

Full Performance Park Ranger Interpreter

MODULE 310

Title: PLANNING PARK INTERPRETATION*

PURPOSE

Interpretive planning occurs at many different levels in the National Park Service, from general management and comprehensive level to individual projects and programs. The purpose of this module is to convey the hierarchical relationship of the park and interpretive planning processes and how these influence interpretive program decisions. The module also conveys an understanding of the importance of multiple perspectives and consensus in any planning effort. Successful mastery of the module's concepts will prepare the full-performance interpretive ranger to participate in planning interpretive programs and projects, and provide input on the park's overall interpretive plan. This fundamental grasp of the role, function, and importance of all steps in the planning process will let the full- performance ranger make immediate decisions regarding his/her interpretive efforts and to participate proactively in team efforts.

At the full-performance stage of development, the interpretive ranger has gained strong knowledge of the resource, of the visitor, and of interpretive principles. In this module the interpreter will apply this knowledge to the interpretive planning process. The competency requires the interpreter to understand and be an effective participant in interpretive planning process through successful work in a planning activity or project. Interpretive rangers apply interpretive skills and professional knowledge in planing efforts to all planning processes--daily program development, special projects, media development, Comprehensive Interpretive Plan, General Management Plans, etc.

Applying these skills and knowledge is critical to ensuring that park resources are protected and that visitors have opportunities for experiences which strengthen their connection to the resource.

AUDIENCE

Interpretive park rangers pursuing full performance competency under Ranger Careers, other NPS staff, cooperating association employees, volunteers, concessionaires, and park partners.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion, learners will be able to:

- explain the relationship between overall park planning and interpretive planning;
- explain how their individual interpretive project or program implements the park's interpretive plan and the degree to which it accomplishes parkwide goals;
- effectively participate in a park planning project.

TOPICS

Hierarchy of planning processes; NPS legislation and related documents affecting interpretive

planning; relationship of park partners (needs and responsibilities); identifying issues and problems to be solved through interpretive planning; understanding the value of interpretive planning - results/outcome; shifting paradigms - results oriented, outcome based; group process and consensus building; relationship of interpretive plans to other plans; development of overall park primary themes and compelling stories; Comprehensive Interpretive Plan

DELIVERY

Cluster or regional training; Servicewide courses; on-the-job training through a detail assignment or mentoring; participation in planning exercises; university courses; traditional and distance learning in classrooms; computer-based training packages and CD-ROMs; directed readings.

BENCHMARK COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT

An essay about a planning activity that describes the relationship between general parkwide and interpretive planning, the importance of group participation in planning, and the significance of comprehensive interpretive planning.

NOTE: At the Full Performance level you have the option to *develop one competency project* to be reviewed against all four sets of standards separately. Keep in mind that the requirements on the "How to Submit" page *for every competency you couple with your project* must be met (i.e., you must prepare an essay, *and* a facsimile, *and* a questionnaire if you choose to combine Planning, Media, and Training/Coaching in one submission). Likewise, you have the option to *develop a separate project for each Full Performance competency*, and submit them separately. If you choose to combine the reviews and address more than one competency with a single project, be sure to INDICATE CLEARLY on your project label *which* competencies you wish to have the project reviewed against.

COMPONENTS

- [*The Interpretive Planning Process*](#)
- [*Serving on an Interpretive Planning Team*](#)

TARGET

Learner and supervisor adjust time line to meet the final requirements of full-performance park ranger interpreters in Ranger Careers positions. Recommended: the interpreter should have an understanding of fundamental interpretive concepts as covered in [Module 101: The Process of Interpretation](#).

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<http://www.nps.gov/idp/interp/310/module.htm>

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Assessment Rubric For Full-Performance Benchmark Competency*

Planning Park Interpretation

The interpretive planning project described in the submission meets certification standards if it:

1) illustrates the importance of teamwork in park planning through specific references;

AND

2) demonstrates interpretive planning principles and processes by illustrating a direct relationship between stated interpretive planning goals and the specific interpretive product.

Descriptors:

- Clearly describes the scope, intent, purpose, and complexity of the planning activity
- Communicates an appropriate depth and amount of information about the team's make-up, dynamics, and ways of reaching and/or impediments to reaching consensus
- Communicates an understanding of the importance of varied perspectives in the planning process
- Clearly identifies how the planning activity related to park significance, purpose, and goals or how it did not
- Communicates an understanding of how the planning activity relates to established planning goals in the park
- Describes the means by which the intended results of the planning activity might be implemented as well as provides a thoughtful perspective on how effective the project might become

The planning activity described in the submission *approaches* the certification requirements, but does not meet them, if it:

1) Illustrates the importance of teamwork in park planning;

OR

2) Demonstrates interpretive planning principles and processes by directly connecting the interpretive planning goals and the specific interpretive product;

OR NEITHER.

Descriptors:

- Does not adequately describe the scope, intent, purpose, and complexity of the planning activity
- Does not communicate a sufficient amount of information about the team's make-up, dynamics, and ways of reaching and/or impediments to reaching consensus
- Does not convey an understanding of the importance of varied perspectives in the planning process
- Does not adequately identify how the planning activity related to park significance, purpose, and goals or how it did not
- Does not communicate an understanding of how the planning activity relates to established planning goals in the park
- Does not adequately describe the means by which the intended results of the planning activity might be implemented and/or provide a thoughtful perspective on how effective the project might become



PREPARING YOUR SUBMISSION: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Planning Park Interpretation

Introduction:

To demonstrate this competency the interpreter must answer a series of questions in essay format, analyzing a park interpretive planning effort in which the interpreter participated.

