Mission Possible!: the 52nd Annual Meeting of CWAM

April 9-12, 2025 in Greeley, Colorado

@ the DoubleTree by Hilton Greeley at Lincoln Park

Wednesday, April 9

6:00pm-9:00pm	Welcome Reception at Greeley History Museum + Weldworks

Thursday, April 10

8:00am-3:00pm	Registration
9:00am-10:30am	Breakout Session 1
10:30am-11:00am	Morning Mingles: Education or Exhibits
11:00am-12:00pm	Keynote
12:00pm-1:00pm	Business Lunch
1:00pm-2:30pm	Breakout Session 2
2:30pm-3:00pm	Afternoon Mingles: Curators or Directors
3:00pm-4:30pm	Breakout Session 3
5:00pm-7:00pm	Discovery Dinner at LINC Library

Friday, April 11

8:00am-9:00am	Registration
9:00am-10:30am	Breakout Session 4
10:30am-11:00am	Morning Mingle: Poster Presentations
11:00am-12:30pm	Breakout Session 5
12:30pm-2:00pm	Lunch on your own (OR) Mission Lunch (*ticketed activity*)
12:30pm-5:00pm	Dearfield field trip (*ticketed activity with box lunch)*
2:00pm-5:00pm	Historical walking tour & Art tour Field Trips (*ticketed activities*)
6:00pm-9:00pm	Banquet

Saturday, April 12

10:00am-12:00pm	Workshops
12:15pm-2:00pm	Farewell Picnic

Wednesday, April 9

Welcome Reception (6:00pm-9:00pm)

The Greeley History Museum staff welcomes us to Greeley with behind the scenes tours and light hors d'oeuvres at 714 8th Street, Greeley, before we adjourn (around 7:30pm) to Weldworks Brewing Company at 508 8th Avenue, Greeley, to catch up with old and new CWAM friends.

Thursday, April 10

Breakout Session 1 (9:00am-10:30am)

Session A
Cache La Poudre Room

Deaccessioning & Disposal Q&A

**Elizabeth Beaudoin (she/her), Curator of History, Longmont Museum*
**Jacqui Ainlay-Conley (she/her), Director, Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave*
**Abigail Wedlick (she/her), Collections Specialist, Molly Brown House Museum*

Is your museum storing lots of objects that have no relation to its mission? Has your organization been saddled with "wholesale" donations of hundreds (or even thousands) of objects from a period in which no one could say "no"? Do you lack documentation for these donations? Do you feel like you don't know where to start? Do you have questions regarding the legal or ethical ramifications of deaccessioning? Bring your questions to a panel of collections peers who have gone through deaccessioning projects. You will walk away feeling more confident taking on deaccessioning at your museum.

Session B
South Platte Room

Radical Change in a Stubborn Setting: Making Relevant our Historic House

**Margaux Miller (she/her), Guest Services Coordinator, Center for Colorado Women's History, a community museum of History Colorado*
**Cat Jensen (they/them), Education Coordinator, Center for Colorado Women's History, a community museum of History Colorado*
**Elena Jones (she/her), Community Museums Philanthropy Coordinator, Center for Colorado Women's History, a community museum of History Colorado*

The mission of the Center for Colorado Women's History is to share and collect stories that represent the lives and work of all women in Colorado's past and present. Meeting this goal has necessitated a radical departure from the museum's historically dominant practices. Informed

by community feedback, motivated by our mission, and with care of our diverse stakeholders, the Center for Colorado Women's History has evolved and expanded our storytelling to reflect the diverse audiences of Colorado. This presentation will focus on three core elements of change—reinterpretation, programming, and restructured admission— illuminate opportunities and challenges, and invite participants to envision how their own museums might lean into radical change.

Session C
UNC Bears Room

AAM Reaccreditation

**Allison Maluchnik (she/her), Executive Director, Nicolaysen Art Museum*
**Wil Dalvis (he/him), Collections & Registration Technician, Nicolaysen Art Museum*

The Nicolaysen Art Museum staff will discuss their recent experience with the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) reaccreditation process including updating policy to meet current standards, completing the museum self-study, staff training, and peer review visit.

