

# Guidelines for Writing a Scope of Collections Statement



## **Objects on the front cover**

### **Clockwise from top right:**

#### **Barn Owl**

The Barn Owl is found all over the world. The name is derived from the fact that it likes to nest in barn lofts.  
Big Basin Redwoods State Park  
429-Z-10

#### **Carriage**

This runabout belonged to Annie Bidwell. The leather upholstery and Concord springs made for a comfortable ride behind her favorite horse.  
Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park  
139-244-9

#### **Patty Reed's Doll**

Patty Reed, a Donner Party survivor, took comfort from this 4" doll named "Dolly" during the long winter of 1846.  
Sutter's Fort State Historic Park  
308-1744-2

#### **Painting**

Title: Scene in Santa Barbara County  
Artist: Davis F. Schwartz  
Date: 1940  
State Museum Resource Center  
082-145-44

#### **Chinese Porcelain Plate**

This design is found in California archaeological sites from the 1830s and 1840s.  
State Archaeological Collection Research Facility  
P1116-280-30

#### **Indian Basket**

Weaver: Lena Dick  
Lena Dick was one of the premier Washoe basket weavers from the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.  
California State Indian Museum  
309-58-7

# **Guidelines for Writing a Scope of Collections Statement**

California State Parks  
Archaeology, History & Museums Division  
Museum Services Section

March 2009





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**This document is available electronically:  
[www.parks.ca.gov/scope](http://www.parks.ca.gov/scope) or the Unit Data File (UDF), see Appendix C.**

## Acknowledgements

In 1999, a work group of Museum Curators from California State Parks was asked to develop guidelines to help staff in writing Scope of Collections Statements for their units. In May 2000, the group published *Guidelines for Writing a Scope of Collections Statement*. It included a suggested basic outline, definitions of terms, and samples of Scope of Collections Statements, many of which were written by work group members during the course of the project. This simple and effective publication has been a useful tool for almost a decade, guiding grateful Designated Museum Collection Managers as they tackled the task of drafting the Scope of Collections Statements for their parks. Members of the original *Scope of Collections Statement Work Group* were Richard Clark, Stephen Drew (group leader), Steve Feazel, Wendy Franklin, George Jefferson, Edra Moore, and Mike Tucker.

Since the original *Guidelines* were written, we have seen the need for some updates. This revision has drawn on the expertise of many staff. We especially appreciate the help and guidance of Ellen Halteman, Director of Museum Collections, Capital District; Peggy Ronning, Museum Curator I, Antelope Valley Indian Museum, Mojave Sector; Judith Polanich, Museum Curator II, Sierra District; Victoria Yturralde, Supervisor of Interpretive Publications, Education and Interpretation Division; Roger S. Dhesi, Park and Recreation Specialist, Partnerships and Consumer Strategies Division; and Blaine Lamb, Chief, Wendy Franklin, Museum Services Manager, Becky Carruthers, Museum Curator II, Kathleen Kennedy, Historian II, Diane Voll, Archivist, and Paulette Hennem, Museum Curator III, Archaeology, History & Museums Division. Major editing was completed by Fran Bowman, Museum Studies Intern, Department of Anthropology, California State University, Chico. The cover was designed by Sarah Fonseca, Project Assistant, Northern Service Center.

## 1. Introduction

The State of California has managed **museum objects**\* since 1891, when the Native Sons of the Golden West donated Sutter's Fort Pioneer Museum to the people of California. California State Parks currently cares for and manages an encyclopedic collection estimated at one million museum objects, two million **archaeological** specimens, and more than three million **archival** documents housed at parks throughout the state. California State Parks is the largest single owner and administrator of cultural and historic sites, museums, and cultural objects in California, and one of the largest in the nation. Although they do not represent all aspects equally, California State Parks' holdings collectively represent nearly every aspect of our state's rich cultural and natural heritage.

The California Public Resources Code Sections 5005 and 5013 and the Government Code Section 11005 authorize California State Parks to acquire cultural and natural history objects that are "relevant and consistent with the goals and purposes of the State Park System," (DOM 2000.2) as stated in the Department's **Mission Statement**:

The mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

The Department Mission Statement is intended to guide all department activities and is broad enough to include our shared values. In addition, each state park unit has a **Declaration of Purpose**, reflecting the unique character and function of the park and its museum collections. The Declaration of Purpose is the starting point for defining the scope of collections.

\*The first use of terms in **bold** are defined in the Glossary (Appendix B).

## 2. What is a Scope of Collections Statement?

A **Scope of Collections Statement**, or SOCS, is a comprehensive collection plan which specifically defines the types of objects a unit collects and why it does so. It describes what the collection includes, what to add, what not to add, and what may need to be removed from the collection.

Ideally, a SOCS is written as part of the **General Plan** process and it reflects the planning that has been completed and the themes and **interpretive periods** that have been officially adopted. If a collections summary is included in the General Plan, however, often the SOCS is a separate, stand-alone collections plan. If you are writing a SOCS for a park with an approved General Plan, you should base it on the approved themes and interpretive periods in the plan. If you are writing a SOCS for a park that does not have a General Plan, you should base it on the Declaration of Purpose and classification, indicating that the themes and interpretive periods are under development. If an **Interpretive Plan** has been developed it can also be used as a basis for your SOCS.

A SOCS normally covers a single park unit but, in some instances, it may cover an entire district or even a larger regional collection. It may be relatively brief for a park where museum objects play a small role, or more fully developed for a park with a more complex collection.

These guidelines explain concepts and departmental policies for writing a SOCS. They also give examples from current SOCS, practical tips on where to find the information you need, and a template to guide you in drafting your document.

### 3. Why do I need a Scope of Collections Statement?

There are many reasons to have a SOCS, including practical, financial, ethical considerations and policy requirements.

