Component for Module 310

The Interpretive Planning Process

PURPOSE
This component provides the interpreter with an understanding of how interpretive planning fits in the hierarchy of all park planning; how the NPS Comprehensive Interpretive Planning (CIP) process results in visitor experience goals, interpretive themes, and implementation steps for the park's future overall interpretive program; and how individual interpretive programs and projects implement the interpretive plan.

OBJECTIVES
At the completion of this component, learners will be able to:

- explain the relationship of interpretive planning to other NPS planning and how interpretive opportunities can be used to address resource and visitor use issues;

- describe the components of the CIP process as prescribed in National Park Service guidelines;

- demonstrate fundamental understanding of how interpretive planning is critical to ensuring high quality visitor experiences and fostering stewardship of resources;

- describe the considerations necessary for forming an effective planning team;

- apply good planning principles and process to individual interpretive actions.

APPROACH
Every park has legislation, policy, guidelines, and planning documents that provide insight into the park's history, purpose, and significance. These documents are intended to guide management actions regarding the preservation of resources and provide for visitor enjoyment. Perhaps the most effective way to understand park and interpretive planning and its effect on daily operations is through reading and discussing various park planning documents. Such study will allow the learner to connect field level actions to the purposes and significance of the park. This connection will enable the interpreter to contribute to both day-to-day programming and larger interpretive planning efforts that support the overarching mission of the park and the NPS.

CONTENT OUTLINE:

I. Legislation, laws, and regulations pertinent to interpretive planning

A. Existing legislation, laws, and regulations -- mandates for park management

1. park enabling legislation

2. Antiquities Act of 1906

3. NPS Organic Act of 1916

4. Historic Sites Act of 1935

5. Wilderness Act of 1964

6. Redwoods Act of 1965

7. National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

8. Architectural Barriers Act of 1966

9. Endangered Species Act of 1973

10. Historical and Archeological Data Preservation Act of 1974

11. Redwoods Act Amendment of 1978

12. American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1979

13. Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990

14. Public Law 91-383 (requiring General Management Plans)

15. Government Performance and Results Act of 1993

16. others

II. Guidelines and policies influencing park planning

A. Directors Orders (DO) 1: Directives

B. DO-2: Planning

C. DO-6: Interpretation

D. DO-7: Volunteer in Parks

E. DO-28: Cultural Resources

F. DO-32: Cooperating Associations

G. DO-48: Concessions

H. DO-77: Natural Resources

III. Park planning

A. Elements critical to all park planning

1. purpose statement

2. significance statement

3. mission statement

4. long-term goals

B. Relevant park plans and related documents

1. General Management Plan (GMP)

2. Resources Management Plan (RMP)

3. Development concept plans (DCP)

4. Statement for Management

5. Visitor Experience and Resources Protection Plan (VERP)

6. Cultural Landscape Report

7. ethnographic studies

8. park administrative history

9. Government Performance Results Act (GPRA)

10. Interpretive Prospectus (IP)

C. Other relevant plans

1. local, regional, state plans

2. county or community tourism plans and visitor surveys

IV. Basic principles of park interpretive planning

A. Part of all management plans that affect visitor experience.

B. Goal driven

C. Desired and diverse experiences

D. Appropriate interpretive services, facilities, and programs

E. A facilitated process

F. Flexible, ongoing, interdisciplinary, responsive, and management oriented

G. Beyond park boundaries

H. Based on current research

I. Current and appropriate techniques

J. Practical strategies for implementation

V. Elements of the NPS CIP process

A. Long-range Interpretive Plan

1. background for planning

a. purpose and significance

b. visitor experience goals

c. themes incorporating tangible/intangible meanings/universal concepts

d. assessment of existing interpretive personal services, facilities, and media

e. conditions

f. visitor profiles

2. interpretive program description

a. personal services

b. non-personal services/media

c. facilities

d. orientation/information

e. education program

f. library and collection needs

g. research needs

h. partnerships

i. staffing needs and costs

j. implementation plan

B. Annual Implementation Plan

1. current program status

2. management issues facing interpretation

3. annual work plan

4. new individual program plans

5. status of implementation plan

C. Interpretive databases

1. annual media inventory

2. visitor survey data

3. media evaluation

4. annual interpretive program report

5. annual Volunteers-in-Parks

6. education plan

7. media plans

8. basic park reading list

9. Statement for Interpretation

VI. Interpretive concept plans

A. Themes for situations linked to overall park themes

B. Visitor experiences for situations

C. Action planning

VII. Influences/Initiatives affecting Interpretive Planning

A. Servicewide initiatives

B. Regionwide initiatives

VIII. Participants of an effective planning team should provide multiple perspectives.

A. Who takes the role of facilitator and why?

1. specialists with demonstrated competency to lead interpretive planning:

a. support offices

b. Harpers Ferry Center

c. consultants

d. field personnel

e. others

B. Who should participate and why?

1. NPS

a. resource specialists

b. maintenance

c. concession specialist

d. management

e. staff

f. front-line interpreters

g. fee collectors

h. trail crews

i. protection rangers

j. others

2. Non-NPS

a. subject matter experts

b. academia

c. ethnic or cultural representatives

d. park neighbors

e. business

f. advocacy representative

g. adversaries

h. partners

i. cooperating associations

j. others

IX. Funding sources for implementing a plan

A. ONPS base funding

B. Combined call

1. repair/rehab

2. cyclic

3. VIP

4. National Park Foundation

5. others

C. Private sector

1. grants

2. fundraising

D. Cooperating associations

E. Other

X. Responsibilities

A. All interpretive work should be based on planning principles

B. All interpretive work should support park purpose, significance, goals, and themes

Reference and Reading

A. The following documents and reports provide a comprehensive understanding for the influences, development, and results of park planning:

1. DO #s: 2, 6, 7, 32, 48, 77

2. General Management Plan

3. Resources Management Plan

4. Development Concept Plans

5. Statement for Management

6. visitor experience and resources protection

7. Comprehensive Interpretive Plan

8. Annual Interpretive Program Report

9. visitor use surveys

10. Statement for Interpretation

11. Interpretive Prospectus

12. Cultural Landscape Report

13. ethnographic studies

14. NPS Strategic Plan

15. park Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) plan

B. The following legislation provides a comprehensive understanding for the influences,

development, and results of park planning:

1. park enabling legislation

2. Antiquities Act of 1906

3. NPS Organic Act of 1916

4. Historic Sites Act of 1935

5. Wilderness Act of 1964

6. Redwoods Act of 1965

7. National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

8. Architectural Barriers Act of 1966

9. Endangered Species Act of 1973

10. Historical and Archeological Data Preservation Act of 1974

11. Redwoods Act Amendment of 1978

12. American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1979

13. Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990

14. Public Law 91-383 (requiring General Management Plans)

15. GPRA

C. Other

NPS Management Guidelines through the National Park Service homepage (www.nps.gov).

RESOURCES

Interpretive Planning, National Park Service, Interpretation and Visitor Services Guideline, DO-6, Chapter III.

Planning for Interpretation and Visitor Experience, Harpers Ferry Center, Division of Interpretive Planning (available on Harpers Ferry Center homepage-HFC.nps.gov)

Interpretive Master Planning, John A. Veverka, Falcon Press Publishing Company, Inc., 1994.

Samples of completed park long range interpretive plans.

SUGGESTED DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES
1. Review your park planning documents and evaluate the influences and role of interpretation in each. How does your park intend to keep interpretive planning current as described in the DO-6

guidelines?

2. Review the NPS comprehensive interpretive planning guidelines (Chapter 3, DO-6), your park's most recent interpretive planning documents, General Management Plan, and GPRA plan. Document your observations in a log. How current is your park's interpretive planning? To what degree does your plan affect daily interpretative operations and decision-making? Are there obvious connections between your General Management Plan and GPRA Plan goals? Are the documents realistic, useful, actively used, etc.? How well are your overall park themes reflected throughout the park's interpretive program? Do clear linkages exist between tangibles, intangibles, and universal concepts? What opportunities exist to incorporate such connections?

3. Obtain and review the long range interpretive plans of at least two other parks and document your impressions. How are the goals in the planning background section reflected in the proposed actions? Record your impressions about these plans.

4. Discuss with your immediate supervisor the degree to which your site's purpose, significance, and interpretive themes, identified in existing planning documents, are reflected in the site's interpretive programs.

5. Discuss with your division chief the division's strategy for implementing interpretive plans. What funding sources have been identified to target specific planning needs?

6. Participate in a planning project at your site or elsewhere as a member of a team.

7. Identify a park issue or problem on which management has taken action. Find out what stakeholders were involved in making the management decision. Was the problem resolved? How might the result have varied if different stakeholders had participated?

8. Analyze the team composition for two or more recent planning projects in your park. Were the teams multi-disciplinary? Were a variety of stakeholder groups represented? Can you think of any other groups that might have contributed?

9. Select three different examples of interpretive work you personally developed. How does each reflect and support the purpose, significance, goals, and themes identified in existing planning documents? Do your goals and objectives complement existing planning documents? Did you involve multiple perspectives and stakeholders as you developed the product? Evaluate the product's outcomes in relationship to your original goals. Do you need to make changes?

Component for Module 310

Serving on an Interpretive Planning Team

PURPOSE
Interpretive park rangers must be able to provide input into the interpretive planning process and perform as effective members on an interpretive planning team. Regardless of the level of involvement, the interpretive park ranger must understand how an interpretive planning team operates and be ready to respond accordingly from site to site and project to project. Of special importance is recognizing the responsibilities of the team facilitator and other team members as well as finding ways to work together to address problems, achieve consensus, and develop strategies to accomplish effective team planning.

OBJECTIVES
At the completion of this component, learners will be able to:

- perform as effective planning team members;

- explain the importance of consensus building in team situations;

- describe the role of the team facilitator.

APPROACH
This component aims to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to become an effective interpretive planning team participant. The learner needs to recognize the importance, attributes, and responsibilities of an effective team member. The learner should also consider how his/her own knowledge, values, perspectives, convictions, conduct, and other attributes can contribute to or conflict with consensus building.

CONTENT OUTLINE:

I. Advantages of a team approach

A. Provides for multiple points of view/diverse perspectives

B. Provides potential for ideas to build upon one another and create synergy

C. Creates ownership among team members and those they represent

II. The role and function of team members

A. Assembling a team is a collaboration between the park and the assigned HFC or consulting planner.

B. Different perspectives and expertise

1. resource expert

2. planner

3. park staff

4. park partners

5. stakeholders

6. interest group representatives

7. recorder

C. Responsibilities of the facilitator

1. manage the team process

2. develop consensus

3. coordinate logistics

4. ensures objectives and timelines are met

5. tracking team decisions and self-imposed needs

III. Building consensus

A. What is consensus?

B. Principles of consensus building

1. outcomes are acceptable to all participants, 100% agreement is unnecessary

2. active participation

3. common base of information

4. positive/supportive atmosphere

5. respect disagreements

6. identify and validate assumptions when necessary

7. identify the unmet need/problem

C. Attitudes which promote consensus

1. open-minded willingness to listen and consider multiple points of view

2. express viewpoint openly and directly

3. willingness to be persuaded

4. listen non-defensively

5. commit to the search for creative solutions

D. Skills for developing consensus

1. identify and validate the problem or what is not being addressed

2. determine the level of disagreement

3. test assumptions regularly

4. search for creative solutions or missing elements

5. test consensus when it becomes evident

RESOURCES

The Art of Facilitation, NPS, conducted by William Southworth and Sara S. Grigsby, WASA and New Health, 1996.

Planning for Interpretation and Visitor Experience, Harpers Ferry Center, Division of Interpretive Planning (Available on Harpers Ferry Center homepage-HFC.nps.gov)

SUGGESTED DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES
1. Observe, as a non-participant, an interpretive planning meeting. Did the meeting have clear objectives? Describe the process through which the facilitator and team members developed consensus. Were there problems? How were the problems overcome? How did team member personalities affect consensus building? Did all team members contribute effectively? Did the team have the appropriate resources to accomplish its objectives? Were multiple points of view represented AND respected? How did the facilitator contribute to the success or failure of the team?

2. Participate in a team-based project. Did your team work well together? Were there personality conflicts? Did you feel like you could express your opinion freely? Were your opinions respected? Did you respect the opinions of others? Were you listened to and did you listen to others? Did the group develop consensus? Were any members left out? Were multiple points of view represented and respected?