

POLICY AND PROCEDURE MEMORANDUM #62

SUBJECT: INTERPRETIVE PROSPECTUS

TO: POLICY AND PROCEDURE MEMORANDUM HOLDERS

EFFECTIVE DATE: MARCH 25, 1997

POLICY STATEMENT

An Interpretive Prospectus will be developed prior to any permanent development or master planning of any state commemorative areas, state preservation areas and state park facilities in an effort to protect the historical, cultural or natural integrity of the site. Every site that the Office of State Parks develops has its own unique history, natural and cultural features and themes which must be interpreted. Each site presents different problems and challenges; therefore, the approach to developing an interpretive plan for each site is different and inherently time consuming. This is stated to emphasize that there are no short cuts in developing an Interpretive Prospectus for a site.

Ideally, after researching and inventorying a site, sufficient time should be allotted to carefully construct a methodology for interpreting the area. A Master Plan and an Interpretive Prospectus should be formulated based on a complete research effort. The Interpretive Prospectus is an intricate part in the process of planning the development of an area. It should direct the contributions of professional planners, designers and field interpreters in a realistic manner; however, it should not restrict their imagination or creativity for expression. It should be concise and yet contain enough information to provide objective background and recommendations. It is a detailed statement describing interpretive personnel, materials, equipment, facilities, activities, narratives and scripts. An Interpretive Prospectus provides a means of coordinating all information, interpretive services and the facility throughout a site.

Various elements of the Interpretive Prospectus can change as new ideas, new concepts in interpretation and new discoveries about the site are made. This document should be reviewed continuously and revised at least every five years to reflect desired changes. All revisions must be approved by the Chief of Interpretive Services and the Chief of Operations. Each original Interpretive Prospectus shall be maintained by the Administrative Office/Division of Interpretive Services. Several working copies should be kept current with revised pages at the site. An important feature of the Interpretive Prospectus is that it can serve as a valuable up-to-date training manual for new employees as it incorporates everything one needs to know to interpret the site.

All parks projects requested through the Capital Outlay or 729 process must be in accordance with the prospectus recommendations. A procedure for change has been addressed in the body of the policy.

The procedures for developing an Interpretive Prospectus are as follows;

PROCEDURE: INTERPRETIVE PROSPECTUS

I. Introduction

A. Site Location and Description

- Description of the physical location of the site using population centers, position in a parish and proximity to other points of interest as a reference.
- Site description should include, but is not limited to its flora, fauna, geology,

topography, climate, and any cultural, historical, archaeological or recreational resources.

- Include a map or photograph of the area.
- Should include a comprehensive view of what a visitor can actually see at this site.

B. Significance of the Site

- Explain in detail the importance or significance of the site.

C. History of State Parks' Acquisition and Development

- Brief history of the development of the project describing State Parks' involvement in this process.
- Discuss the contribution of our consultants.
- Discuss the cost of the various phases of work.

D. Interpretive Program Objectives

- Discuss the primary theme.
- Briefly discuss the secondary themes and the interrelationships between cultural, historical, archaeological and natural resources on the site.
- State all objectives which dictate the direction, efforts and actions of our site personnel.
- Emphasize that all interpretive program objectives have an educational basis or intent.
- This section should be written as clearly and concisely as possible.

II. Interpretive Program

A. Research

- Discuss the research done for the exhibits/displays currently in use.
- Include the types of research and references that should be known by on-site interpreters.
- Describe what research has been done concerning the site and note all publications dealing with the site in this section or in the appendix.

B. Interpretive Methodology

- Describe how research is applied in programs.
- Describe what types of programs are used and why. Discussion could include any of the following: living history programs (role playing), simple information dissemination, audio-visual aids, artifacts and furnishings on exhibit, demonstrations, hands on exhibits, reenactments, archaeological excavations,

temporary vs. permanent exhibits, tours (guided or self-guided), trials (guided or self-guided) and outreach programs with local schools.

- Briefly discuss where these programs take place.

