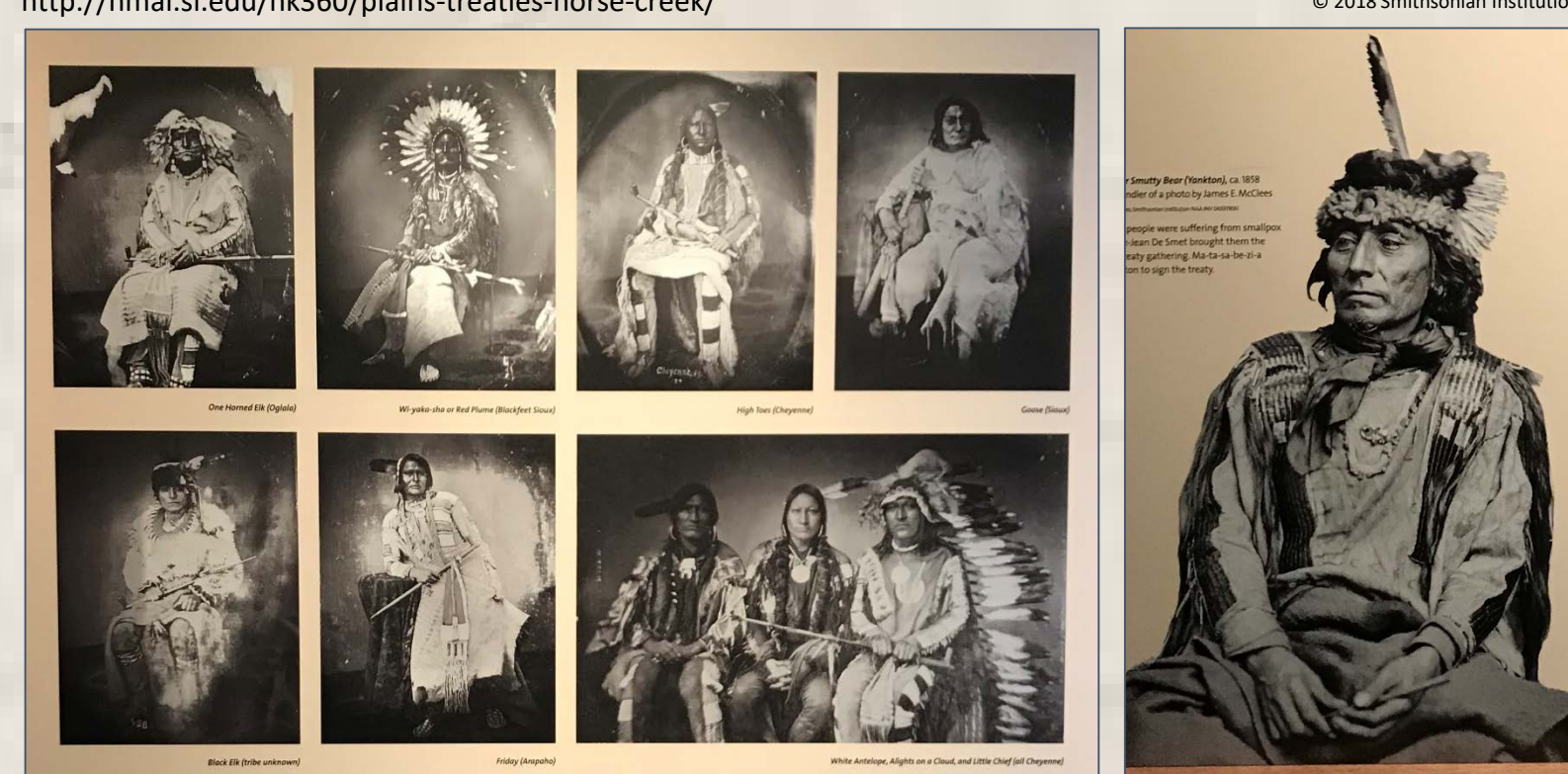
