

COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY

of the

Center for Railroad Photography & Art Inc

Madison, Wisconsin

Approved September 30, 2026, by the Board of Directors

CHARTER PURPOSE

The mission of the Center for Railroad Photography & Art (“Center”) is to preserve and present significant images of railroading, interpreting the intersections of railroad art and culture with world history and life.

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The primary purpose of this Collections Management Policy (the “Policy”) is to guide the work of the Board of Directors and the staff of the Center on management of the Railroad Heritage Visual Archive.

This Policy is designed to ensure that the Center fulfills its obligations to acquire, protect, manage, provide access to, and maintain intellectual control over the images collectively known as the Railroad Heritage Visual Archive and associated records. It seeks to ensure that items and collections are acquired legally and ethically; are appropriate to advance the Center’s mission; and are properly managed, housed, secured, preserved, documented, and used in accordance with current professional archival standards.

By disseminating this Policy to the public, the Center informs donors, prospective donors, researchers, users, and others and fulfills its goals of transparency and accountability.

I. TERMINOLOGY

The following terms have the following meanings when used throughout this Policy:

- **Accession:** (v) to add an acquisition to a repository’s permanent holdings.
- **Accession Number:** (n) A number assigned to uniquely identify an individual or group of records acquired by a repository and used to link the materials to associated records.
- **Acquisition:** (n) 1. the materials acquired by a repository; 2. the process of obtaining custody (physical transfer) and ownership of an item or collection.
- **Appraisal:** (n) a judgment of what something is worth; an expert or official valuation, as for taxation; the process of determining the monetary value of something.
- **Archival Appraisal:** (n) To archival professionals’ “appraisal” is equivalent to “selection” and means: 1. the process of identifying materials offered to an archive that have sufficient value to be accessioned; 2. the process of determining the length of time records should be retained, based on legal requirements and on their current and potential usefulness. Archival appraisal typically is performed by trained archivists in accordance with professional archival standards and institutional policies and guidelines. Note: In the archival context, “value” of materials usually does not mean primarily or exclusively monetary value, but refers primarily to historical and evidential values.
- **Bequest:** (n) a gift of property or funds made through a will or form of Trust.
- **Collection:** (n) a set of archival materials within a repository created or assembled by an individual, family, or corporate entity, such as an organization or business. In this Policy, use of “collection” designates one of many individual and separate component collections held by the Center, all of which together comprise the Railroad Heritage Visual Archive (See also “Item”).
- **Collections Management System (“CMS”):** (n) specialized information technology that describes centralized organization, control, description, and management of collections or items. The Center currently uses Odyssey as its collections management system.
- **Conservation:** (n) the repair or stabilization of items through chemical or physical treatment to ensure that they survive in their original form for as long as possible.
- **Deaccession:** (n) the formal process of permanently and legally removing an accessioned item from a collection, catalogue, or database of an institution.

- **Designated Assistant (“DA”):** (n) a member of the Center’s collections staff acting under the supervision of the Director of Archives and Collections. The Center employs a range of collections professionals including archivists, archival assistants, and interns.
- **Disposal:** (n) the transfer of deaccessioned items to their final state, whether destruction, return to donor, sale, or transfer to another institution or individual.
- **Item:** (n) an individual component within the Railroad Heritage Visual Archive. Examples at the Center include individual paintings and fine art prints, photographs, and manuscripts. (See also: “Collection”)
- **Metadata:** (n) information about data that promotes discovery, structures data objects, and supports the administration and preservation of records/
- **Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (“NAGPRA”):** (n) a federal law enacted by Congress in 1990 to protect Native human remains, funerary articles, sacred items and objects of cultural patrimony that can be affiliated with a Native American tribe, and to facilitate the return of Native human remains and funerary items unlawfully obtained.
- **Preservation:** (n) the act of protecting materials by minimizing chemical and physical deterioration and damage to minimize the loss of information and to extend the life of cultural property; also keeping from harm, injury, decay, or destruction, especially through noninvasive treatment. Basic preservation efforts focus on appropriate housing for the Railroad Heritage Visual Archive and provision of appropriate climate controls.
- **Print Acquisition Program (“PAP”):** (n) an annual fund to facilitate the purchase of limited-edition fine art prints and vintage photographs to be accessioned in the Railroad Heritage Visual Archive.
- **Provenance:** (n) information regarding the origins, custody, and ownership of an item or collection.
- **Railroad Heritage Visual Archive (“RHVA”):** (n) In this Policy, “RHVA” refers to all collections and items accessioned into the Center’s permanent holdings.
- **Qualified Recipients:** (n) a non-profit library, archive, historical society, museum, or educational institution eligible to receive loans or deaccessioned items from the RHVA.

II. HISTORY

The Center was founded in 1997 to preserve, in an archival setting, and to present significant images of railroading in traditional print media and exhibitions. Publication of a journal, *Railroad Heritage*, began in 2000 and expanded to quarterly production in 2012. To its original goals the Center has added presentation of high-quality images and historically accurate descriptions of them on the Internet, an annual conference launched in 2003, and a creative photography awards program that receives submissions from all over the world. Milestones in the Center’s history include:

- *Representations of Railroad Work*, an exhibition and publication program of 2004-2006 (with traveling shows still on the road).
- *Railroads and the American Industrial Landscape: Ted Rose Paintings and Photographs* exhibition and catalog of 2006-2008.
- In 2011, the Center hired its first full-time staff position of Executive Director.
- *Railroaders: Jack Delano’s Homefront Photography*, which opened at the Chicago History Museum in 2014 after five years of extensive research and included a 200-page, hardbound catalog published by the Center.
- In 2015, the Center hired its first, full-time archives manager. In the following years, the Center’s collections staff has grown to multiple full-time positions.
- *After Promontory: 150 Years of Transcontinental Railroad*, an exhibition and publication program launched in 2019 for the sesquicentennial of the completion of the nation’s first transcontinental railroad, with multiple versions of a traveling exhibition at venues across the country and a 320-page, hardbound book published by Indiana University Press (now in its third printing).

- In 2019, the Center leased its first location dedicated exclusively to archival storage. Comprised of 1,450 square feet, the space increased the Center’s storage capacity and was outfitted with commercial dehumidifiers, fire suppression systems, and onsite security integral to the long-term preservation of the RHVA.
- In 2020, the Center established the PAP.
- In 2023, the Center acquired its first CMS and launched an online portal to provide public access to digital surrogates from the RHVA.
- In 2024, the Center revised its acquisition strategy to include three acceptance levels for potential accessions.
- In 2026, the Center installed a new Heating Ventilation Airconditioning (“HVAC”) system in its archival storage. The system was specifically outfitted with a humidistat, thermostat, and a remote access and monitoring system, enabling finer control of the storage environment.

III. LEGAL STATUS

The Center is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit arts and education organization.

IV. AUTHORITY

A. Board of Directors

The Center is governed by a Board of Directors (“Board”) whose members are drawn from across the United States for their expertise, interest, and service. The Board, led by the Chair, is charged with the establishment of policies, oversight, and strategic direction of all Center business affairs. The Board is responsible for approving Center goals and policies and for raising funds and approving the annual budget.

Additionally, the Board assists in the development of the RHVA through its oversight of the Center’s acquisitions and deaccessions. Most acquisitions, whether by gift, bequest, exchange, or purchase, must be approved by the Board before entering the RHVA, and deaccessions and methods of disposal must be approved by the same body before removal from the RHVA.

The Board has final authority and fiduciary responsibility to ensure that the RHVA is managed and cared for in accord with professional and ethical standards, applicable laws, statutes, resolutions, and contractual terms and conditions. The Board reserves the right to approve, amend, reject, or reverse any recommendation or action by Center employees, volunteers, or committees.

B. Executive Director

The Executive Director of the Center works directly with the Chair of the Board and other Board members in managing the operations of the Center. Overall responsibility for the management of the RHVA lies with the Executive Director who is guided by the policies and procedures outlined in this Policy. The Executive Director may delegate specific responsibilities to appropriate members of the staff in managing the RHVA.

C. Director of Archives and Collections

The Center employs a Director of Archives and Collections (“DAC”), who reports to the Executive Director, and serves at the discretion of the Executive Director and with the approval of the Board. The DAC has responsibility for the overall physical care of the RHVA and balances preservation of the RHVA with the provision of public access and research, special exhibitions, staff research, and funding. The DAC also has overall responsibility for providing and improving intellectual controls and access to the RHVA, meeting the research needs of the public, overseeing creation and

maintenance of detailed collection records, and advising and making recommendations to the Executive Director and the Collections and Acquisitions Committee on matters concerning accessions, deaccessions, and loans. In the event that the DAC is not available, the Executive Director or designee may perform and/or share the DAC's responsibilities.

D. The Collections and Acquisitions Committee

The Board has established the Collections and Acquisitions Committee ("Committee") in accord with the Bylaws, to consist of one or two member(s) of the Board who serve as Chair or Co-chairs as the case may be and at least two other members of the Board. The Executive Director, DAC, and, at times, other staff members as agreed upon mutually by the Committee serve as ex officio, non-voting members of the Committee. The Committee meets as needed to perform the following functions:

1. Oversee policies (including this document) and procedures to ensure that the Center meets legal, professional, and ethical standards in the management and care of the RHVA.
2. Consider accession, deaccession, and loan proposals and recommend appropriate action to the Board.
3. Facilitate meeting staff needs for professional expertise and consultation for the benefit of the RHVA.
4. Report to the Board about these activities.

V. CARE OF THE RHVA

A. Policy and Procedure

The Center preserves and provides access to a large quantity of items in furtherance of its mission. The RHVA is housed at the Center's offices and in secure, off-site storage facilities. The Center endeavors to ensure the long-term preservation of the RHVA, to the greatest extent that resources permit.

1. Staff documents the quantity, type, and condition of each collection or item whether by scanning, photography, written descriptions or otherwise.
2. Staff records metadata for each collection or item accessioned including: collection or item name/title (if any), accession number(s), name of creator, name of donor if different than creator, type(s) of medium, provenance (if known), and creation date(s).
3. Digital surrogates and associated metadata documenting the RHVA are retained and stored in at least two different physical locations. Digital storage media are periodically refreshed as necessary.
4. Staff documents any obvious preservation and conservation needs, and for any such needs, will recommend items for conservation and obtain estimates from reputable conservation professionals. This work will be prioritized based upon historic value and value to the RHVA and the condition and need of the item at issue.
5. Staff labels boxes or containers for items with collection name/title, accession/collection or item numbers, and other information for easy retrieval.
6. Items are stabilized for long-term preservation, housed in an appropriate storage environment and in appropriate archival containers. Stored collections are not accessible to the public or available for browsing; staff assistance is required for research use.

B. Availability

1. Access to Items on Display

The Center's office is open to the public by appointment.

2. *Access to the RHVA (materials not on exhibit)*

The Center encourages wide public access to the RHVA through finding aids, examination, exhibition, reproduction, publication, and online sharing through its website, social media channels, and CMS.

Items not on exhibit are available for research upon written request directed to the DAC or DA and received at least two weeks in advance of proposed use. Requests should be as specific in nature as possible.

Access may be granted or denied in the sole discretion of the DAC. Reasons for denial of access include without limitation, resource limitations; condition of materials, ongoing conservation or other treatment; confidentiality, donor restriction, or other considerations. Items currently in use by other researchers or staff or on loan are not available for use. Users are responsible for their own compliance with copyright law.

The Center's archival storage areas are not open for public browsing.

3. *Reproductions from the RHVA*

- a. The Center holds copyright to the majority of the items in the RHVA. Researchers may request reproductions of those materials whose copyright the Center owns by submitting written and phone requests for copies to the DAC or DA. The DAC or DA will log and review each request and facilitate use in concurrence with the Center's established research and reproduction policies and usage fee schedule, which is available to the public on the Center's website.
- b. When reproductions of items from the RHVA are published in print or electronic media, the Center must be acknowledged with the following credit line: "(Creator's name), Collection of the Center for Railroad Photography & Art, www.railphoto-art.org". A copy of the print publication or link must be sent to the Center upon its release or printing.
- c. The Center generally allows personal and not-for-profit use of its images at no charge in concurrence with the Center's usage fee schedule.
- d. Researchers who seek to publish images and papers whose copyright is not owned by the Center are advised to contact their respective copyright owner(s) to secure permission.
- e. Usage fees apply for editorial and/or commercial use in concurrence with the Center's usage fee schedule.
- f. Records about the RHVA are generally considered non-public materials but may be made available to the public upon written request at the DAC's sole discretion.

C. Storage Environment and Monitoring

Items are housed in a proper storage environment, which is regularly monitored. All activities related to monitoring the collections are documented.

1. The physical plant, the largest storage unit within which items are placed, is maintained responsibly.
2. The building and storage spaces are kept clean.
3. Collections in storage are protected from exposure to sunlight, and ultraviolet (UV), and infrared (IR) light of unacceptable levels.
4. Storage areas are fitted with HVAC equipment to ensure that interior climate control is maintained in accordance with the guidelines of the International Council of Museums Conservation Committee and International Institute for Conservation. In the event of power

outages or other unusual circumstances, the Executive Director, DAC, or DA are authorized to take necessary and appropriate steps to ensure preservation of contents and remediate any malfunctions or problems.

5. The DAC monitors and preserves climate control data.
6. Fire Prevention and Suppression Systems are utilized. Fire prevention begins with surveying the premises and eliminating fire hazards. An appropriate suppression system will be used when available. The DAC maintains records. Use of open flames for any purpose is strictly prohibited.
7. Shelving and other storage furniture is designed for the protection of the items that they hold.
8. Appropriate individual storage materials such as archival boxes, enclosures for photographs, mats, frames and other types of enclosures are utilized to help protect items.

