

**INTERPRETIVE SKILLS III-B**

**LESSON PLAN:** 2

**SESSION TITLE:** SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN INTERPRETING CRITICAL/CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

**SESSION LENGTH:** Approx. 6 Hours **ORIG. PREPARED BY:** M. Lane 1/86

**REVISED BY:** J. McMillen, C.B. Wahler 1/92

**OBJECTIVES:** At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Cite one current NPS directive encouraging and validating interpretation of critical/controversial management issues;
2. Define personal value systems and cite one example of how a visitor's perception of a management decision will be affected by their values;
3. Recognize the park's critical issues/problems and develop an interpretive approach for solving those problems.

**TRAINING AIDS:** Video player & 3 videos: "Discovering the Future" with Joel Barker (available from Albright EDC), "Joseph Campbell and the Power of Myth" (available through Mather), "Big Park"; flip chart, markers

**HANDOUTS:** Director Mott's 12 Point Plan - The Challenge; The Director's Report - Mission Interpretation

Content	Method	Time
I. INTRODUCTION	Video	20 Minutes
A. Show "BIG PARK" *		
Stop before end when person talks about why the video was produced.		
Discuss: Why would anyone make such a movie? What is controversy? What causes it to happen? (ans: people have differing beliefs and values which cause them to disagree on what is "right")	Discussion	20 Minutes
Show end of "BIG PARK"		
B. State session objectives and direction	Lecture	5 Minutes
* As lesson plan is being developed, availability of "BIG PARK" is in question. A different video or activity may need to be substituted		
II. Values and Beliefs		
A. Show "Power of Myth"	video	45 min.
Discuss video	discussion	

## B. Personal Values

We all have them. They affect our behavior.

Value/Beliefs exercise

**NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS:** You need to find an exercise that will allow participants to explore their own belief and value systems.

**KEY POINT to Sections A & B:** Acceptance and comprehension of the YOU in Value.

1. Acceptance that in every individual there exists a system of values, related to beliefs and realities, that must be understood as one way to conceptualize the basis for public opinion and action. Values tell us how to act and what to want.

C. Organizations can have values, too.  
What are NPS values, your park's values?

**NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS:** You may want to develop a group activity here, that will give participants the opportunity to explore NPS values as demonstrated in specific park situations of the participants.

Do you always agree with NPS, Park Policies? (If not, your values are in conflict with those NPS, Park management's values) What do you do?

Note: values exist in hierarchies. You generally select that behavior which meets your higher values (Ex: giving up a personal activity for the good of others; giving in during an argument for the sake of a relationship; quitting your job when you feel "ethics" dictate it (ethics is generally a very high value)

Note: Sometimes you can persuade someone to acquiesce on one value by appealing to one of his/her higher values.

- + A river use permit system ensured my access to the river and prevented over-crowding in designated camp sites.
- A river use permit system prevented me from rafting the river during my vacation.

Content	Method	Time
<p>+ A prescribed burn cleared undergrowth, enriched soil conditions, and the opportunities, for wildflower and wildlife viewing have increased significantly.</p> <p>- A prescribed burn generated smoggy weather conditions, made breathing difficult, charred trees, and prevented my access into a favorite area.</p> <p>D.Transition to next section - Remind participants of how values differences lead to conflict. (internal and external)</p>		
<p>III. NPS and conflict</p> <p>A. In the past Past failures to discuss controversial issues, especially as they relate to management of the resources. Cite examples.</p>	lecture	5 min.
<p>B. Today Critical Issues/Controversy today in YOUR parks</p>	brainstorm	10 min
<p><b>KEY POINT to Section II:</b> NPS has a long history of controversy; controversial decisions are being made today; the situation is not likely to change in the future</p>		
<p>IV. Interpretation and Conflict/Controversy</p> <p>A. Restraints and Freedoms</p> <p>Establish a hierarchy of restraints and freedoms delineating the limits to interpretation of controversial resource management issues. Self-Supervisor-Division Chiefs- Superintendent-Area Office-Region-WASO)</p>	brainstorm	5 min.

Content	Method	Time
<p>B. Support</p> <p>Cite current directives encouraging integration of resource management issues into interpretive programs.</p> <p>Some previous directives that provide a historical perspective include:</p> <p>a.12 Point Plan - The Challenge Point #4 Handout ?</p> <p>b. Director's Report - Mission Interpretation Handout ?</p> <p><b>NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS:</b> Be sure to locate current directives on this topic.</p> <p>TRANSITION: What role can/should/does interpretation play in dealing with critical/controversial problems?</p>	<p>Read Aloud</p>	<p>5 min.</p>
<p>V. Role of Interpretation in parks</p> <p>A. What we do now</p> <p>Tell the Park story</p> <p>Provide Information</p> <p>Answer questions</p> <p>assist visitors with problems</p> <p>give programs</p> <p>B. What <u>AREN'T</u> we doing that we could/should?</p> <p>Seeking answers to park issues</p> <p>actively participate in park mgt decisions</p> <p>taking the lead on issues</p> <p>using our communication skills</p> <p><b>NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS:</b> Here, you may also want to brainstorm ways to demonstrate to management that interpretation should and can address critical/controversial issues.</p> <p><b>WHAT PREVENTS US FROM SEEING AND ACCEPTING NEW IDEAS?</b></p> <p><b>WHAT GIVES US THAT "BLOCK" IN SUGGESTING, OR EVEN THINKING UP CREATIVE SOLUTIONS? WHAT BARRIERS KEEP US FROM CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING?</b></p>	<p>Brainstorm</p> <p>Brainstorm list of ideas</p>	<p>15 Minutes</p>

Content	Method	Time
<p>VI. Things that prevent us from accepting new ideas</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A. Show Video "Discovering the Future"</p> <p>Discuss video touching on following important points:</p> <p>1. What is a paradigm? ( a pattern or model)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--They provide rules for success</li> <li>--They filter incoming experience</li> <li>--They set boundaries</li> <li>--They are common and useful</li> </ul> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">BUT...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--They can also cause "paradigm paralysis ( a terminal disease of certainty)</li> <li>--Paradigm "shifts" set you back to zero</li> </ul> <p>2. Where do new paradigms come from?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--From outsiders</li> <li>--From the fringes, at the edge</li> </ul> <p>SUMMARY/SYNTHESIS:</p> <p>Conflict comes from divergent beliefs and value systems.</p> <p>"Tried and true" methods of dealing with conflict have not always been successful in resolving critical issues/problems.</p> <p>New methods (paradigms) are needed to effectively deal with issues facing the parks in the '90's and beyond.</p>		<p>60 min (for all of Sec.V)</p>
<p>VI. CLASS EXERCISE</p> <p>Participants will break up into small groups and will be given a critical/controversial management issue. Group will develop a plan to address this problem through interpretation and make a presentation to the class. Class should critique each solution.</p> <p>Discussion should focus on:</p> <p>Anticipation of the controversy, Factual resources, Knowledge and involvement of the visitor or audience. Interpretive options might include such things as: one-to-one, site bulletin, exhibit design, public relations, programming.</p>	<p>Small Group Discussion &amp; presentation</p>	<p>90 Minutes for group work 60 minutes for all presentations (15 minutes apiece)</p>

**NOTE TO INSTRUCTOR(S):**

Issue to be dealt with in this exercise should be specific to the area where the course is being held.

It will be your responsibility to select the issue and provide participants with necessary background information which might include:

newspaper articles, press releases, Congressional briefing statements, planning documents such as GMPs and DCPs. Materials which may have been prepared by opponents to the Park Service position should also be included.

## REFERENCES

Public Relations and Communications for Natural Resource Managers by James R. Fazio and Douglas L. Gilbert, 1981

Interpreting Environmental Issues by Clay Schoenfeld with Allan Murray, John Ross, Keith Stamm and William Witt, from the 1969-1972 issues of the Journal of Environmental Education.