approved Projects’ can be found at <http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/IBOY/projects.html>

NATION-WIDE CELEBRATIONS OF BIODIVERSITY:

Nations across the world are taking advantage of IBOY to develop ‘National Biodiversity Events,’ for example:

–Australia–

May 2001-For Australian National Science Week, the Australian Science Teachers Association has made the national schools’ theme, *Exploring Biodiversity*.

September 2001 - The Community Biodiversity Network (CBN) will coordinate *Biodiversity Month*.

2001-2002–the replica of the *Bark Endeavour*, the ship that sailed Captain Cook to Australia in 1770, will circumnavigate Australia bringing biodiversity education events to towns and cities.

–Wales–

September 30, 2000 – Biodiversity Fair, **National Botanic Garden of Wales** to launch public education activities throughout 2001-2002.

National Museum of Wales will also coordinate biodiversity activities.

Please help IBOY network and support nation-wide celebrations of biodiversity in your country during 2001-2002.

RECENT MEETINGS:

- **October 2000–Amman, Jordan–IUCN, Convening of the World Conservation Congress:** Resolution adopted agreeing to support and participate in the IBOY.
- **October 2000–London, UK–The Natural History Museum:** IBOY Program Director and Vice–Chair met with Museum representatives to discuss plans for the IBOY.
- **August 2000–Snowbird, US–International Long-Term Ecological Research Meeting:** Workshop participants from over 20 countries discussed research plans for the IBOY.
- **July 2000–Washington DC, US–National Museum of Natural History:** IBOY Chair and Department Chairs of the Museum met to plan activities for the IBOY.

FUTURE MEETINGS:

- **March 2001–Washington DC, US–American Institute of Biological Sciences Meeting:** As a contribution to the IBOY, the theme of the AIBS Annual Meeting will be “Biodiversity to BioComplexity.”
- **Early 2001-IBOY’s Project Meeting “Building Bridges for Biodiversity”:** Proposed international meeting to present and explain the significance of biodiversity and the IBOY to the media. This meeting will also bring the IBOY project leaders together to develop a coordinated program and timetable for highlighting projects and their products during 2001 and 2002.
- **July 2001–London, UK–“Detecting Environmental Change: Science and Society”:** IBOY co–sponsored international meeting.

Help IBOY highlight biodiversity exploration and research through meetings across the world during 2001 and 2002. Please keep us informed of opportunities for symposia, panels or other meetings in your countries and keep us updated with your biodiversity meetings during the IBOY.

Outreach and Education

General Outreach Website:

The IBOY's website provides background information on biodiversity, describes biodiversity research, informatics and education projects around the world and their significance, and provides links to diverse information sources on biodiversity. (<http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/IBOY>)

Education Webpage:

The IBOY is developing an interactive education webpage as a global resource for educators and organizers of nation-wide biodiversity celebrations. Dr. Dan Perlman and Island Press have

agreed to post on the site excerpts from their CD-ROM *Conserving Earth's Biodiversity* with Dr. E.O. Wilson. Dr. David Rothenberg has agreed to post excerpts of his CD *Before the War* that explores biodiversity sounds. We will include excerpts from other IBOY Education and Outreach Projects on this site, and are planning an internet chat session in conjunction with some IBOY project leaders and MW Productions.

Calendars and Posters:

Proposed for 2002, calendars and posters will use compelling images and text to explain key biodiversity issues, the programs around the world that are addressing them and showcase important dates and

anniversaries for biodiversity science and conservation. We are currently fundraising for the calendars.

Media Relations:

We are developing a database of media contacts to disseminate press releases, issue packs and other features on biodiversity and IBOY projects.

Please keep us updated with your projects so that we can help integrate and highlight them. Send us your suggestions of other outreach and education activities.

Help IBOY raise awareness of biodiversity throughout publications in 2001 and 2002. Please get us connected with possible places to publish in your country. IBOY Project Leaders, keep us updated with your publications on IBOY and your project.

Publications

To date, over 20 articles have been published in journals and bulletins of scientific societies on the IBOY; Core Projects have also published 15 articles or books.
<http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/IBOY/publications.html>

February 2000 – **BioScience**

January 2001 – Special article (and front cover) in **Trends in Ecology and Evolution**

Under Development 2002 – IBOY article in **Audubon Magazine**

Under development 2002 – MW Productions **Voyages of Natural Discovery**

Early 2001 – World premiere of IMAX film **Life in the Balance**

October 13, 2000 – **WildScreen Festival 2000 and Television Trust for the Environment (TVE) Debate** to be broadcast for BBC World, Earth Report.

September 12, 2000 – World premiere of the large format film **Ocean Oasis**

Television and Film

Chair

- **Diana H. Wall**, Colorado State University

Vice-Chair

- **Geoffrey A. Boxshall**, The Natural History Museum

Steering Committee

- **Andrew Dobson**, Princeton University
- **Ivan Hattingh**, World Wide Fund for Nature
- **Tohru Nakashizuka**, DIWPA
- **Valery Neronov**, Russian DIVERSITAS
- **Cristián Samper**, Chair, Convention for Biological Diversity, SBSSTTA-5
- **James Seyani**, Commonwealth Science Council

Ex Officio

- **José Sarukhán**, Chair, DIVERSITAS
- **Peter Bridgewater**, UNESCO MAB
- **Harold Mooney**, ICSU

Help IBOY highlight local, regional and national biodiversity research, informatics, education and conservation projects in your country. Please send proposals to highlight:
<http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/test/nat.html>

IBOY Secretariat

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Visit the IBOY webpage



<http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/IBOY>