

519.1-558

WILL ROGERS STATE HISTORIC PARK
INTERPRETIVE PLAN

DECEMBER 1, 1974

Interpretive Plan for Will Rogers SHP

I. Factors Influencing Selection of Interpretive Medium or Method

A. Objectives of the Presentation

1. The primary objective is to relate to the public, for their enjoyment and experience, the life and times of Will Rogers in the context of American culture.
 - a. Will Rogers' Indian heritage
 - b. Will Rogers as entertainer
 - c. Will Rogers as a citizen-statesman
2. The secondary theme will deal with Will Rogers' California lifestyle as exemplified by the ranch house and grounds at Will Rogers State Historic Park.
3. The natural history and ecology of the Santa Monica Mountains portion of the park should be considered the tertiary theme.

B. Advantages and Limitations of Methods and Media

In keeping with the purpose of Will Rogers State Historic Park, the preponderance of interpretive effect should be placed on the life and times of Will Rogers. With the abundance of artifacts available it is all too easy to drift from interpreting the man

to describing the object. The tour guide is especially susceptible to this shift as visitors experience the ranch house. Every effort should be employed to use the house, grounds and artifacts as interpretive devices to better tell of Will Rogers himself.

The physical layout of the buildings and grounds establish tours as the best method of interpretation. Conducted tours add the personal and friendly components so in keeping with the personality and lifestyle of Will Rogers. Self-guiding tours also tell the story but allow more flexibility for those wishing a more leisurely or private experience.

Sophisticated, mechanical interpretive methods are not appropriate to the park or man it honors. With two exceptions, all audiovisual media should be limited to the visitor center, which should be moved from the central historic zone. The two exceptions should be audiovisual explanation of the rules, techniques and examples of polo and demonstration of roping. Demonstrations of polo, roping, and horse handling and care will add significantly to the complete story of Will Rogers.

Visitor orientation should be handled in detail at the visitor center to minimize the need for interpretation exhibit panels and signing. The natural history theme should be carried through guided tours, hiking and limited exhibits and signing.

The more the unit can rely upon an open environment, personal tours and demonstrations, the more closely in tune with the personality and lifestyle of Will Rogers the interpretation will be. An attractive, interesting and strong visitor center program is imperative in this approach.

C. The Visitors and Their Needs

June through September shows heavy visitor use but visitation remains constant on weekends and holidays throughout the remainder of the year. The visitor population decreases only during the mid-week for the "off" season.

Visitors arrive primarily by two modes of transportation. The way of travel often dictates the visitor use. Those people arriving by tour bus have approximately 30 to 40 minutes in which to see the park and get an appreciation of Will Rogers and his contributions to our heritage. The visitors arriving by private car often stay longer, many stay to picnic, hike, or ride horses, hence they spend several hours at the park. There is a need to relate the interpretive themes in two ways: one, to present a more or less complete story of Will Rogers in a concise relatively brief manner; secondly, to allow the story to unfold at a leisurely pace and through several media.

In either case, visitor orientation should be handled primarily at the visitor center. Entrance to the park can be effectively controlled at

one point and orientation information should be included in the unit brochure disseminated at that point and at the visitor center.

Natural history information should be available, for the interested visitor, at the same points.

D. The Environment or Physical Situation

Good weather, much of the year, allows heavy visitor use year-round. The grounds are open and interpretive resources are widely separated which necessitates tours and other visitor orientation. There is a strong contrast between the developed historic area and the surrounding "natural" area. These areas are separated physically as well as ecologically which promotes historic and natural awareness without duplicate or conflicting use. The physical relief of the area also permits separation of utilitarian, historic and natural areas and can be used to maintain the integrity of interpretive resources.

II. Summary of Functions Assigned to Methods and Media

A. Personal Services

1. Talks - In and Out of Park

- a. The life and times of Will Rogers
- b. Will Rogers' Indian heritage
- c. Will Rogers as an entertainer

- d. Natural history and ecology of area
- e. Will Rogers' comments in respect to past, present, and future
- f. The State Park story

2. Personal Tours

- a. Tour of the buildings and grounds as they reflect the personality and life of Will Rogers
- b. Nature Tours - Using the natural area, experience and knowledge of the visitor to describe the natural history and ecology of the area
- c. Sunset hike to Inspiration Point

3. Tour of House Museums

- a. Will Rogers Ranch House - As it pertains to the life and personality of Will Rogers

4. Demonstrations

- a. Polo - rules, techniques and skills at practice cage and on the field
- b. Roping - skills of roping in roping arena
- c. Horsemanship - care and handling of horses

B. Audiovisual

1. Motion Pictures

- a. Will Rogers' life
- b. Will Rogers' house and grounds
- c. Will Rogers Film Festival

2. Slides/Sound

- a. Quotes of Will Rogers
- b. House and grounds
- c. Rogers' memorabilia

3. Audio-Message

- a. Visitor Center - Quotes of Will Rogers (continuous)
- b. Audio-message tour of grounds

4. Film Loop/Sound

- a. Polo Demonstration - rules, techniques and skills of polo
- b. Roping skills and stunts - at barn

