Michael S. Rush

Sternberg Museum of Natural History Herpetology Collection

Fort Hays State University

600 Park St, Hays, KS 67601

Dear Michael S. Rush

My name is Vicente Fernández Lara, and I am an undergraduate student at Utah Tech University working under Dr. Randy Klabacka. I am currently leading a project focused on a novel population of *Aspidocelis neomexicanus* found in Southern Utah and assessing their distribution and origin. The results of this project will contribute to both the fields of evolution and conservation biology. Funding for this project is received from the Department of Biology at Utah Tech University and my advisor Randy Klabacka. Estimating a phylogeny from a molecular data set (mitochondrial genes 12S and CO1 and nuclear gene BACH1), I will examine the phylogenetic placement of this novel population along with the introduced population in northern Utah and which native populations (from three regions along the Rio Grande basin) they are most closely related to. Tissue samples are needed to extract large quantities of DNA to get the coverage of the information needed to determine their origin. Up to six samples per site would be ideal to cover the species haplotype from the locality. The tissues used for this project will be stored in a museum tissue loan box in our private tissue freezer. We have collected samples from Southern Utah (where this species had never before been documented) and will be finished with lab work and data analysis by Spring 2024. Detailed below is a list of the tissue samples in the Museum of Southwestern Biology that are crucial to my project. If it is at all possible, could you send us sub samples from these tissue vouchers?

Many thanks,

Vicente Fernández Lara.

Vicente Fernández Lara

Department of Biology

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**(All tissues are *Aspidocelis neomexicana*)**

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| MSB: Herp: 6391 (specimen from Doña Ana County) |
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Student: Vicente Fernández Lara Advisor: Randy Klabacka