

NORTH TEXAS SOCIETY OF HISTORY & CULTURE
(dba TALES 'N' TRAILS MUSEUM)
OPERATIONS / MAINTENANCE POLICY & PROCEDURES
As Adopted January 2024

INTRODUCTION

Authority:

It is the responsibility of the Board of Directors to adopt policies and procedures for the operation of the Tales 'N' Trails Museum ("Museum"). The primary responsibility of the daily application of this policy manual lies with the Executive Director ("ED").

Mission Statement:

The Mission Statement guides Museum operations and should be at the forefront of all policy development and implementation:

The North Texas Society of History and Culture believes that the legacy of the past enhances and enriches the lives of current and future generations. We strive to preserve and interpret our history through exhibits, programs, and archives that will evoke an appreciation of our shared heritage, inspire a vision for our future, and protect the memories of our past.

Public Disclosure:

This Policy & Procedures Manual is a public document and as such, it will be made available upon request by email, in part or in its entirety. Reproduction fees may apply. It will not be posted on the Museum's website.

ETHICS

Professionalism:

In the interest of the public and the museum community, the staff (paid or unpaid) and the Board of Directors must observe accepted standards and uphold the dignity of the museum profession, as outlined by the American Alliance of Museums and the American Association of State and Local History.

Staff:

Members of the Museum staff (paid or unpaid) must behave in a dignified and ethical manner. They must be aware that any action may reflect upon the Museum, be attributed to it, or reflect upon the integrity of the profession as a whole.

Volunteers:

Volunteers are an integral part of the museum community, and the Museum could not meet its mission without the personal involvement of devoted volunteers. Employees and Directors should be supportive of volunteers, receive them as fellow workers, and willingly provide appropriate training and opportunity for their intellectual enrichment.

Some volunteers may work with the collections and as such, have access to sensitive materials. The lack of material compensation for effort expended on behalf of the museum in no way frees the volunteer from adherence to the standards that apply to paid staff. Conflict of interest restrictions placed upon the staff must be explained to volunteers and, where relevant, observed by them.

Drug-Free / Tobacco-Free Workplace:

The Museum is committed to maintaining an environment free of alcohol and drug abuse. The Museum prohibits the unlawful manufacture, delivery, possession or use of alcohol, controlled substances and drug paraphernalia while on Museum property, while conducting Museum business, and while participating in any Museum sponsored activities. Smoking and other uses of tobacco products, including the use of electronic cigarettes, are not permitted inside the Museum buildings.

Social Media / IT:

All Museum computer hardware and software is the property of the Museum. Moving any hardware requires the prior approval of the ED. The remote use of any software program also requires the prior approval / authorization of the ED. No individual may approve a licensing agreement on behalf of the Museum except the ED at the direction of the Board.

The Museum uses social media for outreach purposes with various online presences and communities, to communicate with the public, and enhance the public's interaction with the Museum. This is not meant to infringe upon any staff member's personal online interactions or commentaries. All Museum staff and volunteers of the Museum must ensure that posting media content to any social networking site aligns with the policies of the Museum, which are to:

- Promote the Museum's mission;
- Reach a wider, more diverse audience;
- Educate, inform and entertain;
- Promote Museum events and exhibitions, and partner events;
- Encourage a conversation about the collections;
- Consider alternative viewpoints;
- Connect with the community in which the Museum is located.

The primary contributors to social media should be the ED, permanent staff, Directors, members of the Social Media Committee, or volunteers working under the supervision of the ED. It is the responsibility of all contributors to monitor the social media posts and to continue the conversation if someone asks a question or comments on the post. All comments and posts should be responded to in a timely manner by the appropriate individuals.

