

## **PRATT MUSEUM COLLECTIONS PLAN**

Approved as the Guidelines for Collections Development  
by the Museum Collections Committee  
September 4, 1996

Revised as the Collections Plan by the Museum Collections Committee  
March 15, 2007

Approved by the Pratt Museum Board of Directors  
April 4, 2007

### Preamble

The Collections Plan is a guideline for thoughtful and systematic collections growth for the Pratt Museum. It is based on an examination of what objects we have and what collecting gaps exist, identifies deaccession candidates, articulates how the objects should serve the Museum's Mission and the community's and visitors' needs, and creates an intellectual framework and vision for collecting in the future. This document will guide the Curator of Collections, Museum Collections Committee, and Board of Directors in making collections acquisition decisions.

The act of collecting and preserving objects is the cornerstone of all museums. Museums answer a basic human need to collect, identify, and understand patterns in our world. Collections are used for exhibits, educational programs, and research. The Pratt Museum's areas of emphasis are natural science and cultural collections in anthropology (ethnography and archaeology), history, art, earth sciences (geology and paleontology), and biology (plants and animals) of the region.

The initial Guidelines for Collections Development were developed by the Museum Collections Committee and the Curator of Collections from 1988 to 1995. This earlier document was a listing of acquisition priorities based on topical areas of interest organized by subject disciplines. The current Collections Plan is an elucidation of this and goes beyond a listing of what we collect to include why we collect what we do.

As is typical of Pratt Museum initiatives, development of the current Collections Plan was a community effort and took place from October 2006 to April 2007. To solicit input from the community, the Curator of Collections and the Museum Collections Committee developed a *Community Collections Questionnaire*, which was circulated at various community centers and via the Homer News. In addition, they issued press releases, published a *Point of View*

article in the Homer News, conducted a *Coffee Table* radio call-in program on KBBI, and hosted an evening *Behind-The-Scenes Tour* and community conversation on *The Keeping Place*. Following these events, the Curator and the Committee compiled input and crafted the new Collections Plan following the AAM Outline for a Collections Plan, which was posted on the Museum's website at [www.prattmuseum.org](http://www.prattmuseum.org). The revised Collections Plan was approved by the Museum Collections Committee on 15 March 2007 and by the Board of Directors on 4 April 2007.

Renewed inspiration for more inclusive community collaboration on the Collections Plan came from the keynote presentation *Changing the Rules of Engagement—Museums and their Communities* by Barbara Franco at the 2005 Museums Alaska Conference. She stated:

*Partnerships have become essential to the way museums do business. As we embark on new subject matters, more complex interpretations, and shared authority, it is clear that we can't do it alone or in isolation. Partnerships and collaborations have become an important working strategy.*

*One of the most difficult issues for many museums looking to foster community partnerships is what and how to collect. This is at the very heart of any institution.*

Consequently, the Collections Plan builds on the previous curatorial listing of regional topics by including the community's vision; responses to the Community Questionnaire (attached at end of section) have been interwoven throughout the Plan. As always, there is a dynamic balance between integrating all of the community's ideas and developing a feasible plan. While not every idea could be incorporated, each was discussed and considered in light of the Museum's Mission. The Plan also includes the intellectual framework and vision of what we will be collecting, why it is important, what it is about the Kachemak Bay region that is significant in each discipline, and the role collections have in fulfilling our Museum Mission. Finally, the Collections Plan was also brought into alignment with *Kachemak Bay—An Exploration of People and Place*, the Museum's comprehensive master plan for new exhibitions, public programs, and collections based on extensive community and visitor input.

The Collections Plan is complementary to the Manual of Collections Policies and Procedures and the Long-range Plan for Collections Management and Conservation developed by the Curator of Collections and approved by the Museum Collections Committee and Board of Directors in 2006. The purpose of

these guidelines is to allow procedural freedom of Museum staff to transact routine collections activities under these guidelines without approval of the Museum Collections Committee and Board of Directors. It is assumed that the Museum has the storage facilities, expertise, time, documentation, and funds to curate the acquisitions. Only those items beyond the scope of these guidelines require review and approval by the Museum Collections Committee and Board of Directors for acquisition. Normally, such objects would require substantial effort, space, time, or funds for their acquisition and curation or depart from the geographic focus stated in the Museum's Mission.