C. Exhibits

1. Museum Exhibits

- a. Visitor Center - Containing pictures and other artifacts that describe Will Rogers and tell his story

2. Outdoor Exhibits

- a. Visitor orientation panels at entrance of park
- b. Skyline orientation panels at Inspiration Point
- c. Roping Arena - restore and use for roping demonstration
- d. Polo Practice Cage - restore and use for polo demonstration
- e. Polo Field - use for polo matches based upon demand and environmental protection
- f. Ranch house and grounds of period
- g. Green house and lathe house - Will Rogers' interest in horticulture

3. House Museums

- a. Will Rogers' Ranch House - To show the lifestyle of Will Rogers 1930-1935
- b. Stable, barn, and corrals (with horses present) - To show Will Rogers' love for horses and polo
- c. Gate House - Present when Will Rogers had ranch

D. Self-Guiding Trails and Tours

- a. Self-guiding orientation, tour and information pamphlet - allow the visitor pre, post and onsite orientation and information
- b. Self-guiding nature trail - showing representative flora and fauna and pointing out ecological principles at work in the area

E. Publications

- a. Self-guiding information and orientation brochure of Will Rogers State Historic Park
- b. Self-guiding nature trail pamphlet
- c. Reproductions of Will Rogers' books, articles, quotes, Russell's paintings and sculptures - for sale at sales shop

F. Information Signs and Markers

- a. Signs marking canyon corrals and Gate House
- b. Signs marking interpretive nature trails
- c. Sign marking burial site of two favorite polo ponies outside of stables
- d. Signs naming trees and other ornamental plants on grounds within the historic zone

III. Outline of Interpretive Content

A. Personal Services - Talks (in and out of park)

Purpose: To promote within the visitor or potential visitor awareness, understanding and appreciation of the life and times of Will Rogers in the context of American culture. To provide an introduction to the natural history and ecology of the area.

Subject:

1. The life and times of Will Rogers.
2. Will Rogers' Indian heritage.
3. Will Rogers as an entertainer.
4. Natural history and ecology of the Santa Monica Mountains' chaparral communities.
5. Will Rogers' comments in respect to past, present, and future.
6. The State Park Story.

Outline of Content: The content of each subject should be appropriate to the time and circumstances of the presentation and be tuned to the interest of the audience.

Style: Informal and informational, based upon authentic information.

Use: Use would be by groups or individuals interested in learning more about the life of Will Rogers and/or the ecology of the Will Rogers State Historic Park portion of the Santa Monica Mountains.

Technical Consideration: Audiovisual and other facilities should be available as needed. Talks should be given on a reservation basis.

B. Personal Services - Personal Tours

1. Tour of Grounds

Purpose: To provide the visitor with information and interpretation of the buildings and grounds of Will Rogers State Historic Park as they relate to the lifestyle and personality of Will Rogers.

Subject: Will Rogers as reflected by his ranch.

Outline of Content:

- a. Polo Field - Will Rogers' love for polo.
- b. Stables and Barn - Will Rogers' fondness for horses and riding.
- c. Mitç, Heart and Bone Canyons - the open space and use of natural settings which reflect Will Rogers' lifestyle.

- d. Roping Arena - as it relates to Will Rogers' roping ability and the role of roping in Will Rogers' show career.
- e. Greenhouse and Lathe House - as they relate to Will Rogers' interest for horticulture and love for natural beauty.
- f. Garage/Blacksmith Complex - as it relates to Will Rogers' lifestyle.
- g. Golfing Green - as it relates to Will Rogers' interest in friends and love of out-of-doors.

Style: Informative but informal, treating visitors as guests of the ranch.

Use: Use should be by those wishing to learn more about Will Rogers and how his personal influence on the Will Rogers Ranch reflects his lifestyle and personality.

Technical Consideration: Extreme care should be exercised to prevent the shift of interpretation from the man to the objects. Tour should be short enough to accommodate the needs of visitors from bus tours as well as those who arrive by private means. The buildings and grounds should be restored to period and maintained to reflect the ranch as it was from 1930 to 1935. Tours should be a regularly scheduled event.

2. Nature Tour

Purpose: To promote an awareness and appreciation of the complexity and value of the natural ecological communities present at Will Rogers State Historic Park and to encourage wise use and preservation of this natural area. To compare the man-made environment of the city with the "natural" island in the park.

Subject: Natural history and ecology of Will Rogers State Historic Park natural area.

Outline of Content:

- a. Flora and fauna, a representation of the Santa Monica Mountains chaparral community.
- b. Description of physical and biotic factors causing these communities.
- c. Man's effect upon the natural ecological balance of the area including the creation of the Los Angeles complex and its effect.
- d. How the ecology and geography of the area and the plant and animal communities affect the Los Angeles area.

Style: Information, utilizing the visitors' knowledge and experiences to relate to the scientific information provided, the most important factor being how the natural area relates to the visitors.

Use: Use by school groups, nature groups, and others interested in the natural history and ecology of the area.

