

Division: Administration

Department: Museum

Distribution: Departmental

Title: Yupiit Piciryarait Collections Management

Policy No.: 02

Effective Date: October 1, 2007

Supercedes: None

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is designed to ensure that the Association of Village Council Presidents Executive Board will maintain full responsibility for the collections policy of the Yupiit Piciryarait Museum.

Procedure:

I. DEFINITION OF THE COLLECTIONS

A. Geographic and Cultural Scope

The Yupiit Piciryarait Museum will accept materials relevant to:

1. the culture of the Native peoples who settled the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta of Alaska,
2. the post contact history of the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Region of Alaska,

The Yupiit Piciryarait Museum may also accept cultural materials from neighboring peoples in the Bristol Bay, Norton Sound and Interior Alaska. However, out of respect for other Native cultures, the Yupiit Piciryarait Museum, as a rule, will not actively seek collections that represent the heritage of other Native peoples.

B. Definition of Collections

1. Ethnographic Collections. The Yupiit Piciryarait Museum's ethnographic collections primarily consist of items of Yup'ik, Cup'ik and Dene material culture, although items relevant to other cultures important to the history of the region may be also included.

2. Archaeological Collections. This includes both prehistoric and historic artifacts as well as supporting documentation such as field notes and photographs.

3. Photographic Collections. The Yupiit Piciryarait Museum maintains collections of photographs, slides, negatives, and digital images.

4. Archival Collections. The Yupiit Piciryarait Museum holds both original paper archives and copies of archival documents from other sources.

5. Film and Audio Recordings. The Yupiit Piciryarait Museum collects videotape, digital video, audiotape, compact discs and other recordings pertaining to the Yukon Kuskokwim Region.

6. Natural History Collections. The Yupiit Piciryarait Museum maintains a collection of geological samples, faunal materials, and botanical specimens from the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Region.

7. Education Collections. These include teaching kits assembled from materials drawn from the collections.

8. Library. These are books relevant to the museum mission statement and to interpreting the heritage of the Yukon Kuskokwim Region.

9. Historic Collections. This includes objects relevant to the history of the Yukon Kuskokwim Region up to and including the present day.

10. Fine Arts Collection. These consist of items representative of the past and present artistic heritage of the Yukon Kuskokwim Region.

II. COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

A. Methods of Acquisition

Acquisitions by Yupiit Piciryarait Museum will be made by gift, bequests, loans, transfers and exchanges, purchases/commissions, field collection, projects and repatriation. Each method of acquisition is described below.

1. Gifts and Bequests (Donations). The museum may accept materials donated either by gift or bequest that relate to its mission statement. Materials which are offered as donations shall be considered outright gifts with no restrictions attached. The donor will be required to sign a Deed of Gift form to confirm the transfer of ownership.

All donations to the Yupiit Piciryarait Museum are tax deductible within the provision of the law; however, museum employees may not provide an appraisal for any donation. Individuals who require appraisals for tax purposes are advised to contact a disinterested third party appraiser, and to review the Tax Reform Act of 1984 and IRS Publication No. 561 - "Determining the Value of Donated Property."

2. Loans. Loans may be negotiated as short term or long term. Loans may be made between the museum and Native corporations; state, federal, and municipal governments; private organizations; and individuals. However, the museum can only enter into a loan agreement with the rightful owner of the material offered on loan.

Items may be accepted for a period of up to a year for use in exhibitions or research projects. Such loans will be made at the discretion of the Museum Director. Items may also be accepted for a loan in perpetuity.

3. Transfers and Exchanges. The museum may accept transfers or exchanges of material from other museums if the materials relate to the mission statement.

4. Purchases/Commissions. The museum may elect to purchase or commission items that enhance its existing range of collections on a case by case basis.

5. Field Collection. Materials may be acquired through field research related to the museum's mission and collections. Materials may include but are not limited to artifacts, photographs, audio recording, video recordings, field notes, and natural history specimens.

6. Museum Projects. The museum may accession materials associated with its events, publications, educational programs, and research projects. Such materials may include,

but are not limited to, objects created by program participants, materials collected or developed by researchers, and documentation of projects such as notes, photographs, recordings, and associated correspondence.

7. Repatriation. The Yupiit Piciryarait Museum may facilitate any repatriation projects in the region by request on a case by case basis.

B. Documentation

The Yupiit Piciryarait Museum considers the documentation of its collections important. Documentation is essential to maintain the identity, cultural value, and spiritual care of an object. The Yupiit Piciryarait Museum maintains paper acquisition and catalog records, a computerized acquisitions database, collections inventories, and additional support documentation for all collections. Where appropriate, the museum will work to produce photographic documentation of its collections.

