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**Preserving Cultural
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Ask a Conservator Day Toolkit

Created exclusively for AIC members, this toolkit contains resources that make it easier to celebrate Ask a Conservator Day, which is being held this year on November 1, 2024.

Why should I participate in Ask a Conservator Day?

- Builds awareness and appreciation of the field
- Helps people understand what conservation is and why it matters to them
- Enables you to communicate the importance of your work
- Supports business development for private practitioners
- Supports fundraising and grant applications for your organization
- Reaches voters, policy makers, elected officials, and opinion leaders
- Provides information for those interested in entering the field
- Offers an additional platform to engage with your colleagues and other conservators around the world

This toolkit contains the following resources:

- **Menu of Ideas** – Ways to celebrate Ask a Conservator Day, online or in person, that require a time commitment ranging from mere seconds to a few hours
- **FAQ** – Answers to frequently asked questions about Ask a Conservator Day
- **Messages** – Succinct and evocative phrases that you can use to explain the importance of conservation to people outside the field
- **Template Copy for Blogs or E-Newsletter** – A tool that you can customize and share on your website or send to your e-newsletter subscribers to inform more people about your participation in Ask a Conservator Day
- **AIC and FAIC Backgrounder** – A resource you can share with your colleagues and partners when organizing events to help introduce AIC and FAIC to people outside the field.
- **Social Media Graphics and Sample Posts** – Resources for Instagram, Facebook, and X

Questions? Contact Katelin Lee, Outreach Manager, klee@culturalheritage.org



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How to Celebrate Ask a Conservator Day

The ways to participate in Ask a Conservator Day are as numerous as our members. This document offers a wide (though not necessarily exhaustive) range of forms of involvement, so that you/your team can choose an option that is most reflective of your capacity, platform(s), and audience. If you don't have the capacity for the activities that require a greater time investment, consider them for next year.

Digital

If you are affiliated with an organization that is open to posting about Ask A Conservator Day on its social media channels, explore that idea with your colleagues, including by sharing the social media assets included in this toolkit. If that is not possible, you can use your own social media to participate. If you don't use social media, there are other options below.

- **If you can dedicate a few minutes to Ask a Conservator Day...**
 - Introduce yourself in a blog post or reshare colleagues' posts on [the AIC member community](#).
 - If you have a LinkedIn page, [follow AIC and FAIC](#).
 - Email an example of your work to [Katelin Lee](#) to be spotlighted on AIC and FAIC's channels.
 - Write a quick post on your social media to introduce yourself as a professional and let people know about #AskAConservator Day.
 - Like, reshare, or comment on posts on the @Conservators feeds or that are tagged #AskAConservator. Amplify your colleagues' posts because highlighting your colleagues is an important way to participate.
 - Share the "Careers in Cultural Heritage" page on the AIC Wiki to help more people learn about career pathways and ways to get involved with cultural heritage, linked [here](#).
 - Livestream from your lab for fifteen minutes (via Instagram Live, TikTok Live, or a similar platform)
 - If you have a website and space on your site, consider adding a banner on Ask A Conservator Day on your homepage to solicit questions you can answer online
 - If you are emailing conservator colleagues on Nov. 1, consider adding a note about Ask a Conservator Day and let them know they can still participate.
- **If you can dedicate up to an hour to Ask a Conservator Day...**
 - If you have an e-newsletter, solicit questions from your subscribers and answer them in your next edition.
 - On social media, write a more in-depth post to share the story of why you became a conservator or an unusual challenge that you've encountered in your career (like food in collections or arsenic in wallpaper).
 - Record a video montage of your day, with maybe ten seconds of content a few times throughout the day, capturing different tasks, meeting with colleagues, and human elements of your day, like getting lunch or taking a break! Many social



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media platforms now make it easy to stitch together short video clips and add narration or music over them.

- Answer questions on your social media platforms. A few ideas to get you started:
 - What does a day in your life look like?
 - Why is conservation important to you?
 - What is the most important change happening in the conservation field now?
 - How did you become a conservator?
 - What's your favorite part of your job?
 - Why is it important to save cultural heritage?
- **If you can dedicate several hours to Ask a Conservator Day...**
 - Host a Reddit-style AMA on a social media platform (including Reddit, potentially) and answer questions for an extended period of time
 - Organize a Zoom panel with your colleagues
 - Partner with a local library, historic society, artist foundation, or business association to "takeover" its social-media account
- **If you can't dedicate any time to Ask a Conservator Day on November 1...**
 - Consider whether you can conduct Ask a Conservator Day activities any day in the week from October 28-November 1. Hold an activity in the week leading up to Ask a Conservator Day, promote colleagues' events, or amplify Ask a Conservator Day content within your network.

