

WILL ROGERS

State Historic Park

INTERPRETIVE STRATEGY REPORT



*An interpretive strategy proposal for Will Rogers State Historic Park
involving interdisciplinary collaboration and
and an all-day Visioning Workshop with friends and family of Will Rogers*

June 2002

CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>Background</i>	1
<i>Purpose</i>	2
<i>Planning Process</i>	3
<i>A Brief History</i>	4
<i>Historical Background: The Rogers Ranch</i>	4
<i>Existing Conditions</i>	8
<i>Current Visitation/Audience</i>	8
<i>Existing Interpretive Programs</i>	8
<i>Goals and Objectives</i>	10
<i>Key Themes and Stories</i>	12
<i>Themes</i>	12
<i>Topics and Stories</i>	16
<i>Potential Interpretive Experience</i>	21
<i>The Vision</i>	21
<i>Potential Expanded Audience and Visitation</i>	23
<i>Interpretive Program Elements</i>	24
<i>Figure 1: Interpretive Strategy Map</i>	
<i>Visitor Flow and Use Patterns</i>	33
<i>Implementation Strategies</i>	35
<i>Organizational Strategies</i>	35
<i>Funding Strategies</i>	35
<i>Operational Strategies</i>	36
<i>Project Priorities</i>	37
<i>Cost Implications of Interpretive Program Elements</i>	40

Introduction

BACKGROUND

Will Rogers State Historic Park is nestled in the Santa Monica Mountains near the southern California Los Angeles coast. The Park is located at the historic site of Will Roger's ranch, where Will and his family made their home from 1928 to 1935. Will Rogers is renowned for a broad spectrum of talents, from acting and trick roping, to humor, writing and "cowboy philosophy." He particularly enjoyed the California lifestyle - spending time at his Santa Monica ranch was a meaningful and significant part of his life. His Native American heritage, love of the land, and fondness for roping and riding are reflected in the ranch house and grounds. Together with his family and friends, Will shaped the landscape and created many

fond memories at the ranch. After Will's death, his wife Betty Rogers deeded the ranch to the State of California to be used as a public park. Betty Rogers died in 1944 and in August of that year the Rogers family home and ranch were dedicated as a State Park.



Photo credit: J. Eulate

Will Rogers State Historic Park: The Rogers family ranch house.

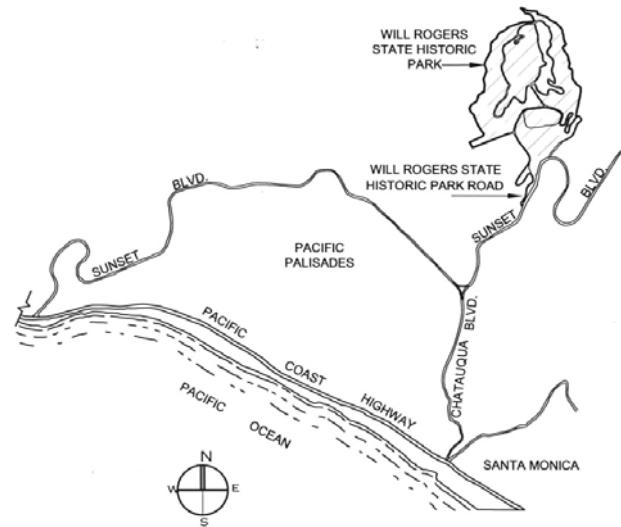
Today, this serene and beautiful 186-acre park site is a rural oasis, surrounded by densely developed metropolitan Los Angeles. Located in Pacific Palisades, just north of the Pacific Coast Highway and Sunset Boulevard, the Park is used daily by neighboring communities and regional visitors.

PURPOSE

The primary purpose of Will Rogers State Historic Park is as a nationally significant memorial to Will Rogers, and to perpetuate the uses and values he created at his ranch home. As part of a Historic Landscape Management Plan currently underway, the California State Department of Parks and Recreation is examining ways in which this unique historic park can more strongly reflect Will Rogers as an American icon. To study Will's life and ranch in a comprehensive and thoughtful way, the California State Parks worked with a team of interdisciplinary professionals, as well as family and friends of Will Rogers, to develop this Interpretive Strategy for Will Rogers State Historic Park. A *Strategy* is different from a *Plan*, in that it lays out a conceptual framework for potential improvement actions (related to possible programs and site improvements), rather than presenting a *Plan* of solutions.

The Strategy presents key interpretive themes; explores possibilities for a diversified audience; proposes potential interpretive programs and facilities; and examines means of enriching the visitor experience and making it more historically relevant.

Findings from this Interpretive Strategy will be incorporated into the California State Parks' Historic Landscape Management Plan, which will guide future park improvements. The interpretive research will also be used to develop an interpretive guide to the historic ranch landscape for park visitors.



Will Rogers State Historic Park location map.

Photo credit: J. Eulate

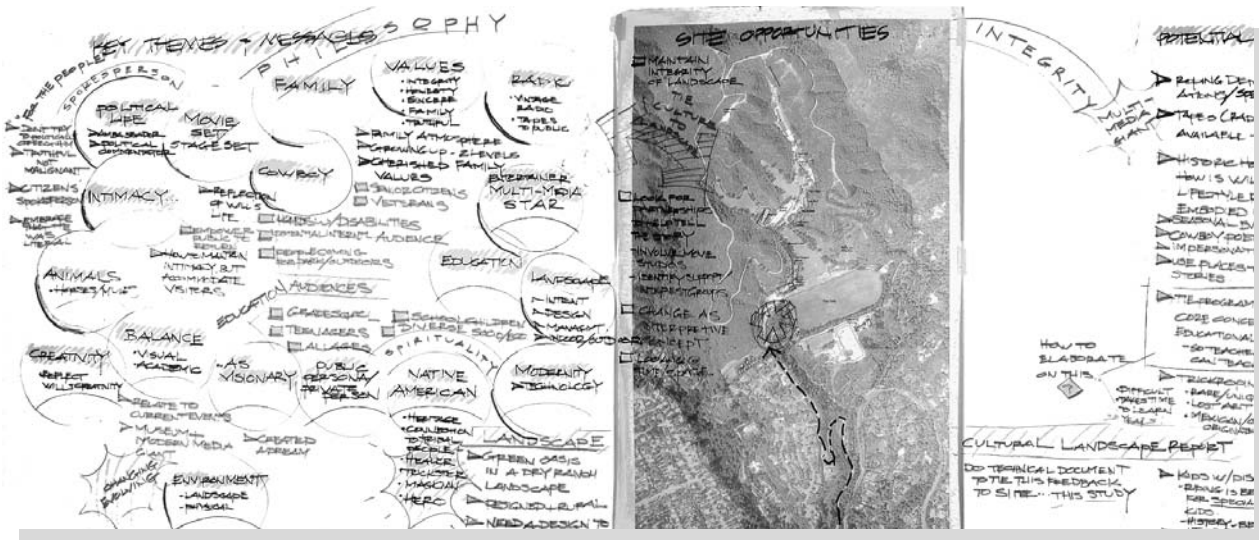


Local historian, Randy Young guides Workshop participants on a field tour of Will Rogers State Historic Ranch Park.

PLANNING PROCESS

In order to shape this Interpretive Strategy, the California State Department of Parks and Recreation drew together a diverse group of historians, preservation specialists, curators, scholars, landscape architects, architects, and performance artists, as well as friends and family of Will Rogers. Interpretive planner and architect, Daniel Quan, Daniel Quan Design, was retained to provide interpretive expertise. During a series of meetings, they explored ways to bring the story of Will Rogers' life and affinity for his Santa Monica ranch to greater public attention.

Professional team meetings were held during the months of February through June, 2002 and an all-day Visioning Workshop was conducted on April 20, 2002.



Visioning Workshop Wallgraphic recording of participants' impressions.

A Brief History

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: THE ROGERS RANCH

Although many memorials to Will Rogers have been established, none has more personal meaning and none is more crowded with memories than his beloved ranch home in Santa Monica.

