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Introduction

I am a principal partner of EcoLeaders and have managed many projects. My specialties are interpretive planning, evaluation, and interpretive signs.

With over twenty-five years of experience in western Canada and the United States, I am an expert at identifying and analyzing audiences to ensure that learning is accurately and effectively targeted. My collaborative, capacity-building approach to planning facilitates positive acceptance and implementation.

Philosophy

Heritage Interpretation

Heritage Interpretation programs and services must address the needs and interest of a wide spectrum of participants. Key to this is finding ways of engaging the whole person, intellectually and emotionally.

In my planning work, I prefer to think of the people who will be taking part in an interpretation program or service as participants. My experience as a front line interpreter and educator has made it clear to me that an interpretation experience must be active, and is best when participants interact with real things such as a living creature, a natural landscape, an historic artifact or site. I also realize that in some cases the real thing may be too delicate, rare or located in an inaccessible location and that models, reproductions, photographs and high tech-virtual reality interactions may be needed to help participants make connections. To achieve this an interpretation planner must incorporate best practice in teaching and learning models including:

- *constructivism*, where participants gain knowledge through exploration and active learning i.e., hands-on. They are encouraged to work with peers (other participants) and a leader to think about and explain their observations and experiences.
- *inquiry learning*, where participants ask questions, discuss ideas and make observations to assist in the understanding of topics.
- *experiential education*, a process through which a learner constructs knowledge, skill, and value from direct experiences.

The Functions of Parks, Museums and Protected Areas

In the past, these places were considered as isolated sanctuaries where natural, cultural and historical features were protected in isolation. Today, I am pleased to say, many of these sites are now being considered by their managers and the public in much broader terms including:

- as custodians of valuable natural and cultural treasures
- core areas of conservation that are part of a greater ecosystem
- centres of best practice for land and cultural stewardship and sustainable living
- centres where citizens may contribute and participate in meaningful stewardship and conservation activities
- gateways to learning about:
 - specific natural and cultural landscapes
 - best practice in stewardship and sustainable living
 - developing leadership skills in conservation and stewardship

Skills

Project Management

I have managed many Interpretation planning project and numerous interpretation media development and production projects for a broad range of clients. The key to success of all of these projects is clear communication between our team and our clients. We like to build in frequent communication through out our projects to ensure:

- a clear mutual understanding of goals, objectives and procedures from the beginning of the project
- an up-to-date understanding of the project's progress
- discussion and resolution of problems when they occur

Examples of Recent Projects

Interpretive Master Plan for Prince Albert National Park

- a comprehensive Interpretation plan for one of Canada's original National Parks, 2010

The Dawn of the Age of Mammals

- an indoor museum exhibit developed with Lime Design of Victoria, BC. This multi-element exhibit is located at Red Deer Alberta's Kerry Wood Nature Centre, 2009

Research

My early training in biological field research taught me good practice in field and library research and how to analyze data. I am convinced that good research is the foundation of effective interpretation and visitor experience planning and programming. Information must be accurate, up-to-date and reflect the spectrum of knowledge and opinions available. On the many interpretation planning projects I have conducted research on:

- *agency foundations*; the vision, mission goals and objectives of the agency or group including an analysis of how these foundations will guide and focus the development of Interpretation services
- *audience/participants*; a study of the people currently engaged in Interpretation services. This may include, specific knowledge, attitudes and behaviour with respect the site and its Interpretation topics
- *markets*; a study of potential and current visitors to a site and how Interpretation services can address their needs and interests
- *curriculum connections*; a review of public and private school curricula and an analysis of how curricula can be connected to the site's foundations and current Interpretation goals and objectives
- *interpretation programing methods*; a description and review of strengths and weakness and best applications of personal and non-personal heritage interpretation and environmental education methods and media, including new electronic media
- *best practices*; identification and analysis of best practice in interpretation and environmental education services

Examples of Projects

A Review of Ecological Footprinting in the Formal Education Sector

- a study of the effectiveness of ecological footprinting world-wide as a tool for education for sustainability conducted for the World Wildlife Fund-UK, 2004

Nature Walk

- head researcher (natural and cultural features) for this award-winning television series, 1999–2003

Skills

Planning

I believe that effective planning is based on a clear understanding of three key components:

- target participants (Participant Analysis)
 - prior knowledge on topics to be covered
 - attitudes and behaviour
 - other reasons for coming to the site
- the natural and cultural features of the site (Feature Inventor and Analysis)
 - what are the key features and stories
 - what features must be protected
- the mandate of the sponsoring agency or group
 - This knowledge helps guide Interpretation program development
 - why is Interpretation being provided
 - where should the emphasis of Interpretation programming be placed?
 - provided a filter to use to determine if certain topics and approaches are appropriate

As a result, these are three key areas of the plans I have completed recently.

