

## Chapter 2: Scope of Museum Collections

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# CHAPTER 2: SCOPE OF MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

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## A. Overview

### 1. *What information will I find in this chapter?*

In this chapter you will find answers to these questions:

- What is a museum collection?
- Who can accept a museum collection?
- What is a Scope of Collection Statement (SOCS)?
- Why does my park need a SOCS?
- How do I write a Scope of Collection Statement?
- Why should I include an Executive Summary (Scope of Collection Statement Summary)?
- How do I write a Scope of Collection Statement Summary?
- How do I implement a museum collection acquisition program?
- What criteria can I use to justify acceptance or rejection of museum objects?
- What is a Collections Advisory Committee?
- Who serves on a Collections Advisory Committee?

### 2. *What other resources can help me prepare and implement my park's Scope of Collection Statement?*

For additional information, see the:

- **Sample Scope of Collection Statement** in Appendix E: Scope of Collection Statement
- **Checklist for Evaluating a Scope of Collection Statement** in Appendix E
- **Bibliography** in Section L., at the end of this chapter

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## B. Museum Collections

### 1. *What is a museum collection?*

A museum collection is a group of artifacts (including archives) and/or scientific specimens that are relevant to the park's mission, mandates, history, and themes, and which the park manages, preserves, and makes available for access (through research, exhibits, and other media) for the public benefit.

The Departmental Manual (411 DM 1.3) defines museum property (museum collections) as:

“an assemblage of museum objects collected according to some rational scheme and maintained so they can be preserved, studied, or interpreted for public benefit. Museum objects include prehistoric and historic objects, artifacts, works of art, archival documents [historical and/or scientific documents collections as defined in the Departmental Museum Property Handbook, 411 DM Volume I, Appendix A, Section A.2.d.] and natural history specimens that are a part of museum collections. Elements, fragments, and components of structures are objects if they are no longer a part of the original structure. Museum property does not include those items necessary to display a collection such as exhibit cases, dioramas, special lighting, graphics, etc.”

Consult with your regional/SO curator and regional historical architect for guidance concerning accessioning structural components and historic fabric into your park’s collection.

**Note:** In rare instances, museum dioramas or exhibit cases may be considered museum property (such as dioramas constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps) or historic fabric.

NPS *Management Policies* (2001), 5.3.5.5 “Museum Collections” states:

“The Service will collect, protect, preserve, provide access to, and use objects, specimens, and archival and manuscript collections (henceforth referred to collectively as ‘collections,’ or individually as ‘items’) in the disciplines of archeology, ethnography, history, biology, geology, and paleontology to aid understanding among park visitors and to advance knowledge in the humanities and sciences.”

2. *Why should parks acquire and manage museum collections?*

Chapter 9 of *Cultural Resource Management Guideline*, Release No. 5 (1997), which implements Director’s Order #28: Cultural Resource Management (June 1998), states:

“Museum collections (objects, specimens, and archival and manuscript collections) are important park resources in their own right as well as being valuable for the information they provide about processes, events, and interactions among people and the environment. Natural and cultural objects and their associated records provide baseline data, serving as scientific and historical documentation of the park’s resources and purpose. All resource management records that are directly associated with museum objects are managed as museum property. These and other resource management records are preserved as part of the archival and manuscript collection because they document and provide an information base for the continuing management of the park’s resources. Museum objects used in exhibits, furnished historic structures, and other interpretive programs help visitors gain better understanding of the events, activities, and people commemorated by parks.”

*Museum collection records such as accession records, catalog records, loan records, conservation records, and inventory records are not included in the museum collection. They are official records that are generated in the course of doing government business. You must retain these records in association with museum collections. Do not catalog or include them as part of the park's museum collection. The management of these records is governed by Director's Order #19: Records Management (Jan 2001). Because they are used in the day-to-day management of the park collection, they are listed on the Records Disposition Schedule as being permanently retained in association with museum collections. See Museum Handbook, Part II (MH-II), Museum Records.*

3. *Who can accept museum collections?*

By delegation, your park's superintendent represents the Director and the Secretary of the Interior in accepting title to and responsibility for museum collections. (See *MH-II*, Museum Records, Chapter 1, for guidance on delegation of authority and museum property management.)

Each park superintendent is responsible for ensuring that all collections acquired are in keeping with the Scope of Collection Statement before accepting the items as part of the permanent collection.

**C. The Scope of Collection Statement**

1. *What is a Scope of Collection Statement?*

A Scope of Collection Statement is a stand-alone museum planning document that succinctly defines the scope of the park's museum collection holdings at the present and for the future. The SOCS derives from the park's mission, as well as laws and regulations mandating the preservation of collections. It is:

- the critical basis for managing museum collections
- referenced in each park's General Management Plan, Resource Management Plan, Long-Range Interpretive Plan, and other planning documents that may affect the collection of museum objects or their management and use

2. *Does every park require a Scope of Collection Statement?*

Yes, all parks must have a Scope of Collection Statement. Although some parks may not intend to acquire a "typical" museum collection, each park will, at a minimum, possess archives documenting the history and management of the park, as well as objects and specimens generated from resource management activities. Other NPS organizational units (such as conservation centers, regional offices, or support offices) that acquire and maintain museum collections must also have a fully developed SOCS.

3. *Why does my park need a Scope of Collection Statement?*

A Scope of Collection Statement guides your park in the acquisition and management of those museum objects that contribute directly to the park's mission, as well as those additional collections that the Service is legally mandated to preserve. A SOCS:

- defines the purpose of the park’s museum collection
- sets agreed-upon limits that specify the subject matter, geographical location, and time period to which the collection must relate
- evolves from legislation and planning documents specific to each park, and from laws, regulations, and NPS policies governing research and specimen collection conducted within park boundaries
- states what types of objects will be acquired to fulfill the park’s mission
- considers collection use and restrictions

Director’s Order #24: NPS Museum Collection Management, 4.3.6 “Scope of Collections” states that NPS units with museum collections must:

“Approve and keep current a Scope of Collection Statement to identify the scope of collecting activities and define the purpose of the collection. Ensure acquisitions are consistent with the Scope of Collection Statement. Deaccession objects inconsistent with the Scope of Collection Statement.”

4. *How do I determine the scope of my park’s museum collection?*

To determine the scope of your park’s museum collection, you should:

- study the mission of the park as stated in its enabling legislation, presidential proclamation, executive order, or subsequent legislation that may revise a park’s mission.
- determine what cultural evidence and scientific information is needed to document and support the park’s resource management and interpretive programs.
- include archeological collections, certain natural history collections, and associated records that are mandated by law, regulation, and policy to be a part of the park’s museum collection.

