

DO YOU PREFER ELECTRONIC MAIL?

Thank you to all of you that have provided your email address to become part of our listserv. A number of you have requested that we send you only electronic versions of our calendar, fliers, and newsletter. We apologise for the delay in instituting this change. We are still in the process of changing our membership database, so that we can send paper mail only to those who want it. Those who just want electronic reminders will be sent a link to our electronic fliers and newsletter at the Center for Plant Diversity website (herbarium.ucdavis.edu). If you would like to be added to the listserv, please email our membership listserv coordinator, Kate Mawdsley, at wfm-kfm@pacbell.

LASTHENIA

LASTHENIA, the Newsletter of the Davis Botanical Society, is published in collaboration with the staff of the UC Davis Botanical Conservatory and Center for Plant Diversity.

Editor: Kate Mawdsley

Issue Contributors: K. Mawdsley, E. Dean, B. Rice, M. Starbuck

Design: Susan Gloystein Cotterel

Layout: Ellen Dean

DBS OFFICERS, 2008-2009

President: Kevin Rice

President-elect: Robbin Thorp

Membership Vice President:
Kate Mawdsley, Ellen Dean

Secretary: Susan Nichol

Treasurer: Robert Rhode

Past President: Jim Doyle

Members at Large: Tim Metcalf, Leslie Randall

Student Member at Large:
Annabelle Kleist

Ex officio: Dan Potter, Ernesto Sandoval, Ellen Dean, Jean Shepard, Allison Chilcott

UC Davis Mail ID: BTNY
Davis, CA 95616
University of California
One Shields Avenue
Plant Sciences Mail Stop #7
Center for Plant Diversity





LASTHENIA

NEWSLETTER OF THE DAVIS BOTANICAL SOCIETY

CONSERVATORY PLANTINGS AT SCIENCES LABORATORY BUILDING BLOOM

Visitors who walked down the driveway between the Sciences Laboratory Building (SLB) and Haring Hall at Picnic Day this year enjoyed a fabulous display of Desertbells (*Phacelia campanularia*) and Tidytips (*Layia platyglossa*)—a blue and gold tribute to the campus centennial. People staffing the wildflower display inside SLB wished for signs to lead the crowds to the rooted beauties around the corner.

DBS members may recall that the Spring 2007 issue of *Lasthenia* described the “grand design” for plantings around SLB and the Sciences Lecture Hall, as well as the Gifford Cycad garden in front of Storer Hall. A single sentence noted, “Around SLB itself the southeastern beds [the ones by the driveway-Ed.] are planned for transects illustrating the new basic biociences course sequence.” It is these plantings



Tidytips (Layia platyglossa) dominated the Conservatory Bioscience 2C plantings in back of the Sciences Laboratory Building this past spring. Photo: Margaret Starbuck

that were so sensational during spring quarter 2009.

The beds needed some dedicated weeding in early August, when Conservatory Director Ernesto Sandoval led another impromptu tour. But the development and maturation of both plan and plantings were obvious. Paths now divide the large bed adjacent to the loading dock into three beds with distinct foundation plantings, all linked in spring by the native annual display. Visitors may have been perplexed by the presence of the native Thistle Sage (*Salvia carduacea*) which resembles a weedy thistle in its rosette stage! The northeast bed has South African perennials, including bulbs. The south bed has southwest desert natives: barrel cactus and yucca are perhaps the most recognizable. And the northwest bed, closest to the building, has a few California native trees and shrubs to create a shady spot for foothill natives. The redbuds and blue oaks are small now, but give them time. Ernesto pointed out that the plantings are designed to be drought-tolerant and survive on rainfall through the winter with only

continued on page 2

HOW TO FIND INTERESTING PLANTS? LET'S GO OUT AND LOOK!

The Center for Plant Diversity completed a number of floristic projects this past year with the help of wonderful volunteers who helped us collect, identify, sort, and file specimens. Of special note were the efforts of Kate Mawdsley, Mark Bibbo, Chiao-Yi (Joy) Cheng, Jill Poloske, Jennifer Buck Diaz, Erin McDermott, Gordon Harrington, Craig Thomsen, Jack Alderson, Barry Rice, Eva Bayon, Margaret Starbuck, Michael Bower, Genevieve Walden, Roger Wilmarth, Diana Hickson, Brian Weiss, Nick Voegtly, and Gerald Dickinson. All of these volunteers helped us with more than one collecting project or came on multiple trips.

