Module 4

PLANNING

Our plans miscarry because they have no aim. When a man does not know what harbor he is making for, no wind is the right wind.

Marcus Annaeus Seneca

Module 4

PLANNING

What is it?

A systematic approach for developing interpretive projects and programs

Why do we do it?

To create quality interpretive experiences that meet park and visitor needs

How do we do it?

To review, identify needs, research, and organize information

INTRODUCTION

Planning is essential for producing successful interpretation. Even spur of the moment contact with the public should be carefully planned. This involves knowing the park and its resources, studying visitor demographics and motives, and understanding management goals and objectives. With this information, you can create interpretive themes and messages that will meet the needs of both visitors and management, and maximize the inherent characteristics and recreational opportunities presented by the resource. After programs or projects are developed, the final step is to monitor and provide feedback that improves the product or outcome of the program.

Interpretive planning essentially asks and answers a few basic questions: **What do we have in our park? Who is coming and why? What do we need to tell them? What will our facilities, staff, and budget allow us to do? How well did we do?** This module reviews steps in the planning process and discusses how to use them to create successful park interpretive programs.

Planning occurs at many levels. In California State Parks; all park planning starts with the park unit's Statement of Purpose and classification, developed and approved as part of the Classification and Naming process. This guides the park general plan, which is ideally built on by more detailed park-wide interpretation planning. Finally, in line with all the previous planning, an interpretive service plan is developed for each new interpretive program or project. All of these plan levels are influenced by system-wide plans and strategic initiatives. While each level of planning is important, this module focuses exclusively on planning for personal interpretive programs.

(Middle-level interpretation plans have changed names and details through the years. The most recent update of the DOM interpretation chapter calls them the Interpretation Master Plan and Action Plan. You may find documents called Interpretation Plan, Master Interpretation Plan, Strategic Plan for Interpretation, or other names, that fill this role between general plan and interpretive service plan. The park may also have an Interpretive Prospectus that was developed along with the General Plan, but contains more interpretation detail.)

We will present some practical methods and strategies for carrying out effective program planning amid the reality of everyday work.

STEPS FOR PROGRAM PLANNING

Step #1 **Research** past planning, audience, resources, and management.

Step #2 **Identify** themes and messages.

Step #3 **Design** interpretive opportunities.

Step #4 **Develop** a program.

Step #5 **Monitor** and provide feedback.

4.1 RESEARCH

Interpreters must know the park and subject matter before they can prepare successful interpretive programs. The logical first step in planning is to conduct research. There are three main elements to be considered in the research phase of the planning process: the resource itself, the visitors and the management. Each element must be considered when choosing a program topic and designing a program.

We will start our discussion of research with the existing interpretation planning foundation. We will then review **what** each main element is—resources, visitors and management, followed by a discussion of **how** to conduct research on that element.

PREVIOUS PARK INTERPRETATION PLANNING

The very first step in planning your program is to identify what park interpretation planning has already been done, and build on that foundation. This serves three important purposes: your program will reinforce and tie in with other park interpretation, creating a more effective interpretive experience for the visitor; your program will help to fulfill previously identified park and system-wide interpretation goals; and (perhaps most important) **you will save substantial time rather than starting from scratch.**

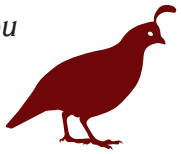
The interpretation planning that actually exists will vary from park to park. Many parks do not yet have interpretation master plans and action plans, since these were only recently defined for California State Parks. Some park units have out-of-date general plans or no general plan at all. Unclassified units do not yet have a statement/declaration of purpose because that is established in the classification and naming process.

Looking over previous research will save you lots of time when developing a new program.

In addition, State Parks' interpretation planning models have changed over time, meaning you will find varying content in different plans of the same name, and plans with different names. Some parks' general plans may only briefly cover interpretation and not provide full themes, goals, or guidelines, while other parks not only have general plans with comprehensive interpretation sections, but also have interpretation master plans and action plans that build on the general plan interpretation sections. General Development Plans from the 1950s and 1960s may be only a drawing or drawings showing planned facilities.

It is your job to find and assess the documents that guide the interpretive services in your park, and determine how much of a foundation you have to build on. What do you do if you find out there is little or no past interpretation planning for your park? You will need to do some additional work in audience, management and resource research, and in developing themes and messages. We will give you more details in the sections on each of these planning aspects.

It is your job to find and assess the documents that guide the interpretive services in your park , and to determine how much of a foundation you have to build on.



Locating Previous Interpretation Planning

The best advice for finding your park's interpretation planning documents used to be, "Look on the bookshelves in park, sector, and district offices; ask your District Interpretive Coordinator for copies of your park's general plan and any interpretive plans; and consult the park's Unit Data File." (For many years each park had a collection of documents on site called the Unit Data File that included all resource inventories, park planning, and other pertinent park documents.) This is still a reasonable place to start, especially if you don't have the best internet connection, but these days you may find a more complete collection in State Parks' Digital Documents Catalog and public website.

Digital Documents Catalog

In 2002, State Parks established a department archives for long-term storage and cataloging of department documents. In 2005 the Archives began developing the Digital Documents Catalog, a searchable collection of electronic documents that can be viewed or downloaded. **The Digital Documents Catalog is often called the UDF, because it functions as an electronic version of the old Unit Data Files for all of the State Park System.** Most of the documents from the archives have been scanned and added to the Digital Documents Catalog, and many more state parks-related documents have been added from other sources.

The Digital Documents Catalog is accessed via the State Parks Intranet site. You can search for documents specifically related to your park, and even narrow the search using key words and document types.

All current general plans are in the Digital Documents Catalog, and Archives has made a concerted effort to locate, scan, and upload all other park planning, including interpretive plans. Other State Parks employees have contributed resource inventories, historic structures reports, oral history transcripts, and many other types of useful research documents. Though its contents are continually growing, the Digital Documents Catalog still does not contain every State Parks document ever written, and contributions vary widely between park units. Therefore, it is still a good idea to check those bookshelves and file cabinets for hardcopy documents. If you find anything that is not already in the Digital Documents Catalog, contact the department archives to add it for others' use.

It is also important to remember that you may find documents in the Digital Documents Catalog that are interesting and valuable historically, but are not the most recent planning or most up-to-date research for your park. Evaluate the documents you find, and check on their current relevance with park planning and resource specialists.

Public Website

The California State Parks public website provides access to purpose statements and all current general plans on the Planning Division's pages. There is also information on general plans under development, which may include resource inventories and draft interpretation planning.

Also available on the Planning Division's pages are statewide planning documents. These will be useful for the management element of your research. They will give you information on the department's statewide goals and strategic initiatives that your program helps achieve.

The Interpretation and Education Division's pages on the public site do not provide access to past interpretive plans, but do include a number of manuals and workbooks that will help your planning effort.

RESOURCES

Why is it protected?

What is so special about this place?

Why is it important?

