



Collections Policy
Museum of Nature and Science
Division of Collections and Research

Adopted by the Board of Directors of the Museum of Nature and Science
April 11, 2008

SECTION I: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

A. Purpose

1. Statement of Purpose:

The mission of the Museum of Nature and Science is “Inspiring Minds through Nature and Science”.

The Museum of Nature and Science was established in June 2006 as the result of a merger between the Dallas Museum of Natural History (est. 1936) and The Science Place (est. 1946), and then further augmented in October by the inclusion of the Dallas Children’s Museum (est. 1995). The Museum’s holdings include over 200,000 items comprised of entomology, vertebrate and invertebrate paleontology, malacology, ichthyology, herpetology, ornithology, and mammalogy specimens. The collections cover approximately 1.7 billion years of Earth’s history.

The Museum not only preserves specimens of animals, plants, fossils, minerals, and human artifacts, but also, through research and teaching, enriches the cultural life of this community and those who visit it. The Museum is committed to improving science literacy, science process skills, and awareness of natural processes by encouraging children to pursue careers as scientists, educators, researchers and engineers.

We live on a dynamic planet with shifting continents and changing panorama of life. The Museum of Nature and Science strives to show how Texas, especially the North Central region, fits into these continental and global patterns of change and how research and collecting has enhanced our understanding of the larger world around us.

To carry out its mission, the Museum will perform the following functions:

- a. **RESEARCH:** Research will inform and energize the interpretive program of the Museum and will ensure the currency of the collections themselves. Research may involve collecting of specimens and/or information which will become part of the Museum's permanent collections, study of existing collections and studies which will further scientific knowledge in areas defined by the Museum's statement of mission.
- b. **COLLECT:** The Museum will acquire significant objects representative of the natural world. These objects will have intrinsic scientific and/or cultural value.
- c. **PRESERVE:** The museum will preserve the objects in its collections, keeping adequate records pertaining to their provenance, identification and location, and practicing current professionally accepted methods to assure their security and minimize damage and deterioration.
- d. **TEACH:** The Museum will disseminate significant and accurate information about the natural world. Objects from its collections will be important foci and vehicles for this teaching. Teaching will occur both in the Museum and in the field and will be directed toward a broad public audience of all ages with varied cultural and educational backgrounds.
- e. **INTERPRET:** The Museum will communicate to the scholarly community and to the general public the social and scientific significance of the objects it collects and of those it may choose to borrow.

Interpretation may be accomplished through permanent or temporary exhibits, varied educational programs, or publication and public discussion of the results of scientific research.

2. Guiding Principles

“All museums accept certain responsibilities toward their collections. The first obligation is to collect, gathering objects of interest and importance within the scope of the institution. The collection is the foundation of the museum, and collecting is the activity around which all other functions revolve.”

NPS Museum Handbook, Part I(1990)

To achieve the goals set forth in its statement of purpose, the Museum is committed to care for its collections in such a way as to meet the highest standards of the profession with respect to conservation, management and ethics, and in accordance with local, state, federal, and international law. Through its exhibits and public programs, the Museum will foster and support scientific research and the dissemination of results through scientific publications and meetings. An important function of the Museum is making the collections and the data related to them available to the public through publications, exhibits and educational programs, and to the international scientific community through publications, loans and hosting of visiting researchers. Finally, the Museum shall promote conservation and minimize the harm any Museum activities may have on human culture, plants, animals or other organisms, both past and present.

B. Scope of the Collections

Historically, ownership of the older collections belongs to the City of Dallas except for two collections, the Mudge Rare Bird Book library and the Boehm Porcelain Bird Collection. These two collections were specifically willed to the former Dallas Museum of Natural History Association, now known as the Museum of Nature and Science.

As part of the privatization agreement between the City of Dallas and the former Dallas Museum of Natural History Association, effective October 1, 1993, the Museum of Nature and Science assumed curatorial responsibility for all the collections. All material collected or donated prior to October 1, 1993 remains the property of the City of Dallas and held-in-trust by the museum. All material collected, donated or purchased after October 1, 1993 is the property of the Museum of Nature and Science.

The Museum collects in the areas of Paleontology, Mineralogy and Geology, Botany, Invertebrate Zoology (especially Entomology and Malacology), and Vertebrate Zoology (Ichthyology, Herpetology, Ornithology and Mammalogy), as well as related disciplines and Nature Art. The collections also grow through exchanges, donations and purchases.

C. Teaching Collections

The Educational Department maintains a separate teaching collection of objects that might not be accepted into the collection based on their quality or lack of data yet is considered to be of potential use for teaching or exhibits. While covered in general by

the policies governing the research collections, the teaching collections are recognized as being inherently at higher risk than the research collections because of the uses made of them. The Museum does not apply the same standards of care and preservation to objects in the teaching collection as to its research collections, since the educational collection is specifically maintained for use in public programs.

D. Archives

The Museum maintains an archive of photographs, documents, letters, published matter, objects and other material relating to the history of the collections, to the Museum itself, or to the region's natural history and advancements in science and technology.

Also stored are records of enduring interest from the Museum's divisions including: Museum publications, invitations, posters, newspaper articles, exhibit planning records, educational material, field notes and so on.

These archives constitute an invaluable and crucial collection, and their conservation, development and growth are central to the research value of the collections themselves.

SECTION II: CARE AND CONTROL OF THE COLLECTIONS

A. Curatorial Responsibilities

1. **CONSERVATION:** The curator must care for objects placed under his/ her control, including basic housekeeping and identification of conservation needs. Each curator has ultimate responsibility for the stewardship of collections within his/her area of responsibility, and final authority regarding the use of collections under his or her stewardship. As the advocate for the collections, the curator must take every effort to discourage handling of collections that can unnecessarily hasten their degradation or deterioration. Specifically, the curator shall:
2. **RESEARCH:** Conduct research on and provide interpretation of the collection and associated materials. Curators are responsible for the accuracy of their research, analysis and interpretation, and for the content of written descriptions and documentation of collections under their jurisdiction.
3. **USE:** Encourage appropriate use of the collections by the scientific community and the public. Any use of collections must be authorized in advance by the appropriate curator or Chief Curator.
4. **DEVELOP:** Guide the development of the collection within the framework of the collections policy and mission.
5. **MAINTAIN:** Keep catalog information for all collections under the curator's control, and associated curatorial records in an adequate and accessible manner.
6. **SUPERVISE:** Coordinate the efforts of collections assistants, technicians, volunteers, adjunct curators and other individuals working in the department under the curator's control.