Our Washoe Meadows State Park plant list, begun in summer 2007, was completed this past spring and turned over to Tamara Sasaki, botanist at the California Department of Parks and Recreation. That was a long birth, mostly due to my unfamiliarity with the High Sierra flora and the fact that we managed to collect over 600 specimens in three weekends of plant collecting. As you may

continued on page 4

IN THIS ISSUE

Conservatory Plantings	1
Floristic Projects	1
Society Profiles.....	2
Student Grants.....	5
Butterfly Valley Trip.....	6
Oak Project Begins.....	7

CONSERVATORY PLANTINGS (CONT. FROM PAGE 1)

some supplemental summer watering. The space is planned primarily for the introductory biology course Bioscience 2C, and each bed can be divided so that two groups of students work on an exercise with, hopefully, comparable results. Plants useful for other classes such as California Floristics and Plant Systematics are definitely part of the mix in these beds and others nearby. Entomology classes should also be able to use the areas for various student projects.

The long bed on the south side of SLB and the oval one in the middle of the parking area were designed with other classes as primary users, namely California Floristics. Palo verde trees (*Cercidium floridum*) and cacti dominate the oval bed, and small Saguaro cactus will be planted under the trees to illustrate the nurse plant effect for



Conservatory SLB plantings used for Bioscience 2C classes.

Photo: Ellen Dean

students. The long bed features canyon natives, plants adapted both to warm

temperatures and shade. A new rock wall near the back of the bed is destined to be home to native ferns and dudleyas, as well as *Selaginella*. Prominent at this time of year is Canyon sunflower (*Venegasia carpesioides*), native to far southwestern California; Ernesto wants to introduce this plant to gardeners in our region. The rich clay soil in the bed has promoted growth “beyond his wildest dreams” in some cases, and both milkweed and chuparosa were leaning out onto the sidewalk.

Remember that mention of “dedicated weeding?” Volunteer gardeners would be more than welcome. Contact Ernesto at 530-752-0569 or jesandoval@ucdavis.edu. And whether you can help or not, plan to spend some time enjoying the gardens next spring.

K. Mawdsley

SOCIETY PROFILES

Kevin Rice

Kevin Rice, DBS President for 2009-10, has done years of research on blue oaks and grasses, including both the notorious invasive cheat grass (*Bromus tectorum*) and purple needlegrass (*Nassella pulchra*). But as a boy he imagined himself the next Jacques Cousteau and completed his Bachelor's and Master's degrees at the University of Miami, the latter in Biological Oceanography. A decision to make marine exploits recreation rather than vocation brought him to UC Davis as a Ph.D. student in our renowned Ecology Graduate Group; he completed his degree in 1984. After a post-doc at Washington State University, he returned to Davis in 1986 to fill the position created by Beecher Crampton's retirement.

His career since then includes teaching some traditional classes with contemporary emphasis; these include his week-long grass identification class offered the week following Spring Quarter in alternate years, and Rangeland ecology, conservation and restoration. His website states that he and his graduate students “are especially interested in using innovative scientific approaches to solve practical problems in conservation biology, restoration ecology, and invasion biology.” They have tackled research

questions related to regeneration of oaks, competition between native seedlings and weedy annuals, and genetic variation in native grasses. That last topic might sound obscure and theoretical, but it has an immediate, very practical application: Kevin, in collaboration with U.S. Forest Service geneticists and botanists, is concluding a three-year project at 15 sites in the Sierra Nevada to identify seed zones for the U.S. Forest Service to use in gathering and reseeding projects using California Brome (*Bromus carinatus*), Blue wildrye (*Elymus glaucus*) and Squirreltail (*Elymus elymoides*). A major government technical report will provide guidance to forest botanists and restoration practitioners throughout the region.

Kevin served for a number of years as Chair of the Ecology Graduate Group and has been a Principal Investigator on two five-year Integrated Graduate education Research and Training (IGERT) projects. These major NSF grants bring together large groups of faculty, graduate students, and non-faculty trainers, such as agency personnel who host student internships, for multi-disciplinary study.



Kevin Rice with a pressure chamber measuring water potential at 3:00 a.m. in the morning.

The first project focused on biological invasions, and the second, which is now in its second year, on rapid environmental change.

