

**Collection Management Policy**

updated January 24, 2022

**Mission Statement:** We strive to connect the past with the present, through preserving and protecting the collections of artifacts and stories that are reflected in Rexburg's history and the story of the Teton Dam Flood.

**Brief Museum History:**  On March 21, 1970 the Upper Snake River Valley Historical Society opened up the museum on College Avenue. Here donations were collected and recorded. During the Teton Dam Flood many of the items and records were lost or damaged. The museum was moved into the basement of the Rexburg Tabernacle in 1981 as part of a stipulation placed in a grant given by the Federal Government to purchase the building in 1978. The museum was named the Teton Flood Museum and opened its doors on June 5, 1981. From 1981-1999 the museum was managed and operated by the historical society. In 1999 the City of Rexburg took over the management of the museum and began to charge admission. In October 2015 the curator, Jill Spencer, retired and a new curator, Jackie Rawlins, was hired by the City of Rexburg. In early 2016, the museum’s name was changed to better reflect its collection and became known as the Museum of Rexburg: Home of the Teton Flood Exhibit. The museum has recently begun improvements and updates that include new displays, digital catalog, and research of all the items placed in its care.

**Scope of Collections:**  The museum’s collection consists of items from early pioneer settlers to artifacts and stories collected after the Teton Dam Flood. The collection is not only from Rexburg but from other cities/towns in Madison County and the surrounding valley. These collections are used to tell the story of Rexburg and the surrounding areas and to teach visitors about the Teton Dam and the effects of its collapse. Many items in the collection were donated without any formal donation forms or history given. Several of the early donated items and records were lost in the sequential flooding from the breakage of the Dam.

**Categories of Collections:** The museum currently has 15 categories that their collections fall under. They include Accessories, Arts and Media, Transportation, Business and Industry, Consumer Electronics, Education, Farm and Ranch, Housewares, Military and Organizations, Clothing, Tools, Toys and Models, Events, Sports and Recreation, Natural History Specimens, Fabrics and Textiles, Kitchenwares, Books, Newspapers, Photographs, Appliances, Memorabilia, and Documents. These categories are subject to change based on what artifacts come into or leave our collection.

**Accessioning:** An artifact will be accessioned into the museum’s collection if it can be proved to be from a period in Rexburg’s history or from any of the surrounding cities/towns in Madison County and the surrounding valley. The artifact may have also been owned or used at one time by a Rexburg resident or a resident of the surrounding valley or could be an item that would have been possibly used by a resident to qualify for accessioning. Examples could include food stamps books, schoolbooks, farming equipment, etc. Storage space and the ability to properly store the proposed artifact must be considered as well. An artifact may be rejected for accession if duplicate items are already part of the collection. The curator must approve all accessioning of artifacts and must sign off all paperwork. The museum will accept an artifact on loan if it is within the accessioning description above. The loan will be issued for up to two years. All loan renewals are the responsibility of the donor. Failure to do so transfers the ownership of the item to the museum.

**Deaccessioning:** The Museum adheres to the Alliance’s Code of Ethics for Museums in which we ensure that the “disposal of collections through sale, trade, or research activities is solely for the advancement of the museum’s mission.” Deaccessioning of an artifact may also occur if the artifact is hazardous to museum employees, patrons, or other artifacts with which it is stored. Deaccessioning of artifacts may be considered in the interest of improving the collections for the museum’s purposes and activities. Artifacts may only be deaccessioned upon the request of museum staff. The curator must approve all deaccessioning of artifacts and must sign off all paperwork. All paperwork will be documented and saved as part of the museum’s records.

Museum staff will use the following criteria in determining the artifacts that have been recommended for deaccessioning:

1. Does the artifact have a number or other paperwork attached to it?
2. Who was the artifact donated by?
3. Does the artifact support the scopes of collection or fall into one of the categories of collection?
4. Is the artifact damaged beyond repair?
5. Does the artifact pose a threat to staff or patrons due to deterioration?
6. Does the artifact pose a threat to other artifacts in the collection due to deterioration?
7. Are they duplicates of this artifact in the collection?
8. Does the museum have adequate storage and resources to maintain the artifact?

