Interpretation Handbook and Standard

Distilling the essence

JUNE 2005

Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

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Editor Fiona Colquhoun

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Albatross taking off
Photo: C.J.R. Robertson

Cover image details: Panel from Trounson Forest Park, Northland. Joel Beachman, graphic designer, Lindsay Charman and Anja Pohler, concepts and text. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun.

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Foreword

Interpretation is fundamental to the Department's fostering of recreation, heritage, understanding and engagement in conservation. Interpretation helps demonstrate the values we hold and connects us to our communities.

We have a fantastic wealth of stories to tell. Stories about species, events and places that help people understand their significance and demonstrate what active conservation actually means. We enjoy hearing the kokako sing, but appreciate it all the more if we know it survives today only as a result of intensive pest management programmes.

Hugh Logan
Director-General

We tell our stories using a variety of media: seasonal interpretation programmes, talks by hut wardens and concessionaires, visitor centre displays, interpreted walks, panels in huts and a wide variety of publications. But the quality of our endeavours varies. We need to make sure that professional, accurate, high-quality interpretation happens by design consistently. It means clear communication, being creative and not letting the media overwhelm the message. What we say is absolutely critical to achieving our mission. From the complex we need to 'distil the essence' and present understandable, challenging, provocative, useful and meaningful stories in enjoyable ways to visitors. Our stories need to help people make connections with and between places or events.

This handbook is about developing and improving our skills in interpretation. It provides some of the ingredients to success, but an ongoing commitment is required. I encourage you to use this handbook and continue to improve your skills so that the experience our visitors have is made all the more meaningful, rich and enjoyable through stimulating, engaging and memorably good interpretation.

Hugh Logan

Director-General

Te pupurangi panel at Trounson Forest Park, Northland. Designer: Joel Beachman. Lindsay Charman and Anja Pohler text and concepts. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

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Fiona Colquhoun, Editor, National Visitor Information & Interpretation Co-ordinator: Research, Development & Improvement Division, Wellington.

Albatross in flight
Photo: C.J.R. Robertson

Contents

Foreword iii
Acknowledgements iv
Introduction vii
What is interpretation? viii
Why interpret? ix
History of interpretation x

Chapter one — Communicating clearly 1

1.1 Communicating clearly 3
1.2 Enjoyable 4
1.3 Relevant 4
1.4 Organised 6
1.5 Thematic 7
1.6 Reaching visitors through different learning styles 8

Chapter two — Planning interpretation 11

2.1 DOC Planning context 13
2.2 DOC Planning processes 15
2.3 Sponsorship and partnerships 16
2.4 Why interpret this topic or site ? 17
2.5 What are you interpreting? 17
2.6 Who are your visitors? 21
2.7 Who should be involved in planning? 23
2.8 What's in a story, topic and theme? 25
2.9 What are the objectives? 26
2.10 Planning quality through evaluation 27
2.11 Maintaining interpretation 31
2.12 Outsourcing interpretation work 32
2.13 Design and build 33
2.14 Display sign creation process 35
2.15 Hut interpretation 37
2.16 Sensitive topics 38
2.17 Interpretation to influence visitor behaviour 39
2.18 Interpretation for special needs visitors 42
2.19 Interpretation for children 43
2.20 Planning case study 44
2.21 Planning considerations 45

Chapter three — Personal interpretation 47

3.1 Types of personal interpretation 49
3.2 Personal interpretation techniques 49
3.3 Why use personal interpretation? 50
3.4 Getting organised 51
3.5 Develop structure and use a theme 52
3.6 Personal delivery skills 54
3.7 Use props 56

3.8 Drama 57
3.9 Visitor centre staff 58
3.10 Associates and partners in interpretation 59

Chapter four — Self-guided interpretation 63

4.1 Self-guided techniques 65
4.2 Planning and writing for self-guided media 66
4.3 Site planning for visitor orientation 69
4.4 Indoor and outdoor panels and displays 72
4.5 Design elements 73
4.6 Designing panels 74
4.7 Production options 76
4.8 Visitor Centre displays 82
4.9 Audio 83
4.10 Audio-visual and multimedia displays 84
4.11 Art and sculpture 87
4.12 Interpretation publications 88
4.13 Ruapekapeka Pa site redevelopment – Case Study 90
4.14 Visitor information 94
4.15 Marketing and promotion 94

Chapter five — Interpretation standards 95

5.1 Interpretation standard 97
5.2 Interpretation for tracks and outdoor visitor structures 101
5.3 Hut Service Standards and interpretation at huts 102
5.4 International standards for heritage Interpretation 103
5.5 History quality standards for interpretation 103
5.6 History quality certification 104
5.7 Other standards 105

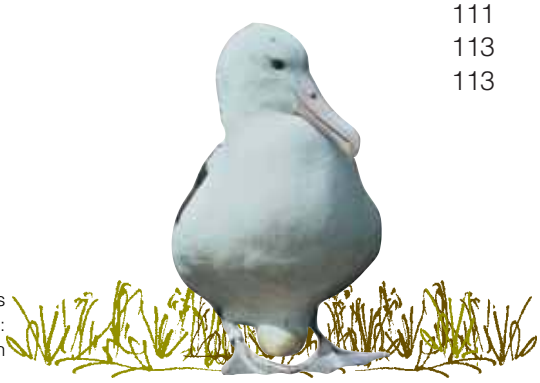
Appendix 1 — Partly annotated bibliography 107

Ruapekapeka case study bibliography 110

Appendix 2 — Other interpretation resources 111

DOC Intranet Resources 111
Useful websites 111
Interpretation associations 113
Interpretation consultants 113

Albatross courting pair
Photo: M.F. Soper



Northern albatross with egg. Photo: C.J.R. Robertson

Introduction

New Zealand's natural and historic heritage is protected; people enjoy it and are involved with the Department in its conservation.

DOC vision

The Department of Conservation is charged with managing conservation areas to conserve and protect natural, cultural and historic resources, undertake conservation promotion, advocacy and education and foster recreation activities while allowing for tourism. Interpreting conservation sites and their values to the public is an important way for the Department to deliver its charter, fostering conservation awareness and commitment.

Outdoor panels, visitor centre models, audio visuals and displays, performances, re-enactments, talks, activity programmes, guided tours and roving interpretation rangers enable us to convey important conservation messages to visitors, helping them to enjoy, connect with and value our significant and special places.

Crafting interpretive media which is simple, insightful, accurate, sensitive, sometimes provocative and always memorable requires the elements of research, knowledge, vision, project management and experience to come together in a mix of science and art. This handbook is designed to assist DOC staff and others translating the conservation vision into action by developing effective messages and stories about New Zealand's great natural and cultural inheritance and its preservation.

Light-mantled sooty Albatross in flight, Photo: J.L. Kendrick

About this handbook

How do you create great memorable and meaningful messages about New Zealand's special ecosystems, habitats, architecture, cultural heritage and significant events?

How do you distil the essence of a long story into a short one?

This handbook offers guidance for communication, interpretation planning, topics and themes, creating structure and the merits of different types of interpretation. It identifies core elements of good practice for effective, worthwhile and enjoyable interpretation.

It is designed to be read in parts:

Chapter one outlines the principles of effective communication.

Chapter two provides guidance on planning interpretation.

Chapter three offers practical guidance for personal or guided interpretation.

Chapter four focuses on non-personal interpretation such as panels, displays and artwork.

Chapter five identifies the DOC standard for interpretation and other relevant standards.

The **Appendices** refer readers to literature and web references.

This handbook has been developed for DOC staff, concessionaires, volunteers and community groups, but should also be useful for others involved in providing interpretation.

Haast tokoeka egg. Photo: Chrissy Wickes

What is interpretation?

Interpretation communicates what is significant about places, people or events. The essence of interpretation provides insight for visitors about what's special and how and why it's valued. It's a celebration of place and things, of culture and nature, creativity and folklore, great successes and failures in our history.

Interpretation is connected to sites and objects, artwork or living things and it can happen anywhere; in parks, visitor centres, historic sites, city streets, museums, zoos or galleries, at specials events or promotions, and in publications.

Techniques include displays, guiding, drama, audio-visual/multi-media and publications. People generally experience interpretation in their leisure time, or as part of formal education activities. There is no one definition of interpretation but here are some well known examples:

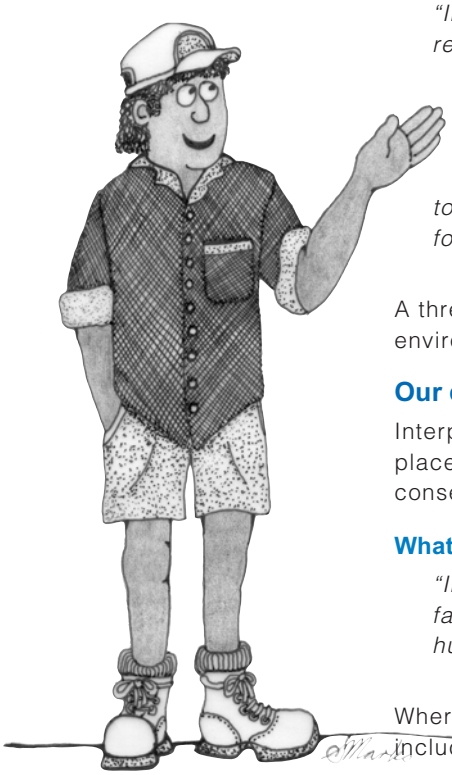
"Interpretation is an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by first hand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information".

Tilden (1977:8)

"Interpretation refers to information which has the objective of facilitating an understanding and appreciation of park assets and values whilst education refers to information directed towards students with the objective of increased knowledge for education outcomes".

ANZECC (1999)

A three fold approach is best for effective conservation education - education **about** the environment, **in** the environment and **for** the environment.



Illustration, Susan Marks

Our definition:

Interpretation is an explanation of the natural, cultural or historic values attached to places. It enables visitors to gain insight and understanding about the reasons for conservation and ongoing protection of our heritage.

What makes information interpretive?

"Interpretation is the revelation of a larger truth that lies behind any statement of fact," and *"interpretation should capitalise mere curiosity for the enrichment of the human mind and spirit."*

Tilden (1977:8)

Where information provides facts, interpretation provides a story. All interpretation includes information, but good interpretation takes facts and connects them with context.

Information: Tane Mahuta is the largest and oldest kauri tree in New Zealand, at 51.5 metres tall, 13.77 metres circumference and 1500 years old.

Interpretation: Tane Mahuta and other Kauri trees had perfect trunks for boat building, masts, carving and housing which helped early New Zealand Maori and Europeans survive and thrive.

Young Australian water wheel and interpretation panel, Carrick Range, Otago. Photo: Peter Bristow

"Do not try to satisfy your vanity by teaching a great many things. Awaken people's curiosity. It is enough to open minds; do not overload them. Just put there a spark. If there is some good inflammable stuff, it will catch fire."

Anatole France

Why interpret?

"*Through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation, protection.*"

Tilden (1977:38)

Interpretation helps fulfil our goals and share knowledge with others: We interpret to:

- enrich the visitors' experience, informing them about the how, what and why of protecting special places for this and future generations
- raise awareness, understanding and support for conservation
- promote a particular issue or message, and to foster desired visitor behaviour, e.g. minimal impact
- promote positive relations with the community, understanding about programmes and facilitate volunteer involvement and engagement.

"The essence of good interpretation is that it reveals new insight into what makes a place special. It gives people a new understanding. If you have ever visited an exhibition, or been on a guided walk and come away saying "Well I never realized that …" *or thinking* "Aha! Now I understand" *you've been an audience for some good interpretation.*"

Carter (2001:6)

What's in interpretation for visitors?

Why spend your precious leisure time reading panels or on a nature programme walk to see the blue duck? Visitors participate in interpretive activities for lots of reasons. Learning more about a place and its features can be stimulating and interesting and help make you feel good. It can:

- satisfy curiosity and thirst for knowledge
- add depth to the experience of places
- entertain
- provide insight and add meaning
- heighten sensory awareness
- inspire
- make the unfamiliar familiar
- be an opportunity to meet and talk with experts
- help you meet other people who share your interests
- be a good activity on holiday or school trips
- make you want to return to the site again

Interpretation also provides deeper less tangible benefits to individuals and to society. The underlying human desire for meaning and connections to communities and places underpins our interpretation work. Identifying with our unique places and culture helps people develop a personal and collective sense of being and value.

Left. Guide showing rock drawings at Weka Pass, Canterbury. Photo: DOC

Right. Kaikoura visitor reading seal colony panel. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

History of interpretation

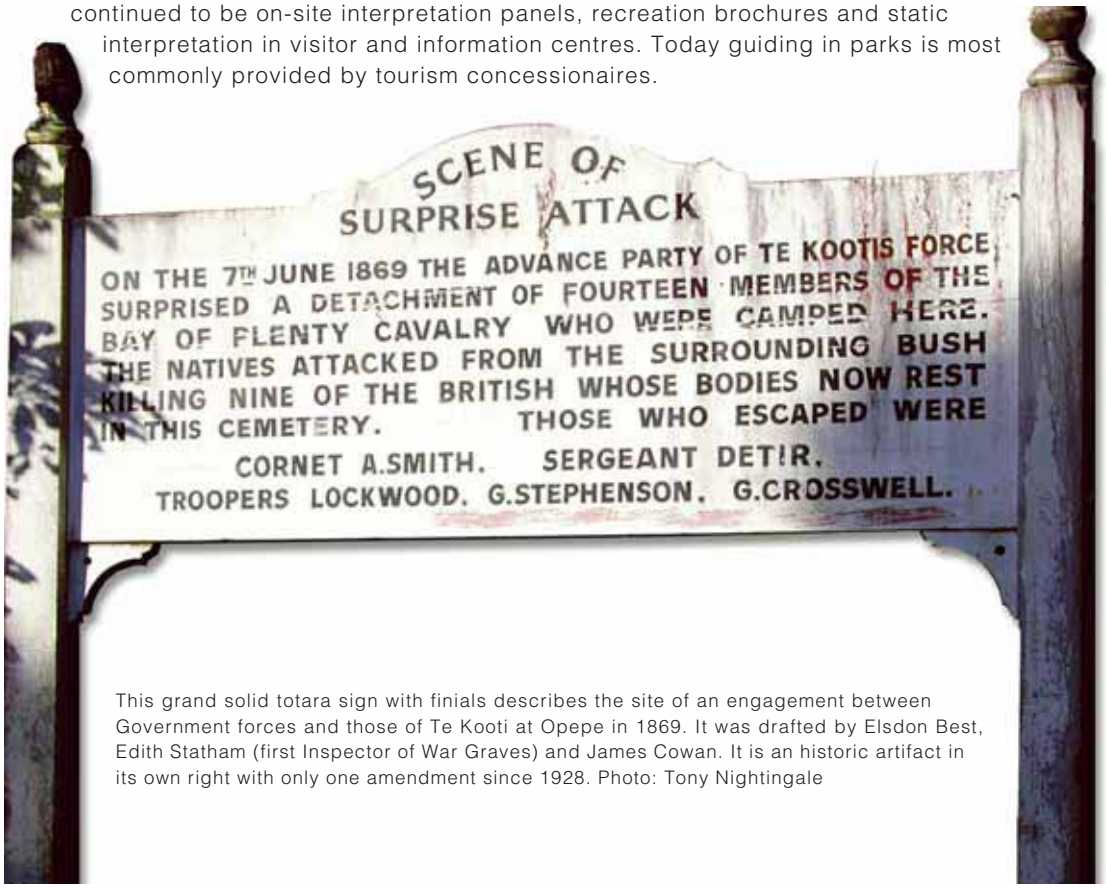
Story telling has been around for as long as we have. People have always yearned to understand and explain the world around them. All cultures have explained and celebrated the land they live in, its creatures and the stories of their people – through art, writing, dance and oral traditions. Interpretation is part of this tradition.

The phenomenon of tourism started the development of interpretation as we know it today. Informed guidance was an integral part of the European sightseeing tours of Europe and the Middle East in the 19th century. The 'Grand Tour' to the renaissance places of continental Europe was not unlike a special interest academic expert-led tour of today. In New Zealand, Maori guides in the thermal village of Whakarewarewa were probably our first interpreters.

The evolution of interpretation is probably most apparent in museums. From the early days of museums when basic facts were all that explained the collections of treasures and oddities, plant, animal and geological specimens, museums now present the rich stories associated with their treasures in creative and innovative ways.

In America from the 1920s, interpretation momentum grew as expansion of the railways made parks more accessible. After World War Two there was a huge growth in park-based concession activities and improvements in facilities and services for visitors. New Zealand park interpretation began to flourish in the 1960s with summer nature programmes. By the early 1980s summer programmes were common place in national and forest parks. Professional training in parks and recreation management at Lincoln College for both trainees and existing rangers included interpretation. Influenced by the US parks service, visitor centres were developed in the 1970s and 80s for almost all national parks and many forest and regional parks. An interpretation design centre was established by the Lands and Survey Department in Nelson in 1977. Te Papa, Museum of New Zealand, and other museums have set high standards for displays and visitor interaction.

In 2005 DOC has a national network of over 25 visitor and information centres, hundreds of interpretation panels and a large range of visitor publications. Several conservancies run summer programmes and have seasonal roving interpreters. The focus has continued to be on-site interpretation panels, recreation brochures and static interpretation in visitor and information centres. Today guiding in parks is most commonly provided by tourism concessionaires.



This grand solid totara sign with finials describes the site of an engagement between Government forces and those of Te Kooti at Opepe in 1869. It was drafted by Elsdon Best, Edith Statham (first Inspector of War Graves) and James Cowan. It is an historic artifact in its own right with only one amendment since 1928. Photo: Tony Nightingale

Chapter one — Communicating clearly

Tongariro National Trout Centre

Trounson Forest Park

Trounson Forest Park
Photos: Fiona Colquhoun

An interactive sign at Auckland Regional Council's Botanic Gardens. Photo: Michelle Edge, ARC

Arrowtown Chinese settlement panels, Otago
Designer: Cathy McPhie
Historian: Peter Bristow

1.1 Communicating clearly

This chapter explores the basic principles of interpretation communication, drawing on the work of Sam Ham (USA), Gianna Moscardo (Australia), and Freeman Tilden (USA). Many researchers of interpretation refer to Freeman Tilden's six guiding principles developed from his observations of park interpretation. These principles provide an introduction to the important elements of communicating to different audiences.

A simple, clear and succinct panel at Monkey Island, Southland.
Designer: Karl Blaas
Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

1. *Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.*
2. *Information, as such, is not interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However all interpretation includes information.*
3. *Interpretation is an art which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical or architectural. Any art is in some degree teachable.*
4. *The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.*
5. *Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part, and must address itself to the whole man rather than any phase.*
6. *Interpretation addressed to children (say, up to the age of twelve) should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best it will require a separate programme.*

Tilden (1977:9)

These points can be summarised as **provoke** thought, **relate** to your audience and **reveal** a new insight about what's special. Make their experience richer through interpretation.

Tilden's book *Interpreting our Heritage* (1977) is still very relevant today. Beck and Cable build on Tilden's principles in *Interpretation for the 21st Century – Fifteen Guiding Principles for Interpreting Nature and Culture* (1998).

"*The mind tends to go where it finds the most gratifying information.*" Ham (1992:6)

To maintain interest and attention, information needs to be presented in interesting and stimulating ways. Interpretation which is boring and monotonous, difficult to read, listen to or work out is not likely to attract much attention or hold an audience for long.

Sam Ham (1992) defines the qualities of effective communication as the PEROT principle. That is Enjoyable, Relevant, Organised and Thematic. This chapter explores these qualities and also touches on learning styles.

Visitors spend less time looking at repetitive displays.
How well will the interpretation at right work for most visitors?
Photo: Ian Hill

This is the entrance panel to a treetop canopy walk in the southwest of Western Australia. Other panels on the walk also use the shape of the tingle tree leaf and include the tingle spider. Photos: Fiona Colquhoun

1.2 Enjoyable

Make it easy for visitors to pay attention. Use colour, sound and surprise. Several features automatically attract attention.

Provide variety

"Humans as a species instinctively pay greater attention to differences and changes. Any repetition will quickly lose visitor attention, and without attention it is difficult to create successful communication."

Moscardo (1999:28)

Keep visitors involved

Greater attention comes from participation, interaction and sensory experiences. People remember things they have touched, rather than simply read, heard or watched. Active involvement also allows visitors more control over their experience which increases 'mindfulness' (consciousness). Participation involves giving some degree of control over he interpretation to the visitors"

Moscardo (1986:32)

E.g. encouraging visitors to ask questions of guides, interactive displays and multimedia.

- Encourage visitors to use their senses by providing things to see, touch, smell, hear or sense and by focusing on one or more senses at different times.
- Encourage interaction, e.g. interactive displays that require two people to operate, hold, or look through.
- Vary the level of participation and challenge required, mix simple and complex displays and information.
- Vary the visual and narrative style, create quiet spaces. Build variety into site structures by being creative.

Grab attention:

- movement and contrast
- living things – people and animals
- unexpected novel and surprising things
- things connected to us
- extreme stimuli – very large, colourful, loud and smelly things.

Moscardo cited Myers (1986:60)

A story about a friendly dog is easy to connect with at the Museum of Wellington City & Sea. Design: Hewett & Pender Assoc., Sydney, Australia. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

North Head gun emplacement guided tour with archaeologist Dave Veart. Photo: P.J. Mahoney

1.3 Relevant

Make personal connections through **meaning** and **relevance**. New information is understood faster if we associate it with something we already know. If there is no association the chance of retaining information is low. That's why marketers put in a lot more effort to create brand awareness with a totally new product than they do with an extension product to an existing brand. Create meaning by making **personal** connections. Make it easy to connect (like the examples above).

Touch and smell the kauri gum. Provide a sensory experience.

Right: Grinding tub.

Recreated gum digger's hut. Imagine living here after working all day in gum holes! Interpretation doesn't need to be complex or high tech to be meaningful.

In face to face interpretation try to connect with memories, experiences or knowledge

- Find out what level of knowledge people already have about your topic and site so you can tailor your material to your audience more accurately.
- Find out people's names, where they are from and other information so you can refer to them by name and start making connections which mean something to them. People generally enjoy historic images in interpretation panels, publications and other media. They can increase reference particularly for local people.

Use analogies, comparisons, metaphors

Overseas visitors connect New Zealand landforms to similar landforms in other countries which are generally well known, e.g. glaciers in New Zealand compared with Europe, Aoraki/Mt. Cook compared to Mt. Everest or K2 in Nepal, pukeko and their Australian cousins swamp hens, Ngaruahoe to Mt Fuji, Japan, shags and cormorant birds etc.

Avoid jargon, clichés and acronyms

- If you use DOC terms, technical terms and acronyms, unless you explain it, most visitors won't know what you are talking about.
- Find out what people care about and connect with these things.

Making interpretation personal means relating to things we *care* about in our own lives, the beliefs and values we have cared enough about to adopt. If you can connect personally with these things you are more likely to be able to make a strong and lasting impression.

Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.

Tilden (1977:9)

Gum Diggers Park Awanui, Northland.
Designer: John Johnston, owner of Gumdiggers
Photos: Fiona Colquhoun

Illustration: Susan Marks

Self referencing

Ask people to think for a moment about themselves when offering new information, e.g. "Think of the last time you…" or "Have you ever noticed that…" "How many of you have ever…" "You probably noticed that…".

> *Putting these phrases before the new information increases the chances of visitors paying attention.*
>
> Sam Ham (1992:16)

Labels

Most people respond by associating or disassociating labels with themselves and it seems personal. Positive, negative and neutral labels can be used such as, "the best national park neighbours do…" or "the worst pests are ones which…" Labels can easily offend so use them cautiously.

In talks appeal to beliefs and values

Ask visitors to recall outside places where they had played as children. Then ask them to describe those places today – what has changed – a lot, some, or not much. This focuses the tour on changes visitors make to the landscape and allows them to relate those changes to ones they had experienced in their home landscape – a valued place.

Tongariro National Trout Centre
Designer: Janet Bathgate
Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

1.4 Organised

Create structure: make it easy to follow

It's hard for people to make connections if your visual, text or verbal presentation is confusing, poorly organised or overwhelming. Background structure which is apparent but not overt can make all the difference.

Clearly organise material using headings and subheadings, be thematic in your interpretation using the traditional story format of beginning, middle and end. Information should be in a logical sequence so it flows connecting ideas from beginning to end.

In non-personal interpretation, use graphic design elements that enhance the structure not detract from it or confuse it. Ensure that images relate to the text.

Limit your ideas or pieces of information to four or fewer in all your communication. That's the maximum most people can recall.
Ham & Weiler (2002)

Structure also extends to site orientation

Moscardo (1999) suggests we provide people with an overview of what to expect at sites. An introductory panel with a map and marked routes, or explaining practical aspects of a guided tour (mind your head, don't touch the stalagmites etc.), introducing the theme and how the talk will progress. Make organisation and introduction seamless. A well designed visitor centre, heritage attraction or interpretive trail should

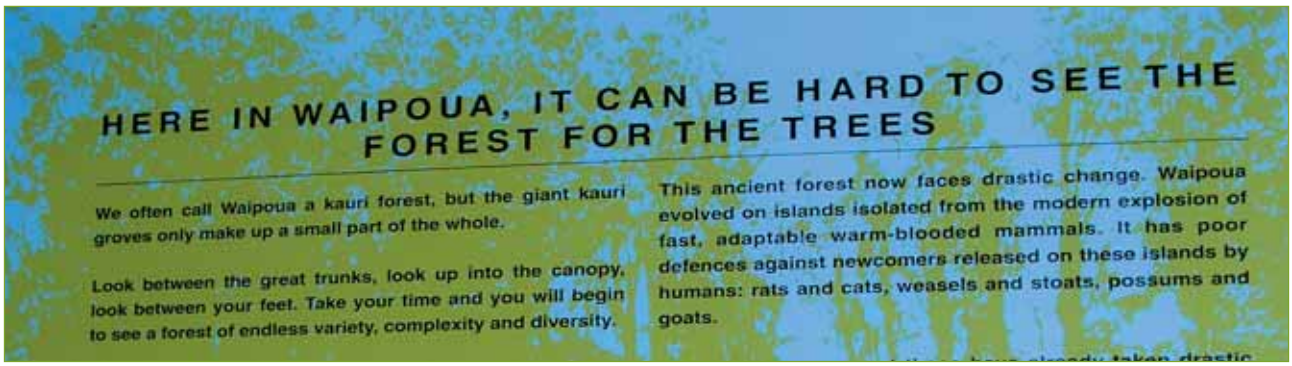
1.5 Thematic

A topic is the subject matter. A **theme** is the main message or moral and presents the viewpoint of the story. Linking a series of related topics with a key message or theme is highly effective. Themes can be revealed in a title or the introduction of a talk. Visitors can then connect meaning and have some expectation of what comes next. On a panel the theme will be in the title heading or subheading. In brochures it will be in the introduction. Developing good themes takes practice and is outlined in more detail in chapter two Planning Interpretation.

A panel at Karori Wildlife Sanctuary about putangatanga (Wellington tree weta). This panel is one of a thematic series found throughout the sanctuary. Designer: Patrick Velvin. Text: Tim Benton. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

Stories

Stories follow a familiar format, an introduction with a scene and characters, a problem, conflict or issue arises, then a climax, resolution or end. The structure is easy to follow and one piece of information relates to another. Cultural history lends itself easily to story-telling but good stories can be made from natural history events and things. Creating or using a character scientist, explorer or Maori chief can provide a framework to discover and reveal information through the telling of a story.



Waipoua, Northland. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

1.6 Reaching visitors through different learning styles

People learn in different ways

Knudsen, Cable and Beck (1995) in *Interpretation of Cultural and Natural Resources* provide an introduction to the study of how people learn; educational psychology. They note:

- we build on what we know and have experienced
- how we learn is age related
- we each use different styles and strategies to learn.

We learn by intellectualising, through emotion and physical sensations. Technically this is cognitive, affective and kinaesthetic learning. Interpretation techniques can reach people in all these ways, and combinations are known to be particularly effective.

Evocative and poetic, Trounson Forest Park, Northland. Encourage reflection and intuitive learning. Designer: Joel Beachman. Lindsay Charman and Anja Pohler text and concepts. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

Traveling with informative tour guides and subject specialists is a great way to learn. Heritage Expeditions on tour in the sub-antarctic islands. Photo: Mike Edginton

Learning preferences

People receive information and learn in different ways:

Visually – graphics, mapping, art, sculpture

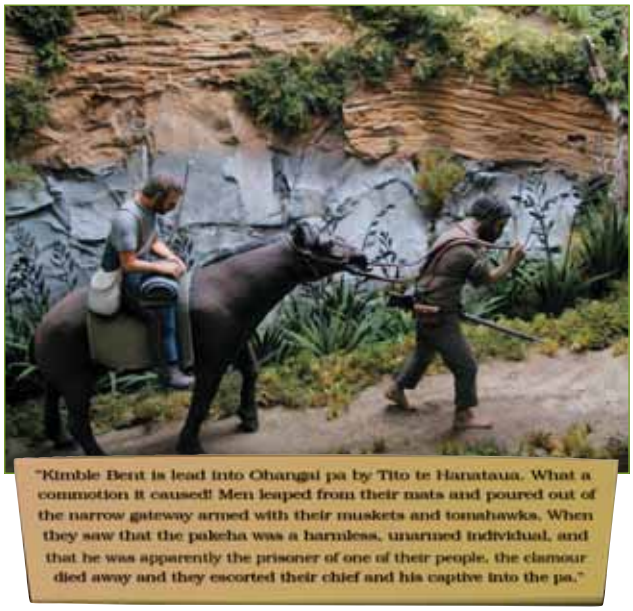
Auditory – sounds, speech, music, song

Kinaesthetically – touching, movement and action.

Emotionally – sensory feeling, emotionally connecting.

KC&B after Christenson (1990)

Some people learn best by reading, others prefer verbal directions or images. Our learning preferences influence the way we present information and interpretation work. We often present information in the way we like to receive it. For best effect interpret in a variety of ways.



Find comfortable places to stop and talk. Rangitoto Island historic baches walk and talk. Photo: P.J. Mahoney

Top left: Visually fascinating Tawhiti Museum diorama, the approach of a visitor. Designer: Nigel Ogle. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun.

Bottom left: Sea lions Macquarie Island. "Maybe later - we're very, very busy just now". Photo: Mike Edginton.

Right: A tactile relief model of Mt Taranaki. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

Learning styles

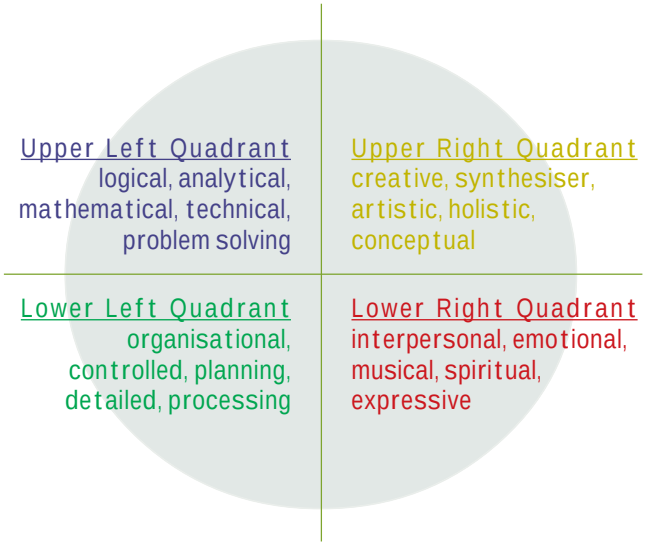
Learning styles go beyond how we prefer to receive information (modalities) and the different types of learning (domains). They look at how we perceive and process information, in abstract or concrete form, and whether we prefer to observe or experiment with information.

Learning styles are also influenced by left or right side brain dominance. Research has identified that our brains are divided into two distinct yet connected hemispheres. The left side functions by processing information in an analytical, rational, logical and sequential way. The right recognises relationships, integrates and synthesises information and arrives at intuitive insights.

Left brain/right brain dominance

The right hemisphere tends to perceive the world and other people in a global mode: instantaneous, intuitive, usual, synthesising, emotion and expressive. It finds solutions through sudden and spontaneous intuition, leaving to the left hemisphere the job of proving them in a logical, analytical and scientific manner.

Hermann Brain Dominance Model



(www.hermann.com.au)

Canterbury Plant Resource Centre
Photos: Gnome Hannah-Brown

The left hemisphere breaks everything down into different elements; the right hemisphere considers the global whole and looks for connections, analogies and similarities.

We each have a quadrant which is dominant in our thinking style. Communication is easiest between people who share the same thinking style, or when information is presented in the manner which represents the style we prefer. We can't hope to tailor our interpretation to the thinking styles of individuals, but we can and should present information in a variety of ways to reach and satisfy a wide audience.

Learning styles

Active learning
- design and construct a planting project.
- learn by doing
- discuss it, try it out

Reflective learning
- stop and reflect to digest new information
- have quiet space to think about meanings

Sensing and intuitive learning
- experience the place
- discover relationships of things
- learn facts

Visual and verbal learning
- listen to talks and instructions
- look at images and displays
- watch demonstrations
- read material

Sequential and global learning
- follow steps/stages
- skim information to get the big picture or read the beginning and end
- read pamphlets and restoration guides
- visit websites.

Learning continues long after the initial contact. At best, the 'story' should enhance a visitor's experience, and provoke reaction and participation. Check your own learning style and more information at: www.jcu.edu.au/studying/services/studyskills/learningst/. Check the 'Credits and Evaluation' section after you have tried the brain dominance exercise for more details about learning styles.

Chapter two — Planning interpretation

Left top: Wanaka Visitor Centre historic interpretation panel.

Left middle: Fiordland Visitor Centre kakapo and pukeko interpretation.

Left bottom: Penguin viewing shelter, Southland, plus penguin artwork from a related interpretation panel.

Above: Wanaka Visitor Centre pest control interpretation.

Photos: Fiona Colquhoun

Rakes and Creepers game. The Botanic Garden has many different themes for its garden beds. For example, an endangered New Zealand native plant garden; a herb garden, a rose garden and gardens from plants from other countries. You have been appointed Curator to plan and grow a new botanic garden. Play this game to find out what to do. Get a friend or family members to play it with you. Photo: Kim Morland

The diorama displays at the Tawhiti museum in Taranaki are fascinating and tell significant New Zealand stories about the 1820s-1830s musket wars, and the post 1860s land wars. Diorama displays can be an evocative way to tell a story.Designer: Nigel Ogle. Photos: Fiona Colquhoun

2.1 DOC Planning context

This chapter explains the planning process for the design and implementation of interpretation projects. It is not about strategic, annual or operational planning. Planning enables you to answer questions: who, what, when, why, how and so what? It helps you define features and stories of an area and decide which are significant enough to interpret. A written plan will help you make considered and informed decisions about resources and provide accountability and transparency for your project. Different levels of planning are required for small, medium and large scale project planning

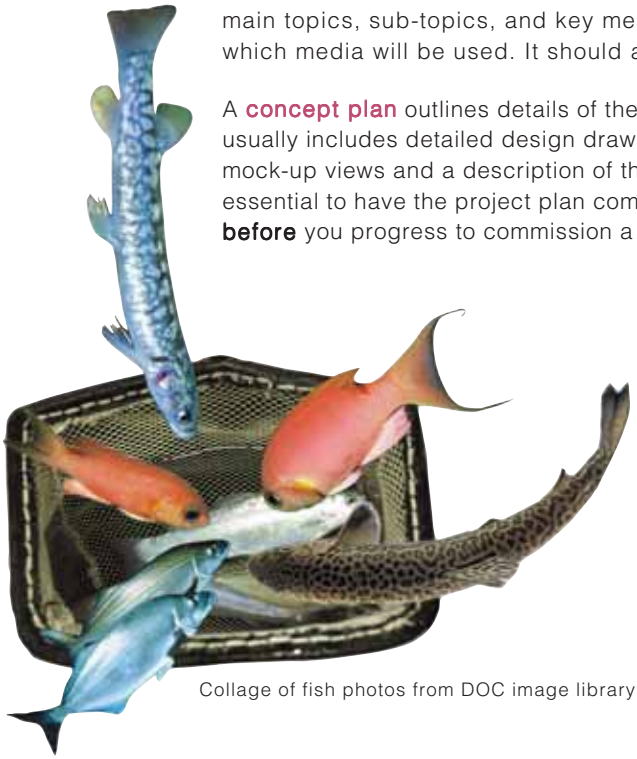
- Strategic plans set broad directions for your work and allow you to future gaze.
- Project plans are the first stage of thinking about what you want to achieve and provides structure and process for getting there. DOC has standard templates for project plans.
- Site plans outline specific details of what you seek to achieve at places.
- Concept plans provide a detailed expression of work and ideas – how objectives will be translated into action.

