

Science Resources at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History Libraries – Transcript of audio

Please stand by for realtime captions.

Hello, everyone. This is Helen Keremedjiev. Been speaking out loud to give you the chance to set your volume on your computer speakers. We will get started in about 10 minutes. Thank you.

Hello, everyone. This is Helen Keremedjiev at GPO. Talking out loud to give you the chance to set your volume on your phone or computer speakers. We will get started in about five minutes. Thank you.

Hello, everyone. This is Helen Keremedjiev at GPO. I am just talking out loud to give you all the chance to set your volume on your phone or computer speakers. We will get started in about two minutes. Thank you.

Good afternoon and welcome to the F DLP Academy. My name is Helen Keremedjiev, user support librarian at the publishing office GPO. I will be the MC for this room today. GPO outreach librarian Ashley Dahlen is providing tech support if you need any assistance. Today's webinar is Smithsonian library archives natural physical sciences library collections by Bonnie Felts as a reference librarian at the national easing of natural history. For the Q&A, please add your questions to the chat and send them to all panelists or all participants. If you have questions during the live demo portions of the talk, mouse over to the blue bar at the top of the screen and click on chat to activate the chat. I will monitor the chat and questions will be answered throughout the talk. This presentation is being recorded and will be made available shortly thereafter. I now handed over to Bonnie who will take it from here.

Thank you. Hi, everyone. Thanks so much for joining us today. We are going to be talking about Smithsonian natural history library and all of its different collections. First of all, who am I? Bonnie Felts Smithsonian archives for 10 years. Currently work as a librarian for the Museum support Center, Museum studies library, vertebrate paleontology library, Kellogg marine mammals library, reference library for natural history. In my spare time I play classical clarinet and roller derby, not at the same time. And down here you see my cat, Lily for short. Kind of an inside joke, Smithsonian, whenever people start we ask if they are dog people or cat people, I am both but I only have a cat right now. Although one library we have 21 branches located in museums and research centers. Each library is assigned a librarian to support the research needs of Smithsonian staff in the locations including education and visitor services staff. These librarians can arrange for additional training to your teams on how to find and use our resources. As you can see, this encompasses all the museums you are familiar with in D.C. Also including some museums you have probably never heard of or research centers you are unfamiliar with. The natural and physical sciences library, as we call our research centers span 14 locations with different collections. We don't have any volunteers at the moment so some of this information is a little outdated. We have at least two more upcoming retirements in the spring. Right now, this is not our ideal staffing situation. We normally have more people. 14 locations. We cover Washington, D.C., Suitland Maryland, front Royal, Virginia, Edgewater, Maryland, Panama City, Panama. Many of the natural history libraries are located in departments. Librarians are assigned to each library that only botany and and apology in the main library are usually fully staffed. Librarians need to cover locations and sometimes traveling between D.C. locations and other library research centers in the D.C. region. I am a librarian for the collection, I split my time between the collection and Suitland, Maryland. This is a graphic of what the building looks like. Probably familiar with the elephants on the first floor in

