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***An Interpretive Planning Guide
for Communities
Along Scenic Byways***

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PREFACE

USING THIS MANUAL

Interpretation is quickly becoming an important component of many community and regional tourism programs since it not only promotes the resources of an area to visitors, but also encourages them to explore and stay longer. This manual has been designed for regional, community, and organization leaders who want to plan and develop an interpretive program.

Like any aspect of tourism planning, facility, access, visitor, and budgetary factors need to be considered for interpretive program planning. The text and worksheets in Chapter III will guide you through inventorying your local resources, determining how to interpret them, and moving forward with implementing your development plans. The case studies in Chapter IV provide imaginary and actual examples of interpretive programs that have been developed.

This manual has been published in notebook form so that the worksheets in Chapter III can be easily removed for photocopying and distribution to committee members. Make photocopies of these worksheets for your preliminary planning purposes. When completed, these worksheets can serve as your interpretive development plan. Because this is a planning manual and not an interpretive training manual, you will need the assistance of a trained interpreter for implementing and designing your plans.

Some definitions...

Access - The means by which visitors physically enter an attraction or site.

Activity - An action or pastime that people participate in. In this manual, "activity" mainly refers to tourism- or recreation-related pastimes.

Attraction - A specific site, building, structure, event, or other occurrence that can be physically entered, attended, or seen. Example: museum, aquarium, park, monument, festival.

Resource - An asset, attribute, or source of information that is associated with an entire community, region, or other area. Although information about a resource can be communicated to visitors at specific attractions or sites, these attractions or sites usually comprise only a part of the entire resource. EXAMPLE: community history, northern deciduous forest, agriculture industry.

Scenic byway - A road or highway system that connects various communities and natural, historic, and cultural attractions and resources. In some states, scenic byways may also include waterways used by motorized boats (e.g., canal systems).

Site - A specific location.

Site-specific interpretation - Interpreting information to visitors at a specific attraction or site.

Theme - The concept, message, or idea that is communicated to visitors through an interpretive program.

CHAPTER 1

THE BASICS OF INTERPRETATION

WHAT IS INTERPRETATION?

Interpretation is explaining and designing information about local resources for visitors in an entertaining and educational way. Historic, natural, cultural, artistic, recreational, and industrial resources and attractions can all be effectively interpreted. Interpretation can be accomplished through the use of signs, exhibits, publications, staff members (i.e., interpreters), tape recordings, and audio-visual presentations. The method used depends on the type of visitor (e.g., family groups, senior citizens, sports enthusiasts), the information that needs to be communicated to them, and the location of attractions and resources.

WHY YOU SHOULD DEVELOP AN INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM

The tourism industry today often focuses on promotion — advertising tourism facilities and attractions to attract visitors. Unfortunately, once visitors arrive in an area they often find it difficult to learn more about local attractions and resources. Through interpretive techniques, communities and regions can provide information about local attractions and resources to visitors and residents.

Why is this important? Providing visitors with entertaining, educational information about the area they are visiting gives them a reason to stay longer. As the stays of visitors are lengthened, more tourism dollars pour into your community. Because word-of-mouth is the most effective form of advertising, the experiences visitors have while in your area can make or break your tourism program.

The impacts of interpretive programs on area residents are equally as important. Because of the educational nature of interpretive facilities and publications, it is very common for them to be extensively used by school groups and other not-for-profit institutions and organizations. Educating residents about community projects and resources can serve to boost public support of community goals and expand residents' knowledge of the local resources that they see daily and often know little about.

Interpretive facilities and publications are usually designed with at least one of four purposes in mind. These are:

1. **To increase visitors' awareness about a resource or attraction.** Most communities abound with local legends, history, and unique landmarks and sites. However, most of these facts remain in the minds of local residents and are not made available to visitors. Through interpretive exhibits, signs, publications, and other media, these fascinating bits of information can be used to enhance the visits of people from outside the area as well. Communicating this information not only increases visitors' awareness of what your community or organization has to offer, but gives visitors an idea of what life in your community is actually like. Examples of this purpose are given throughout the case studies in Chapter IV.
2. **To alter the behavior patterns of visitors and residents.** When creating a change in the behavior patterns of visitors is important, either for management or recreational purposes,



The maritime history of Sodus Point, NY, is interpreted through exhibits at the Sodus Point Lighthouse Museum (above). This museum is run by the Sodus Bay Historical Society.

interpretation can help. Instead of just telling visitors to do or not do something, interpretive techniques will explain why they should or shouldn't. For instance, a trail at a local park may receive so much use that it is becoming eroded. Although a new trail has been established to direct visitors away from the eroded section, visitors are still using the original trail. An interpretive sign posted at the entrance to the old trail stating "Overuse of this trail has caused erosion — help nature rebuild it by using our new trail instead," would help alleviate this problem. A sign stating "Stay off the trail" would only make visitors more curious about what's on the trail. Examples of this purpose are given in Chapter IV, "Interpreting a community on a canal or river corridor" and "Interpreting a loop trail" (pages 69 and 75, respectively).

3. **To explain community, organization, or agency goals and objectives to visitors and residents.** When communities and organizations educate people about their goals and objectives, they not only increase visitors' and residents' awareness of their purposes but foster community support of them. Often, community support is the deciding factor in the success of a program or organization. An example of this purpose is given in Chapter IV, "Interpreting a loop trail" (page 75).
4. **To orient visitors to an area.** Directing visitors to different attractions and resources and educating them about what they can expect to find at each is important to promoting an area. It helps visitors identify which attractions and resources they are interested in seeing and simplifies their travel routes during their visits. Examples of this purpose are given throughout Chapter IV.

PLANNING ON A REGIONAL BASIS

"There is a need for better coordination between agencies in planning the visitor experience on a regional basis rather than agencies continuing to 'do their own thing' in a somewhat isolated vacuum" (Veverka & Capelle, 1988).

Regions are areas with similar geographic features, resources, or cultures, or areas contained within the same governmental boundary (e.g., counties). Regional planning should always be considered when developing an interpretive program because it provides a comprehensive base for planning efforts. When facilities and sites are planned for separately in communities or regions, visitors do not leave with a clear understanding of how the area's resources and attractions are connected. When this occurs, visitors are less apt to return for another visit or tell others about the area — two factors that could seriously hurt the success of a tourism program.

Planning on a regional basis involves working with organizations, agencies, and individuals in the area who are interested in tourism and interpretation planning and development. Programs planned regionally usually have broad themes, enabling the program to expand as needed in the future. Community planning efforts are included within the overall regional plan as individual components of it. This helps each community create a unique interpretive program that is still related to the overall program of the region.

INTERPRETING A THEME

A theme is the message or concept that you want to convey to visitors. A topic is the subject matter that you use to communicate this theme to visitors.

When designed and planned for properly, interpretation relays a theme or message to visitors. The theme of an interpretive program is the concept, idea, or message that you want visitors take away with them. While one major theme connects each component (e.g., tour, sign, exhibit, publication) of an interpretive program, each individual component has its own "subtheme." Each subtheme communicates only a portion of the program theme. Interpreting all of the subthemes together communicates the entire program theme.

Both themes and subthemes are communicated to visitors by interpreting specific topics. While themes and subthemes relay a message or concept, topics relay specific subject matter or information related to the theme. For example, the theme of a community's interpretive sign program might be "local industries have a great impact on the economy of this area." One of the signs within the program might have the subtheme "hydropower is an important source of electricity for our community." This subtheme would be communicated to visitors through the following topics: "the history of hydropower," "how hydropower works," and "local hydropower facilities." Figure 1 shows how themes, subthemes, and topics are related.

To effectively communicate themes, interpretation should incorporate three major learning components: educational, emotional, and behavioral. The educational component is the information that you want people to learn from your interpretive program; the emotional component is how you want them to feel after experiencing it; and the behavioral component suggests an action for them to take. While the educational component gives visitors the necessary information to make a decision, the emotional and behavioral components enable them to act on their knowledge. For example, an interpretive sign designed to keep visitors out of a fragile wetlands area would explain what the effects of visitor use on the wetlands area are (educational component), how this harms the wildlife of the area (emotional component), and how visitors can prevent this impact by staying on boardwalks in the area (behavioral component).

Developing a theme is discussed in Chapter III, Step 4 (page 22). Examples of theme development are given in the case studies in Chapter IV.

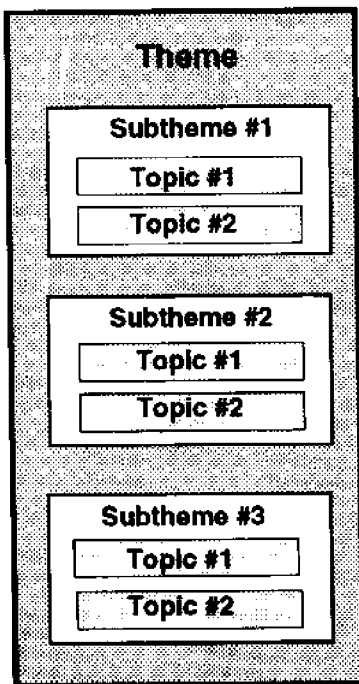


Figure 1. The relationship between a theme and its subthemes and topics. All subthemes, when interpreted together, should communicate the theme of the entire interpretive program.

HOW ARE RESOURCES AND ATTRACTIONS INTERPRETED?

Many methods and media can be used to interpret resource information. These include the use of publications, signs, exhibits, audio-visual media, and interpretive staff (i.e., interpreters). The interpretive technique used must reflect the information itself, the location and arrangement of the resources and attractions to be interpreted, and the type of visitor for which it is being developed. Proper planning will ensure that the interpretive technique chosen is well suited to your area and visitors.

Interpretive centers

Interpretive centers are very useful in some locations because they provide a central location at which resource information is interpreted. Interpretive centers are usually comprised of a central building housing interpretive exhibits, but they may also have self-guided trails, interpretive signs and publications, and tours and presentations by interpreters. Because interpretive centers usually provide information in diverse ways, they are effective at attracting more than one type of visitor group. Examples of interpretive center development are given in "Interpreting a scenic byway" and "Interpreting a loop trail" in Chapter IV (pages 61 and 75, respectively).



The focus of the Salt Museum in Liverpool, NY is the history of the salt industry in Central New York.

Benefits:

1. Interpretive centers provide a central base at which information can be interpreted.
2. They are effective for attracting visitors to an area and often boost the local economy.
3. They can be used to attract more than one type of visitor group at the same time.

Constraints:

1. Interpretive centers are costly to build and maintain.
2. They usually have certain hours of operation and may not be open at all times of the day.
3. They usually need to be staffed.

Questions to consider:

1. Do the resources in the area presently attract enough visitors to warrant the construction of an interpretive center?
2. Would focusing resource information in an interpretive center make local resources more attractive to visitors?
3. Would the center be located within easy traveling distance from one or more major population centers?
4. Do local communities, agencies, and organizations support this effort?
5. What agencies or organizations would be responsible for moving ahead the development of an interpretive center?

Interpretive staff

Hiring people to interpret resource information to visitors remains the key to motivating visitors' interactions with their surroundings. Besides their educational roles, interpreters sometimes have other job responsibilities such as providing security for an area or managing an interpretive center. Interpreters can be involved in two forms of interpretation: first-person and third-person. First-person interpreters act out and dress the part of the person they are interpreting. Third-person interpreters communicate information to visitors through presentations, tours, and discussions with visitors without actually portraying the role of another person. Interpreters can be volunteers or paid staff. Both types can be effective as long as they are properly trained and dedicated to giving visitors a quality educational experience. An example of a position developed for an interpreter is included in Chapter IV, "Interpreting a loop trail" (page 75).

Benefits:

1. Interpreters can provide one-on-one interaction with visitors (e.g., answering questions, leading tours).
2. They can motivate visitors to try different recreational and educational activities.
3. They can quickly alter presentations to meet visitors' individual needs.

Constraints:

1. The salaries of paid interpreters can be expensive.
2. Depending on work schedules, interpreters may not always be available for visitors.
3. Training interpreters can be expensive and time consuming.

Questions to consider:

1. Would the information to be interpreted be most effectively communicated through an historical enactment, demonstration, presentation, guided tour, or other type of interaction between staff and visitors? (If "yes," use of interpretive staff is feasible.)
2. Will interpreters be used for special presentations and tours only, or will they have an additional responsibility as well (e.g., administrative responsibilities)?
3. Will you hire professionally trained and educated interpreters or use volunteers?
4. If you are using volunteer interpreters, how will they receive training in interpretation?



A demonstration on the art of basket weaving is given at the 1993 New York State Fair, Syracuse, NY.

Interpretive exhibits

Interpretive exhibits are displays comprised of interpretive text, illustrations, photographs, audio-visual aids (e.g., light-up features, taped messages, videos, computer simulations), and/or three-dimensional components (e.g., mold-cast structures and artifacts). Interpretive exhibits, when designed properly, promote "hands-on" interaction by visitors and are especially useful for educating children. While state-of-the-art exhibits can be extremely costly, effective interpretive exhibits, by using easily obtainable objects and artifacts, do not need to be. Although most exhibits are usually produced for indoor display only, by taking into account local climatic and environmental factors, outdoor exhibits can also sometimes be produced. Examples of how exhibits can be used are given throughout Chapter IV.

Benefits

1. Exhibits promote hands-on interaction.
2. They can be diverse in the presentation of information.
3. They are very attractive to visitors.

Constraints:

1. Exhibits can be expensive to produce.
2. They usually need to be installed indoors in a shelter or interpretive center.
3. They are not available for viewing at all times of the day when installed in an interpretive center.
4. They may need a lot of maintenance.

Questions to consider:

1. Would the theme and topic of the exhibit be best communicated through a three-dimensional medium like an exhibit? (If "yes," the use of an exhibit is feasible.)
2. Where will the exhibit be located?
3. Will the exhibit be displayed indoors or outdoors? If "outdoors," what environmental and climatic factors do you need to consider when producing it?
4. Who will maintain the exhibit?
5. Will this exhibit be sturdy enough to survive hands-on interaction with visitors?
6. Will interaction with the exhibit be possible for all visitor groups (including children and physically disabled people)?

Interpretive signs

Interpretive signs are boards or panels on which resource information is interpreted to visitors through the use of text, photographs, illustrations, and three-dimensional components. Depending on their construction, signs can be used either indoors or outdoors. Signs are mounted on displays, which physically anchor them to a site. Displays can take the form of single or multiple panels, kiosks, or different types of shelters. Because the amount of information that can be included on signs is limited, signs are not suited to every interpretive effort. Examples of interpretive sign development are given throughout Chapter IV. For more information on signs, see "Developing interpretive signs for visitors," a 1993 New York Sea Grant resource paper.

Benefits:

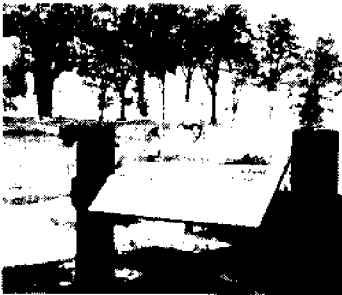
1. Signs can be used either indoors or outdoors.
2. When placed outside, signs provide a continuous source of information for visitors at all times of the day.
3. When designed correctly and placed in a suitable location, signs are effective at catching the attention of visitors.

Constraints:

1. Signs have limited space for interpretive information.
2. They are subject to vandalism and deterioration caused by environmental factors.
3. They can be expensive.

Questions to consider:

1. Does the information to be interpreted need to be available to visitors at all times of the day? (If "yes," a sign is a feasible choice.)
2. Are the subthemes of each sign too broad to be adequately interpreted?
3. Who is going to maintain the signs? What type of maintenance will they require?
4. Is the durability of the sign suited to local environmental factors and resistant to vandalism?
5. Will the sign display allow for easy removal and storage during periods of extreme weather conditions (e.g., winter, severe storms)?
6. Will all visitor groups be able to use the sign (including children and physically disabled people)?



An interpretive sign at Sackets Harbor Battlefield State Historic Site, Sackets Harbor, NY.

Interpretive publications

Interpretive publications can be divided into two distinct types: those that guide visitors through an area from one attraction to another (i.e., interpretive guides), and those that interpret information about a single resource or attraction to visitors (i.e., interpretive brochures). Unlike tourism publications designed for promotional purposes that only list attractions, interpretive publications explain about attractions and resources. Interpretive publications can include text, photographs, and illustrations. Examples of interpretive publication production are given throughout Chapter IV. For more information on interpretive publications, see "Developing an interpretive guide for your community," a 1992 New York Sea Grant fact sheet.

Benefits:

1. Publications can be relatively inexpensive to produce (this depends on the materials used in the printing process).
2. They can relay a relatively large amount of information to visitors.
3. They can be easily carried by visitors.
4. They can be designed for specific visitor groups.
5. Different publications can be used to communicate different themes, attracting more than one visitor group.
6. They can be sent to visitors prior to travel, encouraging visitation.



The Oswego County Department of Promotion and Tourism in New York State has produced several interpretive guides to local resources and attractions.

Constraints:

1. Publications are sometimes not available to visitors at all times of the day.
2. Some visitors do not enjoy reading on their vacations.

Questions to consider:

1. Does the information in the publication need to be available at all times of the day? (If "yes," brochure racks that are always accessible or another information-dissemination mechanism must be used.)
2. How much information will be included in the publication (i.e., how long will it be)? How will this affect its cost?
3. Do you need a publication that guides visitors from one attraction to the next, or one that simply interprets information about a specific local resource or attraction?
4. How will your publication be distributed? How you choose to distribute your publication (e.g., direct mailings, brochure racks) might dictate its size.