### Museum Mission Statement and Values

The Pratt Museum is dedicated to the process of education by exploring the natural environment and human experience relative to the Kachemak Bay region of Alaska and its place in the world. The Museum seeks to inspire self-reflection and dialogue in its community and visitors through exhibitions, programs, and collections in the arts, sciences, and humanities.

The Pratt Museum is committed to fulfilling its mission by—

- ◆ Stimulating life-long wonderment and curiosity through relevant, creative, and interactive educational programs and exhibitions.
- ◆ Encouraging stewardship for the well-being of our cultural and natural resources.
- ◆ Sharing information and ideas with honesty and respect for diverse viewpoints to encourage a more informed and responsible citizenry.
- ◆ Fostering trust, responsiveness, and a spirit of cooperation between the Museum and our community.
- ◆ Promoting institutional integrity, high professional standards, and fiscal responsibility through collaborative teamwork in all Museum endeavors.

### Collections Plan

The overall goal is to obtain representative collections of objects that support the Mission of the Pratt Museum. First priority for acquisition shall be given to objects that are referenced in this Collections Plan, especially in those areas threatened by inflation in value, irreversible action by humans, disappearance into private collections, or any other reason that might make future collection difficult, infeasible, or impossible. Second priority shall be given to those objects that meet the ongoing research, exhibition, and educational programs of the Museum (e.g., *Kachemak Bay—An Exploration of People and Place*). Third priority shall be given to those objects that fill gaps and improve the comparative series in existing collections, as well as to materials that add to

the documentation of existing museum specimens.

The overriding rationale for these priorities is that we are not collecting the past so much as collecting for the future. While the collection needs of the future cannot be wholly anticipated, it is certain that the future will encompass change in our region—cultural, faunal, and landscape. One common concern expressed by the community is that the Pratt Museum document change as it has occurred and continues to occur. Furthermore, as one community member explained, the collection of new objects is needed to engage new parts of our community. The public’s input also revealed that a critical aspect to the Collections Plan should be to preserve local knowledge in the face of this inevitable change. As one community member expressed it, “it is one thing to have a few artifacts, but do we know how people did things?” This need for thorough documentation of all objects, whether through oral histories, written stories, or other accompanying data, drives the future direction of the Museum’s acquisition and deaccession activities. In essence, objects derive meaning only from the stories they can tell.

The Museum’s collections represent (in order of priority) Kachemak Bay, lower Cook Inlet, the Kenai Peninsula, southcentral Alaska, and Alaska. The Kachemak Bay region is home to culturally diverse coastal communities, which make their living from the sea. Our community character and institutional strengths point to emphasis on the themes of homesteading and the history of settlement, fishing, native cultures, environment, art, and our shared ties to the northern marine environment that connect us all. Our place is fertile for exploring who we are and where we live so that we may preserve our distinctive cultural traditions and environment with integrity, and preserve this knowledge for our community and museum visitors alike.

## I. Cultural Collections (Anthropology, History, and Art)

The Kachemak Bay region has a rich and varied human presence. This place is unique because of the diverse cultures that are represented. Michelle Ravenmoon, a Dena’ina Subsistence Coordinator for Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, encourages museums to create "places that help us remember." This should be the cornerstone for future acquisitions and enhancement of existing collections.

The study of human history and the timeline of the Kachemak Bay region over millennia are principal interests of the Pratt Museum audience, particularly of researchers and the visiting public—both local residents and travelers from elsewhere. What people have lived here, how we have survived, how we experience our world, how we make a living, what the challenges of living here

are, and how we are connected to each other and to the greater world—these are questions of great interest to our audience. The Pratt Museum recognizes that through the use of art, rituals, stories and celebrations, we promote understanding of our cultures, clarify our worlds, and stoke the fires of our imaginations. We may be physically isolated, but we are connected to a greater world in many ways. We form communities to survive. Our relationships and rituals, our interactions and language help us anchor and sustain our place in the world.

