

COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY FOR BOX ELDER MUSEUM OF ART, HISTORY, and NATURE

MUSEUM MISSION AND VISION

The mission of the Box Elder Museum of Art, History, and Nature is to collect, preserve, and interpret art and materials that tell stories of human experiences and of the land.

Vision: *The museum is a place to engage with ideas, creativity, and heritage.*

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the scope of the collections of the Box Elder Museum of Art, History, and Nature; define acquisition, care, management, and use of collections according to professional best practice standards; ensure interpretation in keeping with the mission of the museum; and maintain consistency in care and management through future staff changes.

SCOPE OF COLLECTIONS:

The Box Elder Museum of Art, History, and Nature includes the Brigham City Museum of Art and History and the Box Elder Museum of Natural History. As such, it collects in three different areas – art, history, and natural history, which include some overlap. There is an additional Educational Collection, which includes history and natural history objects, and may include works of art as may be required.

In keeping with the mission and purpose of the museum, collecting should be restricted to those objects and images of cultural, historical, or technical significance that can contribute to the documentation and interpretation of the history of Box Elder County. Collections should reflect the breadth, depth, and complexity of the experiences of the people of the county, with efforts to acquire items to illuminate under-represented stories and groups.

Art Collection

Art collections include all media, including painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, ceramics, textiles, designers/crafts, and so on. Art collected should not be limited to Utah artists. Instead, the Museum will collect art by artists of the Inter-mountain West, and depicting the Inter-mountain West. Art also includes art quilts from around the globe.

History Collections

Historic collections should encompass all of Box Elder County, although there is a strong focus on Brigham City due to the museum's past collecting. Towns, cities, and unincorporated areas from which materials may be collected include: Bear River City, Brigham City, Corinne, Garland, Honeyville, Perry, Tremonton, Willard, Deweyville, Elwood, Fielding, Howell,

Mantua, Plymouth, Portage, Snowville, Riverside, South Willard, Thatcher, Beaver Dam, Bothwell, Collinston, Etna, Grouse Creek, Harper Ward, Lynn, Park Valley, Penrose, Promontory, Rosette, Standrod, Yost, Blue Creek, Cedar Creek, Golden, Jackson, Kelton, Lucin, Matlin, Russian Settlement, and Terrace.

All eras of history within Box Elder County will be collected, including contemporary history, pre-history, etc.

History collections are not limited to specific types of artifacts, so long as they are relevant to our collecting area, and within our ability to house them. Items may include furniture, portions of buildings, images, documents, textiles, maps, musical instruments, oral histories, etc.

Artifacts may reflect larger national or international themes, but should always focus attention on how those events affected life in Box Elder County.

Natural History Collections

The natural history collections cover mining history, archaeological specimens, minerals, and fossils. While dinosaur fossils are collected, they are not the focus of the Museum's collections, and should be collected only as needed for particular exhibition or outreach needs, or to represent dinosaurs found in Utah. Should dinosaur fossils be found in Box Elder County, the Museum should attempt to acquire them. While specimens related to Box Elder County's natural history are a major focus for the collection, minerals and fossils from throughout the world have a place in the collection. Trilobites are also a major focus.

Types of specimens include:

- Invertebrate fossils (trilobites, fossilized leaves, petrified wood, etc.)

- Vertebrate fossils (dinosaurs, reptiles, fish, mammals, etc.)

- Minerals and gems

- Items related to the mining history of Box Elder County (including photographs, documents, artifacts from mines, etc.)

Collections do not include taxidermy, study skins, skeletons, fluid-preserved specimens, herbaria

Educational Collections

Historical objects, natural history specimens, and cultural material that do not meet criteria for regular accessioned collections may be added to the education collection. These objects may be used for hands-on experience in the museum or for outreach activities. Items may also be acquired specifically for educational use, including representative specimens, non-significant historical artifacts, replicas, reproductions, or props. These items may be identified with an HO number but documentation need not be filed or included in the database.

ACQUISITION & ACCESSIONING

Authority for Acquisition and Accessioning

The Museum Director has the authority to make acquisition decisions along with the Natural History Curator for natural history acquisition.

Method of Acquisition

The museum acquires objects primarily through donation, purchase, exchange, bequest, abandonment, or field research.

