



Museums for America

Sample Application MA-252997-OMS-23
Project Category: Collections Stewardship and Access

American Museum of Natural History

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$249,841
Amount of cost share:	\$250,900

The American Museum of Natural History will broaden access to its vertebrate paleontology archive by creating detailed findings aids for eight of its collections. The archive consists of 820 linear feet of materials in 43 collections, including photographs, correspondence, and field notes. Building on work funded by previous IMLS grants, the museum will hire a project archivist and two paid student interns to process, rehouse, and digitize collections materials. As a result of the project, researchers from a variety of disciplines will be able to directly access catalog records describing the contents of the vertebrate paleontology archive collections. Project staff will share the results of the project online and at professional conferences.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

When preparing an application for the next deadline, be sure to follow the instructions in the current Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program and project category to which you are applying.

1. PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

Program goal addressed: The American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) proposes a project that will address Goal 3, Collections Stewardship and Access, specifically Objective 3.1 Support collections care and management and 3.2 Promote access to museum and library collections. This project will continue the work initiated in two previous IMLS-funded grants (IMLS MA-05-10-0015-10 and MA-245234-OMS-20), the goals of which were to significantly improve the preservation of and accessibility to AMNH's expansive Vertebrate Paleontology Archive (VP Archive), representing over 820 linear feet of archives related to more than 500,000 specimens in the AMNH Vertebrate Paleontology collections. This proposed project expands upon the work previously accomplished as part of an institutional long-term plan, referred to as the "Archive Program," for the management and care of the VP Archive and for making archival materials and data widely accessible online for the public and scholars.

Advancement of AMNH's Strategic Plan: Critical to AMNH's mission of scientific research and public education are the 34 million scientific specimens and cultural objects in the Museum's collections. The AMNH Strategic Plan specifically calls upon stewardship improvements in key collections to ensure preservation of the "irreplaceable legacy embodied in these collections, now and for generations to come," and to make the collections accessible for researchers and the public. The VP Archive is a vast and one-of-a-kind portion of AMNH's collections, and an invaluable resource for contextualizing and investigating AMNH's extensive VP fossil collections. This project will significantly advance the collections preservation and enhanced accessibility goals outlined in AMNH's Strategic Plan.

Statement of need and project proposal: The proposed project represents a crucial step in a long-term Archive Program being undertaken by the AMNH Vertebrate Paleontology Department. The ultimate goal of the Archive Program is to maximize access to the VP Archive by digitizing archival materials (including scanning photographs, field notebooks, and correspondence) and making them viewable online. These enhancements will enable staff to easily and comprehensively manage the VP Archive. Additionally, the Archive Program aims to thoroughly describe the materials in the VP Archive by creating detailed finding aids (described below) for all 43 collections in the VP Archive. These aids will reduce the amount of time a researcher spends looking for relevant material and may potentially reveal contents of the VP Archive that were unknown previously.

Building on the work undertaken in AMNH's two previous IMLS grants (from 2010 and 2020), AMNH requests \$249,840 over 20 months to continue to expand access to its VP Archive. Accessibility to the Archive has been greatly improved over the past 2 years by the many accomplishments achieved through AMNH's 2020 grant, which will result in the completion of a significant phase of the archive description process. This process is progressive in its approach and becomes more granular as the collection is worked through. Following standards published by the Society of American Archivists and practices implemented in previous AMNH archive projects, the first step in describing an uncatalogued collection is to perform a "survey" that results in "minimal-level catalog records": archival materials and records described as a group (or container), providing general information. The second step in the process is to subject the collection to more examination and data harvesting which results in "multi-level catalog records": archival materials that have an arrangement framework, providing various levels of information for access and in-depth collection details. The final step is the creation of "finding aids": descriptive resources that consist of contextual and structural information about an archival resource that consolidates information about a collection, such as acquisition and processing, provenance and administrative history, organization and arrangement, and the scope, size, subject, and media. (See Supporting Document 1 for an example of a finding aid created during the 2020 IMLS grant).

The first step of the archive description process was undertaken through AMNH's 2010 IMLS grant (MA-05-10-0015-10) to conduct a risk assessment of all AMNH archival collections. The project included the VP Archive, which at the time was described only in hard-copy typed lists and was composed of about 348 linear feet (lf) of material. Under this grant, a survey was created for the collections, collections on the list were assigned call numbers (permanent numbers analogous to a catalog number assigned to a specimen in scientific collections), and minimal-level catalog records were created for the material.

AMNH's second IMLS grant in 2020 (MA-245234-OMS-20) was awarded to the current project team to address the critical need to further describe the 348 lf of VP Archive materials surveyed during the first grant project and process an additional 471 lf of new materials added to the Archive in the intervening years. When

the first grant project was undertaken in 2010, many VP archival documents and collections were distributed across offices, an attic, and several collections spaces. In 2014, the VP Department allocated 1,600 square feet of storage space in a climate-controlled collections room for the consolidation of all archive materials in a single, secure location. This consolidation resulted in the addition of 471 lf of material to the existing 348 lf of the VP Archive – more than doubling its volume. The added material was entirely uncatalogued and was not part of the survey undertaken by the 2010 IMLS grant, making this part of the Archive unprocessed and unsearchable. During the second IMLS grant, AMNH made advanced strides through the archive description process by creating minimal-level catalog records, available online for half of the collection, and multi-level catalog records for the other half. Six detailed finding aids were also created (out of 43 that will ultimately be created), a critical step towards maximizing access and use of the Archive.

This proposed project will continue to advance the work already accomplished and the overall goal of addressing all curation, access, and conservation needs of the VP Archive. Specifically, this phase of work will create multi-level descriptions and finding aids for 8 additional collections (bringing the total to 14, together with the 6 mentioned in the previous paragraph). Tasks involved in achieving those goals include physically sorting through the minimally-processed materials - rolled documents, envelopes of images, and boxes of papers - to mine detailed information about the contents, assess research value, remove duplicated materials, and determine the archival merit of the materials. All data from the finding aids will be made searchable online, via AMNH's database ArchivesSpace. (A user will be able to search within VP collections exclusively and across all repositories in the database, facilitating research across AMNH's seven science departments. ArchivesSpace is one of the most commonly used systems for managing archives, and the open-source community continues to develop and improve the system to support sharing.) Restrictions for usage will be applied to the materials, which will identify contents where there are access issues, including limitations due to dated technology (floppy disks), condition concerns, and conservation concerns. These tasks are crucial steps in a detailed and laborious course of processing the VP Archive to the highest standards, describing its contents in the level of detail that will be of maximum use to researchers searching the Archive, and making the contents of the Archive discoverable to as wide an audience as possible.

The AMNH VP Archive provides rich opportunities for supporting study and education across disciplines. The VP Department houses 500,000 fossil specimens and 820 lf of archives, contained in dozens of secured cabinets. These archives are essential to the scientific interpretation of the VP specimens and serve as vital records of the discovery, identification, condition, history, and exhibition of the specimens through correspondence, field notebooks, sketches, and photographs. For instance, preserved in the VP Archive are notes written in 1902 by Barnum Brown to Henry Fairfield Osborn, two giants of early 20th century paleontology. In them, Brown narrates the unearthing of the "bones of a large Carnivorous Dinosaur," describing the moment of discovery of one of the most famous dinosaurs: *Tyrannosaurus rex*. The VP Archive provides glimpses into social realities throughout AMNH's 150-year history, such as photographs of Elizabeth Fulda who worked in the 1920's as a full-time artist in the VP Department, where she photographed specimens, restored fossils, created models, and sketched illustrations for exhibitions. She represents one of few women in the early 20th century to work in a scientific field primarily occupied by men. The VP Archive also has value to the field of art history and includes a 1947 candid photograph of legendary artist Georgia O'Keeffe at her home in New Mexico, taken by AMNH paleontologist Edwin Colbert, while he explored the nearby desert. (See Supporting Document 2 for these examples and more, and Supporting Document 3 for examples of materials uncovered in the Archive during the second grant.)

The irreplaceable historical information contained in the VP Archive is used alongside the VP specimen collections for research and publication in interdisciplinary studies relating to systematic paleontology, ecology, and history of science, and in exhibitions and education programs for AMNH's five million annual visitors (pre-pandemic). However, to fully realize the VP Archive's potential, AMNH must address the critical need to gather and share data about the entire collection in order to broaden access to it. This work will result in making materials in the Archive discoverable for AMNH VP Department staff, the 200 scientific researchers working within AMNH, scientific researchers globally, researchers and scholars in non-scientific disciplines, students on-site at AMNH and elsewhere, and the general public.