For Will, the ranch was much more than just a comfortable home-it was his refuge and a source of deep personal pleasure. The public knew Will Rogers, the entertainer, but only his family and close friends saw his private side at the ranch, his safe haven for himself and his family. He could be himself and enjoy "messaging around doing this and that and not much of either. Get on old 'Soapsuds' (his favorite horse) and ride off up a little canyon I got here."



Photo credit:
Will Rogers State Historic Park

Will and Betty Blake Rogers and their children, Will Jr., Mary, and Jim, were living in Beverly Hills in 1925 when they made the first payment on their new ranch property. Will had long dreamed of owning a ranch where he would have room to enjoy his horses and play polo. Their Beverly Hills home had a riding ring and stable for eight horses, but their herd was quickly growing. They purchased 80 acres of land nestled in the Santa Monica mountains on a "western mesa" (the natural terrace near today's exit road) overlooking the Pacific Ocean. During the next few years, Will bought land in the upper canyon, on the eastern mesa, and a strip of land along the western ridge. By 1934, the Rogers owned 364 acres.

The Rogers family relaxing at their ranch home.



Photo credit:
Will Rogers State Historic Park

Horses, roping and polo were integral parts of life at the ranch.

Horses, roping and polo were integral parts of life at the ranch from the outset. When Will bought the land, a barely passable narrow dirt road led up from the canyon to the mesa. The hills beyond were densely covered with the native chaparral. Will immediately hired workmen who camped on the site and, using teams of mules, cleared the land and graded for a polo field. A corral and temporary stables were built.

Initially, Will built a simple one-story, 6-room cabin on the side slope of a canyon above the polo field. The following year, he built the adjacent guesthouse and garage. He erected a roping ring at the mouth of Bone Canyon so the family could pursue Will's first, and ongoing, passion of roping. He also had two large stables set up at the mouth of Mitt Canyon to the north of the house and joined them with an elegant rotunda. The area, called "the barn" by the family, was a center of activity and equal in importance to the house.

Throughout the years, Will continued to plan new projects and employed a fulltime force of laborers to lay out roads and bridle paths, put up fences, and build corrals into the steep-sided canyons. A mile-long driveway was constructed to reach the top of the mesa in easy curves; other roads were laid out to encircle the upper slopes; thousands of yards of white rail fences enclosed the pastures and polo field; and rows of eucalyptus trees were planted to turn the barren roads and paths into shady lanes.

By 1928, the polo field was completed and there was a good road, now called Sunset Boulevard, from the ranch right to Hollywood. The family began to spend more and more time at the ranch, so in 1929, they sold their Beverly Hills home and moved here permanently.

The house itself underwent many changes during their years of occupancy. When they decided to expand the house, plans called for an Italian-style villa, similar to other movie star homes. However, when Will saw the plans, he is reported to have said to Betty: "Ma, you don't expect me to live in a house like that? I couldn't spit in that fireplace. You know that."

Instead, Will created the current, rambling 31-room ranch house, with 11 baths and seven fireplaces. Will insisted the ceiling in the living room be high enough to spin his rope comfortably.

The dining area was housed in the patio between the two wings. It was family's custom to eat and entertain outside in the patio, unless the weather was just too cold for comfort. Will adapted a new style of California living, an indoor/outdoor lifestyle that has endured as "California ranch style." His ranch and house combined the advantages of the mild California climate, wide-open spaces, and western lifestyle from Oklahoma.



Photo credit: Randy Young

The Rogers ranch house.

"With his polo field, his stables, his roping corral, his horse and the bridle trail back in the hills, Will...had just about everything he wanted. But the work went on. Will kept adding a fence, a new corral, a new bridle trail; he cut new roads; he changed this and that; and the digging clearing, building, and pounding never slowed down while he was here. The ranch was the joy of his life."
-Betty Rogers

Having his own polo field at the ranch, Will played frequently and developed a polo team with his three children, all of whom learned riding, trick riding and roping under his tutelage. He spent hours with them practicing their riding and roping skills. Whenever Will was in town, there were polo games with his show business friends and other polo enthusiasts. Countless world-famous movie stars, politicians, businessmen and titled people visited the ranch, with its easy-going brand of hospitality.

But Will was happiest when driving along remote country roads with Betty or riding on Soapsuds up in the mountains. Will's love for horses was legendary. As Betty reminisced in her book, "I think he would have been satisfied to spend his entire life astride a horse. He used to say, "There is something the matter with a man who don't like a horse!"

In the mornings, Will rode around the ranch and exercised the horses on the polo field or in the surrounding hills until he left for the studio in Hollywood. The minute he got home, he got back on his horse.

In the summer of 1931, Will built a gate house and garage near the entrance and in 1932, he enlarged the roping area. The last flurry of remodeling and new construction took place in 1935. The Rogers added three bedrooms to the south wing, a forced air system for heating to replace fireplace heat, a sunroom, a caretakers dwelling, and a three-room cabin in the canyon where he and Betty could escape together.

On the Sunday morning before Will departed to fly with Wiley Post in Alaska, he and Betty took a ride around the ranch and down the hidden trail to their just-completed cabin. Will regretted he hadn't had a chance to stay there, but figured that could wait for his return.



Photo credit:
Will Rogers State Historic Park

Will at the polo field on his ranch.

*We are just
here for a spell
and then
pass on, so get
a few laughs
and do the best
you can."*

After Will's plane crash and death on that trip, Betty continued to live in the east wing with her son Jim and his family. From 1938 to 1943, she allowed visitors to tour the large living room and the ranch grounds to benefit the Red Cross and Salvation Army war efforts. She also arranged to donate the original acreage and the house to the State of California. Betty Rogers died in 1944 and in August of that year, the ranch became a state park. All of the home's original furnishings and memorabilia are displayed as they had been during Will's lifetime.



Photo credit: J. Eulate

Will Rogers State Historic Park, 2002.

Existing Conditions

CURRENT VISITATION/AUDIENCE

Annual visitation now averages about 300,000 visitors per year (350,000 peak). Accounting for one block of visitors (between 6 and 12%) are organized school groups who are here on field trips. School visits occur primarily from February through June of the school year. Another contingent of park users are the riders who have horses boarded here and those who participate in the polo matches and special events. Continuing neighborhood use of the park by joggers, hikers, bikers and dog-walkers occurs on a daily basis. On weekends, the park is filled with recreational users who dominate the polo field, green, and picnic area. Due in large part to its location in an urban area, the park appears to function more like a local neighborhood park than a state historical park, with a higher concentration of visitors engaged in recreational pursuits than any other use. Families and young adults appear to make up the largest user groups outside of school children, but their numbers are concentrated on the weekends. Even during summers, week-day visitation is not high and does not peak like the weekends.



Photo credit: J. Eulate

The polo green is frequently used for recreational sports.

EXISTING INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

The only dedicated interpretive facility in the park is the visitor center that is maintained on the lower floor of the family garage. The upper floor of this structure houses the park's administrative offices. The visitor center contains approximately 500 square feet of exhibit space, mainly graphic displays about Will Rogers and the ranch. A scale model of the house and a bust of Will Rogers are also displayed. One of the primary functions of this facility is as a theater to show documentary material such as actual film clips and newsreels of Will Rogers. Because of its small size and multi-use requirements, the garage functions poorly as a visitor center.



Photo credit: J. Eulate

A family enjoys walking in the park.

Photo credit: J. Eulate



The lower floor of the Rogers' family garage currently serves as the Park's Visitor Center.

Photo credit: D. Quan



Will Rogers' home is the main historic resource of the park.

Park staff are present at the visitor center to answer questions at a small contact station at the front of the garage. Here, brochures and information about the park and park programs are available to visitors. Rest rooms, a park map and posting board are located adjacent to the garage visitor center to provide for the typical orientation and arrival needs of visitors.