Conservancy interpretation plans are strategic and provide broad guidance to identify significant stories, sites, and other programmes. They should reflect national directions and may define specific visitor experience outcomes at places based on visitor group needs. They should identify connections between sites to avoid repeating similar stories or methods to the same visitors, e.g. on touring routes, or huts along a track. A basic description of the visitor experience goals for key sites should be included in the plan and important site issues highlighted. A template will be available on the DOC Intranet.

A **project plan** is your brief or instructions for a project. It defines what you intend to achieve, the scope of the project and outlines who, what and when things will happen. For medium and large scale projects standard DOC project plans include a Terms of Reference and Business Case. Developing these plans is a useful process for conceptualising small or large projects, particularly when defining the scope of work and communicating the project to others. For large scale projects the plan should be developed through a steering committee or project work group which may include expert skills from different parts of the organisation. Development of all plans should include appropriate peer review.

A **site/event interpretation plan** directs the development of a new exhibit or work. It covers visitor needs for the site and contextual issues. It should include site objectives, main topics, sub-topics, and key messages. It may also include storylines and outline which media will be used. It should also identify the connections.

A **concept plan** outlines details of the proposed work. It usually includes detailed design drawings, key messages, mock-up views and a description of the visitor experience. Its essential to have the project plan completed and approved **before** you progress to commission a concept plan.

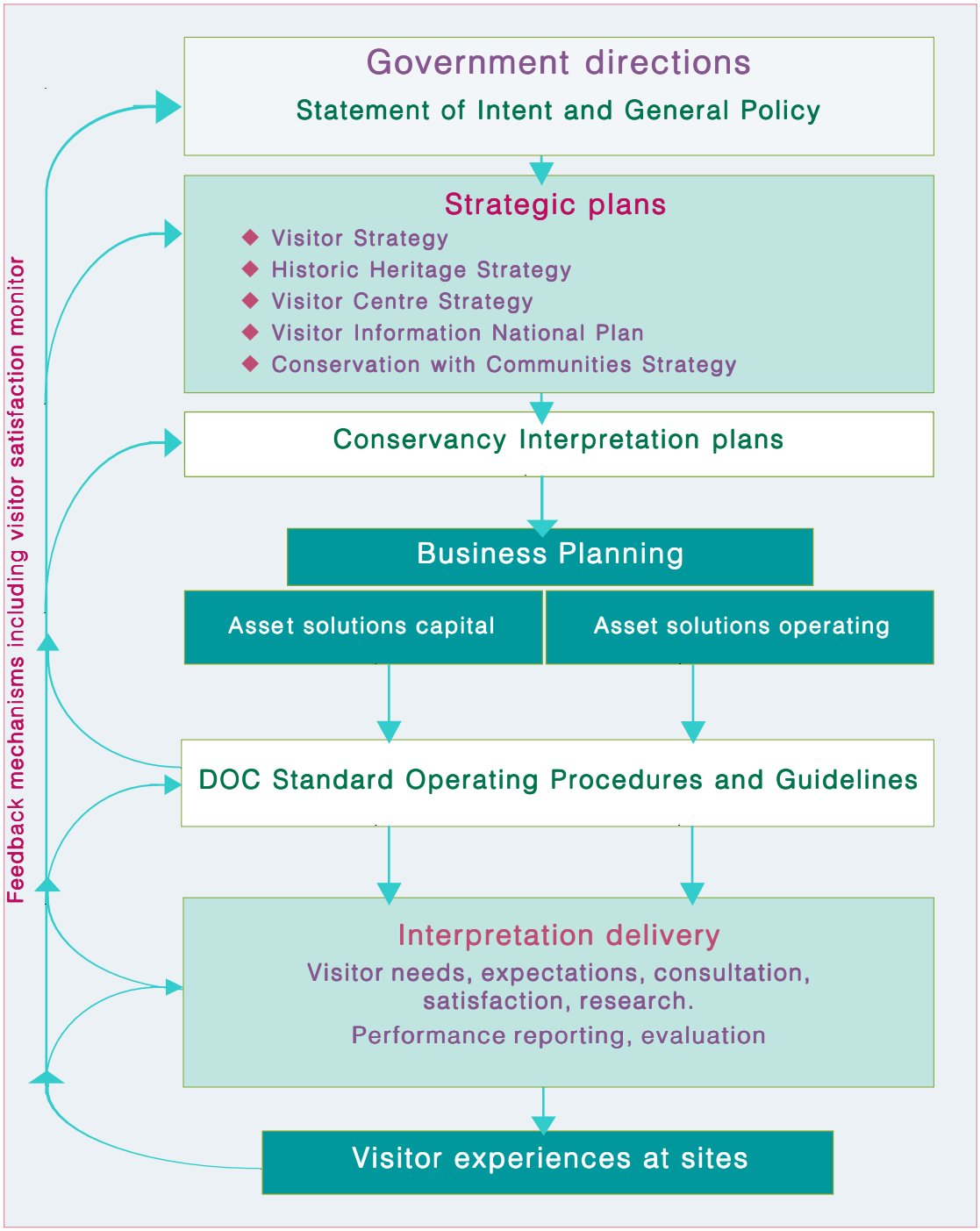


Collage of fish photos from DOC image library

Develop a project plan, paying particular attention to the **objectives** and include provision for **evaluation**. Be clear about what you are trying to achieve. Consider the costs and benefits of interpretation versus landscape design, off-site information, publications, public awareness activities or other ways to allocate resources to best effect. Objectives should be measurable and outcome focused. For example, run a pilot programme or test a draft panel with a focus group or on-site. Evaluation measures should be built in at the planning stage, not just undertaken when the interpretation is completed, evaluation is useful at both ends of the project. Evaluating completed interpretation allows you to assess how effectively you have met your objectives and can be used for assessing performance and reporting. Refer also to page 27.

The DOC Terms of Reference and Business Plan templates are found on the Intranet in the SOP Tool kit which is part of the **Intranet/knowledge** site or at:
DME CHCRO-45152 or http://docintranet/Intranet/Knowledge/default.aspx

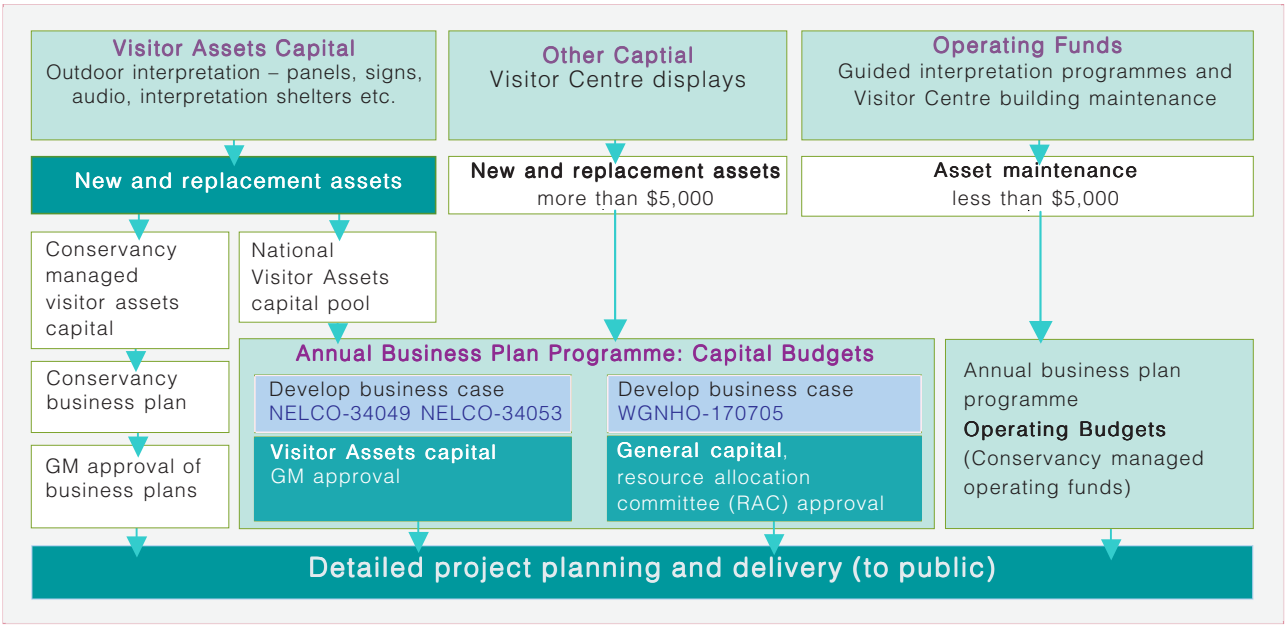
Planning context



2.2 DOC Planning processes

Most funds come through the DOC business planning process, operating budgets, sponsorship or partnership arrangements with other organisations or community groups.

Where do the resources come from for interpretation?



DOC Business Planning processes

All visitor assets are considered to be capital (manufactured assets). Projects funded through operating budgets are usually under $5000. Larger or complex projects, particularly those involving external contractors or the community require a project plan in the form of a Terms of Reference and/or Business Case, with appropriate peer review and approval.

Planning interpretation for sites and guided activities

Is it a small, medium or large scale project?

- A small project may be one or two new panels in a visitor centre or at a redeveloped short shop travel site.
- A medium sized project may be a series of panels on an interpretive trail or minor visitor centre exhibit upgrade such as digitising a slide show.
- Large scale projects include visitor centre redevelopment or annual summer interpretation projects.

The bigger the project, the more thorough and comprehensive the planning. Sound expertise and achievable resources will be required to ensure planning for large scale projects is effective. Approval processes with appropriate sign-off is required for all small, medium and large scale projects to ensure resources are used wisely and for quality assurance purposes. The following section guides you through planning considerations.

- Why interpret this topic or site to visitors?
- What are you interpreting?
- Who are your visitors?
- Who should be involved in the planning process?
- What's in a story, topic and theme?
- What are the objectives?
- Is your money and effort well spent? Evaluation
- How will you interpret?

The above questions are addressed over the following pages.

2.3 Sponsorship and partnerships

Partnerships with organisations and community groups can bring benefits in addition to funds, material or time resources for projects. If a relationship is not already established it must be built which usually takes time and effort. Relationships are built on perceived mutual benefit and goodwill and are usually initiated through discussion.

Benefits of sponsorship:

- Funds
- Expertise
- Materials
- Positive public relations and goodwill
- Involvement with communities.

Benefits for project partners:

- Positive public relations from association with conservation
- Promotion or exposure to target and wider audiences
- Positive relations through involvement.

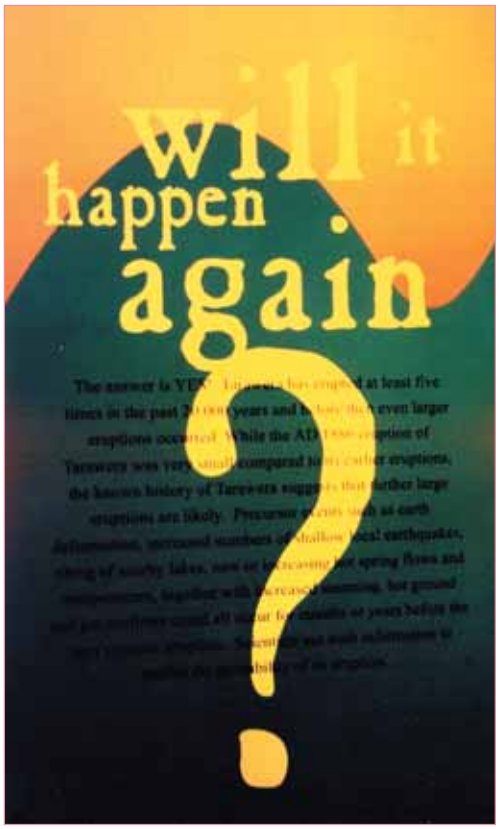
To interest others in sponsoring a project it is best to start with a discussion followed by a written proposal outlining the concept, project details, benefits (tangible and intangible) and options for involvement including the level of commitment sought. Where possible proposals should be tailored and targeted to the potential sponsor or partner. Success is more likely if an informal and friendly relationship between people has been established (e.g. a chat over coffee, at an event etc.), and the product/area of work is well known. Inviting potential partners to site visits or meetings is a good way to develop familiarity with issues and places. Check that the association between DOC and potential partners and/or sponsors is appropriate.

When sponsors logos are used in interpretation panels, displays, signs or other media the DOC logo **must** also be applied in the same scale and proportion to the sponsors. Sponsors logos **must not** appear without an accompanying DOC logo. Interpretation **should** not be used as a medium for advertising.

Refer to the Sponsorship SOP on the Intranet, and also Te Papa's Material Source Guide: "making sponsorship work for you". Its available on their website.

www.tepapa.govt.nz

Further guidance about sponsorships and conservation with communities is available on the DOC Intranet in the Community Relations, Conservation with Communities section.



One of a series of panels describing the stories of the night of June 10th 1886, Mt. Tarawera eruption, Buried Village, Rotorua.
Photo and interpretation consultant: Kim Morland
Graphic designer: Ross Ellen

Tree blown off by maginitute of Mt St Helen's eruption - relocated to Visitor Centre. Photo: Tony Peters

This panel tells the story of the Smith family who rescued the Buried Village site. One of a series of panels describing the stories of the night of June 10th, 1886, Mt. Tarawera eruption, Buried Village, Rotorua. Photo and interpretation consultant: Kim Morland. Graphic designer: Ross Ellen

Seal colony on Kaikoura coast panel answers the most of the questions visitors ask. Consultant: Linda Burns. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

2.4 Why interpret this topic or site ?

Analyse why it is important to interpret. Document the significance of the site, issue or event. Identify who values it and why, then investigate in more detail. Determine how significant the site is; locally, regionally or nationally. Has the significance been recorded, verified or acknowledged in any way, such as the Historic Places Trust register? Decide if it is appropriate to interpret the site or story. Collate and analyse this information, then write a summary.

The conservancy interpretation plan should provide a summary of important sites and stories, and identify overall priorities for the work.

Interpret where there are:

- good stories to tell
- obvious questions
- interesting or important features or history (such as historic events)
- captive audiences e.g. huts and camping grounds
- visitor attractions
- issues to present to visitors
- good opportunities for local communities to tell their stories or be involved.

2.5 What are you interpreting?

At most places there are a vast number of topics and stories which could be interpreted. Identify site features such as views, popular activities, uniqueness, stories, topics.

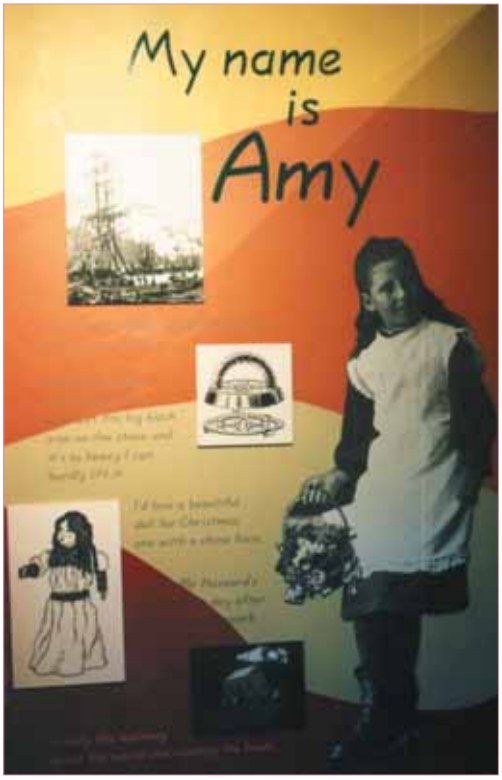
- Consider what is interpreted elsewhere and what links there may be to this site or topic.
- Reflect on how interpreting it will relate to achieving your over-arching objectives.
- Reflect on how well any existing interpretation has worked and what may be retained.

Above all your interpretation must be factually accurate, so record detailed references as you collate material, and always reference quotes.

"*Interpreters must concern themselves with the quantity and quality (selection and accuracy) of information presented. Focused, well-researched interpretation will be more powerful than a longer discourse.*"

Beck and Cable (1998:10)

Gather information; make inventories then determine topics and stories. List key messages and identify their depth and breadth, based on the target audience and site.



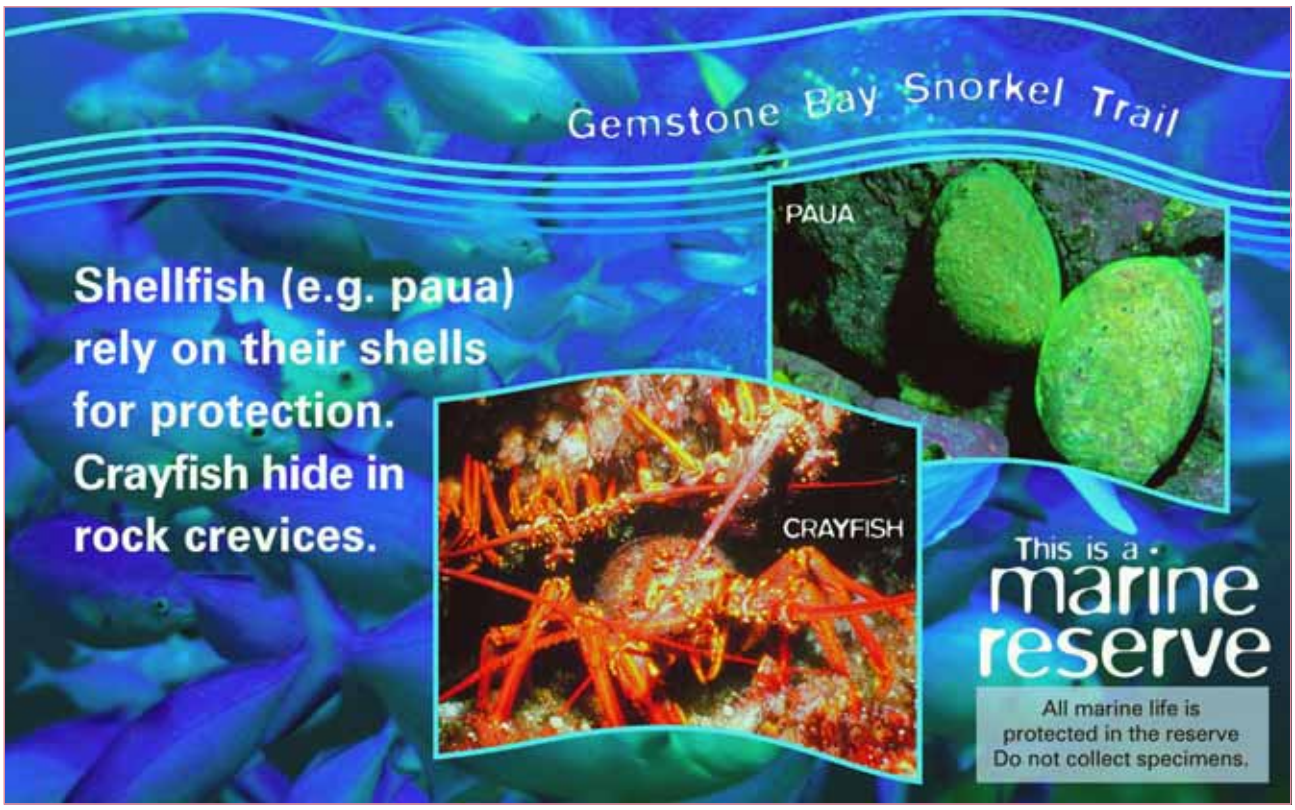
People are always interested in stories about other people's lives. Another panel from the Mt. Tarawera eruption series, Buried Village, Rotorua. Designer: Ross Ellen Photo: Lynda Burns

Research the special, interesting, well known or hidden stories of the site or topic. Key sources:

- books and journals, conservation plans, management plans, reports, strategies
- websites
- local museums, libraries and archives
- DOC systems such as DOCweb, DOCnet, Bioweb, VAMS, library catalogue etc.
- talk to specialist staff, iwi, professional and amateur experts about the area or topic, such as people who belong to historical or conservation societies and trusts, or the local marae.

Consider different perspectives. There are often different views or versions of stories. Determine whose perspective the story will be told from, and if it will be from a single perspective or a number. Decide what will be most effective in getting the message across. Acknowledgement other views where appropriate. Refer to the Ruapekapeka Pa case study at the end of Chapter Four for an example.

Snorkel trail panel, one of a series of four sets of four panels. Each set is attached to a buoy that has a handle around the base (so the person snorkelling can hang on to read the panels) which describe, very simply, the habitat and species likely to be seen beneath the buoy. Designer: Sonia Frimmel



Researching and preparing historic heritage interpretation

Sound research is critical. Considerable research is usually undertaken in the development of a site Heritage Inventory and Conservation Plan and should be sufficient for site interpretation; however checks on the currency, validity and reliability of this information may be required. Interpretation of historic heritage sites should take place at the end of a historic heritage process, not the start. Where site heritage plans are not available, considerable research time and effort will be required.

Sources

Base the interpretation narrative on reliable primary sources and expert opinions. The archaeology of a site, old plans and photographs, oral histories and traditions are good primary sources. Current historiography* should be considered. Consultation with communities should happen early in the project and at all key stages in an open and honest way. A suitably skilled historian or archaeologist should be involved at all stages of project planning from defining the scope and identifying key messages through to completion.
A fully referenced file (using Harvard referencing or footnotes) should be maintained in the appropriate DOC system and key references identified within the interpretation. The file should contain a comprehensive schedule of all known sources, including those not directly used.

Comprehensiveness

Consult a variety and depth of sources to ensure that most stories are identified. Some **periods** may be of greater significance and addressed in more detail, but all periods should be noted. Important **links** with historic stories should be identified. Comprehensiveness is completeness.

Research does not have to be exhaustive but it should be succinct. Gaps in literature and other sources should be identified. The cultural significance of the site should be identified; who it is significant to, why and what for. What is the value of the site to people? The Department's 'Heritage Inventory' guide details the New Zealand standard for the analysis of cultural heritage sites.

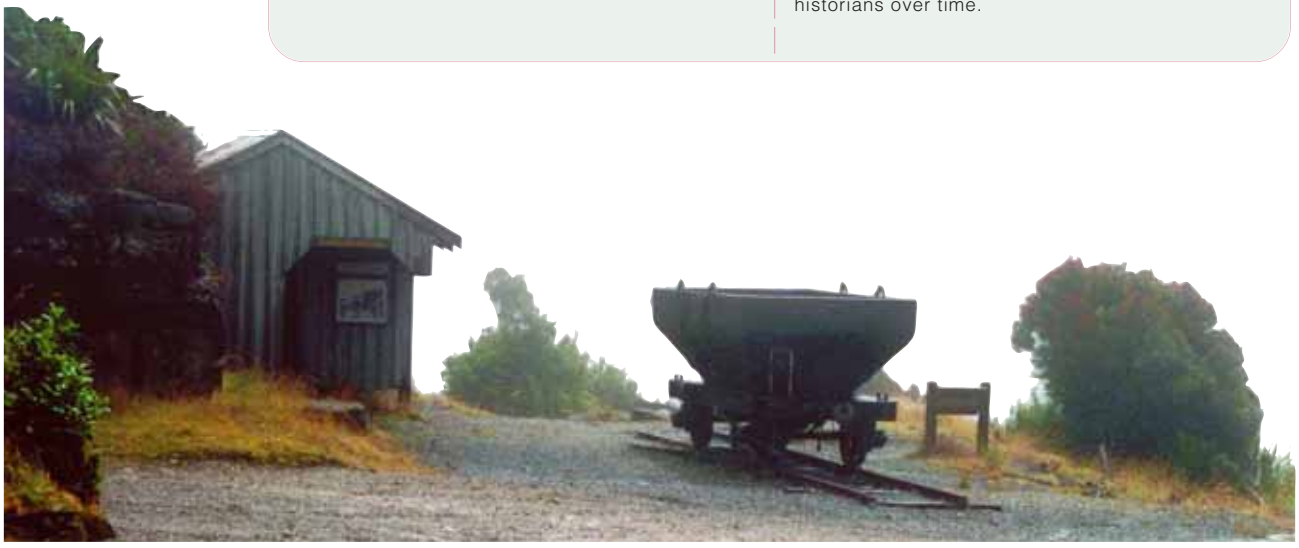
Peer review

Ensure that historic heritage research is sound by providing opportunities for analysis and constructive feedback of the interpretation early in a project, not just at the end. Have the final version of work reviewed by people unfamiliar with it. Have peers and others review work such as:

- Members of the target audience for the interpretation
- Experts in history, the topic or site
- Communication experts
- Staff who can provide a strategic national overview
- Local community members.

The DOC Historic Heritage training course interpretation module provides further details.

*Historiography is the principle or methodology of historical research, or the study of changes in the methods, interpretations, and conclusions of historians over time.



Misty image of the top of the Denniston Incline, which includes an historic 'A' class coal wagon (from the mine), the visitor information shed, and an interpretation panel. Interpretation of this old mining site and village has enhanced enjoyment and added depth and meaning to the experience. Photo: Tony Nightingale

Oral History

Oral history is about first-hand eyewitness accounts and is a 'primary source' for history. Oral history is potentially very powerful for interpretation because it:

- Records personal experiences, including reactions and emotions
- Often provides the 'hook' that first connects a visitor with a site.
- May be the only source of information about a site.

Human ageing sets a limit on creating new oral records. It is an exceptional person who can clearly recall events over seventy years ago. [Reaching earlier, the first oral recordings from the 1960s and may recall 1890s.] Radio interviews and news reels with sound date from the 1930s. That almost gets you back to the Treaty of Waitangi, but only a tiny amount is available. In addition to oral records are first hand written accounts. These include diaries, letters, testimonies, magazine and newspaper articles, and may provide human interest stories and quotes. Locating these existing records requires research. As with other history sources, oral sources that are used should be documented.

Example 1: At the opening of the 2004 Waitawheta hut, Mickey (Ruth) Murray was flown in as guest of honour. Mickey provided first hand information of her experience of daily life in the cookhouse on the same site where she started her first job aged 12 in 1922, a young girl who felt very comfortable in a workforce of about 40 bushmen.

Example 2: At the opening of the restored Tauranga Bridge (Waioeka Gorge) in 1996, a woman read from a soldier's letter home to his mother in 1916. From the muddy despair of a trench in France, each night he longed for the peace and beauty of their small family farm in the Waioeka bush. He never returned.

Mickey (Ruth) Murray, second from left, arrives at Waitawheta Hut for the 2004 opening - her first helicopter ride aged 92. With her are her daughter and son-in-law and 12 year old great-granddaughter Xena.

Essential Information

A good guide to Oral History is: Hutching, Megan, *Talking History: A short guide to oral history, 1993.* Website: www.oralhistory.org.nz

Some of the issues you will need to plan for are:

- Locating interviewees
- Pre interview research
- Sourcing and operating equipment
- Release agreement
- Indexing interviews
- Archiving

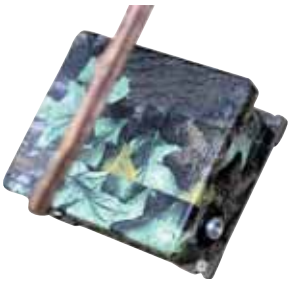
Consider making a visual recording of an oral interview. The use of DVD in interpretation will grow, and your visual material will be very powerful in engaging visitors.

Maori traditionally orally recorded stories which were passed on to successive generations. Memorising traditional history is a discipline. It is a primary source, and the sources used must be identified. There are also some documentary sources of Maori traditional stories. You will need to work with tangata whenua in developing the potential use of this material.

Finally are 'traditions', stories that are embedded in culture but lack the verification of a primary source. Barry Crump's book 'A Good Keen Man' did much to enhance the romance of the deer culler. Some traditions, like the railway pie, are too important to ignore, but if they are used they must be sourced.

People often have photos that can powerfully amplify their reminiscences. Borrow them and have professional digital copies made. Take some photos of the people you interview. Take them back to the site if you can.

Copies of 'borrowed' photographs used in any future publication must be referenced.



Visitor counter, hidden in a tree at Ruapekapeka. (p. 90)

2.6 Who are your visitors?

How much do you know about their needs? Identify your audience. Find out as much as you can about them so that interpretation can be targeted and be more effective. Investigate existing data, determine how reliable it is and whether further research is required before you can describe your visitors. Then collate and analyse the information, and produce a summary.

What if you have low site visitor numbers but interesting site stories? Having interpretation may increase visitor numbers if accompanied by promotion and offer on-site and off-site information such as signs, a brochure, visitor centre options. Visitor numbers have increased at Ruapekapeka Pa since the site was interpreted. See the case study at the end of Chapter Four.

Identify visitor characteristics such as:

- **Desire for knowledge at a site**. Visitors are interested in some topics and sites (or aspects of sites) more than others. Find out how much information they want. They may be interested in the visual experience of a landscape more than the detail of it. More detail may be appropriate at cultural sites.
- **Purpose of visit** – why people visit (e.g. walk, picnic, view wildlife) will influence how receptive they are to interpretation
- **How people visit** – in groups of family or friends, as individuals, couples, on organised tours or part of a school group, influences experiences and use patterns
- **Demographics** – age, gender, education and income levels, place of origin etc., will help you pitch the message at the right level
- **Personal interests** – prior knowledge and expectations.

Identify characteristics of visits (patterns of use) such as:

- Satisfaction results (if any)
- Numbers and timing of visitation. Is it worth while interpreting?
- Length of visit – this will influence how much information is appropriate
- Frequency and mode of travel. Repeat visitors have different needs to infrequent visitors
- Patterns of use within the site – which places are more or less popular
- Longitudinal data (comparative data from other years to identify trends)
- Visitor groups for the site (level of management service). Check VAMs for details.

If further research is required, identify what is needed and how the information will be obtained. Visitor surveys can be quantitative or qualitative and use direct or indirect methods of data collation:

- **Quantitative** research provides numeric data (such as counts, time spent). Coded questionnaire responses can be readily analysed statistically.
- **Qualitative** research describes opinions, attitudes, perceptions and feelings. Statistical analysis will require coding or content analysis.
- **Direct** research involves contact with visitors to collect data such as questionnaires or focus groups.
- **Indirect** research involves observation. Seek permission if appropriate.

Research options:

- Vehicle or track counters for visitor numbers, time and direction of travel. (Indirect quantitative method)
- Intercept surveys. Visitors complete a questionnaire on-site with a mixture of quantitative and qualitative questions. (Direct)
- Visitor behaviour is observed at visitor centre exhibits. (Indirect quantitative)
- Focus groups of people to discuss their experience of a site. (Direct qualitative)

DOC social scientists may be able to provide advice about research methodology; check the Science and Research section of the Intranet for details.

Visitor Groups

Seven visitor groups are identified in DOC's Visitor Strategy (1996). The groups are defined for all sites within the Visitor Asset Management System (VAMS). DOC's service standards for facilities such as huts and tracks are based on the main visitor groups at the site.

Different visitor groups have different needs based on a range of factors including the level of skill and experience required to reach a site. The visitor group definitions can be applied to a continuum of ease of access and skill. Accordingly, Short Stop traveller sites are graded the easiest to access and have the highest level of site management, and Backcountry remote is the most difficult and has the least management intervention. The appropriateness of interpretation to sites should be based on site characteristics (refer to Recreation Opportunity Spectrum classes), visitor group needs, and the significance of natural or cultural features.

The interpretation service standard provides further guidance about the appropriateness of different types of interpretation. Also consider that a site or story may also be of particular interest to enthusiasts or special interest groups e.g. ornithologists, rail heritage, engineers, palaeontologists etc.

DOC Visitor Experience Groups	Recreation Opportunity Spectrum class	Types of interpretation - examples
Short Stop Travel	Urban, urban fringe, rural or back country drive-in	Visitor centres, personal and self-guided interpretation. Can be significant depending on the site and topics.
Day Visit	Urban, urban fringe, rural or back country drive-in	Visitor centres, personal and self-guided interpretation. Can be significant depending on the site and topics.
Overnight Visit	Urban, urban fringe, rural or back country drive-in	Visitor centres, personal and self-guided interpretation. Can be significant. At or near accommodation.
Backcountry Comfortable	Walk-in	At or near accommodation sites, hut wardens or self-guided. At or near huts/campsites. Sites of significance.
Backcountry Adventure	Walk-in remote, walk-in wilderness	Personal (tours) or self-guided (e.g .publications, website). No on-site interpretation, except historic huts or actively managed historic places.
Remote Experience	Walk-in remote, walk-in wilderness	No on-site interpretation, except historic huts or actively managed historic places. Off-site in publications.
Thrill Seeking	Any	Limited issues related (e.g. safety) on-site or off-site

Near Kaweka range – looking across to Mounts Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe, Tongariro National Park. Off-site or guided interpretation is most appropriate for 'backcountry adventurer' places. Photo B. Dobbie

2.7 Who should be involved in planning?

You will have identified stakeholders in the project plan but a detailed communication plan is useful. Many projects involve working with a variety of people and have shared funding. Decide how and when these people and groups will be involved and what information you want to share. Check what formal or informal processes exist for the involvement of iwi and other groups.

James Carter (2001) provides useful and extensive advice on working with communities on interpretation plans. He outlines six tips for working with communities:

- Identify community needs and expectations – they may have agendas that are different from yours.
- Be open and build trust and confidence.
- Be clear and realistic about what outcomes can be expected – interpretation can't deliver everything but can foster a sense of collective ownership of cultural, historical and natural resources.
- Encourage involvement – using community skills.
- Communicate regularly on progress.
- Remember community groups are usually volunteers so support them wherever possible with training, for example, transport and suitable equipment.

Adapted from Carter (2001:19)

Iwi partnerships in interpretation

DOC has a legal and moral responsibility as a treaty partner to respect the wishes of the tangata whenua. Maori generally have a keen interest in explaining their history, legends, traditions, cultural practices, modern heritage and conservation goals to visitors. Interpretation can contribute to raising awareness and understanding of cultural sites, objects and values in museums, tourism businesses and local communities.

Ngäi Tahu also remind us that the process of planning interpretation can increase understanding of the relationships between iwi and cultural sites and between iwi and the environment.

Ruapekapeka Pa entrance, Northland. Designed and carved by local iwi who were fully involved in the redevelopment of the site. Photo: Tony Nightingale.

There is a range of different scenarios for iwi involvement:

- Iwi **may not want a site or story to be interpreted**. It is possible that this may not be revealed to you initially. Some iwi have strong feelings associated with sites which should be respected.
- Iwi may wish to **undertake their own interpretation** such as maintaining traditional interpretation on the marae, or working with schools and other groups on an individual basis.
- Some iwi may wish to have a **collaborative** role and be actively involved with developing interpretation content, images and training. This may require financial resources and contracts for work.
- Others may prefer a **consultative** role such as interviewing selected representatives to record oral material. DOC may seek comments on text and images or material for a tour, which may also require financial resources and contractual arrangements.

The first step is to establish how iwi wish to proceed. It may be appropriate to contract some of the work to them (e.g. research, design, training etc.). The availability of iwi and runanga to be involved in any interpretation project will vary considerably around the country. This will likely have no reflection on how important they perceive your project to be. The critical thing is to discuss your project with iwi representatives at the earliest possible opportunity and let them establish the level of involvement they wish to have.

Some Conservancies have iwi-specific guidelines and procedures. Determine if there are established processes to follow via an initial discussion with the DOC Conservancy Kaupapa Atawhai manager.

The Department's obligations in relation to interpretation and the Ngai Tahu Deed of Settlement are outlined in the Ngai Tahu Protocol CHCRO-20186, 'Consultation Guideline, Ngai Tahu Interpretation' WGNRO-20793, language guideline.

Note that if projects require external consultants to liaise with iwi, DOC staff should generally initiate and facilitate the liaison. For some interpretation projects (e.g. those that involve areas that are of high importance to iwi) must have external consultants working with iwi. Best practice is to involve runanga in the decision as to who the most appropriate consultant may be or, ask if they have someone that they would like to be involved or recommend for the interpretation.

'Communities' are diverse. Archaeologists in action at Urupukapuka. Photo: Tony Nightingale

General guidelines for community consultation are found on the DOC Intranet in the 'Conservation with Communities' section: CANOPIE WGNRO-2000 (Conservation awareness national operating procedures information exchange). Also check: http://www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz/ 'Engaging with Maori'. Also refer to the volunteers SOP on the Intranet.

Principles for effective conservation with communities

These principles are derived from the collective wisdom of the North Island Environmental Education Workshop held at Te Kauri Lodge, Waikato, June 10-12 and the Freshwater Public Awareness Workshop held in Rotorua, June 19–20, 2003.

