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United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20013-7

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AUG 29 1986

Memorandum

To: Regional Directors

From: Director *William Penn Mott, Jr.*

Subject: Recommended Employee Development and Minimum Core Competencies for Interpreters

The subject document is attached for your information. Please bring it to the attention of all the superintendents in your region.

It is intended to serve as a guide for the training and development of interpretive employees and for the identification of the minimum competencies an employee should possess to be considered fully qualified as a National Park Service interpreter.

I specifically call to your attention the first course listed under the Special Training category: "Interpretation for Managers." It is designed specifically for superintendents and other top level managers who are responsible for the interpretive function but have no background experience in this activity.

I believe that the implementation of this plan will have a positive effect on improving the professionalism of interpretation in the national parks.

Attachments

RECOMMENDED
EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT AND
MINIMUM CORE COMPETENCIES FOR INTERPRETERS

THE NEED:

Given the existing manpower and budget limitations, the key to achieving high quality interpretive services is an intensified employee development and training program. This program should be aimed at increasing the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities of our permanent workforce, those who plan and manage our programs and train and supervise front-line interpreters.

INTERPRETER QUALIFICATIONS:

The identification of minimum core competencies for interpreters is intended to:

- 1) Identify the minimum competencies required for an employee to be considered qualified as an interpreter.
- 2) Serve as an interpretive career guide relative to a recommended sequence of training and employee development at various stages in their careers.

The Minimum Core Competencies are identified on the attached chart (middle column). Qualification should be based on completion of the underlined courses in the third column or demonstrated proficiency through equivalent training, self development, or experience.

THE PLAN:

This plan addresses itself to the art and craft of interpretation not with the specialized subject matter education needed for interpreting specific resources or categories of parks. It is based on the assumption that most interpreters will continue to enter the NPS with an academic education in one or more of the resource-oriented disciplines, but they may also be drawn from other appropriate educational backgrounds that will aid in broadening and enhancing their overall competency. It's emphasis is on developing knowledge, skills and abilities in the areas of interpretation, communications, human resource management, and interpretive program planning and management.

The plan identifies three basic levels of interpretive employee development. The titles, Beginning Level, Intermediate Level, and Advanced Level are conceptual rather than keyed to length of service or grade. There is some overlap in the suggested grades for each level, this is in recognition of the variation in duties assigned to different grades throughout the Park System.

A separate group of recommended training experiences is independent of the three basic levels of development. They should be made available to appropriate employees based on the needs of the park.

RECOMMENDED EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT
AND
MINIMUM CORE COMPETENCIES FOR INTERPRETERS

On-the-job training and work experience	Training leading to proficiency in Minimum Core Competencies	Recommended Sources to Achieve Competencies.
Beginning Level GS-4/7		
<p>Direct face-to-face interpretive services: Talks, Walks, Guided Tours, Information Desk, Roving Contacts, etc.</p> <p>Operation and basic maintenance of Visitor Centers, Museums, A/V Equipment, Self-guiding Facilities, Collections, etc.</p> <p>Special events, School Programs, Demonstrations, Living History, Environmental Education, etc.</p>	<p>Basic Park Operations</p> <p>Oral Communications</p> <p>Basic Interpretive Skills in Personal and Non-personal services.</p> <p>Basic Human Behavior</p>	<p><u>-Ranger Skills Course</u> -OJT and Work Experience -First Aid, EMT -Professional Organizations</p> <p><u>-Ranger Skills Course</u> <u>-Interpretive Skills I</u> -OJT and Work Experience -Professional Organizations</p> <p>-OJT and Work Experience <u>-Interpretive Skills I</u> <u>-Interpretive Skills II</u> <u>-Self Study "A Personal Training program for interpreters"</u> -Professional Organizations</p> <p><u>-Reading:</u> Interpreting our Heritage, Interpreting the Environment Interpreting for Park Visitors.</p> <p><u>-Self-Study "A Personal Training Program for Interpreters"</u> <u>-Reading:</u> Interpreting our Heritage, On Interpretation - <u>Ranger Skills</u></p>

