



Collections Development Plan

Western Development Museum Collections Development Plan

Table of Contents

Purpose	2
WDM Collections	3
Approach	4
Acquisitions Process	5
Basic Acquisitions Criteria	6
Assessing Significance, Comparative Criteria and Interpretive Capacity.....	7
Acquisitions Plan	8
Periodization and Geographical Focus.....	8
Indigenous Collections	8
Diverse Settler Collections	9
LGBTQ2+ Collections.....	9
Saskatchewan Innovation	10
Areas of Continued Collecting and Refocus.....	10
Artifacts Rarely Acquired	10
Rapid Response and Contemporary Collecting.....	12
Ad Hoc Sub-collecting Plans.....	12
Deaccessions Plan	13
Basic Deaccession Criteria.....	13
Planned Deaccession Projects.....	14
1920s Cars Project.....	15
“Room D” Project.....	15
Acknowledgements	16
Appendix A – Artifact Statement of Significance	17
Appendix B – Collections Assessment Tool	19
Appendix C – Artifact Accession Recommendation Worksheet	24



Purpose

The WDM has two documents that guide the management and development its collections: The *Collections Management Policies* and the *Collections Development Plan*.

The *Collections Management Policies* provide standards to ensure that the WDM achieves its public-trust responsibilities through the care and stewardship of the WDM collections. These policies provide a management framework for the acquisition, care, use, deaccession and disposal of the WDM collections, contributing to the effectiveness and accountability of the WDM in fulfilling its mandate and mission.

The *Collections Development Plan* guides decision making by defining the criteria for accepting artifacts into the WDM's accessioned collections, the criteria for removing artifacts from the WDM's accessioned collections, and how limited resources will be allocated in the overall care and maintenance of the WDM's accessioned collections. The *Collections Management Policies* guide decision making around objects and materials in the WDM's non-accessioned collections.

The *Collections Management Policies* are reviewed on a three-year cycle. The *Collections Development Plan* will be reviewed on a five-year cycle.

In addition to these documents, the WDM uses collections management software to document, research and support decision making with respect to the collection. The system's public portal, [Argus](#), makes the collection more accessible to Saskatchewan people and beyond.

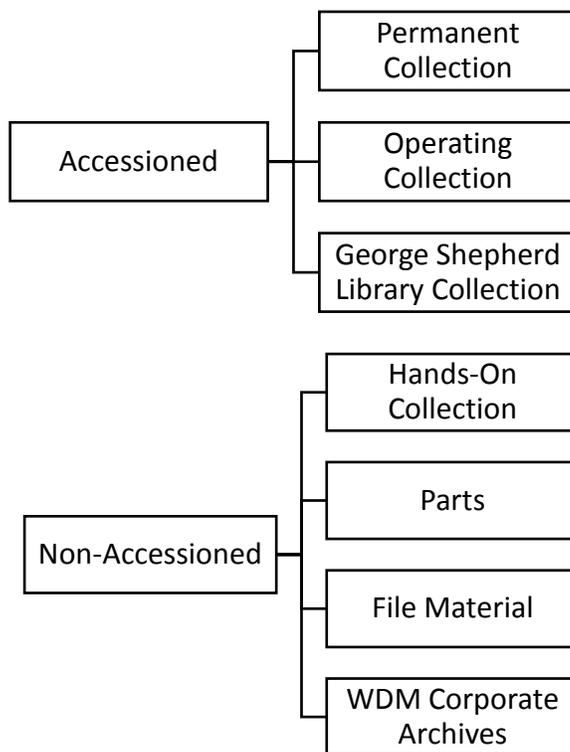
For each new artifact accessioned into the Permanent Collection, a *Statement of Significance* (Appendix A) will be prepared as part of a renewed cataloguing procedure. Inclusive language remediation of old catalogue records will be an important part of the Curatorial Department's priorities in conjunction with this *Plan*.

WDM Collections

The WDM collections represent the cultural, agricultural and industrial history of Western Canada, with strong emphasis on Saskatchewan, from the settlement period (c.1870s) to the present day. These collections are held in trust for the people of Saskatchewan.

The WDM holds over 75,000 artifacts and over 500,000 archival, photographic, and library materials. These objects and their associated documentation are acquired for research, programming and exhibit development. Generally, the WDM does not collect fine arts, natural history or archaeological artifacts, although some of these types of artifacts remain in the Permanent Collection from earlier collecting priorities.

The WDM collections are divided into two main collection categories, *Accessioned* and *Non-Accessioned*. Within these two categories are several collection types.¹



The objects and materials in the accessioned collections are the subject of this plan. The Permanent Collection consists of artifacts that illustrate the cultural, agricultural and industrial history of Saskatchewan and its people. Artifacts in the Permanent Collection represent significant tangible and intangible aspects these histories. The Permanent Collection is the core for WDM research, exhibition, and interpretation activities.

¹ More detailed information about each collection type can be found in the *Collections Management Policies*.

