

Sooke Region Museum*

Collections Policy



***Operated by the Sooke Region Historical Society**

Accepted by the Board on 7 September 2022.

The Sooke Region Museum operates in the territories of the T'Sou-ke, Scia'new, and Pacheedaht peoples, who have inhabited this land since time immemorial.

Purposes of the Society

1. To gather and preserve information, records and objects of educational, historical and cultural value associated with the area, and without limiting the generality of the foregoing.
2. To establish and maintain a museum for the purpose of preserving, recording and exhibiting for public enjoyment such material.
3. To support the development of the arts through exhibition, presentation, performance, commission, development and production.

General Note on Stewardship

Materials acquired by the Sooke Region Museum are owned by the Sooke Region Historical Society and held “in trust” for the benefit, enjoyment, and education of the region’s residents. The geographic area for collecting is generally understood to cover the region from East Sooke to Port Renfrew including the waters and lands between these points. We explore the human and natural history of the region from its beginning to its present.

Archaeological materials deposited under the terms of permits are held “in trust”.

All decisions are made by a Collections Committee or the Executive Director or their designate.

The Collections Policy and Procedures will be reviewed at least every three years.

Policy Statements

Acquisition Policy

The museum will acquire artifacts, archival materials, and natural history specimens related to the region as described prior. In practicing the policy, the Sooke Region Museum is to accept only articles of historical significance of the area. Certain requirements must be met in order for an object to be accepted into the Sooke Region Museum's collection.

Digital Donations

Digital donations are increasing in number, and it is important to preserve these formats for future access, research and interpretation. These digital donations will be placed under the same scrutiny as any other donation that comes to the Sooke Region Museum. The analog carriers of information will be considered the preservation format. But where the analog carrier is at risk of obsolescence, the digital format will be the preservation copy. As there are many different digital formats, the museum will attempt to acquire the proper technologies to access the digital materials. In most cases, the material (i.e., video, audio, photo, etc.) will be considered the item of significance, not the object it is on.

Considerations on Donations

Objects in the collection will maintain a particular significance to the region, whether that be:

- Historical
- Artistic
- Scientific
- Social
- Educational

Objects will not be collected without proof that they are significant to the region. Articles offered from beyond the region can be accepted under certain circumstances. This is considered when articles are valuable in depicting the area's history and no such articles have been made available from within the region. Another area of exception is in our role of presenting the arts, artistic items not from this region may be collected.

Objects selected for their educational significance will be added to the educational collection under a particular accession number:

The educational collection will aim to serve and to benefit the public in terms of learning through hands-on experiences. The items added to the educational collection will not be added to the permanent collection. Additions to the educational collection may be added through deaccessioned objects from the permanent collection, or through newly accepted donations. The items may range in terms of condition, pending the use in the educational collection. These items will allow the public to handle collections, but not put the permanent collection at risk of damage.

Objects will not be accepted in the case that they are not complete, sound and/or in original condition, where possible.

A consideration to donations will be the ability to properly care for the object. This will not be an absolute reason to turn down an object.

Duplicate objects will often be declined due to space limitations. Acknowledgement of long-range space limitations is a factor taken into consideration for every potential donation.

A donation is a donation and conditions other than those allowed under law (such as privacy concerns) will not be allowed.

The Sooke Region Museum may deaccession items according to guidelines listed later in the document.

Found in Collection

Items that are found to have little documentation of their ownership or that have never been formally accessioned into the collection are considered “found in collection” and are given an “FIC” number.

Appraisals

The museum does not provide appraisals for items outside of the mandate. The museum will only provide appraised values for items under \$1000 for Revenue Canada receipts. When required, donors wishing to receive tax receipts for items deemed to be of a higher value must provide an assessment by a professional independent appraiser. Only in very rare and unique circumstances will the Museum pay for an independent appraisal for a collection or item to be donated. Appraisals will only be done for objects that will become a part of the museum collection. Not for general information for the owner.

Bequests

Bequests must be negotiated in advance. The museum is under no obligation to accept gifts of bequests and such donations are subject to the same scrutiny as any donation.

