

Museums for America: Collections Stewardship

Below are examples of recently funded projects that support activities in the Museums for America Collections Stewardship category.

California

Oakland Museum of California - Oakland, CA

Year: 2011

Amount: \$78,530

Grant: Conservation Project Support - Survey of Collections

The Oakland Museum of California will conduct a general conservation survey of its collections in order to identify the museum's most pressing conservation needs and to inform the development of the next long-range plan for collections care and facilities improvements. Eight consulting specialists will survey operations and facilities as well as paper, ethnographic and natural science collections, photographs, time-based media, paintings, costumes, and textiles. The survey will reflect the museum's emphasis on the visitor experience and on connecting communities to the cultural and environmental heritage of California.

San Francisco Botanical Garden Society at Strybing Arboretum - San Francisco, CA

Year: 2012

Amount: \$149,849

Grant: Museums for America - Collections Stewardship

The San Francisco Botanical Garden Society will undertake a two-year geographic-information-system (GIS) mapping project to verify and record the location for each plant in 13 of the garden's 18 geographic and thematic plant collections. Each plant's accession number will then be used to tie its GIS location to information in the existing plant-collection database. An internship program will give undergraduate and graduate students opportunities for practical experience using GIS mapping, and plant collection maps will be used by the curatorial staff and city-employed gardeners to streamline their operations. Project results will be integrated into enhanced outdoor learning experiences for visitors by providing garden staff, docents, and teachers with more detailed information about specific plants and their locations, and scholars worldwide will have improved online access to SFBG's collections.

University and Jepson Herbaria, University of California - Berkeley, CA

Year: 2012

Amount: \$149,999

Grant: Conservation Project Support - Provision of Optimum Environment

The University and Jepson Herbaria will purchase and install compact shelving for its botanical library and archives. Focusing on the history of western American botany from the 1860s to the present, the collections support a variety of research topics from frontier experiences and personal histories of botanists to changes in ecosystems and the development of conservation organizations. Severe leaks in the archives storage rooms have required the archives to be moved to temporary storage closets and wheeled carts in the library. The collections are thus scattered, and accessibility is difficult and limited. The project will reorganize the current library space to accommodate the archives, increase security, and improve environmental conditions for both collections. A conservator will provide training to staff in handling collections and identifying

preservation issues. Long-term maintenance and preservation will be ensured, and collections will be easily accessible to staff, visiting scholars, and the general public.

Colorado

Denver Museum of Nature and Science - Denver, CO

Year: 2012

Amount: \$149,973

Grant: Conservation Project Support - Provision of Optimum Environment

The Denver Museum of Nature and Science will improve the environmental conditions of 700 artifacts from the Pacific islands and Australia by fabricating individual storage mounts and rehousing the artifacts in high-quality closed cabinets. Dating to the early 20th century, the artifacts include plant fiber clothing, tapa cloth, bark paintings, coconut utensils, tusk and shell ornaments, and ceremonial carvings. Conservators will complete a written and photo-documented condition report for each artifact. Staff and volunteers will then construct custom boxes, create cabinet labels, and enter condition reports, artifact analyses, images, and new storage locations into the KE Emu database, and then will physically move the collections. This project will guide future treatment priorities for these artifacts, improve access for monitoring and research, and create new public outreach opportunities through publication, exhibition, and the museum website.

Connecticut

Yale University - New Haven, CT

Year: 2011

Amount: \$100,901

Grant: Conservation Project Support - Provision of Optimum Environment

Yale University Peabody Museum will conserve and improve storage of its 2,000-item Historical Scientific Instrument Collection, which includes objects directly associated with 18th- and 19th-century scientists and instrument manufacturers as well as several 20th-century Nobel Prize winners. Students and staff will unpack, document, and rehouse the collection in new museum-quality cabinets in a new storeroom equipped with environmental controls and a monitored security system. The collection will be organized according to scientific discipline and will be readily accessible to students, faculty, and researchers both physically and virtually through an online digital image database. This will promote the long-term preservation of the collection while improving access to individual instruments for study and teaching.

Illinois

Field Museum of Natural History - Chicago, IL

Year: 2012

Amount: \$150,000

Grant: Conservation Project Support - Treatment of Collections

The Field Museum will stabilize 907 well-documented archaeological ceramics from its Central and South Coast Peru, Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina collections by removing the soluble salts that threaten the preservation of critical surface detail and the integrity of the vessel bodies. Conservators will immerse the ceramics in a series of baths of deionized water until conductivity readings indicate that no more salts are migrating into the soak bath. Severely damaged surfaces will require physical consolidation prior to soaking. The collections are a primary research

resource for anthropologists, human biologists, and archaeologists investigating topics as wide ranging as sourcing clays and pigments, social organization of ceramic production, and relationships between local groups and imperial colonizers during the Wari and Inca periods.

Southern Illinois University - Carbondale, IL

Year: 2011

Amount: \$149,955

Grant: Museums for America - Collections Stewardship

The University Museum, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, will implement the digitization phase of its 21st Century Collection Management Initiative. From 2005 to 2010 (Phases 1 to 3), the museum entered 60,000 manual records and updated descriptive information through a focused inventory. Digitization is the final stage. The proposed project will focus on 3,797 artifacts from the museum's ethnographic, archaeological, and historic collections that represent 26 themes from Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Oceania. These artifacts will be photographed and researched to create 26 online collection portfolios that will provide users with researched context, thereby practicing good collection stewardship and intellectual collection use.