The WDM also recognizes the value of maintaining an operating collection of machinery and equipment. Artifacts in the Operating Collection are used for demonstration, training and other museum functions. The George Shepherd Library Collection consists of accessioned and non-accessioned research materials available to staff and volunteers; while accessioned materials are available to the public, non-accessioned and uncatalogued materials may be limited in access.

Since its founding in 1949, the WDM has evolved to become much more than an agricultural implement museum. With a legislated mandate to stimulate interest in the history of the economic and cultural development of Western Canada², the Museum's collections have grown to better represent the diversity of the Saskatchewan spirit up to the present day. To meet its mandate, the WDM collections must represent all Saskatchewan peoples and the diverse histories of our province. The *Collections Development Plan* sets out the criteria used to develop the Museum's collections in keeping with its mandate.

Approach

The WDM began researching its collections with the goal of implementing a collections development plan as early as 2012. Years of research, inventories, assessments and staff consultations have been conducted since. That research, combined with new planning processes conducted in 2019, informs this *Collections Development Plan*.³

The *Collections Development Plan* (herein referred to as the *Plan*) is aligned to the WDM's mandate as legislated by the Government of Saskatchewan in *The Western Development Museum Act* and the Board of Directors' Ends Policy. The *Plan* responds to the WDM vision of **A Saskatchewan Where Everyone Belongs and Histories Matter**, in its goals to develop the collections to better represent all Saskatchewan people, particularly those who have been unrepresented, underrepresented, misrepresented or erased in the Museum's collections and narratives since its founding in 1949. The *Plan* meets several of the recommendations in the WDM's *Inclusivity Report: Reconciliation and Diversity at the WDM*, particularly Recommendation 4(a), "establishing new significance criteria for actively collecting from underrepresented communities."

² *The Western Development Museum Act*, subsection 11(c).

³ These research materials and findings are stored digitally in the WDM's file management system.

In alignment to the WDM Strategic Plan, 2018-21, the Curatorial Committee developed four curatorial priorities:

- 1. Honouring our Roots through the Legacy Collection⁴**
- 2. Truth and Reconciliation**
- 3. Diversity and Inclusion**
- 4. Saskatchewan Innovation**

These focused priorities guide the work of the Curatorial Committee in allocating limited resources towards multiple operational streams including, collections management, research projects, content development, exhibition production, programming creation and delivery and other general museum functions. The *Plan* reflects these priorities by identifying high- and low-priority collecting areas; setting criteria for assessing prospective acquisitions for *significance*, *comparative criteria* and *interpretive capacity*; and identifying probable artifact categories and setting out plans for deaccessioning projects.

Acquisitions Process

The following plan sets out broad, flexible yet defined, collecting priorities and assessment tools for assessing the strength and suitability of prospective acquisitions. The Curatorial Committee will employ the *Plan* and related tools in its decision-making for acquisitions.

Artifacts accessioned into the Permanent Collection will continue to be highly selective based on current resources. Generally, to be accessioned, artifacts will need to fall under Tier 1 or 2 as outlined in the *Collections Assessment Tool* (Appendix B). Artifacts assigned to Tier 3 will rarely be recommended for accession to the Permanent Collection. In exceptionally rare circumstances, an artifact in this tier may be acquired to replace similar artifacts in poor condition that can subsequently be deaccessioned. Deaccessioning will complement the acquisitions process to develop a more balanced and focused collection and allocate the Museum's limited resources in the most effective way. The most resources will be allocated to acquiring and caring for artifacts from the high-priority categories outlined below.

Most artifacts under consideration for acquisitions will continue to come from donation offers from members of the public. As resources are obtained and/or allow, the Curatorial Committee may actively solicit artifacts for prospective acquisition as per the criteria and high-priority categories outlined below. The WDM may also purchase artifacts from a small allocated annual budget. The WDM does not currently have the capacity to implement and manage a full-scale active collecting program. The WDM continues to receive hundreds of prospective artifact

⁴ The Legacy Collection has yet to be fully defined but includes foundational artifacts collected from the 1940s to approximately the mid-1970s, under the direction of the Museum's founders and its first curator Dr. George Shepherd.

donations per year from the public, which absorbs a considerable amount of existing resources. Educating donors and stakeholders about the *Plan* will be an important part of continuing to better manage public expectations and avoid disappointment.

Basic Acquisitions Criteria

All prospective offers must meet the basic acquisitions criteria as set out in the CM-4 Acquisition Policy before being assessed for *significance*, *comparative criteria* and *interpretive capacity*. The basic acquisitions criteria are as follows:

- The artifact helps to fulfill the WDM's vision, mission, mandate, guiding plans and priorities.
- The artifact tells a Saskatchewan story.
- The artifact represents an activity, process, time-period, event, region, person or community with demonstrable connection to Saskatchewan.
- The artifact belongs to an identified high-priority or 'continued-collecting' category identified in the *Plan*.
- The artifact has a documented history of ownership and use.
- The artifact is in good stable physical condition and does not pose a significant threat to the health and safety of the public, staff or the WDM collections.
- The WDM has the resources required to document, care for, preserve and provide reasonable access to the artifact.
- The artifact is offered as an unconditional donation.
- The artifact does not infringe on intellectual property or privacy rights.
- The artifact creates opportunities for research, exhibition, programming, or other uses.