Donations: A Deed of Gift Form is filled out at the time of donation identifying the donor as having ownership and authority to make the gift, and including a list and description of item(s) donated, and terms and conditions of the gift. The Deed of Gift is an official, legal document transferring ownership to the museum with the understanding that the museum will manage and care for the items according to the best judgment of staff, accepted professional standards, and the mission of the museum. All donations are accepted as unrestricted gifts and the museum maintains sole discretion regarding care, use, display, storage, or disposition of the objects.

The Deed of Gift is dated and signed by the donor and the Museum Director for art/history donations and/or the Natural History Curator for natural history donations. Both parties retain a copy as a legal record of the gift. Any appraisals for tax deduction purposes are the responsibility of the donor.

Purchase: Collections items may be purchased as decided by the Museum Director and/or Natural History Curator according to (board approved) collections goals and plans and adequate budgeted funds. Items purchased with Brigham City Corporation funds must go through the appropriate financial approval process of the City.

Funds for collections purchases come from specifically allocated budget lines, collections from the donation box at the Brigham City Museum, commissions from works of art sold during exhibitions earmarked for purchasing collections, and the sale of deaccessioned collections. Cash donations specified for the purchase of collections may also be accepted.

Documentation of purchases may include receipts, purchase orders, or cancelled checks, and will be retained in the file.

Criteria for Accessioning

Accessioning is the formal, legal process by which an object becomes a part of the museum's permanent collection. Accessioned objects, images and documents have priority in the collection due to their unique, rare, and historical significance. They require strict accountability and receive the highest level of care. They are scrutinized for authenticity, and their physical integrity is of primary importance.

Acceptance obligates the Museum to furnish professional, long-term care for the object; to provide a stable, secure environment for it in both storage and exhibit situations; and to protect it from unnecessary handling, excessive light, and other damaging effects. Accessioned permanent collections (works of art, artifacts, and specimens) should meet the following criteria:

- Be appropriate for the Museum's mission
- Be of museum quality
- Be legally owned by the donor
- Be legally obtained, including the appropriate permits (a copy of appropriate permits must accompany the donation)
- Not be forbidden items according to present state, federal, or international laws

The following should be considered in evaluating objects for acceptance into permanent collections:

- Local historical significance of the object
- Documentation (written or oral) of provenance or history
- Need for conservation
- Duplicate or support the existing collection
- Exhibit potential
- Available appropriate storage space

Accession Process

Acquired items should be accessioned as soon as possible, definitely within six months. An accession number is assigned to each object according to a standard tripartite museum numbering system. The number is written on the object in a safe, accepted manner.

Information is entered into the catalog database, including a detailed description and documentation of condition. Careful examination should be done to identify and isolate any issues with damage, pests, mold, etc. A photograph of the object should be taken at the time of acquisition and included in the record. Efforts should be made at the time of acquisition to obtain all available information regarding provenance and history of the object, which information should be included in the record. Deed of Gift and paper documentation are filed by accession number and also identified by donor name. Efforts should also be made at the time of accession to establish a value of the object for insurance purposes.

DEACCESSION POLICY

Deaccessioning is the process by which an accessioned object is removed permanently from the museum's collections. The purpose of deaccessioning is to refine and improve the quality of the collection through the deliberate, cautious, and selective removal of previously accessioned objects that no longer serve the museum's mission.

Museum Staff will make recommendations regarding deaccessioning to the Board, with the Board making the final decision. Reasons for deaccessioning are documented through a check-

list on the database. Date of decision and additional documentation should be included. Copies of Board minutes where deaccessioning was approved are included in the Accession file.

Criteria for deaccessioning

Objects may be deaccessioned if they meet one or more of the following:

1. The object is outside the scope of the museum collection or is not relevant to the museum's mission.
2. The condition of the object has deteriorated to the point that it is no longer recognizable, meaningful, or useful.
3. The museum cannot properly store, preserve, or conserve the object or costs to do so would be prohibitive.
4. Its condition is detrimental to the condition of other objects in the collection or to persons.
5. Evidence has been found that an item is not authentic or genuine.
6. The object duplicates others in the collection and lacks significance.
7. The object is subject to a legislative mandate, or was originally acquired illegally or unethically.
8. The object lacks sufficient aesthetic merit or art historical importance.