D. Records

The DAC maintains records pertaining to items coming into or leaving the RHVA. The DAC is responsible for ensuring that items bear an accession number linking them to their official records. Records maintained shall include the following:

1. Temporary custody receipts for all items left in the care of the Center.
2. An accession number recorded in both electronic and paper formats for all collection or items accessioned into the RHVA.
3. An initial collection-level catalog record and condition notes for each collection or item upon its accession.
4. Additional accession documentation including deeds of gift, records of negotiations regarding bequests, information about donors, sale receipts and related documentation, appraisals, recommendations for exchange, exchange agreements.
5. Loan records including but not limited to records of both incoming and outgoing loans, including loan numbers, approvals or disapprovals of loans, loan agreements, insurance and transportation documentation, communications with lenders/borrowers, and records of receipt and return of loaned materials.
6. Deaccession records including but not be limited to: accession number, recommendations for deaccessioning, Board approvals for deaccession, deaccession transactions and disposition.
7. A list of all items and collections in the CMS. Information in each entry includes as appropriate: accession number, name of collection or title of item, description of contents, type(s) of material, physical size, place of origin, name of creator, name of donor, date(s) of creation, how acquired, source, location in the collection storage or other location (file shall be updated each time an item is moved, if on loan, for example.), research pertaining to items(s), and such other documentation as is necessary. These records may be made available to the public at the discretion of the DAC.

VI. COLLECTING OBJECTIVES

The primary collecting objective is to maintain and build upon the RHVA to the fulfill the mission of the Center, thereby advancing its commitment to research and writing on topics relating to railroad photography and art. The RHVA consists of all types of images and related material concerning the history of railroads and their culture in the United States and throughout the world. Both framed and unframed works are included, as are:

- A. All forms of silver-gelatin prints: regular photographs, stereographs, snapshots, real photo postcards, cabinet cards and images placed in period photo albums.
- B. Other forms of photographic media including daguerreotypes, albumen prints, cyanotypes, and glass plates.
- C. Photographic negatives (all sizes)
- D. Color transparencies and slides (all sizes)
- E. Paintings (oil, acrylic, watercolor, etc.)

- F. Works on paper (prints, drawings, posters, etc.)
- G. Digital media related directly to the collection
- H. Manuscript materials and paper ephemera related directly to the collection
- I. Books and other publications related directly to the collection
- J. Cabinet collections or photographic artifacts of unusual or supplemental material.

VII. COLLECTING PRIORITIES

The Center's current collecting priorities are those within the scope of the Center's collecting objectives but not currently represented (or well represented) in the RHVA or which satisfy a specific exhibition or program need. They are also considered in relation to available storage space, staffing priorities and condition of the item(s).

The aim of the Center's collecting program is to create a representative view of the history and culture surrounding railroading through significant photography and art. Notwithstanding this, a prioritized piece might already duplicate an item already in the collection by style or perspective, but its provenance may make it unique.

As recommended by the Committee and/or the staff, the Board may establish additional priorities in accordance with changes in the content of the RHVA. All collecting priorities, however, must still fall within the Center's mission and overall collecting scope.

VIII. ACQUISITIONS

The Center acquires items by gift, bequest, exchange, or purchase. It may also accept donations of reference materials, equipment, supplies, and monetary contributions to support and further its objectives.

A. Acquisition Criteria for Additions to the RHVA

Items must meet all of the following criteria before being acquired by the Center by any means:

1. Acquisitions must conform to the Center's Collecting Objectives.
2. Items considered for acquisition must have cultural, aesthetic, historic (i.e., related to the history of railroads and / or the history of railroad photography or art), geographical (i.e., regional, national, or international), educational, or informational importance.
3. The Center must be able to properly care for the proposed acquisition.
4. Donors must sign the Center's Deed of Gift transferring the item(s) and all of their copyrights to the Center. The Center reserves the right to decline donations of less than full copyright. Any exception to this, such as artwork or blended collections that include items not created by the donor, must be approved by the Board following review by the Committee of copyright law.
5. In cases where the offered items include materials not created by the donor, when possible, the donor should provide documentation as to provenance and transfer of title and all rights to the donor.
6. Acquisitions must be free from donor-imposed restrictions. Any exception to this must be approved by the Board.
7. In accordance with The Convention on Cultural Property Implementation Act approved by an Act of Congress in 1982 implementing the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, the Center will not knowingly accept items that have been stolen or illegally removed from their country of origin.
8. Public records can be transferred to the Center only by the governing body with authority over such records and in accord with appropriate law; no individual or private entity can presume the

ownership of any public record, even if the apparent result of abandonment, discard, or attempted destruction. However, the Center may assume temporary custody of apparently abandoned or discarded records for the sole purpose of returning them to the appropriate governmental agency.

9. Acquisitions will not excessively duplicate items already in the RHVA.
10. Acquisitions will be in sound condition and not in need of extensive conservation. Any exception to this must be approved by the Board.

Items offered for donation that do not meet the above criteria will be returned to their owner with a written explanation outlining the reason(s) for rejection.