- On a practical level, the Scope of Collections Statement is a valuable tool for **Museum Curators** and **Designated Collections Managers**. It describes your unit's collection activities to the public, volunteers, and donors as well as to staff, field management and headquarters personnel. It is your road map which can guide you in evaluating new **acquisitions**, in budgeting, prioritizing resources, and overall planning and management of your unit's collections. Defining your scope of collections can be especially useful in justifying donation refusals. It can help you decide which museum objects might be appropriate for **hands-on use**, and which might be appropriate candidates for **deaccession** (DOM 2010.2).
- There are also financial benefits to having a SOCS. According to one museum planning firm, "...the direct and indirect costs of collecting amount to nearly 70 per cent of museum operating costs, and so the strategy for future collections development is a key element in the financial analysis." (Lord) These costs include staff time for curation and housekeeping, the cost of storage to provide safe housing for collections, inventory control, and energy costs to provide a stable environment for collections.
- Considerations of ethics are also very important. As Museum Curators and Designated Collections Managers we are held to a higher ethical standard than other employees. DOM states that our work as caretakers of our common heritage must be guided not only by California State Parks values and standards but also by professional codes of ethics (DOM 2000.3). We must only acquire objects we are able to care for properly; collect materials only when it is legally and ethically appropriate to do so under federal, state, tribal and international laws; ensure that objects are not looted from archaeological sites; and see that all natural history specimens are acquired under correct permits.

Regarding policy, the **Department's Operations Manual (DOM)** chapter entitled *Museum Collections Management*, requires every park unit that has, or plans to have, museum objects to have a written, approved SOCS (DOM 2010.2).



#### 4. How do we acquire collections and how do we use them?

Museum collections have been and continue to be acquired in a variety of ways from a variety of sources and for a variety of reasons. These include:

- Individual objects and entire collections have been donated or bequeathed to, or purchased by the Department over the years.
- Original objects at a site are often acquired when a property is acquired by DPR. For example, Hearst San Simeon State Historic Monument® uses objects original to the Hearst family and the site to interpret the life and achievements of William Randolph Hearst and the history of his castle.
- Some parks collect and display objects to interpret specific ideas, concepts and themes. An example is the California State Railroad Museum, whose mission is to “interpret selected aspects of railroads and railroading, with an emphasis on California and the West.”
- Systematic collecting to study and interpret a park's natural resources often includes gathering specimens from beyond park boundaries for comparative purposes. Or, objects from outside a park's boundaries may be collected to fulfill the park's Declaration of Purpose. For example, the California State Mining and Mineral Museum houses the official State Mineral Collection, a systematic collection started in 1880. The museum's SOCS supports the continued development of this collection in order to create the premier collection of California minerals.
- **Natural history specimens** may be collected to document the flora and fauna of a park.
- **Paleontological specimens** and **archaeological artifacts** are collected systematically through Department investigations, excavations, and surveys to document the natural and cultural history of a park.

DOM summarizes reasons for collecting objects:

- to "preserve elements of the historic and natural environment of the park,"
- to “preserve documentation of people, events, cultural features or natural features that are central to a park's purpose,” and
- to “support the **interpretation** of themes that are important to the park.” (DOM 2000.4)

DOM also describes three ways to use museum objects: research, interpretation and hands-on use (DOM 2010.10).

## 5. How do I assess my park's collections?

An important step in preparing to write a SOCS is performing a general assessment of your unit's collections and their associated documentation. Remember that a collection's documentation can be as important as the objects. Your goal is to determine strengths and weaknesses. You will need to do the following:

- Physically inspect all significant groups or types of objects to get a sense of what you have and where it is. Include objects on display and in storage, on-site and off-site, indoors and outdoors. (See chart in Appendix A.)
- Review all collections documentation including catalogue cards, accession books, paper files, and electronic files.
- If your collections have been entered into **The Museum System (TMS)**, you may want to generate inventory reports to determine the types and numbers of objects in your collections.
- Review your unit's most recent **Museum Collections Facility Index (MCFI)** reports for information on storage conditions.

## 6. What other information will I need and where can I find it?

The next step in writing your SOCS is to gather and review all relevant documents available about your unit. You may need to review the source documents in order to find the Declaration of Purpose. Alternate terms used for the Declaration of Purpose include Mission Statement, **Vision Statement**, **Statement of Purpose** and **Sense of Place Statement**.

Other useful documents include:

- General Plan
- **Master Plan**
- **Interpretation Master Plan**
- **Interpretive Prospectus**
- Interpretive Plan
- **Exhibit Plan**
- **Furnishing Plan**
- **Resource Management Plan**
- SOCS for other units

Some or all of these documents may be filed in your park. If not, try your Sector Office or District Office. District interpretive staff may have final or draft interpretive plans, exhibit plans, or furnishing plans. Check with District resource specialists for final or draft resource management plans.

Other important resources:

The California State Parks Archives is a clearinghouse of studies, surveys, bibliographies, reports, plans, and records of enduring value created by Parks staff. These describe the growth and development of the State Park System, as well as individual park units. The Archives are located at State Park Headquarters in Sacramento. (See Appendix E.)

The Unit Data File (UDF) provides an online library of thousands (over 4,500 documents as of January 2009). About two-thirds deal with cultural resources, which include interpretive and planning documents. (See Appendix C.)

## 7. How do I write a Scope of Collections Statement?

District Superintendents are responsible for all aspects of managing museum objects in their districts, including the review and final approval of a unit's SOCS. The unit or district **Museum Curator** usually writes the SOCS. In the absence of a Museum Curator, the **Designated Collections Manager** may be asked to write it. **Museum Services Section** is available to assist you in getting started, reviewing draft documents and/or locating information.

If this is your unit's first SOCS, you may want to use the template in Appendix A to begin the process and to generate interest and momentum. Using the template will also ensure that your SOCS meets the requirements outlined in DOM 2010.2.

