

Basic Interpretation Learning System

Making Connections: The Essence of Interpretation
Second Edition

Second edition revised and edited by Joanie S. Cahill and Sara M. Skinner

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With contributions by California State Parks Staff

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FOREWORD

Interpretation is one of the most valuable means our Department has to accomplish its mission over the long term. At the same time that interpretation is one of our legally mandated responsibilities to the public, it is also among the highest callings of the park profession. The public's need to understand the value and significance of the parks and resources of this state has never been greater, and consequently, the Department's responsibility through its employees to provide high quality interpretive services has become more important than at any other time in its history.

California State Parks' Interpretation and Education Division and the Training Section are pleased to introduce a new and innovative approach to learning about the art and science of interpretation.

This *Basic Interpretation Learning System* represents a major milestone in interpretive training. It provides our Department's first-ever comprehensive, standardized resource for introductory interpretation training. Intended primarily as a foundation for ranger and lifeguard cadets attending Basic Visitor Services Training, it is also a valuable guide for any interpreter who provides programs and services directly to the public. The handbook serves as both a stand-alone resource and as part of a cadet training package that includes companion student workbooks and instructor guides. The application of this learning for cadets is carried over to the Field Training Program in their initial field assignment.

Through this handbook and the related training that accompanies it, the Department is providing you with the tools to realize your full potential as an interpreter. Your active participation in training and learning is the essential ingredient in deriving benefit from this publication and, more importantly, translating its use into your interpretation with the public.

Donna Pozzi

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Interpretation and Education Division
California State Parks

Joanne Danielson

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

In the ten years since the publication of the Basic Interpretive Learning System created by Alan E. Wilkinson and Carolyn J. Ward, much has changed in the world of state park interpretation. New program delivery methods are now available, thanks to the development of new technologies. Interpretive opportunities and challenges are growing due to social media and the ability to invite virtual visitors to our parks. An expanding body of research emphasizes the effect of the natural environment on the mental and physical health of children, inspiring interpreters to focus their attention on programs of particular interest to the young. Finally, an increasingly frugal state economy has resulted in changes within the organizational culture of California State Parks. These changes have extended interpretive opportunities—and responsibilities—to an ever-widening range of park personnel and partners.

In the second edition to the Basic Interpretive Learning System (BILS), we have restructured and updated several modules. Notably, *Module 4—Planning* is now more closely aligned with state park policies and actual park planning activities. *Module 11—Audiovisual* has also changed substantially; it now includes guidelines and tips on more advanced technologies, such as digital image file formats and image manipulation. The intellectual property rights section has also been expanded and clarified.

The intention of the BILS revision was to create a handbook that would be even more useful to ranger and lifeguard cadets and other beginning interpreters. Toward that end, we consulted with dozens of park professionals who were willing to share the best of their tools, techniques, ideas, and advice based on their experiences. We emphasize the tools and techniques that are especially useful for state park cadets and those beginning their careers as interpreters with California State Parks.

This update could not have been completed without the support and guidance of Donna Pozzi and her staff. We would also like to thank the following valued members of the parks family who shared their time and knowledge to make this book a relevant and useful tool for new field interpreters:

Fred Andrews, Karen Beery, Steve Bier, Brian Cahill, Wes Chapin, Margo Cowan, Carol Cullens, Jenny Donovan, Lindsay Elliott, Scott Elliott, Nina Gordon, Karma Graham, Michael Green, Elizabeth Hammack, Sara Howlett, Wil Jorae, Lorissa Kemper, Brad Krey, Elise McFarland, Lori Martin, Heather McCummins, Nancy Mendez, John Mott, Cate Murphy, Cara O'Brien, Mary Pass, Steve Ptomey, Denise Rist, Jenan Saunders, Carolyn Schimandle, Kathy Searl, Phil Sexton, Ty Smith, Carie Thompson, Samantha Toffoli, Joe von Herrmann, John Werminski, Mike Whelan, and Bill Wolcott.

We wish you great joy and satisfaction as you join the ranks of professional heritage interpreters and venture forth to make connections between your park's resources and its visitors.

Joanie S. Cahill

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

Welcome to the Basic Interpretation Learning System (BILS). This system consists of the Basic Interpretation Handbook, Student Workbook, Instructor Guide, and Field Training Officer Guide. Each component works in conjunction with the others to provide a framework for conducting personal interpretation in California State Parks. The Basic Interpretation Handbook is the central component of the system which all other elements relate. The handbook can also be used as a stand-alone resource, training guide, or reference tool.

BILS provides a unique approach to training and education in interpretation by incorporating nationally accepted theories, standards, and practices with specific California State Parks guidelines and requirements. The result is an instructional system geared toward students, practitioners, trainers, evaluators, and supervisors of interpretation in California State Parks. For those beginning their discovery of interpretation, it provides the history, theories, and basic skills in the art and science of interpretation. For the more experienced practitioners, the Basic Interpretation Handbook provides an in-depth look at improving message formation and a critical examination of evaluation methods and approaches. It also generates discussion of the needs, values, and goals of the profession itself. For managers, administrators, supervisors, and instructors, the BILS serves as a useful reference tool, resource guide, and benchmark for continuing the growth and development of the discipline of interpretation.

Module 1 provides an overview of interpretation. It begins with a brief review of some of the significant people, places, events, and organizations that have influenced the practice of interpretation. It ends with a brief synopsis of the definitions of interpretation and the various types of interpretive services provided in California State Parks. *Module 2—Purpose and Value* provides an in-depth review of the purpose and values of interpretation. It focuses on how interpretation works to connect visitors to the resource and to accomplish management goals and objectives. The basic communication process is the topic of *Module 3—Communication*. The steps of the communication process are examined, and techniques for improving communication effectiveness are reviewed. Once the principles and theories of interpretation are examined, *Module 4—Planning* expands on this basic understanding and provides an overview of the actual planning process for conducting programs.

Module 4—Planning begins the transition from background information and theory (Modules 1-3) to the art and science of practicing interpretation (Modules 4-11). *Module 5—Programs* covers the essential characteristics of the interpretive program. It forms the underlying structure of all interpretive communication and programs. *Module 6—Talks* centers around creating, designing, and conducting talks, and *Module 7—Walks* focuses on the same for interpretive walks. *Module 8—Campfire* captures the art and design of one of the most popular California State Parks programs—campfires. Techniques and skills for conducting these special programs are reviewed in detail. *Module 9—Kids* shifts gears and addresses the needs, challenges, and approaches for conducting programs with children. One of the most common duties performed by the interpreter is walking through the park and talking with

visitors i.e. roving. *Module 10—Roving* conveys the essence of practicing roving interpretation. *Module 11—Audiovisual* provides information on the various types of audiovisual equipment used by interpreters. Tips and pointers for when, where, and how to use the equipment makes *Module 11—Audiovisual* a useful resource and reference tool. The final component of providing interpretive services is to evaluate the effectiveness of that service. *Module 12—Evaluation* introduces the reader to some useful, easy methods that can be implemented to assess the success of programs. *Module 13—Professionalism* ties the entire Basic Interpretation Handbook together by linking the work of interpreters, instructors, evaluators, field training officers, and supervisors with the discipline of interpretation itself. This module on professionalism reviews the rights and responsibilities of an interpreter to the public, the resource, and the science itself.

Our combined experiences, training, teachers, mentors, supervisors, and colleagues have taught us about the essence of interpretation: making connections. The Basic Interpretation Learning System was made possible through the efforts of many other caring, hard-working, and dedicated individuals. In fact, every student of interpretation and visitor to the parks served as a trainer and guide for us as we wrote this system. Although we hesitate to single out individuals because so many have helped make this project a success, there are a few special people that we would like to thank. Broc Stenman and Steve Waggy served as facilitators of this project. They had a vision and helped us create it. We thank Donna Pozzi and her staff for their support throughout this process. We thank Barbara Dolan-Wilkinson, whose tireless efforts, patience, and talent gave this publication graphic and visual life. In addition, although we had numerous editors, the efforts of Patricia Widner, Chris Beresford, Buzz Webb, and Judy Webb went above and beyond the call of duty. They gave us consistency, taught us more about the English language than we ever wanted to know, encouraged us, and were always available to help.

The following are others who helped us make this project a successful point along the continued development and growth of interpretation and its importance in California State Parks: Karen Beery, Jane Bertke, Laurena Cabanero, Brian Cahill, Joanie Cahill, Wes Chapin, Carol Cullens, Michelle Edwards, James Fitzpatrick, Dave Gould, Michael Green, Elizabeth Hammack, Mary Helmich, Ginger Henry, Wil Jorae, Summer Kincaid, John Kolb, Tom Lindberg, Jim Long, Pat McLatchey, John Mott, Donna Pozzi, Laura Reimche, Jenan Saunders, Broc Stenman, John Werminski, and Jonathan Williams.

Finally, we thank our partners, Alan Wilkinson and Carolyn Ward, who endured the grueling hours, lengthy phone calls, meetings, and seemly endless revisions. Their input and patience is much appreciated and was critical to the success of the final product.

Interpretation is built and founded upon love and passion. We loved creating and co-writing the Basic Interpretation Learning System, and working together on it was a great pleasure. We hope that it helps you develop the skills and techniques necessary for passing the passion on to others. **Making connections is the essence of interpretation, and we hope this connects with you.**

DEDICATION



WILLIAM PENN MOTT, JR. (1909-1992)

- Superintendent of Parks for the City of Oakland (1942 to 1969)
- General Manager of the East Bay Regional Park District (1962 to 1967)
- Director of California Department of Parks and Recreation (1967 to 1975)
- Founder of California State Parks Foundation (1975)
- Director of National Park Service (1985 to 1989)

Americans hold the park ranger in highest regard, and value and look forward to interpretive programs whenever they visit a national park. This relationship between interpreter and visitor, in turn, generates broad support for parks throughout the nation.

William Penn Mott, Jr.

William Penn Mott, Jr. was a visionary. We know this from his work, his words, and how others remember him.

Bill Mott always understood that people preserve those places and things that they love and understand. He also recognized long ago that the keys to understanding are education and communication, two endeavors in which he always excelled. Without his keen ability to communicate the necessity for preserving parks and open space, our natural estate would be infinitely reduced.

Lamar Alexander, 1992

Mott's Principles of Leadership

- Be visionary: guide today's decisions by tomorrow's reality.
- Think creatively: dare to try new and controversial ideas.
- Be assertive: market and sell a quality product.
- Share the credit: hire good people and let them do their jobs.
- Educate your constituency: trust them to make an informed choice.
- Never give up: hold on to your dreams until they come true.

Adapted from *Prophet of the Parks: The Story of William Penn Mott, Jr.* Mary Ellen Butler, 1999

MODULE 1
INTRODUCTION



Through interpretive and educational programs, the public gains appreciation and insight into California's natural and cultural riches. Through leadership and example, the Department will mentor practices to sustain these riches into the future.

MODULE 1

INTRODUCTION

INTERPRETATION: WHAT IS IT?

Each year, 70 to 80 million people visit California's state parks. (That's more than Southern California's Disneyland, Sea World, and Universal Studios, combined.) Visitors travel to these precious places seeking various recreational experiences. Interpretation is used in many forms by park staff and volunteers to communicate with these visitors. Used correctly, interpretation functions as the preferred management tool to help increase the visitors' enjoyment and protect the park resources.

■ ■ ■

In this module we'll focus on the definition of interpretation. Interpretation is driven by a philosophy that charges interpreters to help audiences care **about** park resources so they might support the care **for** park resources. Interpretation establishes the value of preserving park resources by helping audiences discover the meanings and significance associated with those resources. (Foundations of Interpretation, National Park Service, 2007). This philosophy will be further explored in *Module 2—Purpose and Value*.

*In the end, we will
conserve only what we
love. We will love only
what we understand.
We will understand only
what we are taught.*

Baba Dioum

■ ■ ■

Although there are many definitions of interpretation, they all center on the idea of translating information from the scientist, the historian, and the manager to the visitor. Over time, how interpretation has been defined and delivered has changed and evolved. *Module 1—Introduction* summarizes the historical development of interpretation, presents some of the currently accepted definitions of interpretation, and reviews the interpretive services provided by California State Parks. *Module 1—Introduction* answers the question, "**Interpretation: What is it?**"

1.1 HISTORY OF INTERPRETATION

When reviewing the history of the profession of interpretation, certain names such as Enos Mills, John Muir, and Freeman Tilden consistently appear. The State of California has also played a key role in the development of the discipline. Interpretation began as a private business and was soon adopted by public agencies and organizations. As the country and its people changed and evolved, so has the discipline of interpretation.

THE PEOPLE

Enos Mills (1870-1922)



Enos Mills is considered one of the founders of the interpretive profession. He started interpreting as a “nature guide” in 1889, leading trips to Long’s Peak, in what later became Rocky Mountain National Park.

Mills had an insatiable thirst for knowledge about the Rockies and believed a nature guide must “have a wide range of knowledge and to be capable of tactfully imparting this directly and indirectly” (Mills, 1920, p. 110). During the span of his career, Mills led over 250 groups to the summit of Long’s Peak, encouraging their connection to the resources he loved so dearly. Mills was one of the first to identify the relationship between what visitors learn about a resource and how much they care for it, and want to protect it.

He influenced the evolution of park protection, started one of the first programs in the country to train interpreters, and authored more than 15 books about the art and science of interpreting. His book, *Adventures of a Nature Guide*, written in 1920, paints a wonderful historical picture of interpretation early in its professional development. “This new occupation is likely to be far-reaching in its influences; it is inspirational and educational. Anyone who has a vacation or an outing in contact with nature will have from the great outdoors its higher values as well as a livelier enjoyment if accompanied by a nature guide” (Mills, 1920, p. 154). Mills’ thoughts and observations regarding the profession form the foundation of today’s interpretive theory and practice.

■ ■ ■

I developed nature guiding, that is, helping people to become happily acquainted with the life and wonders of wild nature.

Enos Mills

■ ■ ■

John Muir (1838-1914)



Although John Muir's role in the development of interpretation is less obvious than Enos Mills' is, it is no less important. John Muir has been credited with being the first to use the term "interpret" in reference to nature.

Muir's work embodied the essence of interpretation. He used his communications of the natural world to encourage people to protect and preserve the topics of his stories. Muir was seminal in the establishment of Yosemite as a national park and was the founder of the Sierra Club. Through his writings and presentations, Muir interpreted much of the West to the nation.

■ ■ ■

I'll interpret the rocks, learn the language of the flood, storm and avalanche. I'll acquaint myself with the glaciers and wild gardens, and get as near the heart of the world as I can.

John Muir

■ ■ ■

Freeman Tilden (1883-1980)



Freeman Tilden's influence and impact on the field of interpretation is one of the most strongly felt today. Many consider him to be the "father" of modern interpretation. Unlike Mills and Muir, he was not a naturalist nor an interpreter, but a writer and a reporter. He was hired by the National Park Service to tour the parks, observe all he could, and write about the interpretive services provided. His book, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, written in 1957, is one of the most widely accepted reviews of the philosophy of interpretation. Tilden wrote many other books and continued his work for over 20 years. No modern literary work has had the same impact on the field of interpretation as *Interpreting Our Heritage*.

TILDEN'S SIX PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

- Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.
- Information, as such, is not interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based on information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.
- Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical or architectural. Any art is in some degree teachable.
- The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.
- Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part, and must address itself to the whole man rather than any phase.
- Interpretation addressed to children (say, up to the age of 12) should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best it will require a separate program.

Galen Clark (1814-1910)



Galen Clark is often overlooked but is one of the most important people in California's history of interpretation. A law signed by Abraham Lincoln in 1864 created the first state park in the country in Yosemite Valley. In 1866, more than 20 years before Mills led his first trip up Long's Peak, Galen Clark became the first formally appointed, paid park ranger in the country (Lynch, 1996). Called the "Guardian of Yosemite," Clark became both protector and educator.

Clark's primary directive, from the eight-member Commission appointed to manage the park, was to protect the park. Over the years, Clark led hundreds of visitors, including John Muir, through the wilds of Yosemite. After several excursions with Clark, Muir said, "His kindness to all Yosemite visitors and mountaineers was marvelously constant and uniform" (Muir, 1912, p. 189). In fact, Clark "began the proud tradition of protection and care of parks, combined with helpful service to the visiting public" (Lynch, 1996, p. 13). In 1880, when Clark was no longer the official "Guardian" of Yosemite, he continued to lead groups through the valley operating what he termed a "Tourist Coach." Clark was arguably then both the first officially appointed, paid interpreter and the first one practicing the profession as a private citizen.

FEDERAL AGENCIES

Traditionally born out of the National Park Service, interpretation, in one form or another, is used by all resource-management agencies today. Although it is used in a number of capacities, the primary function of interpretation has always been as a management tool.

National Park Service (NPS)

California not only had the first paid “interpreter” in any state, it was also home to the first paid interpreter for the National Park Service. In 1920, more than 40 years after Clark served as the first paid “Guardian of Yosemite,” the NPS hired its first interpreters for Yosemite.



In 1919, Stephen Mather, the first director of the newly established NPS, was traveling in the Tahoe area when he saw a captivated crowd gathered around Loye Miller at Fallen Leaf Lodge. Miller was a paleo-ornithologist and educated audiences with his entertaining presentations about birds. Mather, charged with protecting the national parks, recognized that this was exactly what he was seeking “in order to counteract those persons who would selfishly destroy park values” (Sharpe, 1976, p. 31). After several months, he succeeded in convincing those involved at Tahoe to come to Yosemite. Mather was so sure that nature guiding was essential to the successful management of the parks that he personally financed the early work in Yosemite for several years. The NPS continues to be the leader in providing interpretive services.

United States Forest Service (USFS)

The United States Forest Service manages some of the largest areas of public land in the United States—155 national forests and over 100 National Scenic Byways across the country. The agency began to develop its own version of interpretive services when it created the Branch of Visitor Information Services in 1961. One of the primary reasons for its establishment was to help explain to the public the complex policies set forth in the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act of 1960. The USFS was shifting its focus for the management of the public’s resources. It was clear that the public needed to be educated about the changes.



Since formally offering the first interpretive services in 1961, USFS has had a tumultuous history of providing interpretation to the public. In 1980, USFS changed the name of its interpretive program from Visitor Information Services to Interpretive Services—the focus being to orient, inform, and interpret to visitors.

USFS is currently in the process of developing an Interpretive Services Strategy. One of the primary issues with interpretation for USFS is that employees are asked to perform many duties. Those conducting interpretation are only focusing about 20-50% of their time on interpretation (Prell, 2002). Most of the interpretation conducted by this federal agency is done in writing, through signs and brochures, and reaches millions of visitors annually. For the Pacific Southwest Region of the USFS, Sharon Prell, Recreation Extension Agent, said that they “strive to meet the growing demands of people who seek learning-based activities and want more than just information” (Prell, 2002).

United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service also began to provide interpretive services in response to management concerns. Early in its inception, the primary visiting public was composed of hunters and fishermen who, through the purchase of licenses and equipment, provided much of the funding for the agency. The 1980s saw a decline in the numbers of people fishing and hunting regularly and an increase in a new population of users. These “non-consumptive” users were not interested in shooting the wildlife with a gun, but with a camera. Terms such as “watchable wildlife” surfaced and new management issues occurred. In fact, one of the most popular recreation activities today is bird watching, and “birders” flock to lands managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Through employees and contractors, the USFWS provides interpretive services to millions of visitors across the country.



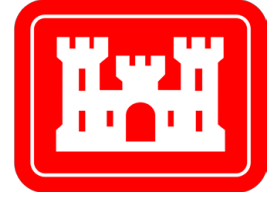
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

The Bureau of Land Management, much like the USFWS, has a relatively young history in interpretation. With the largest public land base in the country, the BLM has great potential for increasing its interpretive efforts. BLM lands offer opportunities for energy development, mining, grazing, and a host of other uses. Like the USFS, the BLM began offering interpretive services in response to a legislated change in management mandate. In 1976, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act was passed, requiring that the BLM manage its land for multiple uses, including recreation. Increased use combined with fragile arid environments forced the agency to provide more interpretive services in an effort to protect resources and provide for the mandated multiple uses. Today, several BLM sites around the country, such as Coos Bay in Oregon and the Lost Coast in California, are increasing interpretive services offered to the public.



United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

The United States Army Corps of Engineers provides the greatest number of water-based recreation opportunities in the country. Although the agency began in 1936, it did not start providing recreation services until the mid-1940s. In the early 1980s, the USACE began to establish a Visitor Perception and Interpretive Services Program. The goal of the program is to educate and enlighten the public regarding the purpose and concept of the USACE, the operation of their water projects, and the historical and natural features of the area. In addition to providing many of the same interpretive services as the other federal agencies, the USACE also provides many unique opportunities in interpretation—such as self-guided water trails and interpreter-led boat tours. Although today there are many water-based interpretive opportunities provided by other organizations and agencies, the USACE was one of the first to provide such services for the public. The USACE has also conducted and funded research to demonstrate the effectiveness of interpretation in meeting agency goals and objectives.



STATE AGENCIES

California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)

California State Parks (CSP)



In 1927, a comprehensive plan was signed into law creating California's state park system. With help from the Save the Redwoods League and individuals such as Frederick Law Olmstead, Newton B. Drury, and John D. Rockefeller, the state park system grew rapidly. Newton Drury oversaw the evolution of the organization as Chief of California's Division of Beaches and Parks. Throughout the history of the organization, there have been several different divisions, including the Division of Beaches and Parks, the Division of Recreation, and the Division of Small Craft Harbors. In 1961, these various divisions merged into the Division of Beaches and Parks. In 1967, William Penn Mott, Jr. became the director and transformed the Division of Beaches and Parks into the current California State Parks. Mott was one of the most influential leaders in California State Parks and one of the most ardent supporters of the role of interpretation in the parks.

The Mission of California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration, and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

The California Department of Parks and Recreation, commonly known as California State Parks (CSP), manages parks that encompass over one third of California's coastline. More than 2,500 state park employees and 15,000 volunteers help maintain and protect some of California's most pristine, scenic and fragile areas as well as valuable cultural resources. California's state parks are not only visited by the public, but are valued by them as well. In 2000, California voters passed the largest state park bond (\$2.1 billion) in the nation's history. In 2002 voters approved a second, even larger, park bond (\$2.6 billion). Within CSP, interpretation plays a large role. In the 2003-4 fiscal year, 3.15 million visitors participated in guided walks, talks, tours and demonstrations. In addition, more than over one-half million children attended our formal interpretive programs that year.

Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW)

Department of Fish and Wildlife is another state agency that provides interpretive and educational services for the public. The agency was an early player in interpretation by sponsoring lectures and tours throughout the state. DFW is charged with managing California's fish, wildlife, and plant resources and the habitats on which they depend. According to the mission of the agency, these resources should be protected for their "ecological values and for their use and enjoyment by the public."

Beginning in the 1850s, DFW enacted laws to protect and manage the state's wildlife. In 1914, DFW created the Bureau of Education, Publicity and Research because of the clear need to develop these areas. In 1984, DFW's Conservation Education implemented Project Wild, and later added Aquatic Wild. These popular programs provide free wildlife education throughout the state. Other popular outreach efforts, spearheaded by DFW interpreters, include the Hunter Education and the Urban Fishing Programs.



Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

CAL FIRE has been in existence since 1905, although it has changed significantly through the years. This agency exists to serve and safeguard the people and protect the property and resources of California. Interpretive efforts are geared mainly towards fire prevention and preparation for natural catastrophes like wildfire and floods.



CAL FIRE's Safety Education programs are spread statewide and come in the form of school group programs, fair exhibits, posters, flyers and thousands of other printed materials, radio and television spots, community meetings, one-on-one contacts and websites. In addition to fire safety and prevention, CAL FIRE works to help the public better understand resource conservation and forestry. CAL FIRE operates eight Demonstration State Forests.

Department of Water Resources (DWR)

The Department of Water Resources is a fourth state agency that provides interpretive services in California. DWR was created in 1956 by the California State Legislature to plan and guide the development of the state's water resources. With increasing demands on water resources and public conflict over the use of those resources, DWR created the Office of Public Information and Communications in 1987. Now known as the Office of Water Education, its primary function is to conduct outreach and education for the public regarding the state's water resources. School publications, public tours, and exhibits are the most common outreach tools used by the DWR. Many state recreation areas are operated in cooperation with the DWR.



LOCAL AGENCIES

Many communities, cities, special districts, and counties have museums, parks, cultural sites, recreational facilities, and zoos. They are managed by local government agencies and nonprofit organizations. Each varies greatly in their approach to interpretation. Some, like the East Bay Regional Park District and the Oakland Museums of California, are well established and have developed extensive facilities and programs, reaching thousands of visitors each year. These organizations have the ability to adapt and transform themselves, expanding their outreach to the perceived needs of their respective communities. They have adopted a regional or statewide approach to interpretation and offer comprehensive training for their staff and volunteers, as well as for individuals from other agencies. Other organizations have taken more modest approaches, but in most cities and counties there is at least one organization that is focused on the preservation and interpretation of the area's natural or cultural history.

PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that provide interpretive services and opportunities can be classified into two groups, for-profit and nonprofit.

FOR-PROFIT

For-profit organizations are similar to those that gave rise to the profession of interpretation. For example, the early work of Enos Mills and Loye Miller was conducted for a fee. Today, this for-profit work has transformed from a few individuals conducting programs for a minimal fee and maybe food and lodging, to a multimillion-dollar-a-year business.

Ecotourism is one of the fastest growing areas in recreation (Doyle, 1999) and interpreters are especially in demand. The Ecotourism model leads to conservation of exotic, pristine, or threatened resources by involving local communities in sustainable activities—including promoting and providing opportunities for responsible tourism.

Interpretation is also done for profit by tour companies, cruise lines, and travel organizations. These groups hire interpreters to help visitors have meaningful and enjoyable experiences with the resources they are visiting, thus ensuring customer satisfaction and return business. Many interpreters also make their livings providing contractual services and training for outfitters and guides.

NONPROFIT

There are thousands of nonprofit organizations throughout the country that provide interpretive services to the public. Organizations such as the California State Parks Foundation, National Audubon Society, the Nature Conservancy, and the National Parks and Conservation Association are a few of the better known nonprofit organizations.

In California State Parks, there are more than 85 nonprofit cooperating associations that assist with fundraising to support interpretive efforts. Some of the most visible services provided by cooperating associations in California State Parks are the sales and services provided in visitor centers and bookstores. Cooperating associations began in California in 1972, and they collectively contribute more than 10 million dollars per year to fund critical staff positions, exhibits, visitor center developments, junior ranger and nature walk programs, living history demonstrations, special events and many other exciting projects.

The typical California State Parks cooperating organization usually consists of a Board of Directors, volunteers, and, in some associations, paid staff. A state park employee serves as Cooperating Association Liaison (CAL), the conduit between the Board of Directors and California State Parks.

■ ■ ■

Nature is not so much her own ever-sweet interpreter, as the mere supplier of that cunning alphabet, whereby selecting and combining as he pleases, each man reads his own peculiar lesson according to his own peculiar mind and mood.

Herman Melville

■ ■ ■

SIGNIFICANT DATES IN INTERPRETIVE HISTORY

- 1864** Yosemite Valley declared first state park in the nation
- 1866** Galen Clark appointed “Guardian” of Yosemite
- 1872** First national park established—Yellowstone
- 1889** Enos Mills began leading trips as a “nature guide”
- 1891** Forest Reserve Act created National Forest System
- 1897** Forest Management Act establishes reserves
- 1914** California Department of Fish and Game—Bureau of Education, Publications and Resources established
- 1916** National Park Service Act passed
- 1918** Save the Redwoods League established
- 1920** Steven T. Mather hired as first paid “interpreter” in the national parks
- 1927** California State Park System created
- 1938** First National Park Service Jr. Naturalist Programs, Yosemite
- 1956** California Dept. of Water Resources established
- 1957** Freeman Tilden published *Interpreting Our Heritage*
- 1960** Multiple Use-Sustained Yield act passed
- 1961** US Forest Service—Visitor Information Services branch established
- 1964** Wilderness Act passed
- 1967** William Penn Mott, Jr. became director of California State Parks
- 1972** First California State Parks cooperating associations established
- 1973** California State Parks—Junior Ranger Program established statewide.
The Center for Continuous Learning welcomed Ranger Trainee Group J and K as the first groups to attend training in the Department’s new training center at Asilomar
- 1974** The Center for Continuous Learning renamed the William Penn Mott, Jr. Training Center
- 1976** Federal Land Policy and Management Act established
- 1980** U.S. Army Corps of Engineers established Visitor Perception and Interpretive Services Program
- 1984** California Dept. of Fish and Game—Project Wild and Aquatic Wild established
- 1987** California DWR Office of Public Information and Communication established
- 1988** National Association for Interpretation established
- 1995** NPS establishes professional standards for its agency’s interpreters.
- 2005** Education and the Environment curriculum legislation for California’s K-12 students.

1.2 INTERPRETATION DEFINED

There are many definitions of interpretation. In fact, Tilden said good interpreters will come up with their own definitions. Tell anyone outside of the discipline that you are an interpreter and they will ask what language you speak. In a way, they are right in their understanding of the word. To interpret is to translate the language of the scientist, the voices of the past, and the significance of the places to create meanings and connections with the people of the present. Interpreters connect people with their cultural and natural heritage in order to promote stewardship of resources. They communicate the science of the natural world, the stories of the cultural world, and the excitement of the recreational world to an audience in a manner that is provoking and interesting, and leaves the audience wanting to discover more.

Interpretation is an artful form of communication that stresses ideas and relationships, not simply isolated facts and figures. This is best achieved through the use of hands-on approaches, firsthand experiences, or the use of physical objects.

The National Association for Interpretation (NAI) is an international organization that promotes leadership and excellence in the interpretive profession. NAI defines interpretation as “a mission-based communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the meanings inherent in the resource.” Here are some other popular definitions.



1.3 TYPES OF INTERPRETATION

There are two basic types of interpretive services provided in California's state parks, personal and nonpersonal. Personal interpretation involves some type of physical interaction with the visitor, such as leading visitors through the park. Nonpersonal interpretive services, such as brochures, exhibits and websites, are used by visitors without the presence of staff.

A primary characteristic that distinguishes nonpersonal services from personal services is that nonpersonal interpretation is nonlinear. In other words, the visitor controls the order of information received. For example, when visitors pick up a brochure, they can read whatever parts may interest them. Personal interpretive services, on the other hand, are linear with the interpreter controlling the order of information. There are positive and negative aspects to each approach. The following section briefly describes each approach and the accompanying qualities and characteristics associated with its use.

NONPERSONAL

Nonpersonal interpretation typically includes any written, audio, or visual messages provided for visitors without the use of direct personal contact with visitors. They may be designed to orient visitors, provide information or educate. Nonpersonal interpretation may be delivered in a variety of ways (see Table 1.1).



Interpretive panels are nonpersonal services.

Table 1.1

COMMON NONPERSONAL INTERPRETIVE SERVICES

- **Brochures/pamphlets/maps**—Publications that convey information, orientation, or educational messages. These are the most common form of nonpersonal services used in California State Parks.
- **Signs**—Free-standing, affixed messages provided at specific locations. Signs are usually two-dimensional, include graphics, may be interactive, and are made of numerous material types.
- **Exhibits**—Three-dimensional, object, or artifact-based displays. Exhibits are often interactive and can include written, visual, kinesthetic, and auditory methods of communication.
- **Wayside exhibits**—The term used to describe a sign or exhibit that is located along a road or trail.
- **Self-guided trails**—A trail that is interpreted through the use of brochures, signs, podcasts, cell phone tours and/or media. An interpretive self-guided trail may be established along a trail, road, underwater, or even in the sky.
- **Newspapers**—Park information on newsprint, usually created annually or seasonally for the park or the region. These often includes the park rules, regulations, and general information.
- **Websites**—The park's presence on the web is often the first place visitors look for information. Sites may present maps, guides, podcasts, school group information, trip planning, virtual tours and exhibits, written guides/brochures, seasonal updates and rules and regulations. Visitors download sections at will and follow links to related sites.
- **Audiovisual**—Videos are usually used as the introduction/welcome to the park and shown in visitor or information centers. They may be available as souvenirs and promotional tools to increase visitor use.
- **Computer Kiosk**—Interactive method for visitors to receive specific information. Often found in visitor centers and have touch screen, keypad, mouse and monitors.
- **Radio transmissions**—Low-frequency radio transmissions that reach visitors' vehicular radios. Roadside signs tell visitors how to tune in.

Nonpersonal interpretation offers many advantages. It is often less expensive than personal contact. It allows one skilled interpreter to reach countless numbers of visitors in an indirect way. It gives visitors freedom to choose what is of most interest to them and to choose the time that suits them for their interpretive experiences. It can be presented in a variety of languages and formats.

The nonlinear nature of nonpersonal communication may result in several negative characteristics. Because visitors can pick and choose what they select, they may not be receiving the primary message intended by management. In addition, there is no way of knowing what messages, if any, are received.

Another disadvantage is that the creation of quality, nonpersonal interpretive services may require expertise and equipment not readily available at individual park units. A great deal of thought and planning should go into the creation, placement, and selection of nonpersonal interpretive services. Due to the high front-end cost, nonpersonal interpretive services like wayside panels may be used for years. Too many or inappropriately placed nonpersonal interpretive services can result in a very negative image for the agency. For example, several signs along a scenic trail overlooking the ocean may only serve to distract from the natural beauty of the surroundings. Care and attention should be used to ensure that nonpersonal interpretation is not inaccurate, out-of-date, vandalized, or damaged.

PERSONAL

Personal interpretive services involve direct, face-to-face contact with the visitor. Personal services include walks, talks, tours, demonstrations, children's programs, roving, campfire programs, and even providing information at the front desk. As discussed above, the primary characteristic—aside from contact with an individual that distinguishes personal services from nonpersonal—is that personal interpretation is given in a linear fashion. The interpreter generally controls the order of the information presented to the public.

There are many benefits to providing personal interpretive services; the primary one is that the interpreter has more control over which message the visitor walks away remembering. In addition, interpreters have the opportunity to interact with visitors and answer questions or clear up any misunderstandings. Many visitors like



knowing that a real person is available. In this day and age of computers, voicemail and automated services everywhere, personal experiences with people can be very rewarding and satisfying. Personal contact with visitors also helps park managers become aware of visitors problems and concerns before the issues become critical.

The term “authenticity” has also been used to distinguish personal from nonpersonal services (Knudson, Cable, and Beck, 1995). An interpreter can physically engage visitors in a way that creates an authentic experience with the park resources. Personal interpretation is a powerful approach because the interpreter can continually adapt to each audience. Skilled interpreters will listen and learn about the members of their audiences and tailor each program to their needs and interests.

There are negative aspects to providing personal services. First and foremost is the high cost per person contacted for interpreter-led programs. On average, most estimates conclude that only 20 percent of visitors attend interpreter-led programs (Knudson, Cable, and Beck 1995). In addition, each interpreter can only be in one place at a time thus reducing both the overall visibility and the number of visitors contacted throughout the resource. Interpreter-led programs may also reduce visitors’ feelings of freedom and discovery. As with nonpersonal services, poor training, preparation, and presentation can leave a negative impression on visitors.

Given the importance of every contact, providing quality interpretation helps fulfill the mission of California State Parks. This handbook will review the theories, techniques, and skills necessary for providing effective personal interpretation.

WHAT’S AHEAD?

As we have seen, there are many types of interpretation, each with its own characteristics. The following modules will explain how to conduct several types of interpretive programs. However, before we can answer the question, “**How do we do it?**” we should ask ourselves, “**Why do we do it?**” Now that we have an understanding of what interpretation is, we can turn to *Module 2—Purpose and Values*—to discover why we should conduct interpretation in California’s state parks.

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Module 1
INTRODUCTION

SELF ASSESSMENT

Answer each question in the section below before reviewing the material in *Module 1—Introduction*. The answers are not provided. Compare your answers with your colleagues and as you read *Module 1—Introduction*. Items from the self assessment may be reviewed and discussed in class.

- 1) Historically, what was the primary function of interpretive services?

- 2) Who was the first official paid park ranger in the country?

- a) Galen Clark
- b) Enos Mills
- c) Freeman Tilden
- d) John Muir

- 3) California State Parks was created in which year?

- a) 1957
- b) 1919
- c) 1916
- d) 1927

- 4) Which federal agency provides the most interpretive services for the public?
 - a) United States Forest Service
 - b) National Park Service
 - c) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 - d) Bureau of Land Management
 - e) U. S. Army Corps of Engineers

5) In your own words, what is the mission of California State Parks? How does interpretation help fulfill this mission?

6) Name two state agencies, other than California State Parks, that provide interpretive services in California.

1. _____

2. _____

7) What is interpretation?

8) Name three forms of nonpersonal interpretive services provided in California State Parks.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

9) Name three benefits of providing personal interpretive services as opposed to nonpersonal services.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Now that you have completed the self assessment questions, review the material in *Module 1—Introduction* to confirm your answers. After reading the module, move on to the workbook learning activities, which will assist you in developing your skills.

WORKBOOK LEARNING ACTIVITIES

To help you review and apply the material covered in *Module 1—Introduction*, a selection of review questions and/or activities is provided. Again, no answers are included. Use the material from the module, outside sources, and your colleagues to help you complete the activities and answer the questions. There may be more than one right answer. Use the questions and activities to generate discussion about the material. Be prepared to discuss, perform, or demonstrate your answers in class.

- 1) If interpretation started as a management tool, what do you think is the function of interpretation in California State Parks today?

- 2) Are personal or nonpersonal interpretive services more effective? Why?

- 3) What is the difference between interpretation and information? Explain.

- 4) Identify one event and one person that have shaped interpretive services in California State Parks and describe their impact.

2) Write a brief summary or list of the types of interpretive services currently provided in your park.

3) What other organizations provide interpretive services in your park area?

- 4) Is there a nonprofit cooperating association affiliated with your park? If so, what is its name and its mission, and what role does it play in your park?

MODULE 2
PURPOSE AND VALUE



Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul.

John Muir

MODULE 2

PURPOSE AND VALUE

INTERPRETATION: WHY DO WE DO IT?

Now that you have an understanding of what interpretation is, the next immediate question is, “Why do we do it?” First and foremost, we must remember that is the mandate of our department. It is part of our jobs, as legally commanded through the public resources code.

The department shall administer, protect, develop and interpret the property under its jurisdiction for the use and enjoyment of the public.

Public Resources Code 5003

As mentioned in *Module 1—Introduction*, interpretation creates a bridge between a park’s visitors and its resources. ***Through interpretation, we help visitors find the meanings in park’s resources that have relevance and importance to them. This connection is the seed of stewardship*** (NPS 2003).

California State Parks encourages staff and volunteers to interpret to park visitors because our state’s most valued natural and cultural resources are at risk of being damaged or destroyed, and the challenge to protect them seems to become more difficult with each generation. World-wide, multiple scientific and cultural experts and groups are describing a catastrophic loss of the world’s heritage (defined by UNESCO’s World Heritage Center to refer to all valued natural and cultural resources.)

Because our department’s mission is **“to preserve the state’s extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation,”** interpretation has always been an important tool. From its beginnings, interpretation has facilitated multiple management goals. Whether that goal was to garner public support, to control visitor behavior, or to protect the resource, it was clear that interpretive efforts were meaningful to management and driven by the benefits produced. When visitors “care” about your resource, they are less likely to damage it.

■ ■ ■

Not the least of the fruits of adequate interpretation is the certainty that it leads directly toward the very preservation of the treasure itself... Indeed such a result may be the most important end of our interpretation, for what we cannot protect, we are destined to lose.

Freeman Tilden

■ ■ ■

The primary interpretive policy of the Department of Parks and Recreation is to heighten and increase public understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of the natural, cultural, historic and recreational values of California as represented in the State Park System; to increase public understanding and concern for people's place in their environment, and thereby provide an increased desire to protect and enjoy the natural and cultural heritage of this state.

California State Parks and Recreation Commission Statements of Policy

2.1 CONNECTING THE VISITOR TO THE RESOURCE

Connecting visitors to the resource has been a longtime goal of California State Parks. The Department Operations Manual (2010) section 0900 states,

From the Department's standpoint, interpretation and education are valuable because they can help achieve several worthwhile ends. They can reduce resource management problems through better-informed visitor use. They can improve public safety. They can promote a sense of pride in the richness and diversity of California's natural and cultural heritage. Finally, they can convey important messages of interrelatedness and stewardship to park visitors...and, through outreach programs, they can speak to the larger community beyond.

Still, interpretation's best benefits are reserved not for any organization, but for the individual. Through interpretation, the receptive person will see seemingly ordinary objects, events, and places come alive with meaning. A broader view of scenic and historic landscapes will come to light, and one's place within them will be better understood. Through an attentive, systematic, and skillfully presented approach, interpretation can have an impact that is powerful and lasting.

Connections involve moments of intellectual and emotional revelation: the “aha” or “wow” moments. Interpreters can promote them by connecting the tangible resources of their parks (things like trees, fossils, missions, tide pools) to the concepts and ideas they represent. These concepts and ideas are often described as **intangible resources or intangible meanings**. Intangible meanings are often abstract rather than concrete. They include processes, relationships, ideas, feelings, values, and beliefs. In your park, they may include things like: **life; death; the span of time; freedom; faith; wealth; home; loss; adventure**.

For example, a coast redwood tree is just a tangible thing, a tree. Why should your visitor care? The interpreter helps build the bridge to understanding. Perhaps they should care because coast redwoods:

- *have been on earth for nearly two thousand years. (span of time, life, death)*
- *are the tallest trees on earth. (extremes, amazement)*
- *are home to dozens of species of plants and animals. (home, survival)*
- *are so big you can drive through them. (fun, awe-inspiring)*
- *now cover only 5% of their original acreage on Earth, 82% of which is not protected. (threats, loss, danger, greed, wealth)*

- *were made into canoes and homes by the Native People. (survival, home, safety, family)*
- *families have lived in their hollowed-out trunks. (family, home, adventure, safety)*

These are all intangible meanings. The interpreter can help the audience see the meanings beyond a single tree. Of course, you can't put all that information and all those meanings into one talk on redwoods, or you'd give your audience a collective headache. The interpreter has to pick and choose his facts and stories, his tangible resources and intangible meanings—based on his knowledge of the park, his knowledge of the audience, and his ability to apply interpretive techniques. More about the audience will be covered in *Module 3—Communication*, and throughout this course, you will be exposed to interpretive techniques that have been used successfully by rangers, lifeguards, interpretive specialists and skilled volunteers throughout our parks.



Why should your visitor care about redwood trees?

Why is facilitating these connections the job of a state park ranger?

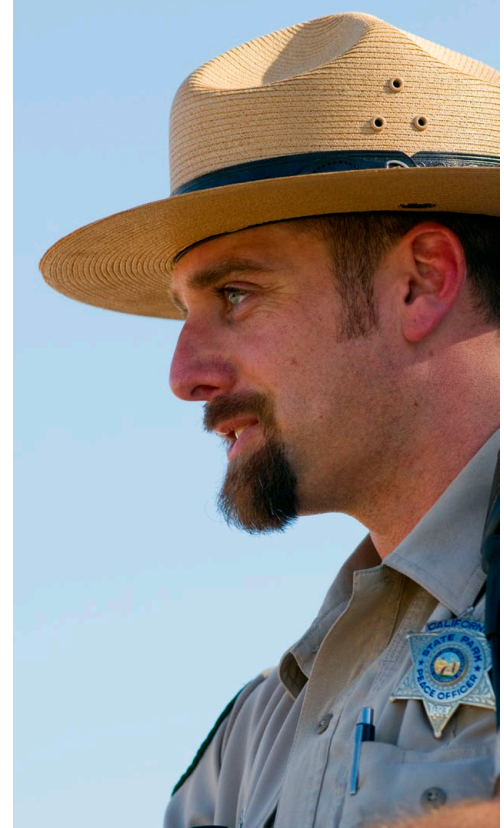
We know that **one of the primary benefits of interpreting the resource is visitor and resource protection.**

Visitors are more likely to protect the resource and adhere to rules and regulations if they understand the resource-based reason for the rule. For example, knowing how fragile the tide pool animals are may result in fewer people taking animals from the tide pools. An understanding of how important it is for an archaeologist to examine artifacts in place may lead to visitors leaving arrowheads or potsherds in place rather than collecting them. Research shows us that visitors are more likely to do as requested if the request is connected, not to the management, but to the resource or to visitors (Oliver, Roggenbuck, and Watson, "Education to reduce impacts in the forest campgrounds," 1985; Schwartzkopf,

“Feeding of Golden Mantled Ground Squirrels by park visitors at Crater Lake National Park,” 1984; Wallace, “Law Enforcement and the ‘Authority of the Resource’,” 1990; Widner, “Conflict among hikers and horseback riders in the Mount Rogers High Country of Virginia,” 2000).

A second key benefit from interpreting the natural and cultural resources in your park is that we are providing a public service by helping people understand an often complicated, but vitally important subject matter. As interpreters, we serve as the link between the scientist or historian and the general public. Giving the public information and the opportunity to make a personal connection with your park’s natural resources will lead to their support and protection of those resources. This, in turn, leads to healthier parks, a healthier environment and even a healthier state park system.

We connect the visitor to the resource by developing interpretive programs that address California State Parks in one or more of these four areas: cultural resources, natural resources, recreational resources, and our agency values or management. In all four areas, the interpreter is challenged to go beyond merely teaching facts to revealing meanings that are relevant to the audience.



Interpretation is a valuable tool for generalist park rangers.

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I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

Maya Angelou

■ ■ ■

2.2 KNOWING THE RESOURCE

Whether the star features of your park are natural, cultural, recreational or a combination of the three, you must become an expert on them. A translator (interpreter) who doesn't know both languages isn't of much use to anyone. (NPS Foundations of Interpretation, p. 11). Before you can interpret anything, you'll need to identify the significant resources in your park. Why was the park unit established? What makes it special? Why should it be protected? California State Parks calls this the "interpretive significance" of the park.

It takes time to become an expert on a place, in fact, the longer you are in a park, the more you will realize how little you know. Walking the trails, talking with others more familiar with the resource than yourself, using field guides, listening to questions visitors have, researching the current science, reviewing oral histories, exploring the park/local library and experiencing the resource will all assist you in successful interpretation of the natural and cultural resources in your park. Many parks also have a document called an "interpretive plan" or an "interpretive prospectus." This document identifies the most significant resources in a park and outlines strategies for interpreting them. It's a great place to start your research.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Every park and protected area has a cultural history. In many parks, especially places like missions, forts, and historic sites, it is the unit's central feature. As an interpreter, most of the time you will be asked to interpret a culture that is not your own. In addition, **many visitors may be coming to your park to learn about their heritage and history from you.** There are several techniques and strategies to help you succeed in this delicate process.

The first task for an interpreter at a new site is to become familiar with the history of the cultures in and around the park. Be aware of and sensitive to cultural diversity. Remember, the "rightness" of an act or a belief system is determined by the historical context in which it occurred. History is not a fact, but instead an interpretation of the people that recorded it, the time in which it occurred and those who are listening to it today. James Loewen's book, *Lies Across America* (1999) provides an eye-opening view of this theory.

Interpreters may need to talk about sensitive and controversial aspects of culture and cultural history. This must be done carefully, as your comments and actions will be judged by the audience of today. What may not be offensive to one will almost certainly offend

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A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.

Marcus Garvey

■ ■ ■

someone else. **Sensitivity, tact, accuracy, and common courtesy go a long way when dealing with cultural messages.**

There are always many perspectives from which to tell a story. Be sure that you are accurately reflecting the cultures involved and not simply playing into stereotypes. If possible, conduct firsthand research and seek out living members of the culture. When interviewing, remember that this person only reflects one perspective of the culture and not the overall perspective. It is not possible to describe every perspective on a culture, although you may be able to present multiple points of view. Choose each perspective you wish to convey carefully and help your audience understand that it is one of many perspectives.

One of the primary benefits of conducting cultural programs is that it helps create tolerance for others. “If (visitors) never learn to enjoy the diversity of their fellow-citizens’ customs, styles, and attitudes, they may be intolerant of those who are ‘different’ and therefore perceive them as ‘dangerous’” (Knudson, Cable, and Beck, p. 67, 1995). Interpretation provides a wonderfully protected and neutral atmosphere through which visitors can come to know others who are different from themselves. It also provides opportunities for many to discover their own culture and history, which in today’s melting pot society can become lost. Cultural pride and tolerance for cultural diversity are both benefits of providing interpretive programs dealing with culture and cultural history.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Interpreters also connect the visitor to the natural resource through interpretive programs. The typical “ranger” image the visitor has is of an interpreter, whom they believe is an expert, leading them up a trail talking about the park’s plants and animals. Visitors often attend programs seeking knowledge about these resources. “What kind of flower is that?” “What causes the tides?”

Becoming an expert on the nature of your park means spending as much time out in it as possible. Interpreters need an intimate knowledge of the resource that can only be gained by experiencing it firsthand. Make time to hike the trails, listen to the birds, smell the flowers, etc. Then back up your firsthand experience with research that is current, accurate and comprehensive. Finally, identify some of your resource’s intangible meanings. Why is this place special to you? What about it do you find moving, interesting or exciting. These intangibles will be a good place for you to start building the bridges to your audience.

■ ■ ■

We should preserve every scrap of biodiversity as priceless while we learn to use it and come to understand what it means to humanity.

E. O. Wilson

■ ■ ■



Becoming an expert on the nature of your park means spending as much time out in it as possible

historians and long-time volunteers. Learn from them and then look it up, to make sure that the information you've been given is accurate.

Build on your experience-based knowledge by reading a wide variety of sources of written information about your park's resources. Don't rely on the same book that everyone uses. Read that book or article and find three more. Talk to other park staff. The greatest wealth of knowledge about a park is often held by senior rangers, scientists,

RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Yes, you might get paid to take people snorkeling, teach them to kayak or help them catch a fish. Why is this valuable to the state of California? Once again, we return to what we might call the interpreter's mantra: **We want visitors to care about the park so they will help us care for it.** Experiencing a personal connection through recreation can be life-changing and create life-long memories. It helps build families and improves health and well-being.

Recreation can also cause a lot of damage to the resource. It is in CSP's best interest to have park visitors recreate safely and with enough knowledge to avoid unnecessary damage to the park.

MANAGERIAL

The fourth, but not least important area to consider when creating interpretive opportunities for visitors is the managerial elements of the park. **Interpretation can help build public understanding for park resources and park values.** Without public support, park management goals will fail. When the public understands and appreciates a park's values, it gives management the support it needs to succeed. Educate visitors about the agency for which you work, the specific management perspectives of your park, the recreational opportunities available, and any special management considerations. There

are critical issues in every park that require special attention and management: the snowy plover, sudden oak death, off-road vehicle management, etc.

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We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.

Aldo Leopold

■ ■ ■

Try to develop a thorough knowledge of not only the rules and regulations, but why they are in place, and what is the overall management paradigm for the rule. Talk with your supervisor, resource specialists, and managers about the overall messages they would like the public to take home with them regarding the park. Remember, the public does not often share the same perspectives regarding the resource and the management of the resource as does the management. Interpretive programs allow you to bridge those gaps and build a constituency.

There are many benefits to providing interpretive messages regarding the management of the resource and we'll discuss them in more detail later in this module. In addition, interpreters must consider the many different motives that bring visitors to the programs. A successful park-wide interpretive effort will include a variety of messages, programs, and communication techniques.



Without public support, park management goals will fail.

2.3 INSPIRATION

Ideally, our interpretive programs connect visitors to the resource by inspiring them. Many of the philosophies of interpretation are written with words such as passion, spiritual whole, and inspiration. Great interpretation inspires visitors to want to explore further, to learn more on their own, and to care about a place or story. **Use inspiration and provocation to turn casual visitors into explorers and stewards.**

Because this type of connection is often an emotional one, it is one of the most powerful ways to connect a visitor to the resource. It is also the type of connection most likely to result in a behavioral change. Tilden spoke of this ability of interpretation to reach and change people when he said it occurs, "...not with the mere recitation of facts. Not with the names of things, but by exposing the soul of things—those truths that lie behind what you are showing your visitor. Nor yet by sermonizing; nor yet by lecturing; not by instruction but by provocation." (Tilden, 1977, p. 38).

■ ■ ■
Do not try to satisfy your vanity by teaching a great many things. Awaken people's curiosity. It is enough to open minds; do not overload them. Put there just a spark. If there is some good flammable stuff, it will catch fire.

Anatole France

■ ■ ■

IS IT EDUCATION OR INTERPRETATION?

Interpretation and education are similar but have different approaches and strive for slightly different outcomes. Although interpreters want the public to leave their program knowing more than they did when they arrived, imparting knowledge is not the primary goal of interpretation.

Interpretation is part education, part inspiration, part entertainment.

Department Operations Manual 0900

There are two mission statements following, one for California State Parks' interpretive efforts and the other for its educational programs. Consider these to further understand the subtle but important differences between interpretation and education.

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

Interpretive Mission Statement

Interpretation is a special form of communication that helps people understand, appreciate, and emotionally connect with the rich natural and cultural heritage preserved in parks. It is the mission of interpretation in California State Parks to convey messages that initially will help visitors value their experience, and that ultimately will foster a conservation ethic and promote a dedicated park constituency.

Education Mission Statement

The most powerful forms of education involve students in meaningful experiences that promote critical thinking and appeal to different learning styles. Our mission is to provide educational opportunities both in California State Parks and in the classroom, assisting educators with curriculum needs and offering activities that enable students to investigate, research, and participate in interactive learning.

Providing inspiration for visitors is not as straightforward as providing informational or educational messages. In fact, we probably can't give them peak or self-actualizing experiences (see *Module 3*—

Communication for more information on

these types of experiences). **What we can do is set the stage by providing opportunities for the visitors to find self-actualizing experiences on their own.** We can “provide resources for independent exploration” (Knudson, et al, p. 64). We can create programs that attempt to “light the spark” of curiosity and wonder. Helping visitors become familiar enough with an environment that they want to forge their own path is the ultimate method of connecting them to the resource.

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A nature guide is not a guide in the ordinary sense of the word, and is not a teacher. At all times, however, he has been rightfully associated with information and some form of education. But Nature guiding, as we see it, is more inspirational than informational.

Enos Mills

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2.4 MANAGEMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Everything we do in California State Parks is somehow directed by or connected to a management need. As we saw in *Module 1—Introduction*, interpretation started because of a need to meet very specific management goals. This function of interpretive programming is still very much a part of the value and purpose of interpretive programs today. For example, even the previously discussed purpose of “connecting visitors to the resource” is done to meet management goals and objectives. Increasing visitor enjoyment, promoting recreational activities, and encouraging visitor education are all management goals. In fact, the mission of California State Parks indicates that one of the primary goals of management is to facilitate visitor enjoyment of the resource.

While facilitating visitor enjoyment, we must also consider how interpretation can be used to: protect the resource, protect the visitor, and promote the agency. The next section briefly discusses each of these management goals and objectives.

PROTECT THE RESOURCE

California State Parks was born out of the need to protect the state’s natural and cultural resources. That is the primary function of state parks. “We respect the intrinsic values of both the natural and cultural environment, and believe that their preservation is essential to our health and to the definition of the California identity” (“Seventh Generation: The Strategic Vision of California State Parks,” p. 14, 2001). Because 70 million visitors a year put tremendous pressure on the resources, it is the visitor in the resource who must be managed.

There are two primary ways to view protecting the resource from visitor damage. One is to focus on decreasing the amount and severity of depreciative visitor behavior. Carving on picnic tables, picking flowers, walking off trail, and leaving litter are all common forms of depreciative behavior. The second way to protect the resource is to increase compliance with rules and regulations. These two perspectives are similar and related. One method focuses on rules for behavior and the other on the outcome from behavior. A combination of both approaches is best for overall success.

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*Wilderness is not a luxury but a
necessity of the human spirit.*

Edward Abbey

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At California State Parks, our staff has the ability to manage visitors through both law enforcement and interpretation. Rangers and lifeguards are peace officers, having graduated from an academy that prepared them for the methods and techniques necessary to fulfill the enforcement aspects of management. This type of management influences behavior by the **authority of the law**.

As interpreters, you are in a unique position to influence visitor behavior through the **authority of the resource**.

Instead of relying solely on the rules and regulations of the department, we can help visitors to hear the voice of the resource and understand that certain conditions must be met in order for the resource to stay healthy or intact.

■ ■ ■
*Nature has her own rules,
operates in certain ways,
and has certain laws; there
are consequences when we
violate that order.*

George N. Wallace

Dr. George N. Wallace of Colorado State University has developed and tested a specific approach called the Authority of the Resource Technique (ART). This technique has been proven to be especially useful in wilderness areas but may also be useful in protecting cultural sites as well.

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The first step in ART is to give an objective description of the situation. Secondly, the ranger explains the implications of the action or situation that was observed. Lastly, you tell them how you feel about it and what can (should) be done to improve the situation. The manager or ranger must make a decision in this third part of the message whether or not it is necessary to cite the regulation per se.

Wallace continues to say, “It is good, however, to expect the best of people when we can. Combining interpretation with law enforcement to reveal the authority of the resource seems to be a good place to start. We hope for long-term changes in peoples’ respect for nature in general and an intrinsically motivated stewardship of the wilderness in particular. Such **changes are likely to last longer when we help people to test their own beliefs and values and arrive at a more principled wilderness ethic of their own accord.** “ (Wallace, G.N., “The Authority of the Resource: an interpretive law enforcement technique for Interagency Wilderness Management Course.” Developed by the Bureau of Land Management at the College of Forestry and Natural Resources, Colorado State University, 1990.)

Many researchers and theorists contend that behavior controlled through interpretive means is the preferred method for several reasons. (Christiansen and Dustin, “Reaching recreationists at different levels of moral development.” *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 1989; Knudson, et al. 1995; Van de Kamp, Johnson, and Swearingen, “Deterring Minor Acts of Noncompliance: A Literature Review,” 1994). The primary reason that an interpretive approach works is that most depreciative behavior occurs out of ignorance. Researchers estimate that on average only two to four percent of depreciative behavior is malicious (Van de Kamp, Johnson, and Swearingen, 1994; Widner, “Reducing Theft of Petrified Wood at Petrified Forest National Park,” *Journal of Interpretation Research*, 2000). If most depreciative behavior occurs out of ignorance, then it would follow that using interpretive methods to educate the visitor about the rules and regulations as well as the reasoning behind them would be the most effective means of controlling that behavior.

A second reason to attempt to control behavior through interpretive means is that recreation areas and parks are considered some of the last places that humans can be free. To escape the rules and restrictions of society is one of the driving factors that push people into the outdoors (Knopf, "Human Experience of Wildlife: A Review of Needs



and Policy," Western Wildlands, 1988). Our efforts to protect the resource must consider this motivating factor. If we manage and regulate people too closely, the experience itself, which we are also charged with protecting, will be lost. We must protect the resource, but not necessarily at the expense of the visitors' experience. Balance is the key to successfully meeting this dual mandate. Interpretation provides a wonderful opportunity to both protect the resource and provide for its use and enjoyment.

Most depreciative behavior occurs not out of malice, but out of ignorance.

A third reason to control behavior through interpretive means is that we may have a better chance at influencing long-term behavioral change through interpretation rather than regulation. The presence of a uniformed officer probably serves as a discriminative stimulus preventing depreciative behavior from occurring only while in the presence of the officer (Van de Kamp, et al., 1994, Geller, 1994). For example, speeders slow down temporarily when in the presence of a police car. This type of behavior modification may not result in any long-term effect. In other words, seeing one police car probably does not transfer into slowing down all the time. In addition, getting a speeding ticket may only serve to make you angry and slow you down for a little while, but not change your driving behavior over the long term. Following this logic, many researchers contend the best method to modify depreciative behavior is through education and other light-handed management techniques (Chiaken and Eagly, 1993; Petty and Cacioppo, "The effects of involvement on responses to argument quantity and quality: Central and peripheral routes to persuasion." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 46, 69-81, 1984; Latane and Darley, 1975; Widner and Roggenbuck, 2000).

PROTECT THE VISITOR

Protecting the visitors is another purpose of interpretation. There are two primary elements: protection from each other and protection from hazards and dangers in the resource itself. We are charged with increasing the visitors' safety while using the resource and minimizing the amount of visitor conflicts.

Many of our parks are small and sustain an ever-increasing number of visitors pursuing a vast array of recreational activities, many of which are in fundamental opposition to each other. For example, kayakers may find their recreational experiences hampered by the presence of motor boats. Visitors have the right to use the resource, but not the right to destroy other users' abilities to enjoy the resource. Managing this situation is a very delicate task. Interpretation provides the opportunity not only to manage the problem but to help visitors understand it as well. Many times it simply requires educating users about each other and pointing out how similar they really are to each other (Jacob and Scheryer, "Conflict in Outdoor Recreation: A Theoretical Perspective," *Journal of Leisure Research*, 1980; Widner, 1994). One of the best methods of accomplishing these objectives is by roving, which we'll discuss at length in *Module 10—Roving*.

In addition to protecting the visitors' experience, we must also protect their physical safety. This is one of the basic needs outlined by Maslow (see *Module 3—Communication*), and until it is met, visitors are often unable to achieve any higher needs and goals from the resource. Whether they are poisonous plants, dangerous rip currents, steep cliff edges, or venomous snakes, there are elements within each park that could potentially pose a threat to visitors' safety. As stated in the section above, much of the danger comes from a lack of knowledge about the resource and not an intention to perform dangerous behaviors. Interpretation often serves as the most effective means to address the problem.

Although certain forms of recreation lend themselves to danger more than others (e.g., rock climbing as opposed to taking pictures), ignorance can make one as dangerous as the other (e.g., taking pictures too close to a 1,000-pound rutting elk). It is through interpretation that we make visitors aware of the potential hazards in the resource and the actions they can take to stay safe.



Visitors must recognize the dangers and understand how to keep themselves safe.

PROMOTE THE AGENCY

The above management goals and objectives of interpretation can be viewed as immediate and short term. For example, we hope that while visitors are on site, they take care of the resource, do not get into dangerous situations, get along with others, comply with rules and regulations, and become connected with the resource. The third goal is to promote the agency. This goal stems from being successful in the short term but is itself considered a long-term goal of interpretation. In other words, if we successfully connect visitors with the resource, educate them about the need to care for the resource, and protect their experience while recreating, we are more likely to garner long-term support from them for the agency's goal and missions.

This long-term goal demonstrates the interconnected nature of everything we do in state parks. **From a friendly, welcoming voice on the phone to well-thought out educational programs, and well-trained volunteers, everything we do makes an impression on the visitor and contributes to the overall image of the agency.** This overall image and conception the public has regarding the purposes and values of our parks and interpretive programs translates into money, votes, and overall support for the Department. In turn, this support results in our ability to do our jobs effectively and to provide those publicly-desired services and opportunities.

WHAT'S AHEAD?

Now that we have a firm understanding of what interpretation is and why we conduct programs, let us turn to the foundation of every program: the basic communication process. In *Module 3—Communication* we will review the fundamental communication process and discover how to create effective messages for the public. This next module will form the foundation of all other communication forms and program types covered in this handbook.

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Module 2

PURPOSE AND VALUE

SELF ASSESSMENT

Answer each question in the section below before reviewing the material in *Module 2—Purpose and Value*. The answers are not provided. Check your answers with your colleagues and as you read *Module 2—Purpose and Value*. Items from the self assessment may be reviewed and discussed in class.

- 1) What are two reasons we conduct interpretive programs in California State Parks?

- 2) Education is the same as interpretation. (Explain your answer.)

- a) True
- b) False

3) How do we connect the visitor to the resource through interpretation?

4) Which is not a benefit of providing cultural resource interpretive programs?

- a) Building cultural tolerance and appreciation
- b) Increasing pride and promoting cultural diversity
- c) Teaching the one true story of a culture to the public
- d) Conveying the historical significance of cultural groups to the public

5) Is it more important to protect the resource or provide for visitor enjoyment of the resource? Explain why.

- 6) The majority of depreciative behavior in parks is due to:
- a) Malice
 - b) Ignorance
 - c) Stubbornness
 - d) Fear

7) How can interpretation help protect the resource?

Now that you have completed the self assessment questions, review the material in *Module 2—Purpose and Value* to confirm your answers. After reading the module, move on to the workbook learning activities, which will assist you in developing your skills.

WORKBOOK LEARNING ACTIVITIES

To help you review and apply the material covered in *Module 2—Purpose and Value*, a selection of review questions and/or activities is provided. Again, no answers are included. Use the material from the module, outside sources, and your colleagues to help you complete the activities and answer the questions. There may be more than one right answer. Use the questions and activities to generate discussion about the material. Be prepared to discuss, perform, or demonstrate your answers in class.

- 1) You witness a visitor damaging the resource by picking flowers from an endangered plant. Describe how you could use an interpretive approach to manage the situation, while providing education, resource protection, and allowing the visitor to maintain her dignity?

- 2) Is there ever a time when an interpretive approach to controlling visitor behavior would not be the best choice? Yes/No Explain your answer.

- 3) Have you ever attended an interpretive program or had an interpretive experience that changed the way you felt or thought about a resource, an activity, or an agency? Describe the situation and what you experienced or learned from it.

- 4) What is our department mandated to do by the public resources code?

Take it to YOUR Park

Answer each question with the information specific to your park. You will have to conduct some research in order to answer each question.

PURPOSE AND VALUE

Park name: _____

- 1) Make a list of the formal interpretive programs that are commonly presented in your park.

- 2) Now list those programs under the most appropriate category. Are they presenting a message that is primarily supporting Natural Resources, Cultural Resources or Managerial Goals?

Natural Resources:

Cultural Resources:

Managerial Goals:

- 3) Put a star by the programs that contain a resource protection message.

- 4) Put a check mark by the programs that contain a visitor safety message.

- 5) Based on your observations of this list and any programs or interpretive materials you have attended or read so far, what do the interpreters and management at your park want the visitors to care about?

Module 3
COMMUNICATION



If you want to move people, it has to be toward a vision that is positive for them, that taps important values, that gets them something they desire, and it has to be presented in a compelling way that they feel inspired to follow.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Module 3

COMMUNICATION**INTERPRETATION: HOW DO WE DO IT?**

Our first two modules give us an understanding of the history of interpretation, what it is and why we conduct interpretive programs. Now let us turn to the heart of the matter and review the principles of communication—the foundation of interpretation. The principles covered in this module form the foundation of all communication regardless of the media, the venues, the audience, or the message types. Although these elements are certainly important, there is basic theory and a process of communicating that sets the stage for building the specific types of programs covered in the remaining modules of this handbook.

