

**COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY**  
**The Wrangell Museum**

Approved By Nolan Board November 9, 2010

Approved by Wrangell City Council December 14, 2010

Signed: Megan L. Clark, Director/Curator, The Wrangell Museum

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## MUSEUM STATEMENT

### **Mission Statement:**

The mission of the Wrangell Museum is to collect, interpret and preserve Wrangell's rich natural and cultural history through exhibits and other educational opportunities.

### **Statement of Purpose:**

The Wrangell Museum was established in conjunction with the Wrangell Historical Society. The Wrangell Museum is a not-for-profit institution by virtue of being a part of the City of Wrangell. The Museum's purpose is to preserve and interpret through the collection, preservation, documentation, and research of scientific and cultural material. The Wrangell Museum will disseminate information about those collections and their scientific and cultural topics through exhibition, interpretation, and publication for primary, secondary, higher education students, the scholarly community, and the general public. The Museum aspires to provide the highest standard of excellence in museological ethics and practices, while pursuing continuous improvement, stimulating the greatest quantity of quality research, conservation, interpretation, exhibition, and education, and providing support for faculty, staff, and students

### **Scope of Collections:**

The general scope-of-collections for The Wrangell Museum encompasses the history of Wrangell Island and the immediate surrounding areas. Each collecting division may further restrict and refine the scope in accordance with the Museum's mission and purpose.

### **Collections Statement:**

The foundation of the Museum is the collections that are held in perpetuity for the public. For the purposes of this policy, the term "object" is used for all types of collection material, including samples and documentation. In accordance with its mission and the diverse nature of its constituency, the Museum maintains two collection categories:

**Research Collections:** Accessioned, documented, and cataloged objects of artistic, cultural, scientific, or historical significance, comparative materials, and objects of high quality that are representative of the diversity inherent in the mission of the Museum. These collections are used for research, exhibitions, and loans. They are owned by the Museum and these collections are given the highest level of care and protection.

**Interpretation Collections:** Accessioned, documented, and cataloged objects that are used for interpretation, participatory exhibitions, and educational programs. These objects are owned by the Museum and are subject to possible damage or destruction due to supervised utilization. These objects are given all reasonable care and are viewed as important to the mission of the Museum. In the event of damage or destruction beyond the point of usefulness, they are deaccessioned in accordance with the deaccessioning section of the Collections Management Policy of the Museum and disposed of appropriately.

The Museum also holds other objects that support its research and educational programming, such as exhibit props, scientific instruments and equipment, books and journals, furniture, materials and supplies, etc. These are not collections objects and are not accessioned, but are property of The Wrangell Museum.

## CODE OF ETHICS

### Introduction

The Wrangell Museum Code of Ethics sets the standards of conduct and performance for the City of Wrangell, the Director, staff and volunteers of the museum.

- I. City of Wrangell
  - a. The City of Wrangell should ensure that the museum has a written and published constitution, statute or other public document, in accordance with state and national laws which clearly states the museum's legal status, mission, permanence, and non-profit nature.
  - b. The Wrangell Museum should prepare, publicize and be guided by a statement of mission, objectives, and policies of the museum and of the role and composition of the governing body.
  - c. The City of Wrangell should ensure adequate premises with a suitable environment for the museum to fulfill the basic functions defined in its mission.
  - d. The City of Wrangell should ensure that the museum and its collections are available to all during reasonable hours and for regular periods.
  - e. The City of Wrangell should ensure that institutional standards of health, safety, and accessibility apply to its personnel and visitors.
  - f. The City of Wrangell should develop and maintain policies to protect the public and personnel, the collections and other resources, against natural and human made disasters.
  - g. The City of Wrangell should ensure appropriate security to protect collections against theft or damage in displays, exhibitions, working or storage areas, and while in transit.
  - h. The City of Wrangell should ensure that there are sufficient funds to carry out and develop the activities of the museum. All funds must be accounted for in a professional manner.
  - i. The City of Wrangell should have a written policy regarding sources of income that it may generate through its activities or accept from outside sources. Regardless of funding source, museums should maintain control of the content and integrity of its programs, exhibitions and activities. Income generating activities should not compromise the standards of the institution or its public.
  - j. The City of Wrangell should ensure that all action concerning personnel is taken in accordance with the policies of the museum as well as the proper and legal procedures.
  - k. The director of the museum is a key post and when making an appointment, the City of Wrangell should have regard for the knowledge and skills required to fill the post effectively. These qualities should include adequate intellectual ability and professional knowledge, complemented by a high standard of ethical conduct.
  - l. The director of the museum should be directly responsible, and have direct access to the relevant governing bodies.
  - m. The City of Wrangell and museum director should seek to employ qualified personnel with the expertise required to meet all responsibilities necessary and be given adequate opportunities for the continuing education and professional development.
  - n. The City of Wrangell should never require museum personnel to act in a way that could be considered to conflict with the provisions of the Code of Ethics, or any state or national law or specialist code of ethics.
  - o. The Wrangell Museum should have a written policy on volunteer work which promotes a positive relationship between volunteers and members of the museum profession.
  - p. The Wrangell Museum should ensure that volunteers, when conducting museum and personal activities, are fully conversant with the Code of Ethics and other applicable codes and laws.

## II. Acquiring Collections

- a. The City of Wrangell should adopt and publish a written collections policy that addresses the acquisition, care and use of collections. This policy should clarify the position of any material that will not be catalogued, conserved or exhibited.
- b. No object of specimen should be acquired by purchase, gift, loan, bequest or exchange unless the acquiring museum is satisfied that a valid title is held. Evidence of lawful ownership is not necessarily valid title.
- c. Every effort must be made before acquisition to ensure that any object or specimen offered for purchase, gift, loan, bequest, or exchange has not been illegally obtained or exported from its country of origin and any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned. Due diligence in this regard should establish the full history of the item from discovery or production.
- d. The museum will not acquire objects where there is reasonable cause to believe their recovery involved the unauthorized, unscientific, or intentional destruction or damage of monuments, archaeological or geographic sites, or species and natural habitats. In the same way, acquisition should not occur if there has been a failure to disclose the finds to the owner or occupier of the land, or to the proper legal or governmental authorities.
- e. Collections of human remains and material of sacrificial significance should be acquired only if they can be housed securely and cared for respectfully. This must be accomplished in a manner consistent with professional standards and the interests and beliefs of members of the community, ethnic or religious group from which the objects originated, where these are known.
- f. The museum will not acquire biological or geological specimens that have been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of local, national regional or international law or treaty relating to wildlife protection or natural history conservation.
- g. The acquisition of objects or specimens outside the museum's stated collections management policy should only be made in exceptional circumstances. The City of Wrangell, and museum director should consider the professional opinions available to them, and the views of all interested parties. Consideration will include the significance of the object or the specimen including its context in the cultural or natural heritage, and the special interests of other museums collecting such material. However, even in these circumstances, objects without a valid title should not be acquired.
- h. Special care is required in consideration of any item, either for sale, as a donation or as a tax-benefit gift, from members of governing bodies, museum personnel, or the families and close associates of these persons to ensure these items fit within the museum's Collections Management Policy, Mission Statement, and Code of Ethics.
- i. Nothing in this Code of Ethics will prevent the museum from acting as an authorized repository for unprovenanced, illicitly collected or recovered specimens and objects from the territory over which it has lawful responsibility.

## III. Deaccessioning

- a. Where the museum has legal powers permitting disposal, the legal or other requirements and procedures must be complied with fully. Where the original acquisition was subject to mandatory or other restrictions these conditions must be observed, unless it can be shown clearly that adherence to such restrictions is impossible or substantially detrimental to the institution and, if appropriate, relief may be sought through legal procedures.
- b. The removal of an object or specimen from a museum collection must be undertaken only with a full understanding of the significance of the item, its character (whether renewable

or non-renewable), legal standing, and any loss of public trust that might result from such action.

- c. The decision to deaccession should be the responsibility of the deaccession committee acting in conjunction with the director of the museum.
- d. The museum will have a policy defining authorized methods for permanently removing an object from the collections through donation, transfer, exchange, sale, repatriation, or destruction, and that allows the transfer of unrestricted title to the receiving agency. Complete records must be kept of all deaccessioning decisions, the objects involved, and the disposition of the object.
- e. Museum collections are held in public trust and may not be treated as a realizable asset. Money or compensation received from the deaccessioning and disposal of objects and specimens from the museum collections will be used solely for the benefit of the collection and usually for acquisitions to that same collection.
- f. Museum personnel, the governing bodies, or their families or close associates will not be permitted to purchase objects that have been deaccessioned from a collection for which they are responsible.

#### IV. Care of Collections

- a. The museum will establish and apply policies to ensure that its collections (both permanent and temporary) and associated information, properly recorded, are available for current use and will be passed on to future generations in as good and safe condition as practical, having regard to current knowledge and resources.
- b. Professional responsibilities involving the care of the collections will be assigned to persons with appropriate skill and knowledge or who are adequately supervised.
- c. Museum collections should be documented according to accepted professional standards. Such documentation will include a full identification and description of each item, its associations, provenance, condition, treatment and present location. Such data will be kept in a secure environment and be supported by retrieval systems providing access to the information by the museum personnel and other legitimate users.
- d. The museum will exercise control to avoid disclosing sensitive personal or related information and other confidential matters when collection data is made available to the public.
- e. Preventative conservation is an important element of museum policy and collections care. It is an essential responsibility of members of the museum profession to create and maintain a protective environment for the collections in their care, whether in store, on display, or in transit.
- f. The museum will carefully monitor the condition of collections to determine when an object or specimen may require conservation/restoration work and the services of a qualified conservator or restorer. The principal goal should be the stabilization of the object or specimen. All conservation procedures will be documented and as reversible as possible, and all alterations should be clearly distinguishable from the original object or specimen.
- g. Museum personnel, the governing body, their families, close associates, or others will not be permitted to expropriate items from the museum collections, even temporarily, for any personal use.

#### V. Primary Evidence

- a. Collecting at the museum will follow the collections management policy and will not be governed by current intellectual trends or present museum usage.

- b. The museum will make the collection and all relevant information available as freely as possible to researchers, while also having regard to restraints arising for reasons of confidentiality and security.

#### VI. Museum Collecting and Research

- a. In exceptional cases an item without provenance may have such an inherently outstanding contribution to knowledge that it would be in public interest to preserve it. The acceptance of such an item into the museum's collection will be the subject of decision by specialists in the discipline concerned and without national and international prejudice.
- b. Professional research by museum personnel, during established working hours, will relate to the museum's mission and objectives and conform to established legal, ethical and academic practices.
- c. When destructive analytical techniques are undertaken, a complete record of material analyzed the outcome of the analysis and the resulting research, including publications, will become a part of the permanent record of the object.
- d. Research on human remains and materials of sacred significance must be accomplished in a manner consistent with professional standards and take into account the interests and beliefs of the community, ethnic or religious groups from who the object originated, where these are known.
- e. When museum personnel prepare material for presentation or to document field investigation, there must be clear agreement with the sponsoring museum regarding all rights to such work.
- f. Employees and volunteers at the Wrangell Museum have an obligation to share their knowledge and experience with colleagues, scholars and students in relevant fields. They will respect and acknowledge those from whom they have learned and will pass on such advancements in techniques and experience that may benefit others.

#### VII. Display and Exhibition

- a. Displays and temporary exhibits will be in accordance with the stated mission, policy and purpose of the museum. They should not compromise either the quality or the proper care and conservation of the collections.
- b. The museum will ensure that the information they present in displays and exhibitions is well founded, accurate and gives appropriate consideration to represented groups of beliefs.
- c. Human remains and materials of sacred significance must be displayed in a manner consistent with professional standards, and where known, taking into account the interests and beliefs of members of the community, ethnic or religious groups from whom the object originated. They must be presented with great tact and respect.
- d. Requests for removal from public display of human remains or materials of sacred significance from the originating communities must be addressed expeditiously with respect and sensitivity. Requests for the return of such material will be addressed similarly.
- e. The museum will not display objects of questionable origin or lacking provenance since display or usage can be seen to condone and contribute to the illicit trade in cultural property.

