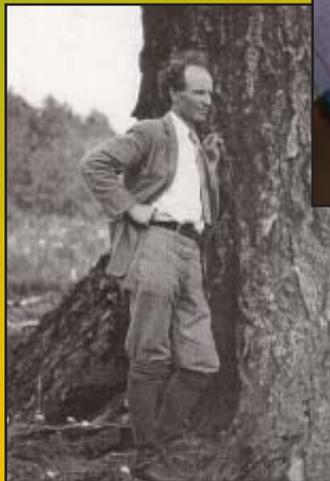


Introduction



Courtesy Enos Mills Cabin Museum

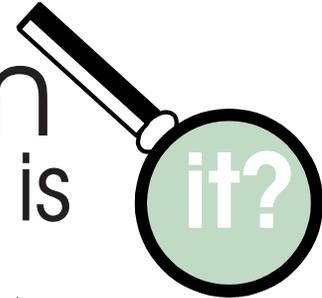
Through interpretive and educational programs, the public gains appreciation and insight into California's natural and cultural riches. Through leadership and example, the Department will mentor practices to sustain these riches into the future.

California State Parks

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Interpretation What is



Introduction

In 2001, an estimated 86 million people visited California's 273 park units. Visitors travel to these precious resources seeking various recreational experiences. Approximately 750 state park peace officers are charged with protecting the natural resources of California State Parks and providing for visitor enjoyment and use of those resources. Interpretation is used in many forms by park staff to communicate with these visitors. Used correctly, interpretation functions as the preferred light-handed management tool to help increase the visitor's enjoyment and protect the park's resources.

In the end, we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught.

Baba Dioum

Although there are numerous definitions of interpretation, they all center around the idea of translating information from the scientist, the historian, and the manager to the visitor. Over time, how interpretation has been defined and delivered has changed and evolved. Module 1-Introduction summarizes the historical development of interpretation, presents some of the currently accepted definitions of interpretation, and reviews the interpretive services provided by California State Parks. Module 1-Introduction answers the question, "*Interpretation: What is it?*"

History of interpretation

When reviewing the history of the profession of interpretation, certain names such as Enos Mills, John Muir, and Freeman Tilden consistently appear. Many places also seem to have played a key role in the development of the discipline, including California. Interpretation began as a private business and was soon adopted by public agencies and organizations. As the country and its people changed and evolved, so has the discipline of interpretation.



The people



Courtesy Enos Mills Cabin Museum

Enos Mills (1870-1922)

Enos Mills is considered one of the founders of the interpretive profession. He started interpreting as a “nature guide” in 1889, leading trips to Long’s Peak, in what later became Rocky Mountain National Park.

I developed nature guiding, that is, helping people to become happily acquainted with the life and wonders of wild nature.

Enos Mills

Mills had an insatiable thirst for knowledge about the resource and believed a nature guide must “have a wide range of knowledge and to be capable of tactfully imparting this directly and indirectly” (Mills, 1920, p. 110). During the span of his career, Mills led over 250 groups to the summit of Long’s Peak, encouraging their connection to the resource he loved so dearly. Mills was one of the first to make use of the relationship between what visitors learn about a resource and how much they care for it, and want to protect it.

He influenced the evolution of park protection, started one of the first programs in the country to train interpreters, and authored more than 15 books about the art and science of interpreting. His book, *Adventures of a Nature Guide*, written in 1920, paints a wonderful historical picture of interpretation early in its professional development. “This new occupation is likely to be far-reaching in its influences; it is inspirational and educational. Anyone who has a vacation or an outing in contact with nature will have from the great outdoors its higher values as well as a livelier enjoyment if accompanied by a nature guide” (Mills, 1920, p. 154). Mills’ thoughts and observations regarding the profession form the foundation of interpretive theory and practice.

John Muir (1838-1914)

Although John Muir’s role in the development of interpretation is less obvious than Enos Mills’, it is no less important. John Muir has been credited with being the first to use the term “interpret” in reference to nature when he said,

I’ll interpret the rocks, learn the language of the flood, storm and avalanche. I’ll acquaint myself with the glaciers and wild gardens, and get as near the heart of the world as I can.