Target group for the project: The audience who will be most immediately and positively impacted by this project

will be the academic researchers--both working internally at AMNH and at other institutions--who require access to the materials in the Archive and who until now, have relied on minimal available information about those materials. Researchers studying the history of Vertebrate Paleontology, specific personalities in the field of Vertebrate Paleontology, and the geographic context of scientific discoveries will have vastly improved access to materials relevant to their areas of interest. Prior to this project, catalog records for the 43 collections of the VP Archive will be available online, some of which will contain minimal-level descriptions; after the completion of this project, 8 additional collections will have the deepest levels of descriptive data available to search. The project team has solicited the support and feedback from three researchers with experience using the VP Archive as a resource prior to the commencement of this work (See Supporting Document 4 for their letters of support). Those researchers have provided insights into the end user experience with the VP Archive at AMNH and their experience accessing similar archive collections at other institutions, and have helped frame the scope and goals of this project. The VP Archives receives tens of inquiries, requests for information, and visitor requests every year from researchers. The team expects those numbers to increase significantly as the data available about the Archive contents increases via the online database.

Beneficiaries of the project: Those who depend heavily on the VP Archive's accessibility are the thousands of scholars from around the world and the post-graduate, graduate, and undergraduate students who use the VP fossil specimens for their research and rely on the supporting documentation in the VP Archive. VP Department staff have assisted with inquiries on subjects ranging from art history to museology to education, as well as inquiries about individual researchers associated with the Department. As a result of enhancing catalog records for the VP Archive created during the second grant and expanded during this grant, researchers will be able to comprehensively search the Archive data records to make a more informed inquiry, and VP staff will be able to locate materials faster and be sure they are sharing the most relevant materials. By making the Archive contents available online and searchable, new users will be reached, including those in non-science disciplines, radically expanding the VP Archive audience.

2. PROJECT WORK PLAN

Project activities: The project goals are to create multi-level descriptions and finding aids for 8 collections in the Archive by completing the following tasks 1) weed materials from minimally-processed sections of the Archive and formalize those collections; 2) apply restrictions to materials; and 3) update and edit catalog records for the 8 collections in the online database ArchivesSpace. The project team leaders developed time estimates for these tasks based on prior similar projects and are confident this scope of work is realistic.

1) **Weeding materials and Formalize the collections:** Weeding is the physical process of identifying and removing "unwanted" materials from a larger body of materials due to duplication, lack of research value, or not being appropriate to include in the Archive. The successful outcome of this task will strengthen each collection in the Archive with unique materials that will retain long-term historical and research value. Formalizing the collections is the final step in this process, whereby the collections in the Archive (post-weeding) are set or defined in a formal manner. Prior to the commencement of this grant and the physical task of weeding the materials, the project team will develop evaluation systems which will be employed to assess and assign value to materials being weeded and help determine their value and appropriateness to the Archive. Rubric systems can be used to evaluate categories of materials such as drawings, illustrations, and maps that share a common purpose of function. A rubric system is a grading structure that helps establish a hierarchy for the materials (high, medium, low value). A second system -- an evaluation work plan -- can be applied to materials such as manuscripts, memorabilia, photographs, records and papers, and reprints. This process aims to examine materials that have a unique purpose of function and determine their permanent archival value by evaluating what the material is, where it came from, and how the material was used. Once that process is completed, 8 collections will be "formalized" or finalized as discrete and official collections.

2) **Applying restrictions:** Materials will be surveyed and objects needing special consideration will be flagged to ensure safe access to the materials. This task will be completed in two phases beginning with the 6 collections for which finding aids were created during the second grant project. This "Development Phase" will begin with the creation of an evaluation work plan to provide guidelines for assessing what kind of restrictions need to be applied to materials and in what circumstances. Restriction categories will include: condition issues, technical requirements

that make them difficult to access (outdated technology), rehousing requirements to facilitate access (maps stored rolled up instead of flat), cleaning requirements if the materials have surface grime, access issues due to high research value and resulting increased handling. The VP Archive can additionally contain sensitive information about fossil collecting localities, which can be vulnerable to unlicensed excavation and exploitation. Those data will need to be restricted and accessed on a limited and considered basis. The evaluations and work plan will be tested, refined, and expanded as the 6 collections are worked through. The goal of this task is to ensure long-term safe access to the materials. The second phase, “In Production”, will involve the application of the refined work plan to the 8 collections for which finding aids are being created during this third grant project.