5. *What is a park Collections Advisory Committee?*

A Collections Advisory Committee is chaired by the curator or collections manager and includes park staff who represent relevant disciplines (interpretation, natural resource management, archeology, and others). Committee members may also include subject matter specialists from neighboring parks and/or the regional office. The roles of the committee members are to:

- determine which of the park’s missions and programs are relevant to museum collections
- determine which types of museum objects the park will maintain to support those missions, programs, and mandates
- draft a new or revised SOCS for the park
- review and make recommendations to the superintendent concerning all potential additions by gift, purchase, transfer, exchange, and loan to the museum collection

- review and make recommendations to the superintendent concerning all potential deaccessions of objects determined to be outside the Scope of Collection
  - review and make recommendations to the superintendent concerning all potential deaccessions of objects that involve voluntary destruction or abandonment
6. *Are parks required to have a Collections Advisory Committee?* No, a Collections Advisory Committee is optional. However, you should consider establishing one. A committee with good representation from different park divisions and across various disciplines will allow for enlightened discussions reflecting diverse viewpoints, and eliminate any appearance of curatorial self-interest unduly influencing the park's acquisitions policies. Most professional museums have a Collections Advisory Committee. The guidance provided by this committee, combined with a well-written SOCS, should ensure that the museum collection is clearly relevant to your park's mission.
7. *Who prepares and approves a Scope of Collection Statement?* The curator, collections manager, or other park staff responsible for the collection (ideally with the assistance of the Collections Advisory Committee) prepares the Scope of Collection Statement. Be sure to coordinate the development of your SOCS with your regional/SO curator, as s/he can provide help. Following review by appropriate park staff (such as archeologists, interpreters, scientists, naturalists, historians, archivists, and other resource management staff) and your regional/SO curator, the superintendent approves the document.
8. *What is the distribution of an approved Scope of Collection Statement?* The park or other NPS unit maintains the original approved Scope of Collection Statement. A copy of the approved SOCS should be forwarded to the regional/SO curator.
9. *How often should I review and revise my park's Scope of Collection Statement?* Review your park's Scope of Collection Statement at least every five years. Revise it whenever changed conditions clearly alter the mission of your park or when priorities in a specific collecting category have been met. Your superintendent must review and approve any changes made to the SOCS. See Appendix E, for a checklist that you can use to prepare or review your park's Scope of Collection Statement.
10. *What are the parts of a Scope of Collection Statement?* Include the following sections in your Scope of Collection Statement:
- Title Page
  - Table of Contents
  - Executive Summary
  - Introduction
  - Types of Collections
  - Museum Collections Subject to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990
  - Acquisition

- Uses of Collections
- Restrictions
- Management Actions

The Introduction and Types of Collections sections are the most important components of the document. These two sections establish the purpose of the park's museum collection and describe the types of objects that the park will collect. The information in these two sections ensures the collection's logical growth while guarding against the acquisition of objects that are not clearly relevant to the park. See Appendix E, for an example of a Scope of Collection Statement.

11. *What is the Executive Summary (Scope of Collection Summary)?*

The Executive Summary (or Scope of Collection Summary) is one or a few paragraphs that summarize the park's collections and highlight the most significant aspects or individual items. The Executive Summary should be located at the beginning of your Scope of Collection Statement. You also may wish to include this same information in a single stand-alone document that you can distribute to park staff, visitors, the press, and other interested parties. Figure 2.1 includes an example Scope of Collection Summary document. This example is available in electronic format. Contact your regional/SO curator to get an electronic copy to use as a template when preparing your park's Scope of Collection Summary.

12. *When should I use the Scope of Collection Summary?*

Use the Scope of Collection Summary when you need a description of the collection for:

- park planning documents
- entries in directories
- press releases
- web sites
- other publications

*You can use the Scope of Collection Summary to update your park's "Collection Summary" on "About Museum Collections" on InsideNPS. Go to <<http://inside.nps.gov/documents/museum>> and follow the instructions under "Edit Park Data."*

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**D. Writing the Introductory Section of the Scope of Collection Statement**

1. *What should I include on the Title Page?*

Prepare a title page that spells out the full name of the park (for example, Zion National Park, Fort Clatsop National Memorial). The Title Page also serves as the review and approval page. See Appendix E, for the Scope of Collection Statement Title Page format.



2. *What should I include in the Executive Summary?* Prepare an Executive Summary that consists of one to a few paragraphs that succinctly outlines the park's collections and highlights the most significant aspects or individual items. The Executive Summary is a useful resource for providing concise collections information to park management, planning staff, and others. You may wish to include this same information in a single stand-alone document (or Scope of Collection Summary) that you can distribute to park staff, visitors, the press, and other interested parties (see Figure 2.1). Use the Scope of Collection Summary when you need a description of the collection for park planning documents, entries in directories, press releases, public inquiries, web sites, or publications. The Scope of Collection Summary can also be made available via the web. See Appendix E, for the Scope of Collection Statement Executive Summary format.
3. *What should I include in the Table of Contents?* Prepare a Table of Contents that lists all of the sections and sub-sections of the SOCS with page numbers. See Appendix E, for the Scope of Collection Statement Table of Contents format.
4. *How do I prepare the Introduction?* The Introduction defines the purpose of your park's museum collection. Justify the collection's significance and include pertinent elements from the park's enabling legislation, other mandates, mission statement, and approved park planning documents. When writing your Introduction, you should state the purpose of the park's Scope of Collection Statement. Sample wording for this section is as follows:
- This Scope of Collection Statement defines the scope of present and future museum collection holdings of Lewis Mountains National Park that contribute directly to the understanding and interpretation of the park's purpose, themes, and resources, as well as those objects that the Service is legally mandated to preserve. It is designed to ensure that the museum collection is clearly relevant to the park.*
5. *What legal authorities should I reference?* Reference the legal authorities for the Service to acquire, document, preserve, and provide access to museum collections:
- Antiquities Act of 1906 (16 USC 431-433)
  - Organic Act of 1916 (16 USC 1 et. seq.)
  - Historic Sites Act of 1935 (16 USC 461-467)
  - Management of Museum Properties Act of 1955, as amended (16 USC 18f)
  - Reservoir Salvage Act of 1960, as amended (16 USC 469-469C)
  - National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 USC 470 et seq.)
  - Archeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974, as amended (16 USC 469-4691-2)
  - Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, as amended (16 USC 470aa-mm)

- National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998 (16 USC 5901)

See Appendix A for a summary of these laws.

Sample wording for this section is as follows:

*The National Park Service's (NPS) legal mandate for acquiring and preserving museum collections is contained in the Antiquities Act of 1906 (16 USC 431-433); the Organic Act of 1916 (16 USC 1 et. seq.); the Historic Sites Act of 1935 (16 USC 461-467); the Management of Museum Properties Act of 1955, as amended (16 USC 18f); the Reservoir Salvage Act of 1960, as amended (16 USC 469-469c); the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 USC 470 et seq.); the Archeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974, as amended (16 USC 469-469l-2); the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, as amended (16 USC 470aa-mm); the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998 (16 USC 5901).*

6. *What information should I include about the park's mission?* State the park's mission. Cite the park's enabling legislation and any relevant subsequent legislation. Include excerpts. If applicable, note that the legislation for the park requires the establishment and maintenance of a museum collection. Be sure to mention any litigation or judgements relating to the collection as well.
7. *What information should I include about the purpose of the collection?* State the purpose of the park's museum collection. A park's museum collection:
  - provides valuable information about processes, events, and interactions among cultures, individuals, and the environment
  - places objects and specimens within a broader context, through research, analysis, and documentary records
  - provides for the greatest benefit and enjoyment by the public
  - provides baseline data, serving as scientific and historical documentation of the Service's resources, and of the purpose for which the park was established
  - may document important events or people in the nation's history, technological processes, or artistic endeavors
8. *What park documents should I reference?* Refer to your park's General Management Plan (GMP) (in lieu of a GMP, refer to the park's current Government Performance Results Act [GPRA] Strategic Plan), Resource Management Plan, Long-Range Interpretive Plan, Historic Furnishings Reports, Historic Structure Reports, exhibit planning documents, or other relevant planning documents in defining the purpose of your park's museum collection.
 

