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Smithsonian Libraries Directors Appointed to Biodiversity Heritage Library Leadership Positions

Nancy E. Gwinn, director of Smithsonian Libraries, and Martin R. Kalfatovic, associate director for Digital Services at Smithsonian Libraries, have been appointed to new positions within the global Biodiversity Heritage Library.

Gwinn was elected chair of the BHL Steering Committee for a two-year term at its annual meeting in Cambridge, Mass. on March 16. In this position, Gwinn will guide the Committee as it oversees the continuing expansion and development of the digital collection, which now numbers over 100,000 volumes and nearly 40 million pages of biodiversity-related publications.

Kalfatovic has assumed the position of BHL program director. In this position, he will guide the daily operations of the BHL, increasing the amount of digitized materials and making them more easily accessible to a wider audience. Kalfatovic will work to enhance partnerships with current members and encourage new partners to join the global digitization effort.

Regarded as one of the most successful open-access digitizing collaborations of its kind, the BHL is used by scientists, students and other researchers all over the world who are working in biodiversity activities, including species identification and classification, ecology, land management and biology. In addition, the BHL makes documentation of flora and fauna existing in the developing world freely available to researchers in those countries, no matter how remote, as long as they have an internet connection.

BHL partners comprise 14 natural history libraries in the U.S. and the United Kingdom. They are committed to working together to digitize the published literature of biodiversity held in their respective collections and making that literature available for open access and responsible use as a part of a global "biodiversity commons." Affiliated BHL projects have been established in Europe, China, Australia, and Brazil.

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