

Meeting Notes

Interior Museum Property Committee Meeting

9:00 AM -- 3:00 PM, Tuesday, December 6, 2005; Room 2603A, Main Interior Building

The next meeting will be scheduled when events warrant. Meanwhile, work of the Interior Museum Property Committee (IMPC) will continue through subordinate working groups and through e-mail and telephonic communications.

These notes were prepared following review by meeting participants. IMPC meeting notes are posted on the Interior Museum Program (IMP) web pages at this URL <http://museums.doi.gov/impc.html>.

Ron Wilson opened the December 6 meeting at 9:00 a.m. with introductions. Emily Shillingburg Palus assisted Ron with note-taking. Meeting participants are listed below.

BIA	Emily Shillingburg Palus	202-501-5946
BLM	Susan Thomas (via phone)	916-978-4650
FWS	Eugene Marino	703-358-2173
IACB	Kenneth Van Wey	202-208-3773
MMS	Tracy Helmick	703-787-1140
NPS	Lynn Black	202-354-2002
	Brian Biegler	202-354-2008
	Terry Childs	202-354-2125
	Ann Hitchcock	202-354-2271
OS/NBC	David McKinney	202-208-7017
	Kim Robinson	202-208-1169
OS/PAM	Donald R. Cumberland	202-208-4698
	Ronald C. Wilson	202-208-3438
OS/PFM	Charlene Hutchinson (a.m.)	202-208-3964
OS/OST	David Pradt (via phone)	505-816-1084
Reclamation	Myra Giesen (via phone)	785-843-0160
	Tom Lincoln	303-445-3311
USGS	no representative	

REPORTING ISSUES

Charlene Hutchinson (Office of Financial Management (PFM)) reported that KPMG auditors issued a "Notice of Findings and Recommendations" (NFR) to the Department and to all large bureaus regarding how we measure and report the condition of museum collections. She noted that PFM did not report deferred maintenance for museum collections because only partial data were available from a few bureaus (Reclamation, Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service). The Office of Acquisition and Property Management has cautioned against reporting deferred maintenance estimates unless the numbers are based on real data from unit-level planning documents. Most bureau units do not yet have these data and lack the staff and funding to collect the data

in the near future.

The IMPC representatives commented that the NFRs reflect the auditors' incomplete understanding of museum practices and the importance of stable environments in stabilizing the condition of museum collections housed in those environments. The IMPC continues to believe that tracking the condition of facilities housing collections is a valid indicator of the condition of the contents. Since PFM reports museum collections at the collection level, condition must also be reported at the collection level. There is no universally accepted standard for defining the overall condition of a collection. We selected a measure (% of departmental standards met by facilities housing collections) that is achievable and cost-effective in the context of limited staff and funds for managing our museum collections. As facilities are evaluated, meaningful data is acquired for use in unit-level planning documents that have the potential of improving the management of the collections.

While we have condition data on 54,719,190 of 68,802,188 cataloged items, these data were recorded over a period of decades and it is both impractical and unnecessary to update the condition field annually. In FY2005 these data indicated that 69% of cataloged collections are in "good" condition, 25% in "fair" condition, and 6% are in "poor" condition. Some materials are very stable and will stay that way when stored in a stable environment. Some sensitive materials are flagged for monitoring or periodic conservation treatments. We monitor condition of "controlled property" and of a random sample of other collections during annual inventories.

Bureau representatives expressed frustration with the lack of knowledge the auditors have regarding the non-financial disciplines they are auditing, which results in a significantly inefficient audit process. Process Analysis Documents used by the auditors often contain incorrect information that does not support the audit process. Bureau museum programs are at different stages of development, and the auditors' do not recognize this in their "one-size-fits-all" approach. Bureau staffs must spend significant amounts of time providing basic education, which must be repeated annually as audit staffs change. With the auditors' focus on miscellaneous details rather than on big-picture views of our museum programs, program managers are not gaining value from the audit process. The efforts do not support improving management of the collection assets, and auditor recommendations are often inappropriate and/or impossible to implement.

Charlene Hutchinson invited IMPC bureau representatives to send comments to her regarding FY2005 audit experiences. She will share the information with her managers. Comments are due to Charlene by December 15, 2005. Charlene has scheduled a videoconference for December 14 to discuss PFM plans for implementing Statement of Federal Financial Accounting Standards #29.

IMPC bureau representatives recommended that Interior Museum Program staff review museum-related NFR data for FY2004 and FY2005 to identify patterns that may help us to focus our comments and recommendations. We may need to continue to seek the support of the Assistant Secretary – Policy, Management and Budget in resolving our

audit issues.

