

COLLECTIONS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
OF
THE VERMONT ARCHAEOLOGY HERITAGE CENTER

Division for Historic Preservation
Agency of Commerce and Community Development

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Statement of Mission

As the publicly funded repository for archaeological collections from federal and state compliance projects and private individuals, the Vermont Archaeology Heritage Center (VAHC) holds its collections in trust for the public. VAHC is committed to enhancing understanding of Vermont's human past through stewardship, education, research, public outreach and volunteer programs.

History of VAHC

For many years, Vermont's archaeological collections were housed in various locations across Vermont and in adjacent states. Many were stored on a temporary basis at the University of Vermont or with other consulting and academic organizations. Beginning in the late 1990s, now retired Vermont Agency of Transportation Archaeology (VTrans) Officer Duncan Wilkie worked to bring the collections and archives generated under the auspices of VTrans back to Vermont. Until 2006, these collections were housed in inaccessible storage at a state surplus facility in Montpelier.

The Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development and its Division for Historic Preservation (VDHP), in partnership with VTrans, and the Federal Highway Administration, created VAHC in 2006 to care for and manage Vermont's irreplaceable archaeological collections and promote research and education. VAHC was originally located in an interim space at 7 Greentree Drive in South Burlington, and began accepting collections from VTrans and the other temporary repositories at that location. In 2012, VAHC was relocated to the current facility in Barre at 60 Washington St. in a portion of the converted Spaulding Graded School building. VAHC currently leases 1,850 square feet of space as part of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Vermont Historical Society (VHS).

Collections, archives and other associated material are housed in two archives rooms maintained at a constant temperature and humidity through the VHS central heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) system. An office space contains VAHC administrative files and archaeology library materials, and has dedicated space for researchers and for artifact analysis. Four contiguous inset display cases offer rotating exhibits in the foyer, and a paneled timeline illustrates the Native history of the state.

Scope of the Collections

VAHC is committed to preserving the state's archaeological heritage according to the national standards of collections care described in Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36, Part 79 (36 CFR 79). As of May, 2015, VAHC curates cultural material, archives and photographs from approximately 800 archaeological sites. These collections cumulatively represent over 12,000 years of Vermont's human history and reflect over 40 years of research by archaeologists working across the state. About 70% of the collections are derived from archaeological investigations conducted on behalf of VTrans in order to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. The remainder primarily come from state-funded or supported archaeological studies, excavations undertaken as part of Vermont's

land use law (Act 250) permit process and Title 30, Section 248 Certificate of Public Good process, and from donations to VDHP by avocational archeologists and collectors.

VAHC accepts and maintains archaeological collections (material remains from archaeological sites and their associated records) related to the prehistoric and historic human occupations of the state of Vermont. Priority is given to collections recovered, analyzed and acquired in a professional and ethical manner. Curation fees associated with these projects fund their future care. In some cases, materials of unusual quality that lack contextual information or associated monies may be accepted for permanent curation. VAHC also accepts objects, books, and archival materials that will contribute to its mission by enhancing its educational collections, research library, or photographic archive on a case-by-case basis.

Types of Collections

VAHC typically only accepts and holds collections for permanent curation. These generally fall into five categories: 1) Collections resulting from federal or state funded or permitted projects given outright by landowners to VAHC, 2) Collections resulting from federal or state funded or permitted projects on federally or state owned land, for which title remains with the federal or state agency and VAHC acts as custodian 3) Collections resulting from state-mandated compliance projects and given outright to VAHC by landowners 4) Collections given outright to VAHC by avocational archaeologists or collectors, and 5) Legacy collections in categories 1, 3, and 4 for which title has not yet been transferred to VAHC.