Other important concepts include:

- Partnership Analysis
 - a review and analysis of potential partners for delivering Interpretation services
- Themes
 - a listing and framing of the key concepts and learning outcomes of the overall Interpretation program
- Presentation Analysis
 - a listing and review of all personal and non-personal heritage interpretation and environmental education media and methods available
 - an analysis of each in terms of its effectiveness in terms of the site and agency being considered
- Program Statements
 - a listing of the key areas of Interpretation programming effort and recommendations of the amount of resources and staffing to be expended
- Implementation Plan
 - includes approach to phasing, general staffing and funding levels over a five year period
- References

Plans for Nature Centres and Visitor Centres

When staffing levels, visitor make-up, agency foundations and program make-up indicate a need and when funding is available, these types of facilities should be considered in Interpretation plans. I have produced concept plans for several nature centres.

Examples of Projects

Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park Heritage Appreciation Development Plan

- a comprehensive Interpretation plan for one of Alberta's largest flagship parks, Alberta Parks and Protected Areas, 2004
- included preliminary plans for a new interpretation/visitor centre

Glenbow Ranch Interpretive Plan, part of the Visitor Services Development Plan for Fish Creek District

- included preliminary plans for a new interpretation/visitor centre

Skills

Evaluation

The purpose of evaluation is to determine if the programs are delivering what was intended. A first step is to review the program's objectives. These should identify the audience, and target learning outcomes. These outcomes may include active participation as well as changes in knowledge, behaviour and attitude.

Another step is to compare the above stated objectives to the mandate of the agency or group that is delivering the program. For the program to be justifiable, its objectives must be consistent with the group's overall mission, vision and goals.

Evaluation can also involve comparison of existing practice with known best practice in heritage interpretation and environmental education or with occupational standards.

I have used all these methods in my evaluation and needs assessment projects.

Examples of Projects

Educational and Interpretive Services Needs Assessment and Analysis for the Wisconsin State Park System, Selected Wildlife Areas, Fisheries Facilities, State Forests and Tree Nurseries

- a comprehensive review of the definition, design, delivery evaluation and support of Interpretation services delivered by the State of Wisconsin's Dept. of Natural Resources, 2001

A Review of the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks Eco Education Program

- identified current best practice in development, delivery, evaluation and support in environmental education services
- compared the Eco Education system to current best practice
- included detailed recommendations

Stakeholder Dialogue

Today many parks and protected areas are working in partnership other like-minded groups and agencies to develop and deliver Interpretation services. On several recent projects I have worked with stakeholder groups and steering committees to gather information from their extensive experience and expertise, as well as on-going feedback about their needs and approaches. I have found this to be a rewarding process that has greatly assisted my planning and delivery of Interpretation services.

Examples of Projects that Included Stakeholder Input

Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park Heritage Appreciation Development Plan

- a multi-stakholder committee of other Interpretation service providers including: Parks Canada, Saskatchewan Provincial Parks, local adventure and ecotourism operators, local museums, community centres, and others.

Beaver Hills Heritage Appreciation Development Plan

- a multi-stakholder review group that reviewed plan drafts and supplied local expertise and experience to the plan
- this group included: university research biologist, regional park planners, local historical societies, Parks Canada, Saskatchewan Provincial Parks, local museums, ranchers, and a municipal environmental education centre

Skills

Heritage Interpreter Training

I have been involved in heritage interpreter training for much of my career. I started as a peer trainer at the annual spring training workshops held by Alberta Provincial Parks. Here I passed on my knowledge and experience in face-to-face interpretation to other parks employees. I also provided training in personal interpretation techniques to volunteers and staff for various nature centres, fish hatcheries parks agencies and ecotourism companies.

In 2000, I became a Interpretation Canada trainer, providing introductory and advanced in interpreter training. I also continue to contribute to Interpretation Canada through conference and workshop presentations and articles in *InterpScan*.

In 2001, I was the co-author of the *Heritage Interpreter Workbook and Trainer's Guide* for the Canadian Tourism Human Resources Council. This two volume set was based on the Canadian Heritage Interpreter Occupational Standards, and won first prize for training products from the US National Association for Interpretation.

