

Acadia University
15 University Avenue
Wolfville, NS B4P 2R6

To Dr. Jeff Hennessy and Dr. Ashlee Cunsolo (CC Dr. Jeff Hooper and Dr. Allison Walker)

The directors and members of the Nova Scotia Wild Flora Society express our concern regarding the dismissal of Alain Belliveau and the elimination of his position as Herbarium Manager. Alain is one of the most skilled botanical experts in Nova Scotia and this will be a huge loss to our province. We urge you to reverse this decision.

The E.C. Smith Herbarium is an internationally renowned collection that has been a prestigious part of Acadia University for decades. It is the first Canadian herbarium to have digital scans of specimens published in a database. It is the largest herbarium in Atlantic Canada. The holdings of the herbarium represent the work of hundreds of professional and amateur collectors who have been contributing for well over a century.

Herbaria and their managers are vital resources for naturalists and scientists. Naturalists rely on herbaria to verify identifications of rare species in the field. In a changing climate, the records of the E.C. Smith Herbarium are essential for documenting the changes to Nova Scotia flora, and determining which plants need protection. Scientists need herbaria as sources of material for research in many fields. Without a manager, an herbarium is at risk of falling into disrepair, turning a valuable scientific resource into a liability for the institution.

The E.C. Smith Herbarium is an important resource for teaching and building community. Here scientists and budding scientists (students) can examine thousands of specimens under a single roof, with an expert to guide them in their study. No biology lab, lecture, or field trip can match this experience. A herbarium manager can rally volunteers to donate hundreds of hours as stewards. Without a manager, the student experience at Acadia University will suffer, and your local community will lose an important unifying feature.

Another area of concern is the continuation of the annual Harriet Irving Botanical Gardens native plant sale. This is by far the best way to access a diversity of native plants for gardening in the Maritimes. Alain's role has been critical to its success.

Because of its deep connection to Acadia University and the Wolfville Community, because of the Herbarium's importance as a scientific resource, and because of its value for students, we ask that you reinstate the position of Herbarium Manager at the E.C. Smith Herbarium, and re-hire Mr. Belliveau.

Sincerely yours, on behalf of our members,

The Directors of the Nova Scotia Wild Flora Society:

Charles Cron, MD; David Patriquin, Phd Biology; Anne Mills, Bryologist; Beth McGee, MSW; Doug Van Hemessen BSc, Stewardship Manager at The Nature Conservancy of Canada ; Marion Sensen, Phd Botany; LH Paris, BA, LTD; Peter Steiner, Project Manager at Coastal Action; Bob Kennedy, BFA Film Production

Nova Scotia Wild Flora Society
c/o NS Museum of Natural History
1747 Summer St., Halifax, NS B3H 3A6
novascotiawildflora@gmail.com nswildflora.ca