Tape Recordings

The use of tape recordings for self-guided tours or as part of exhibits is increasing. They are being produced for tours of large areas such as scenic byways and for smaller areas such as interpretive centers. Because many motorists have cassette or compact disc players in their cars, developing tape recordings for use in large areas can be especially useful to them. Both cassette tapes and compact discs can be used. While compact discs are more durable than cassettes, the high initial expense involved in purchasing compact discs and players may not be feasible for all purposes. In order not to disturb other visitors, ear sets are suggested. Battery recharging units may save money in the long run (Trapp, et al., 1991). Examples of how taped recordings are used are given in "Interpreting a scenic byway" and "Interpreting a loop Trail" in Chapter IV (pages 61 and 75, respectively).

Benefits:

1. Cassette and compact disc recordings are useful for interpreting to visually impaired people.
2. They are useful for self-guided tours.
3. They are effective for communicating stories, anecdotes, and quotes.

Constraints:

1. A system for lending the tapes must be established (e.g., through a visitor center).
2. The maintenance and replacement of compact disc and cassette recorders may become costly.
3. The initial investment in tapes, compact discs, recorders, and message development may be costly.

Questions to consider:

1. Is the information to be interpreted most effectively communicated through stories, anecdotes, and the use of sound effects? (If "yes," the production of tape recordings might be feasible.)
2. How will cassette/compact disc players be distributed to visitors, and what incentive will be given for visitors to return the borrowed equipment (i.e., cash deposit)?
3. Who will be responsible for maintaining the equipment?
4. Who will produce the recording?

Automated video/slide presentations

Video and slide presentations are becoming useful mechanisms for relaying interpretive information. They can be incorporated into interpretive center exhibits, shown in a theater-type setting or classroom, or used for promotional purposes. Depending on the type of projector purchased, interpretive staff may or may not be required to start and rewind the presentation. Equipment for playing these presentations varies from automatic slide projectors to combined VCR/TV units. Examples of automated video presentation production are included in Chapter IV, "Interpreting a loop trail" and "Interpreting an urban area" (pages 75 and 80, respectively).

Benefits:

1. Video and slide presentations are effective at visually involving visitors.
2. They require little involvement of interpretive staff.
3. They are easy to move to different locations.
4. They project a large-size image.

Constraints:

1. Video and slide presentations are often only available for use when interpretive centers are open or interpretive staff are available to start the show.
2. They can be expensive to produce.
3. Video equipment is expensive to purchase and maintain.
4. The flow of information in an audio-visual presentation cannot be easily altered once produced.

Questions to consider:

1. Is the information to be interpreted best communicated through the use of both sound and visual effects? (If "yes," the production of video/slide presentations may be feasible.)
2. Where will the presentation be used: in a theatre setting or classroom, as part of an exhibit, or on a TV or cable TV station? Where it will be used will dictate its length (e.g., a video used in an exhibit might be 60 seconds long, while one used in a theatre is 15 minutes long).
3. Who will be responsible for maintaining the equipment?
4. Will a staff member be responsible for showing the presentation to visitors, or will visitors be able to start the presentation themselves?

DEVELOPING AN INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM SUITED TO YOUR VISITOR GROUP

In order to effectively develop an interpretive program, you need to know what type of visitor group your area or facility attracts. Each visitor group has its own unique needs, wants, and expectations. Because of this, interpretive programs need to be planned with these factors in mind. If you do not know what type of visitor is attracted to your area, you need to find out before proceeding with any planning efforts. This can be done by surveying the visitors presently coming to your area. Their age groups, educational levels, interests, occupations, facility needs, and group compositions (e.g., school groups, families) need to be identified. Interpretive development considerations for different visitors are listed below.

Children:

Children have a short attention span. Because of this, interpretive programs for children should promote active participation and hands-on interaction. Interpretive staff and interactive exhibits are the best forms of interpretation to choose for children, and information should be presented in many diverse forms. When developing guided tours for children, plan for restroom and snack breaks. Signs and exhibits should also be kept relatively low to the ground so that children can see and reach them. Steps should be attached for hard-to-reach exhibits.

Family groups:

Because families usually include both adults and children, interpretive programs for them should be directed toward various age levels. The key to meeting the needs of these age groups is to keep the information presented as diverse as possible, in both level of difficulty and type of information presented. Providing opportunities for parents to work with their children on activities can produce rewarding experiences for all.

Senior citizens:

Interpretive programs designed for senior citizens need to take into account the possibility that some program participants may have limited mobility and visual and hearing impairments, while others will not. Providing guided tours to seniors can be particularly difficult since some seniors will move quickly ahead, while others require more time to get from one point of interest to the next. The difficulty and length of all activities and trail terrains should be stated at the beginning of all interpretive activities and tours. The presentation of information should be diverse (e.g., use both signs and tape-recorded messages on a self-guided tour) so that both the visually impaired and the hearing-impaired can be educated.

Cultural or Ethnic Groups:

Interpretive programs designed for cultural or ethnic groups need to take into account different cultural norms and language barriers. Areas promoting their tourism and interpretation efforts to citizens of foreign countries should have printed materials available in foreign languages. Interpreters should learn basic foreign language skills, speak slowly and clearly articulate when communicating to foreign visitors, and be aware of socially acceptable or unacceptable actions



The life of a soldier is interpreted to children at Old Fort Niagara, Fort Niagara State Park, Youngstown, NY.

and norms for the group. Tours are especially useful to foreign visitors since they emphasize important information about the area.

Physically disabled individuals:

Interpretive programs need to be designed for access by physically and visually disabled people. The construction of wheelchair ramps, automatic doors, and elevators is important for all facilities, including interpretive centers and rest areas. Signs and exhibits should be kept relatively low so that people sitting in wheelchairs can read and interact with them. Lettering on signs and exhibits should be large and easy to read for visually impaired people. If possible, braille signs and publications, and/or taped messages should also be available for use. When interpretive programs and presentations are given, sign-language interpreters or subtitles on visual presentations should be available. For more information on how to make your interpretive program accessible to all people, contact any agency specializing in the needs of the physically disabled.

Touring groups and recreation enthusiasts:

Visitor groups often enjoy touring areas by bus, car, bicycle, skis, boat, all-terrain vehicle, and hiking. Each type of recreation group has different needs. When designing touring loops, the quality of roads and trails must be considered. Visitors need to be informed about the location of facilities including rest areas, restaurants, overnight facilities, and repair and supply shops, as well as any dangerous land forms, obstacles, or detours. For bicyclists, wide road shoulders clear of debris are necessary as well as rest areas, supply stores, and campgrounds. Skiers and hikers likewise need overnight facilities, and water- and provision-supply locations. Boaters need to be informed of water access points, tie-up locations, on-the-water gas stations, repair shops, and walking distances from marinas to local attractions. All-terrain vehicle users need to be informed about the location of trails legal for ATV use, access points, any needed permits, and gas stations. Bus tour organizers should consult with bus companies when developing a tour loop to make sure that the roads are wide enough for buses and there are no low bridges or other impassable structures.

Special interest groups:

Interpretive facilities often attract visitors that know more about the information being interpreted than the "average" visitor. These visitors often come in groups from various organizations (e.g., bird-watching groups). In order to promote interest in these groups, more detailed information needs to be provided. Specialized publications, guided tours, and other presentations are effective.

CHAPTER II

THE ROLE OF INTERPRETATION IN SCENIC BYWAY DEVELOPMENT

WHAT IS A SCENIC BYWAY?

A scenic byway is a government-designated road that connects two or more anchor points (i.e., attractions or communities; Levin, 1988). In many areas, waterways used by motorized boats (e.g., canal systems) are also considered to be scenic byways. Hiking trails, old railroad beds converted to recreation paths, and bicycle and ATV trails are categorized as recreation trails, not scenic byways, by the Federal Highway Administration. Scenic corridors consist of a byway, trail, or waterway and the scenic lands adjacent to this route. Federally-designated scenic byways include the the Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia and the Seaway Trail in New York (see "Case Study: the Seaway Trail" on page 68). New York State-designated scenic byways include the Adirondack and Olympic Trails, two of a series of scenic roads in the Adirondack Park.

Scenic byway and trail systems are important tourism tools because they connect resources and attractions through a designated route, simplify travel routes for visitors, and create a focus for tourism promotion efforts. Because scenic byways and trails are promoted as a travel route with many attractions and resources on them, they usually attract more visitors than individual attractions on the scenic byway. Scenic byways are usually advertised to the public through promotional guides available from tourism promotion agencies.

WHY INTERPRET SCENIC BYWAY RESOURCES?

Interpreting the resources and attractions along a scenic byway to the visitors traveling it is necessary for attracting, educating, and entertaining them. Interpretive facilities and publications encourage visitors to stop at attractions during their travels and learn more about the area they are visiting. Although scenic byways are an important promotional tool for attracting visitors to an area, an effective interpretive program for the byway can extend visitors' stays in the area. When scenic byway resources and attractions are effectively interpreted, the byway becomes, in effect, a "museum without walls."

Every scenic byway needs a specific theme to give visitors an accurate idea of what types of resources and attractions they will see if they travel it. Often long scenic byways have one main central theme connecting several subthemes. By using several subthemes, many diverse visitor groups can be attracted to the byway.

Scenic byways can be interpreted through guidebooks, interpretive signs, and tape recordings for the entire length of the trail, or through the development of site-specific interpretive facilities at attractions on the byway. Different byway subthemes are often best interpreted through publications and tape recordings, since they enable visitors to choose their topic of interest. Signs are better suited for site-specific interpretation and scenic byway directories.



Barcelona harbor – one of the many scenic locations along the Seaway Trail in New York.

DESIGNATING SCENIC BYWAYS



The National Recreation Trail logo.

Scenic byways can be important mechanisms for attracting visitors to your area. If you wish to have a corridor in your area designated as a scenic byway, there are some facts that you should know.

The federal government designates "National Recreation Trails" through the U. S. Department of the Interior National Park Service. Scenic byways, as well as other recreation trails (e.g., hiking trails), are included in this designation. To achieve National Recreation Trail status, the group or agency having jurisdiction over the trail must file an application for designation with the National Park Service for approval by the Secretary of the Interior.

Statewide designation is usually accomplished through each state's scenic byway program. While this program is usually found in the state's department of transportation, other statewide agencies may also have scenic byway programs that enable designation. Designation through a state agency is accomplished by contacting the agency responsible for scenic byway designation and having the byway designated through the state legislature.

CRITERIA FOR SCENIC BYWAY DEVELOPMENT

Planning a successful scenic byway should take into account certain criteria. Your proposed scenic byway route should:

1. **Connect two or more anchor points or attractions.** These anchor points can be communities or major attractions; they are important because of the visitor facilities they provide (i.e., restaurants, lodging, gas).
2. **Have a unifying theme.** If the trail is long enough, it can have several subthemes to attract different visitor groups.
3. **Offer a diversity of attractions, resources, and activities.** Although driving, biking, boating, and other transportation mechanisms provide entertainment to visitors, attractions, resources, and activities provide visitors with a reason for stopping during their travels and exploring an area, thus extending their visits.
4. **Be easy to follow.** This involves providing a direct route with few turns and many directional signs to orient visitors.
5. **Be limited to unique transportation routes.** Scenic byways attract visitors because of their uniqueness and potential for adventure. They lose their effectiveness at attracting visitors when they are plotted along uninteresting routes.
6. **Be supported by the communities it traverses.** Without the communities on the byway supporting and promoting it, the byway's chances of becoming a successful travel route diminish.
7. **Be supported by a not-for-profit group or government agency.** Before a scenic byway can be designated, it must be supported by an organized not-for-profit group or a program

within a government agency. Its not-for-profit status will enable it to collect membership dues, hold fund-raising events, and apply for foundation and government grants.

8. **Be well maintained.** The roads, trails, or waterways comprising the scenic byway should be well maintained and have adequate facilities (e.g., restrooms, pull-overs, marinas, gas stations) along them (Murphy and Dee, 1988).

DEVELOPING LOOP AND SPUR TRAILS

Very often the development of a state or federally designated scenic byway is not desired, even though a community or organization wants to develop a self-guided tour to their area. In this instance, a loop or spur trail can be developed. A loop trail guides visitors along a travel route without having them travel the same route twice (Figure 2). Loop tours often begin at a scenic byway, loop through one or more communities, and return to the byway. Spur trails, on the other hand, make it necessary for visitors to return to the starting point of their tour by the same route.

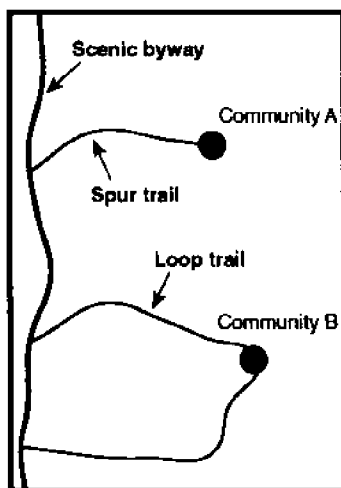


Figure 2. Map showing spur and loop trails.

The same development considerations apply to loops and spurs as to scenic byways. However, while scenic byways are usually officially designated by the state or federal government, loops and spurs may only be designated by local government (see "Interpreting a loop trail" and "Case study: the Niagara Historic Trail" in Chapter IV; pages 75 and 79, respectively). Directional signs should be installed along these routes where necessary to direct visitors. Resources and attractions along loops or spurs can be interpreted through either guided or self-guided tours.

Consider the following when developing a loop or spur trail:

1. Does your proposed route have direct and well-maintained roads or trails, or navigable waterways?
2. Can visitors travel to and from your community without having to use the same route twice? (If "yes," develop a loop trail, if "no," a spur.)
3. Are there diverse attractions and resources along the route? If not, perhaps just advertising your community's resources at some location on a nearby scenic byway or other main road would serve your purposes.

DEVELOPING RECREATION TRAILS

Recreation trails are also useful for moving visitors from one attraction to the next. Recreation trails can include hiking, biking, and skiing paths, ATV trails, and designated walking routes through a community. The interpretive program components listed in "Interpreting a community on a canal or river corridor," "Interpreting a loop trail," and "Interpreting an urban area" in Chapter IV (pages 69, 75, and 80, respectively) include information on recreation trail development. Like scenic byways, these can be federally designated as National Recreation Trails, designated by a state or local govern-

ment, or not formally designated. An example of a federally designated National Recreation Trail that is not a scenic byway is the Long Trail, a hiking trail in Vermont.

The following factors should be considered when developing any recreation trail:

1. What type of recreation enthusiast will be using this trail (e.g., hikers, bikers, skiers, ATV riders)?
2. How will their use affect the trail (e.g., erosion, destruction of local vegetation)?
3. How can this impact be prevented (e.g., install water run-off channels to prevent erosion)?
4. Who will construct and maintain the trail?
5. How will visitors be guided along the trail (e.g., guidebooks, directional signs, or markers)?

POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF SCENIC BYWAY AND TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

Before developing any scenic byway, both the positive and negative impacts that it will have on communities and surrounding areas need to be considered.

The potential positive impacts include:

1. Increased visitor expenditures into the local economy.
2. An increase in the development of facilities for both visitors and residents.
3. The formation of some mechanism for protecting scenic areas and resources.
4. An increased tax base.

The potential negative impacts include:

1. Increased automobile and visitor traffic.
2. The increased use of public and private facilities and recreation areas. This may lead to the damage or deterioration of fragile areas such as wildlife habitat or historic sites.
3. Increased maintenance costs for roads and facilities.
4. Developing new visitor facilities, improving safety measures along byways and trails, and installing directional signs can be expensive.
5. Increased littering and improper garbage disposal.



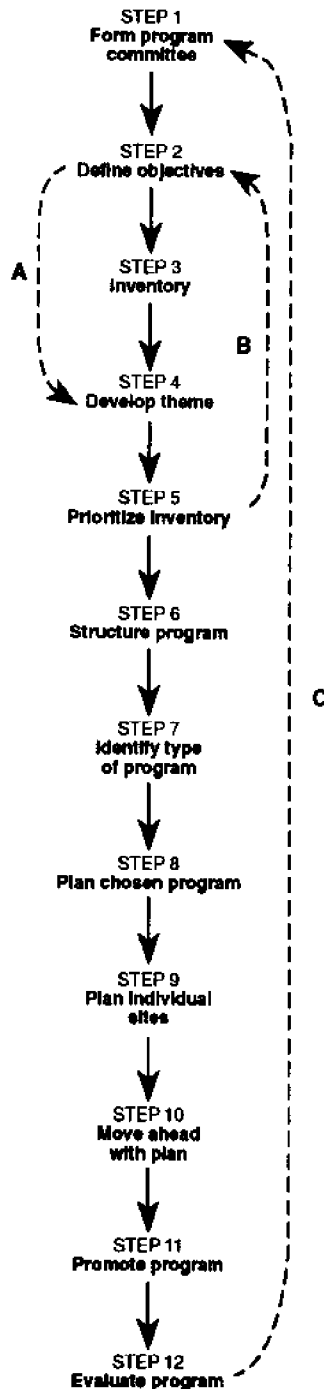
This dune blowout at Lakeview Wildlife Management Area on the eastern shore of Lake Ontario in New York is the result of visitors walking off the designated trail and onto the dunes.

CHAPTER III

**THE INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM
PLANNING PROCESS**

INTRODUCTION

Effective interpretive programs are part of overall tourism development plans, which include access and facility development. This section will help you define your ultimate interpretive objectives and develop a plan for achieving them by working through the worksheets at the end of this chapter. The number of each step in this section corresponds to the number of the appropriate worksheet. If you are unsure about how to proceed through a certain step, consult the conceptual case study examples included in Chapter IV.



