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AIBS NAMES 2007 EMERGING PUBLIC POLICY LEADER AWARDS

Moss Landing Marine Labs student and UW Botany student will travel to Washington, D.C. to speak to lawmakers about science policy

WASHINGTON, D.C. (February 27, 2007) - The American Institute of Biological Sciences, a Washington, D.C.-based scientific association dedicated to advancing biological research and education for the benefit of society, named **Amber Szoboszlai**, a Marine Sciences graduate student at the Moss Landing Marine Labs in California, and **Sarah Wright**, a doctoral candidate in Botany at the University of Wisconsin, as recipients of the 2007 Emerging Public Policy Leader Award.

Since 2003, AIBS has presented the Emerging Public Policy Leader Award (EPPLA) to promising biology graduate students with demonstrated leadership skills and an interest in science policy. Szoboszlai and Wright receive an AIBS membership, including a subscription to the journal *BioScience*, and will travel to Washington, D.C. on April 18-19 to participate in a congressional visits event sponsored by the Biological and Ecological Sciences Coalition (BESC) and the Coalition on Funding Agricultural Research Missions (CoFARM). They will meet with members of Congress and their staffs and attend briefings on federal funding for research by senior members of the science policy community.

"I think attending the Congressional Visits Day will be a valuable opportunity to learn how biologists can effectively communicate the relevance and usefulness of science to our nation's policymakers," said Szoboszlai of her upcoming trip to Washington, D.C.

Prior to graduate school at the Moss Landing Marine Labs, Szoboszlai earned an undergraduate degree in Liberal Arts from Hampshire College in 1998. Her Master's research, which she expects to complete in May 2007, uses field experiments to examine how some species of algae growing in the intertidal zone may modify environmental conditions to promote the settlement and growth of the juvenile stages of another co-existing algal species.

Szoboszlai was awarded a 2007 California Sea Grant State Fellowship with the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) and is working in the MBNMS Science Program, synthesizing biological research projects with management needs

and goals. Following her fellowship in September 2007, she will begin her Ph.D. research in marine ecology at the University of California, Davis.

“I am really excited to join the growing movement of scientists engaged in public policy, sharing with lawmakers the importance of biological research and education,” said Wright of her upcoming participation in the Congressional Visits Day.

Prior to graduate school at the University of Wisconsin, Wright earned undergraduate degrees in Environmental Science (Biology concentration) and English from Bradley University in 2001. She was awarded a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship in 2006 for her dissertation research examining the effects of climate change on the range limits and timing of the life cycle of wild lupine, the only host plant of the endangered Karner blue butterfly.

In addition to research, Wright is engaged in a number of science education and outreach activities including the UW Center for Biology Education Adult Role Models in Science Program and the National Phenology Network Implementation Team, Citizen Science and Outreach working group. She intends to pursue a career in science education following the completion of her Ph.D.

“AIBS is committed to improving the public understanding of science and communicating its value to society,” said executive director, Richard O’Grady. “We are pleased to recognize Amber Szoboszlai and Sarah Wright for exemplifying this commitment through their work.”

“Amber and Sarah, by participating in the 2007 BESC/CoFARM Congressional Visit Day, will play a critical role in bridging the gap between our nation’s policymakers and the scientific community,” said AIBS director of public policy, Robert Gropp.

AIBS also recognized **Kyle Brown**, a Ph.D. candidate in Organismic and Evolutionary Biology at Harvard University, and **Jennifer Jadin**, a Ph.D. candidate in Behavior, Ecology, Evolution and Systematics at the University of Maryland as EPPLA honorable mentions.

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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, with headquarters in Washington, DC, and 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 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.