Collections Policy Draft

Joseph Moore Museum

Earlham College

Richmond, Indiana

Adopted: month / day / year

**Mission Statement:**

The Joseph Moore Museum inspires learners of all ages to connect with and appreciate nature, including the ancient world and its peoples, using a scientific lens.

**Purpose and Scope of Collection Policy**

Purpose of this policy is to establish high standards for collections management, and make clear the JMM’S positions on acquisition, use and disposition of its collections. This policy:

* Outlines priorities for adding specimens to the collection
* Provides guidance on acquisition
* Affirms the highest ethical and professional standards to be met by staff, faculty, and students at the JMM in all transactions
* Affirms compliance with all pertinent legislation (domestic and foreign)
* Assures standards of documentation
* Defines conditions of acceptance that may be placed upon objects
* Defines conditions and procedures for permanent removal of objects from the collections.

These policies apply primarily to the JMM’s research collections, but apply generally as well to the teaching collection except as noted.

**Code of ethics**

The JMM adheres to the American Alliance of Museums code of ethics for museums.

**Scope of Collections**

At the core of the JMM’s collections are the items collected by Joseph Moore and colleagues, which were the impetus of the creation of the museum. Moore collected broadly, with a chief focus on the natural world, but also collecting items of ethnographic and archaeological interest. The items were collected to supplement his teaching. The core focus of the museum remains maintaining a collection that supports the teaching and research of the Earlham College Community including researchers, faculty, and students.

Generally natural history museums serve as an archive for anthropological, biological, and geological objects and their associated scientific records. The JMM collections, which are organized by scientific discipline and preservation requirements, emphasize the eastern Indiana and western Ohio region and range from intensive coverage of this geographic area to extensive coverage of a world biota and broad cultural areas. Research specimens allow support for faculty research and immersive student opportunities.

Today the JMM maintains the following collections: mammals; birds, eggs, and nests; invertebrates; herpetology; anthropology/ethnographic; and paleontology. Some geological specimens, aside from paleontological specimens, were originally part of the JMM’s collections but have been housed in the Geology department recently. Generally, the collecting focus is restricted to eastern Indiana and Western Ohio. Historically, however, the museum collected more widely and continues to do so in order to support specific research of current faculty and to provide world-wide representative specimens for teaching.

The JMM is not actively collecting archaeological or ethnographic materials, but maintains its current collection for teaching purposes.

JMM is in the process in 2012 of starting a tissue collection with samples from all newly prepared specimens and from wild-caught (and sometimes released) organisms as part of faculty research.

JMM collects documentation and materials related to research conducted on the museum’s collections and the work of current and past faculty and students.

Original scientific research, based on the research collections, is carried out by members of the museum’s staff, by scholars throughout the world, and by Earlham College students and faculty. Undergraduate teaching, graduate training and similar activities are an everyday part of collection use.

The JMM maintains a separate teaching collection, which consists of a wide variety of specimens many of which retain little specific scientific data, but nonetheless provide important illustrative opportunities.

**Acquisition**

The museum acquires objects for the permanent collection primarily by permitted salvage collection unless a specific faculty member, student, or researcher requests that the museum house specimens or objects collected as part of their research. All specimens held at the JMM must be collected under the proper permits and legal authority.

Members of the Earlham faculty may make acquisition suggestions, but final decisions regarding acquisition rest with the Director in consultation with the other museum faculty (currently, the Collection Manager and Coordinator of Educational Outreach).

Generally the JMM does not accept items from the general public or alumni that lack data, and rarely purchases items. On occasion the museum will trade collections with other research institutions.

The JMM does not accept any specimen or object without clear and legal title. All acquisitions are unconditional. A deed of gift form is required for any item that is accepted outside of approved permitted salvage and approved research. Normally the JMM will not accept objects on which the owner has placed restrictions that would prevent effective research, normal exhibition use, loan, or disposal in accordance with this policy.

*Faculty Research Collections*

Specimens that are collected for faculty research using a JMM permit are the sole property of the JMM and not the property of the faculty member. The JMM may curate (as a long-term loan) properly collected specimens collected by faculty and student researchers under non-JMM permits for the duration of their tenure at the university. Faculty should discuss curatorial arrangements with the museum’s Director prior to beginning collection and plan to take collections with them when they leave the university. The JMM may be willing to permanently accession faculty research specimens. Faculty members will be expected to sign a deed of gift to demonstrate their agreement that the collection becomes the sole property of the museum to be handled, exhibited, studied, or deaccessioned as best serves the JMM.

