

SPNHC: THE FIRST TEN YEARS

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Abstract.—In 1985, the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections (SPNHC) was created to meet the concerns of a growing number of individuals involved with the development, management, and care of natural history collections. The Society is unique among natural history professional organizations because of its international scope and multidisciplinary approach to collections management and care. The ten-year history of this organization is impressive, particularly with respect to increasing awareness of the value and requirements of collections, collaborating nationally and internationally with other organizations, and contributing to new knowledge, resources and standards for the natural history profession. In celebration of the Society's ten year anniversary, the history and accomplishments of SPNHC during the last decade are documented.

INTRODUCTION

The Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections (SPNHC) is a “multidisciplinary organization, including persons within the fields of anthropology, botany, geology, paleontology, zoology, and others who are interested in the development and preservation of natural history collections” (SPNHC, 1991). The organization's international and multidisciplinary scope makes SPNHC unique among professional natural history organizations. Its diverse disciplinary representation provides strength through numbers and broad based knowledge.

The purpose of SPNHC is “a) to provide for and maintain an international association of persons who study, care for, work with, or are interested in natural history collections; b) to encourage studies about the essential requirements for preservation, management, storage, research, and display of natural history collections; c) to publish at least a newsletter and encourage the dissemination of information about natural history collections in journals, bulletins, proceedings, and wherever such information is appropriate; and d) to hold regular meetings and encourage conferences, symposia, workshops, and other meetings about natural history collections in order to facilitate exchanges of ideas and information” (SPNHC, 1991).

THE BEGINNING

Some say that the “seeds” of SPNHC were planted in 1981, when D. J. Faber and G. R. Fitzgerald of the National Museum of Natural Sciences (now Canadian Museum of Nature) organized the first *Workshop on the Care and Maintenance of Natural History Collections* (Faber, 1983). This workshop demonstrated that the multidisciplinary approach to addressing management and care issues of collections was important. However, it was not until the summary of the second workshop, held at the Royal Ontario Museum in May 1985 (Waddington and Rudkin, 1986), that ideas of an organization for individuals involved with natural history collections was formally discussed. During the open discussion, moderated by D. J. Faber, there were different opinions about the direction and scope that such an organization should have.

In October 1985, D. J. Faber distributed a 26-page pamphlet to workshop at-

tendeos in an effort to keep the idea of a collection-oriented organization viable. This publication became the first issue of *Collection Forum*. It proposed that the organization be called the "Society for Scientific Collections," and it proposed an organizational structure (Faber, 1985). It also serves as an important record by identifying the 67 individuals who attended the second workshop. This record, however, is not considered a listing of charter members because it does not include others who were involved when the organization was actually started.

SPNHC became a reality on November 6, 1985, at a meeting hosted by the Buffalo Museum of Science. The individuals at this meeting were S. S. Albright, D. J. Faber (Chair), D. Laub, C. Romero-Sierra, C. L. Rose, W. Y. Watson, and S. L. Williams (Faber, 1986a). This meeting established the present name of the organization and identified its primary membership as being represented by an international and multidisciplinary audience. The operating structure of the organization was discussed, but not formalized, at that time.

In May 1986, the National Museum of Natural History (Washington, D.C.) hosted the first annual meeting of SPNHC. Participants at this meeting elected the first officers of the organization—D. J. Faber, President; C. Romero-Sierra, President-Elect; and S. S. Albright, Secretary. M. Rankin was the first appointed Treasurer (Faber, 1986b), however, he was replaced the following year by J. P. Cuerrier (Faber, 1987a).

THE BYLAWS

The organization's goal of serving an international and multidisciplinary membership presented challenges in creating a set of bylaws that would satisfy all parties involved. Representatives from Canada and the United States were key participants during the developmental stages. The Bylaws addressed membership, meetings, officers, council, committees, fiscal details, amendment procedures, the SPNHC seal, and dissolution (SPNHC, 1991).

