The Collections and Policies of the Tallahassee Museum

Revised 4/07
Revisions Adopted by the Board 4/07
# Table of Contents

Statement of Purpose ............................................................................................................ 1

The Collections of the Tallahassee Museum ............................................................................. 1
- Permanent Collection ........................................................................................................ 1
- Historical Collection .......................................................................................................... 1
- Natural History Collection ................................................................................................. 1
- Museum Archives .............................................................................................................. 1
- Live Animal Collection ...................................................................................................... 1
  - Wild Animal Collection .................................................................................................. 1 - 2
  - Domestic Animal Collection .......................................................................................... 2
- Teaching Collection ........................................................................................................ 2
- Foreign Cultural Collection .............................................................................................. 2

Non-Living Collections Policies of the Tallahassee Museum ................................................. 3
- Registration ..................................................................................................................... 3
  - History of the Collections Records .............................................................................. 3
- Acquisition ..................................................................................................................... 3 - 4
  - Examination of Possible Donations ............................................................................ 4
  - Accessioning Collections Items ................................................................................... 4
  - Marking Objects ........................................................................................................... 4 - 5
  - Cataloging Procedures .................................................................................................. 5
  - Previously Cataloged Items – A Recommendation ..................................................... 5
  - Deaccession .................................................................................................................. 5 - 6
- Storage and Treatment ..................................................................................................... 6
- Security and Insurance ..................................................................................................... 6
- Use of Collections Objects .............................................................................................. 6
  - In Exhibits .................................................................................................................... 6
  - For Research ................................................................................................................ 6 - 7
  - In the Museum’s Educational Programs ......................................................................... 7
- Loans ................................................................................................................................. 7
  - Loans to the Museum .................................................................................................... 7 - 8
  - Loans by or from the Museum ..................................................................................... 8 - 9
  - Monitoring Loans ........................................................................................................ 9
- Monthly Reports .............................................................................................................. 9
- Non-collections Donations .............................................................................................. 9
- Change in Policies .......................................................................................................... 9

Living Collection Policies of the Tallahassee Museum .......................................................... 10
- Policy Objectives .......................................................................................................... 10
- Registration .................................................................................................................... 10
  - Acquisitions ................................................................................................................. 10 - 11
  - Accessioning Acquisitions ......................................................................................... 11
  - Marking Animals ......................................................................................................... 11
- Cataloguing Procedures .................................................................................................. 11
- Disposition of Animals .................................................................................................. 11 - 12
Statement of Purpose
In 2002 the statement of purpose was amended to read:

“The Tallahassee Museum promotes knowledge and understanding of the Big Bend’s cultural history and natural environment, inspiring people to enrich their lives and build a better community.” (See Appendix I for past statement of purposes)

A program of collecting and preserving objects in social, cultural, and natural history is one of the ways the Museum has developed to fulfill its mission.

The Collections of the Tallahassee Museum of History & Natural Science
The Museum collects to support its educational purposes, providing collections as a resource for exhibit development and educational programming. The educational role of the Museum as defined in the statement of purpose centers on the natural environment and regional history of the Big Bend area. For the purpose of collecting, the Big Bend is defined as the area of North Florida between the Apalachicola River and the Suwannee River from the Gulf north, including adjacent South Georgia counties.

The Museum’s collections are divided into four areas: the Permanent Collection, the Living Collection, the Teaching Collection, and the Foreign Cultural Collection. Within these areas the Museum collects in several specific categories:

1. The Permanent Collection
   a. Historical Collection: Items from social and cultural history, limited to objects/specimens related to or typical and representative of the inhabitants of the region.

   1. Historical buildings: vernacular of the region, with associated furnishings, tools, equipment, records, and immediate surroundings, including objects and records once used at the site and/or belonging to the associated families.

   2. Objects from the 19th century into the early 20th century not directly associated with one of the historical buildings, but suitable as substitutes for associate furnishings, tools, and equipment. The emphasis is on rural life of the region and collecting is limited to the themes and time periods represented by the historical structures and other permanent exhibits current or planned. Objects from earlier or later periods may be included if directly related to the period objects - for example, as a contrast or a later development.

   3. Artifacts of Florida Native Americans: including prehistoric archaeological materials from the Museum property and adjacent properties and traditional cultural materials of historic peoples of the region.