John Muir



Muir’s work embodied the essence of interpretation. He used his communications of the natural world to encourage people to protect and preserve the topics of his stories. Muir was seminal in the establishment of Yosemite as a national park and was the founder of the Sierra Club. Through his writings and presentations, Muir interpreted much of the West to the nation.



History of interpretation

Freeman Tilden (1883-1980)

Freeman Tilden's influence and impact on the field of interpretation is one of the most strongly felt today. Many consider him to be the "father" of modern interpretation. Unlike Mills and Muir, he was not a naturalist nor an interpreter, but a writer and a reporter. He was hired by the National Park Service to tour the parks, observe all he could, and write about the interpretive services provided. His book, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, written in 1957 is one of the most widely accepted reviews of the philosophy of interpretation. Tilden wrote many other books and continued his work for over 20 years. No modern literary work has had the same impact on the field of interpretation as *Interpreting Our Heritage*.

Tilden's Six Principles of Interpretation



- Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.
- Information, as such, is not interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based on information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.
- Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical or architectural. Any art is in some degree teachable.
- The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.
- Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part, and must address itself to the whole man rather than any phase.
- Interpretation addressed to children (say up to the age of 12) should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best it will require a separate program.

Galen Clark (1814-1910)

Galen Clark is often overlooked but is one of the most important people in California's history of interpretation. A law signed by Abraham Lincoln in 1864 created the first state park in the country in Yosemite Valley. In 1866, more than 20 years before Mills led his first trip up Long's Peak, Galen Clark became the first formally appointed, paid park ranger in the country (Lynch, 1996). Called the "Guardian of Yosemite," Clark became both protector and educator.

Clark's primary directive, from the eight member Commission appointed to manage the park, was to protect the park. Over the years, Clark led hundreds of visitors, including John Muir, through the wilds of Yosemite. After several excursions with Clark, Muir said, "His kindness to all Yosemite visitors and mountaineers was marvelously constant and uniform" (Muir, 1912, p. 189). In fact, Clark "began the proud tradition of protection and care of parks, combined with helpful service to the visiting public" (Lynch, 1996, p. 13). In 1880, when Clark was no longer the official "Guardian" of Yosemite, he

History of interpretation



continued to lead groups through the valley operating what he termed a “Tourist Coach.” Clark was arguably then both the first officially appointed, paid interpreter and the first one practicing the profession as a private citizen.

Federal agencies

Traditionally born out of the National Park Service, interpretation, in one form or another, is used by all resource management agencies today. Although it is used in a number of capacities, the primary function of interpretation has always been as a management tool.

National Park Service (NPS)



California not only had the first paid “interpreter” in any state, it was also home to the first paid interpreter for NPS. In 1920, more than 40 years after Clark served as the first paid “Guardian of Yosemite,” the NPS hired its first interpreters for Yosemite.

In 1919, Stephen Mather, the first director of the newly established NPS, was traveling in the Tahoe area when he saw a captivated crowd gathered around Loyal Miller at Fallen Leaf Lodge. Miller was a paleornithologist and educated audiences with his entertaining presentations about birds. Mather, charged with protecting the national parks, recognized that this was exactly what he was seeking “in order to counteract those persons who would selfishly destroy park values” (Sharpe, 1976, p. 31). After several months he succeeded in convincing those involved at Tahoe to come to Yosemite. Mather was so sure that nature guiding was essential to the successful management of the parks that he personally financed the early work in Yosemite for several years. The NPS continues to be the leader in providing interpretive services with over 2,000 paid interpreters and 200,000 docents and volunteers working across the country.

United States Forest Service (USFS)

The USFS manages some of the largest areas of public land in the United States - 155 national forests and over 100 National Scenic Byways across the country. The agency began to develop its own version of interpretive services when it created the Branch of Visitor Information Services in 1961. One of the primary reasons for its establishment was to help explain to the public the complex policies set forth in the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act of 1960. The USFS was shifting its focus for the management of the public’s resources. It was clear that the public needed to be educated about the changes.