With all this, what happened to the little boy's dreams of marine adventure? Kevin reports he snorkels and scuba dives in warm water and enjoys sea and white water rafting. He seems to get to Australia, a great place to snorkel, quite frequently. And this very busy teacher and researcher will also be the DBS Spring speaker, regaling members with adventures on Baja's Guadalupe Island.

K. Mawdsley

FIELD AND LAB STUDIES COMBINE FOR 2009-10 STUDENT GRANT RECIPIENTS

Projects winning Davis Botanical Society student grant support for 2009-10 all involve extensive field collecting and will produce many new voucher specimens for the Center for Plant Diversity herbarium. And, like most projects in recent years, they also require phylogenetic analysis using DNA techniques.

Annabelle Kleist will use the E. Eric Grissell award to study French broom, a serious pest, and other, supposedly non-invasive, "species" sold in the nursery trade. Through field sampling and phylogenetic and population genetic analytic tools, she will determine the origins of invasive broom populations in California and the species identities of ornamental plants sold by nurseries that escape cultivation and become invasive. She is working with Dr. Marie Jasieniuk in the Plant Biology Graduate Group.

Siew Wai Chin will also be working with a genus familiar to us through horticulture and using similar techniques, but he seeks to answer a very different question. Systematists have disagreed about the subgeneric status of a group of six *Prunus* species



Great purple monkey flower (Mimulus lewisii). Photo: Margaret Starbuck

native to the arid southwest U.S., and Siew Wai will use the Larry and Charlotte Mitich award to reconstruct the biogeographic history of the species through a molecular phylogenetic approach after collecting specimens from several sites. This study is an offshoot of a collaborative study of the worldwide phylogeny and taxonomy of *Prunus*; Dr. Dan Potter in Plant Sciences (and Director of the Center for Plant

Diversity) is Siew Wai's advisor.

Finally, a group of three graduate students in the Plant Biology Graduate Group will use the Jack Major award for a "test of pollinator-mediated community assemblage patterns in three California genera: *Limnanthes*, *Mimulus*, and *Clarkia*." Ryan Briscoe Runquist, Dena Grossenbacher, and Stephanie Porter will be assisted by Joel Smith, an EVE undergraduate in Dr. Maureen Stanton's lab, where the three Ph. D. students also work. They will visit 50 sites for each species in the northern and central Sierra Nevada to survey co-occurrence of species and photograph and measure representative plants for further analysis.

A recent article in *The Scientist* lamented the decline in traditional taxonomic studies and the implications for natural history collections. This year's grantees are primarily plant ecologists, but their training at UCD clearly recognizes the importance of field work, collecting vouchers and using herbaria. Congratulations to all of them.

K. Mawdsley

RECENT GIFTS

Conservatory Endowment

John Brittnacher & Marta Marthas
Eric Conn

Herbarium Endowment

John and Marsha Anderson
Michael Barbour
& Valerie Whitworth
Elizabeth Bernhardt & Ted Swiecki
Eric Conn
Gordon and Delia Harrington
Julie Knorr
Robert & Laurie Preston
Mandy Tu & Philip Rogers
Alan Whittemore
Carol Witham

In memory of John M. Tucker & June McCaskill

Lewis Feldman

Conservatory Operations

Ellen Dean

Herbarium Operations

Darrell Brandon III
California Native Plant Society
Charles Hughes IV
Kandace Knudson
Kate Mawdsley
Kenneth Wells

Davis Botanical Society Student Grants Fund

John and Marsha Anderson
Eric Conn
Marie Jasieniuk & Frank Roe
Stephen Rae

In memory of Larry and Charlotte Mitich

Mandy Tu & Philip Rogers

Larry and Charlotte Mitich Student Grant Fund

James & Catherine Murray

Gifts in Kind to the Herbarium

Richard Halse
Jack Maze
Gerald Dickinson
Tom Zavortink
Jean Shepard



*Thank you for
your support!*

HOW TO FIND INTERESTING PLANTS (CONT. FROM PAGE 1)



Ellen Dean and Michael Bower collecting plants at Donner State Park.
Photo: Margaret Starbuck

remember from the Fall 2007 issue of *Lasthenia*, Washoe Meadows State Park has an amazing diversity of habitats for such a small area (600 acres), from dry scrub, dry meadow, and pine forest to wet meadows and carnivorous plant fens. There was even a vernal pool (no fooling). The final plant list includes 335 types of plants, with (UGH) 26 types of sedges and 46 types of grasses (another reason the list had a long birth). Needless to say, yours truly learned a lot.