Study your park's interpretive planning documents, and relate how the museum collection supports the interpretive program. List the interpretive themes and periods. If they exist, cite the park's Long-Range Interpretive Plan and other interpretive plans. Include title(s) and approval date(s).

Study your park's resource management planning documents, and, where relevant, state how the museum collection supports the park's resource management program. List pertinent resource management goals and objectives. If they exist, cite the park's Resource Management Plan, Natural Resources Network Inventory and Monitoring Study Plan, Fire Management Plan, and other resource management plans. Include title(s) and approval date(s).

9. *What should I include about mandated collections?*

Identify mandated collections. The purpose for the park's museum collection also includes managing objects that the Service is mandated to preserve.

43 CFR 7.13, "Custody of Archeological Resources," and NPS *Management Policies* (2001), mandate that archeological collections (including associated records) acquired as a result of systematic investigation within a park's boundary must be managed intact as part of the park's resources and, therefore, never can be outside a park's approved Scope of Collection Statement.

Certain natural history specimens that are not consumed in analysis and are determined to be appropriate for long-term preservation are included in a NPS museum collection in compliance with 36 CFR 2.5, "Research Specimens."

Sample wording for this section is as follows:

*Archeological collections, except inalienable and communal property (as defined by the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 [25 USC 3001-13]), recovered from within park boundaries through systematic collection are Federal property and must be retained in the park's museum collection in accordance with 43 CFR 7.13 and NPS Management Policies (2001).*

*In accordance with the NPS Research Permit and Reporting System, permits to collect natural resource specimens state that retained specimens remain Federal property, are incorporated into the park museum collection and, as required by 36 CFR 2.5g, must bear official National Park Service museum labels and their catalog numbers will be registered in the National Park Service National Catalog.*

10. *Should I include information on the significance of the collection?*

Yes. Be sure to discuss the significance and history of your park's museum collection. This is an important part of every SOCS, as it:

- details the development of your park's collection
- ensures that important collections history information is not lost due to staff turnover
- documents the significance of the museum collections in text that can also be used in PMIS project justifications and other funding requests

**Note:** You also may want to include information concerning your park's past curators and managers, as well as past management priorities. Such information may prove helpful as you attempt to develop solutions to

various museum management issues.

11. *What other references should I include in the Introduction?*

List other laws, regulations, directives, and conventions that are pertinent to the acquisition of museum collections. See Appendix A, for a list and summary of these documents. Suggested wording for this section is as follows:

*Other laws, regulations, directives and conventions pertinent to the acquisition of museum collections at the park include: the Lacey Act of 1900 (18 USC 43-44); the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (16 USC 703-711); the Bald Eagle Protection Act of 1940, as amended (16 USC 668-668d); the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended (40 USC 483[b]); the Federal Records Act of 1950, as amended ("Records Management by Federal Agencies" [44 USC 3101 et. seq.]); the Freedom of Information Act of 1966, as amended (5 USC 552); the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 USC 1361-1407); the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 USC 1531-1543); the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC 552a); the Copyright Act of 1976 (17 USC 101 et seq. [1988 & Supp. V 1993]); the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 (42 USC 1996); the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA) (25 USC 3001-3013); Federal Property Management Regulations (FPMR), 41 CFR 101; 410 Departmental Manual, Interior Property Management Regulations (IPMR); 411 Departmental Manual, "Managing Museum Property," Chapters 1-3; "Curation of Federally-Owned and Administered Archeological Collections," 36 CFR 79; NAGPRA Final Regulations, 43 CFR 10; "Disposition of Federal Records," 36 CFR 1228; "Protection of Archeological Resources", 43 CFR 7; "Preservation of American Antiquities", 43 CFR 3; "Preservation, Arrangement, Duplication, Exhibition of Records" (44 USC 2109); "Disposal of Records" (44 USC 3301 et seq.); Director's Order #19: Records Management; Director's Order #24: NPS Museum Collections Management; Director's Order #28: Cultural Resource Management; Director's Order #44: Personal Property Management; the 1983 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (implemented in the United States by P.L. 97-446 in 1983, 19 USC 2601).*

Identify any special designations (such as Biosphere Reserve, National Historic Landmark, World Heritage Site) that may be relevant to the park's museum collection. At the same time, be sure to note if the park is part of a larger (but local) heritage area designation or historic preservation district.

Refer to the sample Scope of Collection Statement in Appendix E, for additional help when drafting the Introduction section of your SOCS.

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**E. Writing the Types of Collections Section**

1. *What should I include in the Types of Collections section?*

In the Types of Collections section, identify the specific types of museum collections that your park acquires to meet the purpose(s) stated in the Introduction. Describe what should be collected to meet the park's enabling legislation, any subsequent legislation, and approved resource management

and interpretive goals and objectives, as well as mandates relevant to archeological and natural history collections. You should:

- State that the Introduction defines the purpose of the park's museum collection.
- Note the two major categories of museum collections: Natural History and Cultural Collections.
  - **Natural History Collections.** Your park's natural history collection may include specimens from the disciplines of biology, geology, and paleontology.
  - **Cultural Collections.** Your park's cultural collection may include objects from the disciplines of archeology, ethnography, and history (including archives and manuscripts).
- Subdivide each appropriate discipline into collecting categories that reflect the purposes of the park. Establish the collecting categories based on classification, time period, themes, or other criteria. Examples may include types of biological collections (birds, mammals, and fungi), archeological materials recovered during pre-construction compliance work, archival materials associated with certain individuals related to the park.
- Briefly describe current representation of object types under each collecting category.
  - Discuss strengths of the existing collection.
  - Identify any current deficiencies to help define acquisition priorities.
  - Provide sufficient detail to distinguish the various types of items that may be considered for acquisition.
  - Establish quantitative or qualitative limits on the size of the collection when possible.
- Include all archeological materials and natural history specimens collected within park boundaries that the park is mandated to maintain in park collections.
  - These items are Federal property and must be retained in the museum collection according to law, regulation, and policy.
  - State the requirement to retain all resource management records prepared or assembled as a result of archeological survey, excavation, or other study. State the requirement to retain resource management records generated by natural resource studies that the NPS initiates. When these records are associated with collected artifacts or specimens they are known as associated records. In accordance with NPS *Management Policies* (2001), 4.2.2. Independent Studies, and the NPS Research Permit and Reporting

System, parks may require researchers doing independent (non-NPS) studies to provide the park with copies of field notes, final reports, or other documentation related to the project. If the park has this requirement, include it in the SOCS. See *MH-II*, Appendix D, for information concerning associated records.

