Continental Divide National Scenic Trail

Interpretive Plan

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST) Interpretive Plan guides the development and implementation of information, orientation and interpretation for the CDNST. Specifically, this plan includes interpretive goals, objectives, themes, exhibit recommendations, and design guidelines for interpretive efforts associated with the trail. The specific recommendations for Monarch Pass Trailhead is an example of the next step of Proposed Interpretation (*Appendix B*), which define the type of media, size of exhibits, and recommendations useful in developing exhibit plans. Future development of interpretive media will be consistent with this plan and evaluated against the goals and objectives presented in this document.

1.1 Planning Assumptions

This plan is based on a number of assumptions about the current and anticipated future use and projected management of the CDNST. The development of this interpretive plan is consistent with the National Trails System Act (P.L. 90-543), CDNST Comprehensive Plan, 1985, the Forest Service National Recreation Strategy, 2001, and the Forest Service Draft National Interpretive Plan, 2001. (No USDI planning documents were received.) Significant changes in visitor use, or federal agency policies, may require modification to this plan. The following assumptions serve as a foundation:

- The CDNST Interpretive Plan will provide an outline for all information, orientation, and interpretive exhibits and priorities, including messages to be delivered at Level I, II, and III Trailheads as identified in the Design Guideline.
- The agencies will work cooperatively with local communities, nonprofit organizations, and other partners in developing interpretive opportunities, as appropriate.
- The CDNST Interpretive Plan will help strengthen agency image and professionalism through greater design consistency in the interpretive media developed for the CDNST.
- Interpretation will be a tool to educate the public about the managing public agencies, Continental Divide Trail Alliance (CDTA), and the natural and cultural resources along the CDNST.
- The agencies will evaluate and monitor interpretive services.

1.2 Legislative History

The legislative mandate to the Secretaries and the Federal agencies was originally contained in the 1968 National Trails System Act. It established policies and procedures for a nationwide system of trails consisting of National Recreation Trails, National Scenic Trails, and connecting or side trails. The Act designated the Appalachian Trail and the Pacific Crest Trail as the initial National Scenic Trails, and authorized the study of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail.

1. Introduction

The legislative mandate and intent of Congress: Provide for maximum outdoor recreation potential and the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, or cultural qualities of the areas through which it passes.

1.3 Trail Purpose

In the "Trails for America" report, the CDNST purpose was described in 1966 as:

"A Continental Divide Trail would provide a continuous route along the Continental Divide and Rocky Mountains from the Canadian border almost to the Mexican border ...designed to accommodate riders and hikers, a Continental Divide Trail would pass through some of the most scenic areas in the country in its 3,082-mile route. The 763 miles in Montana, 147 miles in Idaho, 506 miles in Wyoming, 614 miles in Colorado, and 1,052 miles in New Mexico span spectacular, wild, mountain country, rich in the early history of the West. The route affords views of perpetual ice fields and of awesome peaks, many over 14,000 feet. It passes hundreds of alpine

lakes and streams teeming with trout. The high mountains are home to many species of game, including the bighorn sheep, mule deer, and bear.

The primary purpose of a Continental Divide Trail would be to provide a continuous, appealing travel route. Broad restrictions against any one type of trail use should be avoided. Along each section of the trail, only those uses should be permitted that do not conflict with other uses of the same section and with management objectives of adjacent lands. Incompatible uses have not yet materially affected the esthetic character of the private lands the trail must cross. However, scenic right-of-passage easements should be acquired or local zoning regulations enacted to protect the esthetic qualities of the trail and the public investment in the trail from incompatible uses in the future."

The Senate describes, in "Establishing a Nationwide System of Trails Report" of 1968, the Continental Divide Trail as:

"Designed to accommodate riders and hikers, the Continental Divide Trail would pass through some of the most scenic areas in the country...The designation of the Continental Divide Trail represents an attempt to make available by trail a stretch of country which has historical interest and charm, and bisects the Western United States. The committee does recognize that no such contiguous trail has ever, in fact, existed. However, the committee believes that the trail should be regarded as calling attention to the grandeur and esthetic qualities of the Continental Divide, and that it will add significantly to the Nation's appreciation of its priceless natural heritage..."

1. Introduction

The entire concept of the CDNST planning and management is based on the project being socially responsive to the needs and situations of local areas. These areas contribute to the character of the Great Divide as much as the more evident physiographic features. The CDNST has been conceived as a "people's trail." A trail that would facilitate, but not dictate, the opportunity for the recreation user to actively (not passively) experience the magnificent variety of landscapes, natural phenomenon, prehistoric and historic actions of humans, and current uses of the resource rich backbone of America.

1.4 Parameters for Trailhead Interpretation

- Stay within Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classifications, Visual Quality Objectives (VQO), and the *Built Environment Image Guidelines* (BEIG) for trailhead and interpretive development and any other agency guidelines

- Meet accessibility standards
- Consider bilingual signage as appropriate, particularly in Colorado and New Mexico
- Provide detailed safety information to the trail user through reliable brochures, signing and education on hazards, water availability, avalanche prone areas, etc.
- Respect adjacent private property through information and signing
- Expound the "nature and purposes" of this National Scenic Trail and non-motorized use opportunities
- Facilitate user experiences through trailhead design, construction and interpretation/information. Potential users of the trail said they would use the experience to:
    - ❑ "get away from the usual demands of life,"
    - ❑ "learn about things along the trail,"
    - ❑ "be with friends,"
    - ❑ "test their outdoor skills "

Written responses also indicated a feeling of need for the agencies to provide adequate information to let the user know what to expect not only in the way of environmental conditions, but also about historic and current uses of the land along the way.

- Address local concerns
The following concerns were addressed in the 1985 Comprehensive Plan. These need to be reviewed and updated or changed as necessary (Social Resource Units identify the section of trail by State and Segment per the Comprehensive Plan and associated maps.)
    - ❑ **Social Resource Unit (SRU) 1B (Segments 1 – 29)** – Grizzly Bear
    - ❑ **SRU 1A and 4B (Segments 30-46)** – Facility construction, mostly trailheads

1. Introduction

- **SRU 4A (segments 1 – 3c)** – Impacts on grizzly bear and elk as well as impacts on the wilderness setting
- **SRU 2C and 4D (segments 4 – 2D)** – Impact on wilderness and water availability on the NF and impacts on private property and on BLM
- **SRU 2E (segments 4E-10)** – Availability of water and the impacts on private landowner's property
- **SRU 2F (segment 1-5)** – Cattle using the trail and elk harassment
- **SRU 21 (segments 6-19)** – Overuse in the Arapaho Pass area and Rocky Mountain National Park and motor vehicle use

- **SRU 2J (segments 20-41)** – Avalanche dangers in winter and motor vehicle uses. There is extensive need to construct trailheads in this section
- **SRU 3-2K (segments CO 42-43 and NM 1-3)** – Colorado: too heavy use and need for trailhead construction. New Mexico: Water availability

- **SRU3-2L (segments 44-48)** – Vehicle traffic on roads, water availability in NM, and trailhead construction needed in this section
- **SRU 3E (segments 4-7)** – Lack of water and private land

This project is also aimed at meeting established goals of the Continental Divide Trail Alliance (CDTA) to:
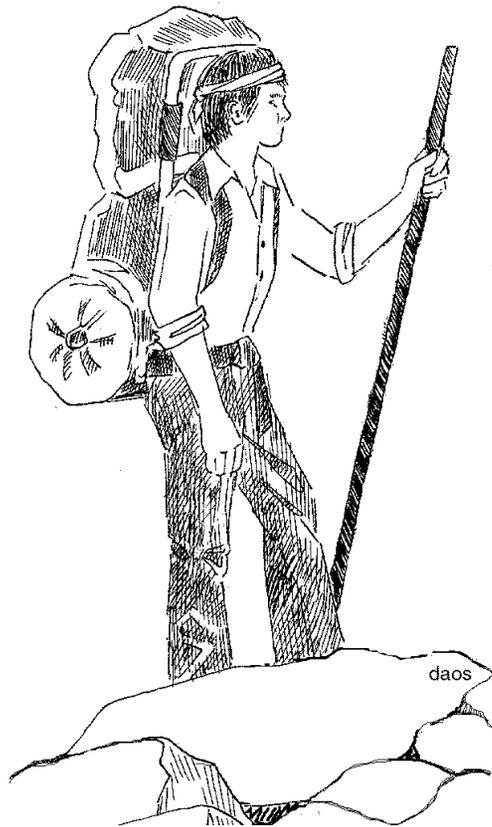
increase the public's awareness and knowledge of the CDNST; educate the public about specific environments relative to the CDNST; and involve the public and volunteers in the creation of this national legacy.

1. Introduction

1.5 Management Policy and Direction - Goal

The goal for the following broad management policy and direction for the CDNST is to facilitate and insure the coordinated location, development, operation, and maintenance of a high quality (and eventually continuous) nonmotorized travel route, extending along or near the Continental Divide from Canada to Mexico, which will serve the following purposes:

1. Provide users the opportunities to view and experience examples of the great diversity of topographic, geologic, vegetative, and scenic phenomenon that characterizes the Continental Divide of the United States.

2. Provide users opportunities to view, experience, and appreciate examples of prehistoric and historic human use of the resources along the Continental Divide; examples of the ways these resources on public land are being managed in harmony with the environment, as an asset to the existing character of the Continental Divide, and which will not detract from the overall experience of the trail.

3. Provide users with opportunities to participate in trail related outdoor recreation activities ranging from extended strenuous and challenging travel through vastly remote alpine and desert environments which demand high degrees of skill and self-reliance to leisurely enjoyment of short trail segments easily accessible from highways or popular resort areas.

4. Provide a linear recreation facility which will have a minimum adverse effect on adjacent natural and cultural environments; and harmonize with the management objectives of land and resource uses which are now or may be occurring on the lands through with the trail passes.

daos

1.6 Visitor Use and Analysis

Visitors to the CDNST include two main groups – small family groups, who are visiting for recreational opportunities, and young adventurers. Many of the visitors are urban dwellers and are not savvy to the outdoors. Approximately two thirds of the visits are in the summer and fall, with the last third during winter months for snowshoeing and Nordic skiing.

