



Section 1 – Introduction, Purpose, Scope, and Definitions

1.1 - Introduction

As part of its core mandate, the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin services both Williams Lake and the Cariboo-Chilcotin region more broadly as a centre for heritage education, research, and gathering. The museum designed this collections policy with an eye to care for and protect community history through the systematic preservation of artifacts, archives, photographs, and reference library collections. Many local residents donate their heirlooms and memorabilia to the museum in the hopes that these items will be maintained using a high grade of standards. The collections policy encompasses all manner of policies relating to the collection, including sub-policies in accessions, deaccessions, loans, and other areas relevant to the management, care, and development of the collection.

1.2 - Purpose

The purpose of the collections policy is to establish guidelines for the healthy growth, management, care of, and access to the items that make up the collection. This policy ensures that museum officers, whether they be staff, volunteers, or governance board members, have the necessary priorities to look after the large collection. It highlights the priority of caring for important aspects of the collection and prevents the wasting of resources on caring for less important elements of the collection.

1.3 - Scope

The policy applies to the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin Society Board of Directors, the Collections Committee, and staff (in particular those working in the knowledge, collections care, conservation, archives, digitization, and repatriation departments).

The Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin maintains a permanent collection that is comprised of accessioned items accorded the highest standard of care and overseen by professional staff. The museum also maintains a collection of loaned items.

The permanent collection comprises four collection domains:

- The artifact collection
- The archival collection
- The photographic collection
- The library collection

The artifact collection contains all physical objects of either human or non-human origin. The archival collection contains all text-based documents such as correspondence, newspapers, and non-reference books. The photograph collection contains all materials relating to photographs, including but not limited to prints, slides, and contact sheets. The library contains all referential materials like contemporary books and articles.

1.4 - Definitions

The museum refers to the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin, the body that cares for and exhibits the collection.

The society refers to the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin Society, the governing body that oversees the museum's direction and goals.

The collection refers to the assortment of artifacts, photographs, archives, and materials in the reference library that, as a whole, make up the items that form the core of its exhibition, research, and educational content.

Accessioning refers to the process by which items become a part of the museum collection. This process is elaborated more in the accompanying accessioning procedures document. Once an item is accessioned into the collection, its care falls under the jurisdiction of this policy.

Deaccessioning refers to the process by which items exit the collection. This process is elaborated more in the accessioning procedures section. Once an item is deaccessioned from the collection, its care no longer falls under the jurisdiction of this policy.

Loans refers to items that are loaned to the museum for safe keeping on a temporary basis. The return and/or deaccessioning of loans is subject to museum procedures.

FIC stands for "Found in Collection," which refers to items that are not accessioned or properly registered but for whatever reason are located in the collection. After reasonable efforts are made to identify FIC items, the museum must accession them and then determine if they fall under the collections mandate and either keep them or deaccession them.

Dissociation refers to the process whereby metadata associated with an item in the collection is lost, resulting in the loss of knowledge about an item. This typically results from a lack of policies, procedures, or proper documentation. According to the Canadian Conservation Institute, this can, if left unchecked, become the most pernicious threat to a collection and must be dealt with early to prevent further loss of data. Losing important data associated with an item is very similar to losing the physical item itself.

Provenance is the chronology of the ownership, custody or location of an object. The purpose is to provide contextual and circumstantial evidence for its original production or discovery, by establishing its history, especially the sequences of its formal ownership, custody and places of storage.

Section 2 – Mandate and Policy Statement

2.1 Collections Mandate

The purpose of the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin is to collect, exhibit, interpret, and, in some cases, restore artifacts, photos, and other archival material reflecting the historical and archeological stories of the Cariboo Chilcotin.

In addition, the museum seeks to promote education and research on the history of the Cariboo Chilcotin region through maintaining a reference library. The museum also allows, with discretion, public access to the items on exhibition and supervised access to the non-exhibition items where viable.

The museum will maintain a comprehensive database of all items in its collection, including identification information on all items in the collection using the tri-partite numbering system.

2.2 - POLICY STATEMENT

The Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin collects in accordance with the relevant Canadian legislation and international obligations and abides by the codes of ethics set out by the British Columbia Museums Association, the Canadian Museums Association, and the Canadian Conservation Institute.

Section 3 - Roles

3.1 - The Roles of Staff

Museum staff are responsible for caring for the collection at all times and will ensure that the collection is exhibited properly as per museum standards. Museum staff take preventative conservation measures to protect the collection from deterioration and especially dissociation as per the Canadian Conservation Institute's recommendations relating to the Agents of Deterioration.