The Registration Associate, or a designate in their absence, will determine if the artifact meets the basic criteria. The core members of the Curatorial Committee⁵, Collections Manager and Registration Associate have the authority to decline artifact offers at the time of donation that do not meet the basic criteria. Once the Registration Associate, or designate, has determined the artifact meets the basic criteria, they will, in consultation with other Curatorial Department staff members, assess its significance using the *Collections Assessment Tool* (herein referred to as the *Tool*) and record their assessments on the *Artifact Accession Recommendation Worksheet* (Appendix C). The Curatorial Committee will review worksheets forwarded to it for decision making at its regular collections development meetings.⁶ The Curatorial Committee will instruct the Registration Associate to inform the donor of its decision. Further procedures are outlined in the Collections Procedures Manual.

⁵ The core members of the Curatorial Committee are the CEO, Curator, Director of Museum Education and Exhibits Manager.

⁶ As per the *Curatorial Committee – Terms of Reference*, revised April 30, 2019.

Assessing Significance, Comparative Criteria and Interpretive Capacity

A clear evidence-based procedure for assessing the *significance* of artifacts promotes a fair and equitable decision-making process. Artifacts are assessed against a set of defined criteria for their:

- historical significance,
- artistic/aesthetic significance,
- scientific significance and/or,
- social/spiritual significance.

Artifacts are then assessed against three *comparative criteria* on the strength of their:

- provenance,
- representativeness in the WDM collection and,
- rarity.

Finally, artifacts are assessed for their *interpretive capacity* to tell impactful, diverse and inclusive stories. Using the *Tool*, artifacts will be assigned to one of three collection tiers.

Based on the overall assessment of *significance*, *comparative criteria* and *interpretive capacity*, artifacts will be assigned to a group level and collection tier. Tier 1 (groups 1 & 2) represents the most significant artifacts in the WDM collection with high levels of provincial, national and international significance. Tier 2 (group 3) represents artifacts that have high levels of significance to local communities or regions within Saskatchewan but not usually beyond. Tier 3 (groups 4 & 5) represents artifacts with little to no significance for Saskatchewan History or significance which cannot be determined due to deficiencies in provenance.

Artifacts in Tier 1 (groups 1 & 2) and Tier 2 (group 3) will be allocated the most resources as they represent the most significant and rare of objects with higher likelihoods of telling diverse Saskatchewan stories. These objects are the most likely to be recommended for acquisition or retainment in the Permanent Collection.

Artifacts in Tier 3 (groups 4 & 5) will be allocated fewer resources and are good candidates for deaccessioning and/or internal transfer to the Hands-On, Operating or Parts Collections and/or exhibit props. These objects are often ubiquitous and lack demonstrable Saskatchewan significance and connection. Artifacts in Tier 3 will rarely be recommended for acquisition to the Permanent Collection. In exceptionally rare circumstances, an artifact in this tier may be acquired to replace similar artifacts in poor condition that can subsequently be deaccessioned.

Assessing artifacts is a poetic exercise where a certain level of subjectivity and interpretation will inevitably remain. It is not a perfect science. The *Tool* is meant to act as a guide, helping assessors determine which tier an artifact belongs to at the time of assessment.

Significance and relevance can change over time. The *Tool* helps WDM staff make the best decisions possible today. Curatorial Department staff will assess prospective acquisitions using

the *Tool* and record their assessments using the *Artifact Accession Recommendation Worksheet*. Further staff procedures for using the *Tool* and preparing the *Worksheet* are included in the Collections Procedures Manual.

Acquisitions Plan

The *Collections Development Plan* prioritizes collecting artifacts from unrepresented, underrepresented, misrepresented and erased people and groups in Saskatchewan's history and the WDM collections. These groups have been identified as **Indigenous, diverse settlers, and LGBTQ2+ people, communities and organizations**. These individuals and groups have made significant contributions to Saskatchewan's culture and economy and should have their histories preserved in the WDM so as to best meet its mandate and present a fuller, more inclusive narrative of our shared provincial history. **Saskatchewan innovation** remains a high priority collecting category.

Periodization and Geographical Focus

The high priority collecting categories outlined below are broad by design to allow for a wide range of histories to be discovered and considered. The historical period will range from the late 19th century to the present day as per the WDM's mandate. The focus will be on the post-1950s as the Permanent Collection currently skews more heavily to the pre-1950s. The geographic boundaries will generally be the provincial boundaries with consideration given to the treaty boundaries, the boundaries of the Métis Nation and the traditional territories of all First Nations in what is now Saskatchewan. A decolonized approach recognizes that linear boundaries are colonial and Indigenous movement was and is more fluid across time and space. Rarely, will a regional artifact be considered for accession (i.e. prairie, broadly speaking); instead, the appropriate provincial human history museum will be recommended (i.e. an artifact with a strong grounding in Alberta's history will be recommended to the Royal Alberta Museum).