This past winter, we also completed a partial plant list based on collecting done over one weekend in summer 2008 for a new land acquisition at Donner State Park. The volunteers on that outing scaled granitic outcrops far above Donner Lake looking for starved



Mark Bibbo at Donner State Park.
Photo: Margaret Starbuck

fleabane (*Erigeron miser*) and other rare plants. We did not find any rare species, but it was a great couple of days with wonderful company, and I met dwarf chamaesaracha (*Chamaesaracha nana*) (Solanaceae) for the first time. Our efforts resulted in numerous species additions to the existing plant list for Donner State Park.

Another short project that we started and finished this past spring (in conjunction with the conservation organization Tuleyome) was a rare plant survey, including a plant list, for Woodland Regional Park. Plant collecting and mapping at Regional Park was carried out by Woodland Community College students, UC Davis students, and a number of volunteers, including Mary Anne Showers of the Department of Fish and Game. I was assisted in plant identification and creation of the plant list by Ryan Abe, a student who has interned with us for all of this past year.



Close up of the stamens and pistil of Leichtlin's mariposa lily (*Calochortus leichtlinii*) at Donner State Park.
Photo: Margaret Starbuck

Regional Park, in the southwestern corner of the city of Woodland (Yolo County) has remnants of the alkali vegetation that once dominated the Davis/Woodland landscape. We documented four rare species, including alkali milkvetch (*Astragalus tener* var. *tener*), Heckard's pepper grass (*Lepidium latipes* var. *heckardii*), San Joaquin spearscale (*Atriplex joaquiniana*) and the federally- and state-listed palmate-bracted bird's beak (*Cordylanthus palmatus*). The results of this work will be presented to the City of Woodland to help them



Alkali milkvetch (*Astragalus tener* var. *tener*) at Woodland Regional Park.
Photo: Ellen Dean

make informed decisions about the future of Regional Park.

This past spring, we finished three years of work at the 12,000 acre BLM Payne Ranch in Colusa County. (It is a minor frustration that the ranch has been renamed Bear Creek Ranch now that all our specimen labels say Payne Ranch, but we'll live with it.) This was an amazing community project, with over 80 people contributing in some way (including UC Davis students and alumni), and I truly enjoyed the company I kept during the outings. Craig Thomsen, Plant Ecologist at UC Davis and Watershed Coordinator for Colusa County, began research at Bear Creek Ranch in 1999, and he already had ca. 200 specimens to donate to this project as well as a wealth of knowledge about the area. Jack Alderson, Agricultural Engineer for the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service in Colusa County also contributed enormous knowledge about the region; he also has sharp eyes and excellent hiking skills (Jack



An outreach field trip to Bear Creek Ranch in March, 2009. Photo: Margaret Starbuck



Ellen Dean, Gordon Harrington, and Kate Mawdsley at Bear Creek Ranch. Photo: Barry Rice

wouldn't have had any trouble keeping up with John Muir). And the project would not have happened without Gordon Harrington's interest in the flowers of the Cache Creek bioregion – Gordon really made the project happen from beginning to end. The final plant list for Bear Creek Ranch, based on over 800 specimens, contains nearly 500 species. We mapped 18 rare plants, including



Ellen Dean and Mark Bibbo mapping round-leaved filaree (*California macrophylla*) at Bear Creek Ranch. Photo: Barry Rice

seven CNPS List 1B and 11 CNPS List 4 plants, at over 150 locations. We coined the phrase "Bear Creek Ranch, where the rare plants are common."

I felt very fortunate to actually see the rare plant round-leaved filaree in flower at Bear Creek Ranch. This

interesting filaree is native to California. Until recently, it was in the genus *Erodium* with nonnative filarees found in California. It has now been placed in its own genus, the genus *California* (The species name is *California macrophylla*, how about that!). Round-leaved filaree has a very short growing period in late March and early April at Bear Creek Ranch. When it starts to flower, it is over quickly. The flowers open very early in the morning, with the petals falling off shortly after the flower opens.



Round-leaved filaree (*California macrophylla*) at Bear Creek Ranch (with a penny for scale). Photo: Ellen Dean

How many Californians have been lucky enough to have seen the genus *California* in flower? Well, it occurs in the thousands at Bear Creek Ranch on deep clay soils, and we documented it at over 20 places, and we even saw some flowers with all the petals attached (but Gordon knocked them off before we could photograph them).

