



INKLINGS

Bulletin of Interpretive Ideas

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Current Project List

- **Indiana Department of Natural Resources**
 - Interpretive Sign Design,
 - Clifty Falls State Park*
 - Monroe Reservoir*
 - O'Bannon Woods*
 - Interpretive Master Plans,
 - Patoka Reservoir*
 - Interpretive Exhibit Mgmt.
 - Spring Mill State Park*
 - McCormick's Creek SP*
 - Indiana Dunes SP*
 - Turkey Run SP*
- **Champaign Cty FPD (IL)**
 - Interpretive Signs*
- **Noblesville Stormwater Management (IN)**
 - Interpretive Signs*

Signs of the Times

Stretching your sign budget

Lise Schools

During economic downturns, hard decisions have to be made in order to meet cutback mandates. Before shelving a sign project, consider some cost saving options.

1. In-house vs. hiring

The more done in-house, the lower the cost. A skilled staff person could provide any or all of the following:

- a. Text writing
- b. Graphics
- c. Layout

2. Trailhead/orientation signs

If a sign project is more about orientation and less about interpretation, consider using a local graphics company. Signs for trailheads and property orientation signs may not require the skills of an interpretive sign company.

3. Cost per sign: one sign vs. several

With many sign manufacturing companies, the cost per sign goes down with each additional sign, even if each design is unique. This is related to:

- a) Administrative and management time required for each project whether big or small.
- b) Shipping costs. Shipping costs are graduated by weight. For example, 0- 250 pounds may have the same rate. Ten pounds of signs will have the same shipping cost as 249 pounds of signs. Spread out over the larger number of signs, the cost per sign comes down.

So, if you are considering future small sign projects, money will be saved if they can be lumped together. If you really only need one sign, ask yourself:

- a) Is there another agency you could combine projects with? The sign manufac-

turing company may be able to reduce your price if the signs can be grouped into one project.

b) Same design, multiple copies. Would your sign be applicable to sites other than your own? An invasive plant sign (*Interpretive Ideas/The Nature Conservancy*) was designed to be applicable state-wide. Many agencies were interested in ordering a sign. Each sign ordered brought down the price for everyone.



Multiple-site sign about invasive plants

4. Art re-use

Many artists own the rights to all their previous artwork and make it available in a single-use agreement. Re-using an artist's existing work in a single-use agreement is less expensive than commissioning an original work. The artwork already exists, so you are only paying for the right to use it once. An established artist will have a large portfolio of available single-use illustrations. I've frequently used Corvus Art <http://www.ameliyahansen.com/index.html> for single-use art.

Economic hard times can create hardships, but also challenge our creativity and efficiency. Before dropping a needed project, check out some alternatives for making that project a reality.



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