*Abandoned and/or Undocumented Collections and Specimens*

Undocumented specimens and objects in the collection will be handled as “undocumented property” in accordance to Indiana Code 32-34-5. Specimens stemming from faculty research, but not collected under a JMM permit, that have not been accessed by the researcher in more than 5 years will be considered abandoned property and the JMM reserves the right to dispose of the specimens or accession them into the JMM permanent collections.

*Teaching Collection*

Specimens are added to the JMM teaching collection at the discretion of the JMM staff. Many items have limited research but significant educational or exhibition potential. The teaching collection has less stringent requirements for related data.

*Collections committee*

An ad hoc collections committee composed of museum faculty, including the museum director, collections manager, coordinator of educational outreach and one or two faculty representative from the science division can be formed to review non-routine acquisitions. The committee will occasionally meet to discuss the scope of the collection, to identify collecting priorities, and to evaluate the intersection of the museums’ mission with wider institutional goals.

**Collection/acquisition Priorities**

Relevance

Significance

Documentation

Condition

Research or interpretive potential

Rarity

Representativeness

Legal requirements

**Ethics and Professional Conduct**

All acquisitions will reflect the JMM’s commitment to preserve the biological and cultural heritage of the earth.

Specimens collected in a manner that impairs their scientific value will not be accepted.

Biological collections involving unnecessary harm to populations with limited numbers of individuals or a tenuous existence will not knowingly be made or accepted.

While anthropological collections often have extraordinary research potential, they may also be highly sensitive and may be viewed from a wide variety of individual and collective belief systems. These diverse perspectives affect all levels of curation from acquisition through collections management and deaccessioning. The ethics of a collection in a culture of origin will be considered in the evaluation and management of anthropological collections. Any Native American remains or cultural objects must be in full compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

No JMM staff member shall give appraisals for the purpose of establishing tax deductible value of gifts or purchases offered to the museum.

**Legal Issues, Permits**

The JMM holds the following permits:

* Salvage collecting in Indiana
* Salvage collecting in Ohio
* Federal Dead Eagle
* Federal Bird Collecting with Salvage

All anthropological collections are subject to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

**Standards of Documentation**

Standards of documentation vary by collection, but JMM will not acquire objects that do not meet minimum standards of documentation to allow effective research. Objects with less complete data may be accepted, into the teaching collections at the discretion of the director, collection manager, or coordinator of educational outreach.

**Accessioning Acquisitions**

Definitions:

Acquisition:

Accession:

Accession ID:

Catalog Number:

Items acquired under any JMM permit are automatically accessioned into the collection and are assumed accessioned when the specimen is appropriately prepared, entered into the catalog, and assigned a catalog number. In this case, the permit file for that year essentially forms the accession record for that collection.

Large collections from other institutions or collectors will be accessioned as a lot and a file created. Accession files are being recreated as best possible for collections accepted before 2013. After 2013, accession files will be required to contain the following information:

* Name of collections
* Destination collections
* Summary of donor/contact information
* Date of accession
* Inventory of the collection
* Statement of provenience
* Copies of necessary documentation certifying the legality of the collection
* Signed deed of gift or letter transferring ownership of the collection to the JMM.
* Information detailing the original acquisition and curatorial history of the collection when available.

Specimens are identified by catalog number, not by accession. Specimens within an accessioned collection will be assigned individual catalog numbers and Specify 6 identifiers. Specimens are tied to accessions in the paper files and in the Specify database.

Faculty collections, collected outside of JMM permits, will not be accessioned without the appropriate agreements between the JMM and the individual faculty member. Faculty generated research collections must meet the same requirements described above. If the JMM is storing a collection temporarily, it will be treated as a long-term loan as described below.

**Collections Care: Documentation, Conservation & Storage**

The JMM aims to achieve high standards of collections care and storage. Each collection: mammals, ornithology, herpetology, invertebrates, paleo, etc. has specific requirements and separate handling procedures.

**Use of Collections**

**Loans**

Permanent and long-term loans will not be accepted by the JMM except as described for particularly faculty research agreements.

The museum will lend and borrow materials to help meet is mission for both research and exhibition.

