

# Procedures for the management and repatriation of sacred and culturally sensitive objects of Aboriginal origin in the Ethnology Reserve Collection



Detail from *The Story Teller* in the First Nations Gallery at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum.

– Dale Stonechild, artist

# Information page

## Forms

Forms to complete and mail to the RSM include:

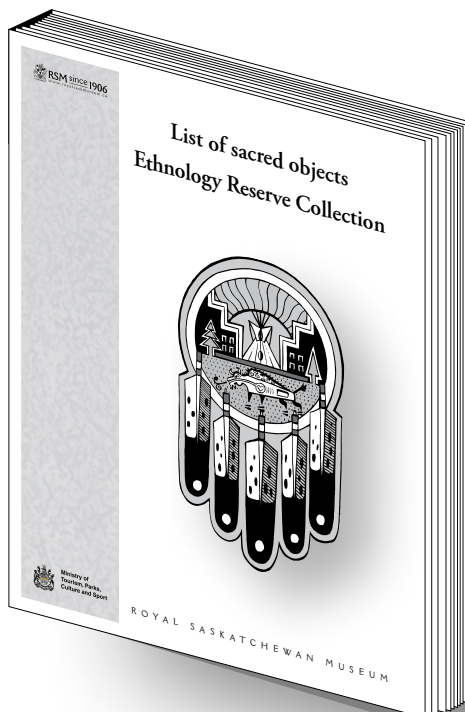
1. *Request to view sacred objects*
2. *Request for action*

Forms are attached at the end of the *Procedures*.



## List of sacred objects

The *List of sacred objects* is attached and also available at your Tribal Council office or by request to the Aboriginal History Unit at the RSM.



## Assistance

For assistance filling out any forms, please contact the RSM between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, except statutory holidays.

## Contact information

Aboriginal History Unit  
Royal Saskatchewan Museum  
2340 Albert Street  
Regina, Saskatchewan, S4P 2V7

Phone: (306) 787-1644 or  
(306) 787-2815

Toll free: 1 (866) 984-4964

Fax: (306) 787-2645

Email: [repatriation@royalsaskmuseum.ca](mailto:repatriation@royalsaskmuseum.ca)

Website: [www.royalsaskmuseum.ca](http://www.royalsaskmuseum.ca)

This section of the policy provides step-by-step procedures to enable the policy and fulfill its purpose. Please remember that there are several different options for the continued care of the sacred objects by Aboriginal peoples and the RSM. Please see the appropriate procedures, if you wish to initiate one of the management options for the care of your identified sacred object(s). The RSM recognizes that inherent cultural differences exist between Aboriginal peoples and will review each request on a case-by-case basis.

Typically, the process will include the following steps:

- i. When necessary, a viewing of the sacred object(s) will initiate the process. Complete a *Request to view sacred objects* form to schedule a viewing appointment.
- ii. When a viewing is not required the completion of a *Request for action* form will initiate the process. Completed forms must be mailed to the RSM.
- iii. Upon receipt of a completed *Request to view sacred objects* or a *Request for action* form, the RSM will forward the form to the appropriate Aboriginal government(s) to confirm the eligibility of all people listed on the form.
- iv. The Aboriginal government(s) and the RSM will also confirm and approve the requests. When there are multiple requests for the same sacred object(s), the competing claims will be resolved without any participation by the RSM.
- v. When all parties reach consensus on the *Request for action* and one of the management options is chosen for the care of the sacred object(s), an agreement will be signed by all parties involved (Aboriginal peoples and the RSM) to complete the process.

## 1.0 Option to maintain status quo and not submit a *Request for action*

The RSM will continue to keep and maintain each sacred object currently listed in the Ethnology Reserve Collection that is *not* identified by a *Request for action* by any Aboriginal individual, community or organization for one of the management options presented in this policy. This is understood as “maintaining status quo” or “maintaining the existing state of affairs” for these sacred objects.

## 2.0 Procedures for the option for shared stewardship (co-management) of sacred objects

### 2.1 Identification of objects for shared stewardship

- i. Use the *List of sacred objects* to identify specific object(s) for shared stewardship. This list is available at Tribal Council offices in Saskatchewan or from the RSM. The identified sacred object(s) must be from the same Treaty area and/or culture-language background as that of the Aboriginal peoples identifying the object(s).
- ii. Make an appointment to view the sacred object(s) at the RSM if further identification/confirmation is needed. ***This step may not be necessary in all cases.*** If a viewing of the sacred object(s) is not needed, proceed to completing a *Request for action* form. If a special viewing is needed, a *Request to view*



*sacred objects* form must be completed. These forms are available from your Tribal Council office or from the RSM website. On the *Request to view sacred objects* form, you must record each sacred object that you wish to view. Catalogue numbers and descriptions of the sacred objects are provided on the *List of sacred objects*. Use this information to complete the form.

