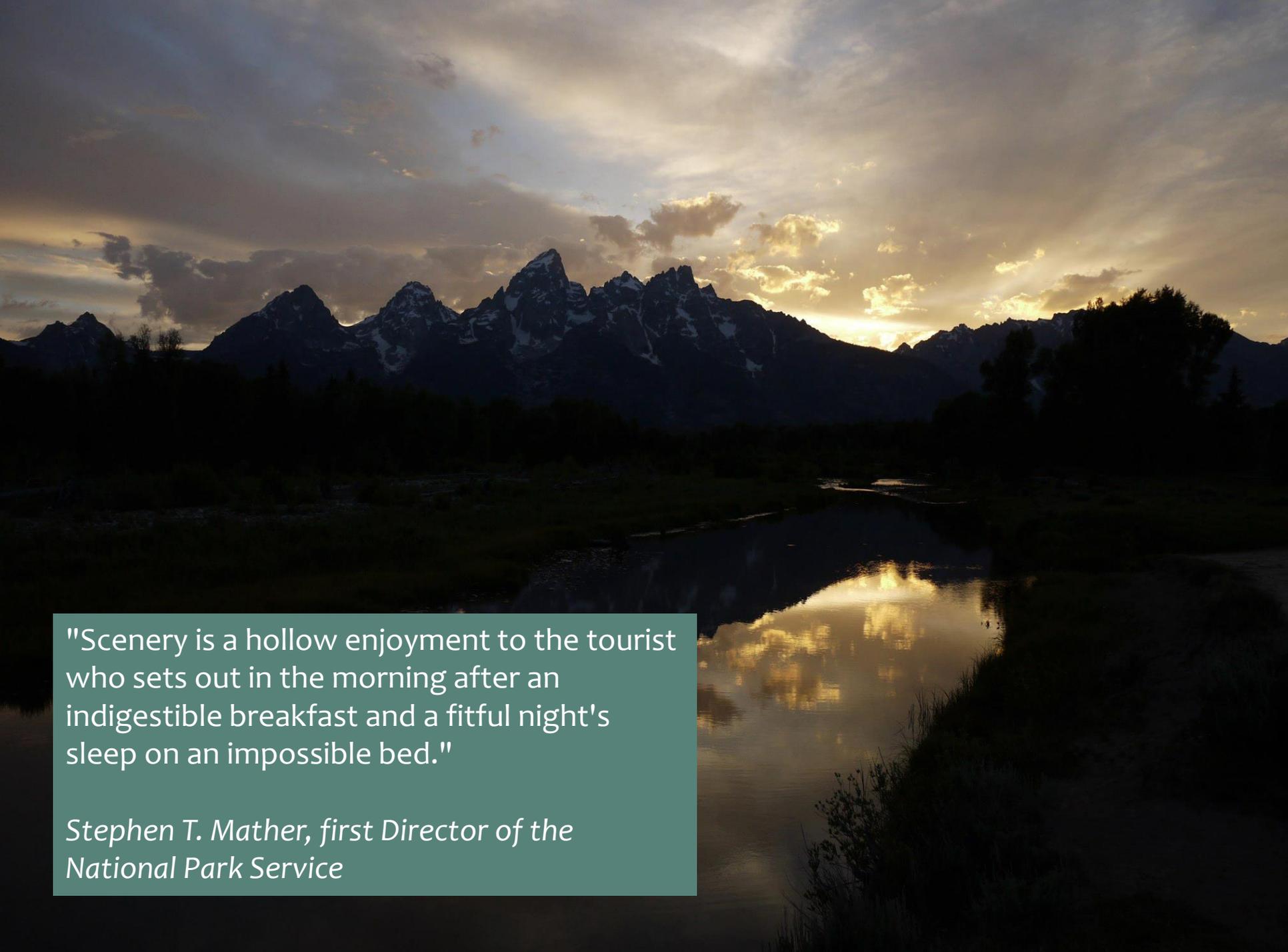


NPS Concessions Interpretive Training



... TO CONSERVE THE SCENERY AND THE
NATURAL AND HISTORIC OBJECTS AND THE
WILDLIFE THEREIN AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE
ENJOYMENT OF THE SAME IN SUCH MANNER
AND BY SUCH MEANS AS WILL LEAVE THEM
UNIMPAIRED FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF FUTURE
GENERATIONS...