The Will Rogers home is the main historic resource of the park. Its historic furnishings and artwork provide an enormous opportunity to interpret Will and his family life on the ranch. The outdoor patio area and immediate landscaped grounds around the house are also very valuable historic resources for interpretation.

The major rooms of the house and the outdoor patio are a part of a regularly scheduled tour that runs daily on the half-hour between 10:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.. Because of the current staffing shortages, house tours are mostly conducted by docent volunteers.

In addition to the items on public display in the house, the park has a large and unique collection of documents, images, objects, and furnishings that is not viewable by the public but is in storage. The potential for further interpretation and research of this collection could be tapped in the future should a new visitor facility be constructed that contains

accessible archival storage.

The stable is another historic resource that currently contains some photographic displays about the ranch and the Rogers' horses. Visitor access to the stable has been limited in the past due to conflicts with the use of the stable for the boarding of horses. Access issues have occurred for the adjacent historic area that contains the hay barn and pipe corrals. Conflicts with equestrian use and with park maintenance use in the northern area of the ranch have precluded higher interpretive use of the area.

The primary interpretive programs offered at the park are the historic house tours and school visitation program, and the self-guided audio tour of the ranch. On a seasonal basis, weekend polo matches are held at the polo field, the only remaining outdoor field in Los Angeles County. Capacity to develop and maintain special events or outreach programs is extremely limited at this time due to staff shortages and budget conditions.

Goals and Objectives

The primary purpose of Will Rogers State Historic Park is as a nationally significant memorial to Will Rogers, and to perpetuate the uses and values he created at his ranch home. The California Department of Parks and Recreation is committed to preserving and interpreting the Will Rogers home, its collections, related historic structures, and the historic landscapes in the park, and endeavors to make these areas accessible to the public for its enjoyment and appreciation.

Related goals include: preserve, manage and restore natural areas in the Park for their intrinsic natural and scenic values, and to complement the historic landscape; provide historically accurate recreation opportunities appropriate to the Park, emphasizing those activities that were historically important on the ranch (such as roping, polo playing, and horsemanship, and others that are ancillary to historic interpretation, such as picnicking, tennis and hiking); promote an understanding of Will Rogers' contributions to American history, folklife and national character through interpretive tours, publications, exhibits, facilities, concessions, and special events. In accordance with these goals, objectives described below are tied to interpretive, educational, behavioral and emotional categories.

Interpretive

- To interpret the universal popularity and appeal of Will Rogers during his lifetime.
- To explore the relationship of Will Rogers' philosophy and outlook on life with the construction and purpose of his ranch.
- To interpret Will Rogers family and home life with respect to his ranch.
- To understand the importance of horses, roping, and cowboy life to Will Rogers.
- To interpret the workings of the ranch.

*“What
constitutes a
life well-spent?
Love and
admiration
for your fellow
man is all
anyone can
ask.”*

Learning

- Visitors will know that Will Rogers was a popular American humorist/commentator, statesman and entertainer.
- Visitors will realize the tremendous impact that Will Rogers had on the public, from the “everyday Joe” to dignitaries and presidents.
- Visitors will be able to associate one or two well-known quotes with Will Rogers.
- Visitors will know that the ranch was a reflection of Will Rogers’ love of family, horses, and the great outdoors.

Behavioral

- Visitors will want to find out more about Will Rogers and his philosophy.
- Visitors who come for recreational purposes will see the park in a different light and will appreciate and use it in new ways.
- Visitors will want to return for future activities and programs offered at the park.
- Visitors will spend some time reflecting on their own beliefs and values.

Emotional

- Visitors will feel a connection with and be inspired by the simple, straight-forward philosophy of Will Rogers.
- Visitors will experience the sense of place provided by the land, and will feel that the site was a real home with the personality and spirit of Will Rogers and his family.

Key Themes and Stories

Several key themes emerged during the visioning workshop and collaborative planning process. These themes make up the foundation of the interpretive strategy. There are many valuable perceptions and reflections of Will Rogers' life that have been described and recorded by family and friends, through historical writings, through Will's film, radio and entertainment pieces, and certainly through his humor and prolific quotes. Distilling the essence of these reflections is an important part of understanding this complex and multi-faceted man. The key themes that follow seem to touch on basic truths about Will Rogers. They serve as the framework for potential stories and ideas related to Will's life that could be meaningful to convey to the public.

THEMES

Unifying Theme Statement

Will Rogers was extremely passionate about and was personally involved in creating his ranch because it was the embodiment of all that he loved deeply - family, friends, horses, roping, riding, polo, and the outdoors.

A Man for all People

Will Rogers was able to make a connection with and touch people from all walks of life.

- Will spoke openly and plainly about what was on his mind on many subjects, bringing a down-home, practical perspective to issues that echoed the inner sentiments of people worldwide. His warm style and approach to life gave him universal appeal and entrée through doors around the world. His presence in every form of media of the times further reinforced his popularity and impact on people.

Universal Values

Will Rogers' belief in straightforwardness, honesty, integrity, family and heritage were universally accepted and highly regarded values held by many people.

- Will was heavily influenced by his family upbringing and his father Clem Rogers, his practical Oklahoma roots, and his Native American ancestry.

The Private Side of a Very Public Man

Will Rogers' warmth, devotion and generosity to all who touched him in his private life speak

volumes about his character, which further reinforce his public persona and deepen the meaning of his words.

- The public knew Will Rogers, the entertainer, but only his family and close friends saw his other side. Will separated his public and private life carefully, establishing the ranch as a "safe haven" for him, Betty and the children. The home side of Will was that of a devoted family man and father who would go to great lengths for his children. He was also a kind and generous friend, opening his home to close friends and remodeling his ranch for the benefit of his guests. The generosity he showed to all who worked for him and his philanthropy for causes in which he believed are little known but extremely important aspects of his private side.

California Living

Will Rogers style of casual indoor/outdoor living, reflected in the design of his home and ranch, was popularized by the media as the "California ranch style."

- Will combined the advantages of the mild California climate with a love for wide open spaces and elements of his native Oklahoma roots to fashion his indoor/outdoor lifestyle.

Ridin' and Ropin'

Will Rogers held a lifelong passion for horses and roping that was unparalleled except for his love of family.

- Will could not be happier than when he was out with his horses or practicing his roping. Horses were an integral part of the children's upbringing as well. A veteran rider and an avid polo player, he taught horsemanship and roping to his children at a very early age.

World Traveler

Will Rogers' globe-hopping lifestyle and his interest in technology came together in his passion for modern aviation and flying.

- The man who grew up before the dawn of modern aviation was enamored with airplanes and flight. Perhaps it was the free-roaming cowboy lifestyle, yearning for wide open spaces and feeling of wanderlust that sparked Will's fascination with this "new" form of transportation. Or perhaps it was his sense of urgency and the idea that he could accomplish so much more in much less time that made Will an outspoken advocate for aviation.

*“We will never
have a true
civilization
until we have
learned to
recognize
the rights of
others.”*

TOPICS AND STORIES

Relevant topics and stories related to the key themes might help guide the development of potential activities and future improvements to the historic ranch site. Following are topics and stories that seem integral to understanding Will Rogers.

A Man for all People

A Spokesperson for Everyone...

Outspoken and never afraid to take a stand, Will Rogers said or wrote what he felt, without regard to political boundaries or concern for being on the "right" side. It is this very trait that endeared him to so many people because he actually said what they might have felt. His prominence in the media made his words even more powerful. Beyond being the spokesperson for the average citizen, Will played a large role as a direct conduit for the people to Congress and the White House. When traveling abroad, he became an informal ambassador for the United States, dispensing his straightforward thoughts to influential citizens and heads of state alike.

The Great Entertainer...

Will Rogers wore many hats during his career. He parlayed a natural penchant for trick roping into a successful vaudeville act, and springboarded into prominence as a humorist, actor, and then a radio commentator and newspaper columnist. He was the epitome of what a megastar would be today. He was in the spotlight for his entire career, making a powerful statement about his popularity and appeal.

The Embodiment of Americanism...