In the absence of a full-time curator within a given discipline, the Chief Curator or another curator designated in writing by the Chief Curator will be responsible for collections within that discipline.

B. The Collection Manager's Responsibility

1. **GENERAL:** The collection manager is responsible for ensuring the research and educational collections adhere to generally accepted museum standards and to this collection policy, and will act as the advocate of the collections to Chief Curator and/or Chief Executive Officer.
2. **ACCESS:** The collections manager is responsible for responding to day-to-day requests for access or loans of specimens. Loans and access must be approved by the appropriate curator.
3. **RECORDKEEPING:** Manage the accession/deaccession file and incoming/outgoing loan records.
4. **CONSERVATION:** Provide proper physical storage for the collections, acting on conservation needs as identified by curators and in accordance with generally accepted museum standards. The collections manager is also responsible for the physical care of collections and for implementation and administration of the Museum's integrated pest management program.
5. **SUPERVISION:** Supervise the development of collections policy statements by each department to make sure they are consistent with this Collections Policy.

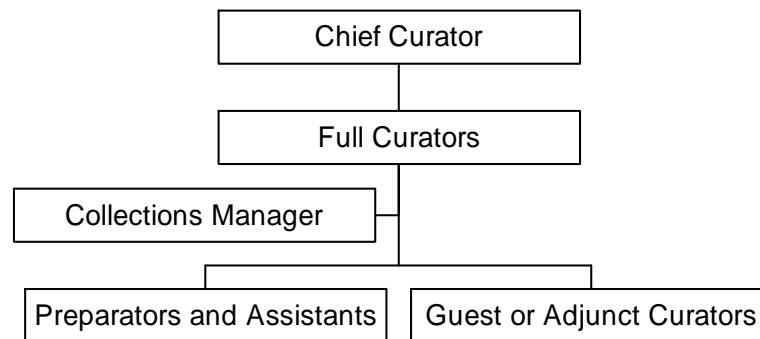
C. Responsibilities of the Museum Collections Committee

1. **GENERAL:** The Museum Collections Committee shall consist of all full curators and the collections manager, plus *ex officio* the Chief Executive Officer and chair of the Board Collections and Research Committee (see below). It will meet regularly to coordinate activities of the various curatorial departments, and to set curatorial policy and directions for growth. Remaining curatorial staff will sit as non-voting members of the committee.
2. **COORDINATE:** The Committee will insure that curatorial departments are aware of one another's activities and that, to whatever degree practicle, they accomplish common goals and address common needs. These projects include, but are not limited to, the development of the museum's permanent and educational collections, expansion of museum scientific programs, submission of grant proposals affecting more than one department, and forms of record keeping, access or organization of collections or collections information.
3. **ADVISE:** The Collections Committee will also advise the Chief Executive Officer regarding issues relating to the museum's collections, the growth of collections, and conservation or collections needs.
4. **IMPLEMENT:** To the extent policies are adopted by the Board, implement such policies.

D. Responsibilities of the Collections and Research Committee of the Board of Directors

1. **REVIEW:** The Committee reviews Collections Policy changes proposed by the Collections staff and makes policy recommendations to the full Board with their counsel, especially in issues requiring the approval of the Board of Trustees.
2. **ADVOCATE:** The Committee acts as an advocate for the development, conservation and care of the collections to the full Board of Trustees.

E. General authority and organization.



For normal day-to-day affairs the Chief Curator reports to the Chief Executive Officer. For policy matters and guidance the Chief Curator also reports to the Collections and Research Committee of the Board of Directors. The first three levels of the organization chart shown above plus the Chief Executive Officer and chair of the Board Collections and Research Committee constitutes the Museum Collections Committee.

F. Appropriate Use of Collections

Guidelines for the appropriate use of specimens will be developed as necessary by the curators within a given department, reviewed and recommended for approval by the senior curatorial staff, and approved by the Collections and Research Committee of the Board of Trustees.

SECTION III: ACQUISITIONS

A. Criteria

The Museum will add to its collections only material consistent with the mission statement of the Museum given in Section I of the Collections Policy. The Museum will not acquire for its collections:

1. Objects that do not fit existing collections subject areas, unless they represent an exceptional opportunity to advance the purposes of the Museum as described in its Mission statement. The decision to accept such material must be approved in writing by the Chief Curator.
2. Objects for which it is impossible to provide storage and preservation consistent with the collections management and conservation standards of the museum profession.
3. Objects without adequate provenance data, as determined by the appropriate curator, unless the object is of exceptional value in other respects.
4. Objects of inferior quality (tourist items, fakes, poorly made objects) unless their very defects are of intrinsic interest.
5. Objects already adequately represented in the collections, as determined by the appropriate curator.
6. Objects that have been acquired in an unethical or illegal manner or are of doubtful origin. The Museum will not acquire objects whose method of acquisition violates the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Endangered Species Act, NAGPRA, state and federal wildlife laws, or any other pertinent state, national or international laws.
7. Objects for which the source of accession cannot pass good title.
8. Objects for which there is not a good-faith intention on the part of the Museum to retain the object in the collections for the foreseeable future, unless it is accepted as a commodity to further the Museum's stated goals.

B. Authority

1. Acquisitions through donation must be approved by the curator in charge of the collection into which the acquisition will be cataloged. Acquisitions from research programs are based on the intellectual pursuits of the curatorial staff.
2. Acquisitions that fall outside the scope of the collections must be approved by the Chief Curator, and acceptance of collections requiring a large commitment of Museum resources in terms of space or money, or are the result of a restricted bequest or donation, must also have prior written approval from the Chief Executive Officer, and formal approval from the Board. The Chief Executive Officer must also approve any acquisition if its value is over \$5,000.00, and this action must be ratified by the Collections and Research Committee of the Board.

C. Accession System

1. All collections will be accessioned using the year and a sequential number (e.g., 2007-05 for the fifth accessioned collection of 2007).
2. All collections are to be accessioned by the collections manager on the advice and at the request of an appropriate curator and in keeping with the established collections policy statement of that department or range. Collections or specimens generated by the curatorial staff or as part of Museum activities will be treated in this regard as any other material obtained by purchase or deed of gift. Individual curators may not accession collections, nor will the collections manager approve an accession except at the direction of an appropriate curator.
3. All donation transactions during a calendar year must be completed by December 31st, including the following:
 - a. Deed of Gift form signed by the appropriate curator
 - b. The Museum must have possession of the donated material.

