



**Della Hall:** Hi Heather! Welcome. How are things down in Juneau?

**Heather McClain (SHI):** Hi Della! Happy Wednesday! They are going. It finally stopped raining and the sun is trying to come out. How are things up north?

**Della Hall:** Happy Wednesday indeed. Oh! Sun and rain, that sounds lovely to me. We just got 6 inches of snow topped with freezing rain

**Heather McClain (SHI):** That sounds delightful (not)

**Della Hall:** Ha-ha yeah... not my favorite. Well I hope we'll have a few more join us today. Did you have any topic in particular you were eager to discuss? Scott and I are hoping to gather a list of topics for future chats. Suggestions are welcome.

**Della Hall:** Hi Amanda! Welcome

**Heather McClain (SHI):** Hopefully. I'm not sure. Was there anything in particular you were thinking of?

**Amanda Lancaster:** Hello!

**Della Hall:** Hi Jodi! Welcome. We have no prescribed topic for today. Does anyone have anything in particular to ask about or bring up for discussion? Otherwise, I'd love to hear what's going on around the state in terms of projects and other happenings.

**Amanda Lancaster:** I had a question for everyone

**Della Hall:** Hi Helen, welcome!  
And Sue, hello!  
Go ahead, Amanda.

**Amanda Lancaster:** We are working on reviewing our research policy and I looked for examples of what other museums do, but couldn't find much. We're looking for policies that guide research & collection use both externally and internally.

**Della Hall:** Hi Angie! That's an interesting one, Amanda

**Helen Alten:** Amanda, what issues have you had that are driving this need?

**Angela Linn:** HI Amanda - our CMP has some language about research access. I'd be happy to share that with you.

**Della Hall:** Not to put Angie on the spot, but I'm pretty sure she has a policy in place at the Museum of the North

**Angela Linn:** Each of our collections each has their own Research Request form that outlines protocols for using that collection.

**Heather McClain (SHI):** We have a section on "Access to the Collection" in our CMP

**Amanda Lancaster:** It's more of a proactive thing. We are just reviewing all policies, and felt like our research policy didn't really cover all use

**Della Hall:** Oh, I missed your comments! You beat me.

**Angela Linn:** :-)

**Amanda Lancaster:** I'd appreciate any examples!

**Helen Alten:** Would it be possible to post examples on the MA site so all of us can see them?

**Angela Linn:** Amanda, I have some of our info on my department webpage:  
<http://uaf.edu/museum/collections/ethno/policies/>

**Della Hall:** Helen, great suggestion! Museums Alaska would LOVE to facilitate things like this! We're actually going to be revamping our website soon, and this is a feature we are eager to add. In the meantime, I can at least add some examples, if anyone would like to share them with me via email at [director@museumsalaska.org](mailto:director@museumsalaska.org)

**Angela Linn:** Della, I can compile some sample documents for the website from our collections and send them to you later.

**Della Hall:** Thank you Angie!

**Helen Alten:** Access is addressed in our CMP.

Here is what it says: The SMCC will provide reasonable and responsible access to its Permanent Collection to the academic and research community for study and publication, and program and exhibit developers for public exhibition and educational purposes. The type and conditions of such use must be consistent with the Museum's responsibility for care and preservation of its collections. SMCC is committed to stewarding the long-term preservation of its Collection while also fostering the ongoing use of the Collection for research, exhibition, educational, promotional and commercial use. The collections will be organized and managed in such a way that it is readily accessible for all purposes consistent with the goals and guidelines of SMCC. Cultural sensitivities must be considered in regard to access and use of archaeological, ethnological and spiritual items.

**Angela Linn:** The biggest thing I think to consider are both your policy statements (who can access collections and for what uses) but also your policy statements (how do you facilitate the research and what do you require from the researchers)

Sorry, part two is "procedures" - how you do it!