1. Acquisitions

a. Recording Acquisitions - The Yupiit Piciryarait Museum maintains a paper catalog and computer database of all acquisitions. Each collection accepted by the museum whether by gift, loan, bequest, donation, transfer, exchange, commission, purchase, field collection or repatriation is assigned a museum collections number. Collections are numbered sequentially as they are processed and referenced with the initials *YM* for Yupiit Museum. Any original documentation accompanying a collection is stored with museum-generated documentation in a central acquisitions file under the associated collections number. The museum will work to duplicate copies of its essential collection documentation, both original and museum-generated, for secure off-site storage.

b. Enhancing Acquisition Information - The Yupiit Piciryarait Museum recognizes the body of traditional Yup'ik, Cup'ik and Dene knowledge that is preserved in the Native community. To improve documentation of the museum's collections, staff will work with people to gain information about cultural materials, their context, and their appropriate treatment.

c. Access to Acquisition Information - Acquisition records are not necessarily public information. Data contained in the museum's acquisition records will be available to the public on a limited basis. Certain types of information may be kept private (e.g., the name of a donor who wishes to remain anonymous, the locations of archaeological sites, culturally sensitive information).

2. Deaccessioning

One of the foremost responsibilities of the museum is to obtain, preserve and maintain collections. Under certain circumstances, however, it is appropriate and necessary to remove materials permanently from the collections. Disposal of museum's collections becomes an important collections management function.

Deaccessioning is the procedure used to record the removal of an object from the museum's collection or to change the recorded status of a collection. Deaccessioning of objects is sometimes necessary to upgrade the quality of the museum's collections. The general policy of the museum toward deaccessioning is one of utmost caution and careful

determination. The Yup'it Piciryarait Museum reserves the right to deaccession any materials in its permanent collections for which the museum holds clear title, or which the museum does not own in order to return the collection to its owner or to change the status of a collection to a loan.

The following criteria will be used to determine whether an item needs to be deaccessioned:

- a. An object has been damaged beyond repair or the museum is no longer able to properly preserve an object.
- b. It is prudent to exchange or sell an object or collection to obtain another object or collection that will substantially improve the overall holdings of the museum.
- c. Based on current knowledge and circumstances, the object or collection belongs more appropriately in another museum or in the care of another organization.
- d. The object has the potential to further understanding of Yup'ik, Cup'ik and Dene culture and history through scientific analysis (e.g., radiocarbon dating, oxygen isotope analysis, thin sectioning, chemical analysis).
- e. A collection was inappropriately accessioned into the permanent collection, requires a change of registration status, or no longer meets the guidelines of the collections policy.

Proceeds from the sale of collections shall not be used for anything other than the acquisition or direct care of other collections.

3. Collections Access

Access to the museum's collections is integral to its mission. The intent of this collections policy is to strike a balance between safeguarding the collections from harm while providing culturally sensitive treatment, and encouraging the use of collections in promoting awareness and appreciation of the rich cultural heritage of the Yukon Kuskokwim Region.

1. Providing Access: The Yup'it Piciryarait Museum recognizes that there are many different reasons to access its collections, and procedures for promoting this access must be designed and controlled to match the types of uses proposed. Minimally, all potential users must make a formal request to the museum to interact with the collections.

The education collection has been specifically assembled for use in heritage programs and public outreach activities. Requests to borrow teaching collection materials will be filled on a first come – first served basis.

4. Exhibition and Display of Collections

The Yup'it Piciryarait Museum reserves the right to display any item acquired by the museum through field collection, loan, gift, bequest, donation, transfer, exchange, purchase, commission or repatriation. The museum, however, will not display human

skeletal remains. Additionally, the Yupiit Piciryarait Museum recognizes that some objects may be culturally sensitive and will endeavor to work with the community to display such materials in a respectful, culturally relevant manner.

5. Lending and Borrowing

To promote a greater understanding of the Yup'ik, Cup'ik and Dene cultures and to provide access to museum collections, the Yupiit Piciryarait Museum will lend items from its collection for exhibition and educational outreach projects. To the same end, the Yupiit Piciryarait Museum may also borrow material through loan agreements.

1. Incoming Loans - All incoming loans must be accompanied by a loan agreement that specifies the length of the loan, describes the items taken on loan, and provides an assessment of the condition of the item(s) to be loaned. This agreement will be signed in duplicate by a member of the museum's staff and the lender. All items loaned to the Yupiit Piciryarait Museum will be handled with the same professional care given to items in the museum's permanent collections. However, beyond cosmetic dusting the museum will not attempt to clean, repair, restore, or otherwise alter any materials, which it accepts on loan, unless the lender authorizes such efforts in writing.