Museum staff also ensure that no artifacts which may pose danger to the public are presented in a public space. Museum staff curate the collection and are responsible for contacting professional conservators in the event that items need to be repaired.

Any accessions or deaccessions should be conducted by trained museum staff, preferably the curator or curatorial assistant(s). The museum reserves the right to not accept a donated or loaned item.

3.2 - The Roles of the Collections Committee

The collections committee oversees policies and procedures for all aspects of the collection. Their role is not only to ensure that policies and procedures are followed but also assess and act on the needs of the collection. Members of the collections committee should include at least one

senior staff member, ideally one who specializes in the curation of the museum, and at least one board member from the society. The expertise of staff should always be taken into consideration when deliberating on the needs of the collection and how best to care for it.

Section 4 – Accessions

4.1 - Donations

A donation form with the description, condition, provenance, and pictures of the object must be filled out by the donor for the object to be presented to the collections committee.

“Doorstep donations” – items left unattended at the Museum outside regular hours - and unsolicited donations will not be accepted into the collection. The Museum reserves the right to dispose or sell unsolicited items after 30 days if no owner has come forward.

The Museum does not accept donations through the mail unless prior arrangements have been made with the appropriate staff or board member. All unsolicited donations sent through the mail will be returned to sender.

Special conditions on how the Museum displays and labels the donation will not be accepted, however outstanding circumstances can be discussed with the appropriate staff or board member.

4.2 – Temporary Accessions

There will be no drop ins or temporary accessions except in the event of temporary accession in preparation for a committee to deliberate on the appropriateness of an item entering the collection. Preferably, donors should provide photographs of the items they wish to give to the museum for accessioning in advance of donating items.

4.3 – Selective Acquisitions

The Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin typically acquires new items for the collection via selective acquisition. All accessioned items follow the tripartite numbering system and should not be “intelligent numbers,” that is to say they should not contain any other information such as storage location or category or date. They should just be a number set. Items are acquired under the following conditions:

1. The item is of significance to the municipality of Williams Lake or the Cariboo Regional District. Significance refers to the values and/or meanings that an item has for people and communities. Whether an item is significant is determined by assessing its value by means of four primary criteria; historic; artistic or aesthetic; scientific or research potential; social or spiritual. The degree to which an item is significant is determined by

four comparative criteria: provenance; rarity or representativeness; condition or completeness; interpretive capacity.

2. Acquisition of the item supports a goal of the collections strategy.
3. There must be adequate storage space to accommodate the item.
4. There must be a reasonable expectation of securing funding for the item's storage, care, and conservation.
5. The item is accompanied by warranties of good legal title where appropriate.
6. The item is accompanied by a good record of provenance and must be authenticated where appropriate. Exceptions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
7. The item is valued where appropriate.
8. The item is accompanied by a bill of sale or other statement signed by the owner transferring ownership, and, if applicable, transferring of copyright as defined in the Copyright Act.
9. Donation of the item is free and clear of restrictions and conditions.
10. Donation of the item is irrevocable upon the formal transfer (with a signed Deed of Gift) or title to the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin.
11. The Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin receives all rights necessary to permit regarding the creator's right to the integrity of his or her work and the right to be associated with the work will be governed by and construed in accordance with existing relevant laws.
12. The Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin is afforded the right to conduct treatments or analytical techniques on the item, to exchange the item with another institution, to deaccession the items, or to remove samples from the items.
13. The Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin is satisfied that the item has not been stolen or otherwise illegally acquired or collected.
14. The Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin is satisfied that all required documents relating to the legal and permitted collection of the item have been provided.

4.4 – Documenting Accessions

When items are accepted for donation to the museum, donors must fill out a donation form that states their name(s), address(es), date of donation, what item(s) they are donating with descriptions, and the historical provenance of the item(s). The form must also state that the item(s) will not necessarily be used for exhibition purposes and that the item(s) may be deaccessioned if changes are made to the collection management policy or the item(s) pose a risk to museum staff, volunteers, or visitors.

When an item is accessioned into the museum collection, the museum takes over ownership and custody of the item and has the right to the item's intellectual property and copyright thereafter.

4.5 – Marking Accession Numbers

All items that make up the collection should receive an accession number, regardless of their mode of acquisition. All accession numbers must be applied to collection items using the guidelines set out in the Canadian Museums Association, British Columbia Museums Association, and the Canadian Conservation Institute. All accession numbers must be removable

in the event that an item is deaccessioned and all accession numbers must not dent, corrode, deface, or damage the items.

Section 5 – Loans

5.1 – Basic Rule of Loans

In-loans must be avoided in all but the utmost rare of circumstances.

5.2 – Length of Loans

The period of the loan must be clearly stated in the loan form with all stipulations clearly explained to the loaner. No loans should exceed a period of 2 years, at which point the loaner should be notified to pick up their loans or given the option to make the item part of the permanent collection.

5.3 – Abandoned Loans

After a succeeding period of 2 years, or 4 years after the date of the loan, the loans will be considered abandoned and will become part of the permanent collection. This information must be communicated to the loaner at the initiation of the loan agreement.

5.4 – Extensions and Terminations of Loans

Extensions to loans are prohibited in all circumstances. In cases where an individual wishes to extend a loan, the loaner must be redirected to make an official accession where the in-item(s) becomes a donation rather than a loan. The status of a loan may be changed at any time and it may be deaccessioned. All loans that are removed from the collection must have their accession numbers removed as per museum standards.

5.5 – Outbound Loans

The Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin does not loan out items to private individuals, unless there are First Nations rights holder requests or if special requests are made. All out-loans are subject to the following criteria:

- 1) All loans are subject to a formal written agreement between the lender and the borrower.
- 2) The borrower must comply with all conditions and restrictions imposed on borrowed items.
- 3) Loan requests must specify the purpose and time period of the loan which will not exceed a continuous period of two years without the explicit approval of the Museum Coordinator or curator.
- 4) Loan agreements must specify copyright and reproduction rights.
- 5) The cost of conserving, crating, shipping, and returning a loaned item is borne by the borrowing institution unless otherwise approved by the Museum Coordinator or curator.

Section 6 - Found in Collection Items

6.1 – Documentation

FIC items must be documented and if necessary given accession numbers, cleaned, and have their historical provenance verified. Following the accession process, if an item has no provenance then it should be deaccessioned (refer to section 7 – deaccessions). If no donor is known then the item may be sold off via third party auction. Ultimately, all items must be registered and documented as per museum standards.

Section 7 - Deaccessions

7.1 – Preliminary Steps to Deaccessioning

Before deaccessioning an item, a thorough document search must be conducted to determine if the item is part of the collection already. If not, FIC items must first be given an identifying number before they can be deaccessioned. If the item is accessioned and properly documented, its provenance must be lackluster or non-existent to justify deaccessioning. Museum staff and volunteers must check the provenance and refer the provenance to either a senior staff member, such a curator, or the collections committee to decide what items should be removed.

7.2 – Reasoning

In all cases of deaccessioning, museum staff, and in their unlikely absence the collections committee, have discretion in the decision-making process of whether or not to deaccession an item.

Items may be deaccessioned for a number of reasons, including but not limited to: (1) accidental loss, destruction, or degradation; (2) duplication; (3) insignificant to the museum's mandate; (4) lack of resources to care for it appropriately; (5) the item is better suited in another museum or cultural organization; (6) an item is of cultural significance to a particular First Nation or Indigenous community and is in need of repatriation.

Items should not be deaccessioned if they (1) could serve a good use in exhibits, or (2) complete a series of items in the collection.

7.3 – Deaccessioning Efforts

When an item is selected for deaccessioning, it must be lightly dusted or cleaned. The museum must prepare documentation for the item which shows that the museum, as the owner of the item, has the legal right to deaccession it.

A deaccessioning form must be filled out in all cases and the original accession/loan documentation must be updated to reflect that the item has been removed from the collection. All items selected for deaccessioning must be photographed. All documentation and photographing must be filed in a deaccessioning folder.

In the absence of information about an item's donor, the museum will not contact the original donor to notify them that the selected item will be deaccessioned.

7.4 – Disposal

Once the accession number is removed from the object, disposal of a deaccessioned item is made in one of the following ways/steps:

1. The item can be returned to the original donor/donor's family **only** if stipulated in the original donation.
2. Transfer the item to the educational collection or use for display.
3. Exchange the item with or transfer to another museum, archive, cultural organization, or charitable institution.
4. If the items cannot be transferred to another institution, they can be sold at a public sale – such as an auction or garage sale - for fair market value. It is recommended to notify the public of the sale, although it can be done anonymously.
5. Incineration or physical destruction – this method can be done first if the object is a hazard to the staff and/or collection.