For example, how are your collections to be referenced in articles; what do you require when someone uses your collections (e.g., a copy of the publication)

What parts of your files are open vs. private (that might be something you need to find out from your governing authority)

Do you/the researcher need to contact source communities if using Indigenous collections

**Helen Alten:** Lately, we have included a revenue generating requirement for the collection. (This is me as a director.) The collection department is expected to raise \$1,000 annually in use fees.

**Amanda Lancaster:** This is all really helpful

**Angela Linn:** just a few things to consider

**Della Hall:** I can speak from a researcher's perspective, having worked with collections on that end as well in many cases. At one institution, they required me to go through a PowerPoint that explained the use of gloves and handling objects, light exposure, etc., and then take a mini quiz before they would let me have access. That was at the Hagley Museum, in Delaware, if you're interested in reaching out to them for an example of that. It was tedious for me, as a museum professional. But for an average user, I could see where it would be beneficial education. And they had very specific citation guidelines. You might also look at what archives are doing - they have this kind of thing nailed down.

**Helen Alten:** Citation guidelines would be a useful thing to add to our document. These comments make me realize our CMP needs to be updated. Thanks Amanda!

**Angela Linn:** Helen, the concept of charging for use fees is interesting and controversial... and probably also dictated by your governing structure. I'd be interested in hearing how your users are responding to it.

**Angela Linn:** As a state entity, we've made the decision to waive all fees except for commercial uses... and then only rarely and for LARGE requests for new photos.

**Helen Alten:** I know the fee generation can be a red flag, but I think it encourages staff to understand that these are assets. Our historic photos had been pretty widely distributed without anyone crediting us or paying us.

**Angela Linn:** Yeah, historic photo use fees are totally understandable. Good luck with it@!

**Helen Alten:** The fees help support collection care work. We haven't had anyone even blink at the suggestion that they pay.

**Della Hall:** Helen, do you also charge fees for photos of objects?

**Angela Linn:** That's great. We tried many years ago and lost a lot of academic researchers as a result. We assume this cost as part of our obligation as a state entity, but I can see how this is different for everyone!

**Helen Alten:** Researchers who require more than an hour of staff time, use of photo, film or audio. We haven't had any requests for objects other than images we already have (Chilkat Blankets). Those are at the same fee schedule as historic photos.

**Della Hall:** Oh, I see. I think that it is pretty standard to charge fees for duplications of archival materials.

**Helen Alten:** We are upfront about the fees, so there are no surprises.

**Della Hall:** Hello Tony!

**Helen Alten:** We may be loaning collection items to other museums this year for the first time. When we requested items from museums in the lower 48, there were fees that included \$150/item plus shipping costs plus courier cost plus crating cost.

**Angela Linn:** I KNOW! It's exorbitant... we also stopped charging loan fees - just the actual cost of supplies for packing materials.

**Helen Alten:** When we were asked for items from a Vancouver museum, I was willing to discuss fees and possibly waive them if the exhibit traveled to our museum as well as theirs.

**Della Hall:** Amanda, in your original question you said "internally and externally" - is that what you were referring to, in terms of externally? Or did you have something else in mind?

**Amanda Lancaster:** Absolutely. Does anyone else require the researcher to deposit their finished work at your institution? We do, but have trouble getting people to follow through.

**Angela Linn:** Yup, we require it for photo usage as well as the research that happens. I track each as a loan also in my database (in-house for the collection use; media for the photo request)

**Helen Alten:** I have also been intrigued by traveling exhibit costs. We borrowed from another small museum for \$1,000 in fees. But I have seen that most traveling exhibits are charging \$35,000 - \$90,000 for their show. Made me think, given the caliber of our collections, that we might consider putting together and traveling a show.

**Angela Linn:** We can add those publications (if articles) into Arctos, our collection management system, then link to the objects used.

**Heather McClain (SHI):** We do. We also request copies of lecture materials such as PowerPoints.

**Helen Alten:** Yes, we get a copy of anything produced with our images (film, book).

**Angela Linn:** It's a pretty good way of tracking the use of our collections and to document their distribution in publications.

