

Collection and Restoration Policy

Colorado Railroad Museum

Golden, Colorado

1. Introduction

The Colorado Railroad Museum collection consists of documentary materials, railroad artifacts, and full-size locomotives and other items of rolling stock. The Museum collection is acquired, preserved, researched, exhibited and/or interpreted to further the mission of the Colorado Railroad Museum.

2. Mission Statement

The mission of the Colorado Railroad Museum is to acquire, preserve and exhibit to the general public, railroad equipment, artifacts, paper records, books, art work, photographs, film and video emphasizing Rocky Mountain area railroads, to explain and interpret the role of railroads in the history of this region from the 1860's to the present by means of exhibits, a reference library, educational programs, publications and information sharing with historical groups. Furthermore to provide incentives that will enhance interest in railroads and railroad history.

3. History of Collection

The basis of the museum collection was the vast store of material gathered during museum founder Bob Richardson's residence in Alamosa, Colorado in the late 1940s and early 1950s. During this period the Rio Grande Southern narrow gauge was abandoned, as well as most of the Denver and Rio Grande Westerns narrow gauge trackage. Mr. Richardson spent many hours saving many artifacts that otherwise would have been discarded. Literally tons of records dating back a half-century or more were salvaged.

When it was decided that the collection should be properly housed in a permanent museum, the present location was chosen adjacent to Colorado's third railroad line, the original Colorado Central Denver to Golden line constructed in 1870. A right-of-way was graded and track laid using authentic old rails, spikes and ties from the Rio Grande Southern, D&RGW's Marshall Pass line and other abandoned narrow gauges.

Since the museum opening in 1959, many generous individuals have continued to provide new material to add to the collection. Many additions have been made as significant historical material and artifacts have become available including rolling stock and equipment representing Colorado railroads such as Colorado Midland, Florence and Cripple Creek, Uintah, Denver Boulder & Western, Manitou & Pikes Peak, Burlington, Colorado & Southern and Union Pacific.

4. Preservation Philosophy

The museum collection committee and staff approach the preservation and conservation of the collection with caution and great sensitivity. Care, conservation and restoration of locomotives, cars and artifacts are based solidly on documentation, observations, careful research, and the results of industrial archaeology and conscious curatorial decision. Restoration of an artifact is to a historically accurate and verifiably achievable date in the piece's history. The restoration process *when at all possible* employs conventional railroad practices normally used in railroad shops – consistent with the use, materials and practices employed at the time. It should also be consistent with practical limitations for the operation of the equipment. All work is well documented and, as much as is possible, is reversible.

4.1 Exhibit Philosophy

Displays of the museums collection should be rotated on a semi-routine basis in a manner to show the railroads through different periods of history and/or uses of the equipment that would show the public how the items were actually used and provide a changing scene at the museum. This would apply primarily to the narrow gauge equipment.

5. Collections Management Committee

The Collection Management Committee serves as a forum for review, support, and decision making for all restoration projects as well as managing and developing the collections. The Collection Management Committee consists of the CRRM Executive Director, Restoration Manager, three Board or Advisory Board members appointed by the President of the Board, Volunteer Coordinator, and library representative. The Collection Management Committee will meet as often as necessary, but not less than twice annually.

5.1 Decision Making Process

The members of the Collection Management Committee will always work toward consensus. When consensus cannot be reached, yet a decision is necessary, the members of the Collection Management Committee have an equal vote. The Collection Management Committee may consult with others knowledgeable in appropriate fields as necessary.

5.2 Collective Responsibilities

The committee will review the Collections and Restoration plan on an annual basis and make any appropriate changes. The committee will also address ethical, problematic, sensitive, or controversial collection issues as they arise and take appropriate action.

The committee will develop and review the Object Condition Report for all rail vehicles and rolling stock at the museum as outlined in section 7 regarding Collection Care.

Under the guidelines of the Acquisition Policy, the committee will review potential acquisitions involving conditions or restraint and recommend appropriate action to the Board of Trustees for approval.

Under the guidance of the De-accession Policy, the committee will review potential de-accession of objects from the museum and recommend appropriate action to the Board of Trustees.

The committee will review all proposals for restoration of equipment as outlined in section 7 regarding Collection Care.

6. Collection Classifications

The Museum recognizes that the best interests of preservation and interpretation may not always be compatible. In order to accommodate these potentially conflicting interests, two categories of collections are defined; Permanent and Support collections.

6.1 Permanent Collection (Accessioned Material)

The acquisition, preservation and exhibition of original objects lie at the core of a museum's unique educational purposes. The CRRM believes that responsible use of original objects is an effective way to impart knowledge and understanding of Colorado railroad history as well as the rail transportation experience. It is the policy of the CRRM to avoid using original objects in any way that would be unnecessarily consumptive of these objects.