Technical Consideration: Care should be given to stay away from a biological lecture tour. Every attempt should be made to call on the visitors' knowledge, experience, and interest to stimulate awareness and understanding. Adequate precaution should be taken to protect the naturally occurring organisms from destruction and damage through misuse or over use. Also, adequate provisions for visitor safety should be taken. Tours should be conducted by reservation and on heavy use days.

3. Sunset Hike to Inspiration Point

Purpose: To promote an awareness of and appreciation for nature and to provide insight into the feeling Will Rogers had for the ranch and nature. To contrast the view today as compared to what Will Rogers might have seen.

Subject: Sunset at Inspiration Point.

Outline of Content:

- a. Will Rogers comments on nature.
- b. Will Rogers comments on philosophy.

- c. Individual silent or verbal interpretation of nature and sunset.

Style: Informal, open to comment and visitor participation.

Use: By individuals and groups interested in learning and experiencing more of Will Rogers philosophy of life and in developing appreciation for the natural elements of man's ecology.

Technical Consideration: Adequate protection and safety should be provided for the visitors and natural habitats. Tours should be led by rangers or volunteer personnel and should be on a limited basis whether scheduled or by reservation. Tours should be limited to fifteen (15) people or less.

C. Personal Services - Tour of House Museums

Purpose: To provide the visitor with information and to promote understanding about the life and personality of Will Rogers as reflected by the ranch house and its artifacts.

Subject: Will Rogers.

Outline of Content:

- a. Artifacts as they relate to the life and personality of Will Rogers.
- b. Architecture of house as it shows the personality of Will Rogers.
- c. The reasons and lifestyle of Will Rogers that caused the ranch to be developed.

Style: Informal and informational:

Use: Use would be by those visitors interested in a better understanding of the life and personality of Will Rogers as represented by the north wing of the ranch house and its contents.

Technical Consideration: Visitors should not be allowed access to the interior of the house except on guided tours in the north wing. Adequate protection should be provided the structure and artifacts against damage by visitors or the environment. The maximum number of visitors in the house at any time should be eighteen (18).

D. Personal Services - Demonstrations

1. Polo

Purpose: To provide visitors with information on the rules, techniques and skills of the game of polo.

Subject: Polo rules, techniques and skills.

Outline of Content:

- a. Rules of polo.
- b. Techniques of playing polo.
- c. Polo games showing skills.

Style: Informational.

Use: Use by visitors interested in information about playing the game of polo and how it affected Will Rogers' life.

Technical Consideration: Demonstrations of the rules and techniques can be presented at the practice cage. There could possibly be limited visitor participation to aid in demonstration. The game of polo should be demonstrated at regularly scheduled matches on the polo field. The number of matches allowed should be based on the interest of the

players and the impact on the field and grounds. Polo rules and technique demonstrations should be on a regularly scheduled basis possibly before matches. All demonstrations should be conducted by authorized staff personnel.

2. Roping

Purpose: To provide the visitors with insight into the skills of trick roping and its effect on the life of Will Rogers.

Subject: Roping skills.

Outline of Content:

- a. Skills of roping.
- b. Roping tricks.
- c. Roping in the life of Will Rogers.

Style: Informational, could include limited visitor participation to help in demonstration.

Use: Use would be by visitors interested in learning more about the art of roping and its place in the life of Will Rogers.

Technical Consideration: Roping demonstrations should be conducted in the roping arena. All demonstrations should be done on a limited, regularly scheduled basis and by authorized personnel or concessionaire.

3. Care and Safe Handling of Horses

Purpose: To demonstrate by actual practice the idea of good care and safe handling of horses.

Subject: Care and safe handling of horses.

Outline of Content:

- a. Proper stabling and feeding of horses.
- b. Proper saddling and riding techniques.
- c. Proper use of horses, equestrian areas, and bridle trails.
- d. Proper handling and storage of tack and other equipment.

Style: Informative through visitor observation of actual performance by personnel and/or concessionaire.

Use: Use would be by all visitors touring the stable and riding areas.

Technical Consideration: Special or scheduled programs would not be necessary but could be held. The demonstration would be through the every day care and handling of horses at Will Rogers State Historic Park. The visitors will be able to observe the procedures and ask questions of the personnel. Any agreement for a concession using horses should include such a commitment. Adequate provisions should be taken for visitor safety around horses and stable area.

E. Audiovisual - Motion Pictures

Purpose: To dramatize the life and accomplishments of Will Rogers and to relate the ranch house and grounds to his life.

Subject: Will Rogers.

Outline of Content:

1. Will Rogers story
 - a. His life
 - b. His accomplishments
 - c. His personality
2. Will Rogers house and grounds
 - a. Description of house, grounds and artifacts in the house

- b. Relationship of Will Rogers possessions to his life and personality.
- 3. Will Rogers and his roping
- 4. Will Rogers Film Festival
 - a. A collection of films starring or about Will Rogers.

Style: Informational and entertaining.

Use: Use by visitors wishing to learn about Will Rogers and his ranch, and as a tribute to Will Rogers, the entertainer and to his accomplishments in the field of motion pictures.