Kachemak Bay has long been a place of convergence. Native people of diverse heritage were drawn here from all directions. The commonalties among the Native peoples from the Alaska Peninsula, Bristol Bay, Lower Cook Inlet, and Prince William Sound brought them together. We know them here as the Sugpiaq Alutiiq. More recent arrivals were the Dena'ina, an Athabaskan people who migrated centuries ago to our shores from interior Alaska, adapting their riverine and land-based hunting techniques to the marine environment. Later came non-Native settlers, from homesteaders and Russian Old Believers to Barefooters, Spit Rats, and artists. The stories and lives of these settlers are revealed to us through archaeological and ethnographic artifacts, music and dance, arts and crafts, historic and contemporary photographs, oral histories, and living storytellers and tradition bearers.

#### A. Anthropology Collections (Archaeology and Ethnology)

The Pratt Museum Anthropology collections consist of over 3,000 objects. Archaeological artifacts excavated from local sites represent well-documented research collections of the earliest known human inhabitants of Kachemak Bay, dating from Ocean Bay Culture 4500 years BP, through Kachemak Tradition, to prehistoric Dena'ina Athabaskans around 1400 AD. Material culture includes basketry, dolls, fishing and hunting tools, watercraft, household utensils, clothing and ceremonial objects representing several regional Native Alaskan cultures: the Athabaskan (Dena'ina), Eskimo (Inupiaq, Siberian Yupik, Central Yup'ik, and Alutiiq Sugpiaq), and Unangan (Aleut). These objects are of cultural, historical and aesthetic value to community members and visiting patrons alike. The Pratt Museum is recognized by the Kenaitze Indian Tribe of Dena'ina Athabaskans as a regional repository for its cultural materials, and the tribe has entrusted the Museum to care for its repatriated counting cords and newly excavated archaeological materials from the Upper Russian River.

The Archaeology and Ethnology Collections reflect the Museum's philosophy of promoting a sense of place and the interconnectedness of

people, past and present, in the Kachemak Bay region. The primary role of these collections is to support the museum’s mission to “inspire self-reflection and dialogue.” Following this intellectual framework, future acquisitions should continue to highlight the various cultural groups of Kachemak Bay. Acquisition priorities will emphasize the cultural history of the region for educational purposes, exhibition, and advanced study and research purposes. These cultural objects should be well documented and contextualized.

1. All regional cultures—acquire materials opportunistically from known regional cultures, including but not limited to Ocean Bay Culture, Arctic Small Tool Tradition (which includes basal component materials), Kachemak Tradition, Yukon Island Bluff Site Culture, Dena'ina Athabaskan, and Alutiiq Sugpiaq.
2. Promote recognition that the Pratt Museum is the most appropriate institution to house artifactual collections from Kachemak Bay.
3. Develop partnerships and collaborations with other museums and agencies, such as the Alaska Native Heritage Center and University of Alaska, for repository and exchange, and for educational and interpretive purposes.
4. Identify and begin selective deaccessioning of poorly documented objects and those without adequate authenticity, physical integrity, or relevance to the Museum’s mission.
5. Specific Cultures (listed from oldest to youngest)
  - a. Ocean Bay Culture — participate when possible in excavation of this culture, identify materials from this culture that may exist in private collections, and acquire objects from private landowners.
  - b. Arctic Small Tool Tradition (basal component)—obtain donation or loan of these materials from local private collections.
  - c. Kachemak Tradition— participate when possible in excavation of this culture, and supplement and maintain existing collection from Point West of Halibut Cove.

d. Yukon Island Bluff Site — obtain a representative portion of the Abbott family collection as gift or loan.

e. Dena'ina Prehistoric—obtain materials when available and act as regional cultural repository for the Kenaitze Tribe I.R.A. for archaeological materials from Kenai and Russian River sites.

f. Dena'ina Historic—participate in an excavation, if possible, of a locally known site and obtain all or part of the collection. Act as a regional cultural repository with the Kenaitze Tribe I.R.A. and manage, interpret, and exhibit loaned objects of this culture. Obtain materials and oral histories of the Dena'ina people.

g. Alutiiq Sugpiaq—obtain materials and oral histories of the Alutiiq Sugpiaq people. Obtain traditional cultural materials when possible.

## B. History Collections

Community rests upon our sense of place, our connection to the land, the sea, and to each other. Appreciating the early settlers' experience is to embrace the meaning of community and the importance of remembering and retelling their stories.

