

# Interior Shelves

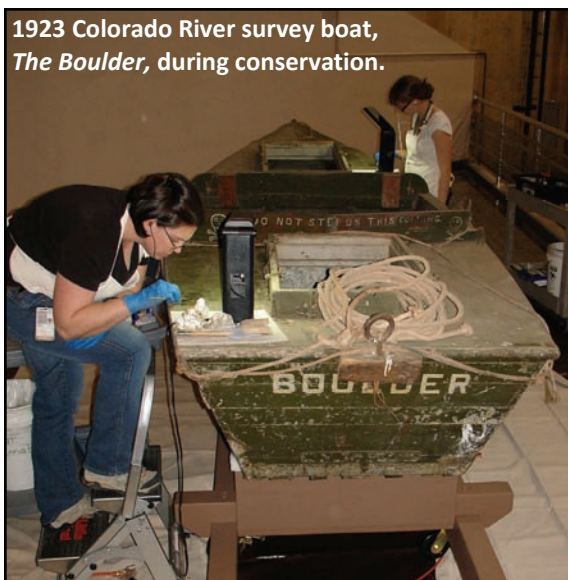


## *The Hoover Dam Collection*

*By Emme Woodward and Roy Given, BOR*

The Bureau of Reclamation's (BOR) Lower Colorado Dams Office (LCDO) headquartered at Hoover Dam near Boulder City, Nevada, manages the "Hoover Dam Collection," comprising approximately 5,600 archival documents and historical objects collected from Hoover Dam, Davis Dam, and Parker Dam on the Colorado River. The collection's objects are diverse, ranging in size from a small metal police badge to an eleven-foot-long topographical model of the dam site.

**1923 Colorado River survey boat, *The Boulder*, during conservation.**



Prior to 2001, historic artifacts and photographs could be accessed by exhibitors, educators, researchers, and other government employees by simply contacting museum personnel to gain access to Hoover Dam, where the collection is housed. After September 11, 2001, public access was restricted for security reasons and physical access to the historic materials was severely impacted.


In 2006, LCDO was awarded a \$765,000 grant to protect and preserve its museum property and to replicate 18,000 photographs and slides, thus allowing Reclamation to meet the agency's collections management goals. The Secretary of the Interior approved the funding under the 1998 Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) which allows the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to sell public land within a specific boundary around Las Vegas, Nevada (see [www.blm.gov/snplma](http://www.blm.gov/snplma) for details on SNPLMA projects).

Due in large part to the grant, all museum property related to these dams is now housed in a secured, controlled environment; conservation assessment and treatment have been performed; and the public can access the collection on the Internet. The grant work was performed in three phases: 1) conservation and storage; 2) photography; and 3) Internet upload.

In Phase I, a conservation survey was performed, 40 documents and 240 objects needing conservation treatment were identified, and the recommended housing units for the objects in the collection were decided upon and described. Documents, including four original Gordon B. Kaufmann architectural design drawings of Hoover Dam and a Six Companies, Inc., fifty-cent payroll check, were sent for conservation. Manageable objects were carefully packaged and transported to a conservation lab in Denver, while objects too large to be moved were conserved on-site. The collection has continued to grow, most recently in October 2011, when one of the four original survey boats used to explore the Colorado River in 1923 was obtained. In February 2012, skilled National Park Service (NPS) specialists performed the conservation treatment on this historic vessel.

In Phase II, the collection was photographed and the existing historic photographs were duplicated.

In Phase III, all images were uploaded to the web and can now be accessed on the Hoover Dam website (see [www.usbr.gov/lc/hooverdam/collection.html](http://www.usbr.gov/lc/hooverdam/collection.html)). The site also includes archival scans of historic news articles contained in the collection. This is a fantastic resource for those researching family histories and for history buffs.

Without the BLM and the NPS, the treasures of the BOR's museum collection at Hoover Dam would not be able to attain this level of accessibility. The partnering of the three DOI agencies enabled these precious artifacts and records to be protected, conserved, and made available for public use once again at this majestic American icon. 



**BOR U.S. Guard Badge, Circa 1940's.**

To learn more about this fascinating collection, contact the museum specialist at [hooverhistory@usbr.gov](mailto:hooverhistory@usbr.gov).