2. *What do I need to know about natural history collections to help me prepare the Types of Collections section?*

Parks generate natural history collections in relation to the size and complexity of natural resources within the park, the number of research and monitoring projects, and for multiple uses. Natural history collections contain materials from the disciplines of biology, paleontology, and geology. Your park's collection may include:

- **Reference Collections.** Many living organisms, fossils, and minerals are difficult to identify. Reference collections allow identification by comparison with actual specimens.
- **Synoptic Collections.** Synoptic collections contain multiple representatives of a particular group from the park. They are generated to document presence and distribution, to establish baseline inventories, for monitoring, or to illustrate the morphological variations within a genus or a species.
- **Voucher Collections.** Studies and projects generate voucher specimens that document by date and locality species identity, age classes, genetic variations, and other information that may be reviewed in the future by other investigators.
- **Type Collections.** A type specimen is the specimen used to describe a new species for the first time. The definitions and procedures for type specimens are tightly controlled by international codes (such as the *International Code of Botanical Nomenclature*). Type specimens have extremely high scientific value. They are managed as NPS controlled museum property and must be afforded appropriate storage and security.
- **Tissue Samples.** Viable tissue samples are rare in NPS collections, as the specimens must be stored within specialized equipment that can maintain ultracold (about -80°C) or cryogenic temperatures (below -130°C) for their preservation. The exact temperature is usually determined by the sensitivity of the specimens. -130°C is the maximum temperature for long-term stability of plant and animal cells and -150°C or lower is considered to be optimum for preservation. See *MH-I*, Appendix T, for additional information on tissue samples.

Natural history collections can result from ongoing park projects such as Fire Effects projects, Inventorying and Monitoring projects, Cultural Landscape Reports, Ethnobotanical Studies, and other activities. These collections can also result from research conducted by non-NPS scientists working in the park under permit. Be sure to develop your park's natural history collection in close coordination with your park's Research Coordinator, resource management and interpretive staff, scientists, your regional/SO curator, and Native American and other cultural groups associated with the park.



3. *What other information concerning natural history collections should I include in the Types of Collections section?*

Your discussion of natural history collections should include a brief paragraph that describes a program for the selective acquisition of natural history specimens for the collection. Base this paragraph on appropriate resource management and interpretive goals and objectives of your park. Be sure to state that:

- Specimens must be collected scientifically, so that only well documented and appropriate specimens are retained in the collection.
- No non-NPS collector can work in the park without first obtaining a permit. The permit's "Collections Section" must also be completed, documenting where collections of specimens and associated records will be housed.

**Note:** You may want to encourage park staff to obtain a permit for projects that they undertake in the park as well. Consult with your park's research coordinator concerning this and other related matters.

*Neither the Collections Advisory Committee nor the museum staff decide what research will be conducted in the park. The superintendent, with the input of your park's research coordinator, makes that decision. Both the committee and the museum staff advise the superintendent on what objects and specimens should be (or must be, according to statute) accessioned into the park's museum collection.*

*In some parks, curatorial and natural resource staff work together to review collection permit requests, advising the superintendent to reject certain requests that are duplicative of existing collections and re-direct the researcher to the existing park collections. This policy is particularly valuable to support park goals of protecting rare species and limiting/preventing duplicative collecting.*

Other information that you should mention in this section includes:

- The collecting category "Associated Records" under each discipline. (See *MH-II*, Appendix D: Archival and Manuscript Collections and Question 6. below, "What do I need to know about Archival and Manuscript Collections..." for information concerning associated records.)
- A statement that addresses the park's program to curtail uncontrolled collecting of natural resources by staff and visitors.

**Note:** Many parks maintain teaching collections of herbarium, mammal, bird, and other specimens. Such collections are usually managed by the park's interpretive division and are typically located in an environmental education center, visitor center "hands-on displays," or are included within a "traveling trunk" used for off-site programs. Such specimens do not result from authorized scientific research in the park, but rather from road kills, collecting outside park boundaries, and illegally possessed flora, fauna, and other specimens seized by state and Federal authorities. Since these

collections are truly interpretive in nature and were not a product of scientific research, do not accession these materials into the museum collection. If your park has such a teaching collection, it is useful to note this fact in the SOCS to differentiate it from the museum collection.

***Except for specimens that the Service is mandated to preserve, a natural history collection may not be applicable to your park's enabling legislation, interpretive themes, and resource management goals and objectives. If your park does not currently possess or intend to acquire a natural history collection (other than mandated collections resulting from resource management activities), include a short statement in this section to that effect.***

See Appendix E, for an example Scope of Collection Statement that includes sample language and content concerning natural history collections.

4. *What do I need to know about cultural collections to help me prepare the Types of Collections section?*

Your park's cultural collection may contain materials from the disciplines of archeology, ethnology, and history (including, but not limited to, fine and decorative arts, architectural materials, and archival and manuscript collections).

Develop your park's cultural collection in close coordination with park resource management and interpretive staff, your regional/SO curator, historians, archivists, archeologists, ethnographers, and Native Americans and other groups who have a personal or cultural affiliation with the collection.

***Limiting the growth of history and ethnographic collections may be an important concern. Consider your park's interpretive and resource management goals and objectives, as well as your capability to properly manage and preserve these collections. If appropriate, indicate the types of objects that should not be part of the collection. History and ethnographic collections may be limited to types and quantities sufficient to implement exhibit planning documents and/or a Historic Furnishings Report.***

5. *What other information about cultural collections should I include in the Types of Collections section?*

Your discussion of cultural collections should include:

- An introductory paragraph that indicates the purpose of these collections.
- Information concerning archeology collections:
  - Artifacts and Specimens. Include a statement that addresses the park's program to curtail uncontrolled surface collecting by staff and visitors.



- Associated Records. See *MH-II*, Appendix D: Archival and Manuscript Collections and Question 6. below, “What do I need to know about Archival and Manuscript Collections...” for information concerning associated records.
- Your park’s collection priorities. State that:
  - An object from the site or directly associated with person(s) or event(s) commemorated by the park is more desirable than a similar object without such association.
  - Priority must be given to the best-documented site-related objects. When a large quantity of an object type is available, priority will be given to acquiring the best-preserved examples (unless there is greater value in the assemblage of a whole set rather than simply of individual items).
- A brief listing of those types of object currently in the collection.
- Information concerning history and ethnographic collections.
  - If a history or ethnographic research/study collection is deemed to be important to fulfilling the park’s mission, make such a statement.
  - Justify this collection by referencing appropriate resource management and interpretive goals and objectives.

See Appendix E, for a sample Scope of Collection Statement that includes language and content concerning cultural collections.

