

19 September 2005

Dear Colleagues,

We are all aware of the tragic losses that have occurred as a result of Hurricane Katrina. Although our primary concerns are with those whose lives have been so utterly devastated, and they must be the first to benefit from relief efforts, there is a small but, for many in our Society, important consequence of this storm: the loss of significant herbarium collections. These collections are irreplaceable and their loss can have far-reaching consequences. We already know that the herbarium of the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory (GCRL) in Ocean Springs, Mississippi, has been flooded and that many specimens may be damaged beyond repair.

The ASPT Council has initiated a campaign to raise funds to provide assistance for collection maintenance and recovery and Dr. Lucinda McDade (mcdade@acnatsci.org) has agreed to head this effort. The details for allocation of these funds are being worked out in consultation with those affected as well as their more fortunate colleagues in neighboring locales. We don't know the full extent of the losses, but we do know that our colleagues at GCRL and other herbaria in the storm path may be hard-pressed to carry out even the most basic curatorial tasks. If nothing else, funds from ASPT could be used to hire student assistants, purchase presses and blotters, or provide access to freezers/dryers.

We are asking that all of you consider making a donation to the ASPT Herbarium Emergency Fund. If you would like to join us in this effort, please send a check, payable to "ASPT Herbarium Emergency Fund", to our business office at

American Society of Plant Taxonomists
University of Wyoming
Department of Botany 3165
1000 E University Avenue
Laramie, WY 82071

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We realize that this request must take a back seat to the more immediate needs of those whose lives have been devastated by this catastrophe and ask you to give them your first priority.

Sincerely,

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