



Mendocino County

Legislation Text

File #: 17-0177, **Version:** 1

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Museum

Meeting Date: March 21, 2017

Department Contact: Alison Glassey

Phone: 459-7698

Item Type: Consent Agenda

Time Allocated for Item: NA

Agenda Title:

Approval of Agreement with ACdR Conservation LLC in the Amount of \$170,000 for Conservation Consultation and Treatment Services for the Term of March 10, 2017 through June 30, 2018

Recommended Action/Motion:

Approve Agreement with ACdR Conservation LLC in the amount of \$170,000 for conservation consultation and treatment services for the term of March 10, 2017 through June 30, 2018; and authorize Chair to sign same.

Previous Board/Board Committee Actions:

None

Summary of Request:

The County of Mendocino through the Mendocino County Museum is legally and ethically responsible for the care, preservation, and storage of artifacts held in the public trust. Beginning in March 2016 and continuing through May 2016, insects and mold were found throughout the Museum's buildings, and the Museum and the County Executive Office took urgent measures to halt the infestation and to remediate the mold respectively. Both efforts are ongoing.

An emergency assessment by a conservation consultant and Museum staff in April 2016 identified the Museum's textiles collections and leather collections as being at significant risk of deterioration and harm, the former due to insects and lack of ongoing conservation care since 2001, and the latter due to mold and lack of ongoing conditioning and care since acquisition. The items in the collections need a level of intensive remedial conservation that is not possible to perform locally due to the lack of specialized treatment resources, specifically anoxic abatement; lack of specialized expertise; lack of sufficient numbers of staff; lack of adequately-sized or clean workspace; and lack of time.

Beginning in May 2016 and continuing through October 2016, Museum staff and volunteers inspected the entirety of the textile collections, identifying where insects were found, and packaged all textiles for intensive conservation treatment. Wrapping the textiles isolated and halted the spread of the insect infestation, prepared the items for transport, and protected them from the mold remediation work being done around them. While the items were wrapped with packets of desiccant, the wrapping was meant as short-term storage prior to transport for anoxic abatement treatment, which would permanently eradicate generational insect infestation,

and which was anticipated to take place last fall. Some items will have been wrapped for almost a year by the time this contract is executed and there is concern about damage due to moisture if there are further delays. The leather items have not yet been packaged, but are in dire need of treatment to prevent disintegration of various parts.

The Museum identified an initial need for intensive conservation treatment in April 2016 and mentioned an initial cost in the department budget conference. By the time most of the textile collection had been inspected in the fall, the cost had increased four-fold as it became clear that the entire collection was compromised and needed equitable and in-depth treatment to end the infestation and allow the collection to be re-housed safely.

This is a two-year contract because the work needs to start as soon as possible this fiscal year, but will not be completed until the following fiscal year. It is projected that up to four treatment cycles will be needed to deal with the numbers and sizes of artifacts. It is not possible to split the contract up because all of the collections must be processed through the entire treatment cycle to prevent harm and avoid any chance of re-infestation.

Nearly half of the total funding for the contract has been identified by the Museum as salary savings from this fiscal year (due to the continued vacancy of a collections management position). Whatever of these funds have not been paid out toward the contract this fiscal year will be carried over for the contract in the next fiscal year. Funds for the remainder of the contract total will be handled through the FY 2017-18 budget process.

One past bright spot in this situation is that Museum staff and volunteers initially focused on the Museum's collections of Native American baskets and artifacts as the highest priority. Every item was identified, catalogued, cleaned and re-housed in archival wrap and boxes. This work took several years and was completed in 2015. All Native American objects, as they were conserved, were then moved into an environmentally-controlled room within the Archives Suite. As a result, none of these re-housed and stored items have been affected or threatened by the insect infestation or the mold. It should also be noted that the Museum's collections include many items of metal and wood, for which conservation care can be handled locally on an ongoing, non-emergency basis.

A future bright spot is that the mold remediation will be completed in the next couple of months. At that time, the Museum will reclaim the Artifacts/Archive Storage building for its original purpose and it will be set up properly with environmental controls and efficient shelving. A room constructed with its own ventilation system will be re-purposed as sensitive storage space in time to receive and house the entire textiles collection as the objects return from the off-site conservation treatments. This will preserve the effects of the anoxic abatement, thorough cleaning, and reconditioning *for the long-term* and allow for in-house preventive maintenance care as the ongoing practice in the future.

Alternative Action/Motion:

Determine alternate method for urgent intensive conservation treatment of the Museum's textiles and leather collections.

Supplemental Information Available Online at: NA

Fiscal Impact:

Source of Funding: BU 7110

Current F/Y Cost: \$74,000

Next F/Y Cost: \$96,000

Supervisory District: All

Budgeted in Current F/Y: Yes

Annual Recurring Cost: NA

Vote Requirement: Majority

Agreement/Resolution/Ordinance Approved by County Counsel: Yes

CEO Liaison: Sarah Dukett, Administrative Analyst II

CEO Review: Yes

Comments: