

Washington Preservation Initiative
Advisory Group Minutes
December 10, 2004, Conference Call

Present: Gary Menges, UW Libraries, Chair
Gudrun Aurand, WSU
Jill Bourne, Seattle Public Library
Lee Dirks, Microsoft
Eric Palo, Renton Technical College
Linda Pierce, Gonzaga University
Kathryn Hamilton Wang, WSL
Susan Barrett (WSL Project Manager)

Alan Lewis Workshop

Plans for these workshops, to be held just after a presentation at the Pacific Northwest Preservation Management Institute (PMI) at the UW, are well underway. Current expectations are for a general Seattle/UW workshop for us on Friday, Feb. 4, 2005 and one in Spokane at Gonzaga on Tuesday, Feb. 8, 2005. Mr. Lewis will have just retired from the National Archives.

Assessment Grants

The site visits for the Eastern Washington assessments by Tom Claerson and Gayle Palmer will take place the week of Dec. 13, and for the three Western Washington sites, the week of Jan. 24, 2005. Tom's reports should be ready in February, and he will be contacting each library three months after his visit, plus a 6-months conference call.

The group agreed that a similar grant cycle should be offered in 2005, after the regular "large grants" cycle has been held. It was suggested that some of the site assessment recipients, possibly from both years, might be encouraged to offer a panel discussion on best practices at WLA 2006 (Tacoma), describing their assessments and any resultant activities at their libraries.

Another suggestion was to hold a workshop just for these assessment recipients, and perhaps the Washington PMI participants who are doing self-guided preservation assessments of their libraries. It would focus on their progress in implementing assessment recommendations and how to overcome obstacles to implementation and to move forward. As an invitational workshop, perhaps travel stipends might be included to encourage attendance.

2003 WPI Grants

Final reports have been received from the recipients of the first year of grants and will be part of a wider year-end report being made to the Institute of Museum and Library

Services (IMLS), our federal funding agency. Gary has received a copy of these final reports, and Gudrun also requested one.

As a quick summary:

Everett Public Library had \$7, 000 to preserve 126 nitrate panorama photographs.

UW had \$20,000 to assess, clean, and re-record some of their archival film collection.

WSU had \$20,000 to survey their manuscript and visual collections and create photocopies from one collection and preservation contact prints from glass negatives.

MOHAI (Museum of History & Industry) had \$13,763 to preserve and microfilm 58 maritime scrapbooks.

Seattle Public Library had \$19,360 to preserve and re-bind volumes of the Sanborn Insurance Maps of Seattle. (Some funding was added by SPL to fully complete the project.)

Gonzaga University had \$8,000 for a conservation treatment needs assessment of a collection of 2,774 rare books from Mount St. Michaels.

Ellensburg Public Library had \$11,876 (a partial funding) to make larger prints from 1500 photographic contact prints, and to begin work on oral history audiocassettes.

All recipients completed all or most of their work and felt that the grants were well worth receiving.

2005 WPI Funding

The arrival of the federal funding should be earlier in the spring than in some years; the President has just signed the appropriations bill. The WPI portion for this last year of the Initiative should be \$350,000; spending will need to be completed by Aug. 30, 2006.

Gary had prepared a list at Jill's prior request for some possible future WPI projects and workshops which the group reviewed and discussed.

Jill thought that programs on local history and selecting collections for preservation would be of interest to public libraries. Linda and Eric mentioned that a repeat of the Disaster Preparation workshop might be popular. Gary mentioned that perhaps we could use Julie from California to have a different speaker on this topic and that he had heard she did a good presentation. He also mentioned doing a workshop on "Planning a Preservation Program on a Limited Budget." Gudrun said that information on making preservation boxes and other information can be found on the NEDCC website.

We have tried to contract for workshops that have been successful in other parts of the country, but we have identified several topics which would be “new” workshops where a speaker would have to be identified and a workshop designed for WPI.