Natural, cultural and recreational resources are the most important of the three elements—resources, visitors, management—identified above as the basis for interpretation planning. Interpretation is, after all, a communication process designed to help visitors connect with the resources. But which resources? You should not choose just any resource that happens to be in the park or that interests you. Start by finding out your park's significant resources. The significant resources determine the park's **interpretive significance.**

> *Park Interpretive Significance: The special resources and stories represented at the park that have been identified as important topics for park interpretation.*
>
> *California State Parks Planning Handbook.* April 2010. p. 120.

You will be conducting resource research at two different times in the planning process. The first time you research resources, you will identify the significant resources in order to help you choose an appropriate program topic. Later on, after you have chosen the topic, you will conduct more in-depth resource research just on that topic. For convenience, we cover both resource research phases in this section, since you will be using some of the same sources for both.

Determining Interpretive Significance

The first place to look for interpretive significance is in the existing interpretive planning. The most recent general plans and Interpretation Master Plans include a formal Park Interpretive Significance statement that will tell you what topics have already been identified as the most important for park interpretation. In other general plans and long-range park interpretive plans, the themes or narrative about planned interpretation identify the significant resources to interpret.

If none of these planning documents exist, look to the park's Statement/ Declaration of Purpose. If none of these planning documents exist, you will identify significant resources by conducting more resource research, especially by perusing previously compiled resource inventories.

Extensive Resource Research

If you are unfamiliar with your park's resources, you cannot connect visitors to them. As

an interpreter, you must have the most current and accurate resource information to build credibility with the audience and to build their experience of the resources.

Since State Parks' mission is resource-based, department resource specialists have gathered at least some resource data for every state park unit, and many parks have decades of resource information already compiled. Resource inventories probably already exist for your park. The park's Interpretation Master Plan, general plan and naming and classification documentation should contain information from resource inventories, edited to include only the most significant information. Look for these, and more recent resource inventories, as resource specialists have compiled valuable observations and research in these files. They are excellent reference tools, especially if recently completed. The information in resource inventories will also help you determine interpretive significance, if you did not have sufficient data available in planning documents.

On the following pages we describe common categories of information that are examined when identifying significant park resources.

Natural Resources

Natural resources include much more than plants and animals. Any of the following may be significant natural resources in your park unit:.

- **Climate** *(rainfall, snowfall, temperature, etc.)*
- **Park Elevations**
- **Dominant Vegetation**
- **Primary Animals** *(terrestrial and aquatic; vertebrate and invertebrate)*
- **Rare, Threatened, Or Endangered Species**
- **Species of Special Concern**
- **Water Sources** in number and size *(lakes, rivers, creeks, ocean, etc.)*
- **Habitat Types**
- **Unique or Seasonal Features** *(flower blooms, grunion runs, whale or monarch migrations, etc.)*
- **Park Superlatives** *(the biggest, oldest, tallest, etc.)*
- **Historical Changes** in flora or fauna numbers, patterns, and distribution *(non-native species, decline of plants or animals, etc.)*
- **Natural Hazards** *(poison oak, rattlesnakes, etc.)*
- **Geologic Features** *(parent rock, fossil beds, etc.)*
- **Geological Development & History** *(erosion, soil horizons, rock outcroppings, etc.)*
- **Significant Geological Events** *(eruptions, earthquakes, etc.)*
- **Relationships Between Geological, Biological, and Cultural Elements**

Natural resources include much more than plants and animals, especially at parks like Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, where geological and paleontological resources are visible.

Cultural Resources

Cultural resource inventories identify the significant human activities that have taken place within park boundaries and the surrounding area. These resources may be as significant as the reason the park itself was protected or they may be events and activities that have been overlooked, even at frequently visited sites. Often parks protected for their natural resources have important human history, including the history of how and why the park was protected.

Cultural and natural resources are silent unless interpretation gives them a voice.

Department Operations Manual, Section 0902

Look for information on the following in plans and inventories when researching cultural resources:

- **Cultural Groups** associated with the park and region—past and present
- **Historic Events** and their significance
- **Historic Highlights** from relevant cultural groups
- **Significance of Park Resources** for individuals or groups in/near the park
- **Existing Historic Structures** *(cabins, forts, building ruins, Civilian Conservation Corps sites, etc.)*
- **Cultural Landscapes** *(bedrock mortars, period landscaping, traditional uses of an area)*
- **Significant Cultural Places** *(battlefields, sites of historic events, homestead sites, etc.)*

- **Transportation Corridors** *(trails, toll roads, skid roads, railroad rights-of-ways, bridges, historic highways)*
- **Archaeological Sites and Associated Artifacts**
- **Historical Collections** associated with the park and its people *(diaries, letters, photographs, furniture, furnishings, tools, equipment)*
- **Cultural Practices** *(daily life activities)*
- **Seasonal Celebrations and Events** *(brush dance, battle reenactments, harvest activities, etc.)*
- **Historic Changes In Makeup and Distribution of Population(s)**

Interpreting Native California Indians Policy

Formal consultation is required when presenting the story of Native California Indian people. This policy is detailed in the Native American Consultation Policy and Implementation Procedures in DOM 0400, Cultural Resources. In addition, any brochures, signs or other interpretive products should be developed in full consultation with your park's tribal liaisons. Find out from your park or district resource specialists the process and people you should consult with before presenting another group's culture and stories to the public.

Cultural resources include physical objects, structures and sites, and the history and people connected with them.

Recreational Resources

The use of recreational resources as a springboard for interpretation is becoming more popular all the time. Your park may have a recreational resource inventory you can use for research, and the general plan will include at least some recreation resource information. The more recent general plans include more information in this area; the list below was developed from the 2010 general plan specifications. Interpretation Master Plans also usually include recreation resource information. The Recreation Section of the Planning Division has helpful information on recreation trends and patterns available on the Planning Division web pages. Consider the following when researching significant recreational resources:

- **Recreational Facilities** *(trails, roads, picnic areas, campgrounds, visitor centers, beach improvements, etc.)*
- **Primary Visitor Activities** *(camping, sightseeing, hiking, bicycling, equestrian use, picnicking, observing wildlife, wildflower viewing, off-road vehicle recreation, surfing, climbing, fishing, swimming, etc., including information on how, when and where visitors can do these activities, and any rules or regulations)*
- **Primary Visitor Destinations** *(such as popular trails and roads, beaches, ponds, peaks, campgrounds, cultural resource sites)*
- **Park Visitor Information** *(numbers and demographics, seasonal use patterns)*
- **Visitor Experience** *(Beach crowded or not on most summer days? What kinds of views can be seen from the peaks? Will hikers experience solitude?)*
- **Wilderness Values and Experiences—**if state-designated wilderness or remote backcountry *(amount of wilderness and when designated, natural and scenic values, any specific rules, recreation information for wilderness as above.)*
- **Significant Cultural Places** *(battlefields, sites of historic events, homestead sites, etc.)*
- **Significant Natural Places** *(unusual, rare, or especially abundant natural resources, such as rare animals and plants, unusual geological formations, good birding or other wildlife viewing spots, or prolific wildflower displays.)*
- **Significant Scenic/Aesthetic Places** *(Places that, though not otherwise notable natural or cultural resources, attract visitors because of their special scenic or aesthetic value. Examples are viewpoints, picturesque lakes or ponds, and rugged rock formations.)*
- **Compatibility of Current Recreational Uses** *(Any history of compatibility issues with unit designation, park resources or other user groups?)*
- **Recreation Trends** *(Any emerging recreation activities which may be popular in the park in the future, with analysis of their compatibility with the park?)*