- iii. When the *Request to view sacred objects* form is completed, it must be mailed to the Aboriginal History Unit of the RSM.
- iv. Upon receipt of the completed form, the RSM will send a notification to the appropriate Aboriginal government(s) that an appointment has been made for a special viewing. The notification will identify all people who will view the sacred object(s) and which object(s) they have chosen to view.
- v. Identify any protocols, procedures or ceremonies to take place at the RSM by Aboriginal peoples and RSM staff in the Protocols and Procedures section on the *Request to view sacred objects* form. The protocols, procedures or ceremonies may require scheduling times to be set up prior to viewing the sacred object(s).

## 2.2 Making the request for shared stewardship

- i. Once the object(s) has/have been viewed and/or identified and a decision is made to enter into a shared stewardship agreement with the RSM, a *Request for action* form must be submitted to initiate the procedure.
- ii. *Request for action* forms are available at your Tribal Council office or from the RSM website. Fill out one request form for each object identified for shared stewardship. Catalogue

numbers and descriptions of the sacred objects are provided on the *List of sacred objects*. Use this information to complete the form(s).

- iii. Submit the completed *Request for action* form(s) to the Aboriginal History Unit of the RSM.
- iv. Identify any protocols, procedures or ceremonies to take place at the RSM by Aboriginal peoples and RSM staff in the Protocols and Procedures section on the *Request for action* form. The protocols, procedures or ceremonies may require scheduled events to be set up for the management of the sacred object(s).

## 2.3 The review process

- i. Upon receipt of the completed *Request for action* form(s) at the RSM, the form(s) will be copied and submitted to the appropriate Aboriginal government(s) for review and confirmation of the eligibility of each *Request for action*. The Aboriginal government will ensure there are no competing claims.
- ii. The RSM will distribute a *Notice of intent for shared stewardship* to the appropriate Aboriginal government(s) and will publish the Notice on the RSM website for a period of three (3) months.

## 2.4 Shared stewardship of sacred objects

- i. Aboriginal peoples and the RSM will sign a formal agreement for shared stewardship of sacred object(s). Each agreement will include any special protocols, procedures or ceremonies for the care and handling of the sacred object(s) by Aboriginal peoples and RSM staff.

- ii. The sacred object(s) will be clearly identified and maintained by the RSM during the times when they are located within the RSM.
- iii. The sacred object(s) will be available for ceremonial use by Aboriginal peoples, provided that enough advance notice is given, so that RSM staff may accommodate needs. The use of any sacred object(s) in ceremony may take place at the RSM or the sacred object(s) will be released to the ceremonial caretaker(s) or designate(s) for transport to a ceremonial location.
- iv. Ceremonial caretaker(s) and/or designate(s) will assume responsibility for the culturally appropriate care and use of the sacred object(s). The sacred object(s) must be retrieved from the RSM by the ceremonial caretaker(s) and/or designate(s) who requested the use of the sacred object(s) for ceremony. Sacred objects will not be mailed or delivered.
- v. Sacred objects that leave the care of the RSM for ceremonial use will be returned to the RSM when ceremonies have been completed.

## 3.0 Procedures for the option to request the repatriation/return of sacred objects

### 3.1 Identification of sacred objects for repatriation/return

- i. Use the *List of sacred objects* to identify any specific object(s) for repatriation/return. This list is available at Tribal Council offices in Saskatchewan or from the RSM. The identified sacred object(s) must be from the

same Treaty area and/or culture-language background as that of the Aboriginal peoples identifying the object(s).

- ii. Make an appointment to view the sacred object(s) at the RSM if further identification/confirmation is needed. ***This step may not be necessary in all cases.*** If a viewing of the sacred object(s) is not needed, proceed to completing a *Request for action* form. If a special viewing is needed, a *Request to view sacred objects* form must be completed. These forms are available at your Tribal Council office or from the RSM website. On the *Request to view sacred objects* form, you must record each sacred object that you wish to view. Catalogue numbers and descriptions of the sacred objects are provided on the *List of sacred objects*. Use this information to complete the form.
- iii. When completed, the *Request to view sacred objects* form must be mailed to the Aboriginal History Unit of the RSM.
- iv. Upon receipt of the completed form, the RSM will send a notification to the appropriate Aboriginal government(s) that an appointment has been made for a special viewing. The notification will identify all people who will view the sacred object(s) and which object(s) they have chosen to view.
- v. Identify any protocols, procedures or ceremonies to take place at the RSM by Aboriginal peoples and RSM staff in the Protocols and Procedures section on the *Request to view sacred objects* form. The protocols, procedures or ceremonies may require scheduling times to be set up prior to viewing the sacred object(s).

## 3.2 Making the request for repatriation/return

- i. Once the sacred object(s) has/have been viewed and/or identified and a decision is made to have the sacred object(s) repatriated/returned, a *Request for action* form must be submitted to initiate the procedure.
- ii. *Request for action* forms are available at your Tribal Council office or from the RSM website. Fill out one request form for each object identified for repatriation/return. Catalogue numbers and descriptions of the sacred objects are provided on the *List of sacred objects*. Use this information to complete the form(s).
- iii. Submit the completed *Request for action* form(s) to the Aboriginal History Unit of the RSM.
- iv. Identify any protocols, procedures or ceremonies to take place at the RSM by Aboriginal peoples and RSM staff. Please use the Protocols and Procedures section on the *Request for action* form. The protocols, procedures or ceremonies may require scheduled events to be set up at appropriate times for the repatriation/return of the sacred object(s).