the natural history building. I think it is 1.9 million square feet in the Museum. The public only sees about one third of that exhibit space. The majority of the spaces behind the scenes research space. Within each department we have a coordinating library that supports that department which I have highlighted in red. This is a natural and physical sciences library statistics from 2018. Obviously during COVID we didn't have, we were not working in the library locations. Most of our work was online. Our statistics dropped a lot during that time because we were unable to do as much reference work since we did not have access to our physical locations. Since there are some electronic resources that we offer through DHL, interlibrary loan, we were still able to get some support to our staff and we pretty much did not serve much outside reference. We like to look at these numbers because it makes us think of times of the past. We are hoping things continue to grow as we are working more with our collections. This is the natural history Museum studies research library location. This part that I'm going to go through, all of these locations might be a little wordy so I apologize. I am trying to get as much information to back up these collections to make sense to everyone. The main natural history library is located on two floors. The space is not a traditional quiet library but a collaborative space for staff in the building. The museums education and outreach staff tend to utilize the space more regularly by using open tables for drop in meetings and we have a coffee bar where we offer coffee for one dollar. Coffee regulars can come in, drink a cup of coffee, catch up on new books and journals while also communicating with peers. The main location contains about 105,000 items of general science, biology, ecology, evolution. Biodiversity, geology, genomics, paleontology, wildlife conservation, other subjects. Over 540 journal subscriptions and a large number of journals received and exchanged. Many of our collections emphasize taxonomy, or solid, geography, ecology, evolution, biodiversity, comparative anatomy. The second part of the natural history collection is in our basement along with Smithsonian Anna. A collection of historic and current Smithsonian publications such as convocations to acknowledge with integration of the libraries with Smithsonian institutional archives, finding that collecting materials published by the Smithsonian like Smithsonian scholarly press have been redundant. For the past two years I have been working on policy documents to ensure Smithsonian published items go to our archives while making sure we have at least one copy in a circulating library. Smithsonian continues to collect publications about the Smithsonian or written by Smithsonian researchers that the archive does not collect. The Museum studies research library is located along with the natural history main collection on the first floor. MSRL collect materials pertaining to organization, administration, management, and programs. Named after the American geologist and explorer that explored the Western United States, most notably the Grand Canyon, the John Wesley Powell library of and apology is one of the oldest and largest collections of the libraries. It started with the library of the Bureau of American anthropology from 1879 to 1965. In 1965, came to merger the two principal Smithsonian collections, divisional collections of the department event apology. Powell was a founder and first director. The library collects four subdisciplines of the American anthropology. Physical anthropology, archaeology, cultural and apology, linguistics. As well as some related disciplines like folklore, and mystics, biomedicine, forensic science, number of area studies. The collections cover more than just anthropology and Native American culture, language, history, also cover Asia, Africa, Middle East Oceania. The botany and horticulture library supports the staff that work in the natural herbarium, the Smithsonian Gardens. In 2003, the horticulture collection was brought over to the botany library and merged. The collection covers molecular evolution, classification, identification, nomenclature, ballistics, floor sticks, endangered and threatened species. Other subjects are botanical history, especially North and South America, no botany, plant exploration, botanical illustration. Geographical coverage is worldwide with a special emphasis on New York traffics. With horticultural subjects, plant exploration, garden preservation, restoration, ornaments, furnishings, structures, horticulture, integrated pest management, flour design and botanical art. Mineral science covers three divisions. Meteorites, mineralogy. This is one of the smaller collections but it is very dense in the subject matter that it covers.

Also located within the mineralogy apartment and requires even more special access due to the security in the department.

This is Helen. Just very briefly, those of you who are attending the session. If you have any questions for our presenter, go to the top of the screen and hover over to see a blue menu and click on the chat in order to activate the chat and there you can add your questions. Thank you.

Thank you. The entomology library, the collection supports the collections and focuses on taxonomy and systematics. Reflect specimen collections of the Museum. Also the most inclusive, I think they said the fourth most largest entomology library collection in the world. The invertebrate zoology library is housed in the former fireproof collections area once housed that were sent out to the museum support center. It covers subjects of systematics and taxonomy, anatomy, physiology, marine ecology. Over the years, this collection has combined multiple smaller collections. Part of that would have been the worms collections, there was a mollusk collection. They eventually put this all together as invertebrate zoology. Putting all of those smaller collections together so they weren't just all over the departments. The words library main focus is on systematic ornithology. Places an emphasis on neotropical regions and Pacific ocean regions that would incorporate all aspects of ornithology around the world, including evolution and structural adaptation, distribution studies, geography, birds. What is really cool about our birds division is not only is it in the birds division, we have the scientists that help identify the bird strike that brought down the plane in the Hudson River. We have further identification lab that is located on the same floor of the library. We get to work very closely with the ornithologists there. Amphibians and reptiles, which are, amphibians and reptiles, and fishes library. Two different collections put into the same space. This library had been renovated fairly recently within the past 11 years. The amphibians and reptiles library, which are evolution morphology, systematic reptiles and amphibians, the languages are English and major, European, actively, worldwide coverage and particular emphasis on North American and tropical regions of the world for this collection. Also with the collection which follows interest in fishes which are the systematic zoo geography of fishes. Also areas of life history, a query elegy, economic biology. Worldwide coverage. Especially South America neo-tropics and Marine tropics. Also what is interesting about our fishes researchers is that we have a lot of people from the U.S. Fish and wildlife that are assigned to our building. Many of them have retired in the past few years. We actually have one patron who donates his money to help us pay for some of our resources and subscriptions in this collection.

I don't mean to backtrack a tiny bit, we do have a quick question concerning the bird library. What exactly is the feather identification lab, what does that entail?

