



Inklings

Bulletin of Interpretive Ideas

March 2006 Volume 6, Issue 1

Current Project List

- Interpretive Sign Design, CSX Rail Trail, Bloomington (IN) Parks and Recreation
- Trail Signs, Reeds Lake Trail, East Grand Rapids (MI) Parks Department
- Interpretive Site Plan, Prime Outlets, Fremont, IN
- Interpretive Sign Design, Indiana DNR, Whitewater State Park
- Interpretive Sign Design, Indiana DNR, Ouabache State Park

Interpreting Management Concerns

Lise Schools

Since 1993, *Interpretive Ideas* has created several hundred interpretive signs for historical, natural and technical sites. We've interpreted prairies, iron bridges and wastewater treatment plants. In recent years, however, there has been an increase in the number of sign projects dealing with management issues. Signs interpreting protection strategies and management concerns have become common projects. The increase in these types of projects is because: a) these concerns have grown in recent years, and b) managers see the value of building public support through interpretation.

Some of the issues that have been interpreted:

Invasive Plants (1)

Managing invasive plants was not a sign topic ten years ago. Last year alone, however, *Interpretive Ideas* had five sign projects at least making reference to this management concern. Interpretive panels offer a way to prevent their spread.

Stormwater Management (2,3)

Run-off from parking lots and streets is another issue of growing concern. Many sites are using native plants and new technology to cleanse the water before it enters streams and lakes. Interpretive panels explain the problem and creative solutions.

Prescribed Burns (4)

Although natural and intentional fires have maintained ecosystems for thousands of years, they conjure up negative reactions for many. There are fears of wildfires and damage to property.

Interpretive signs explain the historic role of fire in maintaining prairies. They alleviate fears by describing the training and precautions required in prescribed burns.



(4)

Lake Siltation (5)

Manmade lakes with dams trap fill with silt. Managers face costly dredging or removing the dam to restore the natural waterway. For a lake that has been a popular fishing spot, the issue is extremely controversial. Interpretation explains the symptoms of declining lake quality and management alternatives. It



(5)

brings the public into the process of making tough decisions.

Stay on the Trail (6)

Sometimes our favorite places to explore are also the most fragile. Inadvertent-

(cont. next page)



(1)



(2)



(3)



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(Management Concerns)

ently, visitors destroy the things that make the site significant. Interpretation helps people become aware of their actions. It changes detrimental behaviors.

Interpretation helps explain the problem and the management solution. Seeing acres of shrubs being cut and cleared may alarm people until they realize that the shrubs are the invasive bush honeysuckle. Likewise, burning a woodlot may appear destructive until people understand what a savannah is. By interpreting management decisions, the public understands the problems and creative solutions being implemented.

Key to Photos

(1) Invasive plants sign encourages people to wipe their feet on the boot brush to prevent spreading seeds caught in boot treads.

Client: Indiana Chapter of the Nature Conservancy

Design: Interpretive Ideas

Fabrication: Pannier Graphics

Boot Brush Sign Frame: BestEx

(2) Stormwater control landscaping with native plants.

Client: Bloomington Parks and Recreation (IN)

Design: Interpretive Ideas

Fabrication: Folia Industries

(3) Stormwater control landscaping with native plants. (Porter County, IN)

Client: J.F. New and Associates

Design: Interpretive Ideas

Fabrication: Pannier Graphics

(4) Ecosystem restoration (savanna)

Client: Portage Parks and Recreation (IN)

Design: Interpretive Ideas

Fabrication: Folia Industries

(5) Lake siltation exhibit

Client: Indiana DNR

Design: Interpretive Ideas

Fabrication: ICON Exhibits



(6)

(6) Stay on the trail to protect the bryophytes

Client: Indiana DNR

Design: Interpretive Ideas

Fabrication: Crystal Graphics