

The Catalyst



The Newsletter for Interpretation in California State Parks

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Interpreting with Youth





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Contributor's Guidelines

The Catalyst welcomes your original articles up to two pages in length. We prefer unpublished material, but will occasionally reprint items published elsewhere. Be sure to include information about the publication so we can get permission to use the material. You may submit an article at any time. Please include a photograph whenever possible.

We really appreciate items submitted by email. Please send photographs as separate files, not inserted into your document. You may also submit original photographs or other illustrations to *The Catalyst*. We reserve the right to edit all material. Items are selected for publication solely at the discretion of the editor and publisher. We appreciate your suggestions.


Guest Editors Wanted!

Are you looking for an opportunity to work with other writers on engaging interpretive topics? Would you like to develop and challenge your creative and technical skills? Then consider becoming a Guest Editor for an upcoming issue of *The Catalyst*. Among the topics we're planning for future issues are:

Marine Protected Areas Interpretation
Interpreting Climate Change
Reorganization and Interpretation

Please contact Heather Holm with your ideas. heather.holm@parks.ca.gov.

Stay Connected

Want to connect with other interpreters and share ideas in a timely manner? Join the California State Park Interpretation Facebook group. 



From the Guest Editor

Youth today from a very young age are taking an active role in advocating for their future. From the national group Heirs to Our Ocean, a small child with a passion for protecting bees by selling lemonade, a girl standing up for the right of all girls to attend school, to students fighting for their right to be safe from violence on their campuses; this is an age of youth activism. Today's children are advocating for themselves on campuses and from home by insisting that companies create recycling programs for their spent coloring pens, demanding play equipment that meets the needs of children with different physical abilities, and creating innovative solutions for cleaning up plastic pollution. What all of these youth have in common is an adult mentor that listens to their ideas, encourages their actions, and believes that youth can make significant contributions to benefit society and the planet.

What a great time to harness this youthful energy for the protection of California's 280 state parks. It is easier than ever to mentor children to take an active role in becoming citizen scientists, creators of social campaigns, and voices for the future protection of California's cultural, recreational, and natural resources. We have the setting, the tools, and youth visitation in parks and virtually. It is up to you to make each encounter a chance to ignite that spark!

In This Issue:

- **Resources for Interpreters** highlights free or low-cost apps, blogs, websites, etc., recommended by fellow interpreters.
- **Dear Master Interpreter** answers questions from the field about interpreting with today's youth.
- Heirs to Our Ocean youth activist Dakota Peebler gives insight into the mind of youth today and advice to interpreters on best methods to reach a youth audience about threats to our parks
- Susan Doniger, formerly of North Coast Redwoods District, reveals the successful map to youth engagement with the North Coast Redwoods Quest Program.
- Calla Allison of the Marine Protected Area Collaborative previews exciting new tools for coastal interpreters to reach youth and engage them in protecting the ocean.
- Alison Parks will inspire you to consider new ways to reach students visiting cultural sites, through a look at living history at Sutter's Fort SHP and the California State Indian Museum.
- Joleane King is a lifesaver when it comes to innovative ways that the Division of Boating and Waterways staff are keeping kids Aqua Smart!
- Partnership reaches new heights as Aja Milne shares model programs for youth at Hearst San Simeon SHM.
- Providence Mountain SRA's Andrew Fitzpatrick is rebooting the park's Junior Ranger program to help kids explore the reopened park.
- Take time out of your day to stretch your interpretive skills with OHV Interpreter Peter Ostroskie.
- Emily Gottlieb engages youth in science at the beaches of California's National Marine Sanctuaries for a winning combination for youth and coastal resources.

What's Up?



Resources for Interpreters

Plastic pollution kit with complete lesson plans are available for \$60, or free if you add your name to the waiting list at www.algalita.org.

Virginia Tech offers [this resource](#) to support educators' use of the Summarizing, Contextualizing, Inferring, Monitoring, and Corroborating (SCIM-C) model of historical inquiry. This resource uses video and example to explain and support the use of the SCIM-C model. www.historicalinquiry.com/

For those interested in addressing environmental topics from a historic context with students check out the California History-Social Science Project website: <http://chssp.ucdavis.edu/current-context>. Each report includes background, a timeline of significant events, a map and links to useful resources. Some topics of particular interest to parks are Youth in Action, Politics of Managing Public Lands, Land Use and Predators, Water in California, Climate Change, Fire, and California Drought.

Use the free app iNaturalist to engage students with citizen science in the park and to host BioBlitz events. Available for download at your app store for Apple and Android devices.

Share wildlife awareness with youth on the coast with resources and information from www.seabirdprotectionnetwork.org and www.seaottersavvy.org. Both have excellent blogs to keep you up to date with research and best practices.

Institute at Golden Gate has updated their webpage with links to various tools and educational resources. They have information on a variety of subjects, including climate change, engaging diverse youth, collaboration handbook, building stewardship through internships, and much more. <https://instituteatgoldengate.org/>

California Environmental Education Interagency Network (CEEIN) is now offering a calendar of

environmental education events and opportunities in California. You can submit your events, grants, and contests related to environmental education through an easy online form, and find an array of exciting and engaging opportunities in which to participate. Find a link to the calendar at <http://ceein.org>.

Reference the new Environmental Principles and Concepts (EP&Cs) flyer; published by California Education and the Environment Initiative (EEI). This is a good reference to use when planning school group curriculum that supports the EP&C as well as academic content standards. Flyer: https://www.californiaeei.org/media/1445/epc_eei-curriculum-flyer.pdf

BEETLES (Better Environmental Education, Teaching, Learning & Expertise Sharing) has created resources and a learning program to improve the quality of outdoor science education, based on current research and understandings of how people learn. Their materials are designed for residential outdoor science but have been used in a variety of outdoor education settings. Check out their information on nature exploration with young students: <http://beetlesproject.org/beetles-nature-exploration-with-young-students/>

Dear Master Interpreter

**Dear Master Interpreter,
I keep hearing about these events called Bioblitzes.
What are they, and how can I get involved?
-City Zen Science**

Dear CZS,
A Bioblitz is a science inventory event where a group of people (with or without previous experience) documents the species in a specific area over a set amount of time. A Bioblitz is a perfect opportunity to engage youth as citizen scientists in their parks while creating a database of the park's biodiversity. Using the free app, iNaturalist, you can create a project for your site, and then have participants take photos using your device or directly enter their photos into the app on their own devices. To learn more about hosting a Bioblitz visit <https://www.calacademy.org/citizen-science>.

M.I.

**Dear Master Interpreter,
I am working on creating a kid's activity page for the park newsletter and games for Junior Ranger programs. Where can I find help creating puzzles, crosswords, quizzes, and games?
-Ms. T. Fyed**

Dear Ms. Fyed,
Check out <https://www.flippity.net> for tools for Interpreters and Educators to turn a spreadsheet automatically into a Quiz show, Bingo Cards, Crossword Puzzle, Name Picker and more.