Intermediate Level GS 5/9

supervision and operations of Interpretive Facilities and Program activities	Interpretive Program Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <u>Interpretive Operations for First-Line Supervisors</u>- OJT and Work Experience- Professional Organizations
Recruiting, Training, Supervising, Interpreters Seasonals, VIP's, etc.	Training and Supervising Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <u>Interpretive Operations for First-Line Supervisors</u>- Fundamentals of Training- Instructors Workshop in Interpretive Skills- General Supervisory training- OJT and Work Experience- Professional Organizations
Planning, Programming, and Budgeting		
Cooperating Association Operations	Interpretive Methods and Techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <u>Interpretive Skills III</u>- OJT and Work Experience- Professional Organizations- <u>Reading:</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">Interpreting the EnvironmentInterpreting for Park VisitorsInterpreting our Heritage- Self-Study
Outreach Services		
	Interpretive Writing and Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <u>Interpretive Skills IV</u>- OJT and Work Experience- Professional Organizations- Self-Study
	Administration for Interpreters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- OJT and Work Experience- Administration for line Managers- Self-Study
	Park Operations * (based on park needs and job requirements)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Curatorial Methods* Natural/Cultural Resource Management* Basic Law Enforcement

Advanced Level GS- 7 and Up

Program Planning and Management

Park and Interpretive Planning

Private Sector coordination
and Public Relations

Supervision and Employee
Development

Developing and Coordinating
Interpretive Training Courses

Interpretive Program Evaluation

Interpretive Program Management

Marketing Parks and developing
public support

Interpretive Planning

Private Sector Interpretive
Services Development and
Coordination

- Interpretive Program Management
- OJT and Work Experience
- Advanced training in supervisory management, employee development
- Professional Organizations
- Self-Study: Management
- Reading Interpretive Views

- Interpretive Program Management
- OJT and Work Experience
- Self-Study: Marketing
- Professional Organizations

- Fundamentals of Interpretive Planning
- OJT and Work Experience
- Details to Planning Team, HFC / DSC
- Self-Study
- Professional Organizations

- Interpretation: Private Sector Coordination
- OJT and Work Experiences
- Professional Organizations

Special training as needed

Interpretation for Managers

Critical Issues: Workshop in Interpretation

Historic Weapons Firing Safety Certification

Instructors Workshop in Interpretive Skills

Interpretive Programming for Urban Areas

Interpretation for Populations at Risk

Interpretive/Resource Management Workshops

- Special courses as offered
- OJT and Work Experience
- Professional Organizations
- Self-study

SUMMARY MINIMUM CORE INTERPRETIVE TRAINING:

Beginning level: GS 4-7

General Ranger Skills Course (for all 025	220 hrs.
Interpretive Skills I (Personal Services)	64/80 hrs.
Interpretive Skills II (non-personal services)	64/80 hrs.
Personal Training Program (self-study package)	30 hrs.

Intermediate level: GS 5-9

Interpretive operations (1st line supervisors)	80 hrs.
Interpretive Skills III (methods and techniques)	80 hrs.
Interpretive Skills IV (Interpretive Writing)	80 hrs.

Advanced level: GS 7-and above

Interpretive program management	40 hrs.
Interpretive planning	40 hrs.
Interpretation; private sector coordination	40 hrs.

Special training as needed:

Interpretation for Managers	40 hrs.
Critical Issues: Workshop in Interpretation	40 hrs.
Instructor's Workshop in Interpretive Skills	80 hrs.
Historic Weapons Firing Certification	80 hrs.
Interpretation for Populations at Risk	40 hrs.
Interpretive programming for Urban Parks and Urban Recreation Areas	40 hrs.
Interpretive/Resource Management Workshops	Variable

BRIEF SUMMARY OF CURRICULUM CONTENT FOR EACH COURSE FOLLOWS:

BEGINNING LEVEL GS 4-7

Ranger Skills: An introduction to the full range of knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for the operation of an national park (220 - 280 hours). Taught at the Albright Training Center.

NOTE: This is not specific interpretive training but is recommended as part of the required training for all interpreters. It is a basic Park Service Course for all "Park Ranger" employees. It does offer approximately 60 hours of communications and interpretive skills.

Interpretive Skills I & II: Development of the basic knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for the delivery of park interpretive services, and the motivation of interpreters to experiment with innovative interpretive ideas. Includes an introduction to the wide variety of techniques, media and services used in interpretive programs. Taught at the Regional level by the interpretive skills teams. (64 to 80 hrs. each)

Skills I: Personal services interpretation

- basic oral communications
- application of communication skills to the preparation, presentation and evaluation of effective face-to-face interpretation. (talks, walks, tours, information stations, roving contacts)
- Basic principles of human behavior, cultural and group dynamics.
- Perform the basic operation and maintenance of NPS A-V equipment.