   4. Gundrum Collection: Reproductions of pre-Columbian Gulf Coast Indian pottery made by Ivan Gundrum, and associated materials.

   5. Objects from the 20th century.

   b. Natural History Collection: Natural history items, limited to those currently or historically native to the region defined by the purpose, and those in support of educational programming and permanent exhibits current or planned.

      1. Biological specimens.

      2. Cultural items related to specific exhibited animals, plants, their use by people or beliefs about them.

   c. Museum Archives: Papers, photographs, and slides concerning the Museum’s own history, its policies and programs. These records include but are not limited to board minutes, annual reports, final reports of grant projects, Museum publications, and financial records that need to be retained beyond 7 years.

2. The Live Animal Collection
   a. Wild Animal Collection: Native Florida animals; mammals, birds, reptiles. The scope
and purpose of the wild animal collection at the Museum is limited to the collection, exhibition, and interpretation of live animal specimens native to but not necessarily endemic to the Big Bend region of Florida. The collection is not limited to animals that are currently extant to this region, but includes animals that have been documented as surviving into historical times.

b. Domestic Animal Collection: Farm animals. The domestic animal collection consists exclusively of species that would have been utilized as beasts of burden, food sources or companion animals on a rural North Florida farm of modest means at the turn of the century. These animals serve to illustrate the daily operation of a typical family farm in a historical setting and context.

3. Teaching Collection: Items which may have active use and as such are considered repairable and/or replaceable. Items which are to be used as they were originally intended, in a demonstration or living history activity, and items of natural history which are considered expendable and may be damaged through educational use, must be in the teaching collections.

It is recommended that as much as possible the items in the teaching collection be replicas or reproductions.

Live animals used in the Museum’s education programs also constitute a Living Teaching Collection. This collection consists of small animals that do not pose a threat to the handler or the public. The use of these animals is regulated by state license (see Appendix E & G). Animal department staff care for the live animals in the teaching collection.

4. Foreign Cultural Collection:
Representative selection of items that document the early collecting history of the Museum. (The Museum no longer collects in this area.)

Additionally, as the Museum is the only broadly focused collecting organization in the region, it has a responsibility to the community to preserve items of special value to the Big Bend area that do not fall within the parameters of more specialized local collections, and may not be specifically included by the above areas.
A. Registration

1. A History of the Collection Records

The section of the collections manual detailing collections procedures shall include a history of the collections records, updated regularly to include known past as well as current practices, changes, dates of changes, and reasons for changes.

2. Acquisition

Acquisitions involve all transactions by which title to incoming items is transferred to the Museum. Acquisitions can occur through donation, purchase, bequest, or exchange.

Acceptance of donations which do not fall into any of the collections categories is at the discretion of the Curator. It might be decided to keep something for trade or placement with another museum. If at all possible, the Curator should refer a prospective donor to an institution where acceptance is more likely.

Some items which might not be suitable for the collections might still be very useful in the educational programs of the Museum. If these items fall into the categories of active collecting, they may go through the formal acquisition process and then become part of the teaching collection. If they do not fall into areas of active collecting, they should be recorded as non-collections donations.

Because the Curator has the best idea of what the Museum already owns or is capable of caring for, she/he should make the final decision based on the following considerations.

a. Acceptance of Objects for the Museum’s Collections: The decision on whether or not to accept a donation or make a purchase is based on a number of things. Is the object relevant to the Museum’s stated purpose? Does the item fall into existing collections? Can the object be used in the exhibits program? Is the object redundant? Is there adequate storage of the proper kind? Can the object be properly cared for? Such things as the security, temperature, and humidity conditions in the historical buildings, and any necessary repairs or maintenance should also be taken into consideration. Badly damaged objects should be taken into collections only if they can be used for parts to repair similar items.

b. Laws Governing Acquisitions:

Reasonable effort will be made to ensure that archaeological items and natural history specimens offered to the Museum are acquired only if they were lawfully collected. The Curator may accept items in any of these collection categories, subject to the following restrictions.

1. If it is archaeological material, it must be from a properly supervised, scientifically excavated site, and have proper documentation. The Museum cannot be in the position of appearing to encourage wanton “pot hunting.” (see Appendix E for Federal regulations and other documents related to protection of cultural materials.)

