

GUIDELINES FOR THE BLM INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM

Mission Statement

The Bureau of Land Management mission is supported by the interpretive program through serving BLM customers, promoting the health of the land and enhancing the public's enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of the public land's natural and cultural resources and its management.

Guiding Interpretive Theme

The resources on public lands are an integral part of people's lives and BLM is working to protect the value of these resources for all generations.

Goal Statements

BLM INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS:

1. serve the resources, the customers' needs and interests, and the agency's goals and management needs.
2. are coordinated with BLM environmental education efforts.
3. are based on solid information about the visitors, the resources, and agency policies.
4. are developed collaboratively with internal resource experts and external partners
5. foster an appreciation and understanding about the relationship between people and the public land resources.

Guiding Principles of the BLM Interpretive Program

A. THE INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM WILL ENHANCE THE UNIQUE ATTRIBUTES OF BLM'S PUBLIC LANDS.

BLM lands are noted for their opportunities to allow visitors the freedom to explore.

1. Interpretive media choice will be made through evaluating the techniques with the least impact to the resource first.

For example, before choosing a wayside exhibit, a brochure or audio tape should be fully explored. The aim is to help visitors discover the resources on the public lands, with the least impact on the resources, while giving ~~the~~ visitors freedom to explore. Visitor centers should be an option only after all other options are fully explored.

2. A cost/benefit analysis and projected cost for the next five years will be completed in evaluating the media choice.

This will include an evaluation of the operation and maintenance cost and a cost per visitor analysis. This cost analysis will help evaluate whether the appropriate media is being chosen for the number of visitors expected and operational resources of the agency.

3. Interpretation opportunities will be expanded through cooperative efforts with partners, interpretive associations, outfitters and guides, other government agencies and non-governmental organizations.

We can expand our interpretive efforts on public lands through partnerships with other groups, such as volunteers, outfitters and guides, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and cooperative associations. These partners should help establish interpretive goals and objectives, be included in our interpretive training programs, and be encouraged to do interpretation on public lands. They should be encouraged to incorporate BLM interpretive goals and themes into their own programs. Whenever possible, the BLM should work with interpretive cooperative associations and friends' groups to develop materials to better service for the public.

B. THE INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM WILL SUPPORT THE MISSION BY:

1. Helping BLM customers understand interrelationships within ecosystems and ways they can protect the resources.

BLM interpretive programs should help the visitor understand their relationship to the entire ecosystem, and how everything depends on everything else. Visitors should also gain understanding of the ways they can enjoy their visit with low impact to the resources. Interpretation is an important tool for helping to change visitor behavior. Leave No Trace, and Tread Lightly concepts will be incorporated into all our interpretive programs.

2. Helping BLM customers see the interrelationships between cultural sites, people's stories and their environment.

The BLM public lands are rich in archaeological and historic sites. The BLM interpretive program should aim to help visitors understand the value of these sites and the stories these sites can help tell.

3. Reaching out internally and externally to collaboratively design and implement interpretive programs.

The staff from all BLM resource disciplines should be involved in developing the interpretive programs' themes, goals, and objectives throughout the entire planning process. BLM's interpretive programs should also enhance the messages and themes in the interpretive programs of other surrounding sites, including other agencies areas. This should be done through close coordination with other agencies.

4. Have clear, measurable objectives.

Objectives clearly define the purpose of the interpretive program and should be identified in any interpretive project. BLM's interpretive programs should be regularly evaluated based on identified objectives, in order to see how well we are serving the public and accomplishing the BLM resource goals.

5. Showing the visitor how the BLM accomplishes its management goals.

The story of the BLM's management efforts should be interwoven within the interpretive story. We should be showing visitors the cause and effect of our actions on the resources. This is different from telling the visitors how wonderful we are in accomplishing our work. We should also recognize and respect the different values customers have in relationship to actual management objectives and practices.

6. Support national initiatives and incorporate resource protection and environmental ethics.

The interpretive program should incorporate BLM initiatives, such as Heritage Education, Leave No Trace, Tread Lightly, Watchable Wildlife, Wild Horse and Burro program, Weed Control and National Fishing Week. In all our programs, visitors should gain a greater understanding how to enjoy the resources without damaging them.

C. INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS ARE CUSTOMER DRIVEN.

1. Our programs will use interpretive techniques that will best serve dispersed users.

Working closely with contractors, BLM will help develop and improve self-guided interpretive techniques serving public land users. Some examples are: audio tours and wayside audio posts, portable video and portable interactive computer programs.

2. Our programs will be universally accessible.

Our programs will be universally accessible, using auxiliary aids, alternative programs, and staff skilled in communicating with people of various disabilities. Universally accessible programs serve everyone better. For programs serve everyone better. For example, a ramp designed for wheelchair use will also benefit someone pushing a baby carriage or using a walker. If we cannot give someone access to the program without causing fundamental changes in the nature of a program or activity, then we must develop alternative ways to share the site with them. For example, a steep climb to cliff dwellings may be impossible for some

people with physical disabilities. A three-dimensional model at the base of the climb would be an alternative to help visitors who cannot climb see what is at the top. It would also help a blind visitor and a person with space perception problems get a better understanding of the layout of the site.

3. Our programs will serve current and the future public.

Visitors tend not to pay attention to interpretive programs if they do not address their needs or interests. It is important to find out what are the visitors' interests and needs. This can be done informally by observing visitor behavior. And asking them questions during a friendly conversation, such as: why they chose the site and what type of information and experience they are looking for. The agency message and resource information should be intertwined with information relating to the visitor.

4. Our programs will help visitors have a safe and enjoyable experience.

The interpretive program will help visitors have a safe trip by showing them how to avoid problems. It will also help them to understand the natural and cultural resources of the site, and help enhance their experience through greater understanding of the resources. For instance, in explaining cryptobiotic soil, visitors should also appreciate the complete desert system and the need to stay on the trails.

5. Our programs will be sensitive to diverse opinions and views.

We need to be aware of the different perceptions and understanding people have of our language and programs. For instance, in California many environmental education teachers view the term "multiple-use" as

propaganda to try to justify hunting and harvesting timber. Our interpretive program must be careful of the words chosen and recognize the differences between facts, opinions, and values.

D. BLM INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS USE ACCEPTED INTERPRETIVE PRINCIPLES.

1. All BLM disciplines will be encouraged to attend interpretive training.

Everyone who deals with the public on public lands should at least have a basic introduction to interpretation so they can more effectively communicate with the public. Interpretation is an effective means for protecting the resources and helping the public understand how to safely and wisely enjoy public land resources.

2. Interpretive projects will be well maintained and updated.

Whenever we produce an interpretive product, it gives a message to the public about us as an agency and our resource management programs. High-quality interpretive media not only clearly communicates its message, but shows the public that we are proud of our work.

3. Goals, objectives, and themes will dictate the media choice.

An interpretive program is a comprehensive approach to delivering information, including goals, objectives, themes, and the delivery system. The media is the way to implement the program. If you do not properly identify what segment of the public you are trying to reach, what the objectives of the interpretive program are, and if you do not accomplish

interpretive planning, you will probably choose the wrong media. This would result in very ineffective use of interpretive dollars.

4. BLM interpretive program will be known for its professional approach.

Programs will use Freeman Tilden's principles (see Attachment 2-1) and good interpretive techniques to tell the stories on BLM lands.