Since formally offering the first interpretive services in 1961, USFS has had a tumultuous history of providing interpretation to the public. In 1980, USFS changed the name of its interpretive program from Visitor Information Services to Interpretive Services, the focus being to orient, inform, and interpret to visitors.

USFS is currently in the process of developing an Interpretive Services Strategy. One of the primary issues with interpretation for USFS is that employees are asked to perform many duties. Those conducting interpretation are only focusing about 20-50% of their time on interpretation (Prell, 2002). Most of the interpretation conducted by this federal agency is done in writing, through signs and



History of interpretation

brochures, and reaches millions of visitors annually. For the Pacific Southwest Region of the USFS, Sharon Prell, Recreation Extension Agent, said “we...strive to meet the growing demands of people who seek learning-based activities and want more than just information” (Prell, 2002).

United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

The USFWS also began to provide interpretive services in response to management concerns. Early in its inception, the primary visiting public were hunters and fishermen who, through the purchase of licenses and equipment, provided much of the funding for the agency. The 1980s saw a decline in the numbers of people fishing and hunting regularly and an increase in a new population of users. These “nonconsumptive” users were not interested in shooting the wildlife with a gun, but with a camera. Terms such as “watchable wildlife” surfaced and new management issues occurred. In fact, one of the most popular recreation activities today is bird watching, and “birders” flock to lands managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Through employees and contractors, the USFWS provides interpretive services to millions of visitors across the country.



Bureau of Land Management (BLM)



The BLM, much like the USFWS, has a relatively young history in interpretation. With the largest public land base in the country, the BLM has great potential for increasing its interpretive efforts. Like the USFS, the BLM began offering interpretive services in response to a legislated change in management mandate. In 1976, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act was passed, requiring that the BLM manage its land for multiple uses, including recreation. Increased use combined with fragile arid environments forced the agency to provide more interpretive services in an effort to protect resources and provide for the mandated multiple uses. Today, several BLM sites around the country, such as Coos Bay in Oregon and the Lost Coast in California, are increasing interpretive services offered to the public.

United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

The USACE provides the greatest number of water-based recreation opportunities in the country. Although the agency began in 1936, it did not start providing recreation services until the mid-1940s. In the early 1980s, the USACE began to establish a Visitor Perception and Interpretive Services Program. The goal of the program is to educate and enlighten the public regarding the purpose and concept of the USACE, the operation of their water projects, and the historical and natural features of the area. In addition to providing many of the same interpretive services as the other federal agencies, the USACE also provides many unique opportunities in interpretation such as self-guided water trails and interpreter-led boat tours. Although today there are many water-based interpretive opportunities provided by other organizations and agencies, the USACE was one of the first to provide such services for the public. The USACE has also conducted and funded research to demonstrate the effectiveness of interpretation in meeting agency goals and objectives.





State agencies

In California, the history of interpretation is an old one. From the first nationally appointed “interpreter” in 1866, to the second largest group of paid park rangers in the country today, California has a strong tradition of interpretation. With the appointment of Galen Clark in 1866, Yosemite became the first site in the country to have a paid “nature guide.” In 1920, Stephen T. Mather made California’s Yosemite the site of the first “nature guide” in the National Park Service. State departments providing interpretive services in California today include Parks and Recreation, Fish and Game, and Water Resources. A brief history of these three departments is provided below.

Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)

In 1927, a comprehensive plan was signed into law creating California’s state park system. With help from the Save-the-Redwoods League and individuals such as Frederick Law Olmstead, Newton B. Drury, and John D. Rockefeller, the state park system grew rapidly. Newton Drury oversaw the evolution of the organization as Chief of California’s Division of Beaches and Parks. Throughout the history of the organization, there have been several different divisions, including the Division of Beaches and Parks, the Division of Recreation, and the Division of Small Craft Harbors. In 1961, these various divisions merged into the Division of Beaches and Parks. In 1967, William Penn Mott became the director and transformed the Division of Beaches and Parks into the current Department of Parks and Recreation. Mott was one of the most influential leaders in California State Parks and one of the most ardent supporters of the role of interpretation in the parks.



The Mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state’s extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

California Department of Parks and Recreation

The Department of Parks and Recreation, commonly known as California State Parks, currently manages more than 270 park units, encompassing over one third of California’s coastline and providing recreation opportunities for over 85 million people annually. More than 2,500 state park employees and 12,000 volunteers help maintain and protect some of California’s most pristine, scenic and fragile areas as well as valuable cultural resources. California’s state parks are not only visited by the public, but are valued by them as well. In 2000, California voters passed the largest state park bond (\$2.1 billion) in the nation’s history. In 2002 voters approved a second, even larger, park bond (\$2.6 billion). Within California State Parks, interpretation plays a large role. In fiscal year 2000-01, the total number of interpretive programs given statewide was 148,234.



History of interpretation

Department of Fish and Game (DFG)

DFG is another state agency that provides interpretive and educational services for the public. They were early players in interpretation by sponsoring lectures and tours throughout the state. DFG is charged with managing California's fish, wildlife, and plant resources and the habitats on which they depend. According to the mission of the agency, these resources should be protected for their "ecological values and for their use and enjoyment by the public." DFG has over 150 public access sites and manages in excess of 800,000 acres of land. Beginning in the 1850s, DFG enacted laws to protect and manage the state's wildlife. In 1914, DFG created the Bureau of Education, Publicity and Research because of the clear need to develop these areas. In 1984, DFG's Conservation Education implemented Project Wild, and later added Aquatic Wild. These popular programs provide free wildlife education throughout the state. Other popular outreach efforts sponsored by DFG include the Hunter Education and the Urban Fishing Programs.



Department of Water Resources (DWR)



DWR is a third state agency that provides interpretive services in California. DWR was created in 1956 by the California State Legislature to plan and guide the development of the state's water resources. With increasing demands on water resources and public conflict over the use of those resources, DWR created the Office of Public Information and Communications in 1987. Now known as the Office of Water Education, its primary function is to conduct outreach and education for the public regarding the state's water resources. School publications, public tours, and exhibits are the most common outreach tools used by the DWR.

Local agencies

Many communities, cities, special districts, and counties have museums, parks, cultural sites, recreational facilities, and zoos. They are managed by local government agencies and non-profit organizations. Each varies greatly in their approach to interpretation. Some, like the East Bay Regional Park District and the Oakland Museums of California, are well established and have developed extensive facilities and programs, which reach thousands of visitors each year. These organizations have the ability to adapt and transform themselves, expanding their outreach to the perceived needs of their respective communities. They have adopted a regional or statewide approach to interpretation and offer comprehensive training for their staff and volunteers, as well as for individuals from other agencies. Other organizations, because of their location and budgetary considerations, have taken more modest approaches to interpretation. Within most counties there is at least one organization that is focused on the preservation and interpretation of the area's natural or cultural history.



Private organizations

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that provide interpretive services and opportunities can be classified into two groups, for-profit and nonprofit.

For-profit

For-profit organizations are similar to those that gave rise to the profession of interpretation. For example, the early work of Enos Mills and Loye Miller was conducted for a fee. Today, this for-profit work has transformed from a few individuals, conducting programs for a minimal fee and maybe food and lodging, to a multimillion-dollar-a-year business. Ecotourism is one of the fastest growing areas in recreation (Doyle, 1999). Tour companies, cruise lines, and travel organizations often hire interpreters to help visitors have meaningful and enjoyable experiences, thus ensuring customer satisfaction and return business. Many individuals also make their living providing contractual interpretive services and training for outfitters and guides.