Procedures for Donation to VAHC

VAHC currently charges a standard per-box fee of \$500.00 for permanent curation. VAHC encourages all consultants conducting archaeological investigations in Vermont to work for the donation of the archaeological assemblages and the associated archives derived from them to it. Collections derived from excavations conducted on state-owned land *must* be curated at VAHC, and monies should be budgeted for their care in any scope of work. VAHC cannot accept any collections excavated from private land without a signed Deed of Gift form from the landowner. A copy of this form is appended at the end of this document (Appendix 1). VAHC has a manual for consultants to follow when preparing donations for delivery. The manual, [Guidance for Consultants and Agencies Transferring Collections to the VT Archaeology Heritage Center](#) can be downloaded from the VAHC website.

Native American Burials (Including Human Remains and Funerary Objects) and Non-Native American Human Remains

It is against the law to excavate an unmarked burial in Vermont, except under the provisions outlined in Title 18, Chapter 107 of the Vermont Statutes, and specifically 18 VSA §5212b. If the burial is in imminent danger of disturbance by natural or human processes, respectful removal may be conducted in consultation with VDHP and any affiliated tribe(s). VAHC does not accept Native American human remains or associated burial goods unless with

the express consent and coordination with the affiliated tribe(s), if applicable. Unassociated funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony, as defined in Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) (25 USC, §§3001-3013), will be curated on a case-by case-basis, in consultation with affiliated tribe(s), if applicable. If a decision is made to reinter such objects, additional documentation may be required. Historic human remains of non-Native descent may be accepted pursuant to state laws on a temporary basis until they can be reinterred in an appropriate cemetery and town.

Field Recovery, Sampling, and Culling/Discard Policies

Given the continual advances in analytical techniques for archaeological materials, the research potential of bulk materials (such as brick, slag, fire-cracked rock, and soils) is unknown but potentially far greater than supposed or realized at present. Indiscriminant or *ad hoc* discard procedures in the field, therefore, are not recommended. A number of problems arise from collecting and curating large amounts of bulky, nondiagnostic, and often redundant materials in archaeological repositories, however; particularly given the realities of limited storage space in facilities and the money and time associated with their analysis, quantification, labelling, boxing and transfer. VDHP is working to develop a set of sampling protocols and procedures for bulk materials that will apply to all regulated undertakings in Vermont. Until those procedures are finalized, however, the following guidance must be utilized in Scopes of Work and during Phase I-III excavations.

Currently, consultants working on any regulated archaeological undertaking in Vermont should consult with VDHP if they anticipate or encounter situations that may require sampling of bulk materials in the field, whether or not the artifacts will eventually be curated at VAHC. Additional explanation of these procedures can be found in the *Guidelines for Conducting Archaeology in Vermont* manual available on VDHP website. In general, if not overly burdensome, all materials should be collected in the field and any sampling, culling or discard should be done after analysis within the controlled conditions of a laboratory. The State Archaeologist should be consulted about sampling procedures of definitive cultural material dating to the primary time period(s) of study if the materials are to be ultimately curated at VAHC. The State Archaeologist will certainly consider on a case-by-case basis reasonable sampling procedures if the consultant feels that certain bulk materials are redundant, have limited or no future research potential, or where sampling would be just as or nearly as effective for future research.

Deaccession Policies

VAHC reserves the right to deaccession any materials it currently curates or accepts for curation, except as restricted by separate Programmatic Agreements or Memoranda of Understanding. Nevertheless, VAHC's mission is to hold collections in trust for the public now and in the future. As such, it treats extremely seriously any deaccessioning actions that it may take. In certain cases, however, materials curated in legacy collections may have degraded to a significant degree, have little or no provenience information associated with them, are redundant, or were collected unsystematically with no regard to their permanent curation. In those cases, VAHC may in the future judiciously deaccession selections of bulk, unprovenienced, and/or

degraded materials. In those cases, it will consult with colleagues within and outside of the VDHP, where appropriate, about the best deaccession procedures for a given collection.

Access and Use of Collections

VAHC collections are not open to the public for general browsing. Nevertheless, VAHC makes every reasonable effort to provide students, scholars, and researchers with access to the collections and archives sufficient to the legitimate topics of interest to them. It is also committed to offering outreach and education programming based upon its collections.