Morning Mingles (10:30am-11:00am)

*Want to meet more folks who do what you do? Join either the **Education** or the **Exhibits** Morning Mingle at this first break to join in on the conversation.*

Cache La Poudre Room - *Education mingle*

South Platte Room - *Exhibits mingle*

Keynote (11:00am-12:15pm)
Business Lunch (12:15pm-1:00pm)

Big Thompson Room

Mission Possible: Preservation, Education, and Connection at Japanese American incarceration sites in Colorado and Wyoming

**Aura Sunada Newlin (she/her), Executive Director, Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation*
**Mitch Homma, Board of Directors - President, Amache Alliance*

Between 1942 and 1945, more than 21,000 people of Japanese ancestry were unjustly incarcerated at the Amache and Heart Mountain camps in northwest Wyoming and southeast Colorado. Today, the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation and the Amache Alliance preserve these historic sites and educate about this dark chapter in American history, highlighting its relevance to the preservation of rights for all Americans today.

In this session, Amache Alliance president Mitch Homma and Heart Mountain Executive Director Aura Sunada Newlin will discuss how their respective organizations are drawing on physical and cultural landscapes to bring together three distinct communities that have called these places home: Japanese Americans, Indigenous Americans, and local community members. This keynote address will relay how today's custodians are using these historic sites to heal and educate, converting what had been places of rupture into places of connection.

Breakout Session 2 (1:00pm-2:00pm)

Session A
Cache La Poudre Room

"More than Not Urban": Commemorating Rural America in 250 Years

**Andy Mink (he/him), Director, Rural Initiative, Smithsonian Institution*

Rural communities are an important part of American life and history, and studies have shown that rural schools promote civic engagement more than other communities. Rurality is not a monolith, however, and different regions of the country have qualities and characteristics that are important to understand. This session presents a structural map of rural communities across the nation in order to identify formal and informal structures that support authentic engagement and responsive programming. We will highlight Smithsonian the nuts and bolts of current programming that are currently partnering with small museums, libraries, and historic sites to commemorate their community's unique role in America over 250 years. One example is the Dialogue on Democracy Virtual Exchange Program, in which youth explore their communities in a series of object-based activities in order to share with a partner community in another location in the country. Museum educators center their collections in the local narrative while matched with museum educators from other institutions and regions. This work is informed by a recently completed Needs Sensing research project in which we surveyed and hosted listening sessions with nearly 3,000 rural stakeholders. We will share the key findings of this work and discuss how cultural organizations can partner with the Smithsonian to implement programs that address the stated needs and interests of these communities. This report is not hypothetical; rather, we will use the key findings to activate communities to co-create and co-design projects that address these stated goals with local and Smithsonian partners.

Session B
South Platte Room

Creating Traveling 2-D Exhibits

**Michelle Bahe (she/her), Curator of Collections, Fort Caspar Museum*

Fort Caspar Museum began developing 2-D exhibits for in house use after an expansion 15 years ago. Since then we've worked with other community organizations to travel the exhibits

around Wyoming. In this session, I will cover traveling exhibits from start to finish: including picking a topic, research, finding images, layout and design, printing and framing, building the boxes for travel and storage, traveling the exhibit, and more.

Afternoon Mingles (10:30am-11:00am)

*Want to meet more folks who do what you do? Join either the **Directors** or the **Curators** Morning Mingle at this second break to join in on the conversation.*

Cache La Poudre Room - *Directors mingle*

South Platte Room - *Curators mingle*

Breakout Session 3 (3:00pm-4:30pm)

Session A
Cache La Poudre Room

Collections in Plain Sight

**Katy Lewis (she/her), Museum Curator, Heritage Lakewood Belmar Park*

Long-term preservation of artifacts is key to museum collections management. But are there additional practices you can incorporate if your artifact is, for example, a historic structure, a large textile or a vehicle? Explore options for offering experiential learning and public access while keeping artifacts safe. This presentation will offer three instances of current practices to incorporate public interaction with artifacts at a municipal history museum, as well as some methods to apply similar activities at organizations that may have a variety of different strengths and abilities. The examples will include historic preservation of a 1954 gas station and its use as a display and tour space; restoration and operation of a vintage tractor for event and rental programming; and an open storage concept for an exhibition during which large textiles will be catalogued, cleaned, and photographed with the assistance of volunteers while on public view. The juxtaposition between preservation and visitor access is common to almost all museums and archives. The concerns and ability to address them vary widely depending on the type of organization and collections involved, the size of the museum and staff, funding and many other factors. If possible, experimenting with different practices to interact with the public can create a richer experience for the visitors while still safeguarding museum artifacts for the long-term.