The Museum will not post-date donations for the purpose of a tax-deductible donation on the part of the donor.

4. Documents relating to the acquisition or accession of a collection will be maintained in a central accessions file, with duplicates housed in individual ranges or laboratories as necessary for the maintenance of collections or for research purposes.
 - a. **DATA/INFORMATION:** Summary catalog information will be forwarded to the collections manager for inclusion in the central accessions file and accessions database. At a minimum, this data will include catalog numbers assigned, number of total specimens, and gross descriptions of catalog lots. More detailed catalog data (and, where appropriate, item data) will be stored in appropriate ranges or departments, or in database files compatible with the main accessions database. Collections identified as being of special value or sensitivity may have more detailed separately maintained catalogues and only item listings in the central accessions file. Catalogue records may vary somewhat from one department or collection to another in keeping with accepted standards within that discipline.
 - b. **FORMS:** Forms for the main accessions file and associated legal records will be printed on acid-free paper in keeping with standard accession and registration guidelines.
 - c. **NUMBERING:** The recommended form for catalog numbers follows the accession format outlined above (see box below). Catalog numbers are assigned sequentially within accession numbers, with individual item numbers sequential within catalog numbers. This system can be extended to whatever level of detail is deemed appropriate by the curator for a given collection or research problem. This makes it possible for diverse data to be collected and stored at a variety of levels of specificity within a common, easily understood system.

DMNH 2007:	Year of accession
DMNH 2007-05:	5 th accession of 2007 (Complete Accession Number)
DMNH 2007-05-4:	4 th object of the 5 th accession of 2007 (Complete Catalog Number)
DMNH 2007-05-4-a:	Component part (a) of the 4 th object (Complete Catalog Number)

- d. **EDUCATION:** All education collections will be catalogued as accession number 1 for that year (e.g., 2007-1) to simplify identification, and to reduce the proliferation of numbers associated with expendable or consumable materials.
 - e. **REPORTS:** At the conclusion of each calendar year the collections manager will submit a written report detailing all collections accessioned over the course of the previous year. Curators will separately submit summaries of the collections accessioned as part of their departments or ranges for which they are responsible to permitting agencies. A reconciled report based on these two sources of information will be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer prior to the end of each fiscal year, covering the previous calendar year, and will be included in the Chief Executive Officer's annual report to the museum's Board of Directors.
4. Every ten years (or less) curators will inventory their collections to identify lost, missing, or damaged collections. They will also assess the overall condition of collections and make appropriate recommendations to the Chief Curator for their care and conservation. As part of these inventories the location of all catalogued material will be recorded, and these data updated as necessary. Materials which cannot be located by the curatorial staff and collections manager will be reported to the Chief Executive Officer if the value of the missing items is greater than \$5,000. He or she shall also inform the Collections and Research Committee of the Board. The status of missing collections and the date when their disappearance was noted will be appended to the central accessions file. Curators are encouraged to undertake inventories at more frequent intervals as deemed appropriate given their separate needs and different frequencies of use for individual collections.
 5. All documents relating to a given accession will be labeled with the appropriate accession number. More detailed records dealing with subsets of collections will be referenced by more detailed catalogue or item numbers as deemed appropriate by the curator in charge of the collection. In addition, photographs or other auxiliary records will be identified by accession, catalogue or item number as appropriate. Since the numbering sequence is hierarchical, this means that all records will be organized by accession number, with subdivisions by lot or even item as appropriate in the judgment of the appropriate curator. Records will be kept in the Collections database.
 - a. **DUPLICATE RECORDS:** In order to assure the safety of Museum collections documentation, adequate duplicate or backup copies of critical information will be compiled on a regular basis and duplicates stored off-site.
 - i. All electronic documents or records will be maintained within the Museum, with duplicate sets housed off-site. These duplicates will be updated regularly.
 - ii. Duplicates of critical paper records will also be made and stored off-site. Gradual duplication of existing records onto more permanent media (non-acid paper, etc.) will be the responsibility of the Collection Manager, and s/he will be responsible for performing or coordinating the duplication of information.
 6. Undocumented objects found in the collections are those that do not have an accession number, record of the object being accessioned, or information as to why they are in the Museum. Ownership of undocumented objects cannot be

assumed and they cannot be disposed of or accessioned. These objects are abandoned property and the Texas Property Law (Title 6A, Chapter 80) for museum abandoned property and old loans must be followed in order to gain clear title. Once clear title is established, the objects undergo acquisition review.

D. Methods of Acquisition

1. Donations:

- a. **AUTHORITY:** Donations may be accepted only by the curator in charge of the collection into which an object is cataloged or by the Chief Curator in the absence of the appropriate curator. A curator may authorize a staff person to accept a donation on his/her behalf.
 - b. **RESTRICTED DONATIONS:** Donations are not normally accepted if they are encumbered by restrictions by the donor. In extraordinary situations, where the donation represents such a large benefit to the Museum that this outweighs the strong presumption against restricted donation, restricted donations may be accepted with the prior approval of the Chief Executive Officer and the Board. Donations are not accepted with the commitment, stated or implied, that the object or objects donated will remain permanently on display.
 - c. **APPRAISALS:** The Museum will not make, arrange for, or pay for appraisals of donated items for the donor. This must be made clear at the time of the donation. The appropriate curator may suggest without preference possible appraisers for the donor to contact, but must list more than two. If three names are not known to the curator, then no references will be given. Appraisals commissioned for Museum use will not be made available to the donor.
 - d. **VALUE:** The Chief Executive Officer must approve any acquisition if its value is greater than \$5,000.00, and this action must be ratified by the Collections and Research Committee of the Board.
2. **Bequest:** The Museum is not obligated to accept bequests into the collections and will do so only when the bequeathed specimen or specimens fit the needs of the collections and meet the other criteria of the Collections Policy..
 3. **Exchanges:** Collection specimens may be traded to other educational or research non-profit organizations in return for specimens of similar monetary or intrinsic value. Exchanges of specimens valued over \$5,000.00 must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer and ratified by the Collections and Research Committee of the Board. Exchanges of City-owned material will be done in accordance with applicable City regulations.
 4. **Purchases:** Curators may purchase specimens for their collection out of funds budgeted for that purpose. Purchases over \$1,000.00 must be approved by the Chief Curator.
 5. **Collecting:** All specimens obtained by Museum staff through collecting in the field shall be accompanied by copies of all appropriate permits, letters of consent from property owners, or whatever documentation is appropriate to establish that the material was collected in accordance with local, state, federal and international law.