B. Appraisals

1. To avoid potential conflicts of interest, the Center does not appraise items considered for acquisition or any items owned by third parties.
2. The Center staff, when asked to recommend an expert for a valuation, refers any donor or third party to professional appraisal organizations such as the American Society of Appraisers, Appraisers Association of America, Inc., or International Society of Appraisers.
3. Securing appraisal for personal use is solely the responsibility of the donor and must be performed at the donor's expense.

C. Acquisitions Procedure for Collections

1. Gifts

- a. The DAC, Executive Director, or such individual as may be designated by the Board may temporarily receive items which meet the acquisition criteria for addition to the RHVA.
- b. Funding is required in order to process and maintain acquisitions to contemporary preservation and archival standards. The Center's financial resources directly impact its ability to take on new collections. Where possible, donors are encouraged to consider making a financial gift to help defray these costs.
- c. For a collection to be considered for acquisition, the potential donor must submit thirty scans (images) of representative items, a short written overview of the collection, what its art or historical significance might be, a CV / bio of the creator, potential transportation costs or plans for the collection, verification that said items have no legal encumbrances or restrictions placed upon it, and that the items are the creation of the donor and that the donor owns copyright to the items or that the donor has clear title to them. If the donor does not own copyright to the items, the donor must provide information about the copyright owner. Certain vetting requirements may be waived at the Committee's discretion.
 - a. For photography collections numbering fewer than 1,000 items in sound condition, the Executive Director and DAC may work in concert to jointly accept or decline donations directly, based on the standards outlined in this document. The Executive Director or the DAC shall advise the Committee and the Board of any such actions at their next meeting.
 - b. For photography collections numbering between 1,000-10,000 items in sound condition, the Executive Director and the DAC may work in concert to jointly accept donations following a review of and recommendation by the Committee. The Executive Director or the DAC shall advise the Committee and the Board of any such actions at their next meeting.
 - c. For photography collections numbering above 10,000 items in sound condition, the Center will accept proffered items only after approval by the Board following a review of and recommendation by the Committee.

- d. The DAC will provide documentation outlining the Center's description and preservation procedures to donors who wish to prepare their collections prior to donation.
- e. Upon acceptance by the Center, the donor or an authorized representative of the donor and an authorized representative of the Center such as the Executive Director or the DAC will execute the Center's Deed of Gift.
- f. The Center will keep all records documenting all gifts.
- g. Any Board or Committee member who brings prospective items to the attention of the Center for possible acquisition must recuse themselves from the vote to accept the items into the RHVA. Any Board or Committee member who nominates any items may write a recommendation to be reviewed in its consideration.
- h. The Center acknowledges that its Board members, employees, and volunteers may engage in their own collecting activities. Any individual involved with the Center's collecting activities must disclose conflicts of interest when they arise.
- i. When collections or items are acquired, shipping and handling arrangements will be mutually agreed upon between the donor and the Center prior to the signing of the Deed of Gift.
- j. Unplanned donations that do not fall within the collecting scope criteria generally will be declined. If declined, the Center will attempt to return such donations to their lawful owners with documentation of donation rejection. If the Center is unable to locate the lawful owner, the materials will be held in surplus to wait for disposal following the passage of the required amount of time according to Wisconsin's current Unclaimed and Abandoned Property Laws.

2. *Bequests*

- a. Bequests of items will only be accepted if sufficient information about the decedent and/or the items bequeathed is available to ensure their long-term preservation and use.
- b. The Center encourages those who wish to bequeath items to contact the Center in advance to discuss the proposed plans and provide information about the provenance, order, and contents of any proposed bequests. If possible, the Center welcomes receiving a copy of the will or other documentation referring to the proposed bequest.
- c. Items received by the Center via bequest will be considered by the Committee in the same way as gifts submitted by living donors. The Committee may recommend accepting or declining bequeathed items, and the Board must approve acceptance of all items offered by way of a decedent's will.
- d. If declined, bequeathed items will be returned to the decedent's executor, personal representative, or the decedent's legal counsel. If the Center is unable to locate any such lawful representative of the decedent, the items will be held pending disposition as outlined in Wisconsin's current Unclaimed and Abandoned Property Laws.
- e. The Executive Director and/or the DAC will have ultimate responsibility for all final negotiations with executors, personal representatives, and/or decedent's legal counsel.
- f. The Center will keep records documenting all bequests.

3. *Exchange*

- a. The DAC may recommend to the Committee in writing the exchange of an item or items owned by the Center with a Qualified Recipient. Such Qualified Recipients must be able to properly care for the proffered items and must collect or conduct research on items of that type. The recommendation shall specify what item(s) the Center will offer, the item(s) to be provided to the Center in exchange, and the reasons for the exchange. The recommendation must also provide written certification that both the Center and the proposed exchange partner fully and legally own the item(s) proposed to be exchanged and their copyright. The Center's item(s) proposed for exchange also must meet the Center's criteria for deaccession.