First settled by gold seekers in the mid-1890s, the nascent community of Homer on the northern shore of Kachemak Bay was named after miner and notorious con man Homer Pennock. There was no gold in the hills, just coal. Homer became a turn-of-the-century coal-shipping hub, metamorphosing over the decades into a fishing hamlet and mecca for homesteaders, artists, and others. Husbanders, fox farmers, and fishermen carved from the land and sea a self-sufficient life. Cool weather and cold soils, a rainy hay season, and unstable markets worked against financial success, though many tried raising bees, cattle, chickens, goats, turkeys, horses, rabbits, sheep, and fox. Gardens yielded sustenance. In the rich glacial till and long summer light, cabbages grew three to a wheelbarrow. Children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of many homesteaders live here today. The fact that life in the small communities of Kachemak Bay required courage, the ability to endure economic uncertainty, and a chameleon-like way of jumping into new enterprises paid off for people. They shaped wilderness into community.

Alaska is undergoing familiar changes that occurred elsewhere in the United States generations ago when traditional ways of life and wild spaces began to vanish. In the Kachemak Bay region, families find it more difficult by the year to make a living commercial fishing. As with all cultures, Native people have adapted their traditional subsistence lifestyles to the modern world. Early settlers are still here to tell their story, although we are losing them month-by-month. This universal dance of culture and environment over time is an essential story to be documented by the history collections, particularly oral histories and photographs.

The History Collection of over 4,200 objects features Russian and American influences represented by trapping, whaling, fishing, mining, fox farming, and agricultural tools; religious memorabilia; and household items. The historic Harrington cabin is furnished with a homestead collection of hand-tooled equipment, catalogue-ordered household goods, and handmade personal items encompassing the most complete time capsule of self-reliant homestead life in Homer from 1920-1960, along with the 1929 Nordby outhouse, the oldest two-seater in town. Other resources such as maps, nautical charts, surveys, correspondence, newspapers, journals, artifacts of ingenious local design, clothing and household goods, fishing gear, artworks, historic and contemporary photographs, oral history tapes, and films document regional homesteading and community development. A treasured collection of thematic quilts, produced by community quilters, portrays local natural and cultural history. Association with the Kachemak Bay Wooden Boat Society has yielded collaborative restorations of three recently acquired historic boats. The Photo Archives consist of over 7,000 historical images documenting community development and Kachemak Bay and over 6,000 images of the museum's institutional history and activities. Ninety-two-year-old Ted Palmer returned briefly to Homer to donate photographs of his homestead life from 1920-1927, the oldest known photographs of family life in this area, and provided an extraordinary oral history interview.

1. Collect and document private collections of materials pertaining to all eras, including artifacts, correspondence, diaries, photographs, maps, etc. Attempt to obtain materials for preservation in the Museum or to donate to more appropriate archives.

2. Age of Exploration (1741-1899)—document early coal and gold



mining activities with artifacts, photos, maps, documents, etc. To the extent possible, document the Russian Period and interface with Native cultures.

3. Early 20th Century (1900-1930)—Collect materials and transcribe oral histories from the following industries—

- a. herring fishery
- b. fur farming
- c. salmon fisheries
- d. commercial mining (Red Mountain chromium mining, commercial coaling along Homer bluff)

4. Recent (1930-present)—

- a. Early History of Homer—conduct and transcribe oral history tapes discussing origin and early development, and collect materials, photographs, and documents opportunistically. Collect artifacts and oral histories related to North Shore settlement during Alaska's territorial days.
- b. Homesteading—identify and obtain important items lacking in our collections, such as a kitchen cabinet and all types of clothing, and make an effort to obtain them. Maintain the Harrington Cabin and Drew Collection contents as a premiere interpretive and exhibit venue of the homestead era.
- c. Geophysical Exploration—document oil and gas exploration and transportation, lease sales, cancellations, etc. that have impacted Kachemak Bay.
- d. Historic Buildings in Homer—photodocument historic buildings. Create a schedule to photodocument the city and environs on a regular basis (e.g., every 5 years). Document the same areas each time to show changes. Add new areas as development occurs (e.g., Homer Public Library, Islands and Ocean Visitor Center, ice rink, Homer Spit bike trail, first traffic light). Include ground and aerial views if possible (e.g., new subdivisions, changes in vegetation patterns, spruce bark beetle effects on forest).
- e. Maritime History and Fishing Industry—collect

representative fishing artifacts, such as traps, nets, floats, gear types, pots, nautical equipment, historic boats, photographs and oral histories of fishermen, and information on historic fishing sites. Document presence of U. S. Coast Guard in Homer. The collection of representative fishing and other workboats is a long-term objective of the Museum, but requires careful review by the Curator and Museum Collections Committee.