## A Rich Cultural Legacy in Totem Poles

By Sue Thorsen, NPS

*Know all men that I, the undersigned Saanaheit, through governor John Brady, present to the District of Alaska for its museum, a totem pole which was erected at Kaasaan village by my Uncle – also the... four corner posts (of his house)...the conditions are that these are to be transported to the government park at Sitka and to be erected and remain there as memorials to my people.*

Following Chief Saanaheit's original gift of a totem pole in the early 1900's, Alaska Governor John Brady asked leaders from several southeast Alaska villages to donate additional totems for public exhibitions outside Alaska, and eventually, for display at Sitka. Leaders of eight Tlingit and Haida villages around Prince of Wales Island agreed. The poles were shipped cross-country and exhibited at both the *Louisiana Purchase Exposition* in St. Louis and the *Lewis and Clark Exposition* in Portland.

They returned to Alaska in 1906 and were placed along the trails of Sitka's public park. In 1910, federal legislation was passed designating the "government park" as Sitka National Monument, including the totem poles standing along its trails.

Preparing totems for trails in the park in 1906.



Until 1976, the only totem poles in the park were those original poles donated by Native leaders, and replicas of those earlier designs carved by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). However, to mark the nation's bi-centennial, a new totem pole with a new story executed in traditional form line design was commissioned. The new pole by Duane Pasco illustrated two hundred years of Northwest Coast Indian history. As well as carving the pole, the contract called for the carver to provide a living history demonstration, accessible to the public as he carved. Over the following three decades seven replicas of deteriorated early poles and three new original poles have been carved at the park.

Totem Trail at NPS's Sitka National Monument.



Since then, totem carving has flourished. As the park's approach to preservation has evolved, its scope has expanded to include not only the original totems on the Totem Trail and the park's totem landscape, but preservation of totemic art itself.

Traditionally, little effort was made at preserving carvings such as totem poles. Their primary purpose was to augment the wealth and prestige of those who commissioned them. This was accomplished during public ceremonies that marked their raising. Once raised, owners received no additional recognition for efforts at preservation. Rather, new carvings were commissioned, and the cycle of creation and cultural affirmation continued.

The park's collection of totems began in a time of cultural transition with the donation of a totem pole by Chief Saanaheit as a memorial to his people. Cultural traditions that had kept the cycle of totem creation alive were disrupted. Facing this reality, Chief Saanaheit's vision for the future was a brilliant innovation. Preservation of these cultural icons has made it possible for subsequent generations to inherit a rich cultural legacy. As we plan, carve, teach and raise new totem poles, the enduring seeds of cultural tradition thrive for all to see. 

## Boning Up on Fossils in New Mexico

By Phil Gensler, BLM

Since 1983, the New Mexico Museum of Natural History & Science (NMMNHS) has been building a paleontological collection of fossils to support its mission to preserve and interpret the natural and scientific heritage of New Mexico. With a staff of three vertebrate paleontology curators, a fossil preparator, a collections manager, and 60 volunteers the museum has collected and curated over 130,000 paleontological specimens, many of which were found on BLM and public land throughout New Mexico.




Bistahieversor sealeyi skull

These fossils and the information they provide are made available to the public and scientific community through scientific research, publications, loans, exhibitions, educational programs, and a collections-based web page.

The NMMNHS is continually making new discoveries in the field that advance the science and study of paleontology. A recent notable discovery made on BLM land was the partial skeleton and skull of a new species of tyrannosaurid dinosaur which was named *Bistahieversor sealeyi* (meaning "Sealey's Destroyer of the Badlands"). The skull of this relative of the famous *Tyrannosaurus rex* is currently on exhibit at NMMNHS's museum and provides insight to the evolution of this carnivorous dinosaur lineage.

NMMNHS is also developing a traveling educational program in conjunction with BLM. This program will use casts of 280 million year old trackways found in southern New Mexico. Students will use these fossils to identify what type of creature made the tracks, interpret the size of the creature, and analyze how it may have walked. Together the BLM and the NMMNHS hope to send the program to schools across the country.

The paleontology collections at the New Mexico Museum of Natural History & Science are a growing source of knowledge and resources for all generations and backgrounds. With new discoveries and growing partnerships, the NMMNHS is educating an increasingly large audience each year. 

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