Recreational resources can inspire visitors to become stewards with a little help from an interpreter

METHODS FOR COLLECTING AND ORGANIZING RESOURCE INFORMATION

Information can be found through a number of sources. In fact, it is easy to become lost or overwhelmed in the process! Start by organizing your thoughts as a working outline, or develop an initial theme for your program. Figure out what you know and what you would like to know. What will visitors need to know in order to understand your overall message? This may include, but not be limited to:

- The identification of resources—plants, animals, historic sites, building styles, collections
- Factual points—names, dates, events
- Resource issues—natural processes, implication of human activities
- Cultural perspectives—multiple points of view, cultural practices

By narrowing your search around an initial theme, it will be easier to find the right information.

As in all the other research steps, before you delve into original primary research, review existing documents. Find out whether the information you need has already been collected, and if so, by whom. This will save time and may lead you to some surprising information.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- Current and former park staff
- Unit files and unit histories
- Resource specialists, e.g. historians, biologists, archeologists, recreation planners.
- Historic Structures Reports
- General Plans
- Interpretive Plans
- Furnishing Plans
- Department Resource Inventories
- California State Parks Photographic Archives
- Park and local libraries
- Local and regional museums, historical societies
- California State Library
- California State Archives
- Online Archives of California
- Books, research journals, newspapers, reliable web pages, etc.
- Scope of collections statements
- Teacher's guides
- Artifact collection reports
- City, county, or state property records
- California State Parks Archives and Digital Documents Catalog
- University libraries

When collecting resource information, remember there are basically two types of data– **primary** and **secondary.** **Primary sources** are materials that originated ***directly from the person or historical event in question.*** Typically, this primary information exists in the form of letters, personal diaries, interviews, speeches, personal narratives, eyewitness accounts, contemporaneous newspaper articles, and autobiographies. Legal documents such as birth certificates, death certificates, marriage certificates, or census records also qualify as primary sources. Historical artifacts and works of art can usually also be considered primary sources.

Secondary sources are materials whose purpose is ***to interpret and analyze primary sources.*** This can include text from persons during the period in question that were not eyewitnesses to the person or event as well as historians that have studied the same person or event hundreds of years later. Secondary sources can usually be found in the form of textbooks, histories, academic articles, reference materials and biographies.

It should also be noted that many secondary sources, especially books written by historians, often contain quotes, legal information, or photographs that are themselves

considered to be primary sources. Both primary and secondary sources may contain bias (and thus may contain inaccurate or exaggerated information), so it is up to the researcher to determine the validity of information in either case, usually by checking other sources to clarify or disprove inconsistencies. In gathering materials for an interpretive program, it is important to be as honest and as objective as possible. Do not assume the material you are examining is factual, tasteful, logical, well-designed, organized, up-to-date, unique, or typical of the period. Also remember, not everything has been recorded or saved.

When are Newspaper Articles Primary Sources?

Contemporaneous newspaper articles may or may not be good primary sources. (Consider the famous "Dewey Defeats Truman" headline in the *Chicago Tribune,* November 1948) In many cases, they should be considered secondary sources written near the time of the event, because they are written based on others' accounts. Newspaper reports may contain inaccuracies introduced by writers or editors who don't understand the topic or delete important information. Anyone ever interviewed for a newspaper knows that paraphrases and misquotes are common. But sometimes newspaper articles are the best contemporary account we have of an event. Eyewitness accounts are especially valuable.

Newspaper articles written long after the event, based on the reporter's research, definitely are secondary—not primary—sources. Consider the source: is it the *New York Times* or the *Weekly Local Shopper?* Writers' research skills vary, especially in small local papers where information is not carefully checked for accuracy.

As with other types of sources, always verify newspaper articles with two other sources if available.

You may need to gather some information for your program on site. Reviewing previous inventories and research efforts will help to promote familiarity and knowledge of the park's resources. Develop regular procedures for conducting your research. Be sure to keep track of authors, titles, dates, record books, including any details about the information and where it came from. Record the data you collect in a systematic manner. Be neat! You or someone else may have to refer to this information again.

Tips for Collecting Data On Site

- **Visit** the site at different times of the day, week, month and season.
- **Use** a camera to photograph and note special or unusual resources; photograph from several perspectives.
- **Record** and date all observations, and label photographs.
- **Note** conditions under which observations were made.
- **Take care** not to alter any historical or cultural resources.
- **Use** field guides to verify species, architectural details, etc.
- **Call** in an expert if identification is in question.
- **Indicate** any resources too fragile to withstand visitor use or traffic.

Tips for Conducting Research

- **Apply the rule of three**—Try to avoid using information in a program that cannot be verified by three different original sources. This reduces the potential for inaccuracy or misinformation in programs. However, sometimes there is only one source. In that case, if it's important to include the information, it is best to give the source of the unverified information when you refer to it. For example, you could say, "Joe Smith wrote to a friend in 1927 that 'Harry Jones is chopping down redwoods inside the park boundaries.'"
- **Use current sources**—Utilize the most up-to-date information. Science is changing and theories develop as scientists test and learn new facts. Current information and perspectives on historical events evolve. Be aware of the dates and perspectives of your sources.
- **Know the source**—Part of evaluating the credibility of information is to understand the source of the information. Is it from a reputable source? What makes it reliable? Perspectives may differ widely on issues, facts, science, and history and how they may impact the slant of the story.
- **Use the internet—*wisely.*** There is a wealth of valuable information on the internet. Many of the sources listed above can be found on the internet, and are usually more up-to-date on the web than print versions. The California State Parks public website is your best resource for general plans and statements of purpose. Libraries, newspapers, museums, universities and government agencies supply many documents only via the internet. Remember, just as with books and magazines, there are also many less reliable

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If you fail to plan, plan to fail

James Fazio and
Douglas Gilbert

▪ ▪ ▪

web pages where information is not peer-reviewed. Use the same rules you would with printed materials: use current sources, know the sources, verify facts with different original sources, and keep good notes.

- **Keep good notes**—Record the source of your information. Keep notes from your research in an organized, consistent and systematic manner. The information you gather will create usable data for present and future interpretation.

AUDIENCE

Who is coming?

Why are they coming?

What do they want when they get here?