E. Objects Left in Custody

1. All objects left in the custody of the Museum pending transfer of title will be accompanied at all times by documentation sufficient to establish their source and the status of the pending transaction.
2. A record shall be kept in a central file of all objects in the custody of the Museum pending transfer of title, and of the location of these objects.
3. When the transfer of title takes longer than 90 days, the object will be considered as an incoming loan for the purpose of examination.
4. All Undocumented or Found-in-Collections specimens are considered accessioned property of the Museum of Nature and Science or City of Dallas Held-in-Trust collections until proven otherwise.

F. Records

1. It is the responsibility of the collection manager to accession incoming collections material, and to establish an accession folder which includes the deed of gift, sales contract, accession-specific correspondence, permits, or any other documents confirming the legality of the transaction and the validity of the title. All accession records will be kept in a central file.
2. It is the responsibility of the curatorial departments to process, catalog and store newly acquired objects in a timely fashion, and to establish files of auxiliary collections documentation such as field notes, catalogs or other correspondence.

SECTION IV: DEACCESSIONING

A. Introduction

1. Deaccessioning is the formal process used to legally and permanently remove an object from the collections.
2. Disposition is the manner in which the Museum transfers the object to a new owner or destroys it.
3. When undertaking the deaccession and disposition of specimens, the Museum proceeds with the knowledge that it holds its collections as a public trust. In order to fulfill this trust most effectively, the Museum must balance considerations of continued public or scientific access to a specimen with the obligation of maximizing the benefit of any transaction to the Museum's own collections.
4. Deaccessioning/disposition will proceed under the conventions and practices of the collection object's discipline.
5. The Museum's identifying numbers will be removed from deaccessioned objects before disposition except in cases where it is necessary and appropriate for the numbers to remain.
6. Any monetary gain obtained through deaccessioning must be applied towards the acquisition of new specimens.

B. Criteria

The Museum may consider deaccessioning objects from the collection that meet any of the following conditions:

1. The object is not relevant to the purpose and scope of the collections as defined in Section I of the Collections Policy.
2. The Museum is not able to provide adequate care for the object.
3. The object has deteriorated past the point of usefulness.
4. The type of object is sufficiently represented in the collections, or has been replaced with superior examples, in the judgment of the curator in charge of the collection.
5. The object is inferior or has substandard documentation.
6. The object is not Held-In-Trust. (Held-In-Trust means that the stewardship of a collection, but not the ownership, is officially transferred to a curatorial facility.)

C. Authority and Responsibility

1. The curator responsible for the department into which the object is cataloged may propose the object for deaccessioning.
2. The curator is responsible for forwarding a written deaccessioning proposal, including copies of all known documentation on the object and the proposed method of disposition to the collection manager.
3. The collection manager is responsible for checking the records to locate any known restrictions on the donation, and for investigating any other legal issues affecting deaccession or disposition.

4. A list of proposed deaccessions must be circulated to the curators. This will determine whether the staff has comments on potential use within the Museum of the object which might affect the deaccession decision.
5. The deaccession proposal must be discussed by the senior curatorial staff (i.e., full curators) and forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer for approval.
6. The Board of Trustees shall be notified in a timely manner of objects or collections which have been recommended for deaccessioning. The Board will approve or disapprove all deaccessions.
7. The deaccessioning of city property will be conducted in accordance with all applicable city regulations.

D. Methods of Disposition

1. Acceptable methods of disposition for objects are:
 - a. SALE: at public auction or in the public marketplace. Archeological materials may be sold only in accordance with current guidelines and conventions established by the Society for American Archeology (SAA) and other applicable international conventions. All sales will be conducted in accordance with applicable laws.
 - b. DONATION: to another educational or research non-profit institution.
 - c. TRANSFER: to another division within the Museum for use in exhibits or education.
 - d. DESTRUCTION: If an object has deteriorated to the point that it is of no further use to anyone, or if it constitutes any uncontainable hazard, then it may be destroyed. This destruction must comply with any relevant local, state, or federal regulations concerning disposal of such material and must be conducted in such a way as to pose no public hazard, in the best judgment of the Museum. The destruction must be witnessed and attested to in writing by a curator and/or the collection manager.
2. Objects with significant value for research should be offered in sale, exchange, or as a donation to other educational or research non-profits, with preference to those in this geographical region or to those in a geographical region for which the object has special significance.
3. All methods of disposition must be in compliance with all relevant local, state, federal and international laws.
4. All specimens must be accompanied with a full disclosure of any known hazard they may present to a future owner.
5. Objects from the Museum's collections may never be transferred to a Museum employee, member of the Board of Trustees, officer, or immediate relative of any of these. Museum volunteers or business associates should not receive an advantage that is not available to the general public, in the acquisition of an object.
6. Return to the original donor.

E. Sales

1. If it is the opinion of the curatorial staff that an object should remain in the public domain, then objects may be offered for sale and suitably publicized so that the Museum obtains the best selling price given the pool of appropriate buyers.
2. Whenever possible, objects that are sold should be offered at public auction at a reserve price. If the reserve price is not met, then the object may be sold privately for at least the reserve price. This dollar value will be determined by the Executive Director in consultation with the appropriate curator or Chief Curator.
3. If the value of the object is too significant to warrant its being sold at auction, then the object may be offered for public sale by the Museum.
4. Any monetary gain obtained through deaccessioning must be applied towards the acquisition of new specimens.

F. Exchanges

1. Exchanges can be made with non-profits or certain reputable for-profit institutions.
2. The Museum will not engage in exchanges with individuals.
3. Exchanges should be for objects of equivalent monetary or intrinsic value. In the case of objects of significant monetary worth, this must be documented by formal appraisals.

G. Donations

Collections objects will be donated only to non-profit educational or research institutions, never to individuals or for-profit entities.

H. Records Keeping

A complete and permanent record of each deaccession, including documentation of the deaccession and disposition process, will be kept in a central records file by the collection manager.