1. **Have a clear purpose** – plan well or fail well.
2. **Back winners:** do few projects and do them well; allow a quality project to ripple out.
3. **Don't do one-off's** – ensure a project has potential to be ongoing.
4. **Don't re-invent the wheel** – talk to the DOC and wider conservation network.
5. **Collaborate** – where possible involve other agencies, community groups and allies.
6. **Talk to people face to face**
7. **Action on the ground** – make something happen!
8. **Find common ground** – win-win solutions
9. **Hand it over** – facilitate community **ownership**.
10. **When in doubt facilitate** – be a 'path smoother'
11. **Have passion** – model conservation through personal satisfaction of a job well done.
12. **Be patient**!

Unpublished workshop notes, Mike Copeland, conservation awareness ranger, Buller Area 2003.

2.8 What's in a story, topic and theme?

Refine your communication by using **topics** and **themes**. Sometimes, the terms 'theme' and 'topic' are used interchangeably which can create confusion, so what's the difference?

A **topic** is the **subject** of your communication. A **theme** identifies the key **message** in your interpretation. It should be simple and clear, and link pieces of information (topics) together.

Topic	Theme
Tui	Tui. Vocal virtuosos of forests and gardens throughout New Zealand (Karori panel)
Weta	Tokoriro. The undisputed long jump champion of the weta world. (Karori panel)
Pests	Pests destroy. Who are the pests? St Arnaud Visitor Centre. (Janet Bathgate)
Huts	Shelter from the storm (FMC Poster)
Regeneration	Into the world of light (Trounson panel)

Thematic panels at Karori Wildlife Sanctuary
Panel design: Patrick Velvin. Text: Tim Benton. Photos: Fiona Colquhoun

A **story** is a narrative or description with a beginning, middle and end. Not all interpretation needs to tell stories; sometimes simple messages are enough.

Developing a good theme is a powerful way to convey messages. A theme should reflect really special or significant aspects of a place and provide purpose. Themes are best displayed in titles rather than hidden in text in non-personal interpretation, and identified early in a personal interpretation presentation and reinforced later.

Why use thematic interpretation?

- Themes present a whole idea that can be taken away by visitors.
- People remember themes more than facts, particularly when there are less than five pieces of information presented.

  Ham cited Thorndyke (1977:39)
- Themes help retain interest and link pieces of information.
- Themes help interpreters reduce, focus and organise information.

Developing good themes takes plenty of practice. Themes should:

- be stated as a simple complete sentence (can be more than one)
- have a subject, verb and full stop
- have one main idea and reveal the overall message
- be interesting.

Sam Ham has written extensively about thematic interpretation. Refer to the references section for publication details. Freeman Tilden's (1957) principles of 'provoke' (attention/thought), 'relate' (to the familiar) and 'reveal' (new insight) can be useful reference points to stimulate the development of themes.

2.9 What are the objectives?

Fort Takapuna gun emplacements. How will history be remembered? Photo: P.J. Mahoney

Chinese miner's cottage, Arrowtown. Who lived here and why? Photo: Les Molloy

Guided tour, Fort Takapuna. Photo: P.J. Mahoney

Define steps to achieve outcomes:

Goals are broad aspects of vision. They are general, not easy to measure and something achieved over a longer timeframe. For example, fostering commitment to conservation.

Objectives are statements of specific, measurable outcomes which contribute to goals. For example, 'to increase awareness of river crossing risks amongst backcountry trampers through interpretation' or 'prepare a five year interpretation plan for the blue creek historic site'. You will probably develop a series of objectives for the overarching project and for the site or programme.

Actions are tasks required to achieve objectives. For example, produce audio visual for a visitor centre for trampers, or create a hut interpretation series focusing on historic heritage preservation.

Objectives relate to what you hope to achieve though interpretation:

- learning objectives
- behavioural, influencing visitor actions
- emotional objectives e.g. enjoyment, empathy etc.

Develop detailed and measurable statements about how you intend to achieve desired outcomes. When developing objectives ask 'so what', why do you want a visitor to know this?

Objectives for site and personal interpretation reflect national goals, directions of Conservancy interpretation and historic plans.

Objectives should relate to the significant topics and stories of places (natural, cultural, historic, recreation and the DOC role). Think about how easy it is to measure your objectives. Make them more detailed if necessary.

Write objectives which are SMART:
Specific: be clear about what is intended
Measurable: so you can monitor and report on performance
Appropriate: to the site and audience, and DOC goals
Realistic: achievable
Timely: when it should happen

2.10 Planning quality through evaluation

Evaluation is a critical quality assurance measure in interpretation project management. Evaluation should be undertaken throughout the project, not just at the end and identified in the project plan. Undertake evaluation to:

- assess the effectiveness of interpretation during development and easily correct mistakes *before* the project is completed
- check if you are on track with management goals and project objectives
- ensure the message is clear and easily understood
- ensure that best practice standards are met
- learn about what works and what doesn't
- to save wasting time, effort and resources on interpretation products that don't work as well as they could
- apply specific measures of effectiveness, for example, PEROT qualities (personal, enjoyable, relevant, organised and thematic)
- answer key questions such as '*have project resources been well spent?'*

Undertake evaluation at the following key project stages

1. ***Before you start design*** (front-end evaluation) e.g. focus groups, qualitative questionnaires. Research your audience preferences, and the level of knowledge and interest they have about a topic or issue. Their responses can help you identify content and at what level to pitch your interpretation. The more you know about your visitors' beliefs, attitudes and feelings, the more effective your interpretation is likely to be.
2. ***While you prepare interpretation*** (formative evaluation), e.g. observations, interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, test-drive your product! Pilot a draft interpretation presentation with an audience before it is finalised and save time and money. Assess reactions, find out if the theme is clear, your messages understood and if the work has an effective balance of function and form. Check that the design or media does not dominate the message. Check that text and graphics can be read or audio heard and understood. Make revisions **before** the work is completed.
3. ***When the interpretation is completed*** (summative evaluation), e.g. observation, focus groups, quantitative and qualitative surveys built into existing visitor satisfaction monitoring programmes. Find out from visitors if the interpretation is doing what you intended, or observe their behaviour. Ask them specific questions. Determine how well the project has met its objectives and to what extent. Make notes for future reference (e.g. in the Visitor Asset Management System - VAMS).

Adapted from James Carter (2001) and Ballantyne et al. (2002:34)

Steps one and two can be a time consuming experience to implement. You may want to target particularly important audiences, or the more controversial or tricky parts of displays/ tours/key messages. It may not be necessary to do the whole project if it's a big one.

Evaluation methods:

Direct – visitor surveys/interviews
Indirect – visitor behaviour observed
Quantitative – numerical data collected; counts, time spent, number of visitors viewing particular exhibits etc.
Qualitative – visitor and staff information about opinions, views, feelings, perceptions collected

Simple evaluation techniques – how attractive is this panel or exhibit?

James Carter in the Scottish National Heritage Interpretation Handbook, *A Sense of Place* details these simple methods:

Attraction power – the number of people who stop at an exhibit, divided by the total number who pass it (including those who stop), expressed as a percentage, e.g. 60 people walk past an exhibit and 15 of them stop to look at it. The attraction power is 15 ÷ 60 x 100 = 251.

Holding power – the average time people spend at an exhibit divided by the actual time required to read or review it, expressed as a percentage, e.g. suppose it takes 10 minutes to read all the text and to operate a small model attached to it. The average time visits spend is 1½ minutes, its holding power is 1.5 ÷ 10 x 100 = 151.

Attraction power measures how successfully an exhibit catches attention, and holding power measures how well it holds attention once its attracted visitors. Use these methods to test prototype panels and exhibits at the stage when changes can still be made, the final product or existing work.

Carter (2001:35) Available from: www.snh.or.uk

DOC staff evaluating interpretation revamp at Denniston historic mine site and village, West Coast. Photo: P.J. Mahoney

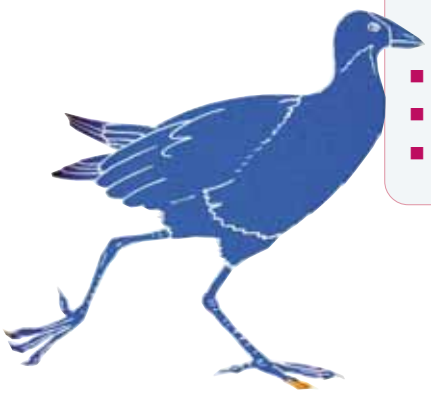
Questions to consider when evaluating interpretation exhibits

For the visitor audience

- Is it easy to understand, and key messages understood?
- Are the messages clear?
- What messages can visitors identify?
- What are visitors learning or doing as a result of the interpretation?
- Is attention being held and for how long?
- How enjoyable is it?
- What is most and least interesting?
- Is it well organised and easy to navigate? Does it have a clear structure?
- Was there enough/too little information or images?
- Are there connections or references to other interpretation sources or further information?
- Are common questions still being asked by visitors?
- How much time is spent by visitors at individual exhibits/places and has this changed?
- Are visitors able to easily find interpretation on-site?
- What could be improved?

Planning checklist

	✔	✘
Have DOC planning processes been followed (e.g. TOR, Business Case, Business Plans)?		
Have the characteristics of visitor groups been defined?		
Has a communication plan been developed to identify and guide stakeholder liaison?		
Are project objectives clearly defined and SMART?		
Have relevant connections been made in the interpretation? E.g. between stories at places, interpretation in visitor centres and on-site. Identify the links for visitors.		
Does it have qualities of being enjoyable, relevant, organised and thematic? (EROT) (Ham 1992)		
Has the accuracy and reliability of source information been checked? Is the research comprehensive?		
Are quotes and other material appropriately referenced in the interpretation or supporting documents?		
Has appropriate peer review, front end or formative evaluation taken place?		
Has permission been sought from people or groups related to the site or subject being interpreted? E.g. local iwi, Historic Places Trust, land managers etc.		
Is it clear, legible, understandable and functional?		
Has accessibility been considered?		
Does it meet DOC Interpretation Standard requirements in Chapter Five?		



Pukeko from Wenderholm regional park panel

How will you interpret?

Choosing media for delivery

What **media** will be used to interpret your site or event? Investigate options; consider their strengths and weaknesses, cost, availability, durability, suitability to the audience and site. Choice of technique will be influenced by all the factors you have considered in planning as well as the communication effectiveness and costs of different techniques. It will depend on a range of factors including project objectives, setting, audience and resources.

Choose an interpretation technique which is sympathetic to the nature of the place, audience and key messages and consider a full range of options. Think broadly. For example, the best solution could be a joint display in a local museum, a working object that visitors can interact with, or a widely distributed publication.

The following table provides a short summary of different techniques and some advantages and disadvantages. Personal and non-personal techniques are explored in more detail in chapters three and four. The reference section details relevant research papers. Refer to McLennan (2000) for a discussion of media effectiveness.

Guided/personal interpretation activities (Refer to Chapter Three)  Illustration: Susan Marks	**Includes guided walks, talks, presentations, roving interpreters, drama, activity programmes, special events, volunteer and concessionary interpretation activities.** ■ Personal contact generally considered to be effective provided material and presenter are credible and accurate. ■ Can be entertaining and memorable. ■ Audience has usually chosen/paid to participate and therefore has higher level of interest and attention. ■ Requires training and support programme. ■ Can use in conjunction with other techniques to reinforce messages. ■ Can involve volunteers and engage communities with sites and conservation. ■ Can be weather dependent. ■ Can be tailored to particular audiences.
Self guided interpretation (Refer to chapter four)	**Includes panels, art, audio, multimedia, audio-visual, props, visitor centre displays, publications.** ■ A range of materials and production techniques exist. ■ Outdoor media reaches a high number of visitors to sites and is usually free. ■ For any type of self guided interpretation, there is a low production cost relative to the life of the asset. ■ Durability will vary with construction materials and method and setting. Audio visual/interactive displays generally require more maintenance than static panels. ■ Visitor centre displays such as interactive models, short audio or audio visual presentations and multi media can have a higher development cost (than static panels) but are generally very popular with visitors. ■ Publications can provide off-site detailed information about sites or topics and can reach a wide audience, particularly when distributed electronically. They are inexpensive to update. ■ Outdoor media is susceptible to vandalism and the extremes of New Zealand weather.

2.11 Maintaining interpretation

Indoor and outdoor interpretation media is subject to deterioration. Weather, natural events, use and vandalism can all impact on the useful life of built interpretation assets. Visitor centre exhibits which have higher levels of mechanical or digital complexity are usually more sensitive to visitor use and require higher levels of maintenance. The higher costs of maintaining interactive displays, audio, audio-visual, or those with lighting or live flora and fauna should be considered when planning interpretation.

Consider the durability of the chosen media and materials, what the maintenance cost is likely to be, and if it will be affordable. There is no point installing state of the art equipment if there won't be adequate budget to get it fixed. Broken on-site equipment presents a poor public image of the Department, and is disappointing for visitors. Poorly repaired signs and displays are equally unappealing.

The placement of outdoor panels can make a big difference to maintenance requirements. For example, outdoor locations with little sun and air movement are likely to require frequent cleaning. If it is known that information contained in a panel is likely to change (e.g. a hut that is referenced in the text is going to be removed), then design to accommodate change wherever possible. It's usually not easy to professionally change text on a panel without completely replacing it, but some sign professionals have developed methods.

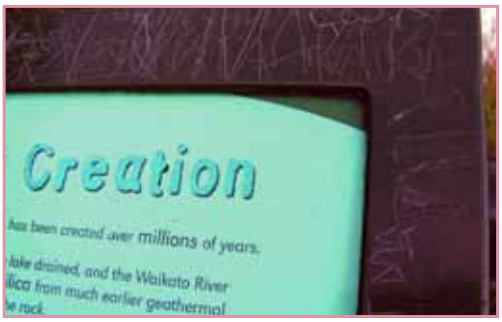
If you expect damage consider getting more than one panel (or other form of interpretive media) produced. The cost of additional panels is usually less than the first which incorporates set up cost.

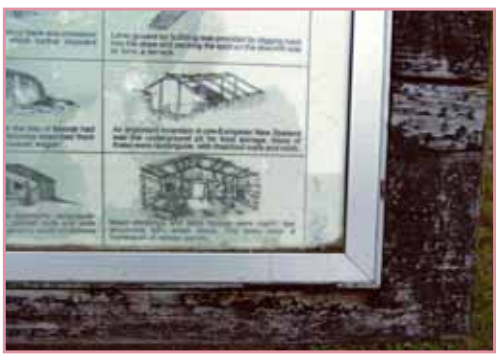
Repair, replace, remove (update or consider alternative forms of message communication as is appropriate) interpretation media when:

- damaged or broken, has reached the end of its economic life, is shabby or has prematurely worn out. For example, faded, water damaged, vandalised.
- found to contain inaccurate information
- not able to be clearly viewed, read or heard
- off-site maintenance is required.

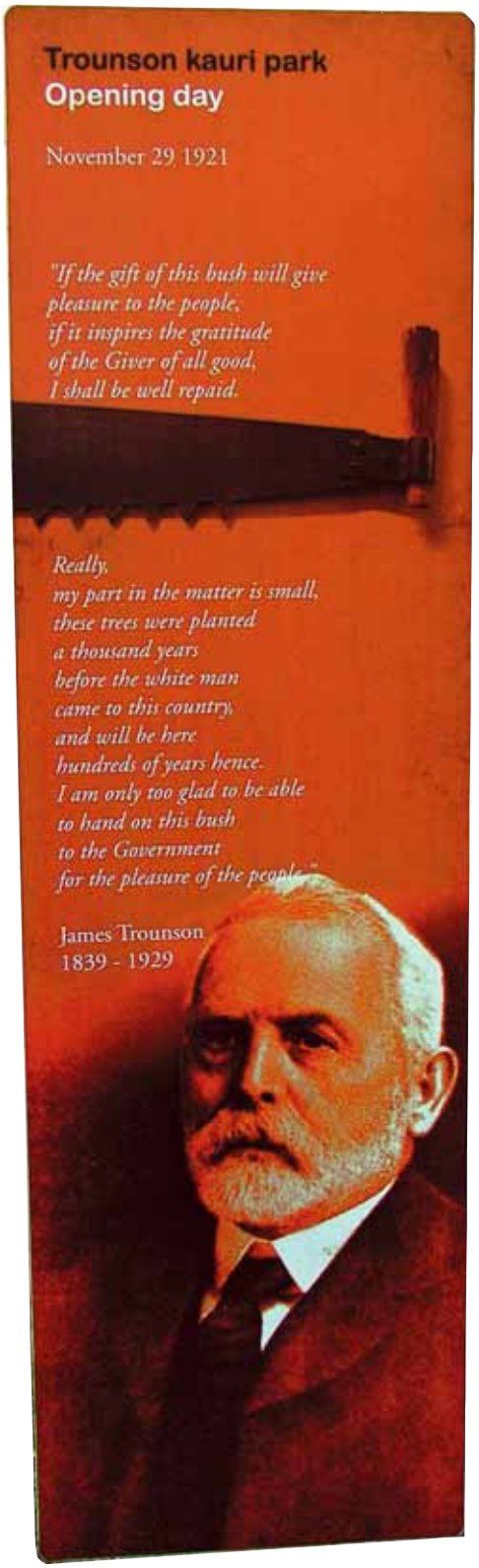
Refer to the Interpretation Standard (chapter five) for asset maintenance requirements. Regular reviews and inspections are required to pick up damage and unexpected changes. Maintenance should be concurrent with asset life cycle and inspection regimes, and conditions should be recorded in VAMS.

When panels look shabby, damaged, worn out or broken; refresh, replace or remove.
Photos: Fiona Colquhoun





2.12 Outsourcing interpretation work



Designer: Joel Beachman
Concept and text: Lindsay Charman, Anje Pohler
Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

An interpretation project usually involves some outsourced work, for example an illustration, panel printing, recording audio, writing or design work. Prepare a brief detailing the project requirements. If it's a small project, the requirements are straight forward and the contractor's standard of work known, the brief could be a discussion and correspondence (works order). A detailed brief will be required for large and/or complex projects and for all tendered projects. The more thorough the brief, the more likely you are to receive responses which meet project needs.

Most importantly, be clear about reproduction rights (copyright), authorship and ownership of material. Identify where original work will be stored and in what format. The DOC copyright guidelines are available from the Information Resource Centre, part of the Intranet.

A DOC works order or contract will be required for most work. Options for contracting fees include a set fee or series of fees for different project stages, hours worked (use with caution) or a combination of both. Follow standard DOC processes, available on the Intranet (WGNHO-143473), for quotes, tenders, expressions of interest and contracts. A model contract for small and medium sized interpretation contracts will also be made available on the Intranet.

Briefing a designer/writer

Focus on what needs to be achieved by the interpretation work including clear expectations. This makes the designer or copywriter's task easier and will help avoid disappointment. These points can be used to prompt discussion or help form the basis of a written brief. Use a well thought through and detailed brief to clarify what you really need and specify the standard of work required.

Provide context

- Clearly outline the objectives of the work and intended outcomes.
- Identify what DOC will provide and what the contractor will provide e.g. design only, text, design and installation, research and text only.
- Identify relationships to other interpretation/conservation/community work or plans.
- Indicate the nature and extent of required consultation and stakeholder/community liaison. Reference required protocol and procedures where they exist. Identify DOC's general contractual arrangements for projects and sub-projects such as contracts for service with iwi where they exist.
- Describe the environmental context and landscape setting. Identify to what extent the work needs to blend in, stand out or be sympathetic to the site and its features.
- Describe the site and/or topic and its significance, issues, constraints etc.
- Identify the social context – including the nature of visits and visitor behaviour at the site or for the programme.
- Identify visitor needs, characteristics and nature of visits. Include visit frequency, demographic information (age, gender, origin, education level, etc.), and the DOC visitor group service standard requirements.

Provide direction for the work

Identify what's essential, desirable and optional:

- Identify the topic, clear message or thematic statement and any issues to include/ avoid.
- Identify the *look* and *feel* of what's required e.g. humour, hardness, softness of images (examples can be useful).
- Identify the interpretive techniques and media or determine with the assistance of the consultant.
- Note if the work is stand alone or be part of other work (e.g. site redevelopment, seasonal programme etc).
- Identify how structured the delivery needs to be.
- Identify communication and evaluation requirements (including timing and audiences).
- Identify how and where work will be used by DOC e.g. in panels, website, publications, multimedia, (copyright).
- Define quality standards required, particularly for digital art work. Allow time for expert peer review.
- Be as thorough as possible.

Choosing a contractor

Find out as much as you can about the performance of interpretation professionals/ consultants regarding their level of professionalism, nature and quality of their work and what they are like to work with. Try to find out what they specialise in and do best and worst so that you only commission work in their area of expertise. Choose specialists for writing, illustrating, face to face communication, training, thinking creatively, strategic planning, landscape design, multimedia, panels etc. Check websites, talk to others who have used their services and ask for references. These issues can be critical to the success of a project. It's good to find out what contractors are like to work with on smaller projects first. This reduces the risk for big project contracts.

If a contractor does not perform to expectations, the success of the project can be put at risk, budgets and timeframes can blow out and it can add considerable stress to the team. Allow sufficient time to research and carefully select contractors.

Note: in June 2005 there is no national NZ register of interpretation consultants, but check the Interpretation Association Australia consultants register for New Zealand members, and VAMS records for names of designers.

2.13 Design and build

After the project Business Case, Terms of Reference and budget have been approved and in-house staff or contractors assigned, detailed concept development or project work can commence.

A detailed concept plan may be required for large or particularly complex projects e.g. visitor centre display redevelopment. It will include concept drawings, cost and development and delivery time estimates. A project manager may be needed to manage the work of others such as an interpreter, architect, exhibit designer, landscape architect, illustrator, writer, audio, film, multimedia specialists or artists. A project steering committee may also be required to assist the project manager. The steering committee could include asset, community relations or business staff and a combination of specialists and generalists. Choose a team with a variety of strengths in skills and expertise. Clearly identify the role and decision making requirements of the group. Expect this team to journey through the stages of 'forming' (getting to know each other) 'storming' (exploring options and tangents) and 'norming' before they become fully functional.

Several rounds of presentation and modification of detailed concept plans will be required with key stakeholders (outlined in the project communication plan). Once a design or programme is agreed and approved, final detailed drawings, specifications and cost estimates can be made. Further briefs and processes of seeking quotes and tenders may be required for other aspects of the project e.g. development of individual visitor centre displays, AV recordings, furnishings, display stands, photographs.

- Identify and provide a copy of the DOC service standards relevant to the work. (Corporate Identity, Publications Standards, Interpretation Standard, Sign Standard, Tracks and Outdoor Visitor Structures etc.)
- Be clear about expectations for the *standard* of work required. Define as much as possible including stating what might seem obvious, e.g. well written, succinct, rough draft, digital quality, sound quality, reproduction quality in different media etc.

Identify project management requirements:

- List the deliverables e.g. plans, number size, style of illustrations, number of panels, length of audio, illustrations, documents, advice etc.
- Identify timing of work and consequences of late delivery (e.g. penalties for late delivery). Provide realistic project milestones.
- Identify reporting requirements and approval processes. Contractors would only have one person to deal with even if there is project steering committee or team approval. The key DOC person should collate responses and take responsibility for getting agreement from the rest of the team.
- Have a clear explanation of roles – who will do what and when etc. Agree to DOC responsibilities as well as contractor responsibilities, e.g. supply feedback to contractor within agreed timeframe.
- Identify who signs off defined sections, e.g. final text design. Who will be responsible if a spelling mistake is found in the final installed interpretation?
- Outline risk management issues. Discuss how unprogrammed changes to the project will be handled (e.g. budget revisions). Keep a record of changes to contract.
- Note what is *not* included in the project (clear scope). Avoid ambiguity/grey areas.
- Write 'out' clauses into the contract to enable it to be easily terminated if necessary.
- Identify stakeholder liaison requirements.
- Have contingency dollars in your budget to allow for unforeseen expenses.
- Be clear about what the contractor will charge you for, e.g. number of revisions, number of uses of material.
- Use clear statements of DOC's authorship, copyright, ownership of material produced and intellectual property rights and use of information supplied. For further details about copyright refer to *'The Copyright Act 1994 and Copyright Issues, A Guide for the Department of Conservation, August 2001'* available on the Intranet. The handbook provides useful detail about Copyright, intellectual property (IP) and other information.
- Consider Privacy Act and Official Information Act (OIA) obligations.
- Include an estimate of project budget (optional).

Multi-media at St. Arnaud Lakes NP Visitor Centre.

AV which introduces Southland Great Walks. What to expect, take and see and how to leave no trace of your visit. Fiordland Visitor Centre, Te Anau. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

Determine the requirements for media:

- Colour, black and white, both or leave it to the designer?
- Will it be static or mobile?
- Will it be interactive and to what extent?
- What elements of interactivity are required (e.g. tactile, simple or complex mechanical, electronic, multi media etc.)?
- Will it need to be altered at a later stage and in what way (e.g. changeable sound bites)?
- How durable and easily maintained and repaired does it need to be (e.g. must last at least five years outdoors in a high rainfall environment and be simple to repair)?

Audio, audio-visual and multi-media:

- What length of programme is required (e.g. 60 seconds to 2½ minutes maximum for audio)?
- What digital quality will be required?
- Has a script been prepared or is it required?
- How will it be activated and used by visitors? How user friendly should it be?
- How quickly does it need to activate and stop? Are cycles required?
- Will it be able to be adjusted to the setting or location (e.g. sound and speaker adjustment for the display area)?
- Will variable depths of information be required for different users (e.g. children, well informed/less informed adults etc.)?
- Where and how will original copies of image and mixed media be stored?

Artwork

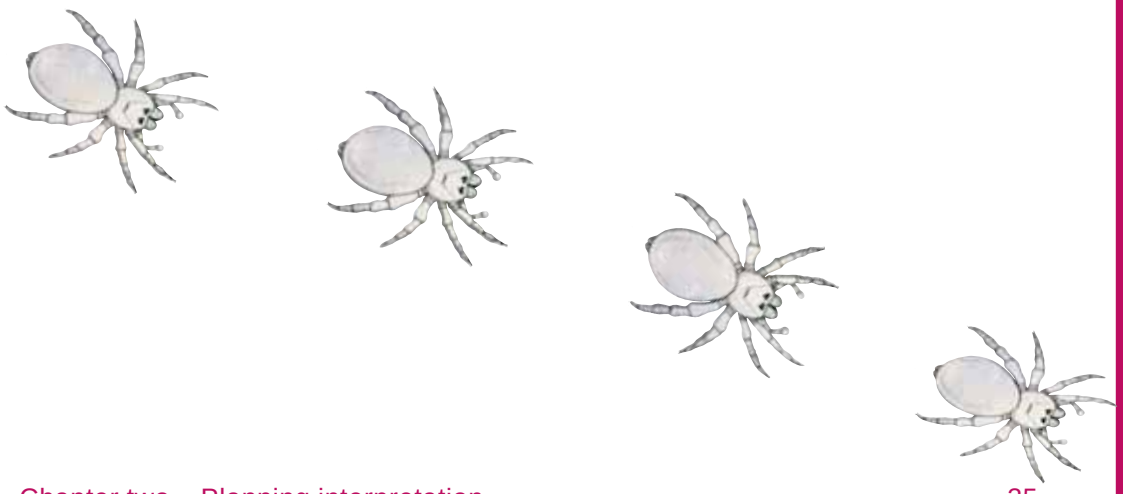
- Art can be challenging, provocative, bold, discreet and have varying degrees of abstraction.

  'Artwork is an adventure and good adventures have two essential characteristics; you never quite know where they are going to take you, and they leave all their adventurers with a different view of the world than when they had started'.

  Paraphrased from Carter (1998)
- Create a brief that outlines what's required but allows plenty of freedom for creative expression of ideas
- View a portfolio of work, including recent work.
- Get advice from someone with independent knowledge and experien. ce, e.gpolytechnic art teachers.
- Remember that the final art work needs to be safe for visitors and staff to touch and use or interact with, including during installation.

2.14 Display sign creation process

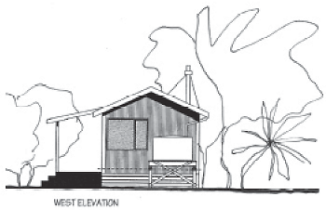
The table on the following page details the stages of work in developing interpretation. Of course this will vary according to the scale and nature of the project, but even for small scale projects appropriate sign-off should be obtained at key stages.

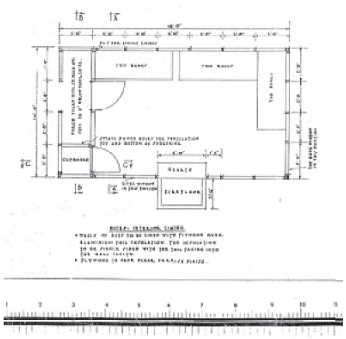


Example: Interpretation Display Creation Process

Adapted from Lands and Survey Conservation Design Centre process (1992)

2.15 Hut interpretation





Interpreting DOC work can be interesting for visitors e.g. hut design. Above: elevations and interior of huts c. 2001-2051. Below: Interior and plan of huts c. 1960-70. Illustrations: Pynenburg and Collins.

Huts are an important part of the New Zealand backcountry experience. Providing interpretation in or near huts enables visitors to learn about their surroundings in an unrushed and focused way. Even on a one night stay you are likely to have visitors' attention much longer than the average forty five seconds spent viewing a panel or twelve minutes in a visitor centre. There are often interesting stories associated with huts, their users, the surroundings or their management.

When planning interpretation at huts and other accommodation consider:

- Visitor numbers – day and overnight and seasonally (e.g. to use in a cost/benefit analysis or planning schedule of ranger talks).
- If there are good site stories to tell, or if you will provide general conservation work programme information.
- If there are good historic heritage stories to tell.
- Visitor needs for 'information' versus 'interpretation'. Have both.
- The service category of the hut (refer to the Hut Service Standards for guidance on the presence or absence of interpretation).
- The landscape and social setting (e.g. getting away from it all).
- The nature and location of other interpretation in the area.
- Potential vulnerability to vandalism or theft.
- The total word count for panels can be higher than generally recommended as visitors have more time to read, but don't over do it.
- Costs of delivering interpretation at backcountry sites, and maintenance intervals.

Above all consider the context of the natural environment, use earthy tones in imagery and develop interpretation which is sympathetic to the hut environment.

Ideas for interpretation at huts

Think strategically and laterally when planning hut interpretation. Visitor journeys often involve several huts and tracks so try and make interpretation stimulating and memorable rather than boring and predictable. Interpreting flora, fauna, cultural and natural history are obvious topics; how about interpreting stories of people, backcountry recreation and DOC asset and biodiversity management as well. Here are some suggestions:

- Use different methods at different huts on a track e.g. panel, listening post, art or sculpture, props, personal interpretation by the hut warden.
- Create a series of themed, linked panels placed in different huts on a track. Pose a question in one hut panel and provide the answer in another hut or somewhere nearby.
- Consider creating media which is mobile and move it around.
- Support hut wardens with training so they can confidently provide five or ten minute themed talks.
- Employ specialist or trained amateur roving interpreters for the peak season.
- Train your track maintenance or summer fire crew to perform spontaneous interpretation.
- Target interpretation to different audiences e.g. children, families, overseas visitors, climbers etc.
- Use photographs creatively to tell a story e.g. seasonal landscape change, bird migration, hut construction, restoration etc.
- Provide interactive models or props.
- Put your interpretation in unusual or different places e.g. back of the toilet door (provided there is sufficient light for it to be read)
- Embed a conservation game into a hut table e.g. quiz, puzzle etc.
- Run a conservation quiz with questions on the notice board over summer or during Easter with a prize.
- Promote the conservation work of the community or conservation volunteers.
- Provide opportunities for activity groups who use huts regularly to be involved .
- Create a 'story trail' journey presented in a publication, panels or audio.

Hut interpretation can be fun and interesting. Refer to the Hut Service Standard for guidance about interpretation requirements for different category huts.

2.16 Sensitive topics

Sensitive topics don't need to be resolved to be interpreted.

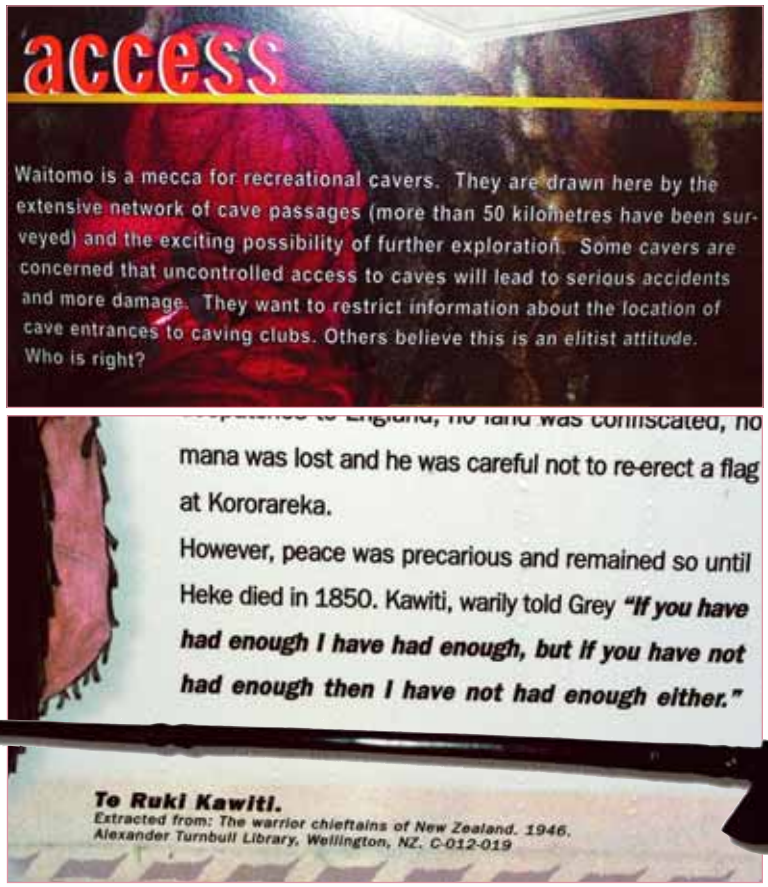
Be prepared to let a story go, tell it in another way or at another time.

Sensitivity in presentation and appropriate choice of media should be paramount.

There are many purposes for undertaking interpretation but having a good story is the best way to start. Identify that "the purpose of the interpretive story is to inspire and provoke people to broaden their horizons", Beck and Cable (1998:10).

'Sensitive' stories are usually those that involve controversy, fear, loss, conflict, power, differences of values and opinion, and they relate to people. These types of stories are an interesting part of life and are told every day in the media. In death, battles, conflict of values, struggles of survival and even monumental failures there is often much to be learnt, remembered and even celebrated. Difficult events and situations can present us with opportunities to learn and grow.

Analyse the issue and determine what it is, who's involved and how important it is considered to be. Stories associated with conflicts over land ownership, racism or gross inequalities require special attention. Past conservation/resource use battles can be 'no go' topics for some time in some places, as can past battles between Maori tribes. Marine conservation is also fraught with conflicts of values.



There are sometimes many variations on events. New Zealand has a rich history of conflict and parties involved have their own perspective.

Segments of panels from Waitomo and Ruapekapeka, including an image of a kakauroa named *Ringakaha* made and used by Te Kawiti.

Ruapekapeka designer: Sonia Frimmel

Photos: Fiona Colquhoun

The tragedy at Cave Creek in 1995 was pivotal in shaping the current form and functions of the Department of Conservation. DOC now has a comprehensive asset management system and thorough processes to help ensure that this sort of event never happens again. Near Cave Creek the lives of those lost are commemorated with a simple memorial. Every anniversary the Department solemnly remembers. A film made about the tragedy has enabled agencies involved in managing visitor assets within New Zealand and internationally to understand and learn from it.

The process of telling a sensitive story usually requires consultation with those involved, empathy and compassion, and accurate representation without judgment. Difficult stories told well can have very positive outcomes but skill and sensitivity are required.

Some points to consider:

- Determine if it's appropriate to tell the story at the time.
- Involve the people associated with the story.
- Consider a range of options for presenting a story e.g. personal or non-personal interpretation, publications etc.
- Investigate the issue at the heart of the matter.
- Be provocative and challenge people to think about issues.
- Present different views and leave the judgment to your audience.
- Focus on what was learnt/changed as a result.
- Audio or audio visual presentations provide more scope to create stories which are moving.
- Select words carefully in consultation with interested parties.
- Have people who were involved tell all or part of the story (e.g. through audio).
- Humour can be a useful tool but try not to trivialise an issue or open old wounds.
- Reference places where national stories or significant local stories are told well, e.g. 1860s land wars and 1820s musket wars at Tawhiti museum, Taranaki.

2.17 Interpretation to influence visitor behaviour

A variety of techniques can be used to help preserve resources, discourage particular practice, effect behaviour change or protect visitors from harm. Promotion of awareness and understanding about minimal impact and safe practice enables visitors to make better informed decisions about their activities, the impact they may have, and the risks and responsibility they are prepared to take.