**Helen Alten:** Angela, I like that. I don't think we have been tracking publications that use our collections within the database.

**Angela Linn:** some of our collections have also set up their collection as an "author" in Google Scholar in order to show how their collection is being used in academic publications.

**Angela Linn:** Yeah, I also put how many hours it takes to process each request like that... a good way to show what different uses require in terms of staff time

**Helen Alten:** What collections use Google Scholar?

**Angela Linn:** I know for sure our Bird Collection and Archaeology have done it

**Helen Alten:** Angela, when will MA conference be in Fairbanks? I am eager to see the new building and your behind-the-scenes activities. :)

**Angela Linn:** Maybe also our Entomology & Herbarium have done it too

**Angela Linn:** I think the Pioneer Park museums are bidding for MA for next year maybe?

**Helen Alten:** So setting up a collection as an author, means the entire collection as one entry?

**Angela Linn:** Yup.

**Angela Linn:** We have 10 different collecting departments that are led by curators, so each department manages its uses separately

**Angela Linn:** we share our data annually in a google spreadsheet so we can see collectively how we're doing in terms of # of specimens, data requests, queries to our collections in Arctos, loans, researchers / students in collection, etc.

**Amanda Lancaster:** We have an online survey that lets us keep track of collections use as well.

**Helen Alten:** I just searched "museum of the north" in Google Scholar, and THERE YOU ARE! What a great idea.

**Angela Linn:** :-)

**Angela Linn:** Our bird collection curator & collections manager were the ones who came up with the idea and they seem to think it's really worthwhile!

**Della Hall:** that's very cool! A unique way to engage with researchers

**Angela Linn:** BTW, our "science" collections all just use "University of Alaska Museum" as their institution. They've resisted the "...of the North" because of legacy references in the literature.

**Helen Alten:** I can see that. We have changed our name to Haines Sheldon Museum, but still link to Sheldon Museum and Cultural Center, because of the long history of use.

**Helen Alten:** (Changing the name has really helped alleviate confusion with Sitka!)

**Angela Linn:** It's definitely something to consider before undertaking a name change!

**Helen Alten:** I was wondering about the status of Grant in Aid. Did enough of us write in?

**Della Hall:** I did not know that, Helen! I will need to update your listing on our website!

**Della Hall:** I don't have an update about Grant-in-Aid, but the legislative session started yesterday, I think?

**Angela Linn:** Right

**Helen Alten:** Thanks Della. Board voted the change 2 years ago, and we have been slowly implementing - running out of all of our marketing materials so we can redo them.

**Sue Deyoe:** Helen, that's not to mention people come to Talkeetna and ask about the (Don) Sheldon museum (there isn't one) and I have to figure out if they are asking about Don Sheldon or Sheldon Jackson or...

**Angela Linn:** !!!

**Della Hall:** ha!

**Helen Alten:** I know. We changed our name after Museums Alaska put Sitka on my name badge. Only down side is that we won't be getting as many donations on Pick, Click, Give from Sitka. :)

**Della Hall:** Just in case I disappear, my power just went out for a few seconds. Sorry if that happens!

**Helen Alten:** I'm wondering if other folks would be interested in traveling small exhibits within Alaska. We've never done it, but we have had some great exhibits and we are starting to wish that they had a wider audience. Also, I would love to borrow more exhibits and have less staff generated exhibits.

**Helen Alten:** The new Ketchikan exhibit, for example, sounds really great.

**Angela Linn:** Our exhibits folks have made the exact opposite decision. They decided if we're going to spend money on exhibits, we want to be the ones creating the content.

**Helen Alten:** Part of my reasoning is that I can then show my borough that we are a relevant marketing arm. :)

**Angela Linn:** I think the biggest challenge is who manages the traveling show - ANC is probably one of the only ones with a big enough staff to do it without over-taxing their staff?