Technical Consideration: The movie presentations should be presented in the Visitor Center. The movie length and content should reflect the needs of the visitor but should be limited to the story of Will Rogers and his ranch. The only exception would be a Will Rogers Film Festival which could be held annually, possibly on the lawn of the golfing green. The films could be shown on a portable screen placed at the lower edge of the grass with visitors seated on the golfing green.

F. Audiovisual - Slides/Sound

Purpose: To supplement talks and other presentations about Will Rogers.

Subject:

- a. Will Rogers.
- b. Will Rogers house and grounds.
- c. Rogers' memorabilia

Outline of Content: Content should be developed as it fits the presentation. Slides should deal with Will Rogers and not strictly the artifacts.

Style: Slides should be professional quality and should serve the needs of the speaker and audience.

Use: Use would be by personnel giving in and out of park talks and/or by audiences wishing to know more about Will Rogers.

Technical Consideration: Slides and other equipment should be good quality. An audio presentation could be added to allow a visitor actuated presentation if desirable.

G. Audiovisual - Audio Message

1. At Visitor Center

Purpose: To supplement and reinforce exhibits and motion pictures.

Subject: Will Rogers comments.

Outline of Content: Taped comments by Will Rogers on several subjects.

Style: Entertaining, using "typical" 1930's living room scene with audio from radio.

Use: To be used to set the mood of the Visitor Center by using Will Rogers' voice.

Technical Consideration: Good quality equipment and recordings should be used. Backup equipment should be available. Only Will Rogers' voice and other appropriate material should be used. Audio should sound as if coming from a radio broadcast.

2. Audio Message Tour of Grounds

Purpose: To relate to the public, the buildings and grounds of Will Rogers' ranch as they show the presence of

this great American. To utilize Will Rogers' voice to help portray his feelings toward the ranch and its importance to him.

Subject: Will Rogers' ranch grounds; audio message tour

- a. Polo field
- b. Ranch house
- c. Stables and barn
- d. Heart Canyon
- e. Roping arena
- f. Greenhouse/lathehouse
- g. Garage
- h. Blacksmith shop

Outline of Content:

- a. How did Will Rogers feel about the ranch?
- b. How did the comments of Will Rogers reflect the way he designed and used the ranch?
- c. Other appropriate information from the recordings of Will Rogers.
- d. Background narration to fill in information and to connect quoted material.

Style: In the voice and manner of Will Rogers supplemented by narration.

Use: A self-guiding audio-message tour.

Technical Consideration: The availability of Will Rogers'

comedy routines on record should not be used as the sole excuse for an audio-message tour. Many of his comments do not have any bearing on the ranch and its use. The recordings should not be "stretched" to fit subjects at the ranch or its use. The quotes could be tied together through narration of background information. If there are enough appropriate quotations by Will Rogers concerning the ranch or what went on there, the system could have great advantage and public appeal. There are numerous systems available but the most practical at Will Rogers SHP would be either the portable receiver (wand) or the listening post with portable plug-in earphones.

Good quality recordings and equipment should be used and backup equipment should be available. The visitor uses and needs at the unit are so varied that compulsory cost for the audio system would be inappropriate. Pay for use should be the system to follow. The tour should not necessarily replace the guided tour but would act as a choice of interpretation media to be given the visitors to better fit their needs. Operational adjustments will have to be made to provide for dispersal and retrieval of the wand/head sets.

H. Audiovisual - Film Loop

1. Polo - At Barn and Stables

Purpose: To show the rules and techniques of the game of polo.

Subject: Polo

Outline of Content:

- a. Major rules of polo
- b. Techniques needed to play the game of polo

Style: Informative

Use: Use by those visitors interested in additional information on the game of polo (visitor-actuated).

Technical Consideration: Good quality equipment should be used - a back screen projection unit, built-in and visitor actuated, should be installed. Film should be brief (2-3 minutes) but informative.

2. Roping - At Barn and Stables

Purpose: To show roping skills and stunts used by Will Rogers.

Subject: The art of roping.

Outline of Content: A film loop showing Will Rogers doing roping tricks.

Style: Informative.

Use: By visitors wishing to know more about the roping tricks performed by Will Rogers.

Technical Consideration: Film loop should show Will Rogers performing rope tricks. This can be taken from an existing motion picture footage. Good quality equipment should be used. A rear screen unit should be installed with a visitor-actuated switch.

I. Exhibits - Visitor Center

Purpose: To provide, for the visitor, an overview of the life and times of Will Rogers emphasizing the period of 1879 to 1930.

Subject: Will Rogers.

Outline of Content:

- a. Who was Will Rogers?
- b. What was his life before he moved to Santa Monica Mountains ranch?

- a. family, home and schooling
 - b. life before vaudeville days
 - c. vaudeville, marriage, and the "follies"
 - d. movies and the move to California
 - e. newspaper articles, books and telegrams
 - f. life in Beverly Hills
3. What were his main interests?
- a. family man
 - b. polo and horses
 - c. aviation
4. Who were his friends?
- a. gifts from friends
 - b. wide range of types and backgrounds
 - c. friend of the "common folk"
5. What was the history behind the Will Rogers' California ranch?
- a. planning and development
 - b. acquisition
 - c. purpose and use

Style: Informative, primarily graphics, displays and audiovisual media.