*Incoming*

* Incoming loans shall only be accepted for specific exhibitions or research and for fixed periods of time.
* Incoming loans shall be recorded in a separate Loans Register and loan files established for all correspondence.
* A representative of both the museum and the lender will be required to sign an agreed inward loan form. Each party will hold a copy of this agreement. This form will record conditions of the loan and the period of the loan.
* The Museum agrees to exercise the same care with respect to loans as it does for its own collection. Loaned items will be handled conserved, stored, and exhibited as required by the lending institution or otherwise accorded the same professional care as if they were part of the museum’s collections.
* Loans shall remain in the possession of the Museum for the time specified on the form.
* The Museum can request to renew loans if required. A Museum Officer and the lender must sign documentation recording renewal.
* Incoming loans must meet the same ethical standards of acquisition as the museum’s own collection and must meet all appropriate laws governing acquisition.

*Outgoing*

* The Museum will lend objects to other qualifying museums and institutions holding collections. It will not lend to private collectors.
* All loans are at the discretion of the Director, collections manager and Coordinator of educational outreach.
* Borrowers and a representative from the Museum will be required to sign two outward loan agreement forms. Each party will hold a copy of this agreement. This form will record any special conditions of the loan, the condition of the specimens loaned, and the period of the loan.
* The borrower must exercise care in the handling, storage and display of the loan object and must be prepared to meet any conditions outlined in the outward loan agreement.
* The borrower will provide a secure display and/or storage area.
* The maximum loan period is 12 months, with the exception of tissue loans which may be consumed entirely during scientific research. Applications for extension of this period must be made prior to the loan expiry date.
* Loaned specimens cannot be treated or altered in any way without the written permission of the JMM.
* Loans will remain in the possession of the borrowing institution until returned to the Museum.
* Transport of outgoing loans will be subject to all requirements of applicable state and federal laws, international treaties, etc.
* The borrower will assume all costs for transportation and is required to follow any stipulations or requirements placed on the transportation up to and including the round trip costs of any personnel that travels with a specimen.
* Objects will not be loaned for destructive analysis except as provided for below.

**Access**

*General Public*

The Collection is accessible to the public through exhibitions during regular opening hours and by appointment. The collection records are accessible for research purposes by appointment. Images of selected collection items are accessible through the museum website.

*Access to anthropological collections by Native peoples*

Access to anthropological collections by Native peoples will be available upon request and is subject to the same restrictions as research access.

*Faculty use*

Earlham faculty are encouraged to use the collections of the JMM to the fullest extent possible, but must act in a manner that protects the long term stability of the specimens and the integrity of the collections. Faculty will be subject to the handling procedures outlined in each collection’s handbook. The collection is available for approved research and for classroom use.

*Student use*

Like faculty, students are also encouraged to use the collections for study, research, and learning. The director in consultation with appropriate faculty advisors must review all projects and will set terms of use. Students must follow all handling procedures as outlined in each collection’s handbook.

*Outside researchers*

The Joseph Moore Museum welcomes visiting researchers to study our extensive collections independently and in cooperation with our own staff. In addition to in-house research we strive to accommodate requests for loans or exchanges of data, samples, and specimens. Researchers must be affiliated with an appropriate research institution.

Requests for a tissue sample or to work in the collections are initiated by sending a letter of inquiry to the JMM Director that includes the following:

* A detailed description of the research project, including the authorizing institution.
* Students must include the name and contact information of the faculty advisor or supervising scientist.
* C.V.s for all involved.
* A timeline for all stages of research.
* The estimated number and type of all specimens required.
* A description of how the specimens from the JMM will be incorporated into the research (list of species/specimens, number needed, types of analyses, etc.)
* An explanation of funding available to complete the research
* A description of the plan for products of the research, including any leftover specimen(s), DNA, slides, samples, etc.

JMM may require additional information before responding.

*Use in exhibitions*

In keeping with the JMM’s mission, the JMM places original, reconstructed, and duplicated objects from the collection on public exhibition. These objects remain the curatorial responsibility of the collection manager and will be treated in a manner consistent with this policy and the handbook of the specimen’s originating collection. If it is determined that exhibition will damage, or is damaging, displayed objects, the collections manager will work with the director and coordinator of educational outreach to minimize any negative impact on the exhibition, with removal from the exhibition being a last resort.