Planning for interpretive programs is similar to planning for any tourism program. Figure 3 outlines the basic planning process involved. As you proceed through this process, you will need to adapt it to suit the needs of your area. For instance, if your region already has a thorough inventory of local attractions and resources, you may wish to skip STEP 3 on inventorying (Figure 3, A). If the prioritized inventory developed in STEP 5 does not suit the objectives that you originally identified in STEP 2, you may need to redefine your objectives (Figure 3, B). If the results of a program evaluation indicate that your program is not accomplishing your objectives, you may need to review the planning process and identify where changes are needed (Figure 3, C).

Promoting public awareness of and participation in your interpretive planning efforts will foster public support of them. This support is essential to your program's success. Public participation also provides a mechanism for identifying the needs and desires of residents, which should be incorporated into the planning process. Public participation can be promoted through informational meetings, special events, and news releases. Local not-for-profit organizations (e.g., Lions Club, Girl and Boy Scout Troops) should be asked to participate in special events and fundraising campaigns when possible.

Figure 3. A flow chart outlining the interpretive planning process. Dashed lines indicate some of the possible adaptations that can be made to the process. This process should be designed to suit the characteristics and needs of the area it is being used in.

**STEP 1.
FORM A PROGRAM
COMMITTEE**

The program committee is responsible for planning and developing your interpretive program. It should include community leaders, sponsoring agencies, and professional or volunteer interpreters, and should be as small as possible (try to keep the number of members to five or fewer). Depending on the budget for your program, you may also wish to hire a consultant and include him/her on your program committee. List the names of committee members on **Worksheet #1**.

**What should you look for
in a consultant?**

Because community and not-for-profit groups often do not have the expertise needed to design or develop interpretive programs, consultants are often hired. There are many different types of consultants: interpretive media designers, writers and artists, landscape architects, sign and exhibit manufacturers, planning consultants, audio-visual specialists, and fund-raising specialists. Ask local interpretive centers and educational groups for their recommendations on consultants whom they have used in the past. Always obtain bids from several consultants.

Before hiring any consultant, consider the following:

1. Are there any interpretive experts in local government agencies, not-for-profit groups, industries, or universities who would be willing to assist with your project at minimal or no cost?
2. How much experience does the consultant have with the type of project you want to develop?
3. Will you be able to visit different interpretive programs or view products that the consultant has developed?
4. Can the consultant give you recommendations from previous clients?
5. Is the quality and cost of product the consultant will provide suitable to your needs and budget?

**STEP 2.
DEFINE YOUR OBJECTIVES**

Your objectives are the end results that you want to obtain by developing your interpretive program. Identifying objectives is important since they provide a focal point for all program efforts; all program decisions are ultimately based on them. **Worksheet #2** will help you define your initial basic objectives. You will need to refer back to these objectives and further clarify them as you proceed through the planning process.

**STEP 3.
INVENTORY LOCAL
RESOURCES AND
ATTRACTIONS**

An inventory is a list of the attractions and resources that exist in your area. Developing a thorough inventory is an important step in the planning process since it identifies resources and attractions that you might not have previously considered for development, as well as those that you already knew existed. It will also help you identify the facilities that need to be added, improved, or expanded; existing land use limitations (e.g., property ownership, physical characteristics of the property, zoning, easily compacted or eroded soil types); and any safety considerations for the site (e.g., rock slides, abandoned machinery or buildings, cliffs, wells, crime or vandalism).

Worksheets #3a-f will help you identify the resources and attractions in your area that have artistic, cultural, historical, industrial, natural, and recreational significance. You will notice that **Worksheets #3a-e** pertain to specific sites and attractions that can be physically visited by visitors, while **Worksheet #3f** concerns general resources that may or may not have a specific site associated with them. You will probably find that there is some overlap between the attraction and resource charts. For example, biographical information about a famous person who once lived in your community may be listed on the "Regional and community-wide resources" chart, while the actual residence that he/she once lived in is listed on the "Historic attractions and sites" chart. In this instance, both charts would have a listing. The best methods for interpreting overlapping subjects will be determined as you proceed through the planning process. For example, in the situation above you might develop a brochure interpreting the biographical information about the person and also offer a tour of the person's former home.



Lake Ontario is a valuable resource to New York State residents, as well as many different visitor groups. (Photo by Patricia Peterson.)

It is important to list all resources and attractions on these worksheets, not just those that you find interesting; local attractions that residents take for granted are often fascinating to visitors. On each chart, identify what access or facilities presently exist. Also list any ownership considerations, zoning limitations, required development permits, potential safety considerations for visitors, and physical characteristics of the property that might limit development (e.g., unsuitable soil type, wetland areas, habitat for endangered wildlife species).

STEP 4. DEVELOP A THEME

A theme is the message or concept that connects the attractions and resources in your area. Not only does a theme make it easier for you to focus on specific interpretive efforts, but it also gives a visitor a clear sense of what is important about your community. Themes, subthemes, and topics are discussed in detail in Chapter 1.

How narrow or broad your theme is will determine the size of your interpretive program. A broad theme can be communicated to visitors through many different subthemes and topics. For example, the broad theme "local industries have had a great impact on the development of our community" can be interpreted with many subthemes, including the following: "hydropower provides most of the electricity for our community;" "local food processing plants provide occupations for many community residents;" "local manufacturing industries provide machinery for both local and national industries;" and "small businesses are the foundation of our community." Each of these subthemes could be interpreted through several topics. This theme would enable the development of a large interpretive program, since each of the subthemes could be interpreted through a sign, as a stop in a guided or self-guided tour of the community's industries and businesses, or through exhibits in an interpretive center about local industries.

In contrast, a narrow theme would have few subthemes. For example, the narrow theme "hydropower is an important source of electricity for our community" could be interpreted through two subthemes: "hydropower provides electricity without harming the environment" and "hydropower generates enough electricity for all the residents of our community." These subthemes could be interpreted through a brochure, one or two signs, or through a tour of a local hydropower facility. You'll notice how your options for interpretive development decrease as you go from broad to narrow themes.

By reviewing your inventory, you may be able to see a theme developing. **Worksheet #4** will help you determine a theme for your program. This step comes before "Prioritize your inventory" (STEP 5) because only after choosing a theme can you decide which attractions and resources should be the focus of your program.

**STEP 5.
PRIORITIZE YOUR
INVENTORY**

Prioritizing identifies which attractions and resources are the most important to develop for meeting your interpretive program goals and objectives. To develop a prioritized inventory, consider the following questions for each attraction and resource listed:

1. Is this attraction or resource related to the theme of your interpretive program?
2. Will the development of this attraction or resource be useful and interesting to your visitor group?
3. Will the development of this attraction or resource help accomplish your program objectives?
4. Is the attraction or resource located on property that can be developed or that you will be able to obtain permission to develop? (NOTE: this question may not apply to resources that will be interpreted through a guidebook or interpreter since visitors may not necessarily need access to the sites being interpreted.)

If you answer "yes" to all of the questions above or you think that any obstacles in the development of the attraction or resource can be overcome, the attraction or resource should be on your priority inventory list. List your priority attractions and resources on **Worksheet #5a**. Space is provided on this worksheet for you to identify the significance of each attraction and resource that you list. The significance explains why each attraction or resource is important to your area and interpretive program.

After you determine how you are going to interpret your theme (e.g., developing an interpretive publication, hiring an interpreter), you may need to narrow this list even further to take into consideration financial and time constraints (see STEP 10 on page 28).

**Planning for attractions
and resources not related
to your theme**

Very often, communities or regions have attractions that are popular with visitors but which are not related to the main theme of their interpretive program. In these instances, on-site interpretation of a unique and separate theme can be developed at these attractions. On-site interpretation could involve developing an interpretive center, adding interpretive exhibits and signs to an already-existing attraction, developing guidebooks and brochures, and providing interesting presentations and tours. List any miscellaneous attractions that you wish to interpret on **Worksheet #5b**. After this is accomplished, proceed to STEPS 6 through 12 to plan the development of these resources and attractions. However, to prevent confusion in the planning process keep these plans separate from those developed for your regional or community interpretive plan.

**STEP 6.
STRUCTURE YOUR
PROGRAM**

Structuring involves identifying how attractions and resources are arranged in your area, what type of interpretive program is most suited to this arrangement, and how visitors will travel from one attraction to the next. This is accomplished by locating the priority attractions and resources on a map of your area and studying their arrangement. Structuring is especially important when you are developing a guided or self-guided tour, since it will help you determine how visitors will be traveling from one attraction to the next.

The questions on **Worksheet #6** will help you identify how your program should be structured.

**STEP 7.
IDENTIFY THE TYPE OF
INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM
YOU WANT TO DEVELOP**

Once you have identified how your priority resources and attractions are arranged, you will be able to decide what type of interpretive program to develop. When determining which of the following options you would like to develop in your area, consider how broad or narrow your theme is, the size of the area you are developing the interpretive program for, and the arrangement of resources and attractions in it. Small communities often have very narrow themes that can be interpreted adequately through a single publication or sign, while areas or attractions with broad themes may need to develop a combination of several of the following options to provide a comprehensive interpretive program. In areas that are large and have broad themes, it is advisable to use several of the following options since this will diversify your interpretive program and attract different types of visitors. Figure 4 will help you determine the most suitable program options for your area. Write your choice or choices on **Worksheet #7**. This worksheet also indicates which worksheet in STEP 8 you should refer to for planning your chosen program.

NOTE: Conducting a feasibility study is crucial to the success of any large interpretive program that requires a significant amount of funding (i.e., interpretive centers) or will need the construction of additional facilities (e.g., visitor rest areas).

**Options for your
Interpretive program**

1. **Develop a self-guided or guided tour.** Tours direct visitors from one attraction to the next. They are useful for connecting attractions and resources that are scattered throughout a region or along a scenic byway or trail and for guiding visitors through an attraction. Guided tours are led by interpreters and vary from nature walks to bus tours. Self-guided tours, which provide directions for visitors to guide themselves, are developed using guidebooks, sign displays, and tape recordings. The roads, trails, or waterways used should be well maintained with adequate facilities along them for your specific visitor group.

The size of your area, its physical characteristics, and how visitors are going to travel from one attraction to the next will determine the type of tour developed. For instance, if your interpretive program is being developed for a long scenic byway that is heavily traveled by cars, a self-guided walking tour might

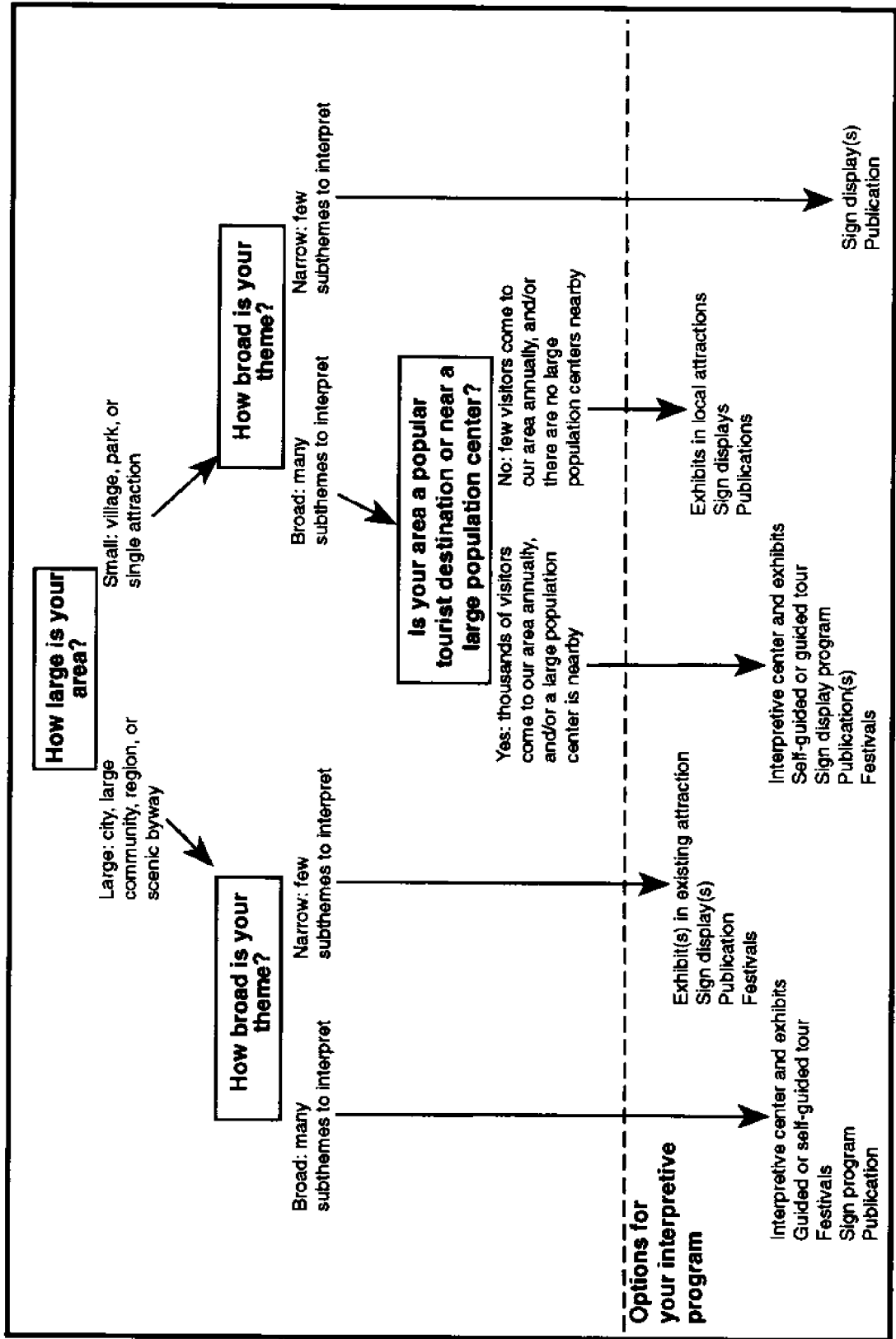


Figure 4. Determining your program options.

not be suitable. However, a walking tour on a hiking trail of the same length would be suitable.

- 2. Develop an interpretive center.** Interpretive centers provide a centralized location at which information can be communicated to visitors. Interpretive publications, exhibits, sign displays, and staff are often located at interpretive centers. While interpretive centers usually have a central building containing exhibits, this is not necessary for the center to be a focus for interpretive efforts on a specific theme; in some instances, a small shelter containing interpretive signs and a trail directory is sufficient.

The theme of any interpretive center must be broad enough to provide diverse subject matter for interpretation. For instance, an interpretive center developed to interpret the importance of a single species of fish to an area would not provide much diversity in its subject matter; a center interpreting the area's entire sport fishing industry would, however.

Because of the expense involved in developing an interpretive center, a feasibility study is strongly recommended. This study determines if the center is really needed, if enough visitors will be attracted by the center, where it will be located, and the estimated cost for building and maintaining it. Feasibility studies are usually produced by hired planning consultants.

- 3. Organize a festival, enactment, or event.** Special events are often a popular choice with communities because of the high economic impact they can have. If you wish to organize a festival, enactment, or other event, there are several factors you need to consider: where your visitors will be traveling from, if there are any competing festivals occurring at the same time, what forms of entertainment are going to be offered, and who is going to sponsor the event. A large population center within easy traveling distance is always a plus. Like any other type of interpretive program, festivals should have a theme. This theme will determine the types of entertainment that are included in the event.
- 4. Develop additional signs, publications, and exhibits.** Signs, publications, and exhibits can be produced in addition to already existing interpretive or tourism facilities, or they can be used alone for smaller interpretive programs. They can often be produced without the tremendous amount of planning required for larger interpretive efforts such as interpretive centers or festivals.

STEP 8. PLAN YOUR CHOSEN PROGRAM

Now that you have identified which interpretive program is most suited to your area, determine how each attraction and resource within it will be interpreted. For example, if you have decided to develop a self-guided tour of your community, you need to decide on the following: which specific sites will be included in the tour; what interpretive techniques (i.e., publication, sign, tape recording) will be used for the tour; and the subthemes to be interpreted at each site. **Worksheets #8a-e** will help you plan your interpretive program. STEP 9 will help you plan out the development of individual sites in your program.

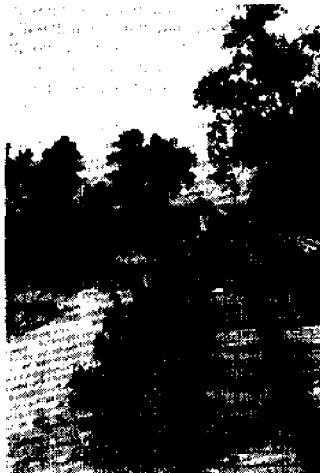
STEP 9. PLAN THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIVIDUAL SITES

Planning the development of the sites identified on **worksheets #8a-e** involves identifying the specific objectives for each site, the subtheme and topics to be interpreted at each, and the facilities that need to be expanded, repaired, or added. **Worksheets #9a** and **#9b** should be completed for each individual site within your interpretive program. You will need to make a photocopy of both of these worksheets for each site. One copy of each worksheet may be sufficient for single-site programs such as interpretive centers and festivals, while multiple-site programs such as sign programs may require the use of several copies. The worksheets may not need to be used if your program does not involve the development of specific sites (e.g., a brochure on local maritime history might not mention specific sites).

Worksheet #9a will help you identify the specific objectives, topics to be interpreted, land-use limitations, and safety considerations for each site within the program. For instance, if you decided to develop a self-guided interpretive sign program in STEP 8, you would use this worksheet to plan the development of the individual signs in this program and the sites where each will be located.

