



INKLINGS

Bulletin of Interpretive Ideas

June 2009 Volume 9, Issue 2

Interpretive Master Plans *the Table of Contents*

Current Project List

- **Indiana Department of Natural Resources**
Interpretive Sign Design,
Clifty Falls State Park
Spring Mill State Park
Interpretive Exhibit Mgmt.
McCormick's Creek SP
Indiana Dunes SP
Turkey Run SP
- **Bloomington Parks and Recreation (IN)**
B-Line Trail signs
- **East Lansing Parks and Recreation (MI)**
Interpretive Signs
- **Noblesville Stormwater Management (IN)**
Interpretive Signs

Although no two interpretive plans are alike, certain parts should appear in all Table of Contents.

1. Resource Overview. What is unique about the site? Why is it protected? The Resource Overview includes natural and cultural resources. It also includes information on who manages the site and their mission. The Resource Overview provides the background information for the interpretive story.

2. Existing Conditions. What is happening now? Existing Conditions covers:

- a. Audiences. Who is coming to the site? Who is not coming to the site? This portion includes attendance figures as well as demographic information.
- b. Programs. Types of programs as well as attendance figures. What programs are successful in terms of attendance, revenue or other intrinsic values?



- c. Non-personal media. This would include signs, brochures, exhibits or

other interpretive media.

- d. Facilities for interpretation. This would be an overview of facilities including a nature center, amphitheater, shelters, trail systems or historical buildings – places where programs are conducted.

- e. Staff and volunteers.

3. Interpretive Theme and Sub-themes. The interpretive theme incorporates the Resource Overview into a one sentence statement that answers the question: What is the message you want people to leave with? The sub-themes form the background needed to understand that theme. For example:

Theme: The landscape of Prophetstown State Park was formed by ice, water, fire and humans.

In order to have an understanding of this theme, one needs to know:

Subtheme: Glaciers covered the bedrock, altered pre-existing features and created new ones

Subtheme: Water continues to build and tear down the landscape

Subtheme: Fire maintained the pre-settlement ecosystems

Subtheme: For thousands of years, humans have lived with and altered the landscape

All plan recommendations would support the theme and subthemes.



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4. Recommendations. All recommendations support the theme and take into consideration the resource, the audience (current and target) and the managing agency. Using the theme mentioned previously, a recommendation could be for an exhibit that explains prescribed burns.

5. Implementation. Depending on the situation, this could include a specific budget or phases/priorities.

6. Miscellaneous. Each plan caters to a specific client need and is therefore unique. Although the previous five points should be in each plan, a client may also request: audience evaluation/surveys, marketing strategies, site maps identifying recommendation locations, exhibit floorplans, sign prototypes, inventories or artifact lists. Some of these items may appear as appendices.

By including the five content areas while keeping it adaptable your individual site, you will have a document that focuses and guides your efforts.