With the Bylaws in place by May 1988, independent efforts in Canada and the United States were initiated to obtain tax-free status as a non-profit organization. C. Romero-Sierra was primarily responsible for obtaining the Canadian Letters Patent on May 2, 1989. S. B. McLaren assumed responsibility for obtaining federal non-profit status in the United States in November 1988 and Articles of Incorporation (in Pennsylvania) on May 27, 1989.

The original Bylaws accepted by the membership provided a strong framework for the developing organization. A growing number of standing rules, policies, and guidelines assisted the organization in its operations. As the organization matured and the operations and services were established, it became evident that the Bylaws would require revision to meet changing needs and times. These changes included membership and financial growth, operation refinements, and expanding collaboration among organizations. In May 1994, the membership approved the revision of the Bylaws that are in effect today. At the same time, the Canadian corporation of the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections established a separate Board of Directors and approved a separate set of revised Bylaws; thus, SPNHC in Canada and the United States became two distinct organizations.

Table 1. SPNHC Officers during the first 10 years.

Inclusive years	Individuals/Offices		
	President-Elect	President	Past-President
1986–1988	C. Romero-Sierra	D. J. Faber	
1988–1990	S. L. Williams	C. Romero-Sierra	D. J. Faber
1990–1992	G. R. Fitzgerald	S. L. Williams	C. Romero-Sierra
1992–1994	C. L. Rose	G. R. Fitzgerald	S. L. Williams
1994–1996	G. W. Hughes	C. L. Rose	G. R. Fitzgerald
	Secretary	Treasurer	Managing Editor
1985–1986			D. J. Faber
1986–1987	S. S. Albright	J. P. Cuerrier	D. J. Faber
1987–1988	S. S. Albright	J. P. Cuerrier	D. J. Faber
1988–1989	S. S. Albright	S. B. McLaren	P. S. Cato
1989–1990	S. S. Albright	S. B. McLaren	P. S. Cato
1990–1991	J. B. Waddington	S. B. McLaren	P. S. Cato
1991–1992	J. B. Waddington	S. B. McLaren	P. S. Cato
1992–1993	J. B. Waddington	S. B. McLaren	P. S. Cato
1993–1994	J. B. Waddington	S. B. McLaren	J. E. Simmons
1994–1995	M. E. Taylor	J. Golden	J. E. Simmons
1995–1996	M. E. Taylor	J. Golden	J. E. Simmons

THE COUNCIL

SPNHC leadership is provided by the Council which consists of six officers and six Members-at-Large. The officers include the President, Past-President, President-Elect, Treasurer, Secretary, and Managing Editor. The positions of President-Elect, Secretary, and Members-at-Large are elected offices with specific terms; the Treasurer and Managing Editor are appointed for one- to two-year terms, with the provision of being renewed repeatedly by mutual agreement. Individuals elected to the presidential positions accept a six-year commitment, but serve in three different capacities, separated into two-year increments (President-Elect, President, and Past President). The Members-at-Large hold the longest term of three years; each year two Members-at-Large are retired and replaced (Table 2). This structure provides consistency of direction and operations over time for the Council, as well as training for individuals who may become future officers.

During the first ten years, the individuals elected to the presidential positions were D. J. Faber, C. Romero-Sierra, S. L. Williams, G. R. Fitzgerald, C. L. Rose, and G. W. Hughes; the Secretaries have been S. S. Albright, J. B. Waddington, and M. E. Taylor; the Treasurers have been J. P. Cuerrier, S. B. McLaren, and J. Golden; the Managing Editors have been D. J. Faber, P. S. Cato, and J. E. Simmons (Table 1). The Members-at-Large and their respective terms are given in Table 2.

Council meetings are held during the annual meetings of the Society. In 1987, the Council found it useful to have meetings that preceded and followed the General Business Meeting. This practice is still used for Council operations. In 1989, significant restructuring of the Council meeting was initiated to increase efficiency and to actively involve and familiarize the membership with the operations of the Society. Since that time, it has been standard practice for committee

Table 2. SPNHC Members-at-Large during the first 10 years.