SECTION V: LOANS

A. Internal Loans

Objects considered for loan are the property of the Museum or held-in-trust and accessioned into the Museum's record. Unaccessioned or uncataloged Museum collections and type specimens and comparable objects will not be loaned. Each department may further restrict the kinds of objects or materials eligible for loans based on nature, rarity, monetary value, research priority, and/or management considerations of the objects.

All loans of material, external requests for access, or internal use of collections by other departments will be recorded by accession, catalogue or item number. These data will be used both to maintain records of a specimen's current location and to monitor the frequency of use for various collections. Loans will be handled by the collections manager following approval by the curator involved. Internal loans follow the same basic guidelines as external loans.

B. Outgoing Loans

1. Eligible Borrowers

The Museum does not lend to institutions which cannot provide an adequate level of care for the objects or that have a record of mistreating loans from the Museum in the past.

- a. **NON-PROFITS:** The Museum may lend collections objects to non-profit institutions for the purposes of exhibit, education, or research. Specimens may be lent to students through their tenured major professors.
- b. **COMMERCIAL:** The Museum occasionally may lend collections or objects to individuals or for-profit organizations for commercial use. Supervising curators will decide on the appropriateness of such loans on a case-by-case basis. In all cases the commercial entity and its intended use of the objects or specimens must be in strict conformance with the Museum's stated mission. The loan agreement will explicitly state the intended use of specimens and how such use relates to the Museum mission. The Museum must receive printed credit for all photographs or drawings used.
- c. **THIRD-PARTY LOANS:** The Museum will not engage in third-party loans without expressed, written consent from the original loaning party.

2. Fees

- a. **RESEARCH LOANS:** The Museum will not charge a fee to cover the cost of processing research loan requests. The decision on whether to ask the borrowing institution to cover other expenses associated with research loans will be made on a departmental basis based on the conventions in that field of study.
- b. **EXHIBIT LOANS:** The Museum normally will ask the borrower to cover all expenses associated with the loan (packing and shipping, show proof of insurance, conservation, etc.) but will not normally charge a fee for the processing of the loan request.
- c. **COMMERCIAL LOANS:** User fees will be established by Chief Curator in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer. The Museum must receive

credit in all commercial uses of its objects, and fees will be deposited into the general fund or Collections and Research discretionary fund as appropriate.

3. Duration of Loans

In order to promote responsible oversight of collection items while they are off Museum premises, outgoing loans shall be made for no longer than a maximum period of one year, renewable annually. When renewing a loan, the borrower will be asked to provide the Museum with assurance that the lent material is accounted for and in good condition. There are no permanent loans or loans of indefinite duration.

4. Loan Conditions

- a. **LOAN AGREEMENT:** All loans will be formalized with a loan agreement spelling out the conditions of the loan, including the issues of insurance, photography rights, duration, credit, etc. In order to maintain the research and interpretive value of the Museum's collections, the borrower must agree to submit one copy of any and all reports, photographs or drawings, analyses or articles based on the study of the loaned material, or any corrections or corroboration regarding the identification of or supporting information accompanying museum collections. Material lent for exhibits must be returned with photographs of the resulting exhibit.
- b. **HAZARDS:** The Museum will inform the borrower of any known hazards or potential hazards associated with the loan material which are not readily apparent, including chemical and biological hazards.

5. Authority

The curator responsible for the object may approve loans subject to this policy. Final responsibility for authorizing or denying internal and external loans resides with the appropriate curator or the Chief Curator in said curator's absence. Loans of held-in-trust objects also must have the approval of the appropriate governmental agency prior to the finalization of the loan agreement. It is the responsibility of the Curator to request loan approval from the governmental agency and provide the approval document to the Collections Manager. The Collection Manager will maintain a central file of all material on loan, and correspondence or records pertaining to all incoming or outgoing loans.

- a. **ADJUNCT OR DEPUTY CURATORS:** Loans from departments being cared for by adjunct or deputy curators must be authorized by the supervising full curator or Chief Curator.
- b. **SIGNING:** Loan forms must be signed by the curator of that department or by a person designated in writing by the curator.
- c. **USAGE:** The curator will exercise care in authorizing loans to ensure that loans are consistent with the Museum's philosophy and in keeping with the Museum's public image, and that usage will not significantly damage or unnecessarily endanger the specimens.
- d. **RESPONSIBILITY:** The collection manager must monitor loans to ensure that the conditions of the loan agreement are met, and to see that loans are returned or renewed in a timely manner.

- e. **VALUE:** All loans with a value exceeding \$10,000.00 must be approved by the Executive Director.

C. Incoming Loans

1. Incoming loans are accepted for the purposes of exhibit, research, examination, education, or identification.
 - a. **EXHIBIT:** This includes both the exhibition of an object and the process of replicating it for use in exhibits.
 - b. **RESEARCH:** These loans are the responsibility of the requesting department. The collections manager will maintain a record of current loans and their status.
 - c. **EXAMINATION:** Items may be deposited for examination by the Museum to consider acquisition of the material.
 - d. **EDUCATION:** Loans are accepted for docent training and educational programming.
 - e. **IDENTIFICATION:** Objects temporarily deposited with the Museum for identification shall become Museum property if not collected after 90 days unless other arrangements have been made in writing in advance. Curators will be responsible for the timely processing of such loans.
2. If the lender elects to maintain his or her own insurance on loan material, then the Museum must be provided with an insurance certificate naming the Museum as an additional assured or waiving subrogation against the Museum.

D. Abandoned Loans

When the Museum borrows objects from private individuals, the loan agreement will specify that ultimate responsibility for the return of the loan lies with the lender, and that the lender must keep the Museum apprised of the lender's current address and of any change of ownership of the loan material. The agreement also will ensure that if the Museum is unable after reasonable effort to locate the lender, then title to the loan material will pass to the Museum after 90 days and in accordance with local, state, or federal requirements.

E. Provenance

It is the responsibility of the curator to exercise his/her knowledge and judgment in ascertaining that loan material does not fall under one of the prohibitions listed below:

1. **ORIGIN:** The Museum will not borrow objects that it has reason to believe have been acquired in an unethical manner or are of doubtful origin.
2. **LEGALITY:** The Museum will not borrow objects whose method of acquisition violates UNESCO convention, CITES, state and federal wildlife laws, or any other pertinent local, state, national or international laws.
3. **TITLE:** The Museum will not borrow objects for which the lender does not hold good title.

