

William S. Webb Museum of Anthropology

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CONDUCTING CULTURAL RESOURCE INVESTIGATIONS IN KENTUCKY: STANDARDS FOR THE PREPARATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SPECIMENS AND DOCUMENTS FOR CURATION AT THE WILLIAM S. WEBB MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Revised August 2024

INTRODUCTION

The William S. Webb Museum of Anthropology (hereafter Webb Museum) at the University of Kentucky has been designated by the Kentucky Heritage Council as an approved curatorial facility for federally- and state-owned archaeological collections. Existing Federal environmental and preservation legislation and Executive Orders require that archaeological specimens, and associated documentation, recovered during cultural assessment and data recovery programs be deposited in a museum or other qualified curatorial institution.

The title to materials from federal lands, including primary records, remains with the Government of the United States of America, through the individual federal agency that commissioned the study. The responsibility for the administration, preservation, and use of these collections lies with the curating institution with adequate funding for the long-term care and maintenance of the collections provided by federal agencies to the curating institution through a variety of methods, such as Memoranda of Agreement, etc. (36FCR Part 79, *Curation of Federally-Owned and Administered Archeological Collections*, Section 79.7).

The title to all materials from state, county, or municipal lands is retained by the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Title to all materials from private land becomes property of the Commonwealth of Kentucky upon signed consent of the landowner. It is the due diligence of the agency and/or professional archaeological contractor to fully explain the scientific value of the artifacts for research and education and to encourage their appropriate curation. All project documentation is required by KY SHPO to be curated at a state approved facility regardless of the final disposition of the artifacts. (<https://heritage.ky.gov/Documents/FieldworkCRspecs.pdf>)

The following information has been provided for archaeological contractors, avocational archaeologists, and students who intend to curate collections recovered during archaeological projects and their associated records with the Webb Museum. For a collection to be accepted, it must have been collected, excavated, or acquired in a professional and ethical manner. Priority is given to materials that directly relate to the history of Kentucky.

The Standards set forth in this document have been developed to promote the long-term preservation and accessibility of the collections. They provide guidance for preparing archaeological collections for curation and serve to facilitate integration into the Museum's holdings, mitigate loss of data, and maximize research potential. Any variance must be approved in advance of submission.

While every attempt has been made to make this document as comprehensive as possible, we recognize challenging and/or problematic issues may arise when preparing collections. It is advisable, in these instances, for contractors to contact Webb Museum staff immediately for guidance in working through any complications to ensure compliance.

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ARTIFACTS

CLEANING

All stable artifacts must be cleaned in a manner appropriate for its material class. Care must be taken with items that are particularly fragile as washing could compromise the integrity of the object, remove important residues (ie: blood or pollen residue), and adversely affect subsequent analysis.

Wet Wash	Dry Brush	Do Not Wash
Lithics Bone Shell Ceramics Glass Tobacco pipes Brick Coal Slag	All metals Leather Textiles Wood	Fragile items Any items with residue Stone tools (blood; pollen) Ceramics (food) Pipes (DNA) Daub Pigment

Table 1: Recommended Cleaning Guidance

- Wet wash with tap water and a soft toothbrush.
- Dry brush using a stiff artist brush or soft toothbrush.
- Always dry artifacts in the shade or at room temperature, and never use heat to dry.
- Household surfactants should not be used.
- Any cleaning other than washing with water or dry brushing must be documented.
- Be conservative when undertaking any alternative cleaning or conservation treatment, and carefully consider the potential long-term effects of the treatment on the scientific value of an object.
- Records of alternative cleaning should be appropriately documented either in the report or other means and submitted with the collection.

CATALOGING

Each specimen, sample, or lot of specimens must be assigned its own unique catalog number. A full catalog must accompany any collection submitted for curation and, at a minimum, include the following fields:

- Site number or isolated find number
- Provenience information
- Catalog/Artifact number
- Material
- Object name/class
- Detailed artifact description
- Count
- Weight – required for discards

Catalogs may contain more fields and additional information. Every item in a collection must be included in the catalog. Items that were analyzed/counted/weighed then discarded or returned to the landowner must also be indicated on the catalog.

