

Yale Peabody Museum

The Yale Peabody Museum consolidates collections and improves storage environments with Spacesaver Systems



The Peabody Museum of Natural History at Yale University, a premier institution in the areas of anthropology, paleontology and zoology, recently opened the Class of 1954 Environmental Sciences Center and utilized Spacesaver storage systems for most of its collections.

"Anytime you build a new university facility, campus space is an issue," said Tim White, assistant director for collections and operations. "By utilizing Spacesaver compact storage systems instead of conventional storage methods, the Peabody was able to cut storage space requirements in half by shrinking 40,000 square feet of storage into 17,000 square feet." By reducing cubic space, the museum also saved ongoing utility costs associated with the environmentally controlled storage areas.

The new 100,000 square foot facility — which houses 60 percent of the Peabody collection as well as offices and labs for faculty from the departments of Anthropology, Geology and Geophysics, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, and the School of Forestry — includes more than 250 high-density carriages, 40,000 drawers, 2,000 museum cabinets and 16,000 linear feet of shelving. The local Spacesaver Museum Specialists, helped the museum achieve one of the primary facility design goals to separate collection space from people space so that specimen storage could be better controlled.

"Utilizing mobile storage was a very prudent way to achieve our facility design goals," said White. "We saved enough space to combine several departments into one facility, thereby fostering a more interdisciplinary work environment. At the same time, we were able to redefine facility space to keep collection areas separate and implement better controls."



With more than 7.5 million specimens housed in mobile systems throughout three floors, storage space was cut in half.

Three floors of collection storage house more than 7.5 million specimens including Botany, Entomology, Herpetology, Ichthyology, Invertebrate Paleontology, Invertebrate Zoology, Mammalogy, Ornithology and Paleobotany—including some specimens that date back two billion years.

A wide array of storage methods are utilized to safely house specimens:

- Wide-span shelving for large taxidermy mounts and fossil tree stumps
- Heavy-duty, four-post shelving with reinforced supports for bulky, oversized fossil storage
- Specialty shelving bins for fluid-preserved collections
- Cantilever shelving with glass doors for rare books and manuscripts

Spacesaver worked with the university to custom design a special feature that enhanced the collections' safety. For open-shelf applications, special gasketing was added to the entire parameter of each shelf aisle—the front, top and back—to ensure a constant seal when carriages are closed, thus protecting against damaging elements.

White explained that the museum has received numerous accolades for its innovative storage and facility design. "We recommend Spacesaver to other people," concluded White. "Not only have we improved the safety and efficiency of collection storage, we have brought our collections together in one building so that researchers can conveniently study a cross-section of specimens representing the entire history of life."