Interpretation can be used to deliver messages about appropriate behaviour and risk of harm. Attempts to change behaviour are usually most effective when a combination of techniques is used. For example, regulatory signs, landscape or engineering solutions such as barriers or re-routing tracks, contact with uniformed staff, or staff presence, and clear on-site and pre-visit information including environmental care codes. Reinforce the same messages in a number of different media, messages should be consistent and clearly understandable for the target audience.

Developing an understanding of visitors' knowledge, attitudes, motivation and site use patterns is important. This is likely to involve site research with users and observation or other forms of monitoring. After analysis, options can be developed and trialed at the site to determine effectiveness. If an issue is common to a number of sites and the solution effective, then it's a good idea to share it.

Let wildlife be wild, keep your distance. On the right it shows '10' as a distance which may be confusing for some visitors – is it feet or metres?
Photo: Sonia Lloyd

Effecting behavioural change is not easy. If behavioural change is the objective, it usually happens slowly. Veverka (1994:13) suggests that there is a sequential process for affecting change in the minds of visitors:

1. Create an awareness of the critical issue through interpretation (and information).
2. If visitors can relate to the issue, they start to form feelings about it. Let visitors know why the issue is important and what the consequences are.
3. Visitors form an emotional opinion and relate their behaviour to it.
4. Visitors choose to maintain current behaviour or change it based on the new information.

Eagles, McCool and Haynes (2002) identify a range of visitor related management problems and a scale of likely effectiveness of interpretation messages in creating behavioural change.

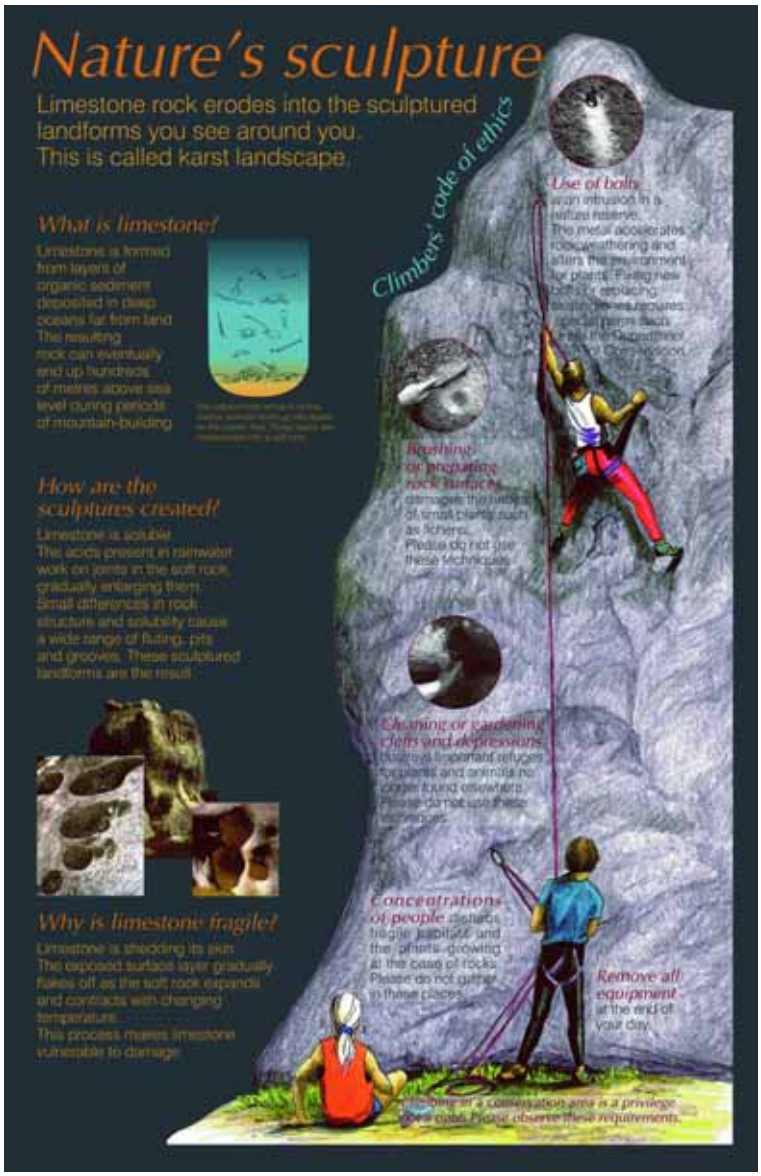
Type of problem	Likely effectiveness of information & education	For example
Illegal actions (visitors know they're doing the wrong thing)	Low	Fishing in no fish zones or without a licence (enforcement required)
Unavoidable actions (impacts are largely beyond visitors' control, management action required)	Low	Loss of ground cover vegetation at campsites (site hardening or other measure required)
Careless actions (visitors don't care what they do)	Moderate	Leaving rubbish, creating noise, not being sensitive to the environment or others (information, education, interpretation required)
Unskilled actions (visitors don't know how to minimise their impact; better skills are required)	High	Selecting inappropriate campsitse, collecting green firewood (information, education, interpretation required)
Uninformed actions (visitors have insufficient knowledge)	Very high	Lighting a fire on a fire ban day, leaving permanent bolts when climbing (information, education, interpretation required)

Management measures to influence visitor behaviour on-site may involve:

- indirect regulation (enforcement of regulations)
- directive measures (design features that guide visitors such as trail alignment, barriers, signage), or
- indirect measures (information, interpretation, education).

Sphere of influence and control

All desirable and undesirable visitor activities cannot be quickly and easily solved. Measures can only be deployed according to the sphere of control or influence and skills an organisation or individuals have.



Kura Tawhiti Castle Hill rock climbing panel presents climbers with a code of behaviour. Designer: Sandra Parkkali

Direct control over agencies' own operations, for example:

- Compulsory components of facility service standards such as SNZ8604 Tracks and Outdoor Visitor Structures handbook
- Concessionaires' permitted activities are guided by their licence conditions, own business policies and other Government regulations.
- Policies and processes such as pricing
- Decisions about agency partnerships in information provision

Indirect impact on activities of others, for example:

- Non-compulsory guidelines and recommended aspects of service standards, e.g. SNZ 8604 Recreation Symbol Standard for New Zealand.
- Concessionaire licence conditions which are loosely binding e.g. following the Environmental Care Code.
- Management decisions about the scale and nature of services in particular locations which may impact on related services provided by other businesses

Influence on others, for example:

- Degree and nature of engagement with stakeholders and the public
- The nature of communication activities, e.g. media and public relations, information translated into other languages etc.
- Reach, frequency and distribution of information e.g. availability of safety information or minimal impact codes
- Effectiveness of communication media, skills and techniques employed

Adapted from Eagles, McCool and Haynes (2002)

Visitor beliefs and perceptions

Ballantyne and Hughes (2004:3) identify three theories about the role of pre-existing visitor beliefs and conceptions in determining behaviour: the theory of planned behaviour, protection motivation theory, and constructivist theory. All emanate from the principle that to be persuasive, educational messages must to be tailored to target audience's knowledge, interests and needs. Persuasion occurs when the audience scrutinises the content of the message and accepts its argument.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour seeks to establish visitor beliefs in relation to the phenomenon. In order to change undesirable behaviour, the information upon which the beliefs are based must be challenged with new information, persuasive message appeals used (such as moral), and the preferred practice clearly identified.

Illustration: Karl Blass

Protection Motivation Theory relates to perceived threats and consequences based on existing beliefs, perceptions and experiences. Interpretation which identifies or depicts consequences of actions which the target audience accepts as relevant is more likely to result in modification of visitor behaviour. For example, consequences of walking on glaciers without appropriate equipment or a guide.

Constructivist Theory attempts to identify specific conceptions and misconceptions in relation to the phenomenon. Interpretation should specifically address misconceptions with facts and clear reasons why behaviour change is required.

Ballantyne and Hughes (2004) research into the use of front-end and formative evaluation to design and test persuasive bird feeding warning signs found that the sign based on Constructivist Theory was likely to be most effective for positively influencing visitors' behaviour.

However, using elements of all three theories may be the most effective depending on a range of factors such as the topic, pre-existing beliefs, timing and relevance for the audience and the format of message delivery.

When developing interpretation to affect behavioural change:

1. Thoroughly research site issues, existing visitor behaviour and key site visitor groups.
2. Identify the problem and the behaviour that contributes to it or perpetuates it.
3. Consult the target audience with front-end evaluation to identify pre-existing beliefs and which ones influence their behaviour. (Ballantyne & Hughes {2004] cited Ham & Kruupe [1996:18])
4. Find out what visitors already know about the topic. If it's about safety, find out what level of risk the target audience accepts as part of the experience.
5. Always trial the effectiveness of new measures before they are fully developed, e.g. mock up panels.
6. A combination of direct and indirect measures is most likely to be effective.
7. Make it easy for visitors to learn the appropriate practice.
8. The title should attract attention. The text should be clear and concise. The message should present a factual requirement for the desired behaviour by identifying the reasons why. Address misconceptions, and outline the consequences of the inappropriate behaviour identified.
9. Share your good ideas and practices. Emotional appeals and humour can be useful too, such as phrasing appeals by wildlife themselves. Check out www.countryside.assess.co.nz for a great example.

2.18 Interpretation for special needs visitors

Many people have mobility limitations, visual, auditory or other functional impairments. Standards New Zealand Document NZS 4121:2001: *Design for access and mobility: Buildings and associated facilities* provides specifications for the design of barrier-free access facilities. Other standards provide access related specifications e.g. *Tracks and Outdoor Visitor Structures Handbook*.

Many structures are designed for barrier-free access, so interpretation associated with them should also be designed for ease of access e.g. placement, location and height of panels. It's tempting when developing interpretation panels to fit in more text by making the point size small, this is counter- productive when your audience can't read it. Think about the audience.

Site orientation information is particularly important for visitors with limited mobility. They need to know how long a track is, and what the terrain is like before they can make a decision about whether they can do it. Able-bodied visitors can find out what a track is like on the way, but for others negotiating a 500 metre long walk with steps and a slippery surface might not be easy.

Some general considerations when tailoring interpretation for people with special needs.

- Develop multi-sensory experiences.
- Provide or identify possible guided activities.
- Provide an audio option e.g. a CD player, listening post, or panel with sound.
- Create clearly structured text with big headings or provide a large print brochure
- Think of colours. Many people are red/ green colour blind; yellow is the last colour to remain when sight loss occurs; dark colours on a light background are the most clear. Use white instead of a photo background.
- Create tactile interpretation such as maps and models; a winner for everyone.
- Place signs at appropriate heights and for best light.
- Make a simple step to give short people and children better viewing.
- Make sure information about what is accessible for everyone is available. A simple list in visitor centres and on the website may suffice.

Access for all. Museum of Wellington City & Sea. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

Above: Braille sign. Photo: Glenn Willmott

Step up and see. Museum of Wellington City & Sea. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

2.19 Interpretation for children

Children are a very open and appreciative audience for interesting things and stories. Interpretation developed for them should be entertaining and fun. Often keen conservationists, DOC's Super Sites for education, and seasonal activity programmes offer learning opportunities. Refer to the DOC Intranet for details. The following table shows the stages of child development with examples of interpretation styles:

Age	Developmental stage and abilities	Interpretation which appeals
0-2 years	Develops patterns of thought primarily with senses an motion	Colour, sound, touch, repetition
2-7 years	language development focusing on one aspect at a time wonder and exploration of connections	Play Repeated esperiences Indentifying and matching things Developing simple understanding Experiencing real things Short attention span
7-11 years	Developing greater depth of meaning Creating own meanings from experiences	Exploration Discovering independence Easy to engage Developing fine motor co-ordination Absorb facts quickly Longer attention span
Over 11 years	Able to form hypotheses and understand abstract notions More complex problem solving	Easily distracted and bored Participatory activities are best Discovery and exploration Challenge

Live things are appealing and engaging for children as are colour and action. Make it fun.

Tilden's Principle 6.

"Interpretation addressed to children (say up to the age of 12) should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best it will require a separate program [sic]."

Tilden (1979:9)

Places to see good examples of children's interpretation include: Christchurch Museum, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Melbourne Museum and Science Works.


Make it fun! Karori Wildlife Sanctuary Weta Hotels. Left: hotel interpretation panel. Middle: closed hotel doors. Right: open doors. Large weta from bottom of hotel interpretation panel. Photos: Fiona Colquhoun

2.20 Planning case study

Redeveloping Whakapapa, Visitor Centre, Tongariro National Park

The following material is based largely on the report 'Visitor survey and display evaluation, Whakapapa Visitor Centre, March 2003', prepared for the Department by Sonia Frimmel, interpretation consultant, What's the Story?

Visitor centre building and display assets require regular maintenance and replacement. The Department redeveloped the visitor spaces within the Whakapapa Visitor Centre in 2000-2001 based on the recommendations of a 1995 operational review.

Key issues which prompted the redevelopment related to layout and content of material, including:

- congestion in some display areas and inadequate reception space
- lack of rest space
- lack of space for temporary exhibits
- limited room for growth in visitor numbers
- the world heritage status of the park.

The redevelopment involved:

- creating a circuit visitor flow which can be seen from the entrance
- creating a spacious, light reception area and foyer which offers shelter and space for a statue of the paramount chief of Tuwharetoa, Horonuku, Te Heuheu Tukino IV, (The Gift)
- updating and structuring recreation information by length of activity
- making safety and weather updates easy to find
- updating displays to focus on the gift of the park from local iwi, and volcanoes linked to the World Heritage status of Tongariro National Park. The overarching theme is flora and fauna survival within adversity.
- retaining popular exhibits (relief and ski history models) and moving the volcanic audio visual (AV)
- maintaining a functional visitor centre during redevelopment by staging structural alterations and installation of displays
- a total expenditure of approximately $735,000 of which approximately 11% (or $80,000) was planning.

In 2002, after the redesigned layout and new displays had been in use for 18 months an evaluation project commenced. The objectives of the evaluation were to establish if the redevelopment had met staff and visitor needs, solved the original problems and identified any new issues with displays or layout. Visitor surveys and observations and staff interviews were used to gather information. Staff interviews investigated functionality and staff needs.

Visitor surveys identified:

- demographic data
- reason for visit and satisfaction with visit
- patterns of use
- preferences for displays and topics.

The results were favourable:

Flow

- Visitor flow problems were largely solved with most visitors circulating freely and viewing most displays.
- Circular flow was planned but actual circulation was random with no negative effect.

Displays

- Volcanic displays remain popular.
- The Gift area less well used but has a strong visual impact.

The original relief model was touched up and is the most popular exhibit in the centre. Three quarters of all visitors spend time with it and the weather display.

Satisfaction

- Visitors were very satisfied with their overall visit, presentation and quality of displays.
- The main reasons for visiting were to obtain information about tracks and the park.
- Some exhibits were more popular than others with visitors. The topographic model, ash cloud, general volcanic information, World Heritage i mac, ski history and eruption video were most popular. The tracks information, natural history, DOC management work and The Gift were less popular.
- Interactive, three dimensional or audio-visual displays were the most popular display formats.
- Staff noted that the redevelopment had vastly improved flow, reception functions and retail opportunities. They considered that track update information needed to be made more prominent within the centre and available in an after-hours location, printers were required at close hand and some further orientation signage was required.

Visitors were asked for suggestions for change. Most responses were for more or bigger interactives, more for children, more computers, AV/film, wandering guides, display text available in other languages as handouts, labelled view of mountain and having a virtual bush track.

The biodiversity corridor attracts fewer visitors than other display areas. It could be a 'corridor effect', a feeling of crowding or the topic. Kiwi threats is the most popular section of the display.

Designer: Janet Bathgate
All photos: Dave Wakelin

Visitors were happy with the level, quality and quantity of information they received and spent an average 20 minutes in the centre. The evaluation found that the redevelopment project had met its objectives and also provided specific feedback about visitor preferences.

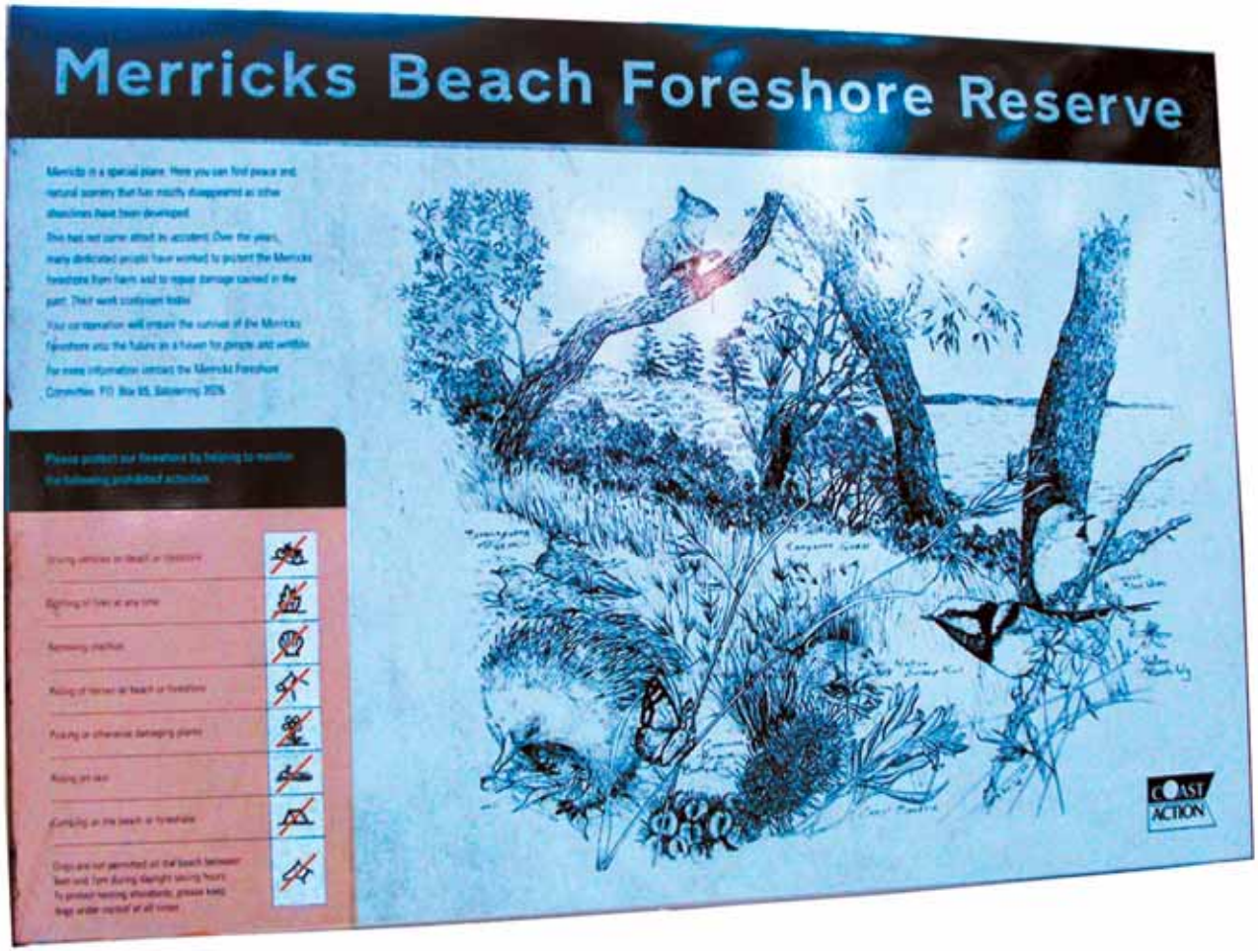
2.21 Planning considerations

Investigate, analyse and determine:

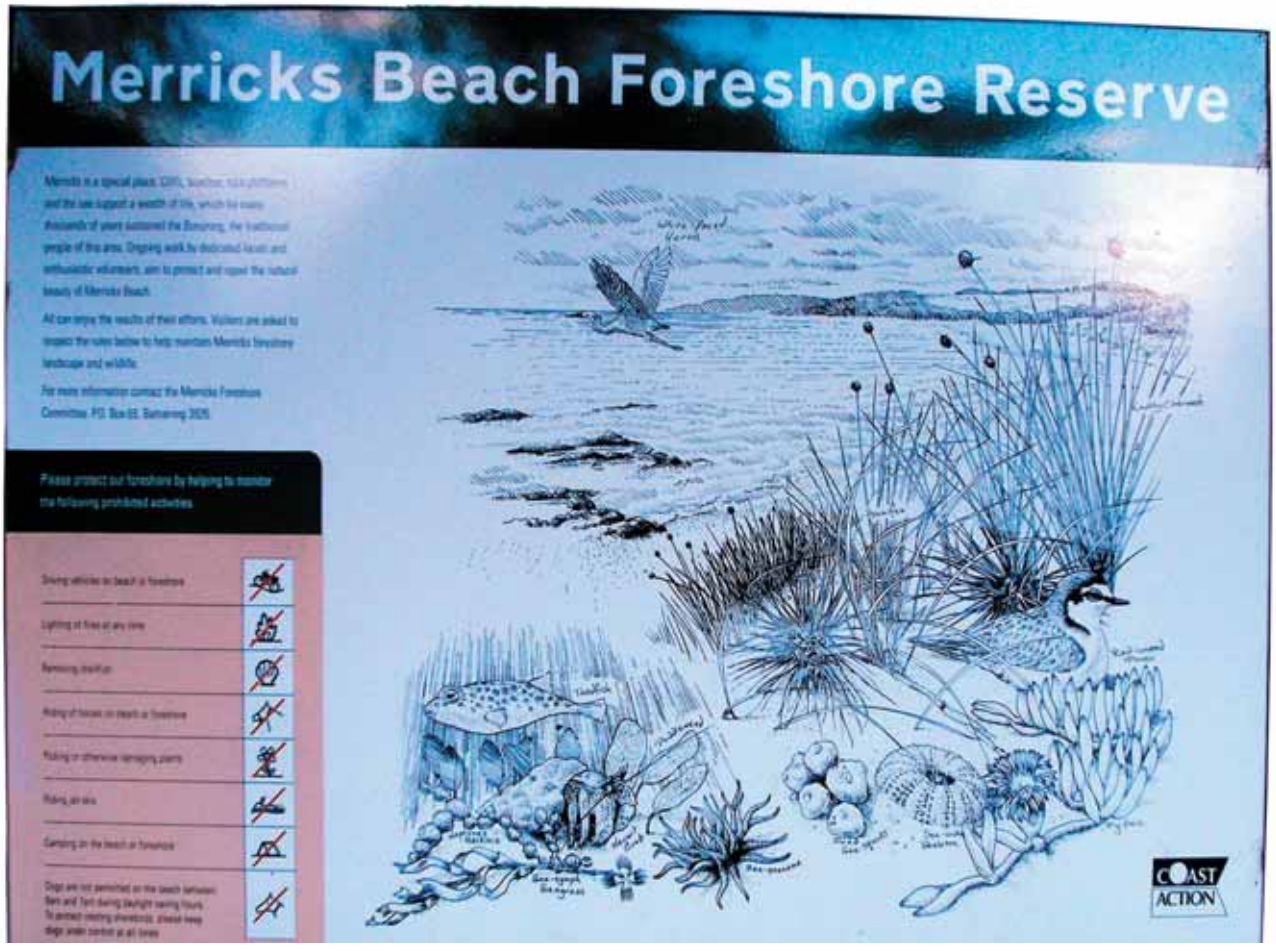
- why people visit and what story should be told.
- if the same outcomes can be achieved by placing DOC material in other locations or site sharing. (E.g. museum, i-site, other businesses or community areas)
- the strengths and weaknesses and opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the location, building, visibility and access
- the essential take away messages for visitors (what is most interesting, unique or significant?)
- the level of interest the centre's topics have for visitors and how well they have been told in other places or by other people (e.g. concessionaires)
- redevelopment options with detailed analysis, costs and benefits (feasibility).

A project plan and business case will be required and funding sought through internal and/or external sources for different stages of the project. The advice of professionals such as architects and designers will assist in determining resource requirements.

Evaluation research found that 20% of visitors used the computer interactive and it kept their attention longer than other exhibits.



Double sided panels are a very efficient use of space and minimise clutter caused by multiple signs. This double sided panel at a track entrance, Merricks Beach, Victoria, has illustrations which highlight the important flora and fauna species in the coastal reserve. The text is secondary to the illustration which reflects the short time most visitors spend viewing the panels. Photos: Fiona Colquhoun



Chapter three — Personal interpretation

Above: Ngäi Tahu interpreter Joseph Hullen, Canterbury. Photo: Gnome Hannah-Brown

Top left: North Head, Auckland. Dave Veart, DOC, training workshop, 2003. Photo: P.J. Mahoney

Middle: DOC re-enactment at ARC Karangahake Bushcamp. Photo: Michelle Elborn

Bottom left: Gemstone Bay, on-site planning. Photo: Greg Martin

Sea kayakers in Fiordland National Park. Photo: Fiordland Wilderness Experiences

Below, Hands-on historic re-enactment, organised by DOC staff, at Auckland Regional Council's bushcamp in the Karangahake region, as part of Conservation Week activities in 2003. Photo: Michelle Elborn

3.1 Types of personal interpretation

This chapter focuses on personal or guided interpretation and explores the skills and techniques used to deliver memorable interpretation. Personal interpretation is delivered face to face. Settings are as diverse as a glow-worm cave tour, interpretive rangers on Great Walks, marine reserve summer programmes, visitor centre slide shows and talks, cultural places, or historic heritage sites such as bush tramway work with volunteers. It is usually delivered by staff, volunteers or concession operators. Staff in uniform are perceived as a highly credible source of information, so personal interpretation can be a powerful and effective medium to influence visitor perceptions and behaviour.

3.2 Personal interpretation techniques

Meet and greet

Provide a brief introduction then allow visitors to make their own way through a site. This is an effective way to make contact with a large group for a short time.

Wellington Zoo's keepers give scheduled talks. Photo. Fiona Colquhoun

Interpreted archaeological walk Urupukapuka Island, Northland. Pa site interpretation standing on the defensive earthwork. Photo: Tony Nightingale

Guided tours by foot or vehicle

Guiding provides an opportunity to visit remote or less accessible places, see wildlife, or view landscapes in a different light. Tours can be easily tailored to audience needs whether general or special-interest.

Talks or presentations

Delivered at a scheduled time and place or can take place informally, such as a hut warden's entry talk, talks to schools.

Ad hoc or roving interpretation

Allows informal interaction at sites and allows visitors to explore their interests, e.g. track markers provide interpretaion.

Open days and events

This can be a cost-effective way to reach bigger audiences. Good planning and promotion is essential to attract people.

Volunteer programmes

Mix active conservation work with interpretation to provide a deeper more meaningful experience. Include time on volunteer programmes for interpretive talks.

Seasonal programmes

Most DOC conservancies schedule summer programmes with short-guided walks, river trips, talks, building or special site tours or extended trips. Check the DOC website for programme details. Tailored for impact and effect with a particular audience, these can be particularly memorable for those involved, e.g. children's activities.

Concessionaire activities

Some tourism/recreation operators are interpretation focused and also subject experts, others include interpretation in their programme, and others focus just on an activity.

3.3 Why use personal interpretation?

When choosing different types of personal interpretation you need to consider your setting, audience, project or programme objectives, resources and level of commitment for training and support. Consider the advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages

Personal

- visitors can ask questions
- delivery can be flexible
- presentations can be tailored to audience needs.

Credible

Knowledge is assumed so know the facts! Make sure your interaction is a positive one.

Meaningful

Presentations can provide highly memorable experiences of a place for visitors.

Effective

In influencing behavioural change – e.g. delivering minimal impact/regulatory messages.

Efficient

Staff can be trained to deliver face to face interpretation on the same day they do track, hut or environmental work. Licensed concessionaires can also deliver interpretation as part of their activities.

Flexible

Programmes can be delivered ad hoc or just in peak seasons. Timing can change.

Can provide access to places

Going with a guide can make inaccessible places accessible and provide meaningful insight, e.g. glacier tours, viewing kiwi and bats at night.

Opportunity for involvement

If training and support are provided, it's a great way to involve the local community and develop knowledgeable volunteers.

Disadvantages

May be costly

- to set up a programme for a few visitors
- Training and support is required and skills are lost through staff and volunteer programme turnover.

Well developed skills are required

Good skills usually take time and effort and training to develop.

Formal

Attending a scheduled programme requires a commitment in leisure time that many visitors do not want to make.

Profile is less visible

This may make it less attractive to potential sponsors, and unless you promote it well, many people may not find out about it.

Seasonal/time limited

It requires an audience and may be feasible to only provide in peak visitor periods or when the weather is suitable.

Harebell. Photo: DOC

Long-tailed blue butterfly. Photo: George W. Gibbs

Copper butterfly. Photo: DOC

Boulder copper butterfly. Photo: DOC

3.4 Getting organised

What makes personal interpretation effective? The success of personal interpretation relies on the interpreter's communication skills and abilities. Talks present a different opportunity from guided tours when the outdoor experience of a site is replaced with images – photographs, illustrations, graphics and objects. This section explores the ingredients of personal delivery.

Organising an activity

Preparation and planning are critical to the success of personal activities. If you are developing a new activity or running an activity regularly, being well organised means:

- **Before the activity.** Manage expectations and activity satisfaction by clearly advising the group what level of skill and equipment will be required, and what they need to wear and bring.

  If you have site or activity notes provide them to participants before the trip so they know what is ahead.
- **Organise yourself.** Have the things you need with you e.g. first aid, water, radio or phone, binoculars, water, references.
- **Know your site well.** Focus on what visitors see and experience at the site and build your themes around what the site offers.
- **Know your facts.** Learn a lot more than you plan to present. This helps you be confident and relaxed and more spontaneous. Don't try and memorise your whole talk and then regurgitate it. Keep a card of single point prompts in your pocket and refer to them in between stops or before you start talking if you need to. Never read or refer to prompts during your presentation.
- **Develop a well-planned thematic and structured presentation** (see below for more detail).
- **Practice your presentation delivery** on other staff first and prepare variations for different audiences and group sizes.
- **Safety first.** Count your group and don't lose anyone! Have an emergency response plan and always advise people about possible hazards.
- **Check visitor skills and equipment** (if relevant), and don't take visitors on the activity if they are not adequately prepared.
- **Stay on time** and let people know if you are running late.

Welcoming visitors

You are the host at your site – be it a historic home, visitor centre, forest remnant, marine reserve or pa site.

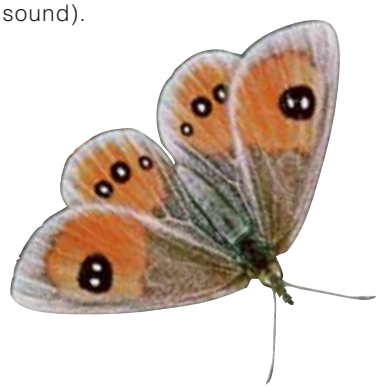
Consider these basic points for your 'meet and greet':

- Arrive early and use the time to get to know your audience a little – you can use this in your talk.
- Clearly explain the day's format so the group knows what's ahead, e.g. 'the track up the valley will take an hour with lots of stops followed by morning tea at … lunch at …' etc.
- Find out if there are visitors with special needs.
- Learn and use some of your visitors' names. Not only does this make them feel included but it will help target your interpretation.
- Find out if anyone has something they particularly wanted to find out.
- Be mindful of visitors' needs for the time you are their host, e.g. adjust walking pace for the slowest visitors.

Involve your audience

Make the most of this personal involvement:

- Ask and answer questions.
- Encourage discussion about your theme.
- Relate your interpretation directly to visitors' experiences of the site, park, region or New Zealand, or something you know about your visitors.
- Use props that visitors can touch or use and other practical activities, e.g. count different types and colours of fish at a marine reserve .
- Encourage visitors to use all their senses (touch, smell, taste, sight, sound).



Tussock butterfly, Waituna Wetlands . Photo: DOC

3.5 Develop structure and use a theme

Introduce your topic using themes and sub themes

- **Address visitors' safety and comfort needs** – e.g. timing, food, toilets, equipment and any other relevant safety issues.
- **Use a hook** to capture your visitors' attention and get them excited about your tour (use music, a gimmick, a joke, tell a story, have a prop). The first minute is critical in getting your visitors thinking, 'this sounds great, this is what I expected'.
- **Tell them about what's ahead** – outline various points along the route and how they link to your theme.

Body. Develop the story at planned stops. Illustrate major ideas, referring back to themes and sub themes. Respond to visitor questions and prompts in the surrounding environment.

Use transitions to move from one point to the next. As you are leaving one stop refer to and link the next. Sometimes you can use the conversations you have with visitors between stops to link into the next point. Be prepared for 'gear changing' – out of the blue questions that can direct the course of the theme. Practice timing gear changes back into the direction of the theme

Conclusion. Summarise some of the features of the tour and bring them together to reinforce the theme. Finish with a big picture or where to from here question and where to find more information or other activities.

Adapted from Ham (1992) and Regnier (1992)

These techniques are also relevant to non-personal interpretation, Chapter 4

Keep the audience engaged

There are lots of different techniques to help structure talks. Consider some of these:

- **Cause and effect.** This contributes to that outcome. Combine this with time, or use changes over time alone.
- **Objective.** Discuss a number of points of view.
- **Places**. Compare the same thing as it occurs in different places in NZ or the world. This works well with the support of visual imagery.
- **Zooming in or out**. Micro to macro perspective or vice versa.
- **Imagery**. Illustrate complex topics with props, illustrations etc. to provide explanation.
- **Silence.** Using silence allows your group to listen, reflect, and take time without talking. Silence can also be used to create suspense and anticipation or reinforce a message.

Use analogies and metaphors

Analogies compare a familiar idea, concept, story, historical event, or process to the elements of your example.

- *Shrinking a period of time to a week – on Monday…*
- *Comparing the life cycle of an animal to the human life story birth, growing, learning, mating…*

Metaphors use the application of a name or descriptions of an object which are imaginative but not literally applicable.

Food for thought.

Ask questions to get visitors involved

"Can you see where the addition was?"

"Have you seen what these foundations are made of?"

Questions about process ask people to integrate information.

"Why do you think the timber line stops here?"

"Why do you think this site was chosen for this pa?"

Evaluative questions deal with choice, values or judgements.

"What do you think about the marine reserve proposal?"

Use active rather than passive language

"Look closely at the bird's feathers. Can you see the wing stripe?"

rather than

"These birds have a white wing stripe."

"Miners sluiced these hills for gold."

rather than

"These hills were sluiced for gold."

Using te reo

Refer to the DOC Maori language strategy and publication standard for further guidance, or the Maori Language Commission website: www.tetaurawhiri.govt.nz

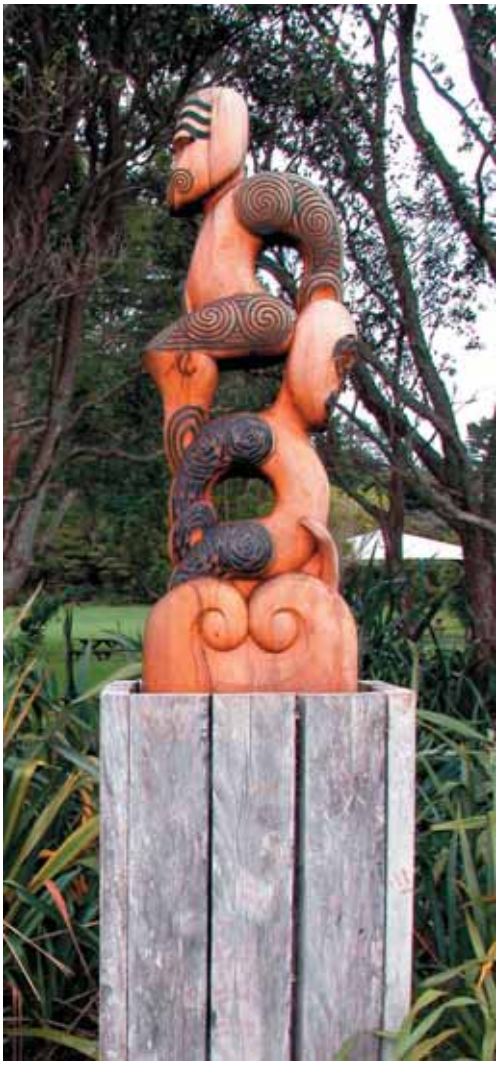
Personal interpretation activities are ideal opportunities to introduce Maori language and concepts to visitors. Use of te reo is critical in any interpretation of Maori topics as you discuss ancestors, place names, describe plants and animals and important spiritual concepts. Different Maori words are regionally and locally appropriate. Different iwi and even hapu have different words for species, places or concepts. There may also be different spelling and pronunciation for the same words e.g. pukeko for Ngai tahu is pâkua. Check what is locally appropriate and learn the local pronunciation. Knowledge of te reo is limited for many New Zealanders and visitors, but here are some starting points:

- **People** – ancestors – tipuna. When you introduce stories about tipuna, focus on the name of the key person in the story e.g. 'Aoraki and his three brothers'. When you are planning your talk, think about two versions of the story – one where you use all the names and another where you pare it down to the most important characters.

- **Place names** – repeat the names of the places you are visiting – Otamahua, Kura Tawhiti, Aoraki – throughout your walk and highlight the name somewhere on the walk "Here at Kura Tawhiti … when you leave Kura Tawhiti today …" as this reinforces the name. It is quite powerful to hear the interpretation of place names of hills, mountains, rivers, harbours when they are right in front of you. Visitors may not remember these names but they will remember that there are other names, and it emphasises Maori history of places.

Kete
Photo: Sandra Parkkali

- **Concepts** – some Maori words are now commonly used throughout New Zealand, e.g. tapu, mana, iwi, whanau, tangata whenua. Use all the Maori language you are familiar with and find out how familiar your audience is. Give an explanation or brief definition when you first use a word or you could ask the group – "Can anybody tell me what they understand mana to mean?"



Te Kawerau sculpture, Omana pa, ARC
Artist: Whare Thompson. Photo: Michelle Edge

Give visitors a chance to learn and say some Maori words that relate closely to the theme of your activity.

Welcome panel, Buried Village ki ete, Rotorua. Photo and interpretation consultant: Kim Morland. Graphic designer: Ross Ellen

3.6 Personal delivery skills

Sam Ham (1999) refers to four different kinds of guide. You may recognise the characteristics:

1 **The Cop**, who is highly protective of the resource and almost resents visitors.

2 **The Machine**, who has a set commentary that allows for no deviation, spontaneity and little visitor interaction.

3 **The Know-it-all**, whose main purpose is to demonstrate their knowledge to the audience.

4 **The Host**, who engages with visitors and uses their knowledge to provide insight.

Which guide would you prefer to have or be?

Three valuable tools for communicating:

Your body

- First impressions are important; wear a clean and tidy uniform or clothes. Don't forget a name badge and hat for the sun or rain.
- Smile to help everyone relax and feel welcome.
- Think about your posture and body language. Stand solid and firm to indicate confidence and competence. Avoid distracting mannerisms such as fidgeting, clicking pens, rattling keys.
- Use natural gestures and always face your group.

Your voice

- Speak with enthusiasm and passion
- Vary tone and pace. Remember to pause for emphasis, to collect your thoughts, to let your story be absorbed or to indicate a change in topic
- Replace 'um' and 'ah' with a pause

Your language

- Use simple language and speak clearly with short sentences; this is particularly important if English is not your audience's first language.
- Avoid jargon – it turns visitors off.
- Create images in people's heads.
- Use humour. If your audience is laughing then everyone is relaxed. Make jokes or stories relevant to your subject.
- Use silence for impact and focus.

Analyse your performance – what worked best, what did visitors really like? Ask for feedback. To help quell your nerves and improve your public speaking practice, join a Toastmasters Club or do a presentation skills course and keep practising.

Adapted from Burns (2000)

Presentation is a performance. Photo: Tony Nightingale

Quick thinking

Buy time to respond to audience questions or points:

- rephrase the question
- acknowledge the point
- ask for clarification
- ask for an example
- agree.

Develop your own style

Research has shown that **enthusiasm** is the most highly valued attribute interpreters can have. Credibility and professionalism are also valued. While a sense of humour always helps relate to a visitor, don't force humour if it doesn't come naturally.

Managing large groups

- Don't have a large group! Determine a maximum size to suit the talk and site; eight to twelve is often optimum but this would be determined by the number of staff involved – 30 people is a good maximum for 4 staff or volunteers.
- Stay at the front and appoint someone to be a tail-end-Charlie or whip.
- Allow time to deal with obstacles.
- Talk to your group once everyone has arrived.
- Be visible and audible at all times, stand above your group if necessary, and project your voice to the person at the back
- Provide children with tasks or games along the route and periodically count your group – safety first!

Talks

- If your talk is longer than 35 minutes (the average adult attention span) take a break.
- Have good images. Few talks are effective without visual aids.
- Use sound to maintain interest and attention.
- PowerPoint presentations have a corporate style, a slide show with quality images may have more impact.
- Present in a pleasant setting free of other distractions.

Roving interpretation

Sometimes the best contact you can have with a visitor is when **they** are least expecting it! Choose popular sites where you can have a meaningful contact with visitors, e.g. huts, visitor centres, view points. Start by answering a few simple questions and this may lead to longer stories or a personal tour. Props and equipment, (binoculars, photos) can add value. Roving can be hard work. Determine the best times for roving by trying out different times and allocating staff short roving time periods such as one to two hours at a time. Consider setting up a volunteer roving interpreter programme if you have the resources.

Provide interpretation at places with obvious questions. Nenthorn Historic Reserve gold mine site.
Photo: P.J. Mahoney

Talking about archaeology.
Photo: Tony Nightingale

Roving interpreters should:

- be friendly and approachable
- know the site well – its features and issues
- read body language – assess when to approach people and when to leave them alone
- be concise – answer questions but allow quiet enjoyment of the site.

Adapted from Regnier et al. (1992:79)

Consider sites for roving interpretation:

- where people naturally congregate (i.e. viewpoints, key features)
- where hazards can be monitored (i.e. places where visitors are tempted to go beyond barriers for better views or photos)
- that are interesting and have obvious questions (e.g. penguin or seal colonies)
- close to visitor centres that are easily accessible (e.g. highly visited).

What the feral cat ate for dinner. Prop made by Judith Street
Photo: Gnome Hannah-Brown

Possible props:

- skins
- skeletons
- pressed plants
- rocks
- artefacts
- tools
- replicas
- costumes
- equipment
- traps
- laminated photos and sketches
- stuffed animals
- books
- music
- instruments
- toasty warm possum socks, scarf or gloves

The pest story is told so often in New Zealand that it can become tedious. The challenge is to be creative and make it interesting. St. Arnaud Visitor Centre (possum up a tree), Opossum World, Napier (singing possums). Photos: Fiona Colquhoun

3.7 Use props

Every DOC office is full of potential props. Props explain things, gain attention and engage a group.

- People respond to familiar objects used in innovative ways.
- Involve different senses with props – smell, noise and touch. Pass around a sample of *Coprosma foetodissima,* its smell is sure to get at least the kids laughing! Feel the softness of a kakapo feather.
- Try using historic artefacts as they were originally. Pulling on a crosscut saw for only a minute can give you an insight into the life of an early bushman. Don't forget to ask first if you wish to use Maori artefacts.

Adapted from Regnier (1992.27)

Props can also be distracting and you can lose visitors' attention when it is their turn to have a go. When passing a prop around, stay on the topic until visitors have finished with it then put it away.

An authentic looking vintage fly fisherman prop at the Tongariro National Trout Centre.
Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

3.8 Drama

History lends itself to re-enactment and dramatisation. Consider adding drama to your interpretation by using some of these methods.

Check out ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) www.international.icomos.org for accepted international principles on heritage management.

Camp oven re-enactment at DOC Conservation Week historic day in the Karangahake Region. Photo: Michelle Elborn.

Archaeologist Dave Veart explaining restoration progress. North Head, Auckland. Photo: P.J. Mahoney

First person living history related to an event, time or period. This is a popular technique which takes visitors to another time. Theatrical skills are required to make this interpretation work well – interpreters need to stay in role at all times and be historically accurate.

Costumed guides who do not play a part are not limited to staying in character. The costume is part of the story and provides context. Tours of buildings and historic precincts benefit from personalised stories or a political context to bring the architectural forms and features to life.

Re-enactment of real events provide the opportunity to immerse an audience mentally and emotionally. The resources, planning and the skills required of participants will depend on the scale and nature of the re-enactment, and can provide good opportunities for volunteer involvement.

Demonstrations of cultural practices involve visitors and provide a relaxed environment to talk about the activity and other cultural information.

Performing arts – music and theatre events often take place in outdoor sites and sometimes draw on the site for the story line.

Non-costumed guides.

Costumes and characterisation are not essential to create great interpretation. Once the theme has been established, the story can become more specific as points of interest are reached. A historic house can offer lots of engaging stories (mysterious deaths, ghosts, character people, odd things) and plenty of opportunities to 'do things' with well placed props. Grab visitor attention.

3.9 Visitor centre staff

Visitor and information centre staff head DOC's front line delivery of information services. Visitors expect staff to have an up-to-date knowledge about recreational opportunities, facilities and weather conditions. Staff in uniform are generally perceived as credible and reliable sources of information, which means they can be very influential in guiding visitors' location and activity choices. Comprehensive knowledge of recreation opportunities gives staff the confidence required to meet visitor expectations. Service delivery should be supported by a training programme which, particularly, includes site familiarisation trips.

Braided river interactive display
Photo: Science Alive

The hardest thing for counter staff is judging the previous experience of visitors. If you over estimate you risk recommending something outside their capabilities; if you underestimate you risk patronizing them. Ask about their level of experience.

Even though you may have answered a question 100 times that day, it is the first time for the visitor. Maybe it shows a gap in your information or interpretation material in the visitor centre, or the placement of it. However, many visitors like to make contact with reception staff so the obvious question could be the icebreaker even though the information on tracks is clearly displayed.

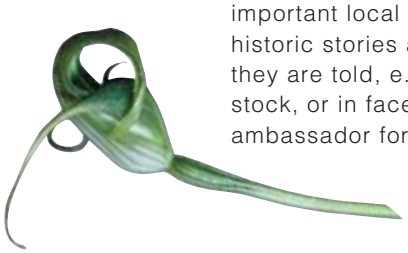
Picton Visitor Centre staff providing information.
Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

Make sure information and interpretation is well laid out and logically structured so its easy to find. Move things around if they are not in the right place. Put safety activity information in the most appealing places so visitors can choose their activities and then view interpretation material.

Tips for visitor information staff:

- alert visitors to 'can't miss' stories and features; don't assume they know what your place is known for
- find out generally what level of knowledge visitors have about your place and pitch your response accordingly
- help manage expectations by letting people know which places become crowded in peak periods and certain times of the day
- think about the topics presented in your visitor centre and consider developing a series of short thematic chats to have informally with visitors – like roving interpretation
- participate in summer interpretation programmes to build your face to face interpretation skills
- focus your attention, anticipate questions and be prepared with answers
- look professional and always be friendly.

Visitor centre staff, find out what the important local conservation, recreation or historic stories are, and where and how they are told, e.g. on site, in museums, in publications - which the visitor centre can stock, or in face to face programmes. Consider yourself the 'meet and greet' person and ambassador for your interesting local stories.



3.10 Associates and partners in interpretation

Tour operators, volunteers, museums, community groups, schools and others

The Department's Visitor Strategy (1996) identifies the significant role our industry partners and associates play in delivering interpretation to visitors and providing satisfying recreation experiences. The responsibility for visitors becoming informed is shared by the Department, concessionaires, other partners and associates in delivery, and by all people who choose to visit protected areas.

Concessionaires

The Department has a responsibility in ensuring that the activities undertaken by concessionaires and their clients do not compromise the conservation of the intrinsic natural and historic values of the areas visited. The licensing and permit system ensures that prospective operators consider and detail any potential adverse impacts of proposed activities through preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment, and an audited Safety Plan. For many operators there are also requirements to deliver information to clients about appropriate minimal impact behaviour and provide accurate and relevant interpretation.

Tiritiri Matangi Island nursery and shop, administered by volunteers and a volunteer working the Kawerau track. Photos: Claudia Schleicher - www.aetoma.com

Volunteers, communities and schools

The work of volunteers and schools education is integral to achieving long term conservation and social benefits. The Department's volunteer, community and schools education programmes provide:

- Information about opportunities for involvement and a public events calendar
- Policies, Standards and procedures to direct, guide and support.

The Volunteers Standard Operating Procedure (2005) provides comprehensive guidance about planning, defining goals, recruitment, health and safety, training, project management, providing recognition and project evaluation. It is available on the DOC Intranet in the Community Relations section. Information about volunteer programmes is available on the DOC website.

Becoming informed

It is important that the Department's partners and associates in interpretation have quick easy access to information to enable them to be accurately and well informed.

Sources of information

A wide range of useful information is available in print and electronic format from the Department including:

- visitor and recreation publications, including fact sheets on a variety of topics (on the DOC website and at visitor centres).
- school education resource kits (www.doc.govt.nz).
- management strategies, policies and reports (www.doc.govt.nz and at DOC offices).
- DOC science and corporate publications (www.doc.govt.nz, printed catalogue available email: sciencepublications@doc.govt.nz).
- media releases (www.doc.govt.nz)
- a series of fact sheets will be available for tourism and recreation concessionaires in 2006
- talking to DOC staff (at DOC offices and Visitor Centres).

DOC Visitor Strategy guiding principles

The DOC Visitor Strategy (1996) provides directions for the management of all visitor services delivered by the Department, concessionaires, volunteers and others.

It is useful to reflect on the visitor strategy principles. They are the values for our work and guide what we do and why we do it.

Heritage Expeditions on tour at Macquarie Island
Photo: Mike Edginton

Flying Kiwi Wilderness Expeditions Limited, www.flyingkiwi.com

1. Information and interpretation will be provided about natural and cultural places, values and active conservation work.
2. Visitors are encouraged to adopt behaviour which respects these values and the recreation experiences of others.
3. Visitors will be provided with a range of information and interpretation services which will increase their knowledge, enjoyment, understanding and concern for protected areas.
4. Visitor information and interpretation services will be accurate and of a high quality. Information is required to raise visitors' awareness of the risks present in protected areas and the skills and competence they require to cope with these risks.
5. Iwi are encouraged to interpret their kaupapa where they consider it appropriate.
6. Use of the most effective. communication media for information delivery and interpretation to visitors is encouraged.

Adapted principles (1996)

Tour operators

Good rapport is the foundation of effective working partnerships.

The Australian Heritage Commission and Department of Industry Science and Resources *Guide for tourism operators, heritage managers and communities* (2001) offers useful practical guidance for tourism operators and communities involved in protected areas anywhere.

The following points may help tourism operators build good relationships with site managers:

- *find out what is special about places – even if they look ordinary to you*
- *find out what management or conservation plans are available for the places in which you may be interested. Read them before having detailed discussions with site managers*
- *don't take any visitors to a place before informing yourself about it and receiving approval to visit*
- *step lightly and interfere as little as possible with the place*
- *participate in the stewardship of places through active involvement* (2001:20).

Levels of engagement

Contributions to conservation by associates and partners are encouraged. For example, through research programmes, donations to conservation projects, revegetation of degraded areas, active involvement in pest and weed programmes and informing tour participants through high quality interpretation content.

Contributions to conservation include:

- Research programmes – sponsor, support or conduct research, incorporate research into tours.
- Donation schemes or sponsored conservation or recreation management projects
- Scientific or social research monitoring – as part of tours or seasonal programmes.
- Landcare programmes – participation in weed or rubbish removal, revegetation or pest management programmes.
- Maintaining or assisting in upgrading visitor facilities – huts, tracks, campgrounds, visitor centre interpretation.
- Supporting interpretation or school education programmes – discounted services, expertise.
- Fostering minimal impact and safe activity practice – offering appealing alternatives to high impact activities, voluntarily limiting visitor numbers and group size, using renewable energy sources (e.g. solar or hydro power instead of diesel at hut concessions), changing tour itineraries for optimal environmental protection.
- Having well informed visitors – providing detailed accurate information for visitors prior to the trip and on-tour, inviting DOC staff to present information or talk about work programmes, including visitor centres in tour itineraries, making learning fun.
- Having high interpretation content in tour commentaries – employing qualified guides, training staff in interpretation, providing useful resources for guides, encouraging learning, making it core business.

Case studies

The following illustrates the nature and diversity of contributions our conservation and recreation partners and associates make.

Fiordland Wilderness Experiences, Southland

Operators Bill Gibson and Daphne Taylor base their sea kayaking business on environmental responsibility and safe practice. Guides provide instruction, safety management and natural history information. Daphne says “sharing our knowledge about flora and fauna and telling our clients about conservation work gets to the essence of why visitors come to paddle in these amazing natural places. We recognise that we are privileged to be operating in such a unique area and that we have a particular responsibility to ensure future generations can also experience its wilderness values. To that end we have in place an environmental care code by which we operate, and participate in conservation work such as an ongoing trapping project to attempt to make some impact on stoat numbers in Doubtful Sound. We often make decisions where the environment comes before profit, working closely with the Department of Conservation, beyond the requirements of our concession permits. We spend a great deal of time reading draft management documents and making submissions from our kayaking and conservation perspective, and donate $1 from each guided client trip to environmental advocacy”. Daphne and Bill have teaching qualifications, are founding members of their industry body, the Sea Kayakers Operators Association of New Zealand (SKOANZ), and have been involved in the development of activity standards with TIANZ. Contact Daphne or Bill for more information about their work: www.fiordlandseakayak.co.nz

Image from website

Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi and Fullers ferries

Tiritiri Matangi Island, located 30 kilometres north of Auckland, was settled by the Kawerau-A-Maki tribe and later farmed by European settlers. During this time 94% of the native bush was cleared. In 1980 the island was gazetted as a Scientific Reserve and it is now managed by the Department and the Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi Inc., in partnership as an open sanctuary. Between 1984 and 1994 over 250,000 trees were planted by volunteers, and the island is now 60% forest with the remaining area left as grassland for takahe – a remarkable achievement. An extensive network of tracks enables visitors to see a number of species of threatened and endangered birds. Volunteer guides conduct interpreted walks for visitors to learn about the revegetation project and ongoing conservation programmes. They also run a visitor centre/shop and nursery. The Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi Inc., is one of the largest volunteer conservation groups in New Zealand. They have a newsletter, hold special events, lectures and working and non-working weekends. For more information visit: www.123.co.nz/tiri/ or www.tiritirimatangi.org.nz

Fullers ferry alongside Tiritiri Matangi jetty
Photo and map: www.richard-seaman.com/Travel/NewZealand/NorthIsland/TiritiriMatangi

> An informed visitor is one who is more likely to have satisfying experiences during the visit, is less likely to be at risk of injury, and is more likely to return for future visits. (1996)

Fullers ferries transport visitors to Tiritiri Matangi and promote the supporters guided walks and other conservation events. Fullers also offer guided tours of Rangitoto Island with interpretation of the volcanic landscape and flora and fauna.

Abel Tasman Water Taxis

There are a number of water taxi operators who provide easy access for the public to Abel Tasman National Park and it's walking tracks. Your journey is more than a traditional taxi ride. Operators stop at key points of interest and provide an interpretation commentary. Split Apple Rock, Tonga Island Marine Reserve, shags and oyster catchers are places and species you are likely to learn a little more about with humour and style.

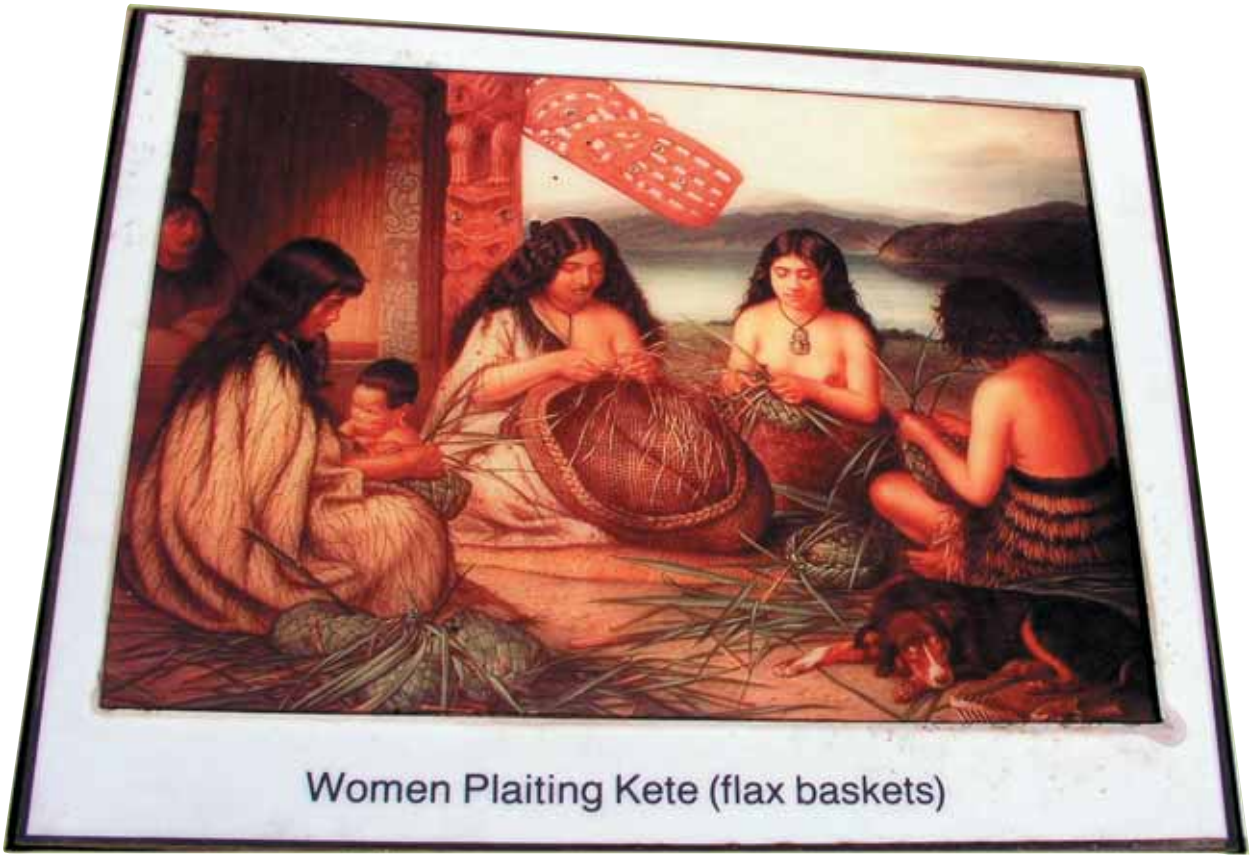
Abel Tasman Water Taxi skipper and interpreter, Abel Tasman National Park.
Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

Chapter four —
Self-guided interpretation

Left: Horseshoe Lake, Christchurch. Geoff Thompson designed shelter. Photo: Wayne Rimmer

Top right: Interpretation shelter at Shipwreck Creek, West Coast. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

Bottom right: Whatipu shelter with visitors viewing panels. Photo: Michelle Edge, ARC



Illustrations are a powerful interpretive tool and the investment can often be returned by using the illustration in a number of ways. The panel above is one of a series on Kororipo pa, Kerikeri, Northland. Artist: Gottfried Lindauer, 1903. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun.

Simone End's illustration depicting some of the residents of Canterbury's braided rivers was developed as an interpretation panel and has also been used in a poster, stickers, a guidebook and other configurations.

4.1 Self-guided techniques

Kaituna Wetland series. Design: Sonia Frimmel Photo: Michelle Elborn

Self-guided interpretation means non-personal delivery. Panels and displays, audio, audio-visual, multimedia, art and sculpture, and publications are used to deliver interpretation messages to visitors instead of people.

This chapter outlines the basic principles of good practice. The challenge when using self-guided interpretation techniques is to be succinct, have a clear message, create a balance between form and function in design, and above all make it appealing and interesting. Self-guided interpretation is the most popular form of interpretation used in nature based and historic heritage settings. It includes:

- panels
- audio
- visitor centre static and interactive models, panels, displays, audio, audio-visual and multimedia
- publications
- art and sculpture.

Why use self-guided interpretation?

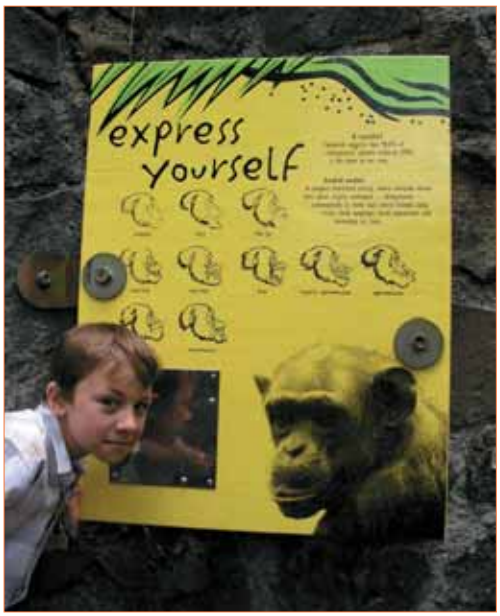
Entrance to Rakiura National Park, Stewart Island. Photo: DOC

Advantages

- Can be delivered to a wide audience
- Visitors can view at their leisure
- Available whenever the site is open
- Usually a long lived and tangible outcome of work
- Displays can be portable
- Publications can be viewed at leisure
- Not personally intimidating
- Usually more cost effective than guided interpretation
- Can incorporate other languages
- Often requires little maintenance

Disadvantages

- Some media can have high initial capital costs e.g. audio visual
- Generally not easy to change
- If not well designed or placed, its effectiveness can be reduced
- Outdoor media can be susceptible to vandalism
- Requires more formal evaluation methods
- Sometimes prone to 'design by committee' to meet a variety of stakeholder needs, which dilutes its effectiveness



Outdoor panels can be interactive too.Nick and chimp at an Auckland Zoo – progressive development panel. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

Touch the bird to hear its call. Karori Wildlife Sanctuary listening post. Design: Patrick Velvin Text: Tim Benton. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

4.2 Planning and writing for self-guided media

The essence of good self-guided media is to **maximise the message not the media** and **keep it clear and simple.** Make a post card, not a book!

> *"Simplicity is not the same thing as triviality, which is what subject specialists fear. Specialists often forget that their detailed knowledge is the result of a long journey, and that visitors are only coming to see what the start of the road looks like."* Carter (2002)

Four thematic panels – each with a few simple, clever words, layered paragraphs and sharp photography. Karori Wildlife Sanctuary. Design: Patrick Velvin Text: Tim Benton Photos: Fiona Colquhoun

There are lots of ways to convey stories to visitors. An interpretive writer has to filter the best information from a variety of sources into a succinct, entertaining and interesting story for visitors.

Creating a few clear messages can be difficult when you have an in-depth knowledge about the site or subject and want to share all of it. If you really must have lots of detail then consider making a publication to support on-site material, or use diagrams instead of words to explain complex ideas. Reference places to go for more detailed information. Refer to the visitor audience section in Chapter Two. If the site attracts special interest visitors, more detail may be appropriate.

Writing panels and display text

Research and reference. Research thoroughly; check facts through credible sources and double check. Acknowledge and reference sources if you are quoting or paraphrasing the material of others. 'Don't let the facts stand in the way of a good story'. Tempting as it may be to embellish, rearrange facts and add value judgments, don't: stay truthful and authentic.

Write your title thematically. Most people read or skim titles, just as they read newspapers – scanning for headlines of interest. If the headline doesn't grab they may go no further.

Capture the essence of the theme in your title, not simply the topic. Remember a thematic title will have one main idea and reveal the overall message.

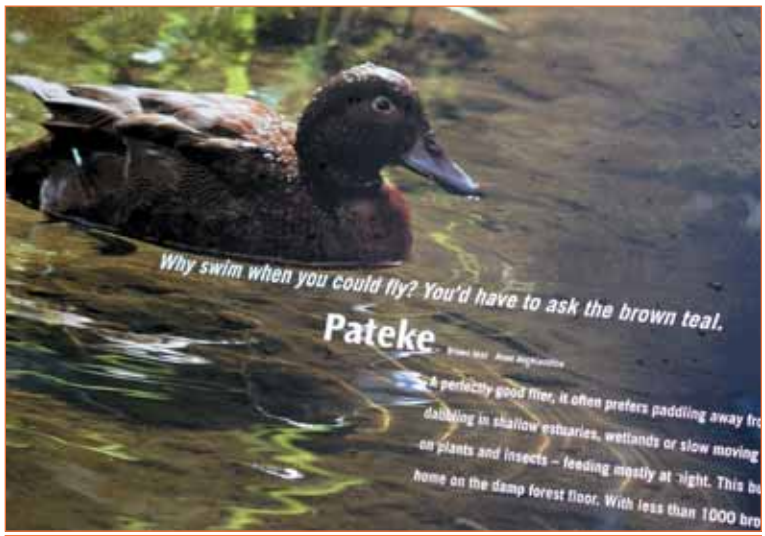
Structure the text. "More visitors read shorter labels, and read them more thoroughly than longer labels" Serrell (1992). Layering is an important way to encourage visitors to start and continue reading your text.

Try this

Think about something good to tell visitors about e.g. new pups at the seal colony.
Put aside all the background reports and information you have about it and draft a postcard to a friend with no more than five messages. This can be your concept 'mud map' to keep you on track and refer to when you get lost in the detail.

Demonstrate and illustrate

Think about how you will demonstrate your points visually before and while you are writing text. Review text and look for opportunities to use fewer words and more illustrations, diagrams, charts, tables, graphics, maps or photographs. People often only look at the title, photographs and captions, so make sure key messages are found in these layers.

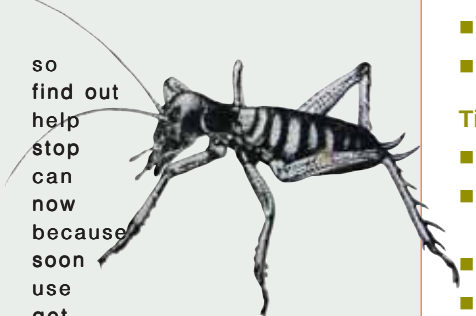


LAYER

1. **Title.**
2. **Sub headings** introducing key points.
3. **Main body text** in paragraphs. Try to have no more than three to five paragraphs – less if you can use images. No more than two or three sentences per paragraph. Each paragraph should be able to stand alone.
4. **Captions** for illustrations, diagrams, photographs

KEEP IT SIMPLE!

accordingly	**so**
ascertain	**find out**
facilitate	**help**
discontinue	**stop**
has the capacity to	**can**
at the present time	**now**
due to the fact that	**because**
in the near future	**soon**
utilise	**use**
obtain	**get**



Write clearly

Make reading easy with clear writing:

- Use verbs rather than nouns or adjectives that derive from verbs e.g. "*1080 poisoning reduced the number of possums in this area*" rather than "*1080 poisoning has led to a reduction …*"
- Use active not passive verbs e.g. "*Architect, William Montfort, designed the Provincial Chambers*" rather than "*The Provincial Chambers were designed by the architect William Montfort*"
- Use point form selectively – visitors see it as shorter, easier to read, and less wordy – but don't overuse it.
- Avoid weak verbs such as "have, occur, exist, be"
- Put main clauses first e.g. "*The undisputed long jump champion of the weta world*".

Ask questions visitors commonly ask

Well conceived questions on a panel or display stimulate the desire to find the answer. Questions that work well are the kind visitors would ask each other. For example, overheard at Tane Mahuta, Waipoua Forest, "*that's huge, I wonder if it's as big as a redwood?*" An interpretive sign might start with "*Is this the biggest tree in the world?*" rather than the '*did you know*' questions which are likely to engender "*No*!" as a response. Refer to page 52 – techniques to keep the audience engaged.

Revise and review your work

Get your text reviewed and proofread by people familiar with and unfamiliar with the subject. Allow time to put your work aside and come back to it with fresh eyes.

Proofread in three stages

- check overall structure makes sense
- check grammar and sentence structure
- spell check electronically and manually.

Tips for proofreading:

- read word by word aloud
- have it read by someone who hasn't seen it before
- employ a professional
- don't forget to check the text in image captions.

Preparing audio and audio-visual scripts

Audio visual dialogues vary from 30 seconds for a interactive display, to 30 minutes or more for an audio visual presentation. The script is often combined with natural and constructed sounds such as bird calls, music, machinery sounds etc. The script is usually written in story format and should flow naturally.

Stories written for audio visual presentations will refer to images presented. Audio scripts are usually based on an object within the setting such as natural features outdoors or objects on display in visitor centres or museums.

Briefing a writer, designer or illustrator

Working with a writer

Writing and rewriting can be time consuming so it's important in the beginning to be clear about what you need. Establishing how you will work is critical. There are two common approaches:

- Research and collate the base material yourself, including the images. Determine the themes and approximate word limits and pass to the writer to craft
- Identify the overall topic, message and word limits, and have the writer undertake the research, collation and writing. This will cost you more and the writer will have more influence on the outcome.

Whichever approach you take, it's usually easier for a writer to work with one person who co-ordinates material and comments from other specialists. Confirm in advance who will co-ordinate and approve drafts at each stage. Stages are generally outline, draft, revised draft and final copy. Establish mutually agreed time-frames for submittal of each stage of work, and decide in advance how many revisions and rewrites will be included in the contract.

Refer to chapter two for guidelines on creating a brief for a designer or writer.

Working with a designer

Some designers will manage the whole process for you – research, writing, artwork, fabrication and installation. Others see their role as primarily to take your text and images and create an electronic file ready for a printer. Sort out the practicalities of how you will work with your designer at the beginning. Identify who signs off and at what predetermined stages.

Think about the number of rounds of comment and revision required, and what pre-printing proofs will be required.

The process usually involves:

1. Developing a good final text or 'copy' and have it thoroughly checked.
2. Supplying the text in the format required. This is usually an electronic file with plain text and limited formatting. If the structure of information and headings (titles, subtitles etc) isn't clear, mark this up on a hard copy.
3. Indicating where images link to text or should be placed. Note any particular requirements for individual images e.g. cropping, contouring or priority images. Include credits and captions.
4. Drawing a rough sketch of how you envisage the layout but giving the designer the flexibility to vary the size or order of some things to create visual impact or flow.
5. Carefully proofreading each draft, particularly headings, for your own and introduced errors, particularly photo captions.
6. Identifying the type and nature of framing, if any, and making provision for it before printing.
7. Final sign-off of a proof.
8. The designer supplying the printer with artwork and sorting out any technical problems. Most printers accept artwork in a variety of page layout programmes (e.g. Adobe In Design and PageMaker, Quark XPress, Freehand etc.), or print direct from a print quality PDF file. The designer will obtain detailed print setup information, including scanning parameters, document setup and colour management.

Pohutukawa flowers. Illustration: Chris Colquhoun

Look at different works of an illustrator and provide examples similar to what you are seeking.

4.3 Site planning for visitor orientation

Is your interpretation easy to find?

If visitors can't easily find their own way around a site they are likely to miss important aspects of it – such as interpretation. Getting lost is a frustrating and negative experience and impacts on enjoyment. Send visitors where you want them to go using landscape design with easy to follow paths which make the experience interesting and pleasurable. Poor site orientation can also result in people missing things. Make it easy with simple, clear orientation signage. Creative landscaping can form part of the interpretation.

Two DOC orientation panels. Tongariro National Trout Centre and Cape Reinga.
Photos: Fiona Colquhoun

During the planning stage you will have analysed the site to assess its features, vantage points and good places to interpret. Think specifically about how people will find their way around and discover your interpreted path. Site design principles apply to both indoor or outdoor settings. Refer to the DOC Sign Standard requirements for orientation signs.

Orientation signs

These are primarily for orientation and recreation activity information. They are also a good place to introduce interpretation. At the beginning of an activity visitors want to find out what they can do, how long it will take, what amenities there are (if it is not obvious) and where features of interest are found. They want to get started and will be more open to interpretation once 'on the way'.

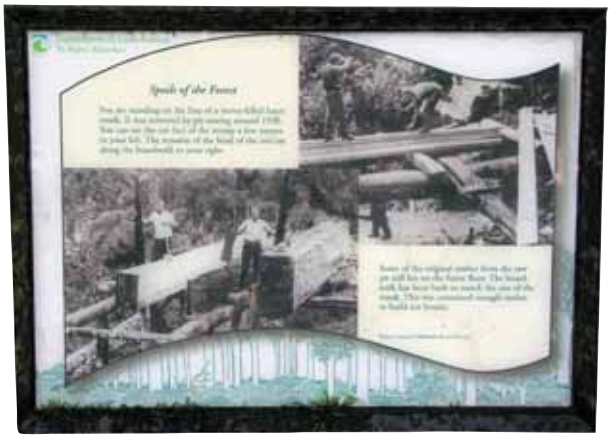
Display and sign placement

Check with others to see if a sign or panel has been developed for the area or site. Identify exact locations for interpretation within a site plan.

Use site features to tell stories

The short walk at Northland Kauri Forest, Manginangina Scenic Reserve, uses the boardwalk design to tell part of the story.

Photos: Fiona Colquhoun



This is the only straight section (right) of the boardwalk and it shows the length of a felled kauri trunk. The interpretation panel at one end explains this.