Was Will's way of life synonymous with the idealized concept of the "American" way of life of the 1920s and 30s? Did his words and actions help define the nation's image of what a true American was during the early twentieth century? Were the American people perhaps searching for a national American hero to rally behind?

*“Congress:
they are
professional
joke-makers. I
could study all
my life and not
think up half
the amount of
funny things
they can think
of in one
session of
Congress.”*

World and US Events During Will's Lifetime...

The bulk of Will Rogers' life work took place in the context of events such as the stock market crash of the 1920s, the Great Depression, the blooming of Hollywood and the entertainment industry, the emergence of technology and media, and political unrest around the world.

Universal Values

A Matter of Principles...

Will Rogers was a principled man who believed in honesty, integrity and morality. He treated everyone with the same respect that he wished to be accorded. He was a caring, generous person who revered family and family values, and was also proud of his Oklahoma upbringing and Native American heritage.

The Relevancy of Will Rogers' Philosophy Today...

Honesty, integrity, morality, and family values are universal, timeless traits that most people would want to live by just as Will did. Would Will's thoughts and words still ring true today or were they more relevant to the times in which he lived? What power is in his words today if one applies the adage that history repeats itself?

The Private Side of a Very Public Man

Family Life...

One of the main purposes of building the ranch was to provide privacy for his family and to have enough open space for his horses. Here, Will was able to devote time to his wife and children, using the ranch as a huge playground for all their enjoyment. The extent to which he would go to provide for his family can be seen in his purchase of three miles of beach-front property nearby so that his children would have a place to swim.

- The private side of Will Rogers can be expressed through family home movies, interviews, still photographs and memoirs.

Hospitality on a Grand Scale...

The closeness of Will's relationship with his friends can be shown in the generosity and hospitality he extended to them, offering his home for extended periods of time and even building a golf course for their enjoyment. The polo field was another amenity built not only for his own enjoyment but to make the ranch a hub for activities for his friends. Though his hospitality was manifested on a grand scale through the built elements of the ranch, Will's

own personal style was very informal and unpretentious. Barbecues and casual outdoor living on the patio were the norm, with a strong dose of horseback riding thrown in for good measure.

A Hands-On Approach...

Will was very interested in developing different aspects of the ranch and wanted to be personally involved in design and construction. Whether it was building fences, planting trees, landscaping or making house additions, it appears that Will had some hand in them all.

- Stable construction and modification
- House additions
- Recycling of materials and moving of whole structures
- References to Oklahoma-style structures

Lending a Helping Hand...

Will Rogers enjoyed a close relationship and camaraderie with his ranch hands and other workers whom he employed at the ranch. He even went so far as to hire more workers during the Depression because he it was the "right" thing to do. Both Will and Betty were very quiet and humble about their generosity and "caring" for others, helping many people over the years. Additionally, Will was very philanthropic and was especially generous with his donations to the Red Cross.

California Living

Building the Dream and a Lifestyle...

When Will was building the ranch, little did he realize that he was crafting what was to become a "California ranch lifestyle" that would signify a design style and attitude about life on the West Coast. Availability of open land, views to wide expanses of landscape, design for indoor/outdoor living based on a Mediterranean climate, and suburban living within driving distance to work were all elements of this new lifestyle.

- Myths and Realities of the West - Does this "larger-than-life living" mean that all of the West has this lifestyle? Is the perception of Western living overblown? What essential elements of the California ranch style and of Western living are in fact realities? What aspects of Will Rogers' life were mythic versus those that were real?

It's all a Stage Set...

As much as he designed his ranch based on the natural contours of the landscape and available views, Will also imported a bit of Hollywood to the design. He carefully crafted entrance points,

views and individual settings much as he would a movie set, bringing in full-sized trees and framing views as if to be seen through a camera lens. He manipulated the landscape in the image that he saw in his mind - full-grown, mature, and complete in all details. Today, the landscape has changed far beyond the image that Will saw when it was installed. We recognize now that landscape is dynamic and ever changing.

The Pre-Ranch Landscape...

Photographs exist of the land at the time that Will Rogers constructed the ranch. However, the history of the land goes back much further. Stepping backwards from 1927, Japanese truck farmers occupied the land, preceded by Mexican ownership dating back to the early 1800s, and preceded for thousands of years by Native American inhabitants of the Southern California coast. Each occupied the land and used it in different ways. For most of this time, the region's landscape was predominantly a grassland and scrub community with coastal live oaks dominating.

- Japanese truck farmers
- The Marquez family and Mexican land grant ownership
- Historic Native American occupation and prehistoric peoples

Importance of the Ranch Today...

The Will Rogers Ranch is a prime example of a gentleman's Western ranch. The house and other structures are essentially intact and provide an accurate historical record of this part of Will Rogers' life as well as an example of the California ranch style. The ranch provides a unique rural experience for urban dwellers that is easily accessible. Additionally, as a park it provides vital open space for general recreation.

Ridin' and Ropin'

Riding...

Will grew up in the saddle, and riding was as integral to his lifestyle as food and water were. He seemingly spent every waking hour (when not working) on horseback at the ranch riding the canyon trails or practicing polo or roping. He taught his children horsemanship and the sport of trick riding at very early ages. His son Jim later became a very accomplished trick rider.

Roping...

Besides riding horses and playing polo, there wasn't anything that Will liked to do better than roping. Whether he was practicing rope tricks or whether he was in the corral roping calves, he was participating in the activity that he loved the most. The natural talent that he had for rop-

ing was perfected in his vaudeville act, but his love for the sport went far beyond the act and was really part of his persona. Will practiced roping with his friends and taught his children the sport as well.

Popularizing Polo...

Will fell in love with the sport of polo while living in New York. By the time he moved to California he had become an avid player and advocate of the sport. The polo field he built and the matches he sponsored helped reinforce and popularize polo in Southern California. The competitive nature of the game, the riding skills and physical strength required went hand-in-hand with Will's cowboy lifestyle of riding and roping. The fact that the field he built was non-regulation in specification was of no consequence to Will, who simply just loved to play the game.

World Traveler

A New Frontier...

In the same way that he was drawn to the open plains of South America and Australia as a young man, Will was also attracted to the challenge of world travel in the open skies. This was uncharted territory and Will threw himself into aviation with nearly the same zeal that he had for building his ranch or playing polo. He became a huge advocate for the advancement of aviation, befriending and flying with the major aviators of the time. He continually urged the government to support the fledgling aviation industry and often spoke about the safety and future of air travel.

World Correspondent...

Will Rogers circled the globe on assignment, looking for breaking news stories and interesting people. Through his insights and commentaries, the American public was able to expand its horizons by following his journeys in newspapers, magazines, books and the radio. His universal appeal is evidenced all around his house in the many gifts that he received while traveling the world. He was truly a global citizen.

Tragedy in Alaska...

Will was a risk taker and one who certainly enjoyed life to the fullest. Like horses, aviation became an integral part of his lifestyle, allowing him to travel the world and still have enough time to spend on the ranch with his family. His penchant for flying was unfortunately what ended his life as well. On a continent-hopping expedition with Wiley Post, their single engine plane went down in Alaska, killing both men. The enormous popularity of Will Rogers was never more realized than at his passing. The entire world mourned the man who had been their hero.

POTENTIAL INTERPRETIVE EXPERIENCE

The depth of Will's personality and life, and the beautiful ranch setting provide rich opportunities to expand interpretive experiences and to diversify visitor audience.

THE VISION

The overall vision for an enhanced Park experience is one that allows visitors to familiarize themselves with Will Rogers and the multiple facets of his life. The biggest impression that an observer might have about this park is that the majority of its casual visitors have little or no knowledge about Will Rogers. A primary focus of the park should be to introduce Will Rogers to this new audience and to reintroduce him to the public in general. Using the ranch as the historical foil against which to work, stories about Will Rogers that intertwine his philosophy, life's work, family, and zest for living can be woven into a rich tapestry to illuminate one of America's first media giants.

