Cultural and Scientific Collections

The Department of the Interior (DOI) manages one of the largest museum collections in the nation, with more than 200 million natural and cultural objects held in trust for the American people. The vast collections are housed in 2,000 Interior facilities as well as 1,000 museum and university partner facilities. These collections represent the fields of archaeology, ethnography, fine arts, history, biology, geology, and paleontology. Countless public exhibits and educational programs feature objects from these collections, and they are used widely for research.

Background

The Department of the Interior established the Cultural and Scientific Collections program in 2014 to address deficiencies cited by the Office of Inspector General. As of 2018, approximately 148 million, or 70 percent of bureau collections, had been cataloged. Yet millions of scientific and cultural objects remained to be accessioned and cataloged to provide accountability and increase access and use for the benefit of the public.

FY 2021 Appropriations Request

Please support $1 million for Cultural and Scientific Collections in the FY 2021 Interior Appropriations bill.

APPROPRIATIONS BILL: Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary/Department-Wide Programs

ACCOUNT: Working Capital Fund

ACTIVITY: Cultural and Scientific Collections (CSC)

Recent Funding History:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Enacted Funding</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY 2018</td>
<td>$998,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY 2019</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY 2020</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<td>FY 2021</td>
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JUSTIFICATION: Small investments in cultural and scientific collections from this program have realized substantial returns for the public. Many projects involve partnerships with non-Federal museums and universities that house Interior collections. Through this initiative hundreds of thousands of museum objects have been accessioned and cataloged to improve accountability, access, and compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. This program has helped to correct deficiencies in facilities to improve preservation for research, exhibit, and heritage uses by Tribes. Most importantly, this program has enabled greater public access to and understanding of Interior’s vast collection of America’s artifacts.
Cultural and Scientific Collections

The Department of the Interior’s museum collection is cared for by the Office of Acquisition and Property Management and the ten DOI bureaus and offices that manage portions of the collection. Those offices include the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, the Indian Arts and Crafts Board, the Interior Museum, the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians, and nearly 1,000 partners.

The diverse museum collections are used in many ways, including:

Traditional cultural uses: museum exhibits at DOI bureaus and partner facilities; online exhibits; research; curriculum-based educational initiatives; and publications.

For additional information, contact Janelle DiLuccia, Associate Director of Public Lands Policy, JDiLucia@savingplaces.org, (202) 588-6140.