



A Call to Action ...

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Connecting to Collections

Project Summary April 2009

More than 150 archeology, archives, historic house, library, natural history, art, and history museums, and special collections professionals identified priorities for collections care in Florida. To better understand the state of Florida's collections, the Florida Association of Museums Foundation and collaborators are planning a statewide assessment of Florida's collections and developing strategies to educate legislators and public officials about their responsibility to preserve and conserve Florida's collections. FAMF's collaborators include Florida Art Museum Directors Association, Florida Library Association, Florida Public Archaeology Network, and Florida Trust for Historic Preservation, Department of State, and Society of Florida Archivists. Members of all these organizations met in three forums at three locations around Florida to identify priorities for collections.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services funded the planning phase of Florida's Connecting to Collections in response to the national *Heritage Health Index*, documenting how the nation's collections are at risk.

While the three forums clearly identified "lacks" around the state (funding, staff, training, advocacy, public access, the backlog on cataloguing, digitization and on-line access), the forums also identified a strong commitment to collaborate among the many organizations from different disciplines that attended.

A revelation for many is how similar the issues are whether you work in an archive, a library or a museum, or have responsibilities for archaeological collections or historic houses. Attendees identified opportunities to collaborate across disciplines and outlined areas where collaboration would strengthen each organization's work. Potential collaborations include:

- Share resources and knowledge
- Expand training opportunities for professionals and for volunteers
- Help each other assess the state of collections
- Explore shared storage facilities
- Prepare for disasters
- Create networks to help each other after a disaster
- Communicate to the public that collections are a state asset much like environmentally sensitive lands
- Advocate for funding for collections care at the local and the state level
- Document collections
- Provide public access to digitized and on-line collections-related resources.

The priorities identified during the forums will inform a statewide survey. The survey was drafted by the Connecting to Collections Steering Committee (including board members of each of the collaborating organizations). Dr. Paul Marty, Associate Professor in the College of Information at Florida State University will conduct the survey, along with Ph.D. candidate Kathy Braun.

Each forum was followed by a reception for area legislators to help them understand the importance of preserving collections as a community resource.

Further information is available at
<http://www.flamuseums.org/programming/c2c/>

The *Florida Connecting to Collections Final Report* will be posted on this website in June 2009.