PLANNING AND PRIORITIZING

The following text is adapted from selected leaflet webpages on the Northeast Document Conservation Center website: http://www.nedcc.org/resources/leaflets.list.php.

Considerations for Prioritizing

Collections have many preservation needs requiring a variety of actions to meet. Since resources are always limited, every action cannot be accomplished. Thus, it is crucial to prioritize actions that are most important. Prioritizing is the process of deciding which actions have the most significant impact, are the most important, and are the most feasible. The most straightforward way to prioritize preservation actions is by carefully considering specific prioritization criteria, weighing appropriate collections-related factors, and making informed value judgments before reaching a decision.

Criteria for Prioritizing

It is useful to consider three criteria when prioritizing preservation actions.

- **IMPACT.** Impact is an evaluation of the extent to which an action improves the preservation of a collection. Consider the following questions: To what extent will a specific action improve preservation of the collections? How great is the immediate versus the potential impact of implementing this action? The greater the overall impact of an action, the higher its priority.

- **FEASIBILITY.** The feasibility of implementing an action is the consideration of the amount of time and resources required to undertake and complete the action. Some actions are easy and inexpensive to implement, while others are difficult and expensive. Keep in mind the availability of expertise capability and financial resources. If it is unlikely that you can implement an action, it should be given lower priority even if its impact is high.

- **URGENCY.** An action can be regarded as urgent if waiting to implement it would cause further problems or would mean bypassing an opportunity. Actions requiring immediate implementation should be given highest priority.

Factors Influential in Prioritizing

The use, storage, condition and value of materials in the collections also influence prioritizing actions and should be considered.

- The amount and type of use items receive is significant. Items on permanent exhibition have different needs from those in storage. Items that heavily or precariously used are at higher risk and in more urgent need of attention.

- The housing of collections is important. Materials stored under poor environmental conditions, in harmful containers, or materials susceptible to theft, vandalism, fire, or other disasters, are all at higher risk.

- Another factor to consider is the value of the materials. The nature of the value of items (monetary, intrinsic, associational, bibliographic), their rarity, their provenance, and their significance to the you need to be considered.
• The personal, nostalgic and historical use of materials should be considered. For how long should you planned for their preservation?

Implementation Priorities

Implementation priorities are high-priority actions that are achievable. Actions that are of high impact and can be implemented with little difficulty probably deserve highest priority. Actions that are difficult to implement and have little impact can often be postponed or even disregarded because they achieve little while requiring great effort.

Priority Actions for Preservation

The following list outlines a range of necessary actions commonly identified by a preservation planning survey. To use survey, checked off all necessary actions; then, rank their priority to organize your long-range plan (e.g. 1 = high priority through 5 = low priority).

1. Building maintenance
   ___ Get professional inspection
     _____ building
     _____ electric
     _____ roof
     _____ furnace or heating/cooling machinery
     _____ masonry
     _____ basement/drainage
     _____ plumbing
     _____ other _________________________
   ___ Set up an inspection schedule
     _____ building
     _____ electric
     _____ roof
     _____ plumbing
     _____ grounds
     _____ drains and gutters
     _____ furnace or heating/cooling machinery
     _____ other _________________________
   ___ Set up a building maintenance schedule
     _____ repair windows
     _____ repair roof
     _____ paint
     _____ re-point bricks
     _____ repair masonry
     _____ replace elements (e.g., steps, sills, drainpipes, etc.)
     _____ repair elements (e.g., reattach downspouts, flashings, etc.)
     _____ seal cracks or other openings
     _____ clean gutters
2. Climate/Energy Efficiency

___ Seal windows (e.g., caulk around panes, add weather-stripping, etc.)
___ Weatherstrip doors
___ Monitor for temperature and relative humidity changes
___ Purchase monitoring equipment
   ___ hygrothermograph
   ___ hygrometer
   ___ thermometer
   ___ aspirating psychrometer
   ___ sling psychrometer
   ___ humidity cards
   ___ other ____________________________
___ Relocate collections out of damp basement
   ___ from hot attic
   ___ away from exterior walls
___ Add humidifier/dehumidifier
___ Check location and function of vents
   ___ open louvers
   ___ relocate collections
   ___ unblock vents
___ Change filters
___ Set up a schedule for filter replacement
___ Install fans
   ___ ceiling
   ___ floor
   ___ window
___ Install storm windows
___ Other ____________________________

3. Light Control

___ Block windows permanently
___ Install
   ___ drapes
   ___ shades
   ___ blinds
___ Sleeve fluorescent bulbs with UV filtering tubes
___ Add UV film or Plexiglas
   ___ to windows
   ___ to exhibit cases
   ___ to framed objects
___ Relocate exhibits or collections away from direct light
___ Measure and keep records of light levels
___ Rotate valuable objects from long-term exhibits
___ Install drapes on exhibit cases
___ Replace bulbs with lower wattage lamps
___ Remove bulbs from unnecessary fixtures
___ Redirect spotlights to provide indirect lighting for exhibits
___ Skylight
   ___ add UV protection
   ___ paint panes to reduce light
   ___ black out panes
___ Turn off in-case lights (or remove bulbs)
___ Purchase blue wool fading standards
___ Set up a light exposure test with blue wool standards