6. *What do I need to know about Archival and Manuscript Collections to help me prepare the Types of Collections section?*

Never include official records in the museum collection without specific authorization from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). Official records are defined under the Federal Records Act. They are also described in guidelines issued by NARA, and in NPS Director’s Order #19: Records Management. Official records include original or “record copy” documents created or received in the course of performing the daily work of the NPS. Examples of official records include audit records, budget materials, central park correspondence files, contracting files, financial records, law enforcement records, legal records, museum administrative records, permits, personnel records, project files, and similar types of materials. By law, the NARA has authority over these materials, and they must be transferred to that agency or otherwise disposed of according to NARA guidelines.

The museum collection may include several categories of archival and manuscript materials that do not meet the statutory definition of official records, as well as official records that the National Archives has authorized NPS to retain. These materials include:

- **Personal Papers or Organizational Archives** donated to the NPS by non-Federal sources. Because these materials are non-Federal in origin and because the NPS obtained them as museum objects rather than as records of NPS activity, they are not considered to be official records.

**Note:** Acquiring such collections without also acquiring the copyrights can severely limit the park’s use of the items. NPS acquisition policy requires parks to:

- determine who owns the copyright
- if possible, have the owner transfer the copyrights to the NPS

See Section E: Acquiring Copyrights, in *MH-II*, Chapter 2: Accessioning, for additional information.

- **Sub-Official Records.** These include *copies* of official records, such as bibliographies, desk files maintained by individual NPS employees, park handouts, and other documents kept for purposes of reference or convenience.
- **Resource Management Files.** These records are defined in the Departmental Manual (411 DM 1, Policy and Responsibilities for Managing Museum Property), and include site forms, field notes, drawings, maps, photographs, video tapes, sound recordings, oral histories, inventories of artifacts, laboratory reports, and “Associated Records” that are created in connection with specific sites, objects, and specimens. Although these are official records created by a Federal employee, contractor, or partner, the Service has permission from the NARA to keep them because they relate directly to museum collections and park resources, and because they are critical for the interpretation, management, or preservation of the nation’s natural and cultural heritage. See 36 CFR 79 for additional information concerning associated records related to archeological resources.

*Archival documents can be in any format: paper, film, audio or video recordings, or electronic (computer-based) media, to name but a few.*

Also, except for materials compiled by NPS staff into “assembled collections,” it is seldom appropriate to acquire or maintain archival materials on a document-by-document basis. Instead, archival materials usually are kept in their original groupings, following the filing schemes developed by the person or organization that created them. Therefore, it is preferable to acquire archival materials on a collection-by-collection basis. See *MH-II*, Appendix D: Museum Archival and Manuscript Collections for additional information.

See *MH-I*, Appendix E, for a sample Scope of Collection Statement that illustrates sample language and content for this collecting category.

7. *How do I determine if material belongs in the park library or the museum collection?*

**Library Collections.** As a general rule, place publications that are not rare or assembled by an eminent figure related to the park’s mission in the park library. See *Conserve O Gram* 19/1, “What Makes a Book Rare” for the definition of a rare book.

**Museum Collections.** In addition to the excepted publications noted above, place all original archival documents, whether in audio-visual, electronic, textual, or visual format, in the museum collection. These

original materials include such items as audiotapes, correspondence, graphic prints, manuscripts, motion picture film footage, photographs, reports, and videotapes, plus all other original documentary formats.

*Books associated with a significant individual (such as Frederick Douglass) or acquired in response to a deficiency identified in a Historic Furnishings Report or Exhibit Plan should be placed in the museum collection.*

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## F. Writing the Museum Collections Subject to NAGPRA Section

### 1. *What is NAGPRA?*

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA) (25 USC Chapter 32) recognizes the rights of lineal descendants, culturally affiliated Indian tribes (including Native Alaskan villages or corporations), or Native Hawaiian organizations to control or own Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony that are held by federal agencies and museums that receive federal funds. In addition to its other provisions, the law requires these agencies and museums to:

- conduct inventories and produce written summaries of such items in their collections
- repatriate (return) identified NAGPRA associated items to the appropriate lineal descendants, culturally affiliated Indian tribes, or Native Hawaiian organizations in compliance with the law, if requested to do so by these groups

For additional information concerning NAGPRA, see Appendix A: Mandates and Standards and *MH-II*, Chapter 6: Deaccessioning.

### 2. *What do I include in the SOCS about NAGPRA?*

If applicable to your park, include information on the written summary and inventory.

**Written Summary.** If applicable to your park, state that the NPS met the legal requirement by distribution of the Servicewide Summary, listed by park, to all Indian Tribes, Alaskan Native villages or corporations, and Native Hawaiian organizations on October 27, 1993. In accordance with *Cultural Resource Management Guideline* (1997), Appendix R, NAGPRA Compliance, superintendents must periodically review and update summaries to reflect new acquisitions and newly recognized Indian tribes. State that an updated copy of this summary is on file at your park. If your park has no museum objects in the NAGPRA defined categories of unassociated funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony, make a statement to that effect. Suggested wording for this section is as follows:

*The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA), 25 USC 3001-13, requires, in addition to other actions, a written summary of unassociated funerary objects, sacred objects, and*

*objects of cultural patrimony. The park's holdings that fall into these NAGPRA categories are listed in the Servicewide Summary that was distributed to all Indian Tribes, Alaska Native villages, and Native Hawaiian organizations on October 27, 1993. An updated copy of this summary is on file at the park.*

**Inventory.** If applicable, state that your park has human remains or associated funerary objects subject to NAGPRA in its collection. State as of **[note date]** the park completed the inventory of Native American human remains and funerary objects. In accordance with *Cultural Resource Management Guideline* (1997), Appendix R, NAGPRA Compliance, superintendents must periodically review and update the inventory to reflect new acquisitions and newly recognized Indian tribes. State that an updated copy of this inventory is on file at your park. If the park has no human remains or associated funerary objects, make a statement to that effect. Suggested wording for this section is as follows:

*NAGPRA requires a written, item-by-item inventory of human remains and associated funerary objects to be completed no later than November 16, 1995. The park has human remains and associated funerary objects subject to NAGPRA in its museum collection. A detailed listing of these items is contained in the park's NAGPRA Inventory, completed [note date]. An updated copy of this inventory is on file at the park.*

**Note:** You must keep all NAGPRA summaries and inventories up-to-date. If your park has acquired NAGPRA related items since 1993, be sure to amend your park's summary and inventory to reflect this. For additional information, see *Cultural Resource Management Guideline*, Appendix R, NAGPRA Compliance, pp. 325-326.

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## G. Writing the Acquisition Section

### 1. *How do I prepare the Acquisition section?*

When writing the Acquisition section, be sure to:

- Describe the various types of acquisition sources.
- State that museum objects must be acquired, accessioned, and cataloged in accordance with *Museum Handbook*, Part II, Museum Records.
- State that the acquisition of museum objects is governed by the park's ability to manage, preserve, and provide access to them according to:
  - *NPS Management Policies* (2001), Chapter 5
  - Director's Order #28, Cultural Resource Management (1998)
  - *Cultural Resource Management Guideline* (1997)
  - Director's Order #24: NPS Museum Collections Management (2000)
  - *NPS Museum Handbook*, Part I, Museum Collections, Part II,

## Museum Records, and Part III, Access and Use

- State that the park will not be a partner to, or encourage in any way, the trafficking in illicitly collected materials. Be sure that all acquisitions were collected, exported, imported, transported, or otherwise obtained and possessed in full compliance with the laws and regulations of:
  - the country of origin
  - the United States federal government (including NAGPRA)
  - the individual states within the U.S.