That is a good question. Obviously, when you have a bird with an airplane, there is not much left of what that thing was that hit into the engine. Most of the time they are stuck with debris. I guess bird debris. They actually call it spurge. If you're interested, you could look up the Smithsonian feather identification lab and what happens is they will have basically bird gunk and they might have pieces of feathers left. What they try to do is they will look at the feathers, microscopically, try to compare it to birds in the collections and birds that are found in those areas and try to identify what kind of birds tend to be causing the most trouble with crashing into planes or other situations. Can't think of any active, kind of like a forensic science. Trying to identify the remains of a bird just by its feather. That is what they do so they are able to do enough research. In most cases, positively identify bird species that had crashed into a plane and in the case of the Hudson River, they were actually able to identify as Canada geese that had gotten into the aircraft pass and crashed, the plane crashed into them, I guess. Did answer that question?

Yes, thank you.

Cool. We have the mammals library. The mammals library is in the main building. Probably should explain how the buildings puts together first. The main building is the original part of the museum that was built in 1911. There were wings added in the 60s and then within the courtyards that were part of the original building, they built more buildings in there in the 90s. Almost five buildings in one. I should have told that from the beginning, really confusing. The mammals library is near the mammals department, vast ranges of collection shelving. When collection supports the division of mammals, the major research, systematics, distribution, evolution, morphology as well as ecology and evolution of mammals. This is to collections that are managed, vertebrate paleontology library, Kellogg library of marine mammals. These are two smaller collections but very specialized libraries containing one space along with the department reprints and archives. The libraries do not manage reprints collections but we often share spaces and divisions that we are serving. The vertebrate paleontology libraries collects, I cannot talk today, systematic paleontology. Zoology vertebrates of the Paleozoic, Mesozoic, tertiary, Quaternary periods. The Kellogg library of marine mammals collection contains fossils of living mammals, behavioral biology, evolution, systematics. It was named after Marine mineralogist and director of natural history Museum. The zoo is located on 160 acres in Washington D.C. and a 3100 acre campus in front Royal, Virginia. Library supports research and species survival as well as in the care and feeding of more than 2400 animals. 350 different species. No centralized library collection. In multiple offices like veterinarian offices and nutritional offices, the collection covers genetics, comparative reproduction physiology, animal cognition, endocrinology, sustainability of endangered animal populations, conservation medicine, biological diversity. Also going to go back. That is what we call our zoobrarian, Stephen Cox. He got a turtle. The museum support center library located in Suitland, Maryland across from the cultural resource center part of the natural Museum of the American Indian. A museum collection management facility designed for the purposes of collection storage, research and conservation. It houses the museum Smithsonian conservation Institute, laboratories of analytical biology, numerous departments from the natural, National Museum of Natural History. National anthropological archives, Walter Reed bio systematics unit, also out there. The library supports the staff by collecting materials on conservation restoration, reservation deterioration of materials in a museum as well as scientific understanding of these processes. Also collect molecular evolution, molecular systematics, molecular genetics, population genetics, genetic theory and analysis, electrophoresis, I could not pronounce that word, genetics, evolutionary biology, protein DNA, RNA analysis as it relates to tropics and natural history, plant molecular biology, animal molecular biology. Also we also have collections on medical entomology, identification, taxonomy, systematic works. Fleas, ticks, and mosquitoes, as well as the Rathburn crustacean you and collections. As this is one of my newer collections, I am still trying to get my head around just how distorted some of these subject areas are so you can understand it is really interesting, the types of materials that I have in this library. Also, since it is disconnected from the natural history Library, I don't have as much foot traffic is the main library does. There is a shuttle that travels between National History Museum and museum support center and some other locations. This is accessible to our patrons while they are on-site. Then we had SERC, also known as Smithsonian environmental research Center. Environmental research educational facility located on the road in West Rivers near Edgewater in Maryland. Near the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay, 365 acre dairy farm was donated to the Smithsonian in 1964 by Robert Lee Forrest of Baltimore which became the start of what was known as the Chesapeake Center for female biology. The library collects materials on global change, land water interactions, ecosystems, landscape ecology, population and community ecology, statistical analysis and modeling. This is another picture of the SERC library, what the inside looks like. This is the newer library. In the past 10 years and has had to move