M.I.

**Dear Master Interpreter,
Sometimes when I interpret with youth, I just feel so out of touch with their lingo and popular culture references. I want the examples and stories I share with youth groups to be relevant. What should I do?
-Fontaine O. Yuthe**

Dear Fontaine,
Spending time reading books, watching movies, and playing games that are popular with youth can be fun, and awaken your inner child while giving you characters, themes, references, and stories to use to relate park resources to youth's lives. Just keep in mind what is popular today, is not necessarily cool with kids tomorrow. Pokémon Go is almost Pokémon Gone!

M.I.



**Dear Master Interpreter,
How do we best communicate the value of our historical and cultural programs for the current generation?
-Hes Torian**

Dear Hes,
Demonstrating the value of parks' historical and cultural resources for today's youth is critical for fostering future park stewards. It is essential to keep in mind the values and life history that youth bring with them and find ways to connect the park's story to those experiences. Start by planning your program using universal values that are relevant to children including immigration, family, cultural celebrations/foods, games, chores, friendship, sports, technology, school, and home. Use a day-in-the-life of a child from the past to help children relate. Give children a chance to share their stories that relate to the stories of the park's past.
M.I.

**Dear Master Interpreter,
I want to make my booth and activity stand out when I do outreach in the community at festivals. I do not have expensive prizes and live animals to attract youth to my station like some of the other participants. Please help me make my station stand out!
-Rocky On the Road**

Dear Rocky,
Just because you do not have expensive giveaways and live animals, does not mean that you need to have an over-looked outreach station. Try engaging youth by having hands-on activities, games, and challenges involving topics of interest to youth including technology, innovation, exploration, and adventures they can do in the park. You can use sorting/stacking games, colorful signs, specimens, videos, and maps to engage youth and attract them to your booth. When in doubt test your station with youth visitors in the park before the event and ask them what they like or how to improve it.

M.I.

Interview of Dakota Peebler of Heirs to Our Ocean

By Cara O'Brien

State Park Interpreter II, San Luis Obispo Coast District

Heirs To Our Oceans is an empowerment learning program with a vision of saving our oceans, waterways and humanity through educating the next generation of inspired environmental and social justice leaders.

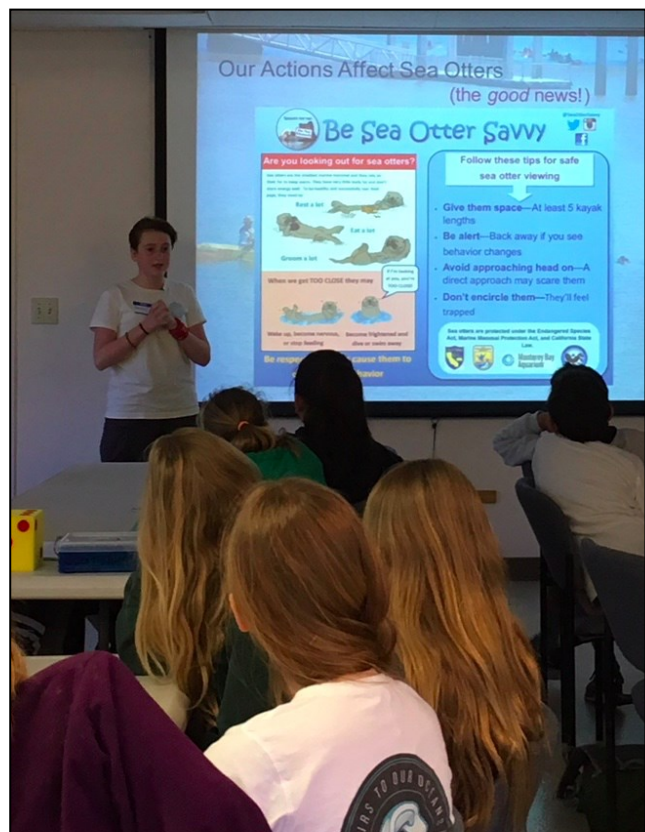
As an Heir to Our Ocean, what do you expect from park professionals in regards to securing the healthiest future we can for our ocean and coast? What do you expect from youth your age or younger?

Answer: I think that park professionals should understand the laws that are in place to protect wildlife and our marine ecosystems and actively enforce them. Park rangers need to be adequately educated about the wildlife and ecosystems that they are meant to protect. For example, park rangers at Elkhorn Slough should understand not only the laws in place to protect sea otters, an endangered, keystone and sentinel species. Also, they should be educated as to why otters are important to protect. If the State of California isn't offering adequate education to park rangers about the wildlife they are protecting, then park rangers can educate themselves through organizations such as Sea Otter Savvy! For example, they can learn about the importance of keystone species, and why harassing sea otters causes them harm. I ask all adult professionals to think about youth when they make decisions, as they might just affect their kids and grandkids. We kids will be inheriting this planet. That is where our name comes from -- Heirs To Our Oceans. Every single kid on this planet is an Heir to the Oceans.

As an Heir, you do outreach similar to what we do in parks. You reach your peers and adults about the state of the ocean and why it is imperative to protect it now. What in your experience is the best media a State Park Interpreter can use to reach and engage youth at different stages including K-5th, 6th through 8th, and high schoolers?

Answer: I believe the best media to reach youth from Kindergarten through High School is different for each age range. For K through 6th grade I believe hands-on workshops that will get youth in the field and hands on with their oceans. Learning about what is threatening the oceans and what they can do about it. For 8th to

high school I think higher level workshops would also be a great way to reach out to older kids. I know social media is a big component of kids' lives today, so I think that things such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc. would be a good way to reach out. I know for myself as a kid, that when I see devastating news or pictures about what is happening to our oceans it makes me want to do something and make a difference.



Dakota doing a sea otter workshop with Gena Bental of Sea Otter Savvy in Elkhorn Slough.

What actions for protecting our ocean and planet seem attainable and most engaging to you and your peers?

Answer: Number 1 for me is, reduce the amount of single use plastic you use on an everyday basis! Single use plastic is plastic that you use once for maybe 5 minutes and then throw away. That includes straws, plastic utensils, plastic water bottles, and plastic bags. Plastics is one of the worst threats to our oceans.

Interview Of Dakota Peebler, Continued



The Heirs and I in Washington DC at the Capitol.

Also, keep getting educated about these issues. Learn as much as you can and spread the word to anyone you can reach out to. Even congresspersons! You have the power to take matters into your own hands. This is your planet we are talking about!!

Out of all of the talks, programs, articles, blogs, YouTube videos, live streams, etc. you have seen which seem most relevant to you and what you care about? What is the best example of current media that really reaches youth with the power to change hearts and minds? Any other advice that you have for inspiring youth to take action to protect their ocean legacy?