See *MH-II*, Chapter 2: Accessioning, Section D. Special Considerations for Accessions, for information on the illicit trade of collections.

- State that the acquisition of firearms included on the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) list of prohibited/restricted weapons requires concurrent review by the regional/SO curator and the regional/SO law enforcement specialist.
- State that NPS policy requires superintendents to accept only unconditional gifts. This includes acquiring all copyrights at the time of acquisition. Only the regional director has the authority to approve conditional gifts for rare exceptions, on a case-by-case basis. See Director's Order #24: NPS Museum Collections Management (2000), 4.3.15 Unconditional Gifts and *Museum Handbook*, Part II: Museum Records, Chapter 2, Section E. "Acquiring Copyrights."
- Make a statement regarding delegation to the park superintendent of the responsibility for accepting title to museum collections and for their subsequent management. As appropriate, outline any park-specific acquisition procedures that supplement the Servicewide requirements.

### 2. *What is some suggested wording for the Acquisition section?*

Suggested wording for the Acquisition section is as follows:

*The park acquires objects for its museum collections by gift, purchase, exchange, transfer, field collection, and loan. Museum objects must be acquired, accessioned, and cataloged in accordance with Museum Handbook, Part II, Museum Records. Acquisition of museum objects are governed by the park's ability to manage, preserve, and provide access to them according to NPS Management Policies (2001), Chapter 5; the standards for managing museum objects in Director's Order #28: Cultural Resource Management (1998), Cultural Resource Management Guideline (1997), and Director's Order #24: NPS Museum Collections Management (2000); the NPS Museum Handbook, Part I, Museum Collections and Part III, Access and Use.*

*In accordance with NPS policy, the park will prohibit the acquisition of gifts with restrictions or limiting conditions. Such restrictions include copyrights; the park will acquire copyrights to all incoming accessions. Incoming loans will be acquired only for a particular purpose such as research or exhibition, and for a specified period of time. Museum objects are acquired, accessioned, and cataloged in accordance with*

*the NPS Museum Handbook, Part II, Museum Records.*

*The park will not be a partner to, or encourage in any way, the trafficking in illicitly collected materials. All acquisitions must be collected, exported, imported, transported, or otherwise obtained and possessed in full compliance with the laws and regulations of the country of origin, the United States federal government (including NAGPRA), and the individual states of the United States.*

*The acquisition of firearms included on the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) list of prohibited/restricted weapons requires concurrent review by the regional/SO curator and the regional/SO law enforcement specialist.*

*The park superintendent, by delegation, represents the Director of the National Park Service and the Secretary of the Interior in accepting title to and responsibility for museum objects. The superintendent bears the ultimate responsibility for the acquisition and proper care and management of the museum collection. The superintendent has delegated the day-to-day care of the collection to the museum curator.*

*All acquisitions must receive formal approval from the superintendent before they can be accepted into the museum collection. Upon receipt, all newly acquired objects and related documentation must be turned over to the museum curator. The museum curator prepares, for the superintendent's signature, all instruments of conveyance, and letters of thanks, acceptance, or rejection, and transmits them as appropriate, to the donor, lender, vendor, or other source of acquisition.*

Refer to the Acquisition section of the sample Scope of Collection Statement in Appendix E, for additional help when drafting this section of your SOCS.

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## **H. Writing the Uses of Collections Section**

### **1. *How do I prepare the Uses of Collections section?***

When writing the Uses of Collections section, you should:

- Briefly describe the desired and acceptable uses of the museum collection and establish the limits of such uses. Possible uses include exhibits (including web features), interpretive programs, research, and other interpretive media (such as publications).
- State that the primary consideration in all uses of museum objects is the preservation of each object in question and of the museum collection as a whole.
- If applicable, state that the park may consult with local and/or affiliated Native American tribes, Native Hawaiian organizations, or Alaskan Native villages and corporations about providing access to certain items of concern.
- State that in accordance with NPS *Management Policies* (2001), Chapters 5 and 7, the park will not exhibit Native American human remains or photographs of those remains. You should also include



language concerning the NPS management policies regarding the display of Native American grave goods or other objects considered sacred. See *NPS Management Policies* (2001), 5.3.4 “Stewardship of Human Remains and Burials,” 5.3.5.5 “Museum Collections,” and 7.5.5 “Consultation.”

- State that any interpretive use defined as consumptive must be authorized in advance, as outlined in Director’s Order #28: Cultural Resources Management (1998) and Director’s Order #6: Interpretation and Education (Draft, 2003).

*The NPS prefers the use of reproductions to the consumptive use of original objects.*

2. *What is some suggested wording for the Uses of Collections section?*

Suggested wording for Uses of Collections section is as follows:

*The park’s museum collection may be used for exhibits, interpretive programs, research, publications, or other interpretive media. The primary considerations for the use of museum objects are the preservation of each object in question and of the collection as a whole, and accurate interpretation.*

*In accordance with NPS Management Policies (2001), Chapters 5 and 7, the park will not exhibit Native American human remains or photographs of those remains. Drawings, renderings, or casts of such remains will not be displayed without the consent of culturally affiliated Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations. The park will consult with culturally affiliated or traditionally associated peoples to determine the religious status of any object whose sacred nature is suspected but not confirmed. These consultations will occur before such an object is exhibited or any action is taken that may have an adverse effect on its religious qualities.*

*Researchers and other specialists may examine objects and archival materials under the conditions and procedures outlined in Director’s Order #24: NPS Museum Collections Management (2000), Director’s Order #28: Cultural Resource Management (1998), Cultural Resource Management Guideline (1997), and in the park’s written “Museum Collections Access Procedures.” Outside researchers must submit a research proposal to the superintendent for review by the park’s Research Committee. If applicable, the research proposal may be presented for review during consultation with the **[list all local and/or affiliated Native American tribes, Native Hawaiian organizations, or Alaskan Native villages and corporations with whom you should consult]** before access to certain items in the collection is granted.*

*Any interpretive use defined as consumptive must be authorized in advance, as outlined in Director’s Order #24: NPS Museum Collections Management (2000), Director’s Order #28: Cultural Resource Management (1998), Cultural Resource Management Guideline (1997), and Director’s Order #6: Interpretation and Education (Draft, 2003). The use of reproductions is preferred to the*

*consumptive use of original objects.*

*Destructive analysis is a legitimate use of museum collections for approved research purposes when the impact is minor or when the object is common, in which case approval by the superintendent is required. If an object is rare or significant, a request for destructive analysis should be reviewed by the regional/SO curator and may be approved only by the regional director, as outlined in Director's Order #28: Cultural Resource Management (1998) and Cultural Resource Management Guideline (1997).*

*Objects may be loaned out to qualified institutions for approved purposes in accordance with NPS Museum Handbook, Part II, Chapter 5: Outgoing Loans. Institutions must meet accepted museum standards for security, handling, and exhibition of NPS museum objects. Sensitive materials may require additional conditions prior to a loan commitment. Expenses related to loans of museum objects, including shipping and insurance, will normally be assumed by the borrower.*

Refer to the Uses of Collections section of the sample Scope of Collection Statement in Appendix E for additional help when drafting this section of your SOCS.