There is no set schedule for reviewing or revising your SOCS. It should be updated to reflect the most current interpretation planning, especially if it was written before the General Plan. It could be triggered by the arrival of a new superintendent, your transfer to a new unit or the acquisition of a significant collection.

Here is a description of what your SOCS should include:

### a. Title page

Include the name of your park; the title "Scope of Collections Statement"; your name and title as the author; the date of the report; and names, titles and dates of approval for the park superintendent and district superintendent. Here is an example from the South Yuba River State Park SOCS:

SOUTH YUBA RIVER STATE PARK  
SCOPE OF COLLECTIONS STATEMENT

Prepared by  
Judith K. Polanich, Museum Curator II  
Sierra District, Northern Division  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
State of California

June, 2007

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ron Munson, Sector Superintendent  
Sierra Gold Sector

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Pam Armas, District Superintendent  
Sierra District

**b. Brief description of the unit**

State the name of your park and where it is located. When did it open? What land, natural features and buildings are in your park? What is the main theme of your park? What dates does it interpret? What is unique about your park?

Here is an example from the Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park SOCS:

Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park is located in the city of Chico along Big Chico Creek, County of Butte, State of California. It consists of the Bidwell Mansion, a 10,000 square foot Italianate mansion built in 1868, an 1865 Architect's Home, a 1987 Carriage Shed, and a 1992 Visitor Center on five acres of historic grounds...The primary Interpretive period is from 1841 to 1918...the period when John Bidwell came to California until Annie E.K. Bidwell's death...

Themes include: the Bidwells' significant contributions to the social, cultural and economic heritage of California; the Mechoopda Indians who worked for the Bidwells; and Bidwell Mansion itself as a fine example of a Victorian Italianate villa.

### **c. Brief description of the collections**

Describe in general the kind of objects in your collection; for example, are they archeological, **ethnographic**, historic objects or natural history specimens? How are the collections used; for example, are there exhibits, are there research opportunities, or hands-on use by visitors?

Here is an example from La Purisima Mission State Historic Park SOCS:

The collections can generally be divided into three categories; furnishings, archeological and archival. The furnishings provide the "lived in" feeling for the mission grounds and rooms. They are mostly reproductions or consumable objects displayed in the rooms. There are only a few original mission objects that are displayed in cases. The archeological materials are all from the mission grounds and are stored in the archive rooms.

The archival materials consist mainly of documents, blueprints and photographs that were generated during the mission's reconstruction.

The archival materials are stored in the archive rooms.

### **d. Declaration of Purpose of your unit**

Quote the approved Declaration of Purpose for your park. This document may also be known as the Statement of Purpose, Mission Statement, Vision Statement or Sense of Place Statement.

Here is an example from the Bodie State Historic Park SOCS:

The purpose of Bodie State Historic Park is to make available to the people forever the opportunity to appreciate and enjoy the ghost mining town of Bodie in its historic and natural setting. The function of the Division of Beaches and Parks (now DPR) at Bodie is to preserve and protect the historic structures and features in a manner that retains the 'ghost town' atmosphere; to provide appropriate interpretive services; and to furnish such other facilities and public services consistent with the purpose of the historic park, as may be necessary for the full enjoyment of the park by the people.

### **e. Additional planning documents used**

Describe the planning documents used in writing your SOCS. (For a list of resources, see Section 6: What other information will I need and where can I find it?)

Here is an example from the Shasta State Historic Park SOCS:

For this Scope of Collections Statement, the following documents and records were consulted:

1. Shasta State Historic Park General Plan, 1992 (which includes the Statement of Purpose)
2. Museum Collections Management Handbook, California State Parks, Volumes I and II, 2000
3. Suggested Outline for a Scope of Collections Statement, California State Parks, 2000
4. Shasta State Historic Park accession records.

#### **f. People consulted**

Whom did you consult for information? For example, you may talk to current and former staff, volunteers, interns, a concessionaire, **cooperating association** members, and others.

Here is an example from the California State Mining and Mineral Museum SOCS:

The following stakeholders in the museum were consulted from December, 2000 to March, 2001:

- \* Dana Jones, Superintendent /Museum Director, CSMMM
- \* Mova Verde, Interpreter I, CSMMM
- \* Karma Graham, Interpretive Specialist, CSMMM
- \* Patricia Jacobs-Chalk, Senior Park Aid, CSMMM
- \* Fred Devito, President, Fund for the Preservation of the CSMMM
- \* Members of the CSMMM Association
- \* Members of the Fund for the Preservation of the CSMMM
- \* Members of the Mariposa Gem and Mineral Club
- \* Joel A. Bartsch, Curator of Gems and Minerals, Houston Museum of Natural Science
- \* Jean F. DeMouthe, Mineralogist, California Academy of Sciences
- \* Anthony Kampf, Curator and Section Head, Mineral Sciences, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County
- \* Craig Poole, Fresno City College

#### **g. Major interpretive themes, topics and/or time periods of the collection**

What are the main **interpretive themes** or topics represented in your park? Does your park highlight certain cultural groups, geographical boundaries, historic people or events? What time periods does the collection focus on?

Here is an example from the Emerald Bay State Park / Vikingsholm SOCS:

In practice, the main Vikingsholm building is the focus of interpretive effort. Park employees give tours of the house and collection twice an hour every day all summer long. The fifteen year history of the house (1929-1945) under Mrs. Knight's ownership is recounted. Major interpretive topics include:

- The Vikingsholm dream of Mrs. Knight
- Building of the castle with architect Lennart Palme
- Furnishing the castle with original and replica items
- Gracious summer living at Vikingsholm
- Mrs. Knight and her life

#### **h. History of the collection**

When was the collection acquired, and why is this date significant? Who were the major donors or collectors? Was there a donor or benefactor who was especially important? Is there a connection with an industry, such as mining or agriculture? Are there any gift restrictions on the collection?

