

## The Interpretive Development Program

Professional Standards for Learning and Performance

The Interpretive Development Program (IDP) is the National Park Service's (NPS) competencies based training and peer review certification program. The IDP establishes, teaches, implements, and measures professional standards to provide developmental opportunities in interpretation for all employees and partners throughout the NPS.

Interpretive competencies define professional standards for NPS interpreters. A competency is a group of knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviors necessary to successfully complete a given task required by a particular job.

In 1995, more than 300 NPS field interpreters identified thirteen technical interpretive competencies. In 2003, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) conducted a scientific survey that validated all thirteen for training and development. Currently, OPM is conducting a series of subject matter expert focus groups to determine which of the competencies (they predict as many as ten) could be fully integrated into Human Resources.

### **Interpretation Competencies**

- Knowledge of the Resource
- Knowledge of the Audience
- Knowledge of Appropriate Technique
- Informal Visitor Contacts
- The Interpretive Talk
- Conducted Activities
- Demonstrations and Other Illustrated Programs
- Interpretive Writing
- Curriculum-based Education Programs
- Planning Park Interpretation
- Coaching and Training
- Interpretive Media
- Interpretive Research and Resource Liaison

The IDP uses these competencies to deliver approximately 120 classroom events around the country each year. Classroom training is coordinated and delivered locally, but based on a national curriculum that supports competency standards. In addition, 15 satellite interpretive training events are delivered to more than 200 downlinks each year. These efforts reach more than 3,000 participants annually. The IDP has also published a textbook *Meaningful Interpretation: How to Connect Hearts and Minds to Places, Objects, and Other Resources* and partners with Stephen F. Austin University to support a Masters Degree in Resource Interpretation based on NPS interpretive competencies.

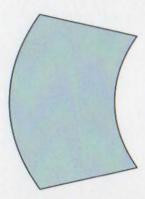
The IDP also uses interpretive competencies for professional accountability by operating a peer review certification program. To date, more than 4,000 interpretive products have been assessed against competency standards.

In addition, the IDP is sponsoring three evaluation studies: 1) Indiana University is seeking to establish the relationship of NPS interpretation competencies to visitor outcomes; 2) Clemson University is seeking to determine the effectiveness of competencies training; and, 3) Stephen F. Austin University is seeking to understand visitor outcomes in terms of diversity and demographics.

# National Park Service Interpretation Competencies The Interpretive Development Program

#### **Competencies Defined**

- 13 Interpretation Ranger competencies defined by field
- All 13 competencies validated by Office of Personnel Management
- Directors Orders 6 determines interpretive standards are defined by the 13 competencies



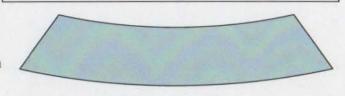
#### **Competencies Measured**

- Peer Review Certification Program assesses more than 500 interpretive products annually
- Effectiveness of competencies currently being evaluated by three studies: Clemson, Indiana, and Stephen F. Austin Universities



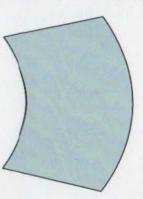
#### Interpretation Competencies

- Knowledge of the Resource
- Knowledge of the Audience
- Knowledge of Appropriate Technique
- Informal Visitor Contacts
- The Interpretive Talk
- Conducted Activities
- Demonstrations and Other Illustrated Programs
- Interpretive Writing
- Curriculum-based Education Programs
- Planning Park Interpretation
- Coaching and Training
- Interpretive Media
- Interpretive Research and Resource Liaison



#### **Competencies Learned**

- Approximately 120 annual classroom events
- Approximately 3,000 annual training participants
- Approximately 15 satellite annual satellite broadcasts
- Competencies-based Masters Degree offered by Stephen F. Austin University



#### Competencies Used

- Competencies used in coaching and performance standards
- Some competencies adopted by Resource Management and Cultural Resource Management
- · Competencies used in Civic Engagement
- Partnerships competencies and training modeled after interpretation

Interpretive Development Program Website: <a href="www.nps.gov/idp/interp">www.nps.gov/idp/interp</a> Training Manager for Interpretation: David Larsen, 304-535-6437 DRAFT National Park Service Interpretation and Education Program Logic Model

Premise: If the NPS offers high quality interpretative, curriculum-based, and informational programs to a diverse public, the public will have better quality of life and will be better equipped to help preserve and protect the National Park System for future generations.

Inputs		Activities	Outputs		Outcomes	Impacts
Funding National, Regional, Local Sources—Public, Private, Philanthropic, Earned Revenue, Fees  Skilled Staff		Formal Interpretation (e.g. Interpretive Talks, Demonstrations, Tours)	People Participating (e.g. In each type of program/event, Internet hits)	->	Participants find personal (intellectual and emotional) meaning and relevance in National Park resources	and participates in civil democratic society; practices healthy lifestyles to demonstrates a long-term commitment to stewardship of National Park remotivating, lifelong learning opportunities.  The National Park System is preserved for future general participations.
		Informal Interpretation (e.g. Roving, Visitor Center Contact)	Interpretive Media Products (e.g. exhibits, websites, brochures)	$\rightarrow$	Participants learn new information/concepts about the park or program topic	
NPS Partners		Interpretive Media	Programs/Services Offered (e.g. walks, talks, curriculum based programs, teacher workshops, public meetings,	→ →		
Volunteers Cooperating Associations Community members		(e.g. Publications, Exhibits, Web)			Participants learn Civic Engagement skills Participants Take action (volunteer, make a donation, etc.)	
Management Supervision Administration Policy		Curriculum-based Programs (e.g. Parks as Classrooms,	Informational Products (e.g. magazines, TV programs, newsletters, fact sheets)			
		Distance Learning)			Improved teacher practice and enhanced student learning/ motivation	
Facilities Technology		Teacher Professional Development (e.g. Workshops, Institutes)			Park neighbors and community decision makers understand park resources and issues and are engaged in park and community preservation	
Planning Training		Community Engagement (e.g. Public Meetings, Community Fairs, Events, Dialogs, Internships, Youth Programs)				cs, and enjo
Standards/ Guiding Principles Best Practices Evaluation			Parks are Welcoming and Accessible to All People	$\rightarrow$	Participants have Memorable Experiences	ys
		Information and Orientation (e.g. Maps, Marketing, Tourism, TV Programs, Magazines, Newsletters)				