Worksheet #9b lists many of the attractions and facilities needed by visitors. Keep in mind the following as you determine which facilities you will need at each site:

1. **Your visitor group.** What facilities does this group require to make their visit more enjoyable? For example, bicyclists would need rest areas and water- and food-supply locations. School groups usually need a picnic or dining area and restrooms.
2. **Location of each site.** The location of the site is directly related to the type of access that will be needed for visitors to view your interpretive facilities. For example, an interpretive sign placed in front of a downtown public building would probably not require any additional facilities, while the same sign placed along a scenic highway system would require at least a car pull-over area.
3. **The potential for development at each site.** What facilities will it be possible for you to develop? Development is often limited by physical features (e.g., ravines, bodies of water), land ownership, zoning ordinances, and environmental factors.



This dune walkover was constructed at Lakeview Wildlife Management Area on the eastern coast of Lake Ontario to prevent degradation of the dunes by visitors.

**STEP 10.
MOVE AHEAD WITH
YOUR PLAN**

Now that you have identified all the essentials for the development of your interpretive program, you can move ahead with your plan. **Worksheets #10a and #10b**, respectively, will help you set a timeframe for achieving the objectives of your plan and develop an action plan to move it ahead. Depending on the type of development you are planning, you may need to break it down into smaller components. For example, the development of an interpretive center might involve the production of a publication, several signs, and many exhibits, each of which is a separate project in itself. Each of these individual projects can be planned for separately.

Set up a timeframe

Now that you know just what facilities, access, finances, and effort will be involved in developing each program component, you need to reorganize them with regard to the length of time needed to complete each. Some may be long-term objectives, while others can be accomplished immediately. If you know that it is not possible to complete a project immediately, estimate a timeframe for completion. Using **Worksheet #10a**, organize the different program components according to when you estimate they can be completed.

Develop an action plan

Once your committee has decided which program components it will be able to move ahead with, it needs to decide who will be responsible for completing the different tasks involved in accomplishing your objectives. Using **Worksheet #10b**, list the committee member responsible for each task and when the task will be completed. Use a separate chart for each program component if necessary. (Make additional photocopies of this chart if needed.) Although many of the responsibilities outlined in this chart can be accomplished by a hired consultant, the more responsibility your program committee takes on, the less expensive the project will be. Frequent committee meetings will help ensure that the tasks are being accomplished.

**STEP 11.
PROMOTE YOUR
INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM**

Promotion involves telling your chosen visitor group about what your area has to offer. Promotion is usually best accomplished by working through local tourism promotion agencies, chambers of commerce, not-for-profit organizations, and government agencies. Your interpretive program should be promoted in combination with other visitor facilities and attractions in the area. While it may be difficult to advertise specific components of your interpretive program (e.g., a single interpretive sign), your entire program can be effectively promoted like any tourism attraction. **Worksheet #11** is a checklist of promotional suggestions.

The key to effective promotion is understanding who your visitors are, where they come from, the types of news media they read and listen to, and the types of attractions and facilities they presently use. For instance, a guidebook developed for bicyclists would be best promoted in magazines for bicyclists, through bicycle clubs, and in bicycle shops. Local chambers of commerce, tourism promotion agencies, and not-for-profit groups that cater to specific visitor groups might be able to help you identify target areas for your advertising (e.g., in other states or other regions of your state). Analyzing demographic data (see STEP 12 on page 31) for travel trends is also helpful.

Packaging your program with other local activities, resources, and attractions should always be considered. Packaging can be implemented by not-for-profit groups, tourism agencies, tour providers, and local business owners who want to attract visitors. For instance, the owner of a bed and breakfast could develop a weekend get-away package for visitors in conjunction with the operator of a local canal boat who offers guided tours of a nearby canal. Offering packages will not only increase the use of your interpretive program, but it will also help local businesses.

The best form of promotion is word-of-mouth advertising. Although it takes several years of consistent, quality tourism for word-of-mouth advertising to become truly effective, it still remains the least expensive and most effective form of promotion. In order to develop effective word-of-mouth advertising, local residents, business owners, and community leaders need to completely support your tourism and interpretation program and be dedicated to providing visitors with an enjoyable vacation experience. This involves maintaining high standards of hospitality and service in all businesses and tourism attractions within the area. Providing frequent hospitality training workshops for business owners and tourism professionals is recommended.

Suggestions for promoting interpretive facilities and publications include:

1. Guided or self-guided tours

- Develop a promotional brochure for distribution at attractions and visitor centers.



"Journey" is a promotional publication produced annually by Seaway Trail, Inc.

- Advertise in tourism publications and magazines.
- Post directional signs for self-guided trails or "starting point" signs for guided tours.
- Offer special events along the tour loop.
- Advertise on TV/radio.

2. Interpretive centers

- Develop a promotional brochure for distribution at attractions and visitor centers.
- Advertise in tourism publications, newspapers, and magazines.
- Post directional signs to the center.
- Organize special events at the center.
- Advertise on TV/radio.

3. Festivals, enactments, and events

- Develop a promotional brochure for distribution through attractions and visitor centers.
- Advertise in tourism publications, newspapers, and magazines.
- Post directional signs to the festival.
- Advertise on TV/radio.

4. Additional publications

- Distribute through attractions, visitor centers, and government agency offices.
- Advertise in tourism publications and magazines.
- Advertise on TV/radio.

5. Additional exhibits and signs

- Advertise in tourism publications.
- Advertise on radio.

Evaluating your promotional campaign

The only way to know whether your promotional campaign is actually benefiting your area is to evaluate its cost-effectiveness. This evaluation could be as simple as asking each person who inquires about your area or facility where he or she heard about it. The total cost of each specific advertisement should be divided by the number of inquiries it generates to find out how cost-effective each method is at attracting visitors. Other techniques include offering discount coupons (these can be coded differently for each newspaper or magazine to identify the source of the coupon), and surveying visitors when they enter your facility to find out how they heard about it.

**STEP 12.
EVALUATE YOUR
INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM**

Evaluations are crucial to determining if your program is successful, if changes need to be made, and if further development or expansion is feasible. The most useful tool for evaluating interpretive programs is the survey.

Developing a survey

Surveys can be either a one-page questionnaire filled out by visitors or a list of questions that employees ask visitors. Surveys can be filled out by visitors during their visits or mailed to them after. If a mail survey is going to be done, you should compile a mailing list from which names will be randomly selected for your mailing. Sample surveys are shown on **Worksheets #12a–d**.

When writing a survey, keep in mind the following factors:

1. **Keep it short and to the point.** Visitors do not want to spend their vacation time answering a lot of questions. A survey should take no more than one minute to complete.
2. **Determine before writing the survey what information you want to obtain.** If the purpose of your survey is to identify whether your advertising is effective, then questions such as "Where did you find out about our facility?," "What city and state are you from?," and "Did our facility meet your expectations?" should be asked. If you want to find out if your exhibits are getting across the correct information, ask "Did you enjoy viewing the exhibits?," "Were there any questions that you had that were not answered by the exhibits?," and "Which exhibits did you like the most (or least)?"
3. **Use an incentive for mail surveys if possible.** The number of mail surveys returned to you can be increased by offering some type of incentive to the visitor for returning it. Free souvenirs or discount coupons for local attractions are suitable incentives.
4. **Make the questions easy to answer.** This involves making it possible for visitors to simply check off an answer instead of needing to write out sentences. You may not be able to use this format for all questions.
5. **Make sure the questions cannot be interpreted in more than one way.** Confusing or biased questions can be interpreted in different ways by different visitors. Avoid these since they will give you poor results.
6. **Include return postage for mail surveys.** When using mail surveys, always include a self-addressed, stamped envelope for people to return the survey, or print the survey on the back of a self-addressed, stamped postcard. People often do not return surveys when they have to pay the postage.

Worksheets #12a–d are sample surveys. Adapt these surveys to the needs of your program.

Analyzing socioeconomic and demographic information

Although surveys are the most useful tools for identifying whether specific interpretive projects and promotional efforts are successful, socioeconomic and demographic information is useful for indicating the success of regional tourism programs. Because much of this data is available on a regional or county basis only, it is not usually helpful in identifying tourism trends in specific communities. Types of socioeconomic data and where to obtain them are found in Appendix B (page 89).

**WORKSHEETS FOR
CHAPTER III**

WORKSHEETS

Worksheet #1:	Forming a program committee	34
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WORKSHEET #1: FORMING A PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Member #1:

Name _____
Affiliation _____
Address _____
Phone _____ FAX _____
Expertise _____

Member #2:

Name _____
Affiliation _____
Address _____
Phone _____ FAX _____
Expertise _____

Member #3:

Name _____
Affiliation _____
Address _____
Phone _____ FAX _____
Expertise _____

Member #4:

Name _____
Affiliation _____
Address _____
Phone _____ FAX _____
Expertise _____

Member #5:

Name _____
Affiliation _____
Address _____
Phone _____ FAX _____
Expertise _____

WORKSHEET #2: DEFINING YOUR OBJECTIVES

1. What does your community/organization hope to accomplish with this program? (Check all that apply.)

Management objectives

To stop visitors from _____

To encourage visitors to _____

To increase visitors' awareness of local resources.

To orient visitors to important sites/landmarks/attractions in the community.

To educate the public about community or organizational goals and efforts.

To stimulate the area's economy.

To promote the use of local facilities by visitors.

Other (specify) _____

2. In what type of area will you be developing your interpretive program? (Check one.)

City/village/other community

County/township

Scenic byway

Other geographic region (specify) _____

3. What are your possible sources of funding? (Check all that apply.)

State/local grants

Federal grants

Foundation grants

Private donations

Fund raising events

Membership fees

Other (specify) _____

4. What visitor group are you trying to attract? (Check all that apply.)

Families

Outdoor recreation enthusiasts

Anglers

Bicyclists

Hikers

ATV riders

Naturalists

Skiers

Other (specify) _____

Senior citizens

Cultural groups

Children's groups

Special interest groups

Other (specify) _____

5. What is the educational level of this visitor group? (Check all that apply.)

Kindergarten - 3 grade

4 - 6 grade

7 - 9 grade

10 - 12 grade

College level

6. What special educational and/or recreational goals does this visitor group have? _____

WORKSHEET #31: INVENTORY OF REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY-WIDE RESOURCES

Examples of resources to consider:

Artistic & Cultural:
 Present-day cultural settlements
 Regional folk art and crafts
 Architecture
 General art forms (e.g., music, painting, writing)
 Famous artists

Historical:
 Community and regional history
 Styles of architecture
 War/battles
 Local inventions
 Transportation routes
 Industrial
 Educational institutes
 Cultural settlements and traditions
 Famous historic people

Industrial:
 Agriculture
 Energy production
 Manufacturing
 Tourism-related (e.g., charter-fishing industry)
 Famous industrialists

Natural:
 Animals, birds, plants, fish, and insects
 Rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds
 Forest, meadow, and wetland ecosystems
 Geographic regions (e.g., plateaus, mountains)
 Geologic formations (e.g., glacial formations)
 Soil, bedrock, and fossils
 Famous naturalists and scientists

Recreational:
 ATV use
 Auto racing
 Badminton
 Bicycling
 Boating, canoeing, and kayaking
 Bowling
 Camping
 Downhill and cross-country skiing
 Driving/motorcycling
 Fishing
 Hiking/walking
 Horseback riding

Recreational:
 Jogging
 Mountain climbing
 Nature study
 Photography
 Picnicking
 Racquetball/handball
 Rollerice skating
 Scuba diving/storkeling
 Spectator sports
 Spelunking
 Swimming
 Tennis
 Volleyball
 Famous athletes

Resources	Associated Sites	Access	Facilities	Information Facilities	Other Considerations
List all resources below. EXAMPLE: A river.	List below on separate lines any sites associated with the resource that are suitable for interpretive development. EXAMPLE: A car pull-over area on the river's shore.	Parking Trails, paths Roads Bicycle paths Boat launch Boat docking Other	Picnic areas Benches Restrooms Other	Information center Directories Brochures Staff Other	List any land-use limitations or safety considerations below.

WORKSHEET #4: STATING YOUR THEME

1. Is there a common idea or concept that connects many of the resources and attractions on your inventory list?

EXAMPLE: Most of the attractions and resources are related to the history of our community.

Answer: _____

2. Are the resources and attractions on your inventory found in a specific region or on a certain body of water or scenic byway?

EXAMPLE: All the attractions are found along the harbor front in our community.

Answer: _____

3. What message or concept would you like to convey to visitors?

EXAMPLE: The harbor is important to our community.

Answer: _____

4. Combine your answers to these questions to write your theme.

EXAMPLE: The development of our community has been greatly influenced by our harbor front area.

Theme: _____

5. Identify the breadth of your theme. If your theme is broad, you will have many subthemes; if it is narrow, you will have few. The breadth of your theme should suit the size of the program that you want to develop.

EXAMPLE: Subthemes to interpret within this theme include:

1. Our harbor was strategically important for military defense during the 18th century.
2. Our harbor front was established as a center for trade in the 19th century.
3. Shipbuilding was important to the development of our harbor front.
4. Recreational boating and fishing affect our harbor today.

This theme has many subthemes and is broad enough for our purposes.

Subthemes:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

WORKSHEET #5a: PRIORITIZED INVENTORY FOR YOUR INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM

Program theme: _____

Example: Our nautical heritage has greatly influenced the development of our community.

Attraction/Resource	Significance of Attraction/Resource
EXAMPLE: 1. Maritime museum 2. Public fishing pier	This museum interprets the area's maritime heritage. This pier is a very popular fishing access point in our community and would be a useful site for interpreting information about local sport fishing.
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	
13.	
14.	
15.	

WORKSHEET #5b: PRIORITIZED INVENTORY OF MISCELLANEOUS ATTRACTIONS NOT RELATED TO MAIN THEME OF INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM

Attraction	Theme of Attraction
EXAMPLE: County park and nature trail	Our natural environment can be used for recreational purposes without negatively affecting local species of wildlife.
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

WORKSHEET #6: IDENTIFYING THE STRUCTURE OF YOUR PROGRAM

1. Place a copy of the map of your area in the space below, or add it to this binder. Indicate with a dot where specific attractions are located. For resources, indicate with a dot any possible locations at which the entire resource could be interpreted. If the resource has a geographic boundary, outline this on your map as well (if possible).

(Place copy of map here
or use separate page)

2. How are the attractions and resources arranged?
- Along a designated scenic byway, trail route, or waterway.
 - In one centralized area such as a park or downtown area of a community.
 - Scattered throughout an area.
3. How will visitors travel from one attraction to the next? (Consider the distance between attractions when answering this question; check all that apply.)
- Walking
 - Bicycling
 - ATV
 - Car
 - Boat/canoe
 - Bus
 - Other (specify) _____
-
4. If the attractions and resources are not already connected by a designated scenic byway or trail, is there some type of travel corridor or route that can be developed to connect the attractions and resources?
- Yes
 - No
- Trail system
 - Scenic highway
 - Sidewalk route
 - Other (specify) _____

WORKSHEET #7: LIST OF PROGRAM OPTIONS

Check off the program options that you have chosen. The worksheet number given next to each refers to the worksheet that will be used for planning each specific program.

- 1. Interpretive tour (**Worksheet #8a**)
 - Guided
 - Bus tour
 - Walking tour
 - Other (specify) _____
 - Self-guided
 - Publication
 - Signs
 - Tape recording
 - Other (specify) _____
- 2. Interpretive center (**Worksheet #8b**)
 - Central building, exhibit hall, or shelter
 - Indoor exhibits
 - Outdoor exhibits/signs
 - Guided tours and presentations by interpretive staff
 - Self-guided tours
 - Publications
- 3. Interpretive festivals, enactments, and events (**Worksheet #8c**)
 - Festival
 - Enactment
 - Other event (specify) _____
- 4. Various other projects
 - Publications (**Worksheet #8d**)
 - Signs and/or exhibits (**Worksheet #8e**)

WORKSHEET #8a: PLANNING CHART FOR GUIDED AND SELF-GUIDED TOURS

1. Tour theme: _____

2. Objective(s) for interpretation (check all that apply):

- Increase visitors' awareness of theme
- Alter visitor behavior patterns (specify) _____
- Increase visitors' awareness of agency/organizational goals
- Orient visitors to the area
- Increase visitor use of the site
- Other (specify) _____

3. Technique to be used (check which applies):

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interpreter guided | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-guided |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bus tour | <input type="checkbox"/> Publication |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walking tour | <input type="checkbox"/> Signs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other guided tour (specify) _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Tape recording |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____ |

4. Estimated costs: _____

5. Stopover sites on tour and subthemes to be interpreted at each:

Site	Subthemes
<p>EXAMPLE: A guidebook to local industries would include:</p> <p>1. Food-processing plant</p> <p>2. Equipment manufacturer</p>	<p>Many canned-food products are produced by this facility daily.</p> <p>The equipment manufactured in this plant is used both locally and around the world.</p>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

WORKSHEET #8b: PLANNING CHART FOR INTERPRETIVE CENTERS

NOTE: When developing an interpretive center, professional design consultants and planners should be contacted to conduct a feasibility study of the project, and if this study confirms the need for the center, design it. This planning chart will help you organize your ideas before you discuss this project with a consultant. The ultimate cost of the project should be identified through the feasibility study.