Artifact catalogs require both hard copy and digital submission. *See Artifact Catalog under Associated Documentation for more information.*

NUMBERING

The Webb Museum does not currently have a required methodology for assigning catalog numbers. Agencies and contractors may assign numbers based on a provenience/lot system or follow a general numerical sequence within each individual site.

- Do not continue a sequence of numbers across collections from different sites within one project.
- In a provenience/lot bases system, a corresponding provenience log must accompany.
- If a number in sequence has been omitted for any reason do not delete it from the catalog; designate the number as “unused”.

If previous fieldwork has occurred, it is the responsibility of the contracting agency to contact the Webb Museum prior to cataloging to obtain the next available artifact number. It is recommended to curate all project material at the same facility. If you believe the site in question has previously been investigated but are unable to ascertain where the materials have been curated contact the Office of State Archaeology. The Webb Museum reserves the right to redirect a collection to a different curation facility.

LABELING

WHAT TO LABEL

Clean artifacts must be labelled with the site number and artifact number as assigned in the artifact catalog (Figure 1). For lots of undiagnostic material: unmodified stone debitage, non-diagnostic glass, ceramic body sherds, and unmodified faunal remains, a 10% sample should be labeled. Objects smaller than a dime, extremely fragile materials, corroded ferrous objects, and delaminating glass and bone should not be directly labeled.

Label 100%	Do Not Label	Label 10% Sample
Diagnostic ceramics Diagnostic glass Lithic tools Bone/Shell tools Tobacco pipes Stable non-ferrous metals	Ferrous metals Mortar/Daub/Plaster Wood Leather Textiles Fragile bone Fragile shell Friable ceramics Heavily patinated glass	Undecorated ceramic body sherds Plain body glass fragments Window glass Debitage FCR Stable Bone Stable Shell Brick

Table 2: Labelling Guidance

HOW TO LABEL

Direct labels must always begin with a clear undercoat of Acryloid B-72 in acetone. This serves as a protective barrier, prevents the ink from bonding to the objects surface, and is reversible. Labels must be written clearly and legibly with black archival ink; white ink can be used for dark color objects. Solid, opaque white basecoats often obscure artifact attributes and are not recommended. Direct labels are finished with a clear topcoat of Acryloid-72 in acetone; acetone percentage may need to be adjusted to avoid dissolving the ink label and to prevent bubbling during the drying process.

- If bubbling of the base/topcoat occur the label must be redone.
- If the topcoat renders the label illegible the label must be redone.
- Make sure labels are completely dry before re-bagging.
- Do not write directly on an artifact.

Based on your cataloging method, labels should follow one of the two conventions with site number underscored and catalog number below:

<u>15Fa2</u> 6	Site Number/Isolated Find Number Artifact Number
<u>15Fa2</u> 23.6	Site Number/Isolated Find Number Provenience + Artifact Number

Figure 1: Labelling Conventions

- Labels should always be placed in a discrete location that does not damage the object or cover up important attributes. Take into account how the object might be displayed.
- Place label along an edge; avoid placing labels in the center of objects.
- Never label over decoration or on a broken edge.
- Do not apply labels that would obscure diagnostic features of an object such as a retouched edge of a lithic tool or makers mark on historic pottery.
- Do not apply inappropriately large labels.
- Do not apply to any loose or flaking/deteriorating surfaces such as friable ceramics, delaminating bone, or patinated glass.
- For materials unable to be directly labeled, acid free hang tags should be affixed to the object.

CONSERVATION

Typically speaking, most artifacts in collections will not require attention from a conservator. Consider the anticipated assemblage for your project. Ceramics and lithics are generally stable; metals and perishables are more susceptible to deterioration once removed from their burial environment. Items requiring special care should, at a minimum, be provided with preventative conservation treatment by way of specialized packaging, supports, and microclimates.