NOTE: This course should be offered to all employees who are involved in direct public contact duties, including concession employees involved in interpretation.

Skills II: Non-personal interpretive services and job related communications

- introduction to a variety of interpretive skills including interpretive writing, exhibit preparation, publications, AV applications, and media relations.
- Train, lead, coach and critique interpretive services carried on by seasonals, volunteers, and others.
- apply effective communication skills in one-on-one job related communications.
- Use of interpretation as part of the park team to advance goals and objectives.

A personal training program for interpreters: This is a self study course consisting of five video tapes and a syllabus. It takes 24-30 hours of work to complete. The package was developed in 1976, it is scheduled for updateing.

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL GS 5-9

Interpretive operations for first line supervisors: Identifies the overall picture of interpretive operations and analyzes the various parts of those operations; the application of the "nuts and bolts" of interpretive services and their appropriateness to the park's overall operation; concentration is on developing supervisory and training skills (80 hours) Taught at the Mather T.C.

Interpretive Skills III: Methods and techniques :

An overview of the wide variety of special methods and techniques available to interpreters to enable them to serve the needs of all park visitors and to encourage them to put sparkle, creativity and a "sense of wonder" in their programs. Emphasis will be on the strengths, weaknesses and special quality requirements of each.

- Serving special populations - living history - demonstrations - recreational skills workshops - creative and performing arts - environmental education, etc.

(80 hours) Taught at the regional level by the interpretive skills teams, with special assistance as needed.

Interpretive Skills IV: Interpretive Writing : A workshop designed to develop interpretive writing, layout and design skills, and their application to the production of Site Bulletins, Newspaper articles, Press releases, Signs, Wayside labels and other written interpretive communications. (80 hours). Taught at the servicewide level at the Mather Training Center with assistance from HFC Division of publications as needed.

ADVANCED LEVEL GS 7 - AND UP

Interpretive Program Management : The development of effective program managers sensitive to the needs and values of interpretation and its role and responsibility in overall park management; covers advanced personnel management and human resources development, marketing parks through interpretation, the development, operation, and evaluation of a balanced, integrated program designed to meet the current needs of park management and of servicewide goals and objectives. (40 hours) Taught at the Mather T.C.

Interpretive Planning: An introduction to interpretive planning, the content and purpose of the different plans effecting interpretation (General Management Plan, Development Concept Plan, Interpretive Prospectus and Statement for Interpretation). The strengths, weaknesses, and uses of different media, and the efficient use of HFC and Regional resources in bringing concepts to reality.

(40 hours) Taught at Mather T.C. with assistance from the Harpers Ferry Center interpretive planners.

Interpretation: Private Sector Coordination : An identification of the range of Private Sector organizations interested in and available to assist use in delivering interpretive services. The "nuts and bolts" of working with private sector sources (cooperating associations, concessionaire, educational institutions, private non-profit organizations, etc.). The development and management of Fee interpretation services and techniques for fund raising from the private sector. (40 hours)

SPECIAL TRAINING - DEPENDING ON PARK AND PROGRAM NEEDS:

Interpretation for Managers: (40 hours)

Managers must have an understanding of the current Service policies, philosophy, role and responsibilities of the interpretive function in order to maximize the benefits of interpretation. This course is designed to help managers gain this understanding as it relates to integrating interpretation into the overall park management program. The use of interpretation in visitor safety, resources management, law enforcement, park maintenance and in marketing the park (developing public support for parks and their policies and programs). The role of cooperating associations, concessionaires, private sector individuals and organizations and the use of fees to expand services to visitors will also be covered.

Critical Issues: Workshop in Interpretation :

Recent developments in Interpretation, servicewide interpretive themes, and information on special initiatives in resource management as applied to interpretation will be explored. Specific activities will be developed at the workshop for servicewide implementation. Also covered will be recent changes in NPS interpretive policy.

Instructor's Workshop in Interpretive Skills :

In FY 83 ten regional training teams were formed to conduct interpretive skills courses throughout the Service. This workshop will train additional members for these regional teams to replace instructors lost due to transfers, etc.. It will also be used to revise the existing courses and create the curriculum for the new skills courses identified as needed.

