

Colorado Model Railroad Museum

Collections Management Policy – Approved May 31, 2018

I. Statements of Purpose, Mission and Vision

The organization was originally founded as the Greeley Freight Station Museum Guild on November 20, 2009. It was renamed the Colorado Model Railroad Museum on December 11, 2014.

A. Purpose

- i. Promote model railroading.
- ii. Educate members of the public on the history of railroading, particularly in the Western United States.
- iii. Enhance and preserve the downtown core area of Greeley, Colorado.
- iv. Contribute financial and operational assistance, provide volunteer support and promote opportunities for community involvement with the CMRM.

B. Mission

To provide a model railroading experience that educates, inspires and brings joy to all ages.

C. Vision

To share and expand the model railroading experience as an avenue for human creativity.

II. Purpose of the Collections Management Policy

This Collections Management Policy is intended to document the policies that guide the development and care of the Museum's artifact collection consistent with the mission of the Museum and professional museum standards. Through this policy, the Museum ensures that:

- Collections are accounted for by an accurate inventory and documented in the collections management database.
- Collections are protected, secure, cared for and preserved.
- Acquisition, deaccessioning and loans of collection artifacts are conducted in a manner consistent with the Museum's mission, complies with applicable law and reflects the highest ethical standards.

- Disposal of artifacts from the collection through sale, exchange, or other means is solely for the advancement of the Museum's mission, and proceeds from the sale of such artifacts are used only to purchase other artifacts.
- Collection-related activities promote the public good rather than individual financial gain.

III. **Duties of the Board of Directors and Collections Committee**

A. **Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors has the following powers with respect to the collection:

- Accept or decline gifts or bequests of artifacts upon the recommendation of the Collections Committee.
- Deaccess artifacts for sale, exchange, or other means of disposal irrespective of market value upon the recommendation of the Collections Committee.

B. **Collections Committee**

The Collections Committee consists of at least the Board President, one other Board member serving as Chair, the Museum Director and if applicable, the Curator and museum volunteers. The Committee has the following powers with respect to the collection:

- Recommend accession of artifacts to a specified collection to the Board of Directors.
- Recommend deaccession of collection artifacts to the Board of Directors.
- Formulate and adopt a program for and to approve the purchase of artifacts and to apply to the purchase of artifacts the funds restricted for such purposes. The Committee may delegate to the Director and Curator power to purchase artifacts within such reasonable limits as the Committee may impose.
- Provide oversight of the implementation of this policy.

IV. **Definitions**

Accession: The act by which objects are accepted into the Museum's permanent collection.

Acquisition: The act by which objects are transferred into the Museum's ownership.

Deaccession: The act of permanently removing or transferring objects from the Museum's permanent collection.

Loans: The temporary transfer of custody of objects from the Museum's permanent collection to an outside organization or group for cultural or educational purposes for a limited time; and/or objects transferred for a limited time from an outside organization or group to the Museum that do not involve a change of ownership.

- V. **Statement of Collecting Interests:** Collection interests include, but are not limited to:
- A. Accurate models of G-, O-, HO-, N-, and Z-scale trains, including freight, specialty, and passenger cars.
 - B. Historic tinsplate toy trains, buildings, and accessories.
 - C. Railroad rolling stock.
 - D. Photographs, maps and drawings of significant events relating to the railroads.
 - E. Railroad clothing, uniforms, equipment, insignia, and memorabilia.
 - F. Books, manuals and manuscripts relating to the model railroad hobby and railroads.
 - G. Art, music and objects historically related to prototype trains and model railroads and trains that celebrate all aspects of railroading.
 - H. Materials and objects that document the history of the Museum including founder biography, design and operational concepts, drawings, construction, organization, policies, programming, Board minutes, fiscal reports, newsletters, strategic plans, volunteer involvement and exhibit development.

VI. **The Collections:** The Museum organizes its collections in four functional areas:

A. Education Collection:

Items in this category will not be a part of the Museum's accessioned collection. They will be used solely for educational and research purposes. They are not subject to the restrictions, inventorying and standard of care afforded the accessioned collections.