Maryland

Washington County Museum of Fine Arts - Hagerstown, MD

Year: 2011

Amount: \$144,578

Grant: Museums for America - Collections Stewardship

The collections inventory project will help the Washington County Museum of Fine Arts maintain and improve the management and control of its collections and by systematically identifying and recording information about each of its 7000 works, including significant holdings of European and American art dating from the 16th century to the present, Asian and African Art, and decorative arts, especially glass. The project will also include elements of collections planning, collections security and safety, database conversion, photography, and documentation. The inventory will allow the museum to provide better access to its collections for citizens of the region, artists, area collectors, community educators, students, and scholars.

Massachusetts

Mount Holyoke College - South Hadley, MA

Year: 2012

Amount: \$148,599

Grant: Museums for America - Collections Stewardship

The Mount Holyoke College Art Museum will digitally photograph and catalogue approximately 4,000 objects in three of its most frequently studied and noteworthy holdings: works of art on paper, objects of American material culture, and American and European silver. Representing Phase II of the museum's digitization efforts, the project will provide college faculty and students with access to an increased array of objects to include in teaching and learning. A new K-12 module created as part of this project will be instrumental in bringing object-based teaching into the classrooms of area primary and secondary schools. The database will also serve to familiarize public visitors with the collection and act as a first level of research support for scholars.

Michigan

Michigan State University - East Lansing, MI

Year: 2011

Amount: \$149,639

Grant: Museums for America - Collections Stewardship

The Michigan State University Museum will use its grant to complete critical chemical testing for natural science specimens. In addition, the museum will make database and technological enhancements for its natural science and cultural collections. Project activities will include completing final data capture and database enhancements for 8,290 vertebrate specimens and records; completing arsenic detection tests for 730 of the large taxidermy-mounted specimens; geo-referencing localities for all nonfossil project specimens; migrating cultural history collections data to the new database system; and creating 20,000 digital images of historical objects. All of these records will be published on the Web.

Minnesota

Science Museum of Minnesota - St. Paul, MN

Year: 2012

Amount: \$22,671

Grant: Conservation Project Support - Survey of Collections

The Science Museum of Minnesota will hire two conservators to carry out two complementary collection surveys. A general conservation survey will update information gathered in 1996 and will reflect the move of the collections to a new, purpose-built facility in 1999. A separate media collections survey will focus on the museum's photographs, slides, film, videos, audiocassettes, and digital format media, which are considered most at-risk. The results of the surveys will be used to prioritize and plan future collections care and to develop a new, integrated long-range conservation plan. The conservators will also conduct workshops for museum staff and professional colleagues on natural history conservation and media preservation.

Missouri

A.T. Still University of Health Sciences - Kirksville, MO

Year: 2011

Amount: \$142,776

Grant: Museums for America - Collections Stewardship

In phase two of this project, the Museum of Osteopathic Medicine will inventory over 14,400 records representing many rare and unique items and leading to the creation of one comprehensive online inventory system with the ultimate goal of maintaining intellectual control over the entire collection. The museum is the primary repository of materials documenting the origins, growth, and practice of osteopathic medicine, an American form of medicine founded in 1874 by Andrew Taylor Still. The collection began in 1934 and contains over 30,000 historical items including art, documents, photographs, osteopathic artifacts, osteopathic journals, books, and textiles dating from the early 1800s to 2001. The inventory project will significantly improve collection stewardship, patron access, retrieval processes for staff assisting researchers, and expand use of the collection now and into the future.

New York

American Museum of Natural History - New York, NY

Year: 2011

Amount: \$149,996

Grant: Conservation Project Support - Treatment of Collections

The American Museum of Natural History will treat 630 of its amber fossils that show signs of deterioration or vulnerability. These hardened and fossilized forms of tree resin-containing microscopic life forms range in age from the Early Cretaceous to the Quaternary and provide an archive of ancient life. Specific treatment will involve coating or embedding pieces within a special epoxy, documenting and imaging the treatment for each piece, and then preparing specimen cabinets to buffer against relative humidity fluctuations and outfitting them with data loggers to monitor humidity levels. This project will prepare the amber fossils for long-term preservation, safe handling, and research, and will increase their accessibility to researchers and the public worldwide.

Pennsylvania

Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site - Philadelphia, PA

Year: 2012

Amount: \$26,805

Grant: Conservation Project Support - Survey of Collections

Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site will hire two consulting architects, an engineer, and a conservator to conduct a planning study to evaluate several historic structures as potential long-term collection storage spaces. Project participants will not only appraise potential environments but will also take into account other practical aspects such as visitor circulation, availability of electricity, serviceability of other mechanical systems, and overall sustainability. As part of this process, the consultants and staff will review previous conservation, architectural, and planning studies and analyze nearly one year of environmental monitoring data for the potential and current storage areas. The result will be an Environmental Management Plan for the building best suited for long-term collections storage and interim storage solutions.

Texas

Dallas County Historical Foundation - Dallas, TX

Year: 2011

Amount: \$150,000

Grant: Museums for America - Collections Stewardship

The Sixth Floor Museum will implement a comprehensive two-year cataloguing project that will improve intellectual control of its collections and make them available to the broadest possible audience. The museum's diverse, actively growing collection of approximately 35,000 items is one of the world's most important sources of artifacts, images, documents, audio and visual recordings, oral histories, and other documentation of the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy and the cultural legacy of that event. Building on cataloguing work that is already being done, this project will dramatically increase the number of complete catalogued records in both the museum's internal collections database and online database.