

Association of Manitoba Museums' Cultural Stewardship Program (CSP) Background

A number of years ago, the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, the Winnipeg Art Gallery, and the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature (now called The Manitoba Museum), with funding from the province, formed the Manitoba Heritage Conservation Service (MHCS). MHCS provided conservation treatments, some training, and advice to other heritage institutions in the province. Funding changed, needs changed, the focus changed from conservation treatment to preventive conservation, and the name changed to the Preventive Conservation Service (PCS). The PCS was offered by The Manitoba Museum along with their Museums Advisory and Training Service. As of March 31, 2004, these services were no longer offered by The Manitoba Museum. The AMM felt that these services were needed by the museums in Manitoba. The province agreed and accepted the AMM's proposal for the Cultural Stewardship Program.

The Association of Manitoba Museums has offered the Cultural Stewardship Program to the museums in Manitoba since 2004 - 2005. For the first two years, the program consisted of workshops introducing the basic concepts of preventive conservation and site visits to museums where a professional conservator went to an individual museum, assessed the site and provided a written report to help the museum address their preventive conservation needs. The reports spoke to specific concerns of the clients and were designed to allow the museum to tackle conservation issues *one small piece at a time*.

Since the start of the program, there have been eight Preventive Conservation workshops held in eight different locations at least once in each of the seven regions of the province. These workshops have been attended by 83 participants representing 46 institutions from 35 different communities. We also provided site visits and reports for 27 museums.

In 2006 - 2007 the AMM introduced Emergency Preparedness. The two-day workshop on Emergency Preparedness was designed to help museums identify, address, and plan for possible emergencies. Participants were offered assistance in identifying their risks and creating an emergency plan. We held three Emergency Preparedness workshops, in three locations in two regions. The workshops were attended by 19 people representing 12 institutions and four communities.

Site visits, artifact assessments, mini-presentations, information sessions, environmental monitoring equipment loans, selected hands-on training - these are all available to AMM members FREE OF CHARGE as part of the AMM's Cultural Stewardship Program.

The Cultural Stewardship Program has been very well received by previous participants. Participants have used the information from the CSP to improve storage, upgrade facilities, and even leverage money from other sources to address their conservation needs.

If you'd like to know more, call the AMM office at 947-1782 or toll-free at 1-866-747-9323, or e-mail us at training@museumsmanitoba.com.