Nonprofit

There are thousands of nonprofit organizations throughout the country that provide interpretive services to the public. Organizations such as the California State Parks Foundation, National Audubon Society, the Nature Conservancy, and the National Parks and Conservation Association are a few of the better known nonprofit organizations. In California, there are more than 80 nonprofit cooperating associations that assist with fundraising to support interpretive efforts in state parks. Some of the most visible services provided by cooperating associations in California State Parks are the sales and services provided in visitor centers and bookstores. Cooperating associations began in California in 1972, and in the year 2000 alone they raised almost \$12 million (Cooperating Associations Program 2000 Statistical Summary). The typical California State Parks cooperating organization usually consists of a Board of Directors, volunteers, and, in some associations, paid staff. A state park employee serves as Cooperating Association Liaison (CAL), the conduit between the Board of Directors and California State Parks.

Nature is not so much her own ever-sweet interpreter, as the mere supplier of that cunning alphabet, whereby selecting and combining as he pleases, each man reads his own peculiar lesson according to his own peculiar mind and mood.

Herman Melville



History of interpretation

Significant dates in interpretive history

1864	Yosemite Valley made first state park in the nation
1866	Galen Clark appointed “Guardian” of Yosemite
1872	First national park established - Yellowstone
1889	Enos Mills began leading trips as a “nature guide”
1891	Forest Reserve Act created National Forest System
1897	Forest Management Act establishes reserves
1900	
1914	California Department of Fish and Game’s, Bureau of Education, Publications and Resources established
1916	National Park Service Act passed
1918	Save-the-Redwoods League established
1920	Steven T. Mather hired first paid “interpreter” in the national parks
1927	California State Park System created
1938	First National Park Service Jr. Naturalist Programs - Yosemite
1956	California Dept. of Water Resources established
1957	Freeman Tilden published <i>Interpreting Our Heritage</i>
1960	Multiple Use - Sustained Yield act passed
1961	US Forest Service - Visitor Information Services branch established
1964	Wilderness Act passed
1967	William Penn Mott, Jr. became director of California State Parks
1972	First California State Park cooperating associations established
1973	California State Park - Jr. Ranger Program established statewide
1974	Wm. Penn Mott, Jr. Training Center dedicated
1976	Federal Land Policy and Mgmt. Act established
1980	US Army Corps of Engineers established Visitor Perception and Interpretive Services Program
1984	California Dept. of Fish and Game - Project Wild and Aquatic Wild established
1987	California Dept. of Water Resources Office of Public Information and Communication established
1988	National Association for Interpretation established
2000	



Interpretation defined

There are numerous definitions of interpretation. In fact, Tilden said good interpreters will come up with their own definitions. Tell anyone outside of the discipline that you are an interpreter and they will ask what language you speak. In a way, they are right in their understanding of the word. To interpret is to translate the language of the scientist, the voices of the past, and the significance of the places to create meanings and connections with the people of the present.

Interpretation is an artful form of communication that stresses ideas and relationships, not simply isolated facts and figures. This is most frequently done through the use of hands-on approaches, firsthand experiences and/or the use of physical objects. Interpretation communicates the science of the natural world, the stories of the cultural world, and the excitement of the recreational world to an audience in a manner that is provoking and interesting, and leaves them wanting to discover more.

Helping people to become happily acquainted with the life and wonders of wild nature...it is inspirational and educational.

Enos Mills

An educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experiences, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information.

Freeman Tilden

Interpretation is the communication link between the visitor and (park) resources.

Grant Sharpe

Interpretation is the translation of the language of the scientist, the voices of the past, and the significance of the places to help create meanings and connections with the people of the present.

Carolyn Widner

Interpretation is an intelligent and meaningful presentation and explanation of the significance and value of the features and qualities preserved in the State Park System.

California State Park
Operational Manual

Interpretation is a communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the inherent meanings in the resource.

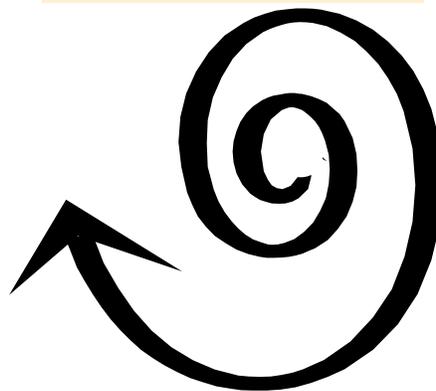
National Association for
Interpretation

Interpretation is how people communicate the significance of cultural and natural resources.