F. Loan Conditions

1. **INSTITUTIONAL:** All loans will be formalized with appropriate loan agreement forms.
2. **INDIVIDUAL:** When borrowing from individuals, the Museum will use its own incoming loan agreement.

G. Authority

The collection manager is responsible for processing incoming and outgoing loans, arranging for loan agreements, appropriate insurance, shipment, and the timely return of loan material.

1. **RESEARCH:** Incoming loans for the purpose of research are initiated by the curator of the department conducting the research.
2. **EXHIBITS:** Incoming loans for the purpose of exhibits are directed through the director of exhibits or the curator responsible for the exhibit.
3. **EDUCATION:** Incoming loans for the purpose of education are directed through the collection manager.

H. Incoming and Outgoing Loans

1. **Records:** The curator will notify the collection manager of any incoming or outgoing loans, so that in the curator's absence the location and status of any loan may be determined. The collections manager shall keep complete records associated with every collections loan, including signed loan agreements, certificates of insurance, shipping documents, condition reports and other related material. These files are permanent records.
2. **Condition Reports:** If incoming or outgoing loan material is insured, then the appropriate curator or collection manager will fill out condition reports and/or take condition photographs of the insured material. These records shall be of sufficient quality to establish the validity of an insurance claim.
3. **Copies of Publications:** Collections lent to other institutions or researchers shall include a request for copies of any publication or results of the study, or photographs of any exhibit featuring the collection item(s).
4. **Corrections or Corroboration:** If more detailed or more accurate information regarding Museum collections is generated as a result of a loan, the borrower agrees to supply the Museum with copies of corrections or corroboration as appropriate.

I. Permanent Loans

Permanent loans to the Museum generally shall not be accepted but are allowed for objects and collections owned by government agencies and institutions whose own collection policies do not allow transfer of title. These loans shall require the same approvals as an acquisition. Permanent and long-term loans or custodial arrangements shall be documented in writing and signed by the lender and shall address, in accordance with each scientific department's policy:

- The purpose of the loan (exhibition, research, or education)
- The rights to use and publish the material

- Financial obligations to be borne by each party
- The duration of loan and right of the Museum to return the loan
- The legal and ethical responsibilities of the Museum during custody and upon termination of the loan

SECTION VI: PERSONAL COLLECTIONS

A. Decoration

Personal collections, including objects of art, used in any individual's office must be marked with the name of the owner or inventoried as a loan. If a personal item is not marked or inventoried, and the ownership of the object comes into doubt, then the presumption will be that the item belongs to the Museum.

B. Storage

Museum staff is not allowed to use Museum facilities for the storage of personal collections. Personal collections must be signed in as a research or other loan, as appropriate. This restriction is not intended to apply to books or reprints used for Museum research.

C. Scientific Collection Trips

Staff or volunteers may not conduct personal collecting on museum-sponsored collection trips. All material/specimens collected during such trips become the property of the Museum. All Museum staff and volunteers must agree to abide by the ethical guidelines governing collecting within the discipline or disciplines concerned, and the Museum will not tolerate breaches of these guidelines. Except at the direction of the appropriate curator, Museum staff and volunteers may not use their association with the Museum to gain access to collections or collecting localities for any purpose.

D. Personal Collections

1. **COMPETITION:** Staff members may not compete with the Museum in the collection, purchase, trade, loan, or exchange of objects or specimens. This does not prohibit staff from possessing a professionally related collection (e.g. books).
2. **PURCHASE:** The Museum reserves the right to purchase any object or specimen acquired by a staff member at the price paid by that individual. Staff must inform the Chief Executive Officer in writing within 3 months of receipt. The Museum has 3 months after notification to act upon its right of purchase.
3. **DISCLOSURE:** Staff must disclose in writing the extent and policy of their personal collecting.
4. **PROFIT:** No staff member may participate in buying or selling for profit objects similar or related to objects collected by the Museum.
5. **EXEMPTIONS:** Holders of courtesy appointments are exempt from personal collection restrictions, but are prohibited from acquiring objects obtained as a result of their connection with the Museum, or from acting in a manner inconsistent with established ethical practices within their disciplines.
6. **CONFORMANCE TO ETHICAL GUIDELINES:** Any staff member holding collections in a given discipline must comply with the established ethical guidelines for collections within that discipline or those disciplines, regardless of whether or not that staff member holds his or her appointment within that discipline.

E. Site Information

1. **AUTHORITY:** Site information is restricted and must not be shared without the curator's direct written permission.
2. **COLLECTING:** Having knowledge of a site does not grant permission to collect at that site. Volunteers and holders of courtesy appointments must agree to abide by these rules, and to abide by the ethical guidelines specified in Section C and applicable codes of ethics within the appropriate discipline or disciplines.

SECTION VII: ACCESS

A. Access for Non-Staff

1. **Researchers:** The Museum puts an emphasis on making collections available to qualified investigators for legitimate research and study at the discretion of the curator of the department in question. Requests for access are coordinated through the curator of the collection in question. A record will be kept by the collection manager of all use of Museum collections by outside researchers.
2. **Public and press**
 - a. **COLLECTION OBJECTS:** Access to the collections by the public is at the discretion of the curator and collections manager, subject to the need to ensure the safety of the objects and of the visitors.
 - b. **COLLECTIONS STORAGE ROOMS:** These rooms should be regarded as off-limits to the public to maintain temperature/humidity requirements, limit possible introduction of contaminants, reduce potential pilferage, and promote standard conservation and Integrated Pest Management practices.

B. Staff Access

1. **Exhibits:** Collections objects are available for exhibit, display or other use at the discretion of the curator of the collection from which the object originates. In all cases factors of security, conservation, and suitability for the exhibit in question will be considered. Objects on exhibit remain the responsibility of the curator and are to be treated in a manner consistent with the collections policy. Requests for access are coordinated through the curatorial staff and the collection manager.
2. **Education:** Objects in the departmental teaching collections are presumed to be available to the education staff. Objects from the research collections are available at the discretion of the curator. In all cases, factors of security, conservation, suitability for the program in question and hazards that may be posed by the object itself will be considered. Objects being used for education are the responsibility of the collection manager, and are to be treated in a manner consistent with the collections policy.