For security purposes, access to the archives rooms is limited to appropriate VAHC and VHS staff and visitors authorized by VAHC senior staff. The State Archeologist serves as the VAHC Director and, in that role, makes the ultimate decisions about access to the VAHC. To obtain access to collections and restricted archives, individuals must email the State Archeologist, Jess Robinson (jess.robinson@vermont.gov) and include name, affiliation/position, phone number, address, the specific collections the applicant wishes to view or analyze, the purpose of the visit, how the results of the visit will be used, and dates/times of availability. VAHC reserves the right to investigate the qualifications of any person applying to use the collections. In an effort to aid potential researchers about the collections VAHC currently curates, the State Archaeologist hosts a [Public Collections Database](#) with some information about each on the VAHC website.

Visitors can only be accommodated during the operating hours of VHS, and in accordance with the availability of the State Archeologist or VAHC staff designated to act on her/his behalf. Visitors to VAHC must sign in to the Visitor's Log in the Office. VAHC and VHS senior staff may give tours to groups of students, educators, researchers, colleagues, and donors but they must have the tour authorized by the State Archeologist or VHS Director. Visitors must be supervised by senior staff at all times.

Photographic Procedures

The public and VAHC visitors are permitted to take photographs of exhibits and VAHC facility for their own use. If photographs will be published or made available for public viewing or for commercial purposes, they may be subject to reproduction regulations. Please contact the State Archaeologist for clarification in those cases. Photography requiring special equipment or accessories must be approved in advance by the State Archeologist.

Photography of objects not on display in the exhibit cases must be approved in advance by the State Archeologist. Requests for permission should be submitted in writing and include the objects to be photographed, the purpose and intended use of the photographs, and the qualifications of the photographer or other initiator of the photography. VAHC Staff will bring out the objects and handle them to the extent necessary. Objects cannot be taken from the building without an approved Loan Request.

Digital photographs of objects or field work can be provided to interested persons if available. The individual requesting photographs must agree to reimburse VAHC for the costs of producing the photograph, which may involve VAHC staff taking a photograph or scanning archival slides. Permission to reproduce any items from VAHC's collections, including artifacts, reports, field and lab documents, maps, and photographs, must be requested from the State Archeologist in writing. The credit line for any reproduction should read "*Vermont Archaeology Heritage Center, Division for Historic Preservation, Barre, VT.*" Modifications to this credit line may be necessary depending on the ownership and origin of the materials. VAHC should receive two copies of any materials in which the reproductions appear.

Loan and Destructive Analysis Policies

Loan Policy

Artifacts from VAHC collections may be loaned to qualified individuals for purposes consistent with the Mission. These purposes include exhibits, scientific analysis, and scholarly research. Permission must be requested in writing from the State Archaeologist by filling out a Loan Request form. This form specifies the purpose of the requested loan, the requested time period of the loan, the objects to be loaned, and the storage conditions in which the objects will be housed while on loan. VAHC reserves the right to refuse any loan request. A copy of the loan request form is appended to the end of this document (Appendix 2).

Destructive Analysis Policy

The State Archaeologist will carefully consider requests for the destruction of artifacts (or portions thereof) or associated floral or faunal material for research purposes. Examples of destructive analyses include but are not limited to: radiocarbon dating, instrumental neutron activation analysis (INAA), destructive x-ray fluorescence (XRF), DNA profiling, and various residue analyses where the parent matrix will be destroyed. The anticipated benefits of the analysis will be weighed against a number of other factors, including the potential for better techniques in the future, the research questions being asked and the likelihood that the proposed analysis will generate satisfactory answers to those questions, and the rarity of the artifact(s) or floral or faunal material to be destroyed, among others. Permission must be requested in writing from the State Archaeologist by filling out a Destructive Analysis Application form. If only a portion or sample of an artifact or floral or faunal material will be destroyed, the researcher must also complete a Loan Request form to account for the remainder. The VAHC reserves the right to refuse any destructive analysis request. A copy of the Destructive Analysis Application form is appended to the end of this document (Appendix 3).

