



# SANDHILL CRANE TOUR DOCENT TRAINING

Woodbridge Ecological Reserve

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# CDFW Mission, Overview, and Roles

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# What is in a Mission Statement?

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“Companies have mission statements to unify the efforts of all employees toward a long-term goal... [and to] communicate a company's values to their community to generate interest in the solutions their company creates.”  
– Indeed





# CDFW Mission

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The mission of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is to manage California's diverse fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their ecological values and their use and enjoyment by the public.





# CDFW Core Services

To fulfill its mission, CDFW provides the following services:

- Education & Outreach
- Administrative Support
- Law Enforcement
- Operation Support
- Lands & Facilities
- Public Use And Enjoyment
- Species & Habitat Conservation
- Permitting & Environmental Protection





# Roles that CDFW Staff Fill



**Administrative:** Public relations, accounting, and technology.

**Environmental Scientists:** Research, surveys, and analysis.

**Fish and Wildlife Technicians:** In the field and data collection.

**Scientific Aids:** Support department staff and programs.



# How Our Work Fulfills the Mission

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With your help, