

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

October 2007

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 April 2007 AIS Board meeting to October 12, 2007.

IRIS-RELATED RESEARCH

Discussion: Prior to this year, the last grants to be awarded by AIS, after recommendation by the former Grants/Scientific Research Committee, were funded in 2004. The AIS BOD, in November 2006, budgeted \$5,000 for Scientific research and science project funding for 2007.

The Scientific Advisory Committee, in June 2007, received one request for research grant funding. The proposal was made by Andrew Wheeler, a doctoral student at the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden and Claremont Graduate University in Claremont, California. The scope of this funding request encompasses field and lab work involving three series and eight species of native North American beardless irises (Section Linniris: Series Laevigatae, Series Prismaticae and Series Tripetalae: Are these historic groups supported?) The goal of this phase of Andrew's research, and the current funding proposal, is to explore relationships among these taxa; Specifically, does DNA sequence data support their status as distinct taxa, and does DNA sequence data point to evidence of a hybrid origin of *Iris versicolor*.

Status/Recommendation:

Status of current grants awarded by AIS:

1. Dr. Alan Meerow's AIS funded research on 'Population genetics of *Iris hexagona* using microsatellite DNA': The AIS financial obligations for this grant have been completed. The final report from Dr. Meerow was received after the completion of his study. This report is available to the AIS BOD, but because of its length, is not duplicated here.
2. The SAC unanimously recommended that Andrew Wheeler's grant proposal be funded by AIS in the sum of \$2,500. This recommendation was forwarded to the AIS Board of Directors. An email vote was conducted and the funding was approved by the AIS BOD. It is expected that a summary report will be received by the committee upon completion of this phase of the Wheeler research.

Budget Recommendations for Grants Funding:

See Discussion, Recommendations and Budget request under Project Funding below.

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 the Bulletin Editor 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. Recommendations of the committee are then forwarded to the author of the manuscript and to the Bulletin editor. Incorporation of these recommendations from the SAC is 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:

Scientific Articles in the AIS Bulletin. There have been no new manuscripts submitted to the committee for review since the last BOD meeting.

To date, the committee has reviewed six manuscripts, and all but one were recommended for publication. One article recommended for publication was also withdrawn by the author.

Other AIS Publications:

The SAC is not currently working on any projects of this nature.

Project Funding

Discussion:

The Scientific Advisory Committee requested \$5,000 be budgeted for applicable projects in 2007. This request was approved by the AIS BOD in November 2006. Per Board motion, money not spent in 2007 will be placed in a restricted Science Fund for later use.

Status/Recommendation and Budget Request:

The SAC recommended that \$2,500 grant funding be awarded for Andrew Wheeler's doctoral research on relationships of thirteen taxa (eight species) of North American native irises. This proposal was approved by the AIS BOD in August 2007, and the grant money disbursed in early September 2007. The AIS restricted Science Fund currently has \$2,500 remaining.

Budget Request: The Scientific Advisory Committee requests that an additional \$5,000 be allocated to the Science Fund for research grant funding and other appropriate projects in 2008.

Members of the AIS Scientific Advisory Committee:

Gary White (Chairman), Lincoln, NE

Anna Cadd, Healdsburg, CA

Dennis Hager, Millington, Maryland

George Hildenbrandt, State College, PA

Bob Hollingworth, Williamston, MI

Anna Mae Miller, Kalamazoo, MI

Kelly Norris, Ames, Iowa

Will Plotner, Molalla, Oregon

Bob Pries, St. Louis, Missouri

Bill Shear, Hampden-Sydney, Virginia

James Waddick, Kansas City, Missouri