2. If it is natural history material, such as a mounted bird, or shell collection, it should include data on the collection of each item or appropriate group of items. At the very least, this data should include the source of the material and the date on which it was collected. The collector should have proper collection permits when necessary. The Museum will not accept any endangered species material unlawfully obtained. (See Appendix F for Federal regulations and other documents related to protection of endangered species; Appendix G for permits.)

c. Conditions of Acceptance: With very few exceptions all acquisitions are unconditional. Legal title to all objects in a donation should be obtained free and clear when the donor signs the certificate of gift. The donor should make no restrictions as to the use or future disposition of an object once it is owned by the Museum. A prospective donor should be given some idea of what the donation will be used for. If the items fall into the teaching collection category, for example, it should be made clear that objects will be handled.
Restrictions to be avoided include:

1. Permanent display: Because our exhibit space is so limited, we are unable to promise to keep any donation on permanent display.

2. Credit to the donor each time a donation is displayed: We will acknowledge donations in the newsletter, and may in exhibits of new accessions, but we are unable to give credit for a donation every time it is displayed. Such credit lines often interfere with the story line of the interpretive exhibits.

3. Storage or display separate from other objects or collections of the same type: Storage space is too limited to permit this, and it also restricts exhibit flexibility.

4. Loan back to the donor.

5. Permanent ownership by the Museum: a museum must have the right to deaccession and dispose of an object according to accepted procedures should the item no longer meet its needs.

To avoid future misunderstanding, it is best if potential donors know these things from the start.

d. Acceptance of Loans: The Museum accepts loans only for a specific purpose and for a specified length of time.

e. Appraisals: The Museum does not appraise objects for possible donation or loan. Obtaining such appraisals, from a qualified third party, is the responsibility of the donor or lender. Doing otherwise could leave the Museum open to questions of conflict of interest.

When the Museum requires insurance on any loans that it makes to another party, it will furnish information on the value of the loaned items for use by the borrower’s insurance company.

3. Examination of Possible Donations

If the Curator is unable to make an immediate decision on whether or not to accept a donation which has been brought in, or if an object is brought in while the Curator is out, the owner may leave the item for examination. Items left for examination are left at the owner’s risk. It is the Curator’s responsibility to decide on the status of the object and to let the owner know of the decision as soon as possible.

4. Accessioning Collections Items

The Curator is responsible for all paperwork and permanent records on accessioned objects. She/he may delegate this to another staff member, but should check to see that all the appropriate records including donor recognition are completed promptly and properly.

Gifts should be unconditional with clear title transferred to the Museum through the use of the Museum’s gift form. The gift form should include a description of the donated objects and the signatures of the Curator or Assistant Curator and the donor(s). One copy is given to the donor; the original is kept by the Museum. An additional copy is made at the time of cataloging as a backup record. The gift form and any correspondence documenting the object are maintained as part of the permanent collections records. The donor is acknowledged by mail.

The following records are created, in the order given: entry in numbers register (used to keep track of all numbers as they are assigned to accessions; once a number is assigned, the object should be tagged or marked immediately with its unique number); worksheet (describing the object and cataloging it); source card; computer register entry (register entries are made from worksheet); catalog card (cards are printed from the computer register). All of these records become part of the permanent collections of the Museum and are maintained by the Collections Department staff. Accessions are reported to the Board in the department’s monthly report.
5. Marking Objects

Each removable part of every accessioned object should be marked according to professional standards with its (legible) accession number.

6. Cataloging procedures

The Assistant Curator is in charge of cataloging but may designate a collections staff member or trained volunteer to carry out the tasks. Workers should be familiar with professional cataloging procedures.

7. Previously Cataloged Items - A Recommendation

There is much to do to accession and catalog newly donated objects as well as those which show no evidence of previous processing. In addition, it is imperative that a determination be made of which items listed in the old catalogs are actually still at the Museum. In light of the time-consuming nature of the tasks, we recommend that nothing be done to change existing “old” catalog numbers until the other tasks are complete. This would not preclude the more complete cataloging of the old donations however.

8. Deaccession of Objects

a. When: Proper enforcement of the Museum’s collections policy should keep the necessity to dispose of collections items to a minimum. Changes in purpose, collections growth, and years of wear and tear on some items may cause the Museum to remove certain items from its collections and/or its active records.

Deaccession of an item could be desirable under several circumstances:

1. The object is not relevant to and consistent with the Museum’s stated purpose. The object is outside of any of the main categories of the Museum’s collections; the Museum’s programs have changed, leaving the object irrelevant.

