



Submission for Certification Review – Log Entry Form

Informal Visitor Contacts SAMPLE LOG ENTRY—INTERP

The on-line course in Informal Visitor Contacts is highly recommended as a prerequisite before attempting to submit for certification review. Go to www.parktraining.org to register for the course.

Your log should include at least four (4) entries -- one basic information/orientation contact (1), one in-depth information/orientation contact (1), and two interpretive contacts (2) -- using the form below. You may include up to two additional contacts of your choice (for a maximum of six entries). See the submission guidelines for clarification at <http://www.nps.gov/idp/interp/102/submit.htm>.

****This August, 2007 version of the log entry form supercedes all earlier versions.****

Visitor Contact Log Entry #: 3

Park or site name: *Grand Canyon*

Location/Setting of the contact: *Mather Point / Crowded Overlook, afternoon in October, smoke from management-ignited prescribed fire visible in distance on North Rim*

Audience: *Adult male*

This entry describes and analyzes a contact in which the visitor was provided with:

- basic orientation/information only
- in-depth orientation/information
- interpretation (**SAMPLE**)

Part I – Describe the contact

Provide a detailed *narrative description of the dialogue and progression* of the contact, from how it was initiated to how it was concluded. (Include verbal and non-verbal visitor responses, visual cues, and indicate any resource/safety concerns, special circumstances, or park goals if applicable.)

The contact was initiated when the visitor rushed over to me and asked, “Is that a fire over there?” He was staring toward North Rim with a concerned look on his face (wrinkled brow, biting his lower lip), and seemed to be looking around to see if other visitors had noticed the fire. I thanked him for reporting it, and briefly explained what was going on: “Yes! In the past century, we’ve been suppressing fires, and this has caused a buildup of fuel, creating the potential for catastrophe. We have ignited this fire to reduce the dead wood and brush on the ground while conditions are manageable, so that we can restore the conditions of a natural fire cycle.” I then paused to allow him to respond, and to continue the discussion if he appeared interested.

His eye contact, nods, and open facial expression indicated that he was interested and thoughtful. He said he was aware of the use of prescribed burning, and that he was supportive of it as long as it

didn't endanger homes or people. Because he had affirmed my initial response by commenting on it, I decided to continue and try to address his concern and make it relevant to him personally. I said, "Are you aware of why they call it a "prescribed burn"? He said he didn't know. I said, "It has to do with monitoring the health of the forest and 'prescribing' just the right remedy at just the right time in just the right dose. The fire team will monitor the fuel moisture, along with every aspect of the weather conditions, and the seasonal timing in a way that is best for the forest and also best for protecting any nearby human development. It's a very careful and scientific process and if any element is "out of prescription," the fire boss will not allow the ignition. Sort of like if you were supposed to have surgery, but on the morning of the procedure, the doctor decided that your blood pressure wasn't at an optimal level and it wasn't worth taking the risk." He said he hadn't realized prescribed burning was such a careful and deliberate process.

I paused, but he didn't seem ready to move away or end the contact. Since he was thoughtfully gazing over at the plume of smoke, I added that, "We are also concerned about your ability to see the Canyon. Sometimes, depending on wind direction, wood smoke can fill the Canyon and cast a blue haze over everything, making it difficult to see the colors and shapes clearly. We try to plan burns so that the smoke impairs visibility as little as possible." I paused again to allow him to respond. He said, "Well, I'm thankful for that – I would hate to have this beautiful view ruined by smoke from a manmade fire. This is the most amazing view I've ever seen." I said "I'm so glad your enjoying your visit." I paused but he didn't respond so I said "I'll be over there by the rim for a while if you have any other questions." I pointed to where I was going a few yards away and left him to enjoy the view.

Part II – Analyze the contact

Analyze your decision path by answering the following questions:

A. Initial needs:

1. How would you characterize the visitors' initial needs?

(e.g. they needed help finding their way, they wanted to satisfy a curiosity, they wanted to get some exercise, they wanted to have fun, they had physical needs such as hunger or thirst, they needed help planning their visit, they had a complaint or a concern, they wanted to talk or share, they wanted to find meaning or understanding, etc.)?

Information/To Feel Useful: He needed to feel helpful and report a possible fire, and needed to know if it was OK that it was burning.

