

Collection Management Policy August 4, 2021

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I. Lake Champlain Maritime Museum Statement of Purpose, Mission

- A. Lake Champlain Maritime Museum is a nonprofit organization whose primary directive is to identify and preserve for future generations a central body of knowledge and artifacts pertinent to the maritime history of the Champlain Valley. The Museum's mission, stated in the Strategic Plan adopted by the Board of Directors in June 2012, is **to preserve and share the heritage of the Lake Champlain region by connecting the lake's past, present, and future.**

II. Delegation of Responsibility

- A. The Board of Directors (hereinafter referred to as the Board) is responsible for policy making and oversight of all collections activities. Board approval is necessary to authorize all deaccessions. On the recommendation of the Executive Director, Board approval may be requested for major loans. No individual Board member may commit the Museum to acquisitions, loans, or deaccessions.
- B. The Executive Director ensures ongoing staff compliance with approved policies and procedures. The Executive Director approves all loans, exhibitions, publications, and public programs, referring major initiatives and actions to the Board as appropriate. Acquisitions by purchase are approved by the Executive Director subject to review and ratification by the Board. The Executive Director gives preliminary approval of proposed deaccessions prior to submission to the Board for approval.

- C. The Department of Research and Archaeology is responsible for the day-to-day planning and implementation of collection management activities by the Museum staff, under the supervision of the Executive Director. The Department of Research and Archaeology develops recommendations for acquisitions, procedures, and long-range plans for collection management, and brings them to the Executive Director for review and approval. The staff updates the Collection Management Plan and brings those changes to the Board for review and approval.

III. Collections Objectives

- A. The Museum's collection documents the maritime history and maritime archaeology of the Champlain Valley. Of special interest are artifacts and images related to the region's Native American inhabitants, shipwrecks, and military, commercial, and recreational eras, and to the stewardship of the lake's natural and cultural resources.
- B. The Museum serves as a repository for artifacts associated with the region's underwater cultural resources for the states of New York and Vermont, the United States Navy, and other authorities. The Museum applies the same policies and procedures in caring for collections on deposit as for its own collections, as well as conforms to any additional care requirements imposed by these authorities.
- C. The Museum may also acquire, create, or construct items for use and/or consumption in interpretive programs, research, or activities related to its mission. Items used for interpretive programs or mission-related activities shall be separate from the permanent collection, will not be accessioned, and no deaccession action shall be required when disposing of them should staff deem that their usefulness to the Museum has ended (see VI. Interpretive Use of Artifacts, Section A.). The Museum shall inform the donor at the time of acquisition of its intent to use the item in this fashion. Replica and working watercraft fall under these guidelines.
- D. The Museum's Research and Archaeology Department, along with all the Museum staff and Board, are committed to increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion in all its work, and will continually strive to make the Museum's collections better representative of the people of the Champlain Valley historically and today.

IV. Acquisitions

- A. The Museum shall acquire materials for the permanent collection through donation, purchase, or exchange with other cultural institutions; in extraordinary circumstances, items may be acquired through exchange with an individual, with prior approval of the Board. The Collections Manager shall ascertain that acceptable conditions of acquisition have been met and shall present acquisitions annually to the Executive Director and the Board for approval and ratification as described in IIA and IIB above. Purchases for the

- permanent collection costing above \$1,000 require prior approval by the Board.
- B. The Museum subscribes to a policy of selective acquisition. Artifacts acquired by the Museum for the permanent collection shall meet the following conditions:
- i. Acquisitions must reflect the Museum's mission and Collections Objectives
 - ii. The donor must have clear title and must sign a deed of gift transferring title to the Museum
 - iii. The donor must transfer full copyright to the Museum or disclose any copyright limitations at the time of the acquisition
 - iv. The Museum must possess the resources for proper management and preservation of the acquisition, which meet the National Park Service's standards 36 CFR Part 68
 - v. Materials in repository collections must be stored in accordance with 36 CFR Part 79 for the curation of federally owned and administered archaeological collections
 - vi. Acquisitions must meet the ongoing requirements of the Museum's exhibitions, study and research, collection development, interpretive emphasis, and/or programming needs
- C. The Museum should attempt to obtain title without restrictions as to use, exhibitions, or future disposition for all items acquired for the permanent collection. In extraordinary circumstances, if a restricted acquisition is in the Museum's best long-term interest, a restricted acquisition can be made with the prior approval of the Board. Negotiations with potential donors shall be performed in an unbiased, truthful, and objective fashion, making clear all provisions of acquisition and potential future disposition of proffered objects.
- D. A signed Deed of Gift describing the acquisition shall accompany all gifts or exchanges and shall go into the Museum's permanent accession files. A receipt or bill of sale shall be kept in the accession file for objects acquired by purchase. A permanent system of records relating to the legal and documentary aspects of acquisitions shall be maintained and administered by the Museum.
- E. Museum staff shall not provide formal artifact authentication or render an opinion concerning the monetary value of artifacts.
- F. Museum Board members and staff who engage in personal collecting must avoid conflicts of interest. Such conflicts can be avoided by full and open disclosure, by advance consultation in the event of a contemplated course of action which might give rise to the appearance of a conflict of interest, and by recognition of the fiduciary duty owed to the Museum by Board members and employees. See the Museum's full Conflict of Interest policy for more information. Heirlooms, bequests, personal gifts, and collections acquired before entering into Board membership or employment by the Museum shall be exempt from this policy.

