

# UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS COLLECTIONS FACILITY

Standards for Long Term Curation of Archeological Materials Obtained by Individuals, Agencies, or Firms through Contracts with Federal, State, or Local Governments or Private Corporations

Effective January 1, 2018

The University of Arkansas Collections Facility adheres to the National Park Service Curation Guidelines (36 CFR 79). No archeological materials will be accepted for long term curation which do not conform to those guidelines and the revisions provided in this document. Scientific collections obtained by individuals, agencies, or firms through contracts with federal, state, or local governments or private corporations may be accepted for deposit and curation provided the following conditions are met:

1. The collection must have been obtained in a manner that conforms to generally accepted scientific standards at the time it was removed from, on, or within the ground.
2. The collection must have a long-term scientific or educational value.
3. Collections and documentation deposited with the University of Arkansas Collections Facility shall represent as complete a record as possible of information derived from the study that produced them, so as to maximize their use for purposes of research and public interpretation. A complete collection is one that includes all scientifically essential records, such as site forms, excavation records, field logs, maps indicating locations of provenience units and boundaries of work conducted, digital photographs, all artifacts and other cultural and environmental materials collected, analysis records, copies of any reports and publications produced as a result of study or studies of the collection.

# PROCEDURES

## LETTERS OF AGREEMENT FOR CURATION

As soon as it is anticipated that a collection may be deposited with the University of Arkansas Collections Facility, a Letter of Agreement for Curation will be negotiated between the University of Arkansas Collections Facility (Survey Registrar) and the Depositor. For collections being made under contract, this should be at the time the **contract is negotiated prior to the initiation of any field work**. The Letters of Agreement are negotiated with the Survey Registrar. The Letter of Agreement for Curation will stipulate the scope of the project and the expected date of receipt of the collection by the University of Arkansas Collections Facility. Assignment of accession numbers by the Survey Registrar can be made once a curation agreement has been submitted by the Depositor.

Collections should be submitted in a timely manner. If curation standards or curation costs have increased since the Letter of Agreement for Curation was signed, additional negotiations between the Depositor and the University of Arkansas Collections Facility will be necessary. It is the responsibility of the Depositor to notify the Survey Registrar if unforeseen circumstances make it impossible to submit the collection by the date indicated in the Letter of Agreement for Curation.

## DEPOSIT OF ARCHEOLOGICAL COLLECTION

Archeological material submitted to the University of Arkansas Collections Facility for long term curation must be preceded by a signed Letter of Agreement for Curation. The Depositor shall notify the Survey Registrar **at least one week** prior to delivery of artifacts and associated documentation.

## NOTICE OF RECEIPT

A Notice of Receipt will be issued by the Survey Registrar when the artifacts are submitted. Receipt does not convey agreement with the accompanying inventory nor does it

carry with it responsibility for these collections except for the physical security accorded any scientific collection in the University of Arkansas Collections Facility's care. The University of Arkansas Collections Facility will not be responsible for loss beyond its control.

## **REVIEW OF COLLECTION**

The collection will be reviewed by the Survey Registrar for compliance with the Curation Standards. The collection will be reboxed into appropriate containers for long-term curation. The curation cost will be calculated on the number of cubic feet of the collection **AFTER REBOXING** by the Registrar.

## **LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE OF COLLECTION**

The Survey Registrar will notify the Depositor in writing when the collection and associated documentation conform to the Curation Standards. The Depositor will be sent an invoice for the curation fees as appropriate. A Letter of Acceptance will be issued by the Survey Registrar upon receipt of curation charges.

## **COLLECTIONS NOT MEETING CURATION STANDARDS**

If, in any particular case, the materials do not meet the Curation Standards, the Survey Registrar will notify the Depositor in a Letter of Review specifically identifying the problem(s). The Letter of Review will set forth procedures necessary to bring the collection into full conformance with the Curation Standards. The options for accomplishing this can include: (1) returning the collection to the Depositor for corrections (at the expense of the Depositor); (2) an agreement that the University of Arkansas Collections Facility will correct the problem(s) (at the expense of the Depositor); or (3) some combination of these. A separate Letter of Agreement for Collections Preparation will be negotiated which will establish precisely what is to be done, who is to do it, the estimated cost, and the time frame of this work.