Indigenous Collections

The Permanent Collection contains approximately 300 artifacts that represent Indigenous histories. Artifacts include, clothing, footwear, accessories, beadwork, tools and implements, artwork and cultural items. Archaeological and sacred artifacts have been, and continue to be, transferred to the Royal Saskatchewan Museum or, more recently, repatriated to their source communities. The WDM welcomes working with Indigenous individuals, families, organizations, communities and nations to better represent their histories by expanding their collections at their discretion. Artifacts that explore the treaty relationship and the history of colonialism

would provide Saskatchewan people with a greater understanding of our shared past. Artifacts that demonstrate Indigenous culture, entrepreneurship, achievement, innovation and ingenuity in the 20th century would complement the Indigenous artifacts in the WDM collection from the late 19th century. To continue on our Reconciliation journey, the WDM's Indigenous collections would benefit from expansion, led by Indigenous people from an Indigenous perspective and are thus a high priority area for collections development. The WDM affirms the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in its management of the Indigenous artifacts in its care.

Diverse Settler Collections

Thousands of artifacts in the WDM collection represent the experiences of early settlers, in particular, the histories of white, English-speaking rural and urban settlers from Britain, the United States and other parts of Canada. Small artifact groupings that represent the history of Chinese, Eastern European, French, Jewish and Scandinavian families and communities, thousands of whom have lived here since before provincehood, amount to an underrepresentation. Very small to no groupings represent other migrant groups, particularly those who made Saskatchewan home from the 1950s to the present day. Immigrants from African, Asian/South East Asian, Eastern European, Central and Latin American and some Western European countries (i.e. Italian, Greek, Dutch, etc.) are unrepresented or underrepresented in the Permanent Collection. Artifacts that tell stories from all areas of the cultural and economic lives of these groups should be considered for acquisition. In short, the full of history of immigration to Saskatchewan is not represented in the Permanent Collection and is thus an area of high priority collecting.

LGBTQ2+ Collections

The *Saskatchewan LGBTQ2+ History Collection* was established in 2018 and is a permanent sub-collection of artifacts telling stories about LGBTQ2+ life in Saskatchewan. The WDM is committed to preserving and sharing stories of the LGBTQ2+ communities' history through this collection. An Advisory Council provides input into acquisitions for this sub-collection but the decision to accession rests with the Curatorial Committee. As of 2020, approximately 100 artifacts and file materials have been accessioned into this sub-collection, including personal effects, event posters, information posters, human rights activism banners, personal community awards and leisure activity artifacts. Oral History should be considered as part of this collection area for accession to the George Shepherd Library.

Saskatchewan Innovation

Documenting a wide array of cross-sector innovations and inventions made in Saskatchewan remains a high-priority collecting area, particular for the post-1950s to the present and for those sectors and industries that are not yet well-represented in the Permanent Collection. Sectors include, but are not limited to, exceptional examples in agriculture, mining, forestry, energy, technology and manufacturing.

Areas of Continued Collecting and Refocus

The WDM will acquire artifacts from subject areas currently represented in the collection when they present high levels of *significance*, *comparative criteria* and *interpretative capacity* and/or complement the collection in a formidable way. These areas remain somewhat underdeveloped in the collection and would benefit from expansion, particularly for the post-1950s to the present day:

- Saskatchewan histories of human rights and social advancements or regressions;
- Saskatchewan women's histories, particularly women in STEM or other paid work;
- Histories of Northern Saskatchewan;
- Cultural histories of sports⁷, leisure, music and performance in Saskatchewan;
- Other exceptional or significant moments in Saskatchewan History both celebratory and tragic.

The Acquisitions Plan outlines the collecting priorities of the WDM but is not prescriptive. The WDM will remain flexible and open to unforeseen opportunities that may present themselves over the course of time.

Artifacts Rarely Acquired

The WDM does not have the resources to collect artifacts already represented in the collection, nor will the WDM collect artifacts to represent every type or time period of any particular object (i.e. encyclopedic collecting).

⁷ The WDM will be mindful of the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame mandate to avoid duplicating collecting efforts.

Early agricultural settler histories are well represented in the WDM collection. In many cases, these artifacts amount to an over-representation in the collection. Only early settler artifacts with an exceptional Saskatchewan story and highest level of significance may be considered for acquisition. The following early settler artifacts represent those types we are not currently collecting:

- 1920s vehicles
- Adding machines/calculators
- Aprons
- Baby carriages
- Basic hand tools
- Bed frames/bassinets/cribs
- Bibles
- Binders
- Buffalo fur coats
- Butter churns
- Button hooks
- Cameras
- Cash registers
- Children's books
- Christening/baptism gowns
- Clocks
- Cream separators
- Crocks
- Dictionaries
- Dinnerware
- Doilies
- Dolls
- Encyclopedia sets
- Family Portraits
- Fanning mills
- Fiction Books
- Furs
- Gas Tractors
- Glass insulators
- Lamps/lanterns
- Looms
- Magazines (mass circulation)
- Milk bottles
- Newspapers
- Nightgowns
- Pianos
- Player piano rolls
- Plows
- Portable engines
- Pump organs
- Radios
- Razors
- Scythes
- Sad irons
- Separators
- Sewing machines
- Sewing patterns
- Shawls
- Sheet music
- Sickles
- Slide projectors
- Stuffed animals
- Threshing machines
- Train sets
- Trophies
- Trunks
- Typewriters
- Typical early settler clothing
- Wagons/buggies
- Wash boards
- Wedding dresses

The Operating Collection of machinery is currently full and closed to new acquisitions.