Inclusive years	Individuals
1987–1988	I. U. Birker and S. L. Williams (subsequently became President-Elect and was replaced by C. L. Rose).
1987–1989	F. J. Collier and W. Y. Watson.
1987–1990	J. Golden and J. B. Waddington.
1988–1991	I. U. Birker and C. L. Rose.
1989–1992	J. P. Angle and G. R. Fitzgerald (subsequently became President-Elect and was replaced by C. J. Bossert in 1990).
1990–1993	C. A. Hawks and J. E. Simmons.
1991–1994	G. W. Hughes and C. L. Rose (subsequently became President-Elect and was replaced by J. Gisbert in 1992).
1992–1995	L. Barkley and R. R. Waller.
1993–1996	G. Brown and S. Y. Shelton.
1994–1997	P. S. Cato and S. B. McLaren.
1995–1998	E. E. Merritt and A. Pinzl.

chairs, selected representatives, and incoming officers to attend all Council meetings.

THE COMMITTEES

Much of the success of SPNHC is directly related to activities and accomplishments of the Standing and Sessional committees. The Standing Committees continue from the term of one President to the next, whereas the Sessional Committees exist at the discretion of the President in office.

Initially, the committee structure accommodated operational functions as well as broad interests of the membership. The first official committees and respective chairs (in parentheses) included Annual Conference (C. Romero-Sierra), Bibliography (S. Teraguchi), Bylaws (C. Romero-Sierra), Colleges and Universities (W. Y. Watson), Conservation (C. L. Rose), Liaison (J. Golden), Membership and Directory (S. S. Albright), Publications (D. J. Faber), and Supplies and Equipment (L. Marhue) (Faber, 1986b). The following year, three additional committees were added—Ballot-Counting (J. Danis and P. A. Doepke), Finance (J. P. Cuerrier), and Nominations (F. J. Collier and W. Y. Watson). The Liaison Committee was renamed as Publicity and Liaison (E. Benamy); the Sessional Committees included Bibliography (J. Kaylor), Computer-use (I. Hardy), Conservation (C. L. Rose), Incorporation (D. J. Faber), Supplies and Equipment (C. Kishinami and L. Marhue), and Education (M. A. Dancey) (Faber, 1987b).

In 1987, a review of SPNHC operations indicated that various functions and services of the Society were being duplicated or overlooked with the existing Committee structure. Also, the direction and scope of some committees were inconsistent and occasionally too restrictive to effectively serve the total membership. As a result, the committee system was reorganized in 1988, so that a holistic structure would be in place to address the needs of the Society and its membership.

STANDING COMMITTEES

The 1988 reassessment initially identified 11 committees—four were critical in fulfilling the functions of the organization (Bylaws, Election, Executive, and Fi-

nance committees) and seven were essential in providing important services to the general membership (Archives, Conference, Conservation, Membership, Publications, Publicity and Liaison, and Resources committees). Subsequent committee restructuring and identification of societal needs resulted in the formation of three additional service committees (Awards and Recognition, Documentation, and Education and Training) and the merging of the Publicity and Liaison Committee with the Membership Committee. Details about some committees have been presented by Rose (1993). The following briefly describes the history, activities, and individuals associated with the current committees (listed alphabetically).

Archives Committee.—The Archives Committee is responsible for collecting and maintaining written and photographic documentation of the Society. The Committee has been chaired by J. Kaylor (1988–1989) and J. P. Angle (1989–1995). In 1990, the Society accepted an offer by the Smithsonian Institution Archives to serve as a permanent repository for the organization's archives.