Other rare plants that occur in the thousands at Bear Creek Ranch include the beautiful adobe lily (*Fritillaria pluriflora*), Jepson's milkvetch (*Astragalus*



Genevieve Walden, Kate Mawdsley, and Roger Wilmarth sitting near a field of adobe lily (*Fritillaria pluriflora*) at Bear Creek Ranch. Photo: Ellen Dean

rattanii var. *jepsonianus*), and creme sacs (*Castilleja rubicundula* var. *rubicundula*). We also documented what experts have confirmed is San Joaquin spearscale (same species as at Regional Park) growing on serpentine ridges rather than in alkaline plains. We believe this is the first documentation of an *Atriplex* growing on serpentine soils.

We are now applying for funding for floristic work on Walker Ridge, a well-known botanical hot spot on the border of Lake and Colusa Counties. We made five field trips to the Ridge this past spring (in May), including taking UC Davis students up there for their plant collection project. A fire that burned



San Joaquin spearscale (*Atriplex joaquiniana*) growing on serpentine soil at Bear Creek Ranch. Photo: Ellen Dean

Walker Ridge in June of 2008 made this spring an outstanding year to collect on the Ridge. We have already collected numerous plants never before seen on the Ridge, and we hope to continue this work in 2010. I have also received a small grant to do preliminary rare plant mapping in the Cache Creek Wilderness Area in Lake County, and we are continuing to build a plant list for Bobcat Ranch near Winters in Yolo County. If you are interested in helping with any of these projects, let me know!

E. Dean

BUTTERFLY VALLEY TRIP, JUNE 2009



Barry Rice gives an impromptu lecture on carnivorous plants at Butterfly Valley. Photo: Ellen Dean

Twenty-four enthusiastic and adventurous souls accompanied Beth Salvia, Barry Rice and me to Butterfly Valley on June 27. Barry and Beth are well-known intrepid carnivorous plant explorers (and photographers), and we thank them for their help with this trip. (Also see Barry's article in the last issue of this esteemed journal.) Butterfly Valley is a wildflower hotspot that most California botanists have made the effort to visit. It is located along Hwy 70, just west of Quincy, in the Plumas National Forest. Directions can be obtained at the forest website at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/plumas/recreation/butterfly.php>. We were joined on our trip by several members of the Bay Area Carnivorous Plants Society, as well as others who had never been on a Davis Botanical Society outing.

If I do say so myself, it was a great day. Participants were in good humor, had infinite patience with my somewhat inaccurate directions, and were suitably impressed with our finds. Along the way, we stopped along Caribou Road to explore a serpentine soil area that was in full bloom. We examined a field of leopard lilies (*Lilium pardolinum*) and marveled at a waterfall with orchids (California lady slipper orchid – *Cypripedium californicum* – and stream orchid – *Epipactis gigantea*). We lunched at Butterfly Valley and were joined by Jim Belsher-Howe, Botanist on the Plumas National Forest, who provided plant lists and guided us to special areas that we

would not have known about. Thank you, Jim! Barry gave us an orientation to the area and to carnivorous plants in general.

In all, we saw four types of carnivorous plants during the course of the trip. The carnivores were diverse and included roundleaf sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*), California pitcher plant (*Darlingtonia californica*), lesser bladderwort (*Utricularia minor*), and a nonnative hybrid sundew *Drosera intermedia* x *filiformis* = *D. x hybrida*. (Bogs are sometimes dumping grounds for people who empty their carnivore tanks.)

Carnivorous plants are generally found in low-nitrogen habitats such as bogs or fens, which is why they have



California pitcher plant (*Darlingtonia californica*) at a bog at Butterfly Valley. Photo: Ellen Dean

evolved the ability to trap and absorb the nitrogen from insects. Butterfly Valley has these habitats and is known for its large populations of California pitcher plant and roundleaf sundew. California pitcher plant is usually found in serpentine-influenced bogs, and as it happens, the bogs where it is found in Butterfly valley lie on top of a subterranean block of serpentine. The lesser bladderwort was floating in a pond downslope of the bog that we visited and would have been overlooked, if not for Barry's fortitude and knowledge.