Knowing your resource is one part of the interpretive equation. Knowing your audience is the second. Your park visitors are the primary force behind interpretation. Our programs must meet the needs of our constituents and visitors. There are many "audiences" to consider. The visiting public and the local community are two of our primary concerns.

First, in order to meet their needs and satisfy their expectations, we must know who is coming and why, as well as who is **not** coming and why (Veverka, 1994). We should find out if an audience segment is not participating because of a lack of relevant services, facilities, programs, or outreach (Knudson, Cable, and Beck, 1995). When we understand what motivates their visit, we can examine what they do in the park. With this information we can create and deliver more effective programs. Let us review the primary aspects of an audience, as well as recommended methods for conducting research about them.

School groups make up a majority of visitors to some sites, while others may attract completely different audiences

The visiting public: who is coming?

Analysis of our visiting public includes an examination of demographics, motivations, activity participation, and use levels. Each of these will be discussed, followed by a section on methods and sources for collecting visitor data.

Demographics

Demographic data can be very useful in program design. Consider how your program offerings would vary if your visiting public were primarily families with young children versus adult groups with no children. What if the majority of your users were elderly? The educational levels of your audience can affect the information included in your programs. A visitor's place of residence and previous site experience, as well as prior knowledge about the site, the resources within the park, and the history and culture of the area will affect how your program will be received and therefore how it should be planned. Cultural associations or ethnic background information can be helpful in deciding what interpretive facilities, programs, topics, and recreational opportunities should be offered.

HELPFUL DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

- **Gender**
- **Age**
- **Group structure** (family, adult groups with no children, single, etc.)
- **Place of residence** (local versus non-local, in-state versus out-of-state, foreign, etc.)
- **Education level**
- **Cultural or ethnic identification**
- **Previous site experience**

Motivations

As you know by now, to prepare programs that meet needs and make lasting connections for your visitors, you will need to understand their needs, expectations, and motives. By understanding what motivates visitors to come to your park and seek out interpretation, you will be able to choose strategies and methodologies to reach them. There has been a lot of research conducted on why visitors come to parks and natural areas. Consider how each of these motivations would impact your program design.

Table 4.1

Motivations for Visiting Parks

- **Curiosity—**Many visitors simply are curious about something that they have heard, seen, or read about. These visitors are primed to be "turned on" to the park and its resources. Usually their expectations are not specific and their needs are not well formed. They are more open than visitors with specific expectations.
- **Meaning—**Visitors often come seeking meaning. It comes in many forms. Social meaning includes paying homage to natural wonders or a cultural heritage site, gaining a sense of nationalism, or exploring family history and roots. Other meanings are highly individualized, arising from personal experiences, memories, special events, spiritual associations, or eras in one's lifetime. For example, a park might hold special memories because of a high school class visit.
- **Socialize/Belonging—**Most visitors come in groups, seeking social experiences that are rewarding, gratifying, and non-judgmental. Most visitors assume that others probably share similar values, beliefs, and attitudes. This makes the social experience a rewarding one. Programs with activities that allow visitors to talk to one another and share their experiences help fulfill this desire to socialize.
- **Escape—**Some visitors come as a means to escape everyday work, stress, stimuli, etc. They seek sensory input that is apart from their usual day. They desire natural or cultural stimuli that are slower, more predictable, or different from their usual surroundings.
- **See the Real Thing—**Many parks have attractions that draw visitors to "come see it for themselves." For example, many visitors who come to the redwoods are motivated to "see the trees for themselves." Similarly, historical and cultural sites often draw visitors who want to pay homage to a significant place, person, event, or thing.
- **Enjoyment—**Many visit just to have a good time. Interpretive programs should always strive to increase visitor enjoyment of their recreational experience.
- **Esteem/confidence—**Some visitors are motivated to "prove themselves" through a recreational experience. They like to match competency levels with challenges and seek situations most likely to provide a rewarding experience. Advertisements of these programs should indicate the level of difficulty for an activity. This is an essential component for visitors motivated to build esteem or confidence.

Source: Carolyn Widner Ward and Alan E. Wilkinson, *Conducting Meaningful Interpretation: A Field Guide for Success* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2006), 57.

USE AND ACTIVITY PATTERNS

As you begin to plan, you will want to understand what visitors do and where they go when they are in the park. This is relatively easy and useful data to collect. Park use levels at trails, parking lots, visitor centers, boat ramps, contact/entrance stations, etc. should **all** be included when gathering data. This information will show you times, location, density, and frequency of visits. **Park use level** information can be consolidated with **program use level** data to paint a fairly accurate picture of visitor activities in the park.

Information should also be gathered on how visitors use their time in the park. You can use this information to tailor programs to meet specific activity preferences. "Visitation use patterns allow you to see when your site and services are most in demand" (Veverka, 1994, p. 53). For example, if 50 percent of users ride bikes, offering an interpretive bike program would likely meet visitor needs. If your visitors are all out on the lake during the day, this information would suggest that some of the programs should be conducted on the lake.

Some visitors are motivated to visit parks so they can see the "real" thing. What is your potential audience looking for?

Methods for Collecting Visitor Data

Before you go to the effort to gather visitor data, check if any professional visitor studies have already been completed for your park. Visitor studies may have been conducted in the process of developing a General Plan, Interpretation Master Plan or interpretive services plan. Check on the Digital Documents File (or UDF) and with the District Interpretive Coordinator for any recent plans or other visitor studies. Also check the State Park Visitor Survey conducted by the Recreation Section of State Parks' Planning Division in 2007-2009, available on the intranet at **http://isearch.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=1143**. This professionally-conducted survey was focused on recreation, but is a good source of visitor demographics data for interpretation as well.

If no visitor studies are available, you can collect some of this data yourself. Just as with other research, you can collect either primary or secondary data on your park visitors. There are two **primary data collection methods:** observation and self-report. Observation

data involves watching visitor activities in a setting to determine use patterns and demographics. Simple observation will identify visitor-use types, but not necessarily their motivations. Self-report data collection asks visitors questions and their replies provide the information.

Observation

Observing visitors is informative. The challenge is to pick days and times randomly to observe the place, activity type, etc. Focus on one place, activity, or attraction at a time. Your goal is to identify use patterns over time. You must observe the phenomenon long enough and at a variety of times in order to gain accurate insights. In addition, you must be discreet. Visitors who think they are being watched may change their behavior.

Program attendance is easy to calculate and priceless when it comes to understanding program-specific patterns of use. Over time, you will see variations in attendance, depending on the time of day, day of the week, program topics, etc. This information is invaluable for modifying program offerings. Basic demographic data, combined with attendance levels, can paint a very useful picture of the target audience for each program.

CHECK-EM OUT!

