CARING for CONSERVATION

Preserve our Heritage. Support conservation.
AT THE BUFFALO BILL HISTORICAL CENTER

The Buffalo Bill Historical Center brings the spirit of the American West to life through the stories we tell and the objects we exhibit. The objects give visitors a glimpse into life in the West—past, present, and future—and we weave stories around them to form the tapestry of that life. Because of these objects, the stories carry the weight of authenticity, accuracy, and truth. They are the real thing, and, as such, it is our responsibility to care for them, not only for our children and grandchildren, but also for our grandchildren’s grandchildren and beyond. Our care for objects doesn’t stop there: We reach beyond our walls and provide training and support to institutions throughout Wyoming and to conservation students from around the United States.

Three-fold mission
OF THE CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT

CONSERVATION OF THE CENTER’S COLLECTIONS Our conservator, Beverly Perkins (MA, CAS), examines, documents, treats, and performs preventive care for all the Center’s collections and helps protect the collections while on exhibit, in storage, in transit, and on loan.

Conservation of collections includes cleaning, stabilization, and restoration where necessary. Staff education is critical to successful conservation, and the conservator encourages informal staff visits and questions in addition to formal training. Perkins works with curators to ensure that treatments are accurate and proper for each collection. The collections are continuously monitored and reviewed whether on exhibit or in storage. All conservation work is performed according to the code of ethics of the American Institute for Conservation.
TRAINED NEW PROFESSIONALS Our conservator is committed to providing critical hands-on training to a wide range of students. Over the past two years, Perkins trained fifteen interns, including artists interested in conservation as a museum profession, university students gaining experience necessary to enroll in a conservation Master’s degree program, and advanced students already enrolled in a Master’s program.

STATEWIDE AND REGIONAL TRAINING AND SUPPORT Through a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the Wyoming Statewide Connecting to Collections Project was launched. Project organizers began by conducting symposia in five regions of Wyoming, and they continue to bring professionals from museums, libraries, historical societies, and other collecting institutions together to form interactive networks. Along with training at each symposium, plans were written for projects that will help alleviate problems faced by Wyoming’s collecting institutions. The Center’s grants administrator and conservator continue to seek funding to carry out these projects.

The conservator also provides pro bono conservation services for collecting institutions in the underserved mountain-plains region of the United States.

New funding opportunity

ENDOWED PAPER CONSERVATOR

ENDOWED PAPER CONSERVATOR Perkins’ experience in objects conservation is ideal for supervision of collections that range from leather saddles with silver engraving to Plains Indian buffalo hides, from plaster sculptures to outdoor bronzes. The next important step is to expand the conservation laboratory and department to include a paper conservator. Paper-based artifacts comprise the largest part of the Center’s collections and include works of art on paper, firearms manufacturing blueprints from the Winchester Arms Company, photographs, ephemera, manuscripts, books, maps, and posters of all sizes, including some from Buffalo Bill’s Wild West that measure seventeen feet wide.

Objects conservation and paper conservation are two distinct specialty fields, and each specialty requires at least three years of post-graduate training. Because there is no paper conservation lab in the state of Wyoming, all paper-based artifacts must be sent out of state for conservation work. The addition of a paper conservator will provide a valuable resource, not only for the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, but also for the state of Wyoming.

BUFFALO BILL HISTORICAL CENTER • 720 Sheridan Avenue | Cody, Wyoming 82414 | www.bbhc.org
For more information on giving or creating an endowment, please contact Wendy Schneider at 307.578.4008.