As part of tasks 1 and 2, the project team will flag items and collections for work in future projects, such as items that need re-housing or conservation work, images that should be digitized, and collections that should be prioritized for the creation of finding aids. The resulting work queue will be the foundation of future projects.

3) Revise ArchivesSpace: At the conclusion of the weeding and applying restrictions tasks, catalog records created and uploaded to ArchivesSpace during the second grant project will require editing. Those edits will reflect the addition and updating of data for the 8 collections worked on during this project, and the revision of records reflecting any material removed from the collections during the weeding process. The catalog records for the 6 collections for which finding aids were created during the second grant project will be amended to include data for collections where restrictions have been noted. This task will result in enhanced catalog records for the 14 Archive collections which will now have finding aids, and improved access for users of the Archive.

Sequence of activities: Time budgets for the project’s key tasks have been determined based on the experience of the Special Collections Archivist and her work on prior projects with similar goals and components. See Schedule of Completion for details and time budgets for each task.

- Start up: Sept 1, 2023 – Oct 31, 2023. AMNH’s 2020 IMLS grant comes to completion in October 2023, during which time data records generated under the 2020 grant will be finalized by the Project Archivist, Cataloging and Metadata Librarian, and the Senior Museum Specialist. After October 2023, these team members will reallocate their time to this proposed project. Simultaneously, the Project Director and Special Collections Archivist will commence this proposed project in September 2023 by hiring the Project Archivist (start date 11/1/2023) and two intern positions (start date 11/1/2023). They will also undertake workspace organization, detailed project planning, initial data analysis, training development, and scheduling work.
- Weeding Materials: In Production: Nov 1, 2023 – Oct 31, 2024. The Special Collections Archivist and Conservation Manager will work with VP staff to create rubric systems and evaluation work plans for this task prior to the commencement of the grant. Those systems will be implemented by the Project Archivist and Interns working on materials in the 8 collections selected for finding aids. The Project Archivist and Interns will be trained by the Special Collections Archivist and VP staff who developed the systems. The Special Collections Archivist will work with the Project Archivist and VP staff to collaborate on making final decisions on the value and contents of the collections. This task will result in a reduction of volume in the 8 collections due to duplicated material and non-relevant materials being removed from the collections and will allow the project team to thoroughly assess the material in each collection.
- Applying Restrictions to Materials: In Development: Nov 1, 2023 – Aug 31, 2024. Occurring concurrently with the task above, the Special Collections Archivist and Metadata Librarian will work with VP staff to establish, test, revise and apply an evaluation work plan to assess the 6 collections for which finding aids were created during the second grant. Materials in the collections which require restricted or supervised access will be flagged and information regarding the restrictions will be added to those catalog records. The Conservation Manager will provide training and support to develop and implement the evaluation criteria.
- Formalize Collections: Nov 1-30, 2024. The Project Archivist will review the remaining material in the 8 collections after weeding has been completed to determine the final contents and officially record or “formalize” each collection. This task includes the data recording component following on from the physical task of weeding materials.
- Applying Restrictions to Materials: In Production: Sept 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025. VP staff will begin work on this task to be joined by the interns once they have completed the Weeding Materials task, and the Project Archivist once s/he has completed the Formalize Collections task. The project team will use the refined

evaluation work plans developed and tested during the “In Development” phase to apply restrictions to the 8 collections being worked on during this project. The Conservation Manager will provide support and expertise during this task. During the weeding and applying restrictions tasks, the project team will flag and record information about the collections which will track conservation issues, rehousing issues and data which will help prioritize the goals of subsequent Archive projects.

- **Revise ArchivesSpace:** April 1-30, 2025. The Project Archivist, Special Collections Archivist, and Metadata Librarian will edit existing catalog records for the Archive in the database ArchivesSpace. Those edits will result in qualitative and quantitative improvements in the data available for end users of the Archive.

Risks to the project: The project team is prepared for several potential risks, including failure to obtain funding, unforeseen delays during one or more project phases, or delays in hiring the Project Archivist or interns. Any of these scenarios would dictate a temporary shift in responsibilities to existing AMNH VP Department staff, who understand this risk and are committed to ensuring the project is completed on time. Failure to obtain funding would result in a readjustment of the project approach based on reviewer’s comments and a re-submission of the proposal. Unforeseen delays or the departure of the Project Archivist would result in an increase in AMNH staff time spent on the project to keep tasks on schedule. The experience of the project team implementing and conducting a grant project through the Covid-19 pandemic has provided ample real-world learning experiences in adapting to a difficult and shifting work environment, and the team has successfully met and accommodated all challenges during that time. As a result of that experience, the time ranges for each project phase provide built-in flexibility for unexpected challenges or delays.