The CCRA published a pamphlet called the *Registered Charities and the Income Tax Act*. The pamphlet states “in most cases a registered charity cannot return a donor's gift. At law, a gift transfers ownership of the money or other gifted property from the donor to the charity. Once the transfer is made, the charity's governing documents oblige it to use the gift in carrying out its charitable purposes.” Failure to follow this guideline will put the Museum at risk with the Canadian Revenue Agency and lose Charitable Status. A non-for-profit may give the original donor back the object, as they have different regulations.

No member of the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin Board of Directors, staff, or volunteers, nor any representative or immediate family member thereof, can receive, purchase, or otherwise knowingly obtain a deaccessioned item.

A deaccessioned item cannot be directly sold to a for-profit private individual or corporation. A donor may purchase back their deaccessioned donation at a public sale for fair market value.

Proceeds from the sale of a deaccessioned item are designated for the development and care of the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin's collections.

With the exception of the archival records, an item is not disposed of through gifts to the original donor, though the original donor is permitted to purchase the item at current fair market value. In this respect, living artists are permitted the first right of refusal to acquire their own works which they have themselves donated.

An item under the jurisdiction of the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the BC Wildlife Act, or the Migratory Birds Act, is not returned to the donor unless the donor acquires a permit from the responsible ministry.

An item under the jurisdiction of the Firearms Act can only be deaccessioned through transfer to a registered federal depository or through surrender to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for licensed destruction. It cannot be transferred to another museum.

Archival records can be returned to the original donor at no cost after appropriate consultation and mutual agreement between the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin and the donor if the records should not have been acquired in the first place or where the originating agency now has the ability to manage the records itself. If donors were issued a tax receipt for the value of their donation, the archival records must be purchased at fair market value.

When archival documents of government origin have been transferred to the museum in error, or have since been deemed active by the donor, these can be returned to originating ministries, agencies, courts, boards, or commissions for active use.

Section 8 - Collections Management

8.1 – Database Materials

The Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin maintains records on the identification, description, location, and condition of all items in the permanent collection and of the items relating to ongoing activities, in particular exhibitions, loans, research, and correspondence with the public, donors, and researchers. In so doing, the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin ensures that records are authoritative, accurate, trustworthy, and objective.

Records are maintained both physically and within our collections management systems and databases. All physical and digital records or data created or received in the transaction of collections activities are corporate records. The museum's database is broken down by its four main categories: artifacts, archives, photos, and library reference materials. While there are four categories there are no duplicate accession numbers in the whole collection, meaning that unique object IDs will be spread out across all four database categories.

The Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin uses metadata to manage and share information about its collections and follows standards of best practice for museum metadata and collections management specific to the collections discipline and media formats. The museum actively documents and updates the records of its metadata to ensure that no data is lost or dissociated from the associated items.

All documentation relating to an item is publicly available in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act and the conditions of any relevant Deed of Gift.

8.2 - Collections Care and Access

The Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin is responsible for the long-term care of its permanent collection and for ensuring that items are maintained under conditions that preserve their physical integrity whilst on display, in storage or on loan.

The Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin is committed to sharing its collections as widely as possible throughout the Cariboo Regional District and all municipalities therein. To this end, the museum facilitates the physical and intellectual access to the permanent collection for the purposes of research, learning, exhibition, publication and cultural use. Recognizing the importance of public access to the permanent collection, the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin uses its best judgement within the context of relevant legislation and ethical standards to balance access to and display of items against the need to preserve them for future generations. Access to the permanent collection or information related to the permanent collection can be refused if the curator or archivist is unable due to illness or other circumstances supervise the access or has in writing established reasons for exercising limits or if the request contravenes legislation or other binding agreements.

8.3 - Collections Priorities

The Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin has a series of collections priorities that comprise the broader part of the collection strategy. These priorities refer to heritage items or sub-collections that are either under threat of dissociation or deterioration or remain a significant draw by nature of their content. In all cases, these priorities must be maintained to preserve community history and prevent the loss of important data or narratives. These priorities must be upheld for the long term and are drawn up in the collections strategies document(s). The preservation of these priority areas, such as the British Columbia Cowboy Hall of Fame, the First Nations artifacts, and accounts of early settlement, is paramount to the ongoing success of the museum. The collections strategies document(s) contains further information on these priority areas.

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