**Methods of Disposal:** The museum will consider the following before disposing of an artifact:

1. that the disposal is the best interest of the museum and the community and patrons that they serve.
2. that reasonable efforts have been made to gift the artifact to a public institution or non-profit organization appropriate for the artifact.

The following are proper methods of disposal and an artifact must be disposed in one of the following methods:

1. Usage in outreach and education programming
2. Transfer to another institution or non-profit organization that is appropriate for the artifact
3. Public auction with all procedures going towards supporting preservation and conservation of the collection
4. Destruction in a safe and secure way that does not impede the health or welfare of staff or patrons.

**Loans:** Artifacts cannot be loaned out to other museums/organizations without the approval of the curator. All loan paperwork must include photographs as well as written description of the condition of the artifact being loaned. The paperwork will also include the date and time the artifact will be picked and returned to the museum. Upon return each artifact will again be photographed and a written description of its condition will be reported. All paperwork must be signed and dated by loan recipient. Loan recipients must be willing to provide proper contact information and agree to take full financial responsibility of artifacts loaned and agree to pay for any damage occurred during the length of the loan.

The museum may seek to acquire the loan of artifacts from other institutions and/or community members for exhibit or display purposes. The curator must approve all loans of this type and must sign off on all paperwork.

**Objects in Custody:** Artifacts that are found, abandoned, or unclaimed will be considered the property of the museum and will be either accessioned or deaccessioned appropriately.

**Conservation:**  The museum strives to maintain industry conservation standards with respect to pest control, relative humidity, temperature, storage, conservation, and handling of objects.

**Documentation, Collections, Records, and Inventories:** When the museum was created, paper records were created for each artifact. Each record indicated a number that coordinated with an artifact. The number had three parts. The first number indicated the donation year of an artifact. The second number was the number that coordinated with the collection and the third was the number in the collection. This system was in place up until the museum switched curators in 2016. It was discovered that though this system was effective when it first started, that many artifact records were lost because the paper work had not been filed correctly or numbers were not recorded on the artifacts. Because of this, the museum than developed a new system and resolved to digitalize the collection. Each artifact is now being digitally photographed, physically tagged with a new number that better represents the entire collection, given a marked condition report, and stored in proper storage containers. A paper file is than created with the old catalog numbers, copies of the condition reports, and any history/research that has been collected. Lastly, all photos, condition reports, and research are stored in online database for easier access to museum staff. All this but the research is being done by a catalog specialist who has had specialized training to ensure quality results. The research is being done by museum staff and volunteers who follow a list of questions that gather information about the donor, the artifact itself, and the company that manufactured the artifact. All research is checked by a research assistant and recorded into the digital catalog. Condition reports are filed every time an artifact is moved or used in an exhibit/display. Condition reports are done in a gird format and filed with the artifact record. The digital catalog is backed up daily onto a flash drive that then is switched out periodically with another flash drive that is stored in a separate location. The curator should periodically check the catalog and online database to ensure that quality is maintained.

**Access:** Artifacts currently displayed can be accessed by the public if proof of their family connection can be established. This can only be done with the permission of the curator and under the supervision of museum staff, who will ensure that proper handling of the object occurs. Only a museum staff member can access artifacts currently stored in the archival space. Artifacts can be brought out for patrons if the artifacts are easily accessible and it will not cause damage to the artifact. Patrons are required to wear gloves and only touch the items under the supervision of museum staff. Patrons may not handle the artifacts. Museum staff may only bring out up to two artifacts for free. Any further requests must be submitted with 24 hours’ notice and fee will be required.

**Appraisals:**  Museum staff are not allowed to provide appraisals for artifacts either brought in by the public or other entities.