B. Expendable Collection:

Items in this category shall be used for expendable, trade or sale purposes. Items in this collection are not subject to the restrictions, inventorying and standard of care afforded the accessioned collections.

C. Library Collection:

Accessions include, but are not limited to, commercially available trade publications such as books, newspapers, periodicals, pamphlets, maps, census data, brochures and ephemera in all format/media including microfilms, video tapes, CD ROM, and DVD.

D. Artifact Collection:

1. Accessions include unique and rare items from the Library Collection as well as, but not limited to, manuscripts, archives, photographic materials, prints, broadsides, scrapbooks, maps, architectural and engineering drawings, and paper ephemera relating to the history of railroads and model railroading.

2. Accessions include but are not limited to, scale model trains, historic and/or rare toy trains, model kits, railroad uniforms and textiles, model structures, railroad artifacts, and fine railroad and railroad art, music and objects historically related to the history and celebration of railroads and the model railroading hobby.

VII. **Acquisitions**

A. **Purchasing or Accepting Gifts or Bequests**

The Museum Director or Curator should propose exceptional artifacts for acquisition to the collection that significantly further the Museum's stated mission. The Museum must be able to display, store, and care for the proposed acquisition according to generally accepted museum practices.

The Museum is committed to the principle that all collecting be done according to the highest standards of ethical and professional practice.

The Museum generally does not accept restrictions on gifts; any exceptions require approval by the Board of Directors.

B. Provenance

For all acquisitions, the Museum shall make a rigorous effort to obtain from sellers and donors all available information and accurate written documentation with respect to the ownership history of the artifact.

VIII. Policies Related to Acquisitions

It is Museum policy not to provide appraisals to donors. Under current IRS guidelines, the Museum cannot act as a qualified appraiser because of the inherent conflict with its role as a donee. The Museum will not make arrangements for the appraisal and cannot pay for the appraisal.

IX. Deaccessioning

A. General Principles

Any deaccession of an artifact should be solely for the advancement of the Museum's mission. The criteria for determining whether an artifact should be deaccessioned include, but are not limited to, the following:

- i. The artifact does not further the mission of the Museum.
- ii. The artifact is redundant or is a duplicate and is not necessary for research or study purposes.
- iii. The artifact is of lesser quality than other objects of the same type in the collection or about to be acquired.
- iv. The artifact lacks sufficient merit or historical importance to warrant retention.
- v. The Museum is ordered to return an artifact to its original and rightful owner by a court of law; the Museum determines that another entity is the rightful owner of the object; or the Museum determines that the return of the object is in the best interest of the Museum.
- vi. The Museum is unable to conserve the artifact in a responsible manner.
- vii. The artifact is unduly difficult or impossible to care for or store properly.

No Board Director, Officer, employee, volunteer or family member of such individuals may purchase deaccessioned artifacts directly from the Museum without an auction or other bidding process.

All funds received from deaccessioned artifacts shall only be used to fund the purchase of other artifacts for the collection.

B. Guidelines for Deaccessioning Gifts

The Museum shall honor all legal restrictions attaching to the gift or bequest of any artifact. In addition, donor requests which do not impose any legal obligation accompanying the bequest or gift of any artifact will be respected to the extent feasible, unless modified by the donor, or if the donor is not living, the donor's heirs or legal representatives. Before proceeding to recommend that a donated artifact be deaccessioned, the Museum Director or curator first reviews the records of gift to confirm that the gift is unrestricted.

In addition, no artifact acquired by the Museum through gift or bequest will be disposed of within three years following its receipt if objected to, after appropriate notice, by the donor or the donor's heirs or representatives.

X. Care of the Collections

The Museum is a collecting institution and a repository of artifacts and its mission requires the care of artifacts in its collection. The Museum shall conserve artifacts in accordance with the highest standards. Objects should receive the care necessary so they last indefinitely and in a state as close to that which they entered the care of the Museum. The Museum shall provide a safe and appropriate environment for the collections, with effective security and environmental control, for the benefit of present and future generations. The Museum shall maintain a Collections Emergency Plan. The Museum's conservation standards shall be maintained for artifacts on loan to the Museum or borrowed from the Museum.

