

## KEY POINTS – GSA Proposal August 2014

- I. Geological collections are at a pivotal point
  - a. Localities continually reclaimed and exhausted
  - b. Storage limits being exceeded
  - c. Limited resources becoming more limited

SUMMARY: Our collections are being neglected, lost, and discarded.

- II. Message not heard despite publication such as:
  - a. The Board on Earth Sciences and Resources “Geoscience Data and Collections: National Resources in Peril”.
  - b. GSA position statement on Geoscience Data Preservation

SUMMARY: We are at great risk of losing significant portions of our collections forever.

- III. Why is nothing being done to better preserve geological collections?
  - a. Likely due to lack of priority, if it isn't a policy from the top down then it doesn't get to be a true priority
    - 1. True priority is something to:
      - a. Be paid to complete
      - b. Be evaluated on
    - 2. If it's not a true priority then:
      - a. It isn't funded
      - b. It falls apart
      - c. It never gets done
  - b. Likely due to lack of funding priority, if it isn't a policy from the top then it has no budget priority

- IV. Lack of funding causes these responses from mineral collection managers
  - a. Search for inexpensive ways to provide collection management
    - 1. Microsoft Office-based products like Excel and Access
    - 2. Low cost, low powered third party (commercial or amateur) solutions
    - 3. Do nothing because don't have time or resources to pursue an effective solution

SUMMARY: Currently no long-term sustainable process and smaller preservation attempts are futile.

- V. Discussion by Southeastern GSA Presenters on “Hidden Gems”
  - a. The only way to enact a nation-wide paradigm shift in the way university materials are managed is through a top-down approach
  - b. Likely this will require a new university policy for how materials are treated and perhaps a workshop or meeting specific to this plan of action
  - c. This may also require a funded workforce to research and prepare a report similar to the 2009 IWGSC report (see supporting documentation for link)
  - c. We suggest using guidelines from others who have parallel initiatives and existing infrastructure such as iDigBio

SUMMARY: The future of our collections is dependent on the actions we take now.

## VI. In Addition to Protocols, Supporting Infrastructure is Needed

- a. Use model example institutions and NSF funded initiatives
  - 1. Virginia Tech
  - 2. University of Texas in Austin
  - 3. IDigBio
  - 4. EarthCube
- b. Need a product with these characteristics
  - 1. Well-funded and staffed software organization with a history of supporting natural history collections
  - 2. Inexpensive, preferably free
  - 3. Uses world-class database engine
  - 4. Entry screen designs editable by end user without changing the underlying relational structure
  - 5. Handles all aspects of collection management

SUMMARY: Follow in footsteps of existing institutions and initiatives, work toward ultimate product

## VII. We support GSA in taking leadership

- a. To aid in enacting a policy to preserve collections that are currently deteriorating
- b. To fund and support workshops and meeting sessions on collections preservation
- c. To represent the community and demonstrate geological collections value

SUMMARY: We need GSA to lead our community to ensure our collections are preserved for future use