C. Access to Collections Records

1. **Non-curatorial access to collections records is restricted, with access to the catalog under the control of the curator and accession records under the control of the collection manager or Chief Curator. Requests for any access must be made to the appropriate curator or collection manager.**
2. **Computer Records**
 - a. **ACCESS:** The collection manager, curators and assistants are authorized to have access to the computerized collection system. Volunteers, interns and other users must be approved by, and their use of the system supervised by, one of these staff members.
 - b. **PUBLIC:** Visiting researchers and public will be allowed access only to "view only" reports of restricted lists, not to the primary database and data entry fields. Locality information is restricted, and may not be available for some collections.

- c. **TRANSFER:** Transfer of data is allowed only with the consent of the curator within the guidelines of this policy. Secondary transfer of data is not allowed without permission and proper credit to the Museum.

D. Locality/Sensitive Information

Site locality or other sensitive information provided as a courtesy to the Museum by agencies, institutions, or individuals to further its research mission will not be made available without prior approval by that agency, institution or individual. Museum locality information will not be made available to any party or parties without the written permission of the supervising curator.

E. Collections Storage Areas

Access to Collections Storage areas is restricted to curatorial staff and volunteers under their direct supervision. These areas are to be separately keyed and where possible alarmed, with access to keys and alarm codes limited to members of the curatorial staff and security staff. Access to storage areas is at the discretion of the curator or curators in charge of the collection in question.

SECTION VIII: INSURANCE

A. In-house Collections

1. Philosophy: The Museum does not maintain insurance coverage for the full replacement value of its collections. Indeed, it recognizes that the meaning of the term "full replacement value" is unclear when applied to unique cultural artifacts and scientific specimens. The Museum balances funding security, storage, and fire protection as well as actual insurance policies in providing protection for its collections. The Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Collections Committee will establish an adequate level of coverage for the collection as a whole. Upon the advice of the curators, the Chief Executive Officer and/or Committee will see that individual objects are individually appraised and insured if necessary.
2. Requests for changes in insurance of collections in the Museum will be channeled by the appropriate curator to the Chief Executive Officer.
3. Any changes in the amount, degree or kind of insurance coverage will be reported in writing to the Collections Committee by the Chief Executive Officer or other appropriate museum officer.
4. The City of Dallas will maintain insurance coverage for City-owned collections unless it elects to provide funds so that they can be included under coverage by the Museum.

B. Loans

1. Incoming loans: Objects borrowed by the Museum will be insured by the Museum, or insured on the lender's policy (with the Museum named as an additional insured or subrogation waived), or insurance will be waived.
2. Outgoing loans: Objects lent by the Museum may be covered by either the borrower's insurance or under the Museum's policy depending on circumstance. No items will be loaned unless covered under either the Museum or borrower policy.
3. Insurance involving loans will be coordinated with the Accounting Department. The Chief Executive Officer or a delegated administrative officer will be informed of new objects that need to be placed on the Museum's policy.

SECTION IX: ETHICS

- A. In order to fulfill its responsibilities to maintain its collection as a public trust, the Museum requires its employees to:
1. Abide by the recommendations set forth in the American Association of Museum guidelines: Museum Ethics (1978); Codes of Ethics for Museums (1991, amended 2000); Code of Ethics for Curators (1982, amended 1996); Code of Ethics for Registrars (1985); and the UNESCO Convention of 1971.
 2. Act ethically in collecting, acquiring, lending, and disposing of objects. This includes specimen- based information transfer.
 3. Abide by all relevant local, state, national and international laws with regard to collecting, acquiring, reproducing, lending and disposing of objects.
 4. Provide good stewardship for its collections:
 - a. **DISCOURAGE:** Unethical, illegal, or destructive practices with respect to collecting, acquiring, storing, reproducing, displaying, transporting and trafficking in objects are not allowed.
 - b. **PROTECT:** In providing data to qualified users, sensitive information must be protected.
 - c. **ENSURE:** Care should be taken that data and collection- record information are not distorted, destroyed or misused.
- B. The Museum forbids its employees to:
1. Appraise specimens or objects for private individuals or commercial concerns without prior written approval by the Chief Executive Officer.
 2. Recommend potential buyers or sellers of an object to a private individual or a commercial concern, except with the prior written approval of the Chief Executive Officer
 3. Destroy or alter specimen-based data.
 4. Collect specimens for their own use except in accordance with applicable ethical guidelines and as detailed in this policy.
 5. Divulge to a private individual or commercial concern the locations of:
 - a. Scientific or historically sensitive sites.
 - b. Populations of endangered or threatened species and/or endangered, threatened or sensitive habitats which could be adversely affected by such publicity.
- C. All Museum employees must also abide by the Institutional Code of Ethics adopted by the Museum of Nature and Science Board of Directors.

D. Curatorial Ethics

1. The Curator and the Museum

The relationship between curator and institution must be based on mutual trust and sound judgment, and curators should use this principle in guiding their professional conduct. Curators must be committed to the mission, goals and objectives of the Museum of Nature and Science and avoid both conflict of interest and the appearance of conflict of interest with the Museum. In order to fulfill its responsibilities to maintain the collections as a public trust, curators are required to abide by the American Association of Museums Code of Ethics for Curators (1996), Museum Ethics (1978) and applicable codes of conduct within their own scientific disciplines (e.g., The Society of Vertebrate Paleontology Member Ethics, 2008), as well as all relevant state, federal and international laws regarding the collection, acquisition, housing, lending and disposition of objects.

2. Responsibility to the Collection

The most important responsibility of the curator is to provide good stewardship for the collections under his or her care.

- a. **Acquisition and Disposal:** The formal process of acquisition and disposal begins with the curator. They must provide compelling reasons to acquire or to deaccession objects from the Museum's permanent collections. The planned growth and improvement of the collections in a given area is the responsibility of the supervising curator, and he or she must insure that at the end of their tenure the collections have increased in size or improved in quality, or both. Although authority and the final decision to deaccession objects rests with the Museum of Nature and Science Board of Directors, curators must offer professional guidance and expertise, in order that the institution not suffer legally, financially, scientifically or aesthetically through the disposal of objects in the collection. Funds realized from the sale of collections must be used for the acquisition of collections. Curators must ensure that collections accepted by the Museum of Nature and Science are received with clear legal title and adequate levels of documentation.
- b. **Development of Collections:** Curators are responsible for developing collections under their care in keeping with the museum's stated mission. Curators should actively seek to identify deficiencies or weaknesses in their collections areas and rectify these deficiencies through collection, acquisition or other appropriate means. Curators should also seek to refine the scope of the collections under their care for the overall benefit of the institution.
- c. **Access to Collections:** Curators must balance the need to make collections available to qualified investigators and visitors against the need to preserve and protect the collections under their stewardship. Curators should seek new ways to broaden knowledge of collections and their use by the widest possible audience while maintaining the integrity of the collections and safety of both the objects and the visitors using them.