V. Documentation, Preservation, and Care of Collections

- A. Acquisitions added to the permanent collection shall be promptly accessioned upon receipt and acceptance under a system approved by the Executive Director. The Collections Manager shall produce an accounting of acquisitions for review by the Board annually.
- B. The Museum shall adhere to established professional standards for documentation, storage, protection, preservation, and conservation of objects in the permanent collection and in the care of the Museum. These standards are reflected in the Museum's Collection Management protocols which guide the activities of the Research and Archaeology Department in their care of these materials.
- C. This Collection Management Policy was developed in accordance with the guidance in Vermont Statutes Title 27 Chapter 12, Museum Property, and all Collection Management activities will be carried out in alignment with this statute.
- D. The monetary value of items in the permanent collection shall not be recorded on the Museum's balance sheet, in accordance with the Financial Accounting Standards Board's March 2019 Accounting Standards Update, *Not-for-Profit Entities (Topic 958): Updating the Definition of Collections*, which include the following requirements: They are held for public exhibition, education, or research in furtherance of public service rather than financial gain; They are protected, kept unencumbered, cared for, and preserved; and They are subject to an organizational policy that requires the use of proceeds from items that are sold to be for the acquisition of new collection items, the direct care of existing collection, or both.

VI. Interpretive Use of Artifacts

- A. Determination regarding physical use of the permanent collection (e.g., exhibitions, interpretive demonstrations, outgoing loans, and hands-on activities) shall be made by the Collections Manager and approved by the Director of Research and Archaeology. Because of the varying nature of artifacts, each case will be addressed on its own merits. Decisions shall be guided by the following criteria:
 - i. The preservation of the collections as the primary concern
 - ii. The artifact's value to the permanent collection, including the educational value of the artifact
 - iii. The duplication of the artifact in the permanent collection
 - iv. The condition of the artifact
 - v. The nature and value of the potential use
 - vi. The intention of the donor

VII. Loans, Incoming

- A. Incoming loans shall be accepted from individuals or institutions for the purposes of education, exhibition, or research for a term not to exceed two years and can be renewed as needed for successive two-year terms. Loans are accepted on approval of the Director of Research and Archaeology and, when appropriate for major loans, the Executive Director or the Board. The Museum cannot normally store and maintain materials belonging to others that are not required for exhibition or research. The Museum shall provide lending institutions with a certificate of insurance and add items to its insurance schedule prior to receiving any loans, provided however that the foregoing requirement shall be for the protection of the Museum only and any lender desiring to confirm that such coverage exists shall bear sole responsibility for establishing to their satisfaction the sufficiency of any such coverage and further shall waive, release, defend and indemnify, and hold the Museum harmless from any claims beyond those covered by such insurance. A permanent record will be maintained documenting all incoming loan transactions.

VIII. Loans, Outgoing

- A. The Museum may lend artifacts to museums, educational, and other institutions for exhibits, education, and research purposes where such loans are in the Museum's best interests and further the Museum's mission and goals. Loans of Museum objects are not made to private individuals. Loans are made on approval of the Director of Research and Archaeology and, when appropriate for major loans, the Executive Director or the Board.
- B. Approval of loan requests is governed by the following criteria:
 - i. Security and conservation measures must satisfy Museum requirements
 - ii. Loans are subject to the availability of Museum staffing, scheduling, and workload
 - iii. Loan agreements shall be made for no longer than one year
 - iv. Loan renewals are made on approval of the Director of Research and Archaeology and, when appropriate for major loans, the Executive Director or the Board
 - v. Loan requests may be denied if the requested articles are of such rarity, value, significance, fragility, or are so important to the Museum that the loan would not be in the best interests of the Museum
- C. Loans of major objects, loans which remove important objects from a Museum exhibition and other loans at the discretion of the Director of Research and Archaeology shall be referred to the Executive Director or the Board as appropriate. The Executive Director may approve these loan requests or refer them to the Board for final approval.
- D. A permanent record will be maintained documenting all outgoing loan transactions.