Answer: I once saw a documentary called Mission Blue that was all about the ocean and Sylvia Earle. It showed the terrible things that are happening to our oceans, from shark finning, to oil drilling, to overfishing, to dead zones to global warming. Through all the sorrow, the documentary shows the *beauty* and the life in our big blue ocean. It made *me* as a child inspired to do something. If we had YouTube videos showing the detriments to our oceans, and what *youth* specifically can do about it, I think that would inspire a lot of people.

I also think that getting kids out and near the water is imperative. It will have kids thinking about how humans are causing the beautiful life inside the oceans to die. Kids need to be connected to their local waterways to care about it and protect it. They also need to be out seeing the trash and picking it up. We

can't hide our generation from the truth of the state of our natural environment. We kids need to know now what we will inherit from today's adults and get on a career path that makes us a part of the solution, not the problem.

Any other advice that you have for inspiring youth to take action to protect their ocean legacy?

Answer: My advice for youth is: If you see or hear about something that is wrong and occurring right now on our planet, and you want to make a difference, don't let *anyone* stop you.

You are powerful and you have the ability to change the world for your future and your kids' futures. Get mobile and passionate and active. Become an Heir!



Dakota Peebler at a meeting with Assemblyman Mark Stone about him supporting us to draft a bill to regulate or tax the use of fertilizer in California!

North Coast Redwoods Quest – A Case Study

By Susan Doniger, District Interpretive Specialist (retired)
North Coast Redwoods District

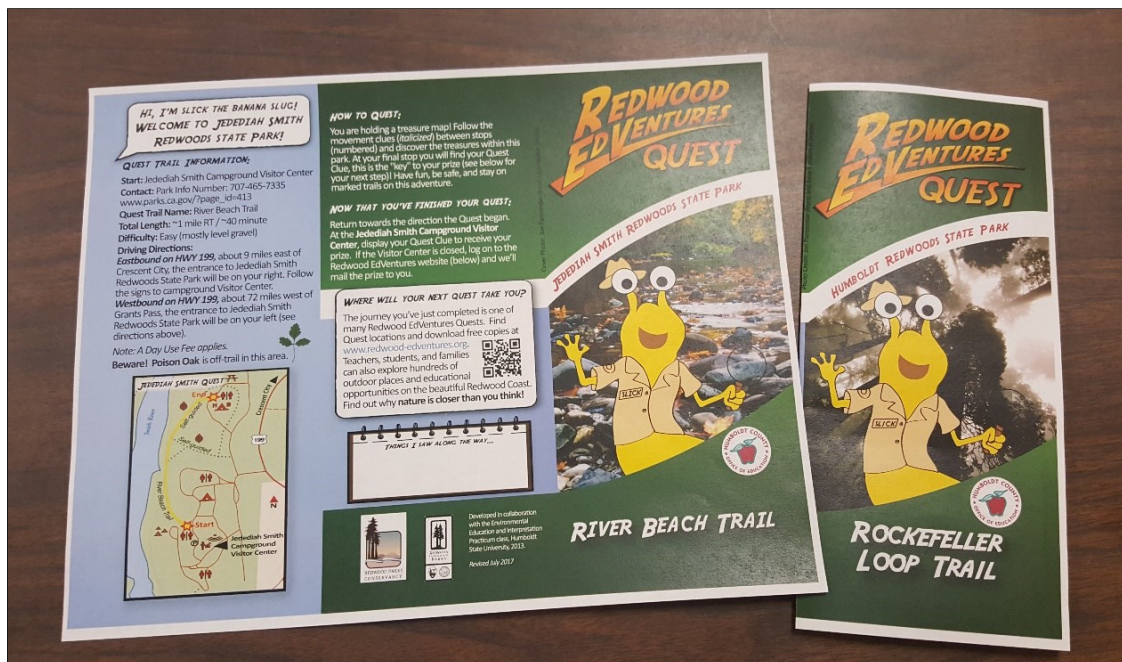
The North Coast Redwoods District Quest Initiative has been a very active and successful interagency campaign to get children (and their families) outdoors in the larger Humboldt region. The lead partners: California State Parks and Humboldt County Office of Education (HCOE) partnered with Humboldt State University's Natural Resources and Interpretation students to help develop & design the quests. Other partners included, the National Park Service, Humboldt & Del Norte County Parks, City of Arcata, Friends of the Dunes, City of Eureka, the Bureau of Land Management, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. So far 23 quests have been developed over a two county area.

This type of outreach program to youth are particularly needed in our North Coast region, which has a high rate of rural poverty. Public schools throughout the county report between 60%-90% of students on free and reduced school lunches. The North Coast Quest Initiative is available and promoted to a wide spectrum of community members and visitors from out of the area, yet the prime audience is families with children ages 4-12. Informal education of this type extends our interpretive reach, while instilling important lessons about the natural history of our many park's natural history. And it's fun!

"Questing" is an old idea, originating from southwest England, where it was known as "letterboxing." Clues were used to lead people to hidden boxes in a type of treasure hunt. Our modern version of the quest starts visitors at the park's Visitor Center, where folks pick up the clues brochure. Once on the trail, clues lead them to various stops where a rhyming clue explains a significant park feature. To help guide them, questers can also follow a map along the route to find a final "hidden" clue. The clue is typically a word or short phrase on a board mounted to a trail post.

After the final clue is found, the participants follow the instructions back to the Visitor Center where they collect their prize and fill out our log book. If the visitor center is closed, they can go online and get their prize, which is a patch, sent to them.

Some of the quest clues were hard for visitors to find and/or the trail locations had to be changed due to storm events, safety and other maintenance issues. We get lots of feedback from the public and sometimes have to rewrite clues and make alterations to the maps. Yet, the practicality of this program can't be beat, as it doesn't require interpretive staff to guide visitors. Instead, visitors can explore and learn at their own pace. As families become familiar with their "backyard" through questing, we hope that



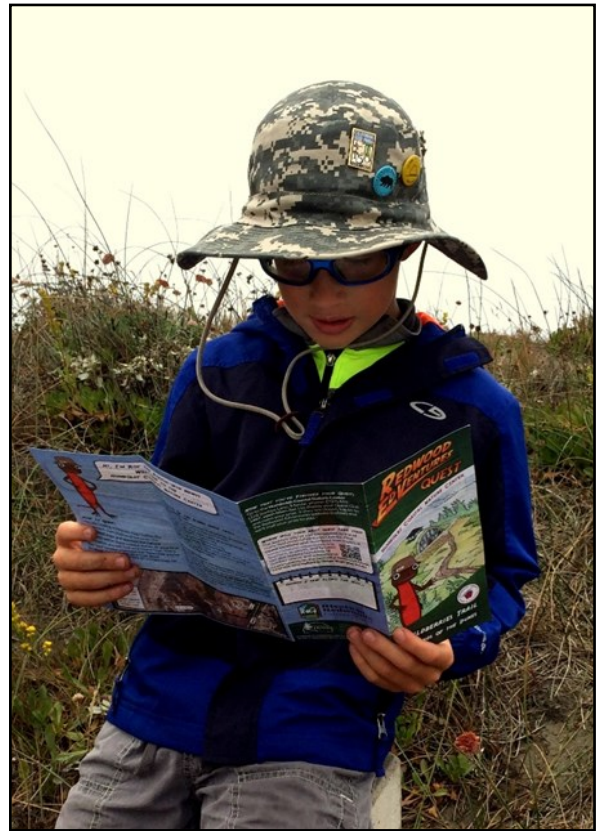
North Coast Redwoods Quest, Continued

increased environmental awareness, as well as a sense of stewardship, will be fostered.

