

Botany 2014

Small Herbarium Digitization Workshop

Building a Community of Small Collection Professionals – NANSH and SCNet

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CMC HERBARIUM
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Welcome to the Central Michigan University Herbarium Website!

The Central Michigan University Herbarium (CMC) strives to integrate research and education, providing centralized botanical resources, research facilities, and educational opportunities to the University and broader scientific community.



This web page is part of an ongoing collaboration between The CMC Herbarium Director and CMU Assistant Professor, Anna Monfils, and CMU Graphic Design Assistant Professor Larry Burditt. This webpage was designed by the students in the Fall 2007 ART 335 Design Bureau.

Herbarium | Biology Department | College of Science & Technology | Central Michigan University

“Small Collection”

- $\leq 100,000$ 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 and 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. §

§ 2013 survey, “*Undergraduate Learning Outcomes in Natural History Collections*.”

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."



“Great things are done by a
series of small things brought
together”

Vincent Van Gogh

<http://scnet.acis.ufl.edu>

The screenshot shows the SCNet website homepage. At the top is a navigation menu with links for Home, About SCNet, Webinar Series, Workshops and Symposia, and Site map. Below the menu is a blue banner with the SCNet logo (the text 'SCNet' in a white oval), the title 'Small Collections Network', and the tagline 'Serving, Supporting, Connecting Natural History Collections'. To the right of the text is a circular diagram with 'SCNet' in the center, connected to icons for a lizard, a fish, a mushroom, a leaf, and a hand. Below the banner, the page is divided into two columns. The left column is titled 'Quick Links' and contains a list of links: Blogs and News, Listserv, Webinar Series, Workshops and Symposia, Working Groups, and Related Wikis and Links. The right column is titled 'Blogs and News' and features a post titled 'iDigBio Initiatives for Small Natural History Collections' by Anna Monfils and Gil Nelson. The post text states that iDigBio participates in several initiatives to serve, support, and connect small natural history collections, including 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). A 'Read more' link is provided at the bottom of the post.

Home About SCNet Webinar Series Workshops and Symposia Site map

SCNet Small Collections Network
Serving, Supporting, Connecting Natural History Collections

Quick Links

- [Blogs and News](#)
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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 listserv go to <http://scnet.acis.ufl.edu/tags/listserv>

Acknowledgements

- Alan Prather
- Richard Carter
- Ashley Morris
- NANSH Working Group
- Pam Soltis
- Ed Gilbert
- Austin Mast
- Tim Evans
- CollectionsWeb
- Valdosta State University
- Central Michigan University
- CMU Institute of Great Lakes Research
- Hanes Foundation
- FSU Godfrey Herbarium
- iDigBio
- SPNHC