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## **I. Writing the Restrictions Section**

### **1. *How do I prepare the Restrictions section?***

You should list any restrictions on the museum collection. Restrictions that you should mention include:

- requirements for consultation with culturally affiliated and traditionally associated peoples and other cultural and community groups for whom the collection has significance in accordance with NPS *Management Policies* (2001) 7.5.5 “Consultation” and 5.3.5.5 “Museum Collections,” and DO #24: NPS Museum Collections Management (2000)
- limited public disclosure of sensitive information concerning the following NPS resources in compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 USC 470 et seq.), the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, as amended (16 USC 470aa-mm), the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998 (16 USC 5937) and NPS *Management Policies* (2001) 4.1.2. “Natural Resource Information” and 5.2.3 “Confidentiality”:
  - rare, threatened, or endangered species
  - commercially valuable resources
  - minerals
  - paleontological resources
  - archeological resources



- objects of cultural patrimony and sensitive ethnographic information
- intellectual property rights limitations on publication of archival and manuscript materials, works of art, and other objects (see *MH-III*, Chapter 2: Legal Issues)
- restrictions on the disposition of type specimens
- limited conditions under which endangered, threatened, or rare animals and plants may be collected in accordance with 36 CFR 2.5
- restrictions to ensure an object's preservation
- limited access to certain objects for security purposes
- any limiting conditions placed on objects when they were acquired

2. *What is some suggested wording for the Restrictions section?*

Suggested wording for this section is as follows:

*In accordance with NPS Management Policies (2001) 7.5.5. "Consultation" and 5.3.5.5 "Museum Collections," and DO #24: NPS Museum Collections Management, curatorial staff should consult with traditionally associated peoples and other cultural and community groups for whom the collection has significance. Archeological objects in the museum collection shall be made available to persons for use in religious rituals or spiritual activities in accordance with 36 CFR 79, Section 79.10(c), "Curation of Federally-owned and Administered Archeological Collections." Requests to borrow non-archeological material for religious ritual or spiritual activities will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.*

*The park will not approve research on human remains and associated funerary objects without the consent of the affected group(s).*

*In accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 USC 470 et seq.), the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, as amended (16 USC 470aa-mm), the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998 (16 USC 5937), and NPS Management Policies (2001) 4.1.2. "Natural Resource Information" and 5.2.3 "Confidentiality," the park may withhold from the public sensitive information concerning: rare, threatened, or endangered species; commercially valuable resources; minerals; paleontological resources; archeological and other cultural resources; objects of cultural patrimony and sensitive ethnographic information; information provided by individuals who wish the information to remain confidential; the identities of individuals who wish to remain anonymous. Inquiries of this nature will be referred to the regional Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Privacy Act Officer for consultation and possible review.*

*Restrictions may be placed on the publication of images or manuscripts in the museum collection if these materials are subject to copyright, and the National Park Service does not hold the copyright.*

*All endangered, threatened, or rare plants and vertebrate and invertebrate animals will be collected only when accidentally killed or when dead from natural causes. The collection of threatened, endangered, or rare plant and animal species will comply with NPS Management Policies (2001), be in accordance with the provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, and will be strictly limited according to the applicable rules of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*

*Final disposition of type specimens will be determined at the Servicewide level and will adhere to recognized conventions established for specific disciplines.*

Refer to the Restrictions section of the sample Scope of Collection Statement in Appendix E for additional help when drafting this section of your SOCS.

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## J. Writing the Management Actions Section

### 1. *How do I prepare the Management Actions section?*

When you prepare the Management Actions section, you should:

- State that the park must review the Scope of Collection Statement at least every five years and revise it when necessary, to remain supportive of and consistent with the park's mission.
- Note that appropriate park staff (such as archeologists, interpreters, scientists, naturalists, and other resource management staff) and your regional/SO curator should review any revisions to the Scope of Collection Statement. The superintendent must approve any revision to the SOCS.
- Identify the need for a Collection Management Plan (CMP), if appropriate. Document this need in the park's Resource Management Plan. If this plan has already been prepared, state that fact and give the completion date. See Chapter 3 for information concerning a CMP.
- Identify any park collections that are stored in a repository outside of the park's boundaries (such as a NPS archeological or preservation center, another park, or a non-NPS repository). If this situation exists, list the name of the repository and its location.

### 2. *What is some suggested wording for the Management Actions section?*

Suggested wording for this section is as follows:

*This Scope of Collection Statement must be reviewed every five years, and when necessary, must be revised to remain supportive of and consistent with any changes in the park's mission. Any revision to this document requires the approval of the superintendent.*

*The park has an approved Collection Management Plan. The plan was approved on [note date].*

*A number of objects from the collection are housed at repositories*

*outside of the park* [note item type, quantity, institution name, and location].

Refer to the Management Actions section of the sample Scope of Collection Statement in Appendix E for additional help when drafting this section of your SOCS.

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## K. Implementing the Scope of Collection Statement

1. *Does my park need to develop an acquisition strategy?*

Yes. You should develop an acquisition strategy to fully implement your park's approved Scope of Collection Statement. An acquisition strategy will help you to:

- understand the disciplines and object types represented in the existing collection
- discover gaps in the collection
- identify excess objects not relevant to the scope of your park's collection
- limit acquisitions to only those items identified as mission-related or those deemed necessary to fill pre-determined gaps in the collection

2. *Is there a standard format for an acquisition strategy?*

No, there is no standard format. However, you should consider the following steps in developing an acquisition strategy:

- Assess the types of objects in the museum collection. Include objects, specimens, and archival and manuscript collections on loan to other institutions.
- Identify gaps by comparing the classes of objects identified in the assessment with the types of objects identified in the Scope of Collection Statement.
- Compare objects in the existing collection with object needs identified in an Exhibit Plan or a Historic Furnishings Report. These plans help you to identify objects that are required for the park's interpretive program.
- Develop a prioritized list of items needed for your park's museum collection. One method is to list specific types of collections needed under the disciplines identified in the Scope of Collection Statement. Use the following criteria in prioritizing needs:
  - Acquire objects to replace those borrowed from other parks or institutions.
  - Acquire only those objects that have a strong relationship to the mission of the park and the purpose of the collection as stated in the Scope of Collection Statement. This includes priorities established by an Exhibit Plan or a Historic Furnishings Report.

