



REPORT

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Jason Kabel, Manager of Community Services

DATE: October 24, 2013

RE: **Museum Policies (2) – Collections Management Policy, Conservation Policy**

In the Spring of 2013 Museum Curator – Sherry George received direction from our provincial contact that we were to have policies in place as adopted by Town Council regarding Collections Management and Conservation at the Museum.

Please find attached the Collections Management Policy and Conservation Policy that have been developed by Sherry George to satisfy the provincial requirement as stipulated. The policies were developed in consultation with provincial representatives to satisfy the specific guidelines. They are to be approved by Town Council prior to October 31 to remove any CMOG (Community Museum Operating Grant) funding implications that The Fort Frances Museum receives annually (\$21,000).

The Community Services Executive Committee recommends to Council endorse the Collections Management Policy and Conservation Policy as presented for the Fort Frances Museum.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jason Kabel,
Manager of Community Services

Council approval of this report will:

Endorse the Collections Management Policy and Conservation Policy as presented for the Fort Frances Museum.

Fort Frances Museum & Cultural Centre Collections Management Policy

The Fort Frances Museum's collection management policy sets forth the goals of the Fort Frances Museum with respect to managing its collections. The policy outlines responsibilities and sets standards for all collection-related activities.

The collection is held and managed in the public trust.

The Acquisition of Objects

The Fort Frances Museum collects objects, photographs, printed and audio-visual material pertaining to the history of Fort Frances and area, in accordance with its Statement of Purpose. The collections are made for the purpose of documentation, preservation, research, exhibition and interpretation for all generations.

The Fort Frances Museum collects according to the following criteria:

1. Artifacts that are specific to Fort Frances and area; i.e. items related to historically important people, places and events in Fort Frances and area.
2. Artifacts that are typical of Fort Frances as a community in Northwestern Ontario, Canada; i.e. artifacts used in Fort Frances and area and/or owned by Fort Frances and area residents.

A budget line is provided in the annual operating budget for the acquisition of objects, their cataloguing, storage and care.

Ethics of Acquisition

The Fort Frances Museum acquires artifacts and/or collections only if it has adequate resources (human, financial, temporal, spatial) to document, preserve, store, research, exhibit and interpret the artifact/collection in accordance to museum standards and while adhering to Canadian Museum Association Ethics Guidelines.

The Fort Frances Museum does *not* acquire material:

1. That has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any provincial or national statute;
2. That has questionable, undetermined or unethical history of ownership;
3. That has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (or any similar statutes) as ratified by Canada on June 28, 1978;
4. If, in addition to, or beyond the preceding clauses, there is any reason to believe that the object's recovery involved recent unscientific handling and/or intentional destruction or damage of archaeological/historical sites or illegal/clandestine excavations.

In addition to the above considerations, acquisition and deaccession of artifacts will be made in light of sensitivity concerning the evolving nature of the relationship between First Peoples and museums.

In situations where copyright is of relevance, the Fort Frances Museum respects the provisions of the Copyright Act (Bill C.32, an Act to Amend the Copyright Act, April 25, 1997). Also, the Fort Frances Museum respects the provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act (1974). Also, the Fort Frances Museum respects the Freedom of Information Act as pursuant to the Municipal Act, R.S.O., 1990 Chap.M.45, the Firearms Act (1995 C.39), the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Wild Animals and Plant Protection Regulation of the International and Interprovincial Trade Act (WAPPRITA), 1992.

Mode of Acquisition

1. Objects/artifacts are acquired by means of donation, bequest, exchange, and on rare occasions, by purchase.
2. All decisions to acquire an artifact are made by the Curator.
3. Any purchases made by the Curator are reported to the Advisory Committee and to the public via Advisory Committee minutes and through the museum's newsletter.
4. All acquisitions involving transfer of ownership and/or responsibility must be accompanied by a *signed* gift agreement or other proof of legal title to the object, such as a transfer of title form or a bill of sale.
5. *No* acquisition is made by which the conditions of acquisition restricts the use of, or disposition of, the object(s) by the Fort Frances Museum as per the Fort Frances Museum's mandate and policies, and professional standards. In rare occasions, should the Curator determine that an artifact is of utmost importance to the collection and the potential donor insists on certain conditions, the donation will be considered.

Management of Artifacts & the Collection

1. Artifacts are stored and handled according to current professional standards.
2. Records are maintained and updated according to current professional standards and staff resources.
3. Artifacts are researched, interpreted and exhibited according to current professional standards and staff resources.
4. A comprehensive inventory is maintained in order to ensure current information about the collection for management and insurance purposes.

Education

The Fort Frances Museum recognizes the importance of experiential learning for its visitors. In fulfillment of this need and to ensure the integrity of the permanent collection, the Fort Frances Museum collects and manages objects separate from the permanent collection to be used for the purpose of enhancing the learning experience during a museum visit, school program or travelling exhibition.