- Count license plates on cars and note the place of origin (state, country, or province). *This can give some indication of how far visitors have traveled.*
- Collect information on the basic group structure of visitors coming to your programs. *This is most easily done in a parking lot before the group splits up to participate in different activities.*
- Conduct trailhead counts to determine the number and types of users.
- Observe visitor center use patterns, frequency and flow to identify which exhibits/signs are the most popular, how traffic flow can be improved, and when most visitors are in the center. *Perhaps a roving presence would be valuable for this data collection.*

Self-report

There are many types of self-report data collection methods. One of the most commonly used self-report data collection methods is surveys. All survey data is self-report data because we are asking the visitor to give us the information. While conducting a survey may seem simple—write some questions, ask some people to answer the questions, and then tally the results—there is much more to it than that. To gather reliable data that can be generalized to a larger group you have to know what questions you want answered,

ask them in the right way so the results aren't biased, survey a large group of people that statistically represents your desired audience, and scientifically analyze the results to minimize error. Properly writing, administering and analyzing surveys to produce solid results requires college-level social science survey design and statistics courses. A simple survey you put together yourself can provide some important leads on visitor informational wants and needs, but don't put too much weight on its conclusions.

Secondary data collection regarding visitor demographics, use, and motivations involves using information that has already been collected and compiled, but not specifically as a park visitor study. Information may already be available on your target audiences through local and state government statistics on family/household expenditures, life-style groups, chambers of commerce, and specialized publications on marketing, which provide information on interests and attitudes of different groups. Although perhaps not as accurate a reflection of users as primary data, secondary data sources may provide good information and be the first choice for interpreters. **The main reason to use secondary data is the ease of acquiring it. It is quicker, cheaper, and requires less skill and expertise to collect than primary data.** Secondary data on the demographics of the area near your park will also provide you with information on who is *not* visiting the park or participating in interpretive programs. Using secondary data is often the practical option for many interpreters.

Another helpful technique

Your first trip—Knudson, Cable, and Beck (1995) recommend using **your** first trip to the park to begin to understand the visitor. This only works in the first week or so on the job, so do not miss the opportunity. When you first arrive on site keep notes.

- What do you notice first?
- What attracts your attention?
- What needs do you have as you enter the park? *e.g., restroom, campsite, orientation/assistance*
- What, if any, are your immediate safety concerns?
- What features in the park do you want to explore first?

Many of the things that you noticed or were of concern to you will also be in the forefront of visitors' minds.

THE LOCAL COMMUNITY: WHO IS NOT COMING?

As you assess local public needs for programs and services, it is also important to ask yourself, "Who is *not* coming?" We want to be sure that participation is not limited because of the lack of appropriate facilities, programs, or services. Trying to assess who is not coming is a very difficult task. The only practical way to answer this question is through the use of secondary data collection about the local general public. This can also be asked of potential visitors from outside the area.

There are two benefits for conducting this type of research. First, by using census data and local (county, city) statistics about the population, you can determine whether park visitor demographics match community demographics. This will give you an idea of groups that may not be using park facilities.

The second key benefit is to help you understand the characteristics of your local community. Are there needs that your park's programs are not addressing? You can then target interpretation in the form of school programs, outreach events, and other special off-site activities to people who may not be visiting the park.

Methods for collecting local community data

The methods for collecting this type of data are similar to those previously mentioned. When you conduct a primary data collection survey of the local public, include items such as: 1) current activity participation levels and types; 2) demographic data; 3) needs and skill level information; 4) attitudes, beliefs, and values regarding relevant issues; and 5) management preferences, opinions, and issues. Although you may not have the time or skill necessary to conduct your own public survey, you can easily obtain much of this information through data sources such as the Federal census, almanacs, and social indicator data. Another extremely good source of demographic data is the California Department of Finance's (DOF) Demographic Research Unit.

Community outreach includes school visits, fairs, and other off-site lectures and events.

The best ways to access the US Census Bureau and DOF demographic data are via their websites:

http://www.dof.ca.gov/research/demographic/

http://www.census.gov/

MANAGEMENT

Management must be included in the research phase of the planning process. To create interpretive programs that support management goals and objectives, you must know and understand them. In addition, a review of the park's current methods for communication, topics covered, facilities, trails, and locations used for programming is essential. Considering these elements will help to ensure the appropriate use of resources in concert with the overall mission of the agency.

The organizational framework

Knowing the purpose and guiding framework of the organization will determine the direction of the interpretive services provided by the park. An organization's framework is made up of mission, vision, goals and objectives statements.

The legal charter of California State Parks, as required by the Public Resources Code and the California Code of Regulations among others, calls for it to:

> *…administer, protect, provide for recreational opportunity, and develop the State Park System; to interpret the values of the State Park System to the public; to operate the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Program; to administer the California Historical Resources Protection Program; and to administer federal and state grants and bond funds to local agencies.*

A mission statement was developed from the original legislation that created our Department.

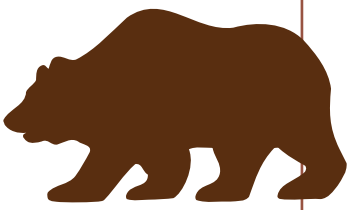
Mission

The mission of California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration, and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

The mission of the organization states the values that express the enduring ideals, or beliefs, shared by State Parks employees. A vision is also part of the organizational structure, guiding programs within parks. A vision outlines future goals and aspirations. Our organization also has a vision statement:

Vision

California State Parks will be the recognized leader in the park and recreation field—skilled stewards of resources, technologically wise, and relevant to all Californians.



An organizational framework guides the California State Park System. Within this structure, each individual park may also have its own goals and objectives that fall within the overall mission of the Department. Effective interpretive programs understand and convey the mission and vision. Actual written organizational frameworks vary from park to park.

Table 4.2

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES
The Strategic Initiatives are the implementation strategy for our Vision: • Increase diversity. • Increase leadership in parks and recreation. • Focus on cultural resources. • Utilize technology. • Increase leadership in natural resource management. • Develop a new image. • Create an urban connection. • Expand recreational opportunities.

Adapted from *The Seventh Generation: The Strategic Vision of California State Parks*, 2001.

CURRENT PROGRAM OFFERINGS

After you understand the guiding framework for interpretation, examine the current status of interpretive services. Before creating a new program, ask, what has been done? What is offered, when, where, and for whom? A recently completed general plan or interpretive master plan will be the best source of this information, and will include recommendations on what types of programs should be offered in the future. Your District Interpretive Coordinator can also provide information.

You may have to gather some data on current and past programming yourself. If you are choosing the type of program to present, where, when, and to whom, examine:

- What types of programs are being offered? (Audiovisual, talk, hike, tour, etc.)
- What times of day or evening are they offered?
- Where are they held?
- Who is the target audience? (Children, adults, birders, school groups, seniors, etc.)
- How many and what kind of children's programs?
- What topics are being addressed?
- What park goals and objectives are addressed?

- How well attended are the different programs?
- How well received were they?

These will then guide the choices for programs to be offered in the future.