Project planning, implementation, and management: AMNH brings a highly experienced and expert team to this project, most of whom have worked on the second IMLS-funded Archive grant. The project team is made up of staff from the AMNH Research Library and VP Department, as well as a Project Archivist and interns. Library staff will advise on best practices and provide in-depth knowledge of how an archive collection should be organized and catalogued to maximize access. This will be complemented by the expertise of VP staff, who will provide an understanding of the Archive’s material, its importance to scientific and historical research, and a familiarity with how the material relates to specimens in the collections. The Project Archivist will provide a fresh perspective, experience working on other archives, and knowledge of best practices.

Project Director Ruth O’Leary (Director of Collections, Archives, and Preparation, Division of Paleontology) has worked in collections management for 22 years and is responsible for the management of all aspects of collection care in the VP Department. O’Leary will be responsible for overall project management: she will plan and schedule all project tasks, recruit and hire the Project Archivist and interns, manage and assist in training activities, manage the budget, track all data, quantify progress and activities, schedule and run progress meetings, and write all progress reports requested by IMLS.

Rebecca Morgan (Special Collections Archivist, Research Library) has worked in museum archives for 13 years. She manages the accessioning in the AMNH Research Library’s archives and special collections, as well as ongoing efforts to identify, describe, and steward archival collections across AMNH. She managed the 2010 IMLS grant and will provide expertise on best practices for the organization and accessibility of Archive materials. She will train the Project Archivist and assist with training the interns and VP Department staff.

The Project Archivist will hold a master’s degree and at least two years of professional experience in archive collections. S/he will supervise the interns and be responsible for quality control. S/he will work with the interns to weed materials from the 8 collections being worked on, will be responsible for formalizing those collections post-weeding, and will work with the project team to apply restrictions to the 8 collections. S/he will also work on revising catalog records in ArchivesSpace and will consult with senior members of the project team to develop goals for the next Archive grant project. S/he will meet with O’Leary and Morgan to quantify progress and discuss planning and strategy throughout the project period.

Barbara J. Rhodes (Conservation Manager, Research Library) has served in her position since 1987. She is responsible for the well-being of books and materials and will serve as an advisor on conservation, preservation, and rehousing of physical records that arise during this project. She will also train the Project Archivist, interns, and VP Department staff in recognizing and flagging materials for future conservation and will provide support for evaluating materials for special consideration during the applying restrictions task.

Iris Lee (Cataloging and Metadata Librarian, Research Library) has 13 years of experience cataloging and describing archival material, including 11 years at AMNH. She will conduct data analysis and enhancement to edit and update catalog records in ArchivesSpace.

Alana Gishlick (Senior Museum Specialist, VP Department) has 15 years of experience in natural history collections management, including 12 years at AMNH, where she is responsible for loans, visitor support and inquiries, and database customization. Dr. Gishlick has a PhD in geology and geophysics and considerable experience working with the VP Archive. She will assist the Project Archivist with interpreting scientific information in the Archive and with relating documentation in the Archive to specimen collections.

Curatorial Assistant, (VP Department, this position is currently vacant but will be advertised and filled in early 2023). The CA will hold a Bachelor's degree in Natural Sciences or an equivalent in Library and Archives studies. S/he will have experience working in natural history collections and/or experience working with archival collections. S/he will report to the Director of Collections, Archives and Preparation and will work with and assist the Project Archivist.

Student interns will work in teams of two to weed material in the 8 collections, and to apply restrictions to those same collections. Leveraging the Research Library's existing relationships with local colleges and universities, interns will be recruited from Library and Archives programs to benefit from their academic training or from vertebrate paleontology programs and related fields that provide experience working in archives. Interns' work will be subject to strict quality control by the Project Archivist and will be reviewed by Morgan and O'Leary.