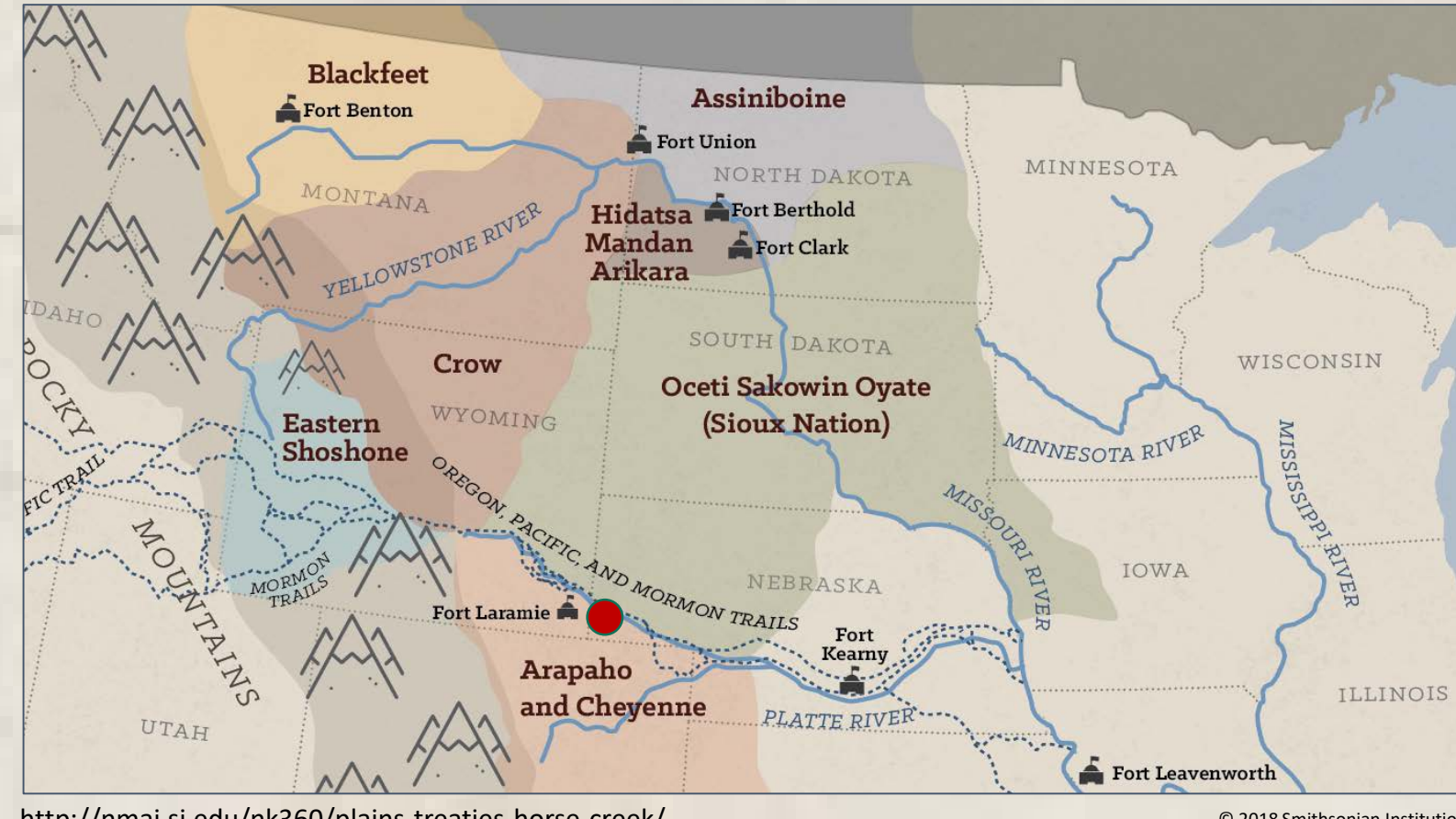