1. Interpretive center theme: _____

2. Proposed site: _____

3. Objective(s) for interpretation on this site (check all that apply):

- Increase visitors' awareness of topic
- Alter visitor behavior patterns
- Increase visitors' awareness of agency/organizational goals
- Orient visitors to the area
- Increase visitor use of the site
- Other (specify) _____

4. Estimated cost: _____

5. Potential funding sources (list): _____

6. Subthemes to interpret and technique(s) used to interpret each:

Subthemes	Interpretive techniques
EXAMPLE: Many ancient legends contributed to the Native American culture as it exists today.	Interpreter presentations; brochure
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

WORKSHEET #8c: PLANNING CHART FOR INTERPRETIVE FESTIVALS, ENACTMENTS, AND EVENTS

1. Theme of event: _____
2. Site to be held at: _____
3. Objective(s) for interpretation at this event (check all that apply):
 - Increase visitors' awareness of theme
 - Fund-raising
 - Promote membership in organization/agency
 - Other (specify) _____
4. Interpretive techniques to be used:
 - Enactments, plays, skits, presentations
 - Traditional/unique music
 - Traditional dances
 - Authentic foods
 - Historic games
 - Interpretive exhibits/displays
 - Other (specify) _____
5. Person responsible for organizing the following activities (give name):
 - Enactments, plays, skits, presentations _____
 - Traditional/unique music _____
 - Traditional dances _____
 - Authentic foods _____
 - Games/activities _____
 - Interpretive exhibits _____
 - Other _____
6. Estimated costs: _____
7. Estimated number of visitors: _____
8. Estimated admission fee (if any): _____
9. Potential sponsors: _____

10. Person(s) responsible for contacting sponsors (give name): _____

11. Marketing/advertising techniques to be used (check all that apply):
 - Radio
 - Television
 - Ads in tourism guides/brochures
 - Newspaper ads, recreational activity listings
 - Direct mail
 - Brochures in visitor centers/local attractions
 - Other (specify) _____

WORKSHEET #8d: PLANNING CHART FOR ADDITIONAL INTERPRETIVE PUBLICATIONS

1. Theme of publication: _____

2. Objective(s) for interpretation (check all that apply):

- Increase visitors' awareness of resource
- Alter visitor behavior patterns
- Increase visitors' awareness of agency/organizational goals
- Orient visitors to the area
- Increase visitor use of the resource
- Other (specify) _____

3. Estimated length: _____ pages

4. Tentative size (check one):

- 4.0x8.5 inches
- 8.5x11.0 inches
- 5.5x8.5 inches
- Other (specify) _____

5. Color options (check one):

- Full color (circle one: entire publication, certain sections only, cover only)
- Use inks of different colors
- One color ink only (specify color: _____)

6. Estimated cost of printing, designing, illustrations, photographs, obtaining copyrights: _____

7. Where visitors will obtain copies:

- Visitors' centers
- Tourism promotion agencies
- Local not-for-profit groups
- Other (specify) _____
- Local attractions
- Chambers of commerce
- Government agencies

8. Topics to include (list all):

Topics	
<p>EXAMPLE: A brochure on the local sport fishery would include the following topics: species to fish for and how to identify them; biological information on the habitats and life cycles of these species; the history of changes in the fishery through time; where the fishing hot-spots are; where boat launch, marina, and fishing pier facilities are located; and any record-size fish caught in the area.</p>	
1.	6.
2.	7.
3.	8.
4.	9.
5.	10.

WORKSHEET #8e: PLANNING CHART FOR ADDITIONAL SIGNS AND EXHIBITS

1. Objective(s) for interpretation (check all that apply):

- Increase visitors' awareness of resource
- Alter visitor behavior patterns
- Increase visitors' awareness of agency/organizational goals
- Orient visitors to the area
- Increase visitor use of the resource
- Other (specify) _____

2. What is the estimated cost of each exhibit and sign display? _____

3. Where will funding for each sign or exhibit come from? _____

4. Who will maintain these signs and/or exhibits? _____

5. Subthemes to be interpreted on each sign or exhibit and where displays will be located:

Subtheme	Exhibit/Sign	Site
EXAMPLE: 1. Architecture styles reflected the different views of society in the 19th century.	Exhibit	Inside public library
2. Greek Revival architecture was used as a symbol of democracy.	Sign	In front of courthouse
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

WORKSHEET #9a: PLANNING CHART FOR INDIVIDUAL SITES WITHIN YOUR PROGRAM

1. Site: _____

2. Subtheme for site: _____

3. Interpretive technique(s) to be used at site (check all that apply):

- Sign
- Publication
- Exhibit
- Interpreter
- Tape recording
- Other (specify) _____

4. Specific objectives for site:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

5. Topics to be interpreted at site:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

6. Land-use development considerations for site (e.g., zoning limitations, private ownership of property, easily eroded soil type):

7. Safety considerations for site (e.g., abandoned machinery, area with high degree of vandalism, area subject to rock slides):

WORKSHEET #9B: LIST OF FACILITIES TO BE DEVELOPED OR EXISTING AT SITE

1. Site: _____

2. Interpretive technique(s) to be used at site (check one):

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Publication | <input type="checkbox"/> Sign |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibit | <input type="checkbox"/> Taped message |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interpreter | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____ |

3. Check which of the following will be necessary for development at the site. Indicate on the line next to each facility whether it will need to be expanded, repaired, added, or is suitable as is.

Access: During which seasons will access be needed? (Check all that apply.)

- Spring Summer Fall Winter

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parking _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Roads _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trails _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Marina (dockage) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wheelchair ramps _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Boat launch _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Automatic doors _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elevator _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____ |

Facilities:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restrooms _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Benches _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drinking fountains _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife blinds _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Souvenir and gift shops _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Snack bars _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching facilities _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibit rooms _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Picnic/dining areas _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Lean-tos/shelters _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Observation tower _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Garbage disposal facility _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____ | |

Facilities that reduce on-site hazards:

- Fencing/guardrails _____
- Handrails _____
- Other (specify) _____

Visual factors:

- Remove obstacles that obstruct viewing the site _____
- Add attractive elements (e.g., ship anchor, flower beds) _____
- Remove garbage/litter _____
- Landscape around proposed facilities _____
- Other (specify) _____

Information facilities:

- Directional signs _____
- Directories _____
- Information or visitor centers _____
- Other (specify) _____

4. Who will be responsible for the maintenance of the facilities? _____

5. Other considerations: _____

WORKSHEET #10a: PROGRAM TIMEFRAME CHART

Program Component	Timeframe for completion
EXAMPLE:	
1. Interpretive sign (near marina)	1 year
2. Interpretive guide to community	1.5 years
3. Interpretive center	4 years
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

WORKSHEET #10b: PLAN OF ACTION CHART

Program component: _____

Task Category	Specific Responsibility	Person Responsible	Date of Completion
Compiling information	Contact professional personnel, agencies, not-for-profit organizations, attractions, and industries for information		
	Research information at public library or local university		
	Obtain important documents relevant to the site (e.g., soil surveys, wetland delineation maps, land use and tourism development plans)		
Choosing consultants and volunteers	Audio-visual, sign, and exhibit production companies		
	Feasibility study and planning consultants		
	Illustrators, photographers, and/or writers		
	Interpretive design consultants		
	Landscape architects		
	Printing companies		
Identifying funding sources	Organize fund-raising campaigns		
	Identify local sponsors		
	Apply for government and foundation grants		
Altering land use limitations	Apply for zoning-ordinance modifications		
	Obtain easements from land owners		
	Obtain building permits Remove any hazards or other safety risks		

WORKSHEET #11: CHECKLIST OF PROMOTIONAL TECHNIQUES

Promotional publications:

- Regional/local tourism promotion brochures and guides
- Promotional brochures for specific sites and attractions
- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Promotional section of the telephone book

Promotional signs:

- Directional signs
- Billboards (NOTE: Billboards are not recommended for use on scenic byways.)

Audio-visual media:

- Radio advertisements
- TV advertisements
- Promotional videos

Miscellaneous:

- Direct mail
- Offer familiarization tours for tourism-related groups (e.g., outdoor writers, travel agents)
- Souvenirs showing attraction's name
- Word-of-mouth advertising
- Advertise through travel agents and/or bus tour companies
- Coordinate package tours
- Attend trade shows
- Other (specify) _____
- Other (specify) _____

WORKSHEET #12A: SURVEY FOR INTERPRETIVE CENTER AND EXHIBITS

Interpretive Center Survey

Thank you for visiting our interpretive center. The following questions will help us determine if our center meets the needs of its visitors. Please answer all questions as they are asked; this will help us correctly analyze the results of the survey.

1. What type of group did you come with? (Check one.)
 School group
 Family
 Friends
 Other organization (specify) _____

2. Where is your group from? (Provide city and state.) _____

3. Where did you hear about our center? (Check all that apply.)
 Family member or friend
 Tourism guide or brochure
 Directional sign to facility
 Phone book
 Other (specify) _____

4. Which exhibits did you enjoy the most? (Check all that apply.)
 Shipbuilding
 Historic shipping routes
 Schooners and brigs
 Tugboats
 Life in the historic harbor
 Other (specify) _____

5. Were there any exhibits that you did not understand? (Check all that apply.)
 Shipbuilding
 Historic shipping routes
 Schooners and brigs
 Tugboats
 Life in the historic harbor
 Other (specify) _____

6. Were there any questions that were not answered by the exhibits? (Explain.) _____

7. Did you find our staff to be helpful? Yes No. Why or why not? _____

8. Is there any way that we could improve our facility or any topics for exhibits that you would like to see added? (Explain.) _____

Thank you very much for your time. Please come again soon!

WORKSHEET #12b: SURVEY FOR INTERPRETIVE PUBLICATION

Publications are often difficult to evaluate through surveys since it can be difficult to obtain visitors' opinions after they have finished reading them. The most effective method for surveying the effectiveness of a publication is by including a postage-paid, self-addressed postcard in the publication. Usually some type of incentive is necessary to motivate visitors to return the postcard. Discount coupons for attractions and facilities in the area can be valuable incentives since they encourage visitors to return to your area again. Small souvenirs can also be used as incentives.

Did you enjoy reading this guide to our community?

We want to know so that we can improve your next visit here. Please answer the following questions on this postage-paid postcard, and then drop it in a mailbox. To express our appreciation, upon receipt of your completed postcard we will send you a discount book for many of the restaurants, lodgings, and attractions in our area.

1. Where did you obtain this guidebook? _____
2. Did this guidebook help you easily find your way around our community? [] Yes [] No
If "no," do you have any suggestions on how we can better direct visitors around the area?

3. Did you find the information to be correct in this guide? [] Yes [] No
If "no," what specifically needs to be corrected? _____
4. Did you find the guidebook to be interesting and attractive? [] Yes [] No
5. Did you have any questions that were not answered by this guide? [] Yes [] No
If "yes," specify? _____
6. Are there any other topics concerning our community that you would like more information about? Please specify. _____
7. Where should we send your discount coupon book?
Name: _____
Address: _____
City/state/zip: _____

WORKSHEET #12C: SURVEY FOR INTERPRETIVE SIGN PROGRAM

Surveying visitors about interpretive signs usually involves stationing a staff member near the signs to question visitors. This staff person can then stop visitors after they are finished reading the sign to survey them. Because it can be extremely time consuming to survey each visitor at each sign in your program, choose several signs for your study and a specific timeframe for conducting the survey (e.g., Saturdays and Sundays throughout the summer from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.).

Staff member: "Hello! My name is _____ and I work for _____. We are conducting a survey to find out what visitors think about our educational signs. Do you have a minute to spare to answer some questions?"

If "no": "Thank you anyway. I hope you enjoy the rest of your visit to our community!"

If "yes," proceed with questions.

1. What city and state do you live in? _____
2. Where did you hear about our community?
 - Friends
 - Tourism brochure
 - Magazine advertisement (which magazine?) _____
 - Other (specify) _____
3. Do you find this interpretive display attractive? Yes No
If "no," what did you find unattractive about it? _____
4. Do you find this location attractive? Yes No
If "no," what did you find unattractive about it? _____
5. Does this sign increase your understanding of (topic of sign)? Yes No
Comments: _____
6. Do you have any questions that were not answered by the sign? Yes No
If "yes," what were they? _____
7. Have you read any of the other educational signs we have in our community? Yes No
If "yes," which ones? _____
8. Are there any subjects that you would like more information about? Specify: _____

Staff member: "Thank you for your time. I hope you come back and visit us again!"

WORKSHEET #12D: SURVEY FOR PRESENTATION OR GUIDED TOUR

This survey should be provided to presentation or tour participants immediately following the event.

Presentation/Tour Evaluation

Event: _____
Location: _____
Date: _____
Time: _____

1. Please provide your city and state of residence: _____

2. How did you find out about this event? (Check one.)
 A friend
 Newspaper ad
 Radio
 Other (specify) _____

3. What did you think about the information presented at this presentation? (Check one.)
 Too simple
 Too technical
 Just right

4. How would you rate the presenter's speaking ability? (Check one.)
 Poor
 Moderate
 Good
 Excellent

5. Did this presentation or tour meet or surpass your expectations? Yes No
If "no," why not? _____

6. Was this presentation a worthwhile expenditure of your time?
 Yes No

7. What did you think about the length of the program? (Check one.)
 Too long
 Too short
 Adequate

8. Did you have any questions that were not adequately answered during the presentation?
 Yes No
If "yes," what were they? _____

9. What would you change about this presentation? _____

*Thank you for attending our presentation and for completing this survey.
We hope to see you again!*

CHAPTER IV
CONCEPTUAL CASE STUDIES

INTRODUCTION

This section is designed to show how the interpretive planning process works in different circumstances. The examples given are conceptual only, and are not based on existing communities or regions. The boxes of text in each section portray similar examples of actual interpretive programs that have been developed.

INTERPRETING A SCENIC BYWAY

Three communities along a two-lane highway are considering designating a portion of the highway as a scenic byway. The proposed route is 40 miles long and travels through an agricultural area. The three communities consist of one small city (Farmton), one medium-sized village (Arkville), and one small village (Appleville).

The small city of Farmton is the government center for the county. It has a population of 21,000. Arkville has a population of 7,000 people and a quaint, country atmosphere, with many folk art and craft shops. The small village of Appleville has a population of 3,000 people. Most of the residents of this village work on the local farms in the area or at the nearby canning plant.

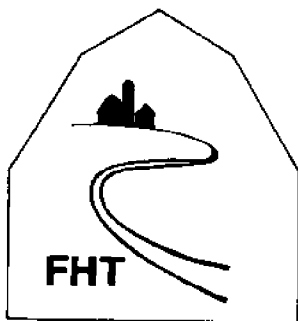


Figure 5. Farm Heritage Trail logo.

A scenic byway development committee consisting of community leaders from each of the three communities, the director of the Farmton Chamber of Commerce, and the regional tourism promotion agency director is set up. Through discussions, the group decides to develop a scenic byway called the "Farm Heritage Trail." It then proceeds to obtain scenic byway designation through the state legislature.

After receiving official scenic byway designation, the committee decides to focus its efforts towards promoting and enhancing the scenic byway to tourists. A logo for the byway is developed (Figure 5) and logo signs are installed along the byway by the state's department of transportation. The committee identifies interpretation as a strong mechanism for achieving its goals. A small interpretation program committee is organized to plan and develop interpretation of resources along the scenic byway (Figure 6). The following information outlines the plan developed.

Objectives

1. To promote the use of the scenic byway and its resources and attractions.
2. To increase the economic base of the scenic byway corridor and the communities along it.
3. To increase visitors' and residents' awareness of the resources located on the scenic byway.

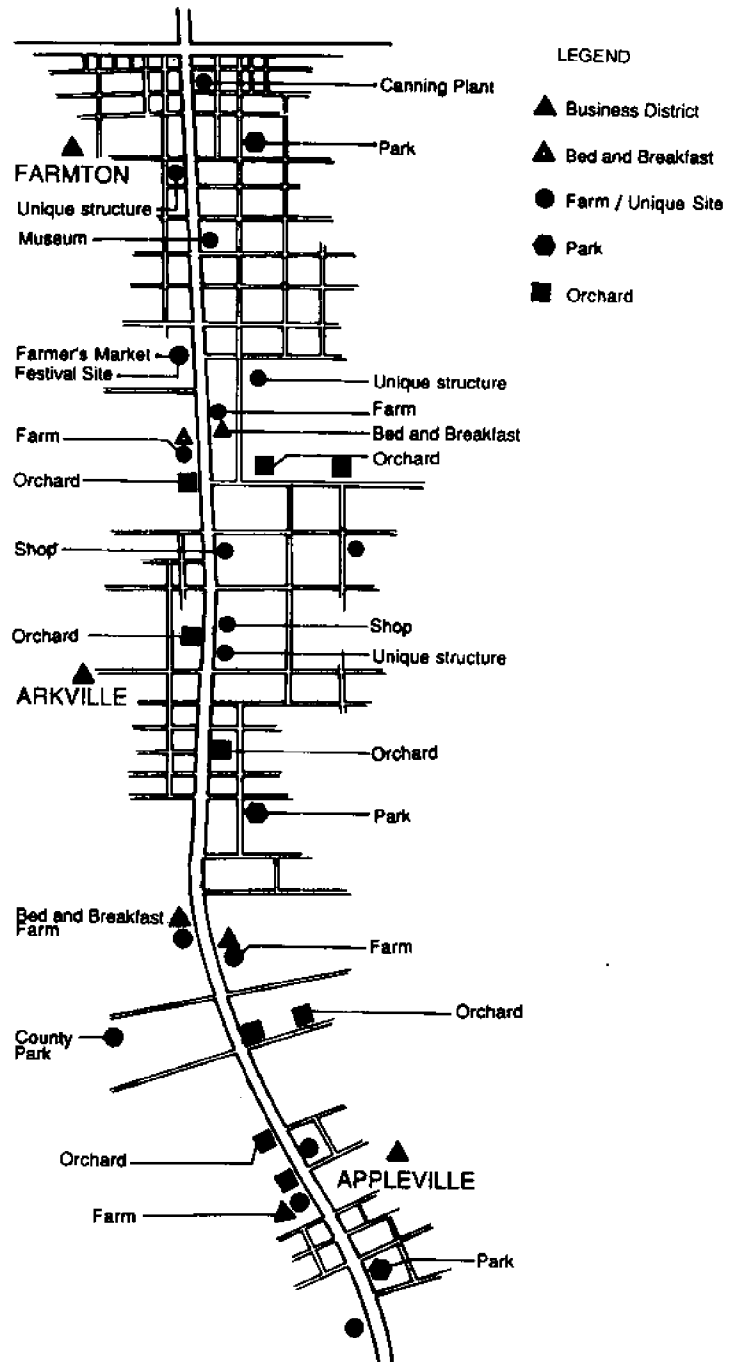


Figure 6. A map showing the attractions and resources along the Farm Heritage Trail.