The primary intention of the Permanent Collection is to preserve these objects in perpetuity. Any display or other interpretive use must reflect that intention. Objects in the Permanent Collection are listed in the Museums accession register. Removal of objects from this category may occur only through the formal deaccession process.

6.1.1 Primary Collection: This is the bulk of the collection; these objects are historic in nature, but the Museum has decided to make them available for appropriate use under the supervision of the Collection Committee. These objects must be respected for their historic value and must not be exposed to consumptive use when at all possible.

6.1.2 Special Collection: These are objects, which either because of their significance and/or their deteriorated or fragile condition require special care and limited use under the supervision of the Collection Committee. The Special Collection is intended for study and not for use.

6.1.3 Utility Collections: These are other objects that are useful in the day-to-day operations of the museum. These will include the same types of objects found in

the Permanent Collection, such as rail vehicles that have been acquired for utility purposes, including demonstration railway operation or for trading with other organizations or individuals for the benefit of the Permanent Collection. The Museum intends to preserve these items as long as feasible, but ultimately they may be expendable. All acquisitions or disposals of rail vehicles into or out of the utility collection require the approval of the Collection committee.

Utility objects are not listed in the Museum's accession register, but appropriate records should be kept in accordance with accepted business and accounting procedures.

Trade or resale of utility equipment may be conducted by the Museum on an occasional basis, but only after careful consideration of the potential for diversion of institutional resources away from the Museum's other collections. The Museum is not in the railway salvage business or used equipment business, and will use due care to avoid even the appearance of same. In acquiring collection-related utility equipment from state or federal surplus programs, the Museum will comply with all applicable laws and rules including statutes concerning resale of surplus equipment.

6.1.4 Parts and Repair Items: Parts and repair items are not generally recognized as being a part of the collection, but attention is called to the historic nature and difficulty in replacing certain parts. A rail vehicle may have been acquired as a source of parts and repair items and as such will not be listed in the Museum's roster. Accession and deaccession procedures of the Museum do not apply to parts and repair items. The acquisition or disposal of any rail vehicle as a "parts source" requires the approval of the Collection Management Committee.

7. Collection Care

The collections of the CRRM are held in trust for the benefit of the public. The Museum recognizes its responsibility to care for these objects, and will continually perform self-analysis to determine its performance in this regard, and take action to address recognized problems or concerns. Although the museum operates a portion of its Permanent Collection, it recognizes that these vehicles have a finite operational life, and will avoid using these vehicles in any way that would unnecessarily consume the object or artifact. The Collection Management Committee will report to the Board of Trustees on an annual basis the state of the CRRM collection.

7.1 Conservation

To preserve its collection, the CRRM will work towards providing appropriate indoor storage space *as available and necessary* for the objects in the Permanent Collection. Other conservation measures will include, as needed, temporary roofs, tarps and other protective coverings, which may be applied to rail vehicles that are without storage space. The goal of this intervention will be to stabilize the object to prevent further deterioration.

Outdoor exhibits will be evaluated and maintained on a regular basis, using applicable methods for preservation and continued stabilization. In applying these protections, care will be taken to avoid techniques that might damage the object or cannot be easily reversed. Removal of parts is permitted only to the extent necessary to permit effective application of the temporary or permanent coverings. In cases where any part may be threatened with destruction, that part will be left in place.

7.1.1 Object Condition Reports

Object Condition Reports are to be developed for all rail vehicles at the Museum, beginning with the Permanent Collection. After completing these reports, the condition of the rail vehicles in the Permanent Collection will be reviewed at least every five years, and this review appended to the Object Condition Report.

7.2 Running Maintenance

The Museum recognizes that by operating part of its collection in demonstration railway service, regular maintenance must be performed in order to keep these rail vehicles in safe operating condition. To help distinguish between maintenance work and restoration work, the following definition is offered. Maintenance consists of (1) repairing an item in a manner that does not in any way change the item, or (2) replacement of so-called “consumables,” which are items such as light bulbs, lubricants, wear plates, paint, and other parts designed as replaceable elements of a mechanical system. Any work beyond that which is described as maintenance above is considered restoration, requiring use of the formal proposal process outlined in section 7.3 covering restoration. Substantive modification of a rail vehicle to facilitate operation or maintenance, including the removal of original parts or installation of replacement parts other than the type originally specified, is considered to be outside the scope of normal maintenance, requiring use of the formal restoration proposal process.

When at all possible, operational rail vehicles will conform to applicable standards as would be required by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). This would include standards for steam locomotives (49 CFR Part 230) as well as requirements by the State of Colorado Boiler Inspection Division. Maintenance is the responsibility of the Restoration Manager as directed by the Executive Director. The Executive Director and Restoration Manager are responsible for ensuring that the rail vehicles in their care are maintained in safe operating condition. As such, any rail vehicle that the Executive Director or Restoration Manager deems to be unsafe for operation can be removed from service at any time.

