



advancing the  
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..... A Call to Action ...

## Summary of the Steering Committee Meeting

### March 23, 2009, Goodwood Museum & Gardens in Tallahassee

**In attendance:** Graig Shaak, Russell Daws, Melissa Kendrick, John Maseman, Maarten Van De Gutche, Corinne Jörgensen, Tomaro Taylor, Nancy Maddox, Burt Altman, Myriam Springuel, Malinda Horton, Paul Marty, Kathy Braun

#### Executive Summary

Following a broad-ranging discussion on possible next steps, the Steering Committee agreed on a limited number of next steps, including:

- Steering Committee members will present information about Connecting to Collections at respective professional conferences
- Steering Committee members will explore joint advocacy about collections during the 2010 legislative session
- Steering Committee members will pursue collaborative training opportunities, among their respective organizations
- The Steering Committee will continue its work as a Standing Committee. Those in attendance agreed to meet at least one more time, with a meeting scheduled once the data is collected to develop a strategic framework for next steps.

Dr. Corinne Jörgensen introduced Dr. Paul Marty, Associate Professor in the College of Information at Florida State University. Paul Marty has offered to conduct the survey with Ph.D. Candidate Kathy Braun. Both attended the full meeting and participated in the discussion.

- The Steering Committee moved to proceed with Paul Marty's suggestions for conducting the survey.

#### Meeting Notes

The Committee meeting included broad-ranging discussion on possible next steps, including:

- Provide guidebooks for small organizations -- including a broad range of collections-related resources from model disaster plans to vendors for archival paper
- Consider developing a conference to build resources around training activities
- Capture "teaching moments" on video and make them available on a website – It was noted some of the volunteers who attended the DeBary meeting indicated they do not look on-line for resources
- Link archives and library websites

- Continue the *Collections 101* and the *Archives without an Archivist on Staff* workshops, holding them at different sites so archivists and librarians are also hosting
- Simply providing resources is not sufficient. People attending the workshops are looking for opportunities to ask questions, respond, and interact with colleagues or fellow volunteers.
- Identify stronger advocacy “stories” to explain to communities why their collections are so important. For example, look for ways to tell the story of each organization and identify links between organizations in a community to allow them to tell more powerful and compelling stories. Examples of powerful story telling can be found at the American Memory project at the Library of Congress website and the Computer Network website.
- The Connecting to Collections Steering Committee needs to continue its role as a link among organizations. We need to make documents available and accessible, but equally important is the need for conversation and training. Networking and the web are critical, but not sufficient. There needs to be face-to-face contact.
- We need to create stronger connections between the end users of materials in collections and the collections themselves – all the while recognizing that the end user often does not care where the material is housed. They want access to images, research, or documentation, and are often less concerned about where the collections are housed.
- Consensus was that regional conservation centers could provide critical services. However, setting up regional centers is costly and complicated. The most important aspect of conservation is keeping the object stable and in a safe environment. That requires training – reinforcing the discussions about the need to continue providing collections care training.

Following the broad-ranging discussion, Graig Shaak asked Steering Committee members to commit to action steps. They committed to the following:

- Spread the word about Connecting to Collections at the upcoming annual meetings of respective association meetings, including FLA in Orlando (panel session includes Steering Committee members), AFL meeting in Gainesville in April, among others
- Members of the Steering Committee agreed to continue the work as part of a Standing Committee with representation from each of the collaborating organizations. Those in the room agreed to continue for at least one more year. Communication will continue via e-mail, with the next meeting at one of the organization’s annual meetings, once survey data is compiled.
- Members of the Steering Committee would like to see the creation of a Florida Connecting to Collections website – with links to each organization’s websites, but one clearly suggesting a collaboration of all the organizations involved and serving as a clearinghouse for information and resources about collections. It was agreed to continue using the FAM website for now.
- The Steering Committee will continue its advocacy role to convince legislators, and city and county commissioners that collections are a part of Florida’s infrastructure. Messages should be delivered as a collective of all organizations with collections, rather than from individual associations. Collaboration around advocacy should be explored for the 2010 legislative session. The results of the survey could help set a baseline and document what is happening county by county. In addition, a roundtable discussion with legislators was suggested for the end of this legislative session; it should include legislators who may emerge as leaders during the next session.

- The Steering Committee reiterated the need for training across the disciplines, and made a commitment to seek joint training opportunities. In particular, Steering Committee members would like to see the workshops continued (i.e. *Managing an Archives Collections without an Archivist on Staff*, and *Collections Care 101*).

The Steering Committee discussed the proposed survey and expressed their thanks to Paul Marty for taking the lead in organizing the survey. Consensus was reached on the following issues:

- Ideally, the target audience for the survey is all organizations with collections held in public trust. However, it was recognized that practically, the initial target would be organizations that are members of Steering Committee organizations.
  - It was recognized that this might leave out some of the smaller, volunteer based organizations. Including them will provide a fuller picture of the needs of Florida’s collections. We will encourage them through every means possible to participate, but recognize that small, volunteer-run organizations may not have the capacity to respond to a survey. Another option is to do a separate, shorter survey for smaller organizations.
- The survey will be publicized widely in the field, so that staff can check in with their director or collections manager to encourage someone from the organization to respond.
- A long-term goal may be to create a periodic “state of the State’s collections,” with updated information organized by county to allow local governments to understand if they are gaining or losing ground on collections care – or losing collections in their community.
- Paul Marty will check on various on-line questionnaire platforms available through FSU and see which are appropriate and available. Generally, consensus was:
  - Survey respondents should be able to complete the survey in multiple on-line sessions. Alternately, we might disseminate a pdf of the survey, encouraging respondents to fill it out in draft form before going on-line to complete it in one sitting.
  - It should be straightforward, and not require extensive preparation work, with the exception of questions at E (on the draft survey submitted in advance of the meeting). Those questions, asking for specifics about the collection, should be last on the questionnaire.
  - A more complicated survey system would allow multiple individuals from one institution to respond to the survey. It might require individual institutional login and password, making it more cumbersome to administer.
  - Paul Marty and Kathy Braun will consider these logistical issues and bring recommendations to the Steering Committee via e-mail, and conference call.
- Steering committee members will be asked to provide information about their members so that Kathy Braun can organize the distribution of the survey. Steering Committee members will help disseminate information about the survey, and will encourage their respective members to respond.
- Paul Marty will review and revise the questionnaire to help increase the response rate. The major issues to be covered include:
  - Priorities for funding
  - Advocacy
  - Collections documentation and access to collections (including living collections)
  - Storage and collections care

- Disaster preparation and disaster recovery (including the creation of local networks among organizations who could help each other)
  - Regional collaborations and networks
  - Training
- With survey results in hand, the Steering Committee will meet again to further refine the long-term goals.
- Myriam was asked to develop a budget to keep the process going for the coming year. Funding was not identified, but it was suggested that each organization might be able to contribute to a small fund, or that funding might be available through the Secretary of State's proposed *Culture Builds Florida* program.
- Note: FSU's College of Information conducts the national library survey.