

August 31, 1994

Park Directive 5000

INTERPRETATION MISSION AND
SCOPE OF PARK INTERPRETATION RESPONSIBILITY

This policy defines the interpretation mission of the Arkansas State Park System and identifies and defines the components of Arkansas State Park interpretation. This policy also mandates park/museum interpretation mission statements and identifies management responsibilities and constraints to interpretation.

I. ARKANSAS STATE PARK SYSTEM INTERPRETATION MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of interpretation in Arkansas State Parks is to support and complement each park/museum's overall mission by assisting in managing and researching Arkansas's natural, historical, and cultural resources, and informing and educating the public about the values and management of those resources.

Programs will relate park/museum resources and heritage to the experience of the visitor and will be presented in a manner which enhances the visitor's understanding and appreciation of site resources and the department's success in managing those resources.

Each park/museum management team will achieve this mission through balanced efforts in the eight components of interpretation, with specific emphasis as identified in the park/museum mission statement, the Interpretation Mission Statement, the Park Interpretation Policy and Plan, and the site's annual interpretation goals.

Together these form the park/museum's annual interpretation strategy which will be monitored by Regional Supervisors, Historical Resources and Museum Services, and Program Services using the Interpretation Status Sheet.

II. PARK/MUSEUM INTERPRETATION MISSION STATEMENT

Each park/museum will develop an Interpretation Mission Statement which supports and complements the park/museum's mission. It is this mission that drives the park/museum interpretive strategy, programs, special events, and other interpretive services and management responsibilities.

- A. The Interpretation Mission Statement will clearly state primary themes, resources, and, where applicable, interpretation time periods.
- B. The Interpretation Mission Statement defines the direction and limits of the park/museum interpretive strategy, including events, programs, and management.
- C. The Interpretation Mission Statement establishes the manner in which historic and natural resource management practices are applied to the park/museum.

III. THE COMPONENTS OF INTERPRETATION

- A. RESEARCH - Compiled for program preparation, historic and scientific knowledge of the site, resource inventories to assist in resource preservation, park/museum management and planning; includes research by staff and by others.
- B. PROGRAMS FOR PARK VISITORS - The first responsibility after resource protection is to provide resource-related information and program services for visitors to the site.
- C. SCHOOL PROGRAMMING - In-park/museum and out-of-park/museum, pre-scheduled, curriculum/resource-related programs and workshops for school groups and their leaders.
- D. NON-PERSONNEL INTERPRETATION - Interpretation not requiring direct staff assistance: audiovisual programming, exhibits, wayside interpretation, publications, self-guiding trails, etc.
- E. OUTREACH - Off-site programs to audiences other than schools; provides a service to, and strengthens relationships, with local communities.

- F. SPECIAL EVENTS - Activities heavily promoted to attract new and/or expanded audiences to a unique park/museum experience that will complement the site's interpretive mission and resource characteristics, leading to mission understanding, appreciation, and repeat visitation.
- G. INTERPRETIVE RESALE - A portion of a park/museum's resale items should relate directly to a site's interpretation mission, its resources, experiences, and programs so that the interpretation message and special experiences are remembered and continued through enjoyment of the resale item.
- H. PROMOTION - Methods consistently used to promote the park/museum, its resources, services, and programs, such as news releases, program schedules, media days, etc.

IV. MANAGEMENT OF INTERPRETIVE SERVICES

The responsibility for effective interpretive services in Arkansas State Parks lies with the Park Superintendent or Museum Director. Each will ensure that interpretive programs, facilities, and other services will be integrated into the total park operation as a key component of management, and that interpretive and education staff receive supervision, guidance, and training in areas of responsibility.

- A. In addition to other duties, the **Park Superintendent or Museum Director** will:
 - 1. Make all park/museum personnel aware of the purpose and intent of interpretive services within the park and demonstrate that interpretation is a vital component of site, resource, and visitor management.
 - 2. Develop annual goals directing the strategy for achieving the components of interpretation.
 - 3. Monitor and evaluate the interpretation effort. Programs, facilities, and other interpretive services will be monitored regularly and reports will be forwarded monthly (full-time interpreters) and weekly (seasonal interpreters) through Superintendents

to the Regional Supervisor or Director of HRMS and the Administrator of Program Services.

B. In addition to other duties, the park **Interpreter or Museum Educator**, or Superintendent or Director will:

1. Conduct an active program of research leading to the production and presentation of regularly scheduled programming consistent with the mission.
2. Monitor the site, exhibits, and facilities for potential hazards and resource degradation or damage.
3. Make the Superintendent or Museum Director aware of potential problems with facilities, resource degradation, or maintenance and major renovation needs, etc.
4. Assure that all interpretive services are in keeping with the thematic purpose and character of the park/museum and support the mission and goals defined in the interpretation plan.

C. It is the responsibility of the **Regional Supervisor or Director of Historical Resources and Museum Services**, and the Administrator of Program Services to:

1. Review annual goals before initiation and after completion.
2. Coordinate programming throughout the system.
3. Set regional and system-wide interpretation, direction, themes, and program concepts.
4. Ensure Superintendents/Directors and Interpreters/Educators are fulfilling the Department's commitment to education and programming.

V. INTERPRETIVE FACILITIES RESPONSIBILITY

- A. The **Park Superintendent or Museum Director** will maintain interpretive facilities in a clean, safe, and secure condition for service to the public. Interpretive facility maintenance will be integrated into the park/museum maintenance plan.
- B. Thefts, losses, or damage to facilities, equipment, collections, or resources will be reported within twenty-four (24) hours by the Superintendent/Director using the Incident Report Form and/or the Stolen or Damaged Property Report Form, to the Regional Supervisor or the Director of Historical Resources and Museum Services.

VI. INTERPRETATION CONSTRAINTS

- A. **COLLECTIONS** - Interpretive methods shall not compromise the historical, cultural, scientific and/or artistic integrity of the collections entrusted to the park/museum's care, nor needlessly hasten the physical, chemical, and/or biological degradation of those materials. (See Collections Care Policy)
- B. **ACCURACY** - All information and interpretation will be thoroughly researched and based on factual information, not hearsay or guesswork. Folklore and legends are appropriate when identified as such. Sources of information will be documented to verify facts and to provide visitors and scholars with supportive documentation.

VII. PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

Each park/museum will design interpretive programs, exhibits, and facilities to provide physical and content accessibility in accordance with, or exceeding, the Americans With Disabilities Act requirements.

Arkansas State Parks does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability in its programs or activities.

Each park/museum will adhere to the following Codes of Ethics:

- A. Code of Ethics, Arkansas State Parks (see EMPLOYEE POLICY HANDBOOK, Section IV-3).
- B. Museum Ethics, Committee on Ethics, American Association of Museums, 1992.

Replaces PD 5000 dated January 13, 1983

Related PDs: 5010 Interpretive Program Availability
5015 Research and Development of Program Resources
5020 Exhibition Policy
5030 Special Events

Approved By



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Arkansas State Parks