C. Facilities, Materials and Equipment

- Discuss the types of references (books, articles, manuscripts) currently available for use at the site.
- Discuss the types of facilities available for use on the site and the function/purpose of each.
- Topics of discussion in this section should include special guidelines (dormitory guidelines, facility use agreement) and park regulations and rules of a general nature that need mentioning (possibly refer to State Parks' regulation brochure).
- Discuss procedures for obtaining artifacts, furnishings, collections, etc. and policies pertaining to these items such as management, accessioning, and cataloging.

D. Personnel

- Briefly describe the personnel assigned to perform interpretive functions and describe their responsibilities in general terms.
- Discuss the need for seasonal interpreters and describe their role.
- Training procedures should be discussed.

E. Visitor Experience

- In detail describe how the entire program is presented to a visitor. Can use flow chart showing where visitors go from station to station (program to program).
- Should use narrative to explain what message is being conveyed to the visitor and refer to the appendix for complete, detailed narrative of all talks, slide programs, taped narratives, museum tours, trail tours, exhibits and generally whatever is said to the visitor by our staff interpreters.
- All narratives should be in detail, but will be mostly factual information. Each interpreter is expected to inject his own personality and humor into his presentations.
- For each station, exhibit or program the purpose, subject matter and anticipated visitor time at each station should be included.
- Describe how groups vs. individuals are handled.
- Describe the schedule of the site as to when it is open to the public, daily hours, days closed, schedule of special programs, and seasonal activities.

F. Role of Other Organizations

- Briefly describe the involvement of other agencies or groups outside State Parks that contribute to the interpretive programs on the site. This could include schools or universities, volunteers, Junior Leagues, 4-H Clubs, scouts, state agencies, individuals, Sierra Club, etc.

G. Guidelines for Future Site Development

- Everything up to this point has been a discussion of what is currently at or done on the site. Existing Master Plans without completed Interpretive Prospectus shall be updated or changed in accordance with this policy. Additionally, prospectus developed through this policy will also change if new research determines need for change. This is the place to elaborate on ideas, concepts and suggestions. Recommendations should be well thought out and should pertain in some way to the interpretation of the site. Suggestions may be to place something on the site, to remove something from the site or to move things around, but the objective of each recommendation should be to enhance the quality of the visitor's experience on that site.

- This section should include a brief discussion and listing of such things as:

1. What land should be acquired to better interpret or protect/buffer the site?
2. What research efforts need to be initiated? Target specific areas of research and factual information that are needed to better interpret the site. Suggest methods to obtain these research data.
3. What artifacts, materials, books, furnishings, implements, equipment, etc. are needed to enhance or improve the interpretive programs on site?
4. What facilities are needed?
5. Are new or other types of personnel desired?
6. What new programs, exhibits or regulations are needed?
7. Recommend areas that are so significant that human activities should be curtailed in these areas.
8. Recommend preservation/conservation measures (artifact, document or furniture conservation).
9. Suggest management programs that are needed (forest management, control beaver populations, erosion control) because they affect the interpretation of the site.
10. What types of programs can be developed with local schools?

H. Appendix

(List of Appendices - will change according to the site needs)

- Bibliography/References - should include all publications dealing with the site; technical, professional or popular articles, trail guides, brochures - exactly what is available from the Office of State Parks or other sources.

- Research Management Plan.
- Exhibit scripts.
- Exhibit photographs.
- Narratives for all interpretive programs conducted by personnel.
- Special guidelines or policies.
- Facility Use Agreement special to the site.
- Trail guide brochure.
- Interpreter's fact sheet.
- Guidelines for archaeological students in field school.
- Others as needed.

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ASSISTANT SECRETARY

THUS DONE AND SIGNED, at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on September 18, 2025 with the understanding and acknowledgment that this PPM has been effective in its current version since March 25, 1997. By my signature below, this PPM shall remain in effect and active unless otherwise amended, replaced, or terminated by myself or my supervisor, designee, or successor.



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H. Brandon Burris  
Assistant Secretary