**Helen Alten:** Interesting. We have added local content to outside exhibits. It stretched our view of ourselves.

**Helen Alten:** Some people have complained about "non-local" exhibits (we are extremely narcissistic in this town).

**Angela Linn:** We also have a pretty small special exhibits gallery (<900sf) so for a bigger museum, we can't take a lot of the traveling shows!

**Sue Deyoe:** Yes, Helen, we'd have the same issue. And we have very small traveling exhibit space (almost nil)

**Helen Alten:** But some of our local topics have broader applicability. Like our form line exhibit, our puppet exhibit, and a newly proposed opioid exhibit.

**Sue Deyoe:** Hmm...interested in the opioid. Such a gigantic problem currently in our tiny community!

**Angela Linn:** I think there's certainly an opportunity for a traveling exhibit network in state. I know there used to be a Western Region network ~10+ years ago that was funded at some national level. Might be good to look at a new one using an IMLS National Leadership Grant!

**Helen Alten:** Oh, dear. We are fighting it. 10 overdoses in 2017. But we have an interesting historical comparison with opium use among cannery workers.

**Angela Linn:** MA might be able to help partner or assist with facilitating the booking? The state council has the Harper fund, which is for traveling shows, isn't it?

**Della Hall:** Info on Harper fund here: <https://education.alaska.gov/aksca/grants2.html>

**Helen Alten:** We used the Harper fund to travel a show between Haines and Wasilla. I think it is something more of us could take advantage of. It is only for the travel costs, but that can be significant.

**Della Hall:** I'm taking copious notes to bring these ideas back to the Museums Alaska board for discussion! Great ideas!

**Helen Alten:** I would love it if MA helped us coordinate exhibits.

**Angela Linn:** The up-front costs of building GOOD crates that can take the wear & tear is another issue

**Angela Linn:** The Decolonizing Alaska exhibit just arrived at our place and those crates are BEASTS!

**Helen Alten:** It is hard to get shows in and out of this state. That is another thing to consider, maybe a show we travel from here to the lower 48. I have crates - inherited them from the Smithsonian's traveling show. Apparently they dump them at the end of a show's run.

**Angela Linn:** The Burke has a good traveling exhibit team that might be able to help set something like that

**Helen Alten:** For example, there have been some good shows at Anchorage that I would love to get - the Ray Troll show and their conservation/materials show.

**Angela Linn:** We did an exhibit a number of years ago and basically transferred it to them to handle booking in the lower-48

**Helen Alten:** Interesting. I've talked to some of the exhibit companies (IAIA), but they are pretty pricey. You don't get much of a cut off the rentals.

**Helen Alten:** (I am seeking ways to diversify revenue.)

**Angela Linn:** WE slapped our logos all over the panels, but then the Burke set the fees and managed it all. You might be able to work out a split of proceeds.

**Angela Linn:** Helen, you might check with Asia @ Bunnell Arts in Homer to see the cost/revenue of the Decolonizing Alaska show for her gallery

**Della Hall:** You all have been fantastic generators of discussion! Thanks for that! We have about 3 minutes left, if anyone has one last burning question. Scott and I are eager to make a list of future discussion topics, so if you want to throw out some ideas, that's welcome too (we tend to have more attendees with a topic or guest host).

**Helen Alten:** I wanted to let everyone know about two places we recently joined. One is the North American Reciprocal Museums Agreement - which is now a benefit we offer to members at the \$200 annual level. The other is the Museum Travel Network. This provides curated tours and we get \$500 for every member who takes a tour with them. No cost to us.

**Helen Alten:** Same tours the big guys offer to their memberships. (Like the Met in NYC)

**Della Hall:** Thanks Helen! And thanks everyone for joining in!

**Helen Alten:** Thanks for holding these opportunities!

**Angela Linn:** Take care everyone!

**Heather McClain (SHI):** Thank you!



## Next Chat Session

February 28th, at 11 am

Topic suggestions? Contact Scott or Della