Staff members who hold administrative status to social media pages may respond to negative comments about the Museum to inform the use of any false information posted. At their discretion, the appropriate staff will immediately remove all defamatory postings to the Museum's social media presence. Defamatory postings include, but are not limited to, those that may be considered as racist, sexist, threatening, insulting, or unlawful. In addition, any postings on the Museum social media presence placed for the unauthorized purposes of selling goods other than Museum-sponsored goods and services, must be immediately removed.

Public Media:

Museum staff should not comment or otherwise engage with agents of public media outlets (ie: TV, radio, newspapers) about any issues that pertain to the Museum unless authorized to do so by the ED. The ED and members of the Executive Board have the sole authority to address all public relations and media inquiries regarding the Museum.

Ownership of Scholarly Material:

All programs or events and the associated documentation which are developed by staff or Directors on behalf of the Museum are the property of the North Texas Society of History & Culture.

Inter-institutional Cooperation:

The Museum is dedicated to the preservation of cultural and scientific heritage and the increase of knowledge; and as such welcomes the opportunity for cooperative action with similar organizations in order to further these goals, even if the advantages are few.

Conflict of Interest:

The Museum exists to serve the public interest and staff must always act in such a way as to maintain public confidence and trust.

Staff and Directors shall be careful to avoid the appearance and/or the reality of using their positions, or the information and access gained from their positions, for personal gain.

Responsibility to the Collection:

Staff and Directors shall not acquire objects from the collections that were once owned or controlled by the Museum unless through public auction or at Museum fundraising events open to the public. No one shall use any object or item that is currently a part of the Museum's collections or guardianship for any personal purpose.

Personal Collecting and Dealing:

Personal collecting is not in and of itself unethical. It can, in fact, enhance professional knowledge and judgment. However, extreme care must be taken whenever staff collects objects similar to those collected by the Museum.

Referrals:

Staff should be circumspect in referring members of the public to outside suppliers of services, such as appraisers or conservators. Whenever possible, more than a single qualified source should be provided so that no appearance of personal favoritism in referrals is created.

Anti-Discrimination:

Discrimination and harassment of any kind are prohibited by law and will not be tolerated. It is the Museum's policy to provide an environment free from unlawful discrimination. The Museum does not discriminate on the basis of a person's protected status as provided for and to the extent required by state and federal law. All forms of discrimination, as well as retaliation for engaging in protected activity, are violations of this policy. No person may discriminate against another person on any grounds when acting or speaking on behalf of the Museum.

The Museum's policy is committed to providing equal opportunities. Therefore, it is a violation of this policy to (1) discriminate in the provision of staff opportunities, benefits, or privileges; (2) create discriminatory or hostile work conditions; or (3) use discriminatory evaluative standards in determining Museum duties.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature are also prohibited, as well as all forms of verbal, non-verbal, and physical harassment.

MUSEUM FACILITY

Hours of Operation:

The Museum shall have consistent and regular open hours of operation. As of the date of this Policy adoption, the Museum is open Monday through Friday from 10am to 5pm, Saturday from 10am to 4pm, and Sunday by appointment. The Museum may be closed on Federal holidays or during local events or funerals at the discretion of the ED. In such case, a temporary sign must be placed on the front glass doors.

Hours should be changed only after careful consideration. Such changes should be made in order to meet the needs of the community and available staffing resources. Visitation statistics shall be tracked as accurately as possible so that trends can be monitored.

Changes in hours of operation may be recommended either by Museum staff or a Director with final approval granted only by the Board of Directors.

Admission Fees:

Admission to the Museum as of the date of this Policy adoption is as follows: \$10 for adults; \$5 for school-age children and seniors over the age of 60; Free for Museum Members, active or retired members of the US military, and first responders. Donations are encouraged.

Changes to the admission fees may be recommended either by staff or a Director with final approval granted only by the ED and/or Board of Directors.

Security:

The Museum alarm security code is to be changed regularly and at any turnover of staff. Whenever the building is vacated, all interior doors are to be closed, all exterior doors are to be locked, and the alarm set.