- b. A statement from the proposed Qualified Recipient must also be included which proves full legal ownership of the offered item(s).
- c. The Board must give final approval of the proposed exchange.
- d. The DAC will carry out the transaction and maintain all records regarding exchanges.

4. *Purchase*

- a. Authority to recommend items for purchase rests with the Executive Director, the DAC, and the Committee, and is to be a joint decision among them. The Executive Director will make the final recommendation in case of dispute. Purchases are made from the annual acquisitions budget approved by the Board after a special request to the Board unless prior approval has been delegated (e.g. the Print Acquisition Program Fund).
- b. The Board will give the final approval of all purchases and ensure or allocate sufficient funds (unless prior approval has been allocated, e.g., the PAP).
- c. The DAC shall keep all records documenting all purchases.

D. Acquisition of Non-collection Items

Some items are accepted as donations to support and further the Center's objectives. Such donations will be acknowledged by a letter of thanks to the donor after acceptance by the Board. Non-collection items are not accessioned, are regarded as expendable, and carry no commitment for their permanent use or preservation. They may be disposed of at the discretion of the DAC who keeps records of acquisition and disposal. Any reproduction item(s) used in an exhibit are considered non-collection item(s).

IX. DEACCESSIONS AND DISPOSAL

Deaccessioning is the process of removing accessioned items permanently from the RHVA. The deaccession process is cautious, deliberate, and scrupulous, and when approved, is followed by the selection of the most appropriate means of disposal. Unless the donor has requested the return of any deaccessioned item, preference is given to a disposal method that benefits another collecting institution and, where possible, represents the original intent of the acquisition.

A. Deaccession Criteria

Item(s) to be considered for deaccession must be free from donor-imposed restrictions and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- 1. Outside the scope of the charter purpose of the Center and its collecting objectives.
- 2. Deteriorated beyond feasible conservation or unable to be properly preserved by the Center.
- 3. Duplicate or significantly derivative of other item(s) in the RHVA.
- 4. Presents a safety concern to other items and/or staff members.
- 5. The supposed donor is found not to have had legal title to the collection or item at the time of donation and the Center is unable to reach an agreement with the actual donor to retain the materials in the RHVA.
- 6. Eligible under NAGPRA for repatriation. Please see Terminology for more information regarding NAGPRA.

B. Deaccession Procedure

Before any item(s) is/are recommended for deaccessioning, the DAC will determine that the Center fully and legally owns the item(s). No items may be deaccessioned for three years after being accessioned into the RHVA unless they meet the criteria in Sections IX-A-2, 4, 5, or 6, above. The Center's Deed of Gift must reference this deaccession procedure.

1. The DAC, Executive Director, or any member of the Committee may recommend any items for deaccessioning if they deem that one or more criteria for deaccessioning has been met.
2. All recommendations for deaccessioning are made in writing to the Committee, and should include:
 - a. Full description of the item(s) recommended for deaccessioning
 - b. Reason for deaccessioning.
 - c. Copy of a recent appraisal, if available.
 - d. Copy of the Deed of Gift
3. The Committee brings all recommendations for deaccessions and proposed means of disposal to the Board for final approval and authorization.
4. The DAC carries out the approved disposal.
5. The DAC maintains all records documenting all deaccessions.
6. In the unlikely event of a donated object deaccessioned within three years of accessioning into the RHVA, the Center will follow the guidelines of the Tax Reform Act of 1984 and notify the donor and the IRS.

C. Notification of Donors

1. When an item has been selected for deaccessioning, the Center is not obligated to contact the donor or next of kin of the donor unless notification was requested as a condition of donation. In such cases the Center will comply with all contractual obligations to contact the donor(s) or next of kin.
2. In certain deaccessioning cases, even when not legally required, the Center's staff or Board may make reasonable efforts to notify donors and/or their families or personal representatives of a deaccession decision so as to offer an explanation. This action is recommended in order to provide transparency and strengthen donor relations.
3. There may be members of the public that will never accept some deaccession decisions even if taken with the Center's best interests in mind. The Center's staff will not be held accountable for donor and public interest issues raised after deaccessions have been approved and executed in adherence with this policy.

D. Means of Disposal

1. *Return to Donor*
Collections or item(s) approved for deaccessioning will be returned to their donor if it has been requested in the signed Deed of Gift or elsewhere.
2. *Exchange*
Collections or item(s) approved for deaccessioning may only be exchanged with a Qualified Recipient. The Qualified Recipient must collect the type of item(s) offered and must offer to the Center item(s) etc. that will enhance the RHVA. The institution selected must be able to properly care for the exchanged item(s).
3. *Donation*
Collections or item(s) approved for deaccessioning may be donated to a Qualified Recipient when the item(s) would benefit the collection of the other institution. The institution selected must collect the type of items offered and must be able to properly care for the donated item(s).
4. *Sale*
Collections or items approved for deaccessioning may be sold when a suitable exchange cannot be made, or when the value of the item is such as to preclude a donation. The sale may be by public sale, private sale, sealed bid, or public auction.