These items may be duplicates or reproductions, and should be in good condition and directly relevant to current research, exhibition, or interpretation programs.

Loans:

- Objects may be loaned to other institutions for temporary displays or educational purposes. Off-site locations must offer reasonable security and environmental conditions. Loans that could pose undue risk to an artifact will not be considered. All loans must be fully documented.

- The Museum will accept loans only for specific purposes – i.e. special displays or temporary exhibits. The Museum will provide the same quality of care as for items in its own collection. No long-term loans from individuals will be accepted due to expense and liability involved in housing, handling, maintaining and insuring the items.

Deaccessioning

Deaccessioning refers to the permanent removal of one or more artifacts from *the permanent collection*.

In order to maintain a growing and relevant collection in accordance with the Museum's Statement of Purpose and current professional standards, occasionally it is necessary to deaccession an artifact or artifacts.

The decision to deaccession will be made on the recommendation of the Museum Curator, and with approval of the Museum's Advisory Committee.

In order to deaccession material from the permanent collection, the Fort Frances Museum adheres to the following standards:

1. The Fort Frances Museum does not acquire any artifact with the intention of eventual deaccession.
2. Criteria for deaccessioning an artifact are: minimal value or significance to the collection and/or to history; poor quality; poor condition; duplication; lack of documentation verifying authenticity, and/or origins, and/or chronological history, and/or owner and/or donor(s); expense of conservation; the possibility/act of upgrading the collection by means of exchange or other transaction.
3. The Fort Frances Museum will deaccession an artifact/artifacts for the purpose of repatriation, when it is legally proven that another body, organization, people, and/or government has the legal and ethical right to the artifact.
4. Once the decision to deaccession has been made, subsequent disposal will:
 - a) Adhere to all applicable laws;
 - b) Be in the best interest of the artifact, the Museum and the public;
 - c) Take into account any restrictions made when the artifact was gifted to the Museum;
 - d) Be in accordance with professional ethical standards;
 - e) Make every effort to keep the artifact in the public domain: artifacts with significant national, regional or local importance should be directed towards appropriate public institutions;
 - f) Ensure that any receiving institution must be able to adequately care for the artifact;
 - g) Employ public sales that are open and transparent, through reputable auction houses or dealers. Funds thus gained must not be used for operational purposes, but for further developing the collection.
5. If an artifact must be destroyed, the Curator and a representative of the Advisory Committee will witness the destruction.
6. No artifact will be returned to its original owner (as stipulated by the Canada Revenue Agency).
7. No artifact can be acquired by staff, Advisory Committee members, or their families.

Repatriation

- The Fort Frances Museum will be committed to the return of culturally sensitive objects when requested by communities or groups with a demonstrable claim or historical relationship to them.

- Every request for restitution, repatriation or return will be given immediate and serious consideration, and treated with respect and sensitivity. Each request will be resolved on a case-by-case basis.
- In respect to First Nations peoples, the Museum will be guided by the Museums Association of Saskatchewan “Standards for the Care of First Nations and Métis Collections”.

Policy Review & Approval

The Collection Management Policy will be reviewed every three years by the Curator, Museum Advisory Committee and Community Services Manager. Recommended changes will be forwarded to Town Council for approval.

Policy revised: October 2013

Fort Frances Museum & Cultural Centre

Conservation Policy

Objective

As a museum's collection is to be kept in trust for future generations, the Fort Frances Museum & Cultural Centre will ensure the preservation of its collection through sound preventive conservation measures.

Definitions

***Conservation** is the application of science to the examination, maintenance, and treatment of artifacts and archival material. Its principal aim is to stabilize artifacts and archival material in their present state. It encompasses both preventive conservation and conservation treatment.*

***Preventive Conservation** consists of non-intrusive actions taken to slow or stop deterioration and to prevent damage.*

***Conservation Treatment** involves interventions causing changes in the physical properties or structure of the object.*

***Restoration** involves removal or modification of existing material, or the addition of new material in order to reinstate earlier known aesthetic, historical, or scientific value.*

Conservation Procedures

The Museum will achieve conservation of the collection by the following means:

- 1) The Museum will ensure that there are good preventive care measures in place to protect the collection from damage. In the event that conservation care is required, the museum will ensure that appropriate measures are taken.
- 2) The Museum will be committed to preventive conservation of its collection through regular assessment and good housekeeping practices.
- 3) The Museum will ensure that only those who have training pertaining to conservation treatment will be responsible for collection management.
- 4) The Museum will refer to up-to-date Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) Notes when basic conservation treatment is required on objects.
- 5) The museum will consult qualified experts when deemed necessary for objects that require more intensive treatment.
- 6) The Museum will be committed to ethical behaviour in the care of its collection.
- 7) The Museum will meet all municipal, provincial and federal legislative requirements that apply to the conservation of its collection.