#### VIII. Identification Services

- a. When the museum provides identification services the staff will not act in a way that could be regarded as benefiting the museum, either directly or indirectly. The identification and authentication of objects that are believed or suspected to have been



illegally or illicitly acquired, transferred, imported or exported, will not be made public until the appropriate authorities have been notified.

- b. Valuations may be made for the purposes of insurance of museum collections. Opinions on the monetary value of other objects should only be given on official request from other museum or competent legal, governmental or other responsible public authorities. However, if the museum is to be the beneficiary, appraisal of an object or specimen must be undertaken by an independent appraisal firm.

#### IX. Origin of Collections

- a. The museum is prepared to initiate dialogues for the return of cultural property to a country or people of origin as defined by NAGPRA or ARPA.
- b. When a country or peoples of origin seeks the restitution of an object or specimen that can be demonstrated to have been exported or otherwise transferred in violation of international or national conventions, and shown to be part of that country or people's cultural or natural heritage, the museum should, if legally free to do so, take prompt and responsible steps to cooperate in its return.
- c. The museum will not purchase or acquire cultural objects from an occupied territory and fully respect all laws and conventions that regulate the import, export and transfer of cultural or natural materials.

#### X. Respect for Communities Served

- a. When the museum's activities involve a contemporary community or its heritage, acquisitions should only be made based on information and mutual consent without exploitation of the owner or informants. Respect for the wishes of the community involved will be paramount.
- b. Museum usage of collections from contemporary communities requires respect for human dignity and the traditions and cultures that use such material. These collections will be used to promote human wellbeing, social development, tolerance, and respect by advocating multisocial, multicultural and multilingual expression.
- c. The museum will create a favorable environment for community support, recognize their contribution and promote a harmonious relationship between the community and museum personnel.

#### XI. Legal Framework

- a. The museum will conform to all national and local laws and respect the legislation of other states as they affect operation.
- b. The Museum will acknowledge the following national and international legislation regarding museum collections.
  - **The Native American Graves Protections and Repatriation Act (1990)**
  - **UNSECO Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict** (The Hague Convention, First Protocol, 1954, and Second Protocol, 1999)
  - **UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of ownership of Cultural Property (1970)**
  - **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (1973); UN Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)**
  - **Unidroit Convention on Stolen and Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (1995)**
  - **UNESCO Convention on the protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001)**

- **UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2001)**

## **XII. Professional Conduct**

- Every member of the staff and governing body of the museum should be conversant with relevant international, national and local legislation and the conditions of their employment. They should avoid situations that could be construed as improper conduct.
- Staff members have an obligation to follow the policies and procedures of their employing institution. However, they may properly object to practices that are perceived to be damaging to a museum or the profession and matters of professional ethics.
- Loyalty to colleagues and to the museum is an important professional responsibility and must be based on an allegiance to fundamental ethical principles applicable to the museum profession.
- Members of the museum staff will promote the investigation, preservation, and use of information inherent in the collections. They should, therefore, refrain from any activity or circumstance that might result in the loss of such academic and scientific data.
- Museum staff members will not support the illicit traffic or market in natural and cultural property, directly or indirectly.
- Museum staff must protect confidential information obtained during their work. In addition, information about items brought to the museum for identification is confidential and should not be published or passed to any other institution or person without specific authorization by the owner.
- Information about the security of the museum or of private collections and locations visited during official duties must be held in strict confidence by museum staff.
- Confidentiality is subject to a legal obligation to assist the police or other proper authorities in investigating possible stolen, illicitly acquired, or illegally transferred property.

## **XIII. Conflict of Interest**

- Museum employees must not accept gifts, favors, loans, or other personal benefits that may be offered to them in connection with their duties for the museum. Occasionally professional courtesy may include the giving and receiving of gifts but this should always take place in the name of the museum.
- Employees of the Wrangell Museum, although entitled to a measure of personal independence, must realize that no private business or professional interest can be wholly separated from their employment with the museum. They should not undertake other paid employment or accept outside commissions that are in conflict with the interests of the museum.
- Employees of the museum should not participate directly or indirectly in dealing (buying or selling for profit), in natural or cultural heritage.
- Employees of the museum should not accept any gift, hospitality, or any reward from a dealer, auctioneer, or other person as inducement to purchase or dispose of museum items, or to take or refrain from taking official action. Furthermore, museum employees will not recommend a particular dealer, auctioneer, or appraiser to a member of the public.
- Employees of the museum should not compete with their institution either in the acquisition of objects or in any personal collecting activity. An agreement between the employee and the City of Wrangell concerning any private collecting must be formulated and scrupulously followed.
- Should any other conflict of interest develop between an individual and the museum, the interests of the museum will prevail.

## ACQUISITIONS

Acquisition is the process of acquiring an object(s) or collection for the collections of The Wrangell Museum object(s) or collections usually are acquired through donation, field work or research, purchase, transfer from or exchange with another institution, or bequest. Acquisition, except as approved in writing by the Director, does not imply accessioning, but is a necessary prerequisite for accessioning. Acquired objects or collections are recommended for accessioning by the Director. Certain state, federal, and international statutes and laws are in existence that may effect the acquisition of certain objects. In all cases, the Museum acts in accordance with those statutes and laws. Additionally, the Museum bases its acquisition and accession policy statements and procedures on the highest ethical standards as set out in its own Code of Ethics. This Code is based on national and international Codes of Ethics for museums and ensures that the Museum operates in all respects to the highest professional standards.

The following policy statements support an attitude of responsible collections management. They provide guidance for acquisition for authorized Museum personnel. Adherence to these statements promotes responsible collecting and assures the attendant housing, preservation, and conservation accountability inherent in the acceptance of objects or collections. Reference to these restrictions fosters a spirit of understanding and cooperation with prospective donors by serving as a defined justification for acceptance or rejection of donations, field-generated collections, purchases, transfers and exchanges, or bequests.

I. As a fundamental axiom for acquisition, The Wrangell Museum categorically endorses the concept that responsibility for the physical safety of the object begins with acquisition.

II. All potential acquisitions must be evaluated in terms of the goals, purpose, mission, and scope of the Museum, and the educational aims of The Wrangell Museum, and must fall within financial and physical limitations of the institution.

III. All potential acquisitions must be evaluated by the following criteria:

- a. Documentation as to origin, previous ownership, use, and pertinent classification information.
- b. Ability of the Museum to properly maintain and house the objects and associated documentation.
- c. Relevance of acquisition to the mission statement and scope-of-collections of the Museum and its ability to enhance collections.
- d. Legal and ethical standards governing possession and use of objects. The Museum will not knowingly accept any object or collection acquired by either illegal or unethical means.
- e. Willingness of the donor (owner) to transfer complete ownership (provide clear title) to the Museum without restrictions, limitations, or conditions. Transfer of legal title is through a signed deed of gift between the Museum and owner that identifies owner, the Museum, and all objects for which ownership is transferred.
- f. Willingness of the federal or state agency to transfer stewardship to the Museum for held-in-trust collections. Transfer of stewardship is through a signed held-in-trust agreement between the Museum and the federal or state agency that identifies the agency, the Museum, and all objects for which stewardship is transferred.
- g. Intellectual Property consideration.

IV. The Museum will acquire no object(s) or collection, by any means, for which a valid title cannot be obtained. It is critical that clear title is established, to the best knowledge of all parties,

prior to acquisition. The Museum will acquire no held-in-trust collection, by any means, for which a valid transfer of stewardship cannot be obtained.

V. Held-in-trust collections are owned by the state or federal government and are acquired by the Museum through permitted field-generated collections on public lands or an agreement with the appropriate state or federal agency to accept such collections for curation.

- a. The collections must fit the scope and collecting plan of the Museum and all other acquisition criteria to ensure the proper housing and maintenance of those collections.

VI. Collections care begins with acquisition. It is the responsibility of the Curator as appropriate to ensure that preventive conservation and collections management best practices are followed.

VII. Restrictive or conditional donations will not be accepted. Restrictive or conditional donations will be considered only under extraordinary circumstances and when the long term advantage to the Museum is unequivocal. Any consideration of such donations must be accompanied by a legal document that conveys any restrictions or conditions.

Fine arts object(s) executed after January 1, 1978 that are subject to the Copyright Act of 1976 (17 U.S.C. §§ 101-702) are considered for acquisition only after a thorough review of copyright restrictions.

VIII. For the purpose of acquisition, Museum curators are relied upon for a judgment of value and provenance in their special fields, and their determination is final.

IX. The Museum or its staff cannot ethically or legally appraise objects for private citizens prior to donation or at any time thereafter, retain an appraiser for a private citizen, or refer an appraiser to a private citizen, and therefore, shall not be involved in appraisal activities. This restriction does not apply to in-house assessments of value of objects owned or held-in-trust by the Museum for such collection objectives as insurance purposes, traveling exhibitions, loans, or for activities within the professional community that involve establishing the relative monetary value of certain kinds of objects. These activities are viewed as professional assessments and not commercial appraisals. Donors requiring appraisals for income tax purposes must obtain these at their own expense from a certified appraiser of their choice prior to donation.

X. Collections objects acquired through purchase are the property of the Museum, are accessioned, and all bills of sale and appropriate records are kept by the Museum.

XI. Collections and associated documentation, including field records generated by staff research and staff or student field work are owned or held-in-trust by the Museum and are accessioned as appropriate. This statement also applies to documentation generated by research carried out on behalf of the Museum where no physical objects or samples are actualized.

XII. The Museum does not acquire object(s) or collections of questionable origin (legal or ethical), nor does the Museum exhibit or otherwise allow the utilization of such object(s) or collections.

XIII. The Museum does not acquire personal memorabilia, unless the material has general relevance to the mission and scope of the Museum.

XIV. Objects bequeathed to the Museum preferably should be approved for acquisition prior to the Museum being designated as beneficiary. All objects bequeathed to the Museum are subject to the Acquisition and Accession policy defined in this document. The Museum shall observe appropriate confidentiality with respect to objects acquired through bequest. The Museum is not legally bound to acquire objects that are bequeathed to it, unless by prior agreement.

XV. In the process of acquiring or collecting field objects, Museum personnel will not knowingly or intentionally violate local, state, national, or international laws or statutes. Nor will the Museum knowingly or intentionally receive into its possession any object(s) that has been stolen, converted, or taken by fraud in violation of the above noted laws or statutes. Field collection is not initiated without the appropriate documentation, including all required state, federal, or foreign government permits, export, import, and health permits and associated documents, land use authorization, and designation of the Museum as the stewardship curatorial facility. On private property, permission to collect, preserve, utilize, and subsequently to assume title, without restriction, must be gained in writing from the owner, or legal representative of the owner, on whose land the object (s) are collected. These permission documents are a part of the field notes associated with the collection and as such become a part of the Museum's permanent record.

XIV. All items acquired for the permanent collections of the Museum will be accessioned in a timely manner.

XV. The Museum maintains in the Registration Division a detailed record-keeping system of all objects acquired or received by any approved means into its care.

XVI. Record keeping begins with acquisition and is the responsibility of the Curator as appropriate. The kinds of records include acquisitions, accessions, catalog, inventory, loan, insurance, condition report, treatment forms, field forms, photodocuments (film and digital images, video recordings), and business records. Records are both paper documents and electronic data entry. All computerized records are updated and a copy stored at an off-site secure facility as are copies of accession records. Records are housed in appropriate cabinetry, file, or refrigerated unit.

XVII. Materials suitable for deposition in the comparative collections of the various divisions for in-house research and education are acquired and accessioned. These collections usually are not available for consumptive use.