Going into our fourth year of the program, we have served almost 10,000 happy kids and their parents. Some families have even started to call themselves “quest families” and are trying to do all of our quests and collect every patch. We also have many out-of-town visitors who are very happy that it is a free activity, engages their kids in the outdoors, and the whole family can participate.

Here are comments from an interpreter and some of our questers:

- “I think this program is one of our most successful in encouraging our youth to get outdoors. What a fabulous idea! The kids had fun – which means the parents had fun.”
- That was a great idea for a day adventure with the kids. We are going to be attending many more. Thanks so much!”
- “We discovered your project too late in our visit to accomplish more than Trinidad Head. It was a blast. Our two boys (5 & 7) are so looking forward to next summer. Please (!) tell me that your program will continue next year!”
- Excellent way to encourage a hike. Best kid program we’ve done in our 3 month trip.”
- “We greatly enjoyed our summer in CA. So many memories were made and knowledge gained while visiting your great outdoors!”



New Toolkits on California's Marine Protected Areas Encourage Youth to Dive into Ocean Protection

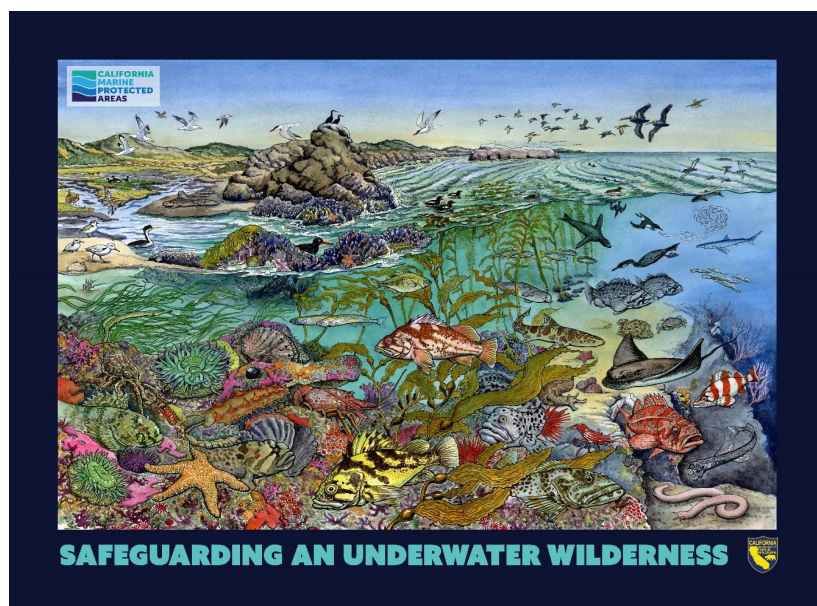
By Calla Allison, Director
MPA Collaborative Network

In 2012, California implemented the largest ecologically based network of marine protected areas (MPAs) in the world. This ambitious endeavor fostered an innovative and robust collaborative effort to ensure the effective implementation and long-term management of California's 124 MPAs—the creation of the MPA Collaborative Network! The MPA Collaborative Network is a statewide network of diverse coastal communities committed to action oriented, grassroots stewardship of California's ocean resources. Fourteen chapters, or Collaboratives, currently exist to bring local area experts together for more effective outreach, education, monitoring and enforcement of our marine protected areas. Members within each Collaborative include conservationists, scientists, aquaria staff, teachers, tribal members, fishermen, ocean business owners, interpreters, agency staff...and STATE PARK EMPLOYEES! Managing MPAs is truly a team effort and we appreciate all of the input of our 600 members and counting.

The latest project that the MPA Collaborative Network is working on across the state is the creation of *MPA Teacher Toolkits*. *MPA Teacher Toolkits* are physical and digital kits that can be checked out by

educators. These kits will include lesson plans, activities, and visual aids that easily allow educators to engage students in the science behind MPAs. To accomplish this endeavor, individual Collaborative are working to create pieces of this toolkit. Some Collaborative are taking on the task of developing particular MPA related messages. These include messaging on MPA Design, ocean resiliency, and tribal ocean knowledge and will build off of the great MPA curriculum already developed with the State Parks PORTS program. Other Collaborative are working on physical/visual aids to be included in the toolkit including coloring books and mock transect activities. Cara O'Brien, State Parks Interpreter III, is spearheading the effort of the San Luis Obispo collaborative in developing a children's ocean activity book and State Parks District Interpretive Specialist Pat Clark-Gray is leading the Monterey Collaborative development of a MPA coloring book. Great work Cara and Pat!

All of these collaborative efforts will align with the MPA outreach and education efforts of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, which has recently developed a number of exciting outreach materials. Check out their beautiful new poster of Species and



New Toolkits, continued

Habitats most likely to benefit and their new MPA video.

Overall, these projects will address the needs of teachers and interpreters in the field who may lack intimate knowledge of MPAs, time for research and lesson planning, funding for materials, and curriculum that aligns with California's recently adopted Next Generation Science Standards. Furthermore, this project will provide another compelling example of the beauty of collaboration and the ability of organizations to come together. If you have any questions or would like to participate in a local collaborative or the statewide teacher toolkit working group, please contact me at calla@mpacollaborative.org. Stay tuned for more exciting products coming your way!



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xB_yqcfN7DE

LiMPETS Help Youth Protect Marine Life!

By Emily Gottlie, LiMPETS Program Coordinator
Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History

LiMPETS (Long-term Monitoring Program and Experiential Training for Students) is a citizen science program for students, educators and volunteer groups. Citizen scientists monitor the coastal ecosystems of California's national marine sanctuaries, increasing awareness and stewardship of these important areas. The statewide program connects over 5,000 citizens annually to the ocean, involves them directly in a hands-on scientific endeavor and increases their knowledge of the marine environment, creating a new generation of informed and engaged ocean stewards.

Beyond the educational value of the program, the



power of LiMPETS lies in the large quantity of data collected at more than 60 sites and over 600 miles of California coastline. Annually, thousands of people collect baseline data. By monitoring, teachers, students and community groups become the eyes and ears for our coastal beaches and rocky shores, detecting changes and possible problems, often before anyone else. LiMPETS data have informed the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Condition Report, were published in the National Marine Sanctuary Conservation Series, and helped establish a baseline of key indicator species for the new system of California Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

The LiMPETS network is a collaborative effort among California's national marine sanctuaries, Greater Farallones Association, and Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History. Visit <http://limpets.org> for more information.