The Museum staff is charged with the long-term care of the collection and shall maintain exact documentation.

XI. Records and Inventories

The Museum, through its staff and volunteers shall maintain accurate, up-to-date records on the identification, location and condition of all objects in the collection, as well as of ongoing activities such as exhibitions, loans, research and correspondence with donors, artists and scholars. These records should be recorded in the Museum's collections management database. Any original paper files regarding the acquisition of objects should also be retained. The staff shall maintain coherent, organized records on accessioned, non-accessioned and deaccessioned artifacts and loans and artifacts brought into the Museum for possible purchase or gift. Staff

and volunteers are responsible for updating and maintaining records for the collections and for controlling access to data bases to ensure limited and appropriate access to confidential records.

All records created or received in the transaction of the Museum's proper business are the property of the Museum and must not be dispersed or destroyed except in accordance with its records retention policy.

The Museum shall make available to qualified researchers and scholars materials relating to the collections unless they are confidential or would suffer physical harm if handled.

XII. Access to the Collection

It is fundamental to the Museum's mission to provide access to the Museum's collection and promote appreciation of its significance.

Among the primary means for achieving this goal is the presentation of exhibits of its own artifacts and those borrowed from other owners. The Museum shall provide additional access to its collections through study areas and loans to other institutions. The Museum shall support continuing scholarly investigation and research in order to document, publish, and advance understanding of the Museum's collections as well as contribute to broader academic and public discourses.

The Museum shall support and encourage awareness and understanding of its artifacts by disseminating information through the development of publications, programs, and its website for a variety of audiences ranging from children to adult audiences and scholars. These will draw upon its collection and research as primary sources for stimulating engagement and promoting familiarity with artifacts in their historical contexts.

XIII. Outgoing Loans

As an important means of fulfilling the educational and scholarly purposes of the Museum's Charter, the Museum lends artifacts from its Library and Artifact Collections to qualified institutions. The Museum wishes to cooperate with as many qualified institutions as possible to share its collection with the widest possible public, both general and scholarly. Loan requests must be evaluated in light of the artifact's historical and scholarly value of the exhibition for which they are requested, as well as the condition of the object and the need for it to remain at the Museum. All loan requests shall be initially reviewed by Museum staff. The Museum Director will review and have authority to approve all outgoing loan requests. The Museum Director must be satisfied that the artifact will be properly cared for and protected adequately from fire, theft, mishandling, insects, and from extremes of light, temperature and humidity. The borrower must provide a facilities report meeting the Museum's standards or the Director shall conduct a physical inspection of the borrower's premises.

All loans should be for a specific period of time (normally not to exceed one year) and may be recalled upon thirty days' written notice to the borrower (or immediately if the Museum's review of the borrower discloses unsatisfactory conditions or continuation of the loan is placing an undue administrative burden on the Museum). The object's condition should be documented and monitored in accordance with the detailed procedures approved by the Museum. All borrowers (with the exception of Tenants-in-Common) must agree in writing to the Museum's Conditions for Outgoing Loans (contained in the Borrower's Agreement) prior to shipment of the loan, and the Borrower's Agreement must be signed by both parties. No object shall leave the Museum unless adequate insurance coverage is provided by the Museum or, if authorized by the Board of Directors, the borrower or through a governmental indemnity program. Long-term loans are subject to periodic review by the Museum Director; the borrower must submit an inventory report to the Museum every two years.

Artifact loans may be made to individuals in two cases. First, if there was a specific agreement with the donor of the object allowing such a privilege at a time when the tax laws permitted such arrangements, a loan may be authorized. Second, the Museum may make loans of artifacts jointly owned with an individual (the Tenant-in-Common with the Museum) to that individual. Such loans are subject to the approvals required for other loans.

All exceptions to the Museum's loan policy must be approved by the Board of Directors.