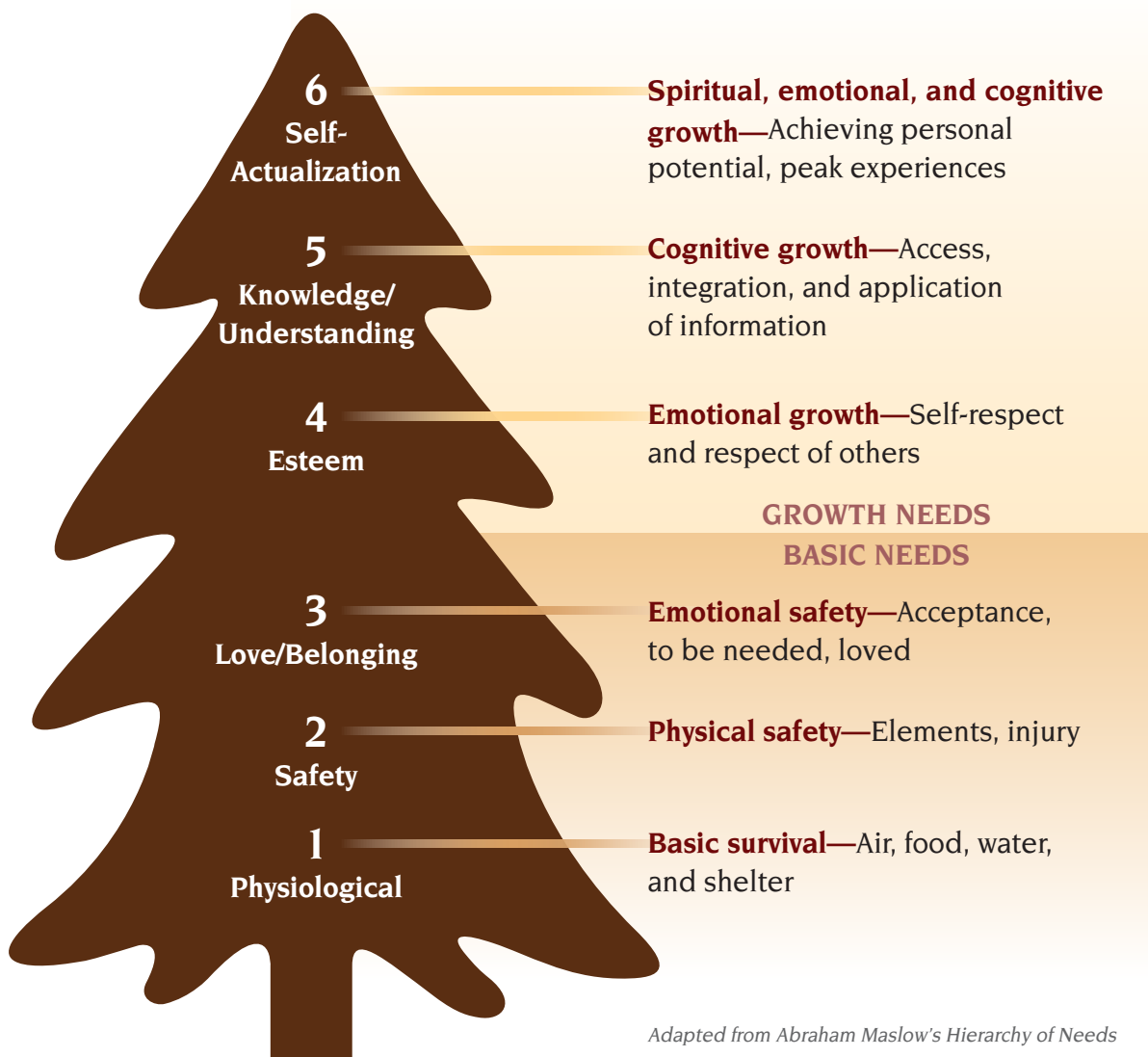
Communication is the process of transferring meaning and understanding from one source to another. The primary goal is that the transmission occurs between the two sources with minimal distortion of the original message. Research suggests that on average **only 10% of what is verbally communicated is retained by the receiver** (Grater, 1976). This demonstrates why it is so important for you, the interpreter, to understand all the methods and techniques for successfully communicating with your audience. This also underscores the importance of creating emotional and intellectual connections between your site and your audience, rather than simply imparting information.

3.1 UNDERSTANDING THE VISITORS' NEEDS

Let's start by looking at the needs and motivations of our visitors. Psychologist Abraham Maslow (1954) developed a hierarchy of human needs (Figure 3.1) that helps us understand the nature of those needs. People's most basic needs must be met before their growth can be enhanced. Recognizing and understanding which level of need a visitor has is key to providing successful interpretive services. For example, a visitor's self-actualization cannot be met if he is, she is frightened or lost.

Figure 3.1

Branches Of Personal Needs



Adapted from Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

INFORMATION AND ORIENTATION SERVICES

The first and most common method of helping visitors meet their basic needs is providing visitor information and orientation services. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, these are among the basic visitor needs that must be met first. For example, the most common question asked in most parks is, "Where is the bathroom?" Nothing else can be achieved unless this need is met first.

Think about basic orientation and informational needs that you had when you first arrived at your training center. You needed to know things such as: *Where is my room? Where is the dining hall?* Visitor orientation is typically accomplished through websites and phone calls ahead of the visit, a stop at the Visitor Center or Entrance Station upon arrival, or from bulletin boards and information kiosks inside the park.

BEFORE ARRIVAL

Many of our visitor information services are not conducted face-to-face, but through means such as telephone, website, and mail contacts. These methods of communication are the first line of contact for many visitors. Think about the last special location you visited. Did you call first, check out a website, or ask for brochures before you actually visited? Many visitors use this information to decide which park to visit and how much time to allow.

When meeting information and orientation needs for visitors over long distance, there are a few special things to consider. Be sure that you are responding to requests for information in a timely manner; don't make people wait! Try to personalize your contacts as much as possible. If you can, give them what they request and include a signed note thanking them for their interest and expressing that you hope to see them when they visit. This personalized attention to detail means a great deal to visitors and functions as a great public relations tool for your agency, helping forge visitor connections to the resource.

Lastly, make sure the information that you are offering via long distance is accurate. Look at your park's website regularly so you will know what your visitors are seeing. Do your part to make sure the website reflects current activities, lodging information and seasonal updates.

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL PHONE CONTACTS

- **Smile while you're on the phone.** Smiling while talking changes the inflection and tone in your voice. People can hear a smile even though they may not see it.
 - **Treat visitors on the phone as you would treat them in person.** How many times have you put a person on hold who is standing in front of you?
 - **Answer the phone with a greeting that reflects the park name and your name:** Hello, my name is Carolyn. Thanks for calling Humboldt Redwoods State Park. How may I help you?
 - **Have common information ready.** Post answers to the most commonly asked questions on the wall near the phone to help volunteers and new staff.
-

AT THE PARK

Information Desk/Entrance Station

The most common place for providing information to visitors is at the entrance station or behind the desk in the visitor center. Visitors who come to these locations are often seeking to meet their basic physiological and safety/security needs; “Where is the bathroom?” and “What kind of snakes are here?” are typical questions.

There are several methods that you can use to help meet these needs. Be prepared to provide clear, concise, and accurate information. Keep a list of the questions your visitors ask. In the beginning, you



Many visitors' first stop will be the front desk of the visitor center.

may not know many of the answers, but as time passes the number of questions that you hear for the first time will dwindle. In time, you can create (if they do not currently exist) several books of “commonly asked questions” that you can leave on the front desk for visitors to peruse and volunteers to study. These will be available when you are not, and thus reach even more visitors.

PROVIDING HELPFUL INFORMATION AND ORIENTATION

- Always have trail, park, local and highway maps available.
 - Listen to what is really being asked.
 - Anticipate questions.
 - Provide interpretive answers (*don't just give facts; tell stories!*).
 - Have common field guides and reference materials handy.
-

It can get tiresome hearing that same old question over and over. However, keep two things in mind: 1) it is the first time the person standing in front of you has asked the question, and 2) they had to get up a lot of nerve to approach you. For many visitors, it takes a lot of curiosity, fear, uncertainty, etc., to spur them to ask a question. As you will learn in *Module 10—Roving*, these spontaneous interactions with visitors are often the most meaningful. These interactions also affect the overall impression an individual has of the entire agency.

Bulletin Boards/Information Kiosks

Bulletin boards are an effective and inexpensive way to provide information and orientation services to visitors. Answering the basic what, where, when, and why questions is a common function of these mediums. One drawback to bulletin boards is that they must be maintained regularly. Bulletin boards will be overlooked by visitors if they contain daunting amounts of text and clutter, or are dirty and unattractive.

We know from research that people do not read very much. **On average, most visitors read about 30-40 seconds worth of material. That is about 200-250 words** (Serrell, 1996; Trapp, Gross, and Zimmerman, 1992). Writing in a short, concise, and clear manner is more difficult than writing lengthy pieces of information, but it is essential. As Mark Twain said, “I would have written you a shorter letter but I did not have the time.” Maximize the effectiveness of bulletin boards by using a few simple pointers provided in the box on the following page.

THOSE MESSY BULLETIN BOARDS!

- Keep everything up to date.
 - Pictures are worth a thousand words.
 - Keep it simple and short.
 - Organize information into meaningful categories and subcategories.
 - Connect information to the tangibles visitors have around them.
 - Include emergency contact information.
 - Vary the size, shape, color, etc. of graphics.
 - Remember to follow accessibility guidelines.
 - Make it look new each season to engage repeat visitors.
-

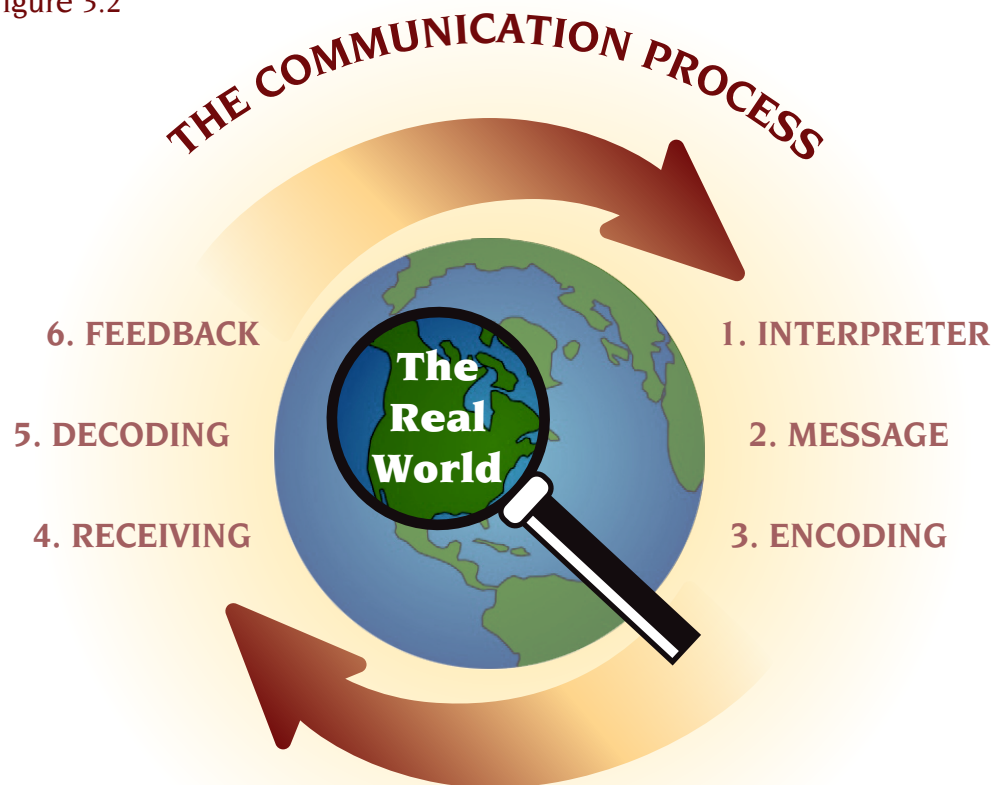
3.2 BASIC COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Once we have helped our visitors meet their basic needs, we can move on to using interpretation to achieve the purposes discussed in *Module 2—Purpose and Value*. To do this we first must have an understanding of the basic communication process. Through understanding of the basic communication process, we can maximize the visitor's retention, comprehension, and understanding of our messages.

Communication (Figure 3.2) begins with a communicator (first step), in our case, an interpreter. The interpreter has a particular message that needs to be transmitted to the receiver, in our case, the visitor. The message is the second step in the communication process. Once the target message has been identified, the interpreter encodes (third step) the message into the appropriate language and communication medium. After the actual communication of the message, the visitor receives the message (fourth step) and decodes it (fifth step). After decoding, there is a feedback process (sixth step) for communication back to the interpreter. All of this occurs in a particular setting with its own set of characteristics that influences the entire process (Fazio and Gilbert, 2000).

Let's take a closer look and identify ways to make the process more successful.

Figure 3.2



A. INTERPRETER

Some characteristics of an interpreter affect the overall reception of the message by the visitor. Appearance, voice, body language, etc., are all linked to one quality—credibility. There are many things that affect a visitor's perception of your credibility. Remember, it does not matter how credible you actually are, all that matters is the perception the visitor has of your credibility. For example, you may be the resident expert in a particular topic, but if you shuffle your feet and cannot maintain eye contact, you will not appear very credible. Think about the last time you asked someone a question and he/she would not look you in the eye and answer. That person may have been telling the truth, but you were probably skeptical due to the lack of eye contact. It should also be mentioned that judgments of credibility vary depending on the target audience. The following is a brief overview of the major elements that affect a visitor's perception of your credibility.

Credibility

Content

The primary aspect that many think of when considering credibility is content. Do they know what they are talking about? Again, we will discuss many things that affect this perception, but you must begin with truthful, accurate information. There is nothing

■ ■ ■
*The way to become boring
is to say everything.*

Voltaire

■ ■ ■

worse for your credibility than to be proven wrong during a talk. The judgment of being trustworthy will, in part, be influenced by whether or not visitors think you know what you are talking about. The key for success in this step is easy: thoroughly research your topic before presenting information to your visitors. In *Module 4—Planning* we will review in detail appropriate methods and practices of conducting good research.

Confidence

Another characteristic that influences perceived credibility is the confidence you project. Judgments of confidence are based on several elements. Eye contact, voice quality and body language are three of the primary elements that influence confidence perceptions.

Eye contact is definitely important. “Studies have found that, whatever the status, age, gender or physical size of individuals, **those who maintain effective eye contact are perceived as more honest, warmer, and more knowledgeable** than those who look away from their listeners” (Brownell, 1982, p. 33). You do not want to stare at visitors, but instead maintain two or three seconds of eye contact with individuals and try to look at everyone at least once. For large audiences, do not focus your attention and eye contact on one side of the group; try to sweep the entire audience.

Voice quality also reflects your confidence. Meek, mild, and high-pitched voices are not thought to be as confident and do not command as much attention as low-pitched, authoritative voices.

Another characteristic of the voice is the **rate of speaking**. Talking too fast or too slowly impacts perceptions of credibility. In addition, filling in silences in speech with “ums” and “uhs” also has a negative impact on visitor perceptions. There is great power in a dramatic pause. Know when to stop talking. Your voice should be loud enough in tone and pitch to hear, fluid in pattern, and slow enough in speed to understand.

Body language is a third element that impacts visitor perceptions of confidence and thus overall judgments of credibility. “The cues your body sends are often more accurate indicators of the way you feel and what you think than the words you choose” (Brownell, 1982, p. 33). In fact, it is estimated that approximately **“60-95% of the meaning transferred in a communication system is accomplished through non-verbals”** (Jurin, Danter, and Roush, 2000, p. 143). We use body language, often subconsciously, about two-thirds of the time when communicating. The trick for an interpreter is to consciously channel that use of body language in appropriate ways. Standing up straight, holding your head up, and using your body for emphasis are all ways of improving your body language.

Appearance

Physical appearance also influences credibility. The old saying “beauty is in the eye of the beholder” is certainly applicable in this situation. However, there are generalities that can be identified regarding how appearance impacts credibility. One of the primary elements that will increase credibility is your uniform. Wearing a uniform typically signifies having authority and being of an expert status; be sure your uniform is always neat, pressed, and clean.

Passion and Sincerity

Finally, the passion, enthusiasm, and sincerity with which you speak affects the communication process. Tilden (1957) called this the “priceless ingredient.” Visitors respond to and can sense the innate interest of the speaker. Changing the variable voice inflection helps pace, rhythm, and tone of speech to convey interest in the subject

matter. Active, animated body language and facial expressions help convey passion. Think about hearing monotone speakers. It is hard to believe that they are really interested in what they are saying. The best method to improve

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Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration.

Thomas A. Edison

■ ■ ■

and convey your sincerity is to have it. Believe in what you are doing, the agency for which you work, and the message you are conveying to the public. The audience forgives many technical mistakes if they believe you are sincere in the attempt.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS THAT IMPACT COMMUNICATION

- Voice Quality
 - Appearance
 - Sincerity
 - Body Language
 - Eye Contact
 - Uniform
 - Accurate Content
 - Passion
 - Title
-

B. MESSAGE

The second step in the communication process is the message itself. As interpreters, we call this the theme of the program. We will cover themes in detail in *Module 5—Programs*. The message is the reason communication takes place. There are several techniques and strategies that can be used to create successful messages. We will review some of the basic characteristics of an effective message and examine more advanced techniques for improving persuasive communication. Keep in mind that **the overall goal is minimal distortion of the original message between the sender (interpreter) and the receiver (visitor).**

■ ■ ■
*Dry words and dry facts
will not fire hearts.*
John Muir
■ ■ ■

The basics of good message delivery are things we instinctively know. Think about telling a good joke. It has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Each has its place in the story and must be told in the appropriate order and with the right emphasis. Communicating interpretively is not a new form of communication. It is simply being able to tell a good story. And in our case, that story has a moral or message we are trying to convey.

C. ENCODING

There are a lot of ways messages can be communicated to visitors. The primary methods are verbal, visual, hands-on and written. Encoding is the process of coding a message into a particular channel to be communicated to visitors. Deciding which channel will be the most effective depends on numerous factors, including the target audience, the message itself, the time frame, the interpreter, and the resource being interpreted. Each channel has its own characteristics and benefits. The key for interpreters is that the more channels you can incorporate, the more the visitor remembers. The most retention comes when we see it, hear it, and do it.

INCREASE MEMORY

- Verbal
 - Hands-on
 - Visual
 - Written
-

D. RECEIVING

Many characteristics of the visitor affect the communication process. Although we cannot change or affect these characteristics, it is important to be aware of their impact on the communication process. David Larsen, the former interpretive training manager for the National Park Service, likes to remind his rangers that the visitor is “sovereign.” “No matter how much confidence we have in our science and our professional procedures, no matter how enthusiastic and polished our presentations, the audience ultimately decides if the resource has value. The audience determines if they will care enough about the resource in order to support the care for the resource.” Larsen, David L., “Be Relevant or Become a Relic” *Journal of Interpretation Research* 7,1, (2002), 17-23.

Visitor Characteristics

- **World view**—The visitors' view of and belief system about the world influence communication. Visitors selectively receive and process information that supports an established belief system. This is known as emotional deafness.
- **Significant others**—The social group that the visitor occupies impacts communication. For example, a teenage boy surrounded by his friends will react differently from the same boy in his family group. This could be considered peer pressure.
- **Knowledge/experience level**—What a visitor knows about a subject influences the communication process. Previous knowledge can positively or negatively affect the process, depending upon perceived credibility of the sender.
- **Attitude toward the agency**—A visitor's belief system regarding California State Parks will impact judgments of credibility and trustworthiness.
- **Personal distractions**—Visitors' social, physical, and emotional settings create various degrees of distraction.
- **Information needs/motives**—Visitors' motives and needs for information impact what is retained.

Barriers to Receiving

Regardless of the channel you choose for your message, you may encounter barriers. These barriers to communication might be inherent to the individual, such as language and physical barriers. Language barriers can result from differences in semantics, dialect, language origin, and jargon. Interpreters can break down these barriers by

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*The seeds of great discoveries
are constantly floating around us,
but they only take root in minds
well prepared to receive them.*

Joseph Henry

■ ■ ■

including more sensory exploration, hands-on demonstrations and analogies and avoiding technical vocabulary. You may even require the services of a language interpreter.

Physical barriers to communication are also common. For example, can the visitor see, hear, or navigate adequately to experience the program? What is the trail surface like? Is there another, more accessible trail where you could do the

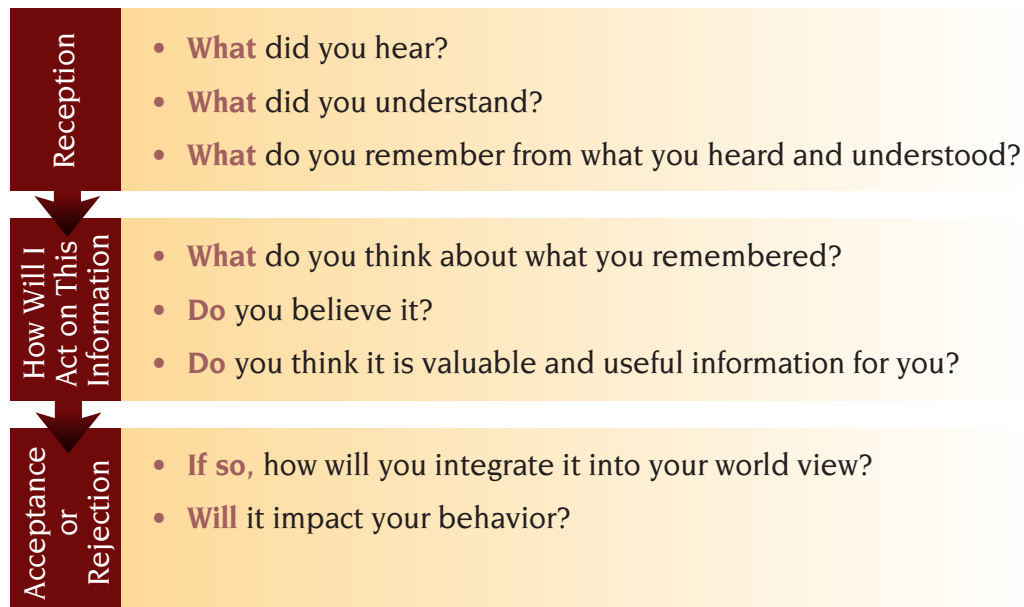
same program? These and other similar questions are important for you to consider when designing communication opportunities. Please refer to *All Visitors Welcome*, a publication produced by and for California State Parks, for more details and suggestions on addressing accessibility issues (Porter, 1994). In addition, we will review program-specific accessibility concerns and techniques in later modules.

E. DECODING

Decoding is the process that happens after information is communicated from the interpreter to the visitor. There are three primary steps that information goes through once it has been communicated. Each of these steps impacts the ultimate goal of communication—the understanding or exchange of meaning. The first step after the sender gives the message is reception. Not all information is heard, remembered, or comprehended. The second step is acceptance or rejection of the information. Given what a visitor heard and understood, value judgments about the information are then made. Once the information has been judged, then appropriate parts are assimilated (or not) into the existing belief system.

VISITORS DECODING INCOMING INFORMATION

When communication is sent...



There are many elements that impact the decoding process. One of the primary elements is that individuals learn and process information differently. For example, many people need visual cues to understand a new concept while others may only need to hear it to understand. Even within the individual, there are times when details are needed for comprehension and other times when the big picture will do. You cannot control how a visitor will decode your message, but you can increase your chances of successful communication by understanding how messages are processed. Tilden's fifth principle reminds us that interpretation must address itself to the many phases of an individual. This means that **at any given time for any one individual, there are many ways information is processed or learned.**

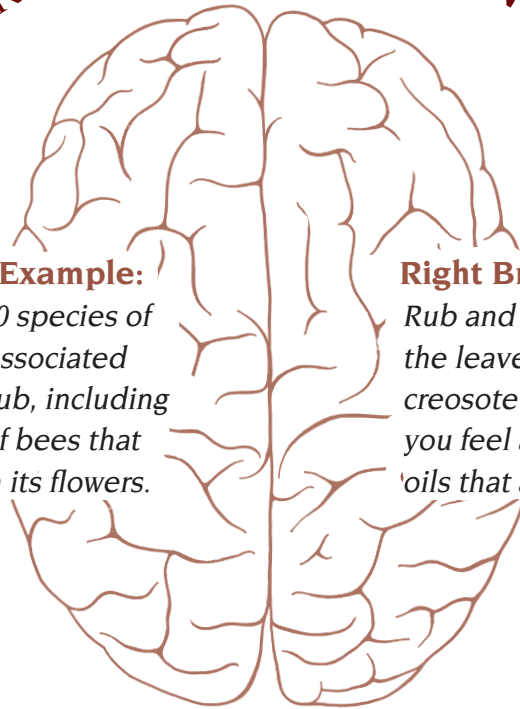
INFORMATION PROCESSING

Left Brain Example:

More than 60 species of insects are associated with this shrub, including 22 species of bees that feed only on its flowers.

Right Brain Example:

Rub and then smell the leaves of this creosote bush. Can you feel and smell the oils that are present?



Information processing is related to regions of the brain. Right brain processing involves visual, intuitive, emotional, and spatial elements. It is the creative side of the brain. Techniques for involving right brain thinkers include anything that incorporates the senses or emotions. To reach this group, remember that emotions are often more

important than facts. Left-brain processing involves factual, linear, logical thought. To engage these logical processors, include facts, ideas, concepts, and the relationships among them.



Kinesthetic learners benefit from moving their bodies in meaningful ways.

Another way to discuss decoding is to consider the style of learning. There are three primary styles: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic.

Although most people favor one style of information processing over another, their choice in a given situation may be influenced by many things. As you communicate with visitors, you will not know how any of them are processing your information. To be most successful, you will need to provide a combination of processing opportunities.

VISUAL LEARNERS	<p>Must see the information in order to understand it. Whether it is seeing the printed word, a picture, or the object itself, a visual learner must engage visually with information.</p>
AUDITORY LEARNERS	<p>Must hear information. The voice of the interpreter and the sounds of the resource serve to reach auditory learners</p>
KINESTHETIC LEARNERS	<p>Must use information. Demonstrations, hands-on activities, and tactile sensory involvement with the resources address these learners.</p>

INCREASE DECODING SUCCESS

- Incorporate all the senses.
 - Tell stories and paint pictures.
 - Engage visitors directly with the resource.
 - Use visual aids and props.
 - Convey facts and information.
 - Highlight relationships and ideas.
 - Demonstrate concepts.
-

F. FEEDBACK

Feedback is the process through which an interpreter can determine if communication is effective. There are three basic types of feedback: verbal, visual, and written. Each method has its own limitations and benefits in the communication process. For each type there are various methods of modification possible for improving communication. We will discuss evaluation and feedback at length in *Module 12—Evaluation*.

3.3 RAPPORT: BASIC MESSAGE EFFECTIVENESS

California State Parks uses a system called **RAPPORT** to help interpreters evaluate and improve their interpretive programs. This method establishes uniform standards to promote effective communication. The acronym **RAPPORT** (see Table 3.3) represents the standards that are necessary for creating a successful interpretive program. These standards are evaluated through the use of the Standard **RAPPORT** form DPR 461.

Table 3.3

RAPPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant—Related to the audience • Accurate—Well prepared and researched • Provocative/Enjoyable—Interesting and fun • Programmatically accessible— Accommodating for all visitors • Organized—Logical sequence of ideas presented • Retained—Memorable • Thematic—A central message throughout

RELEVANT

An effective message must be relevant to the audience. Visitors must be able to understand the concept in terms of something they already know or something with which they can associate. **When you connect a tangible resource in your park with a universal concept you are making your resource relevant for the audience.** (Larsen, 2003)

Remember, universal concepts are ideas and notions that almost everyone can relate to, but that, they do not mean the same to any two people. Examples of universal concepts include: joy, death, family, suffering, love and birth. There are many more processes, systems, relationships and values that are also universal concepts. Audiences presented with tangible/intangible links that include universal concepts are offered the opportunity to relate their own perspectives to the resource as well explore the way others relate.


In a park setting, for example, a pile of pot shards may not mean much to an audience until an interpreter tells them about the Native American women who used these pots to make food for their families. Each person in the audience is familiar with the concepts of mother, family, and food, yet the meanings may be different for each.

In another example, a barrel cactus that barely reaches the interpreter's knees may look unimpressive to the audience until the interpreter explains the myriad challenges it has met and overcome to survive for over 100 years to achieve this size. We have all overcome challenges and can imagine what living to one hundred would entail. Without contextual understanding, new information is sterile and will quickly be forgotten. In addition, if information is not contextually relevant for an audience, it could cause them to become bored or feel unintelligent.

Sam Ham (1992) suggests two more ways to make information personal to visitors, by using **self-referencing** and **labeling**. **Self-referencing** is a technique to get visitors to tap into their own experiences and memories as new information is conveyed. “*How many of you have ever...?*” or “*Remember the first time you made a snowball with your bare hands?*” By tapping into a visitor's own memories, we are once again trying to facilitate connections that are emotional (feelings-based) as well as intellectual (knowledge-based.)

Labeling involves using more specific terms to relate to the audience besides generic pronouns such as, **you**, **us**, and **we**. “*As Americans, we can all relate to the sense of tragedy from the events of September 11, 2001.*” The phrase “*As Americans*” is labeling. “*As cadets at the Mott Training Center...*” is another example. Use care when labeling so you do not exclude people needlessly or include people in negative or derogatory categories.

TILDEN'S FIRST PRINCIPLE



Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.

Freeman Tilden

Techniques to Increase Relevance

- **Analogies**—Drawing similarities between two things. *A shaken soda can is a way to think of a volcanic eruption.*
- **Examples**—Referring to something that is representative of what you are talking about. *This seastar is one of the many creatures that travel with the tides.*
- **Stories**—The telling or accounting of an event that explains or describes what you want to interpret. *For example, this would be like telling the creation story of the Pomo People to convey how they revere the earth.*
- **Metaphors**—A figure of speech in which a comparison is made between unlike things that actually have something in common. *This meadow is a restaurant. This tree is a factory.*
- **Similes**—Comparing two things using like or as. *Tectonic plates can hit together like bumper cars. This wetland is like a highway rest stop for migrating water birds.*
- **Visual aids**—Using a tangible object to demonstrate, represent or explain something. *Pour water onto a dry sponge to represent how marshes soak up and hold water. Show pictures of animals that might not be commonly recognized by everyone.*
- **Universal concepts**—Anything that is known, felt, or believed, regardless of most demographic characteristics. *For example, most emotions and Maslow's basic needs are included.*
- **Practical application**—Demonstrating the usefulness or application of something. *Show visitors the medicinal qualities of plants and indicate potential uses in the future. Make pasta with stinging nettles and invite the audience to taste it.*

ACCURATE

One of the key characteristics affecting and influencing credibility is the presentation of factual, truthful information. This is not as easy as it seems on the surface. Whether

■ ■ ■

All interpretation must be built upon accurate and comprehensive information, but if audiences were simply seeking knowledge, most would have little reason to experience the site at all.

David Larsen

■ ■ ■

you're interpreting in a natural, cultural, or recreational setting, it is important to present a fair, unbiased, and accurate picture of one whole story. Tilden (1967) points out **there are many whole stories to tell regarding any one topic**. The choice of **which** story to tell is driven

by many factors that we will discuss in *Module 4—Planning*. The key for accuracy is to conduct honest, thorough, and unbiased research in an attempt to truly understand the concept, theory, story, or fact. When conducting research, you soon realize that you can never know “the truth” of an event, place, time, or scientific concept. What you can do is adhere to good research practices and paint as honest and accurate a picture as you can.

PROVOCATIVE/ENJOYABLE

MAKE FACTS MORE FUN

- Smile.
- Tell stories, do not just give facts.
- Encourage participation.
- Do hands-on demonstrations.
- Ask questions.
- Use analogies.
- Be enthusiastic.
- Use visual aids.
- Engage visitors' senses.
- Relate it to visitors.

Mainly, LOVE what you do!

If we make learning fun and enjoyable, we create life-long learners. Provoking the visitors to be curious, to want to know more, and to seek more information on their own is the primarily off-site goal of our programs. Given the nature of science, knowledge, and interpretation itself, one of the great achievements of an interpretive program is when the visitor begins to question. As important as a skillfully conveyed message is having visitors wonder, question, and desire to know more!

Methods of accomplishing this wonderment are not easily put into a list. In fact, it is the success of a number of things that results in provocation. There are some things you can do to help facilitate provocation through your programs. Do not always have “the answer;” instead ask good, thought-provoking questions throughout. In addition, always encourage discussion and feedback during your programs.



TILDEN'S FOURTH PRINCIPLE

*The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction,
but provocation.*

Freeman Tilden

PROGRAMMATICALLY ACCESSIBLE

Programmatically accessible means that we have created programs that are accessible to the general public. Making our programs programmatically accessible has a lot to do with considering our target audience's needs, wants, special concerns, and circumstances. It also involves thinking about who is not coming and asking why. **The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA-PL 101-336) is a civil rights law informing all that people with disabilities have the right to visit, enjoy, and participate in public recreational programs and facilities.** Although we will not provide a complete review of the legislation and how it affects California State Parks, we will discuss things to consider when designing communication techniques. Refer to *All Visitors Welcome* for an in-depth discussion of techniques and strategies for accessibility (Porter, 1994).

Make it Accessible!

- **Begin each program with a thorough review of all of the basic visitor needs** (e.g., bathroom, breaks, length of walk, dangers, etc.) and any services or facilities that are accessible. Be sure that you always provide this announcement, no matter who your audience is.
- **Face the audience and speak clearly.** Many hearing impaired people read lips.
- **Incorporate as many senses as you can during the presentation.** Those with limited English can still appreciate seeing, touching and doing something.
- **When using visual aids, be sure that everyone gets to see them.** Ask visitors who have seen the object to please step back and let others see. Have the group make a viewing circle.

Be considerate of others—be a good host!

ORGANIZED

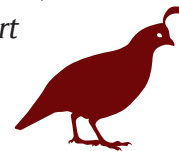
An organized presentation is one of the more fundamental characteristics of interpretation. Information that is organized is presented in an easy-to-understand manner that follows a logical progression of ideas. If information is not presented in an easily understood manner then the audience will soon get frustrated and tune out or walk away.

There are four primary techniques you can use to organize a presentation: a cognitive map, transition sentences, themes/subthemes, and practice. The use of advanced organizers or **cognitive maps** is proven way of increasing organization and thus impacting knowledge acquisition and understanding. (Hammit, 1981; Knopf, 1981). Just as you would use a spatial map to find your way in a foreign place, **cognitive maps provide the mental orientation for the interpretive journey**. Cognitive map theory suggests that providing an initial structure through which the listener can organize the information helps facilitate understanding and comprehension of the message. Learners are said to construct new information, and cognitive maps serve as the blueprints for that construction. A cognitive map tells the visitor what is going to happen.

WHAT'S A COGNITIVE MAP?

Here is an example of a cognitive map:

Today, we will journey together and discover what the forest has to provide. That way if you are ever lost in the woods you will be able to survive! We will discover the easiest way to find water, what the most nutritious thing is to eat, how to build a fire and seek shelter, and finally how to find your way out. We will take an easy, short walk around the visitor center and end up right back here in about one hour.



A second technique to increase organization is to use **transition sentences**. These sentences provide listeners the verbal cues that you have finished one main point and are continuing on to the next. They allow the listener to fade in and out of attention and not lose the ability to follow the program. For example, a listener who has been watching a bird and not listening to your program could hear the transition *“Now that we have discovered how to find water in the forest, let us turn to three primary ways to find food for survival”* and return to the program without feeling lost.

It is important not to have too many main points in an interpretive presentation. In fact, most of the literature recommends five main points (Ham, 1992; Knudson et al., 1995; Miller, 1956). Remember, your audience will not be taking notes and if on vacation, may not be willing to work hard to process too much new information. At the same time, too



Programs that are logically organized are easier for the audience to follow.

As the presenter, your comfort level with the program directly results in the ability to present the information to the public in an organized fashion. Trying to remember what you are supposed to say results in a choppy, jumbled program. Being prepared directly affects the outward organizational appearance of information. We will review strategies and methods of practicing in *Module 6—Talks*.

little information could cause them to become bored. **You'll want to select five main ideas and organize them around a main theme or message**, which is the third technique of increasing organization. We will review thematic presentation of information later.

A fourth technique for improving organization is practice. As the

RETAINED

We want the message or main point of the interpretation to be memorable. Providing a good organizational structure and a sound theme or message facilitates this retention of information. There are other techniques that can be used to increase retention (see Table 3.4).

■ ■ ■

People are out for recreation and need restful, intellectual visions, and not dull, dry facts, rules, and manuals.

Enos Mills

■ ■ ■

Table 3.4

LEST THEY FORGET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat main theme/message often. • Ask questions throughout to assess retention. • Make it relevant. • Provide summaries throughout and especially at the end. • Provide opportunities to apply the information. • Incorporate many senses.

THEMATIC

The theme is the anchor point to which all of the information presented will relate. It is the message of the program. Subthemes are the sub-messages of each main point within the program (see Table 3.5). Using themes and subthemes around which the information is organized serves two main purposes. First, it provides an organizational hierarchy for the program. Second, the message is the reason you are presenting the program. In other words, the theme and subthemes guide your research, establish the structure of your presentation, and convey the reason or message of the program.

The theme is your message for the visitor to take home. If you think about a story with a lot of facts and bits of information, after time, much of the story will be forgotten. However, if the story has a message, that message will likely be retained longer than any of the individual details that made up the story. This is the true success of an interpretive program, not that the visitor walks away knowing all the plants you talked about, but that they retained the bigger message or theme.

Using the elements of **RAPPORT** will help you develop high quality, effective interpretive programs. It will also ensure that your programs meet the standards by which the Department evaluates interpretive performance. Remember **RAPPORT!**

Table 3.5

THE THEME SAYS IT ALL
<p>Theme: <i>The forest provides, so you could survive if lost in the woods.</i></p> <p>Subtheme 1: <i>Find water first, as it is essential to survival.</i></p> <p>Subtheme 2: <i>Food is as easy to find as turning over a rock.</i></p>

3.4 PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUES

All of the messages we provide for visitors are aimed at influencing what they know (cognition), think (attitudes), feel (emotions), or do (behaviors). Whether the goal is to alleviate fear or to educate them about the resource, we are trying to influence them in some fashion. Given this relationship, there are several methods that can be used to increase the overall effectiveness of any type of persuasive message.

ATTITUDES

One of the primary methods of increasing message effectiveness is matching the message to the target audience. As covered in the **RAPPORT** section on “Relevance,” understanding the visitors’ needs, attitudes, and motives is one key to success in message formation. For example, if you are presenting a message to a group of horseback riders identifying the need to remove horseback riding from an area, your approach should be very different than it would be if you are presenting the same program to a group of backpackers. There are three potential attitudes a visitor could have about any given subject: for it, against it, or neutral. Appropriate strategies for each are given in the box below (Table 3.6).

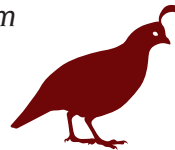
Table 3.6

KNOW THY AUDIENCE		
They are for it	They are against it	They are neutral
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend little time giving facts and evidence (they already support you). • Focus most of the message on action statements (what they can do now). • Provide opportunities for them to contribute (let them share their knowledge). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish common ground (begin with what you both have in common). • Identify the facts/ information from their side (take away arguments before they can use them against you). • Point out major elements from your perspective (use only items that can easily be demonstrated—credibility is crucial). • End with common actions that both sides can agree on (leave them with things that you share in common). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information (they have not made up their minds—educate them). • Present both sides of a logical argument (don’t let them wonder what the other side is). • Conclude with sources of opportunities to learn more.

Most visitors in our parks care about the resources within them, and our messages simply need to remind or prime visitors of that already-held belief. Successful persuasive messages must also convey to visitors that their behavior makes a difference and that they are responsible for that difference (Fishbein and Manfredo, 1992; Petty and Cacioppo, 1984; Vincent and Fazio, 1992). Research supports this theory and indicates that if messages are to affect behavior through attitudes, the appropriate attitude regarding the behavior must be primed. Visitors must be able to predict what will happen after a behavior and must be willing to accept responsibility for those consequences.

HELPING THEM OWN IT

Interpreter's statement, *"It is so nice to see everyone out here because you love and care about our coastal resources. Remember, the tide pool animals need our help to survive. If we remove them from the rocks even once, it can kill them. It is up to us to keep these awesome tide pools alive and healthy."*



Norms

Another method of increasing message effectiveness is to make use of the expected and accepted norms for behavior. Every situation, social group, and setting has a set of expected norms for behavior. For example, laughing during a funeral is not the norm for behavior.

Two types of norms are social norms and descriptive norms. Social norms reflect the most accepted form of behavior in any given situation. These are what people **should** be doing. Descriptive norms tell us what others are doing. The most successful messages will incorporate both types of norms in conjunction with each other (Cialdini, 1996). In other words, what we tell visitors to do (social norm)—e.g., *"Do not litter."*—should be in line with what we say others are doing (descriptive norm), e.g., *"99% of visitors do not litter."*

Using norms to affect behavior works because people are influenced by the expectations of others and by the social pressure of what they think others are doing (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). For example, if visitors believe that most everyone walks off the trail (descriptive norm), it will be difficult to convince them they should not (social norm). After all, *everyone is doing it*, how much more could I hurt it?

Specific Requests

When trying to influence behavior, it is important to be specific with behavioral requests. Do not use general statements like *"Help us protect the resource."* Remember, most

depreciative behavior occurs out of ignorance, and asking someone to protect the resource assumes that they know how to do so. *“Help us protect the resource by staying on the trail.”* conveys the specific behavior you want them to perform. Compliance with this request will be much higher than with the generic one.

Positive Spin

Try to frame messages in a positive light. For example, the above message, *“Help us protect the resource by staying on the trail,”* is positive. *“Do not hike off the trail as it damages the resource”* is the same message framed in a negative way. People respond better to positive messages than to negative ones.

Reasons Why

Another approach that is very effective for influencing others is to tell people why you want them to do something. Identifying the reason behind the rule prevents visitors from guessing the reason and deciding it is not that important. In addition, Wallace (1990) suggests reasons for behavioral requests should be given in reference to the resource first, the visitor second, and the management third. Visitors are more likely to modify their behavior to protect the resource or other people than to satisfy management. In addition, knowing the reasons behind the rules makes you more informed and thus a better interpreter. If you cannot identify the reason behind the rule in terms of the resource or the visitor, then how can you expect a visitor to do so on his or her own?

ALWAYS GIVE A REASON

Please stay on the trail as we pass through this area. The plants you see are homes to animals that can easily be harmed by our footsteps. Staying on the trail will also keep you from getting poison oak or ticks.



MORAL REASONING

Moral reasoning theories suggest persuasive messages should include a message addressing both lower stages of moral development (**preconventional**) and higher levels of moral development (**postconventional**) (Christensen and Dustin, 1989; Kohlberg, Levine, and Hewer, 1983). Individuals in lower or **preconventional** stages of moral development respond to messages that promise a reward or threaten punishment.

Children most closely reflect this level of moral development. Individuals in the **postconventional** moral stages of development respond to what others think and the ethics associated with a behavior. Messages should be tailored to the stage of moral reasoning held by the target audience or individual. For example, individuals in the pre-conventional stage of moral development will be more likely to change behavior in response to threats of punishment or promises of rewards than to ethical appeals. On the other hand, individuals in the postconventional stages of moral reasoning will tend to be more responsive to ethical appeals.

APPEAL TO THEIR MORALS

Preconventional message: *There is a \$1,000 fine for littering.*

Postconventional message: *Leave the resource as you found it—without litter.*

COMBINED APPROACH

The final suggestion for improving persuasive message appeal is to use a combination of several of the approaches previously discussed. Many researchers have concluded that no one strategy will effectively control all deprecative behaviors in parks (Knopf and Dustin, 1992; Van de Kamp, Johnson, and Swearingen, 1994; Widner and Roggenbuck, 2000). **In other words, incorporating multiple persuasive techniques should increase the overall effectiveness of a single message.** For example, if norm appeals (everyone is doing it) reach some people and moral reasoning messages can be used to influence others, a message that includes both approaches should be more effective overall than messages based on any single approach.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Look around the group at all the others just like yourself who care deeply about the natural resources here in the park. Protecting the park's resources is up to each one of you. Although 99% of park visitors do not disturb the tide pool animals, the small fraction that do, cause an enormous amount of damage. Please do not remove any of the animals from their homes. They deserve to live and other visitors should have the same opportunity as you to see them. There is a fine for damaging the tide pools, but destruction costs the animals their lives. Thanks for helping us protect your treasures in the park.



COVER ALL THE BASES

- Make it relevant to the visitor.
 - Present accurate information.
 - Have fun.
 - Leave them wanting to know more.
 - Ensure program accessibility.
 - Present organized information.
 - Help visitors to retain messages.
 - Use a thematic approach.
 - Tap into visitor attitudes.
 - Relate the consequences for behavior.
 - Always tell why.
 - Frame messages in the positive.
 - Appeal to morals.
 - Give specific behavioral requests.
-

■ ■ ■

*The moment one gives close attention to anything,
even a blade of grass, it becomes a mysterious,
awesome, indescribably magnificent world in itself.*

Henry Miller

■ ■ ■

WHAT'S AHEAD?

The basic principles of communication are the foundation of all interpretation. Now that we have a grasp of the generic communication model, let us examine the steps involved with planning specific programs using chosen mediums for target audiences in a particular location. We will examine the basic steps of the planning process and how planning is used to create maximum effectiveness of our messages.

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Module 3

COMMUNICATION

SELF ASSESSMENT

Answer each question in the section below before reviewing the material in *Module 3—Communication*. The answers are not provided. Check your answers with your colleagues and as you read *Module 3—Communication*. Items from the self assessment may be reviewed and discussed in class.

- 1) The primary goal of all communication is to:
 - a) Persuade or change behavior
 - b) Educate the listener
 - c) Transfer a message between two sources
 - d) Solicit a response from the listener

- 2) Research suggests that on average a listener retains _____ percent of what is verbally presented to them.
 - a) 10%
 - b) 30%
 - c) 50%
 - d) 60%

- 3) There are ____ basic steps to the communication process.
 - a) 3
 - b) 4
 - c) 5
 - d) 6

- 4) Which of the following does not usually influence visitors' judgments about an interpreter's credibility?
- a) Height
 - b) Uniform
 - c) Voice
 - d) Body language
- 5) Eye contact is one of the most important indicators of credibility. (Explain your answer.)
- a) True
 - b) False
- 6) The acronym _____ stands for the California State Parks system of establishing and measuring good communication.
- a) COMMUNICATE
 - b) TALK
 - c) RAPPORT
 - d) MESSAGE
- 7) For an interpretive message to reach the audience it should be:
- a) Detailed
 - b) Documented
 - c) Relevant
 - d) A new idea

8) What is a universal concept?

9) There are definitely some inherently boring topics. (Explain your answer.)

a) True

b) False

10) The acronym ADA stands for:

a) All Disabilities Able

b) Americans with Disabilities Act

c) Add Dimensions of Access

d) All Do Attend

11) Which of the following is not used to help organize an oral presentation?

- a) Cognitive map
- b) Transition sentences
- c) Practice
- d) Spatial map

12) What is the difference between a theme and a topic?

13) All interpretive messages are aimed at influencing the visitor. (Explain your answer.)

- a) True
- b) False

- 14) Which type of message is more effective at changing behavior?
- a) Neutral
 - b) Negative
 - c) Positive
 - d) Fear
- 15) You should always tell visitors the reason why you request a particular behavior.
- a) True
 - b) False
- 16) Who developed a six-step hierarchy of needs that is widely used to understand the visitor needs?
- a) B. F. Skinner
 - b) Robert Marshall
 - c) Abraham Maslow
 - d) William Penn Mott Jr.

Now that you have completed the self assessment questions, review the material in *Module 3—Communication* to confirm your answers. After reading the module, move on to the workbook learning activities, which will assist you in developing your skills.

WORKBOOK LEARNING ACTIVITIES

To help you review and apply the material covered in *Module 3—Communication*, a selection of review questions and/or activities is provided. Again, no answers are included. Use the material from the module, outside sources, and your colleagues to help you complete the activities and answer the questions. There may be more than one right answer. Use the questions and activities to generate discussion about the material. Be prepared to discuss, perform or demonstrate your answers in class.

- 1) Which step of the communication process do you think is the most important for a successful interpretive presentation? Why?

- 2) You have been asked to give a presentation to a group of mushroom collectors to explain why they can no longer collect in the park. What can you do to maximize the effectiveness of your message?

- 3) Create a persuasive message that you could use to reduce visitors' desire to touch the marble statues in your historic site.

5) Indicate how you could help visitors relate to each item below.

Topic

Make it relate

A volcanic eruption

it's like shaking a can of soda

The movement of a snake

Ocean waves

The tides

Geologic time

Seasons

Fog

Cultural diversity

Size of a redwood

Depth of the ocean

Earthquakes

Desert plant life

Significance of a tribal dance

Importance of CSP

Role of a ranger

Importance of history

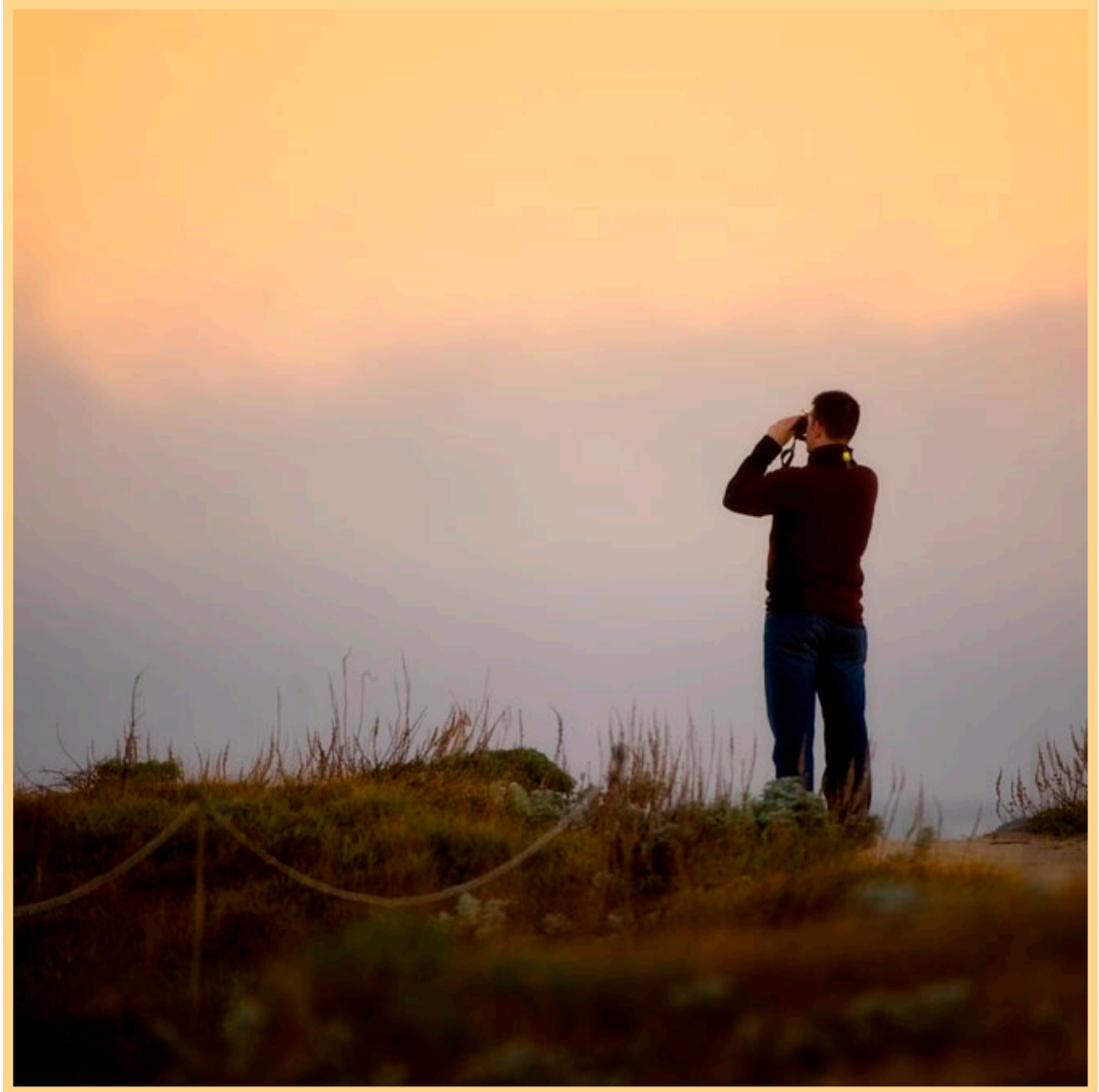
- 2) One of the most important aspects for conducting successful, meaningful interpretation is to know your park. What are the primary critical management issues/concerns that should be interpreted in your park?

- 3) Create a message to address one need from the list above. Identify the need/concern and indicate how your message will help to address it.

4) What types of information and orientation services or programs are currently provided in your park?

5) Using what you've learned from *Module 2—Purpose and Value*, what other types of information and orientation services do you think could be provided in your park?

Module 4
PLANNING



Our plans miscarry because they have no aim. When a man does not know what harbor he is making for, no wind is the right wind.

Marcus Annaeus Seneca

Module 4

PLANNING

What is it?

A systematic approach for developing interpretive projects and programs

Why do we do it?

To create quality interpretive experiences that meet park and visitor needs

How do we do it?

To review, identify needs, research, and organize information

INTRODUCTION

Planning is essential for producing successful interpretation. Even spur of the moment contact with the public should be carefully planned. This involves knowing the park and its resources, studying visitor demographics and motives, and understanding management goals and objectives. With this information, you can create interpretive themes and messages that will meet the needs of both visitors and management, and maximize the inherent characteristics and recreational opportunities presented by the resource. After programs or projects are developed, the final step is to monitor and provide feedback that improves the product or outcome of the program.

Interpretive planning essentially asks and answers a few basic questions: **What do we have in our park? Who is coming and why? What do we need to tell them? What will our facilities, staff, and budget allow us to do? How well did we do?** This module reviews steps in the planning process and discusses how to use them to create successful park interpretive programs.

Planning occurs at many levels. In California State Parks; all park planning starts with the park unit's Statement of Purpose and classification, developed and approved as part of the Classification and Naming process. This guides the park general plan, which is ideally built on by more detailed park-wide interpretation planning. Finally, in line with all the previous planning, an interpretive service plan is developed for each new interpretive program or project. All of these plan levels are influenced by system-wide plans and strategic initiatives. While each level of planning is important, this module focuses exclusively on planning for personal interpretive programs.

(Middle-level interpretation plans have changed names and details through the years. The most recent update of the DOM interpretation chapter calls them the Interpretation Master Plan and Action Plan. You may find documents called Interpretation Plan, Master Interpretation Plan, Strategic Plan for Interpretation, or other names, that fill this role between general plan and interpretive service plan. The park may also have an Interpretive Prospectus that was developed along with the General Plan, but contains more interpretation detail.)

We will present some practical methods and strategies for carrying out effective program planning amid the reality of everyday work.

STEPS FOR PROGRAM PLANNING

Step #1 Research past planning, audience, resources, and management.

Step #2 Identify themes and messages.

Step #3 Design interpretive opportunities.

Step #4 Develop a program.

Step #5 Monitor and provide feedback.

4.1 RESEARCH

Interpreters must know the park and subject matter before they can prepare successful interpretive programs. The logical first step in planning is to conduct research. There are three main elements to be considered in the research phase of the planning process: the resource itself, the visitors and the management. Each element must be considered when choosing a program topic and designing a program.

We will start our discussion of research with the existing interpretation planning foundation. We will then review **what** each main element is—resources, visitors and management, followed by a discussion of **how** to conduct research on that element.

PREVIOUS PARK INTERPRETATION PLANNING

The very first step in planning your program is to identify what park interpretation planning has already been done, and build on that foundation. This serves three important purposes: your program will reinforce and tie in with other park interpretation, creating a more effective interpretive experience for the visitor; your program will help to fulfill previously identified park and system-wide interpretation goals; and (perhaps most important) **you will save substantial time rather than starting from scratch.**

The interpretation planning that actually exists will vary from park to park. Many parks do not yet have interpretation master plans and action plans, since these were only recently defined for California State Parks. Some park units have out-of-date general plans or no general plan at all. Unclassified units do not yet have a statement/declaration of purpose because that is established in the classification and naming process.

Looking over previous research will save you lots of time when developing a new program.



In addition, State Parks' interpretation planning models have changed over time, meaning you will find varying content in different plans of the same name, and plans with different names. Some parks' general plans may only briefly cover interpretation and not provide full themes, goals, or guidelines, while other parks not only have general plans with comprehensive interpretation sections, but also have interpretation master plans and action plans that build on the general plan interpretation sections. General Development Plans from the 1950s and 1960s may be only a drawing or drawings showing planned facilities.

It is your job to find and assess the documents that guide the interpretive services in your park, and determine how much of a foundation you have to build on. What do you do if you find out there is little or no past interpretation planning for your park? You will need to do some additional work in audience, management and resource research, and in developing themes and messages. We will give you more details in the sections on each of these planning aspects.

It is your job to find and assess the documents that guide the interpretive services in your park, and to determine how much of a foundation you have to build on.



Locating Previous Interpretation Planning

The best advice for finding your park's interpretation planning documents used to be, "Look on the bookshelves in park, sector, and district offices; ask your District Interpretive Coordinator for copies of your park's general plan and any interpretive plans; and consult the park's Unit Data File." (For many years each park had a collection of documents on site called the Unit Data File that included all resource inventories, park planning, and other pertinent park documents.) This is still a reasonable place to start, especially if you don't have the best internet connection, but these days you may find a more complete collection in State Parks' Digital Documents Catalog and public website.

Digital Documents Catalog

In 2002, State Parks established a department archives for long-term storage and cataloging of department documents. In 2005 the Archives began developing the Digital Documents Catalog, a searchable collection of electronic documents that can be viewed or downloaded. **The Digital Documents Catalog is often called the UDF, because it functions as an electronic version of the old Unit Data Files for all of the State Park System.** Most of the documents from the archives have been scanned and added to the Digital Documents Catalog, and many more state parks-related documents have been added from other sources.

The Digital Documents Catalog is accessed via the State Parks Intranet site. You can search for documents specifically related to your park, and even narrow the search using key words and document types.

All current general plans are in the Digital Documents Catalog, and Archives has made a concerted effort to locate, scan, and upload all other park planning, including interpretive plans. Other State Parks employees have contributed resource inventories, historic structures reports, oral history transcripts, and many other types of useful research documents. Though its contents are continually growing, the Digital Documents Catalog still does not contain every State Parks document ever written, and contributions vary widely between park units. Therefore, it is still a good idea to check those bookshelves and file cabinets for hardcopy documents. If you find anything that is not already in the Digital Documents Catalog, contact the department archives to add it for others' use.

It is also important to remember that you may find documents in the Digital Documents Catalog that are interesting and valuable historically, but are not the most recent planning or most up-to-date research for your park. Evaluate the documents you find, and check on their current relevance with park planning and resource specialists.

Public Website

The California State Parks public website provides access to purpose statements and all current general plans on the Planning Division's pages. There is also information on general plans under development, which may include resource inventories and draft interpretation planning.

Also available on the Planning Division's pages are statewide planning documents. These will be useful for the management element of your research. They will give you information on the department's statewide goals and strategic initiatives that your program helps achieve.

The Interpretation and Education Division's pages on the public site do not provide access to past interpretive plans, but do include a number of manuals and workbooks that will help your planning effort.

RESOURCES

Why is it protected?

What is so special about this place?

Why is it important?

Natural, cultural and recreational resources are the most important of the three elements—resources, visitors, management—identified above as the basis for interpretation planning. Interpretation is, after all, a communication process designed to help visitors connect with the resources. But which resources? You should not choose just any resource that happens to be in the park or that interests you. Start by finding out your park's significant resources. The significant resources determine the park's **interpretive significance**.

Park Interpretive Significance: The special resources and stories represented at the park that have been identified as important topics for park interpretation.

California State Parks Planning Handbook. April 2010. p. 120.

You will be conducting resource research at two different times in the planning process. The first time you research resources, you will identify the significant resources in order to help you choose an appropriate program topic. Later on, after you have chosen the topic, you will conduct more in-depth resource research just on that topic. For convenience, we cover both resource research phases in this section, since you will be using some of the same sources for both.

Determining Interpretive Significance

The first place to look for interpretive significance is in the existing interpretive planning. The most recent general plans and Interpretation Master Plans include a formal Park Interpretive Significance statement that will tell you what topics have already been identified as the most important for park interpretation. In other general plans and long-range park interpretive plans, the themes or narrative about planned interpretation identify the significant resources to interpret.

If none of these planning documents exist, look to the park's Statement/Declaration of Purpose. If none of these planning documents exist, you will identify significant resources by conducting more resource research, especially by perusing previously compiled resource inventories.

Extensive Resource Research

If you are unfamiliar with your park's resources, you cannot connect visitors to them. As

an interpreter, you must have the most current and accurate resource information to build credibility with the audience and to build their experience of the resources.

Since State Parks' mission is resource-based, department resource specialists have gathered at least some resource data for every state park unit, and many parks have decades of resource information already compiled. Resource inventories probably already exist for your park. The park's Interpretation Master Plan, general plan and naming and classification documentation should contain information from resource inventories, edited to include only the most significant information. Look for these, and more recent resource inventories, as resource specialists have compiled valuable observations and research in these files. They are excellent reference tools, especially if recently completed. The information in resource inventories will also help you determine interpretive significance, if you did not have sufficient data available in planning documents.

On the following pages we describe common categories of information that are examined when identifying significant park resources.

Natural Resources

Natural resources include much more than plants and animals. Any of the following may be significant natural resources in your park unit:

- **Climate** (*rainfall, snowfall, temperature, etc.*)
- **Park Elevations**
- **Dominant Vegetation**
- **Primary Animals** (*terrestrial and aquatic; vertebrate and invertebrate*)
- **Rare, Threatened, Or Endangered Species**
- **Species of Special Concern**
- **Water Sources** in number and size (*lakes, rivers, creeks, ocean, etc.*)
- **Habitat Types**
- **Unique or Seasonal Features** (*flower blooms, grunion runs, whale or monarch migrations, etc.*)
- **Park Superlatives** (*the biggest, oldest, tallest, etc.*)
- **Historical Changes** in flora or fauna numbers, patterns, and distribution (*non-native species, decline of plants or animals, etc.*)
- **Natural Hazards** (*poison oak, rattlesnakes, etc.*)
- **Geologic Features** (*parent rock, fossil beds, etc.*)
- **Geological Development & History** (*erosion, soil horizons, rock outcroppings, etc.*)
- **Significant Geological Events** (*eruptions, earthquakes, etc.*)
- **Relationships Between Geological, Biological, and Cultural Elements**



Natural resources include much more than plants and animals, especially at parks like Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, where geological and paleontological resources are visible.

Cultural Resources

Cultural resource inventories identify the significant human activities that have taken place within park boundaries and the surrounding area. These resources may be as significant as the reason the park itself was protected or they may be events and activities that have been overlooked, even at frequently visited sites. Often parks protected for their natural resources have important human history, including the history of how and why the park was protected.

Look for information on the following in plans and inventories when researching cultural resources:

- **Cultural Groups** associated with the park and region—past and present
- **Historic Events** and their significance
- **Historic Highlights** from relevant cultural groups
- **Significance of Park Resources** for individuals or groups in/near the park
- **Existing Historic Structures** (*cabins, forts, building ruins, Civilian Conservation Corps sites, etc.*)
- **Cultural Landscapes** (*bedrock mortars, period landscaping, traditional uses of an area*)
- **Significant Cultural Places** (*battlefields, sites of historic events, homestead sites, etc.*)

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Cultural and natural resources are silent unless interpretation gives them a voice.

Department Operations Manual,
Section 0902

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- **Transportation Corridors** (*trails, toll roads, skid roads, railroad rights-of-ways, bridges, historic highways*)
- **Archaeological Sites and Associated Artifacts**
- **Historical Collections** associated with the park and its people (*diaries, letters, photographs, furniture, furnishings, tools, equipment*)
- **Cultural Practices** (*daily life activities*)
- **Seasonal Celebrations and Events** (*brush dance, battle reenactments, harvest activities, etc.*)
- **Historic Changes In Makeup and Distribution of Population(s)**

INTERPRETING NATIVE CALIFORNIA INDIANS POLICY

Formal consultation is required when presenting the story of Native California Indian people. This policy is detailed in the Native American Consultation Policy and Implementation Procedures in DOM 0400, Cultural Resources. In addition, any brochures, signs or other interpretive products should be developed in full consultation with your park's tribal liaisons. Find out from your park or district resource specialists the process and people you should consult with before presenting another group's culture and stories to the public.



Cultural resources include physical objects, structures and sites, and the history and people connected with them.

Recreational Resources

The use of recreational resources as a springboard for interpretation is becoming more popular all the time. Your park may have a recreational resource inventory you can use for research, and the general plan will include at least some recreation resource information. The more recent general plans include more information in this area; the list below was developed from the 2010 general plan specifications. Interpretation Master Plans also usually include recreation resource information. The Recreation Section of the Planning Division has helpful information on recreation trends and patterns available on the Planning Division web pages. Consider the following when researching significant recreational resources:

- **Recreational Facilities** (*trails, roads, picnic areas, campgrounds, visitor centers, beach improvements, etc.*)
- **Primary Visitor Activities** (*camping, sightseeing, hiking, bicycling, equestrian use, picnicking, observing wildlife, wildflower viewing, off-road vehicle recreation, surfing, climbing, fishing, swimming, etc., including information on how, when and where visitors can do these activities, and any rules or regulations*)
- **Primary Visitor Destinations** (*such as popular trails and roads, beaches, ponds, peaks, campgrounds, cultural resource sites*)
- **Park Visitor Information** (*numbers and demographics, seasonal use patterns*)
- **Visitor Experience** (*Beach crowded or not on most summer days? What kinds of views can be seen from the peaks? Will hikers experience solitude?*)
- **Wilderness Values and Experiences**—if state-designated wilderness or remote backcountry (*amount of wilderness and when designated, natural and scenic values, any specific rules, recreation information for wilderness as above.*)
- **Significant Cultural Places** (*battlefields, sites of historic events, homestead sites, etc.*)
- **Significant Natural Places** (*unusual, rare, or especially abundant natural resources, such as rare animals and plants, unusual geological formations, good birding or other wildlife viewing spots, or prolific wildflower displays.*)
- **Significant Scenic/Aesthetic Places** (*Places that, though not otherwise notable natural or cultural resources, attract visitors because of their special scenic or aesthetic value. Examples are viewpoints, picturesque lakes or ponds, and rugged rock formations.*)
- **Compatibility of Current Recreational Uses** (*Any history of compatibility issues with unit designation, park resources or other user groups?*)
- **Recreation Trends** (*Any emerging recreation activities which may be popular in the park in the future, with analysis of their compatibility with the park?*)



Recreational resources can inspire visitors to become stewards with a little help from an interpreter

METHODS FOR COLLECTING AND ORGANIZING RESOURCE INFORMATION

Information can be found through a number of sources. In fact, it is easy to become lost or overwhelmed in the process! Start by organizing your thoughts as a working outline, or develop an initial theme for your program. Figure out what you know and what you would like to know. What will visitors need to know in order to understand your overall message? This may include, but not be limited to:

- The identification of resources—plants, animals, historic sites, building styles, collections
- Factual points—names, dates, events
- Resource issues—natural processes, implication of human activities
- Cultural perspectives—multiple points of view, cultural practices

By narrowing your search around an initial theme, it will be easier to find the right information.

As in all the other research steps, before you delve into original primary research, review existing documents. Find out whether the information you need has already been collected, and if so, by whom. This will save time and may lead you to some surprising information.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- Current and former park staff
- Unit files and unit histories
- Resource specialists, e.g. historians, biologists, archeologists, recreation planners.
- Historic Structures Reports
- General Plans
- Interpretive Plans
- Furnishing Plans
- Department Resource Inventories
- California State Parks Photographic Archives
- Park and local libraries
- Local and regional museums, historical societies
- California State Library
- California State Archives
- Online Archives of California
- Books, research journals, newspapers, reliable web pages, etc.
- Scope of collections statements
- Teacher's guides
- Artifact collection reports
- City, county, or state property records
- California State Parks Archives and Digital Documents Catalog
- University libraries

When collecting resource information, remember there are basically two types of data—**primary** and **secondary**. **Primary sources** are materials that originated *directly from the person or historical event in question*. Typically, this primary information exists in the form of letters, personal diaries, interviews, speeches, personal narratives, eyewitness accounts, contemporaneous newspaper articles, and autobiographies. Legal documents such as birth certificates, death certificates, marriage certificates, or census records also qualify as primary sources. Historical artifacts and works of art can usually also be considered primary sources.