Session B
South Platte Room

"You Should Write a Book on That!": Publishing Local Histories

**Rose Gorrell (she/her), Museum Manager, Frisco Historic Park & Museum*
**Blair Miller (he/him), Education & Exhibits Coordinator, Frisco Historic Park & Museum*
**Julie Bell VanLaanen (she/her), Filter Press Publisher, Filter Press, LLC*

You should write a book! We've all heard that suggestion multiple times from community members who love local history. Publishing books as a small museum can serve a variety of mission goals by expanding the written historical record, raising the organization's profile, and providing a new revenue stream. The process can feel intimidating at first, but there are multiple pathways to publishing. It could be a new edition to an older book, an exhibit that has outgrown its word count, or something unique to your community. There is no one-size-fits-all approach allowing small museums to pursue publishing on their terms. We want to demystify the publishing process using our experience as a small government-owned museum establishing an imprint and publishing multiple non-fiction books.

Session C
UNC Bears Room

Centering Community Voices, Transforming History "Where is Denver's Chinatown?" Exhibition

**Kim Kennedy White (she/her), Associate Curator of Arts & Leisure and John W. Emery Family Associate Curator of Oral History, History Colorado*
**Joie Ha (she/they), Executive Director, Colorado Asian Pacific United*
**Molly Rose Merkert (she/they), Student Researcher, University of Colorado Denver*

Part of History Colorado's mission is to center community, serve as a platform for community connection, and ensure we are a place of belonging for all Coloradans. In this session, presenters explore "Where is Denver's Chinatown? Stories Remembered, Reclaimed, Reimagined," an innovative community-led exhibition created in partnership with Colorado Asian Pacific United (CAPU) and CU Denver's College of Architecture and Planning. Representatives from all three organizations will discuss some of the ways in which the development process strengthened community relationships and built trust between the museum and community partners, while uncovering, sharing, and honoring Denver's Historic Chinatown.

Discovery Dinner (5:00pm-7:00pm)

Join us for Luna's Tacos and an exploration of the LINC Library, located a short walk from the hotel at 501 8th Avenue, Greeley.

Following dinner, join us for "After Hours," an informal outing to somewhere to hang out longer.

Friday, April 11

Breakout Session 4 (9:00am-10:30am)

Session A
Cache La Poudre Room

Ethical Collecting at the University of Denver

**Nessa Kerr (she/her), Assistant Director, Center for Art Collection Ethics, University of Denver Center for Art Collection Ethics*
**David Fasman (he/him), Curator, Beck Archives of Rocky Mountain Jewish History*
**Chloe LeRoy (she/her), MA Student of Art History & Museum Studies, University of Denver*

As a private university dedicated to the public good, the University of Denver (DU) is committed to advancing scholarly inquiry, cultivating critical and creative thought, and generating knowledge. This session will highlight the work of DU faculty, staff, and students working in the field of provenance research and ethical collecting practices. Nessa Kerr, Assistant Director for the Center of Art Collection Ethics (ACE), will discuss ACE's work as the leading academic program in the United States offering provenance research training. ACE's annual programs examine the latest advances and challenges in the field, and its public events feature eminent experts working in museums and the art market. David Fasman, Curator of the Beck Archives of Rocky Mountain Jewish History, will examine his research on a gift of books to the University from the Third Reich in 1936, materials that are still held in Special Collections. Chloe LeRoy, Graduate Assistant at the Vicki Myhren Gallery, will share her experience carrying out provenance research on a Roman bust offered as a gift to the University Art Collections (UAC). She will show how this project combined the mission and standards of the UAC with her Museum Studies curriculum, which emphasizes the importance of ethical collecting. The diverse perspectives on this panel will show various ways of engaging with this critical work, which is a current priority for many museums as they assess the ethics of acquisitions and the stewardship of permanent collections.

Session B
South Platte Room

It's a Zoo: Animal Programs at Museums

**Sheryl Kippen (she/her), Cultural History Program Coordinator, Boulder County Parks & Open Space*
**Jennifer Andryauskas (she/her), Live Animal Coordinator, Fort Collins Museum of Discovery*
**Kathleen Eaton (she/her), Interpretation & Visitor Experience Coordinator, Golden History Museum & Park*
**Geoff Havens (he/him), Historic Sites Supervisor, City of Greeley Museums*
**Melissa Hill (she/her), Live Raptor Program Manager, Buffalo Bill Center of the West*
**Melissa Keown, Caretaker and Lead Historical Interpreter, Rock Ledge Ranch Historic Site*

Having animals on site at a museum can present challenges and create rewarding experiences and lasting engagement with the public. How do you plan and manage this? This panel of museum staff that oversee such programs will discuss their shared and unique experiences with animal programs at their sites. Panel members will address questions covering the acquisition

of animals, the joys and obstacles of having animals on site, how to plan your budget, exhibit areas, and more.