**Note:** In order to preserve your collection’s original site-specific objects, you should mention a strategy to acquire “duplicates” (similar objects without site association) or reproductions. You can periodically rotate the “originals” and “duplicates” or reproductions between storage and exhibit to address preservation and security concerns.

- Focus on objects associated with events and activities that took place inside your park’s boundaries.
- Study the park museum files to determine if there are any known sources available to fill identified gaps in the collection. Keep records of potential sources of objects and their locations for future acquisition by the park.

*Visitors may express interest in donating or selling museum objects to your park (or they may know of items of interest). See Figure 2.2 for an example Potential Museum Acquisitions sheet that staff can use to record this information. Contact your regional/SO curator to obtain an electronic copy. You also may develop your own park-specific format for recording this information. Provide copies to staff at all visitor contact locations and be sure to train all staff in the purpose, proper use, and disposition of this information sheet.*

3. *What other factors should we consider when developing our park’s acquisition strategy?*

Take into account the following issues as well:

**Mandated Collections.** Include archeological and certain natural history collections in your acquisition strategy. These collections are generated in response to a park’s cultural or scientific resource management requirements and research projects authorized under the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (ARPA), 43 CFR 7.13, 36 CFR 2, and the NPS Research Permit and Reporting System. You may not be able to predict the size and scope of these collections, so be sure to work closely with park/center/regional archeologists and scientists to stay informed of the needs, including potential growth, of these collections.

**Ability to Manage.** Consider any deficiencies (such as the lack of a proper storage facility or inadequate staffing levels) that limit your park’s capability to properly manage additional collections.

4. *What criteria should my park use to acquire collections?*

If the acquisition of an object or objects is justified by your park’s Scope of Collection Statement, you and your superintendent may reserve the right to accept or reject objects on the basis of the following criteria:

- **Site-Specific Objects.** Give first priority to acquiring objects original to a park, as determined by the Scope of Collection Statement, over non-site-specific objects.
- **Objects that are not Site-Specific**

- Consider objects related to the themes or periods of a park, but not original to the site, as your next priority.
- Make decisions concerning the acquisition of non-site-specific objects based on their significance to the park's interpretive and resource management programs. You should also consider such factors as authenticity and their potential for use as comparative collections.
- Reproductions are considered non-site-specific objects.
- **Physical Condition.** In some cases, damage that is the result of historic use or neglect may enhance the intrinsic value of an object (such as the clock from the USS *Arizona* that was damaged in the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor). However, a park should consider carefully the acquisition of an object whose integrity has been significantly compromised by deterioration or abuse. In general, the following questions are helpful when evaluating an object:
  - Is the object intact?
  - Are all parts present?
  - Is there evidence of deliberate or accidental damage (such as paint spilled on the object)?
  - Does the object show signs of abuse or neglect (for example, an axe that was used for prying or hammering)?
  - Is the object made of materials that are inherently unstable (such as cellulose nitrate negatives)?
- **Rarity.** If an object is considered rare, it may be advisable for the park to accept a donation regardless of defacement, damage, incompleteness, or the quantity of a class of object already in the collection. **This criterion is particularly important when considering site-specific objects.**
- **Part of a Set.** Individual items that are part of a complete set or assemblage may not be individually important, but when taken together possess importance, and should be acquired as a set.
- **Availability.** Except for objects original to the park, you should take advantage of the availability of proposed donations to augment or replace like objects already in the collection that are in poorer condition or of lower quality.
- **Authenticity.** You need to determine that the object is authentic and that the owner acquired it legally. If you aren't sure about an item's authenticity, consult appropriate subject matter experts (historians, curators, archeologists, scientists, appraisers, and others) or staff at institutions with similar collections.

- **Collections Management Issues.** You must ensure that your park has the proper resources (funding, staffing, facilities, and equipment) to properly manage and preserve the object(s).

5. *Where can I find additional information concerning acquisitions?*

Consult your regional/SO curator and refer to *MH-II*, Chapter 2: Accessioning, Section C: Acquisition Policies, for additional information.

6. *What should I do if the collection includes museum objects that are not relevant to our park?*

Use your park's approved Scope of Collection Statement as the basis for determining what objects in the current collection may not be relevant to the park. Prepare a list of these objects for deaccessioning. See *MH-I*, Part II, Chapter 6, for guidance on deaccessioning museum objects.

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## L. Selected Bibliography

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National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

[Park name here]  
National Park

[Address Line 1]  
[Address Line 1]  
(123) 555-1234 phone  
(123) 555-2345 fax

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## [Park Name Here] National Park

### Scope of Collection Summary

The museum collection includes both natural history and cultural collections. The natural history collection includes: mammal and bird collections; the park herbarium; paleontological collections from the Bear Valley Shale Formation; geological specimens from the Bear Valley Shale and Lewis Granite Formations. Other natural history collections within the museum collection include: fungi; reptiles and amphibians; fish; insects and arachnids. At present, these collections are relatively small, as little research pertaining to these disciplines has been conducted in the park to date.

The cultural collection includes: archeological materials systematically excavated from within the park's boundaries and associated field records (circa 1000 BCE – circa 1940); an ethnology collection of Paiute and Shoshone basketry, watercolors, beadwork, and textiles; historic objects associated with the area's 19th century miners, railroad workers, and homesteaders, and items related to the Civilian Conservation Corps and President Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1938 park vacation; archival and manuscript collections such as the Joseph Jakes papers, oral histories, photographs, and scientific and resource management records.

### For additional information on the museum collection contact:

Museum Curator  
[Park Name Here]  
[Address Line 1]  
[Address Line 2]  
(123) 555-1236 phone  
(123) 555-2345 fax  
[museum email address here]

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#### EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Figure 2.1. Example Scope of Collection Summary



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

[Park name here]  
National Park

[Address Line 1]  
[Address Line 1]  
(123) 555-1234 phone  
(123) 555-2345 fax

### [Park Name Here] National Park- Potential Museum Acquisitions

**To Park Staff:** Use this sheet to note information from visitors concerning collections that the park may wish to acquire. Complete Section A. and forward to the Curator's Office. Use the reverse or attach additional sheets if necessary. **DO NOT ACCEPT ANY ITEMS ON APPROVAL**, only the Superintendent can accept acquisitions for the collection.

#### A. Basic Information to be Collected by Park Staff

Contact made by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name Title Division Telephone/Radio Call #

Contact Method:  In Person  Letter  Telephone  Email

Contact Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Check One:  Objects  Natural History Specimens  Archival Materials

Describe the item or collection (discipline(s), quantity, type of item, time periods, condition). Use the reverse if more space is needed: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Estimated size of collection (cubic feet, boxes, quantity, as appropriate): \_\_\_\_\_

Background history of the item/collection: \_\_\_\_\_

Name, address, telephone number, and email of owner: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Current location of collection: \_\_\_\_\_

Is owner willing to donate, sell, lend, or make the collection available for reproduction and on what terms: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### B. To be completed by the Collections Advisory Committee

Should Park seek future acquisition of items:  Yes  No

Native American or other associated group or individual to be consulted: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Figure 2.2. Example Potential Museum Acquisitions Sheet