- a. Ethics of Sale: collections or items approved for deaccessioning may not be given, sold, or transferred publicly or privately to Center members, employees, Directors, or their families.
 - b. Proceeds: All proceeds resulting from the sale of deaccessioned collections or items shall be placed in an account to be used solely for new acquisitions or direct care of the RHVA.
5. *Destruction*
- Items that have deteriorated beyond repair, become infested beyond control of an exterminator, or are composed of potentially lethal or unsafe material will be destroyed in an appropriate manner. Prior to destruction, the accession number will be removed from the item.

X. LOANS

Both incoming and outgoing loans are a means of enhancing the RHVA and the reputation of the Center. Loans, however, will only be made to a Qualified Recipient after careful consideration regarding the stability of the item(s) to be lent; the ability of the borrowing organization to provide proper care, environment, and security; and provided that it is possible to safely transport the loaned item(s). No loans will be made to private individuals. At all times the preservation of the item(s) shall take priority.

A. Incoming Loans

Incoming loans may be accepted from individuals or institutions for purposes of exhibition, education, or research at the Center. In all such cases, the Center will exercise the same care in the documentation, handling, and preservation of the borrowed item as it would for items in the RHVA. The Center cannot normally store and maintain item(s) belonging to others that are not required for exhibition, education, or ongoing research.

1. Incoming Loan Criteria

- a. Loans may be initiated from a private individual, museum, historical society, library, corporation, or other institution ("Lender") and the Lender must be willing to declare that it believes itself to be the legal owner of all items proposed to be lent.
- b. The DAC will review the purpose of the loan to ensure that it is consistent with the mission of the Center.
- c. The Center will make every effort to avoid ethical concerns and/or a public perception of impropriety by the Center or Lender. Before entering into any contract with a Lender, the Center will assess whether potential conflicts of interest may exist. Center staff or Board members who have a perceived conflict of interest concerning the loan will be required to recuse themselves from the decision-making responsibilities involving the particular loan and/or exhibition.
- d. To prevent any conflicts of interest for the Center and/or the Lender, the Center will not accept a fee or commission for objects sold during or after termination of the loan.
- e. The Center will make all decisions concerning the content and display of any exhibition that incorporates loaned items, and for the care and use of any loaned items.
- f. Either party may terminate the loan at any time upon thirty days' written notice to the other party, sent by certified mail.
- g. The Lender is responsible for notifying the Center of any change of address.
- h. All loans will receive the same care as collections belonging to the Center except that no cleaning, repair, or alteration, including rematting or remounting, will occur without prior written authorization by the Lender. No conservation work will be done on a borrowed item except in the event of an emergency where the item requires immediate treatment to stabilize its condition and/or to prevent further damage or complete destruction. In such event the Executive Director and/or DAC will take reasonable steps to obtain verbal permission from

the Lender before treatment is begun and will request written confirmation or permission from the Lender.

- i. Expenses associated with the loan including packing, transportation, insurance, and, if applicable, conservation will be negotiated by the Center and the Lender.
- j. In the event that the Lender has made or will make an assignment for the benefit of creditors or become insolvent; is unable to pay its debts as they become due; has filed or will file a voluntary petition in bankruptcy; has filed a petition or will file a petition for reorganization, liquidation, dissolution, or similar relief; if any trustee, receiver, or liquidator has been or will be appointed for the assets or property of Lender; or if Lender has ceased or shall cease operations of its business as normally conducted, the Center, at its option, may terminate its loan from the Lender upon written notice and return the loaned item(s) immediately.

2. Incoming Loan Procedure

- a. Loans must be contracted for by written agreement between the Center and the Lender.
- b. The Center will accept loans only after approval by the Board following vetting by the Committee.
- c. Upon receipt, the DAC will document the item(s) received in accord with the conditions of the loan agreement.
- d. The DAC will be responsible for the loan transaction including transportation, shipping, insurance, and maintaining all records.

3. Returning Loan Procedure

- a. Upon the expiration or termination of the loan, the DAC will return the item(s) in accord with the conditions of the loan agreement.
- b. Loans will be returned by the date agreed upon, and to the lending party identified on the loan agreement at the stated address unless an authorized agent of the Lender has given written notice of change of ownership or location.
- c. Before returning the item(s), the DAC will document them in accord with the conditions of the loan agreement.
- d. The DAC will be responsible for the loan transaction including transportation, shipping, insurance, and maintaining all records.
- e. If the Center's efforts to contact the Lender within a reasonable period following the expiration of the loan are unsuccessful, and no special arrangements have been made for the return of the loan, the item(s) will be held in surplus at the Lender's risk and expense. If after the passage of the required amount of time according to Wisconsin's current Unclaimed and Abandoned Property Laws the property is not withdrawn, it may be deemed to become the unrestricted property of the Center.

