

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

May 2006

Submitted by Gary White

The Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) was formed during the summer of 2005 to review science issues and make recommendations to the Board of Directors of the American Iris Society when appropriate. Following is a summary of the committee's activities from the November 2005 AIS Board meeting to May 1, 2006.

PROPOSALS FOR FUNDING IRIS-RELATED RESEARCH

Discussion: The former Grants/Scientific Research Committee of AIS was incorporated into the new Scientific Advisory Committee after that committee's term ended in July 2005. Dr. Bill Shear, chairman of the former Grants/Scientific Research committee is now serving on the Scientific Advisory Committee, as is Dr. James Waddick, who also was a member of the former Grants Committee. Dr. Shear forwarded his files and notes to me this spring. Most of this information is historical in nature, going back to 1986 when the Grants/Scientific Research Committee was first organized. The last grants to be awarded by AIS after recommendation by the Grants/Scientific Research Committee were in 2004. Due to lack of sufficient monies for grants funding, there were no grants awarded in 2005, though two grant proposals were submitted to the Grants committee for consideration. The current Scientific Advisory Committee has had no submitted proposals for funding and none were sought for calendar year 2006.

The suggestion stands that we establish a common review panel that would coordinate recommendations on scientific funding requests to both AIS and the AIS Foundation.

Status/Recommendation:

1. Members of the SAC responded to a request from Dr. Robert Hollingworth to review a grant proposal submitted to the AIS Foundation for funding by the Foundation. Those reviews were completed and returned to Dr. Hollingworth for the Foundation Board to consider in their discussion of funding research on 'Genetic Markers for the *Oncoclycus* Irises' by Yuval Sapir.
2. Status of grants awarded by AIS in 2004, the last year that grant funding was approved by the AIS Board.
 - a) Dr. Alan Meerow submitted a report on his AIS funded research on 'Population genetics of *Iris hexagona* using microsatellite DNA'. This is a mid-term report as required under the guidelines of his support. The document is a detailed, technical 18 page summary of progress on his project as of January 1st, 2006. Having received this report, the final payment of \$2500 for Dr. Meerow is now due. A request for payment to Dr. Meerow will be forwarded to the AIS Secretary per procedure.
 - b) Dr Robert S. Cornman at the University of Georgia was the other recipient of AIS funding in 2004. His granting period ended July 1, 2005, but we have yet to receive a final report on his work, 'A phylogeographical study of *Iris missouriensis* using transposon-based markers'.

SCIENTIFIC REVIEW OF AIS PUBLICATIONS

Discussion:

1. **Scientific Articles in the AIS Bulletin.** The SAC has developed a method for reviewing manuscripts of science-related articles submitted to Bruce Filardi for publishing in the AIS Bulletin. The SAC reviews the manuscripts, comments on scientific soundness, suitability for publishing, and offers suggestions for improvements to the manuscript. As committee chair, I then summarize or forward the recommendations of the committee in a letter to the author of the manuscript, with a copy to the Bulletin editor. Incorporation of these recommendations from the SAC are at the discretion of the author and the Bulletin editor. The Scientific Advisory Committee, however, is available for further assistance, if requested.
2. **Other AIS Publications.** The committee would coordinate the review & revision of other science-related educational and informational AIS publications.

Status/Recommendation:

1. **Scientific Articles in the AIS Bulletin.** In 2006, thus far, the committee has reviewed three manuscripts submitted to us by Bruce Filardi. These three manuscripts are:
 - a) **‘Another Approach to Red Irises’, by Neil Mogensen**
This article was published in the January 2006 issue of the Bulletin (Comments were solicited after this issue had gone to press).
 - b) **‘Scleranthus Annuus: A Living, Green Mulch for Iris Beds’, by Dr. Don Spoon**
This article was published in the April 2006 issue of the Bulletin
 - c) **‘Anthocyanic Vacuolar Inclusions and Iris Genetics’, by Chuck Chapman**
This article is slated to appear in the July 2006 issue of the Bulletin.
2. **Other AIS Publications.** The committee began review of the Basic Iris Culture (BIC) booklet, but that effort was tabled pending further discussion by the AIS Board on the booklet’s future use, the possibility of developing a separate publication for promoting irises and the feasibility of a spring magazine. Current copies of the BIC were exhausted and the Board voted to reprint 2000 copies in the interim.

IRIS CONSERVATION POLICY

Discussion: At the November 2005 AIS Board meeting in Minneapolis, an Iris Conservation Policy was presented by this committee, and adopted by the Board. It is now time to consider specific conservation situations for which response protocols should be developed. One of these is the plight of the Mount Gilboa iris (*Iris haynei*) in Israel. A proposed settlement on Mount Gilboa will damage or destroy thousands of plants of this endemic species.

Status/Recommendation: The SAC will shortly begin work on a response letter concerning the proposed settlement on Mount Gilboa affecting the habitat loss for *Iris haynei*.

IRIS TEST GARDENS / PUBLIC DISPLAY GARDENS

Discussion: A request was forwarded to the committee from the Chicago Botanic Garden (CBG) for assistance in selecting irises for inclusion in a new or expanded iris planting at the gardens. While the committee believes this is a very worthwhile venture, the consensus was that finding local irisarians to offer advice on iris plantings at the CBG would be most appropriate. Some members of the SAC also indicated they would offer help to the gardens if needed.

Status/Recommendation: After discussions with Ernie Henson, RVP of Region 9, the SAC recommended that CBG personnel contact Chuck Simon with the Northern Illinois Iris Society in the Chicago area. Chuck agreed to work with the CBG in planning the iris display garden. Chuck is a former RVP of Region 9 and has worked with the CBG in the past, including providing iris workshops for their staff. In addition, lists of possible suggestions of species, cultivars and sources were communicated to the CBG from Dr. Jim Waddick and Will Plotner, members of the Scientific Advisory Committee.