## 3.3 The review process

- i. Upon receipt of the completed *Request for action* form(s) at the RSM, the form(s) will be copied and submitted to the appropriate Aboriginal government(s) for review and confirmation of the eligibility of each *Request for action*. The Aboriginal government will ensure there are no competing claims.

- ii. The RSM will distribute a *Notice of Intent to Repatriate* to all Aboriginal government(s) and will publish the notice on the RSM website for a period of three months.

## 3.4 Repatriation/return of sacred objects

- i. Once the review process is completed and a decision to repatriate/return has been agreed upon, the RSM will notify the individual(s) or designate(s) who signed the *Request for action* form(s).
- ii. The sacred object(s) must be retrieved by the individual(s) or designate(s) who requested the repatriation/return of the sacred object(s). Sacred objects will not be mailed or delivered.
- iii. At this time, reminders should be circulated for any protocols, procedures or ceremonies that may need to take place at the RSM by Aboriginal peoples and RSM staff. The protocols, procedures or ceremonies may require scheduled events to be set up at appropriate times for the repatriation/return of the sacred object(s).
- iv. Repatriation/return agreements for the sacred object(s) will be completed at this time and signed by Aboriginal peoples and the RSM. Once a sacred object is repatriated/returned, the RSM will no longer be responsible for it in any manner.
- v. The RSM will inform the appropriate Aboriginal government(s) where and with whom sacred objects have been repatriated/returned.

## 4.0 Procedures for the option for replication of sacred objects for educational purposes or artistic research

### 4.1 Identification of sacred objects and permission to replicate them for education purposes or artistic research

- i. Use the *List of sacred objects* to identify any specific object(s) for replication for educational purposes or for artistic research. This list is available at Tribal Council offices of Saskatchewan or from the RSM. When and/or where possible the identified sacred object(s) must be from the same Treaty area and/or culture-language background as that of the Aboriginal peoples from whom permission and approval must be obtained. Sacred objects in the Ethnology Reserve Collection that are of unknown origin will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
- ii. A *Request for action* form must be submitted to make an appointment to view and work with the sacred object(s) at the RSM. The RSM will respond only to submitted requests that provide documented permission from Aboriginal government(s) and/or Elders of the appropriate culture-language area and/or area of origin of the sacred objects selected for replication or research.
- iii. *Request for action* forms are available at your Tribal Council office or from the RSM website. Fill out one request form for each object identified for replication. Catalogue numbers and descriptions of the sacred objects are provided on the *List of sacred*

*objects*. Use this information to complete the form(s). Make sure to include any documentation (for example, community letters of support) that supports your request to work with the sacred object(s) for replication or other artistic purpose(s).

- iv. Submit completed *Request for action* form(s) and additional documentation to the Aboriginal History Unit of the RSM.
- v. Identify any protocols, procedures or ceremonies to take place at the RSM by Aboriginal artists/researchers and/or Aboriginal peoples giving permission for use, and RSM staff, in the Protocols and Procedures section on the *Request for action* form. The protocols, procedures or ceremonies may require scheduled events to be set up at appropriate times for viewing and working with the sacred object(s).

### 4.2 The Review Process

- i. Upon receipt of the completed *Request for action* forms and additional documentation at the RSM, the forms and documentation will be copied and submitted to the appropriate Aboriginal community or government(s) for review and confirmation of the eligibility of each *Request for action*.

### 4.3 Working with sacred objects

- i. When the review process has been completed, formal agreements will be signed by the Aboriginal peoples giving permission for the replication work, and the RSM. When and/or where necessary, agreements may include any special protocols, procedures or ceremonies for the care and handling of the sacred object



- by Aboriginal artists/researchers, Aboriginal peoples and RSM staff.
- ii. When formal agreements have been signed, appointment times may be scheduled for the replication/research work. When and/or where necessary, any special protocols, procedures or ceremonies that have been identified, may require scheduled events to be set up at appropriate times for work with the sacred object(s) for artistic research or educational purposes.
  - v. A formal agreement will be signed by Aboriginal peoples and the RSM for temporary storage of any sacred object(s).
  - vi. The sacred object(s) will be clearly identified by the RSM and maintained in proper storage conditions for the duration of the temporary storage period.
  - vii. The sacred object(s) will be available for use and/or removal by Aboriginal peoples provided that advance notice is given so that RSM staff may accommodate needs.

## 5.0 Procedures for the option for temporary storage of sacred objects repatriated/returned from individuals/institutions other than the RSM

### 5.1 Temporary storage of sacred objects

- i. The RSM recognizes that there may be special cases where sacred objects are repatriated/returned to Aboriginal peoples of Saskatchewan from individuals/institutions outside the province and such objects may require temporary storage until facilities appropriate for their needs become available.
- ii. A *Request for action* form must be submitted to initiate procedures for temporary storage. *Request for action* forms are available at Tribal Council offices or from the RSM website.
- iii. Fill out one *Request for action* form for each object that requires temporary storage.
- iv. Submit all completed *Request for action* forms to the Aboriginal History Unit of the RSM.