f. Aviation History—collect artifacts, photographs, and oral histories of local bush pilots and planes, construction of the Homer Airport, and the Civilian Conservation Corps.

g. Military History— collect artifacts, photographs, and oral histories of servicemen, document WWII and the Cold War impact on the community (Ohlson Mountain D.E.W. Radar Site).

h. History of Schools and Education— collect artifacts, photographs, and oral histories of teachers, students, schools, and school activities.

i. Good Friday Earthquake and Other Natural Disasters— Collect artifacts that document the earthquake and other community-altering natural events, such as sand bags, damaged goods, oral histories, and photographs.

j. Social, Ethnic and Occupational Populations—Document through artifacts and media the diverse groups that have occupied the Kachemak Bay region, such as Russian Old Believers, Fox River ranchers, hard hats and earth movers, cannery workers, Spit Rats, etc.

5. Anniversaries—find specific anniversaries or other events to commemorate in order to encourage donation of materials (e.g., Homer Centennial).

6. Other community histories—encourage residents to prepare their own histories. The Museum will cooperate and support these projects and obtain copies of final documents—Seldovia, Port Graham, Nanwalek, Anchor Point, Halibut Cove, The Barefooters Society, Russian Old Believers villages, old Kenai, Ninilchik, and community cemetery histories. Investigate archiving KBBi public

radio programs that document community change. Solicit oral histories from seniors to preserve knowledge of how objects were used in daily life.

## 7. Contemporary

- a. Collect and document materials pertaining to community life, current events, and activities that might prove of historical interest in the future (e.g. fishing industry, tourism development, oil and gas activities—spills, lease sales, exploration, etc.).
- b. Compile a list of community organizations dating from the origins of Homer, and decide which need documentation in the archives (charter, dates, purpose, mission, activities, members, etc.).
- c. Short-lived Phenomena—Collect artifacts related to contemporary issues in the region (e.g., eagle feeding, bear baiting, trapping). Collect product labels and containers of local products representing community diversification (e.g., herbal teas and botanicals, wild berry products, soaps, hats). Collect locally manufactured goods produced by cottage industries that reflect the relationship between people and the environment (e.g., ephemera such as T-shirts, buttons and bumper stickers).
- d. Do not collect information on regional political entities (e.g., City of Homer), Homer weekly newspapers, or documents collected systematically by other local institutions.

## C. Art Collections

1. The Pratt Museum collects significant works of art in all media by primarily local and Alaska artists. All art acquisitions must fall within the scope of the Pratt Museum Mission Statement. The art acquisition program is a balance of theme-driven and artist-driven selections. Themes emphasize community interests and museum programmatic initiatives, particularly as they relate to people and place—the unifying theme in museum benchmark exhibits and programs. Selections of particular artists' work reflect the history and diversity of art in the community, offer local artists a sense of

vision and place, and connect with the broader art community.

2. Acquisitions are selected by the Art Acquisition Committee, which consists of three Museum staff (Director, Exhibits Director, and Curator of Collections) and at least five community members (represented by at least three artists). All acquisitions will be recommended to the Museum Collections Committee at its regular meetings for final approval. Funds for art purchases accrue in the Museum's Art Acquisition Fund through donations from art patrons and the Rasmuson Art Acquisition Initiative.

3. Selection criteria for artworks are based on the following—

The artwork:

- a) is considered of high artistic merit
- b) has historical significance to our community and artists
- c) reflects the artistic vitality and diversity of our community
- d) shows preference for local artists but is not exclusive of work from other areas
- e) educates the community about the larger art world
- f) is exhibitable locally and can represent our community in traveling exhibitions
- g) is reflective of the principal themes of the Pratt Museum benchmark exhibition program
- h) is a theme of interest to the Kachemak Bay community
- i) meets general acquisition criteria set forth in the Museum Collections Policy Manual

4. Objects lacking adequate documentation, physical integrity, and relevance to the Museum's Mission should be deaccessioned.

