



INKLINGS

Bulletin of Interpretive Ideas

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Communicating Visually

Making the most the media

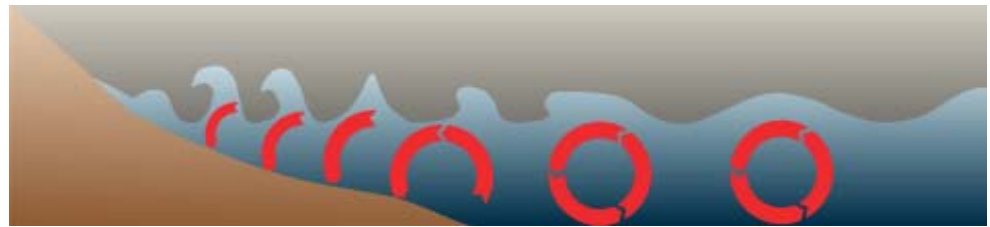
Interpretive signs are a form of visual communication. They rely on images with minimal text to tell a story. Images may include photos, diagrams, maps or illustrations. Each image should convey the concept more efficiently than the written word.

Current Project List

- **Indiana Department of Natural Resources.**
Interpretive Sign Design,
Shades SP
Turkey Run SP
Wyandotte Caves
Hardy Lake
McCormick's Creek SP
Generic Division-wide signs
- **Interpretive Master Plan,**
Turkey Run State Park
Indiana Dunes State Park
- **Interpretive Exhibit Mgmt.**
Spring Mill State Park
McCormick's Creek SP
- **Westfield (IN) Parks and Recreation**
Interpretive Sign Design
- **Elkhart County (IN) Parks**
Interpretive Sign Design
- **Eli Lilly & Company (IN)**
Interpretive Sign Design
- **City of Chesterton (IN)**
Interpretive Sign Design
- **Bloomington Parks (IN)**
B-Line Trail Interpretive Signs

For Example:

Two visual approaches for the same text:



When wave energy passes through water into a shallow area, the waves break. The lower part of the circular motion slows down as it scrapes the shallow bottom. The upper part of the wave continues moving forward until it falls into air, or breaks.



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In the first example, the diagram visually explains the concept. The second example, while a nice photo, does not visually explain the concept as well.

Tip: If the sign is about a feature already being observed by the reader, don't waste sign space with a photo or illustration of it.

For instance, if your sign is *about* a specific cave and is placed *in front* of that cave, why waste valuable visual space with a photo of the cave entrance? Graphics should enhance understanding. Depending on your text, the cave graphics could include:

- photos of inaccessible cave formations or fauna
- a map of the cave passage
- a diagram explaining how the cave formed

Site photos can be used if they further illustrate a point. Before and after photos of an ecological restoration project provide a good visual.

(Continued)



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Images can be used to convey emotion as well as explain concepts. Images of a mill explosion or a flood convey the scale of the devastation. Again, these images visually communicate what words cannot.

By choosing graphics that aid understanding, you will create a sign that visually communicates.