XVIII. Donor information and credit is maintained as part of the acquisition file, the accession file, and on the catalog record. It is not used as part of labeling while the object(s) is on exhibit without the prior signed consent of the donor.

XIX. A potential donor must be informed of the restrictions under which gifts may be given. Acquisitions of the Museum, once accessioned, are subject to the Deaccessioning section of the Collections Management Policy, and except as specifically stated, no object(s) is sold, traded, returned to donor, or otherwise removed from the care and protection of the Museum.

XX. Certain state, national, and international statutes and laws currently in existence may require that acquired and accessioned objects are deaccessioned from the collections of the Museum and repatriated, as per the specific statute or law. The Museum abides by such statutes and laws currently in existence and those that may be bought to apply in the future. Prospective

donors of material likely to be affected by such legislation are informed of this likelihood during initial donation discussions.

XXI. Object(s) donated to the Museum normally are not to be returned to the donor or heirs. In such cases where the return of an object(s) is deemed appropriate by the Curator/Director of the Museum, a report of that action is sent to the Internal Revenue Service as appropriate.

## ACCESSIONS

Accessioning is the procedure that is initiated by the transfer of clear title, and that officially incorporates objects into the permanent collections of The Wrangell Museum or registers objects held-in-trust for federal and state agencies. The Museum recognizes that certain collections generated under state or federal permits are regulated by specific state and federal laws and are held-in-trust instead of owned by the Museum. Title is considered to be transferred when the Museum receives a deed of gift signed by the donor, or when a bill of sale is acknowledged as paid in full in the case of purchased objects, or when a document is signed by all interested parties in the case of transferred objects. Held-in-trust status is considered to be conferred when the Museum receives a held-in-trust accessions agreement signed by the authorized representative of a state or federal agency. Stewardship is transferred but not ownership. Objects are not incorporated into the Museum's collections until they are accessioned. Upon accessioning, the Museum assumes the obligation for the proper care and management of the object(s). Accessioning provides an inventory of objects owned and held-in-trust by the Museum, and is a function of the Collection Division.

- I. All items acquired for the permanent collections of the Museum will be accessioned in a timely manner.
- II. Complete records of the accessioned holdings of the Museum are maintained in the Collections Management. Once an object(s) or collection is reviewed and approved by the Museum Director, and a signed deed of gift or held-in-trust accessions agreement or receipt in the case of purchased objects, is received, then the object(s) or collection is accessioned by the Curator into the Museum. Accession numbers document Museum ownership or stewardship and are an inventory control device for the Curator.
- III. The accession number system utilized by the Museum is alpha-numeric and includes the calendar year of acceptance, followed by a number indicating the order of acceptance and then in the case of multiple objects in the same collection an additional number is added for each individual object. The calendar year is written in full, and the number of order of acceptance is separated by a dash from the year (e.g., 2000-001). Each accession, whether it consists of a single object or collection of objects, is assigned one unique accession number.
- IV. Accessioning is the responsibility of the Curator, and only the Curator or an employee designated by the curator has the authority to assign accession numbers.
- V. The Director has final authority regarding accessions.
- VI. Undocumented objects found in the collections are those that have no accession number and no record of the object being accessioned or why they are in the Museum. Ownership of undocumented objects cannot be assumed and they cannot be disposed of or accessioned. These objects are abandoned property and the Alaska law (AS 34.45) for museum abandoned property and old loans must be followed in order to gain clear title. Once clear title is established, the objects undergo acquisition review.
- VII. The records that accompany accessions are:
  - a. A signed deed of gift for those objects donated to the Museum; proof of ownership for those objects purchased by the Museum; a letter from the trading/exchanging institution transferring title of the object(s) to the Museum; or a signed held-in-trust accessions agreement for those objects held-in-trust by the Museum is required.

- b. If the Museum acquires a state-associated held-in-trust collection generated by an outside researcher, then a signed curation agreement also is required that identifies the generating organization, the Museum, and the objects that constitute the collection.
- c. An annual report of accessioning activities regarding state-associated held-in-trust collections is made to the State of Alaska.
- d. A complete record of all correspondence and transactions involving the accession includes:
  - 1. Name and address of the donor (includes landowner for field-generated collections on private land), seller, trading/exchanging institution, or governmental agency for which object(s) or collection is being held-in-trust.
  - 2. Copy of the permit for held-in-trust objects or collections.
  - 3. Copy of the permit for field-generated collections from foreign countries.
  - 4. Import and export papers for object(s) or collections from foreign countries.
  - 5. Bill of sale and bill of lading.
  - 6. Any gift restrictions.
  - 7. Copyright considerations.
  - 8. Artist's rights considerations.
  - 9. Provenience information.
  - 10. History of object(s).
  - 11. Dates or ages of object(s).
- e. Black and white or color photographic images, digital images, or video recordings with the assigned accession number visible either in the photograph(s) or inscribed on the face of the photograph(s) are required for designated objects. This requirement is to include all type specimens, all works of art, all ethnographic material, significant historical costumes and objects, appropriate archaeological objects, and other objects selected by the Director.
- f. Donated books that are rare and historic manuscripts appropriate for the collections are accessioned, assigned to the appropriate division, and cataloged into that division. Accessioned books are not placed in the library.



## **GIFTS AND GIFTS-IN-KIND**

- I. Definition of Gifts
  - a. For the purpose of these operating policies and procedures, gifts, donations, and non-contractual grants are defined as follows: charitable contributions of any kind of property, real or personal, including pledges that are given for restricted or unrestricted purposes by donors from the private sector. A gift is a voluntary transfer of property from one to another without consideration. It is donative in nature and bestowed by the donor voluntarily and without expectation of any tangible return.
  - b. Included in this definition are gifts such as cash, securities, and tangible personal property and real property.
  - c. Not included in this definition are grants from public entities, including local, state, and federal entities, or contractual grants, contracts, or purchase orders from private sources. The Director coordinates approaches and receipts for contractual grants.
- II. All solicitation of gifts from private sources by any Museum faculty member, staff member, student, student organization, or related entity shall be coordinated and cleared before the fact with the Director.
- III. Finder's Fees or Commissions
  - a. The Museum will not pay a fee to any person in consideration of directing a gift to the Museum. Such fees could be illegal, and, in the case of irrevocable deferred gifts that involve management of assets. No commission or finder's fee of any type will be paid to any party in connection with the completion of a gift to the Museum.
- IV. Gifts-in-Kind Information Form
  - a. The Gifts-in-Kind Information Form is to be completed by Museum personnel who are approached by a person who is a prospective donor of a gift-in-kind (a gift other than cash and securities). The gift must be accepted officially on behalf of the Museum before a gift receipt can be issued for the gift.
  - b. All gifts-in-kind to the Museum must be approved by the Director prior to acceptance. Gifts must be appraised or have a determined fair market valuation before being donated to the Museum.
  - c. Gifts with an appraised value in excess of \$10,000 require the approval of the City of Wrangell.

## DEACCESSIONS

Deaccessioning, when carried out in an appropriate manner, is an integral part of museum professional practice. This view is endorsed by the Wrangell Museum in its Code of Ethics and is based upon ethical codes of national and international museum professional organizations. As the museum profession has developed, so have scholarly mechanisms for building on the experience of the past. Deaccessioning is a useful tool for defining and refining the scope and quality of collections that have grown over the years. The existence of a deaccession policy should not, however, be taken to imply that collections are a resource for the purpose of raising revenue to cover operating costs. Such action quickly undermines the concepts of fiduciary responsibility and public trust. The deaccessioning of an object by sale can only occur in particular circumstances, and the revenue raised from such sales is restricted in use.

The Museum recognizes the special responsibility associated with the receiving and maintenance of objects of cultural, historical, and scientific significance in the public trust. An institution cannot remain static and serve the cultural and educational needs of its various communities. Periodic reevaluations and thoughtful selection are necessary for the growth and proper care of collections. The practice of deaccessioning under well-defined guidelines provides these opportunities. Deaccessioning permanently removes an object from the collections through donation, transfer, exchange, sale, repatriation, loss from collections, deterioration beyond repair, and loss through natural disasters, and allows the transfer of unrestricted title to the receiving agency or transfer of stewardship by the governmental agency to another institution if held-in-trust.

As the Museum is concerned for the preservation of objects in the public trust, written evidence is required that appropriate care and maintenance will be provided all objects considered for deaccessioning through donation, exchange, transfer, or repatriation, except where state, federal, or international laws or statutes override this requirement. Objects under consideration for exchange from another institution are subject to the acquisitions and accessions review process. An object must have been accessioned into the Museum's holdings for at least seven years before it can be considered for deaccessioning, unless otherwise regulated by state and federal law.

- I. A number of reasons create the need for careful removal of properly reviewed objects from the Museum collections. The deaccessioning of any object, for whatever reason, is of primary importance to the Wrangell Museum. The only material considered for deaccession is that to which the Museum has clear title or held-in-trust stewardship. For held-in-trust collections, deaccession consideration and approval is done in concert with the appropriate governmental agency and the method of disposal designated by that governmental agency.
- II. No object is deaccessioned and disposed of by transfer, exchange, sale, or destruction, or in any way removed from the Museum records without careful review, evaluation by curatorial staff, and documentation of clear title or held-in-trust status.
- III. Type materials and comparable objects are not eligible for deaccessioning.
- IV. As a courtesy, reasonable efforts will be made to contact donors or their heirs, and living artists prior to the deaccessioning of objects from the Museum's collections.
- V. The decision to deaccession is made based on, but not limited to, the following guidelines. These guidelines assume that all objects currently are accessioned and that the Museum has clear and unrestricted title or held-in-trust stewardship.

- a. Objects lacking provenience or location information that are not significant or useful for research, exhibit, or educational purposes in and of themselves.
  - b. Objects that have been determined not to be authentic.
  - c. Objects that have limited or no value to the Museum because of redundancy in the collection.
  - d. Human skeletal remains and objects of sacred or ritual significance that are requested for return under the terms and conditions of any state, federal, or international laws and statutes. As per current federal laws and statutes, the requesting group must provide evidence of the validity of their claim. All claims must be made in accordance with national and international statutes and laws and the Museum will respond accordingly.
  - e. Objects that do not relate to the stated mission of the Museum. Objects that are relevant to the stated mission of the Museum may not be deaccessioned on the grounds that they are not relevant to the research interests of current staff.
  - f. Objects that do not fit the stated scope-of-collections.
  - g. Objects that have decayed or decomposed beyond reasonable use and repair or that by their condition constitute a hazard to other objects in the collection.
  - h. Objects reported as missing or stolen.
  - i. Objects that have been stolen and for which an insurance claim has been paid to the Museum.
  - j. Objects used in education programs and from the comparative collections that are consumed.
  - k. Objects that were accessioned erroneously into the collections.
- VI. The preferred method of disposal is transfer or exchange of objects to or with appropriate public museums, after which the order of preference is appropriate public educational agencies and institutions, private museums, and private educational agencies and institutions. Every effort is made to retain objects of regional or local importance in the public sphere.
- a. In the event of transfer to or exchange with either public or private institutions, the Museum requires evidence that proper care will be provided for the objects
- VII. If transfer is not feasible, objects may be sold through standard state procedures.
- a. Under no circumstances will anthropological, natural sciences, or held-in-trust objects be sold. In instances of sale, no employee of The Wrangell Museum will be eligible to purchase deaccessioned items. Under no circumstances will this restriction be waived.
  - b. As a courtesy, reasonable efforts will be made to contact donors or their heirs, and living artists prior to the disposal by sale of objects from the Museum's collections.
  - c. Money acquired from the sale of the object(s) is used solely to obtain objects for the collection of the Museum division from which the object(s) was deaccessioned. None of the revenue generated will be used to fund operating costs or salaries.
  - d. Funding for newly acquired and accessioned objects are attributed to the original donor(s).
  - e. If a suitable recipient for a proposed deaccession and disposal through transfer, exchange, or sale cannot be found, the Museum may have the item destroyed. The destruction of such objects is to be witnessed and documented by at least two museum employees. Objects that have decomposed must be destroyed in an appropriate manner.

