

## RESULTS OF THE 1997 MUSEUM MANAGEMENT SURVEY

### REDWOOD NATIONAL & STATE PARKS

#### Introduction & Methodology

This report details the results of a survey done as part of the Museum Management Plan done for Redwood National & State Parks in October, 1997. The primary objectives of the survey was to determine:

Percentage of staff using the park library and the park museum collections vs the percentage of staff using non-park information resources.

What were the primary areas (categories) of information use, and the reasons for use of these collections.

What are the primary reasons staff do not use these information resources, and what is necessary to promote information resource availability and use.

What are the general impression on the part of the staff concerning the value and use of particularly museum collections and archives.

In addition to these primary objectives, some basic demographic information concerning length of service, number of different parks served in, length of tenure in current position, and number of responses of temporary vs permanent staff was collected.

The target of the survey was the permanent and temporary staff of both the National and State Park staff. The survey was disseminated to the circa 140-person combined staff under a cover memo from the Superintendents of both the National and State Parks, requesting it be completed and returned to the Team Leader for the Museum Management Plan by October 15, 1997. A total of 55 responses were received by that date, representing a 39 % response. Since a response of 10% is considered statistically valid for this type of survey, the Redwood Parks response is considered excellent for a survey dissiminated in this manner. Other demographics recorded by the survey include:

Years of service:	total = 556	average = 10
Years at Redwood:	total = 391	average = 7.10
# of parks served in:	total = 115	average = 2.09
# of years in current position:	total = 294	average = 5.3
Permanent staff responding:	= 43	Temporary staff = 7 Not recorded: = 5

Diversity of respondents by primary duty assignment:

Administration: 11 (20%)	Resource Management: 17 (31%)
Maintenance: 6 (11%)	Law Enforcement: 4 (7%)
Interpretation: 11 (20%)	Not recorded: 6 (11%)

Aside from the demographics, the questions in the survey were two different types, used to collect two different kinds of information:

Checklist - Designed to determine what type of services the respondents are using, and what type of services are needed.

Evaluative - Designed to determine attitudes toward programs and services offered.

In addition respondents were given two opportunities to add categories: One each to the “services used” and “services needed” sections. Write-in responses are generally not used in surveys of this type, as they often fail to elicit a statistically valid response, and the response that is generated is often difficult to quantify. This proved to be the case in the Redwood survey. Most of the written responses were antidotal, but most were also included on the attached compilation.

## **SURVEY RESULTS**

Since the response to the survey is more than sufficient to be considered statistically valid, the results will be phrased as representative of the entire population surveyed.

Concerning the percentage of use the collections receive:

56% use the park library, at an average 12 times a year.

41% use the park archival/museum collections, at an average 14 times a year.

29% use archives, collections and libraries outside the park, at an average 11 times a year. It might be interesting to know what services these staff need that is not being offered in park.

Concerning the types of archival/museum collections used:

Most respondents used the archival parts of the collections: resource management records (32%), photo collections (38%), historic material (23%) and administrative records (9%). This was followed by cultural collections (history, archaeology and ethnography) and then natural collections (herbarium, mammals & birds, geology and insects). This MAY follow the current distribution of the collection, or may be affected by the level of organization of each segment.

Concerning the reasons given for accessing the archival/museum collection:

Project Research was the most common reason by a factor of 3 to 1 (54%); followed by Program Development (18%), Exhibit/Programs (14%), Administrative Research (14%) and Comparative Studies(11%). The needs for Historic Structure, Environmental Impact, Publication and Maintenance/Repair information were clustered around the 10% mark.

Reasons given for not using the museum collections/archives provide some interesting concepts:

The response to such comments as "Don't know what type of collections are available." (54 %), "Don't know where the archives/collections are located." (47%), and "Don't know how to find the collections I need." (40%) indicate we need to make some effort in advertisement. The statement "Don't know who can get me into the collections." (25%) is also significant in this area. Also compare this rate of response with the expressed need for finding aids and listing of holdings expressed below.

The "Collections are too far away from where I work." (25%) response indicates a need for centralization, or a need to make collections/information available in multi-media. This is supported by the responses "Collections are not physically accessible." (16%), "Collections not electronically accessible." (16%), "Collections not organized." (16%), and "There are no supporting archives." (16%), all of which indicate a need for better information concerning these park assets. Also compare these responses to the suggestions for electronic access, centralization and organization in the next section.

Less clear is the response to "The collections are not relevant to my job." (30%), but this may be more a factor of staff not knowing the collections may contain information that may assist them in the planning or completion of their work.