Here is an example from the Shasta State Historic Park SOCS:

The Native Sons of the Golden West deeded the Courthouse Museum to the State of California in 1937 [with] ...their extensive collections of weapons, ethnographic and documentary materials, and general artifacts. Mae Helene Bacon Boggs gave her fine arts collection of California paintings, sculpture, and works on paper which span 1850 to 1950. The Litsch Store was sold to the State of California in 1960. Over 200 individual donors have given to the park and museum since 1937.

#### **i. Collection content summary**

Types and estimated holdings: What types of objects do you have and what are their estimated numbers? The template chart in Appendix A lists various types of collections. Be sure to include everything on exhibit both indoors and out, in storage, and on loan. Include the estimated number of each type of object, and the total number of items overall.

Significance: What is the significance of the collection? For example, are there objects which are original to the site or to the people living there? Are there objects of high monetary value? Do some objects have cultural significance, or are they important for research purposes?

Here is an example from California State Railroad Museum SOCS:

The full-size railroad equipment collection consists of approximately 225 locomotives and cars of 18-inch gauge and larger built from the 1830s to date ...150 locomotives and cars at Sacramento and an additional 75 locomotives and cars at Railtown 1897 SHP. Many of the Museum's locomotives and cars are sole surviving and/or the best examples in North America [including] 22 steam locomotives dating from 1862 to 1944.... There are fewer than 30 full-size steam

locomotives in the U.S. built prior to 1880 and the Museum holds five of them [including] the 1862 CP locomotive No. 1 *Gov. Stanford* and the 1863 SP locomotive No. 1 *C.P. Huntington*.

General condition: What is the general condition of the collection overall, in relation to its age?

Here is an example from the Emerald Bay State Park SOCS:

Most of the artifacts are in relatively good condition, considering the severe winter climate at Emerald Bay and the heavy visitation during the summer months. Textiles are the most fragile of all Vikingsholm artifacts. Curtains in the Chief's room were removed ...until the proper gingham fabric could be located for replication. The original curtains in Mrs. Knight's bedroom were replaced with inferior substitutes. Many of the [original] portieres ...were inadvertently destroyed by visitors. Upholstery on chairs, bedspreads, and rugs all suffer from sun, use, and rodent damage.

Physical locations and storage conditions: Where are the objects stored? What are the general conditions of each of your storage locations? This information may be included in the unit's MCFI reports.

Here is an example from the South Yuba River State Park SOCS:

Most of the objects in the South Yuba River SP collection are in storage.... Due to the lack of appropriate artifact storage space at the park, historic documents and photographs have been moved to the Empire Mine SHP for storage. Leather artifacts from South Yuba River SP are currently stored at Malakoff Diggins SHP.

#### **j. Uses of the collection**

How are the collections used? The three common ways are in exhibits, both permanent and temporary; for use in public programs - which may include hands-on use - and for research.

Here is an example from the California State Mining and Mineral Museum SOCS:

The collection is used for display, interpretation/outreach, and research. Exhibit quality gems and minerals, relevant non-exhibit quality minerals, and mining artifacts are interpreted in displays. Interpretive/outreach materials are handled and/or consumed by the interpretation /outreach program. Non-exhibit quality gems and minerals that are part of the late 1800s collection and ore samples from mining claims are made available for research purposes. With the approval of museum staff items in the collection will be loaned to nonprofit museums or universities for educational purposes such as research and/or exhibition.



**k. Relationship of your unit's collections to other State Park collections and to other non-State Parks collections**

Are your collections closely related to other State Park collections? Do other parks share your park's theme or time period? Do you have items on loan to or from other parks? Are there items in your collection that might be transferred to another park?

Here is an example from South Yuba River State Park SOCS:

Acquisitions of artifacts for South Yuba River State Park will not duplicate the collections at the other parks in Gold Mines Sector: Empire Mine SHP and Malakoff Diggins SHP. Gold mining artifacts, for example, are collected at two parks in the sector, and need not be duplicated at South Yuba River SP.

Are there non-State Parks' institutions whose collections are related to your park's? If so, describe how.

Here is an example from the Governor's Mansion State Historic Park SOCS:

The Governor's Mansion relates to other museums dedicated to governors and their families, such as the Pardee House in Oakland. The Mansion, with its domestic interpretation, provides a counterpoint to the political interpretation presented at the State Capitol. The Governor's Mansion collection includes personal items such as family papers, graphics and political memorabilia used in the house from 1903 to 1967, while strictly political objects, papers and ephemera are more appropriate for the collection of the State Capitol Museum, or, more likely, the State Archives.

**l. Collection development goals – recommended acquisitions, deaccessions and transfers**

Recommended acquisitions: What objects or materials would be desirable acquisitions, and why? What gaps exist in the collection, what areas could be strengthened, and what are your priorities for adding to the collection?

Keep in mind your park's ability to provide for the object's long-term curatorial care, including housing, documentation (DOM 2010.3.1) and research uses. You must consider the following criteria when evaluating a potential acquisition:

- Does it support the park's Declaration of Purpose and interpretive themes?
- Is it significant and/or rare?
- Does it have intrinsic and/or high market value?
- Is it acquired legally (natural and cultural resources were not collected or imported illegally, the donor or seller has legal title to the object, and acquisition will not violate Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), the Endangered Species Act, or other laws)?

- Does it provide potential use(s)?
- Will it be accessible to the public (through exhibits, online or other means)?
- Is it in good physical condition?

Here is an example from the California State Railroad Museum SOCS:

The Museum places a high priority on making selected additions to existing collection strengths rather than creating an excessively broad, generalist collection. Because of the restrictive size and financial commitment represented by railroad equipment, the Museum has more specific restrictive guidelines governing additions to the full-size collection of locomotives and rolling stock.