In-Person

Ask a Conservator Day is not exclusively a digital/social media event. If you have the capacity, there are in-person options for participating:

- **Host an open house at your lab/workspace**
Invite art history students from a local college, the staff and docents of a local museum or historical society, and/or, your clients past and present.
- **Host a one-on-one tour**
If you can't accommodate a large group, consider inviting a local elected official, journalist, or social media influencer to your lab so that these allies can spread the word about the importance of conservation.
- **Empower the next generation**
The most popular question on Ask a Conservator Day to date has been "how do I enter the field?" Make an impact on young lives by offering to present about your career at a local high school art or science class, university, or other educational organization.



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- **Team up**
 - Set up a booth at a local library, historic society, artist foundation, or business association.
 - Reach out to fellow AIC members in your area to organize a forum about why conservation is important in your community.



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Ask a Conservator Day FAQ

What is Ask a Conservator Day?

- Ask a Conservator Day is an annual event organized by the American Institute for Conservation that allows conservators to share their work with the public and educate people about the importance of cultural heritage in our lives.

When is Ask a Conservator Day?

- Friday, November 1, 2024

What if I'm busy on November 1?

- If you have a conflict on November 1, you can participate in Ask a Conservator Day any time between Monday, October 28 through Friday, November 1.

Who can participate in Ask a Conservator Day?

- All conservators and allied professionals can participate (but only AIC members receive this toolkit).

Can private practitioners participate?

- Yes. The resources in this toolkit are designed to help all AIC members, whether you work at an institution or run your own firm.

What if I don't have social media or a website?

- There are many ways to participate, even if you don't use social media or have a website. The menu of ideas in this toolkit provides ideas and suggestions.

Do I have to use the template blog post or send an e-newsletter?

- Like all the materials in the toolkit, the template copy for blogs and e-newsletters is a resource provided to AIC members. If you / your organization does not want to post a blog or share an e-newsletter about Ask a Conservator Day, there are many ways to participate that do not require using the template copy.

What if somebody asks me a question that I don't feel comfortable answering or don't have time to explain in detail?

- AIC has many resources that you can share, including:
 - ["Caring for Your Treasures"](#)
 - The [Find a Conservator tool](#)
 - An overview of [how to become a conservator](#)
 - [The conservation Wiki](#)



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Messages

Cultural heritage is the irreplaceable record of what makes us human. It is the memory of our past, the account of our lives today, and the expression of human creativity across time.

- Tangible cultural heritage includes monuments, sites, and artifacts.
- Intangible cultural heritage includes traditions, skills, and customs passed from one generation to another.

Preserving cultural heritage is vital for everyone. Safeguarding these objects and this knowledge helps foster a society where all people are valued and can thrive.

- Everyone has a connection to cultural heritage through objects, collections, buildings, and sites in their lives.
- Cultural heritage deepens the connections that people feel with their histories and cultures and helps define personal and collective identities.

Conservators preserve cultural heritage for future generations. People are at the center of this work.

- Conservators are dedicated to preserving and helping to share the remarkable diversity of human cultural achievement.
- Conservators go through years of rigorous training spanning arts, science, engineering, and the humanities to enter the field.
- The conservation field is creative and interdisciplinary, and grounded in social justice, equity, and environmental action.
- Conservators collaborate with diverse communities to safeguard sites, artifacts, and traditions. These communities' knowledge is vital to inclusive stewardship; cultural understanding; and new research.
- Conservators also preserve family heirlooms, cherished works of art in people's homes, and objects damaged by the passage of time, accidents, and emergencies.
- Conservators' work is important not just to the field, but to our collective humanity. Conservators not only preserve objects, but the stories that tie us together as people.

- Conservators help us to understand how objects were made and to learn about the people and cultures who made them, research that illuminates the legacies of creators and the course of human history.

The climate crisis poses an existential threat to cultural heritage worldwide. But positive change is possible. The conservation field is leading the way by charting the path to a better and more resilient future.

- Environmental and climate disasters imperil museums, libraries, archives, historic structures, monuments, sites, and historic landscapes.
- Conservators help cultural-heritage organizations plan for the future, increase resilience, and recover from disaster.
- The impacts of the climate crisis fall disproportionately on marginalized communities. Conservators' collaborations with these communities are integral to social justice in the face of growing threats to tangible and intangible cultural heritage.



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**On November 1, [Your Firm or Organization] will participate in
American Institute for Conservation's Ask a Conservator Day 2024
[share topline details on how]**

Annual educational celebration includes in-person and online talks and tours at museums, libraries, labs, and archives throughout the U.S. and across the globe

[If available, add an image of a conservator at work at your firm organization]

[Your firm or organization] is participating in **Ask a Conservator Day on November 1**, answering questions and sharing stories about “A Day in the Life” preserving monuments, historic sites, artifacts, works of art, and family heirlooms at public programs across the nation and online. **[Your firm or organization will participate]** by **[share details of your participation here, like “answering questions on our Instagram account” or “giving a presentation to students enrolled in AP Art History at _____ High School.”]**

Since 2019, Ask a Conservator Day has been hosted by the **American Institute for Conservation** (AIC) in partnership with its membership of more than 3,500 current and aspiring conservators and allied professionals in over 40 countries. **[Your organization or firm]** has been a member of AIC since **[year.]** Other AIC members will host talks about their work at libraries, museums, and conservation labs across the country. On social media, members of the public and conservators are invited to exchange questions and answers in posts tagged **#AskAConservator**.