Mounting Pipe Bags: A Case Study

The Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian's exhibition "Nation to Nation: Treaties Between the United States and American Indian Nations" documents the history of treaty making between Native Americans and the United States, from the days of the early republic, when treaties were considered by both sides to be serious, diplomatic agreements based on the recognition of each nation's sovereignty, to the U.S. government's use in the 19th century of coercive treaties to dispossess Native Americans of their lands, to the 20th century, when Indian Nations successfully fought court and legislative battles for federal recognition of their treaty rights. The pipe bag and mount discussed in this poster are displayed in this exhibition along with eight other pipe bags and associated pipe stems and pipe bowls.

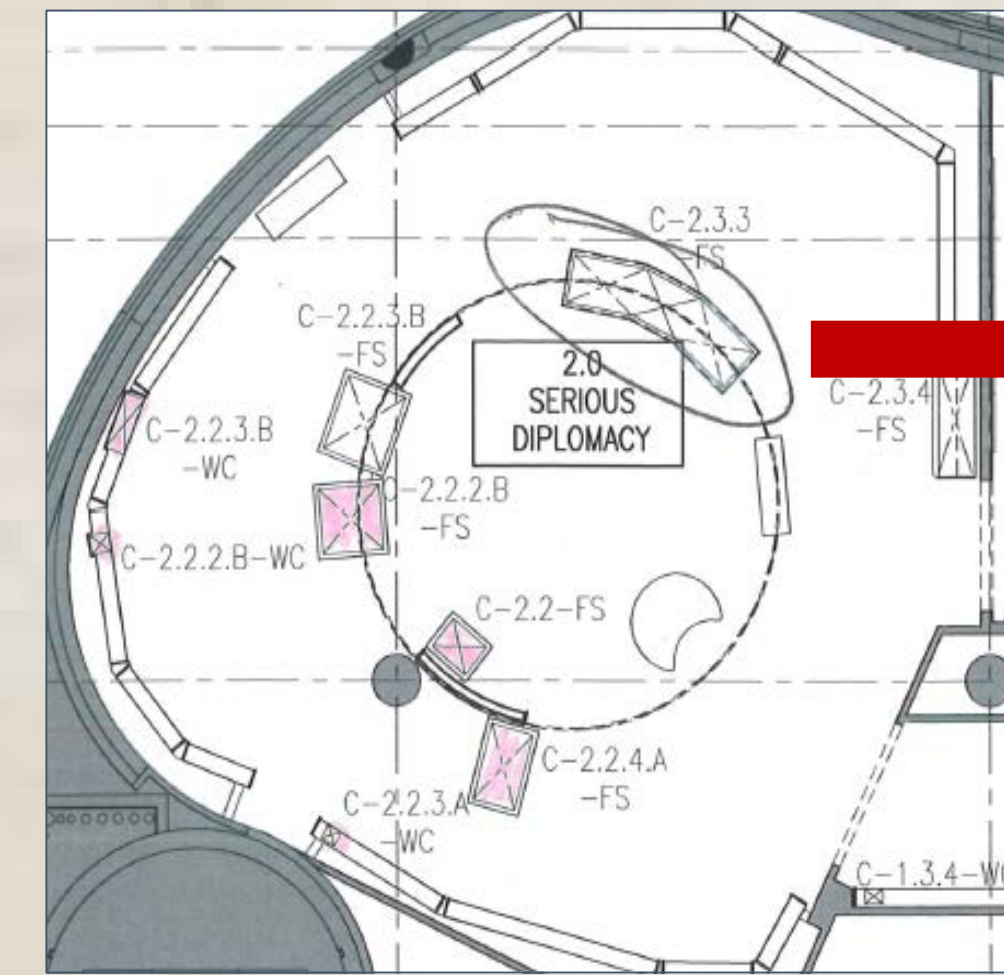
One of the stories in the "Serious Diplomacy" section of the exhibition is about the **Horse Creek Treaty**. In September of 1851, the U.S. invited all the Native Nations of the northern Great Plains to gather for a treaty council at the mouth of Horse Creek, near Fort Laramie, where Nebraska and Wyoming now meet. It was the largest gathering of Plains Nations in U.S. history: around fifteen thousand people attended. Two negotiators from the U.S. Office of Indian Affairs met with delegations representing nine Native Nations that spoke different languages but shared common concerns.



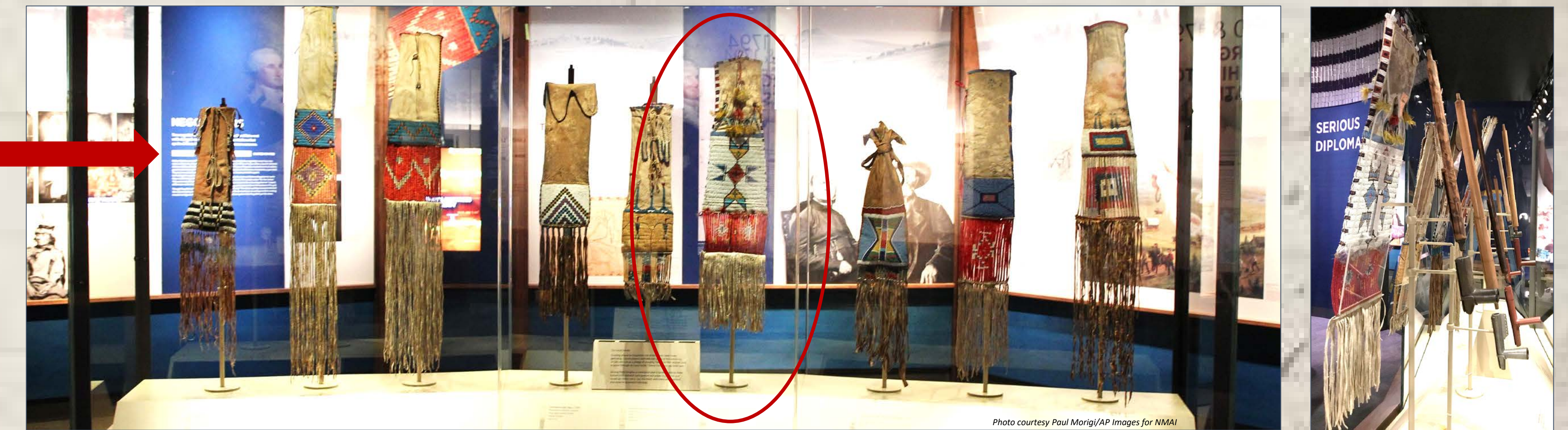
Images from the exhibition of some of the tribal participants in the Horse Creek Treaty gathering.



Installing the Northern Inunaina (Arapaho) pipe bag described in this poster.



Floorplan of the "Serious Diplomacy" section of the exhibition with the pipe bag case circled.