Trip participants exploring the bog with Barry Rice. Photo: Ellen Dean

Along with the splendid lilies and other wildflowers seen in Butterfly Valley, the trip turned out to be an orchid extravaganza: we saw eight species. In addition to the two already mentioned along Caribou Road, we saw spotted coralroot (*Corallorhiza maculata*), rattlesnake plantain (*Goodyera oblongifolia*), broad-leaved twayblade (*Listera convallarioides*), white-flowered bog orchid (*Platanthera leucostachys*), and green bog orchid (*Platanthera sparsiflora*). At the very end of the trip Jim took us to a place where there were two phantom orchids (*Cyclanthera austineae*) – an amazing way to end our day. Thank you to all the participants for a great experience. E. Dean



Phantom orchid (*Cyclanthera austineae*) at Butterfly Valley. Photo: Ellen Dean

OAK PROJECT GETS UNDERWAY

An important collaboration between the Center for Plant Diversity and the UC Davis Arboretum began in mid-August when a group of Arboretum curatorial volunteers came to the Herbarium for training in collecting and pressing voucher specimens. The volunteers, working with Mia Ingolia, Arboretum Curator, will be collecting three specimens from each of the 150 taxa in the Shields Oak Grove at the far west end of the Arboretum. The pressed specimens will come to the Center for Plant Diversity for label-making and mounting and will be added to the already extensive collection of oaks that is part of John Tucker's legacy at UC Davis. Duplicate specimens will be deposited at the herbarium of the U.S. National Arboretum and at the L.H. Bailey Hortorium at Cornell University.

Dr. John Tucker, Herbarium Director for nearly 40 years and Arboretum Director for 15 years, nurtured Shields Grove to become the most taxonomically diverse oak grove at any U.S. arboretum. It has 318 trees representing taxa from the U.S., Mexico, Europe,



Arboretum volunteers Lynne Hasz and Carol Knight practice pressing oak specimens with Arboretum Curator Mia Ingolia at the Center for Plant Diversity. Photo: Ellen Dean

and Asia; it includes 17 oak varieties not found in any other collection. The collection was selected for membership in the North American Plant Collections Consortium, a group of North American botanical gardens and arboreta that aims to improve the continent's living plant collections and enhance the availability of plant germplasm. The consortium is administered by the American Public Gardens Association.

The oak collection in the Center for Plant Diversity's John M. Tucker Herbarium is also extensive, as documented in an article in *Lasthenia*, no. 23, Winter 2004. In that article John described the collections, whose curation he had supported with numerous gifts, as "excellent in California oaks, quite good for the United States, pretty fair for Mexico and Central America." Partly as a result of dissertation projects of international students who came to Davis to work with John, the Old World collections, while "limited," are strong for Turkey and Japan.

This collaborative project, which is funded by a two-year grant from the Institute for Library and Museum Sciences, also includes construction of interpretive paths near and within Shields Grove.

Dr. Tucker made generous donations to endow the Oak Grove and to assist construction of the new Center for Plant Diversity in 2001. It seems especially appropriate that the organizations join forces to perpetuate his legacy.

K. Mawdsley

CENTER FOR PLANT DIVERSITY ACCEPTED INTO MUSEUM ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

This past spring, the Center for Plant Diversity was accepted into the Museum Assessment program jointly administered by the American Association of Museums and the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services. This program allows museums to step back from their daily routine and take a look at what they are doing right and what can be improved.

Some of you have already taken part in the assessment. In July, we held two meetings as part of this process. One meeting focused on governance, including exploring who holds ultimate responsibility for the collections of the Center for Plant Diversity (the Board of Regents)

and whether we have a code of ethics (we do). Another meeting explored how the Center for Plant Diversity is viewed by our users. At this writing, we have one more group meeting to convene in October – it will focus on creating a mission statement for the Center. We sent an email to our members inviting participation and received a good response. That meeting will soon be scheduled – probably for October 11.

Another part of this project was an extensive self-assessment (a written questionnaire) with sections addressing curation, governance, outreach, mission, etc. This completed questionnaire will be provided to an assessor who is an experienced museum professional. We will

also draft our first written collections management policy before her visit.

Our assessor, Jane Pickering from Yale University, will visit the Center at the end of October to look at our operations, our policy and procedure documents, our exhibits, and our facilities. She will then provide us with comments to help us improve what we are doing. We will update you in the spring about the results of the assessment. Many thanks to everyone who has helped us with this process!

E. Dean