

## **General Collections Policy**

*Adopted by the CDRI Executive Committee by a mail vote on August 10, 2000*

*Amended and accepted by the Executive Committee on September 22, 2000.*

*Amended and approved by Board of Directors on February 26, 2011.*

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this corporation shall be charitable, scientific, literary, and educational, with emphasis upon education and research leading to a greater knowledge of the Chihuahuan Desert as located in the United States and the Republic of Mexico. Such purposes shall include, but not be limited to, the establishment and maintenance of a Chihuahuan Desert Museum.

### SECTION 1: ACQUISITIONS

Acquisitions of materials by the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute (CDRI), whether by purchase, gift, temporary loan, bequest, or by other means, shall be acquired and cared for in accordance with the following steps:

1. The acquisition must have intrinsic value to the CDRI and be appropriate for research, comparison, and/or exhibit. All acquisitions shall be approved by the Board of Directors at the recommendation of the Executive Director and/or a committee appointed by the Board of Directors for this purpose.
2. Items should be acquired with free and clear title to the CDRI and without restriction as to use or future deposition.
  - A. Items may be accepted with restrictions or limitations only by the Board of Directors and only when efforts fail to obtain the item or items as a donation.
  - B. Such restrictions must be clearly documented in a signed instrument of conveyance which is then made part of the organization's records and strictly observed by the CDRI.
  - C. A signed letter in which the owner absolves the CDRI of any liability or responsibility for the damage or loss of the item before it is returned must accompany the signed instrument of conveyance.
  - D. The loan of an object shall not exceed five years (renewable). Permanent loans will not be accepted in any case.
3. The CDRI will conduct an inventory of acquisitions on an annual basis with the results reported to the Directors. In the event that the loan of materials is deemed appropriate and approved by the Directors, the CDRI staff will review the agreement with the owner at the termination of the loan.
4. The CDRI is under no obligation to accept all materials offered. Unsuitable materials will be returned to the donor or directed to a more appropriate institution.
5. Acquisitions by purchase shall be made only after proper financing has been arranged and approved by the Board of Directors.
6. The receipt of all acquisitions will be acknowledged by the CDRI in a letter to the donor from the Executive Director or president. A separate file or electronic database will be established for acquisitions. These files or database will contain a copy of 1) the acknowledgement letter; 2)

documentation of the CDRI's legal ownership of each item; and, in the case of a loan, 3) an instrument of conveyance and a letter of absolution.

7. Acquisitions shall be accepted only when the Executive Director of the CDRI has determined that the Institute can provide the proper storage, protection, and preservation of the acquisition.

8. The legal responsibility for appraisal rests with the donor. Appraisals can not be provided by the CDRI, the Institute's staff, or members of the Board of directors. The staff may render impartial assistance to donors seeking independent, qualified appraisers.

## SECTION II: DEACCESSION

No object or collection that has been donated to or purchased by the CDRI for exhibit shall be removed from the CDRI's possession or physically disposed of except by strict conformity to the following rules:

1. Adherence to professional ethics.
  - A. American Association of Museums: Items should be disposed of solely for "the advancement of the museum's mission. Proceeds from the sale of collection materials are to be used consistent with the established standards for museums and in no event shall they be used for anything other than acquisition or direct care of collections."
  - B. American Association of State and Local History: "Collections shall not be deaccessioned or disposed of in order to provide financial support for institutional operations, facilities maintenance, or any reason other than the care or acquisition of collections."
2. An item must meet one or more of the following criteria to be eligible for deaccessioning:
  - A. The item is not within the scope or mission of the collection policy.
  - B. It is beyond the capability of the Institute to properly store or conserve the item.
  - C. The item has deteriorated beyond usefulness.
  - D. The item would be more appropriate at another museum or scientific institution.
  - E. The item is no longer suitable for the purpose it was obtained.
  - F. The item presents a physical hazard.
  - G. The item was acquired illegally or unethically.
  - H. The item is subject to contractual donor restrictions that the CDRI is no longer able to meet.
3. Recommendation for deaccession must be made by the Executive Director or a committee of the Board of Directors established for this purpose, and approved by the Board of Directors.
4. Items eligible for deaccession must be disposed of through one of the following methods;
  - A. Exchange, donation, or sale to another non-profit organization or institution.
  - B. Sale at public auction or in the public market place.
  - C. An item that has seriously deteriorated may be destroyed or returned to the donor.
5. No item may be acquired by the CDRI staff, Directors, or their immediate family unless they were the original donor.

6. In the event of deaccession of donated objects, the CDRI may inform the donor but is under no legal obligation to do so.

7. In the event a former donor, lender, or seller, or their heirs demand the return of any item, the Executive Director will research the matter and report to the Board of Directors based on the merits of the request and not on personal or public relations factors. The Institute's legal counsel may also submit an opinion on the validity of the claim. The Board of Directors will determine how such claims will be handled.