Staff and volunteers who open and/or close the Museum in the absence of the ED should obtain a key from the ED and return it promptly. Individual Directors may retain a key if they regularly fill in for staff. Volunteers will be trained in opening and closing procedures.

Donation Box & Cash Handling:

Cash donations to the Museum are deposited into three separate donation boxes. Money should never be removed from the donation boxes without two staff members present and is to be counted and confirmed by another staff member. Significant deposits should be taken to the bank within a reasonable period of time after they are removed from the boxes. Cash handling procedures are to be followed and appropriate forms used for all donations.

All donations (other than cash donation boxes) should be run through Square, and are accounted for separately. Such donations should not be placed into the donation cash boxes. A receipt shall be provided to the donor.

Museum staff (paid or unpaid) may not accept tips. Tips should be declined or referred to the cash donation boxes.

Deposits should be made once a week or more frequently if more than \$250 cash accumulates.

Use of Facility for Meetings:

The Museum building, the Barn, and surrounding grounds may be used for private meetings or public events related to the Museum's business and/or Mission, and is subject to the approval of the ED. There may be a fee for using the Museum for this purpose, such fee levied at the discretion of the ED and/or the Board of Directors.

Food and Beverages:

In recognition of the desire to uphold best practices for collections preservation, food and beverages are only allowed in the kitchen, offices, Benton conference room, or at the reception

desk of the Museum. Visitors may bring a picnic or sack lunch to enjoy outside on benches and must dispose of their food and open beverages before entering the Museum buildings.

Spills are to be cleaned up immediately in order to prevent pest infestation. Organic trash should be removed from the buildings on a daily basis.

Animals:

Pets are allowed within the Museum buildings at the sole discretion of the ED. Consideration should be made in extreme outdoor heat or cold weather conditions for traveling visitors who do not want their pets left in the car while they visit the Museum.

As dictated by the Federal and State Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), registered service animals are always welcome on Museum property. Staff may ask visitors to describe the tasks the animal is trained to do for the purpose of confirming the animal is a service animal.

All animals with visitors must be on leash or otherwise restrained while on Museum property.

Workplace Safety:

The Museum recognizes that all workers have the right to work in a safe and healthy environment, consistent with the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) and other applicable legislation. All staff members share responsibility for safety, workplace security, wellness, accident prevention and accident reporting. Staff members who identify a hazard or potential hazard must report it immediately to the ED. If an accident occurs, staff members must immediately request appropriate assistance as necessary, including calling 911.

MUSEUM VISITATION POLICY

Photography / Video:

Unless prohibited by a lending institution's or traveling exhibition service's contract, photographing, videotaping, and making of images of or within the Museum is permitted for the private use of visitors, so long as it is in the nature of a "souvenir snapshot." No subsequent use for commercial, political, or religious purposes may be made of those images. In an effort to protect all parties, Museum staff has the authority to question individuals or groups as to the nature and purpose of their activities and/or the equipment they carry while at the Museum. Use of bright photography lights, flash, and tripods in the exhibit areas is prohibited, except by staff members in the exercise of their job.

Sketching/Drawing:

Visitors may write down notes or sketch in the exhibit areas using dry media, such as No. 2 pencils. Ink pens, markers, crayons, and permanent writing utensils are not allowed in the exhibit areas. Visitors should refrain from leaning against walls or display cases while sketching.

Museum staff has the authority to ask anyone behaving inappropriately to cease such activities and, if they persist in such a behavior, to instruct the offenders to leave the premises.

Touching Displays:

The Museum offers visitors interactive areas that provide active participation or hands-on learning opportunities. To ensure the safety and protection of the Museum's collections, visitors are not allowed to touch other objects on display. Visitors are expected to comply with instructions regarding objects on display as given by signage or verbally by Museum staff or docents. No climbing is allowed on any item in the Museum. Running, shoving, pushing, and other physical activity by visitors can damage museum objects and endanger visitor and staff safety. Museum staff has the authority to ask anyone behaving inappropriately to cease such activities and, if they persist in such behavior, to instruct the offenders to leave the premises.