Use: Use would be by visitors wishing an overview of the life and times of Will Rogers and to better understand the man and his effect on America, especially during

his show business days. Use also would be for visitor orientation. The visitor center will be the only interpretive medium experienced by many visitors.

Technical Considerations: Quality audiovisual and backup equipment should be present. An auditorium or other facility should be available for films. An area should be available for visitor orientation and for the sale of reproductions of Will Rogers' writings and other memorabilia. When possible, the visitor center should be removed from the historic zone.

J. Exhibits - Outdoor Exhibits

1. Visitor Orientation panels at main entrance

Purpose: To orient visitors to the physical layout of the ranch and to the historically and naturally significant areas of the park.

Subject: Visitor orientation.

Outline of Content:

- a. orientation of visitor to park
- b. map of Will Rogers State Historic Park
- c. location of historic and natural areas
- d. regulations and rules of park use
- e. hours of operation, scheduled tours and demonstrations

Style: Appropriate to area, informational

Use: Visitor orientation

Technical Consideration: Panels should be located at the entrance to the park and should be appropriate to the area.

2. Skyline orientation panels at Inspiration Point.

Purpose: To orient visitors to significant points as seen from Inspiration Point.

Subject: Skyline orientation.

Outline of Content:

- a. What can be seen along skyline from Inspiration Point?
 - (1) manmade landmarks
 - (2) natural landmarks
- b. What did skyline look like in 1930-35?

Style: Informative.

Use: Visitor orientation to surrounding region.

Technical Consideration: Panels should show a continuous panorama of skyline and should clearly mark significant locations. Panels should be low profile, not showing above the vegetation. Maps should be oriented to the view. A skyline map showing how the view was in 1930-35 should be present for comparison, if it can be put together.

3. Roping Arena

Purpose: To show Will Rogers' interests in roping and to show where he did much of his practice roping.

Subject: Will Rogers and roping.

Outline of Content:

- a. Will Rogers' interest in roping.
- b. Where was the roping arena located?
- c. What was the roping arena like.

Style: Authentic period.

Use: Use would be by visitors wishing to know more of the role roping played in Will Rogers' life.

Technical Consideration: The roping arena should be restored to period. All non-period and inappropriate equipment should be removed. Use should be for roping demonstrations.

4. Polo Practice Cage

Purpose: To help complete the Will Rogers ranch and to give insight into the fondness Will Rogers felt toward polo.

Subject: Will Rogers' Polo Practice Cage.

Outline of Content:

- a. How was the practice cage used?
- b. Where was the polo practice cage located?

Style: Authentic period.

Use: Use would be by visitors wishing to know more about Will Rogers' fondness for polo.

Technical Consideration: The polo practice cage should be repaired and, if possible, placed at the original location. The cage should be used for polo demonstrations.

5. Polo Field

Purpose: To show how the game of polo is played and to show the original use of the ranch by Will Rogers.

Subject: Polo field at Will Rogers State Historic Park.

Outline of Content:

- a. Why was the ranch originally purchased?
- b. How is polo played?
- c. What are the rules and regulations of polo?

Style: Information should be provided through demonstration and actual playing of polo.

Use: Use would be by those interested in knowing more about polo and Will Rogers' interest in the game.

Technical Consideration: The polo field should be maintained as such and should be used for polo matches on a reservation basis. The number of matches should be based upon interest and the impact on the field's environment. Use of the polo field should be restricted to polo or other appropriate activities.

6. Ranch house and grounds.

Purpose: To provide the visitor an overview of the life style and personality of Will Rogers as reflected in the ranch house and grounds.

Subject: Ranch house and grounds as related to Will Rogers.

Outline of Content: How the grounds and ranch house show the life style and personality of Will Rogers.

- a. ranch house architecture
- b. stables and barn
- c. polo practice cage and field
- d. golfing green
- e. greenhouse and lathe house
- f. roping arena
- g. canyon corrals
- h. natural area and Inspiration Point

Style: Informational.

Use: Use will be by those visitors interested in a greater insight into the life and personality of Will Rogers.

Technical Consideration: All non-period and inappropriate equipment and material should be removed from the historic zone. The ranch house and grounds should

be restored (where needed) and maintained at the 1930 to 35 period as stated in the unit prospectus. Service yard, administrative offices and visitor center should be removed from the interpretive area and be placed where they do not intrude on the interpretive resource.

7. Green house and Lathe house

Purpose: To show Will Rogers' interest in natural beauty and horticulture.

Subject: Green house and Lathe house.

Outline of Content: Working areas showing the presence and use of exotic plants at the ranch.

Style: Informational, interpretation should be presented by a working green house and the presence of plants used by Will Rogers to landscape the grounds.

Use: Use would be by visitors wishing to know more about Will Rogers' interest in horticulture.

Technical Consideration: The green house should be reconstructed at its original site and the lathe house restored. Plants used by Will Rogers to landscape the ranch should be grown and cared for and used in landscaping. These

areas would be good for the source of needed plants for the ranch area.

