



# PARK MUSEUM MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES  
2011 – 2015



# INTRODUCTION

The National Park Service (NPS) museum program is charged with providing professional stewardship for more than 42 million objects and specimens and 52,400 linear feet of archives (FY 2010 Collection Management Reports [CMRs]). These collections have unique associations with park cultural and natural resources, eminent figures, and park histories. Diverse collections vouch for the conclusions reached in scientific studies, resource studies, and planning documents. They provide the foundation of park interpretation and education programs. They document and confirm the administrative histories of park units and the relationships with park stakeholders, and they provide the raw material for future studies by park and public researchers.



Top: Shirt, Nez Perce National Historical Park, NEPE 2151.

Above: Chair, Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site, MAWA 529.



The foundation of this program is in dedicated staffs at more than 360 parks, 7 centers, and 7 Regional Offices, all of which carry out important roles for the American public. These staffs provide technical assistance to parks and daily care, preservation, protection, conservation, stewardship, accountability, and access for NPS collections. In addition, Washington Office staff provides leadership, coordination, policy development and procedural guidance, and information management within an organizational structure that promotes collaboration among all levels of management.

This strategic plan is a response to recommendations of a series of external reviews in 2008 and 2009 that called on the NPS to do a better job of caring for its significant collections. NPS Deputy Director Dan Wenk directed NPS Chief Curator Ronald C. Wilson to lead a team of resource professionals in reviewing the external reports, recommending priority actions, and developing planning documents to improve our responses to the reports. By focusing on core priorities, this plan seeks to enhance our ability to respond to future challenges in pursuing the NPS mission.

Key goals for the NPS service-wide museum program are organized within the NPS priorities of Workforce, Relevance, Stewardship, and Education.



# WORKFORCE

The NPS museum program has a dedicated and talented workforce committed to preservation, protection, and use of NPS museum collections. The museum workforce consists of curators, museum specialists, museum technicians, archivists, archive technicians, a wide range of discipline specialists (historians, archeologists, conservators, biologists, paleontologists, etc.), and an even wider range of NPS staff (e.g., rangers and program managers) with museum responsibilities as a collateral duty. Long-term sustainability of the museum program requires the appropriate balance among a diverse workforce with a broad range of skills and abilities. Staffs use tools, such as communication skills, provenience research, comparative analysis, scientific examination, well-designed treatment approaches, information management, and conservation to ensure longevity and availability of NPS museum collections, to inform park resource management, science, and interpretation activities.



Top: Scenery in the Grand Tetons, By Albert Bierstadt, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, MABI 2843.

Above: Desk Lamp, Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historical Site, HOFR 632.

## Strategic Goal

*Promote professionalization of the NPS museum workforce through recruitment, training, retention, and networking opportunities that support appropriate preservation, protection, and use of museum resources.*

## Objectives

- W-1 Develop strategies, including succession planning, to retain and expand curatorial expertise; seek staff levels necessary to meet NPS legal responsibilities for stewardship of its museum and archive collections; and ensure that expertise is available to NPS curatorial staffs when and where it is needed.
- W-2 Create internships, career ladders, and advancement opportunities that encourage staff recruitment, development, and retention.
- W-3 Enhance opportunities for NPS archive and museum staffs at all levels to participate more fully in professional organizations and conferences that provide general museum and discipline-specific training opportunities to expand the skills and abilities of park museum staffs to manage, use, and provide access to NPS museum and archive collections.
- W-4 Provide opportunities for NPS facility managers, superintendents, site managers, and directors at all levels to expand their knowledge of NPS museum and archive services, compliance mandates, stewardship responsibilities, resource needs, facility requirements, and professional training requirements.
- W-5 Enhance access to senior museum preservation experts by park staffs and provide support (e.g., quality assurance and guidance) for collateral duty staffs.
- W-6 Maintain current data on the NPS museum workforce, review positions, identify key deficiencies, and assist in the developing and promoting of OFS requests to resolve deficiencies.
- W-7 Provide opportunities for NPS archive and museum staff at all levels to participate in details, special projects, or resource sharing programs that enhance skills and provide networking opportunities among parks, curation centers, regions, and the Washington office. Promote sharing of staff with unique museum collection management knowledge, skills, and abilities and build networks among parks with similar stewardship needs.



# RELEVANCE



Top: Basket, Yosemite National Park, YOSE 66822.

Above: Union Cavalry Musician's Jacket, Gettysburg National Military Park, GETT 20433.