**Inventory of resources
and attractions**

**1. Farm Heritage Trail (the resources and attractions found in
the communities on the byway are listed separately):**

Agricultural industries and businesses:

- Five apple orchards - three U-pick operations, two farm stands
- Two cherry orchards - both U-pick operations
- Four strawberry farms - all U-pick operations
- A dairy farm
- Five bed and breakfast operations on farms
- A fruit-canning plant

Natural areas:

- County park with nature trail (two miles away from byway)

Recreational facilities:

- All-terrain vehicle recreation trail (trail head is on scenic byway)
- Two campgrounds

2. Farmton:

Historic sites:

- Historical society museum
- Many unique private homes and public buildings

Recreational facilities and events:

- Community park
- Yearly apple and cherry festivals
- Weekly farmers' market during the summer

Community-wide resources:

- A history of being the center of trade for local agriculture industry since early 19th century

3. Arkville:

Industries:

- Many small shops in the village selling antiques, crafts, and folk art

Recreational facility:

- A small park in the center of the village

Historic sites:

- Several unique private homes

4. Appleville:

Recreational facility:

- Small village park

Community-wide resource:

- A history of residence by farm workers

Development of an interpretive program plan

The interpretive program for this scenic byway can be divided into four different development components: the entire scenic byway and the communities of Farmton, Arkville, and Appleville. All four components will be united by one program theme, while the three communities will each have an individual subtheme related to this program theme. This will promote the uniqueness of each community, while still promoting the theme of the scenic byway as a whole.

Scenic byway interpretive program

Theme: "The agriculture industry has greatly affected the development of the area along the Farm Heritage Trail."

Interpretive program components:

1. Develop a "Farm Interpretive Center" at a farm showing recent techniques in fruit growing with an on-site U-pick operation and a sample of different fruits being grown (Figure 7). Exhibits in the center should also interpret the history of farming in the area. Possible funding sources: county government, local farms, grants.

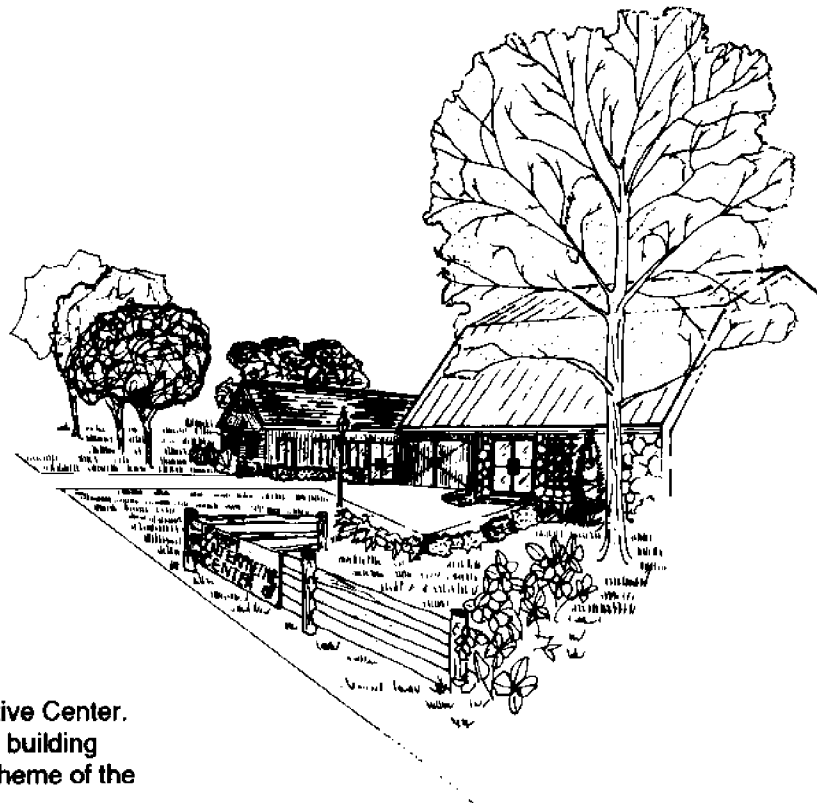


Figure 7. Farm Interpretive Center. Notice how the barn-like building reflects the agricultural theme of the byway.

2. Produce an interpretive guide to the local farms, farm stands and U-pick operations, farm bed and breakfasts, canning factory, and communities. The history of local fruit growing, farming procedures and practices, and the impacts of agriculture on the development of the communities should be included, along with lists of local agricultural festivals and trade fairs. Possible funding sources: local chambers of commerce, local businesses and industries.
3. Develop a tape recording on cassette that interprets the agricultural resources along the scenic byway to visitors. Present-day and historical quotes from residents of local farms should be included that interpret what life on a farm is like. The tape can be purchased from local chambers of commerce, or at the Farming Interpretive Center. Possible funding sources: initial expense paid by chambers of commerce, reimbursed by charging fee for purchase of cassettes.
4. Encourage the canning factory to develop a visitor center and tour. Possible funding source: canning factory.

Miscellaneous interpretive program components:

Several facilities and attractions exist that should be interpreted along the scenic byway. However, because these facilities are not directly related to the central theme of the scenic byway, only site-specific interpretation will be done.

1. County park: Develop a self-guided tour brochure to the park's trail system. If visitor interest is high, expand the park's interpretive program to include interpretive staff and interpretive exhibits and/or signs. Install directional signs to the park along the scenic byway. Possible funding sources: county government, grants.
2. All-terrain vehicle recreation trail: ATV trails are often untapped resources, even though they often receive very high use by ATV enthusiasts. The trail should be modified to have pull-over areas in several locations. These areas should be located close to gas stations, and directories indicating the location of these gas stations should be on the trail. A guidebook indicating the facilities on and off the trail should be produced; this should also indicate trail access and truck/trailer parking sites. Possible funding sources: local ATV clubs, county government, grants.

Farmton interpretive program

Subtheme: "Our community is the center of trade for the agriculture industry in this region."

Interpretive program components:

1. Develop a self-guided brochure to the historic homes and buildings in the community that are/were related to the agriculture industry. Historic farm homesteads, homes owned by people involved in the farming industry, and public buildings built because of the importance of the agriculture industry in the area

should be identified. Possible funding sources: historical society, chamber of commerce.

2. Install several interpretive signs about the community's involvement in the regional agriculture industry. The subthemes for the signs are as follows: "the agricultural trade in our community" (located in front of city hall, Figure 8); "many agriculture technologies were invented in our community" (located in front of the historical society); and "our community was first established in the 19th century by farm owners and workers" (located in the city park). Possible funding sources: county government funds, foundation grants.
3. Encourage the creation of interpretive exhibits at the historical society. These should highlight the history of the city as related to the farming industry. Exhibits could be used to highlight and promote nearby farms. Possible funding sources: local farms, historical society, foundation grants.

Miscellaneous interpretive program components:

1. Have "date of construction" plaques put on unique and historic public buildings and homes (with owners' permission). Possible funding sources: owners of buildings, grants.

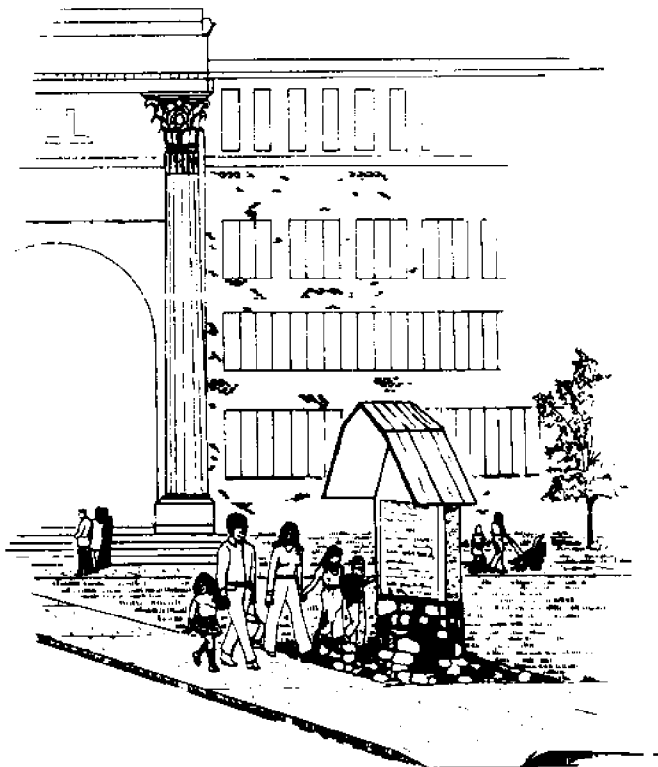


Figure 8. An interpretive sign display in front of City Hall, Farmton. The display's overhang reflects the agricultural theme of the byway.

Arkville interpretive program

Subtheme: "The agricultural heritage of our community is expressed through the creation of folk art."

Interpretive program components:

1. Develop a promotional interpretive brochure about the many folk art shops in the community and the history and significance of different folk art forms in the area. It should contain a map directing visitors to these shops, as well as interpretive information about the type of folk art found at each shop. Possible funding sources: chamber of commerce, local businesses.
2. Encourage each business selling folk art to hold weekend craft demonstrations for visitors. Possible funding sources: local businesses.
3. Organize a folk art festival with demonstrations of art techniques and special sales. Possible funding sources: sponsors, admission charge.
4. Install a three-paneled kiosk in the small village park. One panel should contain a map to the businesses in the town; one an interpretive sign about the history of the village and its folk art heritage; and the third, up-to-date information about local attractions and festivals. Possible funding sources: chamber of commerce, local businesses, attractions.

Miscellaneous interpretive program components:

1. Have "date of construction" plaques put on unique and/or historic public buildings and homes (with owners' permission). Possible funding sources: owners of buildings, grants.

Appleville Interpretive program

Subtheme: "Many of the residents of Appleville work in the region's agriculture industry."

Interpretive program component:

1. Interpretive development in this village should be limited because of the low number of attractions, the narrow subtheme, and the use of the village by visitors for grocery-supply purposes only. A simple sign display that discusses the settlement of the village and the dependence of residents on the agriculture industry could be located in the village park. Possible funding sources: local government, grants.

CASE STUDY: THE SEAWAY TRAIL

Planning components used:

- Development of a federally-designated scenic byway.
- Production of a series of comprehensive tourism plans that include interpretive development.
- Creation of a series of interpretive guidebooks and information kiosks.
- Establishment of a scenic byway monitoring system used to evaluate the success of the byway.

About the Seaway Trail:

The Seaway Trail is a 454-mile scenic byway driving route that meanders from Massena in northeastern New York State to Ripley in western New York, following the St. Lawrence and Niagara Rivers and Lakes Ontario and Erie. The trail was designated a National Recreation Trail in 1986 and is used by many different recreation groups including automobile drivers and bicyclists. A 46-mile section of trail following the Lake Erie coast in Pennsylvania was added in 1991. The trail is administered by Seaway Trail, Inc., a not-for-profit organization with more than 250 member businesses, individuals, and organizations.

Tourism development plans have helped guide tourism and interpretation development along the Seaway Trail. A *Tourism Development Plan for the New York Seaway Trail* and *New York State's Seaway Trail Action Plan* have been produced for the entire length of the trail. Tourism development themes identified in these plans include coastal recreation, history of the coast, people of the coast, natural resources, international coastline and coastal agriculture. Because of its length, the Seaway Trail was divided into 10 smaller zones for tourism planning purposes. Tourism development plans for several of these zones, identifying specific tourism and interpretation development recommendations, have been produced. Two publications designed to evaluate the success of the Seaway Trail have also



Figure 9.
Seaway
Trail's logo.

been produced: *Design of a Marketing Conversion and Evaluation System for Seaway Trail Advertising Programs and Tourism Monitoring System*.

The Seaway Trail is marked by trailblazer signs showing the byway's logo (Figure 9) and 60 visitor information kiosks. Seaway Trail, Inc. has produced many interpretive guides for visitors, including *Seaway Trail Guide to the War of 1812*, *The Nautical Seaway Trail Chartbook and Waterfront Guide*, *Seaway Trail Lighthouses*, and *Seaway Trail Bicycling*. These guides have been successful at promoting the Seaway Trail to visitors. Historic War of 1812 sites along the trail are marked by a series of 42 interpretive signs. These signs contain brief interpretive information, which is explained in detail in the *Seaway Trail Guide to the War of 1812*.

For more information, contact Seaway Trail, Inc. at 1-800-SEAWAY-T or (915) 646-1626.

**INTERPRETING A
COMMUNITY ON A CANAL
OR RIVER CORRIDOR**

The city of Riverside (population 17,000) is located on a 32-mile-long river. Three other communities are found on the river; two within Riverside County, and the third in Weston County. The river is a navigable waterway and is used by recreational boaters only.

Riverside decides to take advantage of the tremendous recreational potential of the river by improving its tourism program. The construction of a marina is undertaken first. Next, a river walkway from the marina to a fishing access site is constructed. This increased development causes an increase in visitor use of the facilities, which causes an increase in improper garbage disposal by boaters. The community decides to move forward with an extensive interpretive program designed to both manage visitors' garbage disposal habits, and inform residents and visitors alike about the tremendous history and present-day resources of the river. An interpretation program committee is set up consisting of the director of the Riverside Chamber of Commerce, the director and exhibit designer of the Riverside Historical Society, and the mayor of the city of Riverside. A separate planning committee consisting of the directors of the Riverside and Weston County planning boards, the director of the regional tourism promotion agency, and the mayor of the city of Riverside is later organized to coordinate interpretive development along the entire river. The exhibit designer of the Riverside Historical Society agrees to volunteer time to design any interpretive signs and publications to be developed.

Objectives

1. To increase visitors' understanding of the natural and historic resources of the river.
2. To educate boaters about the proper methods for disposing of garbage from their boats.
3. To promote use of the river by visitors and residents.

**Inventory of resources
and attractions**

1. *The entire river (excluding the city of Riverside):*

Industries:

- Growing sport fishing and boating industries
- Two hydropower facilities
- Three manufacturing industries

Resources:

- A history of coal and grain shipping on the river
- A history of shipbuilding
- A unique aquatic environment inhabited by many species
- of birds, fish, plants, and insects

2. *City of Riverside:*

Historic sites:

- Historical society museum

Recreational activities and facilities:

- Sport fishing (largemouth bass, northern pike, and yellow perch)
- Marina (35 slips) with boat launch, gas pump, restrooms and showers, electrical/water hookup
- Walkway along river
- Park
- Fishing access

Industries and businesses:

- Motorboat repair and supply shop
- Three bed and breakfasts
- Two bait and tackle shops
- Two hydropower stations
- Three food-processing industries
- Two manufacturing industries

Resources:

- A history of grain mills, boat yards, and coal storage facilities

Development of an Interpretive program plan

This interpretive program has been divided into two components: the entire river corridor and the city of Riverside. The other communities along the river will not be moving ahead with interpretive development at this time. A broad theme for the program was selected so that the program can be expanded to include them in the future.

River corridor interpretive program

Theme: "The river resource has affected the development of the communities along it."

Interpretive program components:

1. Develop an interpretive guide to the facilities and resources found along the river for boaters. This should be a cooperative effort among the four river communities, the Riverside and Weston County planning boards, and the regional tourism promotion agency. Information on the local garbage disposal problem should be included. Possible funding sources: grants, tourism promotion agency.
2. Develop for visitors a designated driving loop to the attractions and resources along the river. The loop will start at the origin of the river, and then travel along both sides of the river. Car pull-over areas with interpretive kiosks should be installed at significant or scenic points along the driving loop. These kiosks will consist of two panels: a directory to attractions and businesses along the river, and a sign interpreting the significant resources at each pull-over site. Possible funding sources: local attractions and businesses, grants.
3. Develop a tape recording on cassette that interprets how the different attractions and facilities along the driving loop contributed to the development of the communities along the river. This will be for use by automobile drivers, and should

include quotes from historical and present day residents about the different industries and resources along the river. Visitors will be able to purchase it from local chambers of commerce, visitor information centers, and local attractions and facilities for a minimal fee. Possible funding sources: grants, income from purchase of tapes.

4. Educate boaters about the effects of improper garbage disposal by: posting signs which explain the negative impacts of improper garbage disposal on the environment and wildlife, and how visitors can help prevent these problems; producing and distributing a trifold brochure which outlines the problem and how to prevent it; and publicizing the cleanup campaign through broadcasts on the local radio station. The installation of garbage cans at all rest areas, boat tie-up points and launches, marinas, and attractions, and the regularly scheduled pickup and disposal of garbage from these cans is also recommended. Possible funding sources: marina and boat-launch user fees, local government, local not-for-profit organizations.

Riverside Interpretive program

Subtheme: "The river resource has greatly influenced the development of recreational and manufacturing industries in Riverside."