2. The Museum cannot adequately care for the object.

3. The object no longer retains its integrity, its physical identity, or its authenticity.

   The object is broken, worn out, or otherwise can no longer be useful in the programs of exhibits or collections.

4. The object is redundant, one of many duplicates.

b. How: Any attempt to deaccession an object should be proceeded by the determination that the Museum has the legal right to deaccession the object by reviewing existing gift agreements and ascertaining clear title.

No accessioned object will be deaccessioned for any reason within two years of its accession. When it appears that an object should be disposed of, the Curator must obtain the permission of the Director and the Board of Trustees by making written recommendation and justification to the Collections Committee. This applies to all cataloged items and to uncataloged items of obvious value. Permission need not be obtained for uncataloged items in the Traveling Trunks.

Deaccessioned objects which are in good condition should be offered to the following groups or organizations. The condition and/or the amount of documentation of an object would probably determine which of the following should be chosen first.

1. The Museum’s education program.
2. Nearby museums or historical societies.
3. Nearby schools or universities.
4. More distant organizations which might have an interest overriding that of the local community.
5. Local cultural organizations.
6. If none of the above wish to take the objects, they should be offered to the public, either
for sale or auction, with the proceeds going
to the collection program for future
acquisitions.

7. Goodwill or similar organization.

Only after the above avenues have been
exhausted may an object be destroyed or
discarded. It should be noted that according to
currently accepted professional ethics of
collection management, it is considered
unethical for collections items to be disposed of
by gift or sale to Museum employees, trustees,
volunteers, or their representatives, or by sale in
the Museum store.

If an object is given to the Museum without
restriction, the donor retains no legal interest in
it. Notifying the donor of a deaccession may be
done in the interest of “good will” if the object
merits it. A donor would have no rights to
purchase or return of the object above that of the
general public. The Museum holds objects as a
public trust and has a duty to preserve and
protect objects for the good of the public.

c. Record Keeping: After permission is
obtained for an object to be deaccessioned, the
Curator should make sure that all required
records are created and procedures are followed.
This process will include noting the object
status on the permanent record and keeping
complete records on all efforts to trade, sell,
donate, or otherwise dispose of a deaccessioned
object.

The document submitted to the Board including
the reasons for deaccession should be signed by
an officer of the Board after approval is given.
This document becomes part of the permanent
collections records.

B. Storage & Treatment

The Curator is responsible for the professional
treatment and storage of the permanent
collections. The treatment and storage of the
collections objects shall be consistent with
current knowledge of conservation and the
purposes of the Museum and its collections.

The most appropriate storage and exhibit
conditions available should be provided.

Records shall be maintained of objects’
locations and regular inventories conducted;
exhibited items shall be inventoried annually,
stored items every five years.

All staff share the responsibility of protecting
collections objects through respect of secure
areas, careful handling techniques, and
awareness of location and inventory
requirements. Movement of an object or
treatment of an object, including cleaning,
should take place only with the prior consent of
Collections Department staff. Records should
be kept of any object cleaned (more than just
dusting) or repaired. This should include not
only what was done, but how it was done. This
is important for two reasons - it is part of the
history of an object, and the process might need
to be used again on another object.

C. Security and Insurance

Access to present collections storage areas and
work spaces is restricted to Collections
Department staff and other authorized Museum
staff. Direct access to collections objects and
records should continue to be restricted to
Collections Department staff.

In response to any reasonable inquiry, the
Museum can make available collections records
or duplicates of records except those which
might compromise the Museum’s security, the
security of the object or an archaeological site,
or a donor’s security and privacy.

Security of collections objects should be
considered for all objects whether exhibited or
stored. Security considerations include
restricted access, fire, and theft prevention, and
adequate insurance.

D. Use of Collections Objects

1. Use of Collections Objects in Exhibits

The Curator makes the ultimate determination
regarding the use of objects from the collections
in the Museum’s exhibits’ program. The
decision should be based on the condition of the object, the type of use which is proposed (in a case? in a historical building? hands on?), and the display method (simple support? attachment to a backing? suspension?). Ideally, if display in the proposed manner could cause damage to the object or markedly hasten its deterioration, the use should be modified or the object should not be used.