Time, financial, personnel resources: From a financial perspective, the entire IMLS request will go toward the Project Archivist and intern salaries. Salaries will be competitive for the profession and will consider the high cost of living in New York City. Time and personal commitments from AMNH staff and staff hired on the grant have been calculated to match the project goals. AMNH will provide an approximate 1:1 cost share in the form of AMNH and intern staff salary costs and fringe benefits. In total, O'Leary will contribute 18% in Year 1 and 17% in Year 2, Morgan 10%, the Curatorial Assistant 25%, Rhodes 5%, Lee 5%, and Gishlick 23% effort throughout the project. AMNH will provide funding for the Director of Collections and one other team member to travel to annual conferences (Society of American Archivists, Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference) to promote and publicize the project efforts (in the event that travel is unsafe due to pandemic conditions, AMNH will provide support to attend these conferences virtually). Supplies such as materials for re-housing collections will be provided by AMNH. The project team has vast experience in managing archive collections and large, time-sensitive projects and has a demonstrated record in achieving project goals on time and on budget.

Evaluation, progress assessment and tracking: Project progress and success will be measured in terms of reaching the goals of creating multi-level descriptions and finding aids for 8 of the 43 collections in the Archive and revising all relevant catalog records in ArchivesSpace. The first tool for assessing progress will be weekly meetings between the Director of Collections, Special Collections Archivist, and VP staff (and, when hired, the Project Archivist) in the initial stages of the project to review workflows and evaluation plans and adapt them to the tasks in this project. Once the interns and Project Archivist are hired, their progress on weeding materials and applying restrictions to the collections will be reviewed weekly by quantifying the linear feet for which tasks were completed in that time period. In that way, team leaders can react quickly if progress is slower than anticipated by deploying AMNH staff members to lend additional support on the project. Regular feedback from the interns on progress and insights into how the approach to tasks can be improved has proven essential in past projects and will be integral to tracking progress in this project. Tasks which are carried out by VP staff members and the Special Collections Archivist will also be quantified on a weekly basis. The process of continual evaluation throughout the project timeline and the input of all team members will permit adjustments and ensure the project remains on schedule.

3. PROJECT RESULTS

Intended results: The proposed work will result in 1) the editing of minimally-processed materials in the 8 collections selected for the creation of finding aids resulting in a definitive body of materials with a determined value to the Archive, 2) the application of restrictions to the 6 collections for which findings aids were created during the second grant project, and the 8 collections worked on during this project which will determine how materials are accessed and what limitations should be considered when giving access, and 3) the updating of existing catalog

records to reflect the edits to the collections and the restrictions assessed for materials. The completion of this work for 8 of the 43 collections will strengthen the research value of the Archive, and greatly enhance the ability to give access to the materials according to the assessments of the materials derived during the project. A work queue will be built as the project progresses, which will be the foundation for future projects and will include prioritizing collections in the Archive for detailed finding aids, conservation and rehousing, and digitization. These results will maximize accessibility and stewardship of the Archive.

Changes in the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes of the target group: At the commencement of this project, multi-level catalog records will be available for approximately half the Archive and minimal-level catalog records will be available for the other half. Those records will be available online for the research community and public to access. At the completion of this project, many of those catalog records will be significantly enhanced with the addition of the data gleaned from the application of restrictions work and edited to reflect the materials removed from the Archive during the weeding process. This will make the data available to researchers considerably more useful, will assist the archivists in assessing access requests, and will result in a more clearly defined Archive collection available for research.

Tangible products: The primary products will be the enhanced catalog records, the assessment data for restrictions which will inform and enhance access, and the physically edited collections with a greater and more defined research value. Dissemination efforts will also result in webpages (see Supporting Document 5 for the Departmental webpage on the second IMLS grant), a blog (see Supporting Document 6 for the blog related to the second IMLS grant), conference presentations, and published notifications, all designed to improve public awareness of the project.

Sustaining benefits: Through the Research Library, the VP Archive records will be uploaded and made available long-term. The AMNH Research Library fully supports and endorses endeavors by the VP Department to manage the VP Archive and has committed to support future projects to continue the work of the Archive Program. The Director of Collections, Archives and Preparation, and the Senior Museum Specialist (VP) will serve as links between this project and future endeavors, an important factor in sustaining this project's benefits and extending them into the future. Project progress and descriptions will be presented at professional meetings (e.g., Society for American Archivists, Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections). Researchers will be notified about the Archive via notes published in journals (e.g., *Collection Forum*) and relevant listservs such as NHCOLL-L (Natural History Collections), VRTPALEO-L (Vertebrate Paleontology), and the Society of American Archivists email and discussion lists.