The road we should take to interpret Will Rogers should reflect the casual style and down-to-earth approach that he might have taken to do this task himself. A low-key approach that is injected with humor and wit, and is told in Will's own words and voice, may be one way to bring this interpretation to life. If anything, Will would probably not want us to preach or lecture anybody about his life.

A walk through the park might include the following experiences...

Arriving at the park via Will Rogers State Park Road, we are greeted at the contact station with a new entrance sign reinforcing the name of the site and its status as a State Historic Park and as a nationally significant site. An image of Will Rogers or an icon or phrase representing his life philosophy is incorporated into this entrance sign to humanize and introduce him.

We are then directed to the new visitor center that is nestled against the northern hillside overlooking the entrance parking lot. The low profile, ranch-style building(s) is open and inviting, with outdoor patios and gathering places suitable for large group orientation or cozy family gatherings. Inside the visitor center, a staff member at a

generous information desk greets us. They inform us about the day's special events and the different site and house tour options available. For an entertaining look at Will Rogers in the media, we are invited to take in a show in the 60-seat Will Rogers Theater. With our interest peaked, we find ourselves drawn to the exhibits in the adjacent space. Here, we are able to use interactive kiosks to "ask" Will Rogers about selected topics, and to hear in his own words how to approach life's problems. We can also look at newsreels and listen to radio broadcasts of the 1930s to take in more. Surrounding us are displays of memorabilia, mementoes from his travels, and exhibits about Will's life and times that help us understand his popularity.

The visitor center exhibits provided the overview and background to enjoy the rest of our visit even more. Now it is time to decide on one of several tours being offered. We can choose a self-guided tour, either using a printed tour guide, or we can rent an audio unit for an in-depth personal tour of the ranch. Alternatively, we can sign up for a guided docent tour of the house or of the working ranch area. Each tour covers different themes about Will Rogers, his family, his ranch and his love for horses. It could be hard to pick just one tour, or it may mean a repeat visit soon to learn more. Whichever tour is taken it promises to be a rich, informative and enjoyable one.

Since it is a weekend, there appears to be a number of programs and special events happening in the park. If we stroll up to the northern "historic zone" where the stable, barn, and corrals are located, we'll be able to take in the flavor of the 1930s ranch at the "living history program." A blacksmith is available today to show us how to shoe a horse, and the cook at the chuck wagon will be making a cowboy stew. Over by the pasture, we can learn how to properly groom a horse. A special treat is in store for us today, because a Mexican trick roper has been invited here to show off his style of the sport over at the roping corral. It should be quite entertaining.

If that weren't enough, it appears that there is a polo demonstration today at the polo field. The objective and rules of the game will be explained and a few players will show us their moves. It will surely draw a crowd to the southern end of the park. Since it is a sunny day, there are already a multitude of picnickers, sunbathers and Frisbee-throwers enjoying the historic green and the picnic areas there.

For those times when we just want to explore the paths and trails of the park, there is ample opportunity to get away from it all by taking the northern canyon trails into the surrounding hills. By walking just a few minutes, we can find grassland, scrub and

oak woodland communities - and the quiet and tranquil setting that Will must have enjoyed as he rode his horse along these canyon walls. As we make our way through the park, we come across interpretive panels at overview points and where certain site features exist, but we also encounter some more subtle or whimsical interpretive touches. Engraved or embedded amongst the natural features of the park, are "discoverable quotes" - words of wisdom from Will Rogers himself. They may be words to live by, words to remember, or words to collect and think about later, but they all are here to remind us of who Will Rogers was and why he is still a force to be reckoned with.

We wind up a long day, glad that we had a chance to explore a slice of American culture from 70 years ago and grateful that we were able to absorb a few pearls of wisdom from a man who should not be forgotten. Hopefully, we can return again soon for another exciting historic adventure.

POTENTIAL EXPANDED AUDIENCE AND VISITATION

Enhancing the interpretive opportunities at the park will widen its appeal to more people. Individuals, families and interest groups will be drawn to the park that might not have come for recreational use. In particular, visitors who spend leisure time involved in historic tourism, seniors who remember Will Rogers, and those with interests in the American West and cowboys would enjoy this park. General interpretive programs should have universal appeal and at the same time should reach out to underserved urban audiences. Enhanced interpretive programs can also increase the number of organized school visits to the park, not only in the primary school range but in the middle and high school range as well.

The future mix of the visitor population would be more diverse in age, gender, color, and interest. The park is large enough for all groups to co-exist. Substantial increases in visitor population are not anticipated, but a change in visitor mix coupled with a slight upturn in total annual visitation is what will likely be the future scenario.

INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Visitor Center Orientation

- The visitor center should introduce Will Rogers, the man, and provide information about his philosophy of life, his international appeal, and the historical context of the time in which he lived. It should also introduce the Santa Monica Ranch as a "passion" and work of Will Rogers.
- It would be ideal if the visitor center was the visitors' first experience prior to entering the site so that they would receive the best orientation possible. Placement of the visitor center needs to be out of the historic district and out of the primary east-west viewshed.
- Care should be taken in the design and importance of the visitor center so that it does not cause the visitor to feel that the visitor center experience was the entire park experience. The clear message of the visitor center should be to make sure that visitors tour the park.
- A bypass around the visitor center should be provided for those who are repeat visitors or arriving for recreational use, but provision should be made for some form of interpretation about Will Rogers for this audience.
- Audiovisual Programs: The depth of material available about Will Rogers on film or audio tape is extraordinary. We can use Will's own words and images to interpret what he stood for and how he chose to live his life. Additionally, extensive interviews with those who were related to him, worked for him, or were close to him are also available. These first-hand accounts, told in their own words, will help paint a picture of him. The use of audiovisual media, whether in short loops, a featured documentary, or through interactive computer media, appears to be a natural fit that Will himself, a player in both silent and talking pictures, would have enjoyed.
 - > Clips from the film "Look Back in Laughter"
 - > Clips from home movies, radio broadcasts
 - > Multimedia kiosks
 - > Facilities to house an oral history program to collect and store ongoing research work as well as a library and archives
- Interpretive Exhibits: An introduction to Will Rogers that can highlight his life and echo his life philosophy while supplying context for his words and actions, will lay the cornerstone for the visitors' enjoyment of the interpretive experiences around the ranch. If possible, such an orientation should occur upon arrival to the park, preceding visitors'

movements to outlying areas of the park. Orientation should be fairly short, meant to provide a sketch of Rogers rather than a comprehensive chronicle of his life's work. Photographic material is rich and readily available, as are objects and items in his collection that may be better interpreted in a visitor center than in the Rogers' house.

- > Timeline of Will Rogers life
- > Exhibits introducing each of the major interpretive themes
- > An overview or orientation to the ranch
- The interpretive opportunities available throughout the park should be clearly shown and defined at the visitor center through maps, postings, and personal services.
- Relocate staff office and collection storage space.

Self-Guided Interpretive Tours

House Complex Tour

Self-guided tours of the interior of the Rogers house are not possible due to security and conservation concerns and lack of staffing. This situation will likely continue into the future. However, this does not prevent visitors from touring the exterior areas around the house, the guest house/garage, or the adjacent utility buildings. At selected locations such as the patio and front porch, the second floor of the garage, and the laundry building, interpretive panels could describe the use of the space, the family connection, and personal recollections. Alternatively, a self-guided brochure could be employed to tell this story; or an audio tour

using CD, DVD or wand technology (minimize intrusion of new elements in historic place) could be used. In general, the house tour should interpret family life, with the California ranch lifestyle as a secondary theme.

Site Tour

Provide waysides or trail markers with a take-along ranch guide, or a combination of both; or provide an audio tour using CD, DVD or wand technology (minimize appearance of new elements in historic settings; expand to include different sites).



Photo credit: D. Quan

The Rogers family ranch house.