Recommended deaccessions: Are there objects which should be removed from the collection, and why? Keep in mind the following criteria for deaccessions to be considered:

- The objects no longer retain their physical integrity, identity, or authenticity.
- The objects are not relevant to DPR's mission, are outside the scope of its collections, or are in excess of DPR's needs for interpretation and research.
- DPR is not able to maintain the objects according to prevailing professional standards of care.
- The public good is better served by the permanent transfer of the objects to another custodian.
- Sacred and funerary objects and/or human remains are repatriated to a culturally-affiliated group. (DOM 2010.4.5)
- The objects are more significant for the information they could yield if submitted to destructive analysis, than they are in fulfilling other DPR purposes. (DOM 2010.4.1)

Here is an example from the Antelope Valley Indian Museum State Historic Park SOCS:

The African collection will probably remain in storage. This collection might better serve the public if it is transferred to the California African American Museum in Los Angeles [which] collects traditional African art, including masks, carvings, and decorative household implements from Sub-Saharan Africa such as those in our collection.

Recommended transfers: Are there objects with a **provenance** that makes them better suited to another park? Do you have a surplus of a particular type of object that could fill a need at another park?

Transfers can be temporary or permanent. (DOM 2010.7)

An example of a permanent transfer occurred in April, 2008 when a milk can, cheese curd rake, barrel, manual water pump, two-man crosscut saw, and butter churn were transferred from the State Museum Resource Center to Point Cabrillo Light Station State Historic Park for a permanent exhibition.

### **m. Collections management goals**

What are your unit's collections management goals? If possible, list them in priority order. These recommendations should be consistent with the information recorded in your MCFIs.

State your goals for the following:

1. Cataloging and documentation
2. **Conservation**
3. Security
4. Environmental conditions
5. Storage

Here is an example from the La Purisima Mission State Historic Park SOCS:

1. Cataloging. Organize and consolidate all collection records. Catalog all incoming objects as they are received.
2. Conservation. Many of the most sensitive objects, in particular artwork and textiles, are on display in the house museum rooms with little or no environmental controls. These objects must be closely monitored for conservation needs.
3. Security. Many of the irreplaceable objects are on display in the house museum setting as furnishings. These objects are readily accessible by park visitors. Non-intrusive and non-damaging means of securing these objects need to be investigated, and implemented. Some rooms within the park have motion-sensing devices, which are armed only after the buildings are secured at night. An evaluation of the buildings needs to be completed by a security specialist and steps taken to provide suggested security measures.
4. Environmental conditions. Establish a pest management program to determine what locations need treatment and for what types of pests. Rooms need to be monitored to determine environmental fluctuations and patterns so steps can be taken to alleviate or reduce the effects on the objects.
5. Improved storage. Current storage space is very limited and housed in a historical structure without climate controls. Archival materials should be placed in the archive area planned in the new visitor center. Archeological artifacts and other objects may be moved to a new archeology lab/storage structure under consideration at this time. Both locations would provide required climate control environment of the objects.

## 8. Special circumstances

You may come across established practices which are inconsistent with the collections management policies in DOM.

Here is another example from the Bodie State Historic Park SOCS:

Staff housing, offices and work areas contain furniture and artifacts that belong to the Park. All those in staff housing have been catalogued. Every winter inventory is taken by the Curatorial Park Aide who lives on site. These artifacts receive ordinary household care and are not altered by the resident staff that live among them.

Such policy exceptions are usually complex matters which are probably beyond the scope of your responsibilities. It is best to document the nature of these practices as simply and as objectively as possible.

For example, the Governor's Mansion State Historic Park SOCS states:

...a highly unusual use of the three-dimensional objects is that of temporary loan to the current governor's office for entertainment purposes. The General Plan acknowledges that the practice of removing artifacts from the Mansion and using them "...differs from the usual relationship for which it has responsibility, and places many of the objects at unpredictable risk."

## 9. What is the SOCS approval and distribution process?

After your SOCS is completed it should be submitted to the Sector Superintendent for approval and then to the District Superintendent for final approval. Once your SOCS has final approval, send one copy to the **Statewide Museum Collections Records** and one copy to the DPR Archives (both are located at Headquarters in Sacramento). Keep one copy with your unit's collections records at the Park and keep copies of the supporting materials you used to develop, draft, and write the SOCS in the unit's files. Also send a copy to the District. Your park's SOCS will be added to the **UDF**.

## 10. Conclusion

The purpose of the *Guidelines* is to help you write a Scope of Collections Statement for your park. Your SOCS is a valuable document that can guide you in the use, care and management of the collections. If you need assistance in writing your SOCS, please contact the Museum Services Section. We welcome any comments, corrections or suggestions for improving these *Guidelines*.

## **Appendix A Template**

### **Template for writing a Scope of Collections Statement**

This template is designed to guide you through the process of writing a Scope of Collections Statement (SOCS). It includes:

- Key topics required for a complete SOCS. Some fields may not be relevant to your collections.
- A chart to help you gather information for the collection content summary.



**a. Title Page**

---

Unit/Park Name

Scope of Collections Statement

Prepared by:

---

Name, Title, Date

---

District Superintendent, Date

---

(Optional) Sector Superintendent/Museum Director, Date

## **b. Introduction**

Briefly describe the unit

Name of the park

Location

Date opened

Land, natural features, and/or buildings

Primary interpretive theme(s)

Historic dates interpreted

What is unique about this park?

## **c. The collections**

### **Briefly describe the collections**

Art

Archival materials

Archeological

Ethnographic

Historical objects

Natural history specimens

Other

## **d. Declaration of Purpose (also known as Statement of Purpose, Sense of Place Statement, Mission Statement)**



**e. Additional planning documents used (include the title and date of each)**

General Plan(s)

Master plan(s)

Interpretive prospectus

Interpretive plan(s)

Exhibit plan(s)

Furnishing plan(s)

Resource management plan(s)

Museum Collections Facility Index (MCFI)

Other

**f. People consulted:** Include names, titles and special roles and dates of employment and/or affiliation

Current staff

Former staff

Volunteers

Interns

Concessionaire(s)

Cooperating association members

Consultants

Contract/project staff

**g. Major interpretive themes, topics and/or time periods of the collection**

Cultural groups represented

Geographical boundaries

Notable people

Historic events

#### **h. History of the collection**

Approximate dates collection was acquired

Significance of dates

Major donors or collectors

Connection with an industry

Gift restrictions

**i. Collection content summary chart**

	<b>Estimated holdings</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>General Condition</b>	<b>Physical Location</b>
Archaeological objects				
Archival materials				
Audio visual materials				
Decorative arts				
Ethnographic materials				
Firearms				
Furniture				
General artifacts				

	Estimated holdings	Significance	General Condition	Physical Location
Library materials				
Machinery: Industrial machinery Agricultural machinery Military machinery Railroad equipment				
Natural history specimens: Animals Plants Minerals / Rocks				
Paleontology specimens				
Photographs & negatives				
Textiles				
Tools				
Vehicles: Wagons Carriages Cars				

	Estimated holdings	Significance	General Condition	Physical Location
Works of Art: Paintings & drawings Sculpture Graphic arts				
State Park Memorabilia: Documents Oral histories Uniforms, badges				
Props & replicas				
Other (specify)				
Total estimated number of objects				

**j. Uses of the collection**

Exhibits (permanent, temporary, traveling, loans for exhibition purposes, other?)

Research and study activities

Other

**k. Relationship of your unit's collections to other State Parks collections and to other non-State Park institutions**

Relationship of the collection to other State Park collections

Shared theme or time period

Items on loan to other parks

Items on loan from other parks

Relationship of the collection to other non-State Parks institutions

**l. Collection development goals**

Recommended priorities for acquisition

Recommended deaccessions

Recommended transfers

**m. Collections management goals in priority order.**

Cataloging and documentation

Conservation

Security

Environmental conditions

Storage

## **Appendix B**

### **Glossary**

**Accession** An object acquired by a museum as part of its permanent collection; the act of recording/processing an addition to the permanent collection; and one or more objects acquired at one time from one source constituting a single transaction between the museum or unit and source, or the transaction itself.

**Acquisition** The purchase or lease of real property (or interests in real-properties) for park or recreation purposes or acquiring permanent materials as part of a collection, usually artifacts, books or art.

**Archaeological Collection(s)** Materials that are excavated or removed during an archaeological investigation, such as a survey or excavation of a prehistoric or historic archaeology resource, and associated records that are prepared or assembled in connection with the survey, excavation or other study.

**Architectural Features** Features separate from a structure (e.g. door, light fixture) that are sufficiently important historically to be retained with museum collections.

**Archival Material** Photographs, papers and other similar material created or received by a person, family, or organization, public or private, in the conduct of their affairs and preserved because of their enduring or historic value.

**Artifact** A human-made object which gives information about the culture of its creator and users.

**Collection** The holdings of a museum or park unit acquired and preserved because of their intrinsic value as examples, as reference material, or as objects of aesthetic, historical, scientific, or educational importance.

**Conservation** The profession devoted to the preservation of cultural property for the future. Conservation activities include examination, documentation, treatment and preventive care, supported by research and education.

**Cooperating Association** A non-profit charitable organization that raises funds to support or enhance the interpretive and education programs, exhibits, and facilities of California State Parks. Funds are normally raised through donations and the sale of merchandise and services to park visitors.

**Deaccession** The formal removal of accessioned objects from a museum's permanent collection.

**Declaration of Purpose** A Departmentally-approved statement defining the primary purpose of a (museum or) park unit; standard component of the General Plan document.

**Department Operations Manual (DOM)** A compilation of Section 2000 relates to the management of the Department's museum collection's policies, procedures and definitions.

**Designated Collections Manager** The museum collections manager designated by the District or Park Superintendent or Museum Director, at the Museum Curator I level or higher, who has general knowledge of and primary responsibility for the management of the unit's or park's collections.

**Endangered Species Act** Passed in 1973, the Act is the most wide-ranging of the dozens of U.S. environmental laws. It was designed to protect critically imperiled species from extinction.

**Ethnographic Collection** Objects relating to indigenous cultures, primarily Native American.

**Exhibit Plan** A document that identifies the theme, goals and costs of an exhibit.

**Furnishing Plan** A written strategy for furnishing an historic structure. Furnishings plans are compilations of research reports and the documentation of decisions made based upon those reports. A furnishing plan should include an overview of the scope of the project, site description, profiles of the occupants, predominant styles used to furnish the rooms, traffic flow floor plan, individual room plan for each space, illustrations, bibliography and chronology.

**General Plan** A document providing broad public policy and programmatic guidance regarding development and management of an individual unit of the State Park System, essential to the managers, staff and stakeholders. A General Plan is sometimes called a "comprehensive plan" or "master plan" in other jurisdictions.

**Hands-on use (objects)** Hands-on objects offer visitors the opportunity to touch, examine, or otherwise explore items related to a park's resources and themes. Because of their value, original objects are often replaced with reproductions for hands-on activities.

**Interpretation** An educational method that seeks to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, firsthand experience, and illustrative media, rather than to only communicate factual information.

**Interpretation Master Plan** A long-range approach to interpretive planning and may be developed for a unit, sector, or geographical region, or may be used for particular resources found throughout the state.

**Interpretive Periods** The historic framework for interpretation within a park unit, directing and focusing interpretive themes, facilities, and activities to represent specific years.

