

Opportunities and Challenges of Small Collections

CollectionsWeb RCN Workshop I



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Museum of Natural History**

CollectionsWeb Workshop I: Opportunities and Challenges of Small Collections

April 19th-20th

Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824

Hosted by Alan Prather, Michigan State University

Organized by the CollectionsWeb Steering Committee:

- Henry Bart, Tulane University
- Meredith Blackwell, Louisiana State University
- Alan Prather, Michigan State University
- Jim Woolley, Texas A & M University

Participants

- **Tiffany Adrain, University of Iowa Paleontology Repository**
- **Bonnie Amos, Angelo State University**
- **Jon Armbruster, Auburn University**
- **Brooks Burr, Southern Illinois University**
- **Richard Carter, Valdosta State University**
- **Tamar Danufsky, Humboldt State University**
- **Robert Delph, Northern Arizona University**
- **Michael Dunn, Cameron University**
- **Karen Francl, Radford University**
- **Nico Franz, University of Puerto Rico**
- **Jim Harris, Utah Valley University**
- **Gabriela Hogue, North Carolina State Museum of Natural Sciences**
- **Mariko Kageyama, University of Colorado Museum of Natural History**
- **Grace Kostel, Black Hills State University**
- **Juan Lopez, University of Alaska**
- **Chris Marshall, Oregon State University**
- **Chris Martine, SUNY Plattsburgh**
- **Anna Monfils, Central Michigan University**
- **Dan Rubinoff, University of Hawaii**
- **Jack Schuster, Universidad del Valle de Guatemala**
- **Jody Ullmann, Virginia Living Museum**
- **Merlin White, Boise State University**

Summary

- Opportunities and Challenges of Small Collections
- Defining the Mission of a Small Collection
- Community Needs
- CollectionsWeb Elections

Opportunities of Small Collections

- Access to students
- Easier to develop close relationship with colleagues
- More community visibility / accessibility / connection
- Shift focus quickly
- Ability to carve out identity
- Focus resources
- More collections = more curators

Challenges of Small Collections

Shortage of resources

- Money (staff, physical environment, supplies)
- Expertise
- Time

Longevity

- Museum support waxes and wanes
- Perpetuation of positions

Respect/appreciation

Mission—Open Doors

- Give adjunct or museum associate status
- Build a volunteer staff
- Involve students
- Educate people in what you're doing
- Make visible contributions
- Host open houses and parties

Mission—Define Your Niche

- Specialize geographically or taxonomically
- Define your audience
- Define your stakeholders

Mission—Support Your Institution

- Incorporate your administrator's agenda(s)
- Serve your colleagues
- Serve your audience and stakeholders
- Build support over time

Community Needs

- Funding
- Forum for Communication
- Best Practices

Shared Ideas

- Offer collections curation courses
- Use common databasing platform (Specify)
- Website development (student graphic designers)
- Fundraising (endowments and 501(c) (3))
- Open house

Elections

- Elected new CollectionsWeb Steering Committee Member
 - Karen Francl, Radford University
- Five New Core Participants
 - Chris Marshall, Oregon State University
 - Chris Martine, SUNY Plattsburgh
 - Karen Francl, Radford University
 - Nico Franz, University of Puerto Rico
 - Jody Ullmann, Virginia Living Museum

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