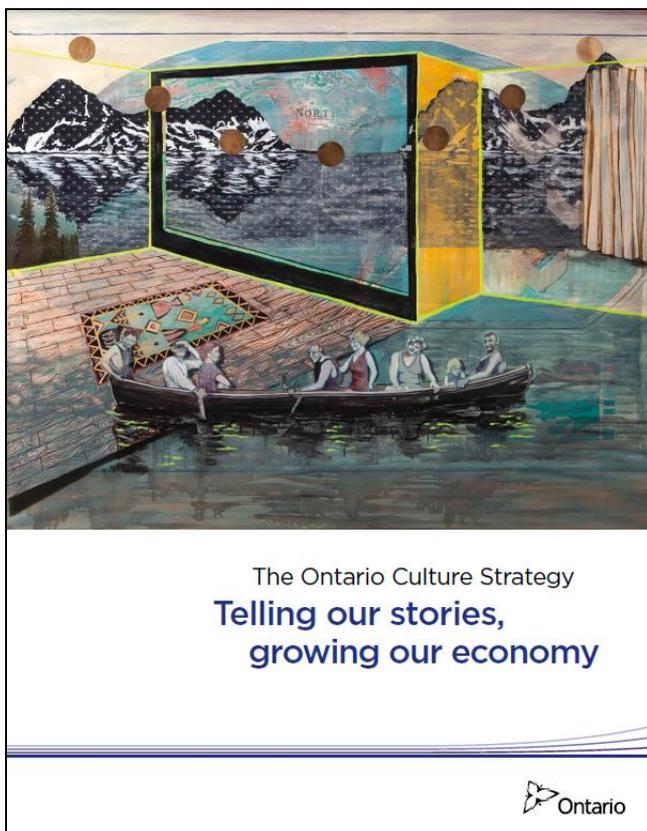




# Archaeological Collections in Museums Legislation, Guidance, & Ontario's Culture Strategy

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport  
OMA conference Oct 13-15, 2017

# Culture Strategy Commitment



*“Work with Indigenous partners, archaeologists, museums and other stakeholders to develop a framework to **improve the conservation of archaeological artifacts** so that current and future generations can learn about and understand our past.”*

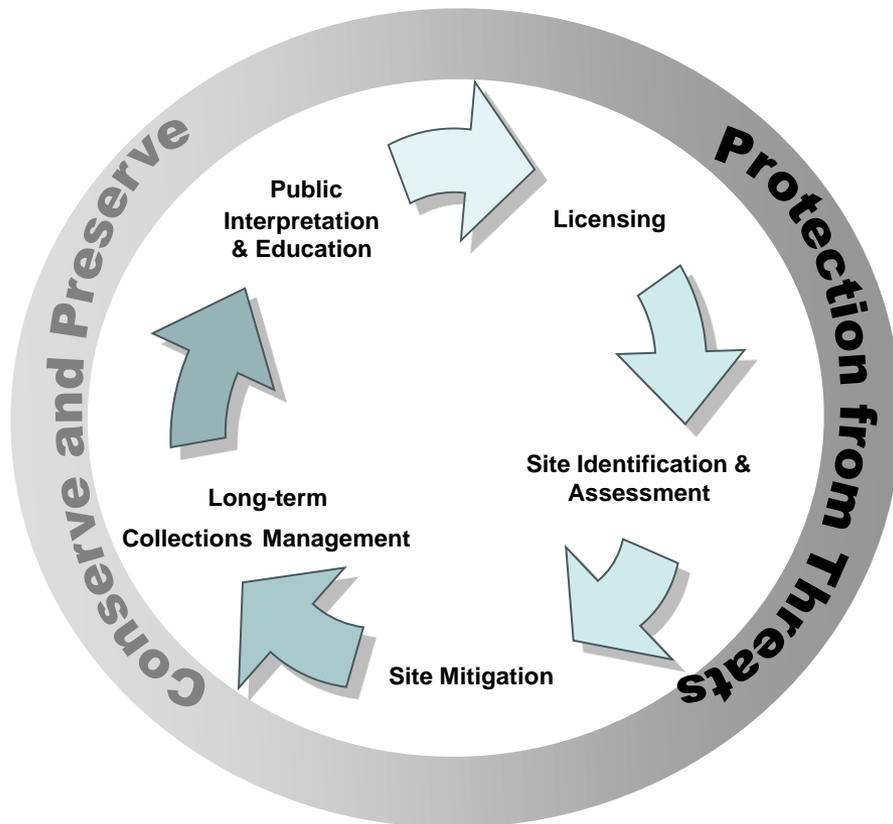
## What is an archaeological collection?

- An **archaeological collection** is made up of all artifacts and other materials originating or collected from an archaeological site, as well as the records of archaeological fieldwork that document the site.
- A collection may include one or more of the following classes of archaeological resources: artifacts, soil samples, floral remains, faunal remains and records that document the site such as field notes, reports, catalogues, digital files, maps, photographs and drawings.



## Context - Legislation

### Archaeological resource conservation cycle



### Ontario Heritage Act

- It is illegal for anyone other than a licensed archaeologist to carry out fieldwork or remove artifacts from an archaeological site (s. 48)
- Archaeologists are required to hold artifacts in safekeeping or transfer them to the Crown or a public institution.
- The Minister may direct that any artifact be deposited in a public institution to be held in trust for the people of Ontario (s. 66).