Living History Today

By Alison Parks, Guide II
Sutter's Fort SHP & California State Indian Museum

I'd like you to picture a living history interpreter. This is someone who has a real love for history. They have carefully curated their own personal period clothing and collection of relevant interpretive items. They come to every living history event at your park. Their commitment and passion is obvious to you.

A respectable crowd has gathered and eagerly wanders up to your living history interpreter's station. The interpreter greets them kindly and begins to explain their station. They tell the visitor in depth about the research they have recently been doing, the exact dates of events, and the names of people who visited your historic site. Watching from a distance you see the visitors listening with their bodies half turned away. They are looking around, searching for other activities to explore, but your interpreter continues and it now become a history lecture. The interpreter's knowledge and care are obvious, but the visitors are not engaged—they are held hostage.



Candle dipping

It is a critical skill for our living history interpreters to not only be able to read their audience, but also understand how to best engage them. It is also good to have a finger on the pulse of current events. Our younger visitors are the ones who know the latest trends and social movements. What might strike some of us as short attention spans, demonstrates just how fast moving the world has become. The difference between the Pony Express and email is obvious, but take, for example the news. Previously, people would tune in to their local TV or radio stations at designated times to get caught up on world events. Now, any kid with a smartphone and twitter or Facebook account has instant access not only to learn the latest news but also to post his or her own feedback about it.

This “instant” quality of today's youth may seem like a negative to many of our living history interpreters, and certainly there are good and bad consequences of the changing culture. Yet, this is the way of the world. It is undeniable that society, culture, and how we interact with each other have changed. Therefore, it only makes us less relevant if we push back against the change. This is a great opportunity for innovation and creativity! We have the opportunity to take what we know about culture today and instill new life into our programs. When we meet visitors where they are and attempt to understand them, we can make real connections between them and our valuable historic and cultural sites. Many of our visitors are school-aged children, so it is critical that we make an effort to understand them.

As much as we can, we want students to be moving, doing hands on activities, and using their imaginations. Our staff and volunteers who dress in period clothing and work at special events can help bring that imagination to life. For students these days, anything we can do to demonstrate what life was like 50, 80, or 170 years ago will help them to remember the facts and concepts they are learning in their classrooms.

Kids today want to be engaged in tough questions. We see them posting on social media about today's laws and tragedies, and getting involved in new social movements, even starting some of their own. They want to have input about the direction of the world.

Living History Today, Continued

For living history programs, this is our opportunity to address and expand on the interpretation we tell. Certainly it is fun for kids to dip candles, but they also want to know about the workers dipping those candles long ago, and what were their lives like. Family diversity and new cultures are often the untold parts of our history yet they are more relevant to the kids who visit our parks today.

It is not easy to adapt the interpretation being told in our parks. It takes research and consultation and buy-in from our stakeholders. These obstacles have often felt insurmountable in the past. However, if we want our parks to remain a destination for families and school groups for years to come, it is critical that we try to build meaningful and thought-provoking connections

with our student-visitors. It is our also our mission: “to inspire and educate the people visiting our parks.” Let’s engage our student visitors by attempting to understand what interests and drives them, and get their hands and minds involved in the important stories we tell about the past.



Environmental Living Program students preparing to make candles.

DBW Teaches California Youth to be ‘AquaSmart’ Safe on the Water

By Joleane King, Associate Park and Recreation Specialist
Boating and Waterways Division

While boating and recreating in the water can be fun, it can also be dangerous. Many years ago, the California Legislature recognized the need for aquatic safety education, and mandated* Department of Boating and Waterways (DBW) to provide “fundamental water safety training for all the children of the state so that California’s youth will be able to enjoy water recreation while avoiding its hazards.” Former DBW Education and Safety Manager Denise Peterson notes, “Over the years, DBW has brought innovative and nationally recognized programming and outreach through its AquaSmart K-12 curricula, school puppet shows, sports team partnerships and aquatic center grant funding for on-the-water classes.”

AquaSmart Curriculum and Puppet Shows

DBW encourages schools to incorporate the “AquaSmart” curriculum series and works to meet changing curriculum standards. Melissa Miranda, Boating Education Manager reports, “DBW recently released a major curriculum update of the [K-8 AquaSmart activity book](http://dbw.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=29863) (http://dbw.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=29863) that conforms to California’s Next Generation Science Standards. The multi-grade level publication includes the updated program logo, website, and an overall updated AquaSmart image, including a cute new otter mascot named Riva.” New teacher’s guides are under development.

AquaSmart curriculum is enhanced through AquaSmart Live!, two K-6 school assembly puppet/game shows. Schools may go [online](#) to request the free shows. Puppet Art Theater Company presents over 200 school assemblies statewide and appears at boating safety and education events each year. [AquaSmart videos](https://www.youtube.com/user/CaliforniaDBW) (https://www.youtube.com/user/CaliforniaDBW) demonstrate the 10 basic lessons taught by the puppets.

Sports Team Partnerships

Because baseball and boating seasons overlap, and because California minor league teams offer significant outreach to schools, DBW partners with a number of teams to promote water and boating safety. The Sacramento River Cats’ AAA School Days includes “Aquatic Safety” at over 150 school presentations

featuring River Cats’ mascot Dinger, who demonstrates proper life jacket wear in humorous situations. The team also hosts thousands of elementary school students at several “AAA Game Days”.



Sacramento River Cats’ mascot Dinger wears a life jacket during school assemblies and at games throughout the season.



Aquatic Center classes generate on-the-water life-long friendships and learning experiences each year.

DBW Teaches California Youth to be ‘AquaSmart’ Safe on the Water,

“In 2017, two new baseball partners, the Modesto Nuts and Lake Elsinore Storm featured life jacket safety including a [mascot video](#) for kids during the games,” reports Joleane King, DBW Media Specialist. “Both teams will bring kids’ clubs onboard with DBW/AquaSmart as the title sponsor in 2018.”