## II. Natural Science Collections (Biology and Earth Sciences)

Kachemak Bay is one of the most ecologically productive and diverse estuaries in Alaska and this rich ecosystem has supported extensive human use of both terrestrial and marine natural resources. Regional landforms have been shaped both by tectonic processes that still influence the area today, as well as the sculpting forces of glaciers, rivers, and ocean waves. Seven glaciers flow into the southern side of the Bay from icefields in the rugged mountain peaks of the Kenai Mountains, while land on the north side has a more gentle topography. Terrestrial habitats include alpine tundra, spruce forests, mixed deciduous forests, grasslands, and salt marshes. Kachemak Bay has a tidal range in excess of 8 meters (~28 feet), which is among the largest in North America, and the rise and fall of the tide help structure and allow access to amazing intertidal habitats. This diversity also extends to the bottom of the Bay, which encompasses steep and rocky fjord habitats, seagrass beds, kelp forests, extensive mudflats and glacial outwash fans. A diverse range of invertebrates, fish, mammals and seabirds take advantage of the niches provided by these habitats, on both a year-round and seasonal basis.

Our place in this subarctic coastal ecosystem has profoundly influenced both past and current human activities. Conversely, human activities have also impacted the structure and functioning of the natural ecosystem in which we live. How is the balance between the natural world and human activity within it maintained, what happens if we don't take care of our place, what are the effects of global warming, and how can we take care of our place—these are questions of burning interest to our audience. Alaska is called the great land, but its wilderness is not unlimited and there are bounds to which humans can sustainably exploit its resources. In Kachemak Bay, many people still take their living from the land and water. With use comes profound responsibility. Who owns the land, its oil, and its wild songs? Themes of subsistence living, sharing resources, and human conflict predominate. Disasters large and small occur when we are careless about our place and when natural forces, such as earthquakes, loom large. Our actions and responses can either topple or preserve our place. There are more of us now, our lifestyles are more pervasive, and the consequences of our acts are multiplied. How do we become aware, create new ways of being, new practices? The Pratt Museum natural science collections aim to reflect the diversity of our natural environment, the traditional relationships of people to place, how technology can help us monitor and learn more about our environment, and current research projects in the Kachemak Bay region.

#### A. Biology

From underwater kelp forests and seagrass to spruce trees and alpine lichen, and from clams and whales to bears and seabirds, Kachemak Bay

contains amazingly diverse flora and fauna. The Pratt Museum Biology Collections attempt to represent this diversity and help the community to address the following questions: How do we value our native plants and animals? How can we understand and evaluate the impacts of climate change and other human and natural stressors on these communities?

In spite of Alaska's image as an unlimited cornucopia of natural resources, evidence to the contrary can be found in Kachemak Bay, as well as in other parts of Alaska. In a very real sense, the region is a cauldron of ferment as intensification of human activity modifies the natural environment, and is in turn modified by the resultant change. This universal dance of culture and environment is the essence of our story. How is the balance between the natural world and humans maintained?

The Biology Collections consist of over 5,200 specimens or units. A valuable marine life collection represents a baseline study of marine plants and animals (wet-preserved) and drift/beach materials (dry-preserved) of Kachemak Bay. The marine aquaria contain up to 250 live intertidal organisms and local commercial species such as crab, salmon and bottom fish. Thirty mounts of marine and freshwater fish feature common species of Kachemak Bay. Mounts, study skins and skeletons of birds represent the 220 species documented locally. A collection of 30 locally salvaged marine mammals is prepared largely as articulated skeletons and is supplemented by a representative collection of mammal study skins, furs, and skeletons of local species. The museum mounted a 54-volunteer salvage effort in summer 1999 to recover a beached gray whale in the Bay, one of over 100 gray whales that died along the northwest coast during their annual northward migration that year. A Russian colleague donated a massive rib of an extinct Steller's Sea Cow from Bering Island. A herbarium of 1,715 specimens represents 347 species of plants from around the Bay and remote, offshore islands. An outdoor botanical garden portrays regional biotic communities from beach to tundra.

