



Native Plant Society of New Mexico

February 4, 2015

Dr. Garrey Carruthers, President
Dr. Daniel Howard, Provost
New Mexico State University
Hadley Hall
MSC 3445, P.O. Box 30001
Las Cruces, New Mexico, 88003

Re: Proposal to Combine Two NMSU Herbaria and
Establish Permanent Curator Position

Dear Dr. Carruthers and Dr. Howard,

I am writing to extend the Native Plant Society of New Mexico's whole-hearted endorsement of the plan, so far also approved by the Department of Biology and the Department of Animal and Range Sciences, to consolidate the two plant collections on campus and to create a permanent Curator position to oversee the collection and manage critical projects and activities.

The Native Plant Society of New Mexico (NPSNM) is a non-profit dedicated to educating the public about native plants, fostering plant conservation, and supporting botanical research. We have 8 chapters with over 700 members, including chapters near NMSU in Las Cruces, Silver City, Alamogordo and El Paso, Texas. For many years the NPSNM has been making regular grants to 5 regional herbaria, including NMSU's. The NPSNM is asking the administration of NMSU to stand with us in financial support of NMSU's invaluable plant collections.

NMSU is an outstanding, scholarly institution with two plant collections on campus—the New Mexico State University Herbarium (NMC) and the Range Science Herbarium at New Mexico State University (NMCR). Both collections have become ever more important as reservoirs of irreplaceable knowledge needed for the future of our region. Early NMSU scholars, among them E.O. Wootton, researched and collected native plants and in 1890 founded the NMC Herbarium. This plant collection is now composed of more than 70,000 specimens, dating from the mid 1800's to the present. As a result of this work, NMC Herbarium has an unusually large collection of "Type Specimens," which are the original specimens from which each species was described and against which future research is compared.

By its continued curatorship from the 19th into the 21st centuries, NMC Herbarium has been able to preserve a whole trove of knowledge that would have otherwise been lost. Because of its unique collection, the NMC Herbarium has been able to provide specimens and support to scholars nationally and around the world.

Herbaria, especially NMSU's for the wider Southwest region, are even more important now because they are essential for scientific research into significant issues such as the effects of droughts and climate change on plant distributions, adaptations, stability and other factors.

A very troubling, recent trend has been for herbaria nationally to cut back on staff or even close altogether, as has the San Juan College's herbarium recently. NMSU has the opportunity to buck that trend and continue to be a unique, scholarly resource. The Range Science Herbarium (NMCR) was established by Kelly Allred to focus on NMSU's mission as a land grant agricultural university. The NMC Herbarium overlaps and complements that educational resource. Consolidating the two herbaria and ensuring that the dedicated curatorship that has brought both into the present will continue to benefit future generations.

Thank you for considering our endorsement of the consolidation of NMSU's herbaria and creation of a permanent curator position. NMSU has much to be proud of. Streamlining and preserving its herbaria will benefit our entire society.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara Fix". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Barbara" is written in a larger, more prominent script, and the last name "Fix" is written in a smaller, more compact script to the right of the first name.

Barbara Fix, President
The Native Plant Society of New Mexico