K. Exhibits - House Museums

1. Will Rogers' Ranch House

Purpose: To show Will Rogers' life style and personality as reflected in the artifacts and architecture of the ranch house.

Subject: Will Rogers' ranch house as it relates to Will Rogers' life style and personality.

Outline of Content:

- a. Why is the ranch house constructed as it is?
- b. How do the gifts by Russell, Ziegfield, and others show their appreciation and understanding of Will Rogers?
- c. How do the personal artifacts of Will Rogers project his interest and personality?

Style: Authentic period, informative and care should be taken to interpret the man, not the object.

Use: Use would be by visitors wishing to know more about the life style and personality of Will Rogers.

Technical Consideration: Access to the interior of the ranch

house should be controlled. Visitors should be allowed into the house environment only on guided tours of the north wing given by authorized staff personnel. The number of visitors should be restricted to 18 per tour. An alternative will be a clear viewing cubicle allowing visitors to view the interior of the south wing of the house without entering the house environment. Adequate maintenance and protection should be given the artifacts within the house. Sunlight and dust/smog seem to be the most destructive factors. Adequate protection should be given the artifacts and structure from damage and/or vandalism.

2. Stable, Barn and Corrals

Purpose: To provide the visitor with insight into the interests and pursuits of Will Rogers and his love of horses and polo.

Subject: Stable, Barn and Corrals at Will Rogers State Historic Park.

Outline of Content:

- a. Will Rogers' love of horses and riding.
- b. Will Rogers' fondness for polo.
- c. Care and handling of horses.

- d. Importance of horses and riding in the building of Will Rogers' ranch.

Style: Informal. The existence of these features and the presence of horses and equipment tell the story without graphics, etc.

Use: Use would be on drop-in or tour basis.

Technical Consideration: Adequate protection should be given the stable, barn and corral areas from damage by visitors and the environment. Adequate protection should also be given the visitors to protect them against injury by horses or other objects.

3. Gate House

Purpose: To present to visitor a more complete historic picture of the Will Rogers Ranch during the interpretive period.

Subject: Gate House at Will Rogers Ranch

Outline of Content:

- a. What was the gate house at Will Rogers like?
- b. How was it used?
- c. When was it located?

Style: Informative.

Use: Use would be by those visitors on the self-guiding tour or on drop-in basis.

Technical Consideration: The Gate House should be included in the self-guiding tour of the historic area. The house should not be open for visitors to enter but viewed from exterior. The historic presence of the structure is its primary interpretive value.

L. Self-Guiding Trails and Tours

1. Self-guiding tour of historic area

Purpose: To interpret the story of Will Rogers as reflected in the ranch and to provide visitor orientation.

Subject: Will Rogers' ranch as it relates to his life style and personality.

Outline of Content:

- a. Polo Field - His love for polo.
- b. Stables and Barn - His love for horses and riding.
- c. Mitt, Heart and Bone Canyons - The open space and use of natural settings which reflect Will Rogers' life style.

- d. Roping Arena - as it relates to his roping ability and the role of roping in his show career.
- e. Green house and lathe house - as they relate to his interest in horticulture..
- f. Garage/Blacksmith complex - as it relates to his life style.
- g. Golfing green - as it relates to his interest in friends and his love for outdoor activities.
- h. Inspiration Point - as it relates to his love of nature and mankind.
- i. Gate House

Style: Informational, relating the points of interest to Will Rogers' life style and personality.

Use: Use would be by visitors wishing to tour the ranch grounds, at their leisure, to learn the story of Will Rogers.

Technical Consideration: Self-guiding tour publications should orient the visitor to the park, suggest sequential route and tell the story of Will Rogers.

2. Self-guiding Tour of Nature Area

Purpose: To promote an awareness and appreciation of the interaction and value of the naturally occurring plant and animal communities found in Will Rogers State Historic

Park and to promote wise use and preservation of this natural area while encouraging the study and understanding of ecological principles at work. Also to allow the visitors to experience the natural area at their own pace.

Subject: Self-guiding natural area tour at Will Rogers State Historic Park.

Outline of Content:

- a. Flora and fauna represented by the Santa Monica Mountain chaparral communities.
- b. Description of physical and biotic factors causing these communities.
- c. Man's effect upon the natural ecological balance of the area.
- d. The effect of the ecology and geography of the Santa Monica Mountains on the Los Angeles area.

Style: The style should be informative and accurate without being so scientific as to restrict the use because of terminology or content.

Use: Use would be by groups and individuals interested in learning more about the ecology of chaparral communities and man's effect on the area.

Technical Consideration: The information brochure should not be so technical as to eliminate its use by the average visitor, but it should be complete enough to give adequate and accurate information to school groups and amateur naturalists. The content should describe the ecological principles at work in the area. The brochure should also attempt to stimulate further study and investigation by visitors.

M. Publications

1. Self-guiding and Orientation Brochures

Purpose: To provide the visitor with pre, post, and onsite orientation, and information concerning Will Rogers, the park, and natural areas within the park.