Display: An object should not be modified for display purposes in any way which would permanently affect it. Objects should be placed firmly and supported evenly, without stress. Small or tempting items should be displayed out of reach or in a secure case.

2. Use of Collections for Research

The Museum’s collections are available for certain types of scholarly research. The Curator decides on a case-by-case basis research requests using the collections.

3. Use of Collections Items in the Museum’s Educational Programs

The Curator makes the ultimate determination regarding the use of any collections item in the educational programs of the Museum. This includes items to be used in classes and those to be used in the development of Museum Traveling Trunks.

It is also the Curator’s responsibility to determine the kind of use an object may have. Items might be permitted to be viewed in an exhibit case, allowed to be shown or demonstrated by a qualified Museum staff member, restricted to minimum handling by students, or used by students with few or no restrictions beyond proper supervision. The decision would be based on the condition of the object and/or on the availability of additional objects in the collections. The Curator may refuse to let a given object be used in educational programs if such use would damage the objects or markedly hasten its deterioration.

a. Use in Classes: After due research and preparation of program ideas, the education staff should determine its collections needs. They and the Curator can look through the collections to see how these needs could best be met. Advance notice is necessary, particularly in the case of any classes which would require an unusual number or extensive preparation of materials.

1. Deaccessioned Objects: The Curator may elect to deaccession certain cataloged objects used continually. If items are deaccessioned to the education department, it will be the responsibility of the education staff to store and care for these items.

2. Borrowed Objects: From time to time the education staff might want to borrow things on a one-time basis. Each item borrowed should be checked out and in with the Assistant Curator or designated collections staff member each time it is used and records kept as part of the collections records.

b. Collections Material Used in Traveling Trunks: Traveling Trunks form a bridge between the collections and education programs of the Museum. There are both accessioned and unaccessioned objects in the Traveling Trunks. Collections staff have the ultimate responsibility for all of the cataloged items, but the Education Department has the day-to-day responsibility for care and maintenance of all contents. The Curator may withdraw any accessioned collection object from a Traveling Trunk if it is decided that it is too fragile or valuable.

c. Preservation vs Use: Because the mission to preserve the things of the past for the enjoyment of many to come goes beyond the immediate educational use of an object, it is unlikely that the Curator will be able to lend or deaccession objects to be used as they were originally intended. Because of the likelihood of damage and the inevitability of wear, actual use of an old tool or wearing of an antique garment is strongly advised against by writers and other professionals in the field. Should use be desired, the Collections Department staff will investigate buying or making reproductions of the appropriate artifacts. These would then be a part of the teaching collection.
E. Loans

There are two kinds of loans which occur: loans TO the Museum, and loans BY or FROM the Museum.

1. Loans TO the Museum:

No loans shall be accepted unless they are for a specific purpose and for a specified time period. The Curator makes the ultimate determination regarding the arrangement of such loans. Loans shall be documented with a loan form stating the time period of the loan and all loan conditions, signed by the lender and the Curator or Assistant Curator. The form shall be signed by both the lender and the Curator or Assistant Curator at the return of the loan.

2. Loans BY or FROM the Museum

   a. General Conditions: The Museum can set the conditions for the use of any of its property by another party. Collections items may be borrowed for educational purposes by other museums, and by universities, schools and libraries. Loans may be made for display and for study purposes. Loans may be made to qualified individuals for the purpose of identification or dating. Loans shall be documented with a loan form stating the time period of the loan, all loan conditions, and signed by the borrower and the Curator or Assistant Curator. The form shall be signed by both the borrower and the Curator or Assistant Curator on the return of the loan.

   b. Traveling Trunks are loaned to schools and other organizations following the guidelines set up by the Education Department.

   c. Other Objects in Collections may be borrowed by educational members and other organizations. The Curator considers these requests on a case-by-case basis, and makes the final decision based upon the condition of the objects desired, the kind of security available, and the use to which they will be put.

   d. Insurance, Deposits, and Security: When the Museum wishes to lend objects of high value, the Curator may decide that the borrower should have insurance covering the items for the period of the loan. The Museum will furnish the borrower with the approximate value of each item to give to the insurance company. The Curator should try to keep up-to-date on such information by checking price guides, attending antique shows, or searching on-line auctions. Insurance coverage should also cover the transportation of the objects to and from the place where they are to be used. When insurance is required, the Museum will require the borrower to bring proof of this coverage prior to picking up the loan.