## Context – Current Status



- Since the 1990s, there has been a dramatic rise in archaeological projects as a result of increased land development.
  - 3000 projects/year vs. 300/year in the 1990s.
- Archaeologists hold large volumes of boxes of archaeological collections in private and business storage facilities.
- Within the next 10 years one-third of archaeologists will retire. They hold the largest proportion of Ontario's collections.

## Context – Current Status

- There is a growing interest among Indigenous and other descendant communities in the return of artifacts and a role in collections management (80% of known archaeological sites in Ontario are Indigenous in origin).
- In 2015, the Ministry conducted a survey of public institutions that looked at challenges regarding the conservation of Ontario's archaeological collections:
  - Lack of space, funding and staff resources to accommodate collection growth.
  - Cost and requirements to bring collections up to museum standards.
  - Capacity pressure areas – GTA, North, Southeast Ontario.

# Archaeological Collections Framework



- A framework to improve the conservation of archaeological collections is being developed.
- Key goals include:
  - facilitating the transfer of archaeological collections from individual archaeologists to public institutions
  - improving public and Indigenous community access to archaeological collections for research, education and cultural purposes.
  - facilitating the return of collections to Indigenous communities.

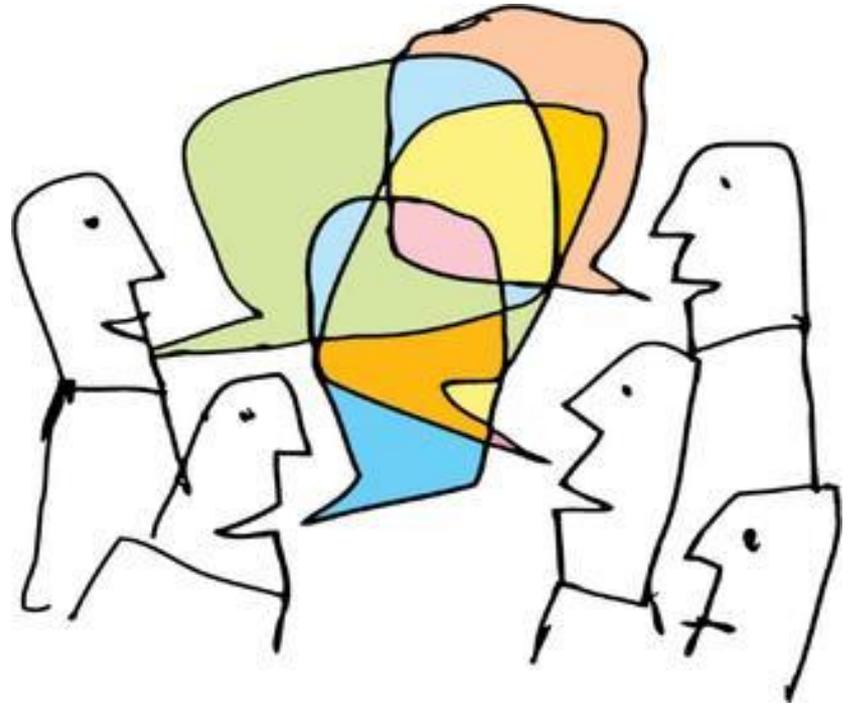
## Criteria for public institutions

To hold archaeological collections a public institution must meet all of the following criteria:

- located in Ontario (certain exceptions may be permitted)
- able to preserve and manage archaeological collections for the people of Ontario in perpetuity or until the minister directs that they be deposited with the province or another public institution
- willing to enter into a deposit agreement and assume full responsibility for the archaeological collection(s)
- non-profit and publicly funded
- can be accessed by the public, researchers and descendent communities
- facilities, staff and policies dedicated to collections conservation and management, including the ethical use and display of collections
- policies to ensure the security of collections, including controlled access

## We need your help!

- We want to hear from museums about their experiences with archaeological collections to help guide our next steps.
  - Public institutions survey
  - Discussion paper
  - Working Groups
  - Presentations and symposiums
- Let's talk!
  - Targeted questions
  - Idea Sharing
  - Questions and answers



## Question 1

What are the key challenges and opportunities your organization faces in regards to archaeological collections?

- Accepting archaeological collections
- Managing archaeological collections
- Interpreting and exhibiting archaeological collections
- Providing access to archaeological collections



## Question 2

How are Indigenous or other descendant communities included in the way your organization works with collections?

- Collections management?
- Interpretation and exhibits?
- Are there barriers or challenges to including Indigenous and other communities in these activities?



## Question 3

How does your organization manage and get the most out of archaeological collections?

- Successful strategies?
- Advice to share with other organizations?



## Question 4

Do you feel confident working with archaeological collections?

If training opportunities or guidance for archaeological collections management was offered:

- What topics would you like covered?
- How would you want guidance delivered?



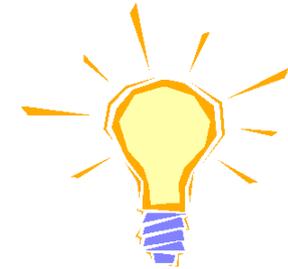
## Ideas, Comments or Questions?

Let's brainstorm – any further ideas about how we can address this challenge?



## Ideas, Comments or Questions?

Do you have any questions for us?



## Further Questions or Comments

- Email us at [archaeology@ontario.ca](mailto:archaeology@ontario.ca)
- Survey
- Discussion Paper