
THE NSF STATUTORY MISSION

To promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; and to secure the national defense

—From The National Science Foundation Act of 1950 (P.L. 81-507)



THE NSF VISION

NSF envisions a nation that capitalizes on new concepts in science and engineering and provides global leadership in advancing research and education.

—From “Empowering the Nation Through Discovery and Innovation, NSF Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2011-2016”

About the Cover: Microbe vs., Mineral — Life and Death Struggle in the Desert

Credit: Michael P. Zach, University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point

Although the bursts of rainbow colors in this photograph are mesmerizing, microbes fight for their lives in the background. Chemist Michael P. Zach of the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point, snapped this image of a salt sample he collected in a hot, arid valley near Death Valley National Park in California. He crushed the salt, placed it under a microscope slide and added a drop of water. Suddenly, a slew of microbes came to life as the salt crystals dissolved. Then when the water started evaporating, he took a picture. The colors come from light passing through the growing crystals, which act like prisms. This image received an Honorable Mention in the 2009 International Science and Engineering Visualization Challenge sponsored by NSF and the journal *Science*.

For more information see: www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/scivis/winners_2009.jsp