

Collections Management Policy:

The Blackwater Draw Museum

Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU)

History and Overview

The Blackwater Draw Museum (BWDM) was created in 1968 to house and display objects excavated from the Blackwater Draw Locality 1 archaeological site, later a National Historic Landmark (NHL). Over the years the museum has grown to include a variety of collections, such as those from private collectors and donors.

Over time, the scope of collections was narrowed to include mainly those of an archaeological nature. Likewise, collections deemed of insufficient scientific value, outside of BWDM's spatial or temporal purview, or legally or ethically indeterminate (such as human remains) are not accepted. Existing collections with legal or ethical concerns are removed or prohibited from display. BWDM, as a part of Blackwater Draw, the ENMU Department of Anthropology and Applied Archaeology, and ENMU community, takes pride in its adherence to all state and federal legislation pertaining to the profession, including but not limited to: NAGPRA (1990); 36 CFR 79 (1990); the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA 1979 rev. 1988); and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA 1966).

Mission

The Blackwater Draw Museum seeks to foster preservation and education of the heritage of New Mexico, the Southern High Plains, and the greater Southwest through exhibitions, educational programs, collections, and research, while enriching and supporting the educational goals and mission of ENMU.

As a component of ENMU, BWDM also adheres to and promotes the ideals set forth by ENMU's Mission and Vision Statements.

ENMU Mission Statement

Eastern New Mexico University combines an engaging learning environment with current technology to provide a rich educational experience. ENMU focuses on:

- *Preparing students for careers and advanced study.*
- *Promoting citizenship and leadership skills and values.*
- *Supporting excellence in teaching and research.*
- *Empowering students to respond to a rapidly changing world.*

ENMU Vision Statement

Eastern New Mexico University emphasizes liberal arts education, freedom of inquiry, cultural diversity and whole student life. Excellent teaching and active learning define campus relationships. Scholarship, both primary and applied, cultural enrichment, and professional service are also important contributions of the University community.

Statement of Authority

BWDM is a component of the larger ENMU - Portales campus, and as such exists within an established hierarchy of authority. BWDM has no Board of Trustees or

advisory membership; rather, BWDM is overseen by two staff members (Director and Collections Manager) and the Department of Anthropology and Applied Archaeology.

Director of Blackwater Draw

The Director of Blackwater Draw oversees the major operations of both BWDM and the NHL site, including allocating and reconciling the budget to permit conservational or curatorial activities. The Director also oversees all other staff, including the BWDM Collections Manager. The Director is not principally responsible for the daily operations of BWDM, nor for its collections, but shares such duties with the Collections Manager.

Blackwater Draw Museum Collections Manager

The BWDM Collections Manager is responsible for the daily operations of the museum, including staff members and students who may be working within the collections. The Collections Manager will propagate or reconcile loans, accept or deny collections-related donations for accessioning, and perform other collections-related activities. These activities include but are not limited to: condition reporting, inventories, repackaging of collections, accessioning, deaccessioning, conservation, and designing exhibits, activities, and programs to maximize the collections.

The Department of Anthropology and Applied Archaeology

Blackwater Draw possesses its own budget but still exists and operates through the infrastructure of the Department of Anthropology and Applied Archaeology (“the Department”). The Department provides support to BWDM to enable its collections-based activities, including providing Graduate Assistants when available and providing exhibit space in lecture halls for exhibits. The Department does not have primary authority over BWDM’s collections, and cannot authorize exhibits, loans, deaccessions, or sales. Deaccession for profit of any archaeological item in the legal custody of BWDM is prohibited (please see [Deaccessioning](#), below).

Code of Ethics

At this time ENMU does not have an existing Code of Ethics for BWDM to adopt.

BWDM’s Code of Ethics is as follows, and must be followed by all staff, students, interns, and volunteers, without exception. Specific points in the Code may be further outlined in later sections.