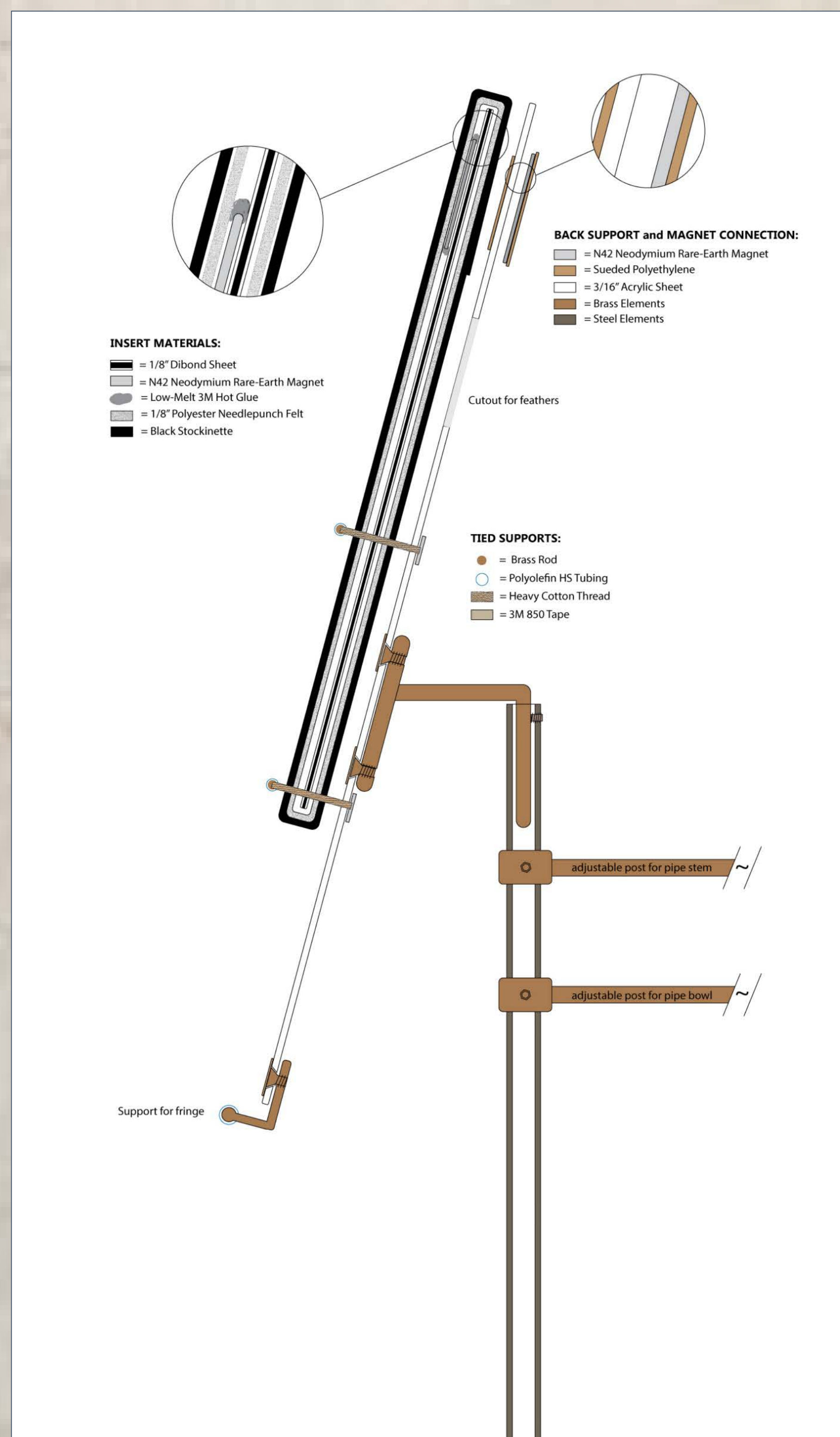


From left to right: Tósisita/Ohitai (Cheyenne) pipe bag, ca. 1851; Sahriish (Arikara) pipe bag, ca. 1880; Yankton (Lakota) pipe bag, ca. 1880; Assiniboine pipe bag, ca. 1880; Numakwi (Mandan) pipe bag, ca. 1850; Northern Inunaina (Arapaho) pipe bag, ca. 1850; Apsakooke (Crow/Absaroke) pipe bag, ca. 1870; Mikitari (Hidatsa) pipe bag, ca. 1880; AMHri (Shoshone) pipe bag, ca. 1870.

This case is designed to represent the Horse Creek Treaty gathering of 1851, sometimes known as the "Great Smoke". A pipe bag, pipe stem and pipe bowl from nine of the tribes in attendance are mounted together on individual posts to visually demonstrate that all three pieces are from the same nation. The objects are viewed in the round and at a nearly vertical angle in order to fit into the shallow case. The unstructured, fragile, culturally important pipe bags offer the mountmaker a distinct challenge. Successful support is achieved through use of a variety of interior and exterior support techniques and materials. One example, the mount for the Northern Inunaina (Arapaho) pipe bag required many of the techniques and is detailed below.

Northern Inunaina (Arapaho) pipe bag

The Mount



Drawing of the mount from the side. AWS

Since there is no one area on the pipe bag that is robust enough to carry the full support weight, the mounting system for this pipe bag is designed to spread the carrier mechanisms in ways appropriate for each area of opportunity. A padded Dibond insert reinforces the internal structure of the bag. Coated brass carries the fringe and back support. Soft ties with internal brass structure keep the beadwork in place. Magnets and embroidery floss along with a ten degree tip back support the top of the bag. Everything is held together against an acrylic back support on an adjustable steel and brass pole structure.



View from the back detailing the support structure. Components are secured with set screws.
View from the front, as installed. The curve of the quilled areas is left in its natural position.
View from the back with the tying in process. Using blue tape as tensioners.

Five-Part Support Strategy

The Internal Support



Lower Left: The edges of the Dibond insert are filed smooth, then covered with a layer of 1/8" polyester batting topped with black stockinette with the ribs aligned vertically to make it easier to slide the insert in and out of the bag.



Upper Left: 1" diameter x 1/16" thick N42 Neodymium rare-earth magnets are attached to the front of 1/8" Dibond sheet insert using 3M 3792 low melt hot glue when the glue cools enough to be liquid but only warm to touch.

The Magnet Connection