Some of these elements may have already been decided for you, but others must still be considered for a well-planned program. Even if your supervisor has tasked you with developing a new campfire program for families, leaving little flexibility in program type, audience, and time, you still need to look at what media have been used in campfire programs in the past, what topics and themes are already regularly addressed, and what media and methods audiences most appreciated.

Facilities, Equipment, Materials, and Supplies

Once you know your topic and audience, and you've an idea of what kinds of programs are popular and what kind might be missing, take a look around at the facilities, equipment, materials, and supplies available to you. Is there a visitor center? What about an amphitheater? How many people does it seat? Is there a facility available to show digital images or slides? What type of interpretive equipment and supplies do you have? Do you have a facility to conduct programs protected from inclement weather? These and other questions are critical for determining what types of programs you can offer and where. Together they form the infrastructure supporting interpretation. For example, developing an interpretive slide program would not be an appropriate approach if there was no facility in which to show slides or if there was no equipment available to use for the program.

Amphitheaters, historic buildings, and covered picnic shelters are facilities that support interpretive programming.

INVENTORYING TOOLS OF THE TRADE

- **Facilities—**Physical structures in the park *(e.g., campfire center, visitor center, trails, historic buildings, classrooms)*
- **Equipment—**Typically things that can be used over and over again *(e.g. digital projector, screen, camera, computer, video/DVD player, sound equipment)*
- **Materials—**Not as durable as equipment, but not as quickly consumed as supplies *(e.g. field guides, props, slides, period attire, specimens)*
- **Supplies—**Things that can be consumed *(e.g. glue, tape, batteries)*

You will also need to know the financial resources available to supplement or replace existing equipment and supplies. What is your park's interpretive budget? Plan ahead for needs. At the end of the fiscal year if funds become available, do you have a list of your needs ready? Is there an interpretive cooperating association working within your park? These nonprofit associations can assist interpreters by acquiring needed equipment, materials, and supplies.

It's easy to come up with new ideas; the hard part is letting go of what worked for you two years ago, but will soon be out-of-date.

John Veverka

Methods for Collecting Management Data

Start collecting management information by seeking data from existing documents, including the park's general plan and interpretation planning that you gathered earlier, park resource management plans, and reports on resource or other park issues. Ask district resource specialists if there are significant resource issues that can be addressed through interpretation, such as attracting corvids by feeding wildlife, or damaging trails by cutting corners. Identify statewide goals and objectives in statewide planning documents such as the *State Park System Plan* and *The Seventh Generation* (available on the Planning Division's web pages). Find out more by talking with your District Interpretive Coordinator or the Interpretation and Education Division staff. They can help you identify additional statewide and regional goals and objectives.

Table 4.3

SOURCES OF MANAGEMENT DATA
• Department mission statement • Organizational framework • *The Seventh Generation* strategic initiatives • Park-specific legislation (if any) • Naming and Classification documents • Statement/Declaration of Purpose • General plan and amendments • Interpretation Master Plan/Action Plan/ Interpretive Prospectus/other interpretation plans • Scope of collections statement • Resource management plans and reports • CAMP Interpretation Data • RAPPORT evaluations

▪ ▪ ▪

Interpretation is aimed at "meaning making"
not merely entertaining fact giving.

Sam Ham

▪ ▪ ▪

4.2 IDENTIFYING TOPICS, THEMES AND MESSAGES

Who—is or is not coming to your park?

What—is special about the resource?

Why—is the resource important?

What—are the management objectives?

What—should the visitor remember about the resource?

Why—should the visitor care about the resource?

Thinking about all the information you've gathered...what stories should you tell? After initial research is completed, the next step in the planning process is to create the message you want to deliver to the public. Your research should have revealed what is special about the resource, why it was protected, what the management objectives are, topics and themes identified for the resource, and who is or is not coming. This information provides the structure for creating the messages that should be delivered and how they should be targeted.

Once you have completed the research you will be ready to develop an interpretive theme. A theme will have a complete sentence that states the overall message for your program. More information on theme development will be discussed in the next chapter. Each of you will arrive at different objectives and themes, even if you are addressing the same goal, because you will be fitting your message to your own style and interests, and to those of your particular audience.

4.3 DESIGNING INTERPRETIVE OPPORTUNITIES

How should messages be provided to the public?

How can programs best meet park goals and objectives?

In the next phase of the program planning process you'll determine the best way to deliver your interpretive message. What is the best way to convey the message to your target audiences while meeting the overall goals and objectives of the park? Below is an example that shows how an interpretive opportunity can be created to meet a management goal, using the planning steps discussed thus far.

Putting it All Together: Creating an Interpretive Opportunity

Step 1—Research

Natural data—Tide pool animals were identified and populations calculated and reviewed for resistance and resilience to handling by visitors. It was found that sea anemone numbers declined drastically during heavy visitor use months.
Visitor data—Surveys revealed that most visitors to the park come to see and experience the tide pools. Only 14 percent of the visitors attended formal tide pool interpretive programs.
Management data—The tide pool resources were one of the primary reasons the park was protected. One of the general plan natural resource goals is to reduce visitor impacts to the tide pools. Two formal programs per week are conducted on tide pools, and this is when resource protection messages are currently given.

Step 2—Themes and Messages

One of the primary themes in the park's general plan is "tide pools are fragile resources that need to be protected." Given the research that indicates a resource management problem—the sea anemones are disappearing—the park's Interpretation Master Plan and Interpretation Action Plan identify interpretation reinforcing this theme as a park priority.

Step 3—Interpretive Opportunity

Given the low attendance at the current tide pool programs and the continued damage to the resource, the Interpretation Master Plan identifies the need for a new interpretive opportunity. One of the recommendations is a roving interpretation presence on site at the tide pools during peak use hours and days (see *Module 10—Roving*). The roving program's goal will be to help visitors appreciate tide pools and understand their fragile nature, so they are inspired to protect them.

PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The previous example demonstrates how the steps of the process begin to fit together. Once program goals are outlined, it is time to develop objectives and identify target audiences. In the previous example, the program's goal is to protect the fragile tide pools from visitor abuse. Just as with park objectives, you'll need to specifically outline how program objectives will be accomplished.

Objectives for interpretive programs may fall into three categories: **behavioral, cognitive,** and **affective. Thinking back to *Module 2—Purpose and Value,* interpretive programs should influence behavior (behavioral objectives), increase knowledge levels (cognitive objectives), or reach emotions (affective objectives).** Park needs and goals often determine the types of objectives programs target. An interpretive program can target all three objectives simultaneously. Let us take a look at an example:

Goal: Protect the park's tide pools

- **Behavioral objective—***In June 2003, resource inventories conducted during a week with roving interpretive programs will show a 50 percent reduction in sea anemones dislodged from the tide pools when compared to a week without a roving on-site presence.*
- **Cognitive objectives—***In June 2003, when exiting the site, 50 percent of randomly surveyed visitors exposed to on-site roving will be able to correctly identify two ways to protect tide pool resources.*
- **Affective objective—**I*n June 2003, 50 percent of visitors exposed to on site roving park tide pool programs will indicate positive support for tide pool protection.*

WRITING OBJECTIVES: A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH

When you write your objective, you'll want to make it specific, time limited, measurable, and have clearly stated standards for achievement. If an objective is not measurable, it ends up being very similar to a goal. It needs to be a step you're taking to reach the goal. If it is not quantifiable, you'll never know if you've reached your goal.