The boardwalk blends with the environment, and panels interpret the kauri in local and Pacific forest settings.

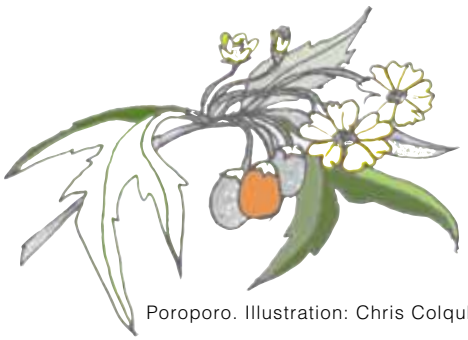
The curved wooden walkway outlines the huge kauri tree trunk.

Evaluate

Test panel placement options on-site with a board about the same size and shape. Test the interpretation to see how it is being used. If the results are not as expected, review the plan, design and orientation information and ask visitors their ideas about the site. Do this in visitor centres too with important safety or activity information.

Points to consider

- New Zealand visitors usually turn left and progress left to right.
- Signs and displays in front of visitors, rather than to the side, are more likely to be read.
- Make sure the text reflects the panel orientation e.g. 'behind you...'
- The sun may effect legibility and fading.
- Allow space for people to pass others viewing displays.

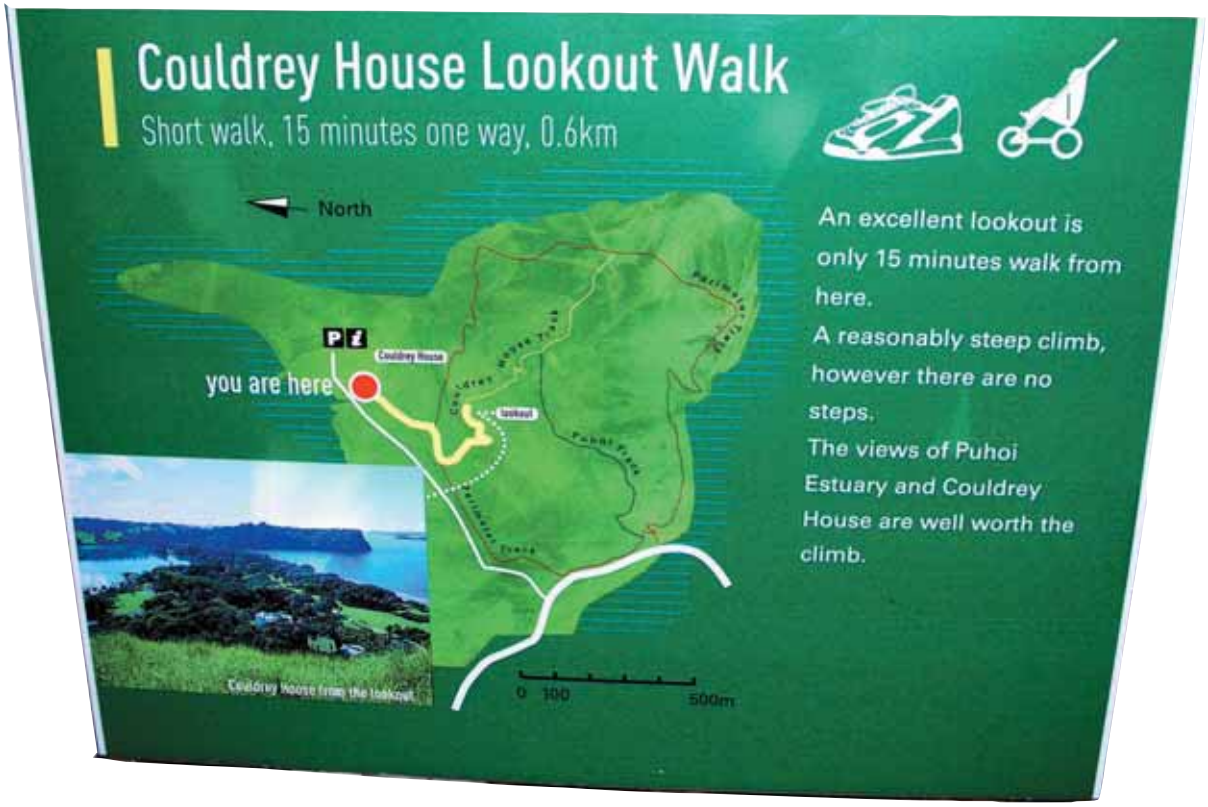


Poroporo. Illustration: Chris Colquhoun

Place interpretation where:

- visitors want to go e.g. sensitive areas
- site features raise obvious questions or create good stories
- there are obvious stopping points e.g. half way up a long hill with a seat and view
- an audience can be temporarily captured by creating a simple roofed or wind shelter
- visitors feel safe and are protected from natural hazards e.g. cliffs
- it can be easily seen and found
- it will not interrupt views
- it can be easily maintained e.g. not where leaf litter routinely accumulates
- it is least likely to be subject to vandalism.

Adapted from Ballantyne et al. (2002)



Very easy to follow orientation panel. Wenderholm Regional Park, ARC. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

Making best use of site planning: visitor flow and site use	✔
Existing features and pathways Make navigation easy. Too many options contribute to spatial confusion, so make visitor choices simple by having easy to follow routes around sites, and visitor centres. Identify the time and distance of tracks. Refer to the Tracks and Outdoor Visitor Structures Service Standards.	
Research how the site is used and what visitors think of it e.g. observation and/or a simple questionnaire.	
Make design sensitive to the site Will interpretation dominate, blend in, look out of place or work well? Consider natural and other sounds of the site – wind, birds, traffic. Will an outdoor audio listening post be heard above the sound of the wind or be too loud and drown out the bird song?	
Ensure orientation information is clear and easy to follow An introductory information panel should include a map, indicate what's ahead and highlight activity options and who they are suitable for. Don't use contour maps; they are confusing for most people.	
Design maps which: 1. Have the perspective matching the direction the visitor is facing 2. Include important information, but avoid excessive detail 3. Highlight landmarks, major paths and routes 4. Use realistic symbols 5. Put text on the map, (not beside it) rather than numbers, letters and a legend 6. Use colour (but remember many people are colour blind). Also, avoid contour lines unless you know most of the audience will know how to interpret them.	
A simple orientation system can help people navigate a site e.g. a hierarchy of trails differentiated by signs, symbols, colours or names. It can also make things more confusing. Adapted from Moscardo (1999:41)	

- Use the Track Service Standard, track classifications and naming conventions.
- Refer to chapter 3 'helping visitors find their way around' for detailed guidance about orientation.
- Refer to the DOC sign and publication standards for more information.

4.4 Indoor and outdoor panels and displays

Two panels at Trounson Forest Park. Each with a theme, a graphic and 50-60 words text. Design: Joel Beachman Photos: Fiona Colquhoun

This section provides best practice guidance to help avoid common pitfalls and produce effective interpretation, such as outdoor panels, listening posts and visitor centre displays.

Design for effectiveness

The success of interpretation panels relies on integrating research, writing and design with appropriate production, framing and location.

Create a message pyramid

Visitors should get the key message of your panel in the title in three seconds. In 30 seconds they should get 2-3 points that illustrate the message. In three minutes an interested visitor should understand the topic and be able to take in all the information – including captions, diagrams etc.

Ruapekapeka Pa 'you are here' map. Design: Sonia Frimmel. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

How many words?

People are very good at screening information and few will read everything presented so choose your words carefully. Most visitors spend between six and fifteen minutes viewing display areas in visitor centres, so it is essential to be precise and not wordy. You don't have long to tell the story.

Adults read at an average speed of 250-300 words per minute and usually spend 45 seconds at individual exhibits. This translates to reading approximately 200-225 words. If visitors spend half their time looking and the other half reading they could possibly read 1500 to 1800 words in 10-12 minutes or three closely typed A4 pages!

If time is spent talking to other visitors, if English is not a first language, if the text point size is too small to read comfortably or if graphics obscure the text, then it is likely they will read much less (1000-1200). Many DOC visitor centres have around 30 different displays and exhibits. If you want visitors to look at every exhibit then use only 30-60 words per display, not 200.

Make some displays succinct and snappy (50-60 words), provide more detail in others (200-225 words or more in huts where you have a semi-captive audience) and include plenty of imagery.

If you are struggling to keep to word counts, use an image instead to help tell the story. Don't try and include everything. Reference other material or places where stories are told. Create a publication. Refer people to interpretation at the nearest visitor centre.

Recommended maximum words:

Type of display	Words
Stand alone panels	50-200
Panel in a series	50-70
ID labels	30-50

For publication word counts refer to the publication section in this chapter.

Adapted from Serrell (1996), Johnstone (1997) and Ham after Neal (1992)

4.5 Design elements

Make it appetising and interesting

Big slabs of text are a real turn off for most people. Instead:

- include a real thing
- provide tactile and three dimensional elements
- provide an interactive element to a panel
- include photos of people, scenes, things.

Graphic elements – banners, contouring, fading, key lines, bleeds, colour etc:

- create a pleasing design
- attract attention to the panel
- visually link a series of panels
- create visual structure in a panel
- create variety, novelty, surprise.

Say it visually

Images are essential in panels, they reveal new meaning and can identify what is being seen. Consider options for images before you start writing text. With a good image you have a lot less text.

Pictures are remembered better than words. The *'picture superiority effect' applies more than 30 seconds after exposure to text and images. Recall is best when the information presented is not overly complex and concrete rather than abstract images are used. Pictures and words should reinforce the same message for optimal recognition and recall of information.*

Lidnell, Holden and Butler (2003:152 p.)

Function and form

- Take care not to let design dominate the message or make text illegible.
- Fade backgrounds sufficiently so that text imposed over it can be read.
- Full colour is not always the best option, especially for historic interpretation panels.
- One strong colour with tonal variations can have as much impact.

Use illustrations to:

- identify or create the scene
- create variety or as a linking style/ design emphasis
- identify species
- incorporate art or cultural symbols
- make sensitive issues less personal
- explain processes e.g. volcanism, erosion, avalanche, wave action.

Diagrams, graphs and charts:

- make comparisons
- show processes or timelines
- explain complex processes.

Cartoons can tell a story:

- add humour and lighten things up
- make important issues seem less heavy and more appealing e.g. compliance with regulation
- appeal to younger audiences
- show consequences of risky actions e.g. death.

Photographs:

- present history and historic events
- show a different perspective e.g. aerial view
- provide an example e.g. Pohutukawa in full bloom
- show change over time e.g. native vegetation regeneration, deforestation, habitat loss
- acknowledge people.

Old images included in panels at Ruapekapeka Pa, Northland. Both credited to the Alexander Turnbull Library. Design: Sonia Frimmel. Photos: Fiona Colquhoun

Unless they are DOC copyright, only use photographs with permission from the photographer. Check the publications standards or 'Standard Copyright Guidelines' on the Intranet.

All historic image credits usually include both the photographer and the collection. If an image has been used before, check it's permission status as it may have been granted one-off use. Check also if a reproduction fee is due.

Changes to historic images such as cropping are discouraged as the integrity of the photograph is lost. Check with the photographer or original source (museum, archive, private collection) if you propose changes.

4.6 Designing panels

Be creative and convey a clear message. Panels are particularly good at sites which have:

- significant natural, cultural, historic or recreation values or issues
- high visitor numbers
- a temporary captive audience e.g. huts or picnic shelters. *(*Refer to the *Hut Service Standards* on the Intranet for details.*)*

Plenty of white space on this panel. Photo: Kim Morland

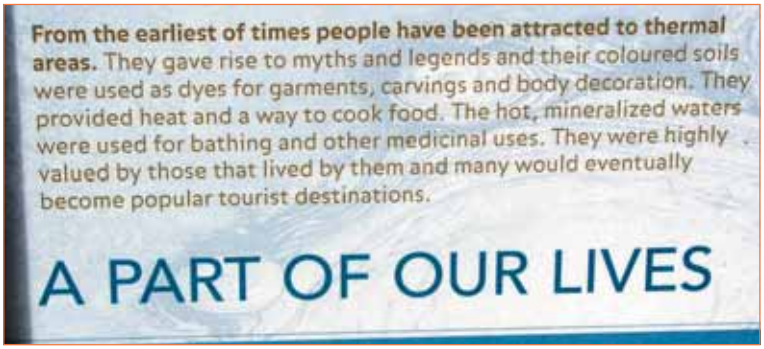
Garamond 18 pt:
a popular type face used mainly in printed publications. There are many versions of Garamond typefaces, this particular example is Garamond 3, 9.5 pt.

Garamond 18 pt:
this example is the version of Garamond used in DOC printed publications at 7.5 pt.

Times New Roman 18 pt:
probably the most used serif font in the world. (Times New Roman 8.5 pt)

Helvetica 18 pt,
Helvetica Light 18 pt:
worldwide the most commonly found typeface in interpretation, advertising, and magazines. This handbook is set in Helvetica. (This example is Helvetica Light 8.5 pt)

Arial 18 pt:
Arial is the Microsoft version of Helvetica, they are not identical but can be substituted one for the other; but the text may differ as a result. (Arial 8.5 pt)



Panel from Craters of the Moon walk near Taupo. Background is faded so text can be easily read. Design: Sonia Frimmel. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

Design elements

White space

Keep the panel face uncluttered with generous amounts of white space. White space is the design term for blank space on a page.

All white spaces should have 'escape routes' to the edges of the panel. That is, they should not be enclosed. Don't be tempted to fill up all the spaces as this makes it harder for visitors to read.

Structure

Your eye should be drawn by titles and subtitles.

Recommended minimum point sizes

- Titles – 12mm, 72-60 point
- Subtitles – 8mm, 48-40 point
- Body text – 5mm, 24 point
- Captions – 18 point
- Credits – 12 point

These commonly used point sizes are suitable for visually impaired people. Refer to page 72 for word limits. Too much text puts people off. Over simplification can make the message meaningless. Generally set text flush to the left and ragged right.

Remember to follow DOC publication standards for visitor and recreation publications including interpretation publications.

Type faces and font styles

Serifs or san-serifs? Be consistent with choice of type face throughout – titles, subtitles, body text, captions, credits.

UPPER CASE, Title Case, Sentence case, lower case, tOGGLE cASE, SMALL CAPS

Serif font styles (those with tails) such as Garamond are considered good for body text readability. Sans serif styles don't have tails. It is commonplace to use different fonts in titles, however too many different fonts can create confusion and be annoying to the reader. Create emphasis using the same type face in italics or bold.

Material ***set apart*** is more likely to be recalled. Write text in lower case as UPPER CASE IS TIRING TO READ AND GIVES READERS AN IMPRESSION THE PANEL IS SHOUTING AT THEM.

Standards

Refer to the Interpretation Standard in the next chapter. Interpretation publications must adhere to the DOC publishing standard. Information and orientation signs must follow the Sign Standard. The Visitor Information Service Standards provide guidance about the content of visitor signs and publications

Clarity

Type needs to contrast clearly with the background.

Reversed out text (light letters on a dark background) is a useful design tool but avoid using this for large amounts of text as it is more difficult to read. Panels in bright light are easier to read if they have light coloured lettering on a dark background. Panels in darker areas are most visible if they have dark lettering on a light background.

Curved lines of text can look cool and be an interesting design feature but they are hard to read. Limit this to short headings, on-off captions or information that's not particularly important.

Clutter

The opposite of clarity and a big turn-off for readers. Avoid clutter in design and sign/panel placement. If you insist on a designer incorporating too much information and graphics it's likely to be cluttered. Remember – less is more. Check prospective designers' styles for clutter and aim to keep things simple.

An example of overprinting, and reversed out text. Karori Wildlife Sanctuary, Wellington. Design: Patrick Velvin. Text: Tim Benton. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

Karori Wildlife Sanctuary plant label – arty and effective. Design: Metal Image. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

Over-printing

Printing text over an image can often make the text hard to read – either screen behind the words or move the text. Avoid red on green and vice versa as this is the most common form of colour blindness. Black on yellow has the most impact. Check out www.vischeck.com to see how different colours on a panel are viewed by people with different types of colour blindness.

Unfortunately there are lots of examples of poor overprinting making the text very difficult to read. Don't waste effort – make sure it's clear for most readers.

Balance and unity

A sign needs to be pleasing to the eye guiding visitors easily from point to point with a visual flow of words and graphics connecting.

Creative

- Arty or effective or both?
- Is your message clear?

Aim for a balance of function and form. Be fun and provocative as long as the message is clear. Visual design is important but don't compromise the message. Many panels look great but reading them is hard work.

Space divisions

Visual divisions in three columns often work best. Avoid using squares or combinations of squares. The rule of thirds is a technique applied to dividing a medium vertically and horizontally creating an invisible grid of rectangles and intersections of them. The primary element within a design should be balanced with other elements.

Lidwell, Holden and Butler (2003:168)

4.7 Production options

There is a wide range of options for the production of interpretation material. The one you choose will depend on:

- What lifespan you want from the panel or display
- How clear you want the images and text to be when viewed close-up or from a distance.
- The type of information you want to present such as text only, text and graphic-type illustrations, photographs, full colour, part colour etc.
- The number of signs or displays you are having produced, and the number of repeats of each design.
- The environmental and social conditions at the site. Will it be subject to ultraviolet light, dampness, extreme weather conditions, theft, vandalism etc?
- The site context and structures. Will it be incorporated into a shelter, in a hut, visitor centre or other location?
- What sort of look and level of finish is appropriate for the site e.g. professional, stylish, rustic, economical etc
- Your budget.

1. Digital prints

A: Thermal prints (Gerber Edge)

Production technique:

30mm wide vinyl print mounted on 5mm powder-coated aluminium. Large images are printed on several strips of vinyl mounted side by side.

- Good for simple, smaller panels with basic messages and images, or larger images that are seen at a distance such as billboards.
- Reasonable image quality
- Less expensive than the following processes.
- One print provided for standard cost. The material is stored on CD and can be reprinted. Reprints are less expensive than the original as setup and design work is completed and cost is for production only.
- Should be displayed vertically for best protection of colour.

Auckland Zoo – simple post connection – no frame. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

B: Digital prints onto various materials with width restrictions.

Production technique:

The image is encapsulated in film (paper or vinyl) and then stuck to mounting sheets such as aluminium or polycarbonate. Anti-graffiti film is usually applied.

- Appropriate for most interpretive panels.
- Image quality is reasonable for viewing at close quarters.
- Can be used for posters or movable displays and temporary exterior displays when printed on coated paper or a synthetic equivalent.
- One print at standard cost. The image is stored on CD and can be reprinted. Reprints are less expensive than original as setup and design work is completed and cost is for production only.
- Easy to accommodate text and illustrative changes in future copies
- Good longevity with colourfast guarantees of approximately 7 years.
- Full colour print cost is only marginally more than 2 colour.
- Should be displayed vertically for best protection of colour.

C: Digital 3M Scotchprint on various materials including 5-6 mm powder-coated aluminium.

Production technique:

Flexible substrates offer printing or decorating with selected 3M films to make indoor and outdoor graphics for signs, awnings, facias, canopies, seamed pylons and banners.

- Good for most interpretive panels. Image quality is good for viewing at close quarters. But pixel size limits very clear images
- Width restrictions are 1 metre wide but can be any length, and panels can be joined.
- The quality and variety of substrates is better/larger than those available when using standard digital processing options.
- Good for extreme weather environments such as geothermal, alpine or coastal areas.
- Can be used for backlit images, high quality banners etc.
- One print at standard cost. The image is stored on CD and can be reprinted.
- Reprints are less expensive than original as setup and design work is completed and cost is for production only.
- Easy to accommodate text and illustrative changes in future copies
- Good longevity with colourfast guarantees of approximately 7 years.
- Full colour cost is only marginally more than 2 colour.
- Should be displayed vertically for best protection of colour.

D. Dyna laser prints

Production technique:

Colour photocopied adhesive vinyl in A3 and A4 sizes.

- Available in clear, white, textured or coloured vinyl
- Quick and easy to produce. Colour fast in exterior situations.

2. Screen printing on vinyl or direct to aluminium

Production technique:

This technique has been the most common method of printing for many years.

- Very sharp image definition and good durability.
- Generally not suitable for full colour printing
- Complicated and expensive process. The more colours used, the higher the cost.
- Two colour is approximately the same price as full-colour 3M vinyl prints so where colour is not a necessity; screen printing can be a good option.
- Multiple copies for your standard cost. Useful process for when several copies of the one design are required.
- Can be displayed vertically or on an angle.

3. Baked enamel and stoved screen prints

Production technique:

Digital images are encapsulated into film and baked onto an aluminium surface at high temperature giving an extremely hard, nonporous finish.

Baked enamel panel, Dandenong Ranges National Park, Melbourne. Photo: Michelle Edge, ARC

- Very good colours and excellent durability. Currently (2005) the most expensive option but not a great deal more than screen printing.
- Useful when several copies of the same image are used. It can also be used in combination with digital prints to keep costs down. For example, if you have a repeated heading and logo but different interpretive information, the title and logos can be baked-on and the digital print applied afterwards.
- The hard finish makes is an attractive option in areas where there is a high rate of vandalism. Additional acrylic or glass covers are not required, but it can be chipped when stones are thrown at it.

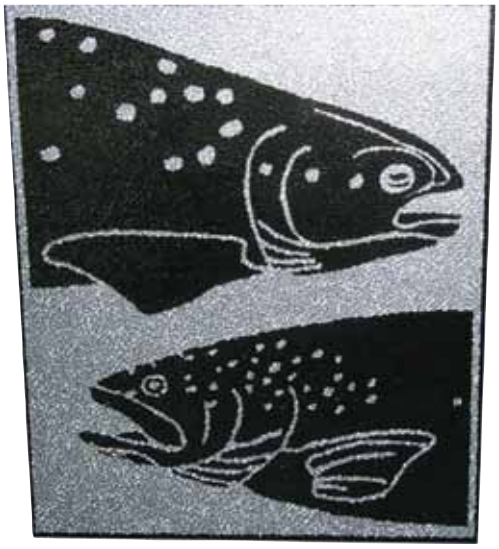
4. Anodised images on aluminium/stainless steel (ALUimage)

Production technique:

Aluminium oxide layer used to open the pores of the substrate which is then coated with a lacquer. Dyes are applied and the aluminium sheets are immersed in a hot acid bath to seal the pores under a layer of transparent aluminium oxide crystals.

The dye is trapped in a cell creating a sapphire hard coating. Shapes and holes can then be laser cut as required to finish the panel.

- Excellent durability, longer than digital prints.
- 4 colour processes
- Variance in colour between sheets of up to 10%
- Maximum single sheet size is 975mm X 990mm. Tiling of sheets is required for larger areas
- Currently works best with line work and graphic images with solid blocks of colour. Photographs have reasonable clarity.
- Unit cost for multiple copies is reasonable compared to the other options.
- Highly UV durable, resistant to extreme weather, graffiti, chemicals and scratching



Textured image. Etched glass or vinyl adhesive at the Tongariro National Trout Centre. Illustration: Mike Edginton. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

5. Cast metal

Production technique:

Image cast from bronze or brass. Molten metal is poured into a carved form or mould.

- Extremely long lasting and durable
- Often used for plaques
- Minimise text and line work for greater clarity
- Frames or backing not required. Attach directly to a hard surface.

Rock plinth, entrance of Tongariro National Trout Centre. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

6. Laser engraving

Production technique:

Image can be laser engraved onto almost any substrate from glass, rock, metal.

- Detail can be very fine
- Only colour is black or burnt colour of what ever surface you wish to use. Run tests on possible surfaces first.
- Set up can be expensive but production costs are competitive.

Cast bronze plaque of the Nella Dan Macquarie Island. Photo: Mike Edginton

7. Art forms

Interpretive signs don't have to be confined to wooden or alloy shapes. Nor do they always need to use traditional word structures and illustrations. Think outside the square and go for artwork alternatives:

- Sculpture
- Pottery
- Mosaics
- Stencils
- Stone

Mix of any of the above with more traditional forms.

Note: the use of routed signs is limited to backcountry locations only. Refer to the DOC Sign Standard for more information.

8. Routed or etched signs

Production technique:

Mechanical or laser engraving into wood or other hard material or chemical etching into metal, glass or other materials.

- For very small amounts of text e.g. a direction sign or place name.
- The ability to include illustrations and colours is limited to stylised images and blocks of colours such as simple logos or naive designs.
- You can create different styles depending on the substrate material and fonts used. Use sans-serif fonts for better clarity (rustic/modern/formal).

9. Laminated photocopies

Production technique:

Plastic top and bottom layer over paper with thermally joined seams.

- Generally only appropriate for temporary information such as promotion of events, changes to interpretation programme details or visitor information notices. The DOC Visitor and Recreation Publication Standard fact sheet template should be used for visitor notices. Professional posters should be produced for longer lasting information.
- Quick, easy and cheap to produce with a laminator, however laser printed colours will fade rapidly, especially outdoors and the image quality can be poor.
- Can present a poor professional image. Do not display longer than planned.

See alternative under Dynalaser copies

Wood frame,
Kororipo Pa, Northland
Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

Angle mounts are excellent, but prone to sun damage. Screen printing is better than digital, but digital printing is rapidly improving with 5-7 year warranties now common for angle and vertical mounts.

Wood backing is inexpensive but must be seasoned to avoid warping or shrinkage.

Metal frames are very durable.

Framing and fixing – sign furniture

Heat, cold, moisture penetration, sunlight, mould, insects and vandals can all affect panel frames and fixing. Consider compatibility between materials and the best way to protect and enhance the panel when choosing frames and mounts.

- Edges of panels are prone to damage from knocking or vandalism. Frameless panels provide a simple, clean look.
- In areas prone to temperature extremes, expansion and shrinkage needs to be accommodated within a frame. Use metal rather than ply as a backing in these circumstances or toughened glass with reverse print (these flake less than ply).
- Choose a frame that requires minimal maintenance and mount where moisture can't pool or leaf litter collect.

Unless panels are free standing, they need to be anchored. Use posts, footings, bolts or glue, mounting on fences, shelters, walls, safety barriers etc., that suit the design. See maintaining interpretation (p.31) in the planning chapter.

Outdoor, permanent panels

Vinyl prints and screen prints can be mounted onto the surface of:

- Sealed sign ply, often marine plywood which is similar cost to aluminium. It must be well sealed with appropriate water proofing paint or the chemicals in the ply can affect the vinyl and printing inks. The substrate expands and contracts with heat/ weather variations (and freeze and thaw) which can cause wrinkling. Allow for adequate water drainage from the panel
- 5mm alloy. Powder-coating is recommended to avoid oxidation. Alloy doesn't expand, contract, retain moisture or react chemically with vinyl and inks. The surface provides clean bonding for adhesives.
- Acrylic. Useful for interior displays or when displays need to be light and transportable. Not recommended for exterior use due to problems with expansion and contraction and reaction of adhesives. Can be reverse mounted behind acrylic, polycarbonate or toughened glass. If vandalism is likely toughened glass is the best option as it doesn't flex, go cloudy over time and can't be scratched (but it's heavier).
- Polycarbonate. Stronger than acrylic and can be used outdoors. Generally reverse screen printed.

If your signs are face-mounted you can:

- Frame them behind toughened glass, acrylic or polycarbonate using a powder coated steel frame. Note that vinyl prints can wrinkle and stretch if the covering material touches the print so a packing strip is put in place between the aluminium sheet and the glass, acrylic or polycarbonate. Toughened glass is recommended as there is no flex. Vandals can shatter glass (like a windscreen) and they can burn and scratch Perspex or polycarbonate. Condensation can occur between the print and any of the covering materials.
- Have a coating of graffiti guard or floor graphic applied. This is a cheaper option and causes fewer problems with condensation and 'wrinkling' of the vinyl. However, vandals can have more immediate access to the print. The 'guard' applications provide protection from graffiti, which can be wiped off, but not against burning and knives.

Steel frame,
Ruapekapeka Pa
Design: Sonia Frimmel
Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

Floor graphic is more robust than graffiti guard and slightly more expensive. Other coatings are likely to become available which can be applied as a liquid.

- Make sure all your materials and surfaces are compatible before you proceed or product warranties may not be valid.
- Also consider that not framing a sign can allow more creative shapes to be created. For example, baked enamel alloy panel mounted without framing.

Visitor centre interior use

There is a wide range of options:

- The application of graphics to solid substrates such as MDF (medium density fibreboard), plywood (interior, marine or treated exterior), acrylic or glass is most common.
- Apply graffiti guard or floor graphic to make cleaning easier if front mounted.
- Large format posters can be mounted into a variety of mobile display systems, and ideal for temporary or movable use. They are widely available from specialist banner/display companies or printers.

Tip:

Citrus or eucalyptus based products are good for removal of graffiti.

Note: Some graffiti solvents can also remove paint from the sign frames and slowly wear away the surface of the sign.

Upright or tilted?

Most digital and screen printed images have a 7 year guarantee against fading. However, for that guarantee to be valid for digital prints, the signs should be installed vertically, not on an angle. This reduces exposure to direct sun and also decreases the amount of detritus that builds up on the surface of the panel. However, signs on an angle often look better and can be easier to read. Screen printed images can be placed on an angle and maintain colourfastness.

Siting

- Remember to site the panel so that the subject of the interpretation can be seen
- Try not to face outside panels in a northerly or westerly aspect in order to reduce exposure to ultraviolet light.
- In visitor centres, consider adding ultraviolet protective film to windows to protect displays from direct or reflected sunlight.

Panels mounted with natural materials – sticks and stones, flax and trees. Buried Village, Rotorua. Design: Ross Ellen. Photo: Kim Morland

Installation

Installation materials shouldn't be an afterthought. Basic posts are common, but think about being more creative about materials for supporting structures. Consider totara fence strainers, power poles, wharf piles, corrugated iron, rock columns, sculpture, carvings or steel. In visitor centre displays use a variety of support structures and incorporate storage for stock too.

Protection from vandals

Few production techniques, substrates or mounting options are completely vandal proof. Unfortunately if people are determined enough they will find a way to damage work. Refer to the section in Chapter Two (p. 39) about influencing visitor behaviour for a range of other management measures.

Durability

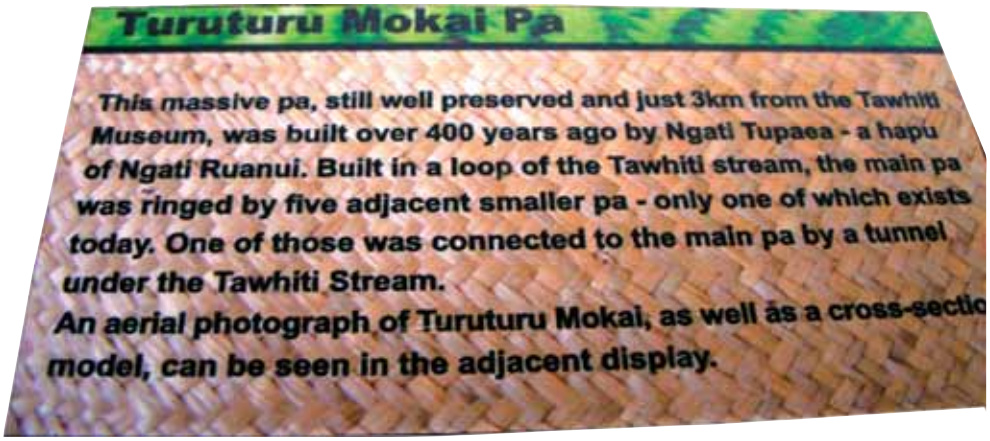
Product guarantees vary depending on where and how the materials are used. Guarantee limitations will include how the panels are mounted, fading, shrinkage and graffiti resistance. Panels generally last 3-8 years, many will last much longer and can be kept if they are in good repair and remain current with appropriate messages and DOC branding.

Production costs

Costs vary widely depending on factors such as the:

- Production technique.
- Installation design.
- Complexity of the design (e.g. maps or detailed graphics need to be developed).
- Number of scans required (illustrative images).
- Amount of preparation work undertaken by DOC staff versus interpretation contractors or production companies.
- Number of copies required (vinyl prints).
- Number of colours used (screen printing).
- Volume of changes/edits to content that occur after the design process starts.

For example, for a single copy of a panel (600/800mm x 800-1200 mm) costs can vary between $1500 and $3000. The higher range includes full colour screen printing or 3M Scotchprints, a more professional or complex design with graphic developments, such as detailed maps, and a contractor doing all research and development. Installation costs are additional.



Diorama of Turuturu Mokai Pa and interpretation, Tawhiti Museum, Taranaki
Designer: Nigel Ogle
Photos: Fiona Colquhoun

4.8 Visitor Centre displays

Displays and multimedia are the most common ways to present conservation messages in visitor centres. They can be innovative and offer a wide scope for creative design.

A simple flipbook is an efficient way of presenting detailed interpretation. St Arnaud Visitor Centre, Nelson Lakes National Park. Design: Janet Bathgate. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

Many visitor centre panels present much more text than can reasonably be read by visitors in a short time. While it's tempting to fill all the space available and tell the visitor everything about a site, being succinct and presenting a few stories well is a better way to get the message across. When writing a brief for the design of visitor centre displays outline a mix of displays and multimedia for both active and passive involvement.

Present information in lots of different ways to foster and hold interest. A mix of maps, photographs, graphics, objects and artefacts, models, live animals, audio and audio-visual media, three dimensional models and interactive displays is an enjoyable and effective way to deliver messages as opposed to a dominance of written text.

Interactive and multimedia displays

These stimulate the mind and different senses and are good at fostering learning. Interactive exhibits are popular with visitors because they:

- attract attention, are visually enjoyable
- retain interest longer than other media.

They can be expensive to develop, construct and maintain, and are generally limited to use by one or two people at a time. The table below indicates the range of interactivity.

Creating effective interactive exhibits requires imagination and time to plan, develop, test and install. While they can be expensive, they don't have to be complex or high tech to be effective. **Mechanical functions, objects and historical artefacts are just as popular** with visitors.

Remember the context and setting. Visiting a park is a nature-based experience and the interpretation provided should connect people to it. Use technology to help people make connections to the story or message without it being an end in itself. Interpretive displays provide people with **something to do**, but make sure the answer to the 'so what?' question is clearly there.

For inspiration visit museums, science exhibits and visitor centres; talk to people about what they have liked and disliked and search the internet.

Writing a brief for a designer

- identify the message first
- brainstorm ideas with the designer, other staff and creative people
- have a prototype developed and test it (if possible)
- request that it is developed to require no instructions or very simple instructions
- request sturdy low maintenance materials and make sure replacement parts will be available
- find out replacement costs for components and what the service intervals are likely to be.

Table adapted from Gross (2002), Moscardo (1999, after Koran et al. 1983)

	Passive	Hands-on	Participatory	Interactive
Display type example	Static panel with text and images	Press a button, lift a flap, touch an object, walk under a sound cone	Activate an audio, use a microscope, make a jigsaw, respond to questions, explore computer databases	Manipulate exhibits to achieve tasks, quizzes, role play, computer games, prompt responses
Visitors response	Passive viewing	Touching or manipulating exhibit	Activating exhibit, more mental involvement	Activating and responding
Level of participation	No participation or control Uni-sensory	Increased participation, more senses used	More participation and control	Full participation and control using many senses

Sydney Museum talking poles, 2000. Photo: Kim Morland

Talking post describing the light well created by the fallen tree and regeneration of vegetation. It follows the panel at the bottom of page 72 "Into the world of light' on the interpretated trail in the Trounson kauri forest, Northland. Design: Outlines. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

4.9 Audio

Music, sound effects, oral history recordings and voice-overs can bring life to a site with much more impact than a static panel or brochure. They can also be intrusive in natural settings so use with sensitivity. This technique can be very effective in historic and cultural settings, as an aid to bringing them back to life.

Audio displays:

- are stimulating
- often memorable
- add variety
- can create sound pollution for other visitors who aren't listening
- need a power source e.g. mains, wind, solar, battery, thermal
- require regular maintenance
- can be expensive to develop and maintain
- are disappointing for visitors if not working.

Stationary sound – listening posts

Can be triggered manually or by sensor. Listening posts are common in museums, visitor and information centres where they often have head sets. Outdoors the sound is usually projected to the immediate area.

Outdoor hardware needs to be weather and vandal proof. Speakers, speaker stands and the button (if visitor activated) are usually the only hardware visible to the visitor. The replay system should be hidden away and secure but accessible for maintenance.

In remote areas issues of creating secure housing for batteries or other equipment will need to be addressed. Moisture can be a big problem so make sure its well sealed to keep out water.