- Perishable and fragile items (basketry, textiles, botanical material, etc.,) should be minimally handled and stored in a manner to prevent crushing or breakage.
- For items requiring more invasive treatments, a professional conservator, as recognized by the American Institute for Conservation (AIC), should be consulted.
- Full treatment records and conservator qualifications must be submitted with materials that have undergone conservation.
- Cross mending and reconstruction of ceramic and glass vessels is not recommended for collections submitted for curation. Submission of reconstructed vessels will result in additional curation fees.
- No object should receive treatment based on aesthetics.
- All treatments should be reversible.
- The Webb Museum does not have a conservator on staff but can provide advice and recommendations.

SOIL/FLOTATION/CHARCOAL SAMPLES

Unprocessed flotation samples will not be accepted for curation at the Webb Museum without approval. All flotation and analysis should be completed prior to submission. With large bags of unsorted heavy fraction, an adequate representative sample of the material should be curated and the amount culled documented and recorded.

The Webb Museum does offer flotation services. Please contact Museum staff for more information.

- Soil samples can be submitted in an appropriate volume not to exceed a 6" x 6" bag.
- It is advisable to package charcoal samples in uncoated chemistry grade foil, which is then placed in an archival artifact box or in a glass or inert plastic vial which is then placed in a zip closure bag; box or bag should be appropriately labeled and include interior tags.
- If household grade foil has been used this should be documented as its coating contains carbon and can affect radiocarbon dates.

DISCARDS/ARTIFACTS RETURNED TO LANDOWNERS

The Webb Museum recognizes the Kentucky Heritage Council's *Discarding Historic Artifacts: Guidance for Consultants* as standard for the selective culling of historic collections.

<https://heritage.ky.gov/Documents/HistoricArtifactCurationPolicy.pdf>. Artifacts returned to landowners are to be recorded and treated similarly to discards.

- All artifacts must be cataloged prior to discard and include weight and count.
- Photographs of discards/returned material are required.
- All diagnostics require individual photos.
- Bulk non-diagnostics should have a representative photo by material/object type.
- All photos require a scale.
- Photos are to be submitted according to the specifications outlined in the "Photographic

Record" section of this document.

- Items susceptible to irreversible deterioration such as ferrous metals may be subject to a sampling and discard strategy as approved by KHC and the project funding agency.

COLLECTIONS ORGANIZATION: BAGS, TAGS, AND BOXES

ARTIFACTS BAGS AND TAGS

Artifacts must be bagged by provenience and artifact number as assigned in the artifact catalog. Each artifact or lot of artifacts must be placed in 4 mil polyethylene white block zip closure bags with interior tags. The outside of the individual artifact bags must be labeled in permanent black ink with, at least, the project name, site number, and artifact or provenience/ + artifact number. Place the number of specimens in the bottom right corner; type of artifact can also be written in the lower right corner (Figure 2).