7.3 Restoration

Restoration is considered to be work on a rail vehicle other than conservation (See Section 7.1 for definition) or maintenance (see Section 7.2 for definition). The purpose of a restoration is to return an object to a specific configuration and appearance, which it had at some point during its career on the railroad. Objects in the Permanent Collection may only be restored to an appearance actually held during their in-service life. In cases where the object was owned by one of the Museum’s focus companies, strong preference

will be given to one of its appearances when owned by that company. Objects in the Utility Collection may be converted to an appearance other than one that was used during its in-service career, if this conversion serves a specific need of the Museum. In cases where such a conversion is made, it is the policy of the Museum to clearly identify the vehicle as such.

7.3.1 Approval of Restorations

It is the policy of the CRRM that all restoration projects must go through a standard proposal/review/approval process prior to the start of work. A proposal utilizing the format outlined in the Requirements for Collections Project Proposal document in Appendix A must be written for all restoration projects. The Collections Management Committee will then review this proposal. As needed, the reviewed proposal will be returned to the individual that initiated the proposal with comments and requests for additional information. If the Collections Management Committee approves the proposal, the Executive Director will bring the proposal to the Board of Trustees for review, approval, and authorization of funds as applicable.

7.3.2 Documentation of Restorations

The Museum Collections Management Committee will develop standards for documenting ongoing restoration work through written and photographic records as well as the capture of samples of original fabric. The documentation will be required to clearly identify all components and sections of the original vehicle which were replaced in the course of the restoration work, as well as any modifications or substitutions made during the course of the work.

7.4 Risk Management

The collections organization will seek to identify risks to the collection and make recommendations on mitigation.

8. Acquisition

It is the policy of the CRRM to own all objects entrusted to its long-term care. It is also the policy of the Museum to seek unconditional gifts to be used in the best interest of the Museum. Offers of conditional gifts, leases, and loans must be evaluated for their potential to divert institutional resources from Museum-owned objects. It is also the Museum's policy to minimize in the future any privately owned equipment to be stored on Museum Property.

8.1 Criteria for evaluating all acquisitions:

All proposed acquisitions, including potential utility items, are to be evaluated against the criteria listed below. In cases of utility items acquired for trade or other use, exceptions can be granted for deviation from relevance to the mission statement, but only after

careful consideration of the proposal's potential to divert institutional resources away from the Museum's other collections.

- **Relevance to the CRRM Mission Statement** – Strong preference is given to objects from the focus companies mentioned in section 3, but objects outside of the geographical area of interest may be considered if a similar object from the area is not available, and the object will fill a critical gap in the collection. Factors such as rarity or typicality, provenance and interpretive potential will be reviewed when considering relevance.
- **Present Condition** – A complete object is preferred over an incomplete one, however an incomplete object or one that is in poor condition may be considered if a better example is not known to be available and it fills a gap in the collection.
- **The Museum's ability to care and conserve the object** – An evaluation of the requirements for storage and conservation, (including track space and indoor storage space), must be made. These requirements must be carefully weighed against the needs of the existing collection.
- **Duplication of existing objects in the collection** – Duplication alone, in either the CRRM's or other museums' collections, is not necessarily a reason for rejection, as many such objects operated in trains. If the duplicate already in the collection is in poorer condition, it may become eligible for deaccessioning and/or disposal. Duplication which is considered to not be in the best interest of the Museum can be a reason for rejection.
- **Completeness of title** – The Museum shall verify ownership by appropriate means prior to accepting gift or entering into a purchase agreement. The museum will not acquire objects when legal ownership cannot be substantiated to the satisfaction of the Board of Trustees using accepted museum standards as a guide.

9. Accession into the Permanent Collection

Accession is the formal process of bringing an object into the Permanent Collection. As stated in section 6.1, the primary intention of the Permanent Collection is to preserve these objects in perpetuity. The only way to remove objects from the Permanent Collection is through the formal deaccession process (Section 10.0).

Eligibility for Accession is determined by an evaluation based upon all of the factors listed in Section 8.1 (Criteria for Evaluation).

9.1 Documentation

Objects accepted for accession will be registered in accordance with accepted museum registration procedures. The following information should be included: a deed of gift for donated objects, bill of sale for purchased objects, conditions of the gift (if any) and a condition report. Accessioned objects are added to the Museum's accession register.

Written records will be kept providing a summary of why the object was acquired and accessioned. The records will document the decision process, identifying how the acquisition criteria in Section 8.1 were applied.

10.0 De-accession from the Permanent Collection

10.1 De-accession

From time to time, it may be beneficial for the Museum to remove objects from its Permanent Collection through a process known as deaccessioning. The formal deaccession process is the only way to remove items from the Permanent Collection. Prior to starting the process, a review must be made of relevant acquisition information including title and condition of gift (if any). Items that have been deaccessioned shall be removed from the accession register.

