

Operating Procedure # O - P - 7

Subject: Programming Standards

Effective Date: July 1, 2015

Revision Date: May 25, 2019

Procedure Statement:

All sites will provide interpretive services and recreational programs for their guests and the local community. These services can be divided into four basic categories: public programs, passive interpretation, organized groups, and special events. Interpretive staff should offer a balance of these types of programs.

Definitions:

Public programs: those programs which provide some form of direct contact between the interpreter and the visitor. Programs which fall under this category would include hikes, environmental education, bird-watching, campfire programs, tours, canoeing, living history, and demonstrations, etc.

Passive interpretation: interpretation in which there is no direct contact between the interpreter and the visitor. This includes flyers, brochures, signage, self-guided tour brochures, audio tours and bulletin boards.

Organized groups: programs which are planned and conducted for a specific group of people, such as school groups, church groups, family reunions, corporate groups, and youth groups, etc.

Special events: activities which require a great deal of planning, preparation, staff involvement and time, and normally occur only on an annual basis.

Procedure:

Each state park and historic site has different staffing levels, different times for peak season and varying levels of funding for seasonal interpreters or program resource people. The appropriate

quality and quantity of programs is expected in each situation. Program events that involve alcoholic beverages must conform to State Law and Park Rules & Regulations and must be tasteful in nature and be approved by the Region Manager. Access to events involving alcohol must be controlled so members of the general public may not attend the event without a ticket, wrist band, or similar control method. There must be a distinguishable method of differentiating persons 21 years and older from persons under 21 years of age, such as different colored wrist bands. Parks/Historic Sites, and PRHS staff, may not obtain, sell, provide, or serve alcoholic beverages. Alcoholic beverages must be provided/served by a third party. Park management should review the organizations alcohol license to make sure they are in compliance prior to approving the event. Alcoholic beverages are permitted only in rented/designated facilities. PRHS Staff may not consume alcohol while working. Also, PRHS staff may not purchase or consume alcoholic beverages while in uniform, regardless if working or not working. Park staff in attendance that are not working and out of uniform still represent the park and should remain professional. Please note, properties managed or operated by the North Georgia Mountains Authority must follow the rules and stipulations set by their Alcoholic Beverage License and are exempt from the guidelines for alcoholic beverages in this SOP.

When planning programs, it is important to remember that quality is more valued than quantity. Programs should focus on interpreting the natural and cultural resources found on your park/site and providing appropriate recreational programs. The region manager/park manager will be the primary decision maker in determining overall park management priorities in relationship to providing programming services.

It is the responsibility of the interpreter to create theme-based interpretive programs focused around the appropriate interpretive topics that have been identified for their site. A theme is the central idea of a program; it is the unifying concept that ties a program together. In order to provide interpretation that is meaningful to visitors an interpreter must know the resource, know the audience so they can develop relevant themes, and use appropriate interpretive techniques to communicate effectively.

All parks and historic sites are required to complete an Interpretive & Recreation Plan which will establish the theme, program topics and recreational activities that are appropriate for the site. In addition, an Annual Program & Recreation Action Plan (AAP), which outlines interpretive efforts for the year including special events, passive interpretation projects, revenue goals and projected expenses should also be completed. The plan should be written by the interpretive staff and Park Manager and approved by the Region Manager.

Each park and historic site with access to a full-time Interpretive Ranger or seasonal naturalist is required to develop and maintain an up to date teacher guide and to provide both onsite and

offsite interpretive programs to local school systems. Sites without designated interpretive staff are encouraged to participate to the level they are able. Offsite programming within the schools is permitted with the approval of the site manager and should be outlined in the Annual Program & Recreation Action Plan.

Program evaluations are a key factor in maintaining program quality at a park/site. While it may not be necessary to complete an evaluation after every program it is helpful to evaluate new programs, regular programs (on occasion) to monitor effectiveness, and all special events. Evaluation is a critical part of program planning. Site staff can evaluate a program by documenting basic steps that need to be repeated the next time the program is conducted and including commentary on what worked and what didn't, suggest improvements for next time, and provide tips for set-up etc. This will save the program planner time when the program is repeated. Program attendees can evaluate an event or program they attended by completing an evaluation form online or provided by the site staff.

There is a Survey Monkey Program Evaluation form online that can be found here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PRHSPrograms> Staff are encouraged to offer the evaluation link or paper form after each program. The online link is the preferred method for evaluating, but in certain circumstances the written evaluation form may be needed. See attachment 4 to use a template to print the online link to offer guests. Staff can either hand out the printed link or can tell the public that they can access the "Program Evaluation Survey" through the "Contact Us" page on the PRHS website. To print the online link template use Avery Word template #5780 business cards. If the written evaluation form is the only option for a program, these evaluations should be kept in the site records and reviewed by staff to consider what worked well or how to improve the program. See attachment 1.

Supervisory staff can evaluate a program presenter to provide constructive criticism or suggestions for improvement. Program evaluations should be filed away with all other documents related to a program so that all of the information will be available when the next event is planned.

Authority: N/A

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Visitor Program Evaluation

Attachment 2 – Group Program Evaluation

Attachment 3 – Supervisor Program Evaluation

Attachment 4 – Evaluation link template