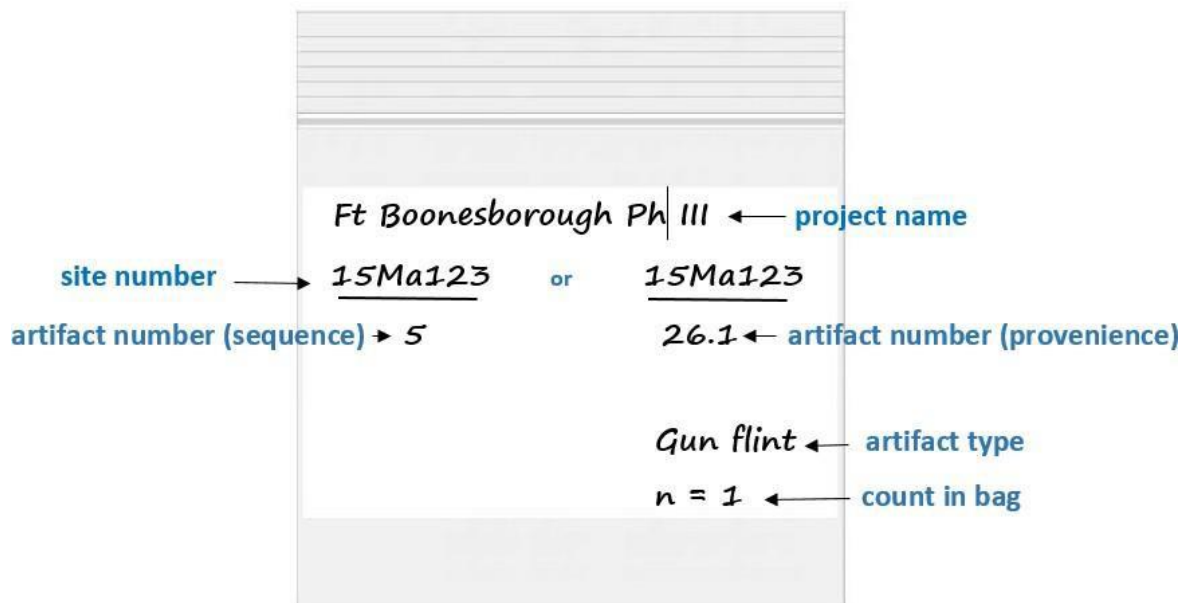


Figure 2: Artifact Bag Label Example

The same information should be included on acid free card stock tags and included inside every artifact bag. Tags can be neatly handwritten or printed, most standard printer ink should be of an archival grade.

PROVENIENCE BAGS AND TAGS

All artifact bags from one provenience should be stored together in a larger 4 mil polyethylene white block zip closure bag. This bag must be labeled with project name, site number/name, complete provenience information, excavators' initials and date collected. Include artifact number range or field specimen/provenience designators in the bottom right (Figures 3, 4). A cardstock tag with the same information should be placed inside.

