

**Canmore Museum & Geoscience Centre  
Collections & Outreach Assistant**

**Wage: \$17.00/hr**

**Dates: May 13, 2019, ending August 19, 2019**

**Hours: 37.5 hour/week**

1. General Project Goals

Over the past few years, the Canmore Museum and Geoscience Centre has received the benefit of having a trained Collection Manager and full-time collection assistant. This has allowed for the discovery and rectification of many issues within the database and the collection and archives, including adding more information about our photograph collection, the rehousing and identification of our geology specimen collection, and the recommencement of acquisitioning. We are in the process of refreshing our gallery, beginning to work with volunteers in the collection, and working on a collaborative exhibit with a local school. During the course of these projects we have identified many issues and discrepancies in the database (which was transferred to PastPerfect in 2014), as well as inconsistencies in categorizing, naming protocols, and quantifiable descriptors within the collection that all need to be investigated and resolved, and a back-log of acquisitions. We have also identified a lack of community awareness around the existence and contents of our collection and archives that we are seeking to remedy through increased collections outreach programming. Financial assistance to hire an-entry-level summer student as a Collections and Outreach Assistant will help significantly with the volume of work to be processed and help make accurate information about the objects in our collection, as well as making the objects themselves more accessible, and supporting our collections outreach projects. This will help in a nation-wide effort to protect and preserve the cultural, social, and industrial heritage of the Rockies region and Canada as a whole. The Collections and Outreach Assistant position will benefit the community by creating an increased sense of museum involvement that will make residents of Canmore feel as if the Canmore Museum & Geoscience Centre is a museum that belongs to them, is for them, and a place where they feel welcomed and reflected.

2. Project planning:

Objectives:

This position recognizes the crucial role that collections play in our museum, and is intended to assist the museum with on-going work in collections, archives, and with the database, as well as the development of small temporary exhibitions. This work includes re-organizing the collection of artifacts, documents, maps, and historic photographs to build a more accessible and professional supporting framework around them particularly in the areas of records management (including digitization and updating the database) and storage. It also includes the development of a small temporary exhibit the museum owns in a public space in the Canmore Civic Centre, and the accomplishment of collections outreach projects including photo and artifact identification at our annual Miners Day event and the presentation of our travelling artifacts at local markets, summer workshops, and events. The position is entry-level but requires a background and understanding of Collections work in Museums. The job will

allow the individual to build on their education studies and gain practical hands-on experience in basic collections functions including heritage preservation, conservation, research and interpretation. Working closely with and under the supervision of the full-time and trained Collections Manager, along with working under the supervision of the full-time and trained Programs Director, the individual will enhance their skills and acquire practical experience in:

- documentation and information management needed for a museum collection including: accessioning, physical and digital records-keeping, and digitization
- working in the database (PastPerfect) to bring records up to a better standard
- storage techniques and exhibit display care for artifacts, archival material, maps and historic photographs
- Accessioning and cataloguing acquisitions
- Developing exhibits
- Interpretation and programming techniques for collections outreach

Experiencing the duties of this position will assist the student in considering career options and directions.

In return, the Canmore Museum & Geoscience Centre will benefit greatly from working with a student who has a museum studies background and is keen to apply their knowledge in a practical work environment. This summer position will allow the museum to accession more artifacts, improve the database records, improve public knowledge and awareness of the collection, and catch up on other outstanding issues.

Measurable outcomes:

Measurable Outcomes:

- working with and being mentored by the Collections Manager, the Assistant will have the opportunity to accomplish significant collections duties over a 14 week period
- short term outcomes: (measured by physical count and percentage calculations)
  - database records: to be double checked and updated and corrections in the data entry information (est. 20-30% of records checked)
  - reduce the cataloguing backlog (20 new entries will be completed)
  - Temporary exhibit installed in small hallway case by the end of the work term
  - Travelling artifacts to be displayed weekly during Thursday Market (July & August)
  - Creation of a short (~15 minute) interpretive program to be completed with summer camp workshop classes at the museum in the summer. (July & August)
- long term outcomes:
  - updated records and better organization will assist CMAGS in efficiency and effectiveness for future processing of acquisitions, and for time needed for research requests
  - better documented collection information will allow ease of access for exhibition development and archival reproductions
  - Improved collections outreach will increase number of reasonable and accurate collections requests and visits from the community
  - Detailed and visible improvements made to our docent guide and tours of the museum exhibit

## Job description:

### The Collections and Outreach Assistant will:

- report to the Collections Manager (or the Program Director in her absence and for outreach activities)
- work with the Collections Manager in all aspects of maintaining, documenting, storing and displaying the CMAGS collection of about 10,000 objects.
- Work with the Program Director to develop and deliver collections outreach programs for museum events, weekly Thursday market booths, and summer camps.