**Interpretive Plan** Plan guides long-term and short-term projects to help realize a park



unit's critical goals and objectives. This document varies according to its purpose and the details required for supporting a range of levels of interpretive development. Interpretation Master Plans specifically define objectives, methodologies and concepts for how goals and guidelines (identified in the General Plan) will be achieved.

**Interpretive Prospectus** A provisional document containing much of the same interpretive direction that will be later included in the General Plan, but is considered a provisional document. The Prospectus evaluates existing conditions for interpretation in the unit, identifies unifying theme, along with supporting primary and secondary themes, and primary and secondary interpretive periods or cultural resources, along with key goals and guidelines.

**Interpretive Theme** A concise, simple, complete idea that defines the informational scope and the perspective to be offered.

**Master Plan** A Master Plan states where a park is now, what it should be in the future and what is required to get there. While circumstances vary from place to place, the decision to develop a master plan is often determined by the need to understand the current conditions of the park, to generate and build community interest and participation, to create new and common vision for the park's future and/or develop a clear and solid set of recommendations and implementation strategies.

**Mission Statement** A broad statement of purpose derived from an organization's values and goals.

**Museum** A museum is an institution devoted to the procurement, care, study, and exhibition of objects of lasting interest or value.

**Museum Collections Facility Index (MCFI)** A report generated annually by museum staff as an indicator of the environmental conditions at facilities that hold California State Park museum collections.

**Museum Collections Management Handbook (MCMH)** The two-volume manual of approved policies and procedures for the museum collections of California State Parks. Originally published in 1998, the Handbook is produced and updated by the Museum Services Section.

**Museum Curator** A person with special training and experience in the management of museum collections. In the general museum field, a curator is a subject matter specialist who conducts research and who interprets the collections.

**Museum Objects** Objects that are subject to the Department's museum collections management policies and procedures. This includes cultural objects, natural history specimens, archival materials, archaeological and paleontological collections.

**Museum Services Section** Part of the Park Operations' Archaeology, History and Museum Division, has responsibility for museum collections policy and matters that must be coordinated or directed on a statewide basis.

**Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)** A U.S. federal law passed in 1990 requiring federal agencies and institutions that receive federal funding to return Native American cultural items and human remains to their respective peoples.

**Paleontological specimens** Paleontology is the study of ancient life. Paleontological specimens are fossil remains of life from past geological periods.

**Prop** A replica or replacement object used in place of a museum object of value to avoid damage or loss of the original. Typical examples are an inexpensive tin cup used in a living history program, or simple replica curtains used in a house museum. Also known as an interpretive program aid.

**Provenance** The history of ownership of a valued object or work of art.

**Purpose Statement** Statements written by California State Parks' staff over the last 40 years which identify the most important features and values at the subject unit or property, and indicates the Department's primary objectives in their management. A general term used to encompass four types of Statements of Purpose, Declarations of Purpose, Sense of Place statements and Vision Statements.

**Resource Management Plan** A plan that describes a specific resource management project designed to meet a specific need. The plan identifies the resource, the environmental setting, justifies the proposed actions, states the goals and objectives, details the methods to be used, the materials needed, outlines the monitoring techniques, establishes a budget, documents the work, and evaluates the results.

**Scope of Collections Statement (SOCS)** A written plan describing the current status and future plans for long-term management of a park unit's museum objects. Also called a "collecting policy."

**Sense of Place Statement** see **Purpose Statement**

**State Park Memorabilia** Objects relating to the history of the State Park System (e.g. documents, oral histories, uniforms, badges).

**Statewide Museum Collections Records** Repository for copies of all park museum collection records. It provides a means of tracking and assessing objects on a statewide basis and serves as backup protection.

**Stewardship** The careful, sound, and responsible management of objects entrusted to a museum's care in the interest of long-term preservation.

**The Museum System or TMS** The Department's electronic database used to manage its museum collections statewide. The database is managed by staff at headquarters in the Museum Services Section. In 2003, TMS replaced Argus, California State Parks' first collections management program.

**Transfers also known as Park to Park Transfers** A park to park transfer is the change in location of objects from one State Park to another, and the transfer of responsibility for those objects from one Superintendent to another.

**UDF or Unit Data File** An online library of thousands of documents, which includes interpretive and planning documents (See Appendix C).

**Vision Statement** An inspiring view of the preferred future. An effective vision statement should include understandable, clear, strong, attractive images of the future, and be specific enough to provide direction and purpose.



## **Appendix C**

### **The Unit Data File**

The Unit Data File (UDF) is an organizational concept in which all information about a park unit is kept together. For example, the Interpretive Plan for Fort Ross SHP would be stored with all other Fort Ross SHP materials, rather than with all other Interpretive Plans. The UDF is closely related to the Unit History File, which traditionally has been compiled at the park unit and contains news clippings photos, articles, reports, ranger notes and other documents relating the day-to-day activities of the park unit. The UDF is managed by the Department Archives and searchable by all park employees.

To access the UDF from the Intranet page, go to “Document Library” and then to “Digital Documents Catalog (UDF).”

A search page will open: an example is shown on the following page. To find all documents relating to your park, leave all fields blank, click on the “Park Units” button, and select your park. Then click “Search.” You will find a list of all documents in UDF related to your park. Ten documents are listed per page; click “more records>>” to see the complete list.

To find a list of all approved SOCS, type the word “scope” in the Title box, then click “Search.”

Click on the document number to access the document.


On the following page is a view the UDF Search page. You must scroll down to find the “Search” button.