Poster Break (10:30am-11:00am)

Big Thompson Room

Stop by the Posters area in the Big Thompson Room to chat with presenters and learn more about their projects during this break.

Poster A

Single Source Research-Strad or Show?

**Stephanie Work (she/her), Historic site interpreter, Centennial Village, Greeley Museums*

This poster will address the difficulties in using a single source when researching. We have a violin that was made by the "Stradivarius of the West". What that means in context will be the subject of the poster.

Poster B

Custom Covers for Better Protection

**Karen Miller (she/her), Collections Curatorial Assistant, Aurora History Museum and Historic Places*

A poster documenting the process of making tyvek dust and splash covers for rolling garment racks and storage shelves.

Breakout Session 5 (11:00am-12:30pm)

Session A
Cache La Poudre Room

Creating a Grant Budget

**Elizabeth Beaudoin (she/her), Curator of History, Longmont Museum*
**Tina Hill, Historic Site Director, Wyoming Frontier Museum*

Looking to apply more to more grants but get stuck on what a budget should look like? Members of the CWAM Grants Committee will answer questions about how to create a solid budget request for grant applications. Great for small museums without fundraising staff.

Session B
South Platte Room

Fostering Pride in Aurora, CO: Changing the Narrative

**Keith Outcelt (he/him), Education Curator, Aurora History Museum*
**Deborah Teany (she/her), Children's Education Specialist, Aurora History Museum*
**Emily Miner (she/her), Adult Education Specialist, Aurora History Museum*

When people think of Aurora, Colorado, negative connotations often come to mind. The Aurora History Museum's mission is to engage "our entire community to interpret and foster pride in Aurora's story." The education team at AHM discusses how to meet people where they are and overcome fear and bias surrounding Colorado's most diverse city. Learn how one museum is bridging the gap between mission statement and public perception.

Session C
UNC Bears Room

Centering Your Community - History Colorado's Affiliate Network & Hands-On History

**Shannon Voirol (she/her), Director of Affiliates and Traveling Exhibitions, History Colorado*
**Tamara Trujillo (she/her), Hands-On History Program Director, History Colorado*
**Leah Androne (she/her), Affiliate & Traveling Exhibits Coordinator, History Colorado*
**Sara Myers (she/her), Youth Programs Manager, History Colorado*

Woven into the mission of History Colorado is centering community and catalyzing the transformational power of history. Come and learn about collaborative possibilities for your Colorado museum to extend its transformational history work through HC's Hands On-History program, the Affiliate Network and traveling exhibitions. History Colorado's Hands-On History programs are a collection of participatory history and culture-based offerings for students when school classes aren't in session. This program has grown beyond History Colorado to include Centennial Village of Greeley History Museum and Woodruff Memorial Library in La Junta - perhaps your museum could be next. Also this session invites you to join the 72 museums across in the Affiliate Network to strengthen our professional community, share leadership opportunities and compliment CWAM. You will leave this session with a short activity exploring how the topics from History Colorado traveling exhibitions could be adapted by your museum into participatory, hands-on educational activities in the Hands-On History style.

Lunch (12:30pm-2:00pm)

Either lunch on your own OR join the ticketed event to learn how to write your own mission statement at Mission Lunch.

Mission Lunch (ticketed event)
Big Thompson Room

**Jill Stilwell (she/her), Principal, Stilwell Cultural Consulting LLC*

In order to stay relevant and continue to serve their communities, museums need to continuously evolve. As priorities shift, the political and economic climates change, and audiences grow and diversify, a museum's mission statement should also evolve to reflect these changes. Many museums and cultural organizations, including CWAM, have been remiss in updating their mission statements for a variety of reasons. CWAM's 1994 mission statement reads:

> *The Colorado-Wyoming Association of Museums is a service organization which educates and unites its membership and the larger museum community. CWAM advocates and promotes museum interests in Colorado and Wyoming and encourages excellence and professionalism in the museum field.*

While technically accurate, broad and vague mission statements that lack a call to action serve very little purpose in guiding an organization forward. Join us for a special Mission Lunch hosted by cultural consultant Jill Stilwell for a participatory dive into how to create a concise and powerful mission statement. Attendees will actively engage in helping create a new mission statement for CWAM while gaining valuable tools to bring back to their own organizations.