*Commercial Use*

JMM collections are normally not available for commercial non-educational uses. At the discretion of the Director, objects may be made available for reproduction for commercial sale. The JMM staff will be in charge of quality control, selection and marketing. Any commercial use must be consistent with this collections policy. Copyright for reproduction of museum objects shall remain the property of the JMM.

Outgoing loans from the genetic resource collections shall require a signed agreement from the loan recipient that stipulates limits on intellectual property rights and commercial use of the genetic information derived from the loaned material. This agreement shall be consistent with the collections policy and with any other such use limits established by the collecting permits used to acquire the loaned material for the genetic resources collections.

*Destructive analysis*

Research involving destructive analysis is a specialized use and requires prior written approval from the director.

Specialized uses of museum materials for destructive analysis include genetic and geochemical analyses, and anatomical and histological studies. When destructive analysis is appropriate, every effort should be made to limit destruction to less than the entire specimen and to return the remains so that they will continue to be available for research and education as well as serve as a voucher of the specimen sampled.

Requests for destructive analysis must detail the specimens or materials required and the procedures to be conducted. Any remains from the analysis continue to be the property of the JMM unless other provisions are specifically allowed in writing prior to destruction. The data resulting from the destructive analysis shall be reported to the appropriate research collection and will be maintained with the records associated with the materials analyzed. At the discretion of the director arrangements may be made to divide duplicate samples/ data or preparations between the museum and the researcher

**Deaccessioning and Disposal**

Objects in the collections should be retained permanently if they continue to be useful to the purposes and activities of the JMM; if they continue to contribute to the integrity of the collections, and if they can be stored, preserved, and used. Upon recommendation of the JMM staff, objects may be disposed of by formal deaccessioning when the above conditions no longer exist, or if it is determined that such action would ultimately improve or refine the collections. When disposition is appropriate for the JMM every effort will be made to transfer objects to other museums or public institutions where they will continue to be available for research and education. Such transactions must not profit individuals or private institutions.

A record of all transfers and disposals shall be maintained as part of the permanent records of the Museum.

All dispositions will be consistent with ethical and legal constraints.

Objects considered for deaccessioning must meet the following criteria a determined by the director, collections manager or educator.

* The object lacks scientific value for scientific research or documentation, or for educational use.
* The object no longer retains its physical integrity, its identity, its provenience, or its authenticity
* The object is not relevant or consistent with the museum’s mission
* Exchange of a redundant object with a recognized public systematics collection or natural history museum will improve and refine the Museum’s collection.

*Deaccessioning Procedures*

* The object identified for removal of the collection must be reviewed by the JMM faculty
* Faculty, staff, students, and their families are prohibited form purchasing or otherwise obtaining a de-accessioned object
* JMM staff will complete a deaccession form and must have the written approval of the museum’s director.
* Removal may be by transfer, disposal or sale.

Transfer: Permanent transfers of scientifically or educationally valuable accessioned objects may be recommended by the JMM staff. Except in extraordinary circumstances transfers will be made only to other non profit public institutions. Transfers to private individuals shall be made only when the curators in charge can demonstrate a benefit to the collection or museum.

Disposal: as collections grow and objects suffer deterioration, formerly significant items may become surplus. Removal or culling of such objects from the collections is a continual and routine process. If such items are not needed by the JMM”s public education programs, the director may give them to an appropriate educational institution for use in teaching activities or if no alternative exists they may be discarded completely or destroyed. Such objects for disposal must have all identifying marks removed from them. Objects shall not be given or sold privately to museum staff or their representative.

Sale: The collections are generally not for sale. In rare instances where specimens are to be disposed of because they are not appropriate for the collections, yet have substantial monetary value, the sale of a specimen may be allowed. Such sales will be limited to items that do not meet the collection’s priorities for acquisitions, lack scientific value, and whose sale does not represent an ethical compromise. Decisions to sell such items will be made jointly by the JMM staff and an ad hoc committee comprised of two science division representatives. In accordance with the legal and ethical standards set forth by the American Alliance of Museums and standards in the field, the proceeds from any sale of collections will be used to purchase new collections, to acquire new collections by other means ( e.g., collecting expeditions), or to improve curation of existing collections.

**Rights and Reproductions**

**Intellectual Property (particularly for genetic ?...**

**Health and Safety?**

**Risk Management?**

**Review of this Policy**

The Museum Staff will review this policy every two years.