Awards and Recognition Committee.—The Awards and Recognition Committee is responsible for developing and exercising standards and protocols so that the Society may recognize and award deserving individuals for exceptional achievement. Activities related to the Committee began as an honorary membership subcommittee of the Elections Committee. The Awards and Recognition Committee became a Sessional Committee (1991–1992) under the Williams presidency, and it became a Standing Committee in 1992. Following established protocol, the Committee reviews and makes recommendations about potential recipients of the SPNHC Award, President's Award, Faber Award, and Honorary Membership to the Executive Committee which is responsible for the final decision. Honorary Membership is extended to individuals who have significantly contributed to exemplary activities that are consistent with the goals of the Society. The SPNHC Award recognizes individuals for life-time accomplishments that serve the Society's goals. The President's Award recognizes members for exceptional service to the Society. The Faber Award is a competitive grant for projects that will help to advance the management and care of natural history collections.

Since the creation of the Awards and Recognition Committee, M.-L. Florian has received the SPNHC Award in 1993, and S. B. McLaren and P. S. Cato have received the President's Award in 1993 and 1995, respectively. This Standing Committee has been chaired by C. J. Bossert (1992–1994) and S. L. Williams (1994–present).

Bylaws Committee.—The Bylaws Committee is responsible for the continued development of the Society Bylaws and Standing Rules as needed, as well as the monitoring of Society activities to ensure agreement with the Bylaws. C. Romero-Sierra (1986–1988) chaired the committee that was responsible for the first accepted version of the Bylaws. Because the President works directly with the Bylaws over an extended period of time, the Committee has been chaired by the Past-President since 1988.

Conference Committee.—The Conference Committee is responsible for soliciting invitations from institutions to host the annual meeting of the Society. The Committee is chaired by the President-Elect because appropriate Society repre-

Table 3. Annual meetings of SPNHC during the first 10 years.

Year	Host and location (date)
1986	National Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C. (21–22 May).
1987	Redpath Museum and McGill University, Montreal, Quebec (31 May–03 June).
1988	Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (30 May–03 June).
1989	Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology, Drumheller, Alberta, and University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta (23–28 July).
1990	Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Illinois (07–11 May).
1991	Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa, Ontario (06–11 May).
1992	University of Nebraska State Museum, Lincoln, Nebraska (02–06 June).
1993	Royal British Columbia Museum, Victoria, British Columbia (07–12 June).
1994	Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis, Missouri (11–15 May).
1995	Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Ontario (02–06 June).

sentation may be required, and the President-Elect must be familiar with events that will occur when related responsibilities shift to those of the President (Table 1).

The Committee serves as a conference facilitator by making recommendations, as needed, to the Local Committee of the host institution. The host institution is responsible for the logistics and finances of the meeting, thus protecting the tax-exempt status of the Society. In recent years, the number of participants at any single meeting has been around 175 individuals.

Historically, the annual meetings of SPNHC have alternated between Canada and the United States (Table 3). It is anticipated that this pattern will change due to the challenge of finding new host institutions.

Conservation Committee.—The Conservation Committee is responsible for acquiring, developing, and distributing to the Society information that will promote the long-term preservation of natural history specimens and associated materials. Activities and membership interest in this Committee have made it one of the two largest committees in the Society. The Committee accommodates its large membership by dividing activities into several subcommittees which currently include Conservation Research, Cooperative Purchasing, Preservation Posters, and Wet Collection Assessment. Some of the previous subcommittees (for example, Documentation and Education subcommittees) subsequently evolved into standing committees of the Society.

The Conservation Committee has been directly or indirectly involved with producing standards and publications (Fitzgerald, 1988; Garrett, 1989; Rose and Torres, 1992; Rose *et al.*, 1995). The Committee has been chaired by C. L. Rose (1987–1992), C. L. Rose and C. G. Leckie (1992–1993), C. G. Leckie and C. A. Hawks (1993–1995), and B. P. Moore (1995–present).