"Scenery is a hollow enjoyment to the tourist who sets out in the morning after an indigestible breakfast and a fitful night's sleep on an impossible bed."

Stephen T. Mather, first Director of the National Park Service

Contractual Basis for Interpretation



- **10.2.4.4 Interpretation by Concessioners**

Concessioners will be required to appropriately train their employees and, through their facilities and services, to **instill in their guests an appreciation of the park, its purpose and significance, its proper and sustainable management, and the stewardship of its resources.** When the provision of interpretive services is required by the contract, concessioners will provide formal interpretive training, approved by the Park Service, for their employees, or will participate in formal interpretive training that is either offered by the Park Service or cosponsored by the concessioner.

Visitor appreciation of the park can be instilled in many ways. For example, it can be accomplished through guided activities; the design, architecture, landscape, and decor of facilities; educational programs; interpretive menu design and menu offerings; and involvement in the park's overall interpretive program. Gift shop merchandise and displays also present opportunities to educate visitors about park history; natural, cultural, and historical resources; and sustainable environmental management.

Concession contracts will require the concessioner to provide all visitor services in a manner that is consistent with and supportive of the interpretive themes, goals, and objectives articulated in each park's planning documents, mission statement, and/or interpretive prospectus.

- Your employer has a contract with the National Park Service to provide services that the NPS has deemed to be both necessary and appropriate to park operations and visitor experiences.
- The NPS requires all concessioners to provide interpretive services (left).
- Your employers' contract also has additional requirements pertaining to interpretation.
- The entire reason we require interpretation is to have you, as a front line, help us instill greater understanding and appreciation of the park in park visitors, thereby increasing the number of park advocates nation-wide (and globally).

Effective Interpretation



Tilden's 6 Principles of Interpretation

1. Any interpretation that does not somehow **relate** what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.
2. Information, as such, **is not Interpretation**. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.
3. Interpretation is an **art**, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical, or architectural. Any are in some degree in teachable.



Tilden's 6 Principles of Interpretation



4. The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction but **provocation**.
5. Interpretation should aim to present **a whole rather than a part**, and must address itself to the whole man rather than any phase.
6. Interpretation addressed to children (say, up to the age of twelve) should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best, it will require a separate program.

“Do not try to satisfy your vanity by teaching a great many things. Awaken people’s curiosity. It is enough to open minds; do not overload them. Put there just a spark. If there is some good inflammable stuff, it will catch fire.”

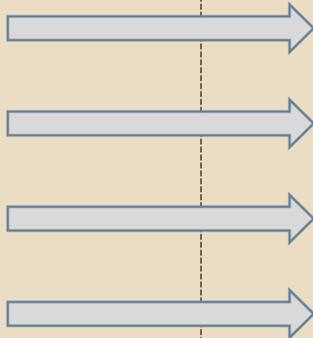
–Anatole France, as quoted in The Earth Speaks

Interpretation



Foundations of an Educational Program:

- Provides answers
- Teaches
- Educates
- Dictates significance



Added Values of an Interpretive Program:

- Poses questions
- Offers opportunities
- Provides understanding
- Reveals personal significance



Which is Interpretive?

Scenario 1

The moose (North America) or elk (Eurasia), *Alces alces*, is the largest extant species in the deer family. Moose are distinguished by the palmate antlers of the males; other members of the family have antlers with a dendritic ("twig-like") configuration. Moose typically inhabit boreal and mixed deciduous forests of the Northern Hemisphere in temperate to subarctic climates. Moose can weight upwards of 1,500 lbs, but more typically weigh an average of 1,000 lbs.

Be ready to answer questions about these facts...

Scenario 2

Moose are gigantic 1,000 lb mammals who possess an odd collection of features that suit as perfect adaptations to their riparian habitat. However, those adaptations may not change as quickly as the climate and habitat of Grand Teton.