The acronym **WAMS** will assist in writing good measurable objectives. It stands for **When, Audience, Method,** and **Standard.** When will the evaluation take place? Who is the target audience? What method will be used to evaluate success? And what is the standard to measure success or failure? Using the WAMS method prevents writing objectives that are not measurable.

Writing Program Objectives — WAMS

Identified Message

The remaining coastal redwoods should be protected and preserved.

Program Goal

Create a program that increases awareness of and support for the preservation of the redwoods.

Program Objectives

Objective #1: *During a fun quiz on the hike back from an interpretive walk, at least 50 percent of visitors will be able to identify two reasons why redwoods should be protected.*

When = during the hike back
Audience = walk participants
Method = a quiz
Standard = 50 percent will identify two reasons why redwoods should be protected

Objective #2: *When offered a Save the Redwoods League membership application at the end of the talk, at least 10 percent of visitors will take one.*

When = end of the talk
Audience = walk participants
Method = offer a membership form
Standard = 10 percent will take one

TARGET AUDIENCES

Remember when you gathered all that information about your park users and non-users? This is where you can put it to work. For example, you should know from your research the kind of audiences that typically attend various programs, the characteristics of the local population, and what populations are not currently being addressed through program offerings. Use this information to identify target audiences for your future programs. Although we do not often limit programs to certain audience types, we can do some things to promote participation by certain groups. For example, the time of day programs are offered may impact whether or not local families would be able to participate.

REACHING YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

- Where programs are advertised
- How programs are advertised
- When programs are offered
- Where programs are conducted
- Program topics
- Program length
- Type of program

Although you'll work to gain the interest of your target audience, it is hard to predict who will attend. Be sure that your program is flexible enough to be modified at the last minute to accommodate whoever shows up.

There are some **special** audiences to consider when designing programs. These audiences introduce special concerns, needs, and issues. Teenagers, children, elderly, and people with disabilities are among some of the groups of special concern when program planning. Below is an introduction to these groups and what might make members of them special in an interpretive setting. Refer to the state park's training manual *All Visitors Welcome* for in-depth information that will help you better meet the needs of these visitors. *All Visitors Welcome* (Porter, 1994, rev. 2011)

Teenagers

Teenagers are a special group because of their emotional, cognitive, and social developmental stage (Grinder and McCoy, 1985; Knudson, et al., 1995). Many teens are concerned about how their peers perceive them and may be very self-conscious. In general, they do not like to be singled out for attention and when included in a general audience, they may be reluctant to participate. Connecting with teenagers is very important because they are in a formative cognitive developmental stage. It is in this stage that basic belief systems can be influenced and molded through the presentation of information.

Address teenagers as adults rather than children. Ask them their opinions, feelings and thoughts about things. Many teenagers are still treated as children by their primary caregivers, so interpretive programs that enable teenagers to express adult thoughts in an adult setting will be well received. Avoid lecture-like material. Instead, provide opportunities for open-ended discussion and problem-solving tasks. You might create a separate program just for teens; it is easier for them to feel like adults when not surrounded by their parents or guardians.

Seniors

The population of recreational participants is aging. Currently about 25 percent of Americans are over the age of 55 and 13.8 percent are over the age of 65 (US Census Bureau, 2009). With the baby-boom population aging and the average life-span increasing, it is expected that by 2025 the median age in the United States will be 41. Projected trends in recreation, such as a decrease in backpacking and an increase in bird watching, reflect this population shift in age (Dwyer, 1993).

Census data implies that the number of seniors visiting parks will continue to increase. What can we do to welcome them?

The older adult population is more sophisticated, typically has more free time, and is more physically fit than in years past. This population is generally influential, votes, and is economically able to participate in recreation. Three primary concerns should be addressed when designing programs for older adults: mobility, hearing, and vision. Geiger and Ellis (1991) indicated that the three most common ailments for seniors are arthritis, hearing loss, and visual impairment.

Generally, interpretive programs targeted for elderly populations should be conducted as short walks on flat or gently sloping trails or as talks with no walking. Programs should take into account the years of experience of the participants and provide opportunities for them to contribute to the program. Socializing opportunities are important for these visitors. Interpreters must speak loudly (but do not shout) and clearly. Use objects, large graphics, and visual aids to illustrate your point. Avoid asking the audience to read small print. Be sure you know what assistive listening devices are available in your park, and always announce to visitors the opportunities to use such devices.

Children

Children pose unique challenges and opportunities for programming as well. Junior Ranger and Junior Lifeguard programs provide special interpretive opportunities in many parks. We will review children's interpretation in detail in *Module 9-Kids*

In keeping with the above discussion of special groups, what makes children a unique population for interpretive programming is their level of cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development. As Tilden said in his sixth principle of interpretation, "Interpretation addressed to children (say up to the age of twelve) should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best it will require a separate program" (Tilden, 1967, p. 47). Children have short attention spans, a great deal of energy, and an enormous potential for absorbing facts and information.

Incorporate as many of the senses as possible when developing programs for children. Programs should be hands-on, involve tangible objects, and stay centered around the physical resource. Programs should incorporate play, fun, and imagination. Analogies, stories, games, role-playing, and questions are all helpful strategies to use with children. The main goal is to engage them in the topic of the program.

People with Disabilities

As of the 2000 census, almost 50 million Americans have some sort of disability. In California that figure is roughly 6 million. These individuals are members of the public we serve in California State Parks, and have the right to be able to access our programs and services. **In 1990 the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed.** This legislation legally requires leisure services providers to facilitate and support the full participation of individuals with disabilities in all leisure programs. ADA impacts programming in California State Parks in various ways. For example, ADA requires that a sign language or oral interpreter be hired any time one is requested **in advance** by a visitor. **California State Parks may not refuse to allow a person to participate in a service, program, or**

activity simply because that individual has a disability. In your role as an interpreter, you should always be prepared to accommodate people with disabilities.

One of the principles of ADA is that "special" programs are not the desired solution. In fact, programs should be made to be as inclusive as possible. "Separate but equal" is **not** the intent of the ADA. *All Visitors Welcome* (Porter, 1994, rev. 2011) provides several suggestions for conducting programs for those with disabilities, including changing as little as possible from the original program, involving the person with a disability in the modification process, and not making assumptions regarding preferences for modifications.

In the end, maintaining the dignity and rights of the individual should always be the primary concern. Be sure to know the facilities, equipment and services that are available in your park to assist those with disabilities. When developing program publicity make sure to include information about auxiliary aids and services available to people with disabilities.

MONITORING AND FEEDBACK

Was the program inclusive?