- d. **Use of Collections:** Curators must insure that collections are used in an appropriate manner at all times. Decisions regarding appropriate use reside with the supervising curator or, in his or her absence, the Chief Curator. All such decisions should be based on the best interests of the collection and institution, and in conjunction with the stated mission of the Museum of Nature and Science. Under no circumstances should curators allow the use of collections as financial assets or collateral, or for any purpose inimical to the stated mission of the institution.
 - e. **Documentation and Interpretation.** Curators are responsible for insuring that information regarding collections is current and correct, and that the highest scientific and scholarly standards are applied in the documentation and interpretation of Museum collections.
3. **Responsibility as Scientists**
- Curators occupy a unique role within the Museum, and have responsibilities beyond those of the general museum staff. While they are often asked to perform functions for which a staff already exists within the museum, they have additional duties they alone can perform. They are the ambassadors of the Museum—and of the museum’s mission—to many communities. As such they must simultaneously serve as keepers of the collections, teachers, researchers and interpreters of both the natural world and our changing knowledge of it.
- a. **Research:** Curators are expected to conduct substantive scientific research as part of their museum duties and to actively expand knowledge within their areas of expertise. Their research conduct shall be governed by the professional ethics applying within that discipline or those disciplines in which their research is conducted. Curators are expected to communicate the results of their research to the scholarly and general public through appropriate means. While the Museum retains intellectual property rights for most purposes, scholarly publications excluding concepts subject to patent or further merchandising are specifically excluded from this assertion of rights.
 - c. **Teaching:** Curators are also expected to apply their experience and knowledge in the training of students and young professionals. All curators will be expected to seek adjunct appointments at one or more local universities, and play an active role in the intellectual life of the campus. Through teaching and internship opportunities curators should also seek to bridge the gap between museums and hands-on field science and university formal classes, to the benefit of both institutions involved and the enrichment of the students’ educational experience. Because of the unique role of the Museum of Nature and Science in the community, curators should recognize an obligation to educate not only secondary, collegiate and graduate students, but individuals of all ages, backgrounds and interests. Curators serve an important educational function, and have an obligation to support the Museum’s education and exhibits programs as expert advisors and resources.

- d. Interpretation: Curators must view their role not only in terms of expanding human knowledge but also of disseminating the results of their research through appropriate scholarly and popular forums. Lectures and public presentations are an important and valuable part of the role of the curator, and lectures by curators are encouraged.

4. General Conduct

Because curators play a central role in the institution, they also have a special responsibility to support both the mission of the institution and the professional standards deriving from that mission:

- a. Collecting: Curators are the stewards not only of the Museum collections they represent but of the populations from which they are drawn. In all cases curators should act responsibly toward the scientific, natural and cultural resources they study, and behave in accordance with all applicable state, federal and international laws. Curators must observe all applicable ethical guidelines for the collection and treatment of materials within their discipline, and observe the ethics defined in the Museum of Nature and Science's Collection Policy.
- b. Conflicts of Interest: Curators must avoid both conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflicts of interest in their professional activities, and conduct themselves as ambassadors of the Museum of Nature and Science and their respective discipline at all times.
- c. Promotion of Ethical Conduct: Curators should not only avoid but actively seek to discourage unethical, illegal or destructive practices with respect to collecting, acquiring, storing, reproducing, displaying, transporting and trafficking in objects, in their own or other disciplines. As scientists and scholars they must also conform to ethical scholarly practices, and actively seek to improve levels of professionalism within both the institution and their discipline. Curators should refuse biological or geological material collected or sold which is not in compliance with applicable laws and treaties, refuse archaeological or cultural material in cases where its removal caused significant damage to sites or monuments, where less than proper disclosure to site owners or appropriate authorities is suspected or where the collection is not in compliance with applicable laws or treaties, and refuse all support, direct or indirect, of illicit trafficking in antiquities or contraband biological or geological material.
- d. Conformance to Professional Standards: In addition to the codes of conduct outlined here, curators must abide by the Curator's Code of Ethics of the American Association of Museums (1996), the Code of Ethics adopted by the Museum of Nature and Science Board of Trustees, and the Museum of Nature and Science Collections Policy.

5. Responsibility as Advisors

Curators represent professional expertise in the care, management and development of museum collections, and have a responsibility to use that knowledge for the good of the institution. On many topics they must offer expert guidance to the Chief Executive Officer or committees of the Board of Directors. While the Board of Directors approves policy for the Museum of Nature and Science, curators have a responsibility to use their knowledge and experience to guide decision-making on topics related to the collections and their welfare, as well as questions relating to the scientific and research mission of the institution.

- a. Collections Care: As stewards of the collections curators should ensure that policies are developed which will maintain collections unimpaired for future use and enjoyment.
- b. Professional Standards: Curators should help frame policies that reflect the highest professional standards, both within their individual disciplines and in the museum field as a whole. Curators should use their professional knowledge to ensure that policies conform to existing laws, treaties and standards of professional practice. These include but are not limited to professional standards established by the American Association of Museums and International Council of Museums, the AAM Standing Curators Committee, as well as the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), the Hague Convention of 1954 regarding the acquisition of materials from occupied countries, the 1970 UNESCO agreements regarding repatriation of illegally acquired specimens, and the Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES). In all cases the Museum will abide by existing state and federal laws in developing policies affecting the collections.
- c. Institutional Stature: Curators should use their knowledge and good offices to ensure that the Museum of Nature and Science enjoys a high reputation for professionalism and scientific rigor within the disciplines they represent. Conversely they must ensure that the future course of the Museum and its curatorial departments positively contributes to that reputation over time.
- d. Professional Judgment: Curators are engaged because of their specialized knowledge in specific scientific disciplines and related areas of and museum practice. Under no circumstances should curators be required to change, reverse, alter or suppress their professional judgment or advice to conform to a management decision.

Collections Policy Acknowledgement Form

Required for all Museum of Nature and Science employees, volunteers, and members of the Board of Directors.

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the Museum of Nature and Science Collections Policy.

Signed

Date