Rapid Response and Contemporary Collecting

There are moments in history where the WDM will need to collect while an event or process is unfolding. Not doing so risks losing the artifacts quickly to the passage of time. This type of contemporary collecting is often referred to as rapid response collecting. The WDM will prioritize this type of collecting during moments where a rapid response is deemed necessary. Saskatchewan's lived experience during the COVID-19 global pandemic is a good example of the need to execute rapid response collecting plans. Other examples include protests, emergencies, tragedies, spontaneous or planned important events, short-lived but important business ventures or prototypes, and institutional or business closures.

This type of collecting is increasingly common in history museums and is practiced widely in North America. The Curatorial Committee will be proactive and make historical decisions for the future when it deems it necessary. While this presents certain challenges, and can be resource-intensive, rapid response collecting can prevent significant historical objects of the future from being lost now. It should be employed only in exceptional circumstances where highly significant artifacts are in danger of being lost.

Ad Hoc Sub-collecting Plans

The Curatorial Committee may create ad hoc sub-collecting plans that complement this *Plan* as resources allow and opportunities are presented. Several sub-collecting plans are already under development, including an archival photographic sub-collecting plan to streamline and refine photographic collecting; a COVID-19 pandemic rapid response sub-collecting plan; and the *Saskatchewan LGBTQ2+ History Collection* sub-collecting plan. These plans must meet the criteria and priorities set out in the Acquisitions Plan above.

Deaccessions Plan

Deaccessioning is a necessary component of responsible collections management and is used to refine the WDM's accessioned collections, improving their relevance and sustainability. The decision to deaccession must be thoroughly documented and based on objective, ethical and defensible motives. As per the *Collections Management Policies* CM-8 Deaccession Policy, the Board of Directors must approve all deaccessions. The Curator will provide written guidance to the Curatorial Committee on planned deaccession investigations and projects every five years as part of this *Plan*.

All Curatorial Department staff are responsible for the ongoing routine identification and research of artifacts that may meet deaccession criteria. Deaccession recommendations to the Board of Directors originate in two streams:

1. Recommendations born of day-to-day research and contact with the collections, and
2. Planned investigations and projects outlined in this *Plan*.

In both streams, the electronic collections management database will be used to research, track and record all deaccessioning activities.

Basic Deaccession Criteria

All potential deaccessions must meet the basic acquisitions criteria as set out in the CM-8 Deaccession Policy before being assessed for *significance*, *comparative criteria* and *interpretive capacity*:

- The artifact or library material lacks relevance to the WDM's vision, mission, mandate, guiding plans and priorities as outlined in the *Plan*.
- The artifact or library material is in poor physical condition and has deteriorated or is damaged or incomplete to a point where it does not serve a useful purpose.
- The artifact or library material is a hazard to the collection.
- The artifact or library material is a weak representation of a type that is over-represented in the collection.
- There are prohibitive restrictions to use by the WDM, including but not limited to donor conditions, intellectual property rights, privacy, copyright and trademark.
- The artifact or library material constitutes a significant human health risk.
- The artifact or library material is to be repatriated.
- The artifact or library material is permanently lost or has been stolen.

Once potential artifacts for deaccession have met any of the basic criteria above, they will be assessed for *significance*, *comparative criteria* and *interpretive capacity* and assigned to a Tier. Artifacts assigned to Tier 3, using the *Tool*, will be allocated less resources and are good

candidates for deaccessioning and/or internal transfer to the Hands-On, Operating, Parts Collections or exhibit props. These artifacts are often ubiquitous and/or lack demonstrable Saskatchewan significance. It is unlikely artifacts assigned to Tiers 1 and 2 would be candidates for deaccession but this could occur on rare occasions due to deteriorated condition or the unsuitability of the WDM to care for the object. In all cases, every attempt is made to retain the artifact in the public domain as per CM-9 Disposal Policy.

Planned Deaccession Projects

Curatorial Department staff are encouraged at any time to launch small, scalable deaccession projects born of their day-to-day work for artifacts known to belong to, or likely belong to, Tier 3. Assessments may be prepared and forwarded to the Collections Manager for consideration to recommend deaccessioning to the Curator at any time. One recent example is the deaccession of dress forms and the Borden model village carried out in 2019-20. Another is the Boomtown fixtures deaccessioning research project, started in 2020, where staff are assessing which artifact fixtures, display cases, racks, etc... belonging to the Permanent Collection could be deaccessioned and transferred internally to exhibit props. The management of exhibit props falls under the policy EP-5 Props and Reproductions.