three times. When I started, it was actually what they called, located in a building that they called the cattle bar. The upstairs was a library. Downstairs is where they birthed cabs. That was interesting. This is the final library under the natural and physical sciences. The library tropical biology located in Panama City, Republic of Panama which supports the tropical research Institute. Smithsonian has a special relationship with the Panama government, local universities are able to use collections for their work. The collection focuses on tropical diversity and its origins bringing ecology and evolution, ecology and physiology of local forests, behavior, adaptive evolution, archaeology, and apology, human ecology, Pino ecology, natural and protected areas, research policy, Panama Canal and its watershed. A fundraising initiative offered by the Smithsonian libraries and archives is called adopt a book. When we are not in the pandemic, the libraries will have donor events where librarians are able to present the books they have put up for adoption on the website. People can symbolically adopt a book in our collection which will then be given an electronic and sometimes physical bookplate. Some people who adopt books in honors of someone as a gift. The money that is generated from these events help pay for preservation of deteriorated materials or help us purchase new books. We also try to digitize books that are out of copyright. Here, you can see me in the first picture, talking to the secretary. Actually the past secretary of Smithsonian. Second picture, looks like I am holding a football but it is actually a smoky quartz, looks like a giant jewel. In the bottom is me with books, bottom corner, we actually had adopted the entire table of books. Enough people had adopted the books that they were all paid for that was pretty cool. Another initiative that we have within the natural and physical sciences is our research guides that are available outside of the Smithsonian. Some people, if they are unable to come on site and use our resources, they are looking for places to start with the research. What we try to do is make these research guides. Is everyone able to see this screen?

Yes.

Cool. What we do is we try to find different subject areas. We try to coordinate it with subject areas of our collections. People outside of the Smithsonian network, if you teach homeschool kids and they are trying to start researching different subject areas, let me see if I can zoom in. We have the science research guides here. And apology research guide. You click on that, it will give you Smithsonian resources. Take it to the Department of anthropology, videos, we also have Arctic studies Center. Repatriation office. This will give you a lot of different interesting things and resources within and apology. Also up here, this will give you all of the science libraries at the Smithsonian. The databases for science, science research, a lot of the resources that are on here may only be, these will be accessible from home, sometimes with pub med you may not be able to get into certain articles but we still have some electronic access on-site. Going back. Research sources. This is really useful for SI staff. This is our intranet. We have enough researchers that they are looking for information on how to get grants and how to do data management. The library does support data management work. We also have something called Smithsonian research online which is a giant bibliography of Smithsonian publications that were written by Smithsonian researchers. If people were like I wrote an article, I want people within the Smithsonian to find it. We try to put it up here on the Smithsonian research.

We do have a question very similar to what you just spoke about. Just to quickly clarify. Are there indices available to help us find citations for Smithsonian publications? Is it all in Smithsonian research online or elsewhere?

Because it is the most concise collection of it, the Smithsonian research online is probably the way to find it. I will say that it will include everything because this is done with human power. It is not automatically put together. We have to have people look through Google scholar alerts or other

publication alert to upload this information. If there was ever an article missing or some of these publications missing when they were at the Smithsonian, we could have missed it. You have to tell us or our researchers, they have to tell us we had written something. I would definitely say Smithsonian research online is probably the best.

Okay. Just a quick clarification. How does one become a patron of your libraries?

Patrons, normally we are open to the public but we mostly help the staff and researchers in our buildings that are SI employees. We are open to the public by appointment. But you cannot check out the books. If you are coming to research a certain topic we will help you locate those items. Using the resources in our libraries. We are members of OCLC and we do interlibrary loans so we do sometimes lend books to outside libraries. If you are at DOI and you request a book and we happen to have a, we probably would lend it. It wouldn't be a full patronage but still able to use the resources.

Sounds like a majority of the public will access your collections through interlibrary loan and reference assistance. Reference assistance, how does that work? Into after the pandemic.

We weren't doing as much in person, obviously. Now we are back to regular programmed schedules I guess. We do have people that contact us. I will be in D.C. for the weekend and I am researching insects of Panama. Can I come in end-user collections? Right now, since we have a low staffing situation, it depends on the staff. We usually can set up to have visitors. That is not too much of an issue. We had to check them in their security. They have to be basically watched staff members so they don't go into specific areas. We do a lot obviously with email reference. We don't really have any virtual, we don't use chats but we will sometimes meet with people on zoom if necessary.

Thank you.

No problem.