Doug Knudson, Ted Cable
and Larry Beck

Environmental interpretation is simply an approach to communication . . . (it) involves translating the technical language of a natural science or a related field into terms and ideas that people who aren't scientists can readily understand.

Sam Ham



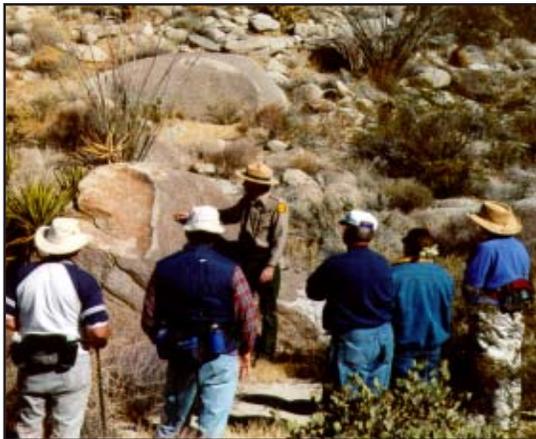


Types of interpretation

Types of interpretation

There are two basic types of interpretive services provided in California's state parks, personal and nonpersonal. Personal interpretation involves some type of physical interaction with the visitor, such as leading visitors through the park. Nonpersonal interpretive services, such as brochures and exhibits, are available for visitors to use without the presence of staff.

A primary characteristic that distinguishes nonpersonal services from personal services is that nonpersonal interpretation is nonlinear. In other words, the visitor controls the order of information received. For example, when visitors pick up a brochure, they can read whatever parts may interest them. Personal interpretive services, on the other hand, are linear with the interpreter controlling the order of information. There are positive and negative aspects to each approach. The following section briefly describes each approach and the accompanying qualities and characteristics associated with its use.



Guided programs provide personal service opportunities.



Interpretive panels offer nonpersonal services.



Programs and facilities offer personal and nonpersonal service opportunities.



Nonpersonal

Nonpersonal interpretation typically includes any informational, orientational, and educational written, audio, or visual messages provided for visitors without the use of direct personal contact with visitors. Nonpersonal services include brochures, pamphlets, newspapers, signs, exhibits, videos, computers, and audio programs (see Table 1.1).

Common nonpersonal interpretive services Table 1.1

- **Brochures/pamphlets/maps**—Publications that convey information, orientation, or educational messages. The most common form of nonpersonal services used in California State Parks.
- **Signs**—Free standing, affixed messages provided at specific locations. Signs are usually two-dimensional, include graphics, may be interactive and are made of numerous material types including wood, metal, porcelain enamel, fiberglass embedment and Lexan®.
- **Exhibits**—Three dimensional, object, or artifact-based displays. Exhibits are often interactive and can include written, visual, kinesthetic, and auditory methods of communication.
- **Wayside exhibits**—The term used to describe a sign or exhibit that is located along a road or trail.
- **Self-guided trails**—A trail that is interpreted through the use of brochures, signs, and/or audio.
- **Newspapers**—Park guide on newsprint, usually created annually or seasonally for the park or the region. Often includes the park rules, regulations, and general information.
- **Audiovisual**—Videos are usually used as the introduction/welcome to the park and shown in visitor or information centers. They may be available as souvenirs and promotional tools to increase visitor use.
- **Computers**—Interactive method for visitors to receive specific information. Often found in visitor centers with touch screen, keypad, mouse, and monitors. Computers, through web sites, are also increasing the parks' ability to reach visitors.
- **Radio transmissions**—Low-frequency radio transmissions that reach visitors' vehicular radios. Signs along roadsides indicate where passersby can tune to find out more information.