If the first alternative is chosen, final acceptance of the collection will be negotiated only subsequent to a second review by the Registrar. An hourly charge will be assessed for each

Review after the first. If the collection is still deemed unacceptable, the Preparation and Review process will be repeated until the collection is in full conformance.

If the Depositor neither performs nor funds the collection preparation, the collection will not be accepted by the University of Arkansas Collections Facility and will be returned to the Depositor at the Depositor's expense. In the event that this matter is not resolved through negotiations with the Depositor, the collection will be held pending the notification of the legal owner.

If the University of Arkansas Collections Facility does all necessary preparation, the completion date of the Letter of Agreement for Collections Preparation can be the date of curation acceptance.

## **COLLECTION PREPARATION**

1. All artifacts are to be clean and dry.
2. All materials (except for experimental and/or deteriorating specimens and special samples such as radiocarbon, pollen, soil, and the like) are to be cleaned using appropriate methods for the materials in question.
3. Items in the collection must be properly prepared before acceptance, or provisions must be made for the University of Arkansas Collections Facility to prepare them appropriately in a Letter of Agreement for Collection Preparation. Consultation with the Museum Conservator is encouraged for any questions regarding conservation or restoration techniques. Documentation describing the techniques and materials used for either the restoration or conservation of artifacts must accompany the collection when it is submitted.
4. Procedures which do not cause and/or accelerate deterioration of the specimen should be used for cleaning. For example, prehistoric ceramics should not be vigorously scrubbed with a brush

and water since this may lead to the deterioration of the surface or removal of decoration, slip, etc. Please contact the Registrar's office for specific questions.

5. Any materials destroyed during the process of analysis, as in radiocarbon dating, and any catalog numbers assigned but not used, shall be accounted for in the written documentation.

6. If human remains are part of the collection, the Survey Registrar should be notified as soon as possible. Due to the wide range of potential situations and preservation of the material, specific treatment must be handled on a case by case basis in accordance with applicable laws.

Documentation of consultation, according to Federal and/or State law must accompany any human remains.

## CATALOGING THE COLLECTION

If any deviation from the following cataloging system is anticipated, it must be approved in writing by the Survey Registrar **in advance**. Copies of all appropriate University of Arkansas Collections Facility forms are available from the Arkansas Archeological Survey website.

### **Catalog Number**

#### **1. Accession Number.**

The Accession Number is a two-part number which is assigned to a collection made at one time at one site. The first part of the Accession Number consists of the year in which the collection is accessioned. The second part is a unique number which identifies the particular collection. An Accession Number will be issued for each site where artifacts are recovered, or an Accession Number Log for Block Allotments can be issued for situations where many sites are anticipated or discovered.

## **2. Field Serial Number (FSN).**

The Survey Registrar will make available an example of a Field Specimen Catalog. The use of alternative forms must have **prior approval in writing** by the Survey Registrar, or provisions must be made by the Depositor for conversion to a form acceptable to the Survey Registrar. A separate Field Specimen Catalog is used for material from each site. A sequential number following the Accession Number (referred to as the Field Serial Number, FSN) is assigned by the investigator to each field provenience of scientific interest and entered on the Field Specimen Catalog. These proveniences may be, for example, surface collection areas, levels in an excavation unit, features or parts thereof, postmolds, individual artifacts whose provenience is recorded, etc. In other words, the provenience is whatever minimal spatial control unit is determined to be scientifically appropriate by the investigator.

All items(s) from each of these minimal spatial control units must be assigned a unique FSN. This could be all material from a grab sample at a site, all material from a [particular] level of a [particular] pit, the specific identified provenience of a group of items within an excavation unit (such as a feature), or a single artifact. The Accession Number along with the FSN becomes a unique numeric indicator used to associate an item or items with a specific provenience for all future records on the collections.

## **3. Laboratory Serial Number(s) (LSN) and Analytical Serial Number(s) (ASN).**

When a variety of items are recovered from a single provenience, the items will be divided into such subdivisions as are meaningful to the investigation but minimally must be divided by material/functional class, e.g., prehistoric ceramics, lithics, bone, historic ceramics, and so on. This can be done in the field or in the laboratory. Each item or group of items separated and identified must be assigned a unique numeric identifier (LSN). An additional digit can subdivide the collection on the basis of other analytic categories (ASN). This full identifier is the **Catalog Number** and is a multi-element number consisting of the Accession Number, the FSN, and one or more additional sets of digits.

#### **4. Example of a Catalog Number.**

2010-125-16-4-1

"2010" equals the year of acquisition.

"125" represents the 125th collection assigned a number in 1980.

"16" identifies the provenience or minimal spatial control unit (FSN).

"4" refers to a subdivision of the material/functional class (LSN), such as prehistoric ceramics, lithics, shell, etc.

"1" identifies any further particular analytical category (ASN), such as cord marked pottery, Dalton points, etc. Further analytical subdivision with additional numbers are, of course, possible.

If there is only one item of a particular kind from a particular provenience, then the Accession Number and the Field Serial Number will uniquely identify the item, i.e., 2010-125-16. However, if there are two Kirk Corner Notched points, two Officer Punctated rim sherds, and 60 novaculite bifacial thinning flakes from a single provenience, then the next numeric element (the LSN) will be utilized to give a unique number to each group of items. For example, 2010-125-16-1 might be assigned to the points, 2010-125-16-2 to the sherds, and 2010-125-16-3 to the flakes. Again, artifacts must be uniquely sorted and cataloged at least to material class.

#### **Catalog Data**

Catalog data must be approved in writing by the Survey Registrar or provisions must be made by the Depositor for conversion to a comparable form acceptable to the Survey Registrar. Each individual **Catalog Number** must be represented by data in a printout or a catalog which is approved in writing by the Survey Registrar.

Minimum information for catalog data must (except as noted) include the following:

1. Catalog number.
2. Site number.
3. Provenience.

4. Analytical description of items(s), i.e., chert interior flakes, etc.
5. Name of recorder/analyst and date of analysis.
6. Number of specimens (item count per catalog number).
7. Weight in grams (without bag or other packaging) of the total material included within the catalog number.
8. Dimensions (optional).

### **Artifact Labeling**

Except for specimens **less than 0.5 inch in diameter**, each specimen receiving a unique catalog number shall be individually labeled with its full catalog number. A **white** acid-free card stock label with the catalog number written in waterproof, permanent black ink must be placed with the artifacts. **SMALL PIECES OF PAPER ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE.** The label must be enclosed with the items in a ziplock or appropriate container. The catalog number must also be written with a Sharpie on the exterior of the ziplock bag or other suitable container.

Artifacts likely to be separated from their provenience for analytic purposes (bifaces, tools, decorated ceramics, rim sherds, etc.) must be labeled with the catalog number applied to the item in a manner which is permanent and legible using waterproof, permanent ink (e.g., Higgins Waterproof Black India Ink, Higgins Black Magic Black Ink, Higgins Engrossing Black Ink, KOH-I-NOOR [3080-F or 3085-F] or Pigma pens). For black or dark-colored artifacts, apply a small area of white acrylic Artists Paint, then put the catalog number on the white area with waterproof, permanent black ink.

Groups of artifacts similarly classified from the same provenience and less than 0.5 inch in size do not have to be numbered individually. Examples may be lithic debitage, plain shell or grog tempered pottery, flat glass, nails, and bottle glass fragments. All faunal material which can be physically labeled should be labeled. Bones too small for individual marking should be placed in a labeled, ziplock bag. It is recommended that bones within a provenience unit be bagged separately by zoological class to prevent or reduce the crushing of fragile remains.