Noise / Cell Phones:

Visitors should be considerate of others and avoid disruptive noises. Visitors should refrain from having loud, disruptive phone conversations while in the galleries. Museum staff has the authority to ask anyone behaving inappropriately to cease such activities and, if they persist in such behavior, to instruct the offenders to leave the premises.

WiFi Internet Access:

Public access to the WiFi internet is available in any area of the Museum building and grounds, and the password will be provided to them upon their request.

HOUSEKEEPING

Regular cleaning of the Museum is an essential part of good management practice. A cleaning regimen should take into consideration every part of the Museum including display and storage areas, as well as individual objects.

The Museum space should be kept clean to reduce potential damage to the collection. Cleanliness also sends a positive message to donors, visitors, members and supporters. A clean museum suggests a museum that values and cares for its collection.

Display and storage areas need to be kept clean to assist in preservation of the collection. Any build up of dust and dirt causes damage and creates an attractive environment for pests.

Individual objects need to be cleaned with extreme care and with attention to the material they are made from and their physical condition. The wrong type of cleaning, too much or too little cleaning may cause harm. Cleaning of collection items must adhere to accepted Museum practices.

A cleaning schedule is to be established that sets out how often particular items and spaces, such as public display areas and private storage areas, should be cleaned. A log of cleaning activities

to be done should be kept, and marked off with date and time of completion for all scheduled activities:

DAILY: When the Museum is open to the public, door mats should be swept, floors in public areas vacuumed, tops of display cases dusted and finger marks cleaned from glass. Check displays and public areas for changes, signs of damage or theft, or blown light bulbs.

WEEKLY: Check environmental conditions to look for changes to the normal or signs of possible problems. This includes use of humidity and light level sensors. Check inside and outside for any signs of damage, vandalism or theft. Any items of note must be communicated immediately to the ED.

QUARTERLY: Integrated pest management and maintenance inspections must be performed. Seek conservation advice if Museum pests are found and arrange for treatment as needed. Inspect the building for potential threats (ie: roof leaks, wiring issues, blocked gutters, degraded paint, mold, excess vegetation, bird infestation, etc). Any items of note must be communicated immediately to the ED.

ANNUALLY: Deep cleaning all the less accessible places, such as behind and under cupboards and display cases, etc. Move furniture, objects, and displays where necessary. Check and update emergency procedures. Request the inspection of fire extinguishers, alarms, knox box, cameras, alarm system, emergency notification system, etc.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Insurance:

The Museum recognizes the importance of insurance coverage as a factor in collections stewardship. It also recognizes the financial and staffing impossibility of insuring the entire collection for its fair market value, while understanding that many items in the Museum collection are priceless. Furthermore, the majority of the collection's value comes from the intangible historical value of an item rather than the retail value of an object and thus no insurance claim would be capable of restoring the historic value of an object once it was lost. For these reasons, insurance coverage is targeted at large losses and has a high deductible, except in specific cases.

OBJECTS ON LOAN. Objects on loan to the Museum for temporary exhibition must be insured by the lender upon delivery to Museum's custody. This does not extend to objects in temporary custody for research, consideration of acquisition, or other events, which are covered by the Museum's insurance policy.

HIGH VALUE OBJECTS. Objects in the collection which are of a high market value (\$1,000 or more at the time of acquisition) may be considered for a special one-object insurance policy, at the recommendation of the ED and/or Board of Directors and the Museum's insurance agent.

MANAGEMENT OF INSURANCE. The Museum's insurance agent handles all insurance claims, certificates of insurance and communications with the insurance company. All insurance decisions regarding the collection will be managed by the ED and the Board of Directors.

