



# **Pacific Coast Archaeological Society**

## **Curation Guidelines**

**November, 2003**



# Pacific Coast Archaeological Society

## Curation Guidelines

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### *Overview*

#### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this document is to establish definitions, standards, procedures, and guidelines to ensure archaeological collections and their associated records are preserved and managed properly so they are available to future generations.

In compliance with the Pacific Coast Archaeological Society (PCAS) Code of Ethics, all members and actions shall adhere to city, county, state, and federal antiquities laws.

#### **AUTHORITY:**

The authority lies with the PCAS Board of Directors to establish or modify these guidelines.

#### **APPLICABILITY:**

These guidelines pertain to collections held by PCAS that have been excavated or removed from any prehistoric or historic archaeological site on public or private land and their associated records.

#### **DEFINITION:**

Curated collections consist of artifacts, midden samples, and any other specimens that are excavated or removed as a result of archaeological surveys, excavations, or other studies of prehistoric or historic archaeological resources. Collections also include such associated documentation as field notes, photographs, maps, laboratory analyses, legal permits and conditions documents, and written reports.

#### **MANAGEMENT**

The guidelines constitute a management policy to process, manage, and curate the collections. Collections should be stored, cleaned, stabilized, catalogued, labeled, and archived.



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### **FUNDS FOR CURATION SERVICES**

Presently, PCAS neither charges nor raises funds for curation. Future costs for curation services will be determined at the time PCAS is in the position to accept collections.

### **CURATION STANDARDS**

These guidelines provide a written policy for accepting, transferring, and deaccessioning collections and associated records. Records may be written reports, field notes, photographs, maps, etc. PCAS will strive to provide physical security, adequate space, facilities for viewing and examining the collections, and a copy of all records off-site.

### **COLLECTION USE**

The collections should be available for scientific, cultural, educational, traditional, and other legitimate public uses. In order to gain access to any collection materials, a research design or letter of intent must be submitted to the Curator or to the Board of Directors for approval. Access to associated records that contain locational information should be restricted to ensure the safety of the site.

To apply for PCAS scholarship or grant funds to analyze, study, or update a collection, a research design must be submitted to the Board of Directors.



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### *Background*

Pacific Coast Archaeological Society (PCAS) was incorporated in 1961 as an educational, non-profit organization. During PCAS' early years and prior to the development of our current environmental laws and cultural resource management companies, PCAS undertook numerous archaeological salvage operations and excavations primarily, but not exclusively, in Orange County as fast-paced development spread across southern California. Additionally, PCAS with academic advisors and with landowners' approval undertook several excavations with all-volunteer labor and occasional assistance from college field classes. For a time in the 1960s and 1970s, PCAS was given the authority to assign site numbers in Orange County. Collections from these early surveys and excavations remain under the management of PCAS. In addition to collections from these PCAS projects, PCAS has accepted collections from various cultural resource management companies and governmental organizations often with the stated intent of keeping Orange County collections housed in Orange County. PCAS has also accepted unprovenanced educational material from individuals.

Today, PCAS remains an active avocational society with emphasis on public outreach and education. PCAS in accepting responsibility for its collections acknowledges that these collections must be made available for study and other legitimate uses and curated for future generations. The establishment of these Guidelines is a step in the process of responsible stewardship.



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### *Accepting Collections*

At this time PCAS is not accepting any new collections for curation. PCAS will continue to accept the return of previously borrowed collections.



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### *Human Remains*

It is the policy of the Society to return to pertinent Native American communities any human remains recognized in the collections being curated by the Society. The actions PCAS will follow are:

1. PCAS shall assemble and update all pertinent documentation relating to the collection, curation, and study of any recognized human remains, and to the significant heritage of those human remains.
2. PCAS shall develop and implement, with the assistance of appropriate specialists, a broad scientific protocol to study, document, and interpret the significant aspects of heritage in any human remains recognized in the Society's archaeological collections. On a case-by-case basis the Board of Directors shall determine the timeframe and costs allotted to each study. The scientific protocol can be found on page 7 of these guidelines.
3. The Board of Directors shall decide how to best implement the policy to return any human remains in the collection to the pertinent Native American communities, following thoughtful consideration of Native American protocols.
4. PCAS shall respectfully initiate conversation with Native American communities of the region to have them offer appropriate Native American protocols for the proper treatment of any human remains recognized in the Society's archaeological collections, and PCAS shall respectfully consider any submitted Native American protocols. The Native American protocols can be found on page 8 of these guidelines.
5. PCAS shall recognize the various and diverse protocols that may be proposed for the treatment of human remains in the Society's archaeological collections and shall endeavor forthrightly to resolve these various protocols. A unified operational protocol is recognized as an important and on-going policy objective.
6. PCAS will contact the Native American Heritage Commission to report the presence of human remains and our desire to return them to the Most Likely Descendant. The Heritage Commission will contact the Most Likely Descendant who will contact us to arrange transfer.



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7. PCAS shall maintain the human remains in the facility until they can be transferred. They shall be properly stored, and their location clearly identified.
  
8. PCAS will complete a Deaccessioning and Return form. The Most Likely Descendant accepting the remains shall sign both forms.

***Important Note:*** Per the Orange County Coroner's office (see letter attached) any existing collection in the PCAS Facility that has human remains excavated from a viable archaeological excavation found along with other cultural materials can be reported directly to the Heritage Commission without calling the Coroner first. In any future excavation the Coroner must be contacted.



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### *Scientific Protocol*

Scientific Protocols have been developed and implemented with the assistance of appropriate specialists. These scientific protocols provide guidelines for the study, documentation, and interpretation of the significant aspects of information gained from any of the Society's archaeological collections.

In the event human remains are found within a collection, scientific protocol will be followed prior to returning the remains to the Most Likely Descendant. The Board of Directors will meet and assign a timeframe for the completion of the study, the maximum dollar amount allotted for that study, and who will be responsible for the study. If applicable, each collection shall be analyzed as outlined below.

1. All records shall be updated.
2. Measurements (metric and non-metric) shall be taken.
3. Floatation studies shall be conducted if suitable materials exist.
4. If human remains exist, they shall be studied to determine possible information such as age at death, sex, height, injuries, etc.
5. The context of the find shall be established, and any associated items shall be analyzed.
6. A photographic record of all items shall be made.



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### *Native American Protocols*

PCAS has initiated conversation with pertinent Native American communities in the region and requested appropriate Native American protocols for the treatment of human remains recognized in the Society's archaeological collections.

Discussion with the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) was conducted to obtain its recommendations and advice on Native American protocols.

If human remains are found within a collection stored or curated by PCAS:

1. The NAHC, and/or Coroner, will be contacted.
2. PCAS will work with the Most Likely Descendant to resolve the disposition of the remains.
3. PCAS will perform any such testing and recording acceptable to the Most Likely Descendant.



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### ***Deaccessioning***

Circumstances will occur where it may be necessary to deaccession a collection, or parts of a collection, in order to enhance the quality, integrity, and/or identity of the remaining collections in the PCAS facility.

In this document the definition of deaccession is to permanently remove an object within a collection, or an entire collection, under the stewardship of PCAS. Some reasons for deaccession are the return of human remains to the Most Likely Descendant, the return of a collection to its rightful owner, or the movement of a collection into another curation facility.

All deaccessioning should be carefully recorded with the proper deaccessioning forms completed. A deaccession form will be stored with the collection, and one copy placed in the PCAS permanent record. When an entire collection is deaccessioned, the forms will be placed in a folder or cabinet where other permanent file information is kept.

#### ***Procedures for Deaccessioning:***

The Curation Committee may make a recommendation to have a collection, or part of a collection, deaccessioned. This recommendation must include a written justification supporting deaccessioning. The PCAS Board of Directors will vote on the deaccessioning recommendation.

#### ***Reasons for Deaccessioning may include but are not limited to:***

Deaccessioning may occur when:

1. Materials, or a whole collection, are determined to belong to someone other than PCAS. The materials or collection will be returned to the rightful owner.
2. The materials are unprovenienced.
3. The collections or materials cannot be properly cared for by PCAS.
4. The collections or materials require restoration in excess of the ability of PCAS.
5. The collections or materials are in such deteriorated condition that restoration would prove either unfeasible or misleading.
6. The collection or materials are to be used in scientific study.