Secondary sources are materials whose purpose is *to interpret and analyze primary sources*. This can include text from persons during the period in question that were not eyewitnesses to the person or event as well as historians that have studied the same person or event hundreds of years later. Secondary sources can usually be found in the form of textbooks, histories, academic articles, reference materials and biographies.

It should also be noted that many secondary sources, especially books written by historians, often contain quotes, legal information, or photographs that are themselves

considered to be primary sources. Both primary and secondary sources may contain bias (and thus may contain inaccurate or exaggerated information), so it is up to the researcher to determine the validity of information in either case, usually by checking other sources to clarify or disprove inconsistencies. In gathering materials for an interpretive program, it is important to be as honest and as objective as possible. Do not assume the material you are examining is factual, tasteful, logical, well-designed, organized, up-to-date, unique, or typical of the period. Also remember, not everything has been recorded or saved.

WHEN ARE NEWSPAPER ARTICLES PRIMARY SOURCES?

Contemporaneous newspaper articles may or may not be good primary sources. (Consider the famous “Dewey Defeats Truman” headline in the *Chicago Tribune*, November 1948) In many cases, they should be considered secondary sources written near the time of the event, because they are written based on others’ accounts. Newspaper reports may contain inaccuracies introduced by writers or editors who don’t understand the topic or delete important information. Anyone ever interviewed for a newspaper knows that paraphrases and misquotes are common. But sometimes newspaper articles are the best contemporary account we have of an event. Eyewitness accounts are especially valuable.

Newspaper articles written long after the event, based on the reporter’s research, definitely are secondary—not primary—sources. Consider the source: is it the *New York Times* or the *Weekly Local Shopper*? Writers’ research skills vary, especially in small local papers where information is not carefully checked for accuracy.

As with other types of sources, always verify newspaper articles with two other sources if available.

You may need to gather some information for your program on site. Reviewing previous inventories and research efforts will help to promote familiarity and knowledge of the park’s resources. Develop regular procedures for conducting your research. Be sure to keep track of authors, titles, dates, record books, including any details about the information and where it came from. Record the data you collect in a systematic manner. Be neat! You or someone else may have to refer to this information again.

Tips for Collecting Data On Site

- **Visit** the site at different times of the day, week, month and season.
- **Use** a camera to photograph and note special or unusual resources; photograph from several perspectives.
- **Record** and date all observations, and label photographs.
- **Note** conditions under which observations were made.
- **Take care** not to alter any historical or cultural resources.
- **Use** field guides to verify species, architectural details, etc.
- **Call** in an expert if identification is in question.
- **Indicate** any resources too fragile to withstand visitor use or traffic.

Tips for Conducting Research

- **Apply the rule of three**—Try to avoid using information in a program that cannot be verified by three different original sources. This reduces the potential for inaccuracy or misinformation in programs. However, sometimes there is only one source. In that case, if it's important to include the information, it is best to give the source of the unverified information when you refer to it. For example, you could say, "Joe Smith wrote to a friend in 1927 that 'Harry Jones is chopping down redwoods inside the park boundaries.'"
- **Use current sources**—Utilize the most up-to-date information. Science is changing and theories develop as scientists test and learn new facts. Current information and perspectives on historical events evolve. Be aware of the dates and perspectives of your sources.
- **Know the source**—Part of evaluating the credibility of information is to understand the source of the information. Is it from a reputable source? What makes it reliable? Perspectives may differ widely on issues, facts, science, and history and how they may impact the slant of the story.
- **Use the internet—wisely.** There is a wealth of valuable information on the internet. Many of the sources listed above can be found on the internet, and are usually more up-to-date on the web than print versions. The California State Parks public website is your best resource for general plans and statements of purpose. Libraries, newspapers, museums, universities and government agencies supply many documents only via the internet. Remember, just as with books and magazines, there are also many less reliable

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If you fail to plan, plan to fail

James Fazio and
Douglas Gilbert

■ ■ ■

web pages where information is not peer-reviewed. Use the same rules you would with printed materials: use current sources, know the sources, verify facts with different original sources, and keep good notes.

- **Keep good notes**—Record the source of your information. Keep notes from your research in an organized, consistent and systematic manner. The information you gather will create usable data for present and future interpretation.

AUDIENCE

Who is coming?

Why are they coming?

What do they want when they get here?

Knowing your resource is one part of the interpretive equation. Knowing your audience is the second. Your park visitors are the primary force behind interpretation. Our programs must meet the needs of our constituents and visitors. There are many “audiences” to consider. The visiting public and the local community are two of our primary concerns.

First, in order to meet their needs and satisfy their expectations, we must know who is coming and why, as well as who is **not** coming and why (Veverka, 1994). We should find out if an audience segment is not participating because of a lack of relevant services, facilities, programs, or outreach (Knudson, Cable, and Beck, 1995). When we understand what motivates their visit, we can examine what they do in the park. With this information we can create and deliver more effective programs. Let us review the primary aspects of an audience, as well as recommended methods for conducting research about them.



School groups make up a majority of visitors to some sites, while others may attract completely different audiences

The visiting public: who is coming?

Analysis of our visiting public includes an examination of demographics, motivations, activity participation, and use levels. Each of these will be discussed, followed by a section on methods and sources for collecting visitor data.

Demographics

Demographic data can be very useful in program design. Consider how your program offerings would vary if your visiting public were primarily families with young children versus adult groups with no children. What if the majority of your users were elderly? The educational levels of your audience can affect the information included in your programs. A visitor's place of residence and previous site experience, as well as prior knowledge about the site, the resources within the park, and the history and culture of the area will affect how your program will be received and therefore how it should be planned. Cultural associations or ethnic background information can be helpful in deciding what interpretive facilities, programs, topics, and recreational opportunities should be offered.

HELPFUL DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

- **Gender**
 - **Age**
 - **Group structure** (family, adult groups with no children, single, etc.)
 - **Place of residence** (local versus non-local, in-state versus out-of-state, foreign, etc.)
 - **Education level**
 - **Cultural or ethnic identification**
 - **Previous site experience**
-

Motivations

As you know by now, to prepare programs that meet needs and make lasting connections for your visitors, you will need to understand their needs, expectations, and motives. By understanding what motivates visitors to come to your park and seek out interpretation, you will be able to choose strategies and methodologies to reach them. There has been a lot of research conducted on why visitors come to parks and natural areas. Consider how each of these motivations would impact your program design.

Table 4.1

Motivations for Visiting Parks

- **Curiosity**—Many visitors simply are curious about something that they have heard, seen, or read about. These visitors are primed to be “turned on” to the park and its resources. Usually their expectations are not specific and their needs are not well formed. They are more open than visitors with specific expectations.
- **Meaning**—Visitors often come seeking meaning. It comes in many forms. Social meaning includes paying homage to natural wonders or a cultural heritage site, gaining a sense of nationalism, or exploring family history and roots. Other meanings are highly individualized, arising from personal experiences, memories, special events, spiritual associations, or eras in one’s lifetime. For example, a park might hold special memories because of a high school class visit.
- **Socialize/Belonging**—Most visitors come in groups, seeking social experiences that are rewarding, gratifying, and non-judgmental. Most visitors assume that others probably share similar values, beliefs, and attitudes. This makes the social experience a rewarding one. Programs with activities that allow visitors to talk to one another and share their experiences help fulfill this desire to socialize.
- **Escape**—Some visitors come as a means to escape everyday work, stress, stimuli, etc. They seek sensory input that is apart from their usual day. They desire natural or cultural stimuli that are slower, more predictable, or different from their usual surroundings.
- **See the Real Thing**—Many parks have attractions that draw visitors to “come see it for themselves.” For example, many visitors who come to the redwoods are motivated to “see the trees for themselves.” Similarly, historical and cultural sites often draw visitors who want to pay homage to a significant place, person, event, or thing.
- **Enjoyment**—Many visit just to have a good time. Interpretive programs should always strive to increase visitor enjoyment of their recreational experience.
- **Esteem/confidence**—Some visitors are motivated to “prove themselves” through a recreational experience. They like to match competency levels with challenges and seek situations most likely to provide a rewarding experience. Advertisements of these programs should indicate the level of difficulty for an activity. This is an essential component for visitors motivated to build esteem or confidence.

Source: Carolyn Widner Ward and Alan E. Wilkinson, *Conducting Meaningful Interpretation: A Field Guide for Success* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2006), 57.

USE AND ACTIVITY PATTERNS

As you begin to plan, you will want to understand what visitors do and where they go when they are in the park. This is relatively easy and useful data to collect. Park use levels at trails, parking lots, visitor centers, boat ramps, contact/entrance stations, etc. should **all** be included when gathering data. This information will show you times, location, density, and frequency of visits. **Park use level** information can be consolidated with **program use level** data to paint a fairly accurate picture of visitor activities in the park.

Information should also be gathered on how visitors use their time in the park. You can use this information to tailor programs to meet specific activity preferences. “Visitation use patterns allow you to see when your site and services are most in demand” (Veverka, 1994, p. 53). For example, if 50 percent of users ride bikes, offering an interpretive bike program would likely meet visitor needs. If your visitors are all out on the lake during the day, this information would suggest that some of the programs should be conducted on the lake.



Some visitors are motivated to visit parks so they can see the “real” thing. What is your potential audience looking for?

Methods for Collecting Visitor Data

Before you go to the effort to gather visitor data, check if any professional visitor studies have already been completed for your park. Visitor studies may have been conducted in the process of developing a General Plan, Interpretation Master Plan or interpretive services plan. Check on the Digital Documents File (or UDF) and with the District Interpretive Coordinator for any recent plans or other visitor studies. Also check the State Park Visitor Survey conducted by the Recreation Section of State Parks' Planning Division in 2007-2009, available on the intranet at http://isearch.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=1143. This professionally-conducted survey was focused on recreation, but is a good source of visitor demographics data for interpretation as well.

If no visitor studies are available, you can collect some of this data yourself. Just as with other research, you can collect either primary or secondary data on your park visitors. There are two **primary data collection methods**: observation and self-report. Observation

data involves watching visitor activities in a setting to determine use patterns and demographics. Simple observation will identify visitor-use types, but not necessarily their motivations. Self-report data collection asks visitors questions and their replies provide the information.

Observation

Observing visitors is informative. The challenge is to pick days and times randomly to observe the place, activity type, etc. Focus on one place, activity, or attraction at a time. Your goal is to identify use patterns over time. You must observe the phenomenon long enough and at a variety of times in order to gain accurate insights. In addition, you must be discreet. Visitors who think they are being watched may change their behavior.

Program attendance is easy to calculate and priceless when it comes to understanding program-specific patterns of use. Over time, you will see variations in attendance, depending on the time of day, day of the week, program topics, etc. This information is invaluable for modifying program offerings. Basic demographic data, combined with attendance levels, can paint a very useful picture of the target audience for each program.

CHECK-EM OUT!

- Count license plates on cars and note the place of origin (state, country, or province). *This can give some indication of how far visitors have traveled.*
- Collect information on the basic group structure of visitors coming to your programs. *This is most easily done in a parking lot before the group splits up to participate in different activities.*
- Conduct trailhead counts to determine the number and types of users.
- Observe visitor center use patterns, frequency and flow to identify which exhibits/signs are the most popular, how traffic flow can be improved, and when most visitors are in the center. *Perhaps a roving presence would be valuable for this data collection.*

Self-report

There are many types of self-report data collection methods. One of the most commonly used self-report data collection methods is surveys. All survey data is self-report data because we are asking the visitor to give us the information. While conducting a survey may seem simple—write some questions, ask some people to answer the questions, and then tally the results—there is much more to it than that. To gather reliable data that can be generalized to a larger group you have to know what questions you want answered,

ask them in the right way so the results aren't biased, survey a large group of people that statistically represents your desired audience, and scientifically analyze the results to minimize error. Properly writing, administering and analyzing surveys to produce solid results requires college-level social science survey design and statistics courses. A simple survey you put together yourself can provide some important leads on visitor informational wants and needs, but don't put too much weight on its conclusions.

Secondary data collection regarding visitor demographics, use, and motivations involves using information that has already been collected and compiled, but not specifically as a park visitor study. Information may already be available on your target audiences through local and state government statistics on family/household expenditures, life-style groups, chambers of commerce, and specialized publications on marketing, which provide information on interests and attitudes of different groups. Although perhaps not as accurate a reflection of users as primary data, secondary data sources may provide good information and be the first choice for interpreters. **The main reason to use secondary data is the ease of acquiring it. It is quicker, cheaper, and requires less skill and expertise to collect than primary data.** Secondary data on the demographics of the area near your park will also provide you with information on who is *not* visiting the park or participating in interpretive programs. Using secondary data is often the practical option for many interpreters.

ANOTHER HELPFUL TECHNIQUE

Your first trip—Knudson, Cable, and Beck (1995) recommend using **your** first trip to the park to begin to understand the visitor. This only works in the first week or so on the job, so do not miss the opportunity. When you first arrive on site keep notes.

- What do you notice first?
- What attracts your attention?
- What needs do you have as you enter the park? *e.g., restroom, campsite, orientation/assistance*
- What, if any, are your immediate safety concerns?
- What features in the park do you want to explore first?

Many of the things that you noticed or were of concern to you will also be in the forefront of visitors' minds.

THE LOCAL COMMUNITY: WHO IS NOT COMING?

As you assess local public needs for programs and services, it is also important to ask yourself, “Who is *not* coming?” We want to be sure that participation is not limited because of the lack of appropriate facilities, programs, or services. Trying to assess who is not coming is a very difficult task. The only practical way to answer this question is through the use of secondary data collection about the local general public. This can also be asked of potential visitors from outside the area.

There are two benefits for conducting this type of research. First, by using census data and local (county, city) statistics about the population, you can determine whether park visitor demographics match community demographics. This will give you an idea of groups that may not be using park facilities.

The second key benefit is to help you understand the characteristics of your local community. Are there needs that your park’s programs are not addressing? You can then target interpretation in the form of school programs, outreach events, and other special off-site activities to people who may not be visiting the park.

Methods for collecting local community data

The methods for collecting this type of data are similar to those previously mentioned. When you conduct a primary data collection survey of the local public, include items such as: 1) current activity participation levels and types; 2) demographic data; 3) needs and skill level information; 4) attitudes, beliefs, and values regarding relevant issues; and 5) management preferences, opinions, and issues. Although you may not have the time or skill necessary to conduct your own public survey, you can easily obtain much of this information through data sources such as the Federal census, almanacs, and social indicator data. Another extremely good source of demographic data is the California Department of Finance’s (DOF) Demographic Research Unit.



Community outreach includes school visits, fairs, and other off-site lectures and events.

The best ways to access the US Census Bureau and DOF demographic data are via their websites:

<http://www.dof.ca.gov/research/demographic/>

<http://www.census.gov/>

MANAGEMENT

Management must be included in the research phase of the planning process. To create interpretive programs that support management goals and objectives, you must know and understand them. In addition, a review of the park's current methods for communication, topics covered, facilities, trails, and locations used for programming is essential. Considering these elements will help to ensure the appropriate use of resources in concert with the overall mission of the agency.


The organizational framework

Knowing the purpose and guiding framework of the organization will determine the direction of the interpretive services provided by the park. An organization's framework is made up of mission, vision, goals and objectives statements.

The legal charter of California State Parks, as required by the Public Resources Code and the California Code of Regulations among others, calls for it to:

...administer, protect, provide for recreational opportunity, and develop the State Park System; to interpret the values of the State Park System to the public; to operate the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Program; to administer the California Historical Resources Protection Program; and to administer federal and state grants and bond funds to local agencies.

A mission statement was developed from the original legislation that created our Department.



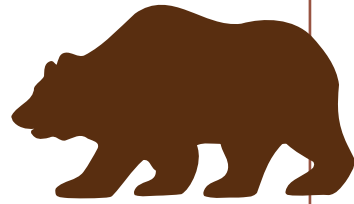
MISSION

The mission of California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration, and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

The mission of the organization states the values that express the enduring ideals, or beliefs, shared by State Parks employees. A vision is also part of the organizational structure, guiding programs within parks. A vision outlines future goals and aspirations. Our organization also has a vision statement:

VISION

California State Parks will be the recognized leader in the park and recreation field—skilled stewards of resources, technologically wise, and relevant to all Californians.



An organizational framework guides the California State Park System. Within this structure, each individual park may also have its own goals and objectives that fall within the overall mission of the Department. Effective interpretive programs understand and convey the mission and vision. Actual written organizational frameworks vary from park to park.

Table 4.2

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The Strategic Initiatives are the implementation strategy for our Vision:

- Increase diversity.
- Increase leadership in parks and recreation.
- Focus on cultural resources.
- Utilize technology.
- Increase leadership in natural resource management.
- Develop a new image.
- Create an urban connection.
- Expand recreational opportunities.

Adapted from *The Seventh Generation: The Strategic Vision of California State Parks*, 2001.

CURRENT PROGRAM OFFERINGS

After you understand the guiding framework for interpretation, examine the current status of interpretive services. Before creating a new program, ask, what has been done? What is offered, when, where, and for whom? A recently completed general plan or interpretive master plan will be the best source of this information, and will include recommendations on what types of programs should be offered in the future. Your District Interpretive Coordinator can also provide information.

You may have to gather some data on current and past programming yourself. If you are choosing the type of program to present, where, when, and to whom, examine:

- What types of programs are being offered? (Audiovisual, talk, hike, tour, etc.)
- What times of day or evening are they offered?
- Where are they held?
- Who is the target audience? (Children, adults, birders, school groups, seniors, etc.)
- How many and what kind of children's programs?
- What topics are being addressed?
- What park goals and objectives are addressed?

- How well attended are the different programs?
- How well received were they?

These will then guide the choices for programs to be offered in the future.

Some of these elements may have already been decided for you, but others must still be considered for a well-planned program. Even if your supervisor has tasked you with developing a new campfire program for families, leaving little flexibility in program type, audience, and time, you still need to look at what media have been used in campfire programs in the past, what topics and themes are already regularly addressed, and what media and methods audiences most appreciated.

Facilities, Equipment, Materials, and Supplies

Once you know your topic and audience, and you've had an idea of what kinds of programs are popular and what kind might be missing, take a look around at the facilities, equipment, materials, and supplies available to you. Is there a visitor center? What about an amphitheater? How many people does it seat? Is there a facility available to show digital images or slides? What type of interpretive equipment and supplies do you have? Do you have a facility to conduct programs protected from inclement weather? These and other questions are critical for determining what types of programs you can offer and where. Together they form the infrastructure supporting interpretation. For example, developing an interpretive slide program would not be an appropriate approach if there was no facility in which to show slides or if there was no equipment available to use for the program.



Amphitheaters, historic buildings, and covered picnic shelters are facilities that support interpretive programming.

INVENTORYING TOOLS OF THE TRADE

- **Facilities**—Physical structures in the park (e.g., campfire center, visitor center, trails, historic buildings, classrooms)
 - **Equipment**—Typically things that can be used over and over again (e.g. digital projector, screen, camera, computer, video/DVD player, sound equipment)
 - **Materials**—Not as durable as equipment, but not as quickly consumed as supplies (e.g. field guides, props, slides, period attire, specimens)
 - **Supplies**—Things that can be consumed (e.g. glue, tape, batteries)
-

You will also need to know the financial resources available to supplement or replace existing equipment and supplies. What is your park's interpretive budget? Plan ahead for needs. At the end of the fiscal year if funds become available, do you have a list of your needs ready? Is there an interpretive cooperating association working within your park? These nonprofit associations can assist interpreters by acquiring needed equipment, materials, and supplies.

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It's easy to come up with new ideas; the hard part is letting go of what worked for you two years ago, but will soon be out-of-date.

John Veverka

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Methods for Collecting Management Data

Start collecting management information by seeking data from existing documents, including the park's general plan and interpretation planning that you gathered earlier, park resource management plans, and reports on resource or other park issues. Ask district resource specialists if there are significant resource issues that can be addressed through interpretation, such as attracting corvids by feeding wildlife, or damaging trails by cutting corners. Identify statewide goals and objectives in statewide planning documents such as the *State Park System Plan* and *The Seventh Generation* (available on the Planning Division's web pages). Find out more by talking with your District Interpretive Coordinator or the Interpretation and Education Division staff. They can help you identify additional statewide and regional goals and objectives.

Table 4.3

SOURCES OF MANAGEMENT DATA
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Department mission statement• Organizational framework• <i>The Seventh Generation</i> strategic initiatives• Park-specific legislation (if any)• Naming and Classification documents• Statement/Declaration of Purpose• General plan and amendments• Interpretation Master Plan/Action Plan/ Interpretive Prospectus/other interpretation plans• Scope of collections statement• Resource management plans and reports• CAMP Interpretation Data• RAPPORT evaluations

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*Interpretation is aimed at “meaning making”
not merely entertaining fact giving.*

Sam Ham

■ ■ ■

4.2 IDENTIFYING TOPICS, THEMES AND MESSAGES

Who—is or is not coming to your park?

What—is special about the resource?

Why—is the resource important?

What—are the management objectives?

What—should the visitor remember about the resource?

Why—should the visitor care about the resource?

Thinking about all the information you've gathered...what stories should you tell? After initial research is completed, the next step in the planning process is to create the message you want to deliver to the public. Your research should have revealed what is special about the resource, why it was protected, what the management objectives are, topics and themes identified for the resource, and who is or is not coming. This information provides the structure for creating the messages that should be delivered and how they should be targeted.

Once you have completed the research you will be ready to develop an interpretive theme. A theme will have a complete sentence that states the overall message for your program. More information on theme development will be discussed in the next chapter. Each of you will arrive at different objectives and themes, even if you are addressing the same goal, because you will be fitting your message to your own style and interests, and to those of your particular audience.

4.3 DESIGNING INTERPRETIVE OPPORTUNITIES

How should messages be provided to the public?

How can programs best meet park goals and objectives?

In the next phase of the program planning process you'll determine the best way to deliver your interpretive message. What is the best way to convey the message to your target audiences while meeting the overall goals and objectives of the park? Below is an example that shows how an interpretive opportunity can be created to meet a management goal, using the planning steps discussed thus far.

Putting it All Together: Creating an Interpretive Opportunity

Step 1—Research

Natural data—Tide pool animals were identified and populations calculated and reviewed for resistance and resilience to handling by visitors. It was found that sea anemone numbers declined drastically during heavy visitor use months.

Visitor data—Surveys revealed that most visitors to the park come to see and experience the tide pools. Only 14 percent of the visitors attended formal tide pool interpretive programs.

Management data—The tide pool resources were one of the primary reasons the park was protected. One of the general plan natural resource goals is to reduce visitor impacts to the tide pools. Two formal programs per week are conducted on tide pools, and this is when resource protection messages are currently given.

Step 2—Themes and Messages

One of the primary themes in the park's general plan is "tide pools are fragile resources that need to be protected." Given the research that indicates a resource management problem—the sea anemones are disappearing—the park's Interpretation Master Plan and Interpretation Action Plan identify interpretation reinforcing this theme as a park priority.

Step 3—Interpretive Opportunity

Given the low attendance at the current tide pool programs and the continued damage to the resource, the Interpretation Master Plan identifies the need for a new interpretive opportunity. One of the recommendations is a roving interpretation presence on site at the tide pools during peak use hours and days (see *Module 10—Roving*). The roving program's goal will be to help visitors appreciate tide pools and understand their fragile nature, so they are inspired to protect them.

PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The previous example demonstrates how the steps of the process begin to fit together. Once program goals are outlined, it is time to develop objectives and identify target audiences. In the previous example, the program's goal is to protect the fragile tide pools from visitor abuse. Just as with park objectives, you'll need to specifically outline how program objectives will be accomplished.

Objectives for interpretive programs may fall into three categories: **behavioral**, **cognitive**, and **affective**. **Thinking back to *Module 2—Purpose and Value*, interpretive programs should influence behavior (behavioral objectives), increase knowledge levels (cognitive objectives), or reach emotions (affective objectives).** Park needs and goals often determine the types of objectives programs target. An interpretive program can target all three objectives simultaneously. Let us take a look at an example:

GOAL: PROTECT THE PARK'S TIDE POOLS

- **Behavioral objective**—*In June 2003, resource inventories conducted during a week with roving interpretive programs will show a 50 percent reduction in sea anemones dislodged from the tide pools when compared to a week without a roving on-site presence.*
- **Cognitive objectives**—*In June 2003, when exiting the site, 50 percent of randomly surveyed visitors exposed to on-site roving will be able to correctly identify two ways to protect tide pool resources.*
- **Affective objective**—*In June 2003, 50 percent of visitors exposed to on site roving park tide pool programs will indicate positive support for tide pool protection.*

WRITING OBJECTIVES: A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH

When you write your objective, you'll want to make it specific, time limited, measurable, and have clearly stated standards for achievement. If an objective is not measurable, it ends up being very similar to a goal. It needs to be a step you're taking to reach the goal. If it is not quantifiable, you'll never know if you've reached your goal.

The acronym **WAMS** will assist in writing good measurable objectives. It stands for **When, Audience, Method, and Standard**. When will the evaluation take place? Who is the target audience? What method will be used to evaluate success? And what is the standard to measure success or failure? Using the WAMS method prevents writing objectives that are not measurable.

Writing Program Objectives — WAMS

Identified Message

The remaining coastal redwoods should be protected and preserved.

Program Goal

Create a program that increases awareness of and support for the preservation of the redwoods.

Program Objectives

Objective #1: *During a fun quiz on the hike back from an interpretive walk, at least 50 percent of visitors will be able to identify two reasons why redwoods should be protected.*

When = during the hike back

Audience = walk participants

Method = a quiz

Standard = 50 percent will identify two reasons why redwoods should be protected

Objective #2: *When offered a Save the Redwoods League membership application at the end of the talk, at least 10 percent of visitors will take one.*

When = end of the talk

Audience = walk participants

Method = offer a membership form

Standard = 10 percent will take one

TARGET AUDIENCES

Remember when you gathered all that information about your park users and non-users? This is where you can put it to work. For example, you should know from your research the kind of audiences that typically attend various programs, the characteristics of the local population, and what populations are not currently being addressed through program offerings. Use this information to identify target audiences for your future programs. Although we do not often limit programs to certain audience types, we can do some things to promote participation by certain groups. For example, the time of day programs are offered may impact whether or not local families would be able to participate.

REACHING YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

- Where programs are advertised
 - How programs are advertised
 - When programs are offered
 - Where programs are conducted
 - Program topics
 - Program length
 - Type of program
-

Although you'll work to gain the interest of your target audience, it is hard to predict who will attend. Be sure that your program is flexible enough to be modified at the last minute to accommodate whoever shows up.

There are some **special** audiences to consider when designing programs. These audiences introduce special concerns, needs, and issues. Teenagers, children, elderly, and people with disabilities are among some of the groups of special concern when program planning. Below is an introduction to these groups and what might make members of them special in an interpretive setting. Refer to the state park's training manual *All Visitors Welcome* for in-depth information that will help you better meet the needs of these visitors. *All Visitors Welcome* (Porter, 1994, rev. 2011)

Teenagers

Teenagers are a special group because of their emotional, cognitive, and social developmental stage (Grinder and McCoy, 1985; Knudson, et al., 1995). Many teens are concerned about how their peers perceive them and may be very self-conscious. In general, they do not like to be singled out for attention and when included in a general audience, they may be reluctant to participate. Connecting with teenagers is very important because they are in a formative cognitive developmental stage. It is in this stage that basic belief systems can be influenced and molded through the presentation of information.

Address teenagers as adults rather than children. Ask them their opinions, feelings and thoughts about things. Many teenagers are still treated as children by their primary caregivers, so interpretive programs that enable teenagers to express adult thoughts in an adult setting will be well received. Avoid lecture-like material. Instead, provide opportunities for open-ended discussion and problem-solving tasks. You might create a separate program just for teens; it is easier for them to feel like adults when not surrounded by their parents or guardians.

Seniors

The population of recreational participants is aging. Currently about 25 percent of Americans are over the age of 55 and 13.8 percent are over the age of 65 (US Census Bureau, 2009). With the baby-boom population aging and the average life-span increasing, it is expected that by 2025 the median age in the United States will be 41. Projected trends in recreation, such as a decrease in backpacking and an increase in bird watching, reflect this population shift in age (Dwyer, 1993).

The older adult population is more sophisticated, typically has more free time, and is more physically fit than in years past. This population is generally influential, votes, and is economically able to participate in recreation. Three primary concerns should be addressed when designing programs for older adults: mobility, hearing, and vision. Geiger and Ellis (1991) indicated that the three most common ailments for seniors are arthritis, hearing loss, and visual impairment.



Census data implies that the number of seniors visiting parks will continue to increase. What can we do to welcome them?

Generally, interpretive programs targeted for elderly populations should be conducted as short walks on flat or gently sloping trails or as talks with no walking. Programs should take into account the years of experience of the participants and provide opportunities for them to contribute to the program. Socializing opportunities are important for these visitors. Interpreters must speak loudly (but do not shout) and clearly. Use objects, large graphics, and visual aids to illustrate your point. Avoid asking the audience to read small print. Be sure you know what assistive listening devices are available in your park, and always announce to visitors the opportunities to use such devices.

Children

Children pose unique challenges and opportunities for programming as well. Junior Ranger and Junior Lifeguard programs provide special interpretive opportunities in many parks. We will review children's interpretation in detail in *Module 9-Kids*

In keeping with the above discussion of special groups, what makes children a unique population for interpretive programming is their level of cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development. As Tilden said in his sixth principle of interpretation, "Interpretation addressed to children (say up to the age of twelve) should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best it will require a separate program" (Tilden, 1967, p. 47). Children have short attention spans, a great deal of energy, and an enormous potential for absorbing facts and information.

Incorporate as many of the senses as possible when developing programs for children. Programs should be hands-on, involve tangible objects, and stay centered around the physical resource. Programs should incorporate play, fun, and imagination. Analogies, stories, games, role-playing, and questions are all helpful strategies to use with children. The main goal is to engage them in the topic of the program.

People with Disabilities

As of the 2000 census, almost 50 million Americans have some sort of disability. In California that figure is roughly 6 million. These individuals are members of the public we serve in California State Parks, and have the right to be able to access our programs and services. **In 1990 the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed.** This legislation legally requires leisure services providers to facilitate and support the full participation of individuals with disabilities in all leisure programs. ADA impacts programming in California State Parks in various ways. For example, ADA requires that a sign language or oral interpreter be hired any time one is requested **in advance** by a visitor. **California State Parks may not refuse to allow a person to participate in a service, program, or**

activity simply because that individual has a disability. In your role as an interpreter, you should always be prepared to accommodate people with disabilities.

One of the principles of ADA is that “special” programs are not the desired solution. In fact, programs should be made to be as inclusive as possible. “Separate but equal” is **not** the intent of the ADA. *All Visitors Welcome* (Porter, 1994, rev. 2011) provides several suggestions for conducting programs for those with disabilities, including changing as little as possible from the original program, involving the person with a disability in the modification process, and not making assumptions regarding preferences for modifications.

In the end, maintaining the dignity and rights of the individual should always be the primary concern. Be sure to know the facilities, equipment and services that are available in your park to assist those with disabilities. When developing program publicity make sure to include information about auxiliary aids and services available to people with disabilities.

MONITORING AND FEEDBACK

Was the program inclusive?

Were the programs successful in meeting goals and objectives?

What can we do better?

The final stage of program planning is monitoring and feedback. This brings the process back full circle to the research phase. Although we dedicate *Module 12-Evaluation* to discussing monitoring and evaluation, we mention it here because evaluation is an integral part of the program-planning process.

Monitoring is essentially asking whether or not you have met the program objectives. Monitoring and feedback should help determine if the programs you are offering are meeting your goals and objectives and help you identify changes for the future. This data is then used as part of the research for the next cycle of programming. Monitoring and feedback techniques and strategies should be based on the program content, goals and objectives, budgets, expertise, target audiences, media used, and the time frame available for feedback

WHAT'S AHEAD?

In the next chapter you will apply your understanding of the basics of interpretation and interpretive planning to developing an interpretive program. You now have the tools needed to create a program that will impact your visitor's point of view in a way that is consistent with our department's goals.

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Module 4
PLANNING

SELF ASSESSMENT

Answer each question in the section below before reviewing the material in *Module 4—Planning*. The answers are not provided. Check your answers with your colleagues and as you read *Module 4—Planning*. Items from the self assessment may be reviewed and discussed in class.

- 1) What are the basic steps of the program planning process?

- 2) What are the three primary elements that must be considered in the planning process?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3) What is a unit data file?

4) What is the difference between the UDF and the Digital Documents Catalog?

5) Which of the following are primary sources for historical research?

- a) Personal observations
- b) Reports from park staff
- c) Unit files
- d) Interpretive prospectus

6) What is the “rule of three” when conducting research?

- a) Read each source at least three times
- b) Find the information repeated in at least three different places
- c) Look three times for information
- d) Use three different sources for the information

7) When researching the public, it is important to know who is not coming to your park.

- a) True
- b) False

- 8) Which of the following is considered a motivating factor for people visiting parks?
- a) Cheap vacation
 - b) Escape or curiosity
 - c) Location
 - d) Ease of transportation
- 9) Which of the following is a good reason to use secondary data regarding visitors as opposed to primary data?
- a) Provides greater detail
 - b) More current
 - c) Quicker and easier to collect
 - d) More relevant
- 10) Specific, measurable statements that guide programs are called:
- a) Goals
 - b) Objectives
 - c) Vision
 - d) Core program areas
- 11) When designing interpretive opportunities for the public, which of the following should not be a primary driving force?
- a) Target audience
 - b) Program and park goals and objectives
 - c) Themes and messages
 - d) Personal content knowledge

12) The population of recreational participants is getting younger.

- a) True
- b) False

13) In California, approximately _____ people have a disability.

- a) 500,000
- b) 1 million
- c) 3 million
- d) 6 million

14) Interpretive programs should be created for visitors with disabilities. (Explain your answer.)

- a) True
- b) False

15) Evaluation is a critical phase of the planning process. (Explain your answer.)

- a) True
- b) False

16) What are three possible types of objectives for interpretive programs?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Now that you have completed the self assessment questions, review the material in *Module 4—Planning* to confirm your answers. After reading the module, move on to the workbook learning activities, which will assist you in developing your skills.

WORKBOOK LEARNING ACTIVITIES

To help you review and apply the material covered in *Module 4—Planning*, a selection of review questions and/or activities is provided. Again, no answers are included. Use the material from the module, outside sources, and your colleagues to help you complete the activities and answer the questions. There may be more than one right answer. Use the questions and activities to generate discussion about the material. Be prepared to discuss, perform, or demonstrate your answers in class.

- 1) What are some practical things you can do the first week on the job to become acquainted with the three primary elements of the research phase of the planning process: the resource itself, the visitors, and the management?

Resource:

Visitors:

Management:

2) Is a primary or a secondary research source more accurate? Why?

3) Write two cognitive objectives for a program targeted at local school children with a goal of educating them about the importance of park protection.

1. _____

2. _____

Take it to YOUR Park

Answer each question with the information specific to your park. You will have to conduct some research in order to answer each question. Use the answers as a guide for beginning your career in California State Parks.

PLANNING

Park name: _____

We learned in this module that research is one of the most important aspects of the planning process. Unfortunately, there is often little time to conduct meaningful research. Take time as your training progresses to fill in as much of the following as possible. This is only a start to discovering the park's resources, visitors' characteristics and needs, and management's needs, goals, and objectives.

Answer each question about your park and indicate the source where you found the data.

1) Natural Resources

What is the primary type of habitat found at your park? If there is more than one, list them all.

Name any invasive plant species that threaten your park.

Describe the wildlife that makes your park unique.

What is the most serious or critical animal or plant management problem?

Name the natural resource feature most likely to draw visitors to your park. Describe it.

What are the major changes in plant and animal life in the last 100 years?

What else makes the natural resources of your park significant or an important part of California's biodiversity?

Which plant and which animal pose the most danger for humans?

What are the key pieces of literature written about the flora and fauna of your park?

2) **Cultural Resources**

What are the significant cultural or historic events that took place in or near your park?

List any significant cultural or historic places or features.

List the existing historic structures in the park.

How have the cultural groups in and around your park changed in the past 100 years?

Are there any living relatives or descendants of the historic cultures? List them.

List key resources written about the local culture or history of your park.

3) **Recreational Resources**

What are the most popular forms of recreation at your park?

What do visitors need to know for safe recreation in the park?

What do visitors need to know to enjoy their recreation and not negatively impact park resources?

4) **Management**

What are the major guiding documents for interpretation in your park? When were they written?

Are there existing goals and objectives for interpretation in your park? Briefly summarize them.

What types of programs are offered to the public?

What facilities in the park can be used to support interpretive efforts?

Create a list of the current interpretive equipment in the park.

What primary interpretive themes and messages are currently delivered in the park?

5) **Visitors**

What types of information are available regarding visitors to your park?

How was the information collected?

When was the information collected?

Indicate the general demographic characteristics of visitors to your park (gender, age, place of residence [local vs. non local], education level, cultural or ethnicity identification, etc.).

Is there any data regarding attendance levels for specific programs? What does it reveal?

What are the demographics of the local population in the area around your park? (Local reports and data from the Chamber of Commerce, census data, etc., can help you answer this.)

Module 5
PROGRAMS



The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.

William Arthur Ward

Module 5
PROGRAMS

What are they?

Planned opportunities to meet with park visitors for an extended period of time

Why do we present them?

To facilitate the visitors' connection with our park resources

How do we create them?

Combine a strong theme with accurate research to tell a complete story with a beginning, middle, and ending.

■ ■ ■

Thinking is more interesting than knowing, but less interesting than looking.

Johann Wolfgang Goethe

■ ■ ■

INTRODUCTION

This module introduces the basic components of an interpretive program. Although there are many forms of personal interpretive programs, including walks, talks, campfires, etc., they are all constructed from the same basic building blocks. In this module, we will review these elements, including the theme, research, introduction, body, and conclusion. Then we will discuss the purpose and methods of implementation for each.

5.1 THEME

DEFINITION

The most important element of an interpretive presentation is the theme. The theme is the one defining characteristic that separates all other communication forms from that of interpretation. Some presentations are simply laundry lists of facts and information; these are known as “show-and-tell” or “drag and brag” presentations. You walk visitors through the park and **show** them the plants (or flowers, or artifacts) and **tell** them some information about each one. This is **not** interpretation!

Interpretation is distinguished by the conveyance of a discernible message driven by an expressed need. David L. Larsen, former training manager for the National Park Service, puts it this way, “**An interpretive theme statement is the artistic creation of the interpreter based upon the significance of the site. It is the expression of what the interpreter and organization knows to be meaningful about the resource in language audiences can connect to their own experience.**” (NPS Interpretive Development Program). He goes on to say, “An interpretive theme is a tool that helps interpreters affect the audience. Its purpose is to provide focus for the audiences’ personal connections. An interpretive theme articulates a reason or reasons for caring about and caring for the resource. Using a theme, an interpreter hopes to provoke the audience to know the resource is meaningful and feel that its preservation matters.”

The **theme** is the message. It is the reason we are giving the program. It is identified through careful examination of the park’s significance, resources, management needs, and the interests of your visitors. Once targeted messages have been identified through careful planning, a theme can be developed.

Some interpreters describe the theme as the “take home message.” This may be partly true, but remember, the visitor is sovereign. You are not here to tell them what to think and feel, but to facilitate their own personal connections. When members of your audience have made their own connections based on your themes, subthemes, and methods of facilitation, they will each create their own, very powerful, take home message. Your audience may agree, disagree, or even add to your meanings.

MEANING, DIRECTION AND STRUCTURE

Themes outline the way interpreters connect visitors to the resource. They help us identify the message or “big picture.” A good theme should answer the question, “So what?” (Ham, 1992). In other words, why is this program worthy of visitors’ time and effort? The National Park Service approach to interpretation indicates that **a great theme will link the tangibles in a park (the object, place, etc.) to the intangibles (the meanings, ideas, emotions, etc.)** (Kohen and Sikoryak, 2000). The theme also helps guide our research, saving time and focusing our attention on the relevant pieces of information for the story. For example, if the presentation were on birds, think about how many books and sources of information you would have to wade through. If your theme were, “Birds take flight for life,” your research is now narrowed and certainly more manageable. (Notice that this theme is linking a tangible thing, birds to an intangible and universal concept, life.) Because the theme also provides the overarching organizational structure for the program, all main points, or subthemes, should fit within and compliment it.

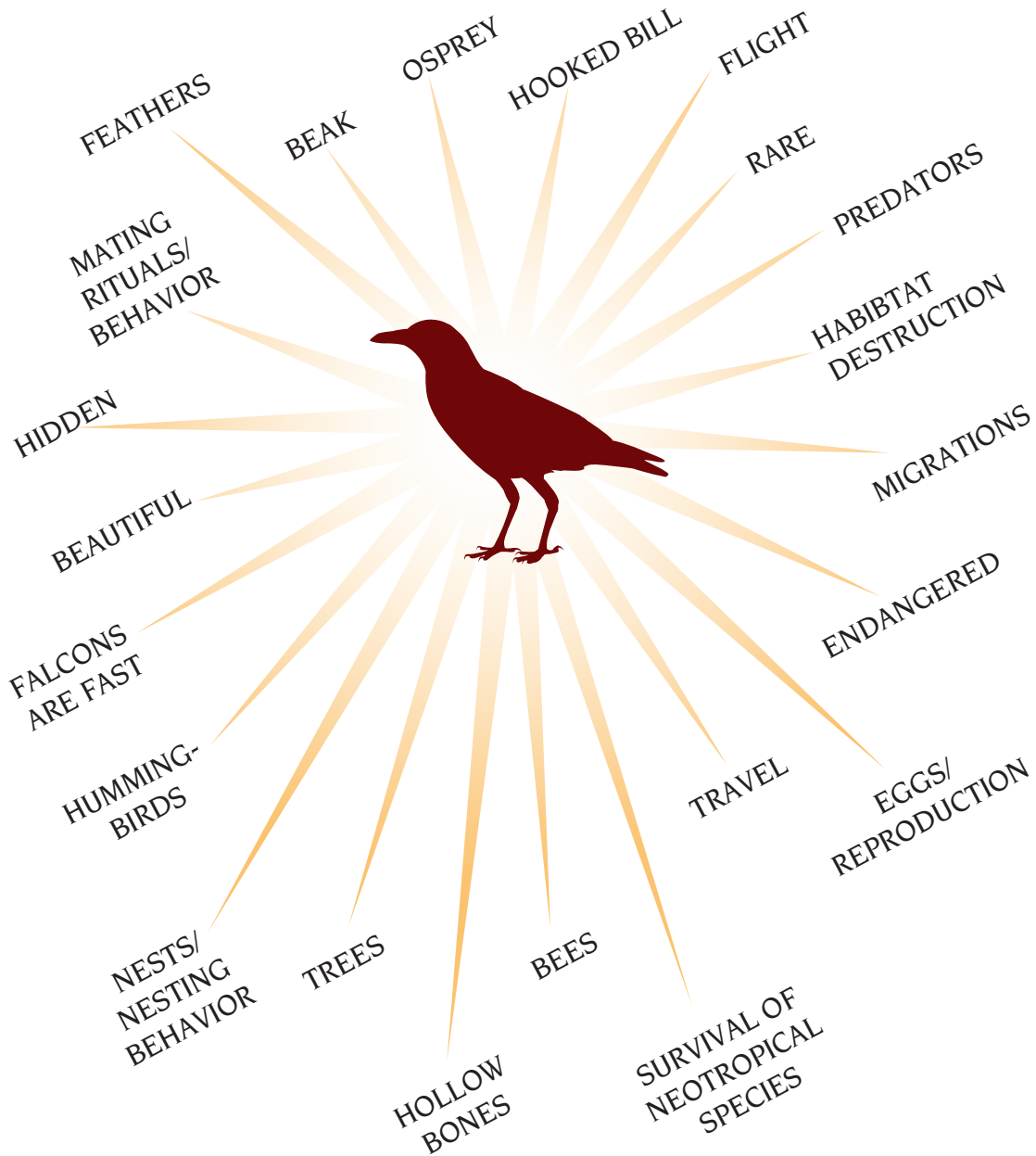
CREATION

Before we discuss how you can develop a theme, remember from *Module 4—Planning* that themes for the park or programs may already be identified in park planning documents. Be sure you have thoroughly completed the research phases of the planning process before you create program themes. Once you have identified the topic of the program and the target message based on planning, themes can be developed using a few easy steps.

The first step for developing a theme is to brainstorm. Brainstorming is essentially free-form thinking to generate ideas regarding a particular topic. It is used to promote creativity for finding different approaches for programs. Familiarity with a topic often leads to a lack of ability to see it creatively. Brainstorming works best when done with a group of people. The goal is to generate a large number of new ideas about a topic. Get started by writing the topic or subject in the center of a piece of paper, chalk board, etc., and then record all ideas and thoughts that are verbalized by participants (Figure 5.1). Hearing what others think often generates new and creative ideas. Silly ideas should verbalized and recorded because they may plant a seed for a more useful comment later.

Figure 5.1

BIRD BRAINSTORM



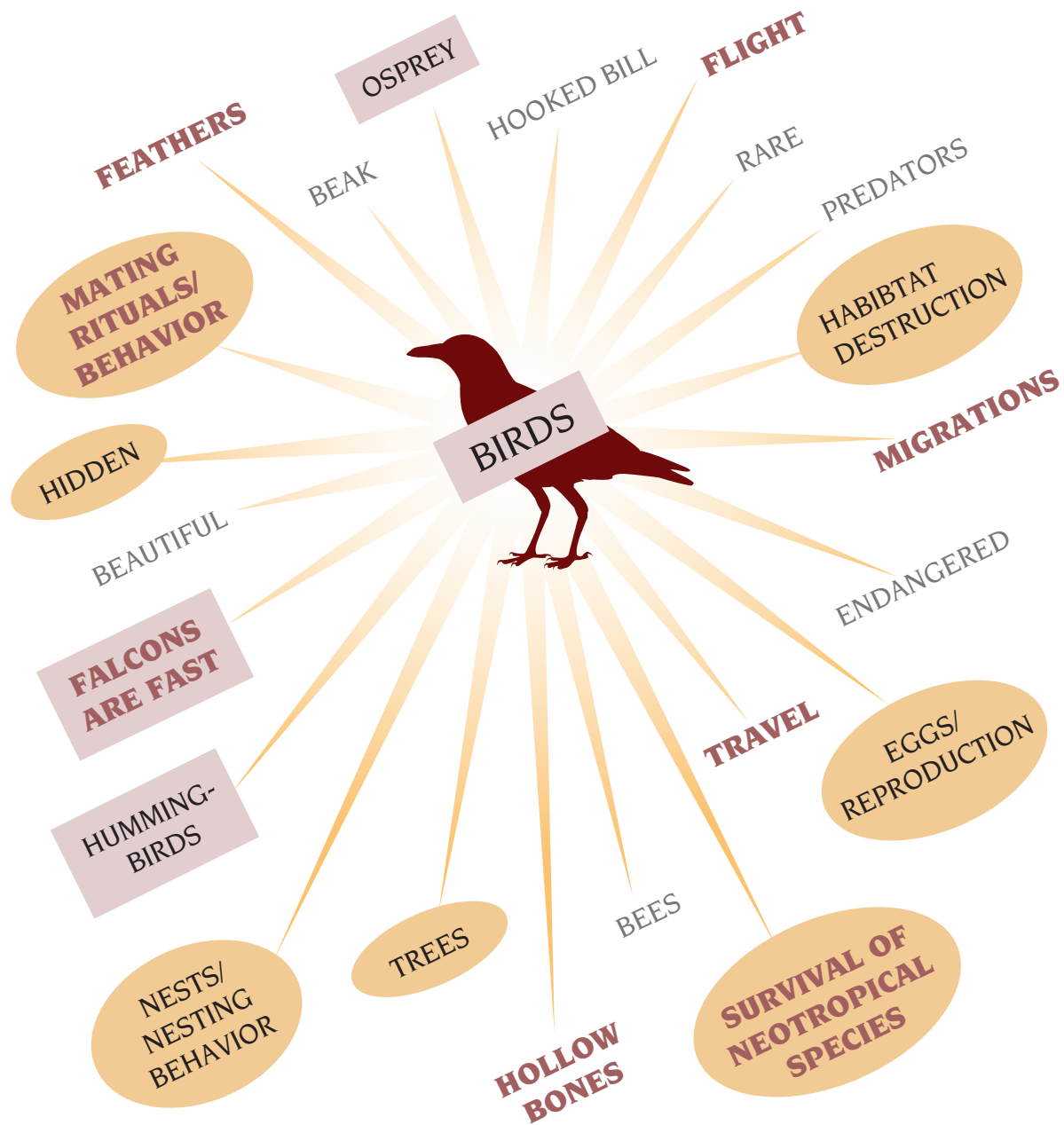
BRAINSTORMING

- **Clearly identify the target topic or subject of the brainstorm.**
 - **Establish group norms in the beginning.**
 - **Record all responses so everyone can see.**
 - **Have a manageable group size.** *At least three and no more than 10 is recommended. In a large group, have two recorders.*
 - **Change the recorder so everyone gets a chance to participate in the brainstorm.**
 - **Record *all* answers with no discussion.** *Discussion and clarification comes later in the process. For now, the goal is simply the generation of new ideas.*
-

After brainstorming, ideas need to be categorized and grouped. This is called mind-mapping or clustering. It is a simple technique that can be used after brainstorming to link generated ideas into potential subcategories that can then be used to produce themes. Generated ideas can be placed in more than one category, so be sure to use different colored pens, or different shapes for grouping ideas (Figure 5.2). Once ideas are subgrouped, brainstorming can focus on a particular subgrouping of interest, which might develop into your theme. Notice how many potential messages (themes) about birds are starting to emerge from the example in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2

FOCUS THE BRAINSTORM



Choose one grouping of ideas to explore further. Use Sam Ham's three-sentence method to refine these ideas into a theme. To build your theme, Ham recommends answering the following three key questions.

1. The first sentence simply states the topic of the presentation.

"Generally, my presentation is about (topic)."

For our example: *"Generally, my presentation is about birds."*

2. After the brainstorming and mind mapping, you can more narrowly define your topic.

"Specifically, I want to tell my audience about (more narrowly defined topic)."

For our example: *"Specifically, I want to tell my audience about why and how birds fly."*

3. Once the topic is narrowed, the third sentence begins to create the message that you want the audience to carry away with them.

"After hearing my presentation, I want my audience to understand that (theme)."

For our example: *"After hearing my presentation, I want my audience to understand that birds fly to survive."*

The third sentence can be modified to fit the particular objective of the program. For example, we can have emotional, cognitive, or behavioral program objectives. If the program objective were to alter behavior, then it might be better to use the verb "do," "support," or "participate" etc., rather than "understand" as in the original version. The verb that works best will depend on the overall objective(s) guiding the program.

A good theme emerges using Ham's method, but not a great one...yet.

A GOOD THEME

- Is specific, simple, and short.
 - Conveys a complete thought or message.
 - Reveals the purpose for the presentation.
 - Contains only one main message.
-

For our example, “Birds fly to survive” is a good theme. It conveys a complete message, reveals the purpose and focus of the talk, and is short and simple.

A GREAT THEME

Not only

- Is specific, simple, and short.
- Conveys a complete thought or message.
- Reveals the purpose for the presentation.
- Contains only one main message.

But also

- Paints a picture.
 - Uses active not passive language.
 - Answers the question “*So what?*”
 - Provokes and promotes attendance.
 - Links a tangible resource to an intangible meaning.
-

Expanding on our previous example, we arrive at “Birds take flight for life” as our theme. This conveys the same meaning but is more interestingly worded, paints a clearer picture, and promotes curiosity. This theme could be improved even more with additional brainstorming. Puns and rhymes can be memorable and attract people to your program.

OTHER THEME EXAMPLES

- *Stars are recyclers of the universe.*
 - *Solar power uses the sun to make your home run.*
 - *Change the world we live in, one solution at a time.*
 - *Humboldt Bay starts on your street.*
 - *Fire forges every phase of life.*
 - *Redwoods adapt to survive fire.*
 - *The river tells the Yurok story.*
 - *Find a new kind of gold in California State Parks.*
-

Writing good themes is easy using the steps outlined above. Take your time and be creative. Writing great themes comes with practice and years of experience.

The theme is the first step of creating a successful interpretive program and should be done with care and patience.



A great theme is one that provokes your audience to a thought or feeling.

RESEARCH

Developing the Theme

After the theme is created, it is time to continue your research. Through the early research phase of the process you were able to generate preliminary ideas; now it is time to conduct very specific research guided by the theme and your intended audience. Use this phase of the research process, to develop and hone your theme, which will evolve and change as you learn more about your topic. Sometimes the research you uncover may alter the theme altogether; be flexible and allow your theme to reflect the research.

We conduct research to accurately understand and then convey information to the public. Because interpreters are the interface between the resource and the public, they are charged with a responsibility to tell the “truth” of the thing, place, time, or event. There are many perspectives of historical events, and researchers often differ in their interpretations of science. It is the job of the interpreter to communicate as honestly as possible. Conducting good research is the only real method to ensure the reflection of accurate information.

CONDUCTING GOOD RESEARCH

- Review existing park information relevant to the theme (may have been collected during the inventory phase of the planning process).
 - Visit the locations applicable to theme (primary research).
 - Examine books, journals, reports, etc., to support theme development (secondary research).
 - Keep notes organized by subtopic within the theme; include citation.
-

Two Approaches

As discussed in *Module 4—Planning*, two basic approaches are used to conduct research—primary and secondary data collection. Conducting research that is guided by a theme is very similar. For example, in the planning stages, primary data collection consisted of inventorying the site and assessing all the resources. Conducting primary research after a theme has been created involves very specific searches for examples demonstrating main points or ideas in the program.

Remember, one of the most important goals of interpretation is to help visitors make their own connections to the resource. In order to accomplish this, primary research must be conducted. Where in the resource are the best places to demonstrate the phenomenon of your program? How can I use this location or example to facilitate a connection for my audience? The information may be used differently, depending on how the program will be delivered to the public. For example, you may demonstrate the information in a walk by actually taking visitors there, or in a talk by using the location to direct visitors to go see it for themselves. **Regardless of the method used, the purpose of the primary research is to identify the places, sites, and objects in the park relevant to or appropriate for a particular theme.** For our theme example, “*Birds take flight for*

life,” we would use primary research to find places in the park that provide the best opportunities to see birds, and especially birds in flight.

■ ■ ■

The work of the specialist, the historian, the naturalist, the archaeologist, is fundamental, then. Without their research the interpreter cannot start.

Freeman Tilden

■ ■ ■

Secondary research is used to provide a more in-depth understanding of the theme. It provides the background, substance, and information that will be used to develop your presentation. Start by reviewing the information you collected during the resource inventory stage of the planning process. Review both the primary and secondary data that is

appropriate for your theme, and then continue your search for other information that supports and develops your theme. Be sure to use information that is current, from a wide variety of sources, and interesting. Research prepares you to tell a **great** story. Finding the intangible meanings related to your theme prepares you to facilitate powerful connections.

The research conducted in this stage should be written and filed under the theme idea. Be sure to date all observations. This information will help you change the program in the future, and it will provide insight into its successes and failures.

5.2 THE STORY

The basic interpretive presentation is like telling a story to visitors. It has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. A good story has an introduction that sets the stage for the body or main part of the story and a conclusion that brings it full circle—leaving the audience satisfied. Let us take a look at the process of creating the story. Sam Ham coined the 2-3-1 rule for the order in which the main parts of an interpretive presentation should be developed. According to Ham, if the introduction of the presentation is #1, the body is #2, and the conclusion is #3, **the 2-3-1 rule suggests that it will be easiest for you to develop the body first, the conclusion second and the introduction last.** How can you write an introduction for a presentation that you have not yet written? Not very easily! Ham's approach to developing the body of the talk first, followed by the conclusion, and last the introduction is a logical approach and one that we recommend. Now that you have developed a theme, identified your tangibles, intangibles, and universal concepts, and have completed much of your research, you are ready to develop your story.



Tell a good story with a beginning, middle, and ending.

THE MIDDLE

The middle or body is the heart of the talk, allowing the interpreter to relate information to visitors, inspiring them to want to learn more, and promoting management goals and objectives. It is here that your main points are developed and delivered to the audience. Remember, there should be no more than five main points covered in the body of the presentation. Do not forget to incorporate RAPPOR and the other communication strategies reviewed in *Module 3—Communication* when developing the body of the talk.

The two structures most commonly used to develop the body of an interpretive presentation are: theme/subthemes and narrative. Let's take a closer look.

Theme/Subtheme

The theme/subtheme structure of a presentation is developed and supported by main points or subthemes. Most interpretive presentations are developed using this format. For theme/subtheme structure, each main point has four elements (Ham, 1992). The first thing each main point should do is focus attention on the subtopic covered in that main point. “Many bird species mate in flight.” In this example, we are introducing mating behavior as the subtheme supporting the main theme that “Birds take flight for life.” The next element of each main point is to describe or explain the information. “There are four species of birds in this park that mate in flight” After presenting the information, each main point should have a thematic connector bringing the information back to the theme. “Mating behavior is an example of how birds take flight for life and in this case, to create life.” The final element of each main point should be a transition to the next main point (or conclusion). “Now that we have discovered how successful mating depends on flight, let us look at the importance of migration for the life of many birds.” Taken together, this approach to designing the body of the presentation follows a theme/subtheme structure. The program contains a central message (theme), which is developed through the creation of several subthemes (main points), which are all linked together with transition sentences.

THEME/SUBTHEME STRUCTURE

Introduction

Body (middle)

1st main point

- A. Focus attention
- B. Describe or explain the information
- C. Connect to theme
- D. Transition

2nd main point

- A. Focus attention
- B. Describe or explain the information
- C. Connect to theme
- D. Transition

3rd main point

Conclusion (ending)

Adapted from Sam Ham

Narrative

The second type of structure for developing the body of an interpretive presentation is more narrative in form; historical or living history presentations often follow this approach. The narrative structure also has a central message or theme, but it may not be as obvious as in the theme/subtheme structure. The narrative structure follows more of a fluid format. There may be dialogue, conversation, or narrator-style presentation of information. For example, the interpreter that comes out in character and relives a moment in history for the audience will probably not follow the outlined theme/subtheme structure. The presentation will flow more fluidly, like a conversation. There may not be discernible main points and transition sentences. However, this type of presentation can be very powerful and provoking. Susan Strauss talks about the “story way” of communicating and how it can be one of the most effective methods of interpreting science and history. “Storytelling is considered a literary art (even though it is oral and not written) because it shapes a narrative to create meaning or address a problem, a question, an imbalance, or a desire” (Strauss, 1996). This, in essence, is interpretation.

NARRATIVE STRUCTURE:

AN EXAMPLE OF A PRESENTATION ABOUT THE ROLE OF FLIGHT IN THE SURVIVAL OF BIRDS

I am the last of my kind still found in these hills. There used to be hundreds of us before the roads, the campgrounds, and all the trails. I searched for others of my kind for years before I finally gave up. I used to hear far-off cries of others, but no more—the woods have been silent for some time now. We used to travel to this place together in great flocks.

The above narrative presentation might go on to describe the reasons for migratory bird species population decreases, but told as a story through the eyes of an endangered bird. It clearly does not follow the structure outlined in the theme/subtheme format, but it is certainly a powerful interpretive method of presenting information.

There is no set formula that can be outlined for presenting interpretation using the narrative form because there are so many ways to develop and present a story. It could have a moral, present a problem and resolve it after a climax, be an epic, leave the audience wondering what happens, or bring the information full circle. **The narrative structure could be used to tell a person's individual story, recall a historical event, follow the life cycle of an individual animal or plant, or trace the life of a drop of water through the park.**

THE ENDING

The final part of an interpretive presentation, regardless of whether it is a walk, talk, campfire, etc., is the conclusion. Following the 2-3-1 rule, the conclusion should be created after the body of the presentation has been designed. The conclusion sums everything up. It is the ending. The reason we give a conclusion is to give the audience a sense of completeness and a signal that the program is over. It also provides an opportunity to repeat the program's theme and subthemes. People are more likely to retain information that has been repeated throughout the presentation. Repeating the theme numerous times, and having it as the last thing visitors hear in the conclusion, maximizes retention.

Creating the Conclusion

There are as many ways to end a presentation as there are presentation styles. Every interpreter has his or her own method of concluding a presentation. There are some things that every conclusion should contain and many more things that might be appropriate, depending upon your specific program goals and presentation style.

Every program should have a clear ending with “Thank you for coming” as one of the parting statements. Ending presentations with, “That’s about it,” or “I’m done,” is not very professional. Every ending should somehow repeat the theme, thus increasing the potential that the message will be remembered. If it was important enough for you to design an entire presentation around, it is important enough to remind visitors.

There are many ways to make your conclusion powerful and effective. You might find a clever way to repeat the main points or subthemes of the program. You might ask your audience or school group specially designed questions to help reinforce your main points. Conclusions can have a philosophical slant to them, leave an audience with a question to think about or challenge them to do something. Bring information sources (books, etc.) for the audience to review and/or include them in your ending with announcements of upcoming events or other park programs.



Your conclusion is the last thing your audience will hear and may be the first thing they remember later.

BYE BYE—IN CONCLUSION—ADIOS—CAT'CHA LATER...

You should:	You can:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce theme • Thank the audience for attending • Present a strong clear ending • Allow time for questions following the conclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat the subthemes • Give a philosophical ending • Leave the audience with a question • Provide opportunities for action • Show resources for more information • Advertise future programs • Repeat name of agency

This is an example of a conclusion:

“We have reached the end of our journey together today. Throughout our walk we’ve seen the many ways that birds take flight for life. Migrating, escaping from predators, and mating are just some of the critical roles flight plays in the survival of birds found here in the San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area.

The next time you see a bird take to the sky, stop and ask yourself if you think it is flying for life, love or longing.

If you have some extra time, I’ve brought some great bird books that you are welcome to stay and browse through. I’d also be happy to answer questions if you’d like to stay and chat for a few minutes. For those who need to get going, I just want to thank you all for coming and I hope you’ll enjoy the rest of your time here at your California State Recreation Area.”

THE BEGINNING

After you have designed the body and the conclusion of the presentation, you are now ready to create a powerful introduction to set the stage for the program. **The introduction is critical, because it is in this early stage of the presentation that people make judgments.** The introduction must grab and hold attention. It conveys to the audience that there is a reason for them to commit and stay for the duration of the presentation. The introduction serves three primary functions. It orients the audience to you, your park,

your agency and your program. It introduces the theme, and provides a cognitive map for the audience. It should tell an audience why they are there, what they will get out of the presentation, and what they can expect.

Creating the Introduction

Remember again, that you are the good host. Welcome your audience to your State Park. Introduce yourself and your agency and tell what your title is or how long you've worked for the department or, if that's not impressive, how long you've been a birder or loved exploring the outdoors. **Establish right away that you are credible, interesting and friendly.**

An introduction should include your theme, the main points to be covered in the talk, any orientation or information needed for the talk (e.g., you should wear shoes that can get wet), and an attention grabber. The introduction is your first impression with much of the audience; come out smiling! Remember, an effective introduction will include all of the elements of effective communication such as those in RAPPOR.

YO!—HOWDY—ALOHA—HI-YA—HEY...

- **Introduce yourself**—Tell the audience your name, position in the park, and a little about yourself.
- **Welcome the visitors**—Be a good host.
- **Provide the theme**—Introduce the theme for the talk.
- **Give an attention grabber**—Provide a startling fact, visual aid, thought-provoking question, etc.
- **Introduce the main points for the talk**—This is part of the cognitive map for the talk.
- **Tell the audience why you are giving the talk**—People respond better if they know why. Be sure you know why you are doing it.
- **During the introduction provide information on**—safety, security, physiological needs, route of the walk, bathroom breaks, and any difficulties or dangers encountered. The specifics of this information will vary greatly depending on the type of presentation.

Be Enthusiastic!

An Example of an Introduction:

Welcome, establishes credibility { Hi, my name is Aaron. I've been a state park interpreter for the past 10 years, and I just love working in this park. I would like to welcome you all to San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area, a popular stop for waterfowl along the Pacific Flyway. }

Attention grabber { How many of you think it would be great to fly? Would you be more likely to fly for love, life, or longing? Today we will travel down one of the park's trails and search for examples of how birds take flight for life. }

Many visitors wonder why the birds do not just stay here all year long. We will discover the primary reasons birds take flight to survive, including migrating, hunting for food, mating, and escaping from predators. We will uncover a fifth reason for flight together at the end of the talk. }

Orientation of walk, safety message { It is an easy walk, covering about one-quarter mile on fairly level ground. The walk will end back here in about one hour. There is poison oak near this trail, and I will point it out to you when we approach it, so please keep together and let me lead. I have binoculars and field guides with me today if anyone would like to use them. Any questions before we start? }

Identifies park and agenda

Cognitive map

■ ■ ■

Enthusiasm is like a virus; it spreads easily!

Steve Ptomey, Interpreter III, CSP

■ ■ ■

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

In this module we reviewed the basic components of an interpretive program. We have seen that all good programs start with a theme. **People forget facts, but they remember a good theme and the supporting subthemes.** Brainstorming, familiarity with the site and visitor, and understanding management needs and objectives all combine to assist in creating appropriate themes. Themes also focus research efforts. Research allows us to connect visitors with the resource in as accurate and honest a manner as possible. After most of the research is completed, the interpretive story can be fashioned. There are two primary structures for developing the interpretive story. We can use both the narrative and theme/subtheme structures to weave our facts and information creatively into an informative, enjoyable, and interesting program. The actual development of the story should follow the 2-3-1 rule. The body of the presentation will have around five main points and should be developed first. After the body of the program is designed, a conclusion can be created that repeats the theme and provides a clear ending for the story told during the program. The last thing to be designed is the introduction. The introduction sets the direction for the program and can best be created after the presentation itself has been designed. These components form the basic interpretive presentation, regardless of delivery method.

WHAT'S AHEAD?

Now that we have reviewed the communication process and the basic structure of an interpretive presentation, we can begin to create specific types of programs. The first we will discuss is the talk. This is the most basic form of an interpretive presentation. Everything else is simply a variation on this form.

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Module 5
PROGRAMS

SELF ASSESSMENT

Answer each question in the section below before reviewing the material in *Module 5—Programs*. The answers are not provided. Check your answers with your colleagues and as you read *Module 5—Programs*. Items from the self assessment may be reviewed and discussed in class.

- 1) A show-and-tell presentation lacks:
 - a) Information
 - b) Illustrations and visual aids
 - c) Good research
 - d) A theme

- 2) Which of the following is not a primary reason to use a theme?
 - a) Directs research
 - b) Identifies the main message
 - c) Guides the organizational structure
 - d) Created easily

- 3) The first step for writing a theme is:
 - a) Mind mapping
 - b) Brainstorming
 - c) Research
 - d) Observation

- 4) Mind mapping is:
 - a) Creating new ideas
 - b) Grouping ideas together
 - c) Silently brainstorming
 - d) Drawing a visual picture of ideas

- 5) Which of the following is not a recommended practice for brainstorming?
 - a) Establish group norms early
 - b) Discuss all answers
 - c) Clearly identify topic
 - d) Record answers so all can see

- 6) An interpretive presentation should be developed in the following order:
 - a) Beginning, middle, end
 - b) Middle, beginning, end
 - c) Middle, end, beginning
 - d) End, middle, beginning

- 7) Name at least three qualities of a great theme.
 - 1. _____
 - 2. _____
 - 3. _____

- 8) A good target for the number of main points in a presentation is:
- a) 3
 - b) 5
 - c) 7
 - d) 9
- 9) There are discernible main points in a narrative program structure.
- a) True
 - b) False
- 10) Circle all of the following that are part of an introduction.
- a) Cognitive map
 - b) Attention grabber
 - c) Theme
 - d) Transitions

Now that you have completed the self-assessment questions, review the material in *Module 5— Programs* to confirm your answers. After reading the module, move on to the workbook learning activities, which will assist you in developing your skills.