Disaster Planning:

The Museum will maintain written procedures for coping with disasters in the collection (currently under development. Until such time as these procedures can be adopted, refer all questions and issues to the Board President and/or the ED). These procedures will include directions for preventive actions, actions to be immediately taken when a disaster occurs, and cleanup and damage mitigation actions. Written procedures will include, but are not limited to, the following types of events:

- Flooding / Water Damage
- Fire
- Earthquake
- Severe Weather / Wind Damage
- Criminal Activity / Vandalism

The disaster plan will be reviewed annually to update emergency contacts and every three to five years to ensure the document remains relevant and current.

Security:

Access to collections storage areas are to be monitored by the ED. No unaccompanied person will have access to collections storage areas except for Directors, trained staff, interns, and volunteers with prior authorization.

Artifacts on display will be monitored regularly by staff during the Museum's regular open hours to prevent theft or vandalism. As is appropriate and practical, artifacts will be displayed using methods that prevent or deter theft or vandalism. Any discoveries of theft or vandalism will be reported to the ED as soon as possible. Security system codes should be changed every three years or when staff/volunteer changeover occurs.

ACCESS

Requests for information or access to collections not considered as public records should be referred to the ED. Due to staffing limitations, walk-in requests may not be accommodated. Visitors are strongly encouraged to make appointments to receive the best customer service, and must provide their name, affiliation, contact information, and nature and purpose of the inquiry to receive access to collections storage or to view Museum artifacts not on exhibit.

Access to the collections will be provided in the following ways:

EXHIBITION. The collections may be displayed in the Museum's long-term and temporary exhibits, which are available for viewing by all visitors during regular Museum hours and during special events. Collections must be exhibited using methods which ensure the preservation of the object in accordance with the policies in the Museum's Collection Management Policy & Procedures.

ONLINE DATABASE ACCESS. The collections records, including cataloging information, research, and photographs, will be made accessible online as Museum resources allow. Online access will be provided free of charge. Restricted collections will not be made available online.

RECORDS REQUEST. Copies of public records from the collection will be made available upon request. However, a fee for any hard-copy reproduction may be assessed.

STAFF ACCESS. Staff access to the collections and collection storage areas will be determined by the ED in accordance with their duties and only after the appropriate training is completed.

VIEWING REQUEST. Visitors and independent researchers may request access to an artifact that is not on exhibit. Requests will be accepted if they meet the following requirements:

- Request is made at least three days in advance.
- Any applicable fees are paid in advance.
- The requester demonstrates sufficient applicable expertise and legitimate research purpose, including but not limited to scholarly, historical or genealogical research.
- Research techniques will not damage materials.
- The request will comply with the care and storage standards set out in these policies.
- The request will comply with the appropriate uses for collections outlined in these policies.

Requests for access may be limited or delayed by staff availability. Requests may be denied for access to objects that are fragile, in poor condition, restricted by donation requirements, or as prohibited Museum policy.

Due to the potential risk to collections, personal handheld scanners and digital imaging equipment are not allowed to be used by visitors. Phone cameras or digital cameras may be used in some circumstances at the discretion of the ED.

Collections are to be handled in a professional manner as requested by staff. Gloves or other proper handling materials will be provided as needed.

Use of Collections

The collection will be used in a manner in line with the Museum's Mission. Usage can take many forms, but will always meet the following requirements:

- Use must conform to the Museum's mission.
- Use must respect the integrity of the objects and the associated collections information.
- Use must comply with care and storage standards.
- Use must be legal.
- Use must be ethical.
- Use must comply with intellectual property rights.

Special considerations for usage are listed below:

COMMERCIAL USE. Any use of an object in the Museum's collection or collections' records for commercial purposes must be done with written permission of the ED. Fees for the use of collections may be applied.

CREDIT IN PUBLICATION. Any publication, both commercial and non-commercial, using an item from the Museum's collection or collections records must credit the Museum and any additional credit as requested by donors. A copy of all publications making use of Museum collections or collections information must be provided at no cost to the Museum.