Types of interpretation

The nonlinear nature of nonpersonal communication also results in several negative characteristics. Because visitors can pick and choose what they select, they may not be receiving the primary message intended by management. In addition, there is no way of knowing what messages, if any, are received. The creation of quality, nonpersonal interpretive services can be very expensive and time consuming, and it requires expertise and equipment often not readily available at individual park units. A great deal of thought and planning should go into the creation, placement, and selection of nonpersonal interpretive services. Due to the high front-end cost, most nonpersonal interpretive services will be used for years. Too many or inappropriately placed nonpersonal interpretive services can result in a very negative image for the agency. For example, several signs along a scenic trail overlooking the ocean may only serve to distract from the natural beauty of the surroundings. Care and attention should be used to ensure that nonpersonal interpretation is not out-of-date, vandalized, or damaged, and if so, it should be replaced or removed in a timely manner.



Trail panels provide orientation and interpretive opportunities.



Publications offer nonpersonal service opportunities for visitors.



Bulletin boards are nonpersonal services that should be updated regularly.



Personal

Personal interpretive services involve direct, face-to-face contact with the visitor. Personal services include walks, talks, demonstrations, children's programs, roving, campfire talks, audiovisual talks, and providing information at the front desk. As discussed above, the primary characteristic, aside from contact with an individual, that distinguishes personal services from nonpersonal is that personal interpretation is given in a linear fashion. The interpreter generally controls the order of the information presented to the public.

There are many benefits of providing personal interpretive services as opposed to nonpersonal ones. The primary benefit of personal services is that you have the greatest control over what message the visitor walks away remembering. In addition, you have a chance to interact with the visitor and answer questions or clear up any misunderstandings. Many visitors like knowing that a real person is available. In this day and age of computers, answering phones and automated services everywhere, personal experiences with people can be very rewarding and satisfying. Personal contact with visitors also gives management a good idea of what problems and concerns visitors have before the issues become critical.

The term "authenticity" has also been used to distinguish personal from nonpersonal services (Knudson, Cable, and Beck, 1995). The interpreter has a better chance of physically engaging visitors in the resource and creating a more authentic experience with the park resources than through the use of nonpersonal, secondhand illustrative media. With the primary mandates to protect resources and provide for visitor enjoyment of those resources, personal contact with visitors affords the best opportunity to meet those goals.

There are negative aspects to providing personal services. Many managers point to the cost per person contacted for interpreter-led programs. On average, most estimates conclude that only 20 percent of visitors attend interpreter-led programs (Knudson, Cable, and Beck 1995). In addition, each interpreter can only be one place at a time thus reducing both the overall visibility and the number of visitors contacted throughout the resource. Interpreter-led programs may also reduce visitors' feelings of freedom and discovery. As with nonpersonal services, poor training, preparation, and presentation can leave a negative impression on visitors.

Given the importance of *every* contact, providing quality interpretation helps fulfill the mission of California State Parks. This handbook will review the theories, techniques, and skills necessary for providing effective personal interpretation.

What's ahead



As we have seen, there are many types of interpretation, each with its own characteristics. Many of the remaining modules in this handbook review, in detail, how to conduct several topics of interpretive programs. However, before we can answer the question, *How do we do it?*, we should ask ourselves, *Why do we do it?* Now that we have an understanding of what interpretation is, we can turn to Module 2-Purpose and Values—to discover why we should conduct interpretation in California's state parks.



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Introduction





Self assessment



Answer each question in the section below before reviewing the material in Module 1-Introduction. The answers are not provided. Compare your answers with your colleagues and as you read Module 1-Introduction. Items from the self assessment may be reviewed and discussed in class.

- 1) Historically, what was the primary function of interpretive services?

- 2) Who was the first official paid park ranger in the country?
 - a) Galen Clark
 - b) Enos Mills
 - c) Freeman Tilden
 - d) John Muir

- 3) The California Department of Parks and Recreation was created in which year?
 - a) 1957
 - b) 1919
 - c) 1916
 - d) 1927

- 4) Which federal agency provides the most interpretive services for the public?
 - a) United States Forest Service
 - b) National Park Service
 - c) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 - d) Bureau of Land Management
 - e) U. S. Army Corps of Engineers

- 5) In your own words, what is the mission of California State Parks? How does interpretation help fulfill this mission?