Interpretive program components:

1. Install a four-paneled kiosk near the boat launch and marina (Figure 10). The four panels will be as follows: a map of the river showing the attractions, facilities, and communities found on it; a business directory for Riverside; information about boat access

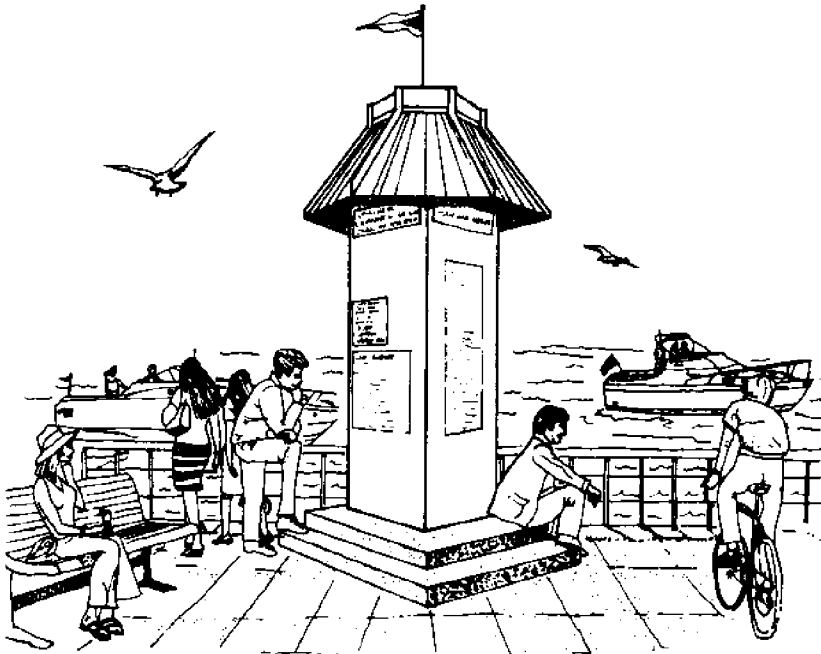


Figure 10. A four-paneled kiosk located at the Riverside marina.

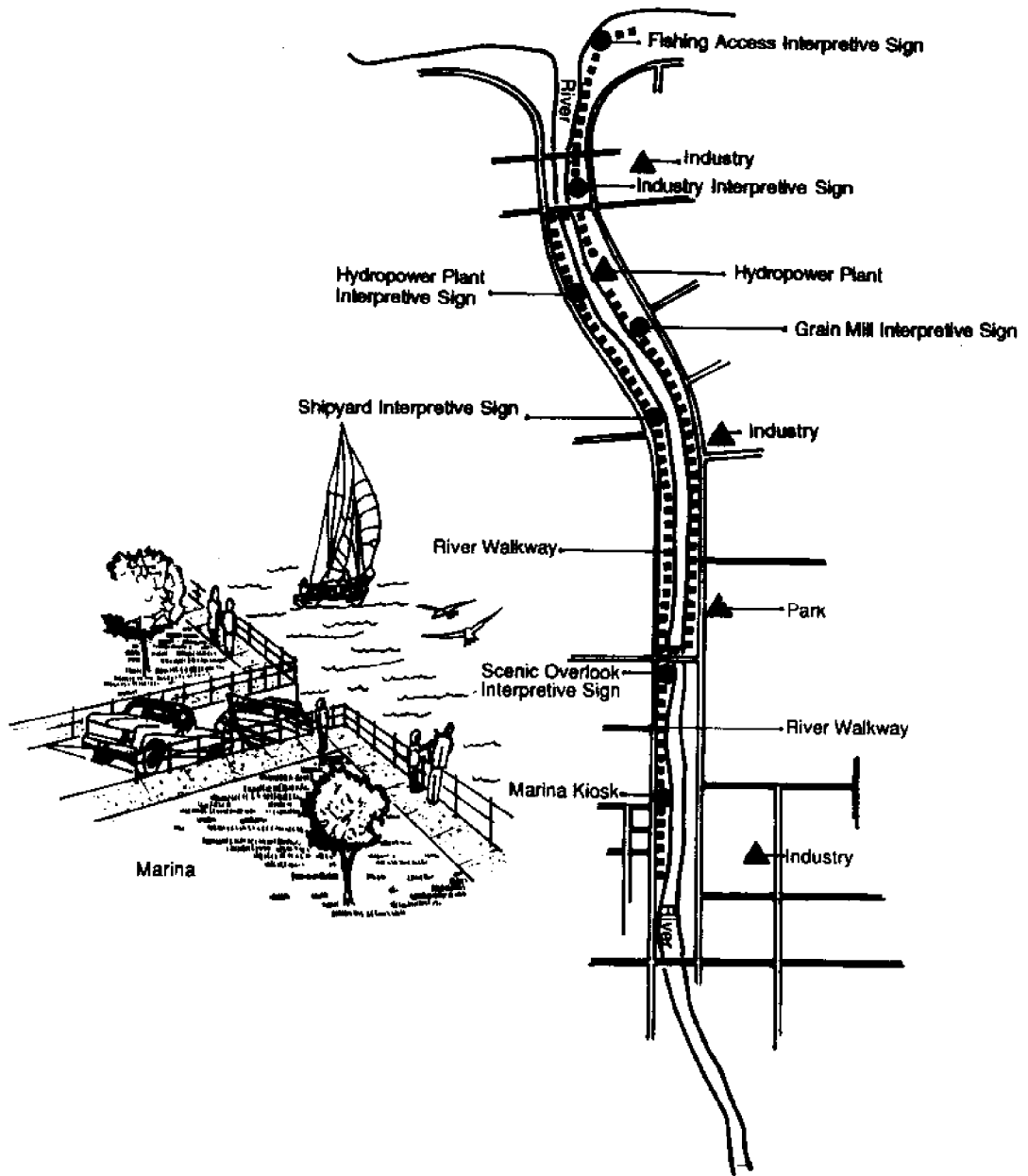


Figure 11. A map showing the placement of interpretive signs along Riverside's river walkway.

facilities; and information about local sport fishing. Possible funding source: city of Riverside, local businesses, and attractions.

2. Install a series of interpretive signs along the river walkway (Figure 11). The subthemes and locations are as follows: "shipbuilding established Riverside as a major port on the river," located at the site of the historic ship yard; "many different products were transported through Riverside to other areas of the country in the 19th century," located at an historic grain mill; "the river environment had changed through time because of industrial and recreational use," located at scenic overlook on river; "hydropower is an important source of energy production for our area," located across the river from one hydropower plant; "many industries depend on the river resource today," located near one industry; and "recreational use of the river has changed over time," located near a fishing access point on the river. Possible funding sources: industries, local power company, historical society, chamber of commerce, grants.
3. Develop a small trifold brochure about the impact of the river on the development of the community. Information on local businesses and industries should be included. Possible funding sources: historical society, chamber of commerce, local businesses and industries.
4. Encourage local industries to provide guided tours of their facilities for visitors and/or develop visitor centers which interpret their manufacturing processes through interpretive exhibits and video presentations. Exhibits interpreting each industry should be installed at either the Riverside Chamber of Commerce or the Riverside Public Library to promote resident and visitor awareness of them. Possible funding sources: local industries, chamber of commerce.

CASE STUDY: THE OSWEGO RIVER CORRIDOR

Planning components used:

- Development of an interpretive guide through extensive public involvement.
- Development of a scenic-assessment plan for the river corridor.

About the Oswego River Corridor:

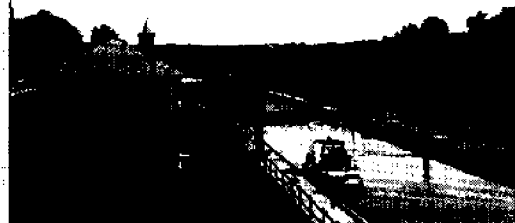
The Oswego River, a 25-mile-long branch of the New York State Barge Canal System, connects the Erie Canal with Lake Ontario in central New York State. The river connects the cities of Oswego (at the northern terminus of the river) and Fulton, and the village of Phoenix (at the southern terminus). Although the Oswego Canal is no longer used extensively for commercial boating purposes, recreational boating on the river has increased tremendously over the past decade.

In response to New York State legislation promoting the rejuvenation and development of the state-owned properties along the Oswego Canal, the Oswego County Department of Promotion and Tourism, with technical assistance from New York Sea Grant, decided to promote the river's resources by producing an interpretive guide for boaters. The project was initiated in the fall of 1991 by the designation of a project committee consisting of the director of the Oswego County Department of Promotion and Tourism, an extension specialist in interpretation planning from New York Sea Grant, and a freelance writer. More than 45 businesses, industries, organizations, and agencies were contacted for information over the next six months. The completed inventory of information was then compiled and prioritized to include only the facts that conveyed the theme "The Oswego River provides vast historical, natural, and cultural resources for recreational boaters." In September 1992, 10,000 copies of the 40-page *Oswego River Canalling: a Boater's Guide to the History, Facilities, and Resources of the Oswego River* were published. Within the four-month period following its release,

the supply of copies was so diminished that the decision was made to reprint the guide. In April 1993, 15,000 copies of the guide were reprinted. The guide has since been used by boaters from all over the northeastern United States and Canada and has been used as an educational tool in many of the school districts throughout Central New York. The Oswego County Department of Promotion and Tourism has also produced several interpretive guides on sport fishing.

Another document, *A Scenic Assessment of the Oswego River Corridor*, produced by the Oswego County Planning Board in 1992, assesses the potential for tourism development on the Oswego River in the future. This document outlines objectives for improving the scenic areas along the Oswego River. Designs for many automobile pull-over areas and other river access areas are included. Plans have been made for the development of interpretive signs at 10 of these rest areas. The three communities along the river also are in the process of planning for tourism development along their waterfront areas.

For more information, contact the Oswego County Department of Promotion and Tourism at (315) 349-8322, or the Oswego County Planning Board at (315) 349-8292.



Lock 8 of the Oswego Canal, Oswego, NY.

INTERPRETING A LOOP TRAIL

The village of Marsh has a population of 6,500 and is located 15 miles from a scenic byway. The roads between the scenic byway and the community are two-lane county routes, well maintained both in the winter and summer. This area is rural, containing several wetland areas such as bogs and swamps. The chamber of commerce director proposes the idea of developing a loop tour from the scenic byway through the community and back to the byway, in order to draw visitors from the byway to the community. Most of the not-for-profit groups and agencies in the community support this idea and decide to proceed with developing a plan for this program. A program committee comprised of the chamber of commerce director, the manager of a nearby state park, and the directors of two local chapters of not-for-profit, nature-oriented organizations is organized. The group first designates a loop off the scenic byway called "The Bog Trail." In order to lessen the potential impact on the area, the group decides not to have the trail officially designated as a scenic byway until they are sure that no negative impacts on nearby natural areas occur from their plans. They do, however, decide to develop a logo for the trail (Figure 12) and place this on the trail to orient visitors. Figure 13 is a map of the Bog Trail.



Figure 12. Logo for the Bog Trail

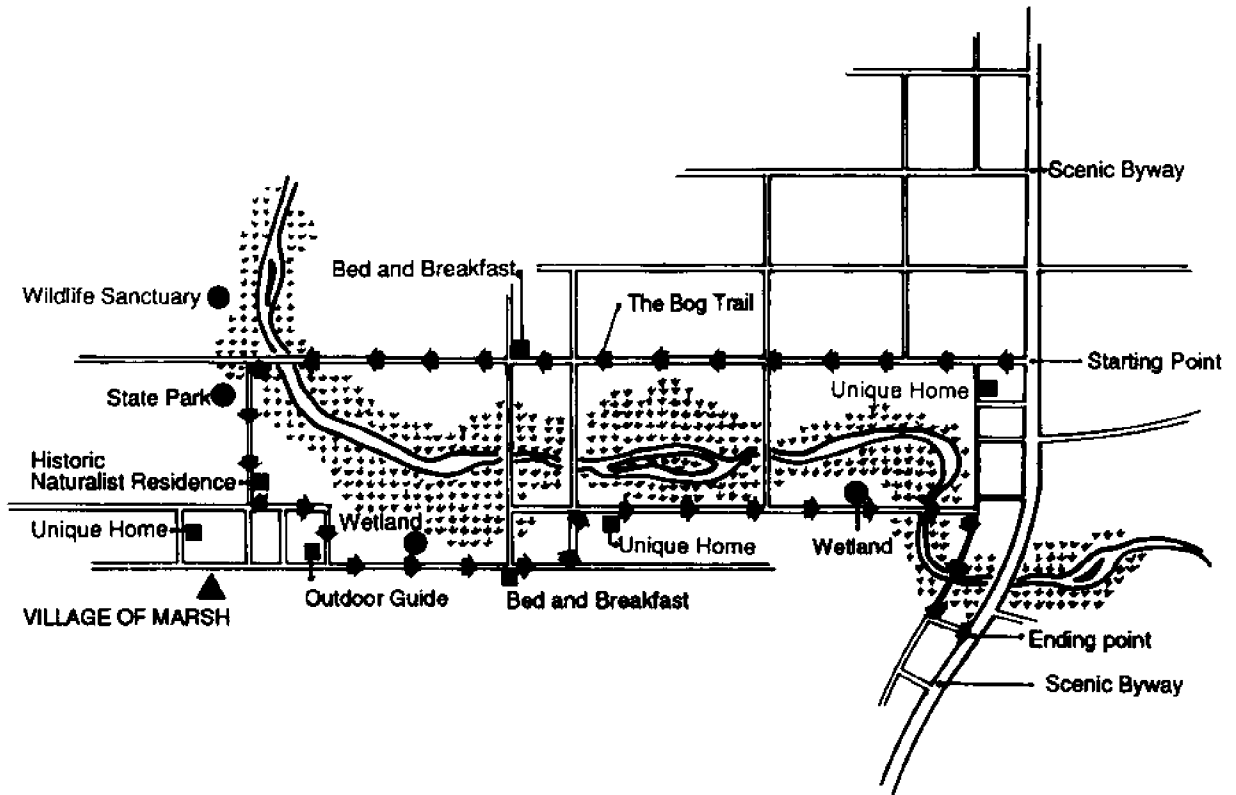


Figure 13. Map showing the Bog Trail, and the attractions and resources along it.

Objectives

1. To increase the economic impacts of tourism on the community.
2. To educate the public about the vast natural resources in the area.
3. To protect the fragile wetland resources of the area, while promoting some recreational use.

Inventory of resources and attractions

The Bog Trail:

Natural areas:

- Wildlife sanctuary owned by a not-for-profit group
- Two wetland areas owned by another not-for-profit group
- One state park containing wetland areas

Regional resources:

- Existence of several rare bird and plant species
- Unique wetland areas

Village of Marsh:

Historic sites:

- Several unique private homes
- The home of a famous historic naturalist

Businesses:

- Two bed and breakfast operations
- One outdoor guide service

Development of an interpretive program plan

This program will consist of two components: the Bog Trail and the village of Marsh. The subtheme of the village will be directly related to the overall theme of the Bog Trail.

The Bog Trail interpretive program

Theme: "Our local wetlands are unique and fragile areas that need to be preserved for wildlife habitat and for the enjoyment of both residents and visitors."

Interpretive Program elements:

1. Develop a natural areas guide for visitors. This guide will describe each natural area, its rules for visitor use, any unique species of wildlife in the area, the organizational objectives of the two not-for-profit groups and the state parks department, and general geological and ecological information about the region. Information about the locations of rare plant species will not be provided in order to prevent any potential negative impacts. Possible funding sources: cooperative funding from all groups involved.
2. Develop self-guided tours to the trail systems in each of the natural areas. These should consist of an interpretive guide and interpretive signs. These signs should focus on the unique ecosystems and species of the area and their preservation and should somewhat blend in to the natural surroundings (Figure 14). A trail directory should be installed in the parking lot or at the trail heads of each area. Small signs stating "Wetland areas are

fragile — protect them by staying on the trail at all times” should be posted frequently along the trails and at the trail heads; a more detailed explanation of how going off the trails affects wetland areas should be given in guidebooks and on interpretive signs. Possible funding sources: agencies or organizations responsible for the wetland areas.

3. Hire a regional interpreter to organize, promote, and conduct interpretive programs at the natural areas. This should be a full-time position. A detailed job description will have to be developed which clearly outlines the amount of time the interpreter will spend conducting programs in each natural area. Possible funding sources: the two not-for-profit groups and the state parks department, grants.
4. Develop a “Bog Interpretive Center” at the state park. The exhibits in the center will focus on how the bogs developed over time and the wildlife that inhabit the bogs. A video interpreting the evolution of plant and animal species over time for survival in the wetland environment should be developed for viewing by visitors. Walking trails comprised of boardwalks will be constructed to enable visitors to view wetland areas close up without negatively impacting them. Possible funding sources: state parks department, grants.

The village of Marsh interpretive program

Subtheme: “Regional efforts for preserving wetland ecosystems are centered in our community.”

Interpretive program components:

1. Develop a four-paneled kiosk in the central square of the community. One panel will be a directory to the local businesses in the community; one will be an interpretive panel discussing the history of the community and the importance of the surrounding

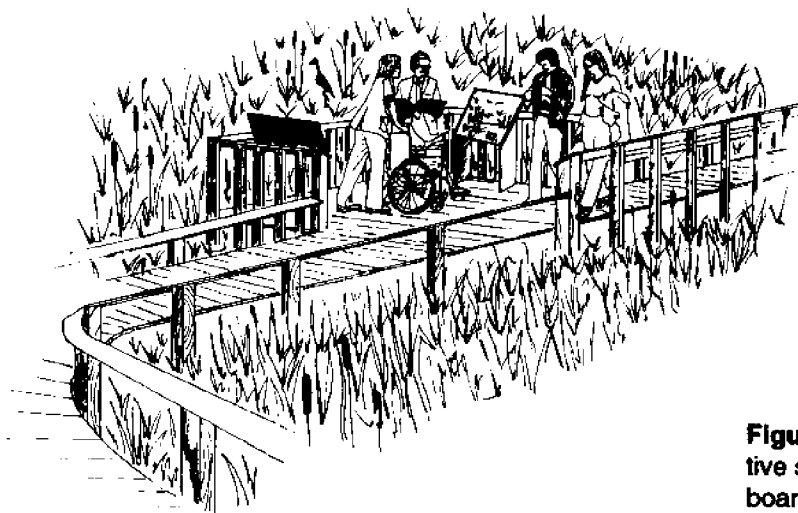


Figure 14. An interpretive sign on a wetland boardwalk trail.

wetland ecosystems to it; one will discuss the many environmentally oriented organizations that exist in the community and their goals and objectives; and one will be a directory to the "Bog Trail" and include interpretive information about each of the sites along the trail. Possible funding sources: chamber of commerce, grants.