[Add your call to action, like “Sign up for our Ask a Conservator Day workshop on Eventbrite” or “Email us your Ask a Conservator Day questions so that we can answer them in the next edition of our e-newsletter.”]

To learn more about Ask a Conservator Day, follow AIC on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [X](#), and [YouTube](#). Join the conversation by tagging your posts **#AskAConservator**. Explore more at culturalheritage.org.



About the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) and the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation (FAIC)

The American Institute for Conservation (AIC) and the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation (FAIC) work in partnership to advance the preservation of cultural heritage worldwide for the sake of a vibrant, inclusive society. Cultural heritage encompasses both tangible objects, including monuments, artworks, and artifacts, and the intangible traditions and practices that help give a cultural group its identity, such as languages, crafts, and stories. Providing critical resources and support for conservation professionals and the field at large, AIC and FAIC advocate for cultural heritage as the irreplaceable record of humanity's creative power.

The [American Institute for Conservation \(AIC\)](#) is the leading membership association for current and aspiring conservators and allied professionals, representing more than 3,500 individuals in more than 40 countries working in the domains of science, art, and history through treatment, research, collections care, and education. AIC offers its members publication platforms and avenues for the exchange of expertise, as well as resources for professional development and best practices in the field of conservation. At the [Annual Meeting](#), AIC hosts the largest domestic (U.S.) convening of members and conservation and preservation professionals, which includes presentations on topical issues from experts, hands-on workshops, and an awards ceremony honoring outstanding and distinguished contributions to the field.

AIC sets professional standards in the field with an established [Code of Ethics](#) and professional designations. Expanding knowledge of best practices within the field, AIC maintains the [Conservation Wiki](#), publishes an array of [books and periodicals](#), and maintains a robust [online community](#) where conservators and allied professionals share advice and opportunities. [Outreach resources](#) for members empower conservators to build awareness for their work, and AIC's [Find a Professional](#) database helps the public find and hire qualified conservators to care for their treasured belongings. The annual [Ask a Conservator Day](#) celebration invites everyone, and in particular aspiring conservators, to ask questions about cultural heritage preservation and how to enter the field.

The [Foundation for Advancement in Conservation \(FAIC\)](#) supports conservation education, research, and outreach activities that increase understanding of cultural heritage. Recognizing that the climate crisis poses an existential threat to cultural heritage worldwide, FAIC provides critical support such as [Climate Resilience Resources for Cultural Heritage](#) (CRR), which enables those who care for cultural resources to plan for and respond to climate change's impacts. In 2023, FAIC issued [Held in Trust](#), a landmark report on the future of the field that centers the importance of equity and environmental action to preserving cultural heritage.

FAIC empowers conservation professionals, students, and the public to advance their understanding of conservation through [online courses](#), [grants and scholarships](#), and [advice](#) about how to care for treasured belongings. FAIC programs support small and mid-sized museums in improving their collections care. A key initiative of FAIC is the [National Heritage Responders](#)

program, a volunteer corps of conservators and allied professionals who help institutions and individuals salvage their collections and personal items following disasters like floods and fires.



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Ask a Conservator Day Sample Social Media Posts

Following area selection of sample media posts that can be personalized and adapted to help spread awareness and engagement in Ask a Conservator Day.

Individual Accounts:

Conservators! Be part of #AskAConservator day—help raise awareness of what we do by participating. Let your followers know they can ask you questions. Find more information here: <http://bit.ly/2nU9531>

I'm participating in #AskAConservator day! Conservators around the world will be discussing their work on November 3rd. Ask me questions & follow the hashtag to see who is participating.

I'm participating in #AskAConservator day! What do you want to know about being a conservator? Start asking questions now and I'll answer them on November 1st!

Do you have questions about what conservators do? Ask me anything about my work on November 1st, #AskAConservator day! Reply to this (post/tweet) and use the hashtag.

Institutional/Organizational Accounts:

We're participating in #AskAConservator day! Conservators around the world will be discussing their work on November 1st. Ask us questions & follow the hashtag to see who else is participating.

Do you have questions about how we care for (collections type: i.e. art, building, site, specimens, etc.)? Ask us anything on November 1st on #AskAConservator Day! You can reply to this tweet or @ us and use the #AskAConservator hashtag.

November 1st is #AskAConservator day! (Title and name of conservator(s)) will be answering your questions at (time). Bring all of your questions about how we care for (collections type: i.e. art, building, site, specimens, etc.)

What do our conservator(s) do? They care for (notable collections items or types of items). Want to know how they do it? Ask your questions on November 3rd, #AskAConservator day!

Promotional Images:

We encourage you to use images of from your work to make your posts more unique and meaningful, but you can also find promotional images here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1tbaiYJrrDutyX2S8P6zGywZ317UiBac2?usp=sharing>