WORKBOOK LEARNING ACTIVITIES

To help you review and apply the material covered in *Module 5—Programs*, a selection of review questions and/or activities is provided. Again, no answers are included. Use the material from the module, outside sources, and your colleagues to help you complete the activities and answer the questions. There may be more than one right answer. Use the questions and activities to generate discussion about the material. Be prepared to discuss, perform, or demonstrate your answers in class.

- 1) With at least two other classmates, choose a topic, brainstorm, mind map, and write a theme. Write your theme below and be prepared to go over it in class.

- 2) Take the following themes and make them better without changing the meaning.
Redwoods have adapted to survive fire.

The Yurok story can be told in the river.

Tide pool life struggles to live on the edge.

Pioneers traveled west.

Many non-native species cause damage in the park.

The bay is home to many different animals.

Dams prevent salmon from swimming upstream to spawn.

The discovery of gold increased California's population.

The desert comes alive with life at night.

3) When do you think a narrative structure would be preferable to a theme/subtheme structure?

4) What do you think is the most important part of an introduction? Why?

Take it to YOUR Park

Answer each question with the information specific to your park. You will have to conduct some research in order to answer each question. Use the answers as a guide for beginning your career in California State Parks.

PROGRAMS

Park name: _____

- 1) Based on the research you started in the previous modules, select one topic that should be interpreted in your park. Go through the appropriate steps and generate at least two possible themes for that topic.

1. _____

2. _____

2) Choose one theme from above, and create an outline for a program.

3) For the same theme, indicate potential sources of primary and secondary information that would be beneficial in developing the program.

- 4) Write an appropriate introduction and conclusion for the program.

Module 6
TALKS



Use the talents you possess, for the woods would be a very silent place if no birds sang except the best.

Henry Van Dyke

Module 6

TALKS

What is it?

Personal verbal interaction with park audiences.

Why do we do it?

To increase appreciation and enjoyment of park resources.

How do we do it?

Through formal and informal discourse.

INTRODUCTION

Talk is the most basic element of personal services interpretation. Through the power of speech and the nonverbal adjuncts associated with our delivery, we attempt to “light the spark” of curiosity and wonder. In the previous modules, we discussed in general terms the whats, whys, and hows of personal interpretation. In the next five modules we will address the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for presenting talks, walks, campfires, children’s, and roving programs. Before we embark onto new territory, following the principles of good interpretation, we will recap a little of what we have already learned.

Interpretation is an artful form of communication that stresses ideas and relationships, not simply isolated facts and figures. This is most frequently done through the use of hands-on illustrative media, first-hand experiences, and/or the use of physical objects. Good interpretation communicates the science of the natural and cultural world to an audience in a manner that is provocative and interesting while leaving them wanting to discover more. It facilitates connections between the meanings inherent in the resource and the interests of the audience.

Interpretation is not the same as teaching. The people who attend interpretive programs are there because they want to be there (non-captive audience). There are no externally motivating factors keeping an audience from leaving. Because of this, one of the most important things to remember is the “priceless ingredient” Tilden talked about—love. Love will allow you to be enthusiastic, knowledgeable and engaging, and to communicate effectively with your audience. We have seen that to effectively communicate, you must establish all the elements embraced in RAPPOR. With this in mind, we will now focus on the most fundamental tool of the interpreter—the talk.

6.1 TYPES OF TALKS

Talks can be either formal, focused, site-specific presentations or informal, spontaneous dialogues. Whether formal or informal, your talk should help visitors move from satisfying their basic needs to fulfilling their growth needs, the ultimate being self-actualization (see *Module 3—Communication*). There are many types of talks, conducted in diverse venues and presented to many different types of audiences. We describe some of them here.

FORMAL

A formal talk consists of a structured presentation to an audience where the interpreter has developed a program with a prepared theme, introduction, body, and conclusion. There are many venues for formal talks. Here are a few.

Walk/hike/tour

We inclusively call walks, hikes, and tours **walks**. Taking your talk “on the trail” provides the opportunity to involve the audience directly with the resource being interpreted. The interpreter guides the audience through a series of thematically planned and well-researched stops. Walks are covered in detail in *Module 7—Walks*.

Site

The purpose of the site talk is to interpret what has happened, is happening, or might happen at a specific location. The site talk may include a demonstration, results of research, or it may feature a specific location focusing on natural and/or cultural topics.

Campfire

A campfire talk, steeped in tradition, is a multisensory and participatory opportunity to interpret park resources to a diverse audience. Campfire talks may use audiovisual equipment, guest speakers, demonstrations, storytelling, and a host of other imaginative and creative media in an evening of fun, education, and interpretation. *Module 8—Campfire* details the techniques and skills of the campfire talk.

Children

Talks to children, while encompassing all the RAPPOR T elements, are designed and delivered to an audience that has specific needs, developmental phases, and desires. A children’s talk should not be a “watered down” version of an already existing program, but a talk developed especially for children. Children’s interpretation is covered in detail in *Module 9—Kids*

Classroom

The classroom provides a venue for integrating our park messages with academic content standards. Ranging from elementary to college classes, classroom talks provide an opportunity to present park themes, discuss pre/post park visits, and encourage park advocacy.

Speaking Engagement

Speaking engagements in the community afford excellent opportunities to connect with constituents who may not routinely visit parks or attend our formal programs. These outreach experiences provide opportunities to present park topics and issues, develop support for park programs, and extend an invitation to the community to visit their park and recreation areas.

SPONTANEOUS

Spontaneous or informal interpretation is a natural, spur-of-the-moment type of dialogue with individual visitors. The encounters may or may not be planned, but in most instances the questions and information requested by the visitors can be anticipated. This type of visitor contact has more of a natural conversational progression.



The two most common locations for spontaneous interpretation to take place are the park visitor center (see *Module 3—Communications*) and through roving. Roving interpretation is personalized, face-to-face communication where the audience has chosen the venue, the resource is the stage, and the interpreter is the catalyst for knowledge. Roving is planned, personalized communication with visitors in an informal setting. *Module 10—Roving* is devoted to the basic techniques of conducting this type of interpretation.

6.2 PLANNING

We know why we want to provide a good talk. We want to connect the visitor to the resource and to protect and manage that connection within management guidelines. Now we will briefly review how to go about planning and presenting a good talk. As discussed in *Module 4—Planning*, when preparing your talk you must know the park and its significant features and their importance; you must have an understanding of your visitors' needs and motives, and you must incorporate management goals and objectives.

In *Module 5—Programs*, we saw that there are basic building blocks of successful interpretive programs—regardless of the delivery form. To prepare our talk we must conduct thorough research, develop a theme, and prepare an introduction, body, and conclusion.

Preparation is the key to success. Being prepared is the best way to combat nervousness and promote self-assurance. Research and study your topic thoroughly. As you begin to really know your subject, you will gain confidence and eventually reach a point where you will be eager to deliver your talk.

■ ■ ■
*The knowledge that most
of the audience regards
you as worth listening to
even before you open
your mouth should
increase your confidence.*

Grant Sharpe
■ ■ ■

GETTING STARTED

It is much better to outline your talk than to write it out completely. If you do write it out, don't try to memorize it, and don't plan to read it word for word. A canned speech sounds like a canned speech. It is not conversational, friendly, or wise. Interpreters who memorize their speeches are under pressure to remember every line. If they fall out of sequence, they often panic and become completely lost. Forgetting even one word of a memorized speech can be disaster.

If you feel you must write the talk word for word, make an outline, **then throw the written version away**. The outline should consist of your theme and subtheme elements, introduction, transitions, and conclusion. Practice without extensive notes. Use just the major points (subthemes) as your guides. Develop focusing sentences, thematic connectors, and transitions (see *Module 5—Programs*.) Make it your goal to feel comfortable enough with the main points, transitions, and the flow of your presentation that you talk with your audience as if they were friends. **If you must memorize something, limit memorization to the outline, transitions, and your opening and closing statements.**

Another instance when memorizing the script may be beneficial is when using quotes, but be careful. If you use a quote, be accurate; do not paraphrase or misquote the person. Quotes can be extremely powerful, especially when they directly relate to your topic. Incorporating the voice/dialect of the person you are quoting certainly enhances the reality. A good technique is to let historical characters speak for themselves through their letters, diaries, and other documents.

Use note cards sparingly. They may come in handy and be appropriate for your program agenda, long quotes, and/or the basic outline (subthemes) of your presentation, but avoid having too many as crutches. Once again, they may get out of sequence and cause you to panic. Be sure you are talking to your audience and not to your notes.

PRACTICE

Practice is a crucial step in the transition phase between planning your talk and actually delivering it. **There is no substitute for actual practice!** Do not just mentally rehearse, but actually stand up, as if an audience were in front of you, and practice. Go through your entire program, using visual aids and body and facial gestures. Anticipate where and when you will have questions. Visualize yourself walking into the room, introducing yourself, delivering your talk, fielding questions, and concluding the presentation.

A minimum of five rehearsals is recommended, but more are desired. However, be careful not to practice so much that it becomes memorized. If possible, have friends and/or coworkers watch and critique your presentation. If you can, videotape your practice sessions. This videotape, combined with a critique from an outside observer, will allow you to modify and adjust your program more easily. Videotaping and/or recording your talk can be excellent practice techniques.

REHEARSALS TAKE MANY FORMS

- **Personal**—Intellectually and physically work out the progression and details of your talk. Work with your notes, talk to yourself, and go back and forth to work out what words, actions, and props work best. Stop as many times as necessary to make corrections.
- **Technical**—Complete verbal program without full development of props, anticipated Q/A, and costume/uniform.
- **Dress**—Complete program without stopping including props, Q/A, and in costume/uniform. Videotaping this form of rehearsal is beneficial.

Take advantage of every opportunity to practice in front of strangers. Force yourself to speak to groups even if you are really frightened. Even the greatest orators get nervous. They overcome their fear by conscious effort and practice. **You can do the same.** Practice, practice, practice! Through practice and preparation, you will begin to deliver your talk in a more natural manner, as though talking with friends about a subject on which you are passionate.

OVERCOMING STAGE FRIGHT

Stage fright is normal. Almost all of us share this anxiety and fear of speaking in front of an audience. Even the most seasoned professional actor may have a nervous stomach, sweaty hands, tremors in the knees, or an accelerated heart rate before each performance. The trick is to use this excess adrenaline to your advantage. “This kind of ‘arousal,’ as psychologists call it, makes us more alert, more focused and less likely to forget—even though we feel just the opposite” (Ham, 1992, p. 69). **Recognize that stage fright stress is normal, and make it work for you.** Let the heightened sensitivity and energy fuel a more enthusiastic and dynamic presentation.

Tell yourself to breathe. When your muscles tighten and you are anxious, you may not be breathing deeply enough. Focus on relaxing. Remind yourself that you are prepared. The audience is on your side, and they want you to succeed. Give yourself some flexibility. Do not lock your knees or maintain a rigid posture; move around a little and allow your muscles to release the tension. Moderation is the key, so do not pace wildly back and forth either. Smile and watch the audience smile back at you. We will talk a little about eye contact and body language later in this module, but for now—remember, this anxiety is normal and you can overcome it. (Although you may feel like it, you will not die!)

6.3 PRESENTATION TIPS

Your appearance and demeanor serve to improve your reputation and approachability as a professional interpreter. As mentioned in *Module 3—Communication*, establishing your credibility is important. We will visit this topic again in *Module 13—Professionalism*.

BENEFITS OF ARRIVING EARLY

Plan to arrive early for your talk. Just how early depends on several factors: location, preparation needs, and familiarity with the venue and potential audience. Arriving early allows you to gain confidence so that you are prepared and ready when it is time to start. Use the time to talk informally with visitors and establish a rapport. It eases your anxiety and lets you learn about your audience.

Knowing your audience allows you to personally tailor your presentation and make it more meaningful and relevant. Through personal conversations, you can learn about individual wants, needs, and expectations. Through observation, you can indirectly gather information about the audience, including age, gender, ethnic composition, etc. Understanding your audience is important. Remember Tilden's first principle, "Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile" (Tilden, 1967, p. 9).



Relax! The audience is on your side.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

First impressions are very important. Your audience begins assessing you the moment they meet you. Arriving at the talk location early helps establish your dependability. Your posture, uniform, and voice reinforce and enhance credibility and confidence. Your eye contact, smile, and warm welcome radiate approachability.



MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION

Just as you will be observing the audience and determining their wants, needs, and interests, they will be assessing your competence, approachability, and professionalism. First impressions are important. Departmental uniform and grooming standards enhance your credibility. The uniform and the regard in which the public holds the Department and its employees lets you begin your talk with a high level of acceptance. Personal habits, voice, enthusiasm, and presentation style can reinforce or shatter the positive respect the audience has for you.



Always exhibit competence, approachability, and professionalism.

Your credibility, personality, competence, and sincerity manifest themselves in your communication skills, both verbal and nonverbal. We communicate a lot of information with our bodies, faces, hands, and posture. When interacting with an individual or a group, always stand up straight, do not slouch. Look at your audience and smile. “Some experts claim that fifty-five percent of understanding from messages is from facial expressions, not words” (Regnier, et al., 1994, p. 26). Avoid distracting mannerisms, such as body swaying, fidgeting, pacing back and forth, hands in pockets fumbling with keys and coins, etc. You communicate positive signals with good posture. Use tasteful, appropriate, and slightly understated hand gestures to punctuate and illustrate points in your program. Do not hesitate to walk toward your audience to focus attention and make personal connections, but be careful not to intimidate them. Once again, be aware of and practice/rehearse good nonverbal skills. In addition, your attitude is extremely important. Assume a friendly, confident, and enthusiastic demeanor. **When you have a positive attitude, all the planning and mechanical details of a talk will come easier and more naturally.**

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An interpreter acts out of authority and humility; confidence and compassion; respect for others and one’s own integrity; stability and enthusiasm; and joy. An interpreter treats others with kindness.

Larry Beck and Ted Cable

■ ■ ■

Personal Style

How you come across to your audience is influenced by a combination of your environment, education, and personality. We have all inherited characteristics, have been influenced by different experiences, and have a personal “comfort zone.” We are unique. When developing your personal style, borrow techniques that you like from other speakers, but do not try to copy them. Let your own personality shine through.

AUDIENCE RESPONSE

Constantly gauge your audience's reaction to determine their level of enjoyment and understanding. Knowing, or at least anticipating, an audience's response will guide you in preparing future programs. Who is this particular audience? Do they understand the language, complexity of issues, and examples that you are using to clarify points? For example, if a large percentage appear to understand only limited English, it would not be effective to present a talk full of terms that they can not understand. As a general guide, plan your presentation for the 8th grade level, and then adjust as needed. If you have practiced your talk and are comfortable with it, you should be able to change it as needed for the group that is before you.



Visitors speaking a foreign language

- **Use a language interpreter if one is available.** Reduce your content by about half to allow for translation time. It is better for the group to understand half of the program well, than to hear it all from you and not understand anything.
- **If you do not have a translator, ask a member of the group to help.** If they do not feel comfortable translating every word, he or she can still be a valuable ally in conveying key concepts. Some individuals are very shy about being in the spotlight. Do not insist if the person asked refuses your invitation to translate.
- **Even scant knowledge of a language is usually appreciated.** Do not be afraid to try out your high school language skills!
- **Use pantomime.** It is fun and often engages the group to try it themselves.
- **Ask how to say something in another person's language, and then repeat it.** Even if (and perhaps especially if) your attempt is clumsy, the group will appreciate you for trying. Good words to start with are "please" and "thank you." Not only will these prove useful, they also demonstrate respect.
- **Build a library of foreign words and phrases that pertain to your topic.** Keep them on note cards and refer to them when appropriate.
- **If possible, touch on topics familiar to them or their country.** (Roth 1998.) For example, German and Swiss visitors are delighted to know that a Swiss German man who brought his culture to America founded Sutter's Fort.

VOICE AND VERBIAGE

Your voice and verbiage are key to conveying that friendly, approachable, personal warmth you want to exhibit. You are not talking at the audience, but with them; there is a huge difference. Try to use the same conversational style in your talk as you would with a group of your friends. Speak clearly, avoid using jargon and scientific terms, and do not forget to breathe. Avoid repeating words or phrases such as “actually,” “basically,” “like,” “um,” or “uh.”

DEVELOP YOUR VOICE

- **Pleasant**—Conversational, friendly
 - **Natural**—Spontaneous and not contrived
 - **Audible**—Articulate with appropriate volume
 - **Compelling**—Makes audience want to listen
 - **Eloquent**—Actively conveys meanings and feelings
-

In addition to using the style of your voice, there are many ways to enhance the delivery of your talk.

DELIVERING YOUR TALK

- **Rate**—Most people speak 120 to 180 words a minute. Vary the speed at which you talk, but do not speak too fast. A constant rate is monotonous.
 - **Pitch**—Tonal variations and volume should also vary. A constant pitch is monotonous.
 - **Articulate**—Enunciate so that each word is heard correctly. “Speak clearly; this is particularly important in large reverberant rooms.” (Green, 2002)
 - **Breathe**—A relaxed voice with controlled breathing is easier to understand and not as stressful for the speaker or the listener. Short sentences with pauses and periods help; don’t run on and on.
 - **Quality**—Emphasis, force, expression, and clarity make all the difference in the effectiveness of a talk.
-

Even if you possess a strong, audible voice, you'll want to stay aware of your surroundings and notice any distractions that may make it difficult for the audience to hear. When you are speaking to a large group, or when the ambient noise level is high, a microphone can be a useful tool. If you think you might need a microphone, you probably need one. Don't be afraid to use this tool, get comfortable with it. Many people do not hear as well as you do.

It is important that you face your audience. This directs your voice towards the audience, and if any participants need to, it allows them to lip read or infer what you are saying. Do not have anything in your mouth while you are speaking; items such as gum, a toothpick, or candy can be very annoying and may reduce your ability to enunciate clearly. They also sabotage your credibility and professionalism. The way you express yourself helps your audience to be open and receptive, understand what you are saying, and relate it to their personal experiences. The words and phrases you use make a difference.

Most often, when conveying facts and numbers, it is best to generalize, but there certainly are exceptions.

For example, gold was discovered in California in 1848, not the 40s; water freezes at precisely 32 degrees, not the low 30s. Conversely, in many instances, rounding numbers is less tedious and distracting. For example, 397 species of birds should be rounded up to 400 and 14,010 acres should be rounded down to 14,000.

Where possible, put

numerical information into a context to which the audience can relate. For example, to help them relate to how much food a hawk must eat each day in order to survive, you might say something such as, "A hawk eats half its body weight every day. If I were to do that, I would have to eat 75 pounds of food. Let's see—that is about 150 hamburgers a day!"

All Visitors Welcome addresses another terminology concern, "The recommended way to refer to people with disabilities is to put people first; for example, 'people with hearing impairments.' It is not appropriate to say, 'hearing-impaired people.' It is important to remember that people with disabilities are individuals, who do not all act, think, or move alike. Therefore do not refer to them as 'the disabled,' or 'the mentally retarded,' etc. Do



It is important that you face your audience and use a microphone when necessary.

not use words which are degrading, such as crippled, defect, wheelchair-bound, confined to a wheelchair, invalid, victim of..., or suffering from.” (Porter, 1994, p. 7). Think of people first!

Living history programs must be authentic and appropriate and must be accompanied by orientation/interpretation for the visitor that allows him or her to have a meaningful interaction with living history presenters. Factors to consider in relation to authenticity and appropriateness of living history programs include such things as interpretive theme(s) and period(s) of the park unit, the individuals selected to fill certain “roles” or characters (age, race, gender, ways of speaking, accents, etc.), and clothing..

DPR Operations Manual, 0904.6.12.1

FIRST-PERSON CHARACTERIZATION

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In essence, living interpretation involves on-site re-creation of the lives of a people, wearing their clothing, speaking their dialect, reviewing their decisions.

Grant Sharpe

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Besides our actual physical voice, there is another “voice” we can use in our interpretation. The voice of first person interpretation is that of an individual from a specific time or period. This type of interpretation is also known as **living history**. For this to work well, you must **become** the person who lived or visited the site. You must not only look like the character, but your speech, dialect, vocabulary, and style must also be an accurate reflection of that era. “First-person gets under the skin of history.” says Stacy F. Roth in

her book *Past into Present*. “Its chief advantage over other interpretive choices centers on its ability to add an emotional dimension to the telling of history.”

First person interpretation may use a “canned presentation,” but more commonly relies on interaction with the audience. When you interact with the audience, you should acknowledge only things from the appropriate time period. For example, you are portraying a rancher’s wife baking bread in an adobe oven. An audience member says something about storing bread in the freezer. You know nothing about a freezer, but you could say that the rodents tend to burrow into the basement cold storage area so bread does not store well. **First person interpretation takes**

First-person interpretation generally requires another person to prepare the audience, introduce the character, “set the stage” and close the program. Without someone to provide a cognitive map to the program, visitors may not understand the depiction and may become confused or feel disoriented.



considerable research, concentration, theatrical skill, and practice to stay in character. Although it is one of the most difficult “voices” to master, when performed correctly, first person interpretation can be a powerful presentation tool.

THIRD-PERSON COSTUMED INTERPRETATION

Third-person interpretation uses a costume and associated items as props for the time period being discussed. The interpreter does not need to become a certain character, and the dialogue and discussion can be in more modern terms. Visitors generally find it easy to interact and ask questions of someone doing third-person, costumed interpretation. Craft and skill demonstrations are certainly enhanced when the interpreter dresses in suitable clothing and uses authentic looking tools and props. Third-person interpretation allows more comfortable interaction with the audience and may be more effective at conveying a given message.



Costumes are great props, but remember to maintain eye contact with the audience.

STORYTELLING

The age-old practice of storytelling has been traditionally performed around a campfire, but a good story, well prepared and practiced, can be told any time and anywhere. *Module 8—Campfire* will include a general discussion on storytelling. In this section we will focus our discussion on exercises and techniques for using your voice to full advantage.

■ ■ ■

As a storyteller, your goal is to become, for a brief moment, something other than a man or woman standing in front of the room—to create a whole new world using words, sounds, gestures, and expressions. To hear a story is an ancient longing, to tell a story an ancient skill. A well-told story can move you to laughter or tears; it can explain or cause you to ponder the wonders of the universe.

Linda Yemoto and Simone Dangles

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Storytelling Tips and Techniques

- **Relaxation exercises**—Take a moment before starting a story to relax your body. Use exercises to release tension.
- **Humming exercises**—Storytelling and any public speaking require a strong voice. One way to strengthen and not strain your voice is to hum. Try changing the volume, pitch, and expression in your voice as you hum.
- **Different parts of your voice**—It is important to be aware of the different types of sound you can make with the parts of your voice. The nasal long “eee” sound comes from the front of your head or through your nose. The long “aaa” sound comes from the front of your mouth. The “ahhh” from the back of your throat, the “ohhh” from your chest, and the deep short “uuu” from way down in your stomach.
- **Inflection**—Use inflection to keep an audience interested and to sustain a feeling or mood. Drop your voice only at the end of a complete thought.
- **Diction**—The audience must understand your words. Improve your diction by repeating tongue twisters such as, “Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.”
- **Facial expression**—Practice expressing different emotions, feelings, attitudes, etc., using only your face. Try showing anger, disgust, joy, surprise, excitement, pride, and sadness for a start.
- **Character assumption**—Learning how to “take on a character” is critical in becoming an effective storyteller. Your character may be the narrator of the story, or it may be one of the principal figures in the story.

Adapted from Linda Yemoto and Simone Dangles

STORYTELLING CAUTIONS

- Talking in a monotone
- Using a fake or affected voice
- Talking too fast or meandering verbally
- Using limp or repetitive gestures
- Insulting other cultures
- Teaching misinformation about nature
- Over-anthropomorphizing wildlife
- Telling stories you don't like

Regnier, et al.

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Storytelling is especially important in cultural settings. New stories can and should be developed based on good research. Interpreters need to understand the techniques of storytelling and then develop stories for that location.

Karen Beery,
Interpreter III, CSP

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A second interpreter enhances first person characterization.

Getting Their Attention

Ron Russo, former Chief Naturalist for the East Bay Regional Parks, believes there is a general tendency for all audiences to wander simply because we speak at a slower rate than minds think. People's thoughts drift to new, unrelated areas or different things to do. The physical signs are obvious to the alert interpreter. For example, fidgeting, looking around, talking, and walking away are all symptoms of mental distractions. Following are his suggestions for regaining the audience's attention and keeping it.

Audience Attention Getters:

- **Ask a question...**put them on alert status.
- **Select someone for a little role-playing.**
- **Use a quote.**
- **Pull out a handheld object or tool.**
- **Make a spontaneous discovery—"Oh, look over there."**
- **Change your facial expression.** Get dramatic!
- **Direct the action.** Stay in charge. You are the producer.
- **Be enthusiastic. Share your excitement at every opportunity.**
- **Recognize and praise someone.** "Oh, what a great idea..."
- **Follow their energy and interests.** What appears to be a distraction can be a great discovery, if you make it one.
- **Use pauses and silences to emphasize a point or attract attention.**

Adapted from Ron Russo

Add Pizzazz

There are many ways to stimulate interest and add excitement to your program. An easy attention getter is a sentence that is outrageous, rhymes, or is startling. Say something that really captures the audience's interest and makes them want to listen. You might use foreshadowing, which is an early reference to something that you will talk about later. This teaser adds mystery and suspense, and enhances curiosity. It provokes the audience to listen carefully and solve the problem. A riddle, a brainteaser, or a trivial pursuit challenge helps to heighten interest and encourage interaction. Providing your audience with clues in the body of your talk helps them solve the mystery at or prior to your conclusion. You might use a phrase that is repeated and gains power with each repetition, e.g., "I have a dream." You might use a turnabout; start a line of thinking in one direction and then abruptly change, or you might use a long silent pause.

Incorporate humor into your talk, as long as it relates to your theme. Humor can add lightheartedness to your presentation and help establish RAPPOR. With that said, use humor very carefully. Something that is funny to one person may be offensive to the next. A humorous story about your personal experiences or observations that directly relates to your theme can add insight and humanize your presentation. If the humorous story is to illustrate a point, the "punch line" should not be at your audience's expense. Remember, befriend your guests and make them feel at home and important.

Spice It Up

- **Choose words carefully.** Use active, descriptive words to verbally show an idea, not just tell about it. For example, instead of saying, "*She tried not to indicate how much my words hurt her.*" Say, "*As I finished speaking, she lowered her eyes and turned away.*" In a whispery voice she said, "Looks like it might rain later."
- **Use descriptive verbs instead of adjectives and adverbs.** For example, you might say, "*The deer ran away scared.*" By saying, "*The deer froze, then leaped the fence and bolted across the meadow,*" you paint a much clearer verbal image.
- **Avoid forms of the verb "to be" (is, was, were) whenever possible.** For example the statement, "*It was a dark and stormy night*" doesn't help the audience visualize as much as, "*The storm raged all night; only the lightning lit my way through the forest.*"
- **Use active voice for power and strength; use passive for soft, vague effect.** "*The grass was bent low by the wind*" is an example of describing a scene in a passive voice. An example of active voice might be, "*The wind pressed the grass close to the ground.*"

- **Use simile or metaphor to enhance your descriptions.** *“The man hopped around and waved his arms,”* is not as descriptive as the following simile: *“The man hopped into the air and waved his arms like a giant prehistoric bird straining to take off into the wind.”* Metaphors work well also: *“He was a giant prehistoric bird straining to take off into the wind.”*

Adapted from Jane Vander Weyden

QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES

The technique of questioning involves and intellectually stimulates the audience. Questions can be either open or closed-ended. Open-ended questions entice visitors to share their knowledge, thoughts, and feelings. They ask for opinions and generally stimulate creative thinking and discussion. Closed-ended questions ask for direct, short, factual type responses; e.g., yes/no, or the answer to who, what, or where.

STIMULATE THE AUDIENCE WITH QUESTIONS

- **Focus**—by describing, naming, observing, recalling, etc.
“Does anyone remember how many eyes I said this tarantula has?”
 - **Process**—by analyzing, comparing, explaining, grouping, etc.
“Do you all see the differences between these two leaves even though they are on the same tree?”
 - **Evaluate**—by imagining, predicting, theorizing, extrapolating, etc.
“How do you think General Vallejo’s wife Francisca felt about this?”
-

It may seem obvious, but when you ask a question, give your audience enough time to answer. Unless you are asking a rhetorical question, you should allow five to 15 seconds for the audience to think about it, formulate an opinion, and verbalize a response. Direct questions to, and encourage responses from, various members of the audience. Do not let one or a few individuals dominate the conversation and interaction. Do NOT put anyone on the spot by directly singling them out, unless you are sure they will be able to answer the question easily.

If no one answers your question, rephrase it or leave it open and answer it later in your talk. Try not to answer your own questions right away. An open question becomes suspenseful foreshadowing. It is important to accept answers gracefully, even if the response is incorrect. “I never thought about it that way...” or “That’s an interesting perspective ...” are methods of gingerly accepting a **wrong** answer. Use follow-up questioning or rephrasing to gently arrive at the correct answer.

EXAMPLE

You’re about to begin a talk on wildlife in the park. You ask the audience, “*What kinds of animals do you think live here at Samuel P. Taylor State Park?*”

A child in the front row immediately answers, “*Tigers!*”

Instead of saying, “*No, you’re wrong about that*” a skilled interpreter might answer, “*Good guess! Tigers do like to live in places where there is a thick forest or jungle like we have here at the park. We don’t have tigers here, but during my talk, I’ll be telling you about the biggest cat that does live here. I’ll even show you its pelt so you can feel its fur and see how big its feet are.*”

More About Answering Questions

The most important thing to remember is to always rephrase and repeat a question from an audience member. Not only does this help ensure that you understand the question being asked but it gives you a chance to repeat it loudly so that everyone can hear it. Don’t assume that everyone heard the question. Keep your group involved by assuming they did not, and rephrasing it and repeating it.

If you do not know the answer to a question, do not bluff or fake it. Say you do not know. Ask if anyone in the audience has the answer, and if not, make arrangements to provide the answer at a later time. Many rangers carry park postcards or 3x5 cards in their vehicles or trail bags. The visitor writes down the question, and addresses the card to themselves. The ranger finds out the answer, writes it on the card and posts it in the mail. This is a great way to make someone’s day and provide a happy memory after they return home.

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Success may breed excess. Gratifying and flattering feedback tempts interpreters to do more. However, interpreters must be vigilant against giving the public too much of a good thing. An old showbiz adage says to “leave the audience wanting to come back for more.” This is sage advice for interpreters.

Larry Beck and Ted Cable

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Sometimes it is prudent not to answer the question directly. Help the audience discover the answer on their own with a little encouragement from you. If the question will be answered later in your talk, let them know you will be answering it shortly.

Answering techniques are very important. Try to act as if you are hearing the question for the first time. Many times interpreters in a cultural setting get into the habit of explaining everything in the room that they know will be of interest to the visitor. This bores your audience! **Interpreters need to allow the visitors to ask questions.** We need to encourage a conversational style, participatory with the audience, not a lecture. Remember, this is about facilitating connections for the members of your audience.

You have heard the question a thousand times! By the end of the season, you will probably know the question before the audience asks it. Remember, be a good host. It is the first time that particular individual has asked a question, and he/she deserves a clear, courteous answer.

Next we'll be covering the mechanics of a good talk. But first, a final review of the elements needed for a good delivery.

FOR A GREAT DELIVERY

- **Incorporate the RAPPORT elements**
- **Put “spark” in your presentation**—The priceless ingredient is love.
- **Smile**—55 percent of communication is unspoken.
- **Vary your voice**—Monotone induces sleep, not interest.
- **Talk with your audience, not at them.**
- **Speak from the heart, not your notes.**
- **Face your audience when speaking.**
- **Exhibit positive body language**—Use appropriate gestures.
- **Don't memorize your talk—Remember your outline.**
- **Make smooth transitions.**
- **Employ good questioning techniques.**
- **Add pizzazz**—Incorporating suspense, mystery, foreshadowing, humor, and active words.
- **Have an ending that punctuates your theme and closes the program.**
- **Remember, stage fright is normal**—Use the energy to your advantage.

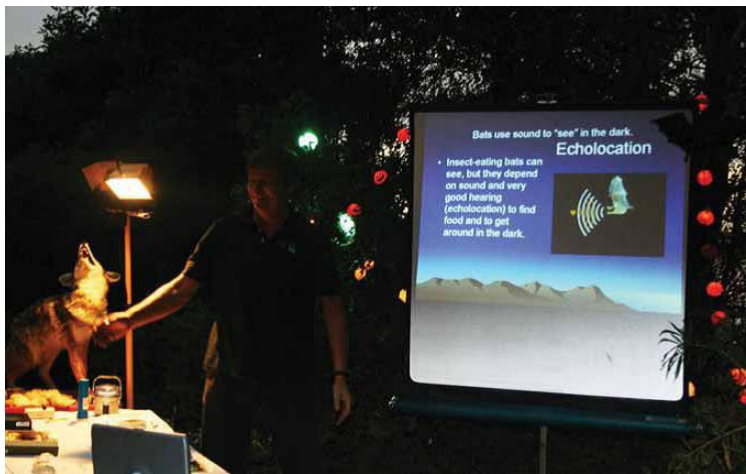
Have FUN — it shows!

6.4 MECHANICS

All of your planning and preparation efforts will begin to pay dividends when you actually present your talk. There are several techniques you should employ that will add to your program's success. We will take a moment to look at them.

BEFORE THE TALK

As mentioned earlier in this module, always arrive early. Allow plenty of time to check your equipment, props, and the setting. If you are presenting your talk at a location you are unfamiliar with, such as an off-site speaking engagement, try to visit the location ahead of time. Room layout, location of switches and plugs, audiovisual concerns, etc., should all be addressed long before the actual presentation. If this is a group booked by reservation, the interpreter may want to call ahead to learn about the group's expectations or goals. Arriving early also provides time to socialize and establish a rapport with individuals before they become your audience. You represent California State Parks. Be prepared and set a high standard of excellence.



Think of yourself as the host and the audience as your guests. Have everything ready when your guests arrive. Greet them and exude a warm welcome; a smile is a great charmer. Acknowledge everyone, whether personally or visually; make a connection and offer a welcoming gesture.

Begin your talk on time. Introduce yourself, formally welcome the audience, have an attention grabber, provide information about the theme and subthemes, tell them why you are giving the talk, and present a cognitive map.

AFTER THE TALK

Inviting the visitors to linger and chat is just good manners. You can overtly state that you will remain for a while and are open to discussion. Or you can simply remain in the area and be receptive to the visitors. **A gracious host attempts to satisfy their guests' needs.**

Simply saying “that’s all folks” and leaving does not allow for that informal socialization with the interpreter that many visitors crave and on which good interpreters thrive. This kind of interaction helps you evaluate the program’s content and your delivery skills. Do not forget to include appropriate evaluation measures.

We will offer some more specific techniques on how to end your talk later in *Modules 7—Walk, 8—Campfire and 10—Roving*.

IT AIN’T OVER TILL IT’S OVER

- **Evaluate the program** (formal/informal, audience/self).
 - **Record interpretive data** (DPR 918).
 - **Secure/store/replenish materials and equipment.**
 - **Follow-up considerations** (for visitors, staff, self)
-

PROPS

A good interpreter employs a number of well-chosen tools in an effective talk. **Your voice, your body language, your questioning skills and your enthusiasm are just four of the tools you constantly have available to you.** There are hosts of other aids or props that you can employ to help illustrate and accentuate the theme of the talk. Remember, props are just aids to the presentation. Props help tell the story; they are not the story.

Props can be real items, reproductions, representations, or graphics. Use props to involve all the senses in your talk; incorporate props that can be smelled, heard, touched, tasted, and seen. This will greatly improve theme comprehension and retention. Where possible and prudent, use the real thing. For example, it is much more effective to let the visitors smell the fragrant bark of the Jeffrey pine rather than to tell them it smells like vanilla. Hearing the chimes of the old clock on the mantle helps envision quieter days. Tasting that exquisitely ripe blackberry right off the vine has much more impact than hearing someone’s description. We will look at how props can be incorporated to effectively engage the senses and heighten understanding.

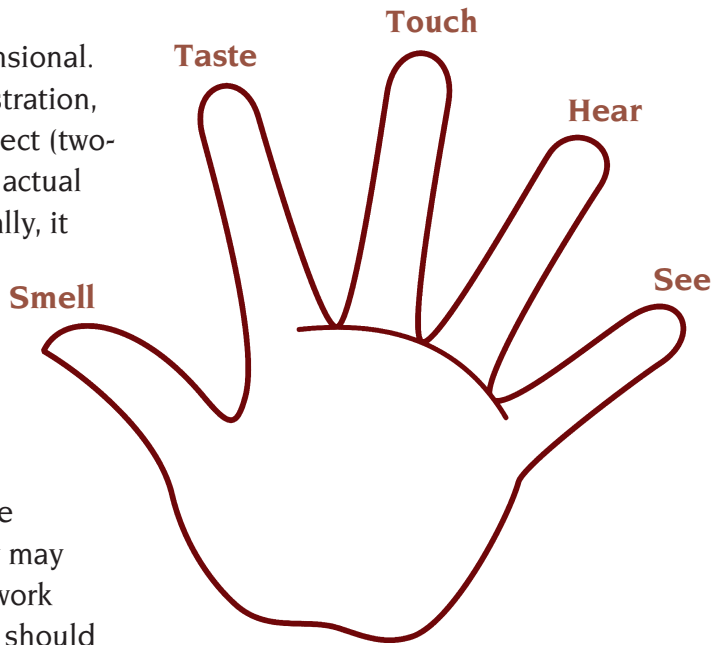
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Activating all the senses creates a holistic experience for the visitor.

Larry Beck and Ted Cable

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Visuals

Visuals may be two- or three-dimensional. For example, you could use an illustration, photograph, digital image of an object (two-dimensional), or you could use the actual object (three-dimensional). Generally, it is much more effective to use the real item rather than a facsimile, but that is not always possible. Some experts believe visual aids increase retention and comprehension by as much as 200 percent. However, if your visuals are poorly designed or displayed, they may draw attention away from you and work against your intended goal. Visuals should function as tools to clarify your theme. They should enhance what you are saying without distracting the audience's attention.



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...the basis for 'ACCLIMATIZING' is natural awareness through use of personal senses (i.e., touching, tasting, hearing, smelling and seeing), using all senses to pursue natural awareness "until we return to that childlike innocence and harmony — only on a higher level" as an adult.

Bill Krumbein and Linda Leyva

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Illustrations

Projected images are common visual aids that make graphics large enough for all to easily see. We will cover how to prepare a multi-media presentation in more detail in *Modules 8—Campfire* and *11—Audiovisual*. Let us discuss how other illustrations can support your theme.

Select your illustration prop carefully. First and foremost, make sure that all of your audience can see it clearly. It may seem obvious, but pictures, posters, maps, and other visual aids must be large enough for your audience to see. Limit the amount of information you present with any one visual aid. For example, limit the text to a line or two on any one graphic. Too much reading becomes too much like school. If you do use

text, the font size and style of the letters should be appropriate for the visual. Use a sans serif font, one that is easy to read such as Arial. Avoid using complicated graphs and charts, because they are too difficult to decipher at a glance. Incorporate extra lighting, projection devices, magnifying glasses, etc., to enhance visual acuity.

Objects

When using handheld objects, be sure the background and lighting are suitable. Hold the object steady, generally at shoulder level, and deliberately point out features and details. Slowly rotating objects allows for visual relationships to be grasped. If the item has a human use, you should show or pantomime that use. Appeal to the audience's imagination where possible. Ask questions about the item to engage their thoughts. For example, you are showing the audience an antique apple peeler that was a common tool in 19th century farm life. It is a complicated combination of wheels, cogs, and prongs. Ask if anyone knows what this tool might have been used for. Provide clues to help them guess correctly; a bowl of apples nearby may just do the trick! Then actually peel an apple or use gestures to indicate how the tool was used. If appropriate, invite a volunteer from the audience to try it. Have them comment on how hard or easy it is to use.

References

Field guides, local flora and fauna keys, architectural digests, "how to" manuals, copies of diaries and letters, and other topic-related references provide visitors opportunities to discover details. Having these in your "kit bag" of tools is appropriate and professional.

Let the visitor know where they can buy or download the reference if they desire. This practice helps increase the take-home value of your program. Is the item for sale in your visitor center? Even better! If an item is good enough to use as a reference in your program, the visitors may very well benefit by having one of their very own.

Audio

Incorporating sound into your talk certainly enhances another dimension of understanding. Stopping to listen to the natural or ambient sounds should be a normal occurrence for the seasoned interpreter. You can enhance the audience's ability to hear sounds with various techniques and tools. Have visitors cup their hands near their ears, or put their ears to the ground or tree and listen intently. Ask everyone to close their eyes and listen to often unheard sounds. In this all-too-busy world, the art of just listening to the tick of a clock, bird song, or rushing water can be a powerful experience.

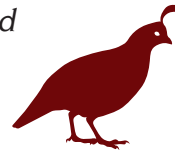
Use mechanical devices such as mp3 players, tablets or cell phones; stethoscopes; bat detectors; or parabolic recorders to capture or play sounds not normally heard by visitors. Use all the tools available to improve the experience and illustrate the theme.

Smell

Inviting your audience to experience the aromas of the environment is another effective presentation tool. The stuffiness of the cellar, the pungency of creosote, or the musk of the elk are all smells the visitor will not soon forget. How you employ and deliver these and other smells requires careful planning and forethought. Keeping the cellar door closed, rubbing the leaves of the creosote, or bottling the musk oil of an elk are all ways to incorporate smell stimuli into the interpretive experience.

Reduce your audience's anxiety by modeling how to smell the item. **Instead of simply handing the person something to smell, show them how to approach it.** Any time you ask the audience to do something, always demonstrate it first. For example, instead of telling the audience to stick their noses in the Jeffrey pine bark, simply walk up to the tree, hug it, put your face right up to the tree, take a deep breath, and say "ahhhhhh." Once they know it is safe, they will be far more relaxed and willing to experience the smell.

What's ambrosia to one, stinks to another. As with all audience considerations, use good judgment, and do not force, shame, or embarrass anyone into smelling, tasting, or touching any of your props.



Taste

Tasting things is a tricky proposition. To the untrained eye, plants that are poisonous may easily be confused for safer ones. In addition, tasting things in front of children often sets a precedent that could be dangerous. Carefully choose the tastes you share with visitors. Done wisely, there are life experiences to be had! For example, that city dweller who tastes a ripe wild huckleberry may now be able to understand why a bear is so focused. Someone who has never tasted a cattail "corncob" may finally understand how innovative the hunter/gatherer cultures were.

Taste is more difficult to incorporate into your talk than the other senses. It is difficult to do effectively, a little scary, and may not always produce the desired effect. But when you use it and it works, you just may have connected the visitor with the resource in a way they will never forget.

TASTING IN THE WILD

- **Do not encourage tasting unless you are absolutely sure it is edible and safe.** Not even a small piece.
 - **Just because animals eat it doesn't mean you can.**
 - **Harvest with respect to the resource and the law.**
 - **Explain to visitors why and how you are ethically harvesting.** For example, advise your audience to take only every fifth blackberry to ensure enough for others, for animals, for reseeding, etc.
 - **Just because it tastes good does not make it safe.**
 - **Always give a warning about look-alikes and dangers of eating in the wild.**
-

Touch

Incorporating tactile sensation is extremely successful at reinforcing messages. For example, touching the ground to test the temperature with one hand in the sun and the other in the shade clearly illustrates the difference a tree can make. The rough texture of bark or the smoothness of polished marble cannot be explained any better than by touch. Touching the hairs on plants shows how they manage to “hitchhike” on your socks and disperse widely.



Touch is a powerful sensory stimulus.

ENGAGE AND INVOLVE THE AUDIENCE

Now that you've selected props/aids/specimens that are large enough to be seen and relevant to your talk, put them in their order of appearance so you won't be digging around in front of your audience. Keep them hidden until you are ready to exhibit them. This provides suspense and lessens distractions. When using props, do not get into the "this is a...and this is a..." mode of explaining the objects. **Remember, good presentation techniques include transitions, foreshadowing, questioning, and relevance to theme.** If the prop doesn't support your theme, it doesn't belong in the program.

Continue to talk to the audience when you use props. Maintain eye contact with the visitors, not your props. Glance at the prop occasionally to identify points of interest and to add emphasis. Use slow, deliberate hand movements to identify features and make sure you do not block anyone's view.

Whenever possible, let visitors feel, smell, and handle the objects you are discussing. When passing objects through the audience, consider waiting until everyone has had a chance to experience it before moving on. If the group is large, however, this may not be an option.

Handout materials are good tools to help engage and involve the audience, but distribution is an issue. Handouts may be beneficial for providing supplemental information and helping with recall at a later date. They also offer some take-home value. How and when you distribute the handout materials requires forethought and good techniques. Distributing the material at the start of the talk may relax the audience and make them more receptive to listening, but might also distract their attention away from your presentation. Passing the materials out during the talk may clarify or help illustrate your theme, but the timing and continuity of your presentation may be thrown off. Waiting until the end of the program may reinforce your presentation and provide additional information, but might also just be something that distracts from your strong conclusion. Use handouts wisely.

KIT BAG

Props, aids, gadgets, and all sorts of paraphernalia help the interpreter reveal the true essence of the story. Over time, interpreters develop their own personalized kit bag of tools with items that work for them for any given situation, topic, and location. Freed and Shafer list 66 items they suggest could go into your kit bag, and Krumbein includes 74 cultural and historic items. Both articles are certainly worth reviewing. Other information on interpretive techniques can be found in *The Interpreter's Guidebook* (Regnier, et al., 1994).

Tricks of the trade

Every interpreter will have special issues and concerns to address. Many times we develop props that work specifically to illustrate a point. For instance, California State Parks Interpreter Michael Green works in historic structures where marble is abundant, Michael realized visitors instinctively want to feel the smooth, cool marble, so he carries a piece of marble in his kit bag which he invites everyone to touch. Over the years, the oils from all this touching has discolored the demonstration marble, offering a perfect opportunity for Michael to explain why we ask visitors not to touch the marble walls.

Whether you use an all-purpose day pack, a treasure trunk, or an under-the-counter drawer to store your kit bag of tools, you will find that you constantly draw on them to help illustrate your talk.



Props allow visitors to see, touch, hear, smell and feel the people or objects you are talking about..

ACCESSIBILITY

As a good host, we must always consider accessibility when presenting a program. Accessibility is often thought of in terms of providing physical access to facilities. “The Americans with Disabilities Act not only addresses the issue of physical access to buildings, but also considers the need for equally effective communication with people with disabilities and program accessibility” (Porter, 1994, p. 53). “It means being able to get to the door, through the door, to the second floor, and to participate, independently, and with dignity” (Stensrud, 1993, p. 103).

As state parks interpreters, we “must ensure that communications with individuals with disabilities are as effective as communications with others”... “Good interpretation always relates the message to the audience, communicating in a way that is both understandable and provocative to the individual listener. This requires that the interpreter be sensitive to the interests and special needs of the entire audience” (Porter, 1994, pp. 53-55). In *All Visitors Welcome*, you will find information that looks beyond the federal and state laws for accessibility. You will also find ways to more effectively communicate with a diverse audience (Porter, 1994).

As the interpreter, it is your responsibility to be familiar with and follow the “letter of the law” for program accessibility. Provide programs where all visitors are included in the interpretive talk. Personal integrity and professionalism also dictate that you embrace the “spirit of the law” with your best interpretive efforts. Incorporate accessibility along with all of the elements of RAPPOR for all members of the audience.

EVALUATE

How do you know you are a good interpreter? How do you assess whether the audience is enjoying, understanding, and learning from your talk? Self-evaluation should be a continual routine. You should always strive to improve on your last visitor interaction. In *Module 12—Evaluation*, we will thoroughly discuss self-evaluation and other assessment tools in detail.

For now, watch your audience for clues. Earlier in this module, we discussed the signals you send with your body language. Your enthusiasm, attention to detail, and confidence help the audience appreciate and benefit from your presentation. Once you become comfortable with your information and your techniques, put your attention into watching your audience and adjusting your presentation as needed.

Gather Formative Feedback During the Program

Are audience members:

- Smiling, applauding, and laughing at the appropriate times?
- Attentive and making eye contact with you?
- Sharing their knowledge and opinions, and being actively involved in the program?
- Asking questions based on their enlightenment?
- Participating when asked?

Or are they:

- Fidgeting, distracted, or having other conversations while you are talking?
- Constantly asking you to clarify what you said?
- Leaving before the talk is over?
- Not looking at you?

Gather Summative Feedback After the Program**Did your audience:**

- Linger and visit, ask questions, and cheerfully interact with you?
- Look at or take materials you offered as additional information?
- Thank, compliment, or ask you about other program opportunities?

Or did they:

- Leave immediately.
- Ask questions you thought you had already addressed in the talk?
- Seem confused about the subject?

Reading body language is an imperfect art. Body language varies based on culture, the person, and the place. In addition, body language signals may have more than one meaning. When evaluating a situation, you should incorporate as many clues as possible. For example, if one person is distracted, your program may be just fine. But if several people are not paying attention, you may need to revise your presentation's content, style, or methods.

This gut-level, traditional evaluation method has benefits and pitfalls. It is extremely important that you also use the scientific methods we'll discuss later to accurately assess your performance

BIAS AND "TRUTH"

Dealing with bias and the "truth" can be difficult. Bias is prejudice, and each individual's truth is in the "eye of the beholder." Bias can be overt or unintended, verbal or nonverbal, and in written or graphic form. For example, you may be exhibiting personal communication bias

■ ■ ■

Our job is to integrate these various truths into the whole truth, which should be our only loyalty.

Abraham Maslow

■ ■ ■

by addressing your comments exclusively to the men in your audience, not making eye contact with individuals with physical disabilities, or not directly addressing a person of a particular ethnic group. To become excellent interpreters, we must constantly strive to identify and remove bias from our presentations. NPS interpretive training Module 201 offers the following forms of bias, prejudice, and stereotyping. If you recognize any of these in your style, take the time to make changes.

VERBAL

- **Speaker's point of view**—From what perspective does the interpreter speak? What assumptions does she/he make about the topic and audience?
- **Pronoun usage**—Are masculine pronouns used when referring to gender-neutral objects? Are feminine pronouns used diminutively?
- **Euphemisms**—Are euphemisms used to diminish the import of sensitive or controversial issues e.g., slaves/servants?
- **Terminology**—Are terms used with cultural sensitivity?

NONVERBAL

- **Eye contact**—With whom does the interpreter make the most eye contact?
- **Body language**—What does body language communicate about accessibility/inaccessibility or interest/disinterest?
- **Gestures**—How are gestures used to prompt or silence members of the audience? To communicate interest/disinterest?
- **Positioning**—Where does the interpreter spend the most time?
- **Inclusion**—Who gets called upon? With whom does the interpreter spend time? What questions are asked of different students/visitors?

Interpretive Development Plan, National Park Service

Truth, especially in the cultural sense, is determined by the historical context in which it occurred. Remember in *Module 2—Purpose and Value* we discussed that **history is not a fact, but rather an interpretation of the event by the person who recorded it, the time in which it occurred, and those of us who are listening to it today**. As more historical information is discovered, the interpretation of that event is altered. There are always many perspectives from which to tell a story. Be careful that you accurately reflect the culture and the historic facts and are not simply playing into stereotypes. Avoid dogmatic

certainty when interpreting a historical event. When you incorporate qualifiers such as: “Based on what we now know...” or “It appears that...”, you will provide the caveat for additional “truths” to be discovered.

PUBLICITY

By now, you have prepared a wonderful interpretive program, but you need an audience! Informing your potential audience about the when, where, and why of your program is extremely important to its success or failure. There are many ways to “get the word out.” A personal invitation from park staff, especially you, is the most powerful. Advertising on park bulletin boards, through white boards at the entrance station, and media announcements are very effective.

Activity Schedules

Design activity schedules with the visitors in mind. Do not forget that staff, including volunteers, other agencies, the media, and other audiences will also use them. This does not mean that the program announcement should look like a timetable. Your program title should make people curious and want to attend your program. The title should convey the essence of your theme, if not the theme itself. The write-up should be short, enticing, and informative.



How will you let visitors know about your program?

Your audience is in great part determined by the way you advertise your programs. **All activity schedules should include the three Ws: what, when, and where. Then incorporate the four Cs: clear, concise, correct, and compelling.** Use active, eloquent, and positive statements to describe your program offering. Select words that are exciting, informative, and hint at the mysteries of the topic. Words such as discover, explore, reveal, realize, unearth, etc., are likely to entice visitors to attend. Terms such as study, learn, investigate, and research do not sound like fun to most people who are on vacation. Don't make your program sound like scholarly work unless you are specifically seeking a very small audience with a singular passion.

Here is an example of an activity announcement for one day. Other announcements on the page should have similar formatting.

EVENTS

Saturday, May 26

10:30 a.m.—Walk

Indians, Explorers, & Settlers: 400 year conflict

1 hour

Join volunteer Lee Smith on a moderately difficult 1-mile amble, exploring sensitive locations that have experienced cultural clashes for centuries. The walk begins in front of the visitor center. Bring water and wear comfortable walking shoes.

3 p.m.—Junior Rangers

Peninsular Bighorn Sheep — Myths and Marvels

1 hour

Children ages 7-12 are invited to join ranger Chris Doe investigating the life, legends, and amazing mysteries of the largest park mammal. Meet at the campfire center.

7:30 p.m.—Campfire

Bats of Borrego and Beyond

1 hour

Bats are in the air, everywhere! Join interpreter Geri Jones for a bat patrol at the Mott Campfire Center. Discover why these mysterious night hunters are disappearing, why that is bad, and how you can help save them.

Media Releases

To attract the local public and a wider audience than might otherwise attend, advertise your interpretive programs outside of the park. The Department's media guide provides direction, structure, and format assistance when writing these Public Service Announcements (PSAs). In addition, most districts have a Public Information Officer (PIO) who will be able to assist you. Putting the what, when, where information in the beginning paragraph is always prudent. Use PSAs for all media including newspapers, magazines, radio, and television. Work with your PIO to develop a good working relationship with your local media. Know the type of information they desire and what their deadlines are.

Advertise your interpretive programs through the local media.



Websites and Social Media

Websites and social media are essential outlets for promoting your programs. Think about the websites, web event calendars, and kinds of social media your potential visitors might use and make the most of them. The California State Parks website is also a great place to post invitations to your programs and events. Upcoming activities are often listed on the landing page, exposing your programs to a world-wide audience.

Personal Invitations

It is worth repeating that the finest and most direct method to publicize your interpretive programs is through warm, sincere, and personal invitations. Do not forget to occasionally invite the local media to your programs. Extend personal invitations to visitors while they are attending another program, or while passing by staffed entrance stations, visitor centers and park offices. If possible, walk through the campground and personally invite visitors about an hour before the program begins. You can also extend invitations during casual chance meetings and while roving. Since only about 20 percent of park visitors attend our formal programs and visitors may ignore bulletin boards, your personal communication may be the only way some visitors learn of the park's interpretive program offerings. Be a good host.

WHAT'S AHEAD?

Our next module will help you develop your skills for conducting a walk, which is nothing more than a "moving talk." A walk offers you the chance to directly introduce the visitor to the resource. It can take many forms. We will take a close look at how to lead an exciting, effective, engaging walk.

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Module 6
TALKS

SELF ASSESSMENT

Answer each question in the section below before reviewing the material in *Module 6—Talks*. The answers are not provided. Check your answers with your colleagues and as you read *Module 6—Talks*. Items from the self assessment may be reviewed and discussed in class.

- 1) Which of the following should not be memorized when preparing for a talk?
 - a) Introduction
 - b) Transition sentences
 - c) Outline
 - d) Body of the presentation

- 2) Writing out a complete script for a talk is a good way to practice. (Explain your answer.)
 - a) True
 - b) False

3) Name three different general types of interpretive talks.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4) List two ways to help alleviate stage fright.

1. _____

2. _____

5) On average, _____ of the understanding from messages comes from facial expressions.

a) 25%

b) 35%

c) 45%

d) 55%

6) Which is a recommended practice for dealing with visitors speaking a foreign language?

a) Make no modifications

b) Use popular slang

c) Incorporate pantomime

d) Simplify the content

7) How does first person "living history" differ from third person, costumed interpretation?

8) Circle all of the following that are recommended strategies for developing storytelling techniques.

- a) Humming exercises
- b) Memorizing the stories you tell
- c) Relaxation exercises
- d) Practicing different facial expressions

9) Props are a necessary part of every interpretive presentation.

- a) True
- b) False

10) List four types of props.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

- 11) Reproductions of authentic objects should never be used in programs.
- a) True
 - b) False
- 12) Which of the following are appropriate methods of publicizing programs. (Circle all that apply.)
- a) Bulletin boards
 - b) Personal invitations
 - c) Media releases
 - d) Entrance station handouts
 - e) Web-based announcement

Now that you have completed the self assessment questions, review the material in *Module 6—Talks* to confirm your answers. After reading the module, move on to the workbook learning activities, which will assist you in developing your skills.

WORKBOOK LEARNING ACTIVITIES

To help you review and apply the material covered in *Module 6—Talks*, a selection of review questions and/or activities is provided. Again, no answers are included. Use the material from the module, outside sources, and your colleagues to help you complete the activities and answer the questions. There may be more than one right answer. Use the questions and activities to generate discussion about the material. Be prepared to discuss, perform, or demonstrate your answers in class.

- 1) Much of what we interpret for the public is factual information about our resources. Making numbers, dates, and other detailed facts understandable and interesting to visitors is a key part of “interpreting” the information. How could you interpret the following concepts for an audience?

Temperatures can reach 115° degrees Fahrenheit.

The tallest redwood is more than 360 feet tall.

The nearest town is 200 miles away.

The lake is 250 feet deep.

This park has 450 miles of trails.

Gold was first discovered in 1848.

Eighty-six million people visit California State Parks each year.

It happened more than 250 million years ago.

California State Parks has more than 275 park units.

Dragonflies can lift seven times their body weight.

Phalaropes fly 2,000 miles from Canada to South America in 2 days.

From 1850 to 1880, 75 million buffalo were killed.

- 2) With a classmate, practice the introduction and conclusion you prepared in the “Taking it to Your Park” section of *Module 5—Programs*. Give each other feedback on body language, facial expressions, and the other elements listed on page 6-9 of the Basic Interpretation Handbook. How could you improve? What did you do well?

3) List ten items you might include in a kit bag of tools for the talk you are preparing for your park.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

4) Develop a 15-second PSA radio spot for your talk.

Take it to YOUR Park

Answer each question with the information specific to your park. You will have to conduct some research in order to answer each question. Use the answers as a guide for enhancing your career in California State Parks.

TALKS

Park name _____

- 1) Brainstorm another potential theme for a program in your park. From your brainstormed list, circle the items that are tangible and underline those that are intangible. Write these two lists below.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
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_____	_____
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_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

- 2) Now identify the subject (topic), target audience, and purpose of the program. Create a theme that if possible, contains both a tangible and an intangible element. Write your theme below.

- 3) Outline your ideas for the talk.

4) List four ways you could engage visitors with the resources being interpreted.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5) Design two ways to publicize the program.

Module 7
WALKS



The moment one gives close attention to anything, even a blade of grass, it becomes a mysterious, awesome, indescribably magnificent world in itself.

Henry Miller

Module 7

WALKS

What is it?

A moving talk.

Why do we do it?

To provide an opportunity to directly connect the audience with the resources.

How do we do it?

Guide the audience through a series of thematically planned stops.

INTRODUCTION

Taking your talk “on the road” provides an opportunity to involve the audience directly with the resource being interpreted. For purposes of this module, we will call our moving talk a walk.

According to Sam Ham the qualities of any good presentation (enjoyable, relevant, organized, and thematic) are enhanced by the dynamics of the walk because something always seems to be happening. Whether the activity consists of strolling through an historic garden, canoeing a lake, exploring a cave system, or hiking in a forest, the visitors are actively involved in the resource. **You**

are the guide on this journey. How you move the group, hold their attention, enhance their understanding of the resource, and keep them safe requires techniques beyond simply talking.

In this module, we will discuss and examine the planning and mechanics of a successful interpretive walk.

■ ■ ■

The movement of a group of visitors led by an interpreter whose goals are to develop sensitivity, awareness, understanding, appreciation, and commitment in the members of the group.

Grant Sharpe

■ ■ ■

7.1 TYPES OF WALKS

In previous modules, you learned how to develop a theme and put together a talk. Now we see how we can deliver that talk as we move through the resource. Some of the more common types of walks include **resource**, **facility**, **site**, and **specialty**. Although we will use semantic differentiation to distinguish between types of walks, there are many elements from each that overlap and complement each other. Here we will briefly describe some common types of walks.

RESOURCE—NATURAL AND CULTURAL SETTINGS

A resource walk generally conjures up thoughts of walking along a trail, viewing and discussing the natural history of the flora, fauna, and landscape of your park. This type of walk is equally appropriate for cultural interpretation. Topics that focus on early inhabitants' uses of resources, hardships overcome by settlers to the area, and indications of past habitation might all be discussed as you walk along the path. Historic landscapes provide venues for “interpreting the life-style, technology, economy, society, and personalities of a particular historic period” (Helmich, 1997, p. 80).



Walks incorporate a variety of experiences.

FACILITY—VISITOR CENTER, HISTORIC STRUCTURE AND MUSEUM

This type of walk focuses on or around a facility. It is generally the facility and the cultural history associated with it that is being interpreted. Exhibits, furnishings, and displays provide interpretive media that assist the interpreter in explaining the resources and history of the site. Historic structures may be original, restored, or reconstructed edifices

of a particular period (Helmich, 1997). Historic setting museums (house museums) are either formal or adaptive. In the formal setting, the interpreter and the visitor are generally separated from the setting. In the adaptive, the visitor is guided into and through the setting.

Facility walks allow the interpreter to make connections between the specific location, the broader issues, the historical context, and the visitors' own experiences.

SITE—DEMONSTRATION, RESEARCH AND CULTURAL

Site visit walks orient the visitors to the features or values of a specific location and may emphasize natural or cultural resources. Many times, walking **to** the site is merely a prelude to a more extensive discussion **at** the site. The walk from the Año Nuevo visitor center to the breeding area of elephant seals is one example. Another example would be a walk through an historic town site, stopping to examine the architecture of a specific building, and ultimately ending at an archeological dig on the outskirts of town. The primary interpretive moment occurs at the dig site itself, and the walk is used to set the stage.

SPECIALTY—NIGHT, WET AND VEHICLE

The time of day, the environmental activities associated with an interpretive program, and even the mode of conveyance are all classifications for types of walks. For purposes of this discussion, specialty walks are something different from the normal offerings. While they may be routine in some parks, specialty walks generally provide a different way to view a resource. Because they are out of the routine, they may require additional preparation, time, and logistical effort, and they may present more

■ ■ ■
*Those who contemplate the beauty
of the earth find reserves of strength
that will endure as long as life lasts.*

Rachel Carson

■ ■ ■

safety issues. Specialty programs may offer adventure or provide new perspectives on the environment. Audience members who might not come on a typical nature walk may wholeheartedly join in an activity that lets them use their cars or bicycles. We will discuss the mechanics of a night, a wet, and a vehicle program later in this module.

While your walk should focus interpretation on specific resources, you must always be flexible enough to embrace the unexpected “teachable moment.” Walks help immerse the visitors and the interpreter in the resource, providing an opportunity for a multisensory experience and a more comprehensive appreciation of that resource. **Only your imagination, resources, audience and purpose limit the types of walks you offer.**

7.2 PLANNING

As you already know, planning a walk begins by determining your subject, audience and purpose; conducting thorough research; identifying your tangible and intangible elements; developing a theme; and putting it all together into an interpretive program.

A walk encompasses all the elements of a talk, plus the logistics and mechanics of moving visitors through the resource.

TOPIC AND THEME

Planning, research, theme development, and presentation skills are all critical elements of a good walk. When developing your walk, research both the cultural and natural features of the location. In the beginning, focus your research on the relevance of the route to your theme and your anticipated audience.

The selection of the route may be dictated by the resource(s) being interpreted. For example, if you are doing a facility walk through an historic building, or a site visit to a cultural location, or even a resource walk along the only trail in the area, your route options may be highly limited. In other instances, you may have more latitude regarding where you go and the sequence in which you view various features along the way.

The first order of business, as we learned in *Module 4—Planning*, is to research and inventory the features and topics of the location. With management's goals and objectives in mind, begin to develop a thematic interpretive program. To be able to select the best theme for any location, you must really get to know the entire setting. Your research should include walking the route in both directions, looking at features from different perspectives, and considering many issues. The more familiar you are with the location, the more personal experiences you will be able to share with your audience.

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*To know a thing, what we
can call knowing, a man
must first love the thing,
sympathize with it: that is,
be virtuously related to it.*

Thomas Carlyle

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CONSIDERATIONS FOR ROUTE SELECTION

- Choose a route that makes a loop, if possible.
 - Be aware of length, time commitment, difficulty and accessibility
 - Provide adequate staging and parking areas at the beginning
 - Avoid hazardous, distracting or unpleasant areas
 - Identify representative examples that develop your theme.
-

ROUTE SELECTION—CHOOSING STOPS

As you become familiar with the resource, start selecting locations for various stops along the route. Regnier, Gross, and Zimmerman (1994) liken various stops along the walk to a string of pearls. “Each pearl is a gem of insight. The strand is held together by a thread of unity, a theme along which all of the pearls are strung. You must carefully prepare each pearl and its placement on the string, but the visitor should only perceive the whole necklace” (p. 68). Let us discuss some of the elements that should be considered for stops.

Selecting Your Staging Area

The staging area is the advertised meeting point for the walk and should be the departure point for your walk. It should be easy to find, have adequate space for the group to congregate without interfering with other operations, and be located near the planned route. If possible, choose an open area where visitors can easily see the starting point and orient to the location.

An open location also allows you to see visitors arriving for the walk, draws in visitors who may not be aware of the scheduled interpretive program, and affords a venue to provide an overview for the walk.

Many times the staging area location is the same for all program offerings; it is the logical



Make sure latecomers will know where to find you.

location to start a variety of walks. The front door of a historic building, the marina of a reservoir, and a major trailhead parking area are examples of easily recognized staging locations. Good staging areas provide a multitude of options for the interpreter.

Start the walk at the advertised time. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of starting on time. Do not penalize those who arrived on time by making them wait for latecomers. But keep in mind that not all cultural groups have the same time sense. You will need to address those who are ready at the starting time while remaining flexible to welcome latecomers. Although you begin your program, you do not have to immediately begin moving away from your staging area. **Remember—be visible, be approachable, and start on time!**

LATECOMERS

Inform staff of your planned route of travel so they can direct latecomers. Integrating latecomers into the group depends on many factors: group size, how far along you are in the program, how many newcomers are joining the group, and whether you think formal or just visual recognition is most appropriate and less distracting.



Selecting Your First Stop

The first stop should be within sight of the staging area. This allows latecomers to easily and quietly join the group. The first stop is, in essence, the beginning of the walk. While you have “started” the walk at the staging area by giving the visitors a cognitive map of the program (time commitment, difficulty, topic, etc.), it is at this first stop that you really introduce the theme of the walk. **This is where you plant the seeds of expectation, wonderment and mystery, and set the scene to begin the journey.**

Selecting Stop Locations

With your theme firmly in mind and a thorough understanding of the resources, you are now ready to plan the location of the specific stops. Each stop should be selected carefully so that it clearly and sequentially adds a “pearl” of information to your thematic “necklace.”