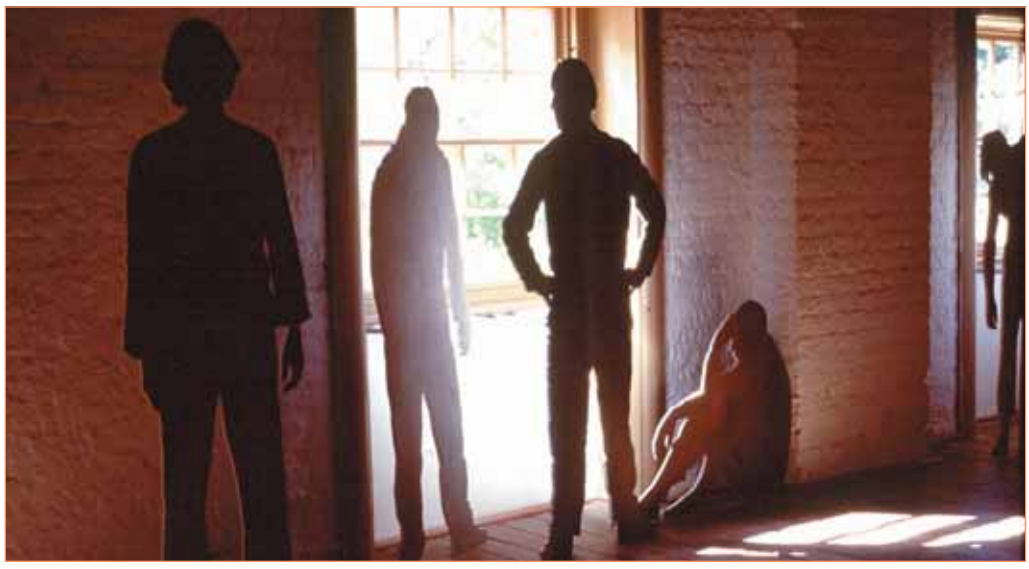
When planning indoor or outdoor audio consider:

- what stories and messages are appropriate
- the nature of the site and main audience and if the audio will add value
- different sources of stories and the best people to tell them e.g. local community characters, professional scriptwriters, actors or media presenters
- how material will be recorded and mixed. Audio specialists usually record and mix the sound effects, voice-overs and music in a recording studio
- what hardware is best for the site and the conditions. Check replay systems such as a CD player or hard drive, speaker and protective shell options with manufacturers. Use commercial quality equipment for reliability and durability with repeated use
- piloting and trialing the system on-site to gauge effectiveness and visitor response.

Also refer to the Recording Oral Histories section in Chapter Two.

Portable sound

Hand held audio allows visitors to privately listen to information without disturbing the quiet of others. It can also be provided in CD or MP3 format.



Sounds of men sleeping create an evocative image in the bunkroom where convicts were housed. Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney. Photo: Lynda Burns

4.10 Audio-visual and multimedia displays

Technology for multimedia and audio-visual is rapidly developing. This section provides a general outline to assist planning but is not comprehensive guidance. Research options widely before investing in these types of displays. Audio-visual (AV) technique involves sound with moving or still film, often presented in video or slide format. 'Multimedia' refers to digital presentations often displayed on computer terminals through touch screens or keyboards.

Media options include:

- DVD/video
- slides, with or without audio
- touch screens and computers
- holograms, Spectra Vision etc.
- virtual reality movies
- animation, 3D.

Songs of the sea, Museum of Wellington City & Sea audio
Design: Hewett & Pender Assoc., Sydney, Australia. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

Audio-visual/multimedia displays:

- are good for presenting sequential information
- require active or passive involvement
- can be dramatic
- are stimulating and memorable for visitors (like interactive displays)
- are a good way to tell detailed or important site stories
- can have technology overwhelm the message
- can be portable for use at other sites
- are expensive to develop and maintain
- can rapidly look dated (e.g. style of people's clothing)
- require space for people to congregate
- are often too long
- are not essential in every visitor centre
- can have day to day running problems
- are disappointing for visitors when not working.

Audio-visual presentations often attract only a small percentage of visitors. Many run for longer than the total time spent in centres so visitors miss, skip or view only part of the story.

Tips for production of sound bites:

- keep it short, between thirty seconds and two and a half minutes is long enough in most situations. 45 seconds is common
- provide a number of short sound audio messages on a trail or sound bites at a display – instead of one long one
- allow visitors to self select options
- make it sound real not canned
- have the narrator speak in first and second person where possible
- test scripts for pacing and comprehension
- use natural and manufactured sound effects to compliment the message.

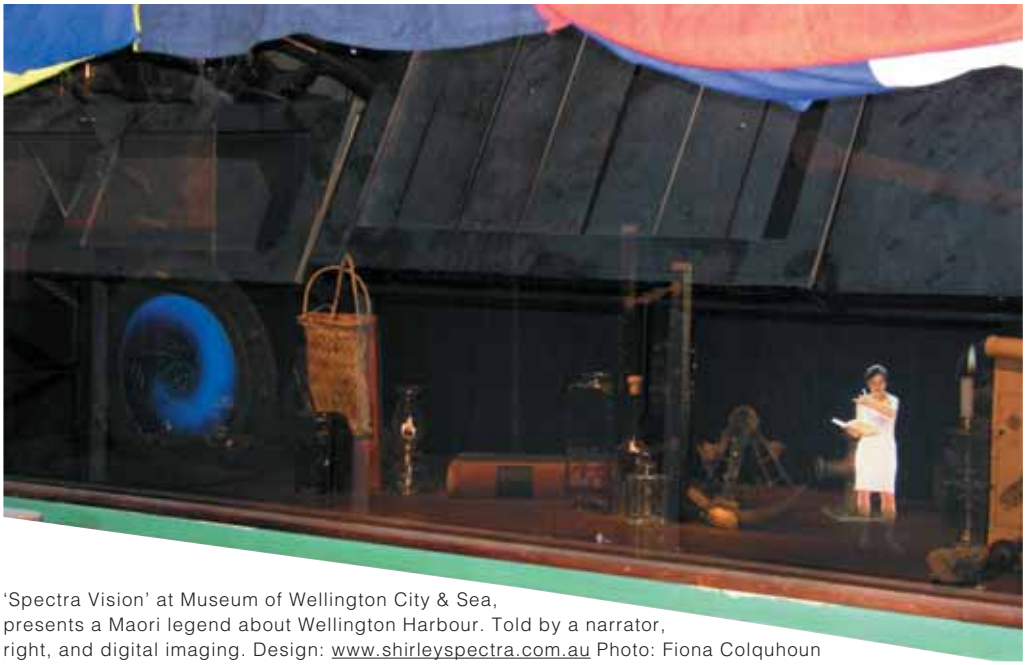
Adapted from Interpreter's Handbook Series
Trapp et al, (1996).

When planning audio-visual or multimedia techniques think about:

- how to précis a story and make it 'snappy'
- how large spaces can be divided to make smaller viewing or listening areas
- other ways to tell long stories e.g. a publication
- the budget accommodating three small productions instead of one large one
- sound and visual media resources you already have e.g. dawn chorus, digital cameras, ranger staff, local characters
- easily obtained media e.g. writing a requirement for (good quality) footage into concession film contracts when professionals are on-site
- use of real-time footage of wildlife sites e.g. web cams to nests, volcanic crater, marine life in a reserve
- developing a series of short (2-7 minute) programmes on small screens or touch screens where visitors can move about freely and quickly.

Shorter presentations and more viewing options can be more appealing to visitors.

Another engaging 'Spectra Vision' exhibit is at the whaling museum in Albany, Western Australia. Set in period with the main story told by a whaler's wife and later by her husband when he returns from whaling.



'Spectra Vision' at Museum of Wellington City & Sea, presents a Maori legend about Wellington Harbour. Told by a narrator, right, and digital imaging. Design: www.shirleyspectra.com.au Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

Planning new or upgrading audio-visual displays – check list

Digital displays are usually time consuming and expensive to produce and maintain.

1. **Define the project sponsor, manager and project team**

2. **Identify:**
   - The purpose of the project. E.g. to tell a complex story with more dramatic effect, to upgrade an existing and still relevant AV to digital format, to tell stories in a variety of ways to maintain visitor interest, increase length of stay in visitor centre. Remember to start with the message not the media.
   - What are the learning, behavioural or emotional objectives?
   - Who are the target audiences? Include DOC visitor groups, special interest groups, demographic – age, gender, cultural, ethnic and multilingual considerations etc.
   - What level of prior knowledge of the topic or site does the audience have? Use this to identify the nature and complexity of information presented.
   - How will you know if you have met defined objectives, and assess the performance of the media and message? Objectives should be measurable.
   - So what? How will visitors' experience of the site be enhanced and what are they likely to take away/remember? What will visitors learn, understand or appreciate?

Site context

- What is appropriate for the site, setting and visitor group?
- What is the average time visitors are spending in the centre, and what length of time will they realistically spend viewing different displays including an AV or multimedia?
- Where and when will it be available for visitors to view? E.g. in a visitor centre auditorium, on CD/DVD. How often will it be shown? Will there be one or a series of audio-visuals or multimedia displays?
- Who will it be available to? E.g. schools, general public, communities, other visitor centres.
- How many visitors per annum are likely to view the material?

Resources

- Can any existing resources be used and if so what? E.g. slides, AV equipment, staff or community people as narrators, office props, DOC work programmes, oral histories.
- What expert resources are required? Professionals, staff and stakeholders.
- Where is copyright vested in the complete product or parts of it?

Development options

- What is the mode of delivery or range of media formats considered appropriate for the story and setting? E.g. slides/photographs with animation, special effects, DVD/ Video, desktop virtual reality, 3D animation, CDROM.
- Where and how will the master copy be stored.
- What is the anticipated shelf-life of the resource? (5 years or less) Is revision is expected within this time?
- Where will resources and expertise come from for maintaining the exhibit in good working order?

Definitions:

Desktop virtual reality (VR) movies use digital images and usually run on ordinary desktop computers. They can be: panoramas, where the viewer is able to see a 360-degree scene as if standing at its centre, and by clicking and dragging with a mouse pan all around and zoom in and out; and objects, where the viewer seems able to manipulate an object by turning it through 360-degrees, seeing it from a variety of angles. Panoramas can be linked together to form *multinode* movies, allowing users to click on a doorway say, and jump to a new node, providing the ability to thoroughly explore a virtual environment.

http://cfdl.auckland.ac.nz/services/multimediatechniques.php University of Auckland

Images of Fort Takapuna (Circa 1899) from the DOC film *Maungauika - Story of a Mountain*. This project was created by 4Dcanvas.com and includes 3D animation of North Head's Fort Cautley as well as the eruption of Rangitoto.

4.11 Art and sculpture

There is a tradition of sculpture and three dimensional art in urban settings as monuments and expressions of culture. They have become popular in natural and historic settings to either interpret the site with supporting text, or simply be on-site art, subject to an individual's own interpretation. Simple text and messages can be used beside artworks, engraved onto the sculpture or provided in a supporting publication.

The development process of commissioning art work can provide an opportunity to involve the community or target an audience such as school children, or directly involve the local community. Artwork is more likely to foster inspiration and enjoyment than knowledge or education but it's good for adding variety. The message can be ambiguous.

Sculptures become part of the landscape and visitors often form emotional attachments to them. Consider what meanings and connections there may be amongst the local community before sculptures are removed or changed. This can also apply to signs (such as park gateway signs).

Pou at Wenderholm Regional Park (ARC). The pou, carved by Whare Thompson at the request of local iwi Te Hao O Ngäti Whätua, represents Maori who once lived in the area.

Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

Art or sculpture interpretation:

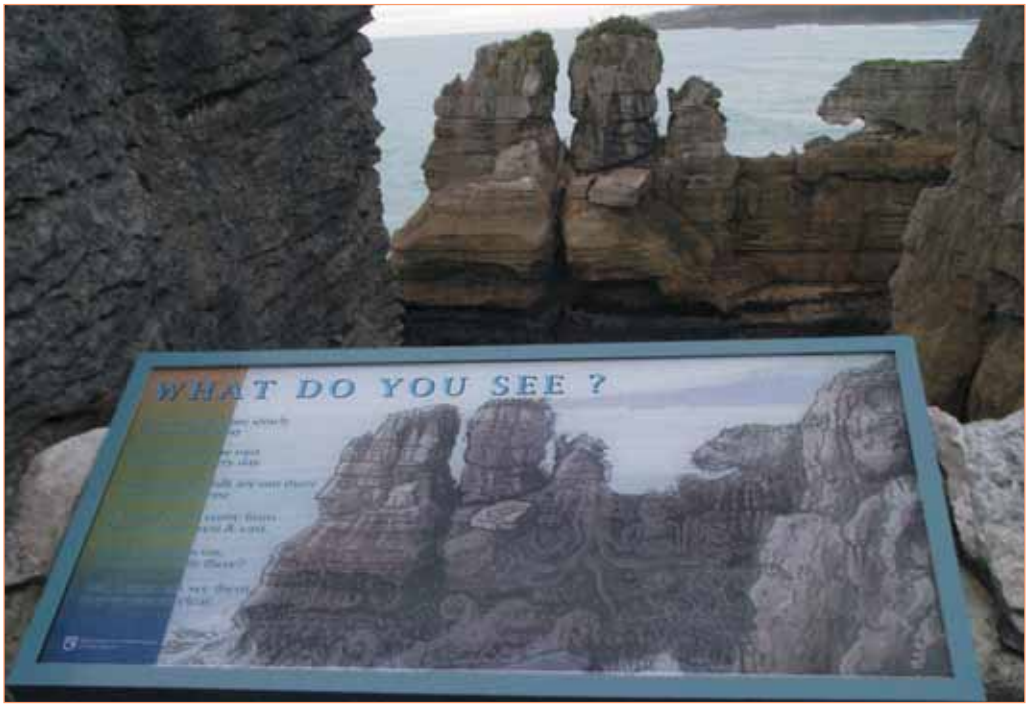
- is usually abstract
- creates very personal responses
- is highly visual
- have less tangible conservation messages
- are prone to vandalism and theft
- can have an expensive and time consuming production period subject to weather or materials
- can be interactive
- can generate a lot of interest.

Briefing artists – options:

- provide a broad concept and ask artists to present sketches or scale models
- provide seed money for several artists to prepare proposals
- have flexibility in the delivery schedule, particularly if there is community involvement
- identify the setting and its conditions, sight lines and landscaping
- incorporate artistic ideas into other structures – seats, gates, shelters, frames
- specify how obvious you want the message to be (if any).

Arthur Dudley Dobson monument, Arthur's Pass. Built with unemployed labour during 1937-38

Photo: P.J. Mahoney



Faces in the rocks, nature's sculpture at Punakaiki Rocks, Paparoa National Park, Punakaiki.
Photo: Simon Witham

4.12 Interpretation publications

Publications can be stand alone off-site or support on-site interpretation. They can provide details of information to support self-guided trails and are an effective way to convey a lot of information. Historic or cultural heritage sites are particularly good sites to interpret with publications. Publications are also a good souvenir of a visit.

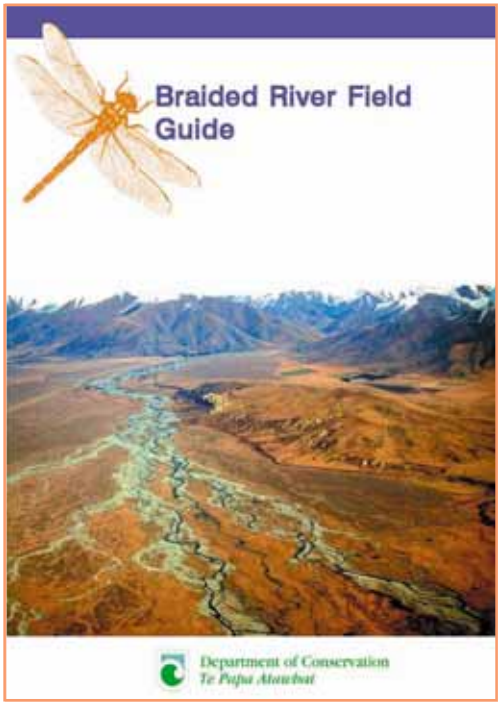
Publications should be targeted to an identified audience and have a level of detail appropriate to their needs. The DOC Publication Standard for visitor and recreation publications provides standard templates and thorough guidance. Interpretation publications must follow the standard. Most interpretation publications will be A4 or A3 folded to DL size (V3 of A4), A4 fact sheets as part of a series, and in some cases, A5 size place or topic specific guides. There are layout examples in the visitor and recreation publication standard. Be creative within the standard and include design elements from panels if the publication supports a series of panels. The Interpretation Handbook is produced in the visitor series report style.

Options

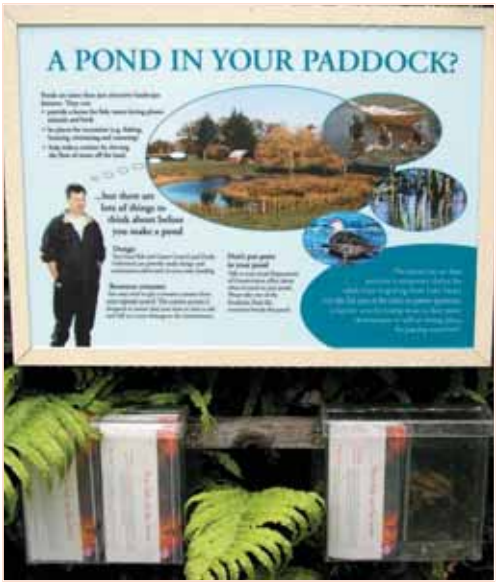
- A publication can be the primary form of interpretation.
- Have a publication plus on-site numbers at key sites that correspond with the brochure.
- Offer a publication from a box at the beginning of a track, site or visitor centre. Restock regularly.
- Use publications to promote and support other interpretation. Having put in the hard work to develop an interpretive walk, let people know that it's there.
- Distribute publications to visitor and information centres or target an audience, e.g. mail to heritage enthusiasts, special interest groups, conservation volunteers or local stores, campgrounds and places where people make decisions about activities.
- If a large proportion of your audience doesn't speak English, produce publications in common languages. Initially print limited quantities from an electronic file while you test their effectiveness.
- Encourage visitors to recycle a publication so others can use it.

Publications:

- should be available in DOC visitor centres and on the DOC website
- can support or replace on-site interpretation
- provide pre-visit information, manage expectations and allow self-paced interpretation
- are less intrusive than panels, inexpensive to produce, and easily updated
- can be problematic on-site in a wet climate
- must follow DOC Visitor and Recreation Publication Standards (2004).



Left: Cover of Braided River guide. Design: Sandra Parkkali



Right: Tongariro National Trout Centre outdoor brochure dispenser well protected from the rain. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

Interactive panels on an interpretive trail in Yellowstone National Park, USA. Photos: Glenn Willmott

4.13 Ruapekapeka Pa site redevelopment – Case Study

On-site interpretation occurs within the wider administration of a site. What follows is an attempt to show how research standards fit into a wider process where a range of standards apply, such as visitor access issues.

Planning context

Location and site details

Ruapekapeka Pa is located approximately 40 kilometres north of Whangarei and 25 kilometres south of Kerikeri, five kilometres off State Highway I via a gravel road. A brown Transit NZ sign identifies the turn off. Site facilities include a car park (takes up to 20 vehicles) and walking tracks. Visitor numbers were estimated at below 10,000 per annum and the aim is to increase visitation up to at least 50,000 with the added attraction of on-site interpretation.

The pa is located in an area rich with pre and early European contact sites and is within half a day's drive of the Kerikeri Basin historic sites including the Stone Store, Kororipo Pa, Kemp House and Pouerua Pa. The Waitangi Treaty House and Pompallier are also not far away. Ruapekapeka's proximity to Whangarei and Kerikeri provides a significant local pool of potential visitors. Visitation to the area peaks in summer and holiday periods but it's popular all year round because of its warmer climate.

Significance

This site is an important battle site and its archaeological remains have assisted in a major debate about the development of Maori fortifications in the face of European artillery that has involved senior historians, archaeologists and tangata whenua. It has also been the focus of considerable debate about hapu relationships within Nga Puhi. The location is ideal for connecting interpretation stories with the place because there are substantial archaeological remains of the pa. There is a panoramic view towards Kerikeri and in the direction of the other Northern War battles. The view is pleasant and there is a short walk through adjacent puriri groves.

It is important that the tracks and interpretation do not lead to damage of the site which has a natural rate of decay and this needs to be monitored. There has been considerable discussion about how people could be made to experience the 'bats nest'. (Ruapekapeka translated means bats nest – describing a defence system of underground tunnels and trenches, which made the pa resistant to musket attack.)

Ruapekapeka panels.
Design: Sonia Frimmel. Photos: Fiona Colquhoun

On-site interpretation has been developed to tell the stories of:

- the final battle in the Northern War
- the archaeological remains of a unique pa specifically built to face British artillery; and
- a very important milestone in the development of relations between iwi and the Crown.

At one level the event is unique but at another it readily fits one of the major categories of the American and US Historic Heritage Frameworks i.e. Shaping the Political Landscape (United States), Peopling New Zealand (Australian themes).

The interpretation panels have balanced text and imagery, maps and illustrations to connect visitors with the life and events of the site. Without this interpretation or a good history book or guide to illuminate, few visitors would understand the significance of the site or learn about it's former use.

The operating environment

Funds were provided for the first stage of redevelopment of visitor facilities at the pa site in 2003-2004. The project was consistent with national directions for historic heritage management and the Northland Conservation Management Strategy.

Above: Entrance carvings in place. Photo: Tony Nightingale

Below: Panel depicting the pa and its defences.

Work included site interpretation, a new track to improve access and the development of a development plan for implementation in stages. Northland Conservancy and particularly the Whangarei Area Office committed considerable resources to getting the project completed. The Far North District Council and the New Zealand Historic Places Trust were supportive of the project. The work was completed and opened by the Minister for Conservation in December 2004.

Later stages of development are planned. Community group expectations have been raised through this work for further enhancement and involvement.

Business planning and scoping research

Why interpret this site to visitors?

Northland Conservancy identified Ruapekapeka as a historic reserve where passive on-site interpretation was a high priority.[1] The site and its stories are of national significance. A very good Lands and Survey management plan provides a considerable amount of historical research with the author of the (1987) report still working for the organisation.

What was being interpreted?

The historic reserve contains the archaeological remains of Kawiti's defensive pa and the British attacking positions. The reserve is 9.4 hectares although it has been enlarged several times since its establishment. There had been a considerable historical debate about the battle as a consequence of James Belich's *New Zealand Wars,* particularly about the defences. There are strong hapu associations with the site and initial research suggested that there was a considerable gap in our knowledge of traditional stories associated with the site. Northland had established a liaison committee with local hapu and formed a Ruapekapeka Management Trust. From work with the Trust it became clear that there was a diversity and depth of traditional stories about the battle that were not in the public domain.

[1] Taitokerau Northland Conservancy, *Draft Conservation Management Strategy* (vol. 1), pp 171-173

The Ruapekapeka Management Trust supported interpretation at a reduced level (four panels and the waharoa) but negotiated the condition that the Department undertook further research including the oral histories currently recounted by hapu. An A4 brochure folded to DL format for display was also produced to provide more detailed information and promote the site to visitors.

Opening day powhiri. Photos: Tony Nightingale

Puriri forest trail - short walk.

Who are your visitors?

It is of particular interest to visitors wanting to learn New Zealand history and about the New Zealand Wars particularly. Ruapekapeka Pa is managed by the Department as a 'short stop traveller' (visitor group) historic site. Visitor numbers had fallen to fewer than 10,000 prior to 2003, which was attributed in part to the lack of on-site interpretation to provide meaning for the experience of the site. Localised visitor research has not been undertaken. The story of Ruapekapeka is told in abbreviated form at the Waitangi National Trust site at Waitangi, and at the Auckland and Whangarei Museums. The need for research about visitors' experience of the site is acknowledged.

Who was involved in the planning process?

The most important aspect of this project was relationship development with tangata whenua. No work would have been possible without the formation of the Ruapekapeka Management Trust over the previous four years. The Ruapekapeka Management Trust, headed by Ripeka Taipari, included hapu representatives for all six hapu who have an association with the site. Raumoa Kawiti, a descendant of the chief who built the pa was a particularly important participant. DOC liaised with the Trust on the process of redevelopment and at each stage of draft interpretation panels and the development plan. Panels and the plan were developed concurrently.

The topic, story and theme

The overarching topic was the Northern War with the theme 'Maori and Europeans fought for this land'[2]. Historic sites tend to lend themselves to narrative stories and in this case it was decided to focus on Kawiti's association with the site, the attack, the battle and the defences. The defences have added significance because these can be directly linked to the extensive archaeological remains seen by visitors.

[2] Reworded Australian Heritage Council's Historic Theme 2.6

Overview of interpretation development

A team worked intensively on the on-site interpretation for four months and built on the earlier work especially that of John Gardiner who had written a management plan for the Department of Lands and Survey and a recent history thesis by Ralph Johnston. This was supported by an extensive collection of published literature.

The interpretation team focused on the on-site interpretation but some members were also closely involved in the development of a project plan for stage 2. The team included Craig Jones of Visitor Solutions Ltd and Sonia Frimmel interpretation consultant. DOC staff members included Shaughan Anderson (Program Manager visitor assets), James Robinson (part time Historic TSO) Pat Campbell (Kaupapa Atawhai Manager, Whangarei) and Tony Nightingale (Historian SRU Wellington).

Aerial view of Ruapekapeka. Compare with orientation map on page 72. Photo: Northland Conservancy

Te Warihi of Nga Puhi carved the waharoa at the site entrance and discussed the symbolic significance of the waharoa with the management team committee. They worked closely with the Committee and the interpretation drafts were finally accepted by the committee in early November. The implementation team included John Gardiner (Area Manager, Whangarei), and at times called on all area staff, most conservancy staff and the entire volunteer group.

Evaluation and monitoring

Two visitor counters have been installed. One is camouflaged in a tree to monitor site visits. The project was a huge success in terms of fostering positive community relations through working together. Ruapekapeka Management Trust meetings provide the ongoing vehicle for liaison in management and discussion. Anecdotal evidence of the visitor experience indicates that the interpretation panels and overall site works are very well received by visitors. There are some site orientation issues such as signage to indicate the length and nature of the walking track through the puriri groves and maps of short trail options. Visitor experiences of the site may be measured in a qualitative way in future through visitor satisfaction monitors and other research.

Conclusion

Historic interpretation is an important mechanism to connect people's experiences on-site with meaningful or significant events of the past. All interpretation must be centred on visitor experience – in a holistic way. This means providing good site facilities and orientation including site maps so visitors can comfortably experience a site and find the interpretation provided without feeling lost, anxious or miss sections of the site all together. It also means providing site services for a range of visitor needs and identifying the nature of the experiences to be encountered (e.g. distance and time on tracks, important features identified on an orientation map).

The interpretation work at Ruapekapeka Pa sensitively tells important stories of the past and their place in New Zealand history. The visitor experience of the site is enriched because of this. The process of redeveloping the site and improving its facilities and services has benefited the local and broader community.

4.14 Visitor information

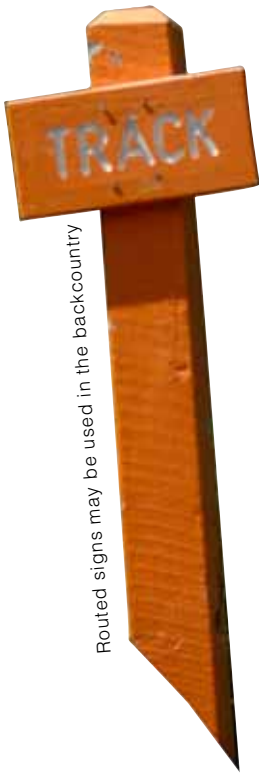
Be careful not to confuse visitor information with interpretaion

It is essential that important information about visitor safety is presented in a clear,.easy to read way, and placed in a prominent obvious position in visitor centres.

The style of the panel below confuses information with interpretation and the crux of the message is lost. The DOC Sign Standard, Visitor Information Service Standard, and Visitor Centre Service Standard provide guidance about orientation and information signs, important messages about minimal impact and safety, track classifications, service levels and other requirements.

Above: Visitor information panel mistakenly produced in interpretive style.

Right: Actively work with other conservation places to promote conservation awareness. Karori Wildlife Sanctuary, Wellington. Photos: Fiona Colquhoun



Routed signs may be used in the backcountry

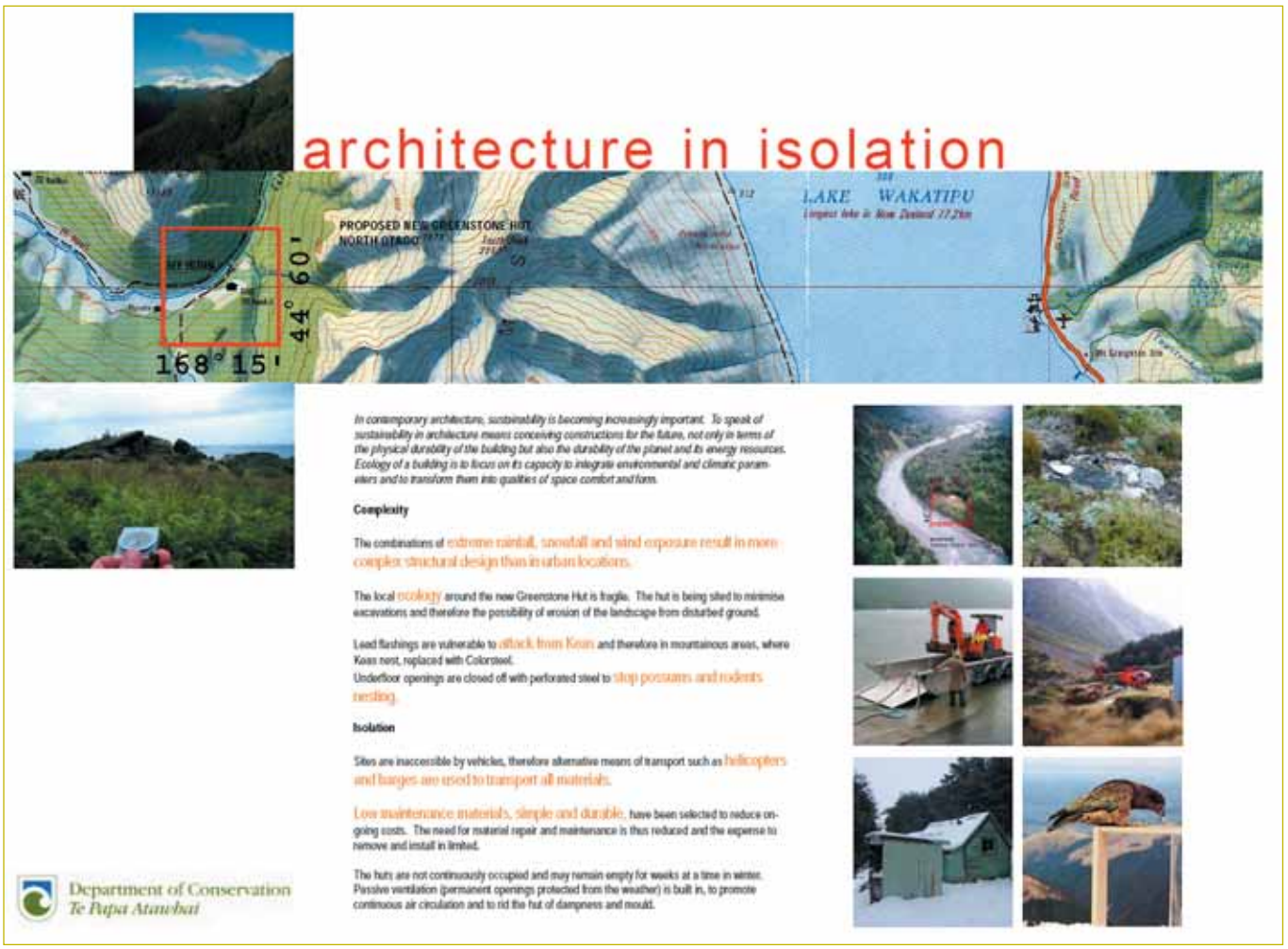
4.15 Marketing and promotion

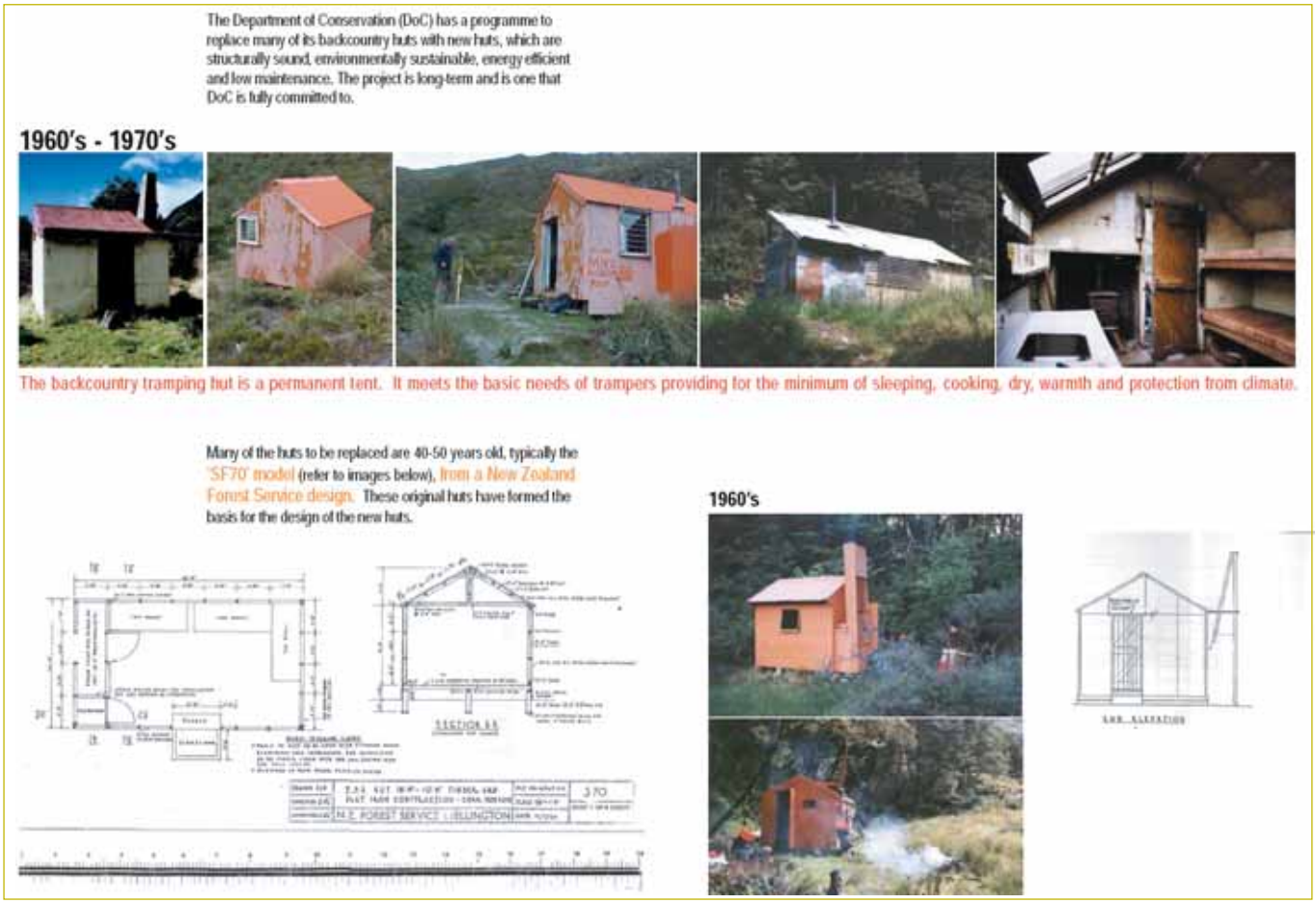
Having developed interpretation and made sites more appealing and informative to visitors, its important to let people know about them. Promote good sites and guided interpretation programmes at visitor centres, on the DOC website, in publications and other media:

- Create promotional material, e.g. flyers, media releases, newsletters or editorial. Make sure it is attractive and appealing.
- Use images of the best site features, and foster realistic expectations of the experience
- Distribute information widely as well as directly to target audiences
- Develop partnerships in promotion/ conservation awareness to co-operatively promote visitor sites, e.g. with museums, volunteer groups, recreation groups or organisations
- Consider advertising in local or national media and tourist brochures. Investigate:
  - who the advertising medium targets?
  - what is the reach of the advertising (circulation/readership)?
  - is the medium well supported by other products in your region?
  - what editorial content is supporting region, city or town?
  - does the quality of the pubvlication or medium reflect your product?

Chapter five — Interpretation standards

Karori Wildlife Sanctuary reservoir images
All photos: Fiona Colquhoun





Look for recreation stories within work programmes. Recreation buildings and structures often have interesting stories associated with them. Hut redevelopment design by Pynenburg & Collins Architects Ltd. These posters were developed for a trade show but would be great in a hut.

