

MEMORANDUM
DEPARTMENT OF FACILITY SERVICES
COUNTY OF PLACER

To: **BOARD OF SUPERVISORS** Date: **JANUARY 22, 2008**
From:  **JAMES DURFEE / ALBERT RICHIE** 
Subject: **ADOPTION OF MUSEUMS COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY**

ACTION REQUESTED/RECOMMENDATION: Adopt a Resolution approving the Museums Division Collections Management Policy to acquire, maintain, conserve and display objects which are significant to the people, history and culture of Placer County.

BACKGROUND: It is the practice of the Placer County Museums Division to acquire, maintain, conserve and display objects which are significant to the people, history and the culture of Placer County. The Museums Division currently operates a Collections Management Facility at the Dewitt Government Center in Auburn. At this facility various County artifacts and objects are preserved and stored. However, there is no formally adopted policy to govern the operation of this center. The Museums Division oversees the Collections Management Facility that houses over 30,000 artifacts that have been donated to the County beginning with the first donations in 1948. This collection has steadily grown and the facility continues to regularly accept new donations. In accordance with good museum practices, the proposed policy establishes collecting objectives including acquisition and deaccession criteria and procedures. This policy has been reviewed and approved by Risk Management.

ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE: Adoption of the Collections Management Policy is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15738(b)(2).

FISCAL IMPACT: There is no affect on the County General Fund by adopting this policy. This policy will formalize the good museums practices the Museums Division has been following.

ATTACHMENT: RESOLUTION

JD/AR

Before The Board of Supervisors County of Placer, State Of California

In the matter of: **A RESOLUTION ADOPTING
THE COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY
FOR THE OPERATION OF THE COLLECTIONS
MANAGEMENT FACILITY**

Resolution No. _____

The following _____ **RESOLUTION** _____ was duly passed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Placer at a regular meeting held _____, by the following

vote on roll call:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Signed and approved by me after its passage.

Attest:
Clerk of said Board

Chairman, Board of Supervisors

WHEREAS, the Museums Division of the Facility Services Department operates a Collections Management Facility to acquire, maintain and conserve objects of significance to the people, history and culture of the County of Placer; and

WHEREAS, proper Museums operating practices require proper evaluation, documentation, classification and cataloguing of objects as they are accepted into the collections inventory.

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Placer, State of California, do hereby adopt the attached Collections Management Policy.

ATTACHMENT: COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY



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Placer County Museums Division
Collections Management Policy

Mission Statement

The mission of the Placer County Museums Division is to serve the public and promote community involvement through heritage education programs, preservation of historic artifacts, preservation of the county's rich historic and cultural legacy, and by adding to the understanding of Placer County, its people, places, and events.

Collecting Objectives

It is the policy of the Placer County Museums Division to acquire, maintain, conserve, and display objects, which are significant to the people, history, and culture of Placer County according to the procedures, described below.

Collections Designations

Collection is the term used for all material holdings of the Museums Division. Specific collection categories are defined as follows:

- Permanent Collection
 - Significant objects that directly relate to the purpose of the Museums Division. Objects accessioned into the permanent collection are catalogued, documented, preserved, and managed according to prescribed procedures meeting current professional museum standards.
- Interpretive Collection
 - Expendable objects that contribute to the educational programs of the Museums Division. Objects in the interpretive collection that are readily available for public examination or are duplicate objects and are not accessioned into the permanent collection. The education division is responsible for maintaining this collection.
- Prop Collection
 - Expendable objects that do not relate directly to the Museums Division Mission but contribute to and enhance the visual and educational impact of exhibits. Objects in the prop collection are not accessioned into the permanent collection. The exhibit division is responsible for maintaining this collection.

Acquisition of Artifacts for the Permanent Collection

Acquisition is defined as the discovery, preliminary evaluation, negotiation for, taking custody of, documenting title to, and acknowledging receipt of documents and objects.