Disposition and disposal of deaccessioned objects

Disposition refers to all transactions by which title to outgoing objects is transferred to another entity. Disposal is the act of physically removing an object from a museum collection. The museum will permanently keep complete records of each deaccessioning decision and final disposition of the object.

Deaccessioned objects may be disposed of by one of the following methods:

1. Exchange, transfer, or sale to another similar museum or historical organization. *First priority before other disposition.*
2. Re-designation as Educational Collection for hands-on or outreach use.
3. Sale of the item. Proceeds will be used solely for acquisitions to the museum's permanent collection or for direct care of collections.
4. *Absolute destruction.*

Deaccessioned objects cannot be given or sold to museum board members, staff, or their families.

LOANS

A loan is the temporary physical transfer of material without transfer of ownership. Loans may be outgoing from the museum's collections or incoming to the museum for specified purposes.

Incoming Loans

All borrowed objects must be covered by a written agreement signed by the lender and borrower. (Incoming Loan Agreement) The form must give a detailed description of each object, state the manner in which the object will be used, the terms of the loan, and the dates the loan will be in effect. The work shall remain in the possession of the Museum for the time specified, but may be withdrawn from exhibition at any time by the Museum. The Lender cannot withdraw the work during the period of this agreement without prior written consent of the Museum Director. Loan forms shall become part of the museum's permanent records.

The museum will exercise the same care with objects on loan as it does with its own objects. No portion of an incoming loan will be transferred to a location or person that has not previously been approved in writing by the lender. Borrower will undertake no modification of the object by cleaning, conservation, alteration, or repair without written prior permission of the lender.

Items on loan are identified according to the same format as accessions beginning with an L (i.e. L2013.1.1)

The Museum assumes the right, unless specifically denied by the Lender, to photograph, videotape, and reproduce the work for documentation, publicity, publication and educational purposes connected with the exhibition and to produce slides or digital images of the work to be distributed for educational use. The general public will not be allowed to photograph works on loan to the Museum when so specified by the loan agreement.

Unless otherwise instructed in writing, the Museum will give credit to the Lender in any labels and publications as specified on the face of the agreement.

Insurance In cases where the loan is to benefit the Museum, unless the Lender expressly elects to maintain his/her own insurance coverage, the Museum will insure the work wall-to-wall under its fine arts policy against risks of physical loss or damage from external cause while in transit and on location during the period of the loan.

Long-term Loans

Any objects on display which are not owned by the museum are considered as a Long-term Loans whether or not there is a formal written loan agreement. They will be subject to the same terms and conditions of care and use as for loans described above, with the exception of a specified time period. In the absence of a written loan agreement, the museum reserves the right to terminate the loan at any time, through timely notification to the owner and transfer of physical possession. Lenders may terminate such non-documented loans at any time by a written request, describing the specific objects with documentation of ownership, and making arrangements for physical transfer of possession in a manner that is safe for the objects, objects in the museum's collection, and the museum facilities. Long term loans are only accepted in special circumstances, and only at the discretion of the Museum Director.

Unclaimed loans/abandoned property

Any non-accessioned objects without documentation of legal ownership will be considered abandoned. Museum staff should make diligent attempts to contact previous owners or heirs of unclaimed objects on loan. Items should be evaluated according to Accession and Deaccession criteria listed above to determine if it is in the best interest of the museum to continue to possess and care for them. Abandoned objects may be accessioned into the collection or disposed of according to the methods described for deaccessioned objects.

Outgoing Loans

The Museum may loan to other museums or museum-like organizations. Decisions regarding such loans are made by the Museum Director. Loans require a Standard Facility Report, use of a Loan Form (of either museum) and a brief description of the reasons for the loan. Also a Certificate of Insurance naming Brigham City Corporation and Brigham City MuseumBox Elder Museum as additional named insured, as insurance is the responsibility of the party who benefits from the loan. Documentation of outgoing loans should be included in the database as well as Accession file.

DOCUMENTATION OF COLLECTIONS

The documentation of the museum collection defines legal custody, assists research, and records the history of an object once it reaches the museum. Collection records should be accurate, timely, complete, and secure. The museum shall maintain documentation of collections in perpetuity.

