

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**THE MANUAL OF COLLECTIONS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**  
**FOR THE DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**

The mission of the Denver Museum of Natural History (DMNH) is to promote the study, understanding, and enjoyment of the universe, nature, science, and human cultures.

**Ethics**

- DMNH staff are guided by the AAM *Code of Ethics for Museums*, the DMNH *Ethics Policy Statement*, and all the ethics codes of pertinent disciplines in carrying out their responsibilities to DMNH collections, to the Museum, and to the public trust.

**Staff and Others Responsible for Collections**

- The President and Board of Trustees, as the Museum's top administrators, ultimately bear the public trust responsibility for DMNH collections development, care, use, and disposition.
- The Curators Review Committee, comprised of the Chief Curator, curators, archivists, librarian, Registrar and chief conservator, have the authority to interpret all sections of the Manual and may seek the advice of the President, Board of Trustees, legal counsel, or other advisors, when circumstances warrant.
- The Chief Curator designates the department in charge of each collection.
- Curators, archivists, and the librarian are primarily responsible for collections management, record keeping, and preparation, but may also delegate this responsibility.
- The Registrar maintains central documentation of collection activity and information.
- The conservator is responsible for maintaining the balance between long-term preservation and short-term use of the collections.

**Authority**

- Curators, the Chief Curator, and the President have the sole authority, as determined by their current authorization limits, to acquire, use, loan, borrow, or dispose of specimens and collection objects.

**Acquisition of Objects for DMNH Collections**

- Collections of DMNH are defined as any object(s) owned by or under the trusteeship of the Museum for the purposes of study, preservation, exhibition, and education. DMNH subscribes to a policy of selective acquisition and is under no obligation to accept any object. Acquisitions are subject to proper authorization.
  - DMNH may acquire objects through the following channels:
    - Donation (Gift or Bequest)
    - Field Collection
    - Purchase
    - Exchange
    - Transfer
    - Salvage
    - Abandoned Property
    - Deposit by a Government Agency

**Use of Collections and Collection Information**

- In fulfillment of its obligation to the public, DMNH provides equal and the fullest possible access to its collections and collections documentation, while providing appropriately for security and preservation.
- Collections of DMNH are used in accordance with its mission and in compliance with currently accepted preservation standards for collections and resources held in the public trust. All use must comply with applicable laws, regulations, and Museum policies. Collections and information are available, with curatorial approval, to DMNH staff and qualified users for legitimate examination, study, research, and teaching purposes. DMNH reserves the right to refuse any request for access to collections and information.
- Analytical sampling is strictly regulated and may only be conducted with the approval of the appropriate authority.
- Use of collections objects for commercial or promotional purposes must be approved by the appropriate curator, archivist, librarian, Collections and Research Division (CRD) department head, Chief Curator, or President.
- The use of collection objects for purely decorative purposes is not permitted.
- All matters involving access, storage, security, conservation treatments, loan requests, exhibition, change of location, or physical handling of the collections materials must be approved by the appropriate curator in consultation with appropriate staff and, as required, by the Chief Curator and President.

- All documentation of DMNH collections-related work conducted as part of an employee's job is a "work made for hire" and is the physical and intellectual property of the DMNH unless otherwise governed by contract, employee agreement, or law. Originals of collections-related documentation shall remain at the DMNH. Employees shall have the right to retain or acquire copies of this documentation and use it to publish subsequent to their employment at DMNH.
- To protect intellectual freedom, DMNH staff may own copyright in their personal, research related, original work.

### **Photography of DMNH Collections**

- Photography of DMNH collections is subject to curatorial approval. DMNH reserves the right to refuse any request to photograph.
- Written permission must be obtained through DMNH Photo Archives if image publication is intended.
- Certain classes of objects may not be published without specific review and appropriate approval.

### **Loans**

- Objects may be temporarily removed from or received into the Museum by loan with proper authorization.
- Outgoing loans will be made for a period of one year or less. Approval levels for loan extensions are the same as those for the original loan.
- The appropriate approval is required to loan type specimens and extinct Holocene taxa.
- Loans of type specimens and extinct Holocene taxa must be hand carried at the expense of the borrower. Only insect or arachnid type specimens for which paratypes exist can be sent via certified or registered mail.
- DMNH may give notice of the termination of a loan at any time.
- Loans are subject to Article 14 *Loans to Museums* under Colorado Title 38 PROPERTY-REAL AND PERSONAL.

### **Conservation**

- The goal of DMNH conservation strategies is to manage and maintain the balance between long-term preservation and short-term use of the collections.

### **Deaccession and Disposition**

- DMNH may permanently and legally remove objects from its collections through deaccession solely for the advancement of the Museum's mission. Deaccession allows DMNH to transfer unrestricted title or trusteeship through the separate but related process of disposition.
- Both deaccession and disposition processes are approved through the Curators Review Committee with proper authorization.
- Deaccessioned objects will be disposed of in a manner considered to be in the best interests of the Museum, the public, the trust it represents in owning the collections, and the scholarly and scientific communities it serves.
- All funds received from the sale of deaccessioned objects shall be used for the care and/or acquisition of collections in accordance with the AAM *Code of Ethics for Museums*.
- In the case of dissolution of DMNH or a CRD department, all accessioned collections will be transferred to a similar institution or department whose mission is to house collections for educational and research purposes.

### **Selling Objects in Museum Retail Shops**

- Retail shop inventory is subject to oversight by the Curators Review Committee to determine the appropriateness of cultural and natural history objects offered for sale.

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\*Detailed policies and procedures can be found in The Manual of Collections Policies and Procedures for the Denver Museum of Natural History, modified in 1998 under guidelines as defined and approved by the Board of Trustees.