PFM sent a memorandum to bureaus on December 5, 2005 instructing bureaus "... to prepare and maintain supporting documentation that provides reasonable assurance and evidence that the audit recommendations were implemented. The results of several recent OIG status and verification reviews have lead to conclusions that some audit recommendations were not implemented as reported."

"Therefore it is important that bureaus and offices improve their processes for determining and documenting when audit recommendations have been implemented. All supporting documentation for recommendations that bureaus and offices consider implemented must be reviewed and approved by appropriate cognizant officials, including senior level officials, before notifying and submitting information to PFM."

Ron and Charlene indicated that bureaus are free to add condition information that supplements the facility condition information, which all bureaus are providing. A few bureaus indicated that they included such supplementary information.

ACTIVITY BASED COSTING

This agenda item was not discussed during the meeting. Information, including activity definitions, is available on the Department's website at this URL

<http://www.doiu.nbc.gov/abc/>. Key museum activity codes include:

- 8A Acquire and Accession Museum Items
- 7Y Assess/Treat Museum Items
- C7 Catalog Museum Items
- 8W Deaccession Museum Items
- 4B Manage/Protect Museum Items
- R2 Provide Research Access to Museum Items

In addition, ABC code 42 is used for some central office program management activities involving museum programs.

INTERIOR COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Lynn Black referred to a memorandum that was distributed to bureaus in October 2005 on Development of a Single Interior Museum Collection Management System (ICMS). It summarizes the project, which is scheduled for implementation in FY2007, and identifies bureau contributions to the Working Capital Fund for the project.

Lynn anticipates contacting bureau program representatives in 3rd Quarter FY2006 to assess bureau-specific needs. Meanwhile, feel free to contact her with your questions or concerns. ICMS should duplicate or better systems currently in use, and will be compliant with 411DM documentation standards. It will standardize and simplify reporting, and will provide economy-of-scale savings. We expect competitive procurement of a commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) product that will be customized to meet our needs. There are fewer than ten companies that specialize in this area, and market research is already underway. The contract will likely include department-wide

support, conversion of data from current formats, and both department-wide and bureau-specific reporting requirements.

On December 2, Lynn had a conversation with Secretary Norton on the project. She commented positively on the benefits of increased access to collections data that the ICMS will provide.

RESPONSES TO CALLS FOR DEACCESSIONS, MUSEUM CLOSINGS, ETC.

Terry Childs has assembled a task group to draft proposed deaccessioning regulations to be added to 36CFR79, Curation of Federally Owned and Administered Archeological Collections. The group will have its first meeting on December 7. Terry distributed a three-page handout that was prepared for discussion at a meeting of Federal Chief Archeologists on November 17, 2005. Goals and principles that will guide drafting of the new regulation are:

- Preserve the integrity of systematic federal archeological collections over the long term.
- Be consistent with relevant laws and agency policies.
- Safeguard the federal government against loss of the scientific, associational, evidential, informational, and/or monetary value represented in the collections.
- Organize potential transfers according to a hierarchy of options.
- Criteria to determine what items may be deaccessioned largely fall under two groups: 1) of “archeological interest” and 2) no longer of archeological interest”.
- Obtain expert advice from specialists in the items being considered for deaccessioning.
- Deaccessioning of items that are covered by NAGPRA must be in compliance with NAGPRA.

Terry plans to publish proposed regulations in the Federal Register within a year.

Ron Wilson reported several proposals that could negatively impact Interior museum facilities. The actions suggest that some managers do not understand the unique legal and ethical requirements, or the benefits associated with museum property.

The Bureau of Land Management has proposed to close the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center in FY2007 as part of a plan to reduce facilities costs.

The Indian Arts and Crafts Board has proposed changing the status of the Museum of the Plains Indian, Sioux Indian Museum, and Southern Plains Indian Museum as part of plan to increase funding for enforcement of the Indian Arts and Crafts Act. The proposal has generated press interest and tribal resolutions. See the following URLs:

<http://www.okgazette.com/news/templates/news.asp?articleid=67&zoneid=3>

<http://www.indiancountry.com/content.cfm?id=1096412014>

<http://www.ncai.org/ncai/data/resolution/annual2005/TUL-05-100.pdf>

The National Business Center has proposed changing the status of the Interior Museum in Interior Headquarters as part of a plan to increase building security by limiting public access.

IMPC representatives suggested that the IMP consider convening the Department’s Museum

Executive Program Committee to discuss concerns raised by these proposals.