Historic Weapons Firing Certification Course: (80 hours)

A mandatory certification for supervising employees who have primary responsibility for historic weapons firing programs. Certification is valid for four years. Course is taught on a two year cycle by the WASO office, funding is by benefiting accounts.

Interpretation For Populations at Risk: (40 hours) A special course for interpreters in recreation areas and large natural areas where visitors participate in high risk recreational activities. A look at the legal responsibilities of the service and methods and techniques that can be implemented through interpretation to reduce the accident and injury potentials for these visitors. Existing course, has been offered once to date, 1985. Should be offered on an as needed basis - depending on transfers, new employees, etc. in the appropriate parks.

Interpretive Programming for Urban Recreation Areas and Parks: (40 hours) A special course for interpreters in urban recreation areas and other parks in major metropolitan areas. An overview of the special programming ideas and needs for these areas. Should be held at one of the major urban areas.

Inter-regional Interpretation / Resource Management Workshops :

These workshops will be developed on the basis of mutual resource management issues, research, visitor use or impacts, and interpretive programs. Attendees will be from appropriate parks and offices and would include interpreters, superintendents, research scientist, and resource management specialist. Each workshop should have a specific resource theme. Workshops should be co-sponsored by the regional offices involved.

FY87 STMA TRAINING CALENDAR

<u>DATE</u>	<u>COORDINATOR</u>
<u>October, 1986</u>	
10/06-10/10 Orientation to NPS Operations	Watson
10/20-10/31 Interpretive Operations for First-Line Supervisors	Dudley
<u>November, 1986</u>	
11/03-11/07 Interpretation Program Management	Watson
11/13-11/25 Basic Supervision/Basic Management Instructors Workshop	Wade
<u>December, 1986</u>	
12/01-12/05 Microcomputers for CR Managers (offsite)	Craig
12/01-12/12 Curatorial Methods	Dudley
12/15-12/19 Maintenance: CR for Managers	Craig
<u>January, 1987</u>	
01/12-01/23 Interpretive Skills IV (2 weeks)	Watson
01/26-02/06 Competencies for Administrative Technicians Instructor Workshop (2 weeks)	Wade/Tucker
<u>February, 1987</u>	
02/09-02/13 IPM (East)	HOAL
02/23-02/27 Interpretation for Managers	Watson
<u>March, 1987</u>	
03/16-03/27 Interpretive Operations for First-Line Supervisors (2 weeks)	Craig

April, 1987

04/06-04/17	Historical Weapons Certification (2 weeks)	Graybill	
04/05-04/09	Policies and Issues in Preservation in Cultural Landscapes (Cumberland Island NS)	Watson	
	(NOTE: NPCH/SHFG Meeting scheduled in Washington, DC, 04/24-04/26)		
04/13-04/17	Workshop in Historic Structures: Maintenance Management (Denver, CO)	Craig	BA
04/27-05/01	Servicewide Workshop for Historians	Craig	
04/28-05/01	Computer Cataloging (Clemson, SC)	Dudley	
TBA	Historic Property Leasing Workshop	Dudley	BA

May, 1987

05/05-05/07	Library Management Workshop (Nathanson)	Dudley	BA
TBA	Critical Natural Resource Issues for Interpreters	Watson	
05/18-05/22	The Superintendency (1 week--offsite)	Wade	BA
05/26-05/28	SCORP Workshop	Craig	

June, 1987

06/01-06/05	Critical Issues--Curatorial (Berkeley, CA)	Dudley	
06/22-06/26	Management/Preservation Outdoor Statues	Craig	BA

July, 1987

07/13-07/17	Advanced Technical Grants	Dudley	BA
07/20-07/24	Personal Computers for Managers (offsite)	Watson	BA

September, 1987

09/15-09/22	Interpretive Planning (8 days over weekend)	Watson	
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8--1ST QUARTER

10/14-10/23	Cutlural Resources Management	Craig
10/26-10/30	Maintenance: Historic Structues For Technicians	Watson

November, 1987

11/02-11/06	Interpretation: Program Management	Craig
11/16-11/20	Orientation to NPS Operations	Dudley
11/30-12/11	Curatorial Methods	Watson

December, 1987

12/14-12/18	Maintenance: CR for Managers	Dudley
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