Documentation Committee.—The Documentation Committee is responsible for promoting the permanence and quality of all documents associated with the management and care of natural history specimens. The Committee started as a subcommittee of the Conservation Committee (1989–1993), evolved into a Sessional Committee (1993–1994) under the Fitzgerald presidency, and became a Standing Committee in 1994. The Committee has been co-chaired by S. M. Woodward (1992–1993), J. Golden and S. B. McLaren (1993–1994), and S. Kraft and J. Zak (1994–present).

Education and Training Committee.—The Education and Training Committee

Table 4. Special training topics provided at annual meetings during the first 10 years.

Year	Topic
1988	Health Hazards Associated with Natural History Museums.
1989	Storage Design and Material for Natural History.
1990	Exhibiting Natural History Materials.
1991	Practical Approaches to Preventive Conservation.
1992	Pest Management.
1993	Archival Concerns of Natural History Museums.
1994	Risk Assessment.
1995	Managing the Modern Herbarium.

is responsible for developing and providing educational and training opportunities for the SPNHC membership. The Committee started as a subcommittee of the Conservation Committee (1988–1989), evolved into a Sessional Committee (1989–1991) under the Romero-Sierra presidency, and became a Standing Committee in 1991.

Since 1988, there have been eight highly successful workshops to enhance the professional knowledge and skills of participating individuals (Table 4). The quality of these workshops is due in part to obtaining outside funding. The Bay Foundation and the Canadian Conservation Institute have been important contributors in helping to make these opportunities worthwhile for diverse audiences. The Committee also has played a major role in developing written material for the SPNHC publications.

Initially, the Seasonal and Standing committees for Education and Training were chaired by L. Barkley (1989–1993). When the planning and organization for each workshop started exceeding one year, the structure was changed to co-chairs. The co-chairs of the Committee have been L. Barkley and E. E. Merritt (1993–1994) and S. C. Byers and E. E. Merritt (1994–present).

Election Committee.—The Election Committee is responsible for coordinating the nomination and election of Council members. In the past, there were two committees, Nominations and Ballot Counting, with F. J. Collier, W. Y. Watson, J. Danis, and P. A. Doepke serving in chair positions. In 1988, these became subcommittees under the current Election Committee; Honorary Membership was also a subcommittee. These subdivisions no longer exist, and Honorary Membership is now part of the Awards and Recognition Committee. The Standing Committee has been chaired by F. J. Collier (1988–1991) and J. C. Price (1991–present).

Executive Committee.—The Executive Committee, consisting of the SPNHC officers, is responsible for carrying out the day-to-day business of the Society. As a committee, the members may conduct meetings and develop proposals for Council. In some instances, it may be necessary for the Committee to act as a group to address specific needs of the Society. The Committee is chaired by the current President (Table 1).

Finance Committee.—The Finance Committee is responsible for monitoring the Society's financial accounts, handling reserve funds, developing fiscal policies, and attending to other financial matters required by Council. SPNHC began with very limited resources, as is common to many new organizations, but it was not

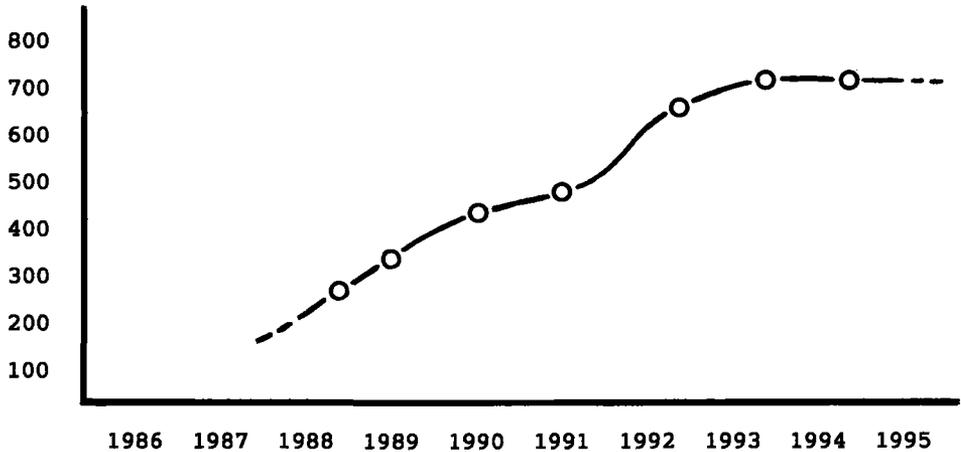


Figure 1. Total number of members of the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections from 1986 to 1995.