## 1. Botany

Major vegetation changes have occurred around Kachemak Bay throughout times of human habitation with little known about human effects on or responses to these changes. Furthermore, there is a notable distinction between vegetation communities found on the northern and southern sides of the Kachemak Bay. This results from a dynamic gradient created by the meeting of

maritime and continental climates. The botany collection should document not only the distribution of plants in and around Kachemak Bay but also the changes in plant diversity and abundance patterns as vegetation types shift in dominance over time.

- a. Herbarium—Obtain specimens of each species of terrestrial and aquatic plant in the Kachemak Bay area, including life cycle, seasonal and geographic variation, and parts such as seeds, cones, bark, and roots. Collect both vascular and non-vascular plants, such as mosses and seaweeds. Collect invasive plant species to document their arrival in Kachemak Bay.
- b. Fungi—photodocument species and obtain spore prints.
- c. Botanical Garden—living specimens in the garden are considered to be a type of museum collection. However, herbarium specimens are not normally obtained from the garden but are wild-collected.

## 2. Zoology

Kachemak Bay is endowed with a relatively high abundance of wildlife and there is much community interest in conserving it. Wildlife provides many things to people, including tangible items like food, as well as the more intangible benefits provided by the opportunity to see wild birds and animals in their natural setting. As our society depends less directly on wildlife to provide sustenance, we find ourselves at a crossroads in conservation. Will people choose to preserve wildlife as symbols and cohesive units of nature, or will we consider other animals expendable to our human progress? The collections seek to represent the faunal diversity of the Kachemak Bay region, in both marine and terrestrial environments.

### a. Invertebrates

1. Dry collections should be obtained of representative groups of corals, mollusks, crustaceans, echinoderms, and other specimens suitable for dry collecting. Fluid-preserved collections of all invertebrates will be obtained opportunistically. All are to be targeted for

biological research, exhibits, and educational programming.

2. Incorporation of insects into the permanent collection is being spearheaded by the Education Department for the *Beauty and the Bug* program for kids.

3. Collect invasive marine species to document their arrival in Kachemak Bay.

b. Fish and Herptiles—Fluid-preserved specimens will be obtained opportunistically, while representative skeletons of common species should be obtained for use in archaeological research, exhibits, and educational programming.

c. Birds and Mammals

1. Taxidermy Mounts—The collection should be representative of common species in the Kachemak Bay area, and collecting targeted for planned educational and exhibit purposes. Mounted specimens lacking exhibit potential, physical integrity, or relevance to the Museum's Mission should be deaccessioned.

2. Study Skins—The collection should be representative of all species in the Kachemak Bay area, including sex and age classes and seasonal and geographic variation, and targeted for research use and planned educational programming. For large mammals, tanned hides supplant study skins. Incorporate more shorebird, seabird and passerine specimens, both study skins and skeletons, for better representation in the bird collection.

3. Skeletons—The collection should be representative of all families and common species in the Kachemak Bay area, and targeted for archaeological and paleontological research, exhibits, and educational programming.

## B. Earth Sciences



From steep glaciated fjords to smoldering volcanoes on the western horizon, the Kachemak Bay region exhibits the effects of dynamic geologic processes. Tectonism, the active process of plate tectonics, has been a major force in shaping this region. The Kenai Mountains, bordering the southern side of the Bay, the volcanoes extending along the arc of the western side of Cook Inlet, and ongoing earthquake and volcanic activity are all the result of tectonic plate subduction, as the Pacific Plate slides under the North American Plate. The process of plate tectonics has been ongoing for at least 250 million years and is responsible for the bedrock geology in the Bay.

On a more recent time scale (thousands of years), episodic glaciation has sculpted the surface features of the Bay. As a result of tectonic plate movements, Kachemak Bay is near the locations of some of the most powerful earthquakes in the world. For people living in the Kachemak Bay area, the geologic history and ongoing plate-tectonic processes produce a lively environment. The environment is subject to varied dynamic geophysical processes, such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, coastal and headland erosion, as well as tidal flat, lagoonal, and spit deposition.

The Kachemak Bay region is a place of convergence with distinct landforms, colliding tectonic plates, and is where land meets sea. The question of what dynamic forces shape our place is addressed with collections related to volcanic eruptions, glacial events, earthquakes, changing landforms, northern latitude and seasons, and high-energy coastal processes—and their effects on our community.