- *Stable:* Besides the house, the stable was the second most important structure on the ranch for Will Rogers. During inclement weather, he boarded the family's horses here and used the round center area as an exercise ring for the horses. The stable should again be used as a hub for activities. Interpretive exhibits should be installed that emphasize Will's connection with and love of horses and roping. Refurnishing the tack room, some stalls, and other support spaces would help interpret how the building was used. The stable might also lend itself well to more active exhibits and programs oriented toward children. Hands-on exhibits that allow children to try on western gear, do role-playing, learn a simple rope trick, or touch the saddles and tack could be easily accommodated in this large space. Large events could be held in the central round space and could include the area immediately outside as well.



Photo credit: D. Quan

The stable.

- *Riding Ring:* The Riding Ring was built with its elongated shape to better serve as a trick riding ring. The wooden fence around the ring is different than the original design, and the center of the ring was once covered with grass, but its use for horses has never changed. It provides a central location with a viewing area to demonstrate trick riding, horsemanship and Western style riding.



Photo credit: D. Quan

The blacksmith shop.

- *Blacksmith Shop:* The blacksmith and adjacent carpentry shops were integral working parts of the ranch. Horseshoeing and minor metalworking repairs were performed in this location, which is the original site of the shop. The blacksmith shop should be open for self-guided tours, and at special times, blacksmithing demonstrations could be held using the equipment here. The emphasis of interpretation here should be on the working ranch. Prop or replica equipment and tools should be installed in lieu of artifacts for security purposes.
- *Hay Barn:* The hay barn was actually constructed and modified a number of times during the life of the ranch. It was built of recycled materials in a very ad hoc fashion, and its main purpose was to store hay and equipment. The hay barn could be rehabilitated and the surrounding grounds restored. The front section of the hay barn could be interpreted through a self-guided tour, and the rear half could be adaptively re-used for park operations. The barn could be furnished with stored hay and period machinery (a Fresno) or a truck or tractor. The emphasis of interpretation should be on the working ranch.



Photo credit: J. Eularte

The hay barn.

- *Roping Corral:* Besides the house and stables, the roping corral was one of Will's favorite outdoor places. He spent many hours practicing calf, steer, and goat roping here. The original roping corral has long since disappeared; having been replaced with this re-creation built in the 1990s. This corral should be retrofitted so that it is safe for roping demonstrations and so that an audience can sit and watch the programs from the nearby hillside. The emphasis of interpretation here should be on roping and trick roping.



Photo credit: J. Eulate

The roping corral.

- *Practice Polo Cage:* This replica cage is similar to the one designed by Will and used by the family to practice their polo strokes. It occupied several different sites during the ranch's history, and relocation of the cage to the pasture behind the stable may be a more prominent place for it. This iteration of the cage is not historically accurate, so if work is done to relocate the cage, it should likewise be reconstructed to be as historically correct as possible. The emphasis of interpretation should be on the importance of polo to Will and the purpose of the cage. Demonstrations on the use of the cage would be an excellent way of enhancing the interpretive value of this feature.



Photo credit: D. Quan

A replica of the polo practice cage designed by Will Rogers.

- *Pastures:* Will's horses grazed in the two pastures adjacent to the stable/barn complex. The pastures were originally enclosed by whitewashed board fencing and had a slightly different alignment. The historic fencing, surrounding landscaping and pastures should be restored to reflect their original character. A small number of horses could again populate the pastures in order to add life to the historic scene. The proliferation of pipe corrals and small outbuildings should be removed if they are not historic to the period. The emphasis of interpretation should be on the care and grooming of horses and the workings of the ranch.



Photo credit: J. Eulate

The pasture.

- *Trails:* Riding the canyon trails by horseback was a favorite pastime of Will Rogers. Nearly every day, he would take the opportunity to saddle his horse and meander through the backcountry hills in the northern section of his ranch. Today, several trails that lead from the ranch into the northern hills are regularly traveled by recreational users. Interpretive wayside panels should be strategically placed along these trails to reach this recreational

audience. An overlook at Inspiration Point, on the Will Rogers Loop Trail, could provide a magnificent historical overview of the ranch. Other waysides could relate to Will's love of horses, his view of nature and solitude, or his fire and flood control management in the canyons and hills around the ranch,

Guided Interpretive Tours

House Tour

Continue with the present house tour program. The house tour should interpret family life, with the California ranch lifestyle as a secondary theme. The house and nearly every item in it make up a historic house museum of great importance and with high interpretive value. Wherever possible, the objects and artwork in the house should be used to convey aspects of Will's family life and to make connections with his worldwide travels.

The house tour programs should be periodically reviewed not only with respect to interpretation but also in relation to artifact conservation, security, and resource preservation. After a curatorial review and analysis of the house and its contents have been completed to establish baseline references for objects and historic fabric, recommendations should be made for any immediate actions that may be required for preservation or conservation.

The outdoor patio and porch area of the house is as important as the interior spaces. The Rogers' spent much of their time out here, dining on the patio or entertaining on the porch and lawn. These exterior spaces are considered extensions of the living space of the house. The focus of interpretation for the patio and porch areas is the concept of indoor/outdoor living that was captured by the phrase "California ranch style."

Site Tour

Provide a new walking tour concentrating on the northern historic zone with the stable, hay barn, blacksmith shop, corrals, and canyon pastures. Interpreting Will's love of horses, riding, and roping, along with the workings of the ranch, should be the primary focus of this site tour.

Program Preparation

Current staffing levels make it impossible for park staff to fulfill the need for all guided tours, other interpretive programs or program development. At present, volunteer docents are largely responsible for the tours of the house. At a minimum, park staffing should be increased to allow for adequate preparation of docent materials and for training and scheduling of volunteer staff, including annual training updates. A formal training program will improve con-

sistency of delivery, historical accuracy, agreement on mission and objectives, and will provide a forum for discussing issues and developing strategies for improving interpretation.

Scheduled Events and Activities

Polo Matches

Polo matches should continue to be held at the park on a regularly scheduled basis. Use of the polo field for its originally intended purpose reinforces the historical interpretation of the park.

Polo Demonstrations

Polo is not a widely understood sport. Demonstration programs to show techniques, strategies, and rules of competition would be helpful in exposing the sport to a wider audience and in increasing interest in the polo matches held at the park. Additionally, a demonstration to show how Will's polo cage worked would be a good way of interpreting Will's dedication to the sport.

Trick Roping

As a master trick roper, Will Rogers was constantly practicing his techniques at the ranch. Demonstrations of both Western and Mexican styles of trick roping would pay tribute to one of Will's main passions and would be a popular program event. Audience participation and experimentation with roping would make the programs interactive.

Trick Riding

The Rogers children grew up with horses and learned to trick ride from Will. Demonstration programs of trick riding would generate a great deal of excitement and would draw crowds.

Care and Grooming of Horses

Horses require dedicated care and grooming and trainers will explain what is involved. This program will allow visitors to get close to the horses. At selected times, a farrier could be employed to show how horses are shod and how horseshoes are made, using the equipment available in the blacksmith shop.

Photo credit: J. Eulate



Trick roping was one of Will's primary passions.

Horse Training and Cutting Horses

Training methods for horses to learn jumping or special maneuvers involving agility and balance are popular programs that attract all audiences. Demonstrations of the ability of cutting horses in herding cattle show the specialties involved in training. The main focus of riding demonstrations will be on the Western riding style of Will Rogers.

Living History Program

On weekends, "actors" in period attire could populate the historic zone around the stable/barn complex, performing ranch tasks or just interacting with visitors, giving them a sense of 1920-30s California ranch living and relating stories about Will Rogers. If possible, period vehicles could be used for shuttle transportation in the park, further enhancing the immersive experience.

Summer Film Series

To reinforce the idea of California outdoor living, initiate a program such as informal evening screenings of period films in the tennis court or other semi-enclosed outdoor area.

Special Programs

Riding Programs for Mentally and Physically Challenged Children and/or Adults

Similar programs were successfully operated in the past, but have not recently been operating due to severe shortage in personnel. Consideration should be given to increasing staff and/or providing supplemental services and support to re-institute these types of programs.