long before the financial structure stabilized and began to grow. A solid financial base has allowed the Society to undertake special committee projects and to take advantage of new opportunities, such as federal grants. The Committee continues to carefully monitor and develop the financial resources of the Society to anticipate and accommodate future activities.

The SPNHC Treasurer has always served on, if not chaired, the Finance Committee. The Committee has been chaired by J. P. Cuerrier (1987–1988), S. B. McLaren (1988–1989), H. H. Genoways (1989–1990), S. B. McLaren (1990–1993), J. Golden and S. B. McLaren (1993–1995), and S. B. McLaren (1995–present).

Membership Committee.—The Membership Committee promotes membership growth and encourages retention of existing members. Because some of its activities overlapped with those of the Publicity and Liaison Committee, the two committees were merged under Membership in 1992. As a result, the Committee also is responsible for publicizing Society activities and functions, and for obtaining pertinent information about related organizations and publications. The Membership Committee has been chaired by S. S. Albright (1987–1988), S. L. Williams (1988–1989), D. S. Chaney (1989–1990), E. E. Merritt (1990–1992), and A. Pinzl (1992–present).

Growth of SPNHC has been rapid, and in recent years membership has stabilized at around 700 members (Fig. 1). Although dominated by members from Canada and the United States, at least 23 other countries are represented in the current membership (J. Golden, personal communication).

Publications Committee.—The Publications Committee is responsible for developing and maintaining publication policies to provide regular publications that reflect the Society's purpose. SPNHC currently publishes a spring and fall issue of *Collection Forum* and a winter and summer issue of the *SPNHC Newsletter*. A membership directory is published about every other year. The Committee also assists other committees with the production of special publications, such as *Storage of Natural History Collections: Ideas and Practical Solutions* (Rose and Torres, 1992) and *Storage*

of *Natural History Collections: A Preventive Conservation Approach* (Rose et al., 1995). The Committee is currently developing another publication series, *SPNHC Leaflets*, for disseminating technical and procedural information.

The journal of the Society, *Collection Forum*, was first published in October 1985, about a month before the organization was actually formed. In 1986, separate spring and fall issues were published; these were followed by a joint spring and fall issue in 1987. Early issues of *Collection Forum* attempted to maintain a balance between contributions of a societal nature with those representing original work. An assessment of professional resources for natural history collections made it apparent that there was a niche that SPNHC could fill with a professional journal specializing in information on the management and care of natural history collections (Cato, 1988).

In the summer of 1987, the first issue of the *SPNHC Newsletter* was published. Its purpose was to provide an outlet for much of the societal information previously published in the journal. In the fall of 1988, the format and operations of *Collection Forum* were restructured to make it an outlet for peer-reviewed contributions that had direct relevance to the profession. Allen Press of Lawrence, Kansas, was selected as the publisher of *Collection Forum* because of their reputation for producing professional quality products for a reasonable cost.

The Managing Editor serves as an appointed officer of the Society and as the chair of the Publications Committee (Table 1). The SPNHC Newsletter Editors have been P. S. Cato (1987–1988), J. Golden (1988–1993), and P. M. Sumpter (1993–present). Currently, the Committee is co-chaired by the Managing Editor and Newsletter Editor to facilitate information exchange and newsletter coverage of Council meetings.