Improvements in the care, condition, management, access to or use of the collection: This proposed project continues the work initiated during the 2010 IMLS grant and furthered during the 2020 IMLS grant and is foundational to a long-term Archive Program run by the VP Department. The Department envisions multiple 2-year grant funded projects to address all aspects of archive stewardship and will assign Department staff to the projects throughout the Program. The work completed during this project is crucial to positioning the Archive for the creation of detailed finding aids for all collections in the Archive, and addressing all physical storage and conservation needs of the collection. By enhancing the previously created catalog records and publicizing the Archive database, the project team aims to increase the number of research visitors and inquiries to the Archive.

Schedule of Completion

Year 1: September 2023 – August 2024

2023				2024							
Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug
● Preliminary work											
		→ Weeding Materials: In Production									
		● Applying Restrictions: Development									

Year 2: September 2024 – April 2025

2024				2025							
Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug
● Weeding Materials: In Production											
		● Formalize Collections									
● Applying Restrictions: In Production											
						● Revise ArchivesSpace					

Legend

→ : task continues in following months/year

● : task completed

Notes

Schedule has been calculated for all project tasks based on prior projects carried out on similar collections by the AMNH Research Library. The AMNH Research Library has reliable time budgets for each task, and we have built in additional time to account for unforeseen delays.

Year 1: September 2023 – August 2024

1. Preliminary work

- Senior project team members will advertise for and interview candidates for the positions of Project Archivist and student interns. Work schedules, workspace organization, task list review, and detailed project planning will be undertaken in this period by AMNH project team members. Duration: 2 months

2. Weeding Materials: In Production Phase

- Prior to the commencement of this grant, the AMNH project staff will undertake a task we are referring to as “Weeding Materials: Pre-Planning”. The term “weeding” refers to the process of identifying and removing unwanted materials from a larger body of materials. This occurs because in minimally-processed parts of the Archive there are materials which are duplicates of materials already existing in the Archive and there will be material that does not qualify for archival status. During Pre-Planning, AMNH project staff will create rubric systems and evaluation work plans for the materials in the Archive. A rubric system is a grading structure that can be applied to a category of

materials that share a common purpose or function and it helps establish a hierarchy for the materials (e.g., high, medium, low value). This type of system can be used to evaluate the importance of drawings, illustrations and maps. An evaluation work plan is a process that helps to examine materials that have a unique purpose or function; it helps to make judgements to determine permanent archival value (e.g., determining what it is, where it came from, how it was used). Evaluation work plans are applied to materials such as manuscripts, correspondence, photographs, records and papers. During the task of Weeding Materials: In Production, the Project Archivist and interns will apply the two evaluation systems to the material in the 8 collections being worked on. Duration: 10 months of Year 1; 12 months in total

3. Applying Restrictions: Development Phase

- An evaluation work plan will be created by VP and Research Library staff to consider what restrictions on access apply to materials in the 8 Collections selected for the creation of finding aids. During this Development Phase, the plan will be tested, revised and applied to the finding aids created for 6 collections during the second grant in the Archive Program. Restrictions on access are applied to archival materials to consider and address concerns or barriers to access such as materials with condition issues, materials that should be restricted to essential research access, materials that have technical requirements that make them difficult to access (floppy disks), materials that need to be re-housed to facilitate access, or materials that need cleaning. Duration: 10 months

Year 2: September 2024 – April 2025

1. Weeding Materials: In Production Phase

- This task will continue as described above. Duration: 2 months of Year 2; 12 months in total

2. Formalize Collections

- This task follows on from Task 1 above. The Project Archivist will formalize the 8 collections for which finding aids are being created. This process involves creating a definite archive body for a collection by determining its valuable material parts and finalizing the contents of the collection. Duration: 1 month

3. Applying Restrictions: In Production Phase

- This task follows on from Task 3 in Year 1 where the evaluation system tested and implemented on the 6 collections from the second grant project will be applied to the 8 collections for which finding aids are being produced in this grant project. VP staff will begin this process and will be joined by the interns and Project Archivist later once they complete Weeding Material and Formalizing Collections tasks. Duration: 7 months

4. Revise ArchivesSpace Records

- After the Weeding and Restrictions tasks have been completed, existing catalog records for the 8 collections worked on during this grant and the 6 collections from the second grant will require revisions to reflect the restrictions assigned to collections and material that has been removed from the Archive. Additionally, collections with high research value will be flagged for the creation of finding aids in future grant projects. Duration: 1 month