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When a decision is reached to deaccession a collection, or materials from a collection, these procedures will be followed:

1. Verify the legal title to the collection.
2. Update the permanent record with notes, photographs, and measurements of the object or material to maintain in the file. Include a list of objects being deaccessioned and the written justification in the permanent file. Also include the catalogue or accession numbers in the permanent file.

Complete a deaccessioning form and have the PCAS Curator and, if applicable, the receiving party sign the form and keep with the permanent record.

3. Do not reuse the deaccessioned catalogue or accession number.
4. Make arrangements for transfer or disposal as approved by the PCAS Board.



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### ***Collections for Study***

#### ***Purpose***

PCAS recognizes that the archaeological collections it houses are deemed a valuable and non-renewable resource and should be available for scientific, cultural, educational, traditional, and other legitimate public uses.

In order to gain access to any collection materials, a research design, scope of study, or letter of intent must be submitted to the Curator who will present it to the Board of Directors for approval. Access to associated records that contain locational information should be restricted to ensure the safety of the site.

#### ***Responsibilities***

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) must be completed and signed by all parties. The MOU must include the following information:

1. The specific collection or collection items that PCAS will provide for study.
2. The name of one PCAS member assigned by the Board to act as liaison with the borrower.
3. The borrower shall list how the artifactual materials will be stored and secured while in his/her possession.
4. The requestor shall provide PCAS with a copy of the report after studying the collection.
5. Return dates must be listed. Should the collection be held more than 6 months, written quarterly reports will be required.
6. An extension or renewal may be granted with Board approval.

#### ***Accountability***

Should a student, faculty, institution, individual, or organization refuse to return any or all of a collection or materials loaned to them by PCAS, legal action may be required.



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### *Procedures for studying or loaning collections*

The following steps must be followed prior to loaning a collection for study.

1. A research design, scope of study, or letter of intent must be approved by the Board.
2. A letter of reference may be required.
3. A MOU must be signed by PCAS and the borrower.
4. A detailed inventory of the collection, which may include photos, must be completed by a PCAS member appointed by the Curator.



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### *Forms*

Listed below are the forms that can be found in this section. These forms are to be used as a master copy. If a form is revised, it needs to be made within this master so the correct and updated revision always remains with the guidelines. Forms may only be modified with Board approval. Make as many photocopies as needed.

These forms are:

1. Return Agreement
2. Deaccession Form
3. Memorandum of Understanding – for a student request
4. Memorandum of Understanding – for all other requests



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### *Return Agreement*

Pacific Coast Archaeological Society (PCAS) has contacted the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) regarding the return of human remains found in collection \_\_\_\_\_ . The NAHC has contacted \_\_\_\_\_ as the Most Likely Descendant.

PCAS and \_\_\_\_\_ (Most Likely Descendant) do hereby agree:

1. To return any human remains found within collection \_\_\_\_\_ to the Most Likely Descendant named above.
2. That any funerary or sacred objects known or reasonably believed to have been placed intentionally at the time of death be returned along with the remains.
3. That PCAS will conduct a complete inventory prior to the removal of said remains.
4. That this agreement releases PCAS from any future claims by the above named Most Likely Descendant regarding the objects described in the inventory.
5. That PCAS will store said remains until the Most Likely Descendant can arrange transfer and reburial.

This agreement shall become binding upon its execution by the authorized representatives of each party.

**Pacific Coast Archaeological Society:**

President	Signature	Date
Curator	Signature	Date

**For the Most Likely Descendant:**

Official Representative	Signature	Date
Title	Most Likely Descendant or Organization	
Contact Phone	Contact Address	



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### *Deaccession Form*

Pacific Coast Archaeological Society has agreed to deaccession the items listed below.

