



# INKLINGS

Bulletin of Interpretive Ideas

Spring 2013, Volume 13, Issue 2

## Current Project List

- **Community Foundation of St. Clair County (MI)**  
*Interpretive Plan and Sign Design*  
Upper St. Clair River Habitat Restoration Project  
(with Smith Group/JJR)
- **City of Hobart (IN)**  
*Interpretive Sign Design*  
Pennsy Station
- **Toledo Metroparks (OH)**  
*Interpretive Planner*  
Middlegrounds Metropark  
(with Smith Group/JJR)
- **Park Forest Parks and Rec. (IL)**  
*Interpretive Sign Design*  
Retirement Sign
- **The Nature Conservancy (IN)**  
*Interpretive Sign Design*  
Kankakee Sands Project
- **Bloomington Parks and Rec. (IN)**  
*Interpretive Sign Design*  
Solar Panels  
Dog Park
- **Bloomington (IN) Housing and Neighborhood Dev.**  
*Interpretive Sign Design*  
Old Northeast Neighborhood
- **Indiana Department of Natural Resources**  
*Interpretive Sign Design*  
Blue-Green Algae Alert  
Forest Habitat Improvement

INKLINGS is available in pdf format. To get on the pdf list, contact [lise@interpretiveideas.com](mailto:lise@interpretiveideas.com)

## Designing Park Features with Interpretive Punch

Lise Schools

The discussions for the new exhibit hall had come to the entryway feature. This would be the large piece that would make a statement about Turkey Run State Park. Known for its sandstone hollows and relict hemlocks, it was decided that a replica of the sandstone walls would be created.



*Preliminary concept by Taylor Studios. The addition of coal seams and iron stains made the feature an interpretive tool.*

As preliminary sketches of the rock feature began to take shape, the interpreter spoke up. “Can we include a coal seam? Can portions be stained with iron? Then I could use this feature as a starting point to hikes to the canyon.”

I wish I’d thought of this idea during that meeting, but must give the credit to the Turkey Run interpreter. Incorporating her ideas into their design, Taylor Studio constructed a beautifully authentic-looking piece of Rocky Hollow.

### The feature serves many purposes.

*Setting the theme.* Placed at the exhibit hall entrance, the feature sets the visual theme for exhibit hall.

*Guided interpretation.* By including the coal seam and iron stains in the sandstone, the feature works as a starting place for guided hikes to the canyon. The interpreter has a prop for her introduction.

*Roving interpretation.* For people with questions about the canyon, the rock can be used to help explain the formations.

*Self-guided interpretation.* The realistic feature becomes an exhibit that explains the geology of the park.

I remembered this lesson and have since incorporated it into other projects. For example, at Milliken State Park in Detroit, a design goal was to introduce visitors to Michigan’s diverse natural resources. A water feature became a waterfall, interpreting the geologic conditions that result in Michigan’s numerous northern waterfalls.

(cont.)



Visit our website [www.interpretiveideas.com](http://www.interpretiveideas.com)

Lise Schools, Owner

[lise@interpretiveideas.com](mailto:lise@interpretiveideas.com)

517/347-0861

Okemos, MI 48805-0355

P.O. Box 355

Interpretive Ideas

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A splash pad play area replicated glacial formations such as kettle lakes and moraines that form Michigan's topography. In both instances these features added an interpretive component that works for guided, roving and self-guided interpretation.

Keeping interpretation in mind during design results in a theme-setting feature that interprets in a variety of situations.

*In the park design, artistic features also have the potential to be interpretive features. Design by Smith Group/JJR with Interpretive Ideas. Milliken State Park, Detroit, MI*