The Museum is aware of its obligation to refine and upgrade its collections. However, deaccessioning should not be a regular occurrence since the Museum has accepted the obligation to preserve objects and hold them in the public trust. Any perception that disposal is common could discourage donations and work against the best collecting interests of the Museum.

Objects may be considered for deaccession based on the following criteria:

- **The object's relevancy or appropriateness to the Museum's mission** – as defined by the Museum's mission statement.
- **The object is being replaced** – The Permanent Collection can evolve by the addition of better, more complete, or more representative examples of the individual pieces. An object from the geographical area of interest may become available that will replace a similar object outside the area of geographical interest. Likewise, with the accession of a new object, an existing object may become a duplicate. Duplication alone is not necessarily a reason for deaccession, as many such objects operated in trains. In cases where it is not in the Museum's interest to retain multiple examples of an object and the duplicate already in the collection is in the poorer condition, it may become eligible for deaccessioning.
- **The object's condition** – If an object has deteriorated or has been damaged so badly as to no longer have value and is beyond reasonable expectations of preservation, an otherwise suitable item may be considered for deaccessioning.
- **The Museum's ability to care for and conserve the object** – If the Museum's inability to properly care for an object threatens to adversely affect the condition of the object, the object may be considered for deaccessioning.

10.2 Disposition

If the decision is made to deaccession an item, the Collection Management Committee makes a recommendation to the Board of Trustees as to the disposition. This recommendation shall be based on a review of relevant acquisition information including original conditions of gift (if any). Strong preference will be given to transferring ownership to another museum or historical society wherever practical.

10.2.1 Options for Disposition

- Return to donor (applies to donated items only)
- Gift, trade or sale to another public, historical or non-profit organization
- Move to the Utility collection
- Trade or sale to individuals, groups or organizations other than as described above
- Dismantle to salvage components

It is the policy of the Museum that moneys or other consideration received from the disposal of a deaccessioned item be used for the benefit and support of the collection whenever possible.

Written records will be kept to provide a summary of why the object was deaccessioned. The records will document the decision process, identifying how the deaccession criteria in Section 10.1 were applied.

11.0 Ownership of Originals

It is the Museum's preference to have full clear title to all permanent collections held by the institution. The Museum places a high priority and value on owning original, authentic and well-documented original collections as opposed to reproductions, replicas or fakes.

12.0 Loans

- **Incoming loans** - are entered into only when there is a specific need or program or where outright ownership is not an immediate option. The Museum also enters into incoming loans when clear ownership cannot be secured or in instances where temporary loans will likely lead to eventual Museum ownership of the object.
- **Outgoing Loans** -The Museum carefully considers the staff workload, the benefits and the risks of outgoing loans. The Museum prefers the loan of collections to a kindred preservation organization or other public institution for purposes of research, exhibit, and/or public programming The Museum considers longer-term outgoing loans when the preservation of an aspect of the collection can best be accomplished by another organization.

13.0 Access to Collections

As the Museum's collections are held in the public trust, the Museum will make every effort to provide the public with access to its collections consistent with the preservation and safety of the collection. During hours when the Museum is open to the public, exhibits and the restoration facility viewing area will be open based on the availability of staff. The Museum cannot promise access to all public facilities at all times. Advance requests to see particular objects in the Museum's collection will always be considered.

14.0 Ethics

The responsibilities of holding and protecting the Museum's collections require that the members, employees and trustees of the Museum adhere to ethics of action and responsibilities. No individual may use their position at the Museum for personal gain or benefit of others, at the expense of the museum, its mission or reputation.

To insure that the members, volunteers, employees and directors of the Museum know and realize the minimum ethical requirements for collections, the following are established:

1. All Museum personnel, including trustees and officers, shall place stewardship of the collection as a high priority when considering the affairs of the Museum. Stewardship includes the preservation, conservation and proper display of all items in the various collections of the Museum.
2. All Museum personnel, including trustees and officers, may have access to collections for the purpose of research when producing production of printed materials, or video or audio programs, through an arrangement with the librarian or curator in advance.
3. No Museum personnel, including trustees and officers may use their Museum affiliation to promote personal collecting activities.
4. No Museum personnel, including trustees may compete with the Museum in any personal collecting activity.
5. Responsibility for the appraisal of all gifts, such as for tax purposes, rests with the donor. No Museum personnel, including trustees may serve as an appraiser of a gift to the Museum.
6. While the Museum recognizes the outstanding monetary and labor contribution of its members, control of collection objects rests entirely with the Museum. The Museum's mission and goals must take precedence over the desires or directives of any donor of cash, labor, material or collection item, except when the donation is made for a specific purpose or project and is approved by the Board of Trustees.