

AIBS Public Policy Report, Volume 9, Issue 21, October 13, 2008

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- Congress extends funding, science agencies flat
- **AERC briefs policymakers on carbon sequestration by ecosystems**
- Mammals perfect disappearing act
- Biology standards beefed up in the longhorn state?
- Meteorologists hold briefing on climate change and ecosystems
- New in BioScience: "Science advice for the next President"
- From the Federal Register
- Now in the AIBS Bookstore - "Communicating Science: A Primer for Working with the Media"

AERC BRIEFS POLICYMAKERS ON CARBON SEQUESTRATION BY ECOSYSTEMS

With an ever increasing number of reports showing that climate change will impact human health, economic and national security, and agricultural and natural resource management, policymakers are increasingly paying attention to the issue of climate change and trying to understand how best to respond. Legislation has been introduced to implement cap and trade systems and carbon taxes, and to promote carbon sequestration. Informed policy decisions require that policymakers understand the potential role of ecosystems in mitigating the problems caused by carbon emissions. Thus, on 25 September 2008, the Association of Ecosystem Research Centers - an AIBS member society, held a special science briefing for policymakers in Washington, DC. The briefing, "Climate Change: A Role for Ecosystems," was held in conjunction with AERC's annual science meeting, and was conducted with the assistance of AIBS Public Policy Office staff.

The briefing allowed policymakers to hear directly from six leading ecosystem researchers. Speaking at the briefing were: Dr. Robin Graham of Oak Ridge National Laboratory ("Environmental Policy and Carbon Sequestration by Ecosystems"); Dr. Ken Buesseler of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution ("Ocean Fertilization: Ironing Out Uncertainties in Climate Engineering"); Dr. Peter Curtis of The Ohio State University ("Forest carbon storage in the upper Midwest: Lessons from the past and predictions for the future"); Dr. J. Patrick Megonigal of the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center ("Carbon In, Methane Out: The Greenhouse Gas Balance of North American Wetlands"); Dr. Charles Rice of Kansas State University ("Carbon Sequestration in Agro-ecosystems"); and, Dr. John Arnone of the Desert Research Institute ("Carbon Sequestration in Deserts").

The timely and useful nature of the 2008 briefing drew a large audience and even broader interest from the policy community. Approximately 50 individuals attended the science briefing for policymakers, including representatives from key congressional offices, executive branch agencies, and non-governmental organizations. In 2007, AERC held a successful briefing to explore the state of our scientific understanding of the ecosystem-related issues associated with the nation's bioenergy policy. AERC plans to once again convene a science briefing in Washington, DC, next fall. For more information about AERC or to view the presentations from the 2008 briefing, please visit www.ecosystemresearch.org.