### Responsibilities include:

- o assist with care, handling and storage of artifacts according to museum standards
- o record, process, catalogue, label, photograph, digitize and store donations
- o assist with accession backlog, records data-entry and help with research to resolve discrepancies in the collection database
- o assist with monitoring/maintaining the museum environment including exhibit galleries, storage spaces and off-site storage locations, and alerting the Collections Manager to any conservation issues related to the condition of individual artifacts, documents and/or photographs
- o Work with staff and volunteers on museum docent tours, including research and presentation of tours to improve quality
- o Assist with the interpretation of travelling artifacts at museum events and market booths
- o Assist with photo and artifact identification outreach at museum events
- o Assist with the creation and delivery of collections outreach programs for summer camps
- o Assist with updates to the collections and archives section of website to improve collections accessibility
- o Create social media content featuring the collection
- o work with other staff at Museum during events and programs as needed

### Work Plan:

- the first week will consist of orientation to and training about the museum and other physical sites related to the museum, the staff, the collection, care and handling of artifacts, safety procedures, local town and area history
- the second week will focus on learning the PastPerfect database by observing the training cd's, reading the training manual, and getting familiar with data entry protocol and on becoming familiar with the museum programs and interpretation strategies
- the remaining 12 weeks will be spent on the following main tasks, which will be ongoing all summer:
  - o there are discrepancies and anomalies to be dealt with from a transfer of our collections records from one database to another, e.g. ensuring records are accurate, that photographs are attached to proper records, that records contain the correct object name and search terms, etc (on-going work all summer)
  - o resolve database issues dealing with poor data entry (not the data transfer) – ie: check donor information; correct object names, descriptors, categories, provenance and historical value/local use; identify and correct duplicate catalogue numbers
  - o Catch up on backlog of accessioning and cataloguing artifacts – documenting an artifact's entry into the museum to the point of storing it; learn storage techniques (best

storage options for different types of artifacts; digital documenting; scanning documents and photographs (on-going work all summer); correcting past errors (reposition catalogue numbers on artifacts where needed, correcting wrong catalogue numbers on objects, etc)

- o Work with volunteers and staff to research, deliver and improve docent tours
  - o Development of a small temporary exhibit for the Civic Centre hallway
  - o Development and delivery of a short interpretive program highlighting the collection to be used with summer camp workshops in July and August
  - o Interpretation of travelling museum artifacts at Thursday market booths, along with research and development to improve the travelling artifact display throughout the summer.
  - o Regular collections themed updates on our website and social media accounts.
- the Collections and Outreach Assistant will work closely with the Collections Manager an estimated 2.5 days a week in the same workspace and will have much opportunity for learning, skills development and practical experience in a collection environment and will be encouraged to ask questions
  - they will also work closely with the Program Director an estimated 2.5 days a week while creating collections outreach opportunities, gaining the opportunity for to learn and develop their interpretive and communications skills.
  - some hours in the final week will be spent compiling a status report of completed and outstanding tasks and reviewing this report with the Collections Manager

#### 4. Skill Development

##### MANAGING INFORMATION:

- The successful management of information is a key element for many careers, but is most certainly at the heart of effective museum collections. The assistant will have opportunities to learn, understand and gain practical experience in the skills required to manage large volumes of data about a large number of objects. There are over 10,000 objects in the CMAGS collection and each can have layers of data associated with it that needs to be readily accessible. The assistant will gain practical experience in all facets of collection record-keeping, both paper files and digital, including - donor information, legal ownership requirements, artifact registration, condition reports, searchable naming protocols, item description and category identifiers, provenance and historical use, exhibit use, and location information. When the museum takes custody of a donation all the forms associated with the donation (temporary receipt, condition report, gift agreement, etc.) must all be completed fully and accurately logged and filed. These forms contain the information detailing what makes this object important to the collection, and the object can lose its place in the collection without this information to back it up. The information is also required and needs to be available for legal reasons. Successfully keeping track of any one item and all its relevant information amongst a large collection of diverse objects demands and improves skills that include receiving, gathering and organizing information, as well as accessing, analyzing and evaluating information.

##### EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION:

- Museums preserve and present information. The assistant will have daily opportunities to document and/or present information clearly, accurately, and appropriately while managing data records and through interaction with staff, museum donors and visitors, as well as while

planning and executing the small temporary exhibit. Clear communication in documentation is also required in this museum role, as many of the documents and records are filed for the lifetime of the museum. The documentation can contain pertinent information about the donor, the object, its condition, and its relevance to the collection. The assistant will also be required to use clear and concise language when planning and executing the small temporary exhibit, and will learn effective interpretive and communication strategies while preparing and delivering collections outreach. In the course of their normal duties, the assistant will gain much practical experience in reading and understanding information in a variety of formats (words, maps, photographs), presenting information in a museum display setting, writing and speaking so that others understand, and sharing information by conversation, email, and written description. They will also be required to communicate effectively with their supervisor when summarizing work completed on assigned tasks.

#### PARTICIPATE IN PROJECTS AND TASKS:

- The museum is in the process of updating and refining its database system. This project has identified many issues within the collection that need to be investigated and resolved.
- The museum will also require the creation of a small temporary exhibit to fill a space we own in the hallway of the Canmore Civic Centre.
- Under the supervision of the Program Director, the student will create, pilot, and revise a short outreach program to be completed with summer camp workshops, gaining guided and practical experience in the interpretive program process. They will also participate in the delivery of our travelling artifact project during Thursday markets.
- Assisting us with these issues will give the assistant practical experience in planning, monitoring and completing a task or project to achieve a desired outcome, working to agreed-upon professional standards, selecting appropriate tools and materials for the task, adapting to changing requirements and information, and identifying ways to improve the process. An example of an issue - there are hundreds of duplicate accession numbers in the collection that need to be corrected and updated. The project will involve assigning one object with the number then assigning new numbers to the other objects, registering the new numbers, applying the corrected number to the artifact, updating all pertinent records and registers, and perhaps reviewing and revising our current accession numbering procedure to ensure this cannot happen again.

#### TO THINK AND SOLVE PROBLEMS:

- Much of documentation process of an object in a museum collection involves assessing the object in terms of naming protocols, quantifiable descriptors, categorizing, and labelling. The assistant will gain much experience in determining and evaluating significant information to describe an object and its importance (making their decisions based on professional standards, guidelines and protocols), and often with the opportunity for multiple and sometimes creative avenues of further research and investigation. They will be required to find out as much information about each object they are to document using whatever means they feel will give a decent outcome. As a specific example, a significant portion the CMAGS collection suffers from incorrect or incomplete documentation. The assistant will need to track past records (which are not always straight-forward or well documented), investigate how objects came to be with CMAGs, and determine a course for further research. This will allow the assistant many opportunities for problem-solving, research, and critical, evaluative thinking. They will also receive practice in problem-solving during their outreach programming as they respond and direct inquiries and questions from the public.

## TO WORK INDEPENDENTLY

- The Collections and Outreach Assistant will have the opportunity to learn to manage their own time and meet deadlines. The tasks outlined above do not require constant supervision (e.g. editing and resolving issues in the database, researching for the temporary exhibit, program and tour research and design) but the Collections and Outreach Assistant will be required to report on the progress they have made and the outcomes of these various projects. This will allow the Collections and Outreach Assistant many opportunities to learn how to manage their own time and create effective and informative reports to their supervisors.

All of the above skills will provide the collections assistant with abilities that will be useful to future employers. The Collections and Outreach Assistant will also gain skills unique to museum work, including working with and editing a database, basic artifact handling and storage, accessioning, cataloguing, data entry, programming, interpretation, and exhibit development.