Were the programs successful in meeting goals and objectives?

What can we do better?

The final stage of program planning is monitoring and feedback. This brings the process back full circle to the research phase. Although we dedicate *Module 12-Evaluation* to discussing monitoring and evaluation, we mention it here because evaluation is an integral part of the program-planning process.

Monitoring is essentially asking whether or not you have met the program objectives. Monitoring and feedback should help determine if the programs you are offering are meeting your goals and objectives and help you identify changes for the future. This data is then used as part of the research for the next cycle of programming. Monitoring and feedback techniques and strategies should be based on the program content, goals and objectives, budgets, expertise, target audiences, media used, and the time frame available for feedback

WHAT'S AHEAD?

In the next chapter you will apply your understanding of the basics of interpretation and interpretive planning to developing an interpretive program. You now have the tools needed to create a program that will impact your visitor's point of view in a way that is consistent with our department's goals.

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Module 4

PLANNING

SELF ASSESSMENT

Answer each question in the section below before reviewing the material in *Module 4—Planning*. The answers are not provided. Check your answers with your colleagues and as you read *Module 4—Planning*. Items from the self assessment may be reviewed and discussed in class.

1) What are the basic steps of the program planning process?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2) What are the three primary elements that must be considered in the planning process?

1. _____
_____

2. _____
_____

3. _____
_____

3) What is a unit data file?

_____
_____
_____
_____

4) What is the difference between the UDF and the Digital Documents Catalog?

_____
_____
_____
_____

5) Which of the following are primary sources for historical research?

a) Personal observations

b) Reports from park staff

c) Unit files

d) Interpretive prospectus

6) What is the "rule of three" when conducting research?

a) Read each source at least three times

b) Find the information repeated in at least three different places

c) Look three times for information

d) Use three different sources for the information

7) When researching the public, it is important to know who is not coming to your park.

a) True

b) False

8) Which of the following is considered a motivating factor for people visiting parks?

a) Cheap vacation

b) Escape or curiosity

c) Location

d) Ease of transportation

9) Which of the following is a good reason to use secondary data regarding visitors as opposed to primary data?

a) Provides greater detail

b) More current

c) Quicker and easier to collect

d) More relevant

10) Specific, measurable statements that guide programs are called:

a) Goals

b) Objectives

c) Vision

d) Core program areas

11) When designing interpretive opportunities for the public, which of the following should <u>not</u> be a primary driving force?

a) Target audience

b) Program and park goals and objectives

c) Themes and messages

d) Personal content knowledge

12) The population of recreational participants is getting younger.

a) True

b) False

13) In California, approximately_____ people have a disability.

a) 500,000

b) 1 million

c) 3 million

d) 6 million

14) Interpretive programs should be created for visitors with disabilities. (Explain your answer.)

a) True

b) False

_____
_____
_____
_____

15) Evaluation is a critical phase of the planning process. (Explain your answer.)

a) True

b) False

_____
_____
_____
_____

16) What are three possible types of objectives for interpretive programs?

1. _____
_____

2. _____
_____

3. _____
_____

Now that you have completed the self assessment questions, review the material in *Module 4—Planning* to confirm your answers. After reading the module, move on to the workbook learning activities, which will assist you in developing your skills.

WORKBOOK LEARNING ACTIVITIES

To help you review and apply the material covered in *Module 4—Planning*, a selection of review questions and/or activities is provided. Again, no answers are included. Use the material from the module, outside sources, and your colleagues to help you complete the activities and answer the questions. There may be more than one right answer. Use the questions and activities to generate discussion about the material. Be prepared to discuss, perform, or demonstrate your answers in class.

1) What are some practical things you can do the first week on the job to become acquainted with the three primary elements of the research phase of the planning process: the resource itself, the visitors, and the management?

Resource:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Visitors:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Management:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2) Is a primary or a secondary research source more accurate? Why?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

3) Write two cognitive objectives for a program targeted at local school children with a goal of educating them about the importance of park protection.

1. _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Take it to YOUR Park

Answer each question with the information specific to your park. You will have to conduct some research in order to answer each question. Use the answers as a guide for beginning your career in California State Parks.

PLANNING

Park name: _____

We learned in this module that research is one of the most important aspects of the planning process. Unfortunately, there is often little time to conduct meaningful research. Take time as your training progresses to fill in as much of the following as possible. This is only a start to discovering the park's resources, visitors' characteristics and needs, and management's needs, goals, and objectives.

Answer each question about your park and indicate the source where you found the data.

1) **Natural Resources**

What is the primary type of habitat found at your park? If there is more than one, list them all.

_____
_____
_____

Name any invasive plant species that threaten your park.

_____
_____
_____

Describe the wildlife that makes your park unique.

_____
_____
_____

What is the most serious or critical animal or plant management problem?

_____
_____
_____

Name the natural resource feature most likely to draw visitors to your park. Describe it.

_____
_____

What are the major changes in plant and animal life in the last 100 years?

_____
_____
_____

What else makes the natural resources of your park significant or an important part of California's biodiversity?

_____
_____
_____

Which plant and which animal pose the most danger for humans?

_____
_____
_____

What are the key pieces of literature written about the flora and fauna of your park?

_____
_____
_____

2) **Cultural Resources**

What are the significant cultural or historic events that took place in or near your park?

_____
_____
_____
_____

List any significant cultural or historic places or features.

_____
_____
_____
_____

List the existing historic structures in the park.

_____
_____
_____
_____

How have the cultural groups in and around your park changed in the past 100 years?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Are there any living relatives or descendants of the historic cultures? List them.

_____
_____
_____
_____

List key resources written about the local culture or history of your park.

_____
_____
_____
_____

3) **Recreational Resources**

What are the most popular forms of recreation at your park?

_____
_____
_____
_____

What do visitors need to know for safe recreation in the park?

_____
_____
_____
_____

What do visitors need to know to enjoy their recreation and not negatively impact park resources?

_____
_____
_____
_____

4) **Management**

What are the major guiding documents for interpretation in your park? When were they written?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Are there existing goals and objectives for interpretation in your park? Briefly summarize them.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What types of programs are offered to the public?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What facilities in the park can be used to support interpretive efforts?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Create a list of the current interpretive equipment in the park.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What primary interpretive themes and messages are currently delivered in the park?

_____
_____
_____
_____

5) **Visitors**

What types of information are available regarding visitors to your park?

_____
_____
_____
_____

How was the information collected?

_____
_____
_____
_____

When was the information collected?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Indicate the general demographic characteristics of visitors to your park (gender, age, place of residence [local vs. non local], education level, cultural or ethnicity identification, etc.).

_____
_____
_____
_____

Is there any data regarding attendance levels for specific programs? What does it reveal?

_____
_____
_____
_____

What are the demographics of the local population in the area around your park? (Local reports and data from the Chamber of Commerce, census data, etc., can help you answer this.)

_____
_____
_____
_____