Visitors to Level I, II & III Trailheads

The Level I Trailheads are along major travel routes and have a variety of visitors that may or may not use the trail. Highway traffic counts give a good estimate of the high volume of traffic that many of these trailheads have the potential to draw. Level II trailheads are on lesser traveled routes, or seasonal routes with less use. Level III trailheads are on the least used routes in general, with specific use geared towards traveling the trail.

Other Visitor Groups

Level I trailheads experience heavy use during the foliage season by tour bus companies, who stop with their travelers at the sites along the highway. There are also bus tour groups that travel through during the summer months. Most buses will seat between 75 – 100 passengers meaning that over 100 visitors may be visiting the trailhead at one time. These passengers are usually not dressed to hike trails. Also, in some cases there are concessionaire operations (*i.e.* Monarch Pass – gift shop, chairlift, etc.) that draw additional people to the trailhead.

Other users visit the site to access designated Wilderness Areas or to use another trail (*i.e.* Colorado Trail) that many times follow the same route.

Analysis

It is important in the development of the Level I & II Trailheads to recognize that there are a majority of people who will stop at the trailhead and never use more than a mile of the trail, if that. The specific objectives and expectations of these visitors may be different than those for the segment or through trail user. It is important to include some special messages about the CDNST and some interpretation along the initial section of the trail that can be used by both groups.

For the casual trailhead visitor, who may not be dressed properly to even use a mile of the trail, there needs to be specific safety information clearly explained at the trailhead. There needs to be safety information provided for the through trail user – water availability and treatment, afternoon thunderstorms and available protection along the particular segment.

For those visitors stopping for reasons other than the trail, it's an opportunity to share information about the significance of the trail, human-interest type stories, and encourage them to support the development of this trail.

Level III trailhead users are traditionally there to use the trail. General safety and trail information is sufficient here. Interpretation is not a priority.

2.1 Interpretive Purpose & Goals

The overall purpose of interpretation is to:

- Assist the visitor in developing a keener awareness, appreciation, and understanding of what they are viewing or experiencing;

- Accomplish management goals that encourage thoughtful use and minimize human impact; and

- Encourage an understanding of agency and partner goals and objectives.

The primary purpose of this interpretive effort is to foster conservation values through written media and interpretive exhibits.

Interpretive goals focus on what the agency desires for the visitor experience while visiting the CDNST and hiking the trail.

The following interpretive goals are established to:

1. Provide orientation and information to the CDNST.

2. Provide a safe, convenient, and enjoyable visit to the CDNST.

3. Enhance the understanding of the role of human use in shaping the past and present local landscape and environment and provide a context for understanding contemporary landscapes and natural resource issues.

4. Improve understanding of the role of the agency's missions in the conservation and interpretation of natural resources.

5. Enhance the visitor's experience through a coordinated consistent presentation along the trail.

6. Encourage increased awareness and appreciation of the CDNST and other natural and cultural resources that results in a stewardship ethic to sustain and protect the CDNST.

7. Foster partnerships that strengthen ties to communities and other local initiatives that improve interpretive services, cost effectiveness and efficiency, and provide message consistency.

8. Connect people to the land especially those in urban environments that are becoming increasingly disconnected from it.

2.2 Interpretive Objectives/Expected Outcomes

Interpretive objectives are measurable and assist managers in determining if they are successful in accomplishing the goals of the plan. Objectives help guide the development of the

interpretive messages and should be used in evaluating the final product upon completion. The objectives are what we want visitors to know, feel, experience, and do while visiting the CDNST or upon their return home. At the conclusion of their visit to CDNST, the desire is that the majority of visitors will:

- Learn about recreation opportunities and develop respect and a sense of stewardship for the CDNST;

- Leave the CDNST with a sense of appreciation for the vast number of mountain experiences and recreational pursuits available;

- Understand the significance of natural events in the environment;

- Understand that the CDNST is managed by

several different agencies and their missions are varied; and

- Recognize the historical significance the Continental Divide had in the development of our country.

The expected outcomes as a result of implementing this plan include:
- Less vandalism along the trail, less cost to repair
- Increased preparedness for trail travel, fewer rescues
- Increased use where appropriate and sustainable
- Increased compliance, fewer violation notices issued
- Increased participation in trail sponsorship
- Increased input to agencies regarding management of trail
- Increased participation as a volunteer on the trail

Specific objectives should be developed by trailhead on a site-by-site basis.

2.3 Statements of Significance

Statements of significance identify the unique and important resources found along the CDNST. These statements serve as guidelines for interpretive planning and provide a framework that all media decisions are built upon. Background for the development of these statements can be found in *Appendix A*.

The following statements of significance reflect the intrinsic qualities found throughout the CDNST corridor.

Recreation Opportunities
The CDNST is a nationally significant trail with some of the most spectacular scenery in the US and a greater diversity of physical, social and managed resources then any other National Scenic Trail that provides recreational access to wilderness, skiing, horse trail riding, rock climbing, mountaineering, mountain biking, fishing, skiing, snowshoeing, backpacking and camping.

Topics include: activities, locations, safety information, ethics, and more specific information by trailhead.

Natural Resources
The CDNST crosses five ecological life zones representative of the Rocky Mountain West and the sustainability of these resources is dependent on each agency's role and responsibility in managing multiple uses.

Topics include: importance of the Continental Divide, orientation, scenic spots along the trail, interpretation of the natural resources and how they are managed, recent natural events such as blowdowns or fires along the trail, leave no trace ethics, wildlife management, multiple use management as demonstrated along the trail, research being conducted along the trail, etc.

Cultural Resources
The CDNST is rich in the heritage and life of the Rocky Mountains and the southwestern United States and provides historic and current examples of how land and people are interconnected.

Topics include: examples of past periods of American development, examples of the many ways in which we now use our lands, as well as ways in which we could make better use of our resources through public awareness and appreciation of environmental relationships and good resource management practices.

Human Connections

The CDNST provides the opportunity to reconnect with the land and our spiritual, social, intellectual, emotional, and physical well-being.

Topics include: human-interest stories, life changing experiences, and physical challenges over time as humans crossed the Continental Divide.

2.4 Interpretive Theme Statement

From the interpretive goals, objectives and the statements of significance, interpretive themes for CDNST are established. These themes capture the essence and importance of the ideas, concepts, and features that emerged from the review of all the natural and cultural resources. Using themes in interpretive planning provides focus, continuity, and meaning to the interpretation.

A central theme helps tie together the information and ideas that are presented to visitors. The theme is the principle message about the topic that we want to get across to our audiences. Themes are the plot to the movie, the moral of the story. They answer the question, "So what?" or "What's the big deal?" They can be expressed in complete sentences, as opposed to topics that are general categories of ideas. The theme provides the foundation for all presentations, no matter what media is used. The central theme is:

"Uniting Along the Divide"
The CDNST is the common thread along the Continental Divide connecting a scenic landscape - rich in a diversity of ecosystems - to history, cultures, values, and communities.

2.5 Sub–Themes

Sub, or supporting themes relate to and support the central theme and focus on specific topical information. The subthemes are linked specifically to certain resources and can be the focus for telling the story of those resources at appropriate sites or media products.

1. **Biodiversity**
    The rich public lands surrounding the CDNST contain scenic landscapes, diverse typography, and plant and wildlife species specific to the Continental Divide, all to be managed for sustainable use to provide for future generations.

    Wildfires are part of the mountain ecosystem and have been extremely significant in the recent past, taking life, destroying property, and changing the landscape.

2. Recreation Experience

The CDNST provides recreational opportunities as it transects the U.S., crossing diverse landscapes, rich in plant and animal species, beautiful scenery, and the evidence of human life from the past and present, sustained for future generations.

Recreation opportunities of national significance exist along the CDNST.

Growing recreation demands and sustainable land use challenge resource managers.

3. Human and Landscape Connections

The vast array of landscapes the CDNST crosses carry the memories of Native American life, Westward expansion, and the forging of a country rich in natural resources – water, timber, wildlife, plants, and minerals.

Cultural and human experiences along the Continental Divide provide a glimpse into the past and picture of the future relationships between land and

people and sustainable resource management.

This rich mountain environment has challenged and attracted people over centuries to climb the mountains, fish the waters, and reflect in the extraordinary scenery.

4. Headwater Challenges

Managing water quality and water yield ensures a healthy and sustainable water supply for agriculture and domestic use to the east and west sides of the Continental Divide.

3.1 Existing Conditions

There are various levels of development at the trailheads. Some trailheads do not even exist yet, and some include restrooms and concessionaire facilities. There is very limited interpretation. An inventory of each trailhead should clearly identify what to keep and what changes need to be made. Current personal services interpretation (uniformed interpreter) is virtually non-existent.

3.2 Proposed Interpretive Sites

As the gateways to the CDNST, the Level I & II Trailheads, located along highways, are prime locations to provide information and orientation to the CDNST, interpretation of on-site attributes, and the mission of the agencies and partners. The Level I Trailheads are shown on the map on page 6-7 of the CDNST Design Guidelines. The Level I Trailheads are the first priority for development.

3.2.a. Level I Trailheads

- Develop a three-panel information/orientation kiosk.
- Develop specific low profile interpretive panels along the initial stretch of the trail interpreting attributes of significance that can be seen primarily on the Level I trailheads. Consider Level II Trailheads as appropriate.

Develop trailhead orientation kiosks at all Level I Trailheads. Introduce visitors to major interpretive themes. Orient the visitor to the activities available on the CDNST. Include a CNDST map, safety orientation, user ethics, travel management information, etc. They need to be informative, interpretive, and attractive and follow the interpretive themes.

Develop a consistent sign structure (base) and design as reflected in the BEIG. Develop a consistent header/graphic style that will visually tie all the signs together across the entire CDNST. Install highway approach markers ¼ mile ahead of trailheads and information kiosks for increased visibility and visitation.

Work with partners to provide orientation kiosks in locations outside of the CDNST corridor. Encourage visits to the CDNST where appropriate, by placing kiosks at visitor centers, chambers, and agency offices. Possible locations include local airports, community visitor centers, and Inter-state Welcome Centers.

3.2.b. Level II Trailheads

The second priority for trailhead development and interpretive exhibits includes the Level II Trailheads. These will be developed at a lower scale. Two panels may be sufficient at these trailheads. Additional low profile interpretive panels may be considered if there is a significant interpretive element. These are usually a lower ROS classification, and may be a more rustic style according to the *Built Environment Image Guide*.

3.2.c. Level III Trailheads

The third priority for development will be the Level III Trailheads with limited access as a trailhead facility with one panel only and no separate interpretive signage.