Stops should not only be selected to best illustrate the subject being discussed, but also must accommodate the audience so that **everyone** can experience the setting, objects, and issues being addressed. When planning your stops, begin to think of the issues and challenges that might affect your presentation. Avoid distractions or uncomfortable locations that prevent the audience from paying attention to your presentation. Avoid locations with noise, visual clutter, and other annoyances. Similarly, plan stops that will allow you to be seen and heard easily while indicating those resources

that illustrate your point. Select locations where you can gather the audience around you, and choose settings that provide a natural stage or podium, or allow you to step away from the group with the particular subject you are discussing in full view of the audience.

ITS THE LITTLE THINGS

- **When selecting the stop, consider your audience.** Physical comfort is conducive to maintaining their attention. Is it too cool to be in the shade, too windy to hear, too confined a room? Is the sun in their eyes or the footing uneven? Little things may distract from your message.
 - **Have more stops in the first half of the walk. People are more attentive in the beginning of the program.**
 - **Plan carefully.**
-

Deciding Where to End the Walk

It is nice to select a route that will allow you to end the walk near the starting point, but this is not always possible. Just like all the other stops, the final one should strongly support the theme of the program. Sam Ham suggests that if the end of the walk culminates at a spectacular feature (waterfall, vista, impressive architectural feature, etc.), then consider presenting your conclusion in advance of arriving at this location unless the feature itself relates directly to your theme. This way you will not compete for the audience's attention.

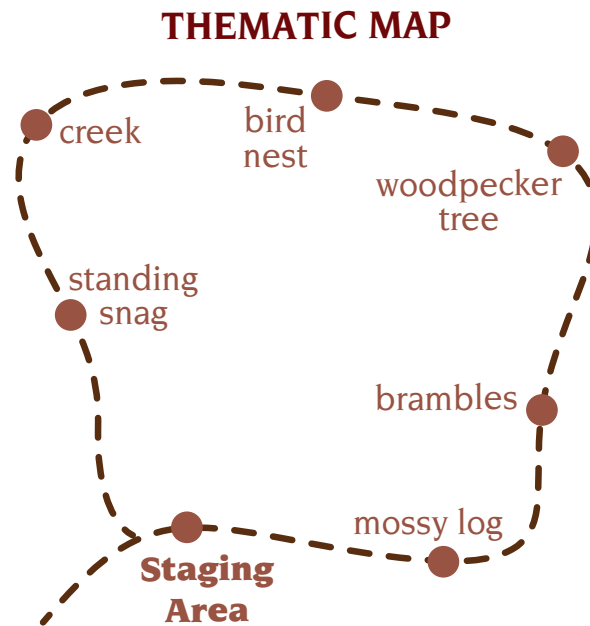
THEMATIC MAP AND OUTLINE

The more familiar you are with the route, the easier it will be to select appropriate stops. Select your stops much as you would select a location to take a photograph. Does the location illustrate the subject, allow you to get close, provide correct lighting, and have a non-distracting background? Will you and your audience be comfortable in the setting? Careful planning should go into each stop selection. Obviously, the first question you should ask yourself is, **does the stop support the theme?**

During the planning stage, you inventoried and researched the resources. Your theme was developed with management objectives in mind. You selected a route with stops that illustrated and supported your theme and accommodated your audience. Prepare a map and outline of how all these elements fit within the framework of your walk to organize the planning process.

An individual location might provide several topic elements. For example, at one stop you could discuss bird-nesting behavior, the cover provided by the trees, or how habitat destruction is affecting bird reproduction. Because you have mapped these various stops, subthemes begin to determine which locations most appropriately fit into the sequence of your story. In short, a thematic map is a spatial picture of all potential stops along the selected route. This picture assists in the final selection and order of stops used to develop the program (see figure above).

As discussed in *Module 5—Programs* there are specific thematic elements you must include at each stop. **In outline form, you now develop your focusing sentence, a description or explanation, a thematic connector, and the transition.** By outlining these elements, you begin to focus on how each stop is a “pearl” for the entire presentation.



PRACTICE—FROM PLANNING TO DOING

Practice is a crucial step between planning your walk and actually conducting it. Practice on-site if you can, so you become more familiar with each stop. While on-site practice is not always possible, your thematic map and outline will permit you to focus on the stop and rehearse your presentation. At first, rehearse your presentation by yourself to work out some of the initial logistics and personal internal conflicts. Then it is a good idea to do a “dry run” with several coworkers and friends. With their help, you will discover issues and distractions you have overlooked. They can help you refine your narrative, anticipate and prepare for questions, and focus on your timing. This dry run will help physically illustrate the logistics of organizing each stop. It will become clear whether the stop will serve your purposes or present any problems. Practice your presentation at least five times, out loud, all the way through without stopping. Practice thoroughly to boost your confidence.

Practicing your narrative alone or with a small group is one thing, but how do you plan for the unexpected or the extra time a larger group takes to go between stops? With experience you will gain insight on how to plan your time and how to build in contingency measures. During this practice phase, determine approximately how much time you need for each stop. Then add time as the potential group size increases. In a normal one-hour

walk, allow an additional five minutes for groups of 12-15 people and as much as 10 minutes when the group exceeds 15. Groups of over 25 may require special attention and planning. Now that we understand the basic elements of planning for a walk, we are ready to review the actual mechanics of conducting a walk.

7.3 MECHANICS

As discussed, a good talk has an introduction, a body and a conclusion. A good walk incorporates these elements into a continuum of the staging area, the first stop (introduction), stops along the walk (body of the presentation), and an ending (conclusion). Each stop should have a purpose; each stop should be a carefully prepared “pearl” on the necklace. Once you have a great walk planned, you will want an audience. Next we’ll take a brief look at the importance and elements of advertising your walk.

ADVERTISING

An amble, a scramble, a saunter, a stroll, or a strident march—how you advertise your walk potentially determines your audience. Your description helps visitors decide if they are interested in participating in the walk. It is important that you know your audience and match your description, purpose and theme to the group. Visitors who understand what they are getting into will be much more receptive to your interpretive message.

Visitors attend walks for numerous reasons. Hopefully, they want to learn about the resource and are willing to do so in an active manner. **When you advertise your program, use words that appeal to the widest audience possible.** For instance, some people may be disinclined to go on a “hike,” but call it a “stroll” and you may capture a broader audience.

The common time commitment for a walk is 45 minutes to an hour-and-a-half. Group size, route layout, complexity of topic, and presentation all contribute to the length of a walk. Walks that last over an-hour-and-a-half are considered to be extended walks and require special considerations. We will discuss some of the complexities later in this module.

USE DESCRIPTIONS THAT ENTICE

- Walk along the path of Native Peoples.
 - Explore the ancient art of recycling: decomposition.
 - Wade the wetlands to discover nature’s cleaning crew.
 - Peek into desert holes and hiding places.
 - Stroll through the back streets of history.
-

Walks are generally expressed in time requirements instead of mileage. In the advertisement, you should also mention any special clothing or gear requirements (e.g., bring a water bottle and a flashlight), and describe any special physical challenges (e.g., participants must be ready for a strenuous climb at a high elevation.)

Sell Those Programs

Let's compare two examples of program advertisement:

Today's discovery walk is very easy.
We will only walk a half mile.

The short mileage might sound perfect to a more sedentary person but could send a message that the walk is too easy for active people. The description also says nothing about what the audience will "discover."

Instead, describe the event this way:

With a description such as this, you are much more likely to attract both sedentary and active participants. Some people will read "easy," others will read "action packed," and even others will read "history."

Today's walk along a relatively easy trail will last one hour. Join us for an action-packed tour, as we discover many facets of the Maidu culture present and past. Bring a water bottle and wear a hat, if possible.

Advertise carefully to entice the broadest range of participants.

GETTING STARTED

Use the staging area to gather the group together, welcome them on behalf of California State Parks (agency recognition), introduce yourself, gain information about your audience via visual and spoken clues, and provide a cognitive map for the audience.

INCLUDE IN YOUR COGNITIVE MAP

- **Topic**—What you expect to see and experience along the route
- **Route**—Time commitment, difficulty, ending location, accessibility
- **Availability of facilities**—e.g. restrooms, drinking water
- **Need for appropriate clothing and footwear**—e.g. rain gear, hat, boots, etc.
- **“Ground rules”**—e.g. you are the leader, receptive to questions, stay on walkway, need for reverence, no flash photography
- **Special health and safety issues**—e.g. pollen, heights, hazards, low ceilings
- **Recommended items to bring**—e.g. binoculars, camera, field guide, water
- **Equipment needs**—e.g. bicycle, personal flotation device, flashlight

As with all interpretive programs, it is important that you arrive early. Fifteen minutes early is probably sufficient for a walk. This means 15 minutes prior to the start time, you are there, unhurried and ready to go. Sometime immediately prior to the walk, check the route to make sure there are no surprises such as room lights burned out, areas closed for rehabilitation, litter/graffiti, or a special activity taking place.

By arriving 15 minutes early, you can establish some personal connections with individual visitors. This will not only establish rapport between you and individual visitors, it will also “break the ice” and allow visitors to be more comfortable within the group. Avoid letting one individual/group dominate your attention. Recognize and welcome everyone as they join the group. When it is time to begin the walk, turn your attention from chatting with individuals and address the whole group with your opening welcome.



FIRST STOP

The first stop affords many benefits when used wisely. When you begin on time, you establish, however subliminally, your credibility. Then you move the group, which helps reinforce that you are the leader. For the visitor, this stop signifies the start of the journey.

This first stop, within sight of the staging area, allows you to determine the group's actual size and composition. Additionally, this short walk provides clues as to how to adjust the tone or pace of your presentation. These are defined by how rapidly you move, how quickly you speak, how you want the group to gather around you, and how knowledgeable and approachable you appear.

The introduction of your theme could be delivered at either the staging area or this first stop. If the staging area is a busy location with distractions and other traffic, then introduce the topic but wait until the first stop to divulge your theme. Your theme is where you plant the seeds of discovery and anticipation.

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...tell them your theme. But, don't do it by saying, "my theme today is..." Rather, "today I'd like to take you on a walk into the past. Let your imagination guide you as we step back 700 years to a time when household chores were the same as now, but their solutions were somewhat different. As we tour the ruins I think you'll begin to see many similarities to life today, and one of the goals of this walk is to help you develop a kinship with that not so distant or alien past."

Grant Sharpe

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Stay in front of the group and be the leader.

LEADING

When you think of yourself as the host of the walk, you will want to arrive early to ensure that everything is ready for your guests. Double check ... are your sunglasses put away? Did you get rid of your gum? Now greet everyone as they arrive, explain the activities that will take place, and invite them on the journey. What host would not want to make sure that all of his or her guests are comfortable and know who is in charge of the event? Stay in front of the group and **be** the leader. Staying in the lead allows you to control the pace and determine when to move briskly and when to saunter. You

know the route, so if something unplanned happens, you will most likely be the first to notice and point it out to the whole group. Being in front also lets you better manage and guide the group to avoid potentially hazardous situations.

As the leader, you know when to stop the audience so everyone can see and hear. This is especially important with large groups. Keep track of the audience and **keep the whole group together**. Remember you are the host. **It is your obligation to ensure no one gets lost or left behind, and that everyone has an enjoyable and educational experience.**

TIMING

Keep the group moving, with each stop averaging five to seven minutes, although some stops may last just a few moments. If the stop is particularly important, or if you want more time for the group to experience the setting, the stop may last 10 or more minutes. However, individual attention spans wane quickly. Walks with larger audiences take more time. We will discuss special considerations for larger groups shortly. When you have a large audience, you may have to curtail, combine or even eliminate some stops to stay on schedule.

HOW MANY STOPS?

That depends on a number of factors:

- Time allotted for the walk
 - Size and abilities of the group
 - Length and difficulty of the route
 - Theme complexity and time needed to develop it
 - Remember, you already have three stops—the staging area, the first stop, and an ending location. It's best to plan no more than seven additional, well thought out, and focused stops—10 stops total.
-

GROUP CONSIDERATIONS—TIPS AND TECHNIQUES

We have already discussed your role as the leader. What can you do to make the journey more inviting and enjoyable for all involved? From the very beginning, use keen observation and sensitivity to assess the physical and mental abilities of the individuals in the group. Describe the physical demands of the walk to the entire audience at the start of the program. Keep in mind that “all visitors are welcome.” Certainly you should not embarrass or exclude anyone, but if necessary, make it absolutely clear that the physical route may be difficult. Hopefully the advertising and announcements about the program have forewarned individuals of impediments, but do not assume anything. Do your best to select routes that will accommodate as many individual needs as possible while supporting the theme of your walk. Use vocabulary that is appropriate for a diverse audience; as always, a friendly, conversational tone works best.

The safety of your audience is paramount. If there are potential hazards along the route, be sure to explain them fully to your audience at the beginning of the talk, before arriving at the potentially hazardous location, and then again as you approach the specific area of concern. For example, if you know that poison oak occurs alongside the path, it is appropriate to tell the group before encountering it. Then, when you arrive near the poison oak, specifically point it out. Always demonstrate safe practices.

Be sure to note the exact number of people attending your walk, not only to keep track of everyone, but also for recording attendance data (DPR 918). Wait for the entire group

to arrive at each stop before you resume your talk; field questions and chitchat while you wait for the group to collect.

Establish a pace that is comfortable for your audience. This may sound obvious and easy to accomplish, but in reality it can be quite a challenge. You should stick to the schedule you announced at the beginning of the walk. However, there are many things that can disrupt the schedule. We will discuss unexpected teachable moments and emergencies later in this section.

Generally speaking, you should set the pace based on the slowest person in the group. Start the walk out briskly from the staging area. This will give you an opportunity to assess the group's abilities. If you are going too fast, you will notice large gaps in the group. It will ultimately take longer to reassemble the group at the next stop than to set a slower overall pace. Be careful not to set too slow a pace because some participants may become bored and distracted, causing you to fall even further behind schedule. Keep track of the entire group's abilities and adjust accordingly. Check behind you periodically to make sure that everything is okay.

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*We should not attempt to describe
that which is only—or better—to
be comprehended by feeling.*

Freeman Tilden

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Be open to questions and discussion, especially when in transit between stops, but do not let one person monopolize your attention. Include others in the conversation, especially if it relates to the theme. If a particular point is relevant to the group, you should brief everyone at the next stop. Remember, it is very wise to clearly repeat the question asked by a visitor. Not only does this let everyone else know what question you are answering, it also clarifies that you understand the question and keeps the whole group involved in the dialogue.

Much of your time is spent moving between stops. Do not forget to use this time to help accomplish program goals. For example, **asking visitors to observe, smell, or count phenomena along the way keeps them involved.**

Being Heard

Let us discuss some techniques to help everyone hear. When you stop, make every attempt to position yourself in the center of the group so everyone can see and hear you. Most importantly, face your audience. This directs your voice at them and, if any participants need to, allows them to lip read or to infer what you are saying.

Be constantly aware of your surroundings and any distractions that may make it difficult for you to be heard. Use a conversational tone. Be observant and take note of nonverbal



Make sure your audience can see and hear you at each stop.

feedback. Are audience members tilting their heads, moving closer, or asking others what you said? Be aware of the cues, and do not hesitate to ask the group if they can hear. Note: if you ask, “Can everyone hear me?” you’ll get a loud yes from the people in front, who can, indeed hear you. Try saying, “Raise your hand if you can hear me.” or

choose a few individuals in the back to ask. Adjust your volume accordingly. Speak clearly, avoid using jargon and scientific terms, and do not forget to breathe.

Sometimes you should be quiet. Do not constantly talk. Use pauses and silences to emphasize a point, set the stage, or enjoy the moment. Sunlight streaming through the tiny window of an adobe house may emphasize the hardships endured in that era. The sound of the crashing surf may imply the dangers of being a seaman, and the sunset may require only silence to punctuate its beauty.

Large Groups

When group size increases, the time needed to organize the group at each stop, the transit time between stops, and the time spent clarifying issues and answering questions also increases. Since you told your audience that the walk would last a certain length of time, and the pace is generally dependent on the slowest person, your options for keeping on schedule are limited. Reducing the time spent at each stop, eliminating a stop (or stops) entirely, or a combination of both are the most obvious remedies. In any case, you will have to make a value judgment on the information you can eliminate without weakening your theme. Do not be tempted to try to make up time by walking and talking at the same time.



Large groups require special organization.

SIZE MATTERS

- Limiting the size of the group may be necessary in some instances. Once again, preplanning is the key. For especially large groups (35 or more), try to have an extra staff person available to assist or take half the group.
 - When approaching a stop, walk past the targeted spot until about half your group has passed it. Walk back to the focal point (now the middle of the group) before you begin speaking. When you start out again, ask the group to let you resume the lead.
 - Whenever possible, request that the group form a semicircle a few feet away from you at each stop. Encourage children and shorter people to stand in the front. Be sure everyone sees the focal point before moving on.
 - Use elevated or separated positions that increase your visibility. Keep your head lifted and project your voice slightly over the group.
-

EXTENDED WALK

An extended walk (over an hour and a half) is generally viewed by the visitor as more of an “outing” with the interpreter than a focused program. It requires a little more stamina and a little less structure. This does not mean an extended walk is not without a purpose, planned stops, or a theme. It does mean you must modify your presentation. **Often visitors attend extended walks because they want to spend time with a resource person who knows the area well and can provide in-depth insight into the park’s resources.** Other times they just want to take a walk with the ranger who will keep them safe and return them to the starting point in one piece.

Make sure all participants are aware of the length and difficulty of an extended walk. Prior to setting off on the walk, you must directly address personal needs such as the appropriate clothing and footwear, whether they need to bring food and water, what sanitary facilities to expect, etc.

Since you will most likely be walking longer stretches between formal stops, there will be more opportunities to talk informally with individuals. Be cautious not to let one person dominate your attention. Others might feel ignored and become bored or feel left out. Do your best to enhance group dynamics and engage everyone in the experience.

TEACHABLE MOMENTS

When that special something happens during the walk, do not ignore it—let the audience savor the experience. Be watchful for that teachable moment and be flexible. Do not be afraid to diverge from your outline. Build on the unexpected, and weave it into your story if at all possible. Challenge yourself to make that connection from the unexpected teachable moment to the theme, but do not get carried away. Stay on theme. Stay on schedule.

AN EXAMPLE:

UNEXPECTED TEACHABLE MOMENT

On the walk you are discussing how cacti have developed adaptations to survive extremely long periods without water. Just then a snake is spotted nearby, eating a mouse. The snake is the unexpected event, but moving the talk to snake adaptations for survival without water provides linkage for your theme. On the other hand, if you are talking about the architectural style of an historic structure and you spot the snake eating a mouse, it might be too great a stretch to link the two. Just acknowledge and witness the event, interpret the moment, and return to your theme.

EMERGENCIES

Accidents happen. Hopefully you and other staff have contingency plans in place to handle emergency situations as efficiently and professionally as possible. If someone becomes ill or injured while on the walk, you will be required to make some decisions quickly and under pressure. Depending on a host of variables (radio, proximity to assistance, seriousness of emergency, etc.) you have two major responsibilities—assist the injured/sick individual, and direct the rest of the group. **Your immediate concern must be for the individual's welfare; however, leadership for the group also remains your responsibility. People in the group understand the higher need.** They just want to be recognized and directed. If the emergency requires that you leave the group, consider selecting a reliable individual to act as leader to make sure the entire group gets back to the staging area safely. Choose wisely, as you are still responsible for everyone's safety.

RULES AND REASONS—THE “EDUCATIONAL EXCEPTION”

Set a good example, not only with the park rules and regulations, but also with the nuances of stewardship. Pick up the gum wrapper or other litter as you pass it. Do not pick flowers, pull the starfish off the rock, or handle the historic document without proper care. People watch your actions and inactions; set a good example and a professional standard.

There will be times when you really want to share some experience or examine something more closely with your audience. The vast majority of the time you can do so without infringing on rules and ethics. Instead of picking the bay laurel leaf off of the tree, find some on the ground for the group to smell. Pass around reproductions instead of actual artifacts for the group to examine. In addition, if you walk off trail or go beyond the barrier to better address the group, do so carefully. Explain to the audience that you are doing so as an “educational exception.” If it is critical to your program that you must “disrupt” an object, do so with consideration and respect. Opening the historic book with care when showing different pages, or gently turning the salamander over and returning it to where you found it, are just two examples of this principle. Do not forget to always tell your audience why you are doing it and that it is not the “norm” for behavior.

This is where your kit bag of tools will come in handy. Use the mirror you carry in your kit bag to show the audience the underside of a mushroom. Individuals can view the gills without disturbing the plant. Handheld items and props really help illustrate your point in an ethical manner.



Use props to enrich your walk and to help illustrate your main points.

ENDING

Remember what we said about beginning on time at the staging area? Well, the same is true for ending the program—ON TIME! It is okay to leave them wanting more.

Have a clear and definite ending to your walk. The conclusion incorporates all the elements we discussed in *Module 5—Programs*. Have a strong concluding statement that reinforces the theme, summarizes the walk experiences, and brings the audience full circle with a clear ending. Thank the group for joining you when you conclude the walk. If you have announcements, need to tell the group about returning to the staging area or wish to let the group know you will be available at the end of the walk, do so before beginning the conclusion. Do not detract from your strong ending with minor, ancillary issues.

If you end the walk at a location other than the staging area, make sure you clearly inform the audience how best to return. Give them the option to stay and enjoy the setting or to join you as you return to the staging area. Notify the whole group of the precise time you will return should they wish to join you. If you end the presentation at the staging area, you have just made a loop. In both cases, it is a good idea to conclude your program before the audience sees the destination. Otherwise, you may lose the attention of the group before you complete your conclusion.

A-B-Cs OF A WALK

- Wait for everyone to arrive before beginning.
- Be a good host. A comfortable audience is more receptive.
- Be sure everyone can see and hear you.
- If possible, place yourself in the center of the group when you stop.
- Focus attention.
- Interpret rather than inform.
- Link information to the theme. Build connections between the resources and your audience.
- Provide a transition to the next stop.
- If appropriate, between the stops have the audience look for or think about things that support the theme.
- End on time.

7.4 OTHER TYPES OF WALKS

We will discuss just a few of the more specialized types of walks. Many times these are engaging for both the audience and the interpreter, but they require special considerations.

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*May your trails be crooked, winding, lonesome,
dangerous, leading to the most amazing view.*

Edward Abbey

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NIGHT WALK

A night walk can be a dramatic change from the usual programming and an entirely new and exciting activity for participants. Consider how our perception of the environment changes with the alteration of ambient lighting. The normal daytime walk through the mission may take on an entirely different character when the rooms are illuminated by candlelight. The nature trail where you have guided walks for the past six months will look entirely different when it is dark.

Appropriate themes should be developed, different equipment and props may be necessary, and special issues must be addressed. Probably the biggest issue is that the audience will not be able to see everything as easily with the reduced lighting. There are certainly exceptions to this statement. The historic home with its electric lighting may provide just as many visual cues as during the daytime, but generally speaking, it is more difficult to see at night. This reduction in sight is a benefit to the night walk. Reducing the ability to see in the ordinary way heightens the use of other senses and provides a whole new way to experience the resource.

To be effective, night walks must be designed differently from daytime walks.

Because you generally do not have the visual cues to read and keep track of your audience, you must plan accordingly. Choose a very safe route; avoid uneven terrain, protruding objects, and areas with hazards. Count and keep the group together more than you normally would. This may mean that you must restrict group size as necessary. Ask the group to help keep track of each other; have each person watch out for a “buddy.” Explain that it takes time (15-30 minutes) for human eyes to adjust to darkness. Consider providing each individual carrying a flashlight with a red covering to avoid those “blinding accidents,” (Red light allows our eyes to see quite well in the dark.) Request that white lights not be used.

It takes at least 15 minutes for your eyes to adjust from daylight to night. During this adjustment the pupils dilate, allowing the eyes to collect more light. The human eye has rods and cones. The cones help you see color; the rods help you see in the dark. Rods have a chemical called rhodopsin, which takes approximately 15 minutes to reach a good level for seeing in the dark after being exposed to white light. Rhodopsin is not as sensitive to red light.



Consider starting the night walk at dusk. Dusk affords better lighting conditions for the group to assemble and for you to provide a cognitive map of the program. This also lets everyone's eyes adjust more naturally to the changing light. Be aware of the moon phases. A full moon may make walking easier, but a new moon might make stargazing spectacular. Use the lunar cycles to your advantage. Starting too late may restrict participation of children who generally go to bed at an early hour. Consider an earlier "night walk" for families with kids.

A GOOD NIGHTTIME HOST WILL

- **Instill confidence that this will be a safe experience.**
- **Challenge visitors to use their other senses as effectively as they do their sight.**
- **Provide information about "night vision" and how the eyes can attune to the lighting when given an opportunity.** Objects that you stare at tend to disappear at night; coach the group to keep their eyes moving. Tell them to look for shapes, shadows, contrast, and movement.
- **Provide/use equipment adjuncts**—red film to cover flashlights, laser pointer to highlight features, rope/string to "link" everyone together, etc. Covering a flashlight's beam with red cellophane film provides plenty of light but does not destroy night vision.

WET WALK

A wet walk can be fun, unusual, revealing, and can literally get everyone immersed in the theme. However, safety is a major concern when around water. Choose your route or location carefully and be aware of the depth, temperature, hidden hazards, etc., that may compromise the safety of the participants.

Provide a very clear cognitive map for the wet walk. Make sure everyone knows prior to beginning the walk what to expect—e.g. how to use equipment, the safety precautions, etc. It is very important to **thoroughly** inform participants of what to expect (they may get their feet wet), and to carefully discuss any instructions prior to entering the water. It is also a good idea to ask that everyone stay close to you so you can share “discoveries.” Keeping everyone close has the hidden benefit of allowing you to watch everyone, control the activities, and lessen the distractions that inevitably occur with this type of walk. Safety first!

Your kit bag of tools for a wet walk might include clear plastic bags, shallow trays, buckets and dip nets that allow for better viewing of the specimens. Always emphasize concern and respect for the health of any animal that is captured. Make it extremely clear that you expect all things to be returned to their original setting.



Not all interpretive “walks” take place on a hiking trail.

VEHICLE TOURS

Vehicle tours might include the use of automobiles, bicycles, watercraft, or any other mode of transportation (rollerblades, skateboards or ski tours). Use your imagination and reach out to an audience that might not otherwise participate. For example, if a lake is a prominent feature of your park, a canoe or kayak trip may be appropriate.

BIKE, PADDLE, DRIVE, SKATE, DIVE, SURF...	
Advantages	Drawbacks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can cover more area, allowing for diverse examples supporting topic/theme development. You can appeal to a specific audience, bicycle riders, nonwalkers, boat enthusiasts, surfers, horseback riders. Happy visitors are more receptive. You can travel to resources not easily accessible on foot. You can teach the skills needed for quality recreational experiences in your park's resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal communication occurs only at stops. Logistics—interpreter loses and has to reclaim the group-leader status. Takes longer to reassemble the group at each stop. There is a potential for accidents. Equipment can distract attention from your theme.

WHAT'S AHEAD?

Next we will discuss how to plan and execute the most traditional and well-attended program offered in parks, the campfire program. All of the principles we have learned regarding how to present a good talk and walk also apply to planning and conducting a successful campfire program. So where are the marshmallows?

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Module 7
WALKS

SELF ASSESSMENT

Answer each question in the section below before reviewing the material in *Module 7—Walks*. The answers are not provided. Check your answers with your colleagues and as you read the *Module 7—Walks*. Items from the self assessment may be reviewed and discussed in class.

1) Name and describe three different types of interpretive walks.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

2) List four considerations for selecting the route of an interpretive walk.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

- 3) To ensure you do not miss any latecomers for your walk, starting about five minutes late is acceptable practice.
- a) True
 - b) False
- 4) Which of the following is a preferred route configuration for a walk?
- a) Linear
 - b) Loop
 - c) Figure eight
- 5) For a one-hour interpretive walk, you should factor in approximately _____ minutes for “walking time” if the group is over 15 people.
- a) 2
 - b) 5
 - c) 10
 - d) 15
- 6) You should practice your presentation at least _____ times all the way through without stopping before presenting it to the public.
- a) 1
 - b) 3
 - c) 5
 - d) You can't practice too many times

- 7) The first stop of an interpretive walk should always be within sight distance of the staging area.
- a) True
 - b) False
- 8) You should walk in the middle of your group so that all can hear you when you speak.
- a) True
 - b) False
- 9) Which of the following determine the number of stops for a walk? (Circle all that apply.)
- a) Time allotted for the walk
 - b) Size of the group
 - c) The route
 - d) Topic and theme
- 10) You should not needlessly worry visitors about potential hazards along the trail until you get close to encountering them.
- a) True
 - b) False

11) If the walk is taking longer than expected, which of the following are acceptable methods of shortening the planned walk? (Circle all that apply.)

- a) Walk and talk at the same time
- b) Shorten the stops
- c) Skip stops entirely
- d) Walk faster

12) Should you have more stops in the first or last half of the walk?

13) What is a teachable moment?

14) What techniques should you employ at each stop of your walk?

Now that you have completed the self assessment questions, review the material in *Module 7—Walks* to confirm your answers. After reading the module, move on to the workbook learning activities, which will assist you in developing your skills.

WORKBOOK LEARNING ACTIVITIES

To help you review and apply the material covered in *Module 7—Walks*, a selection of review questions and/or activities is provided. Again, no answers are included. Use the material from the module, outside sources, and your colleagues to help you complete the activities and answer the questions. There may be more than one right answer. Use the questions and activities to generate discussion about the material. Be prepared to discuss, perform, or demonstrate your answers in class.

- 1) You have planned and advertised a fairly difficult two-hour hike to the top of a ridge in the park. As the group gathers at the staging area, a family with a teenager in a wheelchair arrives. Describe how you should handle this situation.

- 2) You are giving a walk based on the thematic map (found on page 264). Give two examples of how you could use foreshadowing in this walk.

1.

2.

- 3) You will be leading a walk for Asilomar visitors. You will be leaving from the dining hall and walking through the dunes to the beach and back. What will you address in your cognitive map to prepare visitors for the walk?

- 4) You are planning a wet walk. List ten items you might include in a kit bag.

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Take it to YOUR Park

Answer each question with the information specific to your park. You will have to conduct some research in order to answer each question. Use the answers as a guide for beginning your career in California State Parks.

WALKS

Park name _____

1) What types of walks are traditionally offered at your park?

2) What special concerns, issues, or conditions will impact interpretive walks planned in your park (e.g., poisonous plants or animals, dangerous terrain, heat, not touching marble, steep stairs, staying on carpet runners)?

- 3) Are there variations on the types of walks offered in your park or are they all standard one-hour presentations? List some creative ideas for walks in your park.

- 4) Follow the appropriate steps, and create an outline for a needed walk in your park. In addition, indicate the location, subject, theme, target audience and purpose for the walk.

- 5) Create an appropriate advertisement for the walk.

Module 8
CAMPFIRE



My fire squirmed and struggled as if ill at ease...the flames, now rushing up in long lances, now flattened and twisted on the rocky ground, roared as if trying to tell the storm stories of the trees they belonged to, as if the light given out was telling the story of the sunshine they had gathered in centuries of summers.

John Muir

Module 8

CAMPFIRE

What is it?

A traditional program, usually presented at evening around a campfire, that gathers visitors to share each other's company, learn about the park, and develop stronger bonds with each other and the intangible meanings inherent in the site

Why do we do it?

To reach large audiences in a traditional manner

How do we do it?

Multisensory, participatory

INTRODUCTION

The mystique of the campfire is universal. Since humankind's earliest days, the fire that dispelled the fearsome darkness has become a symbol of security and safety for us as a species. Rest, relaxation, and fellowship abound at the fire that signals the day's end. Throughout civilization, special ceremonies have taken place near its flames and oral histories have passed through generations amidst its light. For centuries, in individual houses, the hearth was the heart of the family's home.

Campfire programs are an essential part of interpretive programming in California State Parks, and visitors look forward to them. Most visitors who come to parks are on vacation, and they are seeking a slower pace. They come to your campfire program for entertainment, to learn more about the park, to meet fellow campers and to share the tradition of the fire. Take advantage of this prime opportunity to reward them with a well-thought-out program that is fun, educational, and relevant.

This module covers the basics of preparing and conducting a good campfire program. The most important things to remember when planning a campfire? Have a strong, park-relevant theme that your media-of-choice supports, know your audience, and practice, practice, practice.

■ ■ ■

Campfires recall our deepest roots as social beings. They inspire the same feelings of warmth, security, and conviviality that our primitive forebears shared around the fire, safe from the dark, cold, lonely, and dangerous world outside its circle of light. Similarly, campfire centers evoke the archetypical park experience. We can relax and enjoy each other's company in the evening at a campfire center. A colleague calls them the park "family room."

Joann Weiler

■ ■ ■

8.1 PROGRAM TYPES

There are many types of campfire programs and as with all interpretive programs, you are limited only by your imagination and creativity. We will introduce the four basic types of campfire programs below and review them in greater detail later in this module.

BASIC CAMPFIRE PROGRAMS

- Audiovisual
- Guest speaker
- Demonstration
- Creative techniques

AUDIOVISUAL

Audiovisual (A/V) programs include movies, slide (projected image) programs, video programs, and audio messages. A/V programs are well suited for telling sequential stories and providing overviews of park resources. A/V media can transport visitors through time and space to experience significant historic events or dramatic natural processes, and they can interpret fragile or inaccessible resources (Helmich, 1997, p. 77). Because A/V programs engage multiple senses, they can be very effective at influencing your audience and can offer today's high-tech audience a format that is both engaging and exciting.

GUEST SPEAKER

A guest speaker may be incorporated into your campfire program to provide specific information and expertise beyond your knowledge, but remember the responsibility for the overall program falls to you. People who might be appropriate guest speakers include park managers (superintendent, chief ranger, chief of maintenance) and support staff (resource specialist, historian, trail builder). Also consider local experts, including craftspeople, longtime residents of the area, Native Americans, and experts on the area's natural and cultural features. The speaker must be articulate and prepared, and the topic must be relevant and appropriate for the park and audience.

DEMONSTRATION

A demonstration is a program that incorporates activities with narrative. It is a practical showing of how something works or is used. To enhance the demonstration use objects, props, and/or audiovisual equipment, and allow audience members to participate.

Demonstrations entice visitors to ask questions and can provoke them to think more about what is happening and why.

Some examples of campfire program demonstrations include: how to fire a cannon; how bear traps are used; how to make pasta with stinging nettles; and how to build a Yurok canoe.

CREATIVE TECHNIQUES

Characterizations, storytelling, guided imagery, and puppetry are creative techniques that help to convey interpretive messages. The Interpreter's Guidebook (Regnier, Gross, and Zimmerman, 1994, p. 45) describes these techniques:

- **Characterization**—Uses either a historic personality or an imaginary creature who can give insight into a topic.
- **Storytelling**—Uses the age-old method of handing down history and passing along values to others.
- **Guided Imagery**—Uses “mental field trips” to take audiences to places far away or perhaps too dangerous to visit in person.
- **Finger Puppets**—or larger than life stuffed toys to make abstract concepts understandable and fun.



Living history characterizations are powerful program tools.

8.2 PLANNING

CREATING AN EFFECTIVE PROGRAM

Many factors influence your choice in program topic and theme. Definitely consider the park's interpretive prospectus and plans, resources, and management issues. Connecting the visitor to the resource and accomplishing management goals and objectives is paramount. Your choice of methods is also influenced by the way your program meshes with other programs being offered and your audience's wants and needs.

■ ■ ■
*But see—a spark, a flame, and
now the Wilderness is home.*

Edwin L. Sabin
■ ■ ■

Before you select the interpretive type (e.g. A/V, guest speaker, demonstration) to use, you must develop your talk following the techniques outlined in *Module 5—Programs*.

DEVELOP THE TALK

- Select an appropriate topic.
- Identify the tangible and intangible elements.
- Develop a theme.
- Conduct research.
- Organize the information.
- Decide the best way to convey the message.

GETTING READY

No one enjoys bad surprises; preparation and pretesting are key words. Practice your program on the same type of equipment that you will use at the campfire center. Become thoroughly familiar with the equipment, location, the function of switches, and the layout of the campfire facility.

Days, even hours before your program, you should check the facility. Confirm that the equipment is in place, and make sure all the supplies you need are there. Check to make sure the electricity is working and the lights haven't burned out. Is the facility clean, safe, and free of unwanted distractions such as litter, graffiti or vandalism? If not, give yourself plenty of time to make the necessary corrections.

Get Ready... Get Set...

- **Campfire Center Check**—Make sure lights and electricity are working a day or two before your program. Repair or report maintenance concerns.
- **Agenda**—Prepare a written list of all the items you want to cover. This is your personal “cheat sheet” of program reminders and the order of events.
- **Prep Notecard**—Make a list of all the items you need to take to the campfire center with you. Laminate this for repeat use.
- **Equipment Check**—Check connections and switches, microphone, facility lighting. Check for spare bulb/projector/microphone battery.
- **Props**—Slides/movie, audio tape, hand-held objects, samples.
- **Handout materials**—Song sheets, skit text, prizes/giveaways.
- **Jr. Ranger awards**—Have pins and signed certificates ready.
- **Schedule** of upcoming activities and other announcements.
- **Appearance Check**—which includes taking care of personal comforts.
- **Flashlight**
- **Clipboard and book light** may come in handy.
- **Matches, kindling, and dry firewood. Water to put out the fire.**
- **Small first aid kit.**

Busy days seem to get busier just before your program. There are many things you can do to assure success. Nothing can rattle your confidence like being late. **Arrive at least one-half-hour before the program is scheduled to begin. Spend this time making sure that the equipment and facility are ready.** Prepare your A/V equipment and materials, arrange your props, and construct the fire. This preparation time will build your confidence because you know that everything will go as planned.

Kids arriving early always want to help or see what you are doing. What you are doing is establishing rapport. Allow yourself enough time to mingle and greet people. Chatting with visitors as they arrive will calm your nerves. Take this opportunity to evaluate the audience and tailor the program to their interests.

Additionally, pre-program arrival of the audience allows you time to identify possible troublemakers and program distractions. Sometimes asking an overly active child to be your helper can turn a potential problem into a program help. Give them a task such as counting the audience or distributing handouts. Seat potential troublemakers where their behavior can be monitored. We will discuss this further, later in the module.

Appropriate pre-program mood music may be beneficial in a number of ways:

MUSICAL NOTES

- **Music announces** that something is happening at the campfire center and provides directional clues.
- **Choose music wisely.** It provides foreshadowing for the main program. Use cultural, historic, or natural sounds.
- **Music establishes a mood.** It may also help calm the interpreter.
- **Instrumental music is generally preferable,** but exceptions may certainly be appropriate for cultural and historic programs. Natural sounds lend gaiety, mystery, and interaction with your audience. Be sure to keep the selections relevant.

Don't overdo the volume. Music should be in the background.

ADVERTISING

In *Module 6—Talks* we discussed the effectiveness of extending a personal invitation to visitors to attend scheduled, formal programs. It is well worth the effort. Make sure the park staff is informed and knowledgeable and the interpretive schedules on park bulletin boards are clear and up to date. Additionally, the interpreter should extend an invitation to participants in daytime activities to attend the evening programs, and vice versa. Offer a fixed interpretive schedule that visitors can plan their daily activities around.

8.3 MECHANICS

GETTING STARTED

Start on time; do not penalize those who arrive on time. However, lots of folks will arrive late for one reason or another. If there is something very important at the beginning of the program, then it bears repeating. Your program should last for 45 minutes to an hour, so do not delay your introduction too long. Stay on track, but be a little flexible, especially at the beginning.

ATTENTION GETTERS

- Have the on-time “arrivees” yell “Campfire”
- Divide the on-time audience into two groups (right side against left, or adults against kids), and “out yell” each other.
- Making group noise is a great energy releaser, establishes a playful mood, and builds a sense of camaraderie.

Establish Rapport

Welcome your guests and introduce yourself, other staff who might be assisting, and your agency—California State Parks. People like to know a little about you, so do not be afraid to tell them about yourself. The positive image of the ranger gives you an edge—use it!

Get to Know Your Audience

Use a fun quiz to get to know your audience. Develop your own questions, and mentally note trends, deficiencies, and other anecdotal data that might be helpful. Some suggested questions:

- First time visitors to the park, first time to the campfire, or first time to your program?
- How long have people been coming to the park? For example, who has visited the most times, years, from the farthest away?
- How many are camping in tents, in RVs?
- How many traveled to the park on bicycles?

- How did they learn about tonight's program?
- What does the audience know about tonight's topic?

Reward winners of "Quiz the Audience" with a park map, postcard, or some little relevant prize that will remind them of their visit. The small prize may enhance participation, establish a positive rapport, and it is fun!

Opening

Remember to give your audience a cognitive map. Give them a brief idea of what to expect tonight, such as the length of program and topic. Tell them where to find the nearest restrooms. Use this time to make announcements of upcoming activities scheduled in and around the park. Present Junior Ranger/Junior Lifeguard awards, if appropriate. This is a great time to advertise the program and explain how 7- to 12-year-olds can get involved. Do not forget to promote the "Litter Getter" program and other interpretive activities.

During "Quiz the Audience" you had an opportunity to ask the audience questions; now is a good time to provide an opportunity for them to get some answers from you. Try to keep their questions related to your program's theme and/or the park resources. See "stump the ranger" later in this module.

???

- Always repeat the question so everyone can hear what was asked.
 - By restating the question you gain a moment to decide what you want to say and to confirm that you are answering the question asked.
-

Fire Starters

Lighting the "campfire" can be accomplished in a number of ways. Use your personal preference as to whether it is a ceremony or a task. You may prefer to have the fire already going when the audience arrives, while others like to light it at the very beginning of the program. Some interpreters use dramatic ways of lighting the fire such as flint and steel, using only one match, "magic," etc., while other interpreters prefer to select someone from the audience to have the honor. Be careful, and always be aware of safety issues around the fire; use the opportunity to demonstrate safety.

Light My Fire

- **Use good kindling, paper, and dry wood.**
- **Do not use chemically treated wood or driftwood.** Know how easily or quickly the wood burns and/or if it smokes excessively.
- **Do not forget matches or a lighter.**
- **The timing of when to light the fire depends on a number of factors.** If you are showing slides, light the fire early to give it time to die down. If you are doing a demonstration, storytelling, puppets, or other activities you may want the fire to illuminate and enhance the setting. Bring enough wood to last the whole program.

WARM-UP

There is a whole menu of activities to offer the audience during the warm-up. Select the activities that best suit your style and personality, that are also compatible with the main program. Not every interpreter is comfortable singing songs or telling stories or quizzing the audience, but surely some of the activities will work for you. Whatever you do, keep the warm-up lighthearted and enthusiastic.

Throughout the warm-up activities, do not be shy about walking into the audience and communicating directly with individuals. The underlying purpose of the warm-up is to establish a rapport with the audience, put them in a receptive mood, and help move the program on to the topic of the evening. Design your warm-up activities so they contribute to the overall success of the program objectives.

WARM-UP ACTIVITIES

- Songs
- Skits
- Games and quizzes
- Storytelling
- Stump the interpreter
- Sharing pelts, bones, historical objects

Songs

People expect to sing songs at a campfire program. It is a tradition because it is fun for the group and visitors like to do it. This is also a special opportunity to connect with

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We are born into a universe in which harmony exists in all things. To sing and to make harmony is to become fully human.

Nick Page

■ ■ ■

the youngest members of your audience, who typically participate wholeheartedly.

Leadership is much more important than the quality of your singing voice. To conduct group singing successfully you need lots of self-confidence, an enthusiastic manner, and strong organization. If you are uncomfortable with singing, it will show, so

invite a volunteer or campground host who can carry a tune and who likes to sing to lead the group. Keep the songs simple and easy for the audience to learn.

Sing Along

- **Use familiar songs or “repeat after me” songs.** Song sheets and/or slides can be useful, but make sure lighting is adequate to read them.
- **Briefly go over the words and tune.**
- **Enlist someone to help you.**
- **Start the song with everyone together.**
- **Use gestures to keep time and rhythm.** Do not let the song drag.
- **Maintain contact with all of the audience.**
- **Use a variety of songs (rounds, humorous, slow, fast).** Usually songs with a faster tempo are better at the beginning with slower songs at the end.
- **Incorporate audience “actions” with the words**—clap hands, stand up on a phrase or word, sway like a tree, etc.
- **Warm up your voice in advance.**
- **Consider using “Karaoke style” accompaniment.**

Skits

Audience participation is the key to success here. Skits are intended to be fun, to develop camaraderie, and, at their very finest, to lead the way into the theme of the main program. Most people enjoy being involved in these stories and skits, especially children, and it is fun to see parents’ responses as they watch their children perform. Do not limit it to just adults or children, and do not force anyone to participate.

Generally, many individuals have parts to play, but if possible the skit should include the rest of the audience as a group. If you have more volunteers than parts, have several people play a part together; the more people who are actively involved the better. It is important to allow everyone, including the audience, to practice their parts. The narration or script should be easy to read, and the story should be straightforward to follow. The sayings, words, sounds, and actions each player makes should be easy to learn, perform and remember.

There are lots of tried-and-true scripts to choose from, but they run the risk of being overused and tiresome. Strive to write your own skit that incorporates features of your park and ties to the theme of the main program. Personalizing your skit makes it easier for you to narrate, shows the audience you are really interested in your subject, strengthens your message, and adds originality and spontaneity to the program.

SKIT SUCCESS

- Voice inflections and volume
- Body movements and gestures
- Outrageous actions or sounds
- Funny, surprising, or silly story.

All of these actions contribute to the merriment of a skit.



Songs, skits, and games will help you establish rapport with your audience and build a community spirit.

Games and Quizzes

Presenting information through a quiz or game is often more effective than simply telling the audience. Design games or quizzes that lead up to, develop and support the program's theme.

Friendly competition can be fun, lively, participatory and educational. It adds a measure of excitement to the program. Divide the audience in half or thirds, and have them compete with each other. The interpreter poses questions, most of which should be related to the theme of the program, and then “judges” which group has the correct answer. The reward for the winners might be a round of applause by the losers, but everyone will be winners because you have actively engaged them and have provided additional theme information. See *Module 12—Evaluation* to discover how to incorporate games and quizzes to evaluate your program's effectiveness.

QUIZ ANSWERS

- Repeat the correct answer so that everyone can hear.
- Capitalize on the answer with your more in-depth explanation.

Stump the Ranger

A warm-up technique that provides great interaction between the interpreter and audience, benefiting both, is “stump the ranger.” Audience members are invited to ask any question about the site or California State Parks to see if they can stump you. It gives the audience members the chance to ask questions and is an opportunity for the interpreter to establish a rapport, be human, and impart information.

CAUTION!

Do not spend too much time on the warm-up, generally not more than 10-15 minutes. The audience may be having a good time, but allow yourself sufficient time for the main part of the program.



The main tenet for all interactions is honesty. If you do not know the answer to a question, admit it. Perhaps someone in the audience will have the answer. If not, and the question is answerable, have a plan to get the answer to the questioner at a later time. You could have interested audience members check at the visitor center, entrance station, or campground host site for the answer the next day. But

do not forget to warn the staff to expect inquiries. If you cannot find an answer, offer to continue looking and suggest some places they might research. Be prepared to make a

■ ■ ■

I was gratified to be able to answer promptly. I said, I don't know.

Mark Twain

■ ■ ■

real effort, and to follow through. Another great technique is to have postcards to hand out to visitors who had questions you could not answer. Have them write their name, address, and question on the postcard. Mail it to them when you find the answer. This is wonderful public relations for you and the Department.

TRANSITION

Use final warm-up activities to focus the audience on the program's theme. Plan your warm-up with care. Everyone wants to enjoy the evening activities, and generally you can take this time to develop camaraderie and get the audience to focus. It is important to make a smooth transition from the playful warm-up to the more educational segment of the program.

You should not expect the audience to transition from an excited, interactive warm-up to a totally receptive "listen to my story" mind-set without some time and assistance. Choose your transitional activities wisely.

Calm the activities at the end of the warm-up and begin the introduction into your program. If you are singing at the end of the warm-up conclude with a slower song. A story or "stump the interpreter" question that directly relates to your evening's topic may be an ideal opportunity to transition to the program. Be creative—seize the opportunity.

ABOUT THOSE FLASHLIGHTS

Before the main program begins, invite everyone to shine their light on the screen, on your face, the stars, etc. Let them get it out of their system. Then ask them to turn their flashlights off until the program is over.



CONDUCTING PROGRAMS

Image Presentation

If you use images to supplement your talk, remember they are simply visual aids that are used to support your program. The pictures should illustrate the talk, rather than the talk

being a series of verbal captions for the pictures. Resist the temptation to put in great photos, illustrations or cartoons that have no relevance to your theme.

Think of images as props. Develop your talk before you select the ones that will help illustrate the story and reinforce your theme. Follow these steps:

CREATING AN ILLUSTRATED TALK

- Select the topic.
 - Develop a theme and objectives.
 - Research.
 - Organize the information.
 - Utilize the 2-3-1 process and develop the script.
 - Integrate the story with visualized illustration on a storyboard.
 - Select images.
 - Construct the program.
 - Practice your delivery and know your equipment.
-

As you develop your story, visualize the illustrations you will need. Before you seek the images, create a storyboard. "A storyboard is just a visual plan in which you indicate the kinds of images that would be best to show in each part of the program, and where they should change. As you do this, you'll undoubtedly make small changes in the script to accommodate or capitalize on the visuals you select." (Ham, 1992, p. 358).

The format for the storyboard is a matter of personal preference. One method is to put the script on note cards and next to the script draw or note the visual that would best illustrate the point being made. Later the note cards can be used to practice your talk. Using note cards may be preferable to developing the program on a sheet of paper, because note cards can be moved to accommodate more/less text and illustrations as you refine your program. Use only the best possible images.

USE ONLY IMAGES THAT...

- Illustrate your point.
 - Have sharp color.
 - Are properly exposed.
 - Are in focus and clean.
 - Have variety and sequencing for effect.
 - If in doubt, take it out!
-

CONSTRUCTING YOUR PROGRAM

Title and text inserts might be useful for some programs, but remember that your visitors are on vacation and not attending a college class. **If you absolutely must have text, use it sparingly. Make sure to use a bold, easy to read font, with good contrast between letters and background.** Allow enough time for the audience to view the photo and read the text. Don't use text to say the same thing you are planning to say.

When choosing your images, seek variety, including alternating between close-ups and vistas, using black and white or sepia tone, and sequencing from far away to closer or vice-versa. Do not leave images on the screen longer than 45 seconds. Images that require more viewing time to understand are probably too complicated; find a better picture to make your point. Maps and graphs that need explaining may be the exception. We'll discuss communicating with projected images more in *Module 11—Audiovisual*.

FINDING IMAGES

- Internet search—be sure to secure permission to use it.
 - Use the park or district's digital library.
 - Check the reference slide file (park, CSP photo archives, other agencies, and partners).
 - Take your own photos.
 - Ask park volunteers.
 - Purchase images.
 - Scan printed materials that are permissible to copy.
-

If you cannot find a good image to illustrate your program, what should you do? Modify your talk, temporarily at least, to eliminate the point, or adjust your talk to make a point you can illustrate. Ask coworkers to be on the lookout for the images, you need and continue searching. Do not use a weak fill-in slide.

TIPS FOR SHOWING SLIDES EFFECTIVELY

DO

- Practice, practice, practice!
- Go through your program until you are confident you know it and the equipment very well.
- Know the order of the slides without having to look at the screen.
- Memorize your outline, not the talk.
- Face your audience.
- Use your voice rather than gestures, since the audience is looking at the screen more than at you.
- Use voice inflections to keep the narration interesting.
- Let the slide speak for itself. Avoid “this is a slide of...” and “here is a...” It is okay to call attention to details in the slide—“look closely at...”—to pull the audience into the scene.

DON'T

- Stand between the projected slide and your audience.
- Keep turning around to see what slide comes next; you should already know.
- Stab or flit pointer around the screen—use it only minimally if you must use a pointer (stick or laser) at all.
- Use distracting habits, as the audience can still see everything you do even with the lights out.
- Read from a script. The narration should slightly precede the next slide.

Special effects can make your program more powerful or turn it into a chaotic mess, depending on how you select and use them. Use sparingly and repeat elements. Choose two or three colors to be your palette for the entire program and stick with them unless you are really trying to make a point with contrast. Choose one or two fonts and repeat them rather than choosing lots of different fonts. Keep it simple, clean, easy and fun. Your audience is seeking enjoyment and entertainment as well as education. Look for more information about using digital projection special effects and other tips for using Microsoft's PowerPoint software program in the e-publication *A PowerPoint Presentation... Anyone Can Create* by Brian P. Castelluccio and Jon K. Hooper from CSU Chico.

Slide transitions are another place where you should choose simplicity and repetition. Remember that we want the focus to be on our words and images, not just the special effects. A good transition makes the change from one slide to the next appear smoother. It helps hold an audience's attention. (Castelluccio and Hooper, p. 33) In most digital projection programs, you can choose the speed of transition, and add sound effects or movement effects. You might want to overlay text or pre-record segments of narration to make a point or section of your program stand out. Insert sound effects such as bird calls, waves crashing, or the sounds of flint being rubbed together.

Anticipate the upcoming slide. Avoid advancing to a new slide before you are ready for it. If you change too soon, the listener will become confused as to the meaning of the new slide. Do not apologize for your slides or your program. Do not panic if the equipment (e.g., a bulb) fails. Rely on your preplanning efforts and remember—you know the story; the slides are there just to help illustrate it. You might also want to have laminated photos of your images as a backup in case your equipment malfunctions.

Whether you use a slide projector, a two-projector lapse dissolve, a LED-projected software presentation, or even large pictures that you hold up, the mechanics for developing and presenting the program are much the same.

Guest Speaker

Guest speakers can add variety, substance, and innovation to your program. Practically every location has people who are experts in a specific field who would be appropriate for a campfire program. Do not overlook the expertise you have in staff and volunteers. The

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Do not let the fixed program become a sacred cow, lest it end up a dead one. If a deer or a bear walks into view, you may be sure it will take precedence with the audience over anything else you may have in mind.

■ ■ ■

Training Bulletin for Field Employees of the State Park Service, date unknown.

local community may have an “old-timer” who has watched the surrounding area develop, or a local expert in flora and fauna. Judge wisely.

Establish a bond with the guest speaker long before the program. Thoroughly discuss expectations (yours and the speaker’s), know his/her personal/professional background, and develop a mutually agreeable introduction. Make sure the speaker is aware of the composition and length of the evening’s program. Incorporate warm-up materials that will lead into the guest speaker’s presentation. Agree on the time allotment and how you will signal the speaker to end the presentation.

It should be clearly understood what the topic is, how the speaker will present the topic, and what conclusions will be made. Although the guest speaker is in front of the audience, the interpreter is still the one responsible for the program. At a minimum, the welcoming, warm-up and closing will be your responsibility.

There are hazards to keep in mind when using a guest speaker. An expert may give a lecture, not an interpretive talk with a theme. Before you invite someone, make sure you know the speaker’s ability in subject matter and manner of presentation. If possible, preview a guest speaker’s written outline, A/V program and props ahead of time.

Movie

“Video images capture attention in today’s world because electronic devices are so much a part of most of our lives. Videos and movies, when used correctly, can supplement and reinforce program themes, but should not replace the words and thoughts of an actual interpreter” (Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources, 2001, p. B-20).

Videos and movies should be used sparingly, and not as a crutch. They must be properly introduced and relate to and support the theme of the main program. Use them to supplement your personal presentation on the topic. Simply turning the projector on and showing a film is not an interpretive presentation. Plan an introduction and follow-up discussion.

Many films are photographed in other locales. Help visitors to understand how these films relate to them and the park they are visiting. Point out specific episodes or relationships which may illustrate points you want to emphasize. After the film, a relevant conclusion should be given.

Lastly, make sure copyright permissions are current. Most videos have some type of copyright protection limiting their use. Just because a video has been in the park closet for twenty years does not mean it is legal show it in public. Check with your district interpretive specialist if you are unsure.

SHOWING A MOVIE

- Film should be queued up and ready to go. Be sure to give credit to the cast and crew.
 - Place the audio speaker(s) as close to the screen as possible.
-

Demonstration

As with a talk, demonstrations should be strong thematic presentations. They range from the interpreter explaining, demonstrating and showing examples of one step in a process or activity, to the audience participating in the activity/process. The

■ ■ ■
We may misunderstand, but we do not misexperience.

Vine Deloria, Jr.

■ ■ ■
 audience, or at least individuals from the audience who are actively participating, may actually gain a new skill. The interpreter may or may not be the one doing the demonstration. Historic and cultural sites are common venues for demonstrations, but demonstrations can also be effective at recreational locations. Often interpretive objectives can best be attained through demonstration. You are still telling a story with a theme and objectives, but making use of objects, activities, and props to tell the story.

One of the main drawbacks of the demonstration at a campfire program is visibility. The object you are using or the activity you are demonstrating may not be visible to all. Smaller venues work well. Pay attention to your lighting and make sure it is effective from the audience's point of view. Most times bright ambient light is best. This may mean starting your campfire program earlier, while there is still daylight.

DEMONSTRATION SUGGESTIONS

Clothes, gear, and tools of an 1800s mountain man, 1840s homemaker, or 1850s miner—Help the visitor understand events, issues, and hardships of early inhabitants of your area.

Camping or recreational skills and equipment—The underlying message might be safety, resource protection, or appreciation of the outdoors.

Trail building—Show the skills and effort it takes to keep the trails open and still be sensitive to the resources.

Care and use of fire-fighting equipment—Aim at preventing wildfires.

Characterization

Costumed interpretation of a real or imaginary creature requires considerable preparation, but the rewards may be great. “Characters engage the imagination and evoke a whole range of emotions—humor, drama, pathos. Characters humanize events and concepts, making them personal and real to visitors” (Regnier, et al., 1994, p. 46).

As discussed in previous modules, there are two basic types of characterizations: first person characterization, sometimes called living history, and costumed—or third person—interpretation. The decision to portray your character in either first or third person is a critical issue for preparation. First person generally requires another person to prepare the audience to meet someone from the past. To be truly effective, a first person interpreter needs to have theatrical skills. In first person, you must stay in character, whether you are a person from the past, a shark from the ocean, or a tree from the redwood forest. Third person historical interpretation allows you to recognize more current issues and terminology while in costume.

To portray someone successfully takes a lot of skill and practice. Allow plenty of time to develop your specific character. The character should have a name, a history, and a personality, and must support your theme. You will have the best results if you choose common characters. For example, become John Bidwell’s neighbor, not John Bidwell himself. Most audience members will relate better to the common person. Animals and plants can be brought to life through characterization with great impact. The Papa Bear who shows his family’s slide show to the audience may be more interesting and relevant than a ranger telling the visitors about the bear’s life cycle. As with all characters, make sure your information is accurate.

MAKE YOUR CHARACTER COME ALIVE

- **Clothing**—Choose comfortable, authentic wear with appropriate age indications.
- **Costumes**—Plant and animal costumes can be made from carpet foam, glue and paint.
- **Makeup**—Most of the time the best makeup is the real thing—mud, dirt, grease, flour. However, stage makeup can help make your facial features more visible to a large audience.
- **Details**—Small items make your character come alive, especially those things that contribute to sensory awareness of the audience—smoke, food, music, tools, or other items that are connected to the era, environment, or species. The stage for your character can be enhanced with other visual effects—candles, kerosene lantern, rocking chair, or any prop that helps convey the environment or time period of the character.

Adapted from Crosson and Stailey

Storytelling

Everyone loves to listen to a story—if it is well told. Storytelling is as old as humanity itself. When a story is well told, it is one of the best ways to get your audience receptive and warmed up. Anyone can learn to tell stories; we tell stories daily when we describe an adventure we have had or a movie we have recently seen. Good storytellers have the ability to transport listeners to the scene being described and make them feel involved in the story. Great storytelling is a special gift and an art that not everyone possesses, but anyone can learn to tell good stories. All it takes is the ability to be creative in describing a scenario and the willingness to practice, practice, and practice.

Storytelling has been traditionally used around a campfire, and it is a powerful tool in the interpreter's repertoire. Storytelling offers a special magic. Stories provoke interest and emotion, and they are great for explaining why we celebrate different events and the meaning behind traditions and legends. Throughout the world, we discover stories that teach values, attitudes and philosophies. Through these stories we learn about the culture and the character of those people.

Select stories that are relevant to your interpretive theme. As a storyteller, your goal is to become, for a brief moment, something other than the person standing in front of the group—to create a whole new world using words, sounds, gestures, and expressions. In doing so, remember to tell a story, not a memorized speech. Memorize the sequence of images for the story, but not the words. This allows you to be spontaneous and creative. Your voice and gestures should make every member of the audience feel as if you are talking directly to him or her.

SEQUENCE OF A GOOD STORY

- **Setting the scene**—"Once upon a time" or "Long, long ago"
- **Development**—Pull the audience in, sustain the interest, build up the tension
- **Crisis**—The height of the tension
- **Solution**—Relief of that tension
- **Moral or wrap-up**

Listening to stories is a universal longing; telling a good story is a venerable skill. The best way to develop this skill is to practice. If you are not good at storytelling, do not do it for a park audience until you are.

STORYTELLING**DO**

- Speak clearly and loudly with plenty of inflection.
- Speak at a measured pace, neither too fast nor too slow.
- Wear a mask if you are shy about storytelling, but make sure all can hear.
- Tell a relevant story that you really like.
- Use silence, pause for effect, and whisper to catch attention.
- Use sound effects to emphasize a point.
- Tell the story spontaneously rather than reading from a script.
- Practice, practice, and practice.

DON'T

- Tell a story you do not really like.
- Begin with an apology.
- Start with long story introductions.
- Use annoying/unwelcome body language and facial expressions.
- Read the story.
- Speak in a monotone.
- Express personal opinions or bias.
- Get sidetracked.
- Leave your listeners without a resolution to the story's conflict.
- Begin to talk immediately after finishing your story.
- Use a fake or affected voice.
- Use weak or distracting gestures.
- Be someone who you do not like.
- Be too detailed.

Guided Imagery

Guided imagery is a process of creative visualization or guided fantasy. It allows you to mentally take the audience to places, times or events they cannot or should not experience physically. It is important that the audience is willing to take this journey, and they must trust the interpreter in order to fully enjoy the experience.

Begin the journey by getting the audience as comfortable as possible. Help them relax by listening to the wind, the babble of the nearby creek, or other white, natural noise. Use your voice to help them discard distracting thoughts. Take your time—pauses allow the audience to get in the mood.

Ask your audience to close their eyes, and encourage them to create mental images triggered by your verbal, virtual trip. Then describe, with as lively a narration as possible, the scene, situation, or process you desire to show them. Their active involvement, rather than mere listening, makes for greater understanding and retention. An example of a guided imagery program is a description of the travels of a water molecule through the water cycle from vapor to cloud to earth and back again.

VIRTUAL TRAVEL

- Guided imagery is not effective if there are distractions. Read your audience, and let them know ahead of time what to expect. A crying baby or group of unruly teens will spoil the whole mood.
 - Everyone “sees” the journey a little differently. You might ask members of the audience to share their trips. Different and interesting insights and revelations may be discovered.
 - The audience needs to be comfortable, peaceful, relaxed and in a receptive mood.
 - It is the interpreter’s job to ensure the environment is conducive to creative visualization.
-

Puppetry

Puppets have been used for thousands of years to entertain and educate, and to comment on society and politics. Puppet programs are an excellent way of communicating resource information and values to children and adults alike. Puppets command attention and are enjoyed by audiences of all ages. They allow for interaction with the audience and convey controversial issues in a fun and non-threatening manner. They can be employed

to help individuals see critical issues from a variety of perspectives, as well as to better appreciate the world around them. Through stories, songs, improvised dialogues, and jokes, live puppetry can engage and focus the attention, imagination, and emotions of audiences on important interpretive concepts (Helmich, 1997, p. 86).

USING PUPPETS

- Move the puppet's mouth "in sync" with what it is saying.
 - Open and close the mouth with each syllable.
 - Move the lower jaw. The puppet's head should remain level.
 - Stay in character.
 - Puppets should make eye contact with the audience. You should talk to the puppet and be a good listener.
 - Let the puppet carry the program.
 - Develop a distinct personality and voice for each puppet.
 - Keep the program short and active.
 - Practice, practice, practice!
-



Don't be afraid to use your talents to create a unique campfire program.

CLOSURE

It is time to end your program. Be sure to provide some closure of your theme. If appropriate, end the program with a thought-provoking “needle” that will stay with the audience.

Close on time. Do not draw the program out. People have other things to do and so do you. Invite the audience to come up and talk with you or the guest speaker. Be a gracious host; answer questions, clarify issues, and gain valuable feedback on your program. As nice as compliments are, you may discover the questions audience members ask can be more helpful in improving your program. Do not be in a hurry to leave.

Consider offering informal after-campfire activities such as just plain visiting with the interpreter while roasting marshmallows or popping popcorn, stargazing, or taking a stroll in the dark. You can also use this time to conduct appropriately planned evaluation measures. Occasionally there are people who want to visit with other members of the audience. Be sure you make them feel welcome; encourage them to linger by the fire for a while. If they wish to remain after you have stored the equipment, extinguished the fire, closed up, and are ready to leave, be sure to warn them you will be turning out the lights in a moment.

SUGGESTED TIME ALLOTMENT

- Opening, introduction, welcome, and announcements—**10 minutes**
- Warm-up—**10 to 15 minutes**
- Transition—**5 minutes**
- Program—**15 to 20 minutes**
- Closure—**5 minutes**

8.4 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

ALTERNATIVE PLANS

The campfire program is a production, and there are many elements that contribute to its success. When you finish a program and are feeling good, you should remember it worked because of a considerable amount of group effort. The entire park staff contributes to the success of any program.

A good interpreter will have clear alternative plans in case there are such problems as a power outage, equipment failure, weather issues, etc. As with all emergencies, preplanning the what-ifs is vitally important. Discuss with staff and mutually agree on what to do when things do not go right. There will be times when one or more emergencies occur, and you will be glad you worked with your colleagues to develop a plan for issues such as the following:

PLANNING PREVENTS PROBLEMS

- Who decides when to cancel a program, and how do you notify staff and the potential audience of the cancellation? There should be consistency in this cancellation decision.
 - Is there an alternate location that would accommodate the program in a timely manner?
 - Is backup equipment available, and what is its location?
-

Good interpreters should be able to go on with the show without electricity or the planned equipment. You may need to alter your presentation, consider the safety and comfort of the audience, or shorten the campfire program. Simple inconveniences should not automatically cancel a program. Assume your audience members came to the park just to see your program...do not disappoint them!

DISRUPTIONS

The skills you are developing as an interpreter will serve you well in handling disruptive situations at a campfire program. Remember this is a non-captive audience; people are here for the most part to have fun and learn about the park's resources. Using your pleasant people skills will usually correct the problem. Good judgment, a calm demeanor, and appropriate action when handling disruptive issues are skills you will refine as you develop your craft. Observe how others handle similar situations and do not hesitate to discuss techniques and solutions with them.

Sometimes you can anticipate a problem and defuse it before it becomes disruptive. Ask the overly energetic child to assist with some aspect of the program, such as counting the number of people in attendance or helping lead a song. Invite the rowdy bunch in the back to come closer to the front so that they can “see better.” Enlisting audience and peer pressure can be effective. Discreetly “discussing” the issue with the troublemaker may sometimes be necessary. Call on the help of volunteers, park hosts, and any staff in the audience. Teamwork certainly helps.

The bottom line is you have put a lot of effort into your program. The vast majority of the audience is receptive and appreciative of your efforts, so do not let those very few and occasional distracters ruin the experience for all. Deal with them in a professional manner; do not just ignore them.