The number must be written with a dash separating the elements. Correct: 2010-125-16. Incorrect: 2010/125/16. Most items should not be numbered on or near an edge or on a surface which might be photographed or exhibited. Pieces of historic ceramic and glass, however, should be numbered on a broken edge if possible. If the edge is too narrow, the number should be placed on the least decorated surface of the artifact. When the surface of an item will not "hold" the ink, as perhaps on a glass fragment, a clear coating such as Vinac B-15 in ethanol-acetone should be applied over the number to ensure that it will not be rubbed off (contact Survey Registrar for alternatives to Vinac).

Each item (or group of similar items) receiving a unique catalog number must be labeled with the full number. When small size prohibits the full number, the first elements of the number, i.e., Accession and FSN numbers, will be written on the item (using procedures in accordance with the above guidelines). Perishable or fragile specimens such as floral, fiber, feather, or hide objects, shall not be directly labeled. These types of specimens should be identified with labeled string-tie tags and carefully packed in acid-free tissue paper in labeled boxes. Do not put in ziplock bags. Very tiny specimens, such as beads and lithic debitage which can not be labeled directly must be enclosed in a polyethylene bag along with a waterproof, permanent black ink, indelible label (**white** acid-free card stock). The information should also be written with a Sharpie on the ziplock bag.

### **Bag Labeling**

Each ziplock bag must be labelled using a Sharpie with the following information:

1. Catalog Number(s)
2. Site Number
3. Provenience
4. Object(s) identification
5. Date of collection

## **Packaging**

Items of each unique **Catalog Number** must be sorted and packaged separately in a **4 mil ziplock bag**. A larger 4 mil ziplock is used to enclose several related smaller bags of artifacts from the same FSN. Large quantities of artifacts of like material class should be packaged separately. Ziplock bags must never enclose bags of fragile material (prehistoric ceramics, bone) with bags of lithics, metal, or other objects that may cause breakage (Figure 1 illustrates packaging).

Materials such as radiocarbon samples or fabric or other materials that may deteriorate shall be packaged separately and identified as requiring separate controlled humidity and temperature. Radiocarbon samples and other materials that may be subjects for dating should be stored in a container that will not contaminate or allow contamination to the object.

Small specimens may be placed in glass, plastic, or acceptable metal containers labeled in permanent ink on both the container and the lid. The containers must be individually enclosed in 4 mil ziplock bags. In the case where small floral or faunal specimens have been packaged in suitable containers by specialists, these lidded containers should be enclosed separately in ziplock 4 mil bags labeled with the catalog number written with a Sharpie.

## **Packaging in Boxes for Delivery**

No more than 30 pounds of material may be packaged in a box. Sturdy boxes of any size may be used for shipment and/or delivery as these boxes will not be used for long-term curation by the University of Arkansas Collections Facility. Heavier bags of artifacts should be placed in the bottom of each box with lighter, more fragile materials placed on top. For large collections, items of like material class should be contained in the same box(es). Boxes should be numbered, with each box containing an inventory of the contents of the box. The inventory should note the box number, site number, catalog number(s), and number of bags or containers for each catalog number.

## DOCUMENTATION

The University of Arkansas Collections Facility requires full, appropriate documentation as stated in the Arkansas Curation Standards, Appendix G (as amended 20 January 1989).

Failure to submit the stipulated number of copies of collection documentation and final reports can result in denial of future access to records and collections curated by the University of Arkansas Collection Facility and the refusal to accept further collections for curation.

### **Additional requirements for photographic documentation are:**

1. Contact sheet of digital photographs (color) must be printed on 8.5” x 11” photo quality paper with their respective photo log. They should be 300 dpi and in .tiff format. **Two copies** of each contact sheet are to be provided. If larger prints are available, they should be submitted as well in appropriate sized archival quality preservers and identified in the photo log.
2. Contact sheets (and other prints if present) and photographic record sheets are to be placed in three-ring binders. The duplicate set of contact sheets shall be housed in a separate binder.

### **Digital Data**

GIS shapefiles for project areas are required to transfer the project area to the GIS Interface layer of AMASDA. More information can be found at: <http://archeology.uark.edu/forms-records/amasda/>

Depositors are required to submit digital project records including, but not limited to, inventory and analysis data. (Two hard copies of all records are still required.) Please check with the Registrar’s Office regarding appropriate types of electronic media.