Botany 2014 Small Herbarium Digitization Workshop

Building a Community of Small Collection Professionals – NANSH and SCNet

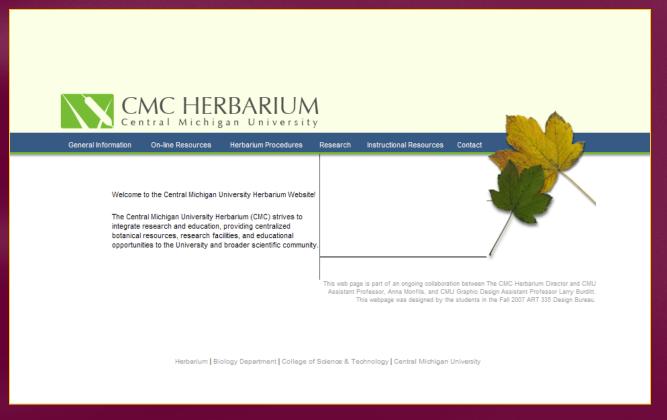
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CMC Herbarium

http://cmcherbarium.bio.cmich.edu/





"Small Collection"

- ≤ 100,000 specimens (though varies by collection type)
- Regional in scope (typically)
- Ecological, taxonomic and geographic bias
- Often not included in inventory or monographic studies

"If you feel small, you are one of us!" -Gil Nelson



Not always just a matter of scale...

- Not part of "official" job responsibilities
 - Not linked to reappointment, tenure or promotion
 - May not even be in job description!
- Isolation within institution and relative to collections community
- Limited institutional resources (= none)
 - Director = curator = curatorial assistant
- Managing a transient undergraduate workforce
- Lack of systematic expertise for all or part of collection



We need a Paradigm shift in our understanding of small collections

- Small collections professionals do not necessarily see themselves as collections professionals.
- The institution supporting a small collection may not view the collection as part of the institutional mission.
- Curators in large <u>and</u> small institutions may not see the quantitative and qualitative value of smaller collections for research, education and outreach.
- Many small collections are wholly unaware of the national digitization effort.§



Value of Small Collections to Scientific/Collections Community

- Unduplicated specimens
- Intense regional sampling
- Unrepresented temporal sampling
- Focused sampling of community composition
- Best source of data for biological hotspots (Biological Field/Research Stations)
- "Hidden source" of specimens representing curator's expertise

Have the potential to significantly expand out knowledge of landscape-level Biogeography



Value of Small Collections in Education

- More undergraduate students educated at institutions with small vs. large collections*
- Students working in collections are:§
 - Expressing increased understanding of the nature of science
 - Indicating collections based experience is influencing their undergraduate experience, course/major selection, and graduate school plans
- Collections are a valuable resource that can be used by educators to authentically engage students in inquiry-based learning^{##}



^{* 2014} entries in *Index Herbariorum* (Barbara Thiers)

^{§ 2013} survey, "Undergraduate Learning Outcomes in Natural History Collections."

Brewer & Smith, 2011, Vision and Change: A Call to Action

[#] Advancing Integration of Museums into Undergraduate Programs, www.aim-up.org

From the Small Collection Perspective: Why is it important for small collections to digitize?

Expand accessibility

"If you are not in the portal you don't exist"

- Stinger Guala

- Enhance impact of data in holdings
- Ensure inclusion in larger research initiatives
- Increase connectivity between researchers
- Promote institutional visibility
- Increase fundability



What would convince you to begin digitizing your collection? (n=16)*

- Funding (100%)
- Institutional buy-in (50%)
- Decreased work load to facilitate digitization (44%)
- Training (38%)
- Clear positive outcomes (25%)
- Sense of long term sustainability (25%)



^{* 2014} survey, "Recruiting and sustaining small collections in the digitization efforts."



http://scnet.acis.ufl.edu

Home

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Webinar Series

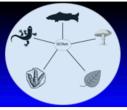
Workshops and Symposia

Site map



SCNet Small Collections Network

Serving, Supporting, Connecting Natural History Collections



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Blogs and News

IDigBio Initiatives for Small Natural History **Collections**

By: Anna Monfils and Gil Nelson

iDigBio participates in several initiatives designed to serve, support and connect small natural history collections. These initiatives include collection-themed symposia and workshops and the establishment of two networks: the North American Network of Small Herbaria (NANSH) and the Small Collections Network (SCNet).

Read more

To join SCNet listserve go to http://scnet.acis.ufl.edu/tags/listserv



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