PROPS AND HANDOUTS

Handheld objects, examples, and written materials are often helpful in strengthening a program. Because you are trying to show items to a large number of people in a limited amount of time, specific display and distribution techniques should be used.

Good lighting is critical. What might be easy for the few visitors in the front row to see can be completely lost for those in the back. Be aware of any glare, hold the object up high, walk up the aisle so everyone can get a better look, and let the audience know they are welcome to take a closer look at the end of the program. Pay attention to your audience; if there is an increase in fidgeting, that is a strong indication you have lost their attention.

If the object you are planning to pass around is expendable, have several to pass, not just one. Starting an object in the front row and expecting it to flow through the audience in a timely fashion does not work. If it is a large, fragile, precious, or dangerous object, make sure you explain the finer details and do not pass it around. Consider using a graphic, a handout, an image of the item projected on a screen, or a larger-than-life model.



Props help visitors connect with your story.

Enlist assistance to distribute objects and materials to the group. Once again, volunteers, park hosts, or other staff in the audience might lend a hand.

FEEDBACK

Visiting with individuals after the program can be a rewarding experience for all involved. This informal conversation affords the visitor an opportunity to ask questions and clarify issues. It permits you an opportunity to socialize and gain valuable feedback on your program.

This evaluative feedback can be further strengthened when you have incorporated the Visitor RAPPORt Survey (DPR 461A). In order to ensure quality data, randomly distribute the forms, along with a pencil, to four or five members of the audience. Request that the selected individuals not look at or fill out the survey until after completion of the program. Implement whatever strategy is necessary to promote completion of the survey only at the conclusion of the program. It is helpful to have another staff member or a park volunteer distribute the surveys and ask for cooperation. Direct the evaluator to leave the completed survey at a location such as the projection booth, rostrum, on the seat, etc., so they can remain anonymous. If they don't have to hand the evaluation directly to you, they may be more direct and open in their comments. *Module 12—Evaluation* thoroughly describes how to assess your presentation without bias.

State of California - The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Visitor RAPPORt Survey

Thank you for providing feedback on this interpretive program. We value your honest assessment, and offer this evaluation so that California State Parks may provide the highest level of public service. Please turn in this form to the park office or return it to a park employee.

PARK	DATE					
PRESENTER	PROGRAM TITLE					
ITEM	DEFINITELY NO	PROBABLY NOT	MAYBE	PROBABLY YES	DEFINITELY YES	NOT APPLICABLE
RELEVANT:						
Did the program give you a better appreciation of this park?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Was the length of the program suitable?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
ACCURATE:						
Was the presenter knowledgeable?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
PROVOCATIVE/ENJOYABLE:						
Was the program interesting?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Did you feel involved in the program?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Did you enjoy the program?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
PROGRAMMATICALLY ACCESSIBLE:						
If you have visual, hearing, or mobility impairment or any disability, were you accommodated appropriately?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
ORGANIZED:						
Was the material presented in a logical order?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
RETAINED THEME:						
In your own words, what was the main point of the program?						
How could this program be improved?						
How did you find out about this program or activity?						

DPR 461A (Rev. 4/2000) Excel

Continually seek quality evaluation of your programs.

FOLLOW-UP

Your program is completed, everything went pretty well, you're tired, and want to get on to all the other "stuff" you have yet to do, but now is not the time to just lock up and leave. Make sure you get everything ready for those following you. Attention to detail makes all the difference for successful interpretive programs.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST

- Have you stored the equipment properly?
 - Does any equipment or the facility need attention?
 - Are all materials and supplies replenished?
 - Should any issues be discussed before the next program?
 - Did you record attendance on the Interpretive Activity Log for entry into CAMP?
-

A campfire program is a formal, audience-participation activity that is conducted in a specified location. Campfire programs may assume various forms and do not always have to take place at night. An early morning coffee with the interpreter at the campfire center may draw those early risers and be a pleasant way for the visitor and interpreter to start their day.

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The future of the campfire program as an institution in your area is influenced each time you lead such a program. You will add to or take away from a noble tradition, according to your performance.

Training Bulletin for Field Employees of the State Park Service

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WHAT'S AHEAD?

In *Module 9—Kids* we will turn our attention to addressing an important and specific audience—children. Children's interpretation has long been recognized as being unique. Tilden said, "Interpretation addressed to children should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach." *Module 9—Kids* will explore the purpose and values of children's interpretation and how to successfully provide these programs.

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Module 8
CAMPFIRE

SELF ASSESSMENT

Answer each question in the section below before reviewing the material in *Module 8—Campfire*. The answers are not provided. Check your answers with your colleagues as you read the manual. Items from the self assessment may be reviewed and discussed in class.

1) Describe two different types of campfire programs.

1. _____

2. _____

2) You should always light the campfire before visitors arrive to your program.

a) True

b) False

3) List three benefits of using music at a campfire program.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4) Which of the following activities are appropriate methods of conducting a warm-up during a campfire program? (Circle all that apply.)

a) Songs

b) Games

c) Quizzes

d) Skits

5) A slide/image presentation is developed using a fundamentally different approach from that of other interpretive programs. (Explain your answer.)

- a) True
- b) False

6) When preparing a slide presentation, you should find your images first, then build your program around them.

- a) True
- b) False

7) What is a storyboard?

8) Name three ways of finding and obtaining slides/images for your program.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

9) Which of the following are recommended practices for conducting a talk with digitally projected images? (Circle all that apply.)

- a) Face the screen to keep organized
- b) Do not use animated body language
- c) Reference each slide as it appears
- d) Use only high quality slides

10) Describe two ways to improve characterizations.

1. _____

2. _____

11) Guided imagery should only be used with children.

- a) True
- b) False

12) Storytelling is most effective if you:

- a) Start with a detailed introduction
- b) Tell stories that express your personal opinions
- c) Tell the story in your own words
- d) Read the story from a script

13) With adults as the primary audience, describe a situation where puppets would be the method of choice for conveying a message.

14) How can you handle a disruptive visitor at a campfire program?

Now that you have completed the self assessment questions, review the material in *Module 8—Campfire* to confirm your answers. After reading the module, move on to the workbook learning activities, which will assist you in developing your skills.

- 2) You arrive one-half hour early for your evening slide presentation around the campfire. You discover the electricity is out in the amphitheater. Describe how you would handle this situation.

Take it to YOUR Park

Answer each question with the information specific to your park. You will have to conduct some research in order to answer each question. Use the answers as a guide for beginning your career in California State Parks.

CAMPFIRE

Park name: _____

- 1) Develop an inventory of the equipment, props, materials, and other items, that are available in your park for conducting campfire programs.

- 2) Brainstorm an appropriate theme for a campfire program.

- 5) Create an advertisement for your campfire program.

Module 9
KIDS



Knowledge without love will not stick. But if love comes first, knowledge is sure to follow.

John Burroughs

For ourselves, and for our planet, we must be both strong and strongly connected — with each other, with the earth. As children, we need time to wander, to be outside, to nibble on icicles, watch ants, to build with dirt and sticks in the hollow of the earth, to lie back and contemplate clouds....

Gary Paul Nabhan & Stephen Trimble

Module 9

KIDS

What is it?

Interpretation designed to address specific needs of children (kids).

Why do we do it?

Children are our future park stewards and their programs require a special approach.

How do we do it?

Implement skills, techniques, and strategies specifically designed for kids' programs.

■ ■ ■

Interpretation addressed to children (say, up to the age of twelve) should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best, it will require a separate program.

Freeman Tilden

■ ■ ■

INTRODUCTION

Conducting interpretation for kids is one of the most rewarding aspects of interpretation. It offers endless possibilities for using your creativity with an audience that is typically very receptive. Interpretive experiences may create powerful memories for children, shaping their feelings towards parks and wilderness for the rest of their lives. As a children's interpreter, you have the opportunity to develop the future stewards of our wild and historic places, as well as developing the future stewards of our planet.

Children need programs that are designed especially for them. In this module we will review the types of kids' programs and explore strategies and techniques to help you develop a program that will engage this audience—whether they are alone or in a mixed-age group.

9.1 PURPOSE AND VALUES

■ ■ ■

Reducing that deficit—healing the broken bond between our young and nature is in our self-interest, not only because aesthetics or justice demands it, but also because our mental, spiritual and physical health depends upon it. The health of the earth is at stake as well.

Richard Louv

■ ■ ■

Because children's interpretation offers us the opportunity to reach not only the child but the important adults in his or her life, children are one of our most important audiences. **It is through the eyes of children that adults often see the clearest vision of their own world.** In this age of video games, computers, and virtual reality, it is especially important to help kids connect to the natural and cultural world. Today's children are less in touch with nature than any previous generation on earth. Although they are “plugged in,” and have access to information and videos twenty four hours a day, many are not able to name the native trees in their neighborhoods. For a variety of reasons, kids are spending less time and especially less **unstructured** time out of doors.

Alienation from nature and the human costs associated with it are called “nature-deficit disorder.” This term was made popular in 2005 by Richard Louv, whose book *Last Child in the Woods* was a wake up call for parents, educators, and environmentalists. Among the costs of alienation from nature Louv identifies are diminished use of the senses, attention difficulties, and higher rates of mental and physical illness (Louv, 2005). In addition, this lack of connection to nature among a whole generation may lead to serious consequences for our planet and our future as a species.

■ ■ ■

As we began our school group tour to find animal homes in a Pacific Northwest forest, I would ask the five and six-year-olds, “What animals do you think we might see today? The first reply was almost always, “Monkeys!”

Joanie Cahill,
Regional Interpretive
Specialist, CSP

■ ■ ■

When children do not connect with nature, it can become a fearful concept (Beck and Cable, 2002; Brown, 1989). Spiders, snakes, and bees frighten not only kids, but adults as well. Children, however, because their exposure to nature has come through television and computer games, also fear animals that are not even in their local parks, such as elephants and tigers. Remembering Maslow's hierarchy of needs (*Module 3—Communication*), if a child is afraid, then learning, discovery, or enjoyment is difficult

at best. Interpretation, appropriately conducted, should always address the basic needs first, thus alleviating fears.

Introducing nature and history to kids through our interpretive efforts may be their first authentic exposure and, as such, can have a life-altering effect on them. Many of us as children were so moved by natural and/or cultural experiences that we chose interpretation as our careers. Our childhood experiences affect us forever. **That is why, as an interpreter, you should always proceed as if each program you create and deliver may change lives.** You may never know the impact you and your program have on a child. Therefore, it is with respect that we provide programs specifically for children.



Our childhood experiences affect us forever.

9.2 TYPES OF PROGRAMS

There are many types of programs that can be conducted with children. You can conduct talks, walks, campfires, and other types of programs with any specific audience in mind, including kids. But there are also specific programs designed to be particularly effective with children. The following sections describe typical situations you will encounter. The most common children's programs are presented in the park or in the classroom.

MIXED AUDIENCE WITH CHILDREN

One of the most common settings in which children connect with park resources is traditional park programs like nature walks, historic tours, and campfire programs. Families attend interpretive programs together, yet a child's needs in this setting are sometimes overlooked. As Freeman Tilden reminds us, programs for children should follow a “fundamentally different approach” than programs for adults. This leads some interpreters to address either the adults' or the children's need—not both.

In fact, the best programs engage all ages and abilities. As with any interpretive opportunity, the key is to incorporate as many different types of learning (visual, tactile, auditory, movement, etc.) as possible. While some enjoy stories and pictures, others may want facts and information. English language learners may appreciate more direct interaction with the resource or props. Facts, stories, hands-on opportunities, sensory involvement, analogies, metaphors, pictures, and direct experiences with natural and cultural resources are all components of a successful program designed to meet the needs of a mixed audience (*Module 3—Communication*). Using a variety of interactive methods will also help you connect to audience members with special needs, such as those with language or physical challenges.

In addition, all adults, not just the parents or guardians, typically appreciate what you do for children. Kids in an audience often create opportunities for adults to be children again. Society usually tempers this desire with regimented restrictions, but **interpretive programs can offer an “approved” setting where adults can play.** When conducting programs for a mixed-age audience, provide opportunities to touch, explore, interact, and imagine, without minimizing the informational components. Let the guidelines outlined in this module assist you in planning appropriate activities for children in a mixed-age audience.

■ ■ ■

I really enjoyed you showing us the wonders of Anza-Borrego. It seems like one of—if not, the coolest parks in California. You've really taught me a lot about the wildlife they have there. I would like to go there sometime soon because of all the cool sights there. I will try to convince my parents on taking me there this year.

School Group Visitor (PORTS),
Anza-Borrego Desert State Park

■ ■ ■

A well-planned interpretive program will engage all ages and abilities.



STATEWIDE CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

California State Parks currently offers the following children's programs on a statewide basis. These programs reach thousands annually, and it is up to the interpreter to make these programs successful. Here is a brief description of each.

Junior Rangers

The Junior Ranger program began in California State Parks in the early 1970s; it has become one of the most important and successful elements of our statewide interpretive programming. Children aged 7 to 12 participate in interpreter-led programs or self-guided activities, earning a variety of awards that signify completion of different topics and levels. Children are the target audience and drive the selection of materials, activities, and topics. California State Parks developed a *Junior Ranger Handbook* to direct the preparation and delivery of Junior Ranger programs. The handbook contains guidelines for working with kids, sample programs, activities, subject information, resources, and self-guided activities.

The goals of the Junior Ranger Program are to offer programming specifically designed for children that develop(s) in children an appreciation for their cultural and natural resources heritage, an awareness of interrelationship among those resources, and a desire to help protect them.

Department of Parks and Recreation, 1998

Junior Ranger Adventure Guide

The Junior Ranger Adventure Guide is a self-guided program consisting of a workbook that can easily be adapted to any California state park. It is easy to implement, even in the off-season. Children obtain the Adventure Guide at the park or download it ahead of time from the Internet. Once at the site, they are invited to explore the park, participate in park activities and complete puzzles and games related to what they've experienced. After completing the activities, participants show their work to park staff and receive an award. The activities are designed to be especially useful in state recreation areas and state historic parks; the award can be easily adapted for different locations.

Junior Lifeguards

Junior Lifeguard programs are presented to children approximately 9 to 15 years of age. They focus specifically on water safety and aquatic natural history. Aquatic recreation, exercise, competition, lifeguard skills and basic First Aid and CPR are introduced. Junior Lifeguard programs involve more contact time with children than do Junior Ranger programs. Junior Lifeguard programs are generally four-week summer programs and average 100 hours of contact time per child. This extended relationship allows interpreters to build on previous lessons and ideas, so a more in-depth examination of topics takes place. Programs culminate in a formal graduation ceremony to celebrate the child's achievements. The Aquatic Operations Handbook provides an overview of the Junior Lifeguard Program.

Environmental Living and Environmental Studies Programs

Environmental Living Programs (ELPs) provide children overnight park experiences that explore the interaction between people and their environments. Immersed for a brief time in the past, students learn from their own experiences about earlier cultures and lifestyles.

Environmental Studies Programs (ESPs) have similar goals to ELPs but are organized without the overnight stay. Both are structured to provide the most informative experience in the allotted time, focusing on the unit's interpretive themes. Both programs are coordinated with concepts taught in the classroom. They differ from standard tours and programs in their in-depth nature, their length, and their immersion of the children in the subject matter being discussed. Programs incorporate demonstrations, hands-on activities, and follow-up student assignments.

PORTS

Park Online Resources for Teachers and Students take classes from all over California on virtual field trips to California State Parks. Teachers and students are provided with complete units of study aligned with state curriculum standards and then participate in live videoconferences. Included in the PORTS program are lessons to prepare the students for the videoconference, supporting materials, and links to further resources. A class could explore paleontology at Anza-Borrego Desert, tide pools at Crystal Cove, the gold rush at Columbia, or the elephant seals at Año Nuevo. Many other topics and parks are also explored through PORTS.



Litter-Getters

The statewide Litter-Getter Program is open to all but is especially popular with children aged three to six. Children pick up a “Litter-Getter bag” from park staff and fill it with trash from the campgrounds and trails. Once the bag is full, it is redeemed for a sticker book and the opportunity to fill another trash bag and earn another sticker. Litter bags and awards are available to support this program.

Additional Programs

Some parks provide other opportunities, such as Young Naturalists or Cubs, specifically for children under the age of seven. Teen programs, high school helpers, Jr. Ranger summer camps and after-school Junior Ranger clubs are also offered at some parks.

These programs are developed and provided based on an individual park's needs, goals, and expertise. Although encouraged, they are not a formal statewide program, and offerings vary considerably from park to park.

For more information on any of these statewide programs, contact your supervisor or your District Interpretive Specialist.

■ ■ ■
*We cannot always build the
 future for our youth, but we can
 build our youth for the future.*

Franklin D. Roosevelt

■ ■ ■

CHILDREN'S OUTDOOR BILL OF RIGHTS

Every child should have the opportunity to:

- Play in a Safe Place
- Explore Nature
- Learn to Swim
- Go Fishing
- Camp Under the Stars
- Ride a Bike
- Go Boating
- Connect with the Past
- Plant a Seed

California Roundtable on Recreation, Parks and Tourism

SCHOOL GROUPS

You can expect to take part in school group programs for the hundreds of thousands of students who come from the over 15,000 schools that visit our parks. “As field trip destinations, California’s state parks are invaluable to schools interested in getting students out of the classroom and into the world beyond the school boundaries” (State Park System Plan, California State Parks, 2002, p. 3).

Programs conducted with school groups follow a somewhat different approach than those conducted with children who are not part of school groups. One of the primary differences between school group programs and other children’s programs is that program content should not only be driven by the park’s significance and messages but also **by mandated curriculum standards**.

There are other differences as well; for example, in the school-group setting, teachers will often handle behavioral problems that the interpreter may need to address in non-school group situations. If school group programs are conducted in the classroom, the lack of distractions from a park setting can be beneficial. Of course, there is no substitute for a real park visit.



Over half a million school students attend California State Park programs each year.

—California State Parks Quick Facts.

School Groups

- More organized
- More group experience
- Familiarity with teacher
- May have studied topic as group
- Typically same age
- Teacher or chaperones may help manage group

Not With School Groups

- Less organized
- No familiar leader
- May not know each other
- Not accustomed to group action
- Often wide range of ages
- Interpreter manages group

Academic Content Standards

All programs conducted for school groups within California State Parks must be aligned with academic content standards. These content standards direct what each student must learn in each grade within California schools. Since a school's accountability is based on the academic content standards, creating interpretive opportunities that incorporate these content standards increases the overall benefit for the students, schools, teachers, and the park. **Programs should get students into natural and cultural settings, provide opportunities for them to learn about and experience science and history firsthand, expose them to California State Parks, and help teachers meet content standards.** By meeting teachers' needs, we are assured continued support from schools as we reach out to this important audience.



School group programs require careful planning.

Although standards help us identify and support appropriate concepts, themes should not be based solely on content standards. Choose your theme the same way all themes are selected—park significance, management goals and objectives, interests of the audience, etc. You may find a training CD helpful: *California State Parks, Integrating Academic Content Standards into School Group Interpretive Programs*. Descriptions of

standards are available on the internet. Your District Interpretive Coordinator can help you locate standards or the training CD. There is a lot to consider when planning a school group program.

WHEN PLANNING A SCHOOL GROUP PROGRAM, CONSIDER

- Park resources and identified interpretive themes
 - Needs of park management
 - Needs and interests of the students
 - Needs and requests of the teacher
 - State academic content standards
 - Time available
 - Location of program
 - Number of students and adults
 - Your own skills, knowledge and abilities
-

Example #1: Ms. Jackson's Fourth Grade Class

Ms. Jackson's fourth grade class will be coming to your forest park. She wants you to take them on a nature walk. There will be 26 students and 6 adults. A quick peek online at the content standards reminds you that fourth graders are learning that *all organisms need energy and matter to live and grow*. As a basis for understanding this concept, they need to know about:

- plants being the primary source of matter and energy for food chains
- producers and consumers as they relate in food chains and food webs
- decomposers, including fungi, insects, etc.

They are also learning that *living organisms depend on one another and on their environment for survival*.

Knowing that they are mostly 9-year-olds with one hour for your walk, you select a one-mile trail with many natural examples demonstrating varieties of plants, food chains and webs, and rotting logs full of decomposers. You develop a theme based on these learning objectives as they relate to:

- **your trail's strengths:** There are lots of fallen trees and rotting logs
- **your management needs:** There are problems with people harvesting firewood, so you'll want to work in the importance of leaving downed wood in place.
- **your interpretive skills:** You love to play games but couldn't sing with a group if your life depended on it!. Plus, you are a birder and know the locations of several nests.

You decide on the theme: “We need each other to survive.” Recognizing that you will have one adult for every five or six children, you plan ahead and direct the adults to take responsibility for keeping their groups together and on task. You remember a game about food chains that you played once, and think about how that will work with your space, time and group size. At this point, you apply everything you’ve learned from *Module 6—Talks* and *Module 7—Walks*, to develop, present, and evaluate your program.

Example #2: Mr. Salvador’s Kindergarten Class

Mr. Salvador is bringing his kindergarten class to your oak woodland park on a morning in October. They will have an hour and fifteen minutes. He would like a nature walk but reminds you that his children tend to have short attention spans. He will be able to bring about seven parent helpers along. After checking the content standards for kindergarten, you know that the students are learning that *different types of plants and animals inhabit the earth*. As a basis for understanding this, they need to know about:

- observing and describing similarities and differences in appearance and behavior of plants and animals
- how stories sometimes give plants and animals attributes they do not really have.
- the names of major structures of animals and plants, such as roots, stems, arms, wings, etc.

You take a quick peek at the Social Studies content standards online too, and see that the kids are learning to:

- recognize national and state symbols and icons
- match simple descriptions of work that people do and the names of jobs in the local community.

You decide that the best approach for this group of 5-year-olds will be to do several short activities that are linked together by the theme, “Oak woodlands create a special California home for plants, animals, and people.”

You begin your program by having the children help you unfold and raise the American and California flags, and talk about how this is our home and why there is a bear on the flag. Next you’ll tell them about the important job that rangers do to keep the wild land healthy, protect the animals, and help people who are lost. You’ll briefly show them some of your equipment (binoculars, gun, handcuffs,

sunscreen, etc.) You let one girl come up and try on your Stetson to see if she'd like to be a ranger someday.

Next you plan to walk a short ways to an oak grove. You explain to the kids that there are many animals and plants in the woodland and that there are only a couple that could hurt them Tell them what to do if they see a snake (if that is likely) or encounter poison oak. Explain that oak woodlands are a great home for many animals and along the walk you'll be looking for clues that animals live there. You might ask for some ideas ahead of time about what they think might live there, or have some pictures to show of common birds, bugs, and mammals. You plan to encourage them to point out holes in the ground, nibble marks on leaves, nests, feathers, scat, etc.

You might have one stop on your walk where you ask the kids to identify all the parts of a tree that they can name and give them time to touch and smell the bark and feel the leaves. If you follow this with a stop at a second tree, they can tell you how the two trees are alike or different. You might stop at a tree with woodpecker holes in it and show them a picture of a woodpecker. Who can name its body parts? Do all birds have beaks that look the same as this? Why not?

At the grove, you'll have the parents help as the children choose a partner for the activity "Meet A Tree" found in Joseph Cornell's book *Sharing Nature with Children*.

After that, you'll have the kids pretend to be squirrels and collect as many acorns as possible in two minutes. Then look at them and discuss what acorns are for, and what their role in nature might be. Some one will probably ask about galls, another unique oak habitat! Have the children return the acorns so they can be food for wildlife or plant themselves for the future. If the idea seems workable, you'll have them all lie on their backs looking up through the trees quietly for ten seconds and listening to the sounds of nature in the grove. If there is time, you'll read a short Native American myth about *Coyote and the Acorns*, before returning to the parking lot.

Along the way back, you plan to stop at one more tree and evaluate what the kids have learned by asking what tree parts they can name, what similarities and differences they can identify, and whether or not they recognize the tree as a home for wildlife. You hope you'll have time at the end of the trail to have them pretend they are tiny acorns, growing tall with bark and branches and leaves etc. If not, you'll finish up at the parking lot with a reminder about how lucky we were to visit the oak woodland that is such a special California home for plants, animals, and people too.

Making park resource-based education an integral part of the formal educational system is a worthy goal. Through school group programs we can reach populations that otherwise may not visit California State Parks. Planting the seeds of pride and stewardship in a variety of population groups may help reduce some of the problems parks will face in the future. In addition, reaching children through school-based programs helps integrate the park and its resources into the whole community. In fact, the basic theories and approaches of interpretation make learning exciting, interesting, and fun—thus helping to create lifelong learners and park stewards.

■ ■ ■
*Interest makes play of
the hardest work.*

Enos Mills

■ ■ ■

Now that you understand the general types of kids' programs we offer, let's review the basic characteristics of children relevant to conducting successful interpretive programs.



When California State Parks become partners with schools, everybody wins.

9.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN

Although each child is unique and individual, some characteristics are commonly recognized. Children of all ages are naturally curious, sensory driven and full of energy. Plan to embrace these characteristics in your programs.

CURIOSITY

What's that? Where does it come from? Why is the sky blue? Anyone who has ever been around children for any length of time can attest to the fact that they are naturally curious. In fact, “the earliest school years find children learning the names of things at a phenomenal rate, never again matched” (Tilden, 1977, p. 49). Adults are curious too, but are often trained by the conventions of society not to ask too many questions. By asking lots of questions, children will help you create experiences for them that are meaningful and relevant.

■ ■ ■
It is a miracle that curiosity survives formal education.

Albert Einstein

■ ■ ■

When conducting a program for kids, constant questions and interruptions may plague your program. This can be very frustrating...**OR**...you can take advantage of this natural curiosity, energy, and excitement, and channel it! Convey facts, names, dates, and details to children. Let them convey facts, names, dates and details to you! Stories, analogies, metaphors, etc., are important, but kids also want to know the specifics. Do not stray too far from the planned path, but answer their questions. Better yet, facilitate their own abilities to find answers.



Interpreters have the opportunity to channel natural curiosity.

CHANNEL CURIOSITY

- **Entertain questions and comments in a controlled, timely fashion.** For example, at the start of the program establish the times and places for stories, comments, and questions. Save comments and stories for the end, but take questions throughout the talk. You may need to explain the difference between comments and questions.
- **Listen!** Children respond well if they know you are listening.
- **Capitalize on kids' natural desire to learn.** Ask guiding questions to engage them in the resource.
- **Follow their eyes.** Find out what interests them.
- **Embrace the teachable moment.** If a snake slithers by, stop, watch and discuss, then link it to your theme if possible.

SENSE-SATIONAL!

The natural curiosity of children allows you to get them to do, feel, smell, and otherwise experience nature in ways that adults might not. Adults become cautious about touching things, especially if they do not know what it is. Kids, on the other hand, often do the opposite. In fact, touch helps them determine what something is. Engage senses frequently to help maximize the natural tendencies of kids to explore. As always, take care to ensure the safety of both the children and the environment when engaging them directly with the resources.



Offer opportunities for children to learn by using their senses.

■ ■ ■
Another characteristic very pronounced in younger children, partly because of their lack of inhibitions, ... is the love of personal examination through (the) senses other than sight and hearing.

Freeman Tilden

■ ■ ■

MAKING SENSE OF SENSES

- **Engage at least one sense with every main point.**
 - **Promote positive engagements with the resource.** Always explain WHY it is okay to touch, taste, smell, etc. Kids remember, so be sure you are giving the right lesson.
 - **Focus on one sense at a time.** For example, blindfold kids and hand them something. Ask them to identify it, what produced it, or who uses the object. Or, place scents or scented items in a bag and have the kids identify the scent.
 - **Change their perspective on a sense.** For example, have them lie on their backs and look at a tree. Have them count the shades of green they can find in the forest, in a square foot of ground, etc.
 - **Enjoy yourself.** Many times kids just do not know how to experience the environment. They will learn much from simply watching you.
 - **Point things out as you notice them,** especially the small, often overlooked things, or better yet, challenge the kids to notice what is special or unique.
-

ENERGIZED

Kids are just naturally energetic. They love to play and run, and have few inhibitions. Especially when outside the formal, regimented classroom, kids are likely to want to express themselves through physical activities. An interpreter who constantly reminds children to sit down, listen, stop talking, etc., is missing learning opportunities. Joseph Cornell's (1998) **flow learning** method provides a structured approach to working with kids and channeling their natural energy. Later in the module, we will review this theory and other techniques for focusing a child's natural excitement and energy.



Children's programs encourage exploration and direct interaction with nature.

AGES AND STAGES

Of course every child is unique, but the generalized descriptions below will serve as guidelines for planning children's programs.

Ages 2-6

At this age, children learn through their play.

Children at this age tend to experience the world through their senses. To them, everything they discover is "alive" and experiences the world the same way they do. For example, a young child might think a tree has feelings and parents, just as he/she does. Independent play, make believe and exploration are the primary ways they discover the world. Language skills also begin to emerge.

Kids in this stage of development do not typically have the ability to perform logical



An interpreter helps tiny people enjoy activities on the big stage.

operations in their minds. The world is what they see, feel, smell, taste, and hear. Socially, two- to six-year-old kids are self-centered. They see the world through their own eyes and have a difficult time grasping any other perspective. Kids at this age also tend to exhibit the preconventional level of moral reasoning. This means they primarily reason the appropriateness of an action based on their perceptions of associated rewards or fears of punishment that directly result from the behavior. This is why stickers, stars, and other methods of rewarding positive behavior work so well at this level of development.

PROGRAM TIPS FOR 2- TO 6-YEAR-OLDS

- Make children feel safe with you.
- Focus on make believe, play, and guided discovery.
- Establish behavioral expectations early.
- Engage children with stories, puppets, thematic songs, games, and sensory explorations.
- Keep groups small, or allow kids to participate in activities as individuals.
- Conduct short hikes, as younger kids tire easily. Be sensitive to their needs and abilities.
- If helpful, give human characteristics to things to illuminate difficult concepts.
- Shift activities, physical location, focuses, etc., frequently.
- Get down on one knee or find other ways to be at their level, eye to eye.
- Ask easy questions shortly after giving the answers.
- Make time to listen to them.
- Use repetition to get your theme and facts to stick.

■ ■ ■

For the child...it is not half so important to know as to feel. If facts are the seeds that later produce knowledge and wisdom, then the emotions and the impressions of the senses are the fertile soil in which the seeds must grow... It is more important to pave the way for a child to want to know than to put him on a diet of facts that he is not ready to assimilate.

Rachel Carson

■ ■ ■

Ages 7-11

Curiosity and making connections drives learning.

Children at this level work well in groups or alone. They can classify objects, understand basic relationships, and grasp specific behavioral requests. Although kids at this level are very much wedded to the physical world, they can begin to perform logical operations in their minds. Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy are replaced with endless questions and inquiries about the nature, classification, or relationship of things.

Social and moral stages at this level of development result in children beginning to see the world from a perspective other than their own. Social development grows from the subjective perspective (ages five to nine) where children begin to understand that others have different perspectives, to the self-reflective thinking (age seven to twelve) category, where they begin to evaluate their own behavior. The world begins to open up to the concept of “others.” Judgments about rightness of an action are now not based solely on the self, but also on the significant others and society as a whole.



7- to 11-year-olds have lots of questions.

PROGRAM TIPS FOR 7- TO 11-YEAR-OLDS

- Activities should involve direct experience with the resources.
- Facilitate whole group, partner, and individual exploration.
- Questions and inquiries are effective at helping guide discoveries.
- Use metaphors, analogies, and other cognitive descriptors to help kids understand difficult concepts.
- Behavioral requests and rules can be understandably discussed.
- Hikes can be longer (approximately 1/2-1 mile).
- Help them name and categorize items and relationships.
- Children are exuberant at this level of development; tap into their energy with thematic games, songs, and actions to perform.
- Kids like to “help” and will even compete for your attention. Assign roles to your “helpers” to keep them engaged.

Ages 12-14

Guiding the discovery on their own, with your help.

By age 12, children typically do not like to be called children. Kids in early adolescence can mentally manipulate hypothetical situations and time relationships, and can conduct inductive and deductive logic. They are aware of social norms and expectations and are painfully aware of their own physical appearance.

In this stage of cognitive development, children can think systematically about logical relationships that are not necessarily physically present. In addition, young teens can now understand something from a neutral third-person perspective or from the perspective of society as a whole. Discussions of global concepts and ideas now hold meaning.

When working with this age group, realize that for many of them their primary concern is their physical development. In this stage, they are acutely aware of themselves and everyone else in terms of physical appearance. It is important for them to feel safe and accepted by their peers. Provide challenges and opportunities to excel without putting anyone on the spot. Working in teams or groups or partnerships may create a more comfortable atmosphere. While some might be willing to stand up in front of others and perform on their own, let them volunteer for this, since most would prefer you didn't single them out. There is safety in numbers.

PROGRAM TIPS FOR 12- TO 14-YEAR-OLDS

- Discuss, debate, and allow them to express their own opinions.
- Let them take on adult roles.
- Engage their minds in “what if” scenarios. Their ability to reason, apply logic, and judge situations should be encouraged.
- Provide opportunities for them to guide the discovery, conversation, or direction of the program.
- Give them the tools to discover the answers (demonstrate how to use field guides, research techniques, keys, etc.).
- Encourage questions and discuss ways they can continue their involvement (participation in clubs is high at this level of development).
- Model desired behavior without telling them to do it. For example, students are more likely to pick up litter if they see you do it than if you ask/tell them to do it.

Teens and Young Adults

Forming values systems that last a lifetime.

By the middle and late teen years, growth is still occurring rapidly, acne may be a problem, and children are trying to reconcile who they are on the inside with who they appear to be on the outside. Some teens experience emotional ups and downs while others struggle with awkward physicality, both side effects of a quick-growing body.



Teens and 'tweens need adults who are positive role models.

This is when values are formed and may remain for a lifetime. Teens are examining good and evil and need to have positive relationships with adults during this time who can be friends and mentors. At this stage, children fully believe they are adults and interpreters should treat them as such while remembering that they are still youth with more development ahead.

■ ■ ■

When most people think of teenagers, they think "rebellion," "stress," and "turbulence." The truth is, however, that teenagers are often delightful people. They're idealistic. They're exuberant. They're creative. They have a lot of energy and drive. They see the world in a different way than adults do, and many have insightful perspectives. They are exploding into possibility—like a new star being born.

Peter L. Benson

■ ■ ■

Kids in their middle teen years are open to trying different hobbies and start to be interested in many things. This is a great opportunity for the interpreter, as teens may find that they can discover more about themselves through nature or learning about historic cultures. They may seem unstable at times, as they are exploring different points of view and trying on different identities. This is just part of searching for who they are in this world.

One technique that works well with this group is to give them your respect and trust from the start of the program while carefully setting the boundaries and expectations. You will find most groups meet or exceed your expectations. Though some teens may appear sullen or withdrawn, they are very

aware of your every action. Modeling behaviors such as picking up litter or the right way to hold an artifact will leave a lasting impression on them. They want to be shown the right way to do things.

Remember how you felt awkward at this age and wanted to look cool, like you knew it all, even though you were unsure of yourself. Be gentle and kind about incorrect answers by carefully thanking them for their input, highlighting any grains of truth and redirecting the question. Using humor and poking fun at yourself is a fun way to disarm teenagers. Giving time for independent activities for reflection and capturing their impressions in a logbook or on a specially designed journal can be highly effective with this group.

Another way to put them at ease and increase the likelihood of their full participation is to have specific programs for them without the direct involvement of their parents or teachers. If you give programs for teens and they do not appear to be enjoying themselves or will not actively participate, remember that teens can have tough outer shells and may still be getting the message. Before you drastically change your program, ask the participants after the program, away from their peers, what they enjoyed the most and to name one thing they learned from the program. You may be pleasantly surprised by what they are actually taking away from your program.

If your program is all day or continues over subsequent days, you might want to use an approach called “experiential learning” with this age group. Think about your park resources, themes, content standards, etc. and then ask yourself, “What experience could teens have in my park that would help them understand these concepts?” Try to create a program that contains the following elements:

1. Reflection, critical analysis and synthesis
2. Opportunities for students to take the initiative, make decisions, and be accountable for the results
3. Opportunities for students to engage intellectually, creatively, emotionally, socially, or physically
4. A designed learning experience that includes the possibility to learn from natural consequences, mistakes, and successes

■ ■ ■

Think of your content as gum and your students processing, practicing, and reflecting as the chewing. You want less gum and more chewing.

Jay Roberts

■ ■ ■

Here are some additional thoughts on communicating with this age group.

PROGRAM TIPS FOR TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS

- Treat them like adults, but also carefully set behavior expectations and boundary/time limits for exploration.
- Respect their fear of being put on the spot.
- Give them respect and responsibility.
- Provide open-ended discussion and problem-solving tasks.
- Role-playing debates are a fun way to engage their intellect and dramatic abilities.
- Make time to listen to them intently.
- Avoid lecturing.
- Avoid intensely direct eye contact.
- Give them a chance to share their ideas and discoveries with small groups of their peers.
- Take time to ask their feelings, opinions and thoughts.
- Involve them with thematic hands-on resource projects, such as planting, removing invasive species, etc.
- Invite them to volunteer in the park.
- Ask them about their hopes and aspirations for the future.
- Ask them about their special talents.
- Model the behaviors you want them to use.
- Use norms (*Module 3—Communication*) to assure their compliance with park rules.
- Be yourself and let your life show through your teaching.

Special Needs

Some of the children attending your program may have visual, mental, mobility, learning, or hearing impairments. As with all visitors with disabilities, these kids have the right to be able to attend, with minimal alteration, any programs being offered. The guide *All Visitors Welcome* recommends that we “focus on what these children can do rather than what they cannot, and how you can adapt your program to meet their special needs” (p. 31). *All Visitors Welcome* and the *Junior Ranger Program Handbook* both include many helpful pointers for working with visitors with various disabilities. Do not assume you know how to accommodate special-needs children. Ask the teacher ahead of time, or ask older children directly what they want to do and how you can help them do it. Let them guide you. As always, include several different kinds of stimuli (visual, auditory, tactile, etc.) to increase your success.

Non-English speaking children also introduce some interesting challenges. Many of the techniques listed below will assist in working with this special needs group as well. In addition, refer to *Module 6—Talks* for more tips on working with non-English speaking visitors. Engaging visitors in the resource, using props like photos, pelts and historical items, and guiding exploration are all useful techniques.

PROGRAM TIPS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

- Find out about special needs from the teacher in advance.
- Allow the child with a disability to provide input on what is necessary to accommodate him or her.
- Engage as many senses as possible.
- Describe objects, and if possible, provide opportunities to touch them.
- Face the audience and speak clearly.
- Offer assistance, but do not automatically give it.
- Be aware of any special facilities or assistance (listening devices, language interpreters, etc.) available in your park.
- Be respectful, friendly, and open.
- Do not give too much special attention to any single child.
- Be flexible and adaptable to needs.

Adapted from the Junior Ranger Handbook, CSP



Working with children reminds us that interpretation is about connecting to beauty, mystery, and wonder.

■ ■ ■

If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder...he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in.

Rachel Carson

■ ■ ■

9.5 MECHANICS

SAFETY FIRST

As the interpreter, you will be responsible for the safety of your group. This may mean anything from counting your group and not losing anyone, to calling 911, or providing first response if that is part of your training and job classification.

Tips for Safe Programs

- Keep group size small (no more than 15). This helps you maintain control and protect the children from the actions of themselves or others. If you must work with a larger group, have the teacher take half on a self-guided activity (then switch) or enlist docents to assist you.
- Establish rules and expectations for behavior with the parents and with the kids.
- Talk to children about dangers you may encounter (poison oak, etc.) at the beginning of the program and reduce fears.
- Know where the parents will be during the program and what the protocol is for dealing with an injury.
- Be sure you always have a means of contacting other staff to help in the event of an emergency.
- Check in with the kids; ask them how they are doing. Many children may never have been in a natural or cultural resource park before, and basic fears can be strong.

HAVE FUN!

Remember what it was like to play, get dirty, and touch the ground? Children will learn more, accept more, and remember more if you play, laugh, and enjoy the experience **with** them. Kids who have never interacted with natural and cultural resources before will look to you for cues on how to respond. Dive into it! The best technique is to have fun. What **you** love, enjoy, and get excited by, kids will too. When your program is fun, the kids will be fully engaged and behavioral problems will be at a minimum.

■ ■ ■
*“...enthusiasm is contagious,
and that...is perhaps your
greatest asset as an interpreter.”*

Joseph Cornell

■ ■ ■

MANAGE BEHAVIOR

There is a fine line between allowing children to explore and discover something for themselves and letting them run wild and out of control. The trick is to find that line and walk it like a tightrope. Establish parameters for behavior early, and allow children to expend some of their energy at the start of a program. Specific techniques for controlling behavior vary depending on the developmental level, the group's structure, the environment, distractions, and the presence or absence of other adults.

One technique that teachers (and interpreters) use to manage behavior is to put it “on cue.” A behavior cue is when you do or say something and the children have a verbal or physical response that they must give. Those of you who were scouts will still remember the cue for silence (two fingers in the air.) For young children, you might teach the group to respond when you make your hands into rabbit ears and say “rabbit ears!” The children must respond by putting their hands on their heads, making rabbit ears, and showing that they are ready to listen. (Nose wiggling is optional.)

Be sure that you make all the children comply with the behavioral cue before you move on to the next topic, activity, etc. You are the leader, but they will exert considerable social pressure on each other to comply. Select or develop specific behavior cues depending on the subject matter, group structure, etc. Here is a list of attention getters that have worked for elementary school students. How could you adapt them for your park setting? You can also ask teachers, seasoned interpreters, colleagues and peers what they use. Experiment!



Let the kids know how you expect them to behave at the beginning of your program.

MORE BEHAVIOR CUES AND ATTENTION GETTERS

LEADER

STUDENTS

“All Set”

“You Bet”

Say, “Clap Once” pause, “Clap Twice” pause, “Clap three times” etc.

Students respond with claps.

“One two three, eyes on me”

“One two, eyes on you”

Use a bell, duck call, drum, rain stick, etc.

When students hear your sound, they stop, look and listen.

“Give me five” (Hold hand in the air)

Students hold hand in the air. Five fingers represent “Stop And Look At Me”

“If you can hear my voice, pat your head...if you can hear my voice, flap your wings...” etc.

Students will notice others responding with actions and will want to “play” too.

Secret Clap: leader claps a special pattern

Class repeats special pattern when they hear it.

“Shark Bait”

Students hold out arms like a giant jaw and clap together

“Who lives in a pineapple under the sea”

“Sponge Bob Square Pants!”

“Looking for gold...”

“Eureka!”

Tips for managing behavior

- Outline expectations and consequences at the start of the program.
- Establish a behavior cue early on in your program.
- Be consistent in behavioral requests and enforcements.
- Do not yell. This signifies that you have lost control.
- Use proximity. Put a problem child next to you.
- Disapproving “looks” are powerful tools, but only if you follow through.
- Delegate responsibility. Disruptive children make good “helpers.”
- Enlist others (parents, teachers, volunteers, etc.) to assist.
- If the problem persists, discuss it privately with the child. As with any visitor, identify the problem behavior, the negative impacts to the resource, to others, and to themselves from the behavior, and address how the situation can be fixed.
- Give the child time to comply. Do not expect immediate results.
- Praise and ignore. Often when you praise the child who is following your directions, the others will try to win your approval as well. Ignore behavior that is not ideal but is not threatening safety or the ability of the group to learn.

Keep it Short

As we learned in *Module 3—Communication*, adults have short attention spans. However, they are capable of making themselves focus for longer periods of time. Children, on the other hand, are more natural in their responses to things. If they are bored, they will let you know! Fidgeting, talking, moving around, and generally not paying attention are all

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Children are naturally drawn to learning if you can keep the spirit of the occasion happy and enthusiastic.

Joseph Cornell

■ ■ ■

classic signals indicating you have lost their interest. Attention spans are very short for kids and “most of them have not learned to be politely quiet when the span is exceeded” (Lewis, 1980, p. 126).

Depending on the developmental level, attention spans may range from a few seconds to about 10 minutes. Programs can and should

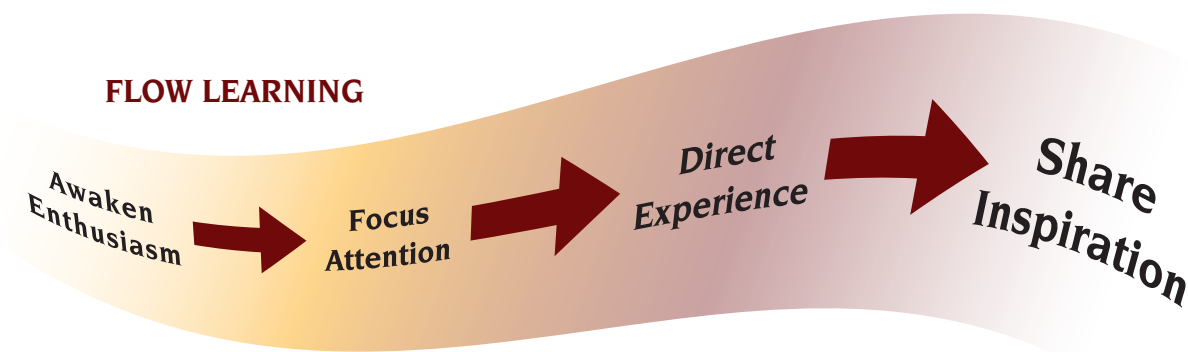
be conducted for longer periods of time than this, but to be successful the interpreter needs to shift focus, location, subject matter, and activity often. For example, one great technique to use when working with kids is to move their physical location frequently.

Having them stand up, sit down, face the other way, etc., is effective in regaining interest and focus. They need to move; use it to your advantage.

The most successful programs keep children physically **and** mentally engaged. Keep information in “sound bites.” Children cannot listen for extended periods of time. Weave information with activities and games to gain a child’s interest. Don’t be boring!

Flow Learning

Another successful approach for conducting programs with children developed by Joseph Cornell is called “flow learning.” Cornell created flow learning from four distinct stages that mirror the natural process of learning and outlines the approach in detail in his book, *Sharing the Joy of Nature*. Stage 1 is awaken enthusiasm; Stage 2 is called focus attention; Stage 3 is direct experience; and Stage 4 is share inspiration. Each of the four stages has accompanying activities that help maximize that particular stage of learning. Cornell has published several outstanding books that provide activities you can use to enrich your nature programs with all audiences.



OTHER RESOURCES

There are lots of resources available to help you design your children’s program. *Project Learning Tree*, *Project Wild*, *Project Wild Aquatic*, and *Project Wet* provide guidelines, curriculum, activities, and learning opportunities designed to encourage children to think and learn about the natural world. You can access these resources through workshops offered throughout the state that are available to everyone. In addition, books, websites, and other curriculum guides are readily available to help you develop your interpretive programs. Some may have been developed specifically for your park.

One of the best ways to make your programs relevant to kids is to know what is popular in their culture. See current kid’s movies, learn the latest “texting” vocabulary, know their expressions and read their books. For example, if you know a current kid’s movie

addresses the topic of climate change and species survival, you can use that to relate it to your program. Leading a nature walk for young children? Turn it into an adventure like Dora the Explorer, with your map and backpack as props.

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Every child should have mud pies, grasshoppers, water bugs, tadpoles, frogs, mud turtles, elderberries, wild strawberries, acorns, chestnuts, trees to climb. Brooks to wade, water lilies, woodchucks, bats, bees, butterflies, various animals to pet, hay fields, pine cones, rocks to roll, sand, snakes, huckleberries and hornets. And any child who has been deprived of these has been deprived of the best part of education.

Luther Burbank

■ ■ ■

There is no formula or guide for working with children that can replace your own natural enthusiasm, creativity, and passion. There is no substitute for you. Your love of the subject and of your audience is the greatest asset you have. Working with children presents wonderful opportunities to share your inspiration, knowledge, and understanding of natural and cultural resources. By engaging them and their families, you are developing park stewards who will share your desire to preserve and protect our heritage.



Help all children understand, appreciate, and enjoy their state parks.

WHAT'S AHEAD?

Now that we have reviewed many of the basic types of formal interpretive programs, let us turn to the most common type of informal interpretation in the parks—roving interpretation. It involves taking our techniques, skills, and interpretive messages to the visitors—on the trails, in the visitor centers, in the campgrounds, or wherever they might be. The next module will provide guidelines for conducting successful roving interpretation.

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Module 9
KIDS

SELF ASSESSMENT

Answer each question in the section below before reviewing the material in *Module 9—Kids*. The answers are not provided. Check your answers with your colleagues and as you read *Module 9—Kids* items from the self assessment may be reviewed and discussed in class.

- 1) What was your earliest park use memory? Do you think today's children are getting similar experiences?

- 2) Can you name three things you learned directly from nature as a child?

- 1.

- 2.

- 3.

- 3) What would be a direct benefit of today's children getting to experience more natural or historic site settings?

3) How is planning a children's program similar to planning an interpretive talk or walk?
How is it different?

4) Name three special children's programs conducted statewide in California State Parks.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

5) What do you think might be your biggest personal challenge when designing or presenting a children's program?

6) Programs conducted with formal school groups should be based on (Circle all that apply.)

- a) School curriculum
- b) Content standards
- c) Park themes
- d) Interpreter interest

7) List three things you should do when leading a walk with young children aged two to six.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

8) Programs conducted with children 7 to 11 years old should (Circle all that apply.)

a) Involve questions and inquiries

b) Be detailed and thorough

c) Include written exercises

d) Practice guided discovery

9) Programs for children 12 to 14 years old should (Circle all that apply.)

a) Involve debates and discussions

b) Allow them to guide the discovery

c) Promote individual performances in front of the group

d) Encourage self-directed exploration

10) Name three techniques for including a child with mobility impairments in your program.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

11) You should not get down on the physical level of the kids during a talk. (Explain your answer.)

- a) True
- b) False

12) What does it mean to “put behavior on cue?”

13) When leading kids on a hike, list three ways to ensure the safety of your group.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

14) Which is more important: (choose one and explain your answer)

- 1. That children learn science or history on your walk.
- 2. That children have an enjoyable experience in a park setting.

15) Why are teenagers an important audience for state park interpretive programs?

16) Describe two ways to manage disruptive behavior during a children's program.

1. _____

2. _____

Now that you have completed the self assessment questions, review the material in *Module 9—Kids* to confirm your answers. After reading the module, move on to the workbook learning activities, which will assist you in developing your skills.

WORKBOOK LEARNING ACTIVITIES

To help you review and apply the material covered in *Module 9—Kids*, a selection of review questions and/or activities is provided. Again, no answers are included. Use the material from the module, outside sources, and your colleagues to help you complete the activities and answer the questions. There may be more than one right answer. Use the questions and activities to generate discussion about the material. Be prepared to discuss, perform, or demonstrate your answers in class.

- 1) Interpreting to a group of 7-year-old children, how would you:

Explain tides using something familiar to inner city kids.

Teach about the water cycle using kinesthetic learning?

Explain why the tribe is NOT extinct, even though the members no longer live in their former dwellings.

Use something familiar to them to explain why the statue represents history.

Explain why they should not pick the endangered flowers.

3) You are conducting a program with a group of 14-year-old children with their teacher present. One of them has been continuously disrupting the program. You have tried making him your helper, keeping him next to you, and asking him to stop. You are still ½ mile from the end of your nature walk. What are three things you could do to manage the situation?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Take it to YOUR Park

Answer each question with the information specific to your park. You will have to conduct some research in order to answer each question. Use the answers as a guide for beginning your career in California State Parks.

KIDS

Park name: _____

- 1) What types of children's programs are conducted in your park? For what ages?

- 2) If Junior Ranger, Junior Lifeguard, and/or Litter Getter programs are not offered, why not? If yes, how successful are they?

- 3) What schools near your park visit the park routinely? Which schools do not visit? Why not?

Module 10
ROVING



We build too many walls and not enough bridges.

Sir Isaac Newton

Module 10

ROVING

What is it?

Planned, personalized communication with the visitor in an informal setting

Why do we do it?

To personally reach visitors who might not otherwise receive interpretive messages

How do we do it?

Informally contact visitors at the resource and provide an opportunity for communication

INTRODUCTION

Roving interpretation is personalized, face-to-face communication where the audience has chosen the venue, the resource is the stage, and the interpreter is the catalyst for knowledge. Roving provides the means to protect the resource and the visitor, and to ensure a quality recreational experience. This opportunity to chat with visitors may be one of the finest opportunities for you to represent CSP in a positive manner.

Roving interpretation may seem spontaneous, impromptu, unstructured, ad-lib, or unprepared, but this is not the case. When done properly, it is well organized and planned.

Getting to talk to a ranger in person, the perceived authority of the resource, is an invaluable bonus for the visitor. The public's perception of the interpreter roaming at leisure through the park and chatting with visitors is their dream, and is often the iconic perception of what rangers do.

For the interpreter, roving interpretation, including incidental visitor contacts, will far outnumber opportunities to reach people through more formal presentations. These contacts are often the only chance you have to interpret to park visitors, influence behavior, and gain support for park resources. With only about 20 percent of park visitors attending our formal programs, roving is a great opportunity to reach the majority of our visiting public (Knudson, Cable, and Beck, 1995). Roving is the quintessential role for an interpreter and is a lot of fun!

■ ■ ■
*...taking the information station
 to where the people are.*

Grant Sharpe

■ ■ ■

In this module, we will explore the benefits and techniques of roving; how to do it, when and when not to do it, and why.

10.1 ROVING FOR SUCCESS

There are multiple reasons for and benefits of roving. Let us explore just a few of the more common ones.

CARPE DIEM!



Carpe diem!

Many times there are seasonal events, phenomena, or special occurrences that take place in the park. Roving provides a perfect opportunity to capitalize on these events. Sharing a fleeting event with another person can be extremely gratifying. This type of sharing and learning can be illuminating and even life changing for you and the visitors. Many visitors who would never attend formal programs are very receptive to these more spontaneous discovery opportunities.

Some roving will be truly spur-of-the-moment, but most of it, while it may seem spontaneous to the visitor, is actually recognized and planned well in advance by the good interpreter. You may not be able to predict rainbows, but you are aware of the local weather patterns; the advantage is yours. Likewise, you may not be able to predict where the gray whale will breach, or even if one will be sighted, but you know their migration patterns and when and where to look. Other seasonal or periodic events—like cactus in bloom, grunion running, a red tide at night, and waterfalls in their full glory—may be easier to predict.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE MOMENT

- Flowers blooming
 - An animal's birth
 - Rainbows
 - Cloud patterns
 - An insect
 - Bird nests
 - Meteor showers
 - Sunset
 - Whale passing by
-

VISITOR SAFETY

You can also use roving interpretation to inform visitors of safety issues. By stationing yourself in locations where there are potential hazards (steep cliffs, strong tides, poisonous plants, etc.), you can make the roving effective as an interpretive tool and address safety concerns.



PROTECTING RESOURCES

You can reduce many underlying management issues through the use of roving interpretation. Often, visitors violate park rules because they are unfamiliar with them. The roving interpreter, who may be the first to see the problem brewing, can rectify a transgression long before it becomes a problem.

Direct person-to-person communication can explain management issues and educate the visitor to more fully appreciate the need to comply. Think of all the rules to which the visitor must adhere. Rules can become the instruments of mistrust and elitism if not explained and personalized by the interpreter. It is easier to gain compliance with understanding than with enforcement. That is a role of the interpreter.

In addition to providing information to visitors, interpretation can help with security and protection of the park resources. To the visitor, rules prohibiting feeding the squirrels, dogs off-leash, and picking flowers may seem like annoying aggravations. When the interpreter has an opportunity to explain the reasons behind the rules, not only will visitors more readily comply, but the park may have gained a supporter.

Peace officers have the responsibility to deal with illegal activities. Laws and regulations guide you in the appropriate action to take. How any good interpreter handles a given situation is ultimately up to the interpreter, of course, but good judgment, good listening skills, and an interpretive approach may best serve all involved.

HANDLING THE VISITOR FROM #@*!

- Listen carefully.
 - Think before you act.
 - Maintain control.
 - Analyze the situation.
 - Take appropriate action.
 - Remember that you are a public servant.
 - Do not get emotionally involved
-

ADVERTISING FORMAL PROGRAMS

Roving through the campground, trails and throughout the park before your program is an excellent way to invite visitors to attend and to gain valuable insight about the audience. Reach those who may have missed the bulletin boards or other announcements by roving.

Generally, visitors are on vacation and do not want to watch the clock. Your friendly reminder of upcoming activities allows them time to plan to attend if they choose. Additionally, you can provide them with a cognitive map of the activity, including the time, place, and topic. You may also offer useful suggestions, such as bringing their own water, wearing appropriate clothing, or carrying a flashlight. You can learn much more about your visitors by walking through your campground than by driving through it.

The more welcome you make the visitors feel, the more likely they are to attend (Knudson, et al., 1995). Roving provides a wonderful opportunity to reach visitors in the field and increase participation in more formal programs.



Extending a personal invitation is the most direct method.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

One of the clear benefits of roving is public relations. As stated earlier, roving is pure joy for interpreters because they get to meander through the park enjoying the resource and mingling with visitors. It is an opportunity for the public, our constituents, to talk with the person they view as the most knowledgeable about the area. Do not disappoint them; be professional in every respect.

You represent CSP. Your appearance, knowledge, demeanor, approachability, and so many other factors go into making a good impression. Be prepared, and set a high standard of excellence.

LEARNING ABOUT YOUR VISITORS

Visitors to the parks are a valuable resource, but do we truly know and understand their wants and needs? How often during the day do we get to chat with a visitor? Certainly not as often as we would like! Roving through an area and talking with visitors helps us personalize our information delivery. This interchange of dialogue is beneficial for both the visitor and the interpreter. The stalwart tenet for good program delivery is to know your audience. What better way to gain this knowledge than to directly observe and talk with the visitors?

Once you've become familiar with the interests, concerns, typical backgrounds, and characteristics of your visitors, you can incorporate this knowledge into your formal programs. It will also be valuable when creating approaches to management issues. Although the individuals you talk with while roving may not be the same people who attend your more formal walk or campfire program, they certainly offer insight into the wants and needs of the park visitor. Use this valuable knowledge to improve your program delivery.

We have discussed some of the more obvious benefits of roving, including public relations, providing information and education, getting to know your visitor and protecting the resource. Other less obvious benefits include collecting anecdotal information about use patterns, gaining feedback for better park management, developing your communication skills in a non-enforcement/non-bureaucratic setting, allowing you to refresh your sanity, reconnecting with reality and making lifetime memories.

■ ■ ■
*What is required is sight
 and insight—then you
 might add one more: excite.*

Robert Frost

■ ■ ■

WHAT GOOD IS ROVING?

- Builds a sense of ownership through interaction.
 - Gives a personal connection to the place.
 - Serves as a remembrance with take-home value.
 - Seizes the moment (carpe diem!).
 - Protects the resource.
 - Advertises events and activities.
 - Promotes public relations.
 - Allows us to get to know our visitors.
 - Connects management with the visitor.
 - Reconnects staff to the resource.
-

10.2 PLANNING

Roving is a planned communication opportunity with visitors in the field. There are several planning elements to roving: location, visitors' needs and interests and interpretive tools/references.

LOCATION

To be a good rover, one needs to know a lot about the area. There is being familiar with the park, and then there is really knowing it. Several visits to a location will begin to open your senses to all of its details—just think of all the discoveries you make each time you return. Now, translate that knowledge of the location by helping the visitor make these and similar discoveries.

Look at a location from various perspectives: the visitor, the interpreter, and the manager. Ask yourself, what is it that draws visitors? If you are new to the park, the first time you walk through the area take notes on what catches your eye. What questions do you have as you walk through? Your observations are probably very similar to those of the visitors.

Examine the resource through the eyes of a manager. Explore how this specific location is part of the overall picture, down to the smallest details. Not only do you need to know about those features that can be viewed or experienced, you should also know about the culture, history, and unseen background aspects. What are the critical issues in your park for managers?



Every park has those places where visitors gather and linger.

And finally, look at the resource through the eyes of an interpreter. What is special about this place? Why was it made a park? Develop a repertoire of mini-stories that you can share. Do your homework. Visit the site often. If you have an “off season” when the location is not quite as busy, this might be an ideal time for you to spend some time doing research.

VISITORS' NEEDS

Experience is a good teacher when it comes to anticipating the needs and interests of the visitor. Some aspects of a location will just naturally be of interest to every visitor while others may be hidden. Address Maslow's human and safety needs first, and then start building on each public interaction, so you can predict what you will be asked next.

■ ■ ■

He who asks is a fool for five minutes, but he who does not ask remains a fool forever.

Chinese proverb

■ ■ ■

to this location. If it is the really big—or the beautiful—or the best—then anticipate what it is the visitor needs to better understand and experience the feature.

There is no such thing as a stupid question. No matter how many times you have heard a visitor's question, answer it as if it is the first time you have ever heard it. Be sincere. It may lead to management change, such as addition of a sign, or clarifications on a map.

You have selected this location to rove because it attracts visitors. Ask yourself what it is that brings them

to this location. If it is the really big—or the beautiful—or the best—then anticipate what it is the visitor needs to better understand and experience the feature.

to this location. If it is the really big—or the beautiful—or the best—then anticipate what it is the visitor needs to better understand and experience the feature.



KIT BAG

Once you have identified the physical location, the target audience and know what it is you want to accomplish, there is a host of items that might be included in a kit bag of props and aids to help you achieve your goals. Each interpreter and location will dictate what works best.

Consider using an all-purpose day pack or messenger bag for general use, and supplement it with special items for different locations, events, or audiences. Your park might have a vista location

What kinds of hand-held items will help you tell your park's story?

where you want to add a spotting scope, photos, and maps to view points of interest. Another rove might be near a creek where you would want a small collection net, specimen tray, and bug boxes. Tailor your pack with useful items for each location. Aside from the custom items for each location, here are some general suggestions for almost every pack.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

- Hand lens and magnifying glass
 - Field guides and local keys
 - Small plastic bags and bottles
 - Pocket mirror
 - Notebook
 - Map and park information
 - Knife
 - And then there are always binoculars, camera, litter bags, small first aid kit, etc.
-

10.3 MECHANICS

Your uniform is a magnet for most visitors. Add a prop or two, a cheerful smile, and a welcoming comment, and you are well on your way to success. Greeting visitors in the manner in which you welcome friends to your home will almost always work.

THAT INITIAL CONTACT

- Smile!
 - Be professional in dress and demeanor.
 - Use a friendly greeting.
 - The ice breaker should make you approachable, not pushy.
 - Avoid yes or no questions and answers.
 - Personalize your contact.
 - Props can draw the visitor into discussions and add interest.
 - Binoculars or a spotting scope are a subtle way to announce that there is something interesting to see.
 - Be visible and capitalize on visitor curiosity.
-

WHEN

Roving should be scheduled. This is not to say that informal, face-to-face interaction with visitors should not be a normal activity, but the good interpreter should allocate a specific time to rove.

Roving interpretation should have a focused agenda that best serves the goals and objectives of the park and the interests of the visitors. Scheduled roving ensures that you will actually make the contacts and gives added emphasis that you will spend time one-on-one with the visitor. It also lets other staff know where you will be at a certain time. In some instances, you may even want to advertise to the public that a ranger will be roving in a specific area at a certain time.

■ ■ ■

*The presence of the...person in uniform
is all that is necessary to attract visitors.*

Grant Sharpe

■ ■ ■

WHERE

Webster's New World Dictionary defines rove as "to roam; to wander about; to go from place to place." In our case as well, roving means moving from location to location. Roving is a very effective method to meet large numbers of visitors, especially if you select a location that ordinarily has a high concentration of users. Scenic overlooks, wildlife viewing areas, visitor use facilities, and popular trails are all locations to consider. Do not overlook other special locations your park offers where visitors gather. Use your imagination!

Remember the benefits of roving—protecting the resource, increasing visitor enjoyment, capitalizing on special occurrences, and educating the public—that we discussed at the beginning of the module? Now place yourself where you can best achieve these results.



At Ocotillo Wells SVRA, interpreters set up a portable station and let the visitors "rove" to them.

HOW

Reading the Audience

Be observant when approaching the visitor; some people just want to enjoy the experience without well-meant distractions. You do not want to disrupt the solitude of the moment or the group camaraderie they are enjoying. Generally, the situation will be obvious. Do not force yourself on anyone; know when to approach and when to leave. Just remember to watch for the warning signals and be courteous.

NOT EVERYONE WANTS YOUR INPUT

- Consider not contacting visitors when:
 - They are eating or involved in other activities.
 - They don't make eye contact or look away as you approach.
 - They are obviously in a hurry and don't have time to chat.
 - Their focus is elsewhere.
 - They are already enjoying an activity.
 - Bottom line—respect privacy.
-

Making Meaningful Contacts

On every contact, try to personalize your approach. Read the clues of the person and the situation. Look for little things. What is the visitor wearing? Does his or her tee shirt or hat have any slogans? Is he or she carrying a camera, fishing pole, or skis? Are there any indications of his or her home state or country such as vehicle license plates or an accent? Be observant so you can customize the interaction to the individual. Do not forget to watch for any signals that indicate the contact should end.

WHEN TO LEAVE—WARNING SIGNALS

- Nonverbal body language—indications from the face, hands/feet, and posture
 - Conversation lags or strays off the subject
 - Generally don't stay more than 5-10 minutes.
 - Abrupt verbal answers
 - Disengaging
-

Once you've put all these techniques to use, you may be so popular that visitors might want you to be their personal guide. How do you end a contact when a visitor wants to keep you there forever? With skill and tactful persuasion! Remind them that you have many visitors to serve and a short time to meet everyone. Thank them for their interest and attention and direct them to a trail or other feature they might enjoy.

10.4 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

ADMINISTRATION

Keep track of the number of interpretive contacts you make. Over time, this will help you and other staff decide when and where to rove by discovering those places that have the greatest potential to connect with visitors. Your numbers can help identify use patterns, traffic patterns, seasonal use and other data that will be useful to your managers and resource specialists.

SUPER INTERPRETER!

Do you have what it takes to be a “super interpreter”? How many of these skills do you exhibit? How about at the end of the season?



- Adaptability of a chameleon
- Vision of an eagle
- Stamina of a bill collector
- Skin of a rhino
- Wits of a fox
- Courage of a lion
- Innocence of a lamb
- Silence of a sphinx
- Tenacity of a bulldog
- Determination of a Brooklyn cab driver
- Complacency of a camel
- Diligence of a beaver
- Nerves of a cow
- Curiosity of a cat
- Friendliness of a child
- Energy of a pup
- Wisdom of an owl

Adapted from NPS training outline

WHAT'S AHEAD?

As we have learned throughout this module, roving interpretation is informal in that you are the primary interpretive tool and your venue is flexible. Let us now switch our attention to a much more formal approach—audiovisual presentations. Next in *Module 11—Audiovisual*, we will discuss audiovisual equipment and suggest some applications for outstanding presentations. Stay tuned!

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Module 10
ROVING

SELF ASSESSMENT

Answer each question in the section below before reviewing the material in *Module 10—Roving*. The answers are not provided. Check your answers with your colleagues and as you read *Module 10—Roving*. Items from the self assessment may be reviewed and discussed in class.

1) What is roving?

2) What is the average percentage of park visitors that attend formal park programs?

- a) 20%
- b) 40%
- c) 60%
- d) 80%

3) Name four benefits of conducting roving interpretation.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

4) Which of the following are recommended methods of interpretively handling disruptive visitors? (Circle all that apply.)

- a) Listen to their concerns
- b) Do not get emotionally involved
- c) Raise your voice to get attention
- d) Forcefully state the rules

5) When approaching visitors, which of the following practices is/are not recommended? (Circle all that apply.)