   Should the Museum decide that insurance is unnecessary, the Museum may require the borrower to make a minimum deposit. This may be scaled upward depending upon the number and value of the objects borrowed. The deposit will be returned after the safe return of the loan. When an object is loaned without requiring insurance or a deposit, the Museum does NOT waive its rights to be reimbursed for damages.

   Security of all loaned objects is very important. Boxed objects ready for display or return should be kept in a secure place. Objects from collections should not be handled by viewers unless permitted by the loan agreement. Display cases should be locked. Borrowers using objects for exhibits should talk with the Museum’s Collections/Exhibits Department staff on security matters.
e. Loans to Commercial Concerns and/or for Promotional Purposes: The Curator should handle these requests on a case-by-case basis in the same manner as described above. The Curator should make the decision in consultation with the Director, based on whether the manner of use of such a loan is consistent with and will promote the purposes and aims of the Museum. Objects may be made available for reproduction for commercial sale. The Curator and the Director shall be the judge of quality control, selections, and marketing. Such commercial use shall be consistent with the collections policy. Copyright for reproduction of Museum objects shall remain the property of the Museum and royalties may be collected.

3. Monitoring Loans

The Assistant Curator should check the records periodically to keep track of any loan period coming to an end or any agreements needing revision.

F. Monthly Reports to the Board of Trustees

The Curator or Assistant Curator shall prepare monthly reports on the collections program to be presented to the Director, Collections Committee, and Board. It should include the following information:

1. Accessions: the number of accessions, the number of items involved, any unusual or outstanding accessions.

2. Loans: the number made to and by the Museum.

3. Other accomplishments of the collections staff, such as renovation of storage space, restoration projects, inventories, completion of cataloging projects, etc.

4. Recommendations for deaccession.

G. Non-Collections Donations

From time to time, people wish to donate non-antique tools, equipment, magazines, or items to the Museum. These are items which the Museum would find useful in its educational, maintenance or other programs, but which would not fall into collections.

If someone calls wishing to donate a non-collections item, the call should be referred to the appropriate curator or, if in doubt, to an Administrator. If a potential donation may involve collections as well as non-collections items, or if there is doubt as to whether a donation is collections or non-collections, the potential donor should be referred to the Museum Curator.

To protect the Museum from possible legal problems, a record should be kept of each of these donations, no matter how insignificant they may seem. These records are the responsibility of Administration.

H. Changes in Policy

Recommendations on revisions or amendments to this manual are made by the Curator to the Director in writing. The Director, in turn, takes these to the Collections Committee of the Board of Trustees, which makes a recommendation to the full board following existing procedures as set forth in the bylaws. The Director will report the results back to the Curator.

Approved revisions should be recorded in board minutes and inserted in the proper places in all copies of the collections manual. Out-of-date sections should be retained for the record, with a reference to the revision. (see Appendix J).
Policy Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to ensure that animals acquired for the collection are consistent with the museum’s mission, are acquired and disposed in compliance with all pertinent government regulations and to ensure that the highest ethical standards are observed, acting in the best interest of the animals involved.

A. Registration

1. Acquisitions

Acquisitions involve all transactions by which title to incoming animals are transferred to the Museum. Acquisitions can occur through donation, purchase, or exchange. Due to specific limitations of the collecting scope of the animal program, space limitations, and specific educational needs, the animal department cannot accept all animal donations.

Acceptance of animal donations which do not fall into any of the collections categories is at the discretion of the Animal Curator. It might be decided to accept animals for trade or placement with another museum/zoo. If at all possible, the Animal Curator should refer a prospective donor to an institution where acceptance is more likely.

It is not the practice of the animal program to accept donations of animals for resale purposes, except under highly unusual circumstances. Proceeds from such animal sales must be restricted to enhancing the live animal collection.

Acquisitions of new species to the collection which require the building of a new habitat will be reported to the Collections Committee of the Board and receive full Board approval. The Animal Curator makes the final decision on acquisitions based on considerations discussed below.

a. Acceptance of animals into the Museum’s Collection: Animals accepted into the collection must be consistent with the mission, purposes, and programs of the Museum.

The Museum will not accept an animal donation unless humane care and management can be provided, in keeping with professionally accepted standards.

b. Laws Governing Acquisitions: The Museum will discourage and avoid, by all practical means, unethical, illegal and destructive practices in acquiring, collecting, transporting and trafficking in wildlife with respect to the animal acquisitions.

