California Preservation Program: Part 1 – Fundamentals and Facilities

Topics

Session 1: Fundamentals and Facilities
Session 2: The Role of Environment in Collections Care
Session 3: Collection Care: Handling, Access, Storage, and Exhibition
Session 4: Planning and Prioritizing

Goals for the Series

- Establish targets for collections care in cultural institutions
- Understand indicators of success in each area
- Have the tools to evaluate the conditions in your own institutions

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California Preservation Program: Part 1 – Fundamentals and Facilities

Areas of Discussion

- Policies
- Facilities
- Environment
- Lighting
- Emergency Preparedness
- Security
- Housekeeping
- Pest Management

- Handling and Access
- Collections Storage
- Exhibition
- Preservation Planning
- Conservation
- Additional Considerations

Today

- Terminology
- Making the case
- Establishing a preservation program
- Facilities
- Security
- Housekeeping

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Terminology

**Preservation**
- Refers to all those activities aimed at caring for your collection.

**Conservation**
- Refers to those activities that stabilize collections chemically or strengthen them physically.

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Professional Mandate

- American Library Association (ALA)
  - The Association's policy on preservation is based on its goal of ensuring that every person has access to information at the time needed and in a usable format.

- American Alliance of Museums (AAM)
  - Museums make their unique contribution to the public by collecting, preserving, and interpreting the things of this world.

- Society of American Archivists (SAA)
  - Archivists select, preserve, and make available documentary materials of long-term value that have lasting value to the organization or public that the archivist serves.

- American Association for State and Local History (AASLH)
  - Members shall give priority to the care and management of the collections within their care and always shall act to preserve their physical and intellectual integrity.

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Preservation Program

- Establish preservation goals and systems.

- A preservation plan is a document that “defines and charts a course of action to meet an institution’s overall preservation needs for its collections.”

  Source: Preservation Planning: Guidelines for Writing and Long-Range Plan

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Benefits of Planning

- Continues and fulfills mission
- Saves collections
- Good use of resources
- Systematic approach

Who is Responsible for Preservation?

- Director
- Board
- Staff
  - Librarians
  - Curators
  - Archivists
- Exhibit Preparators
- Facility Staff
- Janitorial Staff
- Security Staff
- Patrons/Visitors

Establishing the Benchmarks

- Getting Started
  - The minimum level of care necessary for responsible stewardship
- Good
  - Taking actions that are above the "Getting started", but there is still room for improvement
- Better
  - Best possible stewardship of cultural collections based on current research and methods

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Building and Facilities: Getting Started

- The building structure is sound and can support necessary weight loads for the collections
- The building interior is protected from water and weather intrusions
- Maintenance issues are addressed as they occur

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Building and Facilities

The building structure is sound and can support necessary weight loads for the collections

Image: Illinois Digital Archives

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Building and Facilities: Getting Started

- The building is inspected on a regular basis to ensure that changes in building condition are noted and addressed
- Contractors are informed of regulations for working around collections

Building and Facilities: Good

A facilities maintenance program is in place

Building and Facilities: Good

Facilities Maintenance Program

Schedules and guidelines for inspection and preventative maintenance for any location where collections are stored

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Building and Facilities: Good

Building vulnerabilities are known and monitored as necessary

Building and Facilities: Better

- A dedicated facilities maintenance position is on staff full-time
- Plans for regular building upgrades are incorporated into the institutional long-range plan

Security

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Security: Getting Started

- All storage rooms are kept locked when not in use
- Access to collections storage spaces is limited to essential staff
- All facilities in which collections are stored are alarmed with a centrally monitored security system

Security: Getting Started

Researchers sign in and are monitored at all times while using collections materials

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Security: Good

- Security procedures are in place and are followed by all staff
- A system is in place for tracking everyone that enters a secure collections storage location
- Research spaces are monitored with security cameras
- Regular contact is maintained with local law enforcement

Security: Better

- Security procedures are reviewed and assessed annually
- A security specialist has analyzed the institution and has made recommendations for mitigating security risks
- Security personnel are on staff and monitor facilities 24 hours a day

Housekeeping

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Housekeeping: Getting Started

- Storage and stacks areas are cleaned on a regular schedule
- All garbage containing food is removed from the facility on a daily basis
- Cleaning supplies and tools are kept in stock
- Staff are trained in what techniques are appropriate when cleaning around collections

Housekeeping Supplies

General Supplies
- Brushes
- Gloves
- Muslin
- Mylar
- Orvus
- Vacuum
- Murphy’s Oil Soap
- Renaissance Wax
- Dust Cloths
- Screening

Do Not Use
- Lemon Oil
- Turpentine
- Bees Wax
- Endust or other dusting products
- Any Aerosol products
- Saddle soap
- Cleaners
- Plexiglas cleaner on other surfaces
- Glass cleaner on Plexiglas
- Bleach
- Abrasive Cleaners
- Feather Dusters
- Acid-based Cleaners

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HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) filter
Rheostat attachment to adjust the vacuum pressure

Housekeeping: Good

- A conservator has been consulted about what cleaning products are appropriate for use around collections materials
- A formalized housekeeping policy and manual are established

Housekeeping: Good

Staff are trained to notice and report changes in the collection that are observed during cleaning (pests, missing pieces, damage)

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Housekeeping: Better

- A system is in place for basic cleaning of stacks/boxes/artifacts
- An annual training session is held for those staff members involved in housekeeping for collections areas

Thank you and Questions

Questions about collections care?

Contact the California Preservation Program
info@calpreservation.org

Next Session

Session 2: Environment
December 5, 2013

- Temperature
- Relative Humidity
- Lighting
- Pests

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