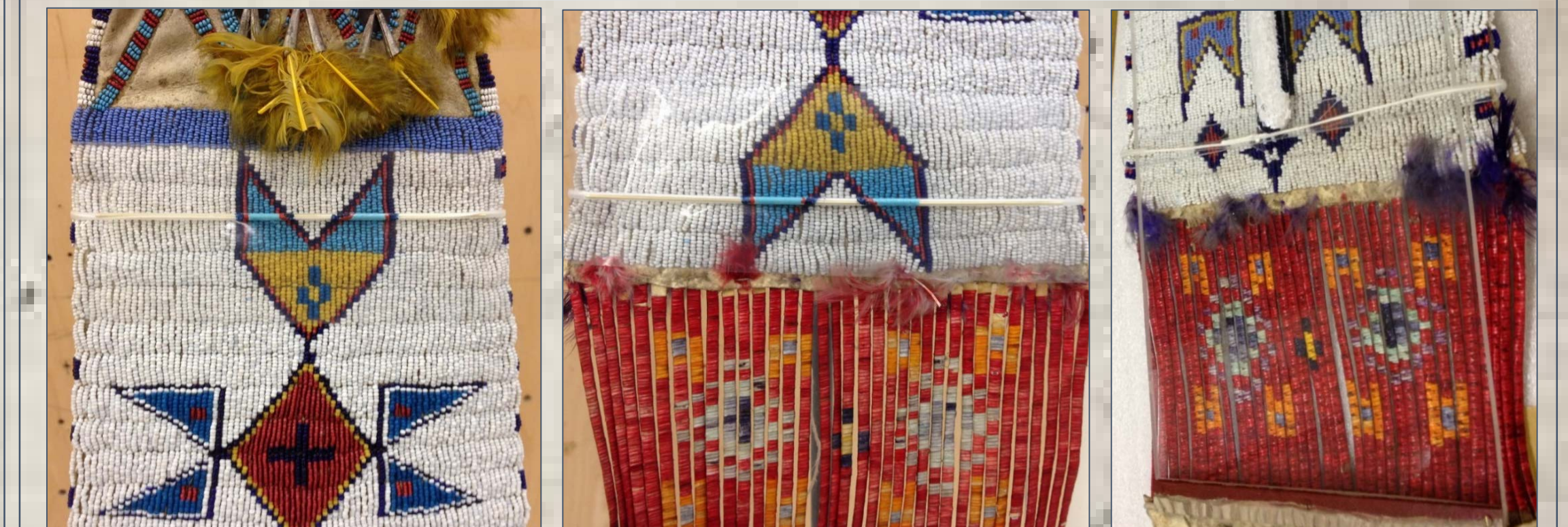


Upper Right: The outer magnets before painting. These are the same size as the magnets that are adhered to the Dibond insert. 1" diameter x 1/16" thick, neodymium, N42 strength. The outer magnets are not glued, but attracted to the insert magnets to allow for some adjustability on site. There is also a small piece of sueded polyethylene under the magnet between the acrylic and the hide to add frictional hold.



Lower Right: The finished outer magnets. Pieces of sueded polyethylene in a similar shade to the hide are cut in circles, then applied to the magnets and trimmed with ceramic scissors. Acrylic paint is applied to sueded polyethylene to better match the hide.

The Tied Supplemental Supports



Heavy cotton thread fills polyolefin heat shrinkable tubing and is tensioned around the sides to gently support the beaded panel.
The same solution on the lower part of the beaded panel. A shorter piece of brass rod is also inserted into the polyolefin tube to add structure to the support.
The back of the mount, with the cotton cord knotted at the back and held with 3M850 tape, then painted with acrylic paints.

The Brass Fringe Support

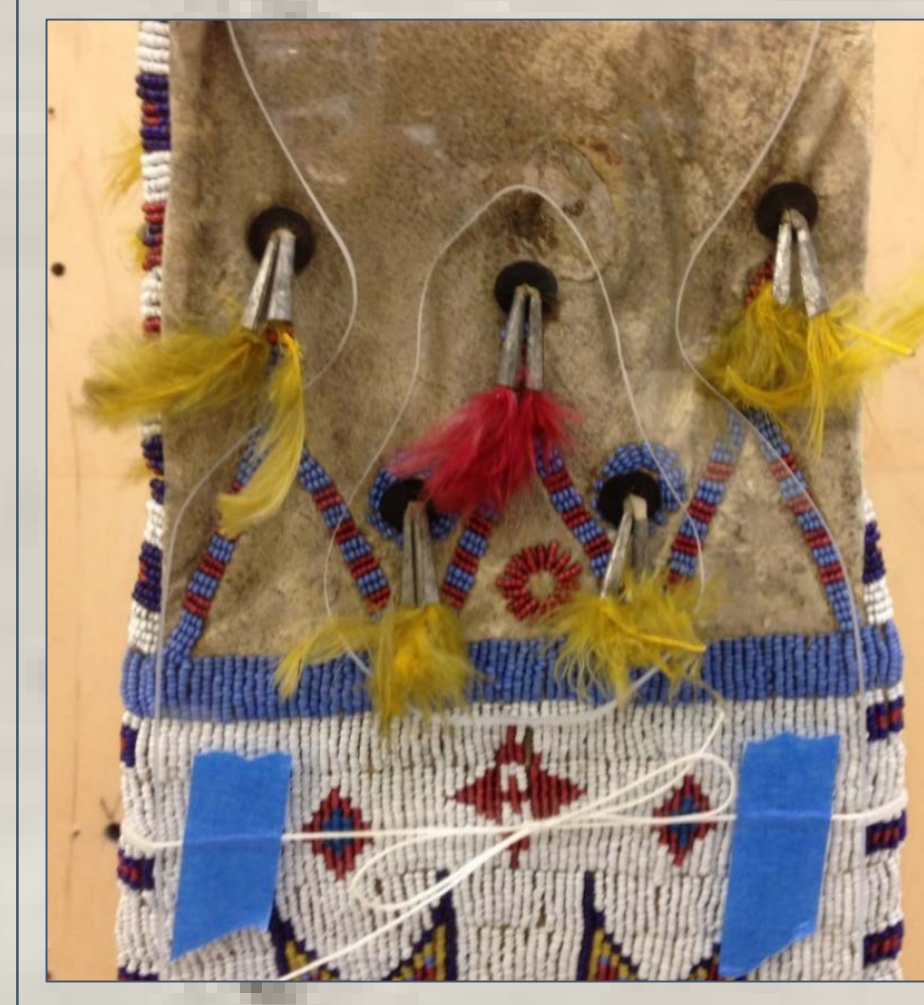


The fringe at the bottom of the bag offers a strong area for partial support. However, all the weight cannot be carried here or the quilled area will collapse.
The back of the mount, showing the brass support before final painting. After coating with B72, the brass is attached with 4-40 FH machine screws.