## CATALOG

Cataloging is to identify and describe in detail through methodical classification each object and provide it a unique identifying number. Cataloging is part of documentary control of the collections, placing the object into proper context and determining information important and unique to that one object. The catalog provides a centralized place for all known documentation of an object for effective management. The Museum maintains a unified cataloging system, with cross reference between accession and catalog numbers. That system is electronic, with collection records backed-up on a periodic basis. Terminology is standardized and codes are not used. The catalog records both intrinsic and associational information in a standard format. The standardized categories basic to all collecting divisions are supplemented by additional categories that customize the catalog to each division.

- I. All accessioned collection objects are cataloged in a timely manner into the appropriate collection division.
- II. Complete records of the cataloged holdings of the Museum are maintained in the appropriate collecting division. Catalog numbers, document classification and scholarship are an inventory control device for the Curator.
- III. Cataloging is the responsibility of the Curator, and only the Curator or an employee designated by the curator has the authority to assign catalog numbers within the appropriate collecting division.
- IV. Objects may not be loaned until they are accessioned and cataloged.

## INVENTORY

Inventory provides accountability, updates collection records and documentation, provides the opportunity to check the condition of each object/specimen, and aids in maintaining the security of each collections. Inventory is the physical verification of the presence, location, and condition of the objects for which the Museum has assumed responsibility. By conducting inventories, the Museum better fulfills its legal and ethical responsibilities.

- I. The Wrangell Museum practices four types of inventory: accessions, comprehensive, spot-check, and relocation.
  - a. Each accession must have an accounting of the incoming objects and documentation to provide a baseline. Accessions inventory is the responsibility of the Curator.
  - b. A comprehensive inventory is conducted on a divisional level once every 10 years accounting for all objects in that division. Each division has the responsibility to conduct comprehensive inventories and comprehensive inventory is the responsibility of the Curator.
  - c. A spot-check inventory is conducted on the divisional level on a regular basis as needed for a specific group of objects, cabinet, or shelf. Spot-check inventory is the responsibility of the Curator.
  - d. A relocation inventory is conducted at any time an object or collection is moved. Relocation inventory is the responsibility of the Curator.

## LOANS

Borrowing and lending objects are inherent practices in a museum and require specific procedures to assure object management. Loans do not involve transfer of title but are the temporary reassignment of objects from the Museum (outgoing) to another institution or to the Museum (incoming). All loans are for a defined period of time and for the stated purposes of exhibition, research, education, or inspection. Third party or permanent loans and commercial use of loaned materials is prohibited.

- I. Loans are by authority of the Director. A written loan contract must accompany every loan with specifications on rights and responsibilities of each party. The loan contract must stipulate the conditions of the loan to insure adequate storage, environmental protection, and safety precautions during transit, handling, and use. Loan contracts are kept on file with a copy in the appropriate division's files. The Curator establishes the procedures for packing and transportation of all loans.
- II. All loan activities (outgoing or incoming) that require a financial or physical commitment by the Museum of other than a minimal nature, or obligates the Museum to other than normal investment in the care, maintenance, or protection of an object, must be approved by the Director.
- III. The loan number system utilized by the Museum is alpha-numeric and includes the letter L (for loan), followed by the calendar year of the loan, followed by a number indicating the order of loan. The calendar year is written in full, and the number of order of acceptance is separated by a dash from the year (e.g., L2000-001). Each loan, whether it consists of a single object or collection of objects, is assigned one unique loan number. Loan numbers apply to both outgoing and incoming loans.
- IV. The purposes for which The Wrangell Museum may release an object to another institution as an outgoing loan are as follows:
  - a. For exhibition as part of a temporary installation or loan exhibition.
  - b. For research, destructive analysis, or related educational purposes for stated institutional purposes.
  - c. For conservation, identification, or examination.
- V. The purposes for which The Wrangell Museum may accept an object as an incoming loan are as follows:
  - a. For exhibition as part of a temporary installation or loan exhibition.
  - b. For research or related educational purposes for stated Museum purposes.
  - c. For inspection and study with regard to possible donation or purchase.

### Outgoing Loans

Museum collections are maintained for the benefit of the public and objects are loaned to reach a wider audience and facilitate research. While on loan, objects must be afforded the same level of care and protection as provided by the Museum. Because of these considerations, loans are made only to other similar institutions, non-profit agencies, and educational organizations. Loans for research purposes are made to the institution with which the individual is affiliated and that institution assumes full

responsibility for the proper administration of the loan and the care and security of the object. Loans are made only to individuals with institutional affiliation.

- I. Objects considered for loan are the property of the Museum or held-in-trust and accessioned into the Museum's record. Unaccessioned or uncataloged Museum collections and type specimens and comparable objects will not be loaned. Each division may further restrict the kinds of objects or materials eligible for loans based on nature, rarity, monetary value, research priority, and/or management considerations of the objects.
- II. The Museum maintains proprietary rights over the object(s) loaned.
- III. To assure objects requested for loan receive proper care and security, the requesting institution must present verification of their environmental, storage, exhibition, and security conditions and procedures for the handling and transit of objects. Objects must be packed and transported in the safest possible way in accordance with the nature and condition of the objects.
- IV. The authority to approve a loan rests with the appropriate Curator. Loans of held-in-trust objects also must have the approval of the appropriate governmental agency prior to the finalization of the loan agreement. It is the responsibility of the Curator to request loan approval from the governmental agency and provide the approval document to the Registrar.
- V. The loan period is six months with options to renew. No objects shall be on exhibition loan for longer than one year or research loan for two years. Traveling exhibits may warrant a contract for a longer loan period. Returned loan objects undergo inventory and evaluation before being loaned again.
- VI. Only the Curator can assign a loan number. The Curator is responsible for completing a condition report prior to outgoing shipment of a loan and after its return to the Museum. The Curator is responsible for providing appropriate information to the borrowing institution relating to a loan. Insurance claims for damaged or lost objects are the responsibility of the Curator. Objects on loan cannot be altered, cleaned, or repaired unless permission to do so is authorized in writing by the Curator on the loan agreement.
- VII. All objects, including held-in-trust, sent out on loan are insured. Normally, insurance coverage is provided by the borrowing institution. Current and reasonable insurance valuations are the responsibility of the Curator. Under most circumstance, insurance is all risk, wall-to-wall coverage. A certificate of insurance is required from the borrowing institution prior to transportation of the loaned objects.
  - a. The Curator is notified when cancellation of or changes in insurance coverage occur. The loan then may be subject to cancellation. Failure to maintain adequate insurance coverage in no way releases the borrowing institution from liability for loss or damage regardless of whether or not the Museum monitored the borrowing institution's insurance.
- VIII. Objects on loan must be returned promptly when the loan period expires. The Museum reserves the right to cancel or deny renewal of any loan.
- IX. Loans that will radically alter or destroy an object (destructive analysis loans) may be permitted only with the written approval of the Director. A research proposal is required from the requesting institution. The object is not deaccessioned. Information gained substitutes for

the altered or destroyed object. The Museum does not in any way relinquish ownership of the object, and retains the right to recall the object, or its modified forms, if not used for the stated purpose within the loan period or if other circumstances warrant it. For objects held-in-trust for governmental agencies, concurrence must be sought in writing from the appropriate governmental agency prior to finalizing the request.

- a. The borrowing institution and researcher may use the destructive loan object only for the stated scientific research purposes in the loan agreement and no derivatives of the destructive loan object may be distributed to any third party. All unused portions of the destructive loan object shall be returned to the Museum at the end of the loan period. Unused portions of tissue samples include remaining tissues and resulting DNA samples.
  - b. All sequence data resulting from the use of tissue samples shall be registered by the borrowing institution and researcher in an archive that provides access to the data by members of the scientific community. Corresponding numbers shall be provided to the Museum.
  - c. Any and all licenses and other rights associated with tissue samples are limited by and subject to the rights and requirements of the pertinent state, federal, or international government.
- X. Except for condition reports, all photography, reproduction, or replication of borrowed objects must be with prior written approval by the Curator. Lighting conditions, environmental and/or applied chemical alterations, and other conditions of reproduction and replication must be specified by the Curator on the loan agreement. Photographs, reproductions, and replicas may only be used for research, exhibition, and educational purposes.
- XI. The Museum must be credited in all publications and exhibitions associated with the loan object, including photographs and reproductions, and must receive two (2) copies of any publication. The object(s) should be identified by its catalog or accession number. The proper name of the Museum to be used in all acknowledgments is "The Wrangell Museum"

### **Incoming Loans**

- I. The Museum may receive loans from institutions or individuals. If the lending institution or individual does not provide a loan agreement, the Museum will use its incoming loan agreement to document the incoming loan. The Museum exercises the same care with objects on loan as it does with its own objects.
- II. No object will be accepted on loan that has been acquired by illegal and unethical means. Loan objects can be received only from the legal owner or authorized agent.
- III. Objects will not be received on loan from Museum staff members, or their immediate families.
- IV. The Museum is unable to insure many incoming loans. If requested insurance can be purchased for loaned exhibits and items.
  - a. It is the responsibility of the lender to set insurance valuations. The type of valuation must be stated on the loan agreement (fair-market, replacement, conservation, material, or special consideration).
  - b. The Museum does not provide evaluations or appraisals for a loan object(s).



- V. Loans of personal property from individuals for warehousing in the Museum will not be considered.
- VI. The Curator may require the lending party to certify that the loan object(s) can withstand ordinary strains of packing, transportation, and handling. The Curator may request that the lending party send a written condition report prior to the transportation of the object(s). It is the responsibility of the Curator to monitor the condition of the loan object(s).
  - a. Upon receipt of the loan by the Curator, the object(s) must be inventoried, inspected, photographed (where appropriate), and written notations made of the findings.
  - b. Any inconsistency in the loan inventory or any change in the condition of the loan object(s) must be reported immediately to the Director. The Director must notify the lending party and, when appropriate, notify the insurance company and prepare a full condition report. It is the responsibility of the Director to handle claim negotiations.
- VII. The Curator is responsible for the prompt return of the loan object(s). The object(s) must be inventoried, inspected, photographed (where appropriate), and written notations made of the findings.
- VIII. The Museum reserves the right to cancel a loan or remove the loan object(s) from exhibit at any time. All loans are for a set period of time that cannot exceed two years.
- IX. Packing and shipping arrangements of a loan object(s) are the responsibility of the Curator.
- X. The Director may notify a lender of the Museum's intent to terminate a loan for an object(s) for which a written loan agreement exists that was made for an indefinite term or for a term in excess of seven years.
- XI. Property on loan to the Museum for 15 years or more, and for which no written loan agreement exists, and to which no person has made claim according to the records of the Museum, is considered abandoned.
- XII. Loans are returned to the lending party identified on the loan agreement at the stated address unless an authorized agent of the lender has given notice of change of ownership or location.

#### **Item of Ceremonial Significance Withdraw**

- I. The Wrangell Museum is the repository for several items of cultural significance. When appropriate these items may be removed from the Museum by an authorized custodian for ceremonial uses.
  - a. Authorized custodians of The Killer Whale Flotilla Chilkat Robe are Louella Knapp, and John Frabel
  - b. Authorized Custodians of the Kiks' Adi Frog Robe, The Raven Hat, and The Raven Rattle are Marge Byrd and Katherine James
  - c. Authorized Custodians of The Chief of the Ravens Hat is a representative of the Alaska State Museum
- II. Before removal from the museum, authorized custodians must sign a Withdraw Agreement Form, and have the form co-signed by the Director. This form will be maintained in the item

file to maintain records of past withdraws. Upon the objects return a condition report should be completed to document any damage sustained while withdrawn.

