



Inklings

Bulletin of Interpretive Ideas

December 2001 Volume 1, Issue 3

Current/Recent Project List

- Interpretive Panel Design, Pattison Park, Clermont County Park District, Batavia, OH
- Exhibit Design and Exhibit Labels, Clinch Park Zoo, Traverse City, MI
- Exhibit Design, Spring Mill State Park, Mitchell, IN
- Interpretive Panel Design, Celery Bog, W. Lafayette Parks Department, W. Lafayette, IN

Signs: Keeping Your Cost Down

The first question that arises with any sign project is “*Can we afford it?*”. The overall cost of a sign is influenced by several factors.



Sign Material

Cost is influenced by the fabrication process and the type of material used. Each process has advantages and disadvantages. Some less expensive methods are also easily vandalized, or subject to weathering. Questions to ask are: Is the site accessible 24 hours a day (hence a greater vandalism potential)? Will the sign be in direct sunlight (fading)? Will the sign be located in a coastal area (where sandblasting will occur)? Thinking through the constraints of the site will help you choose the best material for the best price.

Estimates for one 36" x 24" sign:

silkscreened: \$2,200

porcelain: \$2300

digital: \$425

(estimates from National Park Service)

Sign Size

Standard sizes cost less to fabricate than unique custom sizes. Fabricators will have a list of standard sizes.

Number of Signs

Identical signs (a trail map, for example) will cost less per sign than the same number of signs with different designs. Each design requires set-up time from the fabricator, as well as additional design time.

Mounting Structure

Will you build the mounting structure in-house, or will you purchase it? Many fabricators provide durable mounting systems for standard sized signs. Such a mounting system (continued on back)



Standard mounting systems cost more than one made in-house, but will add to the lifespan of the sign. (Prairie Duneland Trail signs by Interpretive Ideas)

GIS/GPS: Applications for Interpretation

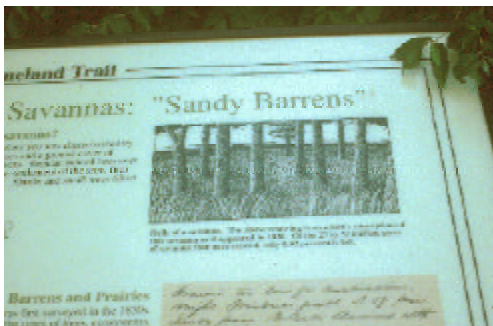
Five years ago you took a photo of a controlled burn site. You'd like to take a photo at the same spot, but now you can't find the location. The flag you left is long gone. What about that rare orchid you found on your property? Could you find it again? You could if you had used a Global Positioning System (GPS).

Interpretive Ideas is using GPS in several applications. Entire interpretive trails can

be accurately mapped. Interpretive panel locations can be marked. Later, when the trail and panels are ready to install, the GPS coordinates identify the exact location.

The spring 2002 issue of *Inklings* will be devoted to the use of GIS and GPS for interpretation and its overlap with management.

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Interpretive Ideas
P.O. Box 355
Okemos, MI 48805-0355
517/347-0861
schools@voyager.net



Original artwork such as this artist's conception of the original savanna, adds to the sign's appearance -- and to its cost. (*Prairie Duneland Trail signs by Interpretive Ideas*)

(Signs *continued*)

for a 36" x 24" sign will cost around \$600. The mounting structure for a custom sized sign will cost more.

Text and Design

Will you create the design or contract this out? Are you providing the text? Will a designer need to travel to the site? Designer costs are influenced by such factors as the number of visits, the amount of research time, number of photos, need for original illustrations, availability of graphics, logos, etc. Depending on the design, the cost could range widely. The more you can provide, the lower the cost.

By thinking through your project you'll be better able to anticipate the cost. If you would like help determining the cost of a project, *Interpretive Ideas* is available to provide an estimate.