- Policy:
 - The Museums Division may acquire objects by donation, by bequest, by purchase, or by transfer.
 - Permanent Collections are accepted at the discretion of the Curator of Collections and the Museums Administrator. The Museums Administrator shall be the final authority on acquisitions.
- Criteria for Acquisition:
 - Collecting goals reflect the Museums Division's mission to acquire the best and most representative objects of Placer County heritage.
 - Acquisition procedures for the permanent collection are called *accessioning*. An evaluation by the Curator of Collections and the Museums Administrator will occur before the object is added to the permanent collection.
 - To be accessioned, an object must meet the following criteria:
 - The present owner must have clear title and give up ownership voluntarily.
 - If the object is for sale, proper funding must be arranged and approved by the Museums Administrator.
 - The Museums Division must be in a position to properly care for the proposed acquisition.
 - The object meets the Museums Division's collecting objectives.
 - If possible, the provenance of the object will be documented.
 - All moral, legal, and ethical implications of the acquisition will be resolved.
 - The Curator of Collections and the Museums Administrator will approve any restrictions imposed upon the object.
 - Acceptance of the object will not result in major expense in conservation disproportionate to its usefulness.
- Acquisition Procedures
 - The Curator of Collections, the Program Manager, and the Museums Administrator may temporarily accept objects for accession consideration, provided the donor and the Museum staff member receiving the objects fill out an Artifact Evaluation Form/Receipt.
 - This receipt outlines the terms of temporary custody. The owners of the objects that fail to gain acceptance will be notified and they have thirty days to remove the objects. Failure of the owner to do so provides the Museums Division the right to dispose of those objects in any manner it deems suitable.

- Providing the donation meets the requirements set forth in the Collections Policy, the Museums Administrator makes the final approval to accept the object into the permanent collection.
- If the decision is made to acquire the object, the Curator of Collections will initiate and complete the acquisition in the following manner:
 - If the object is donated, the donor and the Curator of Collections sign a Deed of Gift. The donor receives a copy of the completed form.
 - If the object is bequeathed, the attorney of executor will provide a copy of the pertinent section of the will.

Required Documentation

Documentation is designed to make possible the full intellectual and physical control of all collections held by the Museums Division. This means that through paperwork, indexes, files, and databases, the history of the object since it has been in the Museum, its purpose for being in the collection, and information about how it was acquired can be determined. The Curator of Collections will maintain paper files, computer files, and indexes for the collections.

- Permanent Collection—deed of gift, identifying descriptions, accession number, available provenance information, location, donor information, special restrictions and all correspondence.
- Interpretive and Prop Collections—objects should be documented as to their intended use by keeping related correspondence and an incoming receipt describing the objects. Exhibits and education departments are responsible for this documentation.

Deaccession

Deaccessioning is the permanent removal of an object from a museum collection. It is an essential collection management activity. It allows continual improvement for the content of the collection and assures that staff time and resources are directed toward objects that are relevant to the Museums Division's Mission Statement. Deaccessioning is an activity subject to strict professional ethical codes and laws regarding objects held in public trust.

The Curator of Collections recommends objects for deaccession. Recommendations are reviewed by the Deaccessioning Committee, presented to the Historical Advisory Board and approved by the Museums Administrator.

Deaccession Criteria

Collection objects may be proposed for deaccession based on the following criteria:

Provenance – The object does not retain its identity or authenticity.

Relevancy – The object is unrelated, outside of or does not support the Museums Division's Mission Statement or Collecting Objectives as stated in the Collections Management Policy.

Duplication – The object is inferior intrinsically or relatively in comparison with other objects of the same type, is repeated in kind by superior examples within the collection, or is in excess of the Division's need for interpretation and research.

Conservation – The care or cost of the object's conservation outweighs the aesthetic, historic, or financial value of the object.

Repatriation – The object is requested for repatriation in compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, PL 101-106.

Condition – The object has lost its physical integrity, poses a threat to the public or to other collections.

Lost/Stolen – The object is missing from the collection or exhibit areas through unauthorized means.

Deaccessioning Procedures

1. The Curator of Collections is responsible for evaluating objects and determining an object's eligibility for deaccession.
2. The Curator of Collections is responsible for submitting a Deaccession Proposal Form for each object to the Museums Administrator. The form will include the object ID number if known, object description, object donor if known, justification for proposing deaccession, and a disposal/disposition recommendation. Groups of like objects may be proposed together.
3. The Museums Administrator reviews the Deaccession Proposal Form and presents it to the Deaccessioning Committee.
4. The Deaccessioning Committee will vote to approve or disapprove the deaccession proposal. A majority vote is required for approval. The Deaccessioning Committee will present its vote to the Historical Advisory Board for confirmation and approval.
5. Once both the Deaccessioning Committee and Historical Advisory Board approve the deaccession proposal, the Museums Administrator will make the final approval. The Museums Administrator will return the form to the Curator of Collections and will instruct the Curator to proceed with the deaccession.

Disposal/Disposition

The manner of disposition for deaccessioned objects is recommended by the Curator of Collections, reviewed and approved by Deaccessioning Committee, and given final approval by the Museums Administrator.