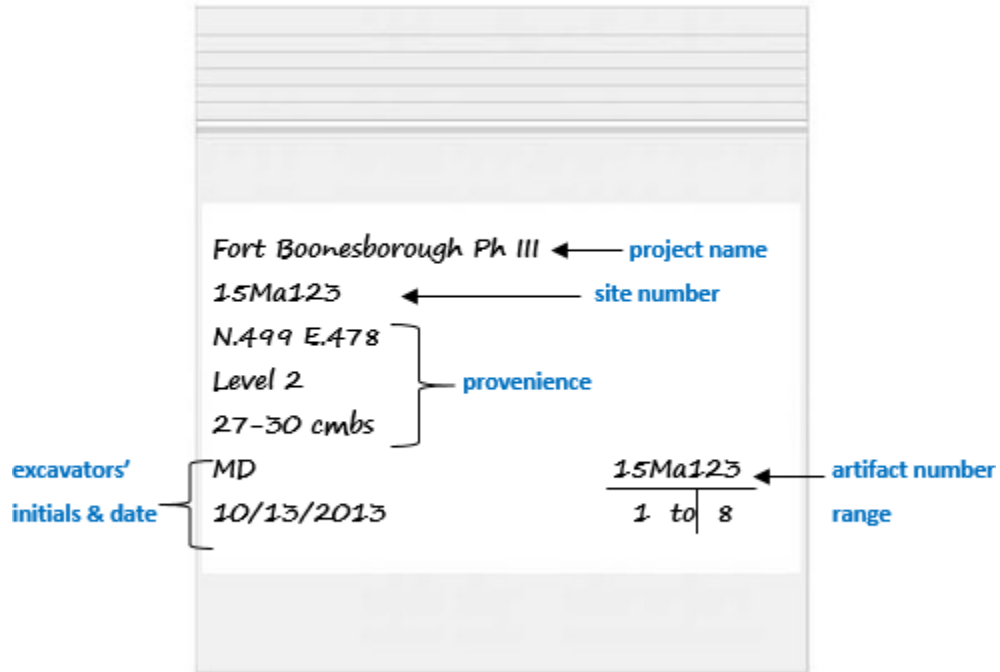


Figure 3: Outer Bag Label - Range of Artifact Numbers

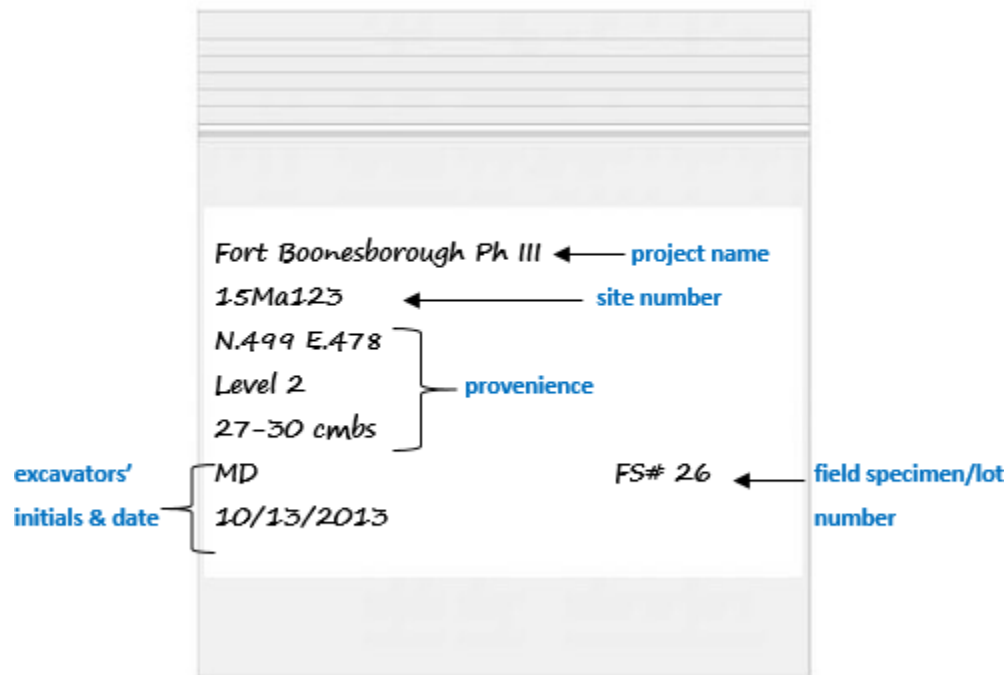


Figure 4: Outer Bag Label - Lot/Provenience Designator

- Use the appropriate size bag for the artifact(s); do not place a singular small find or sherd in an oversized bag.

- Small and fragile items should be provided specialized packaging such as individual acid free artifact boxes with acid free tissue or ethafoam mounts.
- Archival grade polypropylene vials and capsules can also be used; vials should then be place within a labeled poly bag with corresponding bag tag inside.
- Do not use gel capsules.
- Oversized objects may also require specialized packaging.
- Original bag faces should be retained and placed in a single bag and stored with the artifacts.
- Contact the Webb Museum with any questions or advice on how to proceed with objects needing specialized attention.

BOX CONFIGURATION AND ORGANIZATION

Pack all artifacts in Hollinger Metal Edge coroplast artifact boxes (Item no. 30400) with dividers (item number 30410).

- Dividers must be employed in the configuration shown (Figure 5) with four external sides and then at least two internal dividers.
- The front and back of the box should have the thicker, folded edges.
- Failure to include dividers will result in additional fees.
- Pack bags in order by site and then provenience or artifact number sequence. You may alternately organize by material class always by site first. Items should be easy to locate.
- Artifacts that have been pulled for specialize analysis can remain together – indicate on box inventory and note in artifact catalog their location out of sequence.
- Do not over pack boxes and pay attention to weight distribution; do not exceed 25 lbs. per box.
- Include a box inventory with each box (see forms).



Figure 5: Artifact Box - Minimum Divider Configuration

- Small projects which take up less than half an artifact box can be submitted without the required box.
- A series of small projects and/or sites can be submitted in one artifact box.
- One or more projects with a series of small sites should be organized using this hierarchy: project, site number, provenience/artifact number sequence.
- Do not split a project between two boxes unless the boxes are exclusive to that project only.