When asked to make suggestions for improvement:

The single most overwhelming response was "Provide a listing of what is in the collection" (70%). The next highest response was much like the above, "Provide a finding aid to the collections." (49%). The factors of "Provide on-line services to support research." (29%) and "Provide remote computer access to collections/archives." (29%) document the need for this type of service.

Also significant were the responses "Move collections/archives to a more central location." (25%), "Provide professional staff to work on collections." (21%), "Combine museum collections with library." (25%), and "Provide a work area." (20%), all which indicate a need for consolidation and access to available information.

Information from the evaluative section of the survey, concerning the value the park staff ascribed to the museum collections and archives:

The staff views the collections/archives as being very important to the preservation of information about the park: "Museum collections/archives should be used to document park resources." (89% agree, 3% disagree); "Park archives should contain copies of all studies/reports done about the park." (92% agree, 9% uncertain); "Park collections/archives serve as the institutional memory of the park." (81% agree, 11% uncertain).

On one hand the cultural vs natural composition of the park collections appear to be balanced: “There is too much emphasis on cultural material in park collections.” (61% disagree, 21% uncertain). However, responses to the question: “Parks should have more natural collections that document resources.” (40% agree, 32% uncertain) indicates an existing need for a more diverse natural collection. A follow-up survey to define more exact needs might be beneficial.

There were some ambiguous responses in some cases: “Park museum collections/archives are primary resources of the park.” (65% agree, 38% uncertain), and “Park collections and archives should be looked at before beginning resource management projects.” (65% agree, 41% uncertain), and “Park collections and archives are of little value to me in the completion of my job.” (23% agree, 20% uncertain, 43% disagree). However, this ambiguity possibly results from the staff not knowing what is in the collections, and how the collections may apply to current projects. This explanation would be consistent with the large percentage of staff asking for collection lists and finding aids mentioned above.

There also appears to be strong support for the park improving the funding/staffing allocated to the park museum collections/archives: “Park collections can be cared for using collateral duty staff.” (43% disagree, 32% uncertain); “Parks should not be expending staff, time and funding on museum collections.” (76% disagree, 12% uncertain); “There is no value in parks maintaining museum collections or archives.” (85% disagree, 9% uncertain).

## Summary & Conclusions

The Redwood Staff Survey accomplished the primary goals as outlined in the introduction, provided valuable information to the Collection Management Planning Team in advance of their visit to the park, and substantiated the primary issues put forward by the Park Curator. The survey format also provided the park staffs the opportunity to offer in a candid manner their individual impressions of the museum collections/archives program, and their suggestions for changes or improvements. The results from this survey should also provide park management with firm background data necessary for considering the alternatives and recommendations made by the Collections Management Planning Team.

## COMPILED RESULTS FROM 55 RESPONSES, REDWOOD STAFF SURVEY

1. These first questions will help us determine use patterns for archives, museum collections and library collections. For the purpose of this survey, a “visit” to the collections also includes verbal, telephone and e-mail requests for information that would require the Collections Manager to find and communicate that information to you.

Do you use the park library? About how many times in past year? **396**

**yes = 31 no = 24**

Do you use park archives/collections? About how many times in past year? **322**

**yes = 23 no = 32**

Do you use non-Service collections or archives? # of times in the past year: **187**

**yes = 16 no = 39**

What parts of the archives/collections do you use (check as many as apply):

Historic archives: **13** Administrative records: **5** Photo Collections: **21**

Resource Management Records (such as building files, natural resource studies, archaeological excavation reports): **18**

Archaeological Collection: **6** Ethnological Collection: **5** Historic Collection: **10**

Herbarium: **7** Paleontological Collection: Insect Collection: **1**

Geological Collection: **3** Mammal Collection: **5** Bird Collection: **5**

What are the primary reasons you use the collections (check as many as apply):

Administrative research: **7** Project research: **30**

Develop Summer Programs: **10** Comparative Studies: **6**

Maintenance/Repair Information: **4**

Historic Structure Information: **5**

Environmental Impact/Remediation Research: **5**

Publication: **5** Exhibit/Programs: **8**

Information for visitors: **9** Other (please list): **development projects, maps, et al - find out what has been done in the past - Junior Rangers - info for non-NPS researchers - safety training info - ID plants & expand personal knowledge - develop interp. programs -**

**background for planning - preperation for research - funding proposal background info.**

2. We realize that there might be many different reasons park staff do not make use of the archives and museum collections in their work, and it may well be possible to fix some of the situations if we know what to look for. Your open and honest response to this question would be appreciated.