2. Install an interpretive sign in front of the home of the famous naturalist explaining her important accomplishments (with permission of the present home owner). Possible funding sources: historical society, chamber of commerce, grants.

CASE STUDY: THE NIAGARA HISTORIC TRAIL

Planning components used:

- Development of a county-designated loop trail connected to both a scenic byway and a canal system.
- Creation of an interpretive guide through county-wide involvement.

About the Niagara Historic Trail:

The development of the Niagara Historic Trail covers almost two decades. The project was initiated in 1976 by the Niagara County legislature with their designation of the Niagara Historic Trail and the production of *Welcome to the Niagara Historic Trail*, a 48-page tabloid that listed the many historic sites in Niagara County, New York. Many historians, community groups, and community leaders participated in this project. Further trail development did not occur until the early 1990s, when the original trail was extended to circle the county. Today, the trail is approximately 100 miles long and is marked by 128 directional signs showing the trail's logo. One very unique factor of the trail is that it connects with two major scenic corridor routes in New York: the Seaway Trail and the Erie Canal.

In 1991, the original tabloid for the sites on the trail was revised and reformatted into a full-color, 4"x9" interpretive guide entitled *Welcome to Your Niagara Historic Trail*. The guide is organized into three distinct regions of the county: "River Magic," which interprets the Niagara River area; "Lake Odyssey" for the area bordering Lake Ontario; and "Canal Journey," which interprets the communities along the portion of the Erie Canal that passes through Niagara County. It is designed to encourage visitors to wander off the trail and explore the communities in Niagara County. Maps of Niagara County and its communities, which indicate the locations of existing historic sites, monuments, and buildings, are included. Dates of local festivals are also provided. Many groups participated in the development of this project, including: the Niagara County

legislature and its committees of Commerce, Transportation and Tourism, and Senior and Youth Services; Niagara County Planning and Industrial Development Department; Niagara County Tourism Department; the Niagara County historian; and an ad hoc committee, comprised of local historians in Niagara County, that was organized to work with the county government.

In 1991, 20,000 copies of the 28-page guide were produced; it is due to be reprinted in the near future (pending funding). The guide has been used extensively in school districts throughout the county as an educational tool and has received the 1992 Tourism Award from the Preservation League of New York State. It can be obtained from libraries, town halls, and information centers in Niagara County, and the Niagara County Tourism Department. Other plans being considered for tourism and interpretive development along the trail include the development of a promotional video for the trail and a cassette recording of interpretive information about sites on the trail.

For more information, contact Niagara County Tourism at 1-800-338-7890.



The Niagara River gorge is one of the spectacular sights along the Niagara County Historic Trail.

INTERPRETING AN URBAN AREA

Center City is a large urban area with a population of 95,000 people located on a 250-mile-long scenic byway. It is the cultural center for its region. The tourism promotion agency for the city decides to promote its many cultural attractions to visitors through the use of interpretation. A small project committee that includes the director of the city's tourism promotion agency, the director of the chamber of commerce, a hired consultant, and a representative of the city's arts council is set up.

Objectives

1. To promote the cultural attractions of the city to visitors.
2. To increase economic prosperity of businesses and cultural organizations in the city.
3. To foster community pride in the city's neighborhoods.

Inventory of resources and attractions

Center City:

Cultural & Artistic attractions:

- Two art museums
- Ten art galleries
- Outdoor theater
- Opera company
- Symphony orchestra
- Seven movie theaters
- Two museums in the homes of famous residents
- Four different ethnic sections of the city
- Many unique buildings

Historic attractions:

- Historical society museum

Industries:

- Convention center
- Major newspaper
- Several major manufacturing industries
- Small community college
- Many culture-based businesses throughout the city

Development of an Interpretive program plan

The focus of this interpretive program will be Center City. However, because of the proximity of the city to a scenic byway system, this interpretive program should be physically linked to this scenic byway.

Center City Interpretive program

Theme: "The different cultural groups that reside in our city have contributed to the development of a diversity of attractions and industries."

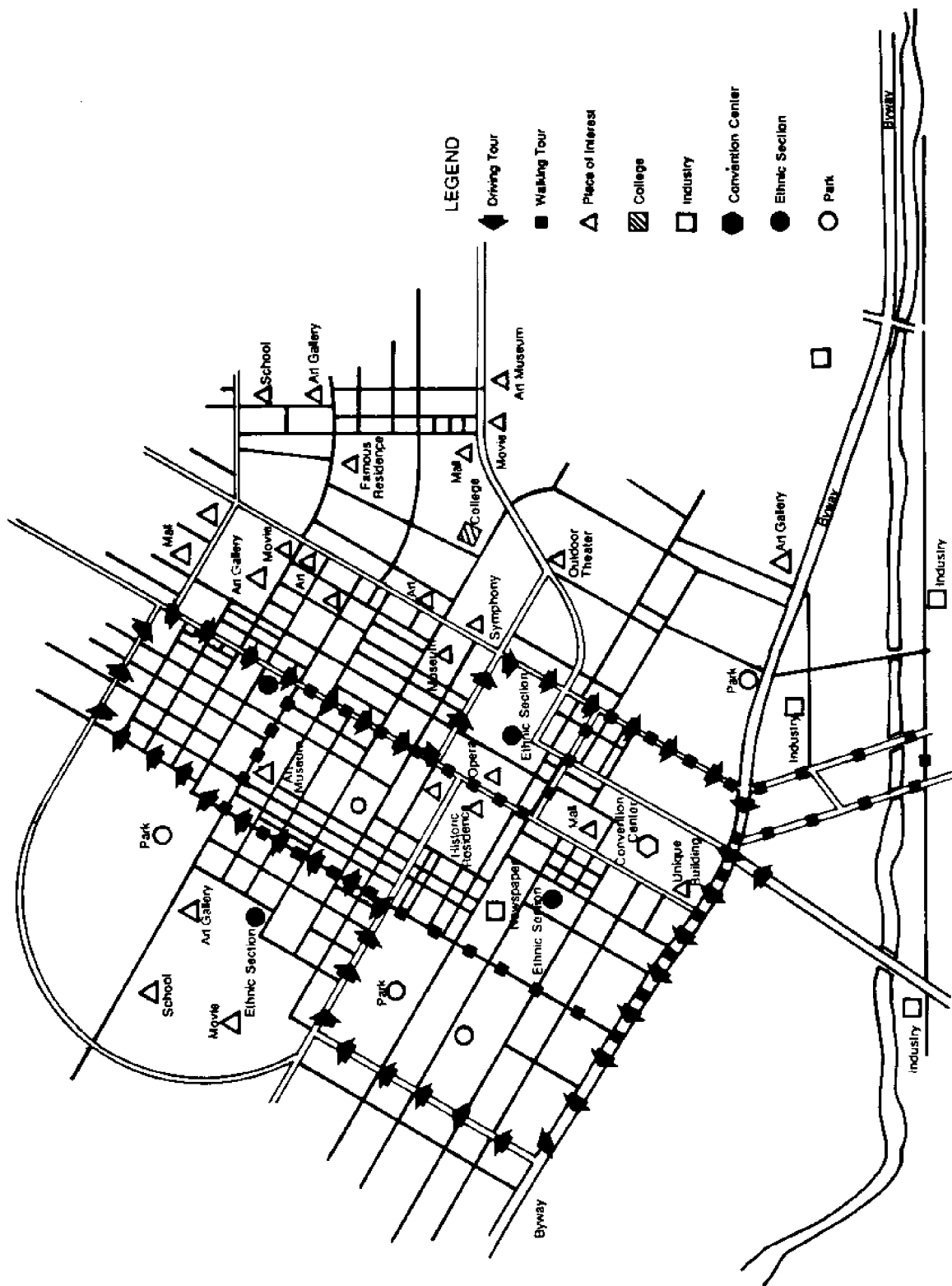


Figure 15. A map of center city showing both the walking and driving tours.

Interpretive program components:

1. Develop a walking tour to the different cultural attractions of the city (Figure 15). An interpretive guide should be produced, through the contributions of the different attractions, that discusses the history of each, its hours of operation, and the walking distance between attractions. Outside each attraction, an interpretive sign display focusing on it and providing a directory to the remaining attractions in the city should be installed. Possible funding sources: chamber of commerce, tourism promotion agency, local attractions.
2. Put up interpretive displays in the convention center that promote the different cultural attractions and ethnic neighborhoods in the city. A video interpreting and promoting the city's resources and attractions should be developed for viewing by visitors in the convention center. Possible funding source: convention and visitors bureau.
3. Develop a trifold brochure interpreting the historical development of the four different ethnic neighborhoods in the city and focusing on the unique businesses and attractions found in each. Possible funding sources: historical society.
4. Develop a scenic automobile touring loop that starts at the scenic byway, travels through the city, and returns to the scenic byway (Figure 15). Directional signs for this loop should be placed at regular intervals along the way. An interpretive guide for the attractions, neighborhoods, and resources on this loop should be produced. This should be promoted to local tour bus companies. Possible funding sources: tourism promotion agency, grants.
5. Develop a guidebook to the unique architecture of the various monuments, homes, and museums in the city (Figure 16). This should focus on how the styles of architecture reflect the different cultures that created them. Possible funding sources: historical society, grants.
6. Develop an interpretive brochure discussing the historical development of the city from the industry point of view. Information on each local industry should be included. The local industries should be encouraged to provide tours for visitors, and interpretive sign displays explaining the industry's history and manufacturing techniques should be placed outside of each. The impacts of local ethnic groups on these industries should also be discussed. Possible funding sources: local industries.



Figure 16. People reading interpretive guidebooks in front of a historic home in Center City.

CASE STUDY: NEW YORK STATE'S URBAN CULTURAL PARK SYSTEM

Planning components used:

- Development of 14 parks and related tourism/interpretive facilities.
- Promotion through a state-wide marketing program.

About the Urban Cultural Park System:

New York's Urban Cultural Park System (UCP) is comprised of 14 parks covering 21 municipalities throughout the state. The idea of turning urban areas into parks was conceived in the late 1970s and was legislated by the state as a program within the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) in 1982.

The parks are located within urban areas that have historical, natural, or cultural significance. The purpose of the program is to create partnerships between state and local governments and the private sector, and focus efforts on the preservation, interpretation, recreational use, and economic revitalization of these 14 urban areas. The parks are united through a statewide marketing program.

The focal point of each UCP is an interpretive visitor center which provides orientation and interpretation for UCP visitors. Other interpretive components include signs, publications, exhibits, and a variety of events. While some of the UCPs are still in

the planning stage for interpretive development, others have already established visitors' centers and other facilities.

Some of the UCPs are located on scenic byways or canals (e.g., Rochester, Buffalo, and Sackets Harbor are on the Seaway Trail, while Syracuse, Hudson-Mohawk, Whitehall, Schenectady, and Seneca Falls are on the New York State Canal System). Some of these UCPs, their themes for tourism development, and their interpretive accomplishments follow.

Rochester

Theme: The natural environment

Interpretive program components:

- The Center at High Falls (interpretive center)
- Several interpretive guides to historic districts

Syracuse

Themes: Business and capital; transportation

Interpretive program components:

- Visitor center operated by the Erie Canal Museum
- Several interpretive guides
- Interpretive sign displays in many city parks

Sackets Harbor

Theme: Defense

Interpretive Program Components:

- Interpretive sign displays in the community

The themes of the 11 remaining UCPs are as follows: Albany, business and capital; Buffalo, flowering of culture; Hudson-Mohawk, labor and industry; Kingston, transportation; New York City, maritime trade and immigration; Ossining, reform movements; Saratoga Springs, natural environment; Schenectady, labor and industry; Seneca Falls, reform movements; Susquehanna, immigration and migration; and Whitehall, defense.

For more information on Urban Cultural Parks, contact OPRHP, Peebles Island, PO Box 279, Waterford, NY 12188-0279.



*Columbus
Park,
Syracuse, NY.*

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

SUMMARY

The importance of including interpretation in tourism programs has been discussed throughout this guide. Interpretation benefits community tourism programs because it promotes the understanding, management, and exploration of local attractions and resources by visitors and residents — something that facility development alone can not accomplish. Interpretation also connects attractions and resources within a tourism program through theme development. This provides visitors with a clear understanding of what is unique about the area they are in or are planning to visit.

Planning is the key to developing an interpretive program suitable for your area and needs. The twelve-step process discussed in this guide outlines what is involved in planning an interpretive program. By adapting this process to the needs of your area, you will ensure that your interpretive program is well suited to local resident and visitor needs and desires. Proper planning also ensures that overuse of local facilities and attractions, and deterioration of resources is prevented through successful management. The comprehensive study of local resources and attractions promoted by this process will enable further expansion of your interpretive program in the future if desired.

To find out more about interpretation, consult an organization devoted to interpretation (Appendix C), a local educational institution specializing in tourism and recreation planning and development, or your local Cooperative Extension or Sea Grant office.

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CHAPTER VI
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. FUNDING SOURCES FOR TOURISM AND INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

Many of the funds that are available for interpretive projects are available through foundations. If you are interested in foundation grants, visit a regional or university library in your area for resource books on available foundation grants.

United States:

<i>Environmental education grants</i>	EPA Environmental Education Grants - Applications AScI 1365 Beverly Road McLean, VA 22101
<i>Grants for educational projects related to the development and promotion of Native American arts and crafts</i>	Indian Arts & Crafts Board Main Interior Building, Rm. 4004 Dept. of the Interior Washington, D.C. 20240
<i>Grants for museum operations, projects, training, and research</i>	Institute of Museum Services 1100 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Rm. 510 Washington, D.C. 20202
<i>Coastal tourism and recreation grants</i>	National Coastal Resources Research & Development Institute 528 S.W. Mill, Suite 250 PO Box 751 Portland, OR 97207
<i>Grants for art and cultural projects and programs</i>	National Endowment for the Arts Nancy Hanks Center 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N. W. Washington, D.C. 20506
<i>Grants for programs and projects related to the humanities</i>	National Endowment for the Humanities 1100 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Rm. 429 Washington, D.C. 20506
<i>Outdoor and urban recreation development grants (not available to individuals or private organizations)</i>	Chief, Recreation Grants Division National Park Service Department of the Interior PO Box 37127 Washington, D.C. 20013-7127
<i>Grants for the protection of historic sites (available as subgrants through each state's historic preservation agency only)</i>	National Trust for Historic Preservation 1785 Massachusetts Ave. NW Washington, D.C. 20036
<i>Grants for the removal of architectural barriers for physically disabled people at public facilities</i>	Special Education Programs Office of the Assistant Secretary, Special Education and Rehabilitative Services Dept. of Education 400 Maryland Ave. SW Washington, D.C. 20202

APPENDIX A. (continued)

Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) transportation enhancement and scenic byway grants (available to municipal planning and scenic byway organizations only)

State departments of transportation or other state scenic byway agencies

In New York:
NYS Department of Transportation
Bureau of Landscape Architecture
1220 Washington Avenue 4-110
Albany, NY 12232

New York State:

Grants for arts in education and design

NYS Council on the Arts
Dept. of Communications
915 Broadway
New York, NY 10010

Grants for public humanities programs

NY Council for the Humanities Program
198 Broadway, 10th floor
New York, NY 10038

Environmental education grants

Natural Heritage Trust
Contact your regional office of the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, & Historic Pres.

REDPP Business Development Loan Program, tourism destination grants

New York State Urban Development Corporation
Director, Regional Economic Development
Partnership Program
1515 Broadway
New York, NY 10036

APPENDIX B. SOURCES OF SOCIOECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA IN NEW YORK STATE

<i>Fishing license sales</i>	NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation Division of Fish and Wildlife 50 Wolf Rd. Albany, NY 12233 Phone: (518) 457-3400
<i>Motorboat and snowmobile registrations</i>	NYS Dept. of Motor Vehicles Research Bureau Albany, NY 12245 Phone: (518) 474-6122
<i>Hotel occupancy tax receipts</i>	County Treasurer's Office
<i>International bridge crossings</i>	Bridge Authorities NYS Dept. of Transportation Data Services Bureau 1220 Washington Blvd. Bldg. 4, Room 115 Albany, NY 12232 Phone: (518) 457-6143
<i>Travel and tourism employment</i>	Bureau of Business Research Department of Economic Development One Commerce Plaza Albany, NY 12245 Phone: (518) 474-7721
<i>Travel trends</i>	US Travel Data Center Two Lafayette Centre 1133 21st St., NW Washington, D. C. 20036-3390 Phone: (202) 293-1040
<i>For other information</i>	New York Sea Grant 52 Swetman Hall SUNY Oswego Oswego, NY 13126 Phone: (315) 341-3042

APPENDIX C. INTERPRETATION ORGANIZATIONS IN NORTH AMERICA

Heritage Interpretation International
PO Box 6116, Station "C"
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada T5B4K5

Interpretation Canada
187 Old Topsaid Road
St. Johns, Newfoundland
Canada A1E2B2

Interpretive Management Institute
Mott Training Center
PO Box 699
Pacific Grove, CA 93950
USA

National Association for Interpretation
PO Box 1892
Fort Collins, CO 80522
USA

North American Association for Environmental Education
PO Box 400
Troy, OH 45373
USA

Professional Guides Association of America
2416 S. Eads Street
Arlington, VA 22202
USA