## **COLLECTIONS CARE**

The purpose of collections care is to preserve well-maintained and well-documented individual objects and collections as a whole. The goal of collections care is to limit deterioration of the collections.

- I. The Museum cares for its collections through a variety of preventive conservation and risk management strategies. These are applied on a variety of levels, from the Museum's environment as a whole, to collections areas, and to individual collections housing and packaging units. The following strategies are used to provide proper care of collections.
  - a. Regulated and monitored temperature, relative humidity, and atmospheric pollutants.
  - b. Low and filtered light levels.
  - c. Integrated pest management.
  - d. Archival housing units that provide a buffer between collections and the environment.
  - e. Archival packaging materials that provide a buffer between collections and the environment.
  - f. Preventive conservation.
  - g. Routine preventive maintenance.
  - h. Safe handling and moving of collections.
  - i. Integrated record-keeping system.
- II. Incoming objects must be evaluated for cleanliness during the accessioning process. They are cleaned only if they can withstand the process and use of solvents. They must not be cleaned if this would reduce their research value or compromise their scientific or aesthetic value. Dirty objects that cannot withstand the cleaning process must be encapsulated before they are placed in collections areas.
- III. All packaging and housing materials used to containerize objects must be chemically stable and free from acids or additives.
- IV. All housing units must be chemically stable and be of sufficient strength to support the weight of the objects that they house. They must be able to accommodate a variety of materials and sizes of objects.
- V. Collections records must be made in a timely manner, housed in a secure location, provide for easy retrieval of information, and be preserved by proper handling and storage. A duplicate copy of information must be made on a regularly scheduled basis and be stored in a secure off-site location.

### **Preventive Conservation**

Preventive conservation philosophy underlies the collections management practices at The Wrangell Museum. Through the practice of preventive conservation, the Museum prevents and limits deterioration of collections due to environmental, human, and inherent factors. Concerns for the preservation of individual objects are at the heart of any decision relating to their use.

- I. Crucial to the success of preventive conservation is the provision of a stable Museum environment. The Museum's internal environment consistently is monitored and controlled throughout the building, with additional monitoring in collections housing and exhibition areas. Temperature and relative humidity, light, atmospheric pollutants are monitored and regulated on an ongoing basis.

- II. All materials used for packaging and housing the Museum's collections are stable and non-reactive, as are materials used for constructing exhibit mounts and supports. Use of any exhibit construction material that is not stable requires a stable barrier material to be placed between it and collections objects.

### **Safe Handling**

Safe handling and movement of collections objects is practiced at all times in The Wrangell Museum. All Museum objects are treated with equal care, regardless of their monetary value. Safe handling minimizes risk to objects and supports their in-perpetuity preservation in the Museum.

- I. In general, safe handling involves the preparation of appropriate space to receive the objects prior to a move, preparation of the route along which the object will be moved, and use of appropriate moving equipment with an appropriate number of Museum personnel safely to carry out the move.
- II. The curator will develop specific safe handling policy that supplements the museum's general policy.
- III. All objects are evaluated individually before they are handled, packaged, and shipped in order to determine if they are sufficiently stable to withstand each activity. Handling, packaging, and shipping methods are chosen based on the individual requirements and sensitivities of the objects.
- IV. The shipping method chosen to transport objects must provide the best protection from reasonably anticipated risks and the shortest en route time.
  - a. The packaging materials chosen must provide adequate and appropriate protection from all reasonably anticipated risks associated with a particular shipping method.
  - b. Cushioning material chosen is based on the individual needs and sensitivities of the objects; materials that provide superior cushioning properties may not necessarily be archival in nature but materials that have direct contact with the surface of the object must be archival.

### **Conservation**

Even under the best-managed conditions, deterioration or damage may occur to collection objects. In such circumstances, conservation may be necessary. Conservation is a continuing responsibility and is focused on the object. It is an intervention measure designed to return a deteriorated or damaged object to stability through reversible and minimally intrusive methods. The Museum endorses the conservation philosophy of minimal chemical and physical trauma to the object, use of sympathetic materials, the principle of reversibility, the compatibility of materials, and the keeping of complete and accurate records of the conservation process.

- I. Conservation work is undertaken within national ethics, principles, and practices by reputable, trained conservators. Conservation work with an outside conservator is conducted under a well-defined, comprehensive agreement between the Museum and the conservator. The Museum monitors the conservation process whether conducted in-house or on loan to an outside conservator to assure the correct use and safety of the object, and to note in the records the returned stabilized materials.

### **Specific Collections Needs**

Objects in storage at the Museum will be kept at a relative humidity (RH) of 50%. The RH will be monitored at all times in the Collections Storage Room. The specific care of collections, based on material type, will be catered to each object.

- I. Bone or Ivory: Will be contained in a custom cut storage container with care given to sudden changes in temperature.
- II. Ceramics (porcelains, terracottas, pottery, potsherds, etc.): The less firing and glazing, the more sensitive the ceramic is to relative humidity and dust. Fugitive paint surfaces may also be light sensitive. These items will be contained in a custom cut storage container with care given to sudden changes in temperature. Archaeological ceramics must have stable temperature and RH incase soluble salts are present.
- III. Composites (objects made of more than one material: jewelry, weapons, natural history mounted specimens, dolls, enamel, fans, paintings, masks, musical instruments, mechanical equipment, etc.): The preservation needs of the components often conflict.

## RECORD KEEPING

Documentary control of the collections is an essential element in the sound management of the Museum's collections. This control allows for the easy retrieval of information, location of the object, and the object itself. It provides the foundation for knowing what is in the Museum's holdings and tracking collections activities. Documentation is maintained in electronic and paper formats that are housed in the Archives or Collections Management rooms as appropriate. Back-up copies are made on a regularly scheduled basis and maintained off-site. Legal activities (transfer status, accessions, deaccessions, loans, insurance) concerning the collections are the responsibility of the Curator. Retrieval is through the use of the accession number, catalog number, or loan number as appropriate. Inventory is conducted using one of these numbers as appropriate. Accession and loan numbers are by year; catalog number is by a sequential count within a curatorial division. The Museum produces and maintains written documentation for the following collections management activities.

- a. Transfer of title or held-in-trust status.
- b. Accessioning.
- c. Curation agreements for acquired state-associated held-in-trust collections generated by outside researchers.
- d. Deaccessioning and method of disposal.
- e. Cataloging.
- f. Loans (incoming, outgoing, and in-house).
- g. Destructive loans.
- h. Insurance.
- j. Condition reports.
- i. Inventory (accessions, spot-check, relocation, comprehensive).
- k. Conservation treatment.
- j. Monitoring records for environmental control.
- l. Integrated pest management.
- k. Still or moving images where appropriate.

## **NATIVE AMERICAN REMAINS, SACRED OBJECTS, AND OBJECTS OF CULTURAL PATRIMONY (NAGPRA)**

- I. It is the Wrangell Museum's intent and policy to comply with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, 25 U.S.C. §3001-13 (1990), 104 Stat. 3042, P.L. 101-106 and subsequent amendments.
- II. Museum staff will not intentionally collect Native American human remains or objects specified under the Act, unless written permission has been granted by the appropriate Native American tribe or corporation.
- III. The Museum may temporarily accept Native American human remains and objects specified under the Act for the purposes of identification, attribution, or legal custody.
- IV. The Museum may accept Native American human remains and objects specified under the Act as per Trust Agreements made with Alaska Native tribes or corporations.
- V. Native American human remains and objects specified under the Act that are included in a gift, donation, bequest, or acquired as federally confiscated property, or in any other legal manner, will be held in trust by the Museum and:
  - a. When possible, the appropriate Native American tribe or corporation will be notified by the Museum or federal agency owning the collection.
  - b. The Museum will comply with the request of the appropriate Native American tribe or corporation or federal agency owning the collection as to the disposition of the material, providing the request is in accordance with the law.

## INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

The damage caused by pest infestation and the actions that must be taken to eradicate the infestation within the Museum can be lessened or mitigated through integrated pest management. Integrated pest management provides an ecosystem level approach to the management of pests that is based on cooperation and participation of all staff within the Museum to eliminate or minimize the causative agents of a pest infestation, namely food, moisture, and availability of pest habitat.

- I. Through the combination of education, vigilant housekeeping, environmental monitoring, habitat modification, inspection, identification of infesting species, and application of specific treatment methods, integrated pest management is an effective tool in preventing the intrusion of pests into collection and exhibit areas. By preventing access to pests, the need for chemicals harmful to collections, staff, and visitors is eliminated.
- II. Integrated pest management is carried out first by determining the extent of biological activity through monitoring, inspection, and identification. If the occurrence of pests within the Museum is detected, appropriate steps are taken to eradicate the pest in a non- or least-toxic manner. Treatment methods are followed by appropriate evaluation techniques.
- III. The following integrated pest management strategies are practiced.
  - a. Exclusion of pests from the Museum.
  - b. On-going monitoring and detection.
  - c. Habitat modification.
  - d. Identification and isolation of infesting species when discovered and isolation and encapsulation of infested objects.
  - d. Treatment and suppression of species through non-toxic or least-toxic measures.
  - e. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the integrated pest management program.
  - f. Continued education of staff regarding integrated pest management.
- IV. Integrated pest management strategies should encourage on-going maintenance and housekeeping activities that include restriction of food and plants and regular cleaning of collection housing rooms and other areas. The collections rooms must be cleaned thoroughly every six months and all collection rooms and other areas checked once a month for any signs of pest activity.



## COLLECTIONS ACCESS

The Wrangell Museum carefully controls access to collection areas. Control of access to the public, researchers, and Museum employees limits the opportunities for unauthorized use, damage, loss, theft, and/or destruction of collections. It also aids in the control of human traffic in collections housing areas.

- I. The Director and staff only are issued keys and codes to their collections housing areas, and to no other collections areas. Part-time staff must sign-in and are issued keys on a daily basis. Visitors to collections areas must sign-in. Keys are not issued to volunteers or visitors.
- II. Security measures must be in place for access and reducing harm to the collections. Controlled access includes signing in and out, issuance of keys, and keypads. Reducing harm includes housekeeping, an integrated pest management system, HVAC system, emergency preparedness, preventive conservation and collections management best practices, record keeping, and insurance.
- III. Collections available for research are those that have been accessioned and cataloged. Access for research purposes is controlled by a research design.
- IV. Each curatorial division must develop its own specific collections access policy that supplements The Museum's general policy. The divisional policy is maintained on file in that division. In general, researchers, donors, students, cultural groups, or others seeking access to collections must first present a request to the appropriate curator who evaluates the risk. Access to collections is at the discretion of the curator.
- V. Collections research is conducted in a secure room separate from the collections housing area. The person making the request has access only to the objects or collection requested. A relocation inventory is required when materials are moved into the secure room and when moved back into the housing room at the completion of the request.
- VI. Access to collections areas by security and custodial staff is controlled by the director.
  - a. New staff receives training regarding the requirements and responsibilities of their position with regards to collections access. This training is supplemented on an annual basis.
  - b. Access is granted on curatorial authorization.

## COLLECTIONS SECURITY

The purpose of security is to protect collections against a variety of risks. The goal of security is to limit damage or loss of collections.