The Blackwater Draw Museum is dedicated to the ethical care and conservation of the collections in its custody, as well as to the safe and collegial atmosphere of its spaces. A Collections Management Policy must account for the proper care of collections, but also for the respectful treatment of the people who work with those collections. For that reason, the following principles, codes, and rules are hereby set forth in order to preserve the integrity of BWDM and the people who work there:

- BWDM is a safe space for employees, students, interns, volunteers, and visitors of all backgrounds and belief systems;

- All collections are components of the lived experiences of past people, not abstract objects of either intrinsic or explicit value, and will be treated as such;
- BWDM's collections are not-for-profit;
- BWDM will work with indigenous people or their representative for access or visits to collections in its legal custody;
- BWDM exists as a part of its community—University, students, K-12 schools, the City of Portales, and its surrounding region—not outside of it; and
- BWDM at all times works to uphold and follow all laws, regulations, and ethical policies outlined both by the Alliance of American Museums, the Society for American Archaeology, and the legal system.

Scope of Collections

Overview

Since 1968, the Blackwater Draw Museum has followed a policy of passive collection; i.e., BWDM does not actively seek to acquire, by donation or through purchase, any new collections. However, BWDM accepted all donations from the community through 2014, and has selectively accepted collections since 2015, limited to those which are representative of Plains archaeology, the Paleoindian period, or the Southwest region. Despite this general standard, BWDM does not, and cannot, accept all donations. Prospective collections or objects should meet a minimum of one or more of the following criteria to be considered for acceptance into the Blackwater Draw Museum collections.

Potential Collection Acquisitions should:

- Have clear title or, in the case of collections recovered from private land, be accompanied by a notarized letter certifying the legal right of the donor to transfer ownership of those materials to BWDM;
- Have reasonable provenience information provided for a majority of the collection; i.e., at least 50% of the collection should contain contextual information suitable for use in student research projects;
- Meet regional and temporal collections preferences as outlined in this document, OR provide sufficient potential for student research in an area outside of BWDM's focus. Examples for the latter should be reviewed and evaluated by the Director and the Department;
- Contain no human remains, funerary objects, or objects known to be used for ceremonial purposes. Nor should objects representing the cultural patrimony of any group, tribe, or nation be considered;
- Not be collected from federal or state lands, under permit or through avocational activity, without the aforementioned title or notarized letter;
- Not cause BWDM to exceed—in collections space utilized nor in cost dedicated to their care—their allowable limit per annum.

All collections should be accepted *only* after careful consideration of the Collections Manager and the Director; when necessary, the Department should also be consulted.

An administrative file must be created for all new donations; donations of art or donations which have been professionally valued should be accepted only through the ENMU Foundation.

The Blackwater Draw Collection

Archaeologists and the public alike have been collecting at the Blackwater Draw archaeological site for decades. The Blackwater Draw Museum opened in 1968 in order to provide a safe location for the storage and display of these materials; the Blackwater Draw Collection is the only collection under the purview of BWDM which accepts all materials donated, with the caveat that they are from the Blackwater Draw site and that they are legally obtained and donated. Items from Blackwater Draw are accepted without provenience or context.

Currently, the collection is composed primarily of three material classes: faunal bone, soils, and lithics (e.g., projectile points and other tools). Smaller quantities of pottery and historic materials have been recovered, though they are not in the possession of BWDM. Major excavations were conducted from the 1930s to the 1960s, most of which resulted in materials being removed to other institutions. Some of these earlier excavations produced megafauna remains and lithic materials which are in the control of BWDM, but which are located off-site (note that collections in the control of BWDM include collections on campus in the Anthropology building and in the Department's curation warehouse).

Excavations in the 1970s and 1980s have scattered representation in the BWDM collections; field schools beginning in the 1990s and continuing through the 2010s comprise a large percentage of the collection. Many of the soils collected from activities at Blackwater Draw are housed in the BWDM collections space and off-site at the Anthropology curation warehouse. All of the lithic materials collected from Blackwater Draw are stored on campus in the Blackwater Draw curation room.

Acquisitions/Accessioning

Currently, BWDM is accepting very few collections and/ or artifacts into its permanent holdings. It is the current policy of the Museum not to accept restricted gifts or donations, and those gifts or donations BWDM may accept into its collections must fit the requirements of collections outlined in the [Scope of Collections](#) above.

Deaccessioning/Disposal

Deaccessioning is defined as the formal process of removing an accessioned item or group of items from the museum's permanent collection. BWDM recognizes the importance of reassessing the contents of its collections to ensure that they meet the mission of BWDM and the University. Any deaccessioning of collection items will proceed in a legal and ethical manner in keeping with professional museum standards. In order to meet our mandate to professionally manage these items, the practice of deaccessioning will be utilized in line with the AAM Code of Ethics, the SAA Code of

Ethics, and in keeping with the standards of the museum and professional archaeological community.

