

## **Project Summary**

### **Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit**

**Project Title:** Taming the Herbarium

**Discipline:** Interdisciplinary  
**Type of Project:** Technical Assistance  
**Funding Agency:** National Park Service  
**Other Partners/Cooperators:** University of Wyoming, Northwest College  
**Effective Dates:** 9/30/2009 - 12/31/2012  
**Funding Amount:** \$7,402

**Investigators and Agency Representative:**

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**Project Abstract:** During the process of drafting a museum management plan it became glaringly apparent that natural resource collections at BICA were poorly documented. The park has an herbarium collection with approximately 1,500 specimens in it. Originally intended as a research or study collection, and collected from 1924-2008 these existing specimens need to be entered into ANCS+ (The NPS museum catalogue system) and assigned NPS catalogue numbers. In addition, collections from BICA exist, or may exist at other repositories (including the Rocky Mountain Herbarium at the University of Wyoming and the New York Botanical Gardens). Data mining will be necessary to determine the extent of these collections and begin the process of assigning NPS catalogue numbers to them.

In 2002 Bonnie Heidel and Walter Fertig completed a Vascular Plant Species Checklist and inventory for the park, cleaning up misidentified specimens in the collection and removing from the list those collected outside of the park. These specimens are used by park staff and other botanists (Teton Fires effects crews etc) for confirming plant ID's and serve as a history of the parks botany. Their usefulness would be greatly improved by having them entered into a searchable database so content could be ascertained without physically searching through the fragile plants themselves.

A student from NW College will enter existing plant specimens into ANCS+. They will also compile a list of specimens at other institutions and as time permits, assign catalogue numbers and create ANCS+ records for them. However, we promise to let the student out of the data entry/ curation dungeon occasionally to see live plants in the park and learn a little about natural and cultural resource management in the park.

**Outcomes with Completion** A usable, searchable database for the plants in the Herbarium, and a decrease in the catalogue backlog. December 31, 2012

**Keywords:** herbarium collection, searchable database, Bighorn Canyon NRA, University of Wyoming, Northwest College