NPS museum collections document American, tribal, and ethnic histories; park cultural and natural resources; park histories; and other aspects of human experience. They allow us to trace the history of climate change, track changes in preservation techniques over time, and preserve oral histories of communities and resources. As such, they are primary resources for information essential for park planning, resource management, research, interpretation, and education programs. Too many park museum collections are not accessed by potential users because they are inaccessible or unknown beyond curatorial staffs. Relevance to the American public is enhanced by access to the collections that meet user needs and interests.

## Strategic Goal

*Share knowledge gained through decades of responsible stewardship and use of NPS museum collections with the American public and with NPS staff.*

## Objectives

- R-1 Expand use of existing communication tools to engage public interest in the diversity of NPS museum collections through research-based and educational use of collections.
- R-2 Strengthen ties to university programs to engage students and faculty in museum-related opportunities available through the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) National Network.
- R-3 Strengthen NPS participation and leadership within the museum profession by sharing collection management policies, procedures, and publications through NPS.gov web pages.
- R-4 Encourage participation of NPS archive and museum staffs in professional organizations by providing funding and time to support these professional development activities.
- R-5 Strengthen the NPS permit system controls to increase compliance with the requirement that collections resulting from permitted research and resource management activities be accessioned, cataloged, and prepared for integration into park museum collections.
- R-6 Coordinate management of park resource records with management of park records controlled by NPS Director's Order #19 and relevant National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) guidelines, and encourage NPS managers to revitalize the NPS records management program.



Above: Sandals [Geta], Manzanar National Historic Site, MANZ 4124.



# STEWARDSHIP



Top: *Allosaurus fragilis*,  
Reptilia, Megalosauridae,  
Morrison Formation  
Jurassic Skull, Dinosaur  
National Monument,  
DINO 2560.

Above: Projectile Point,  
Chaco Culture National  
Historical Park, CHCU  
29928.

The NPS is the steward of the largest network of museums in the United States and is responsible for the welfare of more than 42 million museum objects and 52,400 linear feet of archives. Collections are managed by NPS staffs in over 360 parks, 7 centers, 7 Regional Offices, and the Washington Office. These staffs manage collections in over 1,200 NPS facilities and coordinate care of NPS collections in over 600 non-NPS partner institutions.

Professionalism is the keystone to stewardship. One of the most important core goals of the NPS is to ensure long-term survival of park museum collections in the best condition possible. This requires professionally trained museum staffs, reliable security and fire protection, and specialized supplies, equipment, and facilities. Collection conditions must be systematically monitored, recorded, verified through annual inventories, and programmed for routine preventive conservation and conservation treatments on an as-needed basis. Resulting data informs sustainable management practices for long-term preservation and protection of NPS museum collections.

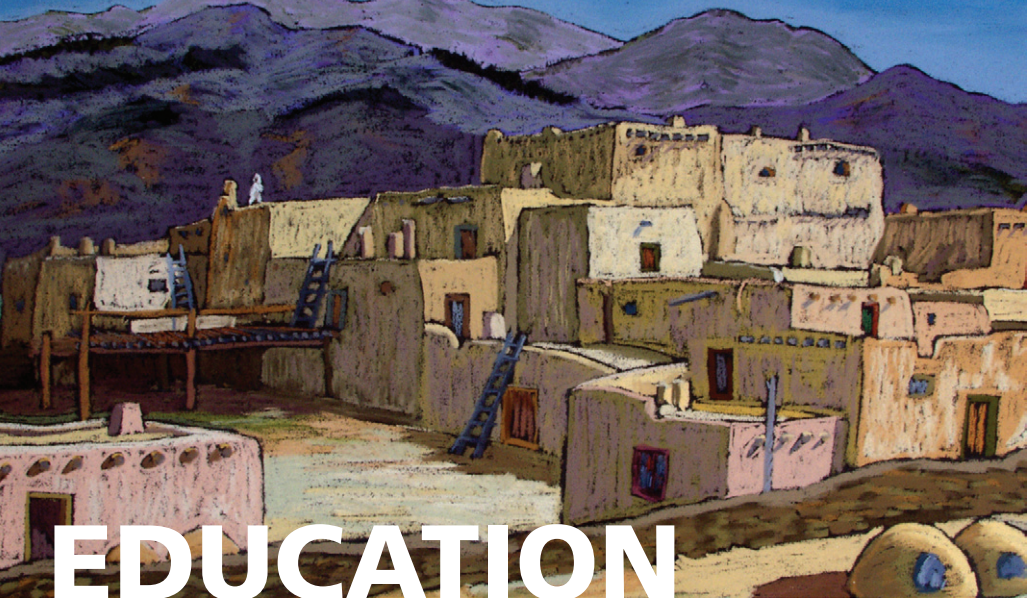


## Strategic Goal

*Apply the best available science, scholarly research, and sustainable management practices to the long-term care and management of NPS museum collections.*

## Objectives

- S-1 Maintain and develop NPS museum services (e.g., Interior Collections Management System, National Catalog, Museum Handbook, Conserve O Grams, etc.) to meet or provide leadership in best practices for managing museum and archive collections.
- S-2 Ensure accountability documentation is established and maintained for all NPS museum and archive collections.
- S-3 Eliminate use of high-risk and poor quality facilities for housing museum collections.
- S-4 Seek operational efficiencies through support and use of multi-park collection management facilities when appropriate.
- S-5 Maintain a current NPS museum facility plan in coordination with NPS facility managers.
- S-6 Partner with the Department of the Interior Museum Program to update the Interior Collection Management System (ICMS) Automated Checklist Program (ACP) so it better reflects current standards of the museum and archive professions.
- S-7 Provide guidelines for developing and updating park management documents, including park Scope of Collections Statements (SOCS), for consulting SOCS prior to accepting additions to the collections, for developing park-specific preservation management plans, and for determining the significance of park collection contents by discipline.
- S-8 Seek partnerships with other NPS directorates to better integrate museum management information into park strategic planning and facility management (e.g., General Management Plans, Comprehensive Interpretive Plans, Resource Stewardship Strategies, Project Management Information System (PMIS) statements, and Facility Management Software System (FMSS)).
- S-9 Develop effective strategies and benchmarks for long-term monitoring of resources and museum facilities, assess the condition of resources, identify conservation priorities, and provide appropriate conservation services.
- S-10 Identify funding opportunities and request financial support to provide appropriate stewardship of NPS museum collections.
- S-11 Improve tracking of lost and stolen museum objects and partner with NPS law enforcement to reduce risks.



# EDUCATION



Top: Taos Pueblo, By Helmut Naumer, Sr. Bandelier National Monument, BAND 1408.

Above: Frederick Douglass, Helen Pitts Douglass and Eva, Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, FRDO 3912.

Information inherent in NPS museum objects and archives contributes significantly to the understanding of the nation's prehistoric and historic pasts and the natural world. Knowledge and information obtained and organized through documentation and study of museum collections is relevant in helping people understand and appreciate the complexities of the natural world and of the cultural and historic events that have shaped this nation.

## Strategic Goal

*Integrate use of museum objects, specimens, archives, and information into NPS resource management, education, and interpretative programs service-wide.*

## Objectives

- E-1 Increase access to museum collections and associated information through web-based finding aids, selected catalog records, park collection profiles, virtual exhibits, and Teaching with Museum Collections lesson plans; explore use of expanded media options.
- E-2 Expand use of existing tools (e.g., Inside NPS/NPS.gov) to share information and promote preservation and use of NPS museum collections.
- E-3 Partner with interpretation and education programs to develop new interpretive tools and programs based on knowledge gained from research and management of NPS museum collections.
- E-4 Partner with youth organizations and programs (e.g., the Youth Conservation Corps and Youth Intake Program) to expand and engage diverse and youthful audiences in stewardship of NPS museum collections.
- E-5 Partner with continuing education groups and programs to engage students of all ages in the stewardship of NPS museum collections.



Above: Sauce Tureen, Hampton National Historic Site, HAMP 17546.

# WASHINGTON OFFICE REPRESENTATIVES

---

## **Ronald C. Wilson**

Chief Curator  
Park Museum Management Program

## **Linda Blaser**

Associate Manager of Museum  
Conservation Services  
Harpers Ferry Center

# REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

---

## **Greg Goodell**

Chief of Museum Services  
Gettysburg National Military Park  
Eisenhower National Historic Site

## **Klydie Thomas**

Museum Curator  
Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site  
Richmond National Battlefield Park

## **Jim Kendrick**

Archeologist and Heritage Preservation  
Chief, El Morro and El Malpais National  
Monuments

## **Mary Troy**

Chief of Museum Services  
Southeast Region

## **Theresa "Tessa" Langford**

Curator  
Fort Vancouver National Historic Site

## **Christine Valosin**

Curator  
Saratoga National Historical Park

## **Diane Nicholson**

Regional Curator  
Pacific West Region

## **Carolyn Wallingford**

Chief, Museum Collections & Records  
Management, Midwest Region

## **Tef Rodeffer**

Museum Services Program Manager  
Intermountain Region

## **Perry Wheelock**

Chief, Cultural Resources  
National Capital Region

## **Bob Sonderman**

Senior Staff Archeologist  
National Capital Region Museum  
Resource Center

## **Sara Wolf**

Director, Northeast Museum Services Center  
Northeast Region

## **Stephanie Stephens**

Senior Curator  
Alaska Region