- I. The safety and security of the personnel and collections housed in the buildings and on the grounds of The Wrangell Museum must be maintained. The Museum provides security for its collections through the following risk management strategies that are used to provide proper security for collections.
  - a. Systems and devices for deterring and detecting intruders.
  - b. Emergency preparedness.
- II. Granting of access (authorization to enter a restricted area) and key issuance (control method for authorized access) is the sole prerogative and authority of the Director of the Museum
- III. Access to areas other than public spaces is restricted to the Museum staff, students, and volunteers. Only paid employees may be issued keys to Museum facilities. Unpaid staff and non-Museum personnel may be allowed access under specific conditions and with supervision by paid Museum staff. All keys (mechanical or electronic) to Museum buildings are the property of the City of Wrangell and may not be duplicated.
- IV. The access and key needs of each staff, association, or faculty member, student, research associate, or volunteer will be assessed by the Director prior to access being granted or keys issued. Normally, access or key permits will be only for those areas to which the person is assigned during regular working hours, and will not include after-hours access. After-hours security access may be granted only by the Director.
- V. Key requests, issuance, turn-in, and safe storage are the delegated responsibility of the Director.
- VI. Transferring or loaning of keys is prohibited. Persons who transfer or loan keys are responsible for the actions of the borrower and may forfeit all subsequent access or key permits, be charged for re-keying costs, face immediate termination of access or key permits.
- VII. Volunteers normally are not issued keys. Limited access of a specified duration may be granted and only if deemed in the best interests of the Museum.
- XIII. Any unidentified person or person(s) in a restricted area of the Museum are to be reported to the Police Department immediately.
- XIV. All unattended doors of ingress/egress/passage to the collections areas will remain locked and be key-accessed only. Doors may not be blocked open or left unlocked.
- XV. All keys must be returned to the Director's office at the conclusion of the access period, termination of employment, completion of volunteer work, or upon the order of the Director. The Curator is responsible for insuring the timely return of keys.
- XVI. Loss or theft of keys is to be reported immediately to the Director's office.

- XVII. The making or issuing of copies of keys to any portion of the Museum is solely by authority of the Director.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

Emergency preparedness for The Wrangell Museum focuses on reduction of risk and the mitigation of catastrophic events that have the potential to endanger people and collections. Emergency preparedness aims to anticipate and avoid emergencies, to regain control when an emergency occurs, and to recover control as quickly as possible should it be lost. The Museum abides by the emergency preparedness plan of the City of Wrangell in the event of a disaster.

- I. Disasters are prevented as far as possible through the practice of emergency preparedness measures such as inspections of entire facility and systems and preventive maintenance of the facilities, systems, and equipment.
- II. Emergency preparedness measures are based on risk analysis of locally occurring hazards.
  - a. The written emergency preparedness plan is tested and evaluated annually.
  - b. The plan addresses measures to be taken before, during, and after an emergency.

### **Collections Emergency Response Recovery Plan**

Museum collections are housed in the Museum, Library and Archives, and offsite storage facilities. The collection includes: large object, small objects, archival collections, photographs, library materials and audio visual magnetic and digital items.

In any disaster situation, it is necessary to respond to life threatening issues first, with actions to ensure the safety of the collection being taken once the immediate threat to personnel has been satisfied. In all cases, once the immediate threat has been eliminated, an evaluation will take place to decide whether or not the collection should be moved to another location until repairs can be made to the buildings and what repairs or conservation may be required for the collection on a case by case basis.

The priority for salvaging the collection includes the following:

1. Objects that are in immediate danger.
2. Objects that are irreplaceable (originals).
3. Objects that are owned by the Museum.
4. Objects that are on loan to the Museum.

In the event of a crisis situation, the Museum will declare an emergency. Staff will be contacted by telephone to respond to the emergency whether they are onsite, at another business location or at home.

#### **I. Collections Responsibilities**

- a. Assessment and Documentation
  - Assess the type and extent of damage to the collection.
  - Provide an initial assessment of the damage.
  - Contact the Director regarding insurance issues and claims reporting.
  - Ensure proper documentation of damage (photos, videos, etc.) including the location of the object, a description of the object and of the damage to the object and immediate requirements for protection, preservation and/or repair.

- Review collections priorities list and confirm or adjust it based on damage assessment.
  - Estimate number of personnel needed to complete the work and how long recovery will take. Evaluate and recommend if salvage can be done in-house with staff or if a consultant and/or emergency recovery services are needed.
  - Identify locations for storing objects and materials both within the Museum and out of building if a commercial recovery service is not used.
  - Formulate logistics for packing out and moving materials from the building if a commercial disaster recovery service is not used.
  - Records all major decisions and by date and time creating a chronology of events response and recovery events.
- b. Communications
- Refer all public relations and media to the Director.
  - Provide communication and updated reports to the EMT and recovery workers.
- c. Collections Salvage
- Deploy work teams based on a prioritized response plan.
  - Supervise work teams in proper packing and personal safety.
  - Keep inventory control of items being removed or discarded.
- d. Security
- Contact Police Department for assistance in providing security for the collection.
- e. Financial Issues
- Track the monetary impact of all decisions.
  - Arranges for funds necessary to buy supplies, equipment, food etc.
- f. Personnel Issues
- Coordinates and monitors the use of volunteers.

## II. TYPES OF EMERGENCY RESPONSES

- a. Flood: Flooding may result in water damage to the building and collection. In a minor flood, the collection may not need to be moved; however, if the water level is rising precautions should be taken quickly and the collection moved to a safe dry area. Equipment and supplies such as portable electric pumps, diesel generators, towels and cloths to wipe surfaces and cribbing should be kept onsite or be readily available though an outside vendor.
- b. Fire: In case of a fire call 911. Fire is a significant threat and should be dealt with quickly and effectively by professionals. Fire may destroy objects in the collection through combustion, heat and/or smoke from the fire may damage sensitive objects and the water from automatic sprinklers may damage objects. The first step upon discovery of a fire that may not be safely extinguished with a fire extinguisher is to call 911. Objects should be removed from the area of the fire as quickly as possible and moved to a secure storage location. Equipment on hand should include certified fire extinguishers and a general alarm to evacuate people from the building.

- c. **Structural Damage to Buildings:** Structural damage to the building can result in severe damage to the collection, either from seismic activity, or an act of terrorism. Upon arrival at the scene, the integrity of the structure should be evaluated by the Director, City Maintenance Staff and a professional engineer if possible. Movement of objects should not be performed unless it has been determined that it is safe to do so.
- d. **Acts of Violence Including Terrorism:** Damage caused by an act of violence or terrorism may result in conditions similar to a fire or building damage; therefore, please refer to those sections.

### **III. EMERGENCY HANDLING OF COLLECTIONS**

#### **a. Books and Paper**

Priority: High – Speed is essential as many items are not replaceable.

Actions:

- Wet books need to be frozen or dried within 48 hours to minimize damage.
- Damp books and papers can be air-dried unless there are too many of them.
- Wetter books will need to be frozen.
- Don't squeeze wet books to try to straighten the text blocks if they seem twisted. Just handle each book carefully and pack for freezing.
- Pack books spine down, only one layer deep in boxes. Try to loosely wrap every other book in waxed paper or freezer paper so that they don't stick together.
- Get these books to a freezer immediately

Wet Unbound Paper:

- Don't try to separate wet single papers with your hands as they will tear easily.
- If the individual papers are just damp, separate them by lifting each one using mylar or polyester film and lay out by hand to dry.
- If papers are wet, interleave groups of papers with waxed paper or freezer paper and freeze as soon as possible. When you're ready to air-dry them, thaw the papers and then separate the sheets using mylar or polyester film.

Drying Methods for Books and Documents:

There are currently five ways to dry wet books and documents. All have undergone at least a minimal level of testing under emergency conditions, and several methods have been used extensively. These five options are described to assist staff in making the best choice under the circumstances: cause of damage, level of damage, number of materials involved, rarity or scarcity, personnel available, budget available, and drying services available. It is important to remember that no drying method restores materials. The condition of materials will not be improved during any drying process. Advice from a conservator or preservation administrator experienced in disaster recovery is advisable before you make the final selection of methods. If you need time to make critical decisions or remove large numbers of materials from the disaster site, books and documents should be frozen to reduce physical distortion and biological contamination. Book and paper conservators should always be consulted about the drying of rare or unique materials.

Air-Drying: Air-drying may still be the most frequently used method of drying wet books and documents, but it is not always the most appropriate. Air-drying is most suitable for small numbers of damp or slightly wet books or documents. Because air-drying requires no special equipment, it is often seen as an inexpensive method. However, air-drying is extremely labor-intensive if carried out properly, occupies considerable space, and usually results in badly distorted bindings and text blocks unless the damage is superficial. Air-drying is seldom, if ever, successful for drying bound coated (shiny) paper. Before commencing air-drying, ensure that your recovery personnel understand the correct procedures for air-drying books and documents.

Guidelines for Air Drying: Wet books may be air-dried successfully if you follow guidelines suggested by preservation experts. Air-drying is most suitable for books that are damp or water-damaged only around the edges. The pages of books printed on coated (shiny) paper stick together very quickly and must receive special attention immediately. If the number of volumes is more than 100, if the books are wet all the way through, or if there are many books with coated paper, you are advised to use an alternative drying method. Once books are wet, they will suffer structural distortion and develop mildew within 48-72 hours. Books will never look the same as they did before water damage, regardless of the drying process used. If damage occurs, the steps outlined below will assist you to achieve satisfactory results from air-drying. It is important to remember that longer drying periods produce greater distortion. Remember also that wet paper is very fragile and easily torn or damaged.

Dehumidification: Dehumidification is the newest method to gain credibility in the library and archival world. Large commercial dehumidifiers are brought into the facility with all collections, equipment, and furnishings left in place. Temperature and humidity can be controlled to customer specifications. Dehumidification must be initiated before swelling becomes a problem, or mold appears, i.e. within 24 hours of the emergency. This method is successful for drying damp to moderately wet books/documents, equipment, and furnishings. Dehumidification is not successful for drying bound, coated paper. Dehumidification has the advantage of drying the materials in place on the shelves or in storage boxes, eliminating the time and expense of removing materials to a freezer or vacuum chamber. The size of the facility is limited only by the amount of equipment available, and the expertise of the operators. Select a company with experience in drying library or archival collections.

Freezer Drying: Books and documents which are damp or moderately wet may be dried successfully in a self-defrosting blast freezer if left there long enough. Materials should be placed in the freezer as soon as possible after water damage has occurred. Books will dry best if their bindings are supported firmly to inhibit initial swelling. The equipment should have the capacity to freeze very quickly, and temperatures must be -10( to -40( F to reduce distortion and facilitate drying. Documents may be placed in the freezer in stacks or spread out for faster drying. In very large commercial freezers, documents may be left in their storage boxes, although this will slow the drying process. You can expect this drying method to take from several weeks to several months depending on the freezer temperature and extent of water damage. Coated paper may adhere when freezer-drying is used.

Vacuum Thermal-Drying : Books and documents may be dried in a vacuum thermal-drying chamber, into which materials are placed either wet or frozen. The vacuum is

drawn, heat introduced, and materials are dried either in cycles of freezing and thawing or slightly above 32 degrees F. This means the materials stay wet, not frozen, while they dry. It is a very acceptable manner of drying wet records if distortion is not a thermal-drying is a good solution for unbound materials which have suffered extensive problems, but it often produces extreme distortion in bound volumes, and causes adhesion of coated paper. Water-soluble inks or pigments will also be affected by vacuum thermal-drying. For large numbers of materials vacuum thermal-drying is easier and usually more cost-effective than air-drying. You should expect extensive rebinding or recasing for bound volumes. Vacuum water damage.

Vacuum Freeze-Drying: Books and records are placed in a vacuum chamber either wet or frozen. The vacuum is drawn, a source of low heat is introduced, and collections are dried at temperatures below 32 degrees F remaining frozen until dry. A physical process known as sublimation takes place in which ice crystals vaporize without melting. As a result, there is no additional swelling or distortion beyond that incurred before materials were placed in the chamber. Coated paper will dry well if it has been frozen or placed into the chamber within 6-8 hours, if not, coated paper may be unsalvageable. The vacuum freeze-drying process requires sophisticated equipment and is especially suitable for large numbers of very wet books and documents, as well as for coated paper. Rare and unique materials can be dried successfully with this method, but leather and vellum bindings may not survive vacuum freeze-drying. Water soluble inks and pigments will not be damaged further. Although this method may initially appear to be more expensive due to the equipment required, the results are often so satisfactory that additional funds for rebinding or recasing are not necessary. Vacuum freeze-drying also lifts mud, dirt, and soot to the surface, making cleaning less time-consuming.