Subject: a. Self-guiding and orientation to historic area.
b. Self-guiding and orientation to natural area.

Outline of Content: Specific content to be developed at the time of implementation. Outline should follow outlines presented under "Self-guiding Trails and Tours", (III, L, 1 and 2).

Style: Informational

Use: Use would be by visitors or potential visitors interested in pre, post and onsite orientation and information concerning Will Rogers, the park and natural areas within the park.

Technical Consideration: Existing brochure should be redone. The new brochure should contain more information on Will Rogers and should have better orientation information. Self-guiding tour publications should be developed for both the historic and natural areas. Trails and trail markers should be developed to point out significant natural areas.

2. Reproductions of Will Rogers' writings and memorabilia.

Purpose: To make available, for purchase, reproductions of writings, books, and sayings of Will Rogers and replicas of Russells' gifts of paintings and sculptures, as well as other appropriate memorabilia.

Subject: Reproductions of Will Rogers' writings and memorabilia.

Outline of Content: Reproductions available should be based on their individual merit and should carry the story of and contributions of Will Rogers.

- a. Will Rogers' books, articles and sayings.
- b. Replicas of gifts such as Russell's paintings and sculptures.
- c. Replicas of other Will Rogers memorabilia.

Style: Authentic reproduction for purchase.

Use: Use would be by visitors wishing to purchase the writings and/or memorabilia of Will Rogers.

Technical Consideration: The legality of reproduction and sale of all objects must be determined before sales begin. An area of the visitor center should be designated as a sales shop and staffed by volunteer personnel from a cooperating association.

N. Interpretive Signing

Purpose: To provide direction and information to supplement interpretation and orientation to Will Rogers State Historic Park.

Subject: Interpretive signing.

Outline of Content:

1. Signs identifying Mitt, Hearst and Bone Canyons and the Gate House.

2. Signs marking interpretive nature trails and stops on self-guiding tours.
3. Sign designating burial site (outside stable) of two of Will Rogers' favorite polo ponies.
4. Signs naming plants used by Will Rogers to landscape the ranch grounds.

Style: Appropriate to sign location and content.

Use: Use would be by visitors needing additional orientation and by those on tours through historic and natural areas.

Technical Consideration: All signs should be brief but informational and should blend with the location of placement. Good quality materials should be used and adequate provisions for protection from damage by environment and visitors should be taken.

Schedule of Improvements - Will Rogers SHP

<u>Recommendations</u>	<u>0-2 yrs.</u>	<u>2-5 yrs.</u>	<u>over 5 yrs.</u>
1. Removal of inappropriate historic farm equipment and inappropriate historic cars from park	X		
2. Remove or refurbish Eagle Scout interpretive exhibit	X		
3. Rewrite unit brochure and include self-guiding tour of historic area	X		
4. Restore roping arena	X		
5. Eliminate all unnecessary trails through natural areas	X		
6. Install film loop stations in stables area			X
7. Establish nature trails and self-guiding nature tour brochure			X
8. Reduce size of cleared area at Inspiration Point and fence			X
9. Removal of all non-period "improvements" such as fencing corrals, structures and equipment; reduce the number of livestock to the number Will Rogers had and restore canyon corrals to pasture			X
10. Reconstruct greenhouse			X
11. Construct visitor center/administrative complex and parking outside of historic zone			X

0-2 yrs. 2-5 yrs. over 5 yrs.

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| 12. Relocate public restroom facilities and
remove existing restroom structure | | | X |
| 13. Construct maintenance complex outside
historic zone | | | X |
| 14. Remove parking lot from in front of
ranch house and golfing greens | | | X |
| 15. Reconstruct goat corral | | | X |

Recommendations - Will Rogers SHP

1. Removal of inappropriate historic farm equipment and inappropriate historic cars from park.

The subject items do not fit the interpretive themes and have no relevance to the story of Will Rogers. They are a hazard and detract from the appearance of the area.

2. Remove or refurbish Eagle Scout interpretive panel.

The exhibit, at present, does not serve a good purpose and is in need of refurbishment. The exhibit should be renovated to reflect the new trails or ecology of the area or the panel should be removed. If it is to remain, the exhibit should be well protected against environmental and visitor damage and maintenance should be performed on it at regular intervals.

3. Rewrite unit brochure and include a self-guiding tour of the historic area.

The existing unit brochure is inaccurate due to changes occurring in park policy. The orientation given is inadequate because of the size and clarity of the maps. A new brochure should expand the story of Will Rogers, provide good visitor orientation and provide the information for a self-guiding tour of the historic area.

4. Restore roping arena.

The roping arena is significant as an historic structure and is important to the interpretation of Will Rogers. The arena is not in good repair and

is being used for inappropriate activities. The roping arena should be restored and the use limited to roping activities.

5. Eliminate all unnecessary trails through natural areas.

Many trails have been trampled through the mountain area by both equestrian and foot traffic. Most of these trails are not necessary for access to significant points of interest and are detrimental to the integrity of the area due to erosion and destruction of vegetation and animal habitats. A plan for hiking and riding trails should be developed and all unnecessary trails should be blocked and allowed to return to natural environment. In cases where severe erosion has or will occur, planting of natural vegetation and other appropriate anti-erosion measures should be undertaken.

