



Inklings

Bulletin of Interpretive Ideas

June 2001 Volume 1, Issue 1

Current/Recent Project List

- Exhibit Plan, Indiana State Parks (through Natural Concepts)
- Trail Plan, Latimer Woods, Bloomington, IN
- Trail Plan, Touch the Earth Preserve, Columbus, IN
- Interpretive Panel Design, W. Lafayette, IN
- Interpretive Panel Design, Bloomington, IN
- Exhibit Design, Indiana State Parks

Too often, a trail's location is determined before interpretation is considered.

Feature Project: Latimer Woods

Letting Interpretation Define Your Trail Location

The site was only 10 acres in size, but contained trees of a size not commonly seen in Indiana. Ecologists visiting the site, speculated that many of the trees pre-dated European settlement. Making these trees more valuable was the fact that they were still standing when everything around them was retail development and apartment complexes.

Latimer Woods, in Bloomington, Indiana, was for generations the wood lot of the Latimer family farm. Living descendants provided marvelous reminiscences of times spent in the woods, their respect for the trees, and their commitment to protecting them. The family memoirs of Latimer Woods, with their site specific text determined the location of the trail recommended by Interpretive Ideas.

An example:

"I remember gathering hickory nuts in the fall from the shagbark hickory trees, gathering and eating pawpaws which were abundant in the woods, and finding and cutting a cedar Christmas tree each Christmas."

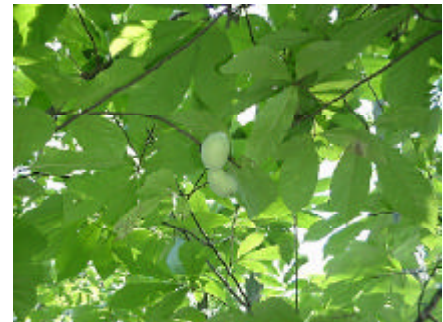
This quotation will be included at a trail stop in a paw paw patch.

Too often, a trail's location is deter-

mined before interpretation is considered. While the trail may function well as a trail, there are missed opportunities for making it interpretive. Far better to allow the interpretive planner to be the first on the site. An interpreter's task is to determine: What is significant and unique to the site? What is the

interpretive theme that emerges and tells the site's story? How can the stops tell the site's story in a revealing way?

Significant information could be historical, biological, geological, cultural, or any combination of these factors. Sometimes the information exists, but must be gathered. In other cases, the interpreter may need to research and inventory the site. As the information is reviewed and the site becomes familiar, an interpretive theme is developed. *(continued next page)*



*Paw paws at Latimer Woods
(photo by Steve Cotter)*

Interpretive Ideas Moves to Michigan

Interpretive Ideas is now located near Lansing in Okemos, Michigan. Interpretive Ideas is maintaining its Indiana client base, and looks forward to projects in Michigan and elsewhere. In addition to offering interpretive planning, training, and design, Interpretive Ideas is branching out into Geographic Information Systems (GIS). We can assist your project by providing the data and maps needed for site analysis. For more information on our services, contact Lise Schools at: 517/347-0861 or schools@voyager.net.

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Interpretive Update

Interpretive Panels: Going Digital

In recent years, the technological advances in digital printers has made digitally produced signs attractive. Advances include better printing quality, inks with longevity, and substrates that hold.

Digitally produced signs can be embedded in fiberglass for vandal resistance. Additionally, digitally produced signs tend to cost less than other traditional materials. From a design standpoint, digital signs offer great options when it comes to multiple colors, photos, overlapping graphics, and other visuals that make signs attractive, without increasing the cost.

For more information on digital signs, contact Interpretive Ideas at: schools@voyager.net

(Latimer Woods continued)

Once the significant stops that support the theme are identified, determining trail location is like playing a game of dot-to-dot. Stop One establishes the theme, the plot, the characters. The trail then connects the visitor to Stop Two. The following stops support the theme, build on previous information, and pose questions. The last stop concludes the story, invites further involvement, and provides opportunities for more information.

Problems and Solutions

While interpretation should be considered early in the process, those who will build the trail must be involved along the way. Factors such as access, cost, and feasibility are considered when determining the final trail location. By having the interpreter work with the park staff, the Latimer Woods the trail was altered to avoid a ravine, while still incorporating the recommended interpretive stops. This alteration saved the agency construction costs and kept the trail accessible.

Latimer Woods is unlike any other site. Its interpretive trail will reveal this fact. By letting interpretation determine trail location, visitors will get a unique experience that brings that site to life. Visitors will more fully understand the site's special story and why it is protected.