BOX LABELING

Do not write on any part of the box internal or external. The Museum will affix its own label once the collection has been accessioned. Temporary labels should be affixed to the box – sticky notes or paper with light tack tape. Include project/site number and the range of artifact numbers. If the box is one in a sequence always indicate the box number part of a sequence, i.e.: Box 1 of 3.

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTATION

PAPER RECORDS

All original primary records created for the duration of the project are required for submission. These include but are not limited to:

- Field notes/journals
- Field forms (survey/STP/unit/feature forms/site maps and profiles)
- Field specimen/bag list – provenience logs
- Excavation photos and photo logs
- Lab forms (artifact analysis/conservation records/artifact photos & illustration)
- Artifact catalog
- Maps
- Final report
- Site Forms - *Finalized OSA Approved
- Primary administrative records

Secondary records such as project background and historical research will be accepted but are not required; documentation such as preliminary statistics and charts should be culled prior to submission, as well as any illegible personal notes, lists generated from databases, and internet print outs.

Records from “No Finds” projects or those projects for which the artifacts were returned to the landowner are required to be curated per KY SHPO guidelines.

DOCUMENT BOXING

Pack all paper records in Hollinger letter size document case with pull string (item #10370AB).

- Organize documents in acid free folders by category – field records, artifact catalogs, administrative records, site forms, etc. *Please be logical in the organization grouping like with like.
- Clearly label each folder with a brief description using archival pens in black ink.
- All paper records should be on acid free paper and free from staples and/or other metal fasteners – this includes spiral bound notebooks, brads, paper clips, etc.
- Metal fasteners should be replaced with archival grade plastic clips such as Plastiklip *see supplies list
- If original materials are acidic, acid free copies should be made and included with the originals. Do not omit the original forms.
- Oversized maps and documents should not be folded and placed inside the enclosure. Submit all oversized items either in a custom, archival flat storage enclosure or rolled up and in an archival document storage tube.
- Non-Spiral bound field notebooks can be place inside without a folder, but should be clearly labeled.
- Do not write on the box or inside; affix a temporary label similar to the artifact boxes.
- Keep all required curation documents together in one folder – do not comingle these with the project documents. More in forms section.
- If records are only in digital format a printed, acid-free hard copy is required.

DIGITAL RECORDS

All original paper records are also required to be submitted digitally. Scans of handwritten documents should be submitted in .pdf format. Their electronic organization should mirror that of the paper documents.

DIGITAL FILE NAMING CONVENTIONS

All digital files must adhere to the following naming conventions which have been established to ensure consistency and ease of access. Failure to follow the prescribed conventions may result in additional processing fees.

- Use capital letter to delineate words, not spaces.
- Only use an underscore to separate name elements.
- All digital files from one project must have a unique project title (it can be abbreviated) followed by an underscore and then a description of the contents.

Ex: *ScoutBranchTimberSale_FieldNotes.pdf*
 ScoutBranchTimberSale_PhotoLog.xlsx
 ScoutBranchTimberSale_ArtifactCatalog.xlsx

- For photographic images put the exposure number in front of the project name. Use leading zeros to ensure proper sequencing.

Ex: 01_ScoutCampTimberSale_ProjectArea.tiff
 02_ScoutCampTimberSale_Unit1.tiff
 03_ScoutCampTimberSale_Feature2.tiff

ARTIFACT CATALOG

Artifact catalogs are required and are to be submitted in a Windows compatible digital format such as Excel or Access as well as in hardcopy. The Webb Museum no longer accepts card catalog files. Obsolete file formats or coded catalogs will not be accepted; older formatted catalogs should be translated into a format compatible with the Museum’s current catalog standards. *See Artifact Cataloging for required fields.*

- An acid free, hard copy print out should be included with the paper documentation.
- Catalogs should be by site and should be comprehensive.
- Do not submit catalogs with multiple sites or submit multiples buy material types or temporal period
- Catalogs should note where artifacts have been discarded or returned to landowners. *see “Discards/artifacts returned to landowners”.
- Limit printout to letter sized paper and print double sided with page numbers.
- Print out should include at least the minimum required fields; additional fields can remain on the digital file. Do not include so many fields that the printout is not legible to the naked eye.

PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD

PRINTS, NEGATIVES AND CONTACT SHEETS

Any prints, negatives, contact sheets, and/or slides are required to be placed in archival sleeves appropriate for each media type and size (limit to two image per insert – front and back) and then placed in an archival file folder.

Do not submit stacks of prints, negatives, or contact sheets.

Photos should be labeled on the back with an archival pen or photo pencil – this should easily refer back to the accompanying photo log and minimally include the site number, roll (when applicable) and exposure number.

Label slides and contact sheets similarly.

DIGITAL IMAGES

If digital images exist individual prints on photographic paper are not required. Digital image files must be in .tiff format and submitted on an archival CD/DVD. An acid-free printout contact sheet with 3 x 5 image size and file name must be included. Please cull any duplicate images prior to submission. Non- excavation related photos such as wildlife or “fun” staff shots should not be submitted.

PHOTO LOGS

Photo logs must accompany all image media and must be submitted digitally in a spreadsheet format such as Excel. The following fields are required:

- File name (see digital file naming conventions)
- Photo title/description
- Date

A paper copy of the photo log must accompany the acid-free printouts. Handwritten photo logs must always be transcribed into an Excel format for digital submission; a scan of the original will not be accepted in lieu of a spreadsheet. Please submit the original with a printout of the transcribed log.

MISCELLANEOUS MEDIA

For other media and/or digital data formats please contact the Museum Curator for compatibility and submission requirements.

COLLECTIONS SUBMITTAL PROCEDURES

INTENT TO CURATE

It is the responsibility of the government agency or archaeological contractor to contact the Museum via e-mail and electronically submit the *Intent to Curate* document. The Webb Museum will notify the contractor of its decision regarding the disposition of project materials. Please note, this preliminary correspondence constitutes a conditional curation agreement. Final acceptance of collections will take place only when the Webb Museum is satisfied that the specimens and documents have been prepared according to the established *Standards for the Preparation of Archaeological Specimens and Documents for Curation at the Webb Museum*.

The Webb Museum reserves the right to refuse collections that do not meet the curation standards outlined in this document or redirect collections outside the Museum's scope of acquisition to a more suitable facility.

FORMS

Prior to delivery, the depositing agency or contractor is required to submit the following documents via email for review by Webb Museum staff:

- 1. Curation Agreement:** Completed by the depositor for each project.
 - A project is represented by a singular bibliographical reference/report.
 - The original copy is retained by the Museum, and a duplicate copy is provided to the contractor upon final accession.
 - This forms serves as the legal record of disposition and the formal record of ownership.

2. **Landowner Consent:** This form serves as legal transfer of custody for collections recovered on privately owned land. *This form is not necessary for collections owned by any Kentucky state agency, county, or municipality.*
 - If a signed form is not secured in person, the form and an accompanying letter are to be sent via certified mail or other shipping method with tracking and proof of delivery.
 - All tracking documents should be submitted with the Curation Agreement along with a copy of the finalized letter.
 - Failure for the landowner to respond in kind within 30 days will denote the landowner's compliance with a transfer of custody to UK.
 - For formal acceptance of the objects into UK's collections the form must be signed by the landlord or an authorized agent on the line provided with an accompanying witness signature.
 - If the landowner has requested the material be returned, proof of correspondence must be submitted. This can be in the form of electronic communication or conventional mail.
 - Verbal agreements do NOT qualify for either disposition.
3. **Collections Transmittal Form:** Completed by the depositor, one form per site; isolates can be lumped onto on form at a county level.
4. **Checklist for Incoming Collections** – per project
5. **Box Inventory**

All forms can be found following a link on the Webb Museum website. Original hard copies of all forms should accompany the collection at time of delivery. Please check the website prior to submission to make sure the most recent versions are in use. Any release of newer versions will be communicated through an email on the OSA listserv.

