



COLLECTIONS DAMAGE REPORT

Object Name: *Puma concolor*, Cougar. Specimen collected in 1929.

Catalogue Number: MAM-2600

Location where damage occurred: Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, Hunters of the Plains exhibit (2nd floor)

Date damage noticed: October 7, 2017. Lindsay Lingle, Special Events staff, contacted Dawn Roberts at 7:45pm that evening.

Description of damage: Tomato soup-based appetizer spilled onto a mounted cougar specimen (MAM-2600) and its base, the interior of the barrier, and the carpeted floor in front of the specimen. Specimen's rear right leg and tail affected, along with many areas of the habitat base. The liquid and acidity of the tomato sauce caused parts of the habitat base to dissolve. See file for additional images.



MAM-2600, Cougar mount



Close up of rear leg.

Probable cause of damage: Unidentified visitor from an evening event at the Museum on Saturday, October 7 spilled a tomato soup-based appetizer over the exhibit barrier of the Hunters of the Plains exhibit.

What can be done to stop this kind of damage in the future?

- 1) Specimens on exhibit are best protected in enclosed cases. For large specimens, a floor-to-ceiling barrier would provide suitable protection against many forms of damage.
- 2) Additional signage or consideration of placement of signage regarding food consumption. There is one large sign on the second floor indicating that food is not permitted in the exhibit areas. It is unknown if this sign was present during the event or if it was further down the hall (closer to the temporary gallery and Wilderness Walk hall). This exhibit is close to the main staircase, where it would be easy for visitors to take a quick look as they made their way in between the South Gallery event space and the stairway.
- 3) Food is restricted to designated areas (e.g. Lobby, North Gallery, South Gallery, Lunch Box, meeting rooms, etc.) and is not permitted in sensitive areas, including exhibit galleries, labs, and collections storage areas. (*Please refer to the IPM Program, Food and Beverages section.*) For the rare occasions that appetizers are served in exhibit areas, these should consist of one-bite portions and not contain liquid or sticky substances, so as to reduce the likelihood of spills that are difficult to clean.

Please describe any conservation or preventive measures that were taken.

Emergency preservation cleaning was carried out by Dawn Roberts, Director of Collections the night of October 7. The food was removed from the surface of the specimen and habitat base using water, a solution of water with Dawn dish soap, cleaning cloths, and q-tips. The majority of the food particles were removed from the specimen. The spill caused parts of the habitat base to dissolve. Some natural elements (e.g. leaves, grasses) of the base were removed as they were destroyed. Repairs to the base were unable to be completed in the display area.

The specimen was pulled from the Hunters of the Plains exhibit on Friday, October 13 for further cleaning and repair. The entire specimen and habitat base were cleaned with a HEPA vacuum to remove surface particulates and pollutants. The affected areas on the specimen were cleaned again with a solution of water and Dawn dish soap and dried using an air compressor and brushes. No harsher chemicals were necessary.

The habitat base required repair and replacement of some natural elements. New leaves were collected and processed through freeze treatment. Leaves and grasses were attached with adhesive from a heat gun. Tempera paint used on base to replace color.

Report Completed By: Dawn Roberts

Date: 10/17/2017