IMP PROJECT REPORTS/DISCUSSION

Donald Cumberland reported on activities of the IMPC Training Work Group. In FY2005, 63 people were trained in three IMP training courses. A distance-learning module on “Introduction to Managing Museum Property” being developed in coordination with DOI University is nearing completion. Donald agreed to provide access information to allow IMPC members to preview the module and to comment on it. The module should be complete and in use during FY2006.

IMP training courses being planned for 2006 include:

“Managing Museum Property”

March 13-17, 2006, in Tallahassee, Florida

July 31-August 4, 2006, in St. Louis, Missouri

“Curating Natural History Collections”

April 3-7, 2006, in Washington, DC

Additional details and registration information will be posted on the IMP webpage at <http://www.doi.gov/museum/techassistance.htm> as they become available.

Donald will be providing collection storage planning assistance to four National Park Service sites in 2006. He also plans to provide limited funding to Department units impacted by hurricanes along the Gulf coast in 2005 to purchase museum equipment and supplies. He asked IMPC members to submit requests to him as soon as possible.

Ron Wilson provided brief updates on two projects – Departmental Guidance on Potentially Contaminated Collections being drafted by a Work Group, and expanded Best Practices for Managing Federal Museum Collections being drafted by the Interagency Federal Collections Alliance Steering Committee. Both projects are nearing completion and should be available for use during the first quarter of CY2006.

Ron reported that Heritage Preservation released its Heritage Health Index survey results on December 6. Visit <http://www.heritagepreservation.org/HHI/index.html> for information, including the full 167 page report. A 20-page summary of The Heritage Health Index Report on the State of America's Collections is available in PDF format at <http://www.heritagepreservation.org/HHI/HHIsummary.pdf>.

BUREAU MUSEUM PROGRAM UPDATES

Bureau of Indian Affairs

Emily Shillingburg Palus reported that BIA coordinated the completion of the Phase IV transfer of archeological collections from Arizona State Museum to the Gila River Indian Community's Huhugam Heritage Center on November 9. This project was initiated at the end of FY2004 at the request of Secretary Norton. The Phase IV transfer involved the cataloging

and rehousing of several thousand pieces of shell jewelry and other ornamental artifacts. The fifth phase is planned for February 2005, and will include stone tools. Through Phase IV, 1,054 whole vessels and ground stone items, and more than 10,000 pieces of shell artifacts were cataloged, rehousing in archival materials, and transferred to the tribal facility.

BIA Central Office continues to oversee contracts with four museums for cataloging and rehousing services. These contracts account for BIA's effort for addressing the cataloging backlog. Two of these contracts include a requirement for use of Re:discovery, the first such project instituted by BIA

BIA is partnering with the National Park Service, Navajo National Monument, on a joint repatriation of human remains and associated funerary objects from Navajo Nation lands, and managed by NPS. BIA and NPS are also working together to transfer collections not subject to NAGPRA from NPS collections to BIA.

BIA will open its new National Training Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico in January 2006. The site is on the former Albuquerque Indian School Campus, now owned by the Pueblo Indian Council. Central Office is working with Southwest Region and BIA Training Center to install Indian art in the new BIA 2 building in Albuquerque, and to develop an exhibit on the history of the Albuquerque Indian School for the new training center.

BIA initiated a museum conservation assessment for the Flandreau Indian School located in Flandreau, South Dakota. This project was identified in previous annual reports as a specific field project priority. In FY2005, BIA secured funding to contract for the expertise of National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center museum conservation staff. The BIA-NPS team conducted an assessment of the Flandreau Cultural Center facility and examined 85 ethnographic objects representing 30 percent of the collection. BIA Central Office is also working with the school administration to develop ways to further incorporate the collections into the school curriculum, and to improve management of the campus cultural center.

BIA is consulting with the Office of the Solicitor regarding ownership of collections removed from Indian lands under Antiquities Act permits.

Bureau of Land Management

Susan Thomas reported that a BLM Museum Task Force has been formed to plan for collecting museum data for the FY2006 annual report. BLM's national curator recently resigned. A vacancy announcement for a GS 12/13 Staff Curator position should be available in January 2006.