Detail of the front of the bag on the mount. The brass support loop is covered by the front edge of fringe so only the side of the loop is visible.
The back of the mount, showing the finished painting. The sides of the loop are intentionally exaggerated to allow room for the fringe to hang naturally.

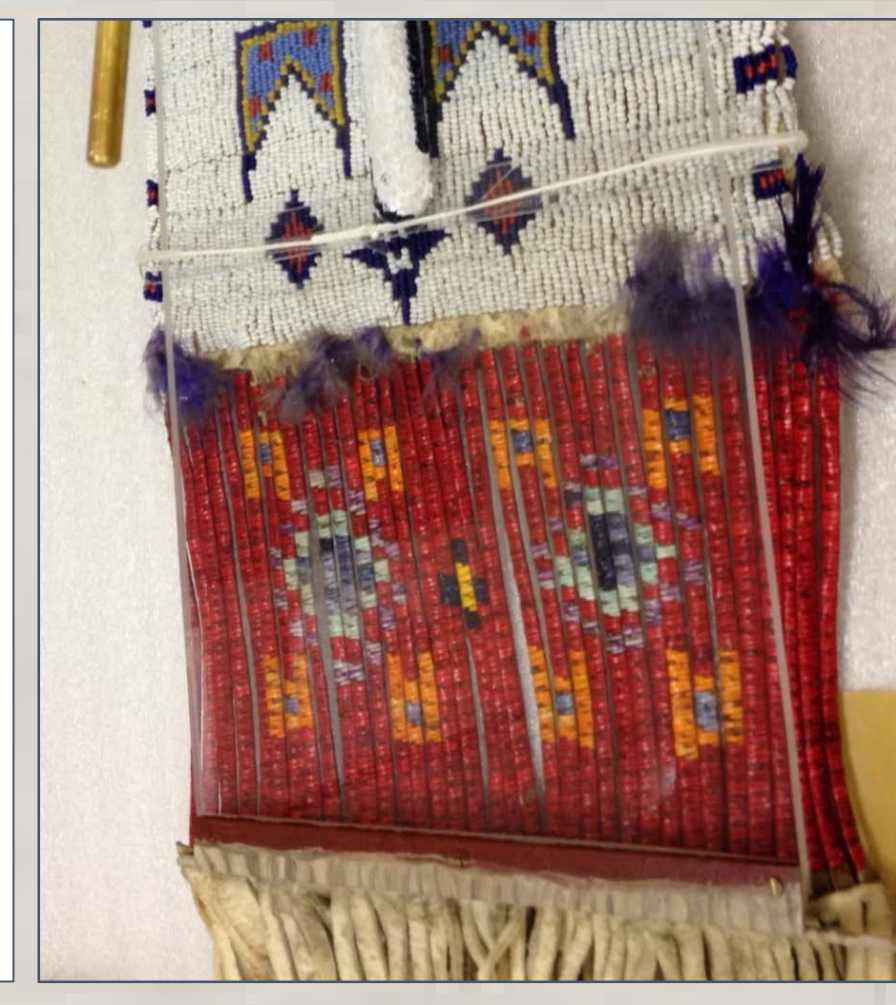
The Back Support



Detail of the back support. Cut-out portions of the acrylic sheet keep the feathers from being crushed.



Mount elements together without the pipe bag.



Detail of the bottom of the back support. There are feathers here too, but the curve of the bag creates space for them.