At the time of acquisition, the museum will attempt to obtain all available information regarding provenance and history of objects. Additional research may be conducted later and added to the record. Photo-documentation of objects in the collections should be done at the time of acquisition. Objects already in the collection should be photographed for documentation of identity and condition.

Accession numbers are assigned according to a standard tripartite museum numbering system: Year.Accession.ObjectID. Year should be 4 digits, though pre-2011 accessioned items used 2 digits. Before 2012, Art collections begin with A (i.e. A2011.1.1) and Natural History collections begin with N (i.e. N2011.1.1) History is the default beginning with the year.

Collections data is stored in a secure online system: *Collective Access*, and is backed up through a web host and on the computers in both museums. Electronic records will include at a minimum accession records, catalog records, donor information, and location and inventory information.

ACCESS AND USE OF COLLECTIONS

The permanent collection and related records will be made available to responsible parties for study, research, inquiry, and examination. The museum will make a good faith effort to

expeditiously accommodate requests for access to collections and records. All persons requesting access will be supervised at all times. Museum staff is not obliged to assist inquiries that involve excessive time or cost to the museum. Persons requesting access are encouraged to make use of online collections access, and to only inquire of staff if further information or images are needed.

Internet access is available to some collections records and images. Museum staff will review such records to determine what information may be published on the Internet.

Truth in Presentation (Interpretation)

It is the responsibility of the museum and its staff to present the best current information about the collections it holds. Intellectual honesty and objectivity in the presentation of objects is the goal of the museum. The stated origin of objects or attribution of work shall reflect a thorough and honest investigation by museum staff and shall yield promptly to change with the advent of new facts or analysis.

INVENTORIES

Periodic inventory of the collection is necessary to ensure the ability to locate individual pieces and to assess the condition of objects. Collections staff will devise a system of inventory that is suited to the size of the collection and includes appropriate checks and balances. Inventories should be conducted on a rotating basis on a 10 year cycle through different areas of the collections. The museum will retain inventory lists and records permanently.

INSURANCE

Box Elder Museum collections are ensured to their full value. Brigham City Museum collections should eventually be assessed and insurance coverage increased to more fully cover their value.

COMMITMENT TO CARE FOR COLLECTIONS

The museum will care for objects in its permanent collection in perpetuity if they continue to meet the accessions criteria.

Standard of Care

The museum has a responsibility to preserve and safeguard the collections it holds in trust. The museum recognizes the importance of preserving the collections records and other documentary materials supporting the collections. The museum shall provide the necessary preservation, protection and security for all collections acquired, borrowed, or in the custody of the museum, including the information associated with the objects. The museum treats loaned objects with the same standard of care as permanent collections.

The museum will balance research, exhibition, and educational uses with the preservation

requirements of collection objects to ensure that the museum maintains collections for future generations. Museum staff will instruct or supervise all persons who come into contact with collections, whether other staff, board members, volunteers, researchers, or visitors, in proper handling of collections.

Preventative Care

To the extent it is able, the museum will practice preventive conservation methods for the collections by providing safe, stable environments for storage and exhibition. The museum staff plans and executes activities, services, and programs to ensure the safety, security, and protection of the collections from the following sources of deterioration:

Direct physical forces (earthquakes, wind, rain); theft and vandalism; fire and smoke; water from all sources, including plumbing, fire suppression, and severe weather; pests; contaminants; radiant energy such as infrared light, ultraviolet light and high-intensity visible light; temperature extremes and fluctuations; relative humidity extremes and fluctuations; and custodial neglect.

Conservation & Preservation

Risk management for museum collections requires the identification and elimination or reduction of factors that may cause loss, damage, or deterioration of collections. This includes potential hazards such as vandalism, human error, mechanical or operational failure, pests and natural disasters.

Museum staff will develop a preservation plan specifying those areas or objects within the collections that need conservation improvements or treatments. Conservation actions will be taken when determined appropriate and feasible.

APPROVAL, REVIEW AND AMENDMENT OF POLICY

Upon approval from the Board, this Policy will be in effect and replace any previous policy. This Collections Management Policy may be amended with the approval of the Museum Board. This Policy should be reviewed every 5 years. This policy shall be made available to any interested person.