What are the primary reasons you do not use the collections (check as many as apply):

Don't know where the archives/collections are located: **26**

Don't know what types of collections are available: **30**

Don't know how to find the collections I need: **22**

Don't know who can get me into the collections: **14**

There is no place to look at/study the collections/archives: **9**

There are no supporting archives (reports, maps, photos): **8**

The collections are not physically accessible: **9**

The collections are not electronically accessible: **9**

There is no place to work: **6**      There is no wet laboratory : **2**

There is no dry laboratory: **1**      There is no preparation area: **1**

There is no study area: **5**      There is no supporting library: **5**

There is no copy machine: **2**      There is no computer printer: **2**

Collections are not organized: **9**      Not open on a regular schedule: **3**

There is no one to let me in: **2**      There is no one to help me find things: **2**

The staff is not friendly: **1**      The staff is not helpful: **1**

The collections don't have the items I need: **5**

Collections are too far away from where I work: **14**      Distance:**35 - 80mi**

The collections are not relevant to my job: **17**

Other (please list):**do own photo work - use public library - would like to have access collection not well labeled w/collection info. - no easy computer access to items & related inf**

3. There is always room for improvement. We are looking for some general trends and areas that may require innovation and shifts in the way museum collections and archives are managed. Again, your open and honest response to this question would be appreciated.

What could the archives/collections do to be more useful to you (check as many as apply):

Move collections/archives to a more central location: **14**

suggestions: **in park near Orick - centralize - Orick - Requa - SOC  
to one location**

Open collections/archives different or longer days and hours: **6**

suggestions: **only if appropriate staff is present - create joint work space &  
establish hours - regular schedule**

Provide a listing of what is in the collections: **39**

Provide a finding aid to the collections: **27**

Combine museum collections with archives: **8**

Combine museum collections with library: **14**

Provide a work area: **11**                      Wet lab: **4**    Dry lab: **3**    Other:

Provide a computer hook up: **9**                      Printer: **4**    Copy machine: **4**

Provide on-line services to support research: **16**    Not ANCS

Provide professional staff to organize and work on collections: **12**

Organize existing collections: **15**

**maps & drawings**

Organize existing collections in a different manner: **3**

**GPS - rebag archaeological collections**

Provide professional staff to assist with access to collections: **6**

Provide remote computer access to collections/archives: **16**

Provide the type of collections I need: **3**

suggestions: **historic data - geology publications/reports/photos/maps -  
road removal info**

Other (please list): **have assumed the collections were "untouchable" - where are they  
located & why might I need them (LE Ranger) - need a real library and real librarian -  
need to cross index w/other collections/archives/libraries, universities & local**

4. We are interested in your general and overall impressions regarding the value and use of museum collections and archives within the Service. Please indicate the intensity of your opinion by circling one letter for each statement below.

A = Agree U = Uncertain D = Disagree

49 1 2

A U D Museum collections and archives should be used to document park resources.

13 11 24

A U D Park collections and archives are of little value to me in the completion of my job.

7 18 24

A U D Park collections can be cared for using collateral duty staff.

36 23 2

A U D Park collections and archives should be looked at before beginning resource management projects.

3 9 40

A U D Park collections and archives are more useful to academicians than park staff.

36 21 4

A U D .Park museum collections and archives are primary resources of the park.

17 11 4

A U D Park collections are best used to provide material for exhibit to the public.

21 26 5

A U D Park collections should be combined with the park archives and library.

22 18 13

A U D Parks should have more natural collections that document resources.

4 7 42

A U D Parks should not be expending staff, time and funding on museum collections.

51 5 1

A U D Park archives should contain copies of all studies and reports done about the park.

4 12 34

A U D There is too much emphasis on cultural material in park collections.

1 5 47

A U D There is no value in parks maintaining museum collections or archives.

45 6 2

A U D Park collections and archives serve as the "institutional memory" of the park

19 13 20

A U D Park Visitor Center exhibits are different from museum exhibits.

5 18 29

A U D Funds spent on museum collections and archives would be better spent on the preservation of park resources.

5. In order to assure a well represented response from a cross section of park staff, we would appreciate a minimum amount of demographic information:

# years in the Service:                      # years in current park:  
**total = 566    average = 10                      total = 391    average = 7.1**

# of parks have you served in:  
**total = 115    average = 2.09**

Current position:                                      # years in current position:  
**total = 294    average = 5.3**  
Permanent Staff: **43**                                      Seasonal/Temporary Staff: **7**

Region:    Park:

Please estimate the time you spent responding to this survey: **range = 2 - 30 min**  
**average = 11.1**

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your responses will provide important information to the team that will be planning for the future of the museum collections and archival management program in the park, and your cooperation is appreciated.

Please return the survey in the addressed envelope provided. If there is not an envelope, please return the survey via first class mail to:

Kent Bush, Staff Curator  
Columbia Cascades Support Office, NPS  
909 First Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104-1060