Aquatic Center Youth Classes

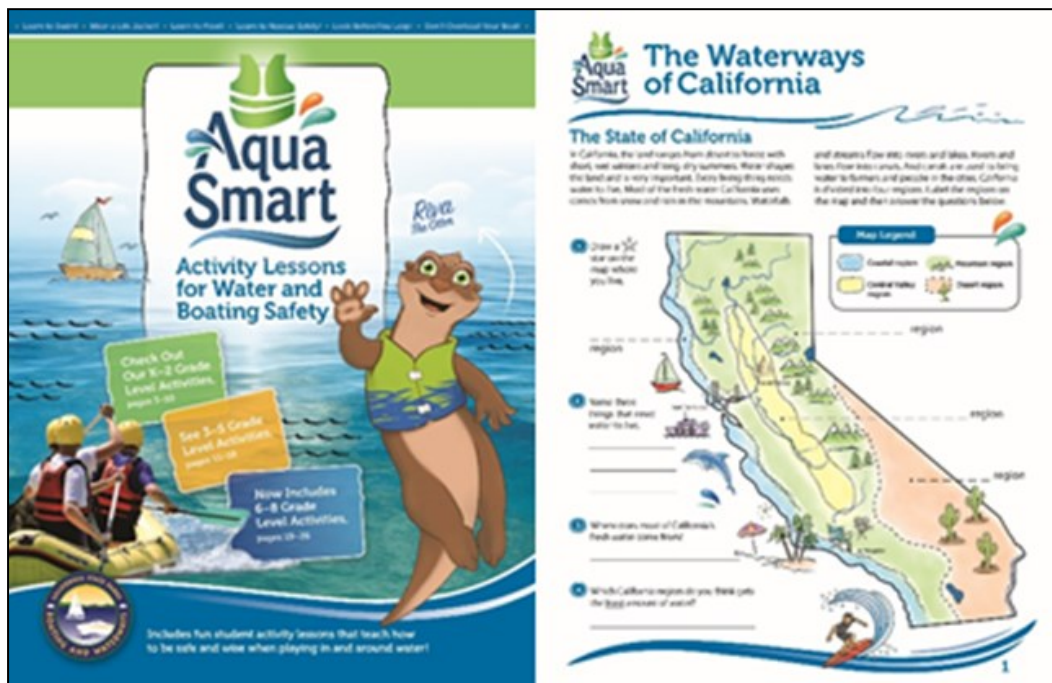
“As part of its mission, DBW looks for ways to enhance boaters’ knowledge of safe and practical handling of vessels on the water and environmental stewardship. And it all begins with getting kids out on the water to experience safe boating first-hand,” says DBW Acting Deputy Director Ramona Fernandez. “With federal funding from the U.S. Coast Guard, DBW pioneered the aquatic center grant model.”

In FY 2016/17 DBW awarded \$1.3 million to 44 [Aquatic Centers](#) operated by colleges, universities, cities, counties, and nonprofit organizations. According to DBW Aquatic Center Grant Specialists Amy Rigby and Johanna Naughton, over 65,000 children, youth and adults learned basic kayaking, canoeing, water-skiing, power boating, sailing, personal watercraft operation, stand-up paddle boarding, rafting and other aquatic activities. Nearly half of these students were from underserved and special need populations.

*California Education Code § 51879.7 - 51879.9, Aquatic Safety enacted by Stats. 1983.



AquaSmart puppets engage thousands of elementary students across the state each year with the 10 lessons of boating and water safety.



DBW’s updated K-8 AquaSmart Activity book brings together water and boating safety in accordance with California’s Next Generation Science Standards

Partnering to Reach Young People in New Ways

By: Aja Milne, Guide II Supervisor
Hearst Castle



Erin Gates welcomes students to her PORTS program.

With budgetary shortfalls and rising bus transportation costs, schools are having an increasingly difficult time providing enrichment programs and field trips for their students. Through partnerships in the virtual and physical world, we at Hearst Castle have come up with some innovative programming that helps us circumvent the problems many schools are facing.

In 2014, our cooperating organization, Friends of Hearst Castle, collaborated with a local non-profit, Studios on the Park, to come up with ways to connect local students to Hearst Castle. Studios on the Park's mission, to provide a "creative, educational, transformational experience to enhance understanding and appreciation of the visual arts" fits very nicely with the mission of California State Parks. After some brainstorming between the two groups, the kids Art Smart partnership with State Parks was born.

The Art Smart program at Hearst Castle is open to local 6th graders and takes up a full school day. The program consists of a 45-minute art-focused tour of the Castle and a directed drawing lesson on one of the Castle's picturesque outdoor terraces. Lunch is provided upon return to the Visitor Center and afterward the students are treated to a complimentary showing of our large screen format

movie *Building the Dream* before heading home. Studios on the Park covers the cost of all art supplies and the professional artist. Friends of Hearst Castle covers the cost of the tour, lunch and movie. The school must cover transportation to and from Hearst Castle and each teacher/class that participates agrees to show the artwork created by the students in a public show. Since the program's inception in 2014, more than 2000 students from San Luis Obispo County have been served. It is a partnership that Art Smart coordinator Leslie Moss says they are "so proud and appreciative of."

For those students who do not live locally, hopping on a bus to come see us is not an easy option. Parks has relied on the innovation of the PORTS program to bridge this gap but many sites weren't reaching their full potential due to limitations in resources and/or access to technology. Hearst Castle's former PORTS guide, Erin Gates, stumbled onto Microsoft's Skype in the Classroom program while looking for ways to increase her reach and get her "show" out from the green screen and onto the tour route.

Erin has been able to provide "virtual fieldtrips" for more than 6,000 students since first experimenting with the program in late 2016. And it's not just PORTS interpreters that can access this program. Any interpreter in the field with a cell phone connection



Students respond to a live question from Erin.

Partnering to Reach Young People in New Ways, Continued

and access to the Skype in the Classroom website can become an educator via Microsoft's program. Contact PORTS staff for assistance in getting signed up to be a Skype in the Classroom presenter. Several parks across the department have even teamed up to provide a comprehensive set of programs exploring interrelated themes and periods in California's history! The possibilities are endless as is the reach potential.



Art in the Park program for youth held at Hearts Castle.

Notes on Rebooting Junior Ranger Program at a Reopened State Park

By Andrew Fitzpatrick, State Park Interpreter I
Providence Mountain SRA

After having been closed for nearly seven years, Providence Mountains State Recreation Area (SRA), "the Home of Mitchell Caverns," reopened on November 3rd, 2017. As can be expected, the park has been quite busy since then, as over six years of pent-up interest have unwound over the past months.

This is particularly true regarding the crown jewel of PMSRA, Mitchell Caverns itself. Tours of Mitchell Caverns are offered at 11am and 2pm Fridays through Sundays, and adjoining holidays – except for the summer months of June, July, and August, when the heat concerns limit us to a single 10am tour. Tours are relatively small, limited to around 15 people, to protect the features in the cave, accommodate the narrow confines of the tour route, and provide a very

personal and intimate experience for visitors. Although at times it may be difficult for visitors to get a reservation during the desert's peak spring and autumn seasons, they are rewarded with what feels like a "private club" experience.

At the time of writing this, tours are completely booked through August, and it should be mentioned that this reservation system is at present completely handled in-house via telephones, pencils, and a 3-ring binder. The arrival of the Reserve California online system is anticipated, but like so much else up here in this time capsule, the analog tends to work better than the digital. This fact has become something of a theme for Providence Mountains SRA; with limited (at times nonexistent) phone and wireless service, you come



Notes on Rebooting Jr. Rangers at a Reopened Sate Park, Continued

here to unplug and enjoy the serenity. It's a bit like stepping into a time capsule.

Location:

Providence Mountains SRA is a remote California State Park. It is over 50 miles from the nearest town of Needles, CA. (While there are a variety of closer desert communities in Nevada and Arizona, most of our visitors right now are coming from southern California metropolitan areas.)