#### Supplies

|                             |                        |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| blotter paper               | dehumidifier           |
| extension cords             | freezer or waxed paper |
| fans                        | masking tape           |
| plywood sheets              | scissors               |
| newsprint (sheets or rolls) | polyethylene sheets    |
| sponges                     | polyester film         |
| storage crate               |                        |

#### **b. Photographs, Prints, Negatives, Transparencies**

##### Priority:

1. Within 24 hours: ambrotypes, daguerreotypes, tintypes, silver gelatin glass plate negatives, wet collodion glass plate negatives;
2. Within 48 hours: color and film, silver gelatin prints and negatives;
3. Within 48 hours: albumen prints and salted paper prints. Cyanotypes in alkaline flood water must be dried as soon as possible; in acidic water they drop to priority 3. Consult a conservator to determine the ph of the water.

##### Actions:

- Don't freeze, then vacuum dry photos, as this may damage the surface of the photos.
- Photos may be immersed in cold water, but keep immersion time to a minimum. Air dry within 48 hours.
- Freezing of photographs retards further deterioration.



- Different salvage techniques are required for different types of photographic materials.
- Carefully remove prints and film positives and negatives from their enclosures. Keep the enclosure or the file number with each film item as it contains vital information to maintain intellectual control.
- Carefully open the case and place the photograph face up in an attempt to disassemble the components, remove debris or wash the photograph. If the affected photo has water or debris trapped within the assemblage, contact the Conservator for proper disassembly.
- Air dry emulsion side up on clean absorbent blotters. Remove and glass lantern slides if present. Do not attempt to clean debris or wash these images. These procedures will be performed by a Conservator.

#### Supplies

|                      |                               |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| blotter paper        | bubble brushes (soft bristle) |
| cheese cloth         | clothes line                  |
| dehumidifier         | distilled water               |
| Falcon squeegee      | drying racks                  |
| fans                 | plastic bags                  |
| Kodak Photo solution | plastic trays                 |
| rust-proof clips     | dryer                         |
| scissors             | sponges                       |

#### **c. Wooden, or Bone Objects**

Priority: Begin drying within 48 hours to prevent mold growth. Polychromed objects require immediate attention; notify the Conservator.

##### Actions:

- Move items only after a place has been prepared to receive them. Lift from the bottom of an object: tables from the apron; chairs by the seat rails - not by the stretchers, slats, headpiece or crest rails; trunks from the bottom, etc.
- Packing: Partially wetted objects can be packed with dry blotting materials such as uninked newsprint or acid free blotters to remove as much moisture as possible. Thoroughly wetted, unpainted objects should be wrapped with blotting materials, then wrapped in polyethylene sheeting to retain as much moisture as possible, since fast drying will cause irreversible damage.
- Drying: Rinse or sponge with clear water to remove mud or dirt before drying. Be careful not to wipe or scour as grit will damage remaining finish. Use a soft bristle brush to clean carvings and crevices. If mud has dried, dampen with a sponge and remove with a wooden spatula; rinse. Remove wet contents and paper liners from drawers and shelves.
- Absorb excess moisture with sponges, clean towels, paper towels, or newsprint. Blot; do not wipe, to avoid scratching the surface. Air dry, using fans to keep air moving without blowing directly on the pieces. Tent the objects with polyethylene sheeting to slow the drying. Raise items off the floor on trestles, pallets, or lumber to allow air to circulate on all sides. Open doors and drawers slightly to allow air to circulate inside the items.
- Use portable dehumidifiers to slowly remove moisture from the area and objects. Drying quickly will cause warping and cracking. Bring relative humidity down to 50-55%.

#### Supplies

soft bristle brush  
clean towels  
fans  
polyethylene sheeting or uninked newsprint  
portable dehumidifier

sponges  
paper towels  
wooden spatula  
pallets or lumber

**d. Paintings on Canvas**

Priority: Begin drying within 48 hours to prevent mold growth.

Actions:

- Precautions: Move items only after a place has been prepared to receive them. If the frame is unstable, remove from painting, pad comers with corrugated cardboard, bubble wrap, or unused newsprint and transport to area dealing with wood objects.
- Packing: Pad comers of frame or painting with corrugated cardboard, bubble wrap, or newsprint. Transport paintings vertically; stand upright with corrugated cardboard between paintings so that painted surfaces do not touch a rough surface.
- Drying: Remove painting from frame: See PAPER: PREPARATION FOR DRYING.
- Prepare a horizontal bed of blotter paper and unused newsprint, equal in thickness to the paint layer, with top-most layer of strong clean tissue. Lay painting, still on face down on this surface. Remove any remaining backing or labels from the painting to expose wet canvas. Retain and tag all associated labels, parts components are removed or detached from the painting or frame.
- Place cut-to-fit blotters or unused newsprint against this back, and apply a slight amount of pressure so that the blotter makes good contact with the entire exposed canvas surface. Repeatedly change backing blotter, being careful not to create impressions in the canvas. DO NOT CHANGE FACING MATERIALS.
- When dry to the touch, remove backing blotter and pick up painting, front facing tissue is still attached to painting front, do not attempt to remove it, since it will hold the painting surface together until it can be consolidated by a conservator.
- Use fans to keep air moving in the room without blowing directly on the paintings. Use portable dehumidifiers to slowly remove moisture and lower relative humidity down to 50%.

**Supplies**

blotter                      paper fans  
portable dehumidifier                      stretch/strainer  
corrugated cardboard, bubble wrap, or unused newsprint

**e. Paper: Framed or Matted**

Priority: Wet paper must be frozen or air dried within 48 hours. Framed and matted items be disassembled prior to air drying or freezing.

Actions:

- Caution must be exercised so as to not puncture or tear the wet paper artifact in the process of removing the frame, gazing and mounting materials.
- Drying: Place face down on a smooth, flat surface covered with blotter paper or plastic bubble pack. Carefully remove dust seal and hardware (place these metal pieces in a container so that they do not come in contact the wet paper and inadvertently cause

damage). Check if the paper object is adhered to rabbet of frame by gently pushing up on the glazing to see that the assemblage will release without resistance. Place a piece of board (mat board, masonite or plexiglass) over the back of the frame with contents still in place. Using two hands, invert frame assemblage so that the glass and image are facing up. Lift off the frame then lift off the glass.

- When the paper is in direct contact with the glass, carefully remove them together and lay face down on a flat surface. Consult a Conservator if the paper is sticking to the glazing.
- If glass is broken, the pieces may be held together with masking tape applied lightly over the breaks. The frame may then be laid face down and the paper removed from the back. If pieces of glass have dropped behind the remaining glass, hold the frame in a vertical position to remove the mat and/or paper.
- To remove the item from its mat, place the image facing up. Lift window mat board carefully and detach paper object from back mat by carefully cutting hinges. If the object is attached and directly to mat or backing board, do not attempt to remove. Proceed to air dry paper object as recommended in PAPER: UNCOATED or PAPER: COATED, as appropriate.
- If difficulty is encountered at any point, consult a Conservator for assistance.

**f. Paper: Uncoated**

Priority: Air dry or freeze within 48 hours. Records with water soluble inks should be frozen immediately to arrest the migration of moisture that will feather and blur inks. Records that show signs of previous bacterial growth should also be frozen immediately if they cannot be air dried.

Actions:

- Paper is very weak when wet and can easily tear if unsupported while handling.
- Drying: Pack flat sheets in bread trays, flat boxes, or on plywood sheets covered with poly-ethylene. Bundle rolled items loosely and place horizontally in boxes lined with a release layer. Remove drawers from flat files; ship and freeze stacked with 1" x 2" strips of wood between each drawer. Framed or matted items must be removed from frames and mats prior to air or freeze drying. See PAPER: FRAMED OR MATTED, PREPARATION FOR DRYING.
- Air Drying: Secure a clean, dry environment where the temperature and humidity are as low as possible. Cover tables, floors or other flat surfaces with sheets of blotter or newsprint. This technique is most suitable for small numbers of records which are damp or water damaged around the edges. Keeps the air moving at all times using fans. Direct fans into the air and away from the drying records. Use dehumidifiers as needed to maintain 50%.
- Freezing: Work space and work surfaces and the following equipment: milk crates cardboard boxes, bread trays, and sheets of plywood and of freezer or waxed paper. This option is best if there are large quantities or if the water damage is extensive. Place manuscript boxes in milk crates or cardboard boxes. If time permits, interleave each manuscript box with freezer or waxed paper. If the boxes have been discarded, interleave every two inches of foldered material with freezer or waxed paper. Do not freeze framed items. Remove frame assemblage before freezing. See PAPER: FRAMED OR MATTED, PREPARATION FOR DRYING
- Damp material: Single sheets or small groups of records are to be laid out on paper covered flat surfaces. If small clumps of records are fanned out to dry, they should be turned at regular intervals to encourage evaporation from both sides. If an item exhibits

water-soluble media, allow it to dry face up. Do not attempt to blot the item since blotting may result in offsetting water-soluble components. Wet blotter or newsprint should be changed and removed from the drying area.

- **Wet material:** When separating saturated paper, use extra caution to support large sheets. If sheets are contained in flat files, standing water should be sponged out first. If items are in L-sleeves the polyester must be removed to allow drying. Cut the two sealed edges of the film in the border between the item and the seal. Roll back the top piece of polyester in a diagonal direction. If there are any apparent problems with the paper support or media, and seek the assistance of a Conservator. Support can be given to single sheets by placing a piece of polyester film on the top of the document. Rub the film gently and then slowly lift the film while at the same time peeling off the top sheet in a diagonal. Lay the sheet flat; as it dries, it will separate from the surface of the film.

#### Supplies

|                                      |                        |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| bread trays                          | blotter paper          |
| bookends/bricks                      | dehumidifier           |
| extension cords                      | freezer or waxed paper |
| fans                                 | masking tape           |
| Hollytex (polyester spunbond fabric) | plywood sheets         |
| Scissors                             | newsprint              |
| polyethylene film                    | plexiglas sheets       |
| pliers, screw driver, tin snips      | sponges                |
| polyester film                       | milk crates            |
| silicon release paper                |                        |

#### **g. Clothing/Accessories with Water Damage**

Priority: Textiles with bleeding dyes as quickly as possible, all other textiles within 48 hours to prevent mold growth.

##### Actions:

- **Precautions:** Move textiles only after a place has been prepared to receive them. Handle wet textile objects only when necessary and as little as possible because textile materials are weaker when wet and can be easily damaged or torn. It is important to support wet textile objects thoroughly when moving them, either on a solid support or in a sling made from a length of fabric, because the added weight of the water increases the possibility of damage. Wet hanging costumes should be carried on a sling and not rehung. Be sure that all identifying information, such as accession number tags, are retained with the objects, and label any parts that become detached. If it is possible to do so without excessive handling, remove all wet packing materials such as cardboard and tissue from contact with the textiles. Do not unfold or spread out wet textiles at this time, and do not stack wet textiles on top of each other.
- Textile objects often have associated non-textile material such as metal and leather. See the salvage instruction sheets for these materials, keeping in mind that the textile component will probably be the most vulnerable.
- **Drying:** A large area is needed to dry wet textiles, as they cannot be placed on top of each other. Floor space can be used; if possible, clean floors before using the space. Table and floor surfaces should be covered with clean polyethylene sheeting, and then with clean blotters or other absorbent material. Fans can be used to increase air circulation and speed drying; place them so that air flow goes across the surface of the textiles for optimal drying. Quick drying is essential for best recovery of wet textile

objects. Excess water can be removed from very wet textiles in good condition by gently blotting with sponges. Absorbent materials such as blotters or terry cloth toweling should then be placed on top of the objects, removed when saturated, and replaced with dry ones.

