# Interpretive Walks
## A Few Tips About Logistics

An interpretive walk is an interpretive program that is spread out along a trail in serial form, as a series of experiences that offer excellent opportunities for engaging all of a visitor's senses. It should have all of the elements of any interpretive program - theme, introduction, transitions, and conclusion.

## Preparation

1. Plan your route.
2. Gather equipment: Radio, first-aid kit, props, water. *(See packing lists under Discovery Hikes)*
3. Look good - sharp, professional, like a leader.

## Beginning the Walk

1. Review *In the Beginning* section of this manual.
2. Arrive at least 15 minutes early.
3. Greet hikers individually, engage in conversation; don't just stand around waiting.
4. Start introduction right on time; don't wait for stragglers.
5. Introduce yourself and the NPS.
6. Let visitors know what to expect:
    - -Which hike this is
    - -Distance to be covered
    - -Time hike will take
    - -Terrain to be covered, trail conditions
    - -Wildlife precautions (See *Bear, Moose & Wolf Warnings* in next section of manual)
    - -Necessary gear: Water, good shoes/boots, raingear if appropriate, bug repellent
    - -Ending location (Horseshoe: guided 1-way only.)
7. Remind visitors of conservation and "Leave No Trace" issues: leave the flowers, rocks, everything for future visitors and for use by wildlife.
8. Introduce your theme.

## The Walk

### *Logistics/Crowd Control*

1. Start off briskly, make first stop in sight of starting location so that stragglers can find you.
2. Stay in the lead; don't let kids (or adults!) run ahead.
3. Stop at planned points of interest that you have developed to support your theme but take advantage of the unexpected interpretive moment.
4. When asked questions while walking, defer questions to next stop.
5. Notice if someone needs a rest.
6. Constantly consider visitor & personal safety.

**At Stops:**

A. Don't make stops too long; be aware of signs of restlessness.
B. Keep track of group; ***gather everyone at stops before talking!***
C. Stop where all can see and hear. If you're on a hill, place yourself uphill from your group. Curves may be good places for a stop if you place yourself at the center of the curve and your group is split in half curving away on either side of you.
D. Make adjustments for group size: Know where good stopping places are that can accommodate large groups.
E. Project your voice; you shouldn't have to shout.

### *Talk Tips*

1. Involve the group:
    - -Avoid lecturing
    - -Use questioning; allow people to theorize, speculate
    - -Avoid technical vocabulary
    - -Involve all 5 senses
2. Repeat visitor questions and responses for whole group.
3. If you don't know an answer, say so.
4. Keep explanations simple, relevant, concrete. Silence can be powerful.
5. Have transitions! End the talk at one stop with something pointing toward your next stop. Start the talk at your next stop by referring back to your previous stop.
5. Visitors usually love to hear your personal experiences but notice if you hear yourself saying "I" too often.
6. Share your enthusiasm, be yourself.

# Finishing the Walk

1. Make sure all visitors are accounted for.
2. End with a strong conclusion that wraps up your theme; mention the NPS.
3. Release the visitors, invite them to walk on, stay awhile or walk back with you. Hang around for a few minutes to answer questions.
4. Return equipment.
5. Record attendance statistics.