This process also applies to the transfer of items from BWDM's permanent collection to the education collection. Items in the collections to which BWDM holds title should be retained permanently if they continue to be relevant and useful to the mission of BWDM and if they can be properly stored, preserved, and used. Any part or component of the specific Blackwater Draw collection (i.e., those materials originating at the Blackwater Draw archaeological site) may not be deaccessioned for any reason, with the sole exception of compliance with a federal law such as NAGPRA.

Deaccessioning of any item should only be considered when one or more of the following conditions are met:

- the item is no longer relevant to BWDM's mission;
- the item is outside BWDM's scope of collections;
- the item has deteriorated beyond any perceived value;
- BWDM can no longer adequately care for or preserve the item;
- the item is hazardous;
- duplicate items exist in the collection;
- the item is subject to NAGPRA repatriation; and/or
- the item was acquired in violation of law.

Before disposing of any item from the collections, BWDM must determine that it has clear title and is legally free to do so. Certification of legal status and restrictions is the responsibility of the Collections Manager. To deaccession, BWDM will proceed in the following manner:

- The legal ownership status of the object(s) or collection(s) must be determined;
- The object(s) or collection(s) will be itemized in an inventory separate from that performed for the sake of catalog upkeep;
- The director must be consulted, and approval must be granted prior to any removal action being taken;
- A justification document must be drafted for permanent inclusion in the administration record. This document will include the inventory mentioned above as well as photographs of all materials;
- If possible, reasonable efforts should be made to contact the item's original donors with a notification of BWDM's intent to deaccession;
- All documentation concerning the item(s) and collection(s) as well as their deaccession shall be maintained in perpetuity. The deaccession inventory and justification document will join this record;
- The object(s) can then be deaccessioned.

The method of disposal should be in the best interest of BWDM, the artifact, the public it serves, and the scholarly or cultural communities it represents. With the exception of

items subject to NAGPRA, for which comprehensive regulations and guidelines already exist, the priority of disposition for deaccessioned items shall be as follows:

1. Transferred to BWDM's education collection for use in outreach activities;
2. Donation/transfer of item to a public museum or archives;
3. Donation/transfer of item to an appropriate non-profit organization or tribal group;
4. Exchange of item with a public museum or archives;
5. Selling;
6. Disposal or destruction of item, if warranted by circumstances.

BWDM shall honor all legal restrictions attached to the gift or bequest of any object or collection, when possible and when known. It is not the current policy of BWDM to accept "restricted" gifts.

Loans

The Blackwater Draw Museum will lend objects or collections to qualified institutions on a case by case basis and with the approval of the Director and, when necessary, the Department. Determination of qualification of the receiving institution can only be made by the Director in consultation with the Collections Manager.

The Blackwater Draw Museum will seek the loan of objects for exhibition purposes on a case by case basis. When borrowing objects from the community or from private entities, BWDM will utilize their documentation. When allowing a loan to another institution, BWDM will use the loan agreement provided by the borrowing institution if the agreement meets or exceeds the level of comprehensiveness of BWDM's form. If the form provided by the borrower does not meet the standards of BWDM, BWDM's form will be included as a supplemental document.

Outgoing loans may be promulgated when the object(s) or collection(s):

- Do not contain sensitive materials (e.g. human remains or sacred objects);
- Are in the legal possession of BWDM;
- Are in the legal control of BWDM and the owning agency approves the loan;
- Are not currently in use by any University student or faculty member for the purposes of a current project;
- Are in sufficiently good and stable condition;
- Are inventoried and a catalog record can be located and verified;
- The borrower can provide evidence of a suitable environment for storage or display;
- The borrower can provide evidence of security measures intended to protect the loan, including insurance for travel and the period of custody;
- The prospective borrower is located within the continental United States. Loans to institutions located outside of the continental United States must undergo secondary review by the Department, and potentially, the University;

BWDM requires that requests for loans must be made in writing and submitted to the Collections Manager and/or Director. Loans are made only for educational purposes to other museums or similar cultural and scientific institutions whose mission sufficiently justifies the appropriateness and relevancy of the loan. Loans must be requested by an official representative of the borrowing institution or agency. As a general rule, loans are not made to individuals and students. An exception is a loan made to ENMU students; however, the materials must be stored in an approved location on campus for the duration of the loan. Approved locations include:

- A locked and secure location in one of the Department labs;
- The Blackwater Draw curation room in the Anthropology building;
- The Department's curation warehouse.