Programs for Seniors: Remembering Will Rogers

A special program designed to reach an underserved audience such as senior citizens would be a good way of rounding out the interpretive outreach of the park while providing a valuable experience for this age group. Additionally, having programs that mix children and young people with seniors who remember Will Rogers would be an excellent way of relating his importance and popularity to newer generations.

Special Events

Musical Performances: especially cowboy music of 1930s, barn dances

Theatrical Presentations: Will Rogers Follies

Cowboy Poetry Readings or Competitions

Will Rogers Day, Cowboy Days, and Charros (Mexican Cowboys) Days

Equestrian Events

Rental Space for Events (on a selective basis)

Extended Learning Opportunities

Internet Links to Other Sites

The Will Rogers State Historic Park website should be linked with the Will Rogers Memorial Museum website in Oklahoma and with other sites that have references, databases, or visual materials about Will Rogers.

Book and Multimedia Sales

A sales outlet at the park where related books, videos, CDs, audiotapes and other interpretive material could be purchased will offer visitors an immediate opportunity to satisfy their desire for more information about Will Rogers. An on-line catalog could be put onto a website to extend the availability of Rogers' reference material to a greater audience.

Special Publications Developed for Sale

Where the park holds unique resources or information not available elsewhere, park partners may want to produce special publications for sale where the proceeds will directly benefit park programs. As an example, an exhibit catalog could be developed that interpreted objects and artifacts belonging to Will Rogers.

Take-home Materials

Specially developed printed material, such as tour guides and site bulletins, available at the park should contain contact and reference information leading visitors to more sources about Will Rogers. This will encourage users to take the material home and to keep it for future reference.

School Curriculum

With the high number of school visits to the park, specially developed pre-visit curriculum could be developed that will help teachers make the most of their field trip to the park. Materials that give background on Will Rogers and provide insight into his philosophy will prepare students for their visit. For schools that cannot make the field trip to the park, a "traveling trunk" exhibit could be made available to send out to schools that will provide some form of Will Rogers experience. School materials should be downloadable on the web.

All educational programs developed by the park must be aligned with the State of California Department of Education academic content standards. Will Rogers State Historic Park is most connected to California history, which is taught at the fourth grade level. However, this is not the only area where programs can be developed. English and contemporary American literature, language arts, media and communications, sociology, and landscape architecture are other areas of interest that have applicability to courses taught in middle school, high school and at college levels. Educational programs undertaken by park staff should be developed in conjunction with an advisory group of local educators, subject matter experts, and interested parents.

A scholar-in-residence program should be considered. Will Rogers wrote over two million published words that were read throughout the world. In his own unique way he was an important American writer.

Website Catalogs/Live Connections

Objects or photos where users can "drill down" into the subject to obtain different levels of information. For instance, a gift art object can be interpreted for what it is, and can tell a story about why it was given and by whom, and then visitors can find information about the person who gave it, etc. An interactive site might also have a live connection to the visitor center or other site, where visitors could talk with other visitors to the site in real time. One mechanism to encourage interaction would be to ask visitors to vote or write in the name of the famous person who they think is most like Will Rogers today. The web site would keep a running ranking and score of the nominations.

VISITOR FLOW AND USE PATTERNS

General Considerations

- Free movement around the park is essential for visitors to get a more complete experience of the ranch. In particular, access to the stables, barn, pastures, and canyon trails will be critical.
- Restoration of landscapes and buildings, or design with respect to the time period (1928-1935) should be carried out within the historic areas of the park to enhance and reinforce interpretation of the ranch. The two primary historic areas to focus on are the house complex and the stable/haybarn/pasture area.
- Connections between facilities or areas of the park and to canyon trails will need to be more evident and more inviting to encourage higher public use.
- Restoration of historic viewsheds, especially looking west from the house to the ocean and looking east from the polo field to the stable, will help in interpreting the establishment and siting of the ranch and ranch elements.
- Opportunities for interpretation of Will Rogers' life and of the ranch should be taken throughout the site, both within facilities and along trails, paths, and open spaces. Providing additional interpretation will reinforce the idea that the park has many areas that can be explored, and that the site will be seen as a "Learning Place."
- ADA accessibility throughout the park and park facilities is a mandatory requirement in the planning of new park facilities/amenities. Where accessibility presents a particular hardship or is constrained by physical factors, alternative interpretive experiences must be considered. One major loop trail through the historic district should be ADA accessible. All major structures should be accessible.
- Visitors should be allowed to choose the routes, activities, and programs that they are interested in, and they should be able to experience them in any order that they choose.
- Recreational use of the park will continue and appears to function well in the western zone of the park. The use of the large historic open spaces for recreation and picnicking seems compatible with the character of the spaces and does not impact those spaces significantly. The addition of interpretive elements to this zone will help tie the overall interpretive aspects of the park together while encouraging use of other areas of the park.

Circulation

- Pedestrian circulation has the highest priority and will be the principal means of access for park visitors. Vehicular access will be maintained to all facilities and areas within the park though. Deliveries, maintenance work, and other needs for vehicles on the site could be scheduled at times when the park is either closed or at its lowest level of visitation.
- An alternative means of transportation should be offered between selected locations for visitors who are physically challenged or seniors who cannot walk a long way. A few small electric cars or golf carts, or a single electric open tram operated by volunteer staff could fulfill this function. If possible, consideration should be given to the use of historic vehicles for this function.
- Public parking should be taken out of the middle of the park so that the historic viewshed is maintained and the public is free to walk without crossing vehicular traffic. The removal of asphalt from the center of the site and the return of the present parking area to a more naturalized condition will enhance the historic setting of the ranch.
- Along key paths in the historic district where interpretation is to have a high priority, staff parking and maintenance facilities, where alternative locations allow, should be removed. Where it is not feasible to completely remove these elements, relocate and/or screen staff parking in areas that are out of direct view. For facilities, relocate entrances and screen modern equipment from direct public view.
- Pedestrian paths should be more clearly delineated and consideration should be given to extend paths or trails to different areas of the park.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

There are a number of promising strategies that may be considered for implementing program and site improvements. Potential implementation actions are organized by major strategy types (organizational, funding, or operational) below. Setting project priorities can be instrumental in determining how to best focus resources. Priorities are suggested at the end of this section.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES

- Establish and develop a strong friends group (nonprofit 501(c) 3) and/or foundation as a park partner. This will be essential for the successful completion of this interpretive project. Fund-raising, liaison with politicians and state and federal agencies, and entrepreneurial pursuits can be more easily and quickly accomplished following this model. This organization will need to be the driving force behind the effort to improve the park.
 - > Similar to other park/association relationships, a formal agreement between state parks and the cooperating entity will be necessary to spell out the roles, responsibilities and relationships of the parties involved.
- Build a network of volunteers, interns, and corporate groups.
- Build alliances with other institutions.
 - > Schools - UCLA, USC.
 - > Institutions - Autry Museum, Film Institute, Joel McCrea Ranch, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, Will Rogers Memorial Museum.
- Increase public awareness of the project.

FUNDING STRATEGIES

- Expect a ten-year time frame to complete this effort.
- Look for primary funding sources in the private sector.
- Develop conceptual plans, a phasing plan, and a realistic cost estimate for the project elements. Couple this with an appealing presentation and promotional package to prepare for a major fundraising effort.

- Foundation grants and government funding sources should also be fully explored for funding of specific project elements.
 - > Funding for oral history projects and archival research
 - National Endowment for the Arts grants
 - > Funding for artifact conservation and historic preservation
 - Stewardship funds from Cultural Division of State Parks
 - Conservation grants from Getty Foundation
 - Historic preservation grants from the National Trust for Historic Preservation
 - > Historic landmark designation may help in getting funding
 - SAT (Save America's Treasures) grants available for historic landmarks
 - > Many grants are challenge grants based on matching funds. Consideration should be given prior to applying for such grants for the feasibility of obtaining matching funds. Target and secure one major funding source from which to leverage applications for challenge grants.

