

Conference Abstract

Rescue of a Large Orphaned Herbarium Collection: Addressing the Security, Accessibility, and Repatriation of the NLU Herbarium

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Abstract

In March of 2018, the University of Louisiana at Monroe (ULM) chose to divest itself of the botanical, ichthyological, and herpetological collections that were part of the ULM Museum of Natural History. The Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT) was selected as the recipient of the herbarium specimens (herbarium acronym: NLU), consisting of approximately 472,000 herbarium sheets stored in 330 herbarium cabinets. Three categories of effort were identified for the process of acquiring and then accessioning the NLU herbarium: security, accessibility, and repatriation. Securing the collection involves the transfer of ownership and the physical move of the collection to the BRIT facility while applying Integrated Pest Management protocols to prevent further damage or the introduction of pests into the BRIT herbarium. Enabling access to the collection involves the organization of the cabinets, the specimens within them, and generating all necessary finding aides. Repatriation involves the deaccession of approximately 60,000 specimens of value for the state of Louisiana to be gifted to the Shirley C. Tucker Herbarium at Louisiana State University. We share here the details of our rescue procedures as a reference to the greater collections community.

Keywords

botany, ichthyology, herpetology, access, security, repatriation, deaccession , accession, herbarium

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