#### **Deaccession Type:**

- Return to rightful owner
- Cannot be properly cared for
- Unprovenienced materials or collection
- Condition of material is in such deteriorated state that restoration is impossible
- The materials or collection will be used in scientific study
- Loss, theft, or other destruction (Describe: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Return to Most Likely Descendant
- Restoration is beyond PCAS ability

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#### **Objects in Deaccession:**

(Record items and catalog/accession numbers below. If lengthy, attach a list.)

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#### **Destination of materials/collection:**

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#### **Signatures:**

President (Print Name)	Signature	Date
Curator (Print Name)	Signature	Date



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### Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been developed and entered into by the Pacific Coast Archaeological Society (PCAS) and \_\_\_\_\_, a student at \_\_\_\_\_ . Each party recognizes interest, concerns, and mutual responsibilities in the implementation of a study and loan of artifactual materials.

#### **Purpose**

PCAS recognizes that the archaeological collections it houses are deemed a valuable and non-renewable resource and recognizes that study and analysis of these collections is needed to interpret and appreciate their full value.

#### **Agreement**

PCAS agrees to loan the specific materials listed for study as outlined in the attached document(s) from the PCAS \_\_\_\_\_ collection to \_\_\_\_\_. All \_\_\_\_\_ material shall be returned by said above named person to PCAS no later than \_\_\_\_\_. The stated return date may be extended by mutual written agreement of the parties. Should the student or Department/Advisor refuse to return the materials/collection legal action may be taken.

#### **Responsibilities**

PCAS shall:

1. Provide specific artifactual material from \_\_\_\_\_ collection.
2. Assign a PCAS Member appointed by the Board to act as liaison.

Student shall:

1. Provide a secure place for the artifactual material. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Provide PCAS with a report on the study of said material and a copy of the thesis (if applicable).

#### **Signatures:**

_____ PCAS President (Print Name)	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Student (Print Name)	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Department/Advisor (Print Name)	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Student Address		_____ Phone
_____ Department/Advisor Address		_____ Phone



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### Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been developed and entered into by the Pacific Coast Archaeological Society (PCAS) and \_\_\_\_\_, from \_\_\_\_\_ (affiliation). Each party recognizes interest, concerns, and mutual responsibilities in the implementation of a study and loan of artifactual materials.

#### Purpose

PCAS recognizes that the archaeological collections it houses are deemed a valuable and non-renewable resource and recognizes that study and analysis of these collections is needed to interpret and appreciate their full value.

#### Agreement

PCAS agrees to loan the specific materials listed for study as outlined in the attached document(s) from the PCAS \_\_\_\_\_ collection to \_\_\_\_\_. All \_\_\_\_\_ material shall be returned by said above named person to PCAS no later than \_\_\_\_\_. The stated return date may be extended by mutual written agreement of the parties. Should the borrower or Company/Employer refuse to return the materials/collection legal action may be taken.

#### Responsibilities

PCAS shall:

1. Provide specific artifactual material from \_\_\_\_\_ collection.
2. Assign a PCAS Member appointed by the Board to act as liaison.

\_\_\_\_\_ shall:

1. Provide a secure place for the artifactual material. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Provide PCAS with a report on the study of said material.

#### Signatures:

_____ PCAS President (Print Name)	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Borrower (Print Name)	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Borrower Company/Employer Name	_____ Company/Employer, Owner, or Manager	
_____ Company/Employer Address	_____ Phone	



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### *Bibliography*

#### **Federal Sources:**

- 36 CFR 79
- NAGPRA Statute – Assembly Bill 978
- National Park Service Curation Guidelines

#### **State Sources:**

- State of California Guidelines for Curation

#### **County Sources:**

- Orange County Curatorial Guidelines

#### **Other Written Materials:**

- Masters Thesis: “How to Curate Archaeological Collections Training Manual”  
Authored by Sandy Kennedy
- SCA Code of Ethics

#### **Personal Interviews:**

- Cindy Stankowski – San Diego Curation Facility and PCAS Advisor
- Dr. Henry Koerper – PCAS Advisor
- Kern County Archaeology Society
- Ventura County Archaeology Society

#### **Telephone Interviews:**

- Rob Woods – Native American Heritage Commission
- Tiffany Burke – Orange County Coroner