6. Install film loop stations in the stables area.

Consistent with the interpretive plan, the stables and barn area is a reasonable and proper place to tell the story of polo and roping as it pertains to Will Rogers. Due to the complexity of the stories and because both subjects lend themselves easily to visual media, it is recommended that audio film loop stations be installed at two locations within the stable/barn structure. If possible, the screens should be placed in the wall with rear screen projectors used. Visitor-actuated push buttons should be installed. Audio presentations would add greatly to the presentation if it is economically feasible to include sound with the film loop.

7. Establish nature trails and self-guiding nature tour brochure.

A trail system and identification of representative examples of natural areas should be developed to promote awareness and understanding of the natural history and ecology of the natural zone. A self-guiding tour and brochure should be developed to give additional information and allow the visitor the option of personal or staff directed interpretation.

8. Reduce size of cleared area at Inspiration Point and fence.

The size of the cleared area at Inspiration Point is much larger than is needed for visitor accommodation. Trails have been created at several points along the perimeter of the cleared area and erosion is severe at the edges of the clearing. The size of the cleared area should be reduced and should be well back of the existing edge. The perimeter should be replanted with naturally occurring vegetation to reduce erosion and protect the integrity of the slope. A low fence should be constructed at the perimeter of the visitor use area with the exception of the road access. The road should be the only visitor access present.

9. Removal of all non-period "improvements" such as fencing, corrals, structures and equipment; reduce the number of livestock to the number which Will Rogers had and restore canyon corrals to pasture.

The pipe fencing, non-period structures, and large number of livestock destroy the historical integrity as well as the atmosphere of Will Rogers State Historic Park. While the presence of livestock, horseback riding

and polo are all appropriate to the area, the overuse of the resource has damaged much of the natural habitat in the historic and natural zones. There is little visitor interpretation occurring from the present use by the concession and there is an actual reduction in the intrinsic interpretive value of the park. The pipe corrals should be removed since they are not period and do not fit into the architecture of the grounds. The non-period equipment, e.g., jumping barricades, barrel racing obstacles, etc., are not appropriate to themes and should be removed.

10. Reconstruction of the greenhouse.

Historically, a greenhouse was located on the ranch grounds near the garage area (the exact location should be researched. Because of Will Rogers' love of plants and horticulture, the greenhouse is important to interpretation in the park. The greenhouse should be a working area used for replacement plants for the landscaping maintenance.

11. Construct visitor center/administrative complex and parking outside of the historic zone.

Construction of a new visitor center is imperative if the story of Will Rogers is to be presented properly. Much of his life took place before he purchased the California ranch and should not be interpreted within the ranch grounds per se. The center could deal uniquely with the period of 1879 to 1930. The second period (1930-1935) is especially suited to the ranch grounds.

The center should contain a theater or auditorium where motion pictures of Will Rogers and starring Will Rogers can be shown. Areas for displays, exhibits and artifacts should be available to interpret Will Rogers' life, accomplishments and contributions. The center should also house a sales area and public restroom facilities and could contain the administrative offices for the unit and area. Visitor parking should be included in the plan.

There are three general locations where a visitor center could be constructed. One location proposed is beneath the existing tennis court. It is recommended that this area not be used, if possible, because it intrudes upon the historic area. The site would, however, allow the visitors to be funneled from the existing parking lot into the visitor center, as they enter the historic zone. The two other sites are well away from the historic zone. One location is in the area of the existing state park residences. The other location is adjacent to Sunset Boulevard and below the practice polo field.

Regardless of the location, the visitor center should be the entrance into the historic area and nature areas and should be the first experience the visitor has before entering the rest of the park.

12. Relocate public restroom facilities and remove existing restroom facilities.

The existing public restroom facilities are housed in a structure constructed by the State Parks Department. The structure is not period and intrudes on the historic zone. Architecturally it blends well with the surrounding buildings, but it should be removed when facilities are available in the new

visitor center. Possibly the existing restroom facilities could be relocated to the garage area. There is need for public restrooms at the upper end of the historic area.

13. Construct maintenance complex outside historic zone.

The use of the historic grounds and structures for a utility yard is not compatible with the theme or purpose of the historic area. The utility yard and maintenance complex should be removed and new facilities should be provided, possibly in the area of the existing park residences.

14. Remove parking lot from in front of ranch house and golfing greens.

The existing parking lot intrudes upon the historic zone and detracts from the atmosphere of the ranch house area. The parking should be eliminated when an alternative parking area is constructed. A large lot should be constructed near the new visitor center and outside the natural and historic areas. The historic use of the existing parking area was a single lane driveway to the garage. Grass was planted to the edge of the driveway. The subject area should be restored to that condition when possible.

15. Reconstruct goat corral.

To aid in completing the historic picture, the goat corral which was located at the mouth of Bone Canyon should be reconstructed. The exact location and description of the corral should be researched. This should be a low priority item and should not take precedence over other interpretive projects.