



# Inklings

Bulletin of Interpretive Ideas

December 2005 Volume 5, Issue 4

## Current Project List

- Interpretive Sign Plan, CSX Rail Trail, Bloomington (IN) Parks and Recreation
- Trail Signs, Reeds Lake Trail, East Grand Rapids (MI) Parks Department
- Interpretive Site Plan, Prime Outlets, Fremont, IN
- Interpretive Brochure Design, The Nature Conservancy, Indiana Chapter
- Interpretive Plan, Wabash and Erie Canal, Delphi, IN with *Lifespace Design*
- Interpretive Sign Design, W. Lafayette Parks Dept. (IN)
- Interpretive Sign Design, North Hydro Park, Charter Township of Ypsilanti (MI) with *Landscape Architects & Planners, Inc*

## Anatomy of an Orientation Sign

The goals of an orientation sign are to:

1. **Welcome** visitors to the site
2. **Orient** them to the site
3. Convey **important information**

### 1. Welcome Your Visitors

Make sure that they know why the site is important. What is significant? Why is it protected? Brief historical background on the park can be included.

Include the **agency logo** and recognition of donors, endowments, etc. on the sign.

### 2. Orientation

A simple, easy-to-read map showing trails, important features and park amenities (restrooms, shelters, etc.).

A **"You Are Here"** helps position your visitor in relation to the park.



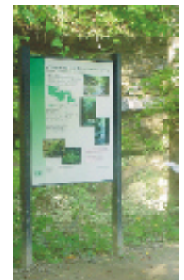
### 3. Important Information

Rules, contact information and cautions are among the items placed here (See Rules Smorgasbord).

## Orientation Signs

Things to keep in mind:

- **Visibility.** An orientation sign needs to be visible from a distance. For this reason, an orientation sign is typically upright and vertical in its design. This differs from an interpretive sign which is typically lower, horizontal and angled for better visibility of the subject being interpreted.
- **Map orientation.** Make sure that the map on the sign is oriented to the site. For example, if the top of the map is North, then the visitor should be facing north when reading the map. This requires making a decision about sign placement before the map is designed.
- **Phone numbers.** Consider carefully before placing a contact phone number on a sign. Could the phone number change over the next several years? Is this the best phone number to call if there is a problem at night or on a weekend? People will call this number, so it needs to be current and provide a quick response.



Orientation Sign  
Turkey Run S.P., IN  
(upright, vertical)



Interpretive Sign  
City of Hamilton, IN  
(angled, horizontal)



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## Rules Smorgasbord

*Each park will have its own safety concerns and regulations. At right are rules frequently used on orientation signs.*

### Park Etiquette

Please . . .



Carry out what you carry in.



Keep pets on leash.



Clean up after your pet.



Respect the rights of park neighbors.



Respect the rights of other park users.

### For Everyone's Enjoyment, Remember . . .



Park vehicles in designated areas.



Alcohol is prohibited.



Hunting and firearms are prohibited.



The park is closed from dusk to dawn.



Camping and ground fires are prohibited.



Trails are for non-motorized use only.



No swimming.

For downloadable orientation icons:

<http://www.aiga.org/content.cfm?ContentAlias=symbolsigns>