DELIVERY

All agencies/consultants must contact the Webb Museum to schedule a delivery. Webb Museum staff will review the collection for compliance. If the collection does not comply the Museum will contact the depositing agency or contractor to determine whether the Museum will perform any additional work to bring the collection into compliance (additional fees apply) or return the collection. Official accessioning is not complete until all fees are paid in full. Acknowledgment of accession will be sent once all conditions have been met.

CURATION FEES

NON-FEDERALLY OWNED COLLECTIONS

A one-time curation fee will be assessed per project. Invoicing for curation fees will be sent out upon formal accession. Any additional processing fees will be clearly itemized and will have been previously agreed upon. Failure to pay outstanding curation fees will result in the suspension of all further curation agreements. See the Curation Fee Policy for Archaeological Collections for current fee schedule.

FEDERALLY OWNED COLLECTIONS

The Webb Museum and its Federal partners will establish a reoccurring fee schedule to cover the cost of collections maintenance and other related services in the form of memoranda of understanding or purchase orders.

CURATION FEE POLICY FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

As Kentucky's largest archaeological research and curation facility, the William S. Webb Museum of Anthropology, University of Kentucky, has a commitment to care for and preserve the state's collections in perpetuity. The fee schedule below is intended to offset the costs associated with curation and collections care and ensure the long-term preservation and accessibility of Kentucky's archaeological collections. The fees are subject to review every five years. Fees will not change without public notification.

APPLICATION OF CURATION FEES

All collections generated through professional archaeological investigations are subject to the one-time fee. Exemptions include those collections donated by private collectors and avocational archaeologist, and those recovered in the course of unfunded M.A. or Ph.D. research projects. Any other exemptions are at the discretion of the Museum Director and Curator.

NON-FEDERALLY OWNED COLLECTIONS

The standard, one-time curation fee is based on the prescribed, Hollinger archival artifact and document boxes referred to in *Standards for the Preparation of Archaeological Specimens and Documents for Curation at the Webb Museum*.

- \$250 Per standard artifact box
- \$100 For material from any one site or project that amounts to less than one half of one cubic foot.
**If numerous small projects are curated at the same time, they should be boxed together, the curation fee will be based on the box rate.*
***Small projects defined as less than ¼ box in volume.*
- \$250 For accompanying documents, photographs and digital files

Please contact the Museum Curator if you have questions about the fees or have special circumstances to be considered in determining the curation charge.

CURATION FEE SCHEDULE FEDERAL CURATION

Federal collections cannot be donated to the state for in-perpetuity curation. Federal collections are submitted under a held-in-trust agreement in compliance with *36 CFR §79: Curation of Federally-Owned and Administered Archaeological Collections*. Fee schedules for Federally owned collections are administered on an agency-by-agency basis. Please contact the Webb Museum for more information.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES GUIDANCE

REQUIRED

Hollinger Metal Edge coroplast artifact boxes - Item no. 30400 Dividers - Item number 30410
Hollinger letter size document case with pull string - Item no. 10370AB

ACCEPTABLE LABELING/PACKAGING SUPPLIES

Pigma Microns— black ink Pilot Gel Ink Pens – white ink Acryloid B72 – clear
Sharpie permanent markers Radiograph pens and India ink
Polyethylene zip closure bags – 4 mil with white block Inert plastic vials and capsules
Acid-free card stock
Acid free file folders/expandable document envelopes Ethafoam
Metal Edge artifact boxes
PrintFile archival photo/negative sleeves
Plastiklip - <https://www.plastiklips.com/>

UNACCEPTABLE LABELING/PACKAGING SUPPLIES

Adhesive labels of any kind
Pressure-sensitive tape (including cellophane, masking, and adhesive tape) Rubber cement/Duco cement
Rubber bands
Metal wire/twist ties
Kitchen grade baggies or zip closer bags White Out or Liquid Paper
Nail polish
Regular felt tip or ball point pens Film canisters
Non archival plastic sleeves/page protectors