The heart of the park are the original local stone buildings of a small "desert resort" run by Jack and Ida Mitchell from the 1930s into the 1950s. The buildings are beautiful and well-designed for the desert, but are small and get cramped when too full, not to mention hot in the summer.

Conditions

- The park is set in the heart of the eastern Mojave Desert and the developed area is at 4300 feet above sea level. For visitors from lower elevations, this can have effect.
- Summer temperatures often exceed 100 degrees, while winters will see occasional snow and freezing temperatures.
- Strong winds are present in any season and gusts top 50 miles per hour.
- Venomous reptiles (rattlesnakes and even the rare Gila monster), insects, and arachnids call this desert home. Even the plants are covered in protective spines and thorns.

Visitors

- Perhaps because of more recent press from Los Angeles metro, Inland Empire, and Palm Springs, most of our visitors are traveling many hours from these locations.
- Visitors are a very diverse range of individuals and demographics: retired snowbirds, families from Southern California who are on weekend trips to the Mojave (and generally on a schedule), footloose desert hipsters, European tourists braving the Mojave's summer temps, and organized groups such as motorcycle clubs, college geology classes, and home school organizations. From Sierra Club members to CORVA (California Off-road Vehicle Association) members, and from Boy Scouts to Girl Scouts, **everyone comes to Mitchell Caverns.**

Implications on Junior Ranger Programs:

- Due to distances and timed tours, visitors to Providence Mountains are generally on a tight schedule, particularly if they have kids. As such they often have little spare time for participating in other activities such as Junior Rangers.
- The desert terrain can be a tough place for kids to explore on their own, full of sharp rocks and sharp plants. There is also the concern of venomous animals and inclement weather.

Current Junior Ranger Status:

- There are no planned or specifically separate formal Junior Ranger programs. This is due to staff levels and generally tight tour schedules of both the park and visitors.
- We offer two different Junior Ranger booklets for kids to select from: the statewide Adventure Guide and a recently completed in-house, park-specific Junior Ranger workbook. We are observing which items best meet the needs or interests of our young visitors.

Future Junior Ranger Plans:

- Advertise our Junior Ranger offerings better so parents/groups may plan to arrive earlier so the children can participate.
- Fine tune our own in-house Junior Ranger workbook – and incorporate the Mary Beal Nature Trail with its diversity of desert plants into activities for our park-specific workbook.
- Consider planning a Junior Ranger weekend at the park, with kid focused events, activities, and special guests.



Stretch, Stretch, Stretch Those Interpretation Skills

By Peter Ostroskie, State Park Interpreter I
Prairie City SVRA

Over the last week I was recovering from an old injury that flairs up every once and a while, I fell off a motorcycle in 2012 and sometimes my back and hips lock up. With tense muscles in my back and barely being able to move, I had to stretch the muscles slowly in order to just be able to walk again. As I stretched and moved, I was thinking about how new methods of interpretation are much like tense muscles that sometimes hurt and are reluctant, but once stretched and moved, allow for a new full range of motion. Much like how we need to stretch our methods that we use with the youth of a very different generation.

Methods like storytelling, analogies, and questioning are three of the techniques interpreters use constantly. So these are the primary muscles that we will focus on. We will look at some new stretches that can be tried in order to have a new full range of motion that is comfortable for you and relative to a youth who spends much of their time looking at screens.

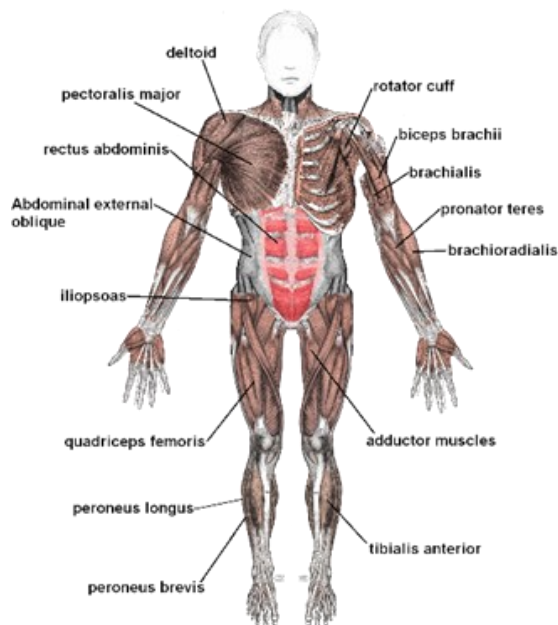
Storytelling is a method or a muscle used by all of us. We love the idea of sharing one of the stories of the past or about a natural resource that we find truly

meaningful. While this is a large portion of what we do, many of the stories are too long for a generation that has the attention span of a goldfish. The stretch for storytelling is making a story quick and to the point. Yes, some stories need more time, and we feel that uncomfortable stretch of not saying everything. Take that story you're telling that usually is 30 mins long and first make it 15 mins, and then 5 mins long, or even harder how can I get the story across in 1 min.

why?
how? who?
WHEN?
Where?

The next part of the stretch is using an alternative form of presentation. By that I mean, learn a new skill like how to use social media, video recording, or audio recording. The reason for this exercise is that most tools on social media have a stronger effect if it is in short digestible bites. It's really difficult, it will hurt, but it's something that will help you listen to and edit the story you are trying to tell. You will hear things that will make yourself ask; **"Is this part of the story really important?"**

Analogies and questioning are two other methods that should be stretched regularly. Being able to compare one concept to another is of utmost importance. The biggest part of this stretch is to compare your dated concept to something that a younger generation can understand. For good examples look at pop culture icons. While many members of our generation recognize that **"Beethoven was the Michael Jackson of his age"**, many younger folks don't even know who Beethoven is, or EVEN Michael Jackson! Find something that is modern and connects with kids today. They will make a stronger bond and memory to that item or idea.



Stretch Those Interpretive Skills, Continued

Questioning, in my opinion, is one of those smaller muscles we don't think about till we absolutely need it. Then when we need it, ouch, it hurts to even stretch. And then we think "why use this!"

Questioning is one of the strongest methods we can use to help our state parks mission and teaching concepts to settle into the minds of our youth. Recently while stretching my sore back, I listened to a Podcast that talked about the power of questioning. Many studies have shown that asking questions about a subject increases retention. Having an ungraded "pop quiz" helps to encourage thinking to reinforce new ideas and facts. **Just a few questions will lead to dialogue with young folks.** This is great! Let the dialogue between visitors, students, and subject matter experts flourish. Another part about questioning, that we sometimes find uncomfortable, is the waiting period. The best rule to follow is wait 10 seconds before rephrasing or asking another question.

Over time, and with increased stretching, those uncomfortable feelings will give way to the full "range of motion" of those primary muscles of storytelling, analogies, and questioning. It will feel natural and become second nature. However, if you don't stretch, your programs may start to go flat with a new generation of fast movers and thinkers. These are just a few helpful tips many of us in the field can use and develop. Many of the techniques we already know but **don't forget to stretch every once in a while** to make ourselves and our programs better than ever.

