The Dynamic Role of Collections Managers

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North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences
Collections Management
Collections Management
Evolution of the Collection Manager’s Role

1997

Description of Work

THIS POSITION IS IN THE FISHERIES UNIT OF THE RESEARCH AND COLLECTIONS SECTION OF THE STATE MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCES. THE INDIVIDUAL SELECTED WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE STATE MUSEUM’S FISH COLLECTIONS (ABOUT 800,000 SPECIMENS) AND WILL PREPARE, IDENTIFY, SORT, AND CATALOG MIXED LOTS OF SPECIMENS, RECORD DATA, MONITOR THE COLLECTIONS FOR PROPER FLUIDS AND FLUID LEVELS, AND MAINTAIN INVENTORIES OF COLLECTION HOLDINGS. THIS POSITION ALSO REQUIRES PARTICIPATION IN ORIGINAL RESEARCH AND FIELD WORK, AND THE INDIVIDUAL SELECTED WILL ALSO PROVIDE INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE AS NEEDED TO THE PUBLIC AND TO OTHER MUSEUM SECTIONS.
Evolution of the Collection Manager’s Role

2018

This position will be primarily responsible for the management and maintenance of the Museum’s Non-Molluscan Invertebrate Collection and associated curatorial duties (databasing, specimen inventory and management, managing loan activity, collection expansion, participating in funded collections grants, seeking additional collections stewardship funding, etc.). This position will be responsible for coordinating, training, and supervision of volunteers and others who might work with this Collection. This position will be expected and encouraged to participate in active research projects in invertebrate biology, taxonomy, and/or ecology, leading to publication of results in peer-reviewed scientific journals and popular media outlets. The position will participate in various educational and outreach activities of the Museum, including (but not limited to): annual signature events; regular, short science presentations offered to the public; and 'behind-the-scenes' tours of the Collections facilities. This position might also be called upon by other state agencies or external organizations to provide collections information, training and other assistance.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES / COMPETENCIES:

1. Demonstrated knowledge of invertebrate taxonomy and/or biology.
2. Demonstrated experience with microscopy, scientific illustration, and/or other methodological skills related to working with invertebrate specimens.
3. Ability to learn computer languages.
4. Ability to converse using professional interpersonal and public communications skills.
5. Ability to organize and work independently to accomplish assigned tasks in a timely manner.
Evolution of the Collection Manager’s Role

1997 to 2018

Similarities

- Management and maintenance of physical collections
- Specimen sorting, identification, inventorying, cataloging/databasing
- Loan fulfillment activities
- Participate in various outreach and education opportunities
- Conduct original research and fieldwork that leads to peer reviewed publications

Differences

- Seek, apply for, and manage funded collections grants
- Experience with or ability to learn computer languages
- Databasing software
- Coordinate, train, and supervise volunteers
- Outreach via Social media
Staying up to date on current standards, trends, and technology
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Prioritizing the Task Overload

Which are most important for the institution?

Which are most important for my career?

Which are most important for the applicability and sustainability of the collection?

Which are most important to my direct and indirect supervisors?
Resources Currently Available

- SPNHC
- Special Interest Groups (ex. IZIG, SCNet, etc.)
- Other Collections Professionals
- IDigBio
- Financial Resources - NSF, IMLS, State and local, and institutional
- ...and many others
Today’s Bridge
Tomorrow’s Bridge
Let’s start a dialogue!

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3d model of Hickory horned devil (Regal moth caterpillar)
Modeled by Megan McCuller