DONOR USE. Donors may request to see objects in the collection that they donated. They may make such a request using the same method as any other visitor, and they will not be granted special usage rights outside of those normally provided to Museum visitors.

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH. Researchers, both amateur and professional, may request access to collections using the same method as any other visitor. Any use of collections for research must comply with intellectual property laws and with the policies in this document.

DESTRUCTIVE SAMPLING. Destructive sampling will not be done for any purpose without prior written permission and approval from the ED / Board of Directors.

STAFF USE. Museum staff may use the collections and collections information for use in exhibits, public programs, research, and collections care. Any staff use must comply with the requirements listed at the beginning of this section.

CULTURAL USE. The Museum will make every effort to make collections available for appropriate cultural use in accordance with its Mission and Code of Ethics.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The Museum will make all reasonable efforts to protect the intellectual property in its collection. This includes protecting the Museum's intellectual rights over its collection and educational products as well as upholding the intellectual property rights of others.

Copyright

FAIR USE. The Museum reserves the right to distribute and utilize its collections under the doctrine of Fair Use. The doctrine of Fair Use allows limited use of copyrighted material without permission from the copyright holder. Fair use includes comment, news reporting criticism, teaching, research and scholarship. All other uses require written permission from the copyright holder; if none can be identified, it must be noted within the Museum's records.

PUBLIC RECORDS ACT AND COPYRIGHT. The Museum will make a good faith effort to contact copyright holders before releasing records to requestors. Requestors are responsible for obtaining copyright permission before using copies for any purpose other than those defined as Fair Use.

Cultural Property

Cultural property includes objects designated by a nation or group as having unique importance for historical, cultural, or religious reasons, particularly sacred objects and human remains. The Museum will make every reasonable effort to see that objects of cultural property in its collection are stored, handled, and otherwise treated in the manner most appropriate for the materials. Items of cultural property which the Museum cannot or should not care for according to the Museum's mission, state or federal law, or cultural considerations will not be considered for inclusion in any of the Museum's collections. Objects already in the Museum's collections which are later found to be items of cultural property will be considered for repatriation or transfer to another institution if the Museum cannot care for them in an appropriate manner.

Guidelines for Human Remains in Collections

The Museum will not knowingly accept human remains into its collections. Should human remains be found in the collections, every effort to repatriate, transfer, or otherwise see that the remains are returned to their appropriate caregivers will be made.

PRIVACY PROTECTION

The Museum collects names, addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses for purposes of providing membership benefits to members, maintaining donor records, and maintaining mailing lists for educational and outreach purposes. This information may be collected from a variety of sources, such as a visitors' log, point of sale system, attendance lists from workshops, conferences, commemorative events, and private and/or public meetings.

The Museum is prohibited from giving, selling, disclosing, or allowing the inspection of lists of individuals, unless specifically authorized or directed by law.

The Museum will offer its members, donors, and individuals (included on its various mailing lists) the opportunity to have one's name removed from the mailing list(s) or to limit the use of one's name and address to internal Museum use only. If a member or donor does not want to be maintained in the Museum's membership or donor databases, the Museum may not be able to provide the services to which they are entitled as a member or donor.

The Museum does not authorize the release of personal information held in its databases to the public by telephone or e-mail. Upon receipt of a request for information that involves the release of personal information such as names, addresses or phone numbers of members, donors or other individuals held in the Museum's databases, the request will be forwarded to the subject of the request for them to handle personally.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Museum works actively towards minimizing the impact of human activities on the environment. It does this directly through the application of sustainable practices such as recycling and conservation of resources, as well as the use of "environmentally friendly" cleaning supplies and/or chemicals where applicable.

The Museum is dedicated to educating its staff and members to reduce, reuse, and recycle now and well into the future. This commitment entails all aspects of its operations, collections, research, education, exhibitions, and visitor programs.