Metadata Search - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Address http://nscgisweb01/website/udf/SearchMetadata.aspx

**UDF Catalog**  
Metadata Portal

California State Parks 

SEARCH

You are here: UDF Catalog > Metadata Search Tool

**UDF Catalog - Metadata Search Tool**

**Search criteria**

**Document Title:**

**Abstract:**

**Publisher:**  **Author:**

**Locational Reference of Document:**

Park Units  
 Admiral William Standley SRA

Park Districts  
 Angeles District

Counties  
 Alameda

Find all documents within State

Keyword  Spatial

To search for documents based on the **name** of the selected reference, ensure that the "keyword" radio button is checked (this is the default). If you wish to search for documents based on the **spatial extent** of the selected reference, click the "spatial" radio button. Note that the **statewide** search is always a spatial search, regardless of this selection.

**Theme or Categories:** ----- Theme and Categories -----

**CEQA Categories:** ----- CEQA Categories -----

**General Categories:** ----- General Categories -----

Done Local intranet

start Document Library - Mi... Metadata Search - Mi... 3:28 PM

## Appendix D References and Resources

### Publications:

- American Association of Museums, "The Accreditation Commission's Expectations Regarding Collections Stewardship," Jan. 1, 2005.
- Buck, Rebecca A., and Jean Allman Gilmore. *The New Museum Registration Methods*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1998.
- Burcaw, G. Ellis. *Introduction to Museum Work, Part I*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 1997.
- Gardner, James B., and Elizabeth E. Merritt. *The AAM Guide to Collections Planning*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 2004.
- Lord, Gail Dexter, and Barry Lord. *The Manual of Museum Planning*, 2nd edition. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 1999.
- Malaro, Marie C. *A Legal Primer on Managing Museum Collections*, 2nd Edition. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 1998.
- Schwarzer, Marjorie. *Riches, Rivals & Radicals: 100 Years of Museums in America*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 2006.
- Simmons, John E. *Things Great and Small: Collections Management Policies*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 2006.
- State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation, Museum Services Section. "Department Operations Manual (DOM) Chapter 2000." *Museum Collections Management Handbook*. Sacramento, 1998.
- State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation, Planning Division. *Concepts: Practical Tools for Parks and Recreation, A Park and Recreation Professionals' Glossary - Words, Phrases and Acronyms*. Sacramento, May, 2004.
- State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation, Planning Division. *Statistical Report FY 2006/07*. Sacramento, Dec., 2007.
- State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation, State Historical Resources Commission. *Guidelines for the Curation of Archaeological Collections*. May, 1993.
- U.S. Government, National Park Service. "Writing the Scope of Collections." *Museum Handbook*, Part I, Chapter 2. Washington D.C., 1990 (revised).

## Web resources:

### **American Association of Museums (AAM):** [www.aam-us.org](http://www.aam-us.org)

Largest national membership organization serving museum professionals of all disciplines and their institutions as well as others working in museum-related fields.

### **American Association for State and Local History (AASLH):** [www.aaslh.org](http://www.aaslh.org)

An organization which "...provides leadership, service and support for its members who preserve and interpret state and local history to make the past more meaningful to all Americans."

### **American Institute for Conservation (AIC):** [www.aic.stanford.edu](http://www.aic.stanford.edu)

An organization of "conservation professionals dedicated to preserving art and historic artifacts."

### **International Council of Museums (ICOM):** [www.icom.museum](http://www.icom.museum)

An organization "dedicated to the development of museums and the museum profession and the preservation of cultural heritage."

### **National Park Service (NPS):** [www.nps.org](http://www.nps.org)

Official site for NPS. Features guides to each national park.

### **Society for American Archaeology (SAA):** [www.saa.org](http://www.saa.org)

"The mission of the SAA is to expand understanding and appreciation of humanity's past as achieved through systematic investigation of the archaeological record."

### **Society of American Archivists (SAA):** [www.archivists.org](http://www.archivists.org)

"SAA's mission is to serve the educational and informational needs of ...its members and to provide leadership to ensure the identification, preservation, and use of records of historical value."



## **Appendix E**

### **California State Parks Information Resources**

Some have reference libraries and archival collections.

#### **Headquarters Resources, 1416 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Sacramento 95814**

Archaeology, History & Museums Division  
Room 905  
916.653.5910

California State Parks Archives and Library  
Room 943  
916.653.6519  
[archives@parks.ca.gov](mailto:archives@parks.ca.gov)

Interpretation and Education Division  
(includes Cooperating Associations & Foundations)  
Room 1449-1  
916.654.2249  
[interp@parks.ca.gov](mailto:interp@parks.ca.gov)

Legal Office  
Room 1404-6  
916.653.9905

Natural Resources Division  
Room 923  
916.653.6725

Office of Historic Preservation  
Room 1442  
916.653.6624  
[calshop@parks.ca.gov](mailto:calshop@parks.ca.gov)

Planning Division  
Room 108  
916.653.9901  
[planning@parks.ca.gov](mailto:planning@parks.ca.gov)

Unit Data File (UDF) Catalogue (see Appendix C)

#### **Other Internal Resources**

Acquisition and Development Division Map Room  
1 Capitol Mall, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
916.445.8705

Administrative Services, Central Records Office  
One Capitol Mall, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
916.445.9014

Northern Service Center  
1 Capitol Mall, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
916.445.8870

Off Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division (OHMVR)  
1725 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 200  
Sacramento, CA 95816  
916.324.4442  
ohvinfo@parks.ca.gov

Photographic Archives  
2517 Port Street  
West Sacramento, CA 95691  
916.375.5930

Southern Service Center  
8885 Rio San Diego Drive, Suite 270  
San Diego, CA 92108  
619.278.3777

State Archaeological Collections Research Facility (SACRF)  
2572 Port Street  
West Sacramento, CA 95691  
916.375.5923

State Museum Resource Center (SMRC)  
2505 Port Street  
West Sacramento, CA 95691  
916.375.5900

### **External Resources – Sacramento**

California State Archives  
1020 O Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
916.653.2246  
ArchivesWeb@sos.ca.gov

California State Library  
California History Room  
900 N Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
cslcal@library.ca.gov