## 4. Job Parameters

### Candidate Profile:

- fluency in English is required
- the applicant should be a student in a degree or diploma program concerned with Museum Studies, preferably with at least one year's training, and preferably in collections management in the heritage field
- strong organizational skills and the ability to focus for long periods of time with a great attention to detail is required and essential
- should be familiar with professional Canadian standards in the accessioning, cataloguing, care and storage of artifacts, historical photographs, and other archival material
- experience with Word, Excel, and databases are required, working with photo editing software and WordPress are assets, as is a general knowledge of and interest in western Canadian History
- a driver's license is useful but not required
- the position is open to all equity groups except persons in a wheelchair as some of the collections storage areas are not wheelchair accessible
- an employment ad for the Collections and Outreach Assistant summer position will also be placed in the local weekly newspaper (Rocky Mountain Outlook), listed on museum and heritage organization websites such as those maintained by the Alberta Museums Association, Archive Society of Alberta, Canadian Museums Association and Association of Canadian Archivists, listed on government youth job sites, Canadian universities and colleges offering museum studies, regional universities and colleges in Western Canada, and by word of mouth recruitment through existing museum employees, board members, and friends of the museum
- prospective candidates will be asked to submit a resume. Preliminary phone interviews will be conducted by the Collections Manager to choose the most suitable person. Ideally, those selected will be interviewed in person by the Collections Manager and the Program Director, or if the candidate is located at a considerable distance, by webcam/Skype
- YCW eligibility will be ensured by checking that the prospective candidate
  - o is legally entitled to work in Canada
  - o is a Canadian citizen, permanent resident or has refugee status in Canada
  - o is a full-time student enrolled in the semester prior to and immediately after the position
  - o is between 16 and 30 years of age

- meets the eligibility criteria of the program under which the museum has been approved
- is registered in the YCW online candidate inventory
- is willing to commit to the full duration of the 14 week project
- does not have another full-time job (over 30 hours a week) while employed with YCW
- the anticipated start date for the position is

#### YCW Website Job Poster:

- located in the Canadian Rockies, 20 minutes east of Banff and one hour west of Calgary, Alberta, the Canmore Museum & Geoscience Centre is eager to hire a full-time student as a Collections & Outreach Assistant
- the position is for 14 weeks, commencing May 13, 2019, ending August 19, 2019
- the wage is \$ 17/hour for a 37.5 hour work week
- application deadline: March 31, 2019
- this summer student position will assist the Collection Manager in the care, documenting, and outreach of the museum collections and will work under the supervision of the Collections Manager (or in her absence the Program Director)
- the job is multi-faceted, and includes areas of interpretation, care, preservation, organization, documentation and information management of artifacts, archival materials, maps, and historic photographs
- strong organizational skills and the ability to focus for long periods of time with a great attention to detail is required
- the applicant should be a student in a degree or diploma program concerned with Museum Studies and should be familiar with professional Canadian museum standards for collections
- experience with Word, Excel, and databases are required, working with photo editing software and wordpress are assets, as is a general knowledge of and interest in western Canadian History
- fluency in English is required
- a driver's license is useful but not required
- the position is open to all equity groups except persons in a wheelchair as some of the collections storage areas are not wheelchair accessible
- this position is supported by Young Canada Works. Applicants must be legally entitled to work in Canada, be a Canadian citizen, permanent resident or have refugee status in Canada, be enrolled as a full-time student prior to the position and immediately after the position, be between the ages of 16 and 30, not have another full-time job, be willing to commit to the full duration of the 14 week project, and be willing to participate in an evaluation/assessment
- for information about the position of Collections and Outreach Assistant, please contact the Collections Manager at [collections@cmags.org](mailto:collections@cmags.org) . Information about the Canmore Museum & Geoscience Centre can be found at [www.canmoremuseum.com](http://www.canmoremuseum.com) .

## 6. Orientation and Supervision

#### Orientation and Training:

- the Museum Director will familiarize the student with the layout of the museum, and introduce the student to other staff and board members
- museum access will be provided along with information on the security systems and location and use of fire exits
- the Collections Manager and Program Director will spend the first week with the new employee familiarizing the student with the museum mandate, current contents and state and locations of

the collection, interpretive programs, care and handling procedures, safety procedures, documentation systems including policies and procedures, current state of documentation both in hard copy and digitally, an examination of the progress thus far regarding accessioning outstanding artifacts, and hands-on training and use of both database systems (InMagic and Past Perfect)

- there will be much focus during the first weeks regarding specific data-entry wording and procedures to ensure that the student understands and is working to proper standards
- The student will be given a tour of the exhibit(s) in order to have a greater understanding of the museum's direction and focus
- background training will include access to books, brochures, museum programs, and publications about the heritage and history of the area
- the student will participate in museum events, programs and tours to help increase their knowledge and experience
- In the first weeks, the Program Director will provide the student with training and experience in interpretation, including museum programming policies, procedures, standards, and strategies
- The Program Director will familiarize the student with programming locations, and access to our website and social media accounts.
- after the first two weeks, an estimated 4 hrs/week throughout the summer will be allocated for the student to work directly with the Collections Manager and they will be encouraged to ask questions, discuss work progress and problems, work together with artifacts and collection projects, and the Collections Manager will proactively mentor/coach the student in collections management workplace skills
- Throughout the summer, the Program Director will directly work an estimated 4hrs/week with the student where the student will be able to ask questions and work together to gain and develop their programming and interpretive skills
- The Collections and Outreach Assistant will be invited to participate in weekly staff meetings with the museum administrator, programs manager, and museum director