Resources Committee.—The Resources Committee is responsible for developing and maintaining pertinent information about resources that would be useful to the general membership of the Society. This Committee is one of the two largest committees of the Society. Current subcommittees include Bibliography, Supplies and Equipment, and Cooperative Purchasing. The Committee has been chaired by C. A. Hawks (1988–1992) and I. Hardy (1992–present).

The Committee has been successful in providing resource information to members and non-members. Examples of the Committee's contribution to the Society include *A Preliminary List of Conservation Resources for the Care of Natural History Collections* (Hawks and Rose, 1987), Resource Center (Madrid meeting), and the *Supplies and Materials for Museum Collections* traveling exhibit (developed by C. Kishinami).

SESSIONAL COMMITTEES

As previously stated, some Standing Committees originated as Sessional Committees (Awards and Recognition, Documentation, and Education and Training). However, some Sessional Committees were formed to address specific short-term needs of SPNHC. Examples of Sessional Committees and their respective activities are as follows:

- The Committee for Evaluating Collection Support Positions (P. S. Cato, Chair; 1989–1991) resulted in an important demographic profile of collection-related professions (Cato, 1991).

- The Committee for the SPNHC Logo (C. Romero-Sierra, Chair; 1989–1990) was instrumental in developing the distinctive logo that represents the Society.
- The Committee assisting with the development of the 1992 Madrid meeting (C. Romero-Sierra, Chair; 1988–1991) was critical in establishing the SPNHC role at the International Symposium and First World Congress on the Preservation and Conservation of Natural History Collections. This Committee subsequently evolved into the Sessional Committee for Liaison with the World Council for Collection Resources (C. L. Rose, Chair; 1994–present) (see below for further details).
- The Committee for Common Philosophies and Objectives (P. S. Cato, Chair; 1993–1994) published the Society's *Guidelines for the Care of Natural History Collections* (SPNHC, 1994).
- The Committee for Long-Range (Strategic) Planning (G. W. Hughes, Chair; 1994–present) is currently addressing the goals and direction of the Society for the future.

COOPERATIVE PROJECTS

The 1992 International Symposium and First World Congress on the Preservation and Conservation of Natural History Collections, commonly referred to as the “Madrid meeting”, was the most ambitious endeavor of the Society since its formation. The idea for the Madrid meeting was presented in 1987 by J. Gisbert at the SPNHC Annual Meeting in Montreal. In 1988, the Council made a formal decision for SPNHC to participate in an opportunity that was being coordinated by the Spanish government to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Columbus' voyage to the Americas. During the next four years, individuals and committees of SPNHC worked diligently with other natural history organizations to develop a program that would appeal to all members of the international and multidisciplinary natural history community. The Madrid meeting was exceptionally successful with 626 individuals from 75 countries expressing a unified concern for the future of natural history collections in the form of written resolutions (Palacios *et al.*, 1993a:33–37). These resolutions, which were subsequently endorsed by the SPNHC membership, were very important for providing direction for future activities and forming the World Council for Collection Resources (WCCR). However, the real success of the Madrid meeting for SPNHC was the recognition the Society received from the international natural history community as a solid and effective organization that actively addresses the interests and needs of all natural history collections (Anon., 1992). The sharp increase (28%) in membership in 1992 was a clear indication of the new recognition and support that SPNHC had received (Fig. 1).

Following the Madrid meeting, SPNHC involvement continued with participation in conference publications (Palacios *et al.*, 1993a, 1993b; Rose *et al.*, 1993) and with further development of the WCCR. On December 15–16, 1992, a meeting was held in Washington, D.C., to set up the operating structure of the WCCR. Participants of this meeting included G. M. Davis, A. R. Emery, G. R. Fitzgerald, R. Garcia-Perea, J. Gisbert, F. Palacios, C. Romero-Sierra (Chair), C. L. Rose, and S. L. Williams. In 1994, SPNHC and the Association of Systematics Collections (ASC) conducted a joint annual meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, where a

group met to continue the initiatives established at the Madrid meeting. Since then, the SPNHC leadership has been involved with the planning of the WCCR and Second World Congress on the Preservation and Conservation of Natural History Collections to be held at the University of Cambridge (UK) in 1996, under the direction of C. Collins.

