



Mackinac Island State Park Commission
Policy

Code of Ethics

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March 4, 2022, p.

Preamble

The Mackinac Island State Park Commission and its staff and volunteers recognize that to maintain public confidence in and support for the purposes of this institution it is necessary to adhere to a high standard of professional and personal conduct. To properly fulfill its mission, Mackinac State Historic Parks (MSHP) will follow the principles and guidelines in this Code of Ethics. As a guideline for ethical behavior MSHP subscribes to the American Alliance of Museums Code of Ethics for Museums (1993, 2000).

As a State of Michigan entity, the commission recognizes its public service role is paramount. Our properties, collections, and information are to benefit the public. We recognize our statutory charge to administer these resources but by affirming our code of ethics we go beyond this to maintain our integrity and warrant public confidence.

Governance

The commission takes its responsibility seriously to protect and enhance the resources, collections, and programs under its care. The commission ensures that all employees understand that resources are developed to support its mission. The commission also acknowledges that it maintains the relationship with staff in which shared roles are recognized and separate responsibilities respected. The commission recognizes and supports professional standards and practices to guide its operations.

Professional Conduct

Commissioners, staff, and volunteers will adhere to State of Michigan “Standards of Conduct for Public Officers and Employees” set forth in the State Ethics Act (Act 196, 1973; Amended April 19, 2005). The State Ethics Act defines unethical conduct as a violation of one or more of seven standards:

1. Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information.
2. Representation of personal opinion as that of government agencies.
3. Use of government resources for personal gain or benefit.
4. Solicitation or acceptance of gifts or loans.
5. Use of official position or confidential information for personal profit or financial benefit.

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6. Engaging in employment or rendering service which is incompatible with performance of official duties.
7. Participation in regulatory or supervisory functions over a business entity in which the officer or employee has a financial or personal interest.

Collections

Collecting activity and management are governed by the Collections Policy. The acquisition of objects, guided by our mission and scope of collections, ensure that they are lawfully held, made available to the public, and promote the public good. Acquisition, disposal, and loan activities are conducted in a manner that protects and preserves these natural and cultural resources and discourages illicit trade in such materials. We recognize the special nature of human remains, funerary, and sacred objects. Acquisition of such objects will only be considered after consultation with cultural representatives of impacted communities.

The core of a museum is its collection. Research projects, exhibits, educational programs should all stem from the collection and serve to enhance its value. An artifact's importance derives from its context. Thus, the documentation about provenance, use, and acquisition must be preserved in an orderly and retrievable form, and must be transferred to our successors in good, if not enhanced, condition.

Deaccessioning of collections is exercised after careful deliberation and with caution. MSHP considers the needs of the collection, the best interests of the public, the donor's wishes, the clarity of title, the tax status of the item, and the fiduciary responsibilities of the commission. Once a decision to deaccession is made, the method of disposal is carefully considered, which includes transfer to another museum or sale. The proceeds from the sale of deaccessioned collections are limited to the purchase of new acquisitions for the historical collection or conservation of existing collection items. Proceeds are placed in the segregated Martin and Patricia Jahn Collections Development Fund (see Commission Policy: Collection Development Fund, 2004). Expenditures from the fund are recommended by collections staff, reviewed by the Collections Committee, and approved by the director. New acquisitions are ultimately approved by the commission.

Staff members and commissioners must be aware of possible conflicts of interest involved with personally collecting artifacts related to the museum's collections. Employees and commissioners should not compete with the institution in any collecting activity, and the institution has the right to purchase, at the price paid by the individual, any artifact that falls within MSHP's collecting scope added to a personal collection. This right extends only to items acquired during the individual's association with the institution and does not include personal gifts and bequests made and accepted in good faith. To avoid the perception of a conflict of interest, MSHP will not purchase artifacts included in a personal collection before or added after the individual's affiliation with the institution.

MSHP must make every effort to avoid conflict of interest. To this end, employees, volunteers, and commissioners may not borrow MSHP's collections for personal use, nor may these individuals or their representatives acquire by any means any artifact deaccessioned by the MSHP. Artifacts from a personal collection will not be stored in the institution's storage facilities unless the items have been loaned to MSHP for a specific purpose. Collection items will not be used to furnish MISPC offices or housing units.

Dealing is defined as the purchase and sale of objects for personal gain. Staff members, volunteers and commissioners will not deal in objects similar or related to objects collected by the institution during their association with MSHP.

Documentation and research completed by staff members for MSHP belong to the institution. Scholarly papers given or manuscripts written as part of the staff member's job will be owned by the institution as set forth under the works-for-hire doctrine of Title 17, USC. As the owner of the staff member's work under this act, the institution will consult with the employee before publishing or otherwise publicly releasing such work. Research, manuscripts, or papers completed on a staff member's personal time belong to the staff member.

Institutional collecting should not be a competitive activity. We will cooperate with other institutions with similar interests to ensure that important artifacts and documents are placed in the repository best able to care for them. Donors offering artifacts that do not fall under MSHP's scope of collections will be referred to other institutions.

The Mackinac Island State Park Commission will not license reproductions from the collections without the advice of the Collections Committee. All reproductions produced for commercial sale will be closely monitored to ensure standards of quality and advertising which will not reflect poorly upon the institution. Interpretive staff members may make reproductions of collections items for use on the sites as part of their interpretive activities but may not sell the items for personal gain.

Archaeology

MSHP will protect and preserve archaeological resources located on lands under its stewardship. Archaeological projects undertaken by MSHP will adhere to professional standards of excavation, recording and dissemination of data. MSHP follows the standards set by the Michigan Antiquities Act of 1929, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act, and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, and the ethical principles set forth by professional archaeological societies.

MSHP supports the efforts of the archaeology profession to stop the looting of archaeological sites. MSHP will not purchase or sell archaeological items. The proper authorities will be notified of any attempt to sell artifacts of questionable or illicit origin to MSHP.

Programs

A primary role of MSHP is to share Mackinac's rich natural and cultural history through a wide variety of public programs. These programs fulfill an important part of the MSHP mission.

MSHP programs will be based on diligent research and intellectual integrity. MSHP programs will meet the needs and expectations of its users and will be accessible to the widest possible audiences consistent with its resources and preservation responsibilities.

MSHP programs will support its mission, respect pluralistic values and traditions, and accurately reflect the cultural context of the subject matter.

MSHP will follow professional standards and keep documentary records for the preservation and

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restoration of its resources. MSHP will practice and promote the preservation and conservation of natural resources in all programs and activities.

Events, exhibits, activities and all other MSHP public programs receiving external funding or other support must be compatible with the museum's mission and support its public trust responsibilities.

Adopted by the Mackinac Island State Park Commission on May 27, 2006 and revised March 4, 2022.