

## Report to the AIS from the American Iris Society Foundation

May, 2011

### Grants and Scholarships:

The Foundation is currently funding five projects.

Dr. Carol Wilson, at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, has begun a new 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 has 48 plots set out to treat.

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 this summer.

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. Subsequent payments, up to an additional \$2,000, may be paid in year two of the project.

Sunni Taylor, a graduate student of Dr. Noland Martin's at Texas State University San Marcos, has proposed a study to start 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 this winter.

The full cost of these five grants potentially amounts to over \$30,500, of which \$17,285 has already been disbursed.

Finally, The Ackerman Youth Essay Contest winners have been selected and approval of funding their scholarship awards will be voted by the Foundation board members in Victoria, B.C. The winners will be announced at the Foundation Board meeting and at the AIS Awards banquet.

**Donation contributions:**

Individual donations have increased somewhat during the past period since the Fall 2010 AIS Board meeting (14 donors and about \$1325 in donations). The contribution from the DuBose Trust interest continues to be the single largest yearly donation coming to the Foundation, however. That amount is increasing now, due to capital investment changes of the Trust.

Because of declining donations over the past several years and because of the ratio of Investment Income to Donation Income, the Foundation was required to file an IRS return last year as a Private Foundation rather than a Public Foundation. The primary downside of this is that the Foundation now is required to pay taxes on the portion of its income from Investments (Interest, etc). Donation income is not taxed. However, we also filed a document with the IRS in December, notifying the IRS of our intent to return to Public Foundation status. That process takes 60 months, during which time we must perform (and prove that we can continue to perform) as a Public Foundation. To do that, we must increase donation income and increase grant, scholarship and other disbursements related to our mission. The IRS acknowledged our intent to embark on this path back to a Public Foundation with a letter in January of this year. During the 60 month period, the IRS informed us that “Grantors and donors may rely on the determination that you are not a private foundation until 90 days after the end of your 60 month period.” At the end of the 90 days following the 60 month period, the IRS will make a determination on our permanent status. The 60 month period ends December 31, 2015.

**AIS Library:**

The joint AIS/AIS Foundation working group continues to consider uses of the DuBose Trust fund proceeds in regards to an iris library. Members of the joint working group 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.

Further discussion of mutual issues concerning both the AIS and the AIS Foundation will be at the joint meeting of the AIS and AISF boards immediately following the AIS Foundation Board meeting on Tuesday, June 1, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gary E. White  
Secretary, AIS Foundation