The SPNHC Council has considered it to be important to serve its membership through representation in national “umbrella” organizations. For this reason, the Society has worked closely with the National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property (NIC) since 1988. The Society’s concerns for natural history collections continue to be addressed by NIC. A product of this joint effort is the recent NIC/NSF-funded project assessing conservation needs of natural history collections (Duckworth *et al.*, 1993).

SPNHC has worked closely with the Association of Systematics Collections (ASC). The Society participated in the ASC meeting at the University of Nebraska State Museum in 1989, and both organizations met jointly at the Missouri Botanical Gardens in 1994. The two organizations have worked together on projects such as the NIC/NSF project, the Madrid meeting, and development of the WCCR. One recent cooperative effort resulted in the ASC publication, *Guidelines for Institutional Policies & Planning in Natural History Collections* (Hoagland, 1994). Currently, both organizations are encouraging email communications by co-sponsoring NHCOLL-L (Natural History Collections Listserve) which is hosted by the University of California at Berkeley. P. M. Sumpter was instrumental in obtaining this service for the Society.

The Society also is an invited representative on the External Advisory Council of the American Institute for the Conservation of Artistic and Historical Works (AIC). During annual Advisory Council meetings, methods of increasing communication and addressing natural history conservation concerns are discussed and initiated.

THE SUPPORTERS OF SPNHC

The success and accomplishments that the Society has attained thus far would not have been possible without strong supporters of the organization. Fundamental to the existence of the Society is a strong membership. Society operations are dependent on a growing number of dedicated individuals (members and non-members) who contribute to the Society through services to committees, publications, annual meetings, and other activities; participating members benefit in turn with professional development and networking. Many of the Society’s opportunities have been a direct result of assistance from institutions, agencies, foundations, and corporations.

Institutional support usually has occurred in three forms; the most obvious is hosting of annual meetings. Less obvious is the support institutions provide individual members to attend annual meetings and to participate in leadership and service capacities within the organization. Finally, institutions have occasionally covered some of the operational costs of the Society, particularly during its early years. Institutional support provided by the Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) has been particularly important to the Society; CCI has provided conservation training for several of the SPNHC education and training programs.

Funding from agencies and foundations has been critical to the accomplish-

ments of the Society. In particular, the Institute for Museum Services (IMS) and the Bay Foundation have repeatedly awarded grants to SPNHC for its activities. For instance, IMS funding has supported the Society's efforts to produce books that serve the entire museum community (Rose and Torres, 1992; Rose *et al.*, 1995). The Bay Foundation has supported the Society's education and training projects, such as annual meeting workshops and the Resource Center at the Madrid meeting. The Museum Assistance Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage also has supported SPNHC initiatives.

Support from corporations also has been important to the success of SPNHC, particularly with annual meetings and special projects. A growing number of diverse corporations have discovered mutually beneficial interactions with SPNHC and its members. For instance, the annual meetings provide a mechanism for educating potential customers, developing new ideas, and becoming aware of changing trends and opportunities.

It would be possible to cite other examples of support that the Society has received. However, it is the intention of this contribution to simply acknowledge how important this support has been, particularly during the first ten years of the Society's history, and to express, on behalf of SPNHC, sincere appreciation for all the support received from individuals, agencies, foundations, corporations, and other contributors.

CONCLUSION

This contribution documents important activities and accomplishments of SPNHC during its first ten years of existence. It is hoped that this information will help those who participated in these events to reflect on what has been achieved, *and* that this information will help new members understand how these events have been important to the history and future of the Society. This is, without a doubt, a success story of what individuals with a common cause can achieve. It is hoped that the achievements and professional development of the first ten years will be perpetuated in the future.

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