The Earth Sciences Collections of over 1,600 geological and paleontological specimens include a rare fossil imprint of a local perch, bison and woolly mammoth fossils, glacial erratics carried to Homer beaches, and a valuable collection of fossil mollusks representing the diverse, prolific life of our ancient seas. Volcanic ash, pumice, and lava bombs represent active regional volcanic activity.

## 1. Geology

- a. The collection should represent geologic strata, patterns and processes of the Kachemak Bay region. Representative

rock specimens should be obtained of each stratum or occurrence of natural formations in the Kachemak Bay area.

b. Photographic and map documentation should be obtained of major stratigraphy, including volcanoes and results of their activity, earthquake faults and results of their activity, and glaciers and their current actions and evidence of past activity. Documentation of volcanic eruptions is of particular interest, including samples of ashfalls and lava from Cook Inlet volcanoes.

## 2. Glaciers and Volcanoes

a. The collection should reflect the presence of glaciers in the Kachemak Bay and surrounding region. Samples should be obtained of glacial activity showing striations, polish, and glacial erratics.

b. The collection should reflect the presence of volcanoes in the Kachemak Bay and surrounding region. Samples of past and present volcanic activity should be obtained, including ash, pumice, scoria, lava, etc.

## 3. Minerals

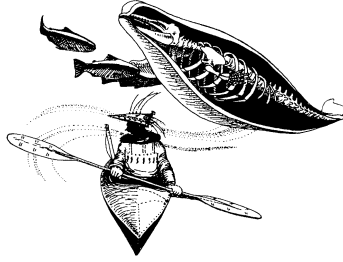
a. The collection should represent the diversity of minerals occurring in the Kachemak Bay region. Specimens should be obtained of all minerals occurring in the Kachemak Bay area.

b. Meteorites should be collected as available.

## 4. Paleontology

a. The collection should reflect Kachemak Bay paleontology—representative regional specimens of plant, invertebrate, and vertebrate fossils.

b. Geological specimens such as ripple marks and mud cracks should be obtained.



## **Let the Pratt Museum Know! Community Questionnaire**

The Pratt Museum is reexamining our **Collections Plan** and wants to know where you think we should be heading. Collections planning is the process of analyzing what objects we have and what we're missing, articulating how these objects should serve the Museum's mission and the community's needs, and creating a philosophical framework and vision for collecting in the future.

The act of collecting and preserving objects is the cornerstone of all museums. Museums answer a basic human need to collect, identify, and understand patterns in our world. Collections are used for exhibits, educational programs, and research. The Pratt Museum's current areas of emphasis are natural science and cultural collections in anthropology (ethnography and archaeology), history, historic photographs, oral histories, art, earth sciences (geology and paleontology), and biology (plants and animals) of the region. Our collections include 18,200 objects plus library and archives.

**Our Mission Statement**—The Pratt Museum is dedicated to the process of education by exploring the natural environment and human experience relative to the Kachemak Bay region of Alaska and its place in the world. The Museum seeks to inspire self-reflection and dialogue in its community and visitors through exhibitions, programs, and collections in the arts, sciences, and humanities.

**Help us chart the course by answering the following questions. Use as much space as you want—add extra pages as needed.**

1. What are your favorite objects in the collection?

2. Have you or your family ever been involved with acquiring objects for the Pratt Museum? If so, can you tell us how these items were chosen—by whom and using what criteria?

3. How well do the current collections meet the needs of our community? Do you ever think, “I wish the museum had a \_\_\_\_\_ that I could look at or make use of”? If so, describe how you would use it?

4. Are there things you believe the Pratt Museum should not be collecting?

5. What objects from the past should be added to the collection? Why?

6. What objects from the present should be saved for the future? Why?

Your name and contact info (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

The Pratt has a special event planned for community input to the Collections Plan—A Collections **Behind-The-Scenes Tour and Open House** with Community Conversation, from **5:00-7:30pm on February 16, 2007**.

**Please drop your responses off at the Pratt Museum or send them by February 16<sup>th</sup> to:**  
Community Questionnaire, Pratt Museum, 3779 Bartlett Street, Homer, AK 99603  
Fax to 235-2764 or Email to [bwebb@prattmuseum.org](mailto:bwebb@prattmuseum.org).

Thank you for being a vital part of our vision!