5.1 Interpretation standard

Service Standards provide benchmarks for work quality. They help to define the scope and nature of work and support consistency in decision making and delivery so that defined levels of service are maintained for visitors throughout New Zealand's protected areas. They are one of our key tools for achieving our vision and goals for conservation and recreation.

This chapter details the **Interpretation Standard** and provides a summary of other Standards relevant to interpretation delivery work. It should be used in conjunction with the detailed guidance provided in the DOC Interpretation Handbook. The Standard applies to all DOC interpretation delivery work, including that provided by tour operators and outsourced to contractors. Performance reporting measures will be derived from the Standard in future.

Definitions

Visitor services standards follow the easy to follow format of core requirements, recommended actions and discretionary actions:

Must = core requirement
Should = recommended
May = discretionary

Interpretation measures	✔	✘
Must align with directions of national strategies and policies and current Conservancy Interpretation plans		
Decisions about interpretation **must** be fully integrated with visitor and historic heritage management directions for sites and not developed in isolation		
Must follow DOC planning and project management processes, use appropriate templates (Terms of Reference, Business Case and business planning) and have appropriate peer reviewed project approvals. For medium and large scale projects, the scope, objectives, audience (including visitor groups), deliverables, resources, risk analysis and internal and external stakeholders and a communication plan **must** be clearly defined. Refer to Chapter two for details.		
Should follow the processes and procedures identified in the 'planning checklist' in chapter two of the Interpretation Handbook. (p. 29)		
Should include evaluation for effectiveness, which may be front-end (when planning), formative (testing when developing or designing), or summative (when interpretation is completed/takes place). Measures may be specific or broad e.g. questionnaires, focus groups, observation, feedback forms, peer or expert review, visitor satisfaction monitors		
Must meet the requirements of other relevant Department standards including: - The DOC Publication Standard for Visitor and Recreation Publications (2004)		
- SNZ8630 Tracks and Outdoor Visitor Structures Handbook (2004)		
- SNZ8603 The Design and Application of Outdoor Recreation Symbols (2005)		
- Corporate Identity Standard (1991)		
- DOC Sign Standard		
- Visitor Information Service Standard (in preparation)		
- Visitor Centre Service Standard (when completed)		

Guided interpretation measures:	✔	✘
A: General measures		
1. **Must** present accurate, relevant and appropriate information		
2. **Must** use appropriate language		
3. **Must** be easily understandable for the audience		
4. **Should** present a clear structure and flow of information		
5. **Should** have a clear topic and theme (refer to chapter 2, EROT attributes)		
6. **Should** be appropriate for the audience, and be interesting and engaging		
7. **Must** include a briefing about minimal impact behaviour appropriate to the activity and location		
8. **Must** include a briefing about hazards and safety (including gear and equipment) appropriate to the activity and location		
9. **Must** be well organised (including: pre-trip information, briefing about required equipment, minimal impact and safety practice, trip timing, and skills required, and have an emergency response plan)		
B: Visitor satisfaction monitoring measure		
Guided interpretation is considered to standard when 85% or more of tour/activity/talk participants report high to very high overall satisfaction through evalutaion/visitor satisfaction measures		

Interpretation shelter at Denniston using recycled materials to emulate a mine shed, and surrounded by mine artefacts. Photo: P.J. Mahoney

Self-guided interpretation:	✔	✘
A: General measures		
1. **Must** be based on clearly defined SMART objectives (specific, measurable, appropriate, realistic, timely) (refer to Chapter Two)		
2. **Should** have a clear topic and theme		
3. **Must** be easily understandable and tailored to a DOC visitor group		
4. **Must** present accurate, relevant and appropriate information, and use appropriate language		
5. **Should** be interesting and engaging - with EROT qualities (enjoyable, relevant, organised and thematic) (refer to Chapter one)		
6. **Should** present a clear structure and flow of information		
7. **Should** involve liaison with local communities and other relevant stakeholder, as appropriate		
8. **Should** meet minimum readability requirements for point size (Chapter Four)		
9. **Should** not exceed recommended word limits (Chapter Four)		
10. **Should** present a visual balance between text and imagery		
11. **Must** appropriately reference any quoted material or information		
12. **Should** be of a scale and nature appropriate to the setting		
13. **Should** use media/technology appropriate to the story and setting context		
14. **Must not** use media or design elements which overwhelm the message (unless it is artwork)		
15. **Should** identify connections or references to other places where there is further information about the topic/story		
16. **Should** include correct DOC website address and nearest visitor centre details for further information where appropriate (e.g. the last panel in a series or the back of visitor brochures)		
17. **Must** be constructed for a minimum functional life of 3-5 years (unless its a temporary display/sign)		
18. **Must** be maintained in good physical condition and inspected annually. Good condition means it is:		
~ Clearly legible/audible text or dialogue		
~ Fully functional, with all electrical and/or mechanical components working		
~ Whole, intact and well sealed (not water or sun damaged)		
~ Undamaged by vandalism or wear and tear (free of significant scratches, abrasions, and graffiti, rot, peeling, fading etc.)		
~ Safe for staff, volunteers and the public		
~ Securely fixed		
~ Clean		
Interpretation which is not in good condition **must** be refurbished, repaired, replaced or removed		
B: Visitor satisfaction monitoring measure		
Self-guided interpretation is considered to standard when evaluation/surveys report 85% or more of visitors viewing the interpretaion report high to very high satisfaction.		

Interpretation publications

✔	✘

- **Must** meet the visual style requirements of the DOC Visitor and Recreation Publication Standard (2004)

Corporate Identity

An accurate and clearly visible DOC corporate signature (logo) **should** be applied to all self-guided interpretation media		
All DOC displays in non-DOC visitor and information centres **must** include a corporate signature, and should use corporate colours where appropriate.		
Singular mobile or outdoor interpretation media **must** have a corporate signature		
Outdoor interpretation media presented in a series **must** include a corporate signature on at least the first and last displays/panels, and it **may** be included on others.		
The signature **may** be applied to the main part of the display, its frame or support.		
When sponsors' logos are used in interpretation panels, displays, signs or other media the DOC logo **must** also be applied in the same scale and proportion. Sponosors logos **must** not appear without an acompanying DOC logo. Interpretation **should not** be used as a medium for advertising.		

Interpret remote and inaccessible places, such as sub-antarctic islands, via publications to reach a wider audience. Southland Conservancy's book *Subantarctic New Zealand: A rare heritage*, by Neville Peat is an excellent example of an interpretive publication with nicely balanced text and imagery.

Macquarie Island whale rendering pots. Photo: Mike Edginton

Concessionaire interpretation

✔	✘

- **Should** follow the requirements of the DOC Interpretation Standard
- **Must** follow concession Permit or Licence conditions relating to information, interpretation, minimal impact and safety
- **Should** be monitored for accuracy of information and effectiveness of delivery
- **Should** attain visitor satisfaction ratings of high to very high by 85% or more of tour participants

Heritage Expeditions on tour, Macquarie Island. Penguins galore! Photo: Mike Edginton

5.2 Interpretation for tracks and outdoor visitor structures

The Standards New Zealand Tracks and Outdoor Visitor Structures Handbook (HB 8630) identifies orientation and directional signage and other structure requirements.

It identifies orientation, information and direction signage requirements for tracks according to their classification. Refer to the standard for Tracks and Outdoor Visitor Structures in relation to information and/or orientation signs.

The standard for Tracks and Outdoor Visitor Structures is available on the Intranet in the Visitor Services and Facilities section.

Direction is provided here about the presence or absence of interpretation adjacent to or near tracks. It does not indicate where and when interpretation should be provided. Directions for the specific location, extent and nature of interpretation should be identified in Conservancy Interpretation plans.

Where interpretation is provided beside or near tracks, it **should** be of a scale and design which is sympathetic to the natural, historic or cultural setting and the degree of site development.

Definitions

- On-site, refers to interpretation at visitor sites which may be visitor centres
- Near-site, refers to interpretation provided away from the place or topic of interpretation (but not distant from), such as visitor and information centres, publications available locally for an interpretation trail, or ranger talks and audio visual presentations given prior to site visits
- Pre-visit interpretation, is largely publications and the internet, but can also be visitor centres away from sites, presentations or talks.

Recreation landscape setting	DOC visitor group experience	Track Classification	Name to be used in visitor information	Interpretation options
Front-country, urban, urban fringe, rural or back country drive-in	Short Stop Travel (SST)	Short walk	Walk	On-site, near-site and/or pre-visit personal and self-guided interpretation. Accessible to people with limited mobility, vision or auditory capacity. Extent: can be significant
Urban, urban fringe, rural or back country drive-in	Day Visit (DV)	Walking track	Walking track	On-site, near-site and/or pre-visit Extent: can be significant
Walk-in	Backcountry Comfortable (BCC)	Tramping track Great Walk Easy tramping track	Name of track (eg, Milford Track, St James walkway)	On-site, near-site or pre-visit. Can be significant. Generally at or near facilities such as accommodation, shelters, boardwalks or features. Extent: moderate on-site outdoors significant in huts and shelters
Walk-in remote, walk-in wilderness	Backcountry Adventure (BCA)	Tramping Track	Track	On-site generally within built structures such as huts and shelters and guided activities. Pre-visit. Extent: limited on-site, except actively managed historic places and huts
Walk-in remote, walk-in wilderness	Remote experience (RS)	Route	Route	Pre-visit only and guided activities. No on-site interpretation. Extent: none on-site, except actively managed historic places and huts
Backcountry drive-in	Overnight stay (ON)	SST, DV, BCC	Path, walk, walking track, easy tramping track	On-site at or near accommodation, near site and/or pre-visit. Extent: can be significant on-site and in huts

5.3 Hut Service Standards and interpretation at huts

The Hut Service Standards (2004) detail requirements for facility and service provision at all categories of DOC visitor huts (Great Walk, Serviced and Serviced Alpine, Standard and Basic). They provide general direction in relation to the appropriateness of interpretation (present or absent) but do not require interpretation to be provided in any particular hut. Conservancy interpretation plans provide the directions for the nature, location and extent of interpretation services at places.

Visitors usually spend longer at huts and campsites than other sites. Offering interpretation in or near huts allows visitors who are interested in learning about interesting or important aspects of their surroundings to do so in an unrushed and focused way. The planning chapter of this handbook offers guidance for developing interpretation for delivery in huts.

Refer to the Hut Service Standards for detailed hut service requirements. The following table is a summary of hut interpretation directions.

'Shall' - interpretation services are required

'Should' - interpretation services are recommended

'May' – interpretation services generally only where significant stories or issues exist

'Should not' - generally no interpretation on-site unless there are significant stories

Hut Service Category	Recommended interpretation	Interpreting	For example
Great Walk (catering for BCC)	**Should**	Natural, cultural, historic or recreation values or sites, or active conservation work.	Wall panels, publications, hut books, roving interpreters, hut warden talks, audio, conservation games
Serviced and Serviced Alpine (catering for BCC or BCA)	**Should**	Natural, cultural, historic or recreation values or sites, or active conservation work.	Conservation games, publications, wall panels, hut books, etc.
Standard (catering for BCA)	**May**	Natural, cultural, historic or recreation values or sites of local significance, or active conservation work	Historic photos, plant ID panel, hut restoration panel
Basic (catering for BCA or RS)	**Should not** Generally no interpretation except actively managed historic huts	Pre-visit interpretation. On site interpretation of exceptional local values or issues.	Historic hut fabric interpretation, event at or near site, stories of people associated with hut.

Lodges and other accommodation at road ends ***should*** *have interpretation. The extent may be significant.*

Clinton Hut on the Milford track interpretation. Photo: Fiona Colquhoun

5.4 International standards for heritage Interpretation

Historic heritage interpretation should meet the principles of the (draft 2004) ICOMOS-Ename Interpretation Charter. The charter recognises the fundamental role of Interpretation in heritage conservation, and identifies universal principles of professional ethics, authenticity, intellectual integrity, social responsibility, and respect and sensitivity for cultural uniqueness and local significance.

The charter can be found on the ICOMOS website:
www.icomos.org.nz/ICOMOS%20NZ%20Charter.pdf

5.5 History quality standards for interpretation

The History Quality Standard for Interpretation focuses on seven items that most need to improve in order to give the most dramatic gains in the quality of history. It is not a comprehensive standard for history quality. This Standard should be used in conjunction with guidance in the DOC Interpretation Handbook and Interpretation Standard when interpreting historic heritage.

National direction/Business Plans

The Statement of Intent since 2001 has asked for more heritage sites to be interpreted, and for the stories to meet history quality standards.

This quality standard is not compulsory; projects can occur that do not meet this standard. However those projects cannot be reported as completed to this standard.

In compiling a research report as the basis for interpretation, the Department's Heritage Inventory format should be used, see WGNRO-19999. Staff will then also be able to record performance against the Heritage Inventory measure.

Re-inventing

Interpretation is ideally the end of a historic heritage process, not the start. The serious research done earlier for the Heritage Inventory and Conservation Plan should be available on file and suffice for interpretation. A little extra research may be required to add human interest.

National Historic Heritage Workshop field day at North Head, Auckland, November 2003. Photo: P.J. Mahoney

5.6 History quality certification

This is the Departments history quality standard for text in **heritage inventory, history interpretation** and other projects. It is concise: seven quality concepts on one A4 page. It should be copied, signed off and filed to document the quality assurance of a history project.

A: Quality Standard

1. Bibliography

History **must be** based on primary sources, including archaeological investigation, archives, plans and photos. Oral history eyewitness accounts and traditions are primary sources, but **must be** attributed. Sources **must be** listed in a bibliography, noting those that exist but were not accessed.

2. Footnotes

History text **must be** supported by a fully referenced version held on file. The referencing system **must be** in the humanities style.

3. Scope

All major stories **must be** considered, although not every story may be included in the final text. If sources are lacking for a key story, this gap **must be** indicated in the history text.

4. Analysis

History text **must** set out the cultural significance of the site. Janelle called this interpreting 'why' as well as 'what'. The Department's 'Heritage Inventory' guide sets out the NZ standard for the analysis of cultural heritage and **must be** used.

5. Context

What is the value of this site relative to others? What are the important links with history themes? The analysis **must** place the site in a national context. If a site is only of local significance this **must** be indicated. The sources used to establish a national context **must be** referenced. The Department undertakes national context studies to assist this task.

6. Review

Review is a standard professional quality tool, and **must** include:

- An independent person competent in the discipline of history.
- Persons regarded as the leading national technical authorities on the subject.

7. Project Management

Reviewers ideally help steer the whole project; at minimum **must** review the final draft. Milestones for their involvement **must be** set out in the project plan.

B. Quality Assurance

These seven quality checks **must be** assured against the Department's quality standard for history before the draft text is published (tick):

☐ 1. Bibliography ☐ 2. Footnotes ☐ 3. Scope

☐ 4. Analysis ☐ 5. Context ☐ 6. Review

☐ 7. Project management OK

Quality assured by:

Project:..... Signed ..... Date.....

The standard was developed by Paul Mahoney and Tony Nightingale. The History Quality Standard for Interpretation is maintained by GM, Research, Development & Improvement Division.

5.7 Other standards

Corporate identity

The Corporate signature is an essential element of corporate identity; an accurate DOC corporate signature must always be used. The corporate signature is comprised of the logo and the wordmark. The logo must always be used with the full departmental wordmark which is embedded in the electronic file of the signature.

The corporate signature is rendered as graphic rather than text so that it can be reproduced accurately by any computer printer or sign vinyl cutter. Note that the letter spacing (kerning) must not be compressed or expanded to adjust overall sign size and that only the officially supplied versions of the signature should be used by designers. Designers should not attempt to recreate the signature in any way.

Electronic copies of the corporate signature are held by Conservancy publication managers and the External Relations Division in Head Office. Refer to the Corporate Identity Manual for details of the Standard. The External Relation Division is responsible for maintenance of the Corporate Identity.

Get emotional - hug a tree! Photo: Sonia Lloyd

DOC sign standard

The DOC Sign Standard details requirements for the Department's visitor signs. It provides directions on use of the corporate signature, layout for all types of signs, siting, installation, inspection and maintenance of signs. It does not include interpretation sign requirements: guidance is provided in the Interpretation Standard.

The Sign Standard is available on the DOC Intranet in the Visitor Services and Facilities section.

Publication standards

Interpretation publications **must** follow the DOC Visitor and Recreation Publications Standard.

Key components of the recreation publication style are:

Crosshead heading banners

- Column format for DL size flyers, brochures and booklets
- Helvetica Light type face and size
- Standard heading and subheading structure for recreation information
- Cover top banner
- 'User friendliness' requirements for ease of display, print and clarity
- All visitor and recreation publications must be A4 print friendly.

The Recreation Publication Standard offers scope for creativity and application of the principles of interpretation identified in the Interpretation Handbook. Visual and narrative links can be created with on-site interpretation work through imagery, heading styles and text. Examples of interpretation publications are provided within the Publications Standard (2004), available on the DOC Intranet.

Editorial style and language

The Department (in 2004) is yet to develop editorial standards for publications or interpretation, however the Publication Standard identifies that the "Write Edit Print, Style Manual for Aotearoa New Zealand" (AGPS Press) is recommended as the Department's editorial style guide (4.1.4).

It covers the principles of good writing and editing, punctuation, grammar, spelling, referencing, typesetting and printing conventions, language, and publication layout. Science Publishing maintains a list of exceptions and additions to this style: WGNCR-15811.

Other useful references include:

''The Broadview book of common errors in English: a guide to righting wrongs', Don Le Pan (2000). It identifies common mistakes such as comma splices, sentence fragments, words frequently confused and misspelled, mixed metaphors, and subject-verb agreement errors. In each case the problem is clearly explained, with examples illustrating both the nature of the trouble and how to put it right.

Mäori for the office - Mäori mö te tari. Mäori Language Commission - Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Mäori. 2nd ed. Auckland, Oxford University Press (1997).

Conservation campsites service standard

To be developed (check the Intranet for project progress).

Visitor Information Service Standard

Guidelines about the visitor information content of signs, publications, website and visitor centre displays. In progress, to be completed with Signs Standards Review and Visitor Centre Service Standard. Check the Intranet for details.

Visitor Centre Service Standard

In progress, check the Intranet for updates.

Mt St Helens (USA), Visitor Centre lava light show.
Photo: Tony Peters

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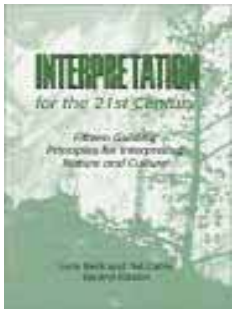

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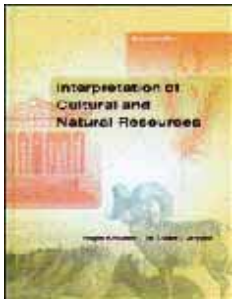

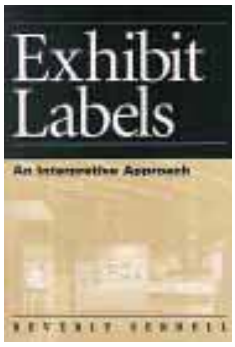

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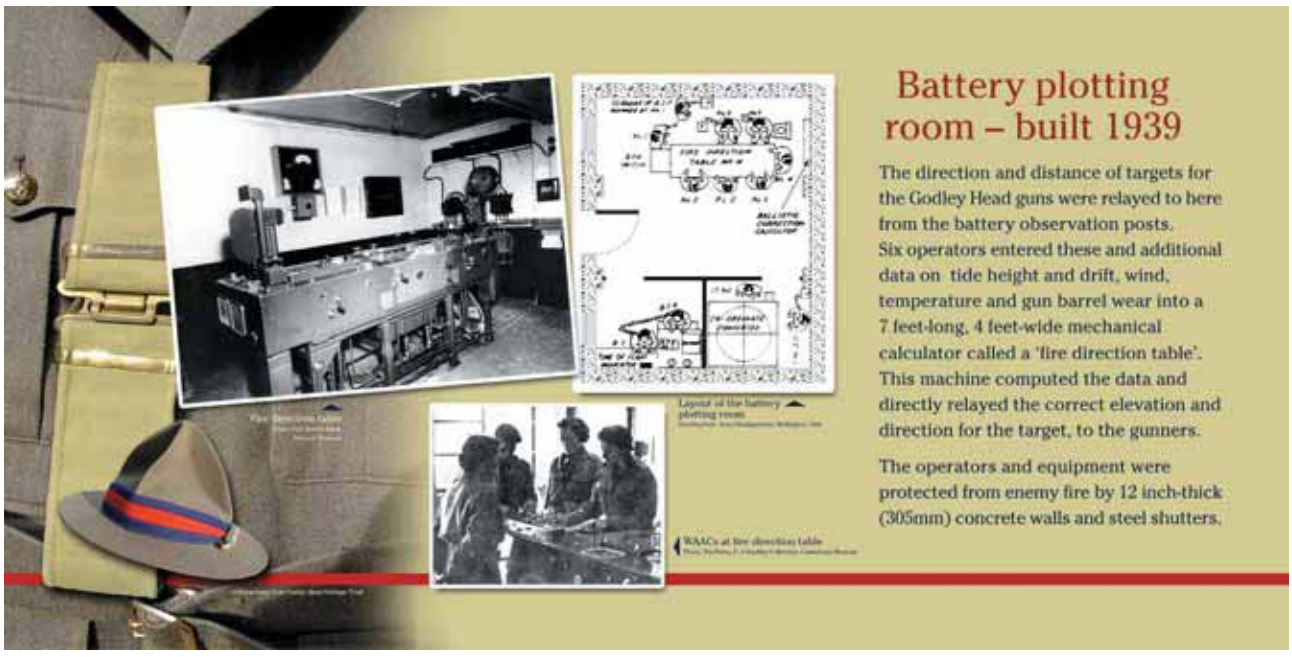
The Germans never came and just as well too! During WWII neither Germans nor Japanese ever came, but if they had they would have been readily detected and fired upon with the 'state of the art' c.1939 equipment at Godley Head, Lyttleton Harbour. Designer: Sandra Parkkali



Appendix 2 — Other interpretation resources

DOC Intranet Resources

The DOC intranet and website hold many research papers, strategies and standard operating procedures which are required and useful for interpretation projects.

Assets, Places & Visitors/Visitor Services and Facilities and Historic Heritage sections:

- Interpretation resource pages DOC Interpretation Handbook Standard
- Plans and strategies for visitor management
- Visitor satisfaction research
- Visitor impact research
- Visitor number monitoring
- DOC Visitor Strategy (1996)
- Sign Standard
- Tracks and Outdoor Visitor Structures Handbook (2004)
- Visitor Information Service Standard
- Visitor Centre Strategy and Standard
- Hut Service Standard

Community Relations

- Visitor and Recreation Publication Standard 2004
- Conservation with Communities and Volunteers Standard Operating Procedure (2005)
- DOC Copyright Guidelines from the Information Resource Centre.

Also check:
DOC papers from Science Publishing. Science/social research.

Useful websites

Virtual Tours

This list is an introduction to local and overseas examples of interpretation work. Sites are only included which offer plenty of examples of work.

www.mangeremountain.co.nz Mangere Mountain tour and information

www.burarra.questacon.edu.au Burarra Gathering - Sharing Indigenous Knowledge 2003. Educational interactive website about the people, land, language and traditional technologies and knowledge of the Burarra people of Arnhem Land, in Australia's Northern Territory.

www.24hourmuseum.org.uk The 24 Hour Museum - National Museum Gateway to most of the museums and galleries in the UK.

www.beringia.com Interpretive centre in Yukon, Canada. Also www.taiga.net

www.sovereignhill.com.au Victorian Goldfields Museum of the 1880s, Ballerat, Victoria.

www.tawhitimuseum.co.nz Tawhiti Museum, a visual history of South Taranaki, acclaimed as the best private museum in New Zealand. Life size exhibits and scale model dioramas.

www.gumdiggerspark.co.nz Living history telling the story of kauri gum digging.

Online examples of work

www.apropos.ca Canadian consultants - online examples of work.

www.cognita.co.nz DOC preferred outdoor signs supplier. Audio and multi media including listening posts

www.egdesign.com.au Tasmanian examples of work.

www.gibsoninternational.co.nz/ Wellington based international design company

www.heritageinterp.com John Verveka and Associates. Examples of work, online library.

www.outlines.co.nz environmental writing and design portfolio online

www.yellow.co.nz/site/processsigns/index.html Process Signs, Napier.

www.storyinc.co.nz/ Wellington based design company. NZ and overseas examples of work.

www.themackenzie.co.nz The Mackenzie Heritage Centre planning

www.thylasign.com.au Tasmanian interpretation/sign company, plenty of examples of design. Easy to explore site.

www.trcnz.com/projects Tourism Resource Consultants. Project list and some images

www.visionsofblue.com.au/projects Images of 'The Octopuses Garden' snorkel trail at Rye Pier, Victoria and other projects

www.display.co.nz Display solutions

www.bannerman.co.nz Examples of temporary display banners

www.aluimage.com Signtech New Zealand. Anodised aluminium signs

www.shirleyspectra.com.au Design company specialising in electronic media; audio and 'Spectra Vision'. Lots of examples of work including Wellington City and Sea Museum

www.tawhitemuseum.co.nz Tawhiti Museum, a visual history of South Taranaki, acclaimed as the best private museum in New Zealand. Life size exhibits and scale model dioramas.

www.gumdiggerspark.co.nz Living history museum telling the story of kauri gum digging, Awanui, Northland.

Academic/Industry website addresses

www.ausleisure.com.au Australasian Parks and Leisure Journal is the official journal of Parks and Leisure Australia and of the New Zealand Recreation Association. Volume 6, No. 4, Summer 2003/2004 is a Special issue on Interpretation. www.parks-leisure.com.au or www.nzrecreation.org.nz/

Tangible history. Recreating a past tramway at Sheridan Creek, Otaki Forks, Tararua Ranges. Photo: P.J. Mahoney

www.interpretivesigns.qut.edu.au 'Interpretive signage principles and practice' by Ballantyne, R., Hughes K. and Moscardo G. 2002. Plenty of links

www.crctourism.com.au Co-operative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism. Check the projects and publications sections.

www.regionaltourism.com.au Visitor Information Centre survey kit. Research on yield.

www.amol.org.au Australian museums and galleries online.

www.cae.org.uk UK Centre for accessible environments

www.astc.org US Association of Science-Technologies Centers

www.fieldfare.org.uk BT Countryside for All. *Standards and Guidelines: A good practice guide to disabled people's access in the countryside.* BT Countryside for All

www.journalofinterpretationresearch.org/issues Journal of Interpretation Research, Out of print back issues online.

www.tepapa.govt.nz Te Papa National Services. National Services - He Rauemi

www.chin.gc.ca Canadian Heritage Information network and museums

Other park management agencies

www.deh.gov.au Environment Australia. Links to all major Australia/New Zealand park management agencies, best practice reports.

www.nps.gov US National Parks Service. Check the Harpers Ferry Center section for online resources.

www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk The countryside code - respect, protect - by the Countryside Agency and the Countryside Council for Water.

www.snh.org.uk Excellent interpretation guidance and case studies. James Carter's (2001) *A Sense of Place Interpretation Handbook* is available as a PDF here.

http://www.interp.de/dokumente/index.html German Interpretation Handbook (English version) 'Basic Interpretive Skills' the course manual. Thorsten Ludwig.

Education and Training

www.nzqa.govt.nz New Zealand Interpretation unit standards - Polytech level. Identifies service providers.

www.naaee.org/publications/pubdescriptions.php North American Association for Environmental Education.

www.lincoln.ac.nz Interpretation subjects at Lincon and Otago Universities www.otago.ac.nz

www.massey.ac.nz Museum Studies at Massey University

www.tuanz.org.nz Digital story telling workshop programme

Historic heritage management

www.ahc.gov.au Australian Heritage Commission. Historic Themes Framework, many online publications.

www.historic.org.nz Historic Places Trust

www.icomos.org.nz International Council on Monuments and Sites. New Zealand Charter.

www.icomos.org ICOMOS Ename Charter on Interpretation of Cultural Heritage Sites 2004

www.nzmuseums.co.nz

Drawer and cupboard display from the Buried Village, Rotorua. Photo and interpretation consultant: Kim Morland. Graphic design: Ross Ellen

Interpretation associations

www.interpretationaustralia.asn.au Interpretation Association Australia. Interpreting Australia newsletter available. Interpretation consultants page and bookshop.

www.interpretscotland.org.uk Interpret Scotland. Current and past issues of Interpret Scotland Journal available on-line.

www.interpnet.com National Association for Interpretation (NAI) USA. Online bookshop.

www.interpret-europe.net European Interpretation Network. John A. Veverka papers in publications section. Info-bulletins has European interpretation news.

www.interpcan.ca Interpretation Canada

www.heritageinterpretation.org.uk Association for Heritage Interpretation UK. Interpretation. Back issues of journal articles are online and you can join an email news bulletin.

www.scotinterpnet.org.uk Scottish Interpretation Network

Interpretation consultants

Check:

- The consultants page of the Interpretation Association Australia website
- Other examples of interpretation work on the DOC Intranet
- Visitor Asset Management System records for the designer of work
- By emailing DOC network groups.

Campbell Island Heritage Expeditions. Photo: Mike Edginton

A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF POWELL HUT

Powell Hut 1939

Before World War II, tramping club skiers went to the Kime Hut–Mount Hector region of the Tararua Ranges. With the five-and-a-half-day working week common then, the sport was very hard work. Enthusiasts searched for a more suitable area, and after successful ski trips to Mount Holdsworth in 1937 and 1938, the Hutt Valley Tramping Club decided to build a hut here.

From February to April 1939, Club members built a hut of 4.9 x 7.3 metres for $260, carrying all the materials to the site. On Sunday 14 May 1939, 120 trampers attended the opening. One of the enthusiasts was Ian Powell (1905–1994) who became a foundation member of the Club in 1925 and for whom the hut was named.

The 1939 to 1941 Wellington Interclub Ski Sports were based at the hut, but after the war skiing migrated to Ruapehu.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

9 10 11 12 13 14

1 [illegible] 2 Excavating a goat hole for the original hut, 1939 3 Foundations, 1939 4 The builders, 1939 5 Everything was carried up. Pig Flat, 1939 6 Opening day, 14 May 1939 7 Club group, 1940

8 Work party of Mountain Horse aboard in clearing at base of steep climb to Powell Hut 9 Packing up to the hut, November 1940 10 The hut on its heyday, early 1970s 11 Cedric, the Powell Hut ghost 12 By the late 1970s Powell hut was well worn 13 Demolition of 1939 Powell Hut, 7 March 1981 14 Demolition of 1939 Powell Hut, 7 March 1981

Powell Hut 1981

By the late 1970s, Powell Hut was showing the effects of age and the rigorous climate. A joint venture between the Hutt Valley Tramping Club and the New Zealand Forest Service resulted in a new Lockwood hut, which cost $34,000, being opened on Sunday 7 June 1981. The Forest Service controlled the construction and the Club helped demolish the old building and contributed towards the cost of the new building. Money was raised by raffles, bottle drives and donations from members and many organisations in Wellington, the Hutt Valley and Wairarapa. Sadly, the 1981 hut was burnt down in May 1999 while still in its prime.

15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22

15 Second hut under construction, 26 March 1981 16 Opening of second Powell Hut, 7 June 1981 17 Windy conditions on opening day, 7 June 1981 18 Hut into the weather

19 A rare combination, sun and deep snow 20 Recent southern extension and new toilets, 10 September 1982 21 Smoking ruins, 17 May 1999 22 Augering the debris after the fire

Powell Hut 2000

Planning for a new hut began soon after the May 1999 fire, but it was not until October that the weather was settled enough for work to begin. Even so, contractors, parties of trampers and Conservation Corps volunteers had to battle fierce weather to build the hut.

Carterton helicopter pilot Jason Diedrichs landed the material in 88 trips. The hut sleeps 32 people, has gas for heating and cooking, and cost $150,000 to build. This was covered by insurance held by the Hutt Valley Tramping Club and topped up by the Department of Conservation.

The hut was officially opened on Saturday 26 February 2000 by Hutt Valley Tramping Club president Gary Goldsworthy and DOC Wellington Conservator Allan Ross.

23 24 25

23 Flying materials to hut site, October 1999 24 Third Powell Hut under construction, November 1999 25 Opening of third Powell Hut, 26 February 2000

Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

The Department of Conservation manages backcountry huts in Tararua and Aorangi forest parks in association with the Tararua-Aorangi Huts Committee, which represents tramping clubs and Deer Stalkers Association branches that own huts in the parks. The Department and the Committee jointly plan, finance and provide labour for the network of huts.

H.V.T.C

Interested to find out more about the Hutt Valley Tramping Club and its broad range of activities?

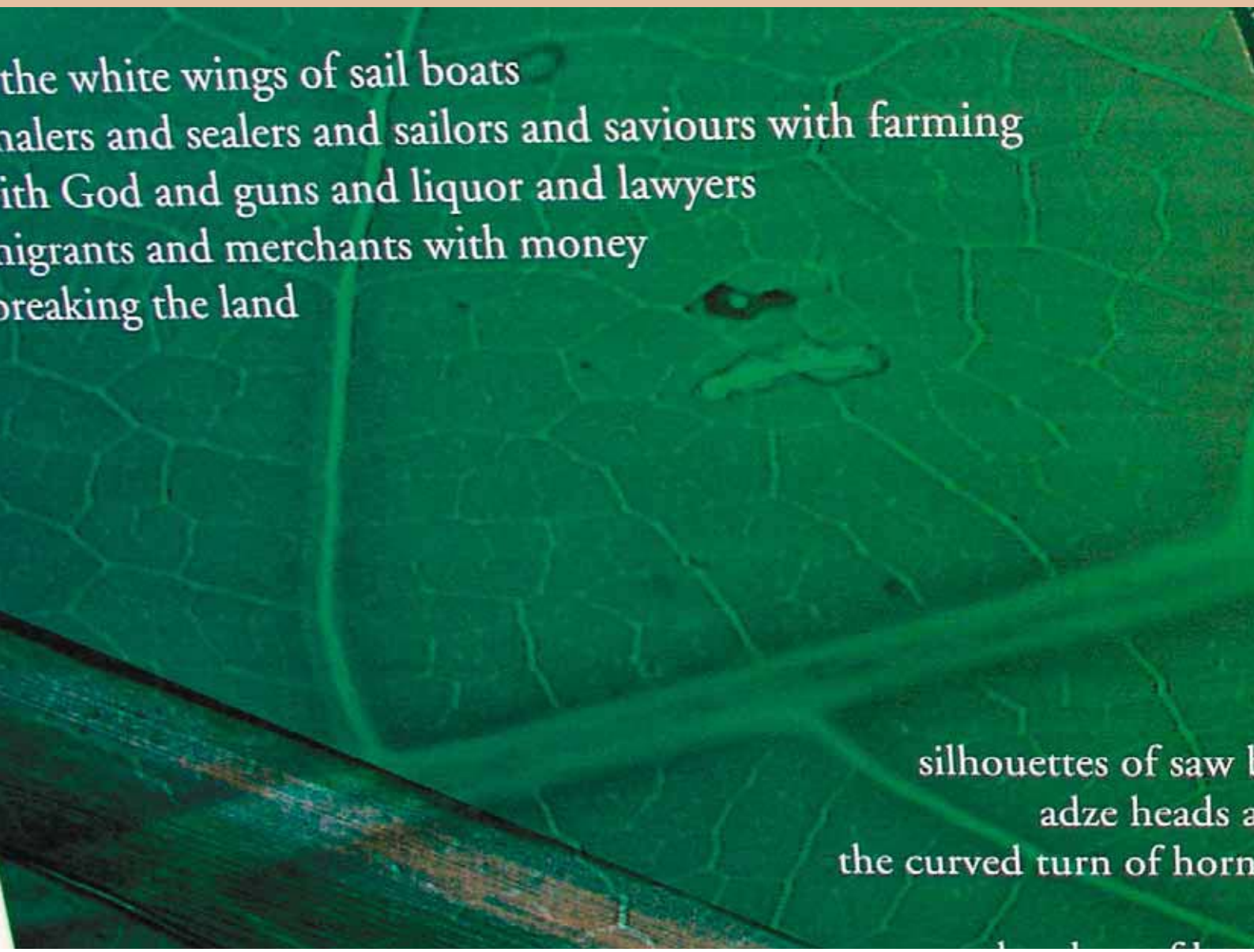
Meetings held 7.45 pm every Wednesday at HVTC clubrooms, Birch St Reserve, Waterloo.

For further information visit our web site: www.hvtc.org.nz

Production of this display was made possible with funding from the Hutt Valley Tramping Club.

Powell hut panel. Designer: Jeremy Rolfe

stories link people with heritage and places
interpretation provides diverse
entertaining and enjoyable experiences



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