#### Supervision:

- the Collections and Outreach Assistant summer student is directly supervised by the Collections Manager. They will also be supervised by the Program Director approximately 2.5 days a week while developing collections outreach programming.
- it is expected that the student will work very closely with the Collections Manager and the Program Director for the first two weeks for training, discussion and hands-on training with artifacts, and programming and outreach procedures, and that as the student becomes familiar with the database software, the collection, interpretation, outreach, and processing and documentation procedures, they will work more independently
- the student, the Collections Manager, and the Program Director will have dedicated work spaces in the same areas of the museum (collections area and main office), thus workplace support and nominal supervision is ongoing every day and any questions, problems or other issues can be readily addressed as they occur
- the work area is located at the Canmore Museum & Geoscience Centre, 902B – 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Canmore, AB T1W 3K1 [www.canmoremuseum.com](http://www.canmoremuseum.com) [collections@cmags.org](mailto:collections@cmags.org) 403-678-2462
- the Collections Manager will monitor the quality and quantity of work by the assistant regularly, and at the end of each week. The Program Director will also provide input on the quality of the work.

- The entire museum staff generally meet once a week, this will be an opportunity for the student to address any questions they may have that cannot be answered by the Collections Manager and Program Director.
- some hours in the final week will be spent compiling a status report of completed and outstanding tasks and reviewing this report with the Collections Manager

#### Characteristics of Town/Region:

- founded in 1883, the mountain town of Canmore, AB sustained itself for nearly 100 years as a coal mining community. More recently, the town now serves as a centre for year-round tourism and alpine recreation. In 1988, it hosted the Nordic events of the Winter Olympics, and now boasts a world-class Nordic training facility. The population is approximately 15,000 and is a diverse community of active individuals involved in sports and recreation, parks and environmental management, tourism, and the arts. The Community has a recreation centre, library, hospital, weekly summer farmer's market and Art in the Park, and many kilometres of maintained hiking and biking trails
- annual summer festivals include Canada Day, Miner's Day, Canmore Folk Festival, several indie Music events, several biking events and the Canmore Highland Games
- the Bow River and several smaller creeks flow through the town. Major wildlife around the town include elk, cougars, black and grizzly bears
- the town of Canmore is located adjacent to Banff National Park and near to Kananaskis Country – a large provincial recreation park
- further information can be obtained at [www.TourismCanmore.com](http://www.TourismCanmore.com), [www.CanmoreAlberta.com](http://www.CanmoreAlberta.com), [www.Canmore.ca](http://www.Canmore.ca), [www.BanffLakeLouise.com](http://www.BanffLakeLouise.com), [www.BanffNationalPark.com](http://www.BanffNationalPark.com), [www.Kananaskis.com](http://www.Kananaskis.com)

#### Mission and Mandate:

Canmore Museum & Geoscience Centre in Canmore, AB

Our MISSION is to tell the stories of our mountains and our communities to you.

Our VISION is to be a well-known centre dedicated to celebrating the unique mountain history of the Canmore area.

My organization's annual operating budget is:

- \$100,000 – \$499,999

Part of the Canadian Museums Association YCW funding has been reserved for small and medium-sized museums. Please help us direct your application by answering the following question.

My organization is considered a museum, according to the following definition:

Museums are institutions created in the public interest. They engage their visitors, foster deeper understanding and promote the enjoyment and sharing of authentic cultural and natural heritage. Museums acquire, preserve, research, interpret and exhibit the tangible and intangible evidence of society and nature. As educational institutions, museums provide a physical forum for critical inquiry and investigation.

Museums are permanent, not-for-profit institutions whose exhibits are regularly open to the general public. This definition encompasses institutions that pursue similar objectives and accomplish most or some of a museum's functions. Accordingly, the following are also recognized as museums:

- Exhibition places such as art galleries and science and interpretation centres
- Institutions with plant and animal collections and displays, such as botanical gardens, biodomes, zoos, aquariums and insectariums
- Cultural establishments that facilitate the preservation, continuation and management of tangible and intangible living heritage resources, such as keeping houses and heritage centres
- Natural, archaeological, ethnographic and historical monuments and site.