



# City Council Report

**Date:** June 6, 2016  
**To:** City Council  
**Through:** Natalie Lewis, Deputy City Manager  
**From:** Cindy Ornstein, Arts and Culture Department  
Thomas H. Wilson, Arizona Museum of Natural History  
**Subject:** \$41,000 BLM Grant to Museum for Collections Management  
Council District 4

## Strategic Initiatives



## Purpose and Recommendation

This report is to seek approval of \$41,000 contingency funds, to permit acceptance of a BLM grant in that amount to the Arizona Museum of Natural History. It is recommended the contingency funds be approved.

## Background

The Arizona Museum of Natural History applied for and received two (here combined as one) paleontological collection improvement grants from the Bureau of Land Management. Acceptance and utilization of these grants requires approval of contingency funds. One grant pays for temporary collection personnel to catalog the backlog of specimens pending in the museum's collection. This follows the recommendations of the City Auditor. The other grant pays for field collection activities in the southern Arizona's Latest Cretaceous Cascabel Formation. This formation contains the only terrestrial rocks of latest Cretaceous age in Arizona, are completely paleontologically unexplored and are of scientific importance. If there is any place to find *Tyrannosaurus rex* in Arizona, it is in this area. Such discovery and collections increase the prestige and visibility of the museum and city, have exhibition and educational value, and increase the probability of receiving further grants. The BLM gains value as well, in having better information on what they are responsible to preserve and protect. Incidental expenses have been factored into the grants.

## Discussion

This grant funds collection management activities that staff would have to do anyway, and field research relevant to the mission of the museum and its exhibitions and educational programs. The City Auditor has recommended the work on

collections management, and these monies will facilitate these necessary tasks.

### **Alternatives**

Approve the contingency. This will allow both aspects of the project to go forward, with no cost to the City beyond salaries of staff involved. The City Auditor has recommended the collections management aspect, and the fieldwork will benefit the public through exhibitions and educational programs.

Take no action. The grants could not be accepted. The collections would not be improved. Inventory and documentation of collections would proceed at the current pace with current personnel and be accomplished to the same level in ten plus years. The goals of the City Auditor will not be met in a timely manner. Further grants from the Department of the Interior could be imperiled.

### **Fiscal Impact**

The grants factor in ancillary expenses. Cost would be only staff time in supervising and accomplishing the terms of the grant. That time is largely illusory, as these are activities the staff will be engaged in anyway, only at reduced efficiency and increased cost.

### **Coordinated With**

No other departments are involved. There is no known objection or reservation to this report.