3.3 Recommended Actions

Development may be phased in as funding is obtained or partners acquired.

3.3a. Three-Panel Information/Orientation Kiosk

Left Panel: Panel 1 –Recreation Activities and Opportunities

This panel will be rotated seasonally if desired. A summer season, fall season with hunting, and winter season with snowmobile/skiing theme as appropriate.

Topics to be covered:
- Activities by season - Activities will be highlighted across the unit *i.e.* watchable wildlife opportunities, wildflower areas, scenic vistas, etc.

- Safety - Information will include safety messages with regard to water, high altitudes, storms, etc. as appropriate by season. Could include some specific user ethic information if not covered on the map panel.

Center Panel- Panel 2 - Map – Entire CDNST as inset – and specific location from previous trailhead to next trailhead. This panel will include a 2 or 3-page acrylic envelope holder for special orders, messages, etc.

Topics to be covered:
- Orientation - A large area map will highlight areas to visit, distances and time to get to major destinations (mileage chart), elevations, travel management areas, etc.

- User Ethics - Information will include Leave No Trace messages, Tread Lightly, pack it in/pack it out, travel management, safety messages, and other appropriate ethic messages.

Right Panel - Panel 3 – Welcome and Introduction to CDNST Interpretive Theme
This panel will include the CDNST logo and agency shield. This will be a basic line graphic of trailhead corridor with photos.

3. Recommended Interpretive Opportunities

Topics to be covered:
- Welcome to the CDNST and importance of the CDNST
- Uniting Along the Divide
- Unique features to the CDNST – meadows, geology, snow capped peaks, history, wildlife such as elk, moose, deer
- Respect Nature – resource ethic
- Protect for future generations
- Hospitality message
- Various recreation opportunities

Specific examples of interpretation proposed at Monarch Pass, Colorado is located in *Appendix B* and includes themes, objectives, graphic needs, design notes particular to the site, and recommendations for number/size of, any site work needed and general cost estimates. This information can be used in the next phase of exhibit planning.

3.3.b. Continental Divide Sign

Provide the traditional butterfly Continental Divide Sign that straddles the divide. Develop a consistent and striking structure (base) and design that can be implemented across the CDNST.

3.3.c. Low Profile Interpretive Exhibits

Interpretive Exhibits should be developed as appropriate by theme. Develop a consistent, complimentary sign base for the panels.

3.3.d. Electronic Media

The CDTA Worldwide Web site on the CDNST represents a very significant tool for reaching the visiting and non-visiting public. Not only can it prepare people for their visit through orientation and information, but also it can provide a vicarious experience for people who might not have an opportunity to visit the CDNST.

Orientation and trip planning represents a vital function of the site. In addition to providing maps of the CDNST include self-guided trail maps by segment, USFS Recreation Opportunity Guide sheet type maps for the trail, etc. Include specific safety information on water availability, lightning hazards, and other hazards along the route. Create links to WWW sites of partners and adjacent resources. Include basic information in other languages used by international visitors coming to the region. Provide current information on road and utility construction, special programs and events, and weather conditions. The site should include a link to the campground reservation system and cabin/lookout rentals.

The WWW site offers unlimited opportunities to provide the public with additional information about the CDNST. It should highlight many of the interpretive opportunities and can include interpretive information on the natural and cultural resources along the CDNST and even a virtual video tour of the CDNST. Computer kiosk locations with net access should be at the agency office, chambers, etc.

3.3.e. Brochures

Develop an interpretive brochure that highlights all the interpretive sites along the CDNST by State. The brochure could be thematically presented by topic – *i.e.* wildlife, prehistoric occupation, etc. They could also be developed as a tour in partnership with local or regional tourism initiatives to include off agency sites as well.
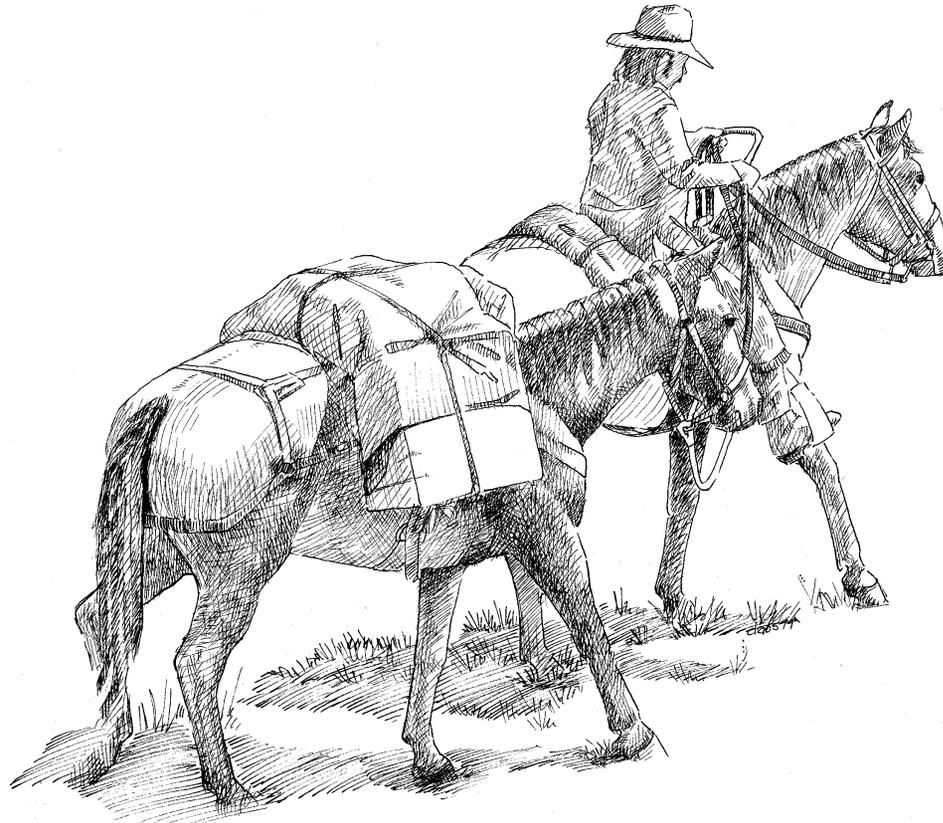
4. Interpretive Design Guidelines

These guidelines should be used to define standards and maintain consistency in development of interpretive media. Guidelines should be adhered to throughout media development phases.

Adherence to high quality design standards is critical to the success of interpretive media. Visitors are more inclined to read information and abide by agency regulations if presented clearly, aesthetically and professionally.

1. All signage should be fabricated of a similar material and color using computer digitized printing within high-pressure laminate or fiberglass embedment.

2. Information kiosks should contain panels that can be rotated. They can also contain an area to include regulations, fire orders, etc. as needed. Tacked up regulations on paper/posters often lack professionalism and should be avoided – *i.e.* fire orders, other special orders, announcements, etc.

3. All interpretive media should blend harmoniously with the environment, using design elements consistent with the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS), the *Built Environment Image Guide* (BEIG), local resources, *e.g.*, native rock bases for waysides, etc. and limit impacts to cultural and natural resources.

4. Interpretive media must strictly adhere to federal accessibility standards. Written material should be available in large print and audio format.

5. The CDNST, agency logo and shield should be present on all media. Additional logos – *i.e.* CDTA, wolf logo for wilderness, Colorado Trail, etc. should be used as appropriate. Employ a unified graphic design for the sign elements for all wayside and orientation kiosks throughout the trail.

6. Graphics formats and styles for all media should be consistent and follow a design theme developed. Graphic standards should reinforce the theme and create a unique identity throughout.

7. All interpretive exhibits should be designed to be easily used and maintained, and be vandal resistant.

5. Personal Services Program

Even with the introduction of non-personal interpretive media as identified in this plan, there is no substitute for the uniformed "ranger" to communicate resource values and agency policies. Uniformed presence can also deter adverse impacts or inappropriate behaviors in regard to structures and resources. They also can improve visitor safety. An enthusiastic interpreter can develop visitor support for agency philosophies and programs.

Due to the high visitation the CDNST receives, especially at Level I Trailheads, public contact interpretation is one of the most effective interpretive tools to achieve the goals of this Interpretive Plan. The following interpretive ideas are suggested to achieve the goals in this plan.

5.1 Potential Interpretive Opportunities

Specific priorities and locations will need to be developed with cost estimates and funding opportunities specifically identified.

5.1.a. Informal (Roving) Interpretation

This is the most personal opportunity to provide interpretation to visitors one-on-one. Roving interpretation is done informally without a structured program.

The role of the interpreter is to engage visitors in conversations, while walking throughout the site, with the goal of making visitor contacts, and assisting visitors with information or other needs.

Roving interpreters will increase agency opportunities to orient, inform and educate unit visitors. The interpreters develop positive rapport with visitors, disperse visitors, deter adverse behavior, and promote the agency image and the mission. The interpreter can also provide important safety information.

The contact can also be used as an opportunity to discuss management issues and agency policy in an interpretive context.

5.1.b. Conducted Interpretive Programs

Conducted programs will enhance the information and roving efforts and provide more in-depth education on significant resources, land ethics, management concerns and policies, and the agency mission and philosophy.

5. Personal Services Program

Guided Tours/Walks – These are specifically developed programs conducted by an interpreter.

- Establish a "Step-On" interpretive program with the tour bus companies through recreation fee demo where an interpreter rides the bus from Point A to Point B or vice versa *i.e.* chamber office to trailhead.

- Develop a guided horse/bike ride or hike on short segments of the trail near the trailhead.

"Artist in Residence" Program – This is a partnership program with a professional visual or performing artist, writer, or composer interested in pursuing their art on site

(trailhead or nearest campground) throughout the day.

- Offer evening classes (or classes on slower use days)
- Sell materials for class at sales outlet; possibly sell artist's work through sales outlet.
- Present a demonstration, talk, or presentation at set times during the day.

Living History Presentations – This is an opportunity for an interpreter or local historian to "act" out a story in costume and share tools, articles, etc. of the time. This is highly desirable where the CDNST crosses National Historic Trails.

Topics could include:

- Sheepherders and Cattlemen
- Tie hacks
- Early Native Americans
- Early CCC'ers
- Key historic figures
- Gold seekers
- Early guides
- Families that crossed the Divide

Formal programs conducted by uniformed interpreter should:

- Include the themes addressed earlier
- Go into more detail than the exhibits, and
- Relate to resource management issues and goals

Specific program topics may include:

- Prehistoric people that lived in the area

- Flora and fauna
- Place names
- Gold fever
- Wilderness
- Fire, and other natural events
- Westward expansion

Suggestions:
Partner with other agencies/local colleges/groups/outfitter and guides to do programs, and have them introduced by an agency employee in uniform. Identify special events where programs can be conducted. Work with chambers and tourism offices to prioritize program needs for special events, tour groups, bus groups, ski area, and other groups. It is important that partners and the programs tie closely with the CDNST interpretive themes and subthemes.

5.2 Program Planning

Preliminary program plans serve to justify the purpose and intent of programs, determine how they will be accomplished and identify specific concerns to be considered for each program. This portion of planning does not address themes, goals, and objectives of each interpretive program, instead it establishes management objectives, and how interpretation will be accomplished, and specific decisions that may be required by a seasonal supervisor. The sample form in *Appendix D* provides a general outline for program planning purposes.

5.3 Suggested Personal Services Interpretation

Utilize partners as appropriate to provide information and interpretation. Evaluate the average attendance at programs by day of week, location, and topic and recommend the best value. Re-evaluate on an annual basis. Develop and provide an Interpretive Resource Manual for staff and partners (outfitter/guides, CDTA, etc.) conducting programs and providing information. Utilize the evaluation and monitoring guidelines addressed later in the plan and in *Appendix C*.

5.4 Outside Funding

The interpretive program should strive to be partially self-sustaining. This will help ensure the survival of interpretation in lean budget years. In addition to charging fees for special interpretive programs or events through recreation fee demo, there are additional opportunities to maintain a program with limited funding. The following suggestions should be considered when looking for outside funding and assistance.

Grants

Grants are available through a variety of foundations, funds, trusts, and state programs. Grants have been awarded more for brochures/exhibits, etc., than for personal services. However, you should consider:

- Forest Service Natural Resource Conservation Education Program
- National Endowment for the Arts
- National Forest Foundation
- State Historical Society
- National Resource Education Foundation
- Conservation for the Millennium
- Environmental Protection Agency – Environmental Education
- Fish America Foundation

In addition, partners like the following can put in for private foundation grants that the federal agencies are usually not eligible for.

- Continental Divide Trail Alliance

- Interpretive associations
- State wildlife agencies
- Colleges and Universities
- Local historical societies
- State Archaeological Council
- Local museums

5. Personal Services Program

Agreements

Agreements between private businesses or non-profits and public agencies can help facilitate an interpretive program that benefits all. Sharing personnel between agencies or sharing costs of interpreters is one example. Potential agreements:

- Continental Divide Trail Alliance
- Concessionaire
- Interpretive Association
- Resort Naturalist Program

In lieu of funding, another feasible option to consider is setting up a partnership with local resorts to operate a resort naturalist program. Numerous forests have successfully implemented this program in the past.

Agreements are made between local resort owners and the agency that are cost sharing arrangements and provide benefits to both parties. If such a program is pursued, the following questions should be addressed and negotiated:

1) What are the objectives of the program?
2) Who/what audiences will benefit from the program?
3) Who will supervise and evaluate employees?
4) What are the employee needs for housing, uniforms, training, and vehicle use during work hours, pay and other miscellaneous items and how will this be handled?
5) What kind of schedule will be developed that meets program objectives and determines level of programming at lodge/resort facilities?
6) How will funding for program be managed?
7) How will the success of the program be monitored and evaluated?

Volunteers – Groups

A variety of groups are available for partnerships and grant writing. Research can be provided by local historical society. Technical assistance and program support can come from a variety of groups. Funding by donation or funding for specific programs or projects can be provided by group support. Possible groups: Continental Divide Trail Alliance, local historical societies, tourism board, local senior centers, clubs, Audubon Society, Trout Unlimited, Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, local colleges, outfitters, local city and county municipalities.

Volunteers - Individuals

There are a number of options for providing personnel to give interpretive programs. Locally, many talented individuals and groups can assist in developing an interpretive program. Coordination and training of these individuals and groups requires a full-time supervisor. Possible Interpretive Personnel: Agency personnel, interns, local teachers, college professors, volunteers, Student Conservation Association interns, college work-study students, concessionaire personnel, chamber of commerce members, club members, guest speakers, etc.

5.5 Interpretive Resource Manual

A critical element for a successful public contact program is the Interpretive Resource Manual. This manual lays the foundation for conducting and evaluating all public contact activities along the CDNST.

The importance of developing this manual should not be underestimated: it sets forth high quality standards for a the interpreter's performance, establishes standard operating procedures, and provides for consistency in communicating resource information and agency philosophy, mission and messages.

Contents of the manual should include:

- Narrative research supporting all interpretive themes
- Standard operating procedures for visitor services, interpretive programs, and medical emergencies typically encountered
- Job Hazard Analysis (FS-6700-7) for staff (USFS)
- Interpretive techniques and communication skills
- Natural history and conservation of the CDNST
- Agency mission and management practices

- Evaluation Forms (*Appendix C*)
- Sample Program Plan (*Appendix D*)
- Interpretive Program Outline (*Appendix E*)

Appropriate expertise and time should be devoted to the manual's development. This effort should be undertaken during the summer months to witness visitor behavior and issues relevant to the manual.

5. Personal Services Program

The manual is not intended to limit creativity; rather its purpose is to ensure consistent, high quality visitor services, accurate resource information, and Agency messages. New staff will have a framework upon which to build and individualize their interpretive programs while maintaining accuracy and consistency in message, information, and resource information.

5.6 Training

All public contact staff should receive training prior to providing information and interpretive services to CDNST visitors. Those in need of training include: seasonal interpreters, frontliners, volunteers, and anyone who may be in contact with visitors. Utilize the National Association for Interpretation Interpretive Guide Training. Training all staff together will enhance communications improving overall service to the public.

The following items need to be covered to ensure consistency in interpretive themes and professionalism:

- Interpretive techniques and communication skills
- Natural history and conservation of the CDNST
- Agency mission and management practices
- Heritage – It's About Time! A National Strategy (USFS)
- Employee and visitor health and safety– (first aid, CPR, etc.)

Staff meetings conducted regularly throughout the summer provides additional opportunities to increase staff skills in a variety of environmental interpretive areas. They provide a forum for staff to share interpretive techniques, successes, failures, and experiences.

The Interpretive Resources Manual should be made available to all interpretive staff. They will know what is expected of their performance and provide accurate and consistent information and interpretive services to the public.

Evaluation and monitoring must be conducted regularly to ensure the high quality visitor services indicative of the agency. See *Appendix C*. This can be accomplished through:

- Communicating performance standards to all seasonal interpreters
- Periodic auditing and review of all public contact programs
- Mid-season and final evaluations of performance for all seasonals

5. Personal Services Program

5.7 Summary

A seasonal public contact program is not a luxury offered only if budget allows, rather it is an essential means to achieve the goals of this Interpretive Plan. The benefits of this interpretive program – to visitors who use and enjoy the CDNST and agency managers responsible for resource protection and visitor safety – will follow.
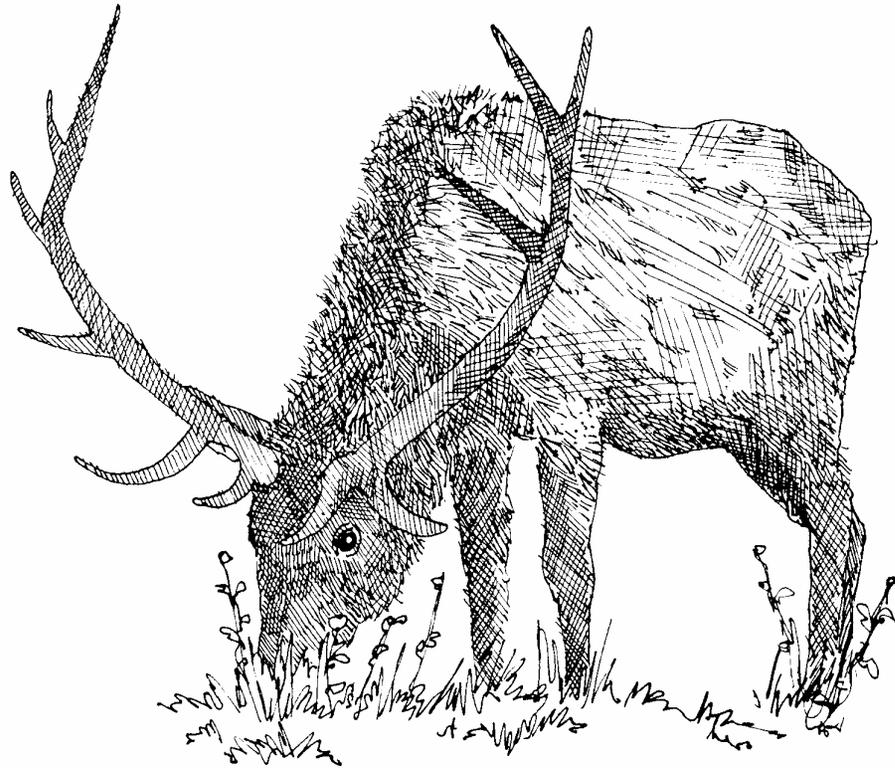
6. Marketing Recommendations

The following marketing recommendations are proposed to fully implement the interpretive plan. Visitors need to know about the incredible opportunities available on the CDNST, and this final step in the plan is essential to accomplishing the goals. Many of the recommendations can be implemented with the help and funding of partners or grants. Others can be implemented as a part of normal business on the unit. Still others can be implemented as the unit revises or expands current opportunities, such as the agency map, or website.

Printed Media:

- Incorporate interpretive information and messages in current publications being distributed in the private sector through museums, tours, and other initiatives.

- Prepare a rack card on interpretive highlights on the CDNST for wide distribution throughout the region, motels, gas stations, and along Interstate travel corridors.

- Write weekly or monthly feature articles on interpretive sites on the CDNST for local and regional publications, newspapers, and magazines.

- Design and sell annual CDNST poster featuring scenic, cultural or historical elements of the CDNST. Do through interpretive association or CDTA and offer prizes for art or photo used.

- Develop placemats with local restaurants that feature unique stories or a map of the CDNST area. Use placemats to share ethics and safety information as well.

- Develop a mailing list to provide up-to date information, especially safety messages, operational changes or special events, to television stations, newspapers, hotels, and motels, private campgrounds, etc.

Training:

- Provide interpretive training through partnerships with chambers, tourism associations, outfitter/guides, public and private parks, museums, etc.

Signing:

- Install highway approach signs to inform drivers of upcoming wayside exhibits at trailheads.
- Include introduction and orientation kiosks at Level I trailheads to all visitors to successfully find, use and enjoy the CDNST.
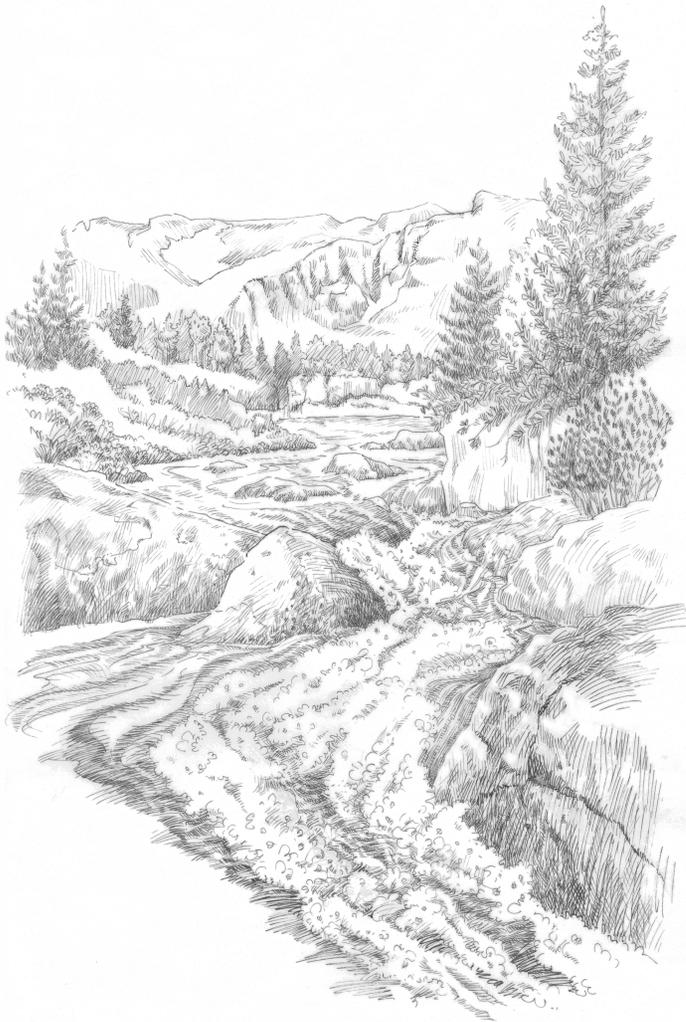
Electronic Media:

- Include interpretive opportunities and self-guided tours on the current CDTA web site.

Tours:

- Develop ecotours and heritage tours with partners to promote the CDNST.

Maps:

- Promote above tours on-line and through tear-off maps developed that highlight tours.
- Incorporate significant interpretive sites on the unit map.

Education:

- Develop a short informative welcome video on the CDNST that can be seen on the web site, or viewed on a bus tour.
- Create student activity modules with partners on environmental education focused on issues on the CDNST.
- Create an interpretive activity guidebook that includes safety messages; trail ethics, wilderness ethics, etc. for group organizations to use before visiting the CDNST. Sell through CDTA or a local interpretive association.

7. Funding & Cost Estimates

7.1 Funding

Funding is a part of the agency Capital Investment Program or partnerships.

7.2 Cost estimates (2004 estimated costs)
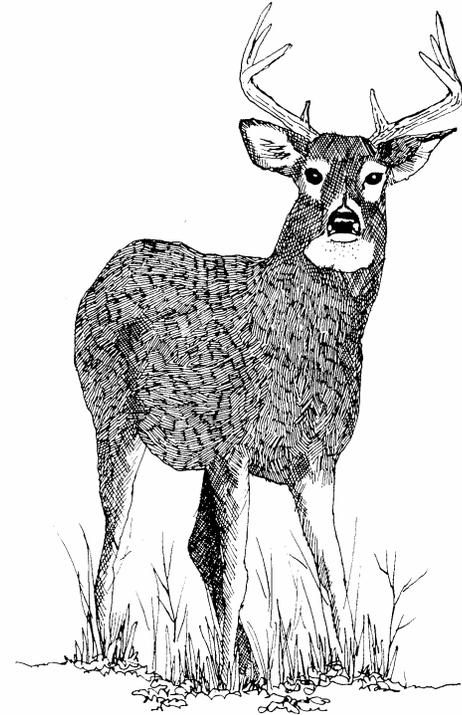
Typical Level I Trailhead Costs for interpretive signing:

Interpretive Panel Development

Kiosk structure- construction/installation: $10,000

Text, graphic design and artwork –
    $3,500/panel x 6 panels = $21,000
Exhibit fabrication per panel – 36" x 24"
 – with duplicate: $500 x 6 panels = $ 3,000
Exhibit fabrication per panel – 48" x 60"
– with duplicate: $750 x 6 panels = $ 4,500
Low Profile – Hopewell Style Frames –
    $450/each x 3 = $ 1,350

Total: **$39,850**

7.3 Annual Operation and Maintenance

Operations and maintenance are integral parts of public use facilities. Exhibit and maintenance costs will be the responsibility of the agency, as the exhibits will remain agency property for the duration of the time they exist on the site. The agency will budget annually for operation and maintenance expenses which may include cleaning and pumping toilets, monthly water tests, trash removal, cleaning signs and adding/removing panels or information. The agency may enter into an agreement with a non-profit partner such as CDTA to help with operations and maintenance. Interpretive panels should be entered into the agency database (INFRA – USFS) for inclusion in the budgeting process.

8. Evaluation Strategies and Techniques

While evaluation of any interpretive product is a critical factor to its ongoing success, it is often the most over looked component. Evaluation of programs or any interpretive/educational endeavor provides a venue for restructuring effective program planning and opportunity for growth. The methods suggested below provide several alternatives for evaluation and can be adapted to use for diverse projects and programs. The lead interpreter, interpretive specialist, recreation staff, trail crews, wilderness rangers, and frontliners, or partners such as CDTA, as appropriate, should conduct evaluations. This can be done informally on an annual basis.

The important thing to keep in mind when evaluating and choosing different data collection methods is that the assessment of behavior, mood, or response to environmental conditions should be as unobtrusive as possible. The following are some methods employed by environmental psychologists to study and record visitors responses to stimuli.

8.1 Unobtrusive Methods

The goal is to apply measurement techniques that address the questions being asked, while disturbing the setting as little as possible, allowing the study of real people in real environments. The disadvantage of using this technique is that it may entail an invasion of privacy and a lack of informed consent on the visitor's part.

1. **Observational Techniques** - the best way to do this is to watch others and report their behavior and interactions in the setting by using recorded narratives, video cameras, photography, or written notes. The advantage to this method is the recorded results can be reviewed at a later date when more time is available to log the data. Spreadsheets can be developed to log the number of occurrences of certain behaviors and what provoked them (whether positive or negative).

2. **Behavior mapping** - this technique requires an accurate record of visitors' actions in a particular place at a specific time. The area is defined and a coded form is filled out stating what happened and where. Different variables can include the time of day, age groups observed, backgrounds of visitors, utilization of equipment and facilities, etc. This technique can be used to predict the success or failure of new facilities.

3. **Accretion** - this data collection method measures the physical evidence removed or left behind at a specific location. It can be a mapping of trails formed by visitors when no trails are present (for future planning of trail locations), it can be recycling drop-off stations (or brochure recycling), trash or litter left behind, nose and hand prints on exhibits, or numerous other physical remnants of visitors.

8.2 Obtrusive Methods:

The most obvious and sometimes accurate way of measuring visitors moods, thoughts, attitudes and behavior is to directly ask what they are thinking, how they feel, and what they would like to see or feel at a specific location.

1. Self-report measures - this method involves interviews on-site or mail-back questionnaires given to them when they leave the site.
   a. Questionnaires - the advantage to this method is that if given to the visitor upon leaving the site, it can be mailed back anonymously, or filled out at the end of the visit and dropped anonymously in a collection spot. It can also be given to a large group at one time, with little skill needed to perform the data collection. The disadvantage is that an interviewer is not available to answer questions once the questionnaire has left the site, and visitors may interpret the questions inaccurately.

   b. Interviews - this can be given only to a few people at a time since it is an individual process. The interviewer may need some level of skill in interpreting the visitor's response and in answering their questions.

2. Cognitive Mapping - this exercise can be fun and challenging. The visitor is asked to draw a map in one minute showing the site they just visited. This is done in a red pencil. Then they are given another color pencil to continue the map for another minute, and so on. Once five minutes is up, they are done. The map shows the importance of certain areas to them, and lists them in order of value.

8.3 Recommended Exhibit Evaluation Methods

Exhibits may be evaluated in the planning stage, or after completion by using one or a combination of the following methods:

- Use the Wayside Exhibit Evaluation Checklist in *Appendix C*.
- Evaluate exhibit with panel of outsiders not associated with interpretation or subject matter.
- Evaluate exhibit based upon interaction with various senses, abilities, and cognitive levels.
- Observe and record visitor interest at exhibit sites by noting amount of time spent at exhibit; fingerprints, footprints, and cigarette butts. Look for results of depreciative behavior and increase or decrease in vandalism/graffiti, etc.
- Solicit visitor comments with questionnaire they fill out.

8.4 Summary

In summary, evaluation and monitoring is critical to the ongoing success for the interpretive media used. This evaluation and monitoring should be conducted on a regular schedule and can be as intense or general as desired. Reviewers can gather data on a seasonal basis. Media can be evaluated as to wear and tear, as well as, content. Most importantly, topics, content, and exhibits used should be improved or changed if indicated from the data collected.
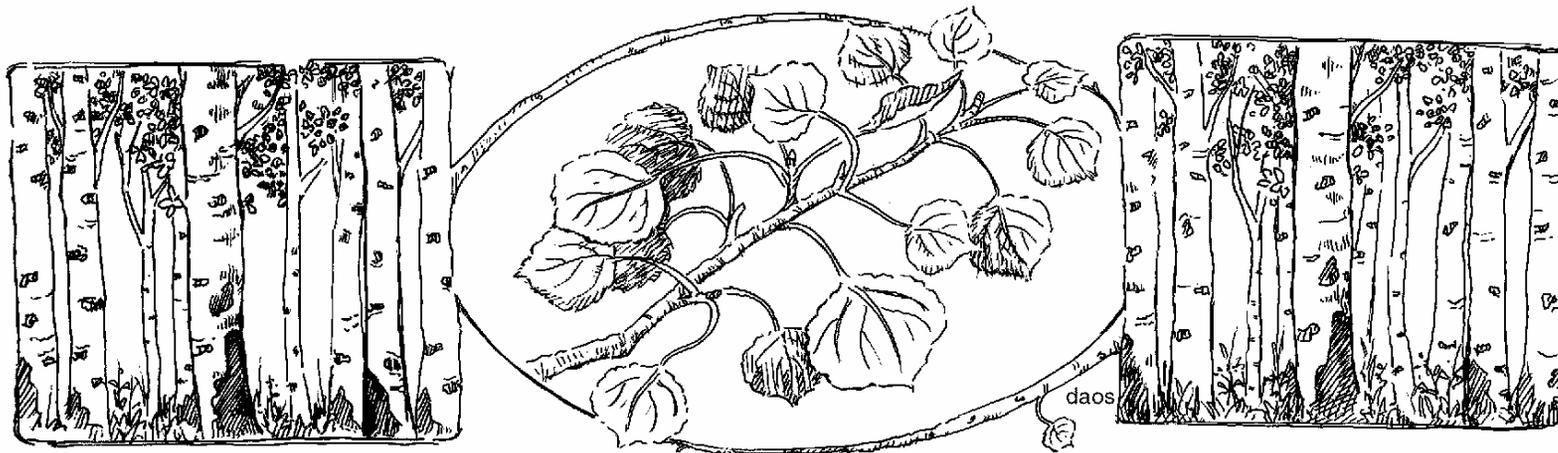
Additional Resources

Beck, Larry; Cable, Ted. 1998. *Interpretation for the 21st Century*. Champaign, Illinois: Sagamore Publishing.

Brochu, Lisa. 2003. *Interpretive Planning. The 5-M Model for Successful Planning Projects*. Ft. Collins, Colorado: The National Association for Interpretation.

Cornell, Joseph. 1979. *Sharing Nature with Children.* Nevada City, California: Dawn Publications.

Earthworks. 1990. *50 Simple Things Kids Can Do to Save the Earth*. Kansas City, Missouri: Andrews & McMeel.

Ham, Sam H. 1992. *Environmental Interpretation – A Practical Guide for People with Big Ideas and Small Budgets.* Golden, Colorado: North American Press.

Hultsman, John; Cottrell, Richard L.; and Hultsman, Wendy Z. 1998. *Planning Parks for People.* State College, Pennsylvania: Venture Publishing, Inc.

Hunter, Carol. 1994. *Everyone's Nature – Designing Interpretation to Include All.* Helena, Montana: Falcon Press.

Knudson, Douglas M.; Cable, Ted T.; Beck, Larry. 1995. Interpretation of Cultural and Natural Resources. State College, Pennsylvania: Venture Publishing, Inc.

Leopold, Aldo. 1966. *A Sand County Almanac.* USA: Oxford University Press, Inc.

Lewis, William J. 1989. *Interpreting for Park Visitors*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Eastern National Park & Monument Association.

Machlis, Gary E. (ed.). 1986. *Interpretive Views.* Washington, D.C.: National Parks and Conservation Association.

Machlis, Gary E.; Field, Donald R. (eds.). 1984. *On Interpretation – Sociology for Interpreters of Natural and Cultural History.* Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Press.

Manfredo, Michael J. 1992. *Influencing Human Behavior – Theory and Application in Recreation, Tourism, and Natural Resource Management.* Champaign, Illinois: Sagamore Publishing Company, Inc.

Plae, Inc. 1993. *Universal Access to Outdoor Recreation – A Design Guide.* Berkeley, California: MIG Communications.

Serrell, Beverly. 1996. *Exhibit Labels. An Interpretive Approach.* Walnut Creek, California: Alta Mira Press.

Sharpe, Grant W. 1982. *Interpreting the Environment.* (2nd ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Tilden, Freeman. 1977. *Interpreting Our Heritage (rev. ed.).* Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press.

Vineyard, Sue. 1984. *Marketing Magic for Volunteer Programs.* Downers Grove, Illinois: Heritage Arts Publishing.

Yamada, Alan; Ostergaard, Dick; Jilbert, Mari; Brunswick, Nancy. 2002. *Scenic Byways – A Guide for Roadside Improvements.* USDA Forest Service, San Dimas Technology Development Center.

Acknowledgements

Appendices

APPENDIX A
Background for Statements of Significance
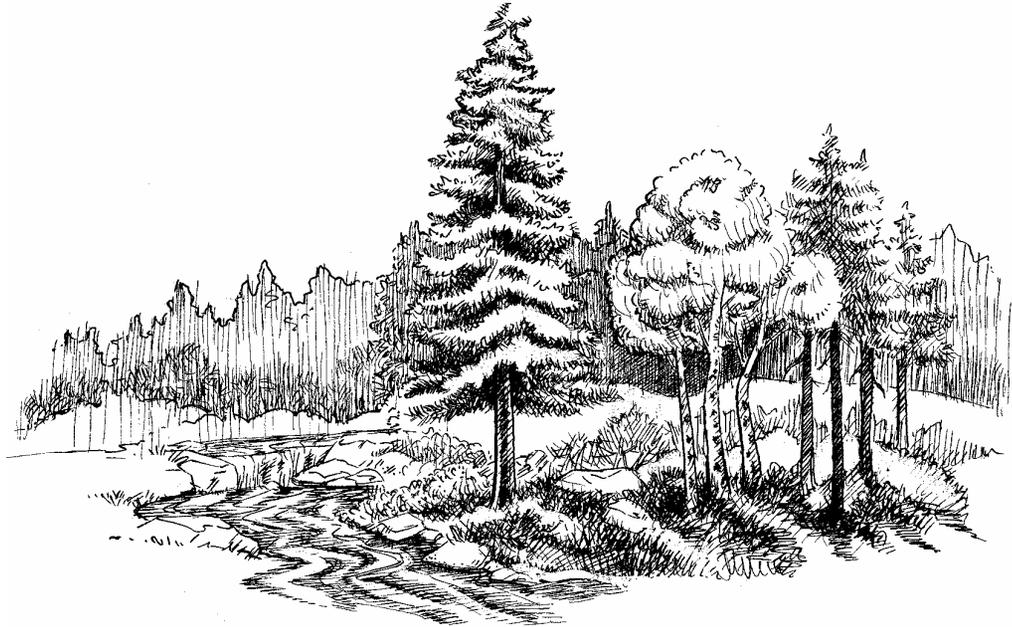
APPENDIX B
Proposed Interpretation

APPENDIX C
Wayside Exhibit Evaluation
Program Evaluation

APPENDIX D
Sample Program Plan

APPENDIX E
Interpretive Program Outline

Appendix A

Background for Statements of Significance

Background - from the CDSNT Comprehensive Plan – 1985

Recreation Resource Management Along the CDNST

Eventual location of a 3,100-mile Continental Divide Trail from Canada to Mexico will provide the American people with recreational opportunities of national significance. The trail, managed and administered within the guidelines for national scenic trails and the land and resource management policies of the respective agencies will further the national goal of promoting public enjoyment and appreciation of our scenic outdoor areas.

The trail will make available numerous additional outdoor recreation experiences. Trail users will be able to wind their way through some of the most spectacular scenery in the United States and have an opportunity to enjoy a greater diversity of physical, social, and managerial settings than found on any other extended National Scenic Trail. The route of the Continental Divide Tail will cross five ecological life zones where visitors will find most of the topography, climate, vegetation and wildlife for which the Rocky Mountain West is noted.

The areas through which the trail will pass are also rich in the heritage and life of the Rocky Mountains and the southwestern United States. The trail traverses lands of historical and cultural importance. It will provide the recreationist with examples of past periods of American development, examples of the many ways in which we now use our lands, as well as ways in which we could make better use of our resources through public awareness and appreciation of environmental relationships and good resource management practices.

Charette Input

The statements above under Recreation Resource Management provide the basis for the Statements of Significance that help develop the Interpretive Themes. In addition, the following Overall Qualities were brainstormed during the Charette held December 2002 and then organized by topic:

Scenic
- Scenic vistas
- <u>National Scenic Trail</u> - not National Historic Trail - Allow American public to see special scenery and places
- Conservation and enjoyment of scenic, historic, natural qualities
- CD is the "highest" trail - greatest change in elevation - talk about elevation

Geography/Geology

- Relationship to how water is flowing-attraction point
- It's about oceans and water sheds
- CD is the highest trail – greatest change in elevation – talk about elevation
- One of the most diverse trails - different levels of development and ecological systems
- One of only a few unifying elements in North America
- Watersheds - where watershed starts

Ecosystem

- Uniqueness of the high elevations-alpine, sub-alpine
- It's about oceans and watersheds
- CD is the highest trail – greatest change in elevation – talk about elevation

- Continental Divide itself is unique-crossing the divide is a significant achievement-barrier
- Ecological diversity makes it very different from other trails - Canada to Mexico - desert to sub-alpine. Show graphically so all can understand
- Linkage to communities. Natural - alpine, sub alpine, montane. Cultural - history, social linkages, links us to the past.

Human Connections

- Historical significance-spiritual relationship with the land. Relationship to the corridor
- Forest Service mission-conservation of watersheds
- Connection to people - this is where the water comes from - we all live downstream
- Take care of watershed – respect

- Recreation opportunities - trailheads, caters to diverse opportunities - wilderness, car
- Gateway concept - attitudes and feelings, spirit of the CDNST should happen at the trailhead - part of a huge trail, information is exchanged, interaction.
- Crossroads of inter modal transportation - transfer from one mode to another, "inter modal" jump-off point.
- Native Americans used passes - linkage east to west
- Rugged aspect - difficulty, struggles of crossing, challenges, self reliance, not an ADA accessible area except for short segments and certain trailheads
- Links us to prehistory - Native American - shallow depth of resources in mountainous areas

- Concept of the existence of the trail, self reliance
- Vicarious use-specialties of its existence
- Physical challenge, learn about the environment, equipment testing, escape heat, history, bonding with family, volunteerism, reasons why people would use. Benefits based recreation/motivation
- Get out of the trail "whatever you seek"
- One of the most diverse trails - different levels of development and ecological systems
- Partnerships - as important as building trail - get people involved in the environment and outdoors.
- The prestige of the CDNST - organizations want their name associated with it
  - Want to be involved
  - Scale and significance

- Investment in the travel and tourism industry
- Direct relationship to what we design
- Ecotourism
- Scenic highway and byways programs cross the Divide, are part of Level I trails and are part of the connection
- Involvement/recognition of public/people in this
- History from east to west
- Tier down from CD. Concept of the "Great Divide". Find out its roots.
- North America, this great divide between exploration - now play role of being able to reflect on scenery, outdoor recreation
- "The King of Trails"- CDTA has an article about this - must be careful about how we use this phrase
- History along trail - "People History" - "Passes Across" -

Crosses other great trails - common to 1/2 dozen other great trails (*e.g.* Chief Joseph, Mormon, California, Oregon, Lewis and Clark as well as railroad systems and Rt.66)
- **Uniting along the "Great Divide"
- There is an audience to tell hiker's stories. Personal interest stories. This is part of story, accomplishment - illustrates mission, goal completion-yet not same as suffering say for Mormon's - not historical in context – a contemporary connection
- Interpreting local history is critical - especially for future, say, to locally maintain and sustain particular sections - "local segment by segment pieces". That will make it work - Like Appalachian Trail

Appendix B
Proposed Interpretation

Interpretive Media Information for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail

Type: Three-Panel Kiosk

Site: Monarch Pass, San Isabel National Forest, Colorado

Topic: The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail

Theme: "Uniting Along the Great Divide"
> **The CDNST is the common thread connecting a scenic landscape - rich in a diversity of ecosystems - to history, cultures, values, and communities.**

Audience: Traveling public and trail hikers

Objectives: As a result of viewing the exhibits, the majority of visitors will:
- learn about recreation opportunities and develop respect and a sense of stewardship for the CDNST;
- leave the CDNST with a sense of appreciation for the vast number of mountain experiences and recreational pursuits available;
- understand the significance of natural events in the environment;
- understand that the CDNST is managed by several different Federal agencies and their missions are varied; and
- recognize the historical significance the Continental Divide had in the development of our country.

Current Condition: The current site is a large, unmarked parking area adjacent to a concessionaire operated visitor center and gift shop, with a chairlift operation. In addition there is a large dome like snow shed used by the Colorado Department of Transportation. The CDNST trailhead is barely noticed. There is a wide open parking area and dangerous cross traffic. The Continental Divide Sign is in the middle outside. The interpretive signage is in the concessionaire building.

Desired Conditions/Media Recommendations:
Three panel kiosk with 48" x 60" panels.
Include benches as appropriate for seating and loading backpacks.

Level I Trailheads
Type: Three Panel Kiosk

List of Graphic Needs:
Welcome, Forest Service shield, CDNST logo, and other logos as appropriate
Forest map in revised conceptual format
Place to post: changing weather information/ fire danger, message board, regulations and special notices. Weatherproof.

Notes/Design Instructions:
The unit will construct and install the kiosk. Panels will be designed and fabricated to match the specifications (size) established in the kiosk design.

These panels will be fabricated of high-pressure laminate, fiberglass embedded, porcelain enamel or other material with a 10-year warranty. Draft text and graphics will be completed. Remaining work includes doing text development, layout/design and fabrication.

Signage Recommendations: 6 panels total (2 permanent and 4 seasonal) sized approximately 48" x 60" each
Panel 1: Special activities, welcome, safety
Panel 2: Map of the area with identification of significant locations
Panels 3/4/5/6: Seasonal panels for autumn, winter, spring and summer

Left Panel: Panel 1 –Recreation Activities and Opportunities
This panel will be rotated seasonally as appropriate or desired by portal. A summer season, fall season with hunting, and winter season with snowmobile/skiing theme as appropriate.

Topics to be covered:
- ❒ Activities by season
- ❒ Activities will be highlighted across the unit, *i.e.* watchable wildlife opportunities, wildflower areas, and scenic vistas, etc.
- ❒ Safety
- ❒ Information will include safety messages with regard to water, high
- ❒ altitudes, storms, etc. as appropriate by season. Could include some specific ethic information if not covered on the map panel

Level I Trailheads
Type: Three Panel Kiosk

Center Panel- Panel 2 - Map – Entire CDNST as inset – and specific location from previous trailhead to next trailhead. This pane will include a 2 or 3-page acrylic envelope holder for special orders, messages, etc.

Topics to be covered:

Orientation
A large forest map will highlight areas to visit, distances and time to get to major destinations (mileage chart), elevations, travel management areas, etc.

User Ethics
Information will include Leave No Trace messages, Tread Lightly, pack-it-in/pack-it-out, travel management, safety messages, and other appropriate ethic messages.

Right Panel - Panel 3 – Welcome and Introduction to CDNST Theme
This panel will include the CDNST logo and agency shield. This will be a basic line graphic of trail corridor with photos and brief explanations of day use opportunities.

Topics to be covered:
- ❐ Welcome to the CDNST
- ❐ Uniting Along the Great Divide
- ❐ Unique features to the CDNST – meadows, geology, snow capped peaks, history, wildlife such as elk, moose, deer
- ❐ Respect Nature – Resource ethic
- ❐ Protect for future generations
- ❐ Hospitality Message
- ❐ Various Recreation Opportunities

Interpretive Media Information for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail

Type: Three Low-profile Interpretive Signs

Site: Monarch Pass, San Isabel National Forest, Colorado

Topic: Historic Stories of the Divide, Modern Day Hiker Stories along the CDNST, and Plants and Animals at Timberline

Theme: **"Uniting Along the Great Divide"**

> The CDNST is the common thread connecting a scenic landscape - rich in a diversity of ecosystems - to history, cultures, values, and communities.

Subthemes:

Recreation Experience

> The CDNST provides recreational opportunities as it transects the U.S., crossing diverse landscapes, rich in plant and animal species, beautiful scenery, and the

evidence of human life from the past and present…. sustained for future generations.

Human and Landscape Connections

> The vast of array of landscapes the CDNST crosses carry the memories of Native American life, Westward expansion, and the forging of a country rich in natural resources – water, timber, wildlife, plants, and minerals.

> Cultural and human experiences along the Great Divide provide a glimpse into the past and picture of the future relationships between land and people and sustainable resource management.

This rich mountain environment has challenged and attracted people over centuries to climb the mountains, fish the waters, and reflect in the extraordinary scenery.

Headwater Challenges

> Managing water quality and water yield ensures a healthy and sustainable water supply for agriculture and domestic use to the east and west sides of the Continental Divide.

Appendix B – Proposed Interpretation

Audience: Traveling public and trail hikers

Objectives: As a result of viewing the exhibits, the majority of visitors will:
- learn about recreation opportunities and develop respect and a sense of stewardship for the CDNST;
- leave the CDNST with a sense of appreciation for the vast number of mountain experiences and recreational pursuits available;
- understand the significance of natural events in the environment;
- understand that the CDNST is managed by several different Federal agencies and their missions are varied; and
- recognize the historical significance the Continental Divide had in the development of our country.

Current Condition: There are no interpretive panels located along the trail. The initial segment of this trail follow a road that is used by a special use permittee to maintain a radio tower. The trail may be relocated to get it off of the road.

Desired Conditions/Media Recommendations:
Locate three 36" x 24" low profile interpretive panels within the first ½ mile of the trail.

List of Graphic Needs:
Forest Service shield, CDNST logo, other logos as appropriate
Photos of hikers along the trail – particularly those that story is about
Watercolor scenic background

Notes/Design Instructions:
Panels will be designed and fabricated to match the design specifications (size) established for the panels. These panels will be fabricated as high-pressure laminate, fiberglass embedded, porcelain enamel or other material with a 10-year warranty. Draft text and graphics will be completed. Remaining work includes doing layout/design and fabrication.

Signage Recommendations: 3 panels total sized approximately 36" x 24" each

Panel 1: Early Day Tales of the Trail (History of Monarch Pass and area – prehistoric to mining era)
Panel 2: Modern Day Tales of the Trail (Hiker's stories)
Panel 3: Timberline Trail (Plants and animals)

Interpretive Media Information for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail

Type: Continental Divide Sign

Site: Monarch Pass, San Isabel National Forest, Colorado

Topic: Continental Divide – Headwater Challenges

Theme: "Uniting Along the Great Divide"
> **The CDNST is the common thread connecting a scenic landscape - rich in a diversity of ecosystems - to history, cultures, values, and communities.**

Subthemes:

Human and Landscape Connections
> The vast of array of landscapes the CDNST crosses carry the memories of Native American life, Westward expansion, and the forging of a country rich in natural resources – water, timber, wildlife, plants, and minerals.

Headwater Challenges
> Managing water quality and water yield ensures a healthy and sustainable water supply for agriculture and domestic use to the east and west sides of the Continental Divide.

Audience: Traveling public and trail hikers

Objectives: As a result of viewing the exhibit, the majority of visitors will:
- recognize where the water goes on either side of the Divide
- understand the significance of the Divide in providing water to people.

Current Condition: There is currently the standard Continental Divide Sign that is used for a photo opportunity. It is poorly located in the middle of the parking lot and needs to be more esthetically located with the story of where the water goes.

Appendix B – Proposed Interpretation

Desired Conditions/Media Recommendations:
Locate a butterfly style sign (Special Attraction Sign-USFS) straddling the Continental Divide. Use large size for Level I Trailheads, and smaller size for Level II and III Trailheads.

List of Graphic Needs:
Forest Service shield
Map of Continental Divide

Notes/Design Instructions: The panel will fabricated as routed wood, and crème and brown for USFS.

Signage Recommendations: One panel total sized approximately 4' x 8'

The Continental Divide

Appendix C
Wayside Exhibit Evaluation, Program Evaluation

Appendix C – Wayside Exhibit Evaluation, Program Evaluation

This list may be of assistance in identifying the strong and weak points of installed wayside exhibits. In the blanks provided, answer questions "yes" or "no".
A separate sheet should be completed for each exhibit being evaluated.