- a) Personalize the contact
- b) Use props
- c) Use yes/no questions
- d) Discreetly approach visitors

6) Name three appropriate and constructive locations to rove.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

7) Roving times and locations should be scheduled ahead of time.

a) True

b) False

8) When should you avoid approaching visitors? (Circle all that apply.)

a) Never

b) They are eating

c) They are involved in an activity

d) They look away as you approach

9) Describe two ways of making meaningful personal contact with visitors you do not know.

1. _____

2. _____

10) When making initial contact with visitors, what are four techniques of promoting a positive meeting?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

11) How do you determine when it is time to end a personal contact?

Now that you have completed the self-assessment questions, review the material in *Module 10—Roving* to confirm your answers. After reading the module, move on to the workbook learning activities, which will assist you in developing your skills.

WORKBOOK LEARNING ACTIVITIES

To help you review and apply the material covered in *Module 10—Roving*, a selection of review questions and/or activities is provided. Again, no answers are included. Use the material from the module, outside sources, and your colleagues to help you complete the activities and answer the questions. There may be more than one right answer. Use the questions and activities to generate discussion about the material. Be prepared to discuss, perform, or demonstrate your answers in class.

- 1) As you rove through a campground, an angry visitor approaches you. He is yelling and is very upset about the group camped next to him. He complains that they are loud and have a dog that has not stopped barking. Describe how you should handle the situation.

- 2) What do you think is the greatest benefit of roving? Why?

3) What steps should you take to ensure your safety when roving in the park?

4) List some items that would be beneficial to carry with you at all times when roving.

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Take it to YOUR Park

Answer each question with the information specific to your park. You will have to conduct some research in order to answer each question. Use the answers as a guide for enhancing your career in California State Parks.

ROVING

Park name: _____

- 1) Based on your research, what areas in the park are prime for conducting roving interpretation?

- 2) Are there any special events or seasonal opportunities that occur in your park where roving would be beneficial?

- 3) In terms of resource protection or visitor safety, which locations in the park would benefit the most from an on-site roving presence?

Module 11
AUDIOVISUAL



Make things as simple as possible, but not simpler.

Albert Einstein

Module 11

AUDIOVISUAL

What is it?

Bringing images and sound to interpretive programs

Why do we do it?

To create powerful connections between our audiences and our subjects

How do we do it?

By carefully selecting when and how to add images or sounds to our interpretive talks and by mastering the use of our equipment

INTRODUCTION

Audio-visual (A/V) presentations range from the very basic, such as using a flip chart to much more sophisticated computer- and projector-integrated presentations. This module will provide a brief overview of the various tools that might help you to provide personal interpretive programs that appeal to the eyes and ears of your target audience. We will discuss their advantages, disadvantages, proper operation, care and maintenance, and some basic principles of photography.

In our fast-paced world, technology seems to be driving much of what our visitors have come to expect. But do not be misled, the program styles that Enos Mills, John Muir, and Galen Clark offered over a hundred years ago are still very well received and appreciated. The same principles of interpretive delivery apply, but with A/V you can augment your presentation to make it more dynamic and interesting for our present day visitors. Over 45 years ago Tilden said, “Gadgets don’t supplant the personal contact; we accept them as valuable alternatives and supplements.” (Tilden, 1967, p. 97).

While A/V equipment is designed to aid in presentations, it is not always appropriate. **Visual aids should supplement your thematic program and not become the driving force behind its creation.** As we discussed in *Module 6—Talks*, visual aids add to the program, but all programs should be able to stand alone. Before you incorporate A/V equipment, ask yourself if it contributes to the understanding of the theme. Do the “bells and whistles” support or detract from your message? There are some interpretive opportunities that are better met with a chipmunk finger puppet than with any sort of audiovisuals.

Once again, it is important to know the audience, have an appropriate theme, and employ the suitable techniques that help convey the purpose of the presentation. As is the case with any equipment, it is critical that you familiarize yourself with its proper setup and operation well in advance of your actual presentation. The more equipment you use, the greater the likelihood that something will go wrong. Your best defense is a thorough knowledge of your equipment.

With that in mind, while it is not the intent of this module to discuss specific brands and models of equipment, we will provide an overview of the currently available types of equipment and some applications in interpretive programming. Remember, the more technology you use in your presentation, the more care and time you will need to invest during the preparation stages. Now we will take a look at some types of A/V aids to interpretation.

11.1 EQUIPMENT

CAMERAS

The most underutilized piece of equipment in an interpreter's arsenal is the camera; we simply do not use our cameras enough. As an interpreter, you are in a unique position to capture special "interpretive" moments that you can share in the future. Experience and practice will make you less preoccupied with the mechanics of the camera and more



Get to know your camera so you can use it to its full capacity.

able to relate to the scene and the final picture. Experiment with the full range of controls offered by your camera, and you will soon become more comfortable with photography and more proficient at photo composition.

Phone cameras and compact digital cameras are relatively small and inexpensive. They offer point-and-shoot capability, making them extremely convenient while requiring less technical knowledge regarding focusing, exposure settings, lens choices, and shutter speeds. In addition, because they are lightweight and compact, they are easy to pick up at a moment's notice. All of these features assist in taking pictures, but good photographic skills are still required for the best results.

Photography

Producing quality photographs takes skill and practice. We encourage you to explore the discipline and the equipment options available. To improve your skills, take advantage of the hundreds of books and websites dedicated to photographic techniques. One of the surest ways to improve your photography skills is to practice. Keep a record of camera settings, weather, and other conditions under which each picture was taken. Soon you will learn what worked and what did not by seeing the picture itself and referring to the conditions under which it was taken. If you are planning to use your photo for park interpretation, **be sure to obtain a visual media consent form (DPR 993) from any recognizable people who appear in your pictures.** (See *Forms*).

Photo Editing

Have you ever been disappointed with a photo you carefully shot? The eye has a much greater tonal and focusing range than any camera. Our brains automatically compensate for exposure and color balance, but the camera does not. Many times, software can help improve photographs from digital cameras.

Adobe® Photoshop© is the industry standard for manipulating digital images, but it is expensive and not intuitive to use. Photoshop Elements© is a much less expensive and easy to use alternative that has the most commonly used functions in a more user-friendly interface.

Professionals often use other software such as Adobe Lightroom©, which is specifically designed for photographers and fairly simple to use. If you are seriously interested



Photos allow you to show visitors some things they might not be lucky enough to see themselves.

serves as an organizer also. Mac® users have iPhoto®, which is similar to Picasa in some ways, as well as Mac versions of popular software. **While software can make a good photo better, it can't make a bad picture into a good one.**

Some software allows you to work on a copy of your image. If not, make a copy yourself before you begin editing. Photo manipulation software makes permanent changes to pixels, with limited opportunities to “undo” your changes. Operations such as changing color balance or exposure should be done subtly.

Composition

The basic principles of composition are extremely important to achieve good photographs. Photographic composition is simply the selection and arrangement of subjects within the picture area. Become familiar with these rules of composition, and practice them until they become second nature to you.

in learning how to use Photoshop to full advantage, consider taking a class online or at a local community college.

Digital cameras almost always come with some basic editing software that allows you to shift color balance, exposure, and crop images, and there are free alternatives as well. Picasa© by Google® is a downloadable software package that allows basic editing functions and

Of course you are probably shooting an oblong image, not a square one. The rule is the same regardless of whether you are shooting a horizontal or a vertical scene. And watch that horizon! Keep it level across the image.

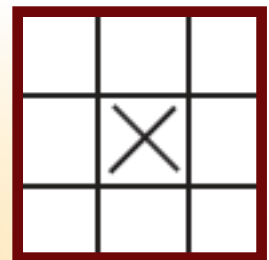
It is very common to photograph a scene where you can see everything clearly only to have some areas of the photo come out much too dark or too light in the image. Whenever you can, avoid scenes that have dark areas and light areas with important details in both. If your subject is in the shade and your background is in bright sun (or vice versa) remember your camera will probably capture one or the other well, but not both.

COMPOSITION TIPS

- **Have a strong center of interest.**
- **Find the best camera angle.**
- **Frame your object.**
- **Fill the frame.**
- **Use the “rule of thirds” for subject location.**

Rule of Thirds:

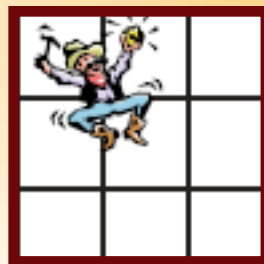
A picture is more interesting if the main subject is not centered. Arrange it a bit off center. Compose your picture as if there was a tic-tac-toe grid over the image; each spot where the lines intersect is ideal for placing a subject. Additionally, have the subject “look” into the photo.



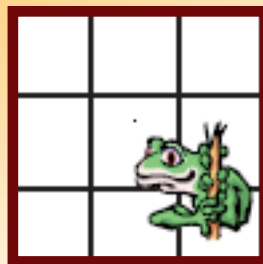
Avoid Center



Lower Left



Upper Left



Lower Right



Upper Right

Lens

One of the most critical components of any camera is the lens. Since the lens plays a vital role in determining what the camera can do for you, knowing how to take full advantage of the various types of camera lenses pays dividends in terms of better, more exciting pictures. The ability to accept interchangeable lenses is a feature that greatly adds to the camera's versatility, although most moderately priced digital cameras do not offer this feature.

PRIMARY TYPES OF LENSES

- **Normal:** approximates what our eye sees
 - **Telephoto:** tight focus on distant objects
 - **Wide Angle:** broader than our eye sees
 - **Macro:** extremely close views
 - **Zoom:** lenses with variable lengths
-

There are also specialty lenses that are rarely encountered, such as tilt shift lenses, primarily used for architectural work. For the cost conscious, lens attachments such as extension tubes provide added features to stock lenses, but generally do not allow for the highest quality images. Your judgment will help you determine if these photos work in your program.

In 35mm photography, a 50-55mm lens is regarded as “normal.” Longer lenses (>55 mm) are telephoto lenses, and shorter lenses (<50 mm) are wide-angle lenses. These numbers are based on the proportional size of the image that strikes the 35mm film frame.

With digital cameras, the lens lengths of “normal,” “telephoto” and “wide-angle” have shifted because different cameras have different-sized image sensors. There is no number rule like there is for film cameras. Professional level cameras have larger image sensors than consumer level cameras, so a “normal” lens for a professional camera is longer than a “normal” lens for a consumer DSLR (Digital Single Lens Reflex) camera, and even shorter for a point-and-shoot camera. Don’t get confused by this. What’s important for you is the image you see in your particular camera’s viewfinder.

Most cameras today, from point-and-shoot to professional models, come with or accommodate zoom lenses, and fixed length lenses are less commonly used. You may see cameras advertised with “digital zoom” with incredible numbers, sometimes up to 300x zoom. If you’re buying a camera, ignore this. Digital zoom is an electronic magnification technique, where individual pixels are magnified, and images quickly begin to look blocky when enlarged. If you’re shooting with a camera with digital zoom, try not to use it. In many cases you can enlarge digital images for better quality with photo editing software.

Shooting Small Objects

You may want to show your audience small objects, perhaps a historical artifact or an insect. Some objects are just too fragile or too expensive to pass around, or perhaps you want to pass one around while you show a large photo of it on a screen.

Be particularly aware of your background when you shoot a close-up. While it will probably work to shoot a close-up of a shell right on the beach or a pinecone on the forest

floor, there are other times when a neutral background is the best way to highlight the object. Look in almost any catalog and you will see the merchandise floating on the page, seemingly without any background. A copy stand works well for flat items. But what if you want to shoot a vase or a flower stamen or something that stands upright? Professional photographers have elaborate setups to provide seamless backgrounds. You can achieve similar results with a sheet of flip chart paper and a little masking tape covering the table and part of the wall behind it. Visit your local art store for large sheets of paper in another colors. A black background may provide a particularly dramatic effect; just as a white background on a printed page gives the impression of floating with no background, a black background gives the same effect when you project the image. Some photographers carry a piece of black cloth in their camera bag to use as a makeshift background.

Image Resolution

When using a digital camera, it is important that you understand image resolution. Cameras are advertised as taking 10, 12, 15 and higher megapixel (Mp) images. A pixel (short for picture element) is a tiny, single point in a graphic image. **Imagine your photo is made up of thousands of dots of color. Each color dot is a pixel. When we speak of megapixels we are referring to how many million pixels are recorded in a single image.** Resolution is important, but there's much more to it.

Just how many megapixels do you need? It all depends on how you intend to use the image. When we are looking at a screen our eyes can see the picture correctly even if there are fewer dots of color spread over the space defining it. When that same picture is printed on paper with ink, we need more of the dots so that they are packed closer together before the image takes the correct shape. Here are some guidelines:

APPROPRIATE IMAGE USE		
TYPE OF USE	TOTAL # PIXELS (Mp = megapixels)	PIXELS PER INCH (PPI or DPI)
PowerPoint or web-based presentation	2 Mp	72-96
Brochure/print materials	5-6 Mp	150-250
Exhibit/banner	as large as possible	200+

These numbers are just approximations, of course. The “best” image resolution depends on the complexity of the subject matter, the number of different colors (and shades of colors), even the types of inks or dyes used in a physical reproduction.

Many photographers shoot at the highest resolution possible and then downsample (save the file in a version with fewer pixels) their work, depending on their intended use. While you may be shooting something for a campfire program presentation using PowerPoint today, perhaps in the future you will want to use the image in a book or backlit display. If you have a high-resolution (high-res) original image, re-purposing your work for this becomes much simpler.

So why not shoot everything in high-res and use it that way in your electronic presentations? It’s just electrons, and electrons are cheap, right? Actually, this is a bad idea for electronic displays. Inserting high-resolution images into electronic presentations such as a web page or PowerPoint presentation can cause problems. For the web, pushing out useless electrons increases the load on the server and slows down the end user. With PowerPoint it’s much the same, but can even cause your computer to crash. PowerPoint is a notorious memory and processor hog under the best of circumstances, and minimizing graphic file sizes is a good practice to adopt to keep your presentations functioning well with smooth transitions and quick load times.



Without an understanding of resolution, you might show blurry pictures or even cause your computer to crash during your program.

Many types of photo editing software allow you to choose resolutions for different uses, and for web and on-screen uses, there is often a “web” or “email” setting, which downsamples images to the ideal resolution for on-screen use.

As you can see, when it comes to projection, more is not always better. Here's a real-life example.

Ranger Jack builds a program with a hundred or more high resolution images. It works just fine in the office on the new computer.

Jack takes it out to the campfire and presents it through the laptop that is connected to the outdoor projector. Suddenly, he has problems. First the images load very slowly. Then the computer starts crashing all the time. Jack assumes he needs a newer, faster computer to handle the task. But before his supervisor budgets for a new computer, she tells Jack to bring the resolution on each photo down to 96 ppi and try the show again. Amazingly, the show now works flawlessly.

A really sharp projector that can project a high definition (HD) image of 1920 x 1080 pixels does quite nicely with a little over two megapixels. If you are supplying it with much more, the extra data is not only wasted, but it slows down and may crash the system. Don't get carried away with resolution for projection. Save your high resolution images for printing.

When you are buying a camera, just remember there's more to it than the megapixel count. The same number of pixels can be captured on a different size chip in different cameras, yielding different size pixels. There are many other factors to consider that are beyond the scope of this module. So read the reviews and do your homework when it is time to buy equipment.



Image at ±96 ppi



Image at ±150 ppi



Image at 250+ ppi

UNDERSTANDING FILE FORMATS

In addition to understanding resolution, you will want to recognize the common file formats for images, including: TIFF, PICT, EPS, GIF, JPEG, PSD, PNG, and PDF. These acronyms are defined below.

- **TIFF (Tag Image File Format)**—The most versatile, reliable, and widely supported bit-mapped format. Good for print use. Uses lots of memory.
- **PICT (Picture)**—The Macintosh® standard format for graphics and drawings that are cut or copied to the clipboard
- **EPS (Encapsulated PostScript)**—The standard format for storing high-resolution PostScript illustrations
- **GIF (Graphics Interchange Format)**—Intended mainly for on-line transmission
- **JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group)**—Data compression for images and a file type. Compression loses data. Not recommended for high quality print uses.
- **PSD (PhotoShop® Document)**—A format that can only be opened and edited in Photoshop. It can preserve layers, channels and paths in a form that can be edited.
- **PNG (Portable Network Graphic)**—Uses data compression for both print and projected images. Allows for transparent image backgrounds like GIF files, but also allows for subtle color gradation like JPEG files.
- **PDF (Portable Document Format)**—Images can be saved from Photoshop as PDF files that can then be viewed using Acrobat Reader. JPEG compression can be used.

The National Park Service's Harper's Ferry website www.nps.gov/hfc is a good reference for digital file types and offers "Suitability Standards for Digital Photographic Images."



VIDEO

Many digital cameras offer the ability to shoot short video segments and some Districts have video cameras available. Creative interpreters are doing some interesting things with video. Remember, a short video file can be used within PowerPoint, so it is not necessary to create a full-scale video production. You can simply have a PowerPoint presentation where some of your pictures move. Although video production is well beyond the scope of this module, the number one tip for interpreters considering video is to use a tripod. A steady camera will go a long way toward giving you a professional

result. You will find Windows Movie Maker already loaded on most park computers. It will give you some basic tools to trim and combine your video clips.

Successful Projector Use

With the advent of presentation software such as PowerPoint and the vast resources of the internet, computer-generated, projected images have become easy to create. Today's laptop computers, coupled with many of the common software packages and a digital projector, offer a powerful tool to the interpreter.

You will hear people speak of an “LCD projector” since it was the first type of digital projector widely available. Most interpreters really don't care what technology is inside their projector — it could be LCD, DLP, CRT or something new. So we'll use the term digital projector. You may also hear “video projector” but we are still talking about the same thing. Most projectors are able to show either TV, video or computer output. And most have a variety of inputs — just match up your computer, projector and cables.

Digital projectors can be very expensive depending on the features and options of the projector. A projector designed for an office boardroom setting may not be the best choice for a campfire center. Some models offer interchangeable lenses, and a longer focal length lens may be what you need at a campfire center. Projectors vary in brightness, too. Light level drops off quickly over a distance. How much light you will need will be determined by the size of the image you are projecting and how close the projector is to the screen.

Brightness is measured in ANSI (American National Standards Institute) Lumens. Often you are projecting at an outdoor campfire center before it is quite dark, so you will probably want the brightest projector you can afford. A brighter image can also have more of an impact on your audience.

Since there are literally thousands of laptop configurations, models, and resolutions, we cannot address how each computer works with each projector. When developing a program using computer technology, just remember there is no substitute for reading instruction manuals, testing, and a great deal of hands-on practice. It is



Know your equipment in case you need to troubleshoot in front of your audience.

especially important to remember that changing projectors or computers results in an entirely different system. Just because your presentation worked on one computer does not mean it will work on a different system. Practice on the actual equipment you will use. Few things will destroy an interpreter's credibility faster, or make an audience more restless, than to be forced to watch you fumble with your equipment.

When practicing with projectors, you may be surprised that it doesn't project the same color balance or even the same range of brightness as your computer's screen. Sometimes what looks fine on your computer looks quite awful on the big screen.

General things to look for when preparing:

- **Most projectors have a warm-up time**, and though an image may appear very quickly, the full color and brightness may not be apparent for a few minutes.
- **In most cases, you need to turn on the projector BEFORE you boot up the computer.** This forces the computer to sense the presence of the projector, so it will supply the video signal to the cable. The downside of this is that the audience can see you open the file. Experienced presenters mask the lens until they are on their first slide, so as to avoid distracting the audience with extraneous images. A piece of folded cardboard or even a piece of paper will suffice. Keeping the lens cap on can be an option, but might result in overheating of the projector, so use this with caution. A "best practice" is to save your PowerPoint as a presentation (.pps or .ppsx suffix) in addition to a PowerPoint file (.ppt or .pptx suffix.). When you double click or open the presentation file, it opens as the first slide in your presentation. See the section on presentation software for details.
- **If your presentation includes an audio component, don't forget that you need an audio cable and speakers.** Projectors do not include this, and high-res monitors also need an audio cable.
- **If you or one of your presenters use a Mac, they need a Mac-specific adapter to go from the Macintosh output to the projector cable.** You should plan for this in advance, particularly in rural areas. They are not widely available except through Macintosh dealers.
- **Many presenters put in a black or neutral slide before the beginning and after the end of a program**, to prevent the audience from seeing the program view in PowerPoint.
- **At the end of a program, when you turn off the projector, allow it to go through the complete cool-down cycle.** It will shut off automatically a few minutes after you turn it off. This cools the bulb in a controlled manner, and lengthens its life.
- **Experienced presenters usually have a spare projection bulb with them, "just in case."**

USING YOUR PROJECTOR CORRECTLY

- Turn on projector BEFORE computer.
- Let fan cycle complete it's cooling cycle before you unplug projector.
- When things don't work, turn everything off and start over.
- Read the manual at least once before you use equipment in public.

Fuzzy Images

Of course you would not deliberately use a blurry image in your program, so if the picture is out of focus, it could be the way the projector and screen are working together. Projection screens usually hang vertically, and projectors are usually tilted up toward the screen. When the projector aims at any angle other than exactly straight across to the screen, there will be some distortion. Generally the top of the image is wider than the bottom so the term “keystone” refers to the shape of the image. While you may not think the shape of the image is a big deal, this also affects focus. In a keystoneed image either the top or the bottom will be in focus, not both.

Digital projectors usually have either a fixed or adjustable keystone factor. **A fixed keystone projector needs to be placed at about an eight-degree angle lower than the center of the screen.** Adjusting the screen by pulling the bottom of the screen back toward the wall (changing the vertical plane of the screen) can also prevent the keystone effect. This can allow for more variation on placement of the projector. Some projectors have an adjustable feature that allows you to electronically correct this distortion without having to worry about screen placement.



Keystone is when your image appears wider at one end and narrower at the other. This is a common problem with digital projectors. Some units can compensate for this electronically. Otherwise, adjusting the projector location or the screen orientation can correct the keystone problem.

Maintain Your Equipment

Maintenance for all A/V equipment is important. For digital projectors it is critical. Clean or replace the filter regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions, as the screen filter can quickly become dirty (especially in a park environment). A clogged filter will cause your projector to overheat or to shut down, and can shorten lamp life. Even worse, the dust that collects on your filter will eventually make its way into your projector and deposit itself on the projection panels. Once this happens, you will have colored spots in your image, and your projector will require professional cleaning. Many digital projectors use lamps that cannot be changed in the field, so they may have some system to warn you when you are nearing the end of the life of your lamp. Again, read the manual and know your equipment.

If the digital projector will not turn on, do not panic. Check the filter door(s) to be sure they are closed completely. Most projectors have a safety switch associated with these doors, which prevents the unit from operating unless the door is properly secured.



PRESENTATION SOFTWARE

There are many different software packages that can be used for interpretive presentations. Each of them works a little differently and offer features you might not find elsewhere. Keep in mind we work for a big department with literally thousands of computers. This requires some degree of standardization. **Our department standard is Microsoft Office®, so for presentations, Microsoft PowerPoint© is the preferred tool.** The software is widely available on department computers and support is readily available.

Don't plan to use an alternative software package for your presentation. You probably won't find it on a state-issued computer and you may not even be permitted to install it. Fortunately, you can do a great deal within PowerPoint and it should work on any CSP computer.

Although all our computers should support PowerPoint, they won't all have the same version. Because there are different versions of software, we recommend that you save your PowerPoint presentations in the Office 2003 format, with the filename suffix .ppt. To do this, choose "save as" and in the option for "file type" click on the arrow and select the Office 2003 option. The default "new" PowerPoint file type has the suffix ".pptx" and may not be usable on earlier versions of PowerPoint. However, we still strongly recommend that you test your presentation on the computer that you'll actually use. Some PowerPoint 2010 presentations when exported to earlier versions tend to look dark and murky compared to the original, and may need tweaking for use by others.

Another compatibility issue that may arise, even when moving your presentation from one computer to another, one might be subtle (or not so subtle) changes to fonts. Even if you have the same fonts on both computers, this may happen, because “newer” computers have newer versions of familiar fonts, and this may change spacing and alignment in strange ways. This is another reason to always preview your presentation on the equipment you’ll be using whenever possible.

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Computers are magnificent tools for the realization of our dreams, but no machine can replace the human spark of spirit, compassion, love, and understanding.

Louis Gerstner, CEO, IBM

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PowerPoint Tips & Tricks

Microsoft PowerPoint was created for business presentations, not for interpreters, but it is an amazingly versatile program that can be used quite effectively. We cannot give you a detailed look at PowerPoint tips and tricks here, but we can highlight some of the most important basics.

- **Keep the flashy options to a minimum.** Have you ever sat through a presentation where there were multiple animations, crazy transitions, garish colors, sound effects, and clip art? These can annoy the viewer, and often draw attention to the technology, not the message. Remember, technology is just a tool, and should not be confused with the program content. Use one or two fonts and keep the transitions consistent and simple.
- **Avoid using specialty fonts if you might be moving your presentation to another computer.** Virtually everyone has Arial, Times New Roman, Tahoma and a few others, but not everyone has Herculaneum or FangSong, for example. If a font is missing, the computer may display them in Courier or something with different spacing that will make your slides difficult to read.
- **Choose a background theme.** Microsoft has provided dozens of built-in graphic themes in PowerPoint. Unfortunately, most of the themes are either business oriented or otherwise unsuitable for interpretive programs, but there are neutral backgrounds and subtle designs that don’t distract the viewer, and many themes are available commercially. You can also create your own themes and backgrounds. Generally, be conservative when choosing a theme. In any interpretive program, your content should be the primary object, not colors or slide designs or fonts.

- **Don't load the screen with text.** 15 to 25 words is more than most people want to read, especially if they are on vacation or in a recreational setting. *Don't read what's on your screen to your audience.* If you can tell them about it, remove the words. If the text is large enough for them to read, then be silent.
- **There's no magic time for a slide to remain on screen,** but if something is on screen for more than 45-60 seconds, you might ask yourself why.
- **Frame your photos.** Photos with varying colors along the edges, such as a long shot of a meadow with a green foreground and blue (sky) background sometimes contain colors that seem to blend into the slide background. This can be distracting to some viewers. You have options in PowerPoint to put a line around a photo or give it a shadow effect to minimize this. Click on a photo, and then right-click your mouse to see the formatting options for a photograph or other graphic element.
- **With a bit of imagination, you can easily create subtle and effective visual tricks.** For instance, an effective transition when working with historic topics is to have two identical slides with an image of an historic house or landscape, but convert one of the photographs in a slide to black & white or sepia tone. When you dissolve from the color slide to sepia slice, the color seems to melt away, a subtle but visually arresting effect that can help people imagine the past. You can probably think of other tricks to help your audience get into the spirit of your topic.
- **In PowerPoint 2010, embedding a YouTube© or other video is much simpler than in previous versions.** This can help you avoid switching between PowerPoint and a web browser and make your overall presentation much smoother for the audience.
- **To avoid the possibility of your audience seeing the slide sorter view in PowerPoint, you can save your file as a "presentation"** (the suffix is .pps or .ppsx rather than .ppt or .pptx) When you double click on the file name, it will open in the full screen mode automatically, but you cannot edit these files, so save in both versions.



- **If you bring in your presentation to the projection location on a flash drive or if it's on a shared drive, always copy it to your hard drive first!** Then use the version that is on the computer's hard drive when you give your presentation. Running a presentation from an external device will slow things down, make transitions clunky, and may even result in a crash.
- **If you're traveling to a new venue, ALWAYS carry a grounded plug strip and a 25- to 50-foot extension cord.** If you have it, you probably won't need it, but if you don't, you will!

Presentation Control

You may occasionally see presenters behind their laptops as they present a program. If you can, stand in front of your audience and face them (rather than the laptop) during an interpretive presentation. A wireless mouse will let you change slides remotely. A presentation mouse often includes a laser pointer in the same handheld unit. The cost is slightly more than a standard mouse, but it adds very little to the cost of the overall package when you are buying a laptop and projector.

Presentation mice come in two basic types: IR (infrared) and RF (radio frequency). IR presentation mice are more common and slightly less expensive. However they rely on a beam of light passing from the mouse to a receiver at the computer, so you must point them at the computer, and a visitor standing in the wrong place could block them entirely. An RF mouse uses radio waves so they don't need to be pointed at the computer and readily pass through obstacles.

FINDING PHOTOS

Interpreters are always looking for just the right images to illustrate a program. Hopefully you will have the opportunity to get out and shoot many of your own. Other photographers will often share their images with you, but be sure to get permission (more on that later). Most park units have literally thousands of old 35mm slides. Don't overlook this valuable resource. We have some beautiful images that may be 50 years old, but still look great. If you don't have access to a slide scanner, you can take them to almost any store that offers photo printing services and have them scanned to disc for a reasonable price. The Department's Photo Archives is another source for some great images at little or no cost to you. Lastly, never, ever take photos off the internet for use in your program without written permission from the photographer.

PROJECTION SCREENS

Projection screens are available in two basic types: front or rear screens. For most interpretive presentation purposes, a front projection screen is the obvious choice, simply because it can fit into any room without the need to build an elaborate rear projection booth.

If you have the luxury of a rear projection system, there are definite advantages. A rear screen permits the use of visuals in near-normal room lighting, your audience can take notes, and you can maintain eye contact. The rear projection system allows the interpreter to walk in front of the screen without casting shadows. Locating projection equipment in a separate room minimizes noise and distractions.

Be careful with rear projection. The audience could be watching your show when suddenly all the pictures look reversed to them. If you are showing a bug or a leaf, it might not matter. But when you get to a trail sign or a well-known rock formation that is backwards, it matters a lot. Many projectors have a setting that will automatically mirror the image. Again, know your equipment and figure this out well ahead of time.

The type of screen at your park, if properly maintained, is probably the one you will be using for a long time. In some parks, the campfire screen is made of wood or a similar material covered with a flat white paint, while other parks may have an electric, roll down, beaded screen. The screens will certainly vary, so once again, know your equipment.

The in-house constructed, painted screens, while not entirely desirable, can be easily repainted. Quite often, once a fabric screen is marred by graffiti, it must be replaced. Glass beaded and rear screen cleaning should be attempted with great care because the beads or projected coatings can easily be damaged. **Even “cleanable surface” screens should be exposed to very light pressure using only mild soap and water. Use of chemical cleaners may destroy their reflective properties.**

SOUND SYSTEMS

The ideal sound system makes speech and music clearly and comfortably audible, yet never draws attention to itself or its operation. Sound systems can be very basic, consisting of just a microphone, amplifier, and speakers. For larger applications, you might need a fairly complex sound system, including a CD player, amp/mixer, speakers, microphones, transmitters and lots of cables. Become familiar with your particular equipment's operation, functional status, and its care and maintenance. Let us now turn our attention to a basic component of the sound system — the microphone.

Microphone

The sound system begins at the microphone, where acoustic sound is converted into an electrical signal. A microphone is connected to an audio mixer, where the input signals are amplified, adjusted and combined to produce a single output signal. From the mixer, the output signal is sent to a power amplifier. The amplifier strengthens the signal further, making it powerful enough to drive loudspeakers, which convert the microphone signals back into acoustic sound.

Every interpreter must know how to use a microphone smoothly and professionally. Microphones and their associated sound systems amplify your voice and are useful for several reasons. You will hear some interpreters say their voices are strong and they don't need a microphone. This is a mistake. Microphones keep you from overtaxing your vocal cords, permit easier listening for the audience and—especially when you are moving around—they ensure that everyone can hear you. A microphone even lets you drop your voice to a whisper for dramatic emphasis yet still be heard in the back row.



Using a microphone makes it easier for members of your audience to hear and understand you.

PREVENTING FEEDBACK

- Keep the microphone BEHIND the speakers. A microphone in front of a speaker will create feedback.
- Locate your speaker(s) either forward, above or beside your performing position.
- Use a microphone stand to control the placement and orientation of the microphone.
- Turn down the volume.
- Sometimes a change in tone or equalization helps.
- Avoid the location where feedback occurred.
- Use as few microphones as possible — the volume level of a system must be turned down for every mic added in order to prevent feedback.

Microphones are available in wired and wireless versions with either hand-held or clip-on capabilities. The wireless clip-on, or lapel microphone, is preferred for its convenience and the full freedom of movement. A miniature, clip-on microphone connects by a short cable to a small transmitter worn on the belt or elsewhere. A special receiver picks up the signal and feeds it to the mixer. Generally, a separate receiver/transmitter is needed for each microphone used.

The proper location of the clip-on microphone is about six inches below the interpreter's chin; the clip allows easy attachment to most clothing. Be sure to anticipate movements that may rub against or obstruct the microphone.

If you are using a wireless microphone remember that it runs on batteries. Weak batteries in your wireless transmitter will usually give you a distorted signal long before it quits working. Remember to turn it off after your program to save the battery and be sure to change out those batteries before they ruin your program. Always have spare batteries on hand.

MICROPHONE PROBLEMS?

No sound?

- Make sure transmitter and receiver are both on.
- Check the battery.
- Check that mute is not selected.
- Ensure cord is securely plugged in belt pack/control system.

Cuts in and out?

- Check that all cables are inserted securely.
 - Make sure belt pack antenna is hanging straight down and is not twisted.
 - Move belt pack to your back.
 - Check the battery.
 - Avoid the location where interruption occurred.
-

A wide variety of wired and wireless hand-held microphones is found throughout the parks. When using a hand-held microphone, get close to it; the most common mistake is having it too far from your lips. Generally sing or speak across it rather than directly into it to reduce the popping caused by sudden breath blasts. The microphone should be

positioned in front, and slightly to one side, of the mouth. The user must stay within the acceptance angle of the microphone to avoid unwanted changes in volume. Using proper techniques, and perhaps an accessory wind screen, will solve most popping problems. Speaking of wind screens, be sure you have one up to the job if you are working in a windy venue.

If you are having a guest speaker or a panel discussion, use additional microphones. Instruct your guests on how to use the microphones properly. Be aware of chains or necklaces that can hit the microphone and cause annoying disturbances.

Generally, you do not need to turn the volume up as high as you think; preplanning the volume setting is the professional approach. You may need to change your usual volume setting when you have unexpected ambient noise, a larger or smaller group than normal, or guest speakers. Ask the audience or have a partner signal you when the sound is comfortable. Sound amplification is usually limited by the feedback condition and not by the power of the amplifier.

Feedback is that tortured howling that results when the output of your speakers gets fed back into your microphone and is amplified and sent back to your speakers in an endless loop. There is no complete cure for feedback. If the volume of any microphone is boosted high enough, it will eventually cause feedback. There are a number of measures you can take to reduce feedback.

Assistive Listening Systems

All visitors need the ability to fully participate in interpretive programs. Assistive listening systems provide the opportunity for individuals with hearing loss to actively take part in our interpretive presentations. Assistive listening systems include portable FM wireless systems, audio induction loop systems, AM systems, infrared systems and hard wire systems. For further information on the different types of systems and their uses see *All Visitors Welcome* (California State Parks, 2003, p. 17) for the advantages, disadvantages and possible applications.

More About Audio

There is a great diversity of audio equipment available to augment any sound system. We can't even try to address it in this handbook. Here is some equipment that you might want to research as you develop your program.

- **Mixer:** A mixer controls the audio inputs going into your sound system. It can switch between inputs, control the volume of each input, and control the outputs to which each input is sent.
- **Equalizer:** An equalizer fine-tunes your sound system's frequency response to a given location. Use it to adjust bass, treble, and midrange to provide the most pleasing sound and to minimize feedback.
- **Reverberation (reverb):** Reverb is sometimes used to provide artificial echo effects, but its real purpose is to provide extra depth and clarity to your sound.

If you have sound embedded in your program you may want to connect the audio output from your computer to the campfire center sound system. There are a variety of wireless devices that could be used to make this connection. **Remember that adding more equipment increases the chance of something going wrong.** A better choice might be the simplest: use a long cable rather than a wireless link, or plug in a set of powered speakers to your computer and avoid tying into the main sound system completely. Powered speakers have built-in amplifiers. The more commonly used non-powered speakers do not. You will want a powered speaker for portability or to use in cases where an amplifier would be expensive or inconvenient.

FLIP CHARTS

Investing a lot of money in high-tech visual aids and equipment will not make your presentation better. Remember, the purpose of using visual aids is to enhance your presentation, not upstage it. While high-tech computer-generated presentations are great, do not overlook the humble but effective flip chart. A flip chart is still a portable, inexpensive, and useful presentation tool with many applications for interpretive programs.

Making "prepared" flip charts can take a considerable amount of time. Make sure you start preparing your charts early enough so you can review them and make any changes or corrections beforehand. If you cannot print neatly, ask someone who can to prepare them for you. A poorly prepared flip chart can be very distracting. If you have access to a large format printer you can create very professional flip chart pages on a computer.

Prepare flip charts ahead of time by lightly writing directly on each page any notes you need for your presentation; the audience will not be able to see your notes if you use pencil. You may also write notes for what you have planned on the next sheet. This will allow you to properly introduce what is next. Remember, this is an interpretive program, not a formal educational lecture. Your flip chart pages should be easy and enjoyable to read.

LIGHTING

Lighting is often the last thing we think of when planning a presentation, and yet it may make or break your program.

When using hand-held items, make sure the items are well lighted. General lighting is accomplished with flood lamps. More direct and intense lighting can be accomplished with spot lamps. Dramatic and special effects can be accomplished with theatrical stage lighting. This type of lighting can be expensive, and prone to the negative effects of weather and vandalism, especially if left outdoors for extended periods. Something as minimal as a single spot light can add dramatic effect to highlight objects and people, and to focus attention. A simple alternative to the more expensive professional stage lighting is to use an old slide projector with a blank, black slide with a pinhole opening. Experiment with the size of the opening needed for the distance from the projector.

Lighting considerations for visitors with hearing impairments should also be recognized and provided. If these visitors have sufficient lighting, they are often able to lip-read, or they may be watching the oral or American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter. If the room or area is too dark, a spotlight on you and/or the sign language interpreter works well. Consult with your Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) specialist or your supervisor, and refer to *All Visitors Welcome* (Porter, 1994) for more details and suggestions.

VIDEOCONFERENCING EQUIPMENT

Videoconferencing equipment has become fairly common, particularly in schools. This capability is at the heart of the State Parks PORTS (Parks Online Resources for Teachers and Students) program (see <http://ports.parks.ca.gov>). A live two-way video connection is a powerful interpretive tool bringing park specialists into classrooms everywhere. PORTS is much more than a videoconference. All PORTS instructional units are built to support academic content standards and feature online resource materials. Find out where this type of equipment is available in your District and learn how to operate it.

11.2 PLANNING

SELECTING APPROPRIATE EQUIPMENT

Karen Beery, State Park Interpreter III, recently summed up a general discussion of “traditional” media vs. “new” media when she wrote,

We could probably trace the roots of this type of discussion back many centuries. For example, is moveable type better than calligraphy; is photography better than painting; is film better than theatre; is recorded music better than live performance; etc. The newer technologies always have an impact on the earlier technologies in some way. However, I think the challenge for us as interpreters is to explore how we can best use the incredible number of tools and techniques that are now available. We should be striving for excellence of design and interpretation regardless of the tools we are using. If it doesn't enhance, reinforce, or clarify your message, don't use it.

MECHANICS

Proper Operation

It is essential to use common sense, good practices, and a professional approach to maintain valuable A/V equipment. Many staff members rely on these expensive tools to assist in their program delivery. Equipment that does not function correctly detracts from the visitors' experience and is certainly inconvenient for the interpreter. A/V equipment is not cheap to purchase, repair, or replace.

TAKING GOOD CARE OF YOUR TOOLS

- Read the instruction manuals.
- Use the equipment for its intended purpose. Do not force controls and mechanisms.
- Perform periodic maintenance and safety inspections.
- Keep equipment clean, and protect it from environmental hazards.
- Properly store equipment.
- Remove batteries from equipment when not in use.

Batteries

Batteries are used in all types of portable video, audio, and computer equipment. Understanding how to take care of batteries can make the difference between interpretive programs that fail or interpretive programs that succeed. The best advice is to **always have a backup available because all batteries are prone to failure at the worst possible time.**

Store your batteries in a cool place, but avoid the refrigerator. Batteries might last a bit longer if stored in the refrigerator, but cold batteries can cause condensation problems and they do not put out their full power until they warm to room temperature.

All batteries eventually die and must be disposed of. DON'T throw them in a wastebasket. They are not permitted in landfills and must be disposed of properly. Check with your maintenance chief about where to put them. Whenever possible, use rechargeable batteries to minimize the number of waste batteries.

To ensure quality performance, routinely clean the battery contacts in the equipment and the charger. Use a cotton swab saturated with rubbing alcohol (isopropyl alcohol), to clean the contact points on the battery and the charger. Most charging problems are caused by dirty contacts on the battery or charger. Speaking of cleaning, do not forget about all of the various pieces of equipment that have lenses.

Cleaning Lenses

Cleaning lenses is not a difficult task. It is a simple matter of using isopropyl alcohol or a photographic lens cleaning solution along with lens cleaning tissue. Other cleaning materials may leave lint or other residue on the glass. Blow the dust off the lens with a dry air gun or "puffer bulb." Apply the cleaning solution to the lens cleaning tissue. Avoid applying the solution directly to the lens surface. Wipe the lens in a spiral motion, beginning in the center of the lens and ending on the outside. If necessary, repeat the above steps until the lens is clean and free of streaks.



It's important to take good care of park equipment so that it may be used for many years.

As stated earlier, proper operation of equipment is key to successful A/V presentations. Knowing how the equipment functions, the safe use and storage of the equipment, and how to make repairs are all essential for program success.

CHANGING LOCATIONS

If you are taking your interpretive program to a different venue, do not forget to bring an extension cord supplemented with a power strip. An ungrounded plug adapter may also come in handy because some facilities still do not have three-prong grounded outlets. Resist the urge to plug some of your equipment in one outlet and the rest in another outlet. When electrical equipment is connected together it must all be on the same circuit or you run the risk of electrical interference. For everyone's safety, tape the power cord and cables to the floor to prevent tripping. (Thank goodness for duct tape!)

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It's all about knowing your message, knowing your audience, and choosing the media that will communicate best with those variables.

Joanie Cahill,

Regional Interpretive Specialist, CSP

■ ■ ■

11.3 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Our department has very high standards regarding intellectual properties. You may be held personally liable if you violate department policy. It is important to understand this complex and rapidly evolving area of law. It is not always as simple as it might seem. There are situations where the department owns a piece of art, but does not own the rights to use a photo of that art. Take the time to consult with knowledgeable people so you are not in violation.

Crediting the creator is not the same as permission. Acknowledging the photographer is nice but you will need, in writing, explicit permission to use another's work.

You may want to show a commercial film on some occasions. In order to do this, you must obtain a formal license for that use. It doesn't matter whether you own or rent the DVD.

Anything beyond your family and immediate circle of friends is defined as a "public performance" and a formal license for use is required.

How can you avoid copyright worries? Follow the guidelines below and when in doubt do the research needed to gain a clear answer. The department's position on copyright and intellectual property rights is included at the end of this module in Appendix A.

USING YOUR OWN WORK

Using your own illustrations or photography in your programs is ideal. But think twice before you sell it to a local postcard vendor or book publisher. If you shot the photo on state time, or if you used a state owned camera, or even if you used special access or knowledge you obtained in the course of your employment to get the photo, it may not be yours. Check with your supervisor before considering anything like this.

CAN I USE THIS IMAGE?

Definitely

- Images owned by California State Parks
- Images licensed to the department for your use
- Images that you have created yourself from original art or photos (as long as releases are on file for any people who are recognizable).
- Images that you have obtained appropriate permission to use

Maybe

- Image created before modern copyright laws
- Images owned by the U.S. Government
- Images copied from books

Do Not Use

- Images from a website obtained without express permission

WHAT'S AHEAD

The way you treat, maintain, and operate A/V equipment greatly affects the quality of any interpretive program. In the next module, we will address in greater detail how to evaluate whether or not you are presenting effective and informative programs.

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APPENDIX

Prepared by Wil Jorae and Laura Reimche. California State Parks, Sacramento, CA 2002

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Copyright

“Copyright is a form of protection provided by the laws of the United States (title 17, U.S. Code) to the authors of ‘original works of authorship,’ including literary, dramatic, musical, artistic, and certain other intellectual works. This protection is available to both published and unpublished works.”

However, for a work to be entitled to protection, it must first be fixed in a tangible form.

Copyright law protects artists, giving them sole right to reproduce their works. It also protects the artist or person who owns copyright to said material against unauthorized use of their work by others. Use of non-owned, copyrighted material requires the expressed permission of the artist or owner of intellectual property rights. Furthermore, only the creator or person who owns copyright can create or authorize the creation of “derivative works” and/or “compilations.” The Library of Congress defines a derivative work as “a work that is based on (or derived from) one or more already existing works.” Compilations are collections of preexisting materials or data, selected, coordinated or arranged so that the resulting work as a whole is a new original work of authorship.

Before using a work that you did not create, the status of the copyright should be determined, and appropriate permission to use the work should be obtained. This can take the form of a formal license agreement or a simple letter granting permission to use the work for the requested purpose.

How to Determine the Copyright Status of a Work

There are several ways to investigate whether a work is under copyright protection:

1. Examine the work to determine if a copyright notice or disclaimer is affixed to the work.
2. If the work is from a published book, look for photo credits in the appendix or in the caption under the image for source, collection, artist, photographer, and date.
3. If no identification is given with the image, contact the publisher and/or the author. The author or author’s estate can usually be contacted through the publisher.
4. Examine the subject and content of the work and contact museums, libraries, or archival institutions that hold works of similar subject matter. These types of institutions may provide referral to additional sources.

5. Have the U.S. Copyright Office perform a search. The Copyright Office publishes a Catalog of Copyright Entries, organized by type of work. The Copyright Office staff will also search its records for a fee.

Determining the duration of a copyright can be a very complicated and difficult process, depending on when the work was created and who created it. However, under current law, if a work was created prior to 1922, it is probably in the public domain, with any copyrights that once existed having expired. If a work is determined to be in the public domain, no permission for use is necessary. If a copyright holder is identified, permission for your intended use should be sought and documented.

Good Faith Effort

If through all or some of the above methods you are unable to locate the copyright holder of the work and have exhausted all “reasonable” possibilities, then you have made a “good faith effort” to determine the holder of the copyright. All correspondence and notes obtained during your investigation should be retained with the project file.

Fair Use

Copyright law does permit the use of copyrighted images under the concept of fair use. The concept or defense of fair use allows for the taking of portions of copyrighted work for limited purposes without requiring the copyright owner's permission. However, there is no clear definition of fair use in the Copyright Act. Section 107 of the Copyright Act (11 USC 107) permits the use of copyrighted material for parodies, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, research, and for criticism or commentary under some circumstances. But, this permitted fair use is determined in large part on a case-by-case basis through weighing the following factors:

1. Purpose and character of the use (i.e., Is it commercial? Controversial? Does the secondary use supersede the original work?)
 2. Nature of the copyrighted work (i.e., Is it published? Regularly sold/licensed for profit? Is it highly creative - factual or fiction?)
 3. Amount and substantiality of the portion used (Quantitatively? Qualitatively?)
 4. The effect on the potential market for the copyrighted work (i.e., Is the market impaired? Are licenses reasonably available? Is the use repeated and long term?)
- Thus, the Copyright Act does not provide a specific exemption for copies made to advance interpretive, educational, and scholarly objectives.

A question raised frequently is, does the use of copied images in an interpretive or campfire program fall under the interpretation of fair use. This question does not have one answer other than, “it depends.” Congress has endorsed guidelines that provide some assistance in deciding whether a particular use constitutes fair use

in the educational context. However, even these guidelines are aimed at classroom teaching situations. Moreover, compliance with these guidelines has influence on the interpretation but is not binding on courts. Thus, consent for intended uses should always be sought where possible. The educational fair use guidelines include, but are not limited to, the following directives:

1. Avoid unfair exploitation, even with noncommercial uses;
2. Do not copy any more than necessary for intended use;
3. Provide notice of copyright and credit where possible;
4. Use is more defensible if it is spontaneous (no chance to seek permission);
5. Stay within the page limits for copying set out in the guidelines (entire work if it is less than 2,500 words, 1,000 words, or 10 percent of the work);
6. Use a single copy where possible (overheads are better than handouts); and
7. Comply with the brevity, spontaneity, and cumulative effect test outlined in these guidelines.

Identification

Any duplicate images captured in electronic or standard photographic form should have the actual source document in the image itself or on the image border, back, slide mount, etc. Ideally, the source listed would be the copyright holder for a particular image. Minimally, the source should be the magazine (name and publication date), book, or other publication, from which the image was copied. If you have doubts as to whether or not the intended use falls within the guidelines of fair use, please contact CSP's legal office for advice. Additionally, the image should be marked, "For Reference Use Only."

When copying images copyrighted to California State Parks, one should transfer the following information from the original to the copy image (per forthcoming Departmental Notice on Photographic Material Documentation):

1. Original photographer's last name and first initial
2. Park name or location
3. Date photograph was taken (as specific as possible)
4. Primary subject matter (determined by original photographer)
5. Names of individuals, if any, depicted in an image should be noted and kept with copies of the original photo releases on file.

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MODULE 11
AUDIOVISUAL

SELF ASSESSMENT

Answer each question in the section below before reviewing the material in *Module 11—Audiovisual*. The answers are not provided. Check your answers with your colleagues and as you read *Module 11—Audiovisual*. Items from the self assessment may be reviewed and discussed in class.

- 1) An interpreter's most underutilized piece of equipment is:
 - a) digital projector
 - b) copy machine
 - c) camera
 - d) copy stand

- 2) It is always important to shoot digital images with the highest resolution possible.
 - a) True
 - b) False

- 3) The brightness of a digital projector is measured in what units?

- 4) What is the most common mistake when using a microphone?

5) Why would you put a black background behind an item you are photographing?

7) What is the preferred presentation software in the Department? Why?

8) What is a digital projector? What can it project?

9) When using a projector, what is keystoneing?

10) Name three advantages of using a flip chart over other more modern presentation techniques.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

11) To control feedback from a microphone you should (Circle all that apply.)

- a) Turn volume up
- b) Move microphone away from the speakers
- c) change the tone
- d) Place speakers behind you

13) Lenses can be safely cleaned with window cleaner and paper towels.

- a) True
- b) False

14) What is a “Public Performance” and why would an interpreter care?

15) Always remember to credit the photographer and the website where you get your images and you will not run into problems.

- a) True
- b) False

16) What is the “rule of thirds” in photography, and why should you use it?

WORKBOOK LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Now that you have completed the self assessment questions, review the material in *Module 11—Audiovisual* to confirm your answers. After reading the module, move on to the workbook learning activities, which will assist you in developing your skills.

To help you review and apply the material covered in *Module 11—Audiovisual*, a selection of review questions and/or activities is provided. Again, no answers are included. Use the material from the module, outside sources, and your colleagues to help you complete the activities and answer the questions. There may be more than one right answer. Use the questions and activities to generate discussion about the material. Be prepared to discuss, perform or demonstrate your answers in class.

- 1) Describe when you should use A/V equipment.

- 2) When making a digital presentation, which should you turn on first, your computer or your projector?

- 3) Complete this sentence: Visual aids add to the program, but all programs _____

- 4) What can happen when a projector fan is turned off before it completes its cooling cycle?

- 5) What is a “.pps” file, and when should you create and use one?

6) What are three types of lighting you might use in a campfire A/V program?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

7) Name three types of images you can definitely use in a park campfire A/V program.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

8) Who is responsible for maintaining the A/V equipment at a park unit?

9) What is videoconferencing equipment useful for?

10) Describe two ways you can change a 3" x 5" picture into a large enough visual form to use during a program.

1. _____

2. _____

Take it to YOUR Park

Answer each question with the information specific to your park. You will have to conduct some research in order to answer each question. Use the answers as a guide for beginning your career in California State Parks.

AUDIOVISUAL

Park name: _____

- 1) Develop a list of all the A/V equipment available in your park.

- 2) Based on the above inventory, create a list of the other equipment that would be beneficial to have.

- 3) Using one of the appropriate program ideas you created in the previous modules, indicate how you could incorporate or use A/V equipment to improve the program.

Module 12
EVALUATION



One of the great mistakes is to judge policies and programs by their intentions rather than their results.

Milton Friedman

Module 12

EVALUATION

What is it?

Planned assessment

Why do we do it?

To determine effectiveness of our interpretive efforts and areas for improvement

How do we do it?

With systematic examinations of interpretive programs

There is much to be learned from evaluating interpretation, if we only ask the right questions.

INTRODUCTION

From its Latin origin meaning 'to strengthen' or to empower, the term evaluation has taken a numerical turn—it is now largely about the measurement of things—and in the process can easily slip into becoming an end rather than a means. (Gitlan, Smyth 1989.) Keep in mind that **evaluation, or assessment, is just a tool that will empower you to present the most effective interpretive programs possible.**

Evaluation is a critical component of any interpretation. It links many of the pieces that we have discussed in other modules. Evaluation provides feedback in the communication process (*Module 3—Communication*), continues the planning cycle (*Module 4—Planning*), measures the benefits and values of programs (*Module 2—Purpose and Values*), and helps set the direction for the future (*Module 13—Professionalism*). This module will review the basic evaluation process, the purpose of evaluation, and the targets and sources of evaluation. Finally, it will examine some practical methods of conducting evaluation. It should be noted that while this module will focus on personal interpretation, nonpersonal interpretation (exhibits, displays, brochures, etc.) should also be regularly evaluated for effectiveness.

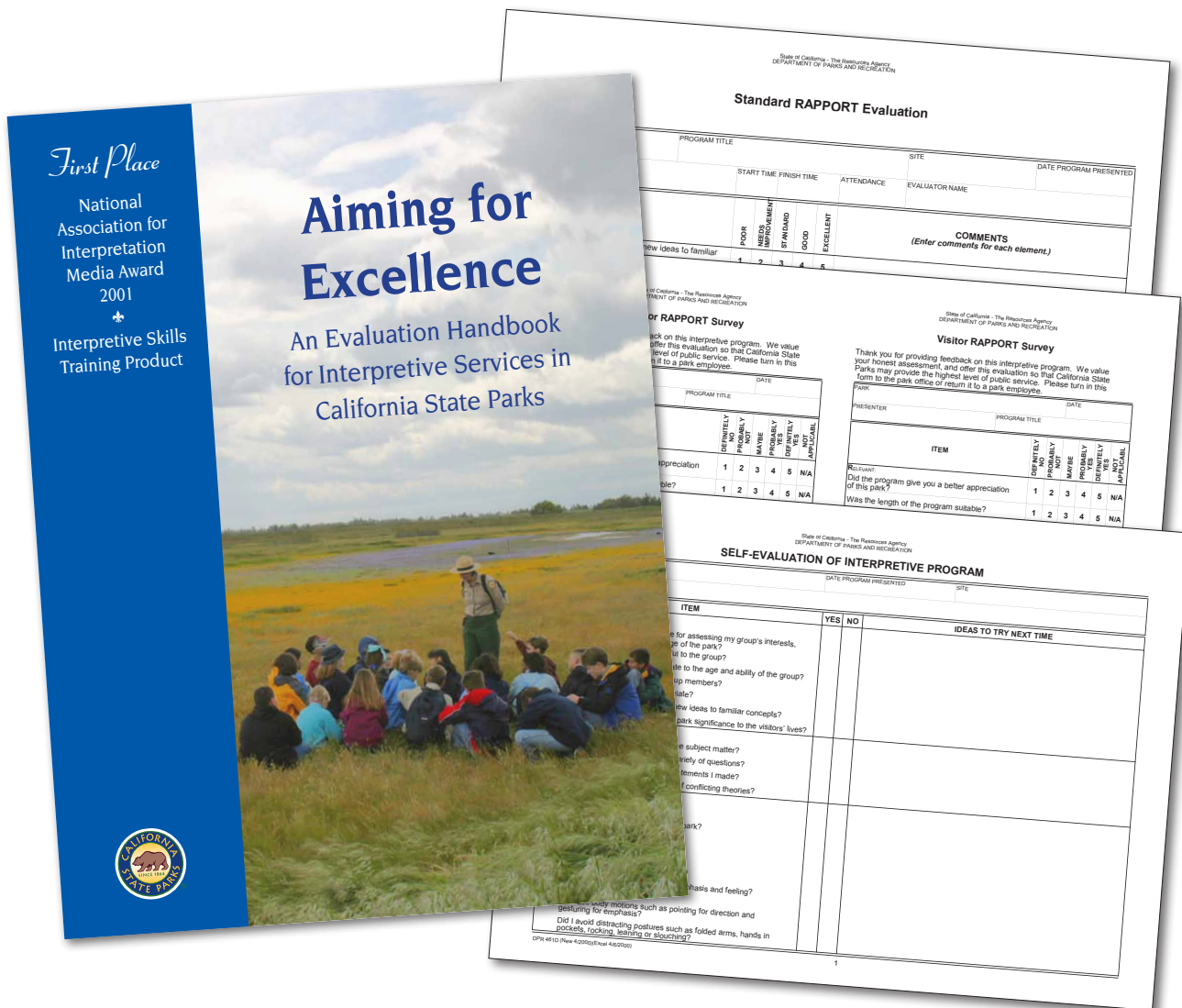
This module is intended to be used in conjunction with the *Aiming for Excellence* handbook (2006). In *Aiming for Excellence* you will find a detailed explanation of the RAPPORT system of evaluation used by California State Parks, as well as guidelines and methods (complete with forms) for evaluating your state park programs. While the

RAPPORT system is considered CSP's primary method of evaluation, other tools are available and should be part of a comprehensive evaluation program. In the following section, several of these are described.

The important thing to remember is that conducting meaningful evaluation is generally up to you, the interpreter. It is your responsibility to seek out assessment of your own programs. The value of your work is directly affected by the quality of your evaluation efforts.

All interpretive staff who present interpretive programs will have their program(s) evaluated a minimum of twice per year, including a minimum of one evaluation by an interpretive coordinator, lead person or supervisor using the Standard RAPPORT Evaluation DPR 461 form. Additional evaluations may be conducted using a variety of appropriate techniques.

Department of Parks and Recreation Policies, *Aiming for Excellence*



12.1 WHY

There are many purposes and benefits of conducting assessment. Each is important and provides insight into the overall success of interpretation. One of the main purposes is to increase program effectiveness. Because there are many elements that determine and influence a program's effectiveness, you must evaluate your program by using several different indicators.

The first step is to decide what you want to learn from your program evaluation. These goals and objectives must be identified before you can design the appropriate strategy or select evaluation tools. For example, if you are trying to assess the cost-effectiveness of programs, asking visitors how satisfied they are with programs will not yield appropriate or useful data.

To measure general program success, you might design an evaluation that will measure how well the program communicates with the audience, meets visitors' needs and promotes management goals. Evaluation measures, properly implemented, will identify the specific areas where improvement is needed. Program evaluations will also help you highlight successes. Without effective evaluation, it would be difficult to know what is working, for whom, and why.

Another key purpose of conducting evaluation is to improve your personal skills as an interpreter. **Evaluation can help you objectively assess your verbal and nonverbal communication skills and your ability to research, organize, and present a program.**

Evaluation should also be conducted to identify whether the goals and objectives of the program have been met. You have carefully created your program to address specific goals and objectives (see *Module 4—Planning*). Assessment allows for a critical analysis of whether you have met those targeted objectives—did your program accomplish what was intended?

Being able to justify budgets, measure cost-effectiveness, and demonstrate the financial benefits of interpretation are another positive aspect of evaluation, especially for administrators. The tighter the budget, the more important it is to convey the cost vs. benefits of interpretive services. Evaluations often provide data that is critical for fundraising and grant-seeking efforts.

■ ■ ■

The only man who behaves sensibly is my tailor; he takes my measurements anew every time he sees me, while all the rest go on with their old measurements and expect me to fit them.

George Bernard Shaw

■ ■ ■

Lastly, data from evaluations helps identify training priorities. What needs to be improved to gain better understanding from the audience? Are there skills that the interpreter could use help with?

WHY CONDUCT EVALUATIONS?

- Increase program effectiveness.
 - Determine if visitors' needs are met.
 - Assess if program goals and objectives are met.
 - Assess interpreter's effectiveness.
 - Establish professional legitimacy.
 - Measure cost-effectiveness.
 - Provide interpretive budget justification.
 - Identify training priorities.
 - Celebrate your successes.
 - Provide data for fundraising and grant application.
-

12.2 WHAT

Once you have determined what it is that you want to learn from your evaluation, the next step is to decide where you will need to focus your attention. Which parts of the program should you focus on to gather the most useful data?

As discussed in *Module 3—Communications*, the “whole” of the interpretive experience is influenced by the interpreter, the audience and the program. Thorough evaluations must consider each of these elements to gain a true picture. For example, the interpreter could be a fabulous communicator and entertain the audience very well. However, without a meaningful message, the “whole” of the interpretive service would fall short. Conversely, the program could be technically “accurate” but be performed in a monotone by a lifeless interpreter. Once again, the “whole” of the interpretive service would be less than desired. As a result, when conducting evaluation, it is important to examine the elements from various perspectives. We will return to this discussion later in the module.

WHAT SHOULD BE EVALUATED?		
<u>Interpreter</u>	<u>Audience</u>	<u>Program</u>
Body language	Satisfaction	Relevant
Appearance	Enjoyment	Accurate
Enthusiasm	Behavior change	Provocative/enjoyable
Credibility	Emotional impact	Programmatically
Subject matter	Attention	accessible
Voice quality	Memory	Organized
Eye contact	Learning	Retained
Confidence	Attendance	Thematic
Grammar		Cost-effective

FOCUS ON THE INTERPRETER

The interpreter controls program delivery and content and interacts directly with the audience. Therefore, examining the interpreter is a critical component of all evaluation of interpretive services. The DPR 461 series of forms will assist with this, whether the interpreter is a ranger, volunteer, or seasonal employee.

Evaluations of the interpreter should include verbal and nonverbal communication techniques and skills, interpersonal interactions with the audience and expertise in and ability to address the department's elements of RAPPORT.



Continuous assessment will help you and your volunteers develop a quality program.

FOCUS ON THE AUDIENCE

The audience is anyone who receives interpretive services. It might be a group of school children, kids at a Junior Ranger Program, a mixed-age audience at a campfire program or general visitors encountered during roving. **Attendance, attention, satisfaction, and recall are some of the most common elements evaluated when focusing on the audience.**

Always take care when collecting data to ensure the information will be useful. For example, the number

of people attending the program is probably the most common form of data collected. It is easy to assess and gives some indication of the program's success. While it reflects attendance levels and examined over time, could yield useful patterns, it does not necessarily provide the most valuable data. Popular programs do not necessarily equal effective programs. A critical question of evaluation should be, "Is the program effective?" Who better to answer that question than the audience? Since satisfaction, program objectives, and overall success of interpretation are judged based on the target audience, audience evaluations are a critical component of interpretive assessment.

FOCUS ON THE PROGRAM

The third target for evaluation is the program itself. Whether it is a formal, school-based program or an informal roving contact, your communications have a purpose, that is stated goals and objectives. By evaluating the program, you can find out how well you met those goals. You can also gather information about visitor accessibility, relevance, organization, cost-effectiveness, and overall audience satisfaction.

12.3 WHEN

There are three basic times to conduct evaluation: before, during, and after the program. We will discuss these, and how to incorporate all three in an evaluation strategy.

BEFORE (FRONT-END)

Evaluation conducted before the program is called front-end, and it occurs during the planning stages. It involves research and careful planning to select the topic, theme, target audience, method of delivery, and goals/objectives of the program. Front-end evaluation is similar to a needs assessment where target audience needs, wants, and goals are examined and programs are matched accordingly (DeGraaf, et al., 1999). This stage of the process is critical for evaluating the program in the later stages. It is in this front-end planning stage that the direction, goals, and objectives for the program are established. These goals and objectives, written in WAMS style (see *Module 4—Planning*), are the very indicators used to evaluate effectiveness in the later stages of evaluation.

■ ■ ■

The most serious mistakes are not being made as a result of wrong answers. The truly dangerous thing is asking the wrong question.

Peter Drucker

■ ■ ■

DURING (FORMATIVE)

Formative evaluation occurs during the program and is often used by interpreters to discover if the program is going well. It occurs naturally when we watch body language, facial expressions, and other cues that indicate whether our communication is effective. Visitors' eye contact and questions are frequently used for formative assessment. Although these are not very scientific, they are classic examples of assessing interpretation during the program.

AFTER (SUMMATIVE)

Summative evaluation could occur at the end of an individual program or after an entire interpretive season. For example, a manager might consider all evaluations occurring during the season to be formative and only end-of-the-year, cumulative assessments to be summative.

Summative evaluation conducted at the end of an individual program is beneficial for discovering the impact of a program. Impact assessment will help you determine whether the program is worth the time and money spent on it. Program effectiveness can be partially judged based on whether or not the outcomes matched the objectives of the program. If the answer is no, modifications to the objectives, the program, the target

audience, the interpreter, or the program are in order. Thorough evaluation will make it clear which should be modified.

CLOSING THE LOOP (MODIFICATION)

Once a program has been evaluated, it is time to use that information. Monitoring and evaluation are part of a cyclical process. Once you have assessment data, you can make changes in your program to better meet your goals. It is also time to celebrate your strengths and recognize your weak areas as an interpreter.

Evaluations can suggest program modifications, give statistical summaries, and provide information for year-end reports regarding the products, successes, and satisfactions with interpretive efforts. They may provide results that were not expected. For example, in *Making the Grade* (2002), an analysis of California State Parks' school group programs (1998-2002), one of the primary conclusions was that the evaluation forms for school groups should be modified. These results, although not the target information sought from the survey, were still very helpful as they served to improve the evaluation process in the future.

Putting it all together—an example

Front-end (before)

- Outline goals and objectives during the planning process
- Determine target audience based on research
- Identify messages and themes that meet audience needs and fulfill goals and objectives.

Formative (during the program)

- Assess interpreter's communication characteristics
- Examine audience reactions to the program
- Analyze messages and themes to determine if appropriate for audience needs.

Summative (after)

- Examine audience's message retention and recall
- Conduct self-assessments
- Assess behavioral impact of the program
- Determine training needed (if any)

Closing the Loop (modification)

- Make needed modifications to program, delivery, and assessment methods
- Re-evaluate program goals and objectives.
- Complete training if necessary

12.4 WHO

Who should provide the feedback data for your evaluation? The audience, supervisor, peer, expert, or interpretive team can all be providers of evaluation data. Each of these evaluators may use different methods and strategies of assessment. Self-evaluations are also extremely valuable.

EVALUATION BY YOUR AUDIENCE

Audience members provide feedback and evaluation of interpretation through their body language, questions, and written and verbal comments. The audience may be especially effective at telling us if program goals and objectives were met, if their needs were addressed, if the program itself was effective, and their overall satisfaction level. This feedback is usually initiated and facilitated by someone other than the audience, such as the interpreter, supervisor or expert evaluator.

Although anyone can initiate evaluations, it is your responsibility to ensure that it occurs. *Aiming for Excellence* offers an assessment tool, the Visitor RAPPORt Survey (DPR 461A) that permits the audience to evaluate both the interpreter and the program. There is also a standardized CSP School Group Evaluation Form available for your use. Remember that the quality of the feedback is only as good as the methods used to collect it.

EVALUATION BY YOUR SUPERVISOR

A supervisor or Field Training Officer (FTO) assessment is very beneficial. This type of evaluation is often more objective than that provided by an audience. It can provide insights into the program's effectiveness, the interpreter's skills and abilities, audience reactions, and how well the program meets Department and program goals and objectives. Supervisory evaluation typically occurs at specific intervals throughout an interpretive season and is typically tied to the RAPPORt system.

Since a supervisor's evaluations may influence job performance assessment in addition to improving program effectiveness, it can be intimidating. Nevertheless, it is in your best interest to seek out opportunities for your supervisor to evaluate you. Your supervisor will discuss the results with you, provide a written evaluation, and issue a follow-up report. Supervisory evaluations are geared toward coaching you through the developmental stages of your interpretive career. Use the feedback and coaching from supervisors to help improve your interpretive techniques, skills, and abilities.

EVALUATION BY YOUR PEER

Peer evaluation occurs when a colleague conducts the evaluation. Useful on many levels and highly recommended, these evaluations can increase overall effectiveness, build collegiality, enhance comprehensive knowledge of the resource, and provide nonthreatening feedback. It is important to outline the parameter of the evaluation ahead of time. Discuss what you expect, establish a “game plan,” and whether you would like oral and/or written comments, whether you’d like them to use the DPR 461 or a different tool. Peers can also attend the program as members of the general audience and observe visitor reactions and comments throughout the program. This unsolicited audience feedback can provide authentic insight into program and interpreter effectiveness. Be sure to provide specific criteria for your peer to examine.

EVALUATION BY AN EXPERT

Professional evaluators, researchers, or statisticians perform expert and objective evaluations. These professionals have the advantage of being neutral and are more often able to recognize problems or issues that may be overlooked by peers or supervisors. There are many methods and strategies for expert evaluation, including in-depth interviews, focus groups, observations, and surveys. Expert evaluations are typically more costly and time consuming than other types of evaluations. However, the precision and quality of the information is often worth the cost. Often your District Interpretive Specialist can provide expert evaluations.

EVALUATION BY A TEAM

Team evaluation is another form of assessment conducted in California State Parks. In fact, “It is recommended that each district form a District Interpretive Planning and Improvement Team (IPIT)...whose primary role is to facilitate the ongoing improvement of the district’s entire interpretive program.” IPIT evaluation is beneficial for its broad range of opinions and perspectives, the collegiality it builds, and the enhancement

■ ■ ■

*...every performance, every
summer season, every service,
and the entire program
merits some kind of serious,
systematic, open, fair analysis...*

Douglas Knudson, Ted Cable,
and Larry Beck

■ ■ ■

it encourages for conducting mission-driven interpretation. In some districts, the IPIT may have another operating name, so seek it out.

SELF-EVALUATION

Interpreters themselves must also initiate evaluations. As the interpreter, you have the primary responsibility to evaluate your programs, yourself, and audience reactions to and satisfaction with the interpretation. This “self-evaluation” can

be very efficient and non-threatening. *Aiming for Excellence* provides a self-evaluation form (DPR 461D) using the RAPPOR criteria.

The remaining sections of this module will review and discuss other practical and effective methods that you can implement in order to evaluate the effectiveness of personal interpretive services.

Each district should have a District Interpretive Improvement Team (DIIT).



12.5 HOW

TRADITIONAL VS. SCIENTIFIC

As you know by now, there are numerous methods for conducting evaluations, ranging from rigorous scientific surveys to casual observations of visitors' behavior. In fact, most authors in literature make two classic distinctions of assessment methods: traditional and scientific. There have been many debates regarding the appropriateness of rigorous scientific assessment versus the more traditional, gut-level impressions about programs. This is similar to the discussion of whether or not interpretation is an art or a science.

Many interpreters agree with William Lewis that “after having observed, practiced, and coached interpretation in parks for more than thirty years, that the gut-level type of evaluation is satisfactory for more purposes” (Lewis, 1986, p. 110). **Seeing the sparkle in the eyes of visitors and sensing the enthusiasm in the audience are both “traditional” methods of evaluation.** Interpreters who have worked for any length of time can tell you when their programs went well. These “traditional” proponents view scientific evaluation as minimizing the true impact and effect of interpretation on the heart and mind of the individual. After all, we are exposing the “soul of a thing” (Tilden, 1977) to the heart of a person. How can this be measured, and does not the mere attempt to assess it degrade the spirituality of it? How can you measure and quantify art?

Interpreters that align more closely with the scientific forms of evaluation agree that, “current emphasis on accountability means interpretation must justify the time, money, equipment, and personnel it requires” (Sharpe, G., and Sharpe, W., 1986, p. 97). This position asserts that interpretation may be spiritual in nature, but it must also be accountable to the people it serves, the agency it represents, and the resources it interprets. Just as ministers or priests may be “called” to the church, they still try to accomplish specific goals and are periodically evaluated on their effectiveness in meeting those goals. It does not lessen their spirituality, but it is an indicator of their commitment and dedication to it.

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Everything that can be counted does not necessarily count; everything that counts cannot necessarily be counted.

Albert Einstein

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Scientific evaluation provides defensible results with rigorous, tangible outcomes as opposed to the more traditional methods of assessment. For example, your gut-level feeling about your program is not easily demonstrated to a supervisor nor is it an adequate justification for an increase in budget. Scientific assessment is a more accurate and representative measure of effectiveness.

While both traditional and scientific evaluations have value, it is the position of California State Parks that evaluation be conducted in a systematic, consistent manner.

“Interpretive services in California State Parks play a key role in the organization’s mission—inspiring and educating the people of California and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation. Measurement of the success of that mission is critical to maintaining support for interpretive services. Therefore, it is imperative that evaluations take place in a consistent and systematic way” (*Aiming for Excellence*, p. vii).

TRADITIONAL EVALUATION	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides immediate feedback • Easy to implement • Requires little training • Based on intuition and gut feeling of interpreter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often inaccurate and unreliable • Biased • Based on emotion and feeling • Provides no distinction between entertainment and interpretation

SCIENTIFIC EVALUATION	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generates definitive evidence of effectiveness • Respected by researchers and administrators • Results in quantifiable data • Allows for precise measurement of interpretive services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires money, time, and expertise • Difficult to collect, tabulate, and analyze • Unable to quantify intangibles • Field application of results is often difficult

There are clearly merits to each evaluative approach and a time and place for each method. Both methods should be used to gain the most accurate “total” picture of the effectiveness of interpretation in your park. As we have just discussed, the most appropriate methods for conducting an evaluation depend on the answers to many questions such as: Who is conducting the evaluation? What is being evaluated? When will the evaluation take place? They also depend on many other issues, such as

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Since an objective of any park administration is to improve the quality of park use, the effectiveness of our interpretive program is a major concern of all administrators.

George Hartzog

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money, time, and the expertise available. **Let us proceed with the practical realization that you, as a park interpreter, have no money, know very little about evaluation, and are already feeling overwhelmed with the amount of work you have to do. So how can you possibly conduct quality evaluation?**

OBJECTIVE-BASED ASSESSMENT

In *Module 4—Planning*, you practiced developing objectives for your program. You may recall that there were three basic types of objectives for interpretive programs: cognitive, behavioral, and affective. Different methods of assessment can be applied to each type of objective.

Cognitive Objectives

Cognitive objectives involve the understanding, information transfer, and/or learning that occurs based on the program. An example of this would be: *During a quiz at the end of the program, 80 percent of randomly selected visitors will correctly identify two reasons to protect tide pools.* One of the classic methods of measuring cognitive objectives is

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...we need to spend more time developing program objectives.

Objectives are an essential precursor to evaluation. Without carefully written objectives, it is next to impossible to interpret the results of evaluation.

Maureen McDonough

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through pre/post assessment. Knowledge is measured before and after exposure to a program to determine if a difference exists. When evaluated correctly, the increase in knowledge after exposure to the program can be attributed to the program. This information can be used to document meeting (or not meeting) the objectives. This is one of the most common forms of assessment, primarily due to the ease of data collection and the tangible results produced.

The DPR 461 (Standard RAPPORT Evaluation), DPR 461A (Visitor RAPPORT Survey), and School Group Program Evaluation each provide some questions that assess cognitive aspects of the program. Following are some additional easy techniques that you can implement to demonstrate program effectiveness in meeting cognitive objectives.

Cognitive Objective Assessment Techniques

- **Oral quizzes**—Learning can be easily assessed before, during, or after a program by having a quiz. Quizzes provide enjoyment, hands-on participation and social interaction, and allow for assessment. Divide visitors into teams, or have them participate as individuals. Postcards, pencils, or other appropriate items can be used as “prizes.” Quizzes may involve answers to questions or identification of objects, smells, etc. Use your imagination to make the evaluation part of the program fun.
- **Pre/post written responses**—This is a very useful method to assess cognitive objectives. Have two colors (for our example, yellow and green) of 3 x 5 index cards, and hand out one card of each color and a pencil to each individual at the start of the program. After your introduction, ask visitors to put the last three digits of their phone number in the top left corner of both cards. This is so you can match the two cards later. Have them write the answer to a question(s) you ask at the start of the program on the green card and collect them. Conduct the program as planned, and repeat the question(s) at the end of the program. Have them record their responses on the other card. After the program, the cards can be matched, using the numbers, to assess any increase in knowledge. Note: If there are children in the group too young to meaningfully participate, have them draw a picture of something from the program before and after. In addition, letting visitors keep the pencil is a nice touch and helps build public support and agency recognition.
- **Review questions**—Similar to the above methods is the use of review questions during and after the program. Ask questions to assess visitors' knowledge levels of information presented during the program. These can be conducted formally or informally as the program proceeds. For example, on the return after a guided walk, ask visitors questions about information covered during the walk. Remember that your audience is non-captive; that is, they are there for fun and enjoyment, not a grade or degree and question them appropriately.
- **Response or comment cards**—Response or comment cards (see box on the next page) are not only beneficial for measuring cognitive objectives but effectiveness as well. *Aiming for Excellence* has several good examples. Response cards are designed to measure how well the program meets performance objectives. They are easy, convenient, and effective measures that first-time interpreters can implement.

COGNITIVE OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT—AN EXAMPLE:

Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park

Please help us improve the quality of our interpretation.

1. What was the main point or message of the program?
2. How did you find out about the program?
3. What did you enjoy most about the program?
4. What did you enjoy least?
5. What is the Save the Redwoods League?

Thank you for your time!

Cognitive Objective Assessment Tips

- **Keep it random**—When you distribute response cards or choose visitors to survey, do it randomly. Asking every fifth person, every other person, etc. produces results more reflective of the entire population of users.
- **Keep it short**—Do not ask more than five questions in any data collection method or from any visitor. Too much data will be difficult to tabulate and analyze. In addition, visitors are on vacation and should not be needlessly disrupted from their recreational experience. This also forces you to carefully select the questions.
- **Make it convenient**—Provide multiple drop-off points for any written data. Make it easy and anonymous for visitors to return the information.
- **Assess throughout the season**—Conduct evaluations throughout the interpretive season. This information can be used very effectively to show patterns and changes.
- **Keep it small**—For written surveys, keep the actual paper small and unimposing. Postcard sized surveys are great!
- **If oral, provide method of recording**—Have a coworker or friend available to discreetly record answers to any oral methods of assessment. If that is not possible, “placeholders” can be used to serve to keep track of answers (For example, move coins from one pocket to another in between contacts to signify the number of correct responses.)
- **Mix it up**—Incorporate before and after assessment methods to determine the cognitive impact of programs.

Behavioral Objectives

Behavioral objectives focus on the physical behaviors of visitors. For example, “50 percent of visitors will take a brochure on tide pool protection.” One of the classic methods of measuring this type of objective is by observation. The key to implementing and measuring behavioral objectives is to ensure that observation is easy, practical, and discreet, and can reveal the targeted behavior. Recognize that you may have class, age, cultural, or other biases that may influence the results of your observations,

Creating the right objective can be challenging. For example, if the desired behavior is to “protect” the resource, then what behaviors will you tangibly measure? **Objectives must be stated in terms of observable phenomena.** Often interpreters try to measure program success by assessing behaviors that are hard to observe or cannot be directly connected with program exposure. The box on the next page presents some simple tips for conducting evaluation based on behavioral objectives.



Behavioral objective: 50% of walk attendees will take a brochure home.

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENTS—AN EXAMPLE

Your program's objective is to get people to leave less litter on the ground in your park. One way to measure success would be to observe visitors' responses to a "planted" piece of garbage.

For example, before the program, have a non-uniformed volunteer observe random visitors in the parking lot and their response to a "planted" piece of trash. How many visitors walk by the trash before someone picks it up? If 40 visitors walk by before someone picks it up, this might be a general average for this behavior—one out of 40 visitors will pick up trash. Repeat this several times to get a true average for the behavior.

After the program, again count how many visitors walk by before someone picks up the same type of "planted" trash. If only 10 program attendees walk by the garbage before someone picks it up, then the program may have reduced the average to one out of 10 visitors. This produces a tangible behavioral result from the program.

This is not statistically defensible data, but it does yield practical results. When repeated regularly and averaged over time, it can produce meaningful results of our interpretive efforts.

Behavioral Objective Assessment Tips

- **Conduct random observations of visitors**—Randomly choose times, places, and visitors, such as every fifth person, every other day, every other parking lot, etc. This produces results more reflective of the general population of park users.
- **Implement pre/post observations**—Observations of random visitors in the park can be compared to random observations of visitors exposed to the program to determine a "difference" due to exposure.
- **Target only specific observations**—Keep observations very specific and manageable. Do not conduct observations of "resource protection." These observations are often too general to be very useful. Instead, determine what specific behaviors reflect resource protection.
- **Assess behavior during the program**—Conduct observations during or immediately after the program. Assessments should be linked as closely as possible to the time of exposure to the program.

- **Observe evidence of behavior**—Sometimes it is easier and more discreet to observe the evidence of the behavior. For example, instead of watching visitors pick up trash, count the number of pieces of planted litter along a trail before and after the program.
- **Be sure the behavior is observable**—If the desired behavior is to get your audience to care about your park resources, then you will want to observe and assess that behavior. How do you think this could be done?

Affective Objectives

Affective objectives focus on the emotional impact of programs. The goal is for visitors to care, to support, to feel, and to be changed by the emotional impact of the resource and our programs. **This is one of the most powerful types of program objectives, but also one of the most difficult to assess.** “Visitors randomly surveyed before the program compared to those surveyed after will demonstrate a 20 percent increase in positive feelings that tide pools should be protected,” is an example of an affective objective. One of the classic methods of measuring this type of an objective is a self-report of emotion. The Visitor RAPPOR Survey (DPR 461A) is an example of allowing visitors to report on how they feel about programs.

Observations can also be used to measure targeted affective objectives. For example, the number of visitors purchasing books or taking brochures about the program topic after exposure to it could assess whether visitors care about the topic. Keep it simple and be sure that observations or self-report measures reflect the targeted emotions. Tips and techniques for conducting this type of evaluation are similar to the strategies we reviewed for cognitive and behavioral objectives.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

The most effective evaluations combine several methods of data gathering. Because each method has strengths and weaknesses associated with it, evaluation through multiple assessment strategies will produce a more accurate assessment of program effectiveness. This is called “triangulation.” Triangulation is used to increase overall accuracy.

For example, if three separate methods are implemented to assess meeting program objectives and all three produce similar results, this is a clearer result than if only one method was used. Different methods can be used within one program or across the season of the program to produce a summative evaluation. Regardless of the approach, increased accuracy will be achieved if multiple methods are used (see box on next page).

Cost Effectiveness

Like it or not, budgets drive much of the practical ability for parks to conduct interpretation. Determining cost effectiveness can be a significant contributor when providing budget justifications (Roggenbuck and Propst, 1981; Machlis, 1986). However, assigning a dollar figure to the worth of interpretation is a double-edged sword. Although it often provides a tangible measure, many would argue that you cannot place a dollar value on intangibles, such as inspiration or provocation. Although that may be true, you can place a value on some of the outputs. For example, cost effectiveness can be measured in the reduction of litter after a program and the budgetary savings of reduced cleanup hours spent by personnel. In addition, an increase in book sales after a program on the same topic can provide a good measure of cost benefit.

In addition to measuring output, the cost effectiveness of a program can also be evaluated by assessing input. For example, the hours spent preparing and delivering a program can be converted into the equivalent amount of salary (\$P) and then divided by the total number of people contacted in the program (N) to determine the cost per individual visitor ($\$P/N$) of the program. This measure, coupled with any discernible outputs in dollar figures, can provide a compelling picture of the cost effectiveness of a program.

EVALUATION STRATEGY—AN EXAMPLE

PROGRAM

Afternoon tide pool walk.

Theme

Tide pool life strives to survive with each changing tide.

Goals

1. Increase visitor satisfaction with the experience of exploring tide pools.
2. Promote tide pool protection.
3. Increase visitor knowledge about the fragile nature of tide pools.

Objectives

1. Visitors surveyed randomly before and after the program will demonstrate a 20 percent increase in positive feelings that tide pools should be protected.
2. 70 percent of randomly surveyed visitors responding to the general park satisfaction survey will indicate positive satisfaction levels with the program.
3. 80 percent of visitors asked will correctly identify two reasons to protect tide pools.

The following methods would be implemented throughout the entire season.

Audience

1. Have randomly selected visitors complete comment cards regarding tide pool objectives.
2. Implement the Visitor RAPPORT Survey (DPR 461A).

Peer

1. Observe visitor behavior and comments during and after the program, specifically examining protection behaviors and overall satisfaction comments.
2. Use/complete Standard RAPPORT Evaluation (DPR 461).

Supervisor

1. Use/complete Standard RAPPORT Evaluation (DPR 461).
2. Invite supervisors to your program early in the season, the middle, and near the end, so they can see the improvements made based on their feedback.

Interpreter

1. Conduct self-evaluations throughout the season using Self-Evaluation of Interpretive Programs (DPR 461D).
2. Observe visitor behavior at the tide pools before and after your programs.
3. Collect attendance levels at all programs.

This outline provides a strategy for evaluating the program that reflects many different points of view, times throughout the season, and purposes for the evaluation. By conducting an evaluation that relies on more than one method, you gain greater insight into the true success of your program. No one method is perfect, but together several different ones can provide a better picture of the interpretive services you provide.

As you can see in the box above, RAPPORT evaluation forms provide a method of “pulling it all together.” Because they are based on the primary criteria of effective interpretation (*Module 3—Communications*), the DPR 461 series helps to measure a program’s success on many levels. In addition, the series can be used by interpreters, supervisors, peers, and the audience. They expose overall visitor satisfaction, meet visitor needs and objectives, and assess program and interpreter effectiveness.

12.6 REPORTING

Another aspect of conducting evaluation is documenting the results for supervisors and administrators. Reporting should be simple, brief, and directly related to the documented information. The primary use of this information is to help you, the interpreter, increase effectiveness. However, since you are collecting the information, it may as well demonstrate your effectiveness to others. Reporting should include program summaries, outlines, objectives, attendance levels, and summaries of assessment measures used. For example, you could simply include an outline of the box on pages 483-484 and the results from each of the methods used throughout the season.

Be sure to keep a copy of all your reports and reporting procedures for your own records. Do not forget to place a copy of the reports in the individual program folders created in the planning stage (see *Module 3—Communications*). This information will be very useful to future interpreters.

Evaluation is an extremely useful tool to indicate program effectiveness, encourage interpreter development and growth, and further the mission of the Department. When asked why you are conducting an interpretive program, you should now be able to answer and clearly demonstrate your effectiveness in meeting those goals.

WHAT'S AHEAD?

We have completed our journey in understanding what interpretation is, how to conduct various program types, and finally how to evaluate the success of our efforts. Now we turn to the profession and its future. What does it mean to be an interpreter? What are the responsibilities of the profession, and what role do interpreters play to ensure further development of the discipline? In *Module 13—Professionalism* we will discuss these and other issues facing the profession of interpretation.

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Module 12
EVALUATION

SELF ASSESSMENT

Answer each question in the section below before reviewing the material in *Module 12—Evaluation*. The answers are not provided. Check your answers with your colleagues and as you read *Module 12—Evaluation*. Items from the self assessment may be reviewed and discussed in class.

- 1) What is *Aiming for Excellence*?

- 2) List four reasons why we should conduct evaluation of interpretive programs.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

3) When conducting evaluation of personal interpretive services, what specific types of things should be evaluated?

4) What is the DPR 461?

5) When should evaluation be conducted?

6) RAPPOR criteria form the basis of much of the evaluation in California State Parks.
(Explain your answer.)

- a) True
- b) False

7) Name two benefits of having an expert provide the evaluation.

1. _____

2. _____

8) Evaluation of interpretive performances should be conducted by a supervisor.
(Explain your answer.)

a) True

b) False

9) What is self evaluation?

10) Describe one method to assess learning based on program objectives.

11) To save time, you should only distribute surveys to visitors who you think will fill them out. (Explain your answer.)

- a) True
- b) False

12) You should have only one drop-off point for surveys. (Explain your answer.)

- a) True
- b) False

13) When measuring the behavioral impact of a program, which of the following are recommended practices? (Check all that apply.)

- a) Assess general, not specific, behavior
- b) Conduct random observations of visitors
- c) Observe evidence of behaviors
- d) Practice discreet observations

14) It is impossible to assess the emotional impact of a program. (Explain your answer.)

- a) True
- b) False

15) What is triangulation?

Now that you have completed the self assessment questions, review the material in *Module 12—Evaluation* to confirm your answers. After reading the module, move on to the workbook learning activities, which will assist you in developing your skills.

WORKBOOK LEARNING ACTIVITIES

To help you review and apply the material covered in *Module 12—Evaluation*, a selection of review questions and/or activities is provided. Again, no answers are included. Use the material from the module, outside sources, and your colleagues to help you complete the activities and answer the questions. There may be more than one right answer. Use the questions and activities to generate discussion about the material. Be prepared to discuss, perform, or demonstrate your answers in class.

- 1) You designed an interpretive program to educate visitors about two primary reasons to protect the resources in the park. Describe two methods you can use to demonstrate your effectiveness in meeting your program goals. Describe an additional method you could use to assess your effectiveness as an interpreter for this program.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

- 2) A common goal for interpretation is provocation. Describe one way you can observe and measure if your program was provocative.

- 3) What do you think is the most important reason to conduct evaluation in your park?

- 4) You are busy and have many duties to perform in the course of a day. What steps can you take to ensure evaluation will not fall by the wayside?

Take it to YOUR Park

Answer each question with the information specific to your park. You will have to conduct some research in order to answer each question. Use the answers as a guide for enhancing your career in California State Parks.

EVALUATION

Park name: _____

- 1) Describe how you can use triangulation to evaluate a program you designed in one of the previous modules.

- 2) Create an evaluation strategy for a program you are designing in your park. Be sure that it contains front-end, formative, and summative elements.

Module 13

PROFESSIONALISM



Ere long may nature guiding be an occupation of honor and distinction. May the tribe increase!

Enos Mills

Module 13

PROFESSIONALISM**What is it?**

High quality standards for the interpretive program including conducting, training, and evaluating

Why do we do it?

To enhance the credibility and effectiveness of interpretation

How do we do it?

By providing high-quality programs and service

INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to be a “professional?” Now that we have uncovered the history, purposes, theories, and skills of practicing interpretation, we turn to a more philosophical discussion about the profession of interpretation. What does it mean to be an interpreter? What are the responsibilities of interpreters to the agency, the public, the resource, and to themselves?

■ ■ ■
*When love and skill
 work together, expect
 a masterpiece.*

John Ruskin

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The Department's commitment to interpretation is evident not just in the broad scope of its program and in the fact that interpretation is one of the Department's six core programs, but in the dedication of its staff of paid professionals and volunteers. That commitment is also affirmed in various official documents—the DPR Mission Statement, a Parks Commission policy (#IV.6), and various initiatives and plans. It is the responsibility of staff at all levels of the Department to contribute to creating and delivering high-quality interpretive services for the public.

Department Operations Manual 0900

As you can see, California State Parks stresses professionalism in its programs, staff, volunteers, and cooperating associations. You will need to exhibit professionalism in your daily interactions with all those encountered. You have an ethical responsibility to the agency, the resource, the public, yourself, and to the discipline itself when you practice

the art and science of interpretation. These responsibilities along with standards of practice combine to form the backbone of the profession of interpretation. This module will propose issues and ideas for contemplation. Keep them in mind as you develop and grow as an interpreter and steward of California's precious resources.



Even the most informal interactions should be conducted with professionalism.

13.1 CHARACTERISTICS

Before we begin a discussion of the interpretive profession, we must understand what profession means. From the dictionary, we find:

DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS

Profession: *n.* a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long academic preparation (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 1994)

Professional: *n.* one that engages in an activity professionally (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 1994)

Professionalism: *n.* the standing, practice, or methods of a professional, as distinguished from those of an amateur (Random House Webster's Dictionary, 2000).

In more concrete terms, think about the following:

- Professionals are considered experts.
- Professionals have a high degree of generalized and systematic knowledge with a theoretical base.
- The primary orientation of professionals is to their public and/or community interest.
- Professionals have a high degree of self-control of their behavior and are governed by a code of ethics.
- Professionals exhibit enthusiasm and commitment to their audience or customers.
- Professionals are committed to continuous learning about the profession.
- Professionals are dedicated to services and institutions.
- Professionals take pride in the quality of their work.

13.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

As a professional interpreter, you have a responsibility to the science and art of the interpretation that you practice, the agency for whom you work, the audience you serve, and the resources with which you work. In addition, one of the most critical responsibilities is to yourself. Each of these areas interacts with the others to weave the tapestry of what it means to be an interpreter. Although we will discuss each separately, they are all interrelated. These responsibilities help us to begin to distinguish the mere **practice** of interpretation from the **profession**.



We have a professional responsibility to tell the resources' stories accurately.

skills and strategies, contribute to the discipline through articles, research, etc., and to participate in training and conferences. Networking is a critical component of improving and expanding the profession of interpretation. The profession is only as strong as the members creating and adhering to it.

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Every interpreter has a personal responsibility to research carefully the messages being conveyed, to represent their organizations faithfully, and to handle the facts, artifacts, and stories of culture and science ethically.

Lisa Brochu and Tim Merriman

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INTERPRETATION

Every interpreter has a responsibility to know, understand, and apply the best practices of interpretation. It is the collective group that makes up the profession. **Staying current in the field is your responsibility. Every time an interpreter interacts with the public, he or she represents the field as a whole and CSP.** Administrators, managers, and visitors form opinions about the field of interpretation based on personal experiences with individual practitioners. It is your responsibility as a professional heritage interpreter to know how to conduct quality interpretation. To do this, you must stay current in the literature, continually learn new

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

As an interpreter, you have responsibility to represent your agency in an appropriate and ethical manner. In the field of interpretation, you work for the public you serve, the resources you represent, and for California State Parks. You have a responsibility to positively represent the Department, promote its mission, increase public support, and conduct ethical action in the Department's best interest. Personal agendas should be secondary to the accomplishment of the mission of the organization for which you work. Life is short. Be sure you are doing something you love. **In the field of interpretation especially, the love and passion for what you do plays a tremendous role in your job performance.** Visitors can see the innate interest, passion, and care you have for your park and your programs. This cannot be taught through training, books, or manuals. It is you who must bring the belief and support in your Department's mission to the public.



Visitors can see the passion and care you have for your park.

AUDIENCE

The audience you serve depends on you to convey accurate, fair, and meaningful information. It is your responsibility to serve your clients in the most appropriate and ethical manner possible. Therefore, you have an ethical responsibility to ensure the information and messages you share with the public are conveyed with the utmost quality, discretion, and honesty.

Balancing the needs and mission of the agency with the demand to accurately represent the resource is your responsibility. The audience deserves the "truth" of the science, the place, the people, etc., and it is your job as a professional to provide this as ethically as possible.

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The audience and even the organization may not know when the interpreter fails to act ethically. Interpreters, as individuals, must protect the dignity and value of the profession in the careful handling of every action.

Lisa Brochu and Tim Merriman

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RESOURCE

You must represent the resource to the public in such a manner as to ensure its protection, promote visitors' respect and support, and encourage the development of future resource stewards. For many visitors, interpreters serve as the link between the resource and the meanings ascribed to it. Additionally, in many parks the interpreters are the ones most familiar with the resource and the effects of visitor use. **You have a responsibility to promote resource knowledge, understanding, and protection through your carefully planned programs.**

We “speak for the trees,” and in this role we must be able to know what they would say (Seuss, 1971). Research, research, and research are the keys to fulfilling our responsibility to the resource. **Know the resource:** walk the trails, uncover the past, discover the seasons, and learn the flora and fauna. **Feel the resource:** slow down and listen, lie on the ground with your eyes closed, step into the past. **Understand the resource:** read, learn the stories, dog-ear the field guides, and ask questions. There is no substitute for field experience, for walking trails, for being in the resource, and for knowing the place. As a professional, it is your responsibility to the resource to know it so well that you may accurately and appropriately “speak for the trees.”

INTERPRETER

The final responsibility you have is to yourself. In order to be an effective interpreter, you have to feel it, to believe in it, and to sincerely care about what you are doing. You



Discover the trail, remember your bliss...fuel the fire.

must fuel your enthusiasm, your innate interest, and your passion. Any fire, even one of the spirit, must be tended, or it will soon smolder and die. During the first weeks on the job, excitement permeates everything you do. As the interpretive season wears on, you become more comfortable with your programs, the public, and your resource. After the fiftieth time you give that same program—well, it is easy to become complacent. The other responsibilities of a professional interpreter that we have discussed will all be affected if you become bored, tired, or too comfortable. Keep your programs fresh; add new information, modify, read, learn, and always try to remember, **it is the first time visitors will hear it**. Most importantly, keep yourself fresh and renewed. The number one way to do this is to get out in the resource. Walk the trails and the historic sites, and remember why you entered this field in the first place.

■ ■ ■

Do not burn yourselves out. Be as I am—a reluctant enthusiast...a part-time crusader, a half-hearted fanatic. Save the other half of yourselves and your lives for pleasure and adventure. It is not enough to fight for the land; it is even more important to enjoy it.

Edward Abbey

■ ■ ■

13.3 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Interpretation is one of the Department's six core programs. As stated in the Department Operations Manual, it is the responsibility of staff at all levels of the Department to contribute to creating and delivering high-quality interpretive services for the public. To accomplish this, you will need to be professional in your delivery of interpretive programs and use the support resources available to stay current and proficient in this area of your duties.



INTERPRETER'S CREED

As an interpreter for California State Parks, I shall endeavor to:

- Know, understand and apply the best practices of interpretation.
- Conduct evaluation of myself and my programs.
- Continually strive to meet agency goals and objectives.
- Stay current in the literature, techniques and skills of interpretation.
- Conduct meaningful thematic interpretation.
- Keep in touch with visitors' needs, goals and desires.
- Make all of my presentations, programs, and displays relevant and enjoyable to visitors.
- Create and conduct interpretation to protect and represent the inherent meanings in the resource.
- Be a role model for environmental responsibility.
- Strive to make interpretation universally accessible to all visitors.
- Be approachable, kind, and respectful to visitors and colleagues.
- Be a resource, mentor, and professional colleague for others.
- Create and strive to meet personal yearly goals.
- Continually rediscover and explore my park's resources.



13.4 SUPPORTING THE PROFESSION

There are two groups that work closely with California State Parks in the design, delivery, and support of interpretation: cooperating associations and the Volunteers-In-Parks (VIP) program. These groups are closely aligned with what Tilden termed “happy amateurs” dedicated to the parks. These are people who love the parks and are passionate about helping achieve the mission of California State Parks, but are not necessarily professional interpreters. They may have special expertise, training, or interest in parks and the resources within them. In fact, many are uniquely qualified to act as interpreters of the resource. Because of the important role these groups play in conducting interpretation in California State Parks, we will discuss each one below. Their work in the parks affects the overall perceived professionalism of interpretation in the parks, and they should be closely nurtured, advised, monitored, and trained.

VIPP (VOLUNTEERS IN PARKS PROGRAM)

Volunteers have been helping out since before the official park system began. Starting in the 1860s with the caring volunteers who rallied to help establish Yosemite as the first state park, to well over 15,000 individuals today, volunteers play a key role in our parks. Volunteers perform many services, including working as docents, park hosts, and visitor center staff. They interact with the public daily, conducting roving interpretation and formal programs, promoting resource protection, and providing information and orientation services. These are some of the same critical duties performed by interpreters in the park. These individuals are not “professional,” as we have discussed; they support the paid interpretive staff. However, this does not mean they can not and should not exude professionalism in their actions.



Tilden described the “happy amateur” as the individual filled with enthusiasm and a desire to share that passion with others. “One does not need the background of a formal education to

Volunteers play a key role in California State Parks and need your support and guidance.

become an amateur of either art or science,” said Tilden (1977, p. 101). Others (Knudson, Cable, and Beck, 1995) have indicated there is no reason volunteers cannot interact with the public in a professional manner. It is up to the rest of the supporting staff and you—the professional interpreter—to ensure that professional standards are adhered to.

California State Park’s VIP program is coordinated statewide by the Volunteer Programs Manager. The purpose of the VIP program is to carry out California State Parks’ mission by establishing the highest standards and developing the best quality volunteer programs. **Working closely with volunteers in your park by providing training and oversight, you can ensure your volunteers are engaging in high quality interactions with the public.** This contributes to the overall professionalism of interpretive services.

NONPROFIT COOPERATING ASSOCIATIONS

Cooperating associations are another critical group of “happy amateurs” helping to fulfill the interpretive mission of CSP. Cooperating associations are nonprofit, charitable, IRS 501(c) (3) organizations committed to funding, supporting, and assisting California State Parks in its educational and interpretive mission.

Today, there are more than 85 cooperating associations raising more than \$12 million dollars to fulfill the interpretive mission of

CSP. These organizations provide program support, raise capital needed for interpretive projects, conduct community outreach, participate in annual training and workshops, and provide educational and interpretive materials for sale through numerous outlets. Wherever a visitor center or bookstore is found, chances are a cooperating association is involved. As with VIPs, working closely with your cooperating association to provide professional interactions with the public should be a priority. The presence of cooperating associations extends the reach of park personnel already stretched thin. Communicating with your cooperating association pays dividends and increases the overall effectiveness of your park’s interpretive services. Policies, guidelines and other essential information about the Cooperating Associations Program are available at www.parks.ca.gov/associations.



Bookstores are one of the most common interpretive services provided by cooperating associations.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

National Association for Interpretation (NAI)

NAI is a professional association for those involved in the interpretation of natural and cultural heritage resources in settings such as parks, zoos, museums, nature centers, aquaria, botanical gardens, and historical sites. For more than 50 years, NAI and its parent organizations have encouraged networking, training, and collaboration among members and partners in support of their mission: inspiring leadership and excellence to advance heritage interpretation as a profession.

Currently there are over 5,000 members of NAI in the United States and in more than 30 countries throughout the world. NAI offers an annual national workshop that attracts more than 1,000 people, an international conference, regional and special-interest section workshops, two full-color magazines, certification and training, an association store, a publishing imprint (InterpPress), digital newsletters, and web-based services. The regional chapters offer outstanding networking opportunities as well as local training opportunities for you and your volunteers. For more information, visit www.interpnet.com.

North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE)

NAAEE is a network of professionals, students, and volunteers working in the field of environmental education throughout North America and in over 55 countries around the world. Since 1971, the Association has promoted environmental education and supported the work of environmental educators. The NAAEE takes a cooperative, non-confrontational, scientifically-balanced approach to promoting education about environmental issues.

In order to translate theory into practice and to provide support for environmental education and educators, NAAEE offers a variety of programs and activities. These include an annual conference, publications, and web-based support. For more information, visit www.naaee.org.

California Association of Museums (CAM)

CAM, founded in 1979, is a nonprofit organization that represents the interests of California museums and their employees and volunteers. CAM's members include educational and research institutions, as well as individuals associated with such institutions. Their function is to interpret and preserve art and cultural and scientific artifacts for public benefit.

CAM provides a variety of programs that address issues important to museums and advocates for museum interests at the local, state, and federal levels. CAM's programs

include workshops, an annual conference, an informational website, and a legislative advocacy network. CAM encourages the implementation of professional practices and standards in museums, and works to increase the public's understanding of and support for museums. CAM offers both institutional and individual memberships at reasonable prices. For more information on this organization, visit www.calmuseums.org.

American Association of Museums (AAM)

AAM is a national organization representing museums and their paid and volunteer staff. Founded in 1906, AAM currently has more than 16,000 members, with over 11,000 individual members who span the range of occupations in museums, including curators, educators, designers, directors, public relations staff, security officers, trustees, and volunteers. AAM is an advocate for museum issues, provides professional educational opportunities, and offers accreditation and guidance on professional standards. For more information on AAM, visit www.aam-us.org.

American Association for State and Local History (AASLH)

AASLH was officially founded in 1940, although its history dates back to an outgrowth of the American Historical Association in 1904. This professional organization for individuals and institutions associated with state and local history currently has close to 6,000 members nationwide. AASLH serves history organizations in the United States through a variety of programs and publications. Although the organization tends to have a museum focus, its members span the gamut of historical interests.

AASLH offers technical resources such as a free video lending library, and technical leaflets. It holds an annual meeting and periodic professional development workshops and seminars and produces a variety of publications including a newsletter, monthly magazine, and books. It



Professional organizations offer a wealth of resources and training opportunities.

has also created software and programming materials geared toward the needs of smaller institutions that may not have the funds to produce such items on their own. For more information, visit www.aaslh.org.

California Council for the Promotion of History (CCPH)

CCPH is a statewide organization committed to serving the interests of professionals across all the history disciplines. As such, CCPH's membership includes individuals and institutions associated with museums, historical societies, archives, historic preservation and archaeology, education, and government service. Founded in 1977, CCPH's program offerings include an annual conference, a quarterly newsletter, and a mini-grant program. CCPH also offers certification through its Register of Professional Historians and puts forward Standards of Professional Conduct for historians. Through a variety of committees, CCPH advocates for history-related interests at the local, state, and national levels. For more information, visit www.csus.edu/org/ccph.

Local Agencies

Many communities, cities, special districts and counties have museums, parks, cultural sites, recreational facilities, and zoos. They are managed by local government agencies and nonprofit organizations. Each varies greatly in their approach to interpretation. Some, like the East Bay Regional Park District and the Oakland Museum of California, are well established and have developed extensive facilities and programs that reach thousands of visitors each year.

These organizations have the ability to adapt and transform themselves, expanding their outreach to the perceived needs of their respective communities. They have adopted a regional or statewide approach to interpretation and offer comprehensive training for their staff and volunteers, as well as for individuals from other agencies. Others are much smaller or take a more modest approach to interpretation. Within most counties there is at least one organization that has focused on the preservation and interpretation of the area's natural or cultural history.

Association for Living History, Farms and Agricultural Museums (ALHFAM)

ALHFAM is a museum organization involved with living historical farms, agricultural museums, outdoor museums of history and folk life, and those museums—large and small—that use “living history” programming. The organization is committed to supporting museum interpreters, educators, researchers, administrators, curators, and

volunteers in the fields of historical agriculture, trades and manufacturing, clothing, foodways, living history programming, historic site administration, care of collections, and program delivery. The organization is an affiliate of the American Association of Museums. For more information, visit www.alhfam.org.

Historical Societies

Throughout the state, a number of historical societies support the preservation of history and its interpretation. Many have scholarly journals, oral histories, documentary materials, and other useful collections. They may be organizations with a statewide interest, like the California Historical Society, or regional groups, such as the Historical Society of Southern California. They can also be smaller local organizations, like the Sacramento County Historical Society. Many have a considerable history themselves, going back fifty to one hundred years. Some groups take a specific focus of interest, such as the Chinese Historical Society of America or the National Japanese American Historical Society. Even the most remote locations in the state have historical organizations with resources that may be of value to interpreters developing programs. Use the American Association for State and Local History's *Directory of Historical Organizations in the United States and Canada* or the California Historical Society's *California Cultural Directory* to locate information. These can be found at www.californiahistoricalsociety.org.

***Be knowledgeable, be skillful, be ethical, be passionate—
Be an interpreter!***

13.5 THE FUTURE

The future of the profession depends on you, the practicing interpreter. The role you play in the development of the discipline is significant. We all determine what interpretation is, how it will be managed, and what the accepted standards will be. You are already well on your way to becoming a professional by completing this training. There are many paths to an end, and which road you choose to follow is up to you. The profession of interpretation is a noble and distinguished one, deserving the dedication and participation of its members. **THAT IS YOU!** Ask questions, contribute, grow, change, challenge, and discover. The profession begins to die when the members become complacent and stop learning.

Our mission is one of distinction and importance. “It is a worthwhile life work and one that will add immeasurably to the general welfare of the nation” (Mills, 1920, p. 140). Especially in this day and age of dissolution, environmental degradation, terrorism, fear, and general unease, the parks and our connections to them are critical. Not only is connecting the public to natural and cultural resources important to the overall health of the nation, but interpretation of the critical issues facing the country and our people is important. Who better than an interpreter to help make sense of the issues we face? Is that not our job, to translate the science, link people to the places, and speak for the issues? We cannot and should not restrict ourselves to just the simple topics. Instead, we should tackle those that are difficult, complex, and unclear. These critical managerial, political, and emotional issues are the worlds we should help illuminate for the public and for ourselves.



The future of interpretation is up to each of you.

WHAT'S AHEAD?

You now have the theories, tools, skills, and techniques of an interpreter and are ready to begin practicing the art and science of interpretation. There will be many new opportunities and experiences that will teach you more about the essence of interpretation than could ever be imparted in a training session. Learn, grow, and teach others. As an interpreter, you wield enormous strength, influence, and responsibility. Use it well.

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Module 13

PROFESSIONALISM

SELF ASSESSMENT

Answer each question in the section below before reviewing the material in *Module 13—Professionalism*. The answers are not provided. Check your answers with your colleagues and as you read *Module 13—Professionalism*. Items from the self assessment may be reviewed and discussed in class.

1) Name three characteristics of a profession.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

2) What will you do to exhibit professionalism as an interpreter?

3) What is the NAI?

4) There are set “standards” for being a professional interpreter. (Explain your answer.)

- a) True
- b) False

5) What is the difference between being a “professional” interpreter and a “happy amateur?”

6) What are your responsibilities to the audience to whom you present a program?

- 7) What are VIPPs, and what role do they play in meeting the interpretive mission of CSP?

- 8) There are approximately _____ volunteers in CSP.
- a) 5,000
 - b) 10,000
 - c) 15,000
 - d) 20,000

- 9) What roles do cooperating associations play in CSP?

Now that you have completed the self assessment questions, review the material in *Module 13—Professionalism* to confirm your answers. After reading the module, move on to the workbook learning activities, which will assist you in developing your skills.

- 3) What ethics are involved in what we do? Explain your answer. Should these be our personal ethics? The Department's? The discipline's?

- 4) What can you do to develop and improve your skills as a professional?

FORMS

Standard RAPPORT Evaluation

INTERPRETER	PROGRAM TITLE	SITE	DATE PROGRAM PRESENTED				
PROGRAM THEME		ATTENDANCE	EVALUATOR NAME				
ITEM	RELEVANT	START TIME	FINISH TIME				
		POOR	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	STANDARD	GOOD	EXCELLENT	
	Use of comparisons to relate new ideas to familiar concepts.	1	2	3	4	5	COMMENTS <i>(Enter comments for each element.)</i>
	Appropriate to age and ability level of group.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Appropriate program length.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Relates DPR message/mission and park objectives to visitors' lives.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Well-prepared, well-researched (costume if applicable).	1	2	3	4	5	
	Correct facts.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Balanced presentation of theories.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Program is thought-provoking and engaging.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Leads the group in active participation.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Encourages visitor feedback.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Appropriate appearance, mannerisms, gestures and body language.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Positive attitude, enthusiasm, and appropriate humor.	1	2	3	4	5	

ITEM	COMMENTS (Enter comments for each element.)						
	POOR	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	STANDARD	GOOD	EXCELLENT		
PROGRAMMATICALLY ACCESSIBLE	Thorough orientation — restrooms, exits, length of program, rest stops, availability of services for people with disabilities or limited English.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Uses a variety of senses to communicate concepts.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Faces audience, speaks with mouth visible for possible lip reading.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Considers and responds to visitors' needs.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Good volume, pronunciation and enunciation.	1	2	3	4	5	
ORGANIZED	Comfortable and appropriate pace.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Introduction, body, conclusion.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Effective transitions.	1	2	3	4	5	
RETAINED	Good sequence and progression of ideas.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Uses questions to check for understanding.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Conclusion includes a review or summary to make sure visitors understood major points.	1	2	3	4	5	
THEMATIC	Has a discernable theme statement.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Theme addresses the significance of the park and helps bring the park to life.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Key points develop the theme.	1	2	3	4	5	

RECOMMENDATIONS

COMMENTS DISCUSSED WITH (check all that apply)

- Interpreter(s)
 Unit Supervisor
 District Superintendent

EVALUATOR SIGNATURE



DATE

PHONE NO. ()

CALNET

Visitor RAPPORT Survey

Thank you for providing feedback on this interpretive program. We value your honest assessment, and offer this evaluation so that California State Parks may provide the highest level of public service. Please turn in this form to the park office or return it to a park employee.

PARK	DATE					
PRESENTER	PROGRAM TITLE					
ITEM	DEFINITELY NO	PROBABLY NOT	MAYBE	PROBABLY YES	DEFINITELY YES	APPLICABLE NOT
RELEVANT: Did the program give you a better appreciation of this park?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Was the length of the program suitable?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
ACCURATE: Was the presenter knowledgeable?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
PROVOCATIVE/ENJOYABLE: Was the program interesting?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Did you feel involved in the program?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Did you enjoy the program?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
PROGRAMMATICALLY ACCESSIBLE: If you have visual, hearing, or mobility impairment or any disability, were you accommodated appropriately?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
ORGANIZED: Was the material presented in a logical order?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
RETAINED/THEME: In your own words, what was the main point of the program?						
How could this program be improved?						
How did you find out about this program or activity?						

Visitor RAPPORT Survey

Thank you for providing feedback on this interpretive program. We value your honest assessment, and offer this evaluation so that California State Parks may provide the highest level of public service. Please turn in this form to the park office or return it to a park employee.

PARK	DATE					
PRESENTER	PROGRAM TITLE					
ITEM	DEFINITELY NO	PROBABLY NOT	MAYBE	PROBABLY YES	DEFINITELY YES	APPLICABLE NOT
RELEVANT: Did the program give you a better appreciation of this park?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Was the length of the program suitable?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
ACCURATE: Was the presenter knowledgeable?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
PROVOCATIVE/ENJOYABLE: Was the program interesting?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Did you feel involved in the program?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Did you enjoy the program?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
PROGRAMMATICALLY ACCESSIBLE: If you have visual, hearing, or mobility impairment or any disability, were you accommodated appropriately?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
ORGANIZED: Was the material presented in a logical order?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
RETAINED/THEME: In your own words, what was the main point of the program?						
How could this program be improved?						
How did you find out about this program or activity?						

SELF-EVALUATION OF INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM

INTERPRETER	DATE PROGRAM PRESENTED	SITE	
THEME STATEMENT			
ITEM	YES	NO	IDEAS TO TRY NEXT TIME
<p>RELEVANT:</p> <p>Did I use the pre-program time for assessing my group's interests, capabilities and prior knowledge of the park? Was my introduction meaningful to the group? Was the presentation appropriate to the age and ability of the group? Did I hold the interest of the group members? Was the program length appropriate? Did I use comparisons to relate new ideas to familiar concepts? Did I relate the DPR mission and park significance to the visitors' lives?</p>			
<p>ACCURATE:</p> <p>Did I show a good knowledge of the subject matter? Was I fully prepared to answer a variety of questions? Do I have any doubts about any statements I made? Did I give a balanced presentation of conflicting theories?</p>			
<p>PROVOCATIVE/ENJOYABLE:</p> <p>Did I get my group involved? Did I provoke them to care about the park?</p> <p>Speech:</p> <p>Was my volume appropriate? Did I vary tones for emphasis? Were my words clearly pronounced? Was my speaking rate varied for emphasis and feeling?</p> <p>Gestures:</p> <p>Did I use body motions such as pointing for direction and gesturing for emphasis? Did I avoid distracting postures such as folded arms, hands in pockets, rocking, leaning or slouching?</p>			

ITEM	YES	NO	IDEAS TO TRY NEXT TIME
<p>Was I using facial gestures as positive responses to my group, such as nodding and smiling? Was I facing my group when listening?</p> <p>Poise:</p> <p>Was I available for conversation before and after the presentation? Was I supportive when my group responded to my presentation? Did I handle strange questions gracefully? Did I answer the most frequently asked questions as if it were the first time the questions were asked? Did I keep my group under control? Was I positive toward my group at all times, expressing warmth, interest and enthusiasm? Did I use humor appropriately? Was I attentive to visitor comments, questions and replies by acknowledging the speaker?</p>			
<p>PROGRAMMATICALLY ACCESSIBLE</p> <p>Did I provide a thorough orientation with ground rules and safety tips clearly and graciously explained? Did I offer services that are available for people with disabilities or limited English? Did I explain the length of the program, rest stops, and exit options? Were key concepts illustrated through the use of objects, media and/or site features? Was my mouth clearly visible to assist possible lip reading? Did I speak slowly enough to be understood by everyone in the group, including people with hidden disabilities? Did I wait for chatter and distracting noises (such as from an electric wheelchair) to subside before beginning?</p>			
<p>ORGANIZED</p> <p>Did my presentation have an introduction, body and conclusion? Did I introduce myself and California State Parks? Did I organize what I said so that the visitor could understand the major points I was making? Did I manage the time well? Did I use good transitions? Was the progression of ideas smooth and logical?</p>			

ITEM	YES	NO	IDEAS TO TRY NEXT TIME
<p>RETAINED</p> <p>Were my questioning strategies successful in encouraging participation and leading visitors to learn? Did the visitors' questions reflect an understanding of the subject? Did I use questions to check for understanding? Did I summarize? Did I review my theme for visitors? Did I leave them wanting more?</p>			
<p>THEMATIC</p> <p>Did I use a clearly stated theme? Did I select appropriate facts to accomplish the objectives and illustrate the theme of my program? Did my theme address the significance of the park and help bring the park to life?</p>			
<p>How can I improve my presentation?</p>			
<p>How can my supervisor or other staff assist me with improving my presentation?</p>			

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Licensee agrees to pay the Department, upon acceptance of this agreement, and prior to delivery of the Material, all expenses as follows:

AGREED AND ACCEPTED

State of California Department of Parks and Recreation		LICENSEE	
BY ▷	DATE	BY ▷	DATE
PRINTED NAME OF PERSON SIGNING		PRINTED NAME OF PERSON SIGNING	
TITLE	DISTRICT/SECTION	TITLE	
PHONE NO.	EMAIL	PHONE NO.	EMAIL

**State of California - The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

PERSONAL RELEASE FOR RECORDED INTERVIEW

EMPLOYEE'S NAME _____ hereafter called the "Employee."			
PRODUCER'S NAME _____ hereafter called the "Producer."			
<p>This agreement between the Employee, an individual and an employee of the California Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Producer is made and entered into this _____ day of _____, _____.</p> <p>WHEREAS, Producer desires, and Employee agrees to allow Producer, to interview, photograph and otherwise visually and audiovisually record Employee in and in connection with the program entitled " _____", a program being produced for _____ and/or its related telecasting service (the "Program"), commencing on _____ and ending on _____.</p> <p>Now therefore, in consideration of the promises and mutual covenants and agreements contained herein, Employee and Producer agree as follows:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Employee hereby grants to Producer, its licensees, successors and assigns, solely for use in connection with the Program:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The right to interview, photograph, film record the voice of, reproduce and/or simulate the voice and picture of, or otherwise visually or audiovisually record Employee; b) All rights, interest and ownership in and to the results and proceeds of the interview, the films, photographs and recordings produced hereunder and all derivative rights thereto, based on technology used now or by technology developed and used in the future, in perpetuity (collectively, the "Material") which shall be considered a "work made for hire," including, without limitation, the right, but not the obligation, to use all or any part of the Material in any and all media whatsoever, whether now known or hereafter devised, in perpetuity, throughout the universe; c) The right to edit the Material and/or combine it with any other material. <p>For the purpose of this Agreement, Employee is not an employee of Producer. Employee will endeavor to provide truthful and accurate information in connection with any interview. HOWEVER, IN NO EVENT, SHALL EMPLOYEE OR THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION BE LIABLE FOR ANY DAMAGES ARISING FROM OR RELATED TO THIS AGREEMENT. EMPLOYEE AND THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION EXPRESSLY DISCLAIM ANY AND ALL WARRANTIES, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE OR NON-INFRINGEMENT.</p> <p>Producer assumes all responsibility for investigating, verifying and clearing any third party rights in and to the Material. Further, Producer agrees to indemnify, protect, hold harmless, and defend Employee and the California Department of Parks and Recreation from and against any liability that might arise from any and all use of the Material by Producer, its licensees, successors or assigns. Employee understands that in proceeding with said recording, Producer will do so in full reliance on the foregoing permissions and grant of rights.</p>			
AGREED AND ACCEPTED			
BY ▷		DATE	PRODUCER
PRINTED NAME OF PERSON SIGNING		BY ▷	DATE
TITLE	DISTRICT/SECTION		PRINTED NAME OF PERSON SIGNING
PHONE NO.	EMAIL		TITLE
SUPERVISOR APPROVAL ▷		DATE	PHONE NO. EMAIL

COPYRIGHT LICENSE AGREEMENT

COPYRIGHT REGISTRATION NO.

ITEM DESCRIPTION

hereafter called the "Material," a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit "A".

I, _____, am the creator of, and/or have acquired the intellectual property rights to the Material, and hereby warrant that I have the authority to issue this license and to authorize and release the Material for use by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (the "Department") and its designated agents. I understand that the Department wants to use and reuse the Material, as the Department deems appropriate.

I hereby grant to the Department an unrestricted, fully paid up, world wide, irrevocable, perpetual license to use, reproduce, distribute, create derivative works, publicly display and perform the Material, in whole or in part, in any manner, for any purpose and in any medium now known or hereinafter invented. This right includes, but is not limited to, the right to copy, publish, distribute, alter and publicly display the Material for education, interpretation, advertising and other purposes consistent with the mission of the Department.

I understand that I will not receive any money for this license agreement, or for any use described above. I understand that I will retain the copyrights to the Material, but hereby grant an unrestricted license to the Department.

I release and discharge Department from any and all claims and demands arising out of, or in connection with any use of the Material, including but not limited to, any and all claims of libel, moral rights and invasion of privacy, and/or any claims under the Visual Artists Rights Act. I realize that I cannot withdraw my consent after I sign this form and I realize this form is binding on me and my heirs, legal representatives and assigns.

I am at least 18 years of age and have the right, ability and authority to enter this binding license agreement.

AGREED AND ACCEPTED

BY ▷	DATE	BY ▷	DATE
PRINTED NAME OF PERSON SIGNING		PRINTED NAME OF PERSON SIGNING	
ADDRESS		TITLE	DISTRICT/SECTION
CITY/STATE/ZIP CODE		State of California Department of Parks and Recreation	
PHONE NO.	EMAIL	PHONE NO.	EMAIL

COPYRIGHT ASSIGNMENT

COPYRIGHT REGISTRATION NO.

For valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged,
 _____ ("Assignor") hereby assigns, transfers and conveys to the State
 of California, Department of Parks and Recreation ("Assignee") the entire right, title and interest
 throughout the world in and to _____
 a true and correct copy (or description) of which is attached hereto as Exhibit "A" (the "Work").

The rights assigned by this Assignment include, but are not limited to, rights to any and all versions of
 the Work, the right to copy or reproduce the Work, the right to distribute the Work, the right to display
 the Work publicly, the right to create derivative works, the right to renew or extend the copyright in the
 Work to the extent permitted by law, and the right to bring suit or make any claim in Assignee's name
 for prior or future infringement of rights in the Work.

Assignor hereby warrants that it is the owner of all right, title and interest in the Work by virtue of its
 authorship or commissioning and purchase of the Work.

Assignor further agrees, at the request of Assignee or its successor in interest, to do all lawful acts
 which may be required for obtaining and enforcing copyright rights in the Work and to otherwise aid
 Assignee or its successor in enforcing the rights in the Work, all at the expense of Assignee or its
 successor in interest.

AGREED AND ACCEPTED

BY ▷	DATE	BY ▷	DATE
PRINTED NAME OF PERSON SIGNING		PRINTED NAME OF PERSON SIGNING	
ADDRESS		TITLE	DISTRICT/SECTION
CITY/STATE/ZIP CODE		State of California Department of Parks and Recreation	
PHONE NO.	EMAIL	PHONE NO.	EMAIL

DATE VISUAL MEDIA CREATED

VISUAL MEDIA CONSENT

NAME OF PERSON CAPTURED IN VISUAL MEDIA *(print)*

PRIVACY RIGHTS AND USE OF INFORMATION

I give the State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) permission to make photographs, videotapes, films or other likenesses of me, my child or legal ward. I hereby grant to DPR the unrestricted right to copyright any of the above-mentioned materials containing images of me, as well as the unrestricted right to use and reuse them, with their caption information, in whole or in part, in any manner, for any purpose and in any medium now known or hereinafter invented. These rights include, but are not limited to, the right to publish, copy, distribute, alter, license and publicly display these materials and images for editorial, trade, marketing and/or advertising purposes. I also grant to DPR and its licensees the unrestricted right to use and disclose my name in connection with use of the above materials.

I understand and agree that I will not be paid for any use described above.

I also waive, and release and discharge the State of California, DPR, its officers, employees and/or agents from, any and all claims arising out of or in connection with any use of the materials, caption information and images described above, including any and all claims for libel, defamation and/or invasion of privacy or publicity. I realize I cannot withdraw my consent after I sign this form and I realize this form is binding on me and my heirs, legal representatives and assigns.

SIGNATURE ▶	PHONE NUMBER ()
----------------	-------------------------

ADDRESS	CITY/STATE/ZIP CODE
---------	---------------------

IF THE ABOVE PERSON IS UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE, A PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN MUST COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:

I am the parent or legal guardian of the person named above and I hereby sign this consent form on behalf such person in accordance with the statements above.

PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN SIGNATURE ▶	PRINTED NAME	PHONE NUMBER ()
---	--------------	-------------------------

ADDRESS	CITY/STATE/ZIP CODE
---------	---------------------

FOR DEPARTMENT USE ONLY

IMAGE NUMBERS

PURPOSE

This form is designed to protect the Intellectual Property Rights of the California Department of Parks and Recreation. It is also designed to protect the Department and avoid the violation of any privacy rights regarding display or use of visual media (i.e. still photography, video footage, etc.) featuring members of the public. Multiple copies of this form must be carried in the field whenever the creation of visual media may capture members of the public when said visual media displays members of the public in a recognizable way.

COMPLETION INSTRUCTIONS

General Instructions

Individuals captured in various visual media by California Department of Parks and Recreation employees must complete this form. This form must be completed while the employees are in the process of capturing visual media.

- ALL people captured in a particular shot must fill out a separate copy of the form.
- ONE person CANNOT sign for a particular group; however, multiple children can be included on one form if they share the same parent and/or legal guardian.
- A parent's or legal guardian's signature on a minor's form CAN count as consent for use of the parent's/legal guardian's image as well, SO LONG AS the parent or legal guardian's name also appears in the NAME OF SUBJECT DEPICTED box.
- BE SURE that the form is properly completed before moving on to another shot.

Item Instructions

NAME OF SUBJECT(S) DEPICTED IN VISUAL MEDIA: Have the person appearing in the visual media print his/her full name. Minors can be grouped on a single form with their parent or legal guardian.

SIGNATURE / PHONE NUMBER / ADDRESS / E-MAIL: Have the person appearing in the visual media enter his/her signature, telephone number and current address, and e-mail.

NOTE: *If the person appearing in the image is under the age of 18, his/her parent or legal guardian MUST enter ALL requested information and sign the form for the form to be valid. If the form is not valid, the image is unusable.*

PARK UNIT AND/OR LOCATION WHERE VISUAL MEDIA CAPTURED & UNIT NO.:

Print the Unit Number and Official Park Unit Name where the visual media is created. If the visual media is created in a location other than a State Park (such as on property operated but not owned by the Department), record that location instead.

DATE VISUAL MEDIA CREATED: Enter the date the visual media is created (i.e., date photograph taken, date video footage filmed, etc.).

PHOTOGRAPHER'S NAME AND TITLE: Record the name and title of the person who created the visual media (official Department job title, Volunteer status, etc.).

IMAGE NUMBERS: Record all the image file names or catalog numbers of the images in which the subject(s) named on the form appear.

Estado de California - Oficina de Recursos Naturales
DEPARTAMENTO DE PARQUES Y RECREACIÓN

CONSENTIMIENTO DE MEDIOS VISUALES

DERECHOS DE PRIVACIDAD Y USO DE LA INFORMACIÓN

Autorizo al Departamento de Parques y Recreación (DPR, por sus siglas en inglés) del estado de California a realizar fotografías, videocintas, películas u otro material similar de mi persona, de mis hijos o de los menores bajo mi tutela. Por la presente, otorgo al DPR el derecho irrestricto de obtener los derechos de propiedad intelectual sobre cualquiera de los materiales mencionados anteriormente que contengan imágenes de mi persona, así como los derechos irrestrictos de utilizarlas y reutilizarlas, junto con la descripción correspondiente, en todo o en parte, de cualquier modo, con cualquier fin y en cualquier medio conocido en la actualidad o que se invente en el futuro, a perpetuidad, y en todos los idiomas del mundo. Esos derechos incluyen, entre otros, el derecho a publicar, copiar, distribuir, modificar, licenciar y divulgar públicamente dichos materiales e imágenes con fines editoriales, comerciales, de marketing o publicitarios. También otorgo al DPR y a sus concesionarios el derecho irrestricto de utilizar y divulgar mi nombre en relación con el uso de los materiales indicados anteriormente.

Entiendo y acepto que no recibiré pago alguno por los usos descriptos anteriormente.

También exonero y eximo al DPR del estado de California, a sus funcionarios, empleados y agentes de toda responsabilidad por los reclamos derivados de o relacionados con el uso de los materiales, la descripción correspondiente y las imágenes detalladas anteriormente, incluida cualquier demanda por calumnia, difamación, violación de la privacidad o publicidad. He leído la presente exoneración antes de firmarla y comprendo en su totalidad el contenido, significado y efecto de la presente. Entiendo que una vez que firme este formulario no podré revocar mi consentimiento y que el presente es vinculante para mí y para mis sucesores, representantes legales y cesionarios.

NOMBRE DE LA PERSONA O PERSONAS QUE APARECEN EN EL MEDIO VISUAL (en letra de molde)

Al firmar el presente, certifico que soy la persona o el padre o tutor legal de la persona o personas menores de 18 años mencionadas arriba y firmo el presente consentimiento en mi nombre y en nombre de dicha persona o personas de conformidad con las declaraciones anteriores.

FIRMA DE LA PERSONA Y/O PADRE/TUTOR LEGAL	ACLARACIÓN DEL NOMBRE	NÚMERO DE TELÉFONO
►		()
DIRECCIÓN	CIUDAD/ESTADO/CÓDIGO POSTAL	DIRECCIÓN DE CORREO ELECTRÓNICO

FOR DEPARTMENT USE ONLY (Para uso exclusivo del Departamento)

PARK UNIT AND/OR LOCATION WHERE VISUAL MEDIA CAPTURED (print) UNIDAD DE PARQUE O LUGAR DONDE SE REALIZÓ EL MEDIO AUDIOVISUAL (en letra de molde)	UNIT NO. NRO. DE UNIDAD
PHOTOGRAPHER'S NAME AND TITLE (print) NOMBRE Y CARGO DEL FOTÓGRAFO (en letra de molde)	DATE VISUAL MEDIA CREATED FECHA DE CREACIÓN DEL MEDIO VISUAL

IMAGE NUMBERS
NÚMEROS DE LAS IMÁGENES

OBJETIVO

El presente formulario se diseñó con el fin de proteger los Derechos de Propiedad Intelectual del Departamento de Parques y Recreación del estado de California. También se diseñó para proteger al Departamento y evitar que se viole el derecho de privacidad debido a la exhibición o utilización de medios visuales (es decir, fotografías, películas de video, etc.) donde aparezcan miembros del público. Se deberán llevar varias copias de este formulario al trabajar en exteriores cuando durante la realización del medio visual se pudiera capturar a miembros del público, siempre que el medio visual muestre a los miembros del público de modo que puedan ser reconocidos.

INSTRUCCIONES PARA COMPLETAR EL FORMULARIO

Instrucciones generales

Las personas capturadas en varios medios visuales por los empleados del Departamento de Parques y Recreación de California deberán completar el presente formulario. El formulario deberá completarse mientras los empleados están tomando las imágenes.

- TODAS las personas capturadas en cada una de las tomas deberán completar una copia distinta del formulario.
- UNA misma persona NO PODRÁ firmar en nombre de un grupo en particular; no obstante se podrá incluir en un mismo formulario a varios menores si tienen el mismo padre o tutor
- La firma de un padre o tutor en el formulario de un menor PODRÁ considerarse un consentimiento para que se utilice también la imagen del padre o tutor, SIEMPRE QUE el nombre del padre o tutor también aparezca en el casillero NOMBRE DE LA PERSONA QUE APARECE EN EL MEDIO VISUAL.
- ASEGÚRESE de que el formulario se complete correctamente antes de seguir con otra toma.

Instrucciones por rubro

NOMBRE DE LA PERSONA O PERSONAS QUE APARECEN EN EL MEDIO VISUAL: Solicítele a la persona que aparece en el medio visual que escriba su nombre completo en letra de molde. Los menores pueden agruparse en el mismo formulario que el padre o tutor legal.

FIRMA / NÚMERO DE TELÉFONO / DIRECCIÓN / CORREO ELECTRÓNICO: Solicítele a la persona que aparece en el medio visual que firme el formulario y coloque su número de teléfono, dirección actual y dirección de correo electrónico.

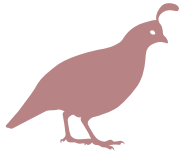
NOTA: *Si la persona que aparece en la imagen es menor de 18 años, el padre o tutor DEBERÁ completar TODA la información solicitada y firmar el formulario para que tenga validez. Si el formulario no fuera válido, no se podrá utilizar la imagen.*

UNIDAD DE PARQUE O LUGAR DONDE SE REALIZÓ EL MEDIO VISUAL Y NRO. DE UNIDAD: Anote el Número de Unidad y el Nombre Oficial de la Unidad de Parque donde se creó el medio visual. Si el medio visual se crea en un sitio que no es un Parque del Estado (por ejemplo, un sitio bajo la gestión del Departamento que no es de su propiedad), se deberá anotar ese lugar.

FECHA DE CREACIÓN DEL MEDIO VISUAL: Escriba la fecha en la cual se creó el medio visual (es decir, la fecha en la que se tomó la fotografía, la fecha en que se filmó el video, etc.)

NOMBRE Y CARGO DEL FOTÓGRAFO: Anote el nombre y el cargo del creador del medio visual (nombre oficial del cargo en el Departamento, condición de voluntario, etc.)

NÚMEROS DE LAS IMÁGENES: Anote todos los nombres de archivo de las imágenes o números de catálogo de las imágenes en las cuales aparece la persona o personas nombradas en el formulario.



INTERPRETER'S CREED

As an interpreter for California State Parks, I shall endeavor to:

- Know, understand and apply the best practices of interpretation.
- Conduct evaluation of myself and my programs.
- Continually strive to meet agency goals and objectives.
- Stay current in the literature, techniques and skills of interpretation.
- Conduct meaningful thematic interpretation.
- Keep in touch with visitors' needs, goals and desires.
- Make all of my presentations, programs, and displays relevant and enjoyable to visitors.
- Create and conduct interpretation to protect and represent the inherent meanings in the resource.
- Be a role model for environmental responsibility.
- Strive to make interpretation universally accessible to all visitors.
- Be approachable, kind, and respectful to visitors and colleagues.
- Be a resource, mentor, and professional colleague for others.
- Create and strive to meet personal yearly goals.
- Continually rediscover and explore my park's resources.