2. What cue(s) from the visitor provided evidence of their need(s) -- what specific action, non-verbal signal, question, comment, etc.?

The fact that he rushed over when he saw me, wrinkling his brow and biting his lower lip, seemed to indicate that he needed information as well as confirmation of his concern. His concern seemed to indicate that he wanted to be helpful by reporting the fire in case it hadn't yet been reported.

3. Were there resource protection, visitor safety, or other regulatory park needs that you also needed to address?

Not directly—the visitor was reporting a fire but I knew that there wasn't any immediate danger.

4. How did you attempt to provide for the initial visitor needs? How did you also attempt to provide for park regulatory needs, if applicable?

I met his need for information by answering his question, explaining park policy in layman's terms, and hopefully assuring him of our ability to manage the park. I attempted to make him feel important by showing appreciation for his reporting the fire and thanking him.

5. How did the visitors' response indicate that you did/did not meet their initial needs?

His body visibly relaxed, indicating relief that the fire was known by management. His eye contact, nods, and open facial expression indicated he was getting the information he needed.

B. Continuing the contact:

1. If you did not continue the contact beyond basic information/orientation, why? What visitor cues or other circumstances indicated that this was appropriate?
(*End entry here for basic info or orientation contacts*)

- OR -

2. If you continued the contact by providing more in-depth information or orientation, what visitor cues indicated that it was appropriate to do so? How did you proceed? When and how did you conclude the contact and why (based on what visitor cues or other circumstances)? (*End entry here for in-depth information or orientation contacts*)

C. Answer for Interpretive Contacts:

1. If you continued and decided to move toward interpretation, *at what point* during the contact did you decide it was appropriate to attempt to introduce resource meanings? What visitor cues prompted your decision?

His open body language (facing me with arms down by his sides), nods and eye contact indicated that he was interested and thoughtful. His response, saying that he was aware of the use of prescribed burning, and that he was supportive of it, seemed to indicate that he was still engaged in the conversation, so I decided to move toward an interpretation of resource meanings.

2. What resource meanings (intangible ideas or universal concepts) did you attempt to link to which tangible resource(s)?

Tangible(s): prescribed fire, forest resources

Intangibles or Universal Concepts: forest health, visitor experience, change, safety, fire management decision-making process

3. How did you develop opportunities for the visitors to make their own connections to resource meanings – what interpretive techniques did you use and how did you use them to relate to visitor interests/experience?

I initially attempted to develop a link between fire and change by explaining how fire affects the forest (cause and effect). However, his response seemed to indicate that his concern and interest was not so much related to fire as an agent of forest ecology but more toward the potential safety and security threats. So I developed the link between the prescribed fire and the intangible idea of a "prescription" for forest health by describing the careful process and variables that the fire managers consider before igniting a prescribed fire. I used an analogy of how a physician would not operate on a person unless the conditions were optimal. I also attempted to develop the idea of visitor experience by sharing an example of how the one can affect the other (cause and effect), and by using a description of what some visitors' experiences are like when the canyon is obscured by smoke or haze.

4. Identify which types of connection opportunities you attempted to facilitate: which opportunities were intended to facilitate intellectual connections (discovery, insight, understanding, etc.) and/or which opportunities were intended to facilitate emotional connections (empathy, concern, awe, wonder, etc.) to resource meanings?

I hoped that the explanation and analogy about the "prescription" for a burn would help address his initial concern about the potential threat of a prescribed fire, providing an intellectual opportunity for understanding the careful decision-making process of fire managers, as well as an emotional opportunity for a feeling of safety and security. I used the example and description of smoke effects to attempt to provide an understanding of cause and effect, an opportunity for intellectual connection to fire as detrimental to visibility and visitor experience. At this point he seemed to make his own connection between the potential for impaired visibility and the beauty of the canyon vista.

5. Describe how and why you concluded the contact (based on visitor cues or other circumstances).

After he said, "I would hate to have this beautiful view ruined by smoke from a manmade fire. This is the most amazing view I've ever seen," he seemed to move into a thoughtful mood and stance, arms crossed and no longer looking at me but instead gazing out at the canyon. I said "I'm so glad you're enjoying your visit" and then paused. When he didn't respond right away, I sensed that it was a moment to disengage and let the beauty of the vista speak for itself. I made sure he knew that I would be nearby if he had other questions, and then quietly stepped away to let him enjoy the moment.