WAYSIDE EXHIBIT EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Name and location of exhibit: _____

CONTENT_____

1. _____ Is the **topic** interesting, significant and appropriate?
2. _____ Is this a **logical** location for this subject?
3. _____ Is the exhibit **content** accurate?
4. _____ Are sentences and paragraphs **clear, concise and correct**?
5. _____ Are the **graphics** effective
6. _____ |Does the panel contain the right amount of **information**?
7. _____ Does the exhibit accomplish the **purpose** stated in the exhibit plan?
8. _____ Is the exhibit consistent with the **theme, goals and objectives** of the interpretive
                plan?

EXHIBIT DESIGN_____

1. _____ Is there a good **balance** of text and graphics?
2. _____ Are the panel **colors** pleasing and easy on the eyes?
3. _____ Does the **arrangement** of text and graphics aid comprehension?
4. _____ Is the **type** legible and readable?
5. _____ Are **captions** complete and properly placed?
6. _____ Is the panel **size and shape** appropriate for the subject?
7. _____ Are panel and base **materials** appropriate for the site?

INSTALLATIONS/MAINTENANCE_____

1. _____ Was the exhibit installed so as to be **unobtrusive** to natural resources?
2. _____ Is there a **level, hard-surfaced exhibit pad** of adequate size?

3. _____ Is the site **accessible** to visitors, including the mobility - impaired?
4. _____ Is the exhibit **plumb, level, and solidly anchored**?
6. _____ Is the exhibit **clean** and in **good condition**?
7. _____ Has the **vista** from the exhibit site been properly maintained?

COMMENTS:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Adapted from the Wayside Exhibit Evaluation Checklist of Guidelines for Planning, Designing and Producing Wayside Exhibits, National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center, Division of Wayside Exhibits. 1992.

Program Evaluation

The following form can be used to evaluate interpretive talks and presentations. It is recommended that all staff receive a copy for the evaluation form prior to being evaluated so they will understand the expectations.

EVALUATION FORM FOR CONDUCTED PROGRAMS

Presenter _____ Activity _____

Coach _____ Date/Time _____

Program Topic: _____

Comments: _____

_____

Preprogram
Arrives early to check equipment and mix with group
Begins on time

Introduction
Welcome
Description of program
Announces other activities
Warm up linked to theme

Rules/Regulations
Safety message
Regulations and rationale

Theme/Message
Introduce theme and work into program or activity "stops"
Organization

Transitions

Sincerity/Enthusiasm

Positive and enthusiastic
Effective illustration

Content/Accuracy

Technically accurate
Appropriate for group
Addresses a "bigger idea"
Relevant to attendees

Stops/Logistics

Pace
Positioning
Group management
Group involvement and interaction

Speaking Style

Tone and speed
Voice projection
Articulate
Eye contact

Conclusions

Recognizable conclusion
Restatement of theme
Stimulates thought and future actions

General Comments

Appendix D
Sample Program Plan

Introduction

The Program Planning Form is something the supervisor fills out with key management objectives and general direction on how to conduct the specific interpretive activity. The form can include a specific topic you want covered, *i.e.* Agency mission talking points, zebra mussel talking points, etc. The cost estimates can then be plugged into the annual project work plan. At the beginning of the season the forms are given to the interpreter who is responsible for developing these programs on the Interpretive Program Outline. Samples in *Appendix E.*

The Planning Form could also be filled out and given to concessionaires or partners that are conducting programs, particularly at the beginning of the season on specific topics (as above) that you want to make sure they cover throughout the season.

PROGRAM PLANNING FORM

INTERPRETIVE SERVICE: (*i.e.* tour, program, roving, etc.)

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES: (*i.e.* reduce vandalism, etc.)

WHY: (Reason you are using this method)

HOW: (Is this a 10 minute talk, 1 hour program? etc.)

WHERE: (Where you want interpreters to do this.)

WHEN: (Regularly scheduled during day, once/month, etc.)

CHARACTERISTICS OF SERVICE: (Are there weather nuances because it's outside?   Need to make hike accessible, etc.)

ALTERNATIVES: (Do you cancel for rain or offer modified program in a shelter?)

REFERENCES: (Key reference books on how to do interpretation.)

AREAS OF CONCERN:
    GENERAL: (*i.e.* someone hearing impaired is attending program, etc.)

    SAFETY: (*i.e.* review Health and Safety Code Handbook, Job Hazard Analysis, discuss hazards public may face.)

PROGRAM HISTORY: (*i.e.*, this kind of service has been provided since the early 80s throughout the forest.)

COST ESTIMATE: (How much does it cost to provide this program?)

PREPARER: **DATE PREPARED:**

PROGRAM PLANNING FORM - SAMPLE

SERVICE: Roving: Short Informal Welcome - Forest Fun

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES: Provide visitors information to successfully use and enjoy the forest to reduce vandalism and trash.

WHY: To orient visitors at the beginning of their visit so they can make the best use of their time.

HOW: Brief 5 minute welcome

WHERE: Entry Kiosk Area

WHEN: Visit throughout the day according to visitation and bus schedules, etc.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SERVICE: Informal informational talk should be flexible to allow time for questions.

ALTERNATIVES: Move under the awning of the bookstore in inclement weather.

MATERIALS: Brochures to handout, information on audiotape tour, sample of popular books available at bookstore, etc.
Forest Map and other activities to enjoy.
Natural or cultural history items as appropriate

REFERENCES: The following books for ideas on presenting talks:
Interpretation for the 21st Century, Sharing Nature with Children, Environmental Interpretation - A Practical Guide, Interpretation of Cultural and Natural Resources, Interpreting for Park Visitors.

CONCERNS: It is important to reach visitors EARLY in their visit. Ideally this should help them enjoy the site more fully and learn about other activities along the Passage to Adventure Corridor.
Safety: Refer to the Job Hazard Analysis for Interpretive Programs and Health and Safety Code Handbook.

PROGRAM HISTORY: This program has never been done here before.

COST ESTIMATE: This is a roving type of interpretation and will require staffing throughout the season. GS-4 - $85/day x 110 days = $9,350. Vehicle: mileage/FOR = $3,000 (Cost, in this case, is not broken out on a per program basis.)

PREPARER: Smokey Bear   **Date: 09/02/10**

Appendix E
Interpretive Program Outline

Introduction

The Interpretive Program Outline is filled out by the interpreter and includes the details of the specific program. It can then be maintained in a District file for use by other interpreters in the future. It includes enough outline and reference materials so that another interpreter could put the program on with less research.

It is also helpful to keep track of when and where the programs are given, and how many attend the program. Additional notes concerning weather, particularly if it affects attendance are also important. This file can then be used at the end of the season to help calculate total numbers and cost per program. This can be kept in a separate card file, or attached at the end of the Plan.

Program attendance helps demonstrates which topics have greater appeal. Sometimes, by reviewing how the topic was presented, changes can be made in the program to make it better or more exciting.

INTREPRETIVE PROGRAM OUTLINE

PROGRAM:

THEME:

OBJECTIVES: As a result of this program visitors will:

WHY:

HOW:

WHERE:

WHEN:

MATERIALS:

CONCERNS:

REFERENCES:

INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM OUTLINE - SAMPLE

PROGRAM: BIGHORN SHEEP   Smokey Bear   09/01/10
                                 Interpreter   **Date**

THEME: *(One simple statement)* Bighorn sheep, a majestic symbol of the Rocky Mountains, historically ranged throughout the Big Horn Mountain Range and their continued existence is due to conservation efforts by federal and state agencies.

GOAL: To increase visitor awareness of how the Bighorn National Forest and Wyoming Game and Fish manage for big game populations in Wyoming.

OBJECTIVES: As a result of this program visitors will be able to:
1. Tell why sheep live in this area;
2. Differentiate between Bighorn, mountain goats and other animals; and
3. Explain management policies of the Forest Service and Wyoming G&F as it relates to Bighorn Sheep.

GENERAL PROGRAM OUTLINE, TECHNIQUES OR COMMENTS:

Introduction: Welcome to the Bighorn National Forest – multiple use mission, name of walk/talk, length of time, what we'll be doing, special needs, etc.

Body:
1. Where to see Bighorn Sheep in this area and how to identify them.
   - Physical identifying characteristics compare to Mountain Goats or deer. (Look for their long underwear.)
   - Horns, not antlers, huge blood supply, groom horns by "brooming"
   - Coats bleach out from sun and snow in winter then turn to light gray in summer – hairs are hollow trapping air to protect them from extreme temperatures in winter.
   - How to watch them when you see them.
   - Approximate number and general locations of herds in area.
   - Why they are attracted to certain locations (salt licks, lambing areas…)
   - Skull is honeycombed in structure to absorb impact of smashing heads together.

2. **What we know about mating habits and care of young.**
   - Rams compete by dueling (charging and clashing heads together)

- Dueling begins in late November and continues through January.
- Young are born in early May on rocky ledges, usually stay here for 2-4 weeks with mother.
- Herd (mails and females) remain separate throughout most of the year, mature males often stay in groups in the high country during the summer.

3. How humans impact bighorn sheep and what the future holds for these animals.
- Encroachment by people raises stress level in animals, more become susceptible to lungworm, pneumonia and death. Also can lower birth rate among populations.
- Stalking of sheep can raise stress levels.
- Introduction of domestic sheep brought new diseases that decimated some herds.
- Wyoming Game and Fish management policies include a vaccination program to protect the sheep against lungworm.
- Hunting policies of sheep in this region.

Conclusion and Review: REITERATE
1. Where to see Bighorn sheep in this area and how to identify them.
   The best times to see bighorn sheep during your visit are "office hours" usually 9-4 during
   mid-day, not early morning or dusk (with exceptions to rams on the tundra at dawn).

2. What we know about mating habits and care of young. There are still many things we do not know about these animals.

3. How humans impact bighorn sheep and what the future hold for these animals.

As a majestic symbol of the Rockies and all that is wild, we must serve as stewards of the resources these animals require for survival into the next century.

End with quote and invite them to stay around if further questions.

MATERIALS: Use bighorn skulls and skins to illustrate points about bighorns.

REFERENCES: A Sierra Club Naturalist's Guide by Audrey DeLella Benedict

DATE/LOCATION PROGRAM GIVEN:
5/30/10 – Pactola Visitor Center – 200 people,
6/5/10 - Moon Walk - 150 people, Grizzly Campground - 8/4/10 - 25 people (rained)

CDNST Interpretive Plan