

# ASPB's Response to the NIH's Public Access Policy

Beginning May 2, 2005, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) requests that authors whose research was supported in whole or in part by NIH deposit their peer-reviewed, accepted manuscripts in PubMed Central, NIH's central repository. The NIH intends the manuscript repository to (1) provide an alternative means through which NIH grantees can partially fulfill progress reporting requirements and (2) be part of a central resource through which the public may view research funded by U.S. taxpayers. The full NIH policy can be viewed at <http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-05-022.html>.

## HOW ASPB IS RESPONDING

The NIH policy is a request, not a requirement, for NIH-funded authors. Moreover, NIH has told publishers that it will honor the copyright agreements that authors enter into with their publishers and that awardee compliance with the NIH policy will not influence future funding decisions. Even though compliance is not mandatory, ASPB recognizes that some of our authors may choose to comply and wants to accommodate them in a manner that does not jeopardize ASPB's legitimate interests and long-standing practices. Therefore, both journals' copyright statements have been amended for articles accepted as of May 2, 2005 to include the following statement: "[*Plant Physiology*/*The Plant Cell*] allows authors whose research was funded in whole or in part by the National Institutes of Health to deposit their peer-reviewed, accepted manuscript to NIH for release in PubMed Central 12 months after the date of final publication by the journal."

At this time, NIH is not accepting articles submitted by third parties, e.g. publishers. Therefore, authors will be responsible for submitting their accepted, peer-reviewed manuscripts to PubMed Central if they choose to do so. NIH's instructions for submitters are available via <http://nihms.nih.gov>. Please note that ASPB requires that authors submit the identical version of the paper that was accepted for publication. This version will be different from the final, copy-edited article that ASPB will publish, so the journals will provide authors with language to append to their manuscript to indicate that it has not been copyedited and may therefore differ in important ways from the authoritative version of the article published in *Plant Physiology* or *The Plant Cell*. NIH

would prefer that the published article eventually replace the author's accepted manuscript, provided that the publisher concurs. ASPB has for five years been depositing final published articles in PubMed Central for release after 12 months, and we will continue to do so.

## ASPB AND FREE ACCESS

One of NIH's stated objectives in establishing this repository is to improve public access to the basic research literature. ASPB already has a long history of making its research content as widely and freely available as possible within the bounds of fiscal prudence. For example, all research content is made free after 12 months from the date of publication, both via the journals' Web sites at HighWire Press and via PubMed Central. The Society has digitized the full content of *The Plant Cell* in searchable PDF format back to Volume 1, January 1989, and the full content of *Plant Physiology* back to Volume 101, January 1993. We are also working closely with the National Library of Medicine and PubMed Central to digitize the rest of *Plant Physiology* back to 1926, Volume 1. Most of that project has been completed, and these historical articles are available to all at <http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/tocrender.fcgi?journal=69&action=archive>. Further, ASPB participates in AGORA (<http://www.aginternetwork.org/en/>), which allows users in more than 70 participating nations immediate free access to the research content of both ASPB journals. For a letter to the ASPB membership that more fully addresses the NIH Public Access Policy as well as Society concerns with the Open Access initiative, go to <http://www.aspb.org/publications/nihpubacc.cfm>.

## WHAT'S NEXT AT ASPB?

ASPB fully recognizes the value to the scientific community of making the journals' research content freely accessible as soon as possible. On the other hand, the full cost to publish an article in *Plant Physiology Online* averages about \$2,500 and in *The Plant Cell Online* \$4,000. To try to find some middle ground, we will be launching in the next couple of months an Open Access "experiment" whereby any author who desires to have a research article that he or she has authored made free from the moment of its publication can do so for a modest surcharge of \$1,000—and just \$500 if the author works at an institution with a subscription to the

ASPB journals. Authors who elect this Open Access option can instruct NIH to release the peer-reviewed

manuscript as soon as the published article appears on the journal site.

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