OPERATIONAL STRATEGIES

Revenue Streams

According to local historian Randy Young, Betty Rogers' wish was that there would not be an admission fee to the ranch. Revenue generation will need to come from alternative sources.

- Promote revenue-producing events with facility rentals.
- Operate a bookstore and an on-line catalog to produce revenue for programs.
- Develop publications and other sales items.
- Develop a high-quality self-guided audio tour that can produce revenue through rentals.

Promotional Opportunities

- Cross promote activities, programs, and events with other institutions.
- Develop media contacts so that adequate levels of press and TV coverage, including public service announcements (PSAs), can be attained.

Interpretive Opportunities

- Develop joint exhibits with a consortium of similar institutions and rotate exhibits/programs with them.
- Develop joint research and public programs with regional universities and schools.

PROJECT PRIORITIES

Facility Priorities

In terms of the overall priorities for projects to improve the use of this park, interpretive projects will likely rank in a second or third order.

- Currently, site drainage and stabilization and preservation of structures and features rank the highest in terms of need and funding.
- Next, is restoration of the historic zone, which includes the stable, barn, blacksmith shop, and corral. Included within this work would be the addition of interpretive elements, both inside buildings and within the landscaped area of this zone.
- Third priority listing includes the visitor center, site circulation, and signage (interpretive, directional and regulatory). Included within this work would be orientation and all interpretive elements and functions of the visitor center.

The following action plan takes just the interpretive program elements and lists them in a sequential order of actions that build upon each other to complete the entire project in a ten-year period. Many of the items are dependent upon previous actions being successfully completed before they can proceed. The phasing periods of the project were created to organize the project into manageable sections and do not necessarily align to project phases describing other areas such as infrastructure upgrading, landscape, or building rehabilitation. The tasks do allude to certain items that need to be completed in these categories in order to complete interpretive tasks though.

PHASE I: Design phase (next 1 to 3 years):

- Interpretive plan: Complete a full interpretive plan for the entire park, including the potential visitor center that is based on this strategy report and the landscape management report
- Contract for Phase 2 exhibit planning and design services for both indoor and outdoor exhibits. Coordinate this work with the architectural work involved in rehabilitating the structures and grounds in the historic areas of the park.
- Establish the nonprofit entity that will work jointly with the park to formulate and run programs and that will operate the store or engage in other revenue-generating

endeavors. Formation and development of this resource will allow all other program elements to grow.

- > Funding base so organization is stable
- > Establish sales outlet
- > Publish ranch interpretive guide
- Explore funding options for additional staff interpretive positions. Alternatives for private grants for specific interpretive programs or tasks might support staff positions. Revenue generated by the cooperating entity could be donated back to the state and earmarked for interpretive use. Fund a minimum of one interpretive FTE.
 - > Develop school curriculum
 - > Develop docent training program and training materials
 - > Contact organizations and individuals that can provide or will partner with the park in the development of events and programs
- Organize new guided tours of house and ranch

PHASE II: Design and implementation (Years 3 to 5):

- Contract for Phase 3 exhibit planning and design services for both indoor and outdoor exhibits. Coordinate this work with the architectural work involved in rehabilitating the structures and grounds in the historic areas of the park.
- Rehabilitate and refurnish guest house/garage, laundry and utility buildings behind house; develop self-guided tour around house complex
- Remove parking from central area of park and re-align roads. Establish pedestrian paths of travel as dominant form of access, and then install new interpretive elements along paths and trails.
- Restore landscape setting and fencing in historic areas and add interpretive gathering places and interpretive signs.
- Rehabilitate stable and riding ring and install new exhibits inside stable.
- Move practice polo cage to pasture behind stable and restore cage to be historically accurate.
- Rehabilitate hay barn and blacksmith/carpentry shop. Furnish both structures with period vehicles, tools, and equipment; install new interpretive exhibits.
 - > Institute demonstration program for blacksmithing, horse care and grooming, and riding in riding ring, pasture, blacksmith shop.

- Expand web presence with new online resources such as catalogs, links, and publication sales
- Establish regular and special events programs
 - > Summer film series
 - > Period dances, musical performances
 - > Living history program
 - > Horse care and grooming program
 - > Polo demonstrations
- Establish pilot special events programs and rental venues

PHASE III: Implementation (Years 5 to 10):

- Rehabilitate roping corral and viewing area,
 - > Institute trick roping demonstration program.
- Build visitor center and fabricate and install new exhibits.
- Install new entrance elements (such as signage, fencing, or a portal)
- Develop new publications (print and/or multimedia)
- Build new archival storage facility and relocate collections from house
- Expand special events programs
 - > Riding programs for physically and mentally challenged
 - > Seniors program
 - > Trick riding program
 - > Cowboy days

Cost Implications of Interpretive Program Elements

PHASE	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET RANGE	TOTAL
I	Year 1 - 3:		
	Complete park interpretive plan	15,000 - 25,000	
	Phase 2 Exhibit design for indoor and outdoor exhibits	46,680 - 87,300	
	Establish non-profit group or foundation	NIC	
	Subtotal Phase I	61-680-112,300	
	CDPR Administrative Overhead, Project Management	6,168-11,230	
	TOTAL PHASE I		\$67,848- \$123,530
II	Year 3 - 5:		
	Phase II Exhibit design for indoor and outdoor exhibits	113,520-156,000	
	Interpretive signs for house complex (garage, laundry, utility buildings, patio, front porch)	8,000-20,000	
	Historic furnishings for garage, laundry	15,000-25,000	
	Signage: Orientation maps, directions (Qty.2)	4,000-8,000	
	Circulation: Upgrade pedestrian paths	NIC	
	Interpretive panels along paths and trails (Qty. 8)	12,800 - 32,000	
	Signage: Discoverable quotes (12 locations)	30,000-40,000	
	Stable: New interpretive exhibits	100,000-200,000	
	Stable: Refurnish tack, saddles, rooms, etc.	7,500-15,000	
	Move and restore practice polo cage	NIC	
	Hay Barn: Historic equipment	15,000-25,000	

PHASE	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET RANGE	TOTAL
	Hay Barn: Interpretive signage	2,000-4,000	
	Hay Barn: Props	1,000-2,500	
	Blacksmith: Props, replicas	1,500-5,000	
	Blacksmith: Interpretive signage	1,600-5,000	
	Expand web presence with catalogs/ databases/ links, etc.	25,000-35,000	
	Establish pilot special events programs (.25 to .5 CDPR FTE)	10,000-20,000	
	Subtotal Phase II Construction	233,400-436,500	
	Estimating Contingency at 20%	46,680-87,300	
	CDPR Administrative Overhead, Project Management	23,340-43,650	
	TOTAL PHASE II		\$303,420- \$567,45
III	Year 5 - 10:		
	Roping Corral: Bleachers	NIC	
	Roping Corral: Interpretive signage	1,600-5,000	
	Roping Corral: Reconstruct for animal safety	NIC	
	Visitor Center: New interpretive exhibits (1,500 s.f.)	450,000-600,000	
	Visitor Center: Theater outfitting, film production (15 min.)	84,000-120,000	
	New entrance elements: fencing/ portals/etc.	NIC	
	New entrance elements: Entrance sign (1 monumental sign)	12,000-20,000	
	New publications (print/CD Rom)	NIC	
	Relocate collections from house to new storage facility	NIC	
	Expand special events programs (.25 to .5 CDPR FTE)	10,000-20,000	

PHASE	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET RANGE	TOTAL
	Signage: Regulatory (general allowance)	10,000-15,000	
	Subtotal Phase III Construction	567,600-780,000	
	Estimating Contingency at 20%	113,520-156,000	
	CDPR Administrative Overhead, Project Management	56,760-78,000	
	TOTAL PHASE III		\$737,880- \$1,014,000
	TOTAL ALL PHASES		\$1,109,148- \$1,704,980