4. Pest Control
___ Trim shrubs or greenery to provide an 18-inch clearance from building
___ Remove potted plants from building interior
___ Buy tight-sealing trash container for food remains
___ Prohibit food in storage and research areas
___ Clean up, including vacuum, immediately after parties
___ Remove trash from room each night
___ Purchase insect test traps
___ Set up a pest monitoring program
___ Set up a pest inspection schedule
___ Assign responsibility for pest management
___ Lower the relative humidity
___ Clean storage areas
___ Have problems evaluated by exterminator
___ Other ________________________
5. **Housekeeping**
___ Set up a cleaning schedule
___ Set up an inspection schedule (2 times/year)
___ Purchase HEPA vacuum
___ Purchase dustcloths
___ Other _________________________

6. **Water Protection**
___ Find source of leaks (list them)

______________________________, ______________________________,
______________________________
___ Relocate collections away from known leaks
___ Relocate collections from below/adjacent to sinks, restrooms, or other water source hazards
___ Move all collections items and boxes off of floor in (space name)

______________________________, ______________________________,
______________________________
___ Other water protections _____________________

7. **Fire Protection**
___ Ban/restrict smoking
___ Inspect fire detectors
___ Clean fire detectors (see manufacturer's instructions)
___ Test fire detectors
___ Set up a cleaning, testing, and inspection schedule for fire detectors
___ Conduct fire safety inspection
___ Inspect fire extinguishers
    ___ purchase
    ___ recharge
    ___ replace
___ Mount fire extinguishers in accessible places
___ Remove or correct fire hazards
___ Design emergency evacuation plan
___ Other fire protections ____________________

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8. Security
___ Install locks on storage areas
___ Upgrade exterior locks
___ Replace locks
___ Inventory collections
___ Install/improve window locks
___ Remove plants obscuring windows
___ Install exterior lights
___ Replace bulbs in exterior lights
___ Other security precautions _______________________

9. General Risk Reduction (Emergency Preparedness)
___ Write emergency preparedness plan
___ Locate freezer for emergency storage of wet material
___ Store emergency supplies (sponges, etc.)
___ Update existing emergency plan
___ Identify salvage priorities
___ Complete a hazards inventory
___ Set up a backup schedule for collections records
___ Back up catalog, computer disks, shelf-list, or other collections records
___ Provide for a copy of backup records to be kept off-site
___ Review insurance coverage with insurer
___ Other ______________________________

10. General Storage
___ Relocate collections/objects
___ Replace plywood or particle board shelves
___ Add shelving
    ___ regular
    ___ oversize
___ Add map case(s)
___ Add/replace file cabinets
___ Add racks and hanging folders for file cabinets
___ Box collections to protect them from wood furniture
___ Line shelves to protect collections
___ Line drawers to protect collections

11. Books
___ Replace rubber bands with fabric tape
___ Replace knifing bookends with non-knifing book supports
___ Add bookends
___ Measure for and order custom book boxes
___ Make polyester book jackets (for red rot)
___ Straighten shelves
___ Turn spine-up volumes spine down
___ Make sure books are fully supported by shelves (add oversize shelves if needed)
___ Dust
___ Remove inserts (dried flowers, bookmarks, etc.)
___ Inventory or read shelf list
___ Other __________________________

12. Pamphlets
___ Make enclosures
___ Replace acidic enclosures and binders
___ Other __________________________

13. Manuscripts and Documents
___ Inventory collection
___ Remove or replace fasteners
___ Estimate quantities and sizes of
   ___ folders
   ___ hanging folders
   ___ boxes needed for rehousing
___ Re-house in
   ___ folders
   ___ boxes
___ Remove or isolate newsclippings and other very poor paper
___ Other __________________________

14. Oversize Objects
___ Provide map case or other oversize storage furniture
13. nominations

___ Make folders
   ___ Melinex (mylar)
   ___ paper
___ Replace tubes for rolled storage
   ___ buy “archival” tubes
   ___ wrap tubes with neutral or buffered paper
   ___ roll objects on outside of tubes
___ Other ______________________________

15. Framed Objects
___ Reframe using museum-quality mats
___ Unframe and store in
   ___ folders
   ___ mats
___ Store in individual items in
   ___ boxes
   ___ flat file
___ Build framed storage bin
___ Other ______________________________

16. Newsprint/Newsclippings
___ Isolate clippings from good-quality paper using
   ___ interleaves
   ___ folders
   ___ Melinex (mylar)
   ___ paper
___ Photocopy
___ Microfilm
___ Other ______________________________

17. Scrapbooks/Albums
___ Photocopy
___ Microfilm
___ Box
___ Other ______________________________

18. Photographs
___ Inventory
___ Purchase and use lint-free gloves
___ Separate photographs from document files
___ Provide proper support for photos on brittle mounts
___ House prints and negatives separately
___ Isolate
    ___ nitrate film stock
    ___ early safety film
___ House nitrate/early safety film negatives in individual buffered enclosures
___ Duplicate (list category or collections ______________________)
___ Frame or reframe photographs using museum-quality mats
___ Unframe photographs and store in
    ___ boxes
    ___ flat files
    ___ hanging files
___ Sleeve and box glass plate negatives
___ Make enclosures for broken glass plate negatives
___ Investigate cold storage for color photos
___ Make enclosures for cased photographs
___ Other __________________________

19. Repair Program
___ Decide what procedures are feasible
___ Identify an experienced technician or conservator for advice and assistance
___ Identify and obtain necessary equipment and supplies
___ Set up a space reserved for repairs
___ Create or adopt guidelines for identifying objects in need of repair
___ Create guidelines for matching repairs to damage
___ Document repair procedures and materials in use
___ Coordinate other preservation strategies (microfilm, binding) with repair program
___ Flatten materials for storage