If you would like to hear that podcast I mentioned in the article you can find it here: <https://www.artofmanliness.com/2018/03/06/podcast-385-make-stick/>

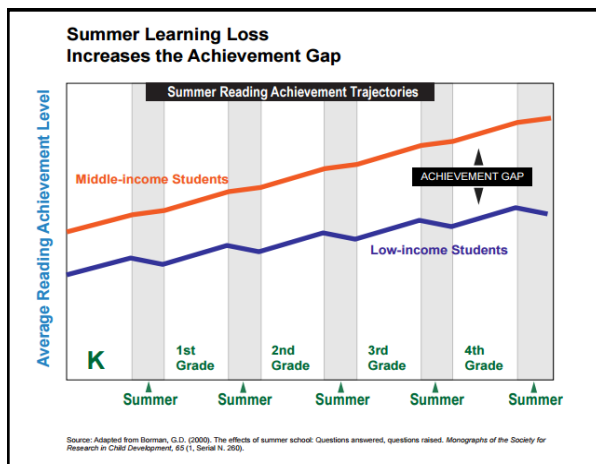


Peter giving interpretive tour at Angel Island State Park

Summer Learning Program

By Ingrid van Dijk, Park and Recreation Specialist
Interpretation and Education Division

It has long been known, and studies have shown, that children experience learning losses over the summer. This is even more evident in low-income communities. A national movement developed years ago to address this gap in learning during the summer months.



In 2008 the David and Lucile Packard Foundation established a grant program to pilot high-quality summer learning programs for seven years to address this achievement gap. California State Parks was one of two partners to consistently receive funds to provide programming.

The goals of the programs were to offer the students experiential learning, connection to the outdoors, physical activity, and integrated language arts.

The Packard Foundation provided California State Parks grant funding for the first seven years of our Summer Learning Program (SLP) to jumpstart the programs. While the program was grant funded, we worked mostly with afterschool programs in southern California and the Bay Area. Park staff did site visits to schools to introduce students to California State Parks, facilitated day trips to parks, and had overnight campouts.

For many of the students, these programs were their first experiences being on a trail in the woods or seeing a natural creek. The day trips included nature hikes, natural history lessons, beach and shoreline activities, water safety instruction, cultural history lessons, and/or scientific studies.

Camping trips were popular with some groups. The students experienced all elements of a true campout—



including putting up and sleeping in tents, a campfire program with a ranger, and making s'mores. All camping supplies for the students were provided by the program, as well as transportation to the park.

After the seven years of Packard Foundation funding concluded, California State Parks continued with the program and expanded to new areas. We also broadened our outreach to include community groups, as well as afterschool programs. We even added summer PORTS (Parks Online Resources for Teachers and Students)[®] distance learning programs for a couple of afterschool programs in the greater Los Angeles area.

Our initial year served about 850 students and now we reach an average of 3,300 students per summer with an average of 53 programs.

The program is now fully funded through California State Parks, with local assistance from some park partners. The program is successful and we plan to continue to expand it to new areas, community groups, and afterschool programs.



California's Tapestry

A Diversity Feature Article

Summer 2019

Youth-centered Experiences Foster Authentic Connections for Diverse Groups

By: Cara O'Brien

State Park Interpreter II, San Luis Obispo Coast District

Interpreting to diverse youth audiences in terms of the places they live, cultural heritage, languages spoken, comfort in park settings, learning styles, and physical capabilities can be challenging. Park interpretive programs for youth start with a solid foundation when they are aligned with relevant content standards, designed with consideration for the groups' abilities, and meet the highest standards of RAPPORT*.

Beyond the basic building blocks, what is the key to reaching your diverse youth audience? The answer that stands out to me on the best programs for diverse youth is the interpreter's sensitivity and ability to read the group and take time to meet the individuals where they are. Now more than ever, it is essential to use questioning to spark curiosity and to let youth guide their experiences as much as possible. It may seem risky at first to let a group shape their experience, especially on a tight timeframe or on a narrow route in a sensitive environment, but the real risk is in not letting them. What does a program accomplish if



Youth participating in a citizen science activity.



Interpreter-led hike at Mount Tamalpais SP for Latino Outdoors group.

participants leave the park without a sense of how it has relevance to their lives, why they should care, and how to take action? Telling them that they have a connection is not the same as guiding them to their own discovery, and risks alienating individuals that do not share the same values and life experiences as the interpreter.

Youth need to make their own discoveries, ask their own questions, and have time to reflect on those discoveries, all while safely and appropriately interacting with the resources found in parks. As their **park mentor**, you are in charge of helping them build their unique attachment to the park by facilitating their exploration and stimulating reflection on what they discover. The typical review of asking questions

Youth centered...diverse groups, continued

to get facts recited back is not an accurate measurement of your program's success. When you foster a safe environment for sharing, actively listen without judgement, and use guiding reflections throughout the program, you help youth frame their discoveries. Those discoveries will belong to the individuals and the thoughts they generate will be authentic and powerful enough to create park stewards. You will be surprised and delighted by the ideas that your guidance inspires and end up learning much more than you teach! Accept the challenge to reach all youth on your programs and not just the ones who share your values.

*RAPPORT is an acronym for relevant, accurate, programmatically accessible, provocative, organized, retained, and thematic. See the park interpretive manual for using RAPPORT for creating excellent interpretive programs, "Aiming for Excellence" at <https://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/735/files/aimingforexcellence2009forweb.pdf>.

Reflection starters to increase relevance:

- What do you think about this?
- How big of a discovery is it for you on a scale of 1-10?
- What does it remind you?
- Will your discovery change what you do back at home or school? If so, how? If not, what would it take to make you take action?
- How best could you share your discovery? (Ex. Storytelling, photo, drawing, poem, blog, song,



State Park interpreter doing school outreach program.



Latino Outdoors group seeing new sights at Mount Tamalpais SP

dance, etc...)

Whom could you share this information with at home or school?

How can you discover more about this?

Do you feel a responsibility or connection to these resources?

What could you do to protect these resources?

What can you do as an individual to make your voice heard?

How does what you discovered relate to the community where you live/California/United States of America/Earth?

Three techniques to maximize time and stimulate reflection with larger groups:

(A little time) Have youth pick their most meaningful discovery out of a choice of three topics from the program, and help them break into those groups to share why that discovery was most meaningful to them. Ask them to brainstorm in each of the three groups how they can apply that knowledge to what they do back at home or school.

(Low on time) Ask youth to take a minute to reflect on their most meaningful discovery. Have them play it back like a movie or comic strip in their mind. Have them share their short movie/comic strip with a partner.

(Out of time) Give a sticker, pencil, postcard, magnet, bookmark, or other memento to youth on your program. Ask them to put it where they will see it daily and to commit to taking one small action to enhance their community and/or environment each time they see it.

The Catalyst

Fall 2019

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