... But frame your program as an interpretive one

Park-Level Interpretive Themes



1. The Teton Range dramatically illustrates all the processes of fault block mountain building.
2. Humans have responded and adapted to the resources and environment of Jackson Hole in many different ways for 12,000 years.
3. Grand Teton, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Memorial Parkway and Yellowstone comprise the heart of the largest, most intact ecosystem remaining in the temperate zone of the world.
4. Glaciers and other erosive forces created the dramatic scenery of the Teton Range and Jackson Hole.
5. The awesome grandeur of the Teton Range adds a greater dimension to resource compatible recreation uses.
6. Grand Teton provides a diversity of habitats for a variety of plant and animal species that interact as a unit rather than as individuals.
7. A number of hazards exist in a natural area such as Grand Teton.
8. Visitors bear responsibility for as well as ownership of public lands such as Grand Teton, and must strive for and support balanced resource preservation and use.

QUIZ: HOW SHOULD THESE BE USED?

1. Strictly/Literally: You must pick one and fit your entire program to the confines of that one theme.
2. Comprehensively: Each one of these points must be addressed in every program.
3. As guidelines for what to talk about generally, to assess what is relevant to the park and what isn't.
4. Selectively: As your main theme if you don't feel creative/want to make up your own.

Make it a Discussion: Dialog Tips



Quiz/Trivia Questions

- Do you know the fastest land animal in North America?
- Guess how deep a moose can dive under water!
- Who helped create Grand Teton by buying up lands within the valley?

These can be fun, and
are appropriate...

Interpretive Questions

- What is the most amazing display of an animals ability you've ever seen?
- What about this landscape do you find most inspiring?
- What do you think our responsibility is in protecting National Parks?

... But these are more
personally meaningful and
may stick with visitors longer.

Crafting an Effective Program



- Be knowledgeable, learn the resource.
- Create an open atmosphere
 - Use icebreakers
 - Be personable
 - Encourage participation
- Avoid ‘spitting out facts’ as the main course of your program. Instead, have some talking points planned.
 - Use a topic, perhaps even an interpretive theme, to structure your program.
 - Construct an outline, but leave room for organic interactions and discussions.
- An interpretive theme is an idea that flows through your program, connecting tangible resources and the relevant facts to intangibles, like ideas.
- Programs instill meaning, a theme is a tool to achieve emotional and intellectual connections to the park.

Key Outcomes of a Guided Program



- Everyone is safe.
- All park regulations are followed, including the terms of your contract.
- Visitors have a positive, enjoyable experience.
- Guided services help advance the Park Service mission by providing for the enjoyment of the park, while protecting resources.
- At best, this includes a program that is interpretive in nature and inspires connections to the park and motivates protection of the National Parks as a whole.

Wild & Scenic Rivers Act



- Similar management goal to the NPS.
- Response to damming
- **Wild River Areas** – Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America.

- **Scenic River Areas** – Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.

- **Recreational River Areas** – Those rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past.



The Snake River Headwaters encompasses parts of Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, the John D. Rockefeller Memorial Parkway and the Bridger-Teton National Forest. The river lies at the heart of the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA), often referred to as one of the last intact functioning temperate ecosystems on earth (U.S. House of Representatives 1985; Keiter and Boyce 1991; Schullery 1997). Thus, the rivers included in **the Snake River Headwaters Legacy Act of 2009** (PL 111-11) are among the most pristine in the nation. They have many outstandingly remarkable values and offer myriad recreational opportunities. ”



Focus on Interpretation: Scenic Guides



Interpretive Opportunities

- Lots of time for discussion
- Resource immersion
- Interesting topics at hand: riparian community, aquatic environment and wildlife, Wild and Scenic designation

Interpretive Challenges

- Safety is priority one, Interpretation second
- Element of the unknown
- What do you think?

On Representing the NPS



- You are seen as a representative of the park, visitors don't often distinguish between a guide and a park ranger.
- This relationship is a partnership.
- As such, you help us communicate our mission to the public.
- Sometimes that means holding back your personal opinions to represent issues in a fair, balanced way.
 - Avoid 'The park makes us...'

We are all part of the same team!

"Irrespective of hour or season, whether viewed on clear days or stormy, the Tetons are so surpassingly beautiful that one is likely to gaze silently upon them, conscious of the futility of speech." -Fritiof Fryxell

Questions?

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