If a request for destructive analysis is granted, VAHC must be properly credited in any publications or other venue in which the results of the analysis appear. Because each case of destructive analysis is different, please contact the State Archaeologist to discuss how VAHC should be credited. Any materials given to a researcher for destructive analysis must be utilized only for the specific analytical techniques stated in the application. If the researcher requires a significant modification to the proposed analytical technique after receipt of the material, please contact the State Archaeologist before any analysis takes place. The researcher will also have to

complete another Destructive Analysis Application form. If unanticipated material is left over after the analysis is completed, it must be returned to the VAHC. It cannot be retained for additional analysis unless specifically agreed to by the State Archaeologist. The researcher will also have to complete another Destructive Analysis Application form in that case.

APPENDIX 1

DEED OF GIFT FORM

Vermont Archaeology Heritage Center

Deed of Gift

I/we own the property described in the Inventory of Objects (below or attached), and hereby unconditionally give, donate, bestow and set over unto the State of Vermont Archaeology Heritage Center, its successors and assigns, said property, to be used or disposed of in their unrestricted discretion. I waive all present or future rights in, to, or over said property, its use or disposition.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Inventory of Objects

Listed below as follows:

Listed on attached inventory

*Please review our Mission Statement and Deaccession Policy, which are available on our website or by request

Vermont Archaeology Heritage Center
60 Washington Street, Barre, VT 05641
ACCD.ArchaeologyCenter@Vermont.gov

accd.vermont.gov/historic-preservation/archaeology-center



APPENDIX 2

LOAN REQUEST FORM

Vermont Archaeology Heritage Center

Loan Request Form

Name: _____ Position/Title: _____
Department/Institution: _____
Address: _____
City/State: _____ Country/Postal Code: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____

Students must include the following information about their advisor:

Name: _____ Title: _____
Department/Institution: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____

Note: Students must include a letter of support from their advisor that states the student's experience working with archeological materials as well as past experience with the proposed procedures.

Please address the following, either on this form or in an attached proposal:

- 1) Purpose and scientific merit of the proposed research or description of proposed exhibition:
- 2) Objects to be included:
- 3) Requested Time Period of Loan:
- 4) Describe how the objects will be stored while they are at your institution (i.e. type and location of cabinetry, who will have access, climate control):
- 5) Any other information you feel is pertinent to this request:

Email Completed Application and Letter of Support to: jess.robinson@vermont.gov

Vermont Archaeology Heritage Center
60 Washington Street, Barre, VT 05641
ACCD.ArchaeologyCenter@Vermont.gov

accd.vermont.gov/historic-preservation/archaeology-center



APPENDIX 3

DESTRUCTIVE ANALYSIS APPLICATION FORM

Vermont Archaeology Heritage Center

Destructive Analysis Application

Name: _____ Position/Title: _____
Department/Institution: _____
Address: _____
City/State: _____ Country/Postal Code: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____

Students must include the following information about their advisor:

Name: _____ Title: _____
Department/Institution: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____

Note: Students must include a letter of support from their advisor which states the student's experience working with archeological materials as well as past experience with the proposed procedures.

Please address the following, either on this form or in an attached proposal:

- 1) Purpose and scientific merit of the proposed research:
- 2) Object(s) to be analyzed:
- 3) Sampling and analytical method(s) to be used and why:
- 4) Provide evidence of your past experience and competence with this protocol:
- 5) Explain why you chose to use these VAHC objects:
- 6) Any other information you feel is pertinent to this request:

Completed Application and Letter of Support can be emailed to jess.robinson@vermont.gov

Vermont Archaeology Heritage Center
60 Washington Street, Barre, VT 05641
ACCD.ArchaeologyCenter@Vermont.gov

historicsites.vermont.gov/vt_history/archaeology