The museum will be committed to protecting the collection through proper care and handling by way of the following:

- 1) Ensuring that staff are trained in the safe handling of artifacts, and that instruction and practice are carried out periodically to reaffirm the training.
- 2) Ensuring that any artifact that is to be exhibited or used for hands-on activities or interpretation can withstand the use.
- 3) Carrying out safe packing, unpacking and transporting of artifacts, and ensuring that staff are appropriately trained in those procedures.

The museum will provide a separate space for the storage of its collection. These areas will be:

- 1) Designated for collection storage areas – for artifacts only.
- 2) An area large enough to store the collection without crowding and will be large enough to accommodate future growth.
- 3) Organized by type of object or material.
- 4) Subject to a regular housekeeping schedule.
- 5) Exposed to as little light as possible – only when staff are in the room.
- 6) Restricted to museum staff only. No visitor will have access to storage areas without knowledge and permission of museum personnel.
- 7) Equipped with suitable shelving, cabinets and cupboards to provide for safe storage and support of artifacts. Poly-foam will be used where needed to prevent slippage. Mylar or aluminum foil will be used where off-gassing is possible.

The Museum will maintain the safety and preservation of the artifacts while on exhibition by:

- 1) Ensuring that cases and floor spaces are large enough to exhibit the artifacts without crowding or distortion.
- 2) Ensuring that any artifact that is on exhibition has adequate support that will not be harmful to the artifact.
- 3) Constructing cases, artifact mounts or supports, labels and backgrounds out of material that is safe for the artifacts: i.e., adhesives, film and cardboard will be archival quality and acid-free.
- 4) Ensuring that only trained staff will be allowed to clean or handle artifacts during exhibition planning, preparation or construction.
- 5) Ensuring that artifacts are removed from exhibition prior to reaching recommended time limits for that item (CCI Notes).
- 6) Monitoring exhibit areas for damage or loss.

The Museum will ensure the security of the collection by:

- 1) Taking all necessary measures to protect the collection from water or other damage through regular inspection and maintenance of the building; i.e. including water pipes, eaves troughing, and drainage.
- 2) Protecting the artifacts from theft and vandalism by restricting access to the collection while on exhibition by using cases that are locked; keeping small artifacts out of reach; restricting bags, knapsacks, etc, from the exhibit area; and by regular monitoring of the objects while on display. The museum will ensure that the security system is activated after hours and that the collection storage area is restricted for use by staff only or by the approval of the curator or designate.
- 3) Following sound preventive measures to prevent the occurrence of a disaster. In the event of a disaster, museum staff will follow standard procedure to handle the emergency or disaster as laid out in the Museum's Disaster Plan. All staff will be required to be completely aware of the contents of the plan and will be trained to carry out the duties listed within the plan.

The Museum will ensure that the artifacts within storage or on exhibition have an appropriate environment by:

- 1) Ensuring that visible light levels are maintained at acceptable standards (CCI Notes).
- 2) Ensuring the absence of ultraviolet light.
- 3) Maintaining humidity within a 40 to 60 percent range and temperatures within the 20 to 22 degrees Celsius range. Trained staff will monitor rooms daily for humidity and temperature readings using a thermohygrometer. Records will be kept and deviations reported so that corrective measures can be taken promptly.
- 4) Limiting dust and pollution by keeping the interior door on the vestibule closed, and by regularly replacing filters and cleaning ductwork. The Museum will use doormats at all entrances and will regularly vacuum storage and exhibition areas. There will be no smoking within the building.
- 5) Carrying out weekly cleaning and regular maintenance of the facility by trained personnel.
- 6) Ensuring that a weekly monitoring schedule for pests is carried out by the placement of pest traps throughout the facility and that materials that are prone to moths are checked for evidence of infestation on a regular basis. Garbage will be removed from all areas nightly to a sealed bin in the shipping area, then removed twice weekly by cleaning staff. No food or drinks will be allowed in the collection storage area.

The Museum will ensure that conservation treatment will not damage artifacts and are carried out in accordance with professional standards of practice by:

- 1) Ensuring that staff are trained to an appropriate level for basic conservation, and using up-to-date CCI Notes for reference. Staff will consult with a professional conservator on any matter that goes beyond their training.
- 2) Carrying out conservation treatment in an area that is separate from the exhibition and storage areas and appropriately equipped and ventilated in accordance with health and safety standards. The Museum will adhere to Town of Fort Frances Health & Safety Policies during any conservation treatment (i.e. wearing proper safety equipment).

Policy Review & Approval

The Conservation Policy will be reviewed every three years by the Curator, Museum Advisory Committee and Community Services Manager. Recommended changes will be forwarded to Town Council for approval.

Policy revised: October 2013