B. Outgoing Loans

All institutions wishing to borrow any item(s) from the Center must meet the following criteria.

1. Outgoing Loan Criteria

- a. The purpose of the loan must be consistent with the mission of the Center.
- b. The Center must feel confident, according to the Executive Director and/or DAC's professional judgment and appropriate research or investigation, that the Borrower can properly care for the borrowed item(s), including the provision of suitable climate control, security, staffing, fire protection, and protection against theft and other common perils.

- c. The Borrower must agree to report any damage, breakage, or loss immediately to the DAC, and include written, photographic, or video documentation of such damage and written confirmation of any loss.
- d. No preservation, cleaning, modification, conservation, or repair work shall be done on any item(s) borrowed from the Center without the prior express written permission of the DAC or Executive Director. The only exception is if, in an emergency, any item(s) requires immediate conservation treatment to stabilize its condition, and/or to prevent further damage, or complete destruction. In such event, the Borrower will make every effort to obtain verbal permission from the DAC or Executive Director prior to beginning treatment. The DAC will follow-up with written confirmation of such permission.
- e. The Borrower may exhibit borrowed items that the DAC deems are in good condition.
- f. All exhibitions must provide a barrier so that items may not easily be touched by the viewing public. Small objects shall be displayed in vitrine cases with tops held in place by security screws.
- g. Borrowed item(s) placed on exhibit must include the following credit: “(Creator’s name), Collection of the Center for Railroad Photography & Art, www.railphoto-art.org” in all appropriate labels, any written accompanying materials (such as catalogs and websites) and for press releases.
- h. Transportation will be by an approved and mutually agreed upon shipper.
- i. The Borrower will assume all costs associated with the packing, transportation/shipping, and shipping insurance of the Center’s loaned item(s).
- j. The borrowed item(s) shall not be photographed or reproduced in any form without the prior express written permission of the DAC. Any permitted photos or videos will include credit for the Center in the form listed above.
- k. The duration of the loan will be for a specific period of time as mutually agreed upon, not to exceed one year. The loan may be renewed at the end of the term, at the discretion of the Center, and as recorded in a signed amendment to the loan agreement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Center may terminate a loan for any reason, in its sole discretion, upon sixty (60) days’ written notice to the Borrower, sent by certified mail.
- l. In the event that the Borrower has made or will make an assignment for the benefit of creditors or become insolvent; is unable to pay its debts as they become due; has filed or will file a voluntary petition in bankruptcy; has filed a petition or will file a petition for reorganization, liquidation, dissolution, or similar relief; if any trustee, receiver, or liquidator has been or will be appointed for the assets or property of Borrower; or if Borrower has ceased or shall cease operations of its business as normally conducted, the Center may terminate its loan to Borrower upon written notice and reclaim its loaned property immediately.
- m. Borrowed item(s) shall not be used for any commercial purposes without advance written consent of the Center.
- n. No borrowed item(s) shall be loaned to any third party by the Borrower without prior written permission of the Center.
- o. Packing for return shipping must be in the same manner and means as the original shipping, and with the same documentation provided.
- p. Only persons approved by the Center will be permitted to handle, move, or pack the Center’s item(s). At any time during the loan period, the Center may inspect the loaned item(s) on the premises of the Borrower during their regular business hours.
- q. Loan requests may be denied if, in the opinion of the DAC and in their sole discretion, the requested item(s) is of such rarity, value, significance, fragility, or is so related to ongoing needs of the Center or its users that the loan would not be in the Center’s best interests.

2. *Outgoing Loan Procedure*

- a. Written requests for the loan of any collections or item(s) must be received by the DAC at least three (3) months prior to the proposed date of the loan.
- b. The DAC will communicate with the Borrower to determine its suitability and ability to meet the loan criteria.
- c. The DAC will examine the item(s) proposed for loan to determine if said item(s) are suitable for loan, evaluating, among other criteria, the item's composition, condition, and ability to withstand the inevitable stresses incurred during a loan.
- d. The DAC will formally loan items only after approval by the Board following a vetting process by the Committee.
- e. The DAC will be responsible for the loan transaction including packing, transportation, and maintaining all records.

XI. Public Disclosure

This policy is accessible online on the Center's website and onsite at its office, with a reference to it on all Deeds of Gift to the Center. A copy shall be made available to any donor or prospective donor upon request.

This policy was accepted by the Board of the Center for Railroad Photography & Art Inc on October TBD, 2026.