



Media only: Liz O'Brien (202) 633-1522

Sept. 1, 2011

Media website: <http://newsdesk.si.edu>

Biodiversity Heritage Library Hosts Conference on Digitization

The Biodiversity Heritage Library will host a two-day conference titled “Life and Literature” Nov. 14 and 15 at the Field Museum in Chicago. The conference will unite librarians, biologists, computer scientists, publishers and students to set the agenda for biodiversity literature digitizing and its networked environment for the next five years.

“Life and Literature” seeks to engage current and future constituencies concerned with biodiversity literature. Sessions will discuss the interoperability of major biodiversity and digital library programs, continued integration of digitized literature within biodiversity databases and publishing models for legacy scientific literature.

Guest lecturers include Richard Pyle and George Dyson. Pyle, a zoologist at the Bishop Museum in Honolulu, is an expert of the taxonomy and biogeography of coral-reef fishes. He has written more than 100 scientific articles and has been featured in several documentary films. Dyson is a scientific historian of technology whose interests include the development of the Aleut kayak (*Baidarka*, 1986), the evolution of digital computing and telecommunications (*Darwin Among the Machines*, 1997) and the exploration of space (*Project Orion*, 2002).

Headquartered at the Smithsonian Institution Libraries, the Biodiversity Heritage Library is the literature digitization component of the Encyclopedia of Life, a global effort to document all 1.8 million named species of animals, plants and other forms of life on Earth. BHL is a consortium of 12 major natural history museum libraries, botanical libraries and research institutions. Its goal is to contribute to the global “biodiversity commons” by digitizing and aggregating the resources housed within each of the participating institutions, providing free and open access to the legacy literature that underpins the work of the natural science community.

For more information about the conference, visit <http://www.lifeandliterature.org/>. To further explore the BHL, visit <http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/>.

###