The third of the three weeks of the Pacific Northwest Preservation Management Institute, to be held in May, will cover implementation, disasters, and preservation in a digital world.

Gudrun felt that we need to offer a more encompassing approach, as in—after they have identified their problem areas, “what do we do now?”, or training on Taking Action.

2005 Grant Applications

Gary asked if the rule would continue to be one application per library. He had heard that a group of eight libraries and historical societies in King County, including but not headed by the UW, were considering doing an application. The group felt that would be allowable and would not preclude an individual application from any of the libraries involved. Jeff Martin, WSL Grants Administrator, had entered the room just prior to this discussion, and the group asked him to try to frame language for the application that would reflect this option.

Susan asked about the stipulation to ban expenditures on machines, and after discussion, the group indicated that purchases should exclude shelving or photocopiers but that something like microfilm readers might be allowed. Linda felt that a library would have to request such a machine as part of a larger project and Kathryn that it should not be for an upgraded machine, but only if the library did not own something already.

Since the funding pool will be larger for this year, there was a discussion of a ceiling for the grant requests. It was felt that \$50,000 would limit the number of recipients and likely funnel money only to the larger institutions. But with a somewhat larger grant than the previous \$20,000, as in \$30,000 for a ceiling, some sites with more complex projects might be able to advance their ideas, particularly with the likelihood that this will be the last year in which preservation grants will be possible. Of course not all applicants would request the full amount. The group agreed on \$30,000 as a cap.

2005 Grants for Assessment Site Visits

After discussion, the group agreed to sponsor another round of these “small grants”, at \$5,000 per site, with the State Library doing the soliciting and contracting with the assessor. The probable intent would be to have five or six libraries participate. For 2004, there are 5 direct recipients, and 3 or 4 others will use part of their “large grant” for an assessment, for which they directly contract. It is possible that some applicants for regular 2005 grants would also go this route.

2005 Grants for Environmental Monitors & Data Loggers

As a new idea, \$10,000 to \$15,000 might be put into a similar group-purchase with the State Library doing the centralized solicitation and contracting. This would be for an idea mentioned by Jim Reilly of Image Permanence that a library would receive the loan of two environmental monitors, with quarterly assessments given of the resulting data. This might involve \$2,000 from the grant and \$1,000 from the library, or perhaps the grant would cover all costs. At the end of a year, the library could purchase the devices for a reduced cost, perhaps \$650.

Group reactions to this: Gudrun thought it would be worth doing; Linda felt it would be used mostly by the larger libraries, which would not be a bad thing. Eric felt that the mid-size libraries would find it of most value, those large enough to need environmental monitoring, but not so large that they already have it in place. It was felt that publicity about this program would be an important component.

The group knew of only one firm which could offer this service. Jeff reminded that we would have to go through the process to see, and verify, that they are a sole source provider. Eric commented that other companies also sell the monitors, but he didn't know of any that would also offer the analysis package.

Other Possible WPI Activities

Statewide Disaster Planning—we might serve as a reservoir for such information. Linda felt this might be a way to encourage libraries which had not yet undertaken disaster planning. Gary mentioned that there were some sources of such information available now, both nationally and locally, such as the Portals website, although our use of or linkage to that would require planning and agreements. It was agreed that this subject needed more discussion at a later date.

The question of writing an informative pamphlet was raised. Gudrun would like to see it contain a list of tools needed for a (preservation) toolkit. This discussion will also be returned to later.

Funding the purchase of a circulating collection of books on preservation, and disaster planning, for loan from the Washington State Library might also be considered, as would a supply of information “wheels” from the National Taskforce on Heritage Response. Linda suggested that these might be sent out with copies of the statewide plan as publicity for preservation efforts.

This discussion will be continued at the next meeting, with more consideration of advocacy methods, and of dollar amounts to connect to the ideas.

Next WPI Meeting

A conference call on Wednesday, January 26, 2005, from 2:00 to 3:00 pm.