What you will submit:

Complete and submit the attached "Product Submission Form" for each certification you attempt. Your essay answers must describe a park planning effort in which you participated. Your project may be for a park's seasonal interpretive program, for a comprehensive interpretive plan, for a special event or other interpretive project, or for a park planning project that does not directly address interpretation, but affects the interpretive goals of your park in some way. Describe your project and answer the questions as directed in the questionnaire that follows.

Important:

You are not required to answer the parenthetical questions following each of the five sections. The parenthetical questions are intended to help you provide information that will help you demonstrate certification standards. Your project may be better described through different questions or avenues.

Please provide the narrative answers in a manner that you feel best communicates the way in which your project met certification standards. Your ultimate task is to match your answers with the bold faced language provided at the top of the rubric page. "Are my statements clearly described by the rubric language that defines certification standards?"

Be sure to check your work against the assessment rubric.

Remember:

Each element must be individually effective and work with the other elements in the project to achieve certification.

NOTE:

At the Full Performance level you have the option to develop one competency project to be reviewed against all four sets of standards separately. Keep in mind that the requirements on the "How to Submit" page for every competency you couple with your project must be met (i.e., you must prepare an essay, and a facsimile, and a questionnaire if you choose to combine Planning, Media, and Training/Coaching in one submission). Likewise, you have the option to develop a separate project for each Full Performance competency, and submit them separately. If you choose to combine the reviews and address more than one competency with a single project, be sure to INDICATE CLEARLY on your project label which competencies you wish to have the project reviewed against.

What to do when your submission is ready:

Review your essay answers with your supervisor. When you and your supervisor concur that the submission is complete, the project should be sent to the Training Manager (Becky Lacombe), Interpretation, Mather Training Center by E-Mail. If E-Mail is not available, send a disk with the essay questions and answers to:

Mather Training Center
Training Manager, Interpretation,
P.O. Box 77, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425.

What happens next?

The training manager will send your essay to two peers who are trained certifiers. Each will independently review the essay using the Assessment Rubric for Benchmark Competency: Planning Park Interpretation, developed specifically for this competency. The essay will be evaluated through peer review to determine whether it meets the certification standards. Those meeting the certification requirements will receive a letter from the training manager.

Those approaching certification will need to revise and resubmit their entry, making the adjustments prompted by feedback provided by the reviewers, and discussions with their supervisor. If you have your project reviewed against multiple standards and one or more elements are judged to be approaching certification, only the portion(s) approaching certification need to be revised and resubmitted. Questions about the process can be answered by any of your cluster curriculum coordinators or the training manager.

*Certification in this competency serves the overall development of employees in Ranger Careers positions, and meets the NPS national standard for interpretation in planning park interpretation. Certification in this competency is a point-in-time assessment. Long-term performance trends are measured at the park level. Eligibility for promotion is determined by the supervisor and park.

Essay Questions

Submission for Planning Park Interpretation

Please provide descriptions and answer the questions below in an essay format. Suggestions on what to include are in parentheses below each question.

- Describe the park planning effort to which you contributed.

(What relationship did interpretation have to the specific plan? What were the goals of the planning effort? What was the scope of the project?)

- How was teamwork important in your planning process?

(What roles did each member have? Were there problems reaching consensus? What were they? If consensus was reached, how did it occur? What role did the facilitator play? How did the team achieve “teamwork”? Were multiple perspectives included and respected?)

- How did your planning effort contribute to the goals in established park and interpretive planning documents?

(Are there established purpose, significance, and goals [CIP, GMP, RMP, Media Plan, SFI, etc.] for this park that relate to this planning effort? How did your planning effort support the purpose, significance, and goals for the park? How might it have more effectively addressed these?)

- Did your planning team develop an implementation strategy?

(Were potential funding sources identified? Was there a timetable for implementation? Who is responsible for the plan's implementation? How were implementation priorities established?)

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<http://www.nps.gov/idp/interp/310/submit.htm>



Product Submission Form

Interpretive Development Certification Program

Please include this form with your submission

Name:

Park/Site:

Module #:

Date mailed:

This is my _____ submission attempt for this certification (1st, 2nd, etc.)

I have reviewed the enclosed product against the submission requirements AND rubric for this certification:

Yes No

Has supervisor reviewed product?

Yes No

Career Position (Please select one from the following):

GS-0025: Park Ranger GS-0090: Park Guide
 GS-1702: Educational Specialist SCA/Student Intern
 GS-0303: Visitor Use Assistant Volunteer
 Cooperating Associate Employee Other _____

Career Status (Please select one from the following):

Permanent Term
 Seasonal Intake (Year _____)

Product Format (Please select from the following and indicate number of copies):

Video (_____ copies) Hard Copy (_____ copies)
 Floppy Disk ccmil/Email

Product Topic/Emphasis is primarily:

Natural Cultural
 Natural and cultural Other _____

FedEx mailing address and phone number:

Park phone and email address:

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?

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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?

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