Specimens must be acquired in compliance with all State and Federal regulations; proper licenses and permits must be maintained where required. (See Appendix E & G for Federal and State regulations and other required legal documents).

c. Conditions of Acceptance: Title shall be acquired free and clear for all specimens when the donor signs the Museum’s “Animal Gift Agreement” form, or by means of a sales receipt from the source. The donor shall make no restrictions as to the use and future disposition of an animal once ownership is transferred to the Museum.

d. Animal Loans: The Museum loans of animals for specific purposes and for specific time periods. The Museum maintains long term loans with federal agencies and reserves the rights to engage in long term loans with individuals and other institutions. All loans will be negotiated and stated in writing using the “Animal Loan Agreement” form subject to professionally accepted standards, pertinent law, and all terms outlined in this policy.

e. Appraisals: The Museum does not appraise animals for possible donation or loan. Obtaining such appraisals, from a qualified third party, is the responsibility of the donor or lender. Doing otherwise could leave the Museum open to questions of conflict of interest.
When the Museum requires insurance on any loans that it makes to another party, it will furnish information on the value of the loaned animal for use by the borrower’s insurance company.

2. Accessioning Acquisitions

The Animal Curator is responsible for all paperwork and permanent records on accessioned animals. He/she may delegate this to another animal department staff member, but should check to see that all the appropriate records including donor recognition are completed promptly and properly.

Gifts should be unconditional with clear title transferred to the Museum through the use of the Museum’s gift form. The gift form should include a description of the donated animal(s) and the signatures of the Animal Curator and the donor(s). One copy is given to the donor; the original is kept by the Museum. The gift form and any correspondence documenting the animal shall be maintained as part of the permanent collections records.

Records shall be kept on each animal and maintained in a permanent file, whether said animal remains in the collection or not. Animal records consist of: Accession Log – Animals which are accessioned into the collection through donations, purchases, births or hatches are entered into the accession log. The log reflects the species, sex, date of accession and source. Primary File contains accession data, condition upon arrival, animal identification cards, and health/reproductive records. The Primary File records are inputted into the International Species Information System (ISIS) Animal Record Keeping System (ARKS) computer database. Computer records are backed up on a regular basis and safely stored on and off site. All of these documents become part of the permanent collections of the Museum and are maintained by the Animal Department staff.

3. Marking Animals

Not all animals in the Museum’s collections are marked. However, those animals not marked are being marked as handling opportunities are presented.

4. Cataloging Procedures

The Animal Registrar is responsible for entering information into the permanent records.

5. Disposition of Animals

The disposition of live specimens must be in accordance with all governmental regulations and any pertinent donation or loan agreements in effect. The best interests of the specimen, the Museum, and its public must be taken into consideration when a disposition is contemplated.

a. When: Animals may leave the collections through several circumstances including: Surplus; age or illness (euthanasia); returned loan; death; or in cooperation with a breeding program, and other programs.

b. How:
1. Surplus specimens - When it is determined that a surplus of specific animals exists; these animals will be placed with appropriate institutions.
2. Euthanasia - When an animal is in an irrevocably declining state because of illness or old age and the quality of life is determined to be below acceptable levels the animal may be euthanized. The decision to euthanize is jointly made by the Curator and the consulting veterinarian. Euthanasia is administered by the consulting veterinarian or by the veterinary technician under the veterinarian’s directions.
3. Return of Loans - Animals on loan to the Museum are returned upon completion of the loan period.
4. Death - The remains of animals which die in the collections are disposed of in a way which is compatible with pertinent laws, for example the USFWS Endangered Species Act. Consideration will be given to the use of carcasses for mounts or other educational or research use.
5. Other Programs - Such as the Species Survival Plan (SSP) - animals come and go at the direction of the SSP studbook keeper.

c. Record keeping: Records on disposed animals are kept and maintained in the permanent inactive file.

B. Display & Husbandry

The Animal Curator in conjunction with the consulting veterinarian, veterinary technician, and head keeper is responsible for displaying animals and animal husbandry. The display and husbandry practices shall be consistent with current knowledge.

Health records are maintained on all animals. All Animal Department staff share the responsibility of documenting animal medical and behavioral conditions in daily keeper observation reports. Conditions of the display, enclosures and security cages are also noted.