When the textiles have dried to an appreciable level, they can be gently handled to open out folds and expose new areas to the air. Costumes can be padded out slightly with acid free tissue, polyester batting, or nylon tulle to speed drying and prevent creasing.

- Textiles with bleeding dyes should be dried first and as quick as possible; use absorbent materials to remove as much water as possible. Concentrate drying activity on the areas that are bleeding so that they will dry before the surrounding areas; hair dryers on low heat can be used. Cover the textiles with cheesecloth and be sure the cheesecloth is in close contact with the textile; leave the cheesecloth undisturbed until the textile is completely dry.

Supplies:

|              |                               |
|--------------|-------------------------------|
| Polyethylene | sheeting blotters             |
| cheesecloth  | terry cloth toweling          |
| sponges      | muslin or boards for carrying |

**h. Costume Accessories**

Priority: Begin drying within 48 hours to prevent mold growth.

Actions:

- Support all accessories when moving them; use a solid support. Keep handling to a minimum as these complex objects can be greatly weakened by water.
- Drying: Prepare the room and surfaces for drying as for textiles and clothing. Do not attempt to open fans or parasols, and do not reshape hats while wet. Gently blot water from the objects with sponges, blotter, terry cloth toweling, or paper towels. As hats dry, they can be gently reshaped and padded with acid-free tissue or polyester batting for drying. Shoes and gloves should be treated as for leather historical objects; in general gloves do need to be padded out for drying. Fans and parasols should be dried as is; do not attempt to open or reshape them. If any of the objects have bleeding dyes, follow the procedure outlined under Textiles and Clothing.

Supplies

|                       |                               |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| polyethylene sheeting | blotters                      |
| cheesecloth           | terry cloth toweling          |
| sponges               | muslin or boards for carrying |

**i. Leather, Fur and Rawhide**

Priority: Begin drying within 48 hours to prevent mold growth. Leather with the condition known as “red rot”, will be irreversibly stiffened and darkened by exposure to water if not treated quickly.

Actions:

- Wet leather may be fragile; leather with red rot or which is torn will require support to transport safely. Move items only after a place has been prepared to receive them.

- Packing: Wrap items with freezer paper or plastic sheeting to prevent red-rotted leather from coming in contact with and soiling adjacent items and to keep it from drying before it can be treated. Support complex objects with unlinked newsprint or other absorbent material.
- Drying: Rinse or sponge with clear water to remove mud or dirt before drying. Be careful in rinsing red rotted or painted/gilded surfaces. Keep red rotted leather damp, if it is still in that condition, until proper consolidation can be done. Some leather was intended to be flexible and will need to be manipulated during drying in order to retain flexibility. Other leather was either not intended to flex or no longer needs to be flexible and may be padded out and allowed to dry slowly. Sponges, clean towels, paper towels, or unlinked news print may be used to absorb excess moisture. Pad out to correct shape using unlinked newsprint or other absorbent material. Change padding material as it becomes saturated.
- Air dry: Use fans to keep air moving without blowing directly on the pieces. Raise items off the floor on trestles, pallets, lumber, or screens to allow air to circulate on all sides.
- Use portable dehumidifiers to slowly remove moisture from the area and objects. Bring the relative humidity down as close to 50% as is practical. Check daily for mold.

#### Supplies

portable dehumidifier  
pallets or lumber  
clear water  
fans

freezer paper or plastic sheeting  
sponges, clean towels, paper  
towels, or unused newsprint

## **PERSONAL COLLECTING**

The professional reputation of The Wrangell Museum is a valuable asset and is reflected by the professional and ethical activities of its staff and volunteers. Museum personnel should avoid the appearance of unethical, unprofessional, and potentially compromising practices that may cause the Museum to lose credibility. In issues that are legally defined, the Museum expects the employee to abide by the law, and in those cases where the legal limitations are unclear, professional and ethical behavior serve as a guide.

- I. The collecting of objects is not in itself unethical, but accumulating a collection in an area associated with the employee's museum-related duties raise ethical concerns. Every member of the Museum staff is entitled to a level of personal independence consistent with professional and staff duties and responsibilities. However, as a person with a role of public trust, no member of the museum profession, museum volunteer, or trustee can be wholly separated from the institution of hire or other official affiliations. Therefore, such persons must be concerned not only with personally motivated conduct and interests, but also with the way such actions might be construed by others. All personal collecting transactions, particularly when dealing with objects similar to those collected by the Museum, require extreme discretion. The staff, volunteers, and board of The Wrangell Museum should not compete or appear to compete with the Museum for the acquisition of any object.
- II. An employee acquiring an object that falls within their museum collection area should inform the Director. If The Wrangell Museum considers the object of interest or value to the collections, it should be offered to the institution at the purchase price plus any reasonable incidental expenses. This policy excludes objects that are readily available on the open market.
- III. It is the responsibility of each Museum employee, volunteer, and board member to exercise reasonable care to avoid conflicts of interest in activities relating to their positions at The Wrangell Museum.

## RESEARCH

Scholarly activity and research is vital to the Museum's educational and public service mission. The purpose is to outline, delineate, and reinforce Museum policy with regard to the conduct of research and scholarly activity by members of the Museum staff and faculty. This statement also endorses research as an activity appropriate to the use of museum collections and an integral part of the Museum's Collection Management Policy.

- I. In recognition of the importance of professional research activities, the Museum's administration normally does not intervene in the research or scholarly activities. Situations may arise where it is necessary for the Museum administration to recommend suspension, modification, or termination of scholarly activity or research for adequate cause. Adequate cause for such action includes but is not limited to the following.
  - a. Demonstrated evidence of professional incompetence, supported by documentation.
  - b. Continuing or repeated substantial neglect of professional responsibilities.
  - c. Professionally unacceptable activity in the conduct of scholarly work (e.g., plagiarism, research fraud).
  - d. Endangerment of collections objects beyond professionally acceptable limits.
  - c. Creating a health or safety hazard for Museum faculty, staff, students, visitors, or volunteers.
- II. The objects in the Museum's collections and their documentation, as well as their image and all additional documentation developed subsequently to their acquisition, are the property or stewardship of The Wrangell Museum. Furthermore, any and all materials or items developed, written, designed, drawn, painted, or digitally produced or reformatted by the staff while executing their responsibilities as employees of the Museum also are considered to be the property of the Museum. These property rights shall continue after the employee ends their employment at the Museum.
- III. To insure academic freedom and professional research and scholarly opportunities, Museum staff has the right to respond to actions that impede or prevent such activities.



## EXHIBITIONS

An exhibition is the process of presenting one or more objects with accompanying interpretive and educational materials for the purpose of informing, inspiring, and enlightening a defined audience. This kind of presentation is an appropriate use of museum collections and an integral part of the Museum's mission.

- I. The Museum's primary responsibility for exhibitions is the use of the collections for disseminating new information. The Museum is obligated to ensure that information in exhibitions is honest, objective, and accurate.
- II. The Museum selects exhibits based on merit and scholarship.
- III. Exhibitions should adhere to the concepts of public service and education while subscribing to standard practices in the museum field. The Museum does not authorize certain kinds of exhibitions. The following represents the kinds of exhibitions that are considered unacceptable.
  - a. Exhibitions that publicize or promote commercial products or services.
  - b. Exhibitions that willfully, with malice aforethought, impugn the reputation of any person.
  - c. Exhibitions that do not support the notion of human dignity.
  - d. Exhibitions that threaten the health and safety of the staff or visitors.
  - e. Exhibitions that are intended to promote and/or enhance a particular religious belief, attitude, or dogma.
  - f. Exhibitions that intentionally or unintentionally promote an attitude of prejudice against any person or persons.
  - g. Exhibitions that perpetuate myths or stereotypes viewed as negative or demeaning to a people, race, gender, religion, or ethnic group.
  - h. Exhibitions that compromise the artist's or scholar's rights.

## **IMAGE USE**

Use of images of museum objects for research, exhibit, publication, programming, and publicity purposes is a common practice and when used appropriately such images serve to share museum collections more widely.

- I. The Director has final authority if an image, in any format, may be made public, or whether to give permission for an image to be used or made public by a third party. Such decisions must be made with due concern for appropriateness of use, security of information, quality of reproduction, and any applicable copyright considerations. Images should not be used in any situation that is without value or merit or which compromises the integrity of the Museum.
- II. An image use fee may be imposed.
- III. The Museum utilizes a Collections, Archives and Library Photographic Licensing agreement for Commercial and Personal Use.

## DEFINITIONS

**Accessioning:** Accessioning is the process that is initiated by the transfer of clear title, and that officially incorporates objects into the permanent collections of the Wrangell Museum, or the registration of objects held-in-trust for governmental agencies.

**Acquisition:** Acquisition is the process of acquiring an object or collection for the collections through donation, fieldwork or research, purchase, transfer from or exchange with another institution, or bequest.

**Archival:** Archival implies that the practices and products used are suitable for preservation purposes.

**Collection Object:** A collection object is an item, artifact, specimen, sample, or document that has been accessioned into the collection.

**Conflict of Interest:** Any action or behavior on the part of the governing body, administration, staff, students, or volunteers, as an individual or group, that competes with the institution, or takes advantage of their position or privileged information for personal gain.

**Comparative Collection:** A comparative collection is a group of objects consisting of representative materials within a collecting division that is used for identification, reference, and educational purposes. Access to this collection is less restrictive than for the research collections.

**Deaccessioning:** Deaccessioning is the formal process by which an object is removed permanently from the Museum's holdings. Records of a deaccessioned object remain with the Museum along with documentation of its disposal.

**Disposal:** Disposal is the method used to remove physically a deaccessioned object from the Museum. Disposal is through transfer, exchange, sale, or destruction,

**Inventory:** The physical verification of the presence, location, and condition of the objects for which a museum has assumed responsibility.

**Loans:** Loans are temporary assignments of collection objects from the Museum (outgoing loans) or temporary assignments of objects to the Museum (incoming loans) for stated museum purposes such as exhibition, research, or examination for possible donation or purchase.

**Mission:** Mission is the purpose, expressed in a written statement, that establishes direction and goals with respect to subject matter, time, location, and function(s) of the Museum.

**Museum:** A museum is a permanent non-profit institution, open to the public on a regular basis, which collects, preserves, researches, and exhibits collection objects for study, education, and enjoyment for the benefit of society.

**Museum Collections:** The body of objects and documentation accepted and held-in-trust by the Museum for research and interpretation.

**Personal Collection:** Accumulating a collection on a personal basis in an area associated with the employee's museum-related duties.

**Staff Member:** A person formally affiliated with the Museum who assists with its functions. Staff members include paid personnel, research associates, visiting curators, adjunct faculty, and volunteers.

**Student:** A person formally enrolled in an institution of higher education, and because that person uses Museum facilities, collections, exhibits, or programs for academic purposes, is expected to work within the parameters defined by the Code of Ethics of the Museum.

**Support and/or Associated Group:** A group organized and chartered in cooperation with the Museum, that supports the purpose of the Museum, has members, and provides financial, programmatic, and general assistance to the Museum. The support and/or associated group may or may not have 501(c)(3) status.

**Type Collection:** A type collection is a systematic collection composed of objects that are the basis for the designation of a particular taxon (holotype), material culture style, or geologic section, rock, or mineral. The type collection is the most restricted subunit of the research collection.

**Visitor:** A visitor is any individual, or group of individuals, not directly affiliated with the Museum that is on-site to interact with museum staff and/or to utilize the exhibits, programs, or collections of the Museum.

**Volunteer:** A volunteer is an unpaid member of the staff and subject to the Code of Ethics of the Museum.