Larger planned deaccession projects may be developed and carried out at the discretion of the Collections Manager on any artifacts overrepresented in the collection listed on pages 8 and 9 this *Plan*. This will be done as resources and staffing allow. The Curatorial Department will strive to complete assessments and deaccession recommendations on one of these artifact groups each fiscal year. Priority will initially be given to artifacts that consume significant resources, such as physically large artifacts or those in very poor physical condition. One example underway, is the player piano rolls deaccession project, which is assessing over 700 player piano rolls in the Permanent Collection as candidates for partial deaccession. Another could be the overrepresentation of pianos and pump organs.

Deaccessioning library materials in the George Shepherd Library is a normal part of good library collection management. Curatorial Department staff may recommend materials for deaccession at any time to the Collections Manager. Materials of low significance, duplication, poor condition or low circulation may be good candidates for deaccession. Library materials have been regularly deaccessioned and disposed of since 2013. Curatorial Department staff may recommend larger deaccessioning projects to the Collections Manager at any time as resources permit.

1920s Cars Project

A large project was launched prior to 2018 to rank and recommend deaccessioning selected artifacts from the 1920s cars collection, of which there is significant overrepresentation and often little provenance. Comprehensive assessment research was carried out under the direction of the former Collections Curator and former Chief Engineer and Restoration Manager, with each car receiving a ranking of four possible levels. At the time, automobiles were assigned a rating of A, B, C, or D with A being the highest based generally on significance to the collection, technological interest, etc.... Cars assigned A were “to be retained;” B signified “possibly retain;” C signified “possibly deaccession;” D signified “deaccession.” At the same time, automobiles were also assigned a rating from 1-10 based on condition; 10 being the highest; 1 the lowest. These assessment levels will now be reviewed using the *Tool* and changed to match the tier and group system. Cars assigned to Tier 3 should be recommended for deaccession.

This project has been on hold due to the intensive resources needed, staffing changes and COVID-19 restrictions. External expertise may be required to complete the assessment process. Given the extent of this collection, a specific project plan will be developed to guide its completion. The project plan will be developed and implemented as soon as possible to begin gaining significant storage space and reducing conservation costs. The WDM will aim to have the project plan completed by **March 31, 2021** and the first set of 1920s cars deaccession recommendations to the Board of Directors for review by **March 31, 2022**. The goal will be to complete this project by **March 31, 2026**.

“Room D” Project

In 2019, a deaccessioning research project began to assess the artifacts in Room D of the Corporate Office for possible deaccessioning. Room D contains a variety of small to medium sized artifacts, mostly representing domestic early settler life in Saskatchewan, many of which are part of the list on pages 8 and 9 of this *Plan*. There are also artifact groupings in Room D that are duplicated in WDM locations, significantly overrepresented in the collection, lack significance and are ubiquitous examples of antiques. Significant storage room and conservation costs would be saved in refining and reducing this collection. A project plan to finish this work will be developed and approved by **March 31, 2021**.

Further planned deaccessioning projects will be prepared when these first two projects are completed.

Acknowledgements

The WDM thanks all former and current staff and volunteers who were consulted for their insights on how best to develop the collections over the last decade. Credit for the concept of “assessing significance” is due to the [Collections Council of Australia](#). We also acknowledge the fundamental shift museum collections are undergoing worldwide, inspired by the concept of active collections, as defined by Elizabeth Wood, Rainey Tisdale and Trevor Jones in their edited collection [Active Collections](#) (London: Routledge, 2018). We have drawn much inspiration from the active collections concept on how to improve the quality, not quantity, of the WDM collections. Both [Trevor Jones’ tiering collections work](#) and the [Significance 2.0 guide](#) from the Collection Council of Australia helped us create our *Collections Assessment Tool*. Inspiration for this *Plan* was also drawn from the [New Bedford Whaling Museum Collections Development Plan](#).

Appendix A – Artifact Statement of Significance

Artifact Statement of Significance: WDM-____ - X - ____, Object Name

Draft written (date) by (staff name)

Draft approved by Curator (date)



Artifact Photo

Themes and Context: Historic event or movement (Second World War, 1939 Royal Visit, Immigration, Public Health), Organization or Corporation (Canadian Pacific Railway, 4-H, University of Saskatchewan), Universal Human Theme/Story (love, loss, courage, conflict, luck, starting over...), Ethnic, Cultural, or Religious Group (Mennonite, Sikh, Ukrainian, Cree), Keywords (Advocacy, Education, Leadership, Racial Stereotypes). Guidelines to be developed.

Description and Statement of Significance:

Paragraph #1: Artifact/Collection description. Brief and concise. No more than 3-5 sentences. Highlight any unique or unusual physical characteristics. This is not a cataloguing description.

Paragraph #2: Clearly state significance and the group the artifact/collection was assessed at according to the WDM Collections Groupings Assessment Tool. Briefly state why by referencing the chart in the assessment tool. What makes this artifact special: connection to tradition or historical events, aesthetics, scientific achievement, spiritual meaning, rarity, etc. What's the personal or powerful story and its connection/importance to Saskatchewan? Focus on tying everything back into the value of the artifact and stay succinct rather than getting into detailed history, that can be done later with in exhibit text or an article.