C. Security

The security of the live animal collection is provided by museum staff during open hours. Certain specimens are shifted from their daily enclosures to security cages at night.

Access to the animal care area is restricted to animal staff and authorized Museum staff. Direct access to animals and records are restricted to Animal Department staff.

In response to any reasonable inquiry, the Museum can make available animal collections records or duplicates of records except those which might compromise the Museum’s security, the security of the animal, or a donor’s security and privacy.

Security considerations include restricted access, weather, fire, and theft prevention. Adherence to keeper protocol and procedures concerning locks, gates, handling, and enclosure access protects keeper safety and minimizes the chance of animal escape.

D. Use of Animals

1. Use of Animals in Exhibits

The live animal collection is intended for public display.

2. Use of Animals in the Museum’s Educational Programs

A small collection of animals is maintained for use in educational programming. Certain animals are made available to the education department from their display enclosures – snakes, turtles, alligator and farm animals.

a. Use in Classes: Live animals in the teaching collection are available for use in classes by qualified museum educators instructed in proper handling/care techniques. Proper permits and licenses shall accompany these educators when they take any animal off grounds.

3. Use of Animals for Research

Animals in the collection are available for certain types of research. For example: genetic, behavioral, and forensic research. The Animal Curator decides on a case-by-case basis research requests using the live animal collection.

E. Loans

1. Loans to the Museum

The Museum frequently displays animals which are on loan from other institutions. The terms of these loans including duration and replacement costs are stipulated in the loan agreement. The loan agreement is signed by the lending institutions and the Animal Curator.

Primary files are created on all loaned animals. Upon the completion of the loan, the primary file records are removed to the inactive file.

2. Loans by or from the Museum

The Museum occasionally loans animals from its collections to other approved institutions. The terms of these loans are specified on a case by case basis and are spelled out in a loan
agreement signed by both the Animal Curator and the borrowing institution.

a. Insurance, Deposits, Security: When the Museum wishes to lend animals of high value, the Animal Curator may decide that the borrower should have insurance covering the animal for the period of the loan. The Museum will furnish the borrower with the approximate value of each animal to give to the insurance company. Such coverage should also cover the animal from the time it leaves the Museum until it returns. When insurance is required, the Museum will require the borrower to bring proof of this coverage prior to picking up the loan.

Should the Museum decide that insurance is unnecessary, the borrower may be asked to make a minimum deposit. This may be scaled upward depending upon the number and value of the animals borrowed. The deposit will be returned after the safe return of the loan. When an animal is loaned without requiring insurance or a deposit, the Museum does NOT waive its rights to be reimbursed for damages.

Security of all loaned animals is very important. Animals should be kept in a secure place and the terms of the loan agreement abided by.

b. Loans to Commercial Concerns and/or for Promotional Purposes: The Animal Curator should handle these requests on a case-by-case basis in the same manner as described above. The Animal Curator should make the decision in consultation with the Director, based on whether the manner of use of such a loan is consistent with and will promote the purposes and aims of the Museum.

3. Monitoring Loans

The Animal Curator should check the records to keep track of any loan period coming to an end or any agreements needing revision.

F. Temporary Housing

Animals may be temporarily housed or placed at the Museum as a professional courtesy to government agencies, institutions and individuals. Decisions about temporary housing or placement are at the discretion of the Animal Curator.

Based on the duration of placement and specimen type, the Animal Curator will decide if a primary file needs to be created for these placements.

G. Monthly Reports to the Board of Trustees

The Animal Curator should prepare a monthly report on the animal collection program to be presented to the Director, Collections Committee, and Board.

It should include the following information:
1. Accessions: the number of accessions, the number of animals involved, any unusual or outstanding accessions.

2. Loans: the number made to and by the Museum.

3. Other accomplishments of the animal staff, such as habitat renovation, etc.

4. Reports on dispositions.

H. Changes in Policy

Recommendations on revisions or amendments to this manual are made by the Animal Curator to the Director in writing. The Director, in turn, takes these to the Collections Committee of the Board of Trustees, which makes a recommendation to the full board following existing procedures as set forth in the bylaws. The Director will report the results back to the Animal Curator.

Approved revisions should be recorded in board minutes and inserted in the proper places in all copies of the collections manual. Out-of-date sections should be retained for the record, with a reference to the revision. (See Appendix J).