Bureau of Reclamation

Myra Giesen reported that a Reclamation workgroup has been formed to assist with policy and guidance development for the Reclamation museum property program. Reclamation will be seeking legislation to expand bureau museum management authorities. Bureau policy and directives and standards for managing museum property are currently under review and will be finalized in FY2006. A revised Bureau Management Plan is included in the review package; it too is projected to be finalized in FY2006. Reclamation will be developing two bureau

guidance documents on: 1) funding non-Federal facility improvements and 2) accessioning, Reclamation also is modifying the 411DM short checklist, provided by IMP, to make it more user friendly (will be shared with other bureaus). Reclamation continues to work on audit and reporting issues. Reclamation is developing a request for an Office of the Solicitor opinion on who has control and/or administration of collections from Federal land when the recoveries of the items were funded by another federal agency. It also will be seeking a statement of who has ownership, control, and/or administration of collections recovered on non-Federal/tribal lands as a result of dam construction conducted under the Reservoir Salvage Act of 1960, as amended by the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974.

Fish and Wildlife Service

Eugene Marino reported that the FWS Museum Property work group has been launched. The group, which consists of FWS Regional Museum Property coordinators as well as staff from NCTC, DC Booth, and DeSoto NWR (Bertrand), are currently reviewing lists of all known and potential FWS repositories (field stations and museums/universities) to identify those repositories that do maintain FWS museum property. Once identified, the non-federal repositories will be reviewed against COE condition data to determine a condition rating for FWS repositories. The field stations will be reviewed against existing Facility Management Plans here at FWS to determine what the facilities have in the way of environmental controls in order to begin to identify some condition information for them as well.

Additionally, the group will be reviewing FWS Heritage Asset data as contained within its Real Property Inventory to identify those assets listed with a 'historic status' designation and to compare this information against that captured through our recent Annual Performance Plan for better consistency of data.

Finally, the FWS continues its work with the US Army Corps of Engineers Mandatory Center for Curation with a project aimed at examining museum property stored on FWS field stations in order to identify current curation and building condition information. 6 Refuges from 3 of our Regions will be completed during this study with more planned, funds permitting.

Indian Arts and Crafts Board

Ron Wilson reported that IACB recently used the assistance of the FBI forensics laboratory to verify that hair on 19th century dolls is from mountain goats rather than human scalps. This, and confirmation of identify of bones in other items in the collections as pig and horse, assisted in clarifying the scope of IACB NAGPRA compliance activities, which are on-going.

National Business Center

David McKinney reported that a William Henry Jackson painting from the Interior Museum's collection was recently lent to the Autry Museum for use in a traveling exhibit. The Interior Museum's historic dioramas are receiving conservation treatment. Ongoing exhibits include The Power of Context and America the Beautiful.

National Park Service

Ann Hitchcock reported that current NPS servicewide initiatives include (*new items since last report in italics*):

- Establishing significance criteria
- Developing a museum award named for Ralph Lewis
- Integrating museum management and the incident command system, *participating in development of Natural and Cultural Resources and Historic Properties Protection part of Emergency Support Function #11 (ESF#11 [NCH]) as part of the National Response Plan, developing NPS Environmental Safeguards Plan, coordinating DOI cultural resources response for ESF#11 (NCH) for 2005 hurricane season.*
- NPS museum centennial 2004-2005 activities – exhibit, The Power of Context: NPS Museums at 100 Years, *open through February 10, 2006 at DOI Museum; see web site at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/museum/centennial/>, which has monthly Featured Treasures and conservation tips. Centennial observance officially ends December 31, 2005.*
- *Initiating project to extend the longevity of NPS film-based collections (Fee Program funding)*
- *Initiating project to prepare high quality digital images of significant objects in NPS museum collections and post the images on the web greatly expanding web access to park catalog data and images (Fee Program funding)*
- *Developing a Congressionally mandated servicewide storage strategy*
- *Completed conversion of paper catalog records to ANCS+*
- *Streamlined submission of year-end data (Collections Management Reports, Checklists)*
- Maintaining an agreement with American Type Culture Collection to serve as repository for biological collections in cryogenic storage and *developing additional servicewide agreements*
- Renewing policy, DO#24 NPS Museum Collections
- Revising policy, DO#28, Cultural Resources
- Completing a servicewide management review of implementation of deaccessioning and annual inventory procedures in parks
- Maintaining Museum Management Program web site with 18 web exhibits and 6 lesson plans, *posted new web exhibits featuring collections from Alcatraz and Grant-Kohrs Ranch*
- Maintaining the Web Catalog, *one park added bringing the total to 20*
- *Coordinating development of Interior Collections Management System*
- *Launched Archeology for Kids page on Archeology Program web site*

Office of Special Trustee for American Indians

David Pradt reported that OST recently purchased 20 items to add to OST museum collections.