

Museum Collections Rehousing Project

Bulkley Valley Museum

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The Bulkley Valley Museum in Smithers received \$28,000 from the B.C.-Canada 150 grant program for the *Collections Rehousing Project*. The project's goal was to implement the use of X5 sliding shelving systems to maximize onsite storage areas for artifacts and archival collections. The project resulted in a 25% increase in the capacity of the artifact storage area, enabling the return of artifacts previously stored offsite and the creation of dedicated space for artifact photography. The ripple-effects of this project were profound. The increased collection accessibility to staff for conservation monitoring, research, and exhibitions ensures room for future collections growth and enrichment of the historical record of the Bulkley Valley. This project was the culmination of a larger three-year collections management project that has resulted in a radical increase in the accessibility of the collection and the capability of the Museum to manage its collection.

The project involved a complete inventory of artifact and archival collections to ensure that all items were accounted for in the Museum's database system. Importantly, this included accurate storage information. In addition, the reorganization

of the space allowed for the creation of a dedicated space for artifact photography. Over the past two years, the Bulkley Valley Museum has been working on making its collection accessible online. A dedicated space for photography not only allows for higher quality images, but also reduces disruptions to visitor space, as the Museum was previously forced to do these projects in spaces open to the public. The lasting legacy of an online and accessible photo inventory of the collection will serve stakeholders for years to come. The collection can be viewed at search.bvmuseum.org/

The rehousing component of the project provided a rare opportunity to completely overhaul storage areas to most effectively house the collections. Existing wood shelving was discarded, and non-adjustable metal frame shelving was repurposed for use at offsite locations. Grid wall panels were also installed in the artifact storage area for hanging oversized long items, such as skis and farming implements. Offsite artifacts were brought to the museum where their condition could be monitored more closely.

This project has a legacy that will continue to impact the Museum's capacity to preserve and share its collections for years to come. The

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public reaction to the project following the Museum's *Behind the Scenes* open house indicates a renewed sense of confidence in the organization and its ability to effectively manage the community heritage in its trust. By providing much-needed infrastructural support, the project has supported ongoing efforts to increase accessibility of the collection to stakeholders. By undertaking this project, the Museum encouraged continued community investment in the Museum as a professional organization dedicated to preserving and sharing collective local history.

To learn more about the project, check out the Collections Rehousing Project videos on [the Bulkley Valley Museum's Facebook page](#).

Before



The museum's previous, inefficient storage, overflowing with the Museum's collection.
 Photo credits: Bulkley Valley Museum.

After



The former inefficient wooden shelving was replaced with X5 sliding shelving systems (left), which improved accessibility to the collection and allowed for the creation of a dedicated photography station (right) which reduces the disruption of the visitor space.
 Photo credits: Bulkley Valley Museum.

GRANT RECIPIENTS IN NORTHERN B.C. BROKEN DOWN BY REGION



\$1 MILLION
 combined total funding.

*British Columbia | Canada 150: Celebrating B.C. Communities and their Contributions to Canada grant program Impact Report