Paragraph #3: Further Context. What is a little of the history and narrative of the artifact? Is there a reason it's rare? Is there information or an idea from a secondary source that would be helpful here? A collection of items or multiple complex stories may occasionally require more than a single paragraph.

Health & Safety: State health and safety concerns such as lead paint, asbestos, requirement of two people to lift and move, flammability, etc. If there are no health concerns, state it.

Conservation: TBD by Conservator. Basic condition and simplified list of concerns like significant oxidation, stains, holes, etc. State if there are no immediate concerns. Reference any detailed assessments by the Conservator and either attach a copy or refer to the location of it.

Donation Conditions: Restrictions on name use, agreements to delay exhibiting it, privacy concerns (banking information, healthcare information, school attendance records), etc. State if there are no donation conditions.

References: Please list all references using Chicago style citations, including artifact files or records and other internal WDM sources. This list is usually brief. These statements are a summary of the available information used to assess the current level of significance of the artifact/collection, not biographies or research papers.

Appendix B – Collections Assessment Tool

The *Collections Assessment Tool* is a flexible but clear mechanism used to assign an artifact to a collection tier and group level on three categories: *significance*, *comparative criteria* and *interpretive capacity*.

Artifacts in collection Tier 1 (groups 1 & 2) and Tier 2 (group 3) will be allocated the most resources as they represent the most significant and rare of objects with higher likelihoods of telling diverse Saskatchewan stories. These objects are the most likely to be recommended for acquisition or retainment in the Permanent Collection.

Artifacts in Tier 3 (groups 4 & 5) will be allocated fewer resources and are good candidates for deaccessioning and/or internal transfer to the Hands-On, Operating, Parts and exhibit props. These artifacts are often ubiquitous and lack demonstrable Saskatchewan significance and connection. Artifacts in Tier 3 will rarely be recommended for acquisition to the Permanent Collection. In exceptionally rare circumstances an artifact in this tier may be acquired to replace similar artifacts in poor condition that can subsequently be deaccessioned.

The *Tool* should also be applied to materials to be acquired for or deaccessioned from the George Shepherd Library and the Operating Collection.

During research for acquisition and deaccessioning, Curatorial Department staff will assign an artifact to group level and a collection tier based on the criteria below. If Curatorial Department staff are unable to ascertain and assign a group level and/or tier, the decision will rest with the Curatorial Committee. If the Curatorial Committee is unable to reach a majority decision, the decision will rest with the Curator and/or the Chief Executive Officer. Further procedures for using the *Tool* can be found in the Collections Procedures Manual.

To use the Tool:

Step One:

- **Acquisitions:** All prospective offers must meet the basic acquisitions criteria as set out in the CM-4 Acquisition Policy, pages 12-13, before being assessed for *significance*, *comparative criteria* and *interpretive capacity*.
- **Deaccessions:** All prospective deaccessions must be assessed against the basic deaccessioning criteria as set out in the CM-8 Deaccession Policy, page 24, before being assessed for *significance*, *comparative criteria* and *interpretive capacity*.

Step Two:

- For both **Acquisitions** and **Deaccessions**: Using the chart below, assess the artifact across all categories of *significance*, *comparative criteria* and *interpretive capacity*.

Step 3:

- Assign the overall group level and collection tier. The overall group level is determined by how the artifact was assessed for each category. For example, an artifact may be assigned to group 1 for *significance* and *interpretive capacity* but score lower in *comparative criteria*. In this case, the artifact should still be assigned to group 1 with notations in the *Statement of Significance* about the lower elements of the rating.

Collection Tiers:

- Tier 1:** Significant to Saskatchewan AND nationally or internationally significant and/or significant to Saskatchewan BUT not nationally or internationally significant.
- Tier 2:** Significant locally to one or more communities in Saskatchewan.
- Tier 3:** Significant regionally to the Prairies but not specifically to Saskatchewan and/or limited or unknown geographic significance in Saskatchewan or the Prairies.

Group Level Criteria:

	Tier 1		Tier 2	Tier 3	
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
SIGNIFICANCE					
Historical	Exceptional, unique example of person, people, event, place or theme in Saskatchewan History (either ordinary or extraordinary) that changed the course of history for humankind broadly	Excellent, somewhat unique example of person, people, event, place or theme in Saskatchewan History (either ordinary or extraordinary) that changed the course of history provincially	Good example of person, people, event, place or theme in Saskatchewan History; might be common or unique	Generic or vague example of person, people, event, place or theme in Saskatchewan History	Limited to no historical significance to Saskatchewan May have clear evidence of significance elsewhere
Artistic/Aesthetic	Exceptional level of craftsmanship, technical excellence, beauty, demonstrated skill, quality, execution, and/or design (either Indigenous or Settler);	Excellent somewhat unique level of craftsmanship, technical excellence, beauty, demonstrated skill, quality, execution and/or design (either	Good example of craftsmanship, technicality, beauty, demonstrated skill, quality, execution, design (either Indigenous or Settler) from	Generic example of craftsmanship, technicality, beauty, demonstrated skill, quality, execution, design (either Indigenous or Settler); might	Limited to no artistic or aesthetic value; often mass-produced

