Jump-Starting a Move: The Integration of Collections Facilities at Parks Canada
Overview

Introduction to Parks Canada

Collections Consolidation Project

Cornwall Pilot Project

Project Goals

The Move

Challenges and Solutions

Lessons Learned

Questions

Pukaskwa National Park
Parks Canada

Parks Canada is a federal agency mandated to protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada’s national and cultural heritage. Parks Canada administers 48 national parks, 171 national historic sites, and 4 national marine conservation areas, from coast to coast to coast.
The collection under Parks Canada’s care
Cornwall Pilot Project: Why Cornwall?

Built in 1970, the facility was once a textile factory. It was subdivided into several units in the 1993, with Parks Canada renting out one of the four units. It is located in the city of Cornwall, Ontario, approximately an hour and a half from Ottawa, the nation’s capital.

The Cornwall collection is made up of approximately 15,000 historic objects and 2 million archaeological objects.
Cornwall Pilot Project: Why Cornwall?

- Unmonitored pest presence and damages, extent unknown
Cornwall Pilot Project: Why Cornwall?

- Deteriorating storage methods
- Last inventory in 1996, only 10% of collection barcoded
- No systematic knowledge transfer
Project Goals

Sustainability

• TerraCycle glove recycling program
• Use of reusable packing and shipping materials
Project Goals

Data Gathering

• Debriefs on each major project
• GoPro videos and time-lapse photography
• Vibration monitoring
X axis: side to side / rocking motion
Y axis: front to back motion
Z axis: up and down motion

Regular truck (left) vs air-ride truck (right)

-----> significant decrease in all movement with air-ride suspension
Project Goals

Standardization

• Flag list to identify relevant issues prior to move
  • Objects of national historic significance
  • Potential hazards
  • Reproductions, etc.

• Templates for logging incidents, tracking movements, etc.

• Master supply/supplier list

• Resource lists
The Move

How do you move a collection?

With lots of advice!

- Royal Alberta Museum
- Canadian War Museum
- Canadian Museum of Science & Technology
- Joliette Art Museum

- Canadian Conservation Institute
- National Museum of the American Indian
- Science Museum of Minnesota
- RE-ORG
- Burke Museum
Moving every which way

Cargo Van – 50 shipments of sensitive objects, boxes of objects, and supplies

Rental truck – 2 shipments of larger objects and pallet packs as a trial run in a 24’ truck

Movers – 45 shipments in two 24’ trucks (from 2-6 per week over 3 months)
Custom-built

Mount-maker:
- mounts for hats, footwear, baskets, parasols, model ship, etc.
- dust covers
- custom archival boxes
Custom-built

Preparator:
• custom crates and slat crates
• retrofitting existing crates
• HTS frames
• custom racks, etc.
Challenges & Solutions
Challenges & Solutions

Moving into the Ottawa facility

• Integrating collections to maximize space, minimize impact on existing operations, and allow for access

• Need to prepare the Ottawa facility for the arrival of the Cornwall collection

• Need to coordinate with Ottawa staff and share resources (forklifts, loading bays, etc.)
Challenges & Solutions

Moving into the Ottawa facility

- Use of Google SketchUp
  - Layout planning for the Ottawa facility
  - Data capture for Cornwall
  - Crate design
  - Ability to plan shipments
Challenges & Solutions

Standardization

• Packing protocols
  • No duplication of efforts
  • Standard method of storage and transport
  • Various types of packing for fragile or damaged objects
  • Links and resources
  • Collections-focused
  • External access
Challenges & Solutions

Standardization

- Standard tagging system and color-coding for transport and storage
  - Highly visible system makes identification easy
  - Works with available resources

Archival waterproof paper: barcode, accession number (database-generated)

Beige tag/white sticker: general information

Red tag/sticker: FIC (found in collection)

Yellow tag/sticker: reproduction

Green tag/sticker: hazard
Challenges & Solutions

Pests and hazards

- Need to identify potential hazards in our collection
  - In-house testing
  - Protocols and safety guidelines
  - Safe storage
  - Safe transport
  - Disposal of targeted items
Challenges & Solutions

Pests and hazards

• Need to control pest presence in Cornwall and prevent their transfer to Ottawa
  • Identification of type and extent
  • Monitoring and control
  • Packing methods to minimize risk of cross-contamination
  • Labeling for future decontamination

Inventory and planning
Before & After: Cornwall
Before & After: Cornwall
Before & After: Cornwall
Before & After: Cornwall
Before & After: Ottawa
A few final words of advice...

• Curatorial evaluation prior to the move is vital

• Planning, planning, planning!

• Use the resources available around you: moves are more common than you think, someone else is sure to have gone through one and have valuable knowledge to pass on

• Work with your moving crew
  • Training in object handling and hazards
  • They have their own knowledge and experience
  • They will ALWAYS want to go faster than you do

• Adaptability is key
  • Keep your staff versatile and able to jump in anywhere
  • Anticipate problems when you can, expect them when you can’t
Thank you!

Questions?

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