

## Archives Committee

### Function:

The Archives Committee preserves the institutional history of the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections (SPNHC) by accepting, storing, and providing access to the documentary records of the Society. Space is generously provided for this by the Smithsonian Institution Archives (SIA). The SPNHC archives document the founding, history, and activities of the Society from its beginning to the present, excluding those records currently in use. The archives are available to scholars and SPNHC members, usually through requests made to the Archives Committee chair. There are restrictions on some material as decided by the SPNHC Council.

### Committee Composition and Size:

The Archives chair is appointed by the President. There is no fixed term for this office. The chair has always been a SPNHC member employed at the U.S. National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), who thus has ready access to the holdings. The responsibility for the SPNHC Archives is carried out by a standing committee of at least two (2) persons, generally employees of NMNH, appointed by the chair.

### Major tasks:

- The committee chair acts as liaison between the SIA (repository) and the Society.
- The chair responds to requests for information or images. Non-electronic archives are stored offsite with the rest of SIA's holdings. The chair must request that the needed materials be transferred to the main SIA office several days in advance of the desired review date.
- It is the chair's responsibility to receive material listed in the guidelines, and transfer it to the repository yearly or when sufficient material accumulates. SIA assigns one accession number to all materials received from October 1 to September 30 of the next year. An electronic list is prepared to accompany the materials that are deposited at SIA. SIA uses this list to develop a finder's guide index for the materials that are filed under each accession number.
- As far as is possible, the committee attempts to locate any documents relating to SPNHC history that appear to be missing.
- A committee member or designated substitute attends each annual meeting to collect written materials and to document the meeting via photographs and/or digital images. The committee also accepts submissions of photographs or digital images of the meeting from other attendees.
- The records include minutes and accounts of all meetings of the Executive Council, annual meetings, and meetings of established committees (standing and ad hoc); fiscal records and correspondence; correspondence of officers and members concerning the affairs of SPNHC; biographical data of past and present members; memorabilia of the Society; voucher sets of all Society publications; and other records that reflect the activities of the Society. This documentation is organized and stored in a manner that facilitates easy retrieval and long-term preservation.
- All material received since 2007 is housed in archival materials prior to being transferred to SIA. It is a goal of the committee to retroactively rehouse earlier materials. The committee also transfers digital materials to SIA as per their protocols.

### Calendar items:

August 1: Send report to Newsletter Editor

February 1: Send report to Newsletter Editor if there has been significant committee activity

April/May: Send report to Secretary for Annual Business Meeting

May/June: SPNHC Annual Conference:

- As the committee members are generally all employed at NMNH, archives issues are discussed as needed throughout the year. Thus the committee does not generally hold a meeting the annual conference.
- A committee member or designated substitute attends the annual meeting for purposes of documenting it via images and paper archives.

The committee chair accepts material throughout the year and stores it until sufficient quantities accumulate to transfer it to SIA. This occurs on an as needed basis. The chair discussed issues with SPNHC's liaison at SIA as needed.

Revised by Linda Hollenberg, February 2014

Reviewed by Jean-Marc Gagnon, February 2014