If you ever need to contact the library, natural history Library, we have a resource account reaching all of the librarians. Also what we have ask a librarian, that will go to all of the librarians. This one is specifically for us. More information, library research center. This tells you about all of our library locations. Not just natural history. American art and portrait Gallery. Their library is within a different building and the museum. They don't have a lot of space. We have the Cooper-Hewitt Smithsonian design in New York City. Special collections like the library of history of science and technology, that is in American history, Freer Gallery of Art, these are located in the garden behind the castle. If you are interested to see what kind of things are in these collections, contact. This will have the contact and the phone numbers. Each one of these pages will include the hours and locations. Course, if they have an online exhibit, if you are ever wanting to learn about more, definitely check these pages out. We also have about the libraries which is our history. History of the library system. More recently we merged with the archives which is now why we are now known as Smithsonian library archives but this is more specifically about the libraries. And then we have the history of the libraries. The short of this is our collection actually was housed at the Library of Congress for a while under the Smithsonian deposit. After there was a fire at the castle, we lost some of our collections. When we started, the Smithsonian deposit, 1866. When we recalled our books to be brought back, some of the books got lost in the Library of Congress which is interesting because sometimes we will request books from the Library of Congress. It's no has, still has the Smithsonian stamp on it. They get to keep it forever. I thought that was kind of funny. If you are interested in learning about the history of the Smithsonian and the libraries, this is all

on this page. We did not become centrally administrated until 1969, 1964. By Dylan Ripley. One of the secretaries of the Smithsonian. The collection started obviously in people's offices. Just everywhere. Departments would have collections. They decided it was probably a good idea to actually centrally administer our collections instead of having them everywhere. And that is the end. This is my resources. I also used Wikipedia for some of my information.

Great presentation. If you wouldn't mind for right now stopping sharing your screen so that it will be easier for folks to at any last minute questions. Folks, if you have any questions for Bonnie, please add them to the chat, either to all panelists or all participants. Just in case, a few more minutes for folks. If you would like to elaborate on anything more on your topic that you just discussed.

That is a good question. Let me go back. When I was talking about the natural history Library. The majority of this presentation is the virtual version of a walking tour that I tend to give in person to our staff when they are either new to the Smithsonian or just learning about the library resources because we have people coming to the library. I didn't know we had a library. Then we have to tell them we have over 21 library research centers and within our building we have 13 libraries. Those collections are not always considered research centers. We called them sub locations so not all counted under the natural history umbrella as we say. When I walked people around the building and try to get some history of the building and the libraries, the walking tour can take 90 minutes. I think I counted 3000 steps across the building. When I mentioned there were five buildings built into one, you can't just walk across to get across, you have to go all the way up to the top floor and walk across, all the way down to the bottom floor and walk across. What they do when they added the wings, in the courtyard, the old building, only three floors on the old building and six to seven floors within the courtyards so that is why there is no direct access across the building. It tends to take a while.

We do have one new question. When working with middle school and high school students, where is the best online place to point them?

Definitely our research guides. I had to reference those a lot during pandemic. I had people that said hi, my 10-year-old is researching dinosaurs. We want to know where we should start. The research guides will at least give you more, what is the word, academic resources, resources at Smithsonian office, he can put you into other areas of research. Hopefully, I think we are going to send out the link to my presentation.

Yes. When the recording is made available, the company slides will be active links for folks to connect to them.

Definitely. If they don't know where to start, we tend to send them the research guides. Also, our online catalog which I did not show because most of the resources are only available on our network. You can still use our catalog or search as they call it. From home. You could search the kind of access that we have two online journals, databases. You might not get full access to them. Sometimes they will give you some titles and ideas of where to start. Like when doing research on general paleontology. That is a good place to search for titles.

Looks like we don't have any new questions. I will start wrapping up this webinar. Bonnie, thank you for an excellent presentation. I am now sharing in the chat a survey link. Please take a moment to let us know how you felt about today's webinar. This webinar has been recorded and you will be notified shortly thereafter when it is available to view. If you enjoyed today's webinar, please check out some of

our upcoming FDLP Academy webinars. I will put into the chat two weeks. The first link is about the FDLP Academy and the second link is of our calendar of events. Last month, we held the 2022 fall Federal depository Library conference. To learn more about it, including viewing the presentation and hearing the recordings of the speaker sessions, here is the link. Thank you again, Bonnie, for a great presentation. Have a marvelous day, everyone.

Thank you. [Event concluded]