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
	generally, globally famous artist, musician or author from or with connection to Saskatchewan; changed the course of cultural style or aesthetic globally	Indigenous or Settler); generally well-known artist, musician or author from or with connection to Saskatchewan but not nationally or internationally	or with connection to Saskatchewan; generally ordinary makers; might be common or unique	be mass-produced	
Scientific	Exceptional unique scientific innovation, invention, patent, product or process designed, invented or made in Saskatchewan that had major global impact, generally with recognition	Excellent scientific innovation, invention, patent, product or process designed, invented or made in Saskatchewan; might not be wholly unique; may have improved on previous technology; made life easier/better for people in Saskatchewan	Good but common scientific innovation, invention, patent, product or process designed, invented or made in Saskatchewan; and/or homemade with no broad reach but impactful in a defined way	Generic or mass produced; not designed, invented or made in Saskatchewan	Limited to no scientific significance and/or not relevant to Saskatchewan
Social/Spiritual	Object held in exceptionally high community esteem; exceptionally high levels of affection for or feelings against; represents core identities, community cohesion or strife; integral to belief systems; exceptionally high political significance; wholly embodies	Object held in community esteem; high levels of affection for or feelings against; represents core identities, community cohesion or strife; important to belief systems; high political significance	Object held somewhat in community esteem, perhaps only for a few; some level of affection for or feelings against; represents only some identities, community cohesion or strife; tangential to belief systems; some	Object not widely held in community esteem; no real affection for or feelings against; does not well-represent core identities, community cohesion or strife; not important to belief systems; little political significance	Limited to no community esteem; level of affection for or feelings against; does not represent core identities, community cohesion or strife; no connection to belief systems; no political significance

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
	cultural expression		political significance		
COMPARATIVE CRITERIA					
Provenance	Exceptionally strong	Strong	Good	Moderate	Little to none
Representativeness in WDM Collection	None to very few duplicates in WDM Collection or other Canadian collections	Few similar examples in WDM Collection or other Canadian collections	Similar examples in WDM Collection or other Canadian collections	Common in WDM Collection or other Canadian collections	Significant overrepresentation in WDM Collection or other Canadian collections
Rarity	Rare, one-of-a-kind, likely irreplaceable	Uncommon, difficult to replace	Moderately difficult to replace, becoming increasingly rare with passage of time	Easy to replace or borrow from other collections	Prolific, mass produced, readily available for the foreseeable future
INTERPRETIVE CAPACITY					
Impact	Could be used to tell multiple powerful and impactful stories about Saskatchewan and its place in Canada and the World	Could be used to tell multiple compelling, interesting stories about Saskatchewan, the Prairies, its people and their lives	Could be used to tell good local place-based stories and their connection to Saskatchewan History	Could be used in a supporting role to complement a more impactful story but not as the focus; exhibit fill	Could be used in a minor supporting role; prop; used as examples of prolific objects
Diversity and Inclusion	Represents marginalized, misrepresented, or underrepresented person or group in Saskatchewan History; tells a little known but important story	Could be used to illustrate a marginalized, misrepresented, or underrepresented person or group in Saskatchewan history; tells a more generic story	Represents the dominant settler group but could be used to tell a diverse and inclusive story	Represents the dominant settler group; excludes many; erases some or many	Doesn't represent a particular group

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
UNDRIP – For Indigenous Artifacts					
	Connected to community of origin; Elders consulted; frequent cultural contact with object	Community of origin identified; some information from Elders; some contact with object	Possible community of origin identified or broader cultural group; contact made; working towards access	Unlikely to identify community of origin; possibly able to identify broader cultural group; no contact yet	Impossible to identify community of origin; difficult to identify broader cultural group; contact unlikely

Appendix C – Artifact Accession Recommendation Worksheet

For Object(s):

Assessor Name(s): _____ Date: _____

Basic Criteria Checklist:

- Fulfills WDM vision, mission, mandate, guiding plans and priorities
- Tells a Saskatchewan story
- Represents an activity, process, time-period, event, region, person or community with demonstrable connection to Saskatchewan
- Belongs to a high-priority or ‘continued collecting’ category identified in the *Collections Development Plan*
- Has a documented history of ownership and use
- Is in good stable physical condition and does not pose a significant threat to the health and safety of the public, staff or the WDM collections
- WDM has resources required to document, care for, preserve and provide reasonable access to the object
- Is offered as an unconditional donation
- Does not infringe on intellectual property or privacy rights
- Creates opportunities for research, exhibition, programming, or other uses

Group Level: 1 2 3 4 5

	Group Level	Assessment Summary
SIGNIFICANCE		
Historical		
Artistic/Aesthetic		
Scientific		
Social/Spiritual		

	Group Level	Assessment Summary
COMPARATIVE CRITERIA		
Provenance		
Representativeness in WDM Collection		
Rarity		
INTERPRETIVE CAPACITY		
Impact		
Diversity and Inclusion		
UNDRIP – For Indigenous Artifacts		

Recommended Collection Tier (based on overall assessment): 1 2 3

Additional Comments:

Date: _____

Signature & WDM Title: _____