Field Trips (*ticketed activities*)

Dearfield Tour

12:30pm-5:00pm, boxed lunches provided

Meet in the DoubleTree lobby to pick up your boxed lunch and get on the bus.

Venture about 30 miles east of Greeley to explore the historical ghost town of Dearfield, Colorado, an African American agricultural colony and townsite that flourished between 1910 and 1930. Participants will get to explore the site and learn about ongoing preservation and restoration efforts, including the current National Parks Service Special Resource Study. The walking tour will be guided by members of the Dearfield Preservation Committee, who have been leading projects at the site for the past seventeen years.

Note: This is an outdoor site, and the paths are not paved, so please plan to wear closed-toe athletic shoes and dress for the weather.

Public Art Tour

2:00pm-5:00pm

Meet in the DoubleTree lobby to get on the bus.

Learn about and experience pieces from Greeley's vibrant Public Art program through this tour of highlights of the collection around Greeley with the Public Art Coordinator, Kim Snyder. The collection celebrates the community's vibrant cultural diversity.

Historic Building Walking Tour

2:00pm-5:00pm

Meet in the DoubleTree lobby to start the walking tour.

Explore the history of downtown Greeley with Betsy Kellums, Greeley' s Historic Preservation Community Planner, including the 1917 Weld County Courthouse. A portion of the tour may go into the courthouse. Please note that attendees will need to go through the security check if going inside the courthouse.

This is an outdoor tour so please plan to wear comfortable shoes and dress for the weather. The tour may stop into the Courthouse building so bring your government-issued ID.

Banquet (6:00pm-9:00pm)

Big Thompson Room

Join us for the celebration banquet, where OG CWAM members regale us with stories of what CWAM looked like in the 80s, fight out those final hours of the silent auction ("It's for the kids!"), and make memories that will last until next year.

Following dinner, join us for "After Hours," an informal outing to somewhere to hang out longer.

Saturday, April 12

Workshops (10:00am-12:00pm)

Workshop A
Cache La Poudre Room

Detecting Pesticides and Hazardous Chemicals in Collections: A Hands-On Workshop

**Paulette Reading (she/her), Textile Conservator, Mountain States Art Conservation*
**Brandy Howard, PE, CIH, CSP (she/her), Senior Project Manager, Terracon Consultants, Inc.*
**Katie Ross, (she/her), Curator of Collections, City of Greeley Museums*
**Charles M. Koch, MPH, CIH, CSHT (he/him), CK Solutions Inc.*

In this hands-on workshop, participants will learn how to obtain samples to detect the presence of applied pesticide contamination of other hazardous chemicals in a collection. The instructors will first give an overview of the history of pesticide use in collection care. Then, sampling techniques commonly used by industrial hygienists will be demonstrated. There will be a hands-on portion of the training, where in small group settings, people can practice the techniques.

Following the demonstration and small group activities, the instructors will review real life data that has been collected so far. The limitations of these sampling techniques, including the potential for false negatives will be discussed, as well as how to work with your selected laboratory to get advice on best sampling techniques and understanding the results. At the end, we will discuss low-cost response options including the use of PPE, the existence of handling protocols that can be adopted, and next steps for further testing.

Workshop B
South Platte Room

Mission Career!

**Christina Cain (she/her), Career Coach, Lukla Coaching & Consulting*

Join Christina Cain, CTA Certified Coach, in this interactive session to co-create your career mission. Many museum professionals face overwhelm and burnout. It is easy to feel stuck. Whether you are exploring new opportunities or seeking to grow in your current role, coaching can help you identify your goals and the pathways to achieve them.

Workshop C
UNC Bears Room

Peer Assessment Training

**Elizabeth Beaudoin (she/her), Curator of History, Longmont Museum*

The CWAM Peer Assessment Program pairs museum professionals with institutions looking for outside recommendations on how to improve their collections care. Assessments can be used by institutions in applying for outside funding or making a case to their municipality or other governing body for funding collections care. This workshop will give an overview of the program, how to become a Peer Assessor, and together work through an example assessment. Peer Assessors are paid $300 by the institution for an assessment.

Farewell Picnic (12:15pm-2:00pm)

Big Thompson Room

Join us for the farewell picnic and say goodbye until we meet next year in Golden for 2026!

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Stay in Touch!

Want to contact your presenters with follow-up questions? Didn't get to attend a session and want more information about their program or project? Here is their contact information:

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