The disposition of deaccessioned objects may be accomplished in the following ways:

Return – The Curator of Collections will always attempt to contact the donor in order to return the object. If the donor cannot be reached or does not respond within 60 days a secondary form of disposition will be used.

Transfer – The deaccessioned object is transferred to another Placer County Museums Division collection designation or to another museum, archive or library.

Destruction – If the physical condition of the deaccessioned object has deteriorated to such an extent it is no longer stable, has lost all its character or financial value the Curator of Collections may recommend destruction.

Sale – Sale of deaccessioned objects may be orchestrated through public auction by an established auction house or through a reputable dealer.

Exchange – The Curator of Collections, with approval from the Museums Administrator, may negotiate an exchange with a dealer or another collections institution. An exchange can only be made to acquire objects that strengthen the collection and meet all Collection Policy Criteria.

Repatriate – In accordance with PL 101-106 (NAGPRA) objects will be deaccessioned and returned to authorized claimants.

Records

The Curator of Collections is responsible for organizing and preserving permanent records for all deaccessioned objects including:

- The approved and dated Deaccession Proposal Form for each object.
- A copy of the catalog record, if available.
- A photograph, as appropriate.
- Method of disposition, including the name and address of the transfer/exchange institution as applicable.

"Deaccessioned" and the date will be noted on all records relating to the deaccessioned object, including the following records:

Accession Book

Accession file
Deed of Gift
Catalog Record

The computerized Past Perfect catalog record will be transferred to the "deaccessioned" file.

Restrictions

No deaccession of significant artifacts figured, published, or photographed in a professional or scientific reference shall occur.

Deaccessioned objects shall not be given or sold privately to museum staff, volunteers, members of the Historical Advisory Board, county officials, elected officials, or immediate families or representatives of the above.

Proceeds

All proceeds resulting from the disposal of deaccessioned objects shall be deposited to a Future Acquisitions Fund.

Public Disclosure

At the discretion of the Museums Administrator and Curator of Collections, a deaccessioned object may be identified for purpose of sale, transfer or exchange as "Deaccessioned from the Permanent Collection of the Placer County Museums Division."

Incoming Loans

The Museums Division may borrow objects from institutions and individuals for specific purpose, such as exhibition or research. Loans of objects from individuals or institutions are limited to a time period of five years or less, but, under special circumstances, may be arranged for a specific time over five years with the approval the Museums Administrator.

- Objects on loan are provided with the same professional level of care afforded objects in the permanent collection.
- Lenders to the Museums Division will have clear and verifiable ownership of the object.
- The Curator of Collections maintains complete records on all incoming loans.
- The Curator of Collections and lender will sign an incoming loan agreement.
- The Museums Division will make all reasonable efforts to return borrowed objects to the lender in accordance to the terms outlined in the loan agreement.
- Loans made to the Museums Division on the understanding that they will ultimately be donated to the Division will be accompanied by a written binding declaration of the lender's intent.

- The Museums Administrator shall be the final authority for incoming loans.

Outgoing Loans

The Museums Division lends objects to qualified institutions for research and exhibition for a specified time period. The Museums Division will not lend objects to individuals.

- The institution will meet professional standard of collections care and management.
- Outgoing loans to qualified institutions will be permitted for a period of five years or less with an option for renewal if agreeable to both parties.
- The Curator of Collections and borrower will sign an outgoing loan agreement.
- The Museums Administrator shall be the final authority for outgoing loans.

Public Access

The collections shall be accessible for research and study by responsible investigators, subject to procedure necessary to safeguard the objects, and to restrictions imposed by limitations of exhibition requirement, availability of study space and facilities, and availability of appropriate staff.

- Access to anthropological collections by representatives of American Indian tribes will be available on request and will be subject to the same restrictions as research access.
- Temporary denial of access to collections will be reviewed by the Museums Administrator.
- At the discretion of the Museums Administrator, collections may be made available for educational movies, films, electronic media, or still photography for scholarly publications.
- At the discretion of the Museums Administrator, objects or their images may be made available for reproduction or replication for commercial use. Such commercial use should be for the benefit of the collections and consistent with the collections policy.

Inventories

All collections will be inventoried on a regular basis. The inventory should include physically locating objects, updating records, and assessing the condition of the object and the environment.

This policy will be reviewed by the Museums Division Staff as required to maintain an effective policy. The Museums Administrator will approve all policy changes.