**Opportunities for Volunteering in the University of Montana Herbarium (MONTU)**

Following is a list of tasks currently on our MONTU To Do List. All projects require attention to detail and familiarity with operating a PC. We respectfully request that volunteers donate a minimum of 10 hours, due to the training time involved in learning the skills for each project. If you would like to volunteer in the herbarium please begin by contacting the curator (Shannon.kimball@mso.umt.edu), and indicate those which you’d like to learn more about.

**Create a Digital List of Specimens in the Vascular Plant Type Collection**

MONTU’s Type collection consists of special plants that act as the single organism to which the taxon is anchored. In other words, it is the specimen that best represents a single, described species. A current, digital list of MONTU’s Type Specimens, created in Excel by a volunteer, will allow us to quickly reference species in this unique collection and make it available to the general public via our website. Qualified volunteers must have past experience working with Microsoft Excel, and good typing skills.

**Database Specimens in the USDA Rocky Mountain Research Station (MRC) Herbarium**

MRC is a separate herbarium that is managed by MONTU, as arranged through a Memorandum of Understanding with the USDA Forest Service. While all of MONTU’s Montana Vascular Plant Collection has been databased, only half of MRC’s vascular sheets have been digitized. Qualified and interested volunteers will create records that reflect all of the collection label information by filling in fields in MONTU’s database, thereby creating a digital record of each herbarium sheet. Accuracy is paramount in databasing collections, so attention to detail is important. Experience with Montana landscapes is also helpful, since the records generated are displayed geographically.

**Photograph Specimens in the USDA Rocky Mountain Research Station (MRC) Herbarium**

In addition to creating digital database records from label data for MRC specimens (see above), images of each herbarium sheet are taken with specially designed photography equipment. Digital images then are linked to each database record so that both label information and specimen images are available for viewing together on our MONTU database. Volunteers must be capable of keeping a number of herbarium sheets and folders organized at time, as well as refiling them in cabinets with precision.

**Improve Mapping Accuracy in Existing Databased Collections**

In the process of databasing MONTU’s vascular collections, many records have been mapped incorrectly. Volunteers interested in this activity will identify the incorrectly mapped records, then use various tools to geolocate collection sites with improved accuracy. A broad knowledge of Montana geography and location names is ideal (but not required) for this task.