Unless the museum is notified to the contrary in writing, it shall allow any and all materials on loan to be photographed or videotaped by the general public and by museum staff for personal or non-profit purposes. However, no flash photography will be permitted by the general public.

If the lender wishes to terminate the loan at any point during the agreed loan period, he or she must provide the museum with written notice and at least 30 days from the time of notice to process the request. Longer notice periods for larger collections, or those used in an exhibit, may be specified in loan agreements.

The museum will only release loaned materials to the custody of the lender, or the lender's agent, verified in writing by the lender. If legal title to the material changes during the period of the loan, the museum will prepare a new loan agreement to reflect the new lender. It is the lender's responsibility to keep the museum informed of any changes in their address or ownership during the period of the loan.

If the museum is unable to contact the lender at the close of the loan period, or the lender fails to reclaim the loaned material, the materials shall be considered an unrestricted gift to the Yupiit Piciryarait Museum after five years from the date of loan termination. This action will reflect the curatorial and custodial services which the museum will have provided over this extended period.

a. Short Term Loans - Items borrowed as short term loans will be accepted for a period of no more than one year. Short term loans are designed to provide the museum with access to items for exhibits and research projects.

b. Long Term Loans - Items borrowed as long term loans will be accepted for an initial period of five years, at the end of which they will be reviewed for possible renewal. Items for long term loan are accepted for care, research, exhibition, and educational outreach programs. If these uses involve inclusion in traveling exhibits or

outreach activities outside the museum, the lender will be approached for written permission for these uses.

2. Outgoing Loans - The museum will loan objects from its collections to other museums, cultural organizations, and individuals for display, research, and educational purposes. All loans will be made at the discretion of the Museum Director who will assess the ability of the proposed borrower to provide appropriate care, insure security as well as the Yupiit Piciryarait Museum's potential needs for access to the material, and the potential risks of the loan.

Materials for which the museum cannot determine legal ownership will not be loaned.

All loans will be made in accordance with international, federal, state, & local regulations pertaining to the treatment of archaeological materials, and materials from protected and endangered species.

Materials from the museum's education collection are designed to be loaned to a broader audience than objects from the museum's other collections. The museum may loan objects from the education collection to educators, artists, community groups, researchers, and individuals for use in educational opportunities. All loans from the education collections will be made at the discretion of the museum staff on a short term basis, so that the objects will be continually available to the community.

H. Insurance and Risk Management

The Yupiit Piciryarait Museum's collections are insured under the Association of Village Council Presidents. Lenders to the museum are to be advised that the Yupiit Piciryarait Museum can only afford to maintain limited insurance coverage, and they may wish to purchase their own insurance. If so, the museum must be given a certificate of insurance that names the museum as "additional assured" for the duration of the loan, or that waives subrogation against the museum. The museum shall not accept responsibility for any error or deficiency in information that a lender furnishes to their insurance carriers, nor for any lapses in a lender's coverage.

Risk management is the responsibility of all staff members and any alterations in the level of security or the state of the museum's environment are to be dealt with promptly.

The museum will maintain an emergency plan that provides for the care of collections in the event of an emergency. At a minimum, this plan will be practiced annually and reviewed in detail to insure preparedness.

I. Care and Maintenance

The care of the Yupiit Piciryarait Museum's collections shall be done in accordance with the highest standards of museum practices and in consultation with professional conservators and other museum professionals as needed. As a general rule, the handling of objects in all museum collections, except for the education collection, will be kept to a minimum to assure the protection and preservation of specimens. Similarly, items not on display or undergoing conservation will be kept in secure storage. Access to secure storage will be limited to museum staff members.

J. Evaluations and Appraisals

Employees of the museum shall not make appraisals (statements of monetary value) to establish the tax-deductible value on items offered to the museum for any reason.

No employee shall identify or otherwise authenticate cultural artifacts under circumstances that could encourage or benefit the illegal, unethical, or irresponsible traffic in such materials or when there is reason to believe such identifications will be used primarily for commercial purposes.

K. Personal Collecting

The Yupiit Piciryarait Museum staff shall use good judgment in avoiding conflict of interest or the appearance of impropriety in personally collecting items which are similar to objects collected by the museum.

III. REVIEWING THE COLLECTIONS POLICY

Formal review of this collections policy will take place as required. Proposed changes or amendments to this policy shall be brought to the attention of the Association of Village Council Presidents Executive Board of Directors.