

Report to the AIS from the American Iris Society Foundation October, 2011

Grants and Scholarships:

The Foundation is currently funding seven projects.

Dr. Carol Wilson, at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, is conducting a study titled “Does Data Based on Nuclear Sequence and Pollen Morphology Agree with the Sectional Classification of Subgenus *Iris* Based on Chloroplast Sequence Data?” This is a two year study and the Foundation Board voted to approve funding in the amount of \$10,285, divided over the two year study period. Dr Wilson notes that this research (especially DNA content) is a new direction for her. The first payment of her grant was made last summer and the remainder of the grant will be paid this year. We expect an interim report of her progress in the next few months.

Dr. John Kaufmann, a weed specialist in Michigan, is working on identifying herbicides that may be sprayed over irises and effective against broadleaf weeds. Iris plots of Tall Bearded, Dwarf Bearded, Spuria, Siberian, and Japanese irises are in place and spraying was begun last summer. Sixteen different herbicides are being evaluated for safety to iris. The first payment on this \$5,000 grant was made last summer and the first progress report of the study was received. Dr. Kaufmann is proceeding with his study and had 48 plots set out for treatment this year. The second and final payment is expected to be requested by the end of this year.

Bob Pries was granted \$500 for a pilot study to digitize and archive about 1000 iris photos. A photographic record of digitized photos would be displayed on the Iris Wiki. A request for payment is expected by the end of this fiscal year.

A grant proposal was submitted by the American Iris Society, under the direction of John Jones, to scan and digitize past AIS Bulletins and make them available in a searchable on-line library. This grant was approved by the AIS Foundation trustees and \$10,000 was paid for the first year of work on this project late in 2010. A subsequent payment of an additional \$2,000 was paid in August, 2011. The Foundation has completed its \$12,000 funding agreement for this grant, and this project is at or near completion.

Sunni Taylor, a graduate student of Dr. Noland Martin’s at Texas State University San Marcos, is conducting a study that began this spring: “Divergence in Sympatry: Mechanical Pollinator Isolation as a Mechanism for Hybrid Speciation”. From the study outline: “This preliminary study is essential to our understanding of the reproductive ecology of *I. nelsonii* and the ecological divergence between *I. nelsonii* and its most closely related progenitor, *I. fulva*.” The primary pollinator of *Iris fulva* is the ruby-throated hummingbird, but the primary pollinator of *Iris nelsonii* has not been published, though it shares the “hummingbird-pollination syndrome” with *I. fulva*. The grant of \$2,718 was approved by the Foundation trustees last winter. Foundation funding for this grant has been completed. We await a report of findings at the end of the study.

A proposal from the AIS to provide archived AIS Bulletins online was received in early August. This is an AIS Library project and would involve purchasing a software package that will allow publishing individual Bulletins as part of a library including current, future, and historical archived copies. The project would include publishing online all the historic bulletins recently scanned (approximately 320), other bulletins that have current electronic versions, and all future bulletins. The amount of the grant request (including cost of software, a website to host it, a lifetime unlimited license, a onetime maintenance update, and five years hosting) is for a total of \$3,949. This project was reviewed by the AIS Foundation trustees and the trustees voted to approve the grant request. Funding for this project is expected to be paid to the AIS this fall.

A new study to be conducted by Sheng-Wei Ho is entitled “Transmission distortion of *Iris nelsonii* and *Iris fulva*”. Sheng-Wei Ho is a graduate student under the direction of Dr. Noland Martin at Texas State University San Marcos. Dr Martin noted that “The goal of this study is to develop a genetic linkage map to use as a resource for ultimately mapping a variety of traits that differentiate *Iris fulva* and *Iris nelsonii*. This map will not only be used by Sheng-Wei Ho, but also by later students to do the actual field work using the mapping population that he’s developed.” This Foundation grant of \$7021 has been voted and approved by the AIS Foundation trustees and payment of the first installment is pending.

The full cost of these seven grants amounts to over \$41,000, of which \$22,253 has already been disbursed.

Finally, The 2011 Ackerman Youth Essay Contest winners have been selected and scholarship funding was awarded in Victoria, B.C.

Donation contributions:

The contribution from the DuBose Trust interest continues to be the single largest yearly donation coming to the Foundation. Other individual donations have been very low in the past few months, however.

At the spring AIS Convention, a special joint meeting of the Boards of the AIS and the AIS Foundation convened to discuss mutual interests and handling donations to both organizations. Out of that meeting, there were three agreements.

Agreement #1 is:

That the AIS promote the AIS Foundation as the recipient of all donations intended for the AIS. The implementation is to be refined with the appropriate input from legal and tax authorities and with consideration of the internal processes of both the AIS and the AIS Foundation. The AIS Foundation will then disburse payments received to the AIS for those purposes intended by the donors.

Agreement #2 is:

That the AIS Foundation shall be the sole supporting group for iris research activities, and that the AIS Scientific Advisory Committee shall handle scientific reviews.

Agreement #3 is:

That the AIS Foundation and the AIS shall form a joint advisory committee for the support and development of AIS Library activities and the development of sources for AIS Library funding.

Agreement #1 has yet to be fully implemented, but will be in effect before the end of 2011.

Agreement #2 is being implemented. Currently, the AIS has no outstanding scientific research projects. Those of the AIS Foundation are detailed above.

Agreement #3: The joint AIS/AIS Foundation working group members are Will Plotner and Nancy Price from the Foundation and Jeanne Clay Plank and Jill Bonino from the AIS, Gary White from both organizations. Bob Hollingworth and Judy Keisling are ex-officio members.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary E. White
Secretary, AIS Foundation