



Nelson named Flora of North America Review Coordinator

B. E. “Ernie” Nelson became Regional Review Coordinator for the *Flora of North America* (FNA) this year with the approval of the FNA Editorial Board. Regional reviewers take new taxonomic chapters out for a “test drive,” checking to make sure the taxonomic keys work, the distribution information is accurate, and the content is consistent with species information at state and regional



levels [RM Friends 5(1), Oct. 2019]. No sooner had Ernie said “yes” than the first manuscript arrived by weekend email, for him to send to a team of regional reviewers in each of the four adjoining states, whose reviews he later compiled with his own into a single regional review file. Ernie is no stranger to FNA, having worked closely with Ron Hartman on regional reviews from the start of the FNA project in 1990, providing review of RM specimens and specimen loans needed by taxonomic authors.

Floras and publications about them are dynamic. FNA publications represent the latest taxonomic research that shapes our understanding – and names – of Rocky Mountain plants. This directly feeds back into the RM work of maintaining the RM database and related products such as the checklist of the Wyoming Flora.

What is even better is the presence of a second FNA reviewer at RM, Ben Legler, who also has extensive western North America field experience.

Flora of North America is not just a publication treatise but a model of top-down and bottom-up information exchange between botanists across the continent. Ernie, Ben and David Tank maintain RM as a herbarium of regional stature and exceptional research activity, and as a cornerstone in the construct and processes for FNA. Further information about FNA is posted on the homepage:

http://floranorthamerica.org/Main_Page.

Director’s Note

Activity has ramped up in the herbarium over the last couple of months, and I am starting to feel like we are settling into a bit of a groove. As you will see in this issue, Ben has spearheaded a formal Rocky Mountain Herbarium Internship program this semester, and we have a full cohort of undergraduate student interns working in the RM. Our goal with this program is to train the next generation of herbarium scientists, and we have a really great group to start it out!

We have also been actively preparing grant proposals for several exciting projects,

including a collaboration with the Wyoming Natural Diversity Database to enhance the RM's digital resources. An exciting goal of this project is to establish the digital infrastructure and initial website for a *Digital Flora of Wyoming* that we hope will become one of your go-to sources for information on our diverse flora. Fingers crossed that this one gets funded!

Finally, I am also excited to report that we have formally secured the necessary approvals from UW for the initial expansion of the RM onto the second floor of the Aven Nelson Memorial building! Space is a valuable commodity on any campus, so this is a big first step toward securing the external funding to make this overdue expansion a reality. Stay tuned.

Dave Tank, Director

Training the next generation of herbarium scientists

RM launched a newly designed internship program for undergraduate students this fall. According to the course description the students will “develop a working knowledge of herbarium organization and management and learn how to collect, process, preserve and digitize herbarium specimens.” To earn two academic credits, students attend a 1-hr class each week to learn a new skill, then apply their skills for an additional five hours per week. They may also choose to use some of their time on a project of special interest.

Instructor Ben Legler says of his five interns “We are fortunate to have an engaged group of students for our initial offering of the herbarium internship. They have shown a great aptitude at learning as we train them on various aspects of specimen curation and herbarium management. With the internship off to such a good start, I look forward to making this a regular course offering.” Ben is

assisted by Dave and Ernie, thus giving the interns a full perspective on the functions of a herbarium.



Ernie Nelson (in orange gaiters) introduces the group to mountain big sage (*Artemisia tridentata* v. *vaseyana*) during the January 2022 UW Tree and Shrub Walk. Photo by Rhiannon Jakopak.

January's Tree and Shrub Walk was great success. More than 30 people gathered to identify evergreen trees and shrubs on a cold but sunny winter day. “The goal of our plant walks is to give everyone opportunities to learn the species visible at different times of year,” said Dr. Kristina Hufford in the UW College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Dr. David Tank, who recently joined the Rocky Mountain Herbarium as a UW Botany Professor and Herbarium Director, enjoyed the walk. “For me,” said Tank, “it was great to meet other plant enthusiasts in the area.” Anyone interested should keep an eye out for future plant walks advertised through the UW Biodiversity Institute Facebook page and other social media accounts. More information can be found at the following website:

<https://www.wyobiodiversity.org/>.