IX. Collections Accessibility

- A. All permanent Museum collections and related records shall be made available for legitimate study, research, inquiry, and examination by responsible parties. The Museum may assess a fee for research services in cases when staff conducts a significant amount of research on behalf of a client.
- B. Requests for special access to collections storage and records shall be made in advance and approved by the Collections Manager subject to the requesting party satisfactorily submitting a request in writing. The Museum shall maintain a permanent record of all collections access requests and record actual examination of artifacts and documents relative to such requests.
- C. Access to collections and records may be limited by staff availability, conservation considerations, fragility of collections, nature of the examination, and exhibition requirements.
- D. Certain types of information, such as donor personal information, donor-stipulated closed files, or donor-requested anonymity may be restricted or denied for security or privacy reasons. In such cases, the person requesting access shall be informed of the research for restriction or denial of access.
- E. Access and use of the Museum's permanent collection and records shall be credited appropriately in all publications, exhibits, and other presentations. Photography for publications or for commercial purposes will be allowed only with prior written permission. Photography for personal use is permitted except where prohibited to protect the collection.
- F. No commercial or promotional use of collection objects or works of art, or of the information or images resulting from their examination, shall be allowed unless specified approval in writing is granted by the Collections Manager.
- G. All persons requesting access to the Museum's permanent collection will be supervised by a Museum staff member at all times unless specific approval to the contrary is granted by the Director of Research and Archaeology within established Museum security policy and procedures governing authorized access.
- H. Access to collections on loan or on deposit shall be governed by the same policies as the permanent collection unless provisions to the contrary have been made by the lender and agreed to by the Director of Research and Archaeology.

X. Deaccessions

- A. To effectively manage and maintain appropriate collections, the Museum may find it necessary to transfer ownership or to discard inappropriate and/or duplicate, extraneous artifacts. Artifacts are defined as deaccessioned when they are removed permanently from the Museum's permanent collection with a legal transfer of ownership or documentation of dismissal.
- B. Any artifact(s) proposed for deaccessioning must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- i. The artifact is no longer relevant and useful to the mission, goals, and activities of the Museum
 - ii. The artifact is duplicated in the permanent collection and the similar artifact is of superior quality and/or provenance
 - iii. The Museum can no longer maintain and preserve the artifact
 - iv. The artifact has deteriorated beyond usefulness, cannot be repaired or exhibited, and is not suitable for educational purposes
- C. All prospective deaccessions and methods of disposition shall be recommended by the Executive Directors and approved by the Board. Methods of disposition will be selected to reflect the best interests of the Museum, and may be as follows:
 - i. An attempt may be made to return the artifact(s) to the original donor
 - ii. Artifacts may be transferred to other educational institutions through gift, in exchange for other artifacts, or purchase by that institution
 - iii. Artifacts may be sold at public auction
 - iv. Artifacts of no interpretive or monetary value to the Museum or other institutions may be physically destroyed
- D. Proceeds from the sale of deaccessioned artifacts will be deposited in a Collections Fund to be used for the acquisition of artifacts for the permanent collection, maintenance of objects in the existing permanent collection, or maintenance of the buildings and/or exhibits in which they are housed. Decisions around use of proceeds from the sale of deaccessioned artifacts shall be made in accordance with the current standards and guidelines of the Museum profession.
- E. A permanent record of all deaccessioned artifacts will be maintained, to include:
 - i. Accession number and description of the artifact deaccessioned
 - ii. Verification of ownership by the Museum
 - iii. Signature of authorizing Board representative and date of Board approval for deaccessioning
 - iv. Date and nature of the disposition
- F. There shall be no sale or transfer of ownership of deaccessioned objects to any member of the Museum staff, Board, or their representatives
- G. No donated objects shall be deaccessioned for any reason for three years after the date of its acquisition (see US Tax Reform Act of 1984 and IRS Regulations)
- H. Loaned objects may be declared abandoned property and deaccessioned if desired upon advice of legal counsel and approval of the Board in accordance with Vermont Statutes Title 27, Chapter 12, Museum Property.

XI. Public Disclosure

- A. This Collection Management Policy shall be publicly available via the Museum website.

- B. All artifact collection policies of the Museum shall be made available to any requesting party, and appropriate portions or summaries thereof shall be a part of all collection transaction documents.
- C. The Museum's original Collections Policy was approved by the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum Board of Directors at its meeting of January 11, 1993.
- D. This Collection Management Policy was approved by the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum Board of Directors at its meeting of August 4, 2021.

Approved by the Board of Directors, August 4, 2021

Scott Hardy
Chair, Board of Directors

Susan Evans McClure
Executive Director