



Committee Report

To: Councillor Garry Michi, Chair and
Members of the Museum Committee

From: Cathy McGirr
Director, Museum & Cultural Services

Date: February 2, 2023

Re: Indigenous Archaeology Report February 2023

Staff Recommendation:

That the ownership of the AMICK collection be redirected from the Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre (BCM&CC) to Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON)

And that, the BCM&CC confirm written approval from the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism (MCM) Archaeology division to authorize the redirection of this collection from the BCM&CC to SON.

Background:

Museums are recognized for playing a vital role regarding archaeological material. Museums can assist in the preservation of material, aid in preserving records of investigation and research and by promoting preservation and appreciation of archaeological sites through exhibitions, research, and programming.

The BCM&CC has a long history of utilizing archaeology sites and material to educate and inform the public through a variety of research, programs, interpretation, and exhibitions. The collaborative partnership with SON in the creation of the temporary exhibition River Mouth Speaks exhibition in 2010, the Anishnabbwe Endaat permanent gallery in 2018 are just two recent examples of this work. The BCM&CC and SON have a history of collaboration and have partnered on a variety of projects to be inclusive of Indigenous history, culture, and voice.

As part of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action [Calls to Action English2.pdf \(exactdn.com\)](#) Museums and Archives have specifically been called upon in Action 67, “We call upon the federal government to provide funding to the Canadian Museum Association to undertake, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, a national review of museum policies and best practices to determine the level of compliance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and to make recommendations.”

The Canadian Museum Association (CMA) recently released its response to the TRC Calls to Action #67 in the form of their “Moved to Action: Activating UNDRIP in Canadian Museums” report [CMA | Canadian Museums Association](#). Section 40 of the report discusses the subject of repatriation and collections management, as repatriation is at the heart of supporting

Indigenous cultural sovereignty and asks the question of “how are museums with indigenous collections supporting this process?” they further state that this section of the report should be a priority for any museum that works with or have Indigenous collections.

Indigenous archaeological collections have been in the BCM&CC either on loan or permanently for many years. Several of these materials date back to the early 1960’s and have been utilized primarily through permanent or temporary exhibitions.

In 2017 the archaeologist and license holder Michael Henry of the AMICK collection was directed by the MCM to deposit the collection at the BCM&CC, resulting in the BCM&CC ownership of this collection. As part of the ongoing discussions and collaboration with SON the BCM&CC recognizes its responsibility to return collections to Indigenous communities supporting Indigenous cultural sovereignty. The BCM&CC has undertaken a review of all Indigenous archaeology collections within our collections and is in the process of collaborating with all appropriate parties (MCM, License holders and Loan holders) to facilitate return of these collections to SON.

It is important to note that while the collections will no longer be owned or physically housed at the BCM&CC, there is a strong desire and mutual understanding between SON and the BCM&CC that loans of these materials to the BCM&CC from SON as the rightful owners will continue so interpretation and education of these collections through joint programming and exhibitions will be a priority for the broader public audience.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

There are no financial, staffing, or IT considerations associated with this report. Legal considerations under Section 66(1) of the Ontario Heritage Act provides the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism (or delegate) with the power to direct artifacts to be deposited in a public institution to be held in trust for the people of Ontario.

Interdepartmental Consultation:

Interdepartmental consultation with the Office of the CAO has occurred in relation to the Reconciliation Plan.

Link to Strategic Goals and Elements:

Linked to the Corporation of the County of Bruce, Reconciliation Plan

Link to Museum Strategic Goals:

Specific links to UNDRIP, TRC Calls to Action and CMA Moved to Action Report Section 40

Report Author:

Cathy McGirr
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Approved for Submission:

Derrick Thomson

Chief Administrative Officer