Loans – Incoming

Temporary – Periodically the museum may borrow artifacts or archival material for display, research, or education purposes. These will be limited to a specific period and are covered by the Museum’s insurance. These loans may be renewed.

Permanent –Permanent loans are not accepted under any circumstances. All loans must have a termination date agreed upon by both parties involved. All lenders must provide alternatives in the event they are unable to resume ownership of loaned items at loan term end. Restrictions can be considered. Loaned items are generally left at the loaners risk unless an agreement to the contrary is made.

Loans – Outgoing

Temporary –These will be restricted to a specific time period and may be renewed. Loans to other institutions may be made. This is to only occur under the circumstances that the receiving institution will provide professional standards of care and management. These will be restricted

to a specific time period and may be renewed. Agreement on liability for the object will be part of the loan agreement.

Permanent – Only in exceptional circumstances will the Museum loan collection(s) items on a permanent basis.

Deaccession and Disposition

Individual items or collections may be deaccessioned upon review and recommendation of the Collections Committee (alongside the Collections Manager and Executive Director). The criteria for determination of this action will be thoroughly scrutinized in the following respects:

- It is no longer relevant to the mission of the Sooke Region Museum nor does it fall under the collections policy as outlined in the Sooke Region Museum’s collection policy.
- It is deteriorated or damaged beyond the point that it no longer serves a useful purpose.
- Presents a hazard or serious risk to health and safety of museum staff and visitors, or conditions of other artifacts
- Duplicates already existing items or a better example has been acquired
- It has fraudulent, unethical or illegal provenance
- It is being repatriated to First Nations

Additionally, there are certain conditions that must be met in order for deaccession:

1. The Sooke Region Museum has clear title to the object.
2. There are no legal or legislative restrictions that prohibit deaccessioning the object.
3. The reason(s) for removal of the object from the collection are thoroughly documented.

In order for items or collections to properly be deaccessioned, there are two forms to be filled out. This includes:

1. *Deaccessioning Form*
2. *Deaccessioning Report*

Deaccessioning Form

This form provides a basic outline of the item(s) or collection that is to be deaccessioned.

Deaccessioning Report

This report provides more information as to why the item(s) or collection is being deaccessioned, the conditions that must be met, method of disposition and authorization from the Deaccessioning Committee. It also allows for any further documentation to support the deaccessioning of the item(s) or collection to be attached.

Disposition

Recommendation for disposition will include the following options:

- Transfer to education collection
- No matter the circumstance, an accessioned item will not be returned to the donor due to CRA Charity Rules.
- Transfer or exchange to another public institution where there is an acceptable standard of care and management
- Sale by auction or similar at fair market value

- Physical destruction or discarding

Prior restrictions on disposal:

Where conditions were imposed by the donor at the time of donation the Museum will comply with those restrictions unless the item(s) represent a safety hazard to staff or other collections. Restrictions are not usually agreed to when accepting new donations.

Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics

Deaccessioned materials may not be sold or given to employees, volunteers or members of the Board, their families, agents, or friends.

Deaccession Revenues

Revenues generated through deaccession will be restricted to the purchase or direct care of the Museum's permanent artifact and archival collections.

Repatriation

Objects or archival material will be repatriated when it is demonstrated that Indigenous or government bodies have a right to these items.

Human Remains

In the Sooke Region Museum collection there are identified human remains. The human remains will be repatriated upon request of the cultural communities to which they belong. In the instances when we know or suspect which cultural community the human remains originated from, we will endeavour to inform them of that fact.

Under no circumstance will the Sooke Region Museum accept human remains, this includes osteological remains and soft tissue.

In the collection, there are artifacts which use human hair and teeth for jewelry. The above clause does not include hair, teeth, or nails in the context of memorial jewelry. It is to the Sooke Region Museum's understanding these items do not contain a sacred significance to a particular culture. If that knowledge is to change, the museum will do its best to properly follow respectful cultural practices and repatriation if necessary.

This policy was accepted and approved by the Sooke Region Historical Society Board on this day 7 September 2022.

Staff will implement this policy document through manuals and forms.