Other Training Products Include:

Developing Your Wildlife-Viewing Site, Alberta Environmental Protection, 1993
- a manual for environmental groups interested in developing a site; includes how to design, support and deliver interpretation and education services

Connecting Students to their Watersheds: a workbook for community leaders, WILD BC, 2001

- a guide for environmental groups interested in developing education programs and projects for students

Non-Personal Interpretation

I have over twenty years of experience planning, designing, writing and illustrating exhibits, interpretation signs, brochures and publications for interpretation and visitor experience projects.

Nature Photography

As part of my work developing non-personal media, I have increased my skill as a nature photographer. Many of my projects are illustrated exclusively illustrated by my photos, and several other designers have used my images in their projects.

Education

MSc Entomology (1980)

Environmental Biology Dept.
University of Guelph
Guelph, Ontario, Canada

BSc Honours Biology (1976)

Zoology Dept.
University of Guelph
Guelph, Ontario, Canada

Other Courses

- Performance Measures for Cultural Resource Management
- Environmental Education
- Graphic Arts
- Group Dynamics
- Cross-cultural Communication
- Creative Writing
- Interpretive Skills

Work History

1988-Present

Consultant and Freelancer EcoLeaders Interpretation

1986-1988

Assistant Naturalist

John Janzen Nature Centre, City of Edmonton Parks and Recreation

- Designed, developed and delivered personal interpretation and environmental education services
- Worked with the facility's exhibit designer to develop non-personal interpretive media (indoor/outdoor exhibits, outdoor interpretive sign systems)
- Trained staff and volunteers in interpretive skills and knowledge of local natural and cultural history

1983-1987

Park Visitor Services Supervisor

Carson-Pegasus Provincial Park, Alberta Recreation and Parks

- Supervised up to three seasonal interpreters
- Researched local natural history and cultural history topics
- Developed park interpretive plan
- Developed, delivered and evaluated interpretive services
- Developed print and sign media interpretation

1982

Seasonal Interpreter

Hilliard's Bay Provincial Park, Alberta Recreation and Parks

- Researched local natural history and cultural history topics
- Developed, delivered and evaluated interpretive services

1980-1982

Research Associate

Dept. Environmental Biology, University of Guelph

- Leader of a team researching an onion maggot sterile male biological control program, University of Guelph
- Supervised staff of four technicians to develop techniques for mass rearing and release for biological control of onion maggot flies
- Conducted public education programs on the sterile male technique for biological control

1978-1980

Graduate Studies, Dept. Environmental Biology, University of Guelph

Biology of the Eastern Subterranean Termite in Southern Ontario (3 yrs.)

Field studies of *Reticulitermes flavipes* for information on population biology and ecology for use in biological control

Community Involvement

Interpretation Canada (IC)

IC is Canada's association of professional heritage interpreters. IC provides professional development activities, networking, publications to members in every part of Canada. Its goal is to enhance the development of theory and practice in the field of heritage interpretation.

- Board Member (1999–2002)
Focused on incorporation of Canadian Heritage Interpreter standards
- Assistant Editor of *InterpScan* (2001-present)
In charge of graphic design, photo illustration and printing

Island Pacific School (IPS)

Island Pacific School is a small private middle school (Grades 6–9) on Bowen Island, British Columbia, near Vancouver. The school focuses on liberal education as defined by its founder Dr. Ted Spear:

The precise contribution of a middle school education is to sustain and enhance intellectual curiosity and to introduce the idea of personal responsibility so that an individual will be both capable and inclined to enrich their education (and their life) as they mature.

- IPS Board (1998-2008)
Development of education and administrative policy (admissions, budget allocations, safety etc.)
Approve budget, education initiatives and teacher training proposals by the school director
- IPS Community Faculty
Developed and led environmental education programs for Grades 6 and 7 (2004)
- Member of Grade 9 Master Works committee
- Graphic Design
Design and illustrate promotional brochure, newspaper, magazine ads and school's annual report

Bowen Island Eco-Alliance

The Eco-Alliance is made up of individuals and families that live on Bowen Island who share the goal of protection and preservation of the rural lifestyle and the natural environment of Bowen island.

- Board (1992-2009)
Woophic founder o-vernment to preserve and protect the island's natural environment and community values
- A founder of the Bowen Island Conservancy, a local agency that holds conservation covenants on private lands and is working on development of Bowen Island Greenway and other land protection articles
- Past President (1994–1996)
- participated in the development of the local Official Community Plan