All other locations for ENMU student loans are subject to approval.

No "permanent loans" will be entertained or granted.

Conservation/Care

BWDM will strive to hold and administer all collections to the highest possible professional standard and work to prolong the life of the collections. Care of archaeological collections, of all provenances, will be in line with the standards required by federal regulation 36 CFR Part 79, and will be supported by BWDM staff and ENMU Physical Plant cooperation. This cooperation includes, but is not limited to:

- As much as is possible, humidity and temperature controls in collections and exhibition spaces;
- Maintenance of exhibit furniture and curation spaces; and
- Security;
- Pest management.

BWDM shall provide a safe and appropriate environment for the collections, with effective security and environmental control, for the benefit of present and future generations. BWDM's standards of care shall be maintained for objects on loan to BWDM.

Documentation

BWDM shall maintain accurate, up-to-date records on the identification, location, and condition of all objects in the collection, as well as of ongoing activities such as exhibitions, loans, research, and correspondence with donors and scholars. Digitization of these records shall be best practice. Any original paper files regarding the acquisition of objects should also be retained. BWDM will maintain coherent, organized records on accessioned, non-accessioned and deaccessioned objects and collections, Departmental loans, and external loans.

BWDM shall make available to qualified researchers and scholars materials relating to the collections unless they are confidential or would suffer physical harm if handled. Documentation produced or maintained by BWDM includes:

- Exhibit records and item removal slips;
- Inventories;
- Catalogs;
- Condition reports;
- Loan documentation, both internal and external;
- Gift documentation;
- Researcher forms, both internal and external;
- Curation agreements, where relevant; and
- Accession and deaccession records.

Access

BWDM allows collections access for scholarly and academic purposes from other universities, academic institutions and affiliates, and private organizations. Requests must be approved by either the Director or Collections Manager and be arranged no less than a month in advance.

Any person wishing to do research with a collection must fill out a *Request for Research* form and our *Policy Agreement* form. If the researcher also intends to photograph the collection, a *Research Photography* form must be included. Any requests for destructive analysis will need additional approval by staff and/ or the Department.

Appraisals

Without exception, the Blackwater Draw Museum does not provide valuations, appraisals, authentications, or any other assessments of artifact worth or provenance to the public or for prospective donors. This policy includes all employees, volunteers, and other individuals associated with BWDM acting in their capacity as a Museum representative. The archaeological record is inherently valuable; however, that value lies in its potential for research and illuminating the mysteries of the past. Placing financial value on archaeological material is unethical, and individuals found doing so as agents of BWDM will be released per ENMU termination policy. BWDM follows the ethics and standards set forth by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), the Society for American Archaeology (SAA), and the Register of Professional Archaeologists (RPA); their Codes of Ethics can and should be consulted at any time.

Intellectual Property

No objects or collections may be photographed without the written permission of BWDM. No objects or collections determined by Museum staff to be sacred, or which contain human remains or funerary objects, may be photographed at any time. Researchers must gain permission to photograph collections and to publish those

photographs. Any publication resulting from the use of Museum collections must credit BWDM, and a copy should be furnished by the researcher to the museum for its library. This should be documented in the Request for Research forms (See **Access** policy).

Photos taken within museum exhibition spaces are considered to be “fair use.”

All documentation for sites and collections owned by BWDM are subject to the same restrictions as general collection photos; permission to reproduce documentation must be granted by BWDM. Researchers must submit proposals outlining the intended use of Museum objects, collections, and documents prior to their visit. These applications may be approved by the Collections Manager; applications for destructive analyses must be approved by the Director. Please see Request for Research forms for more detail.

Review and Revision Schedule

This document will be reviewed annually and updated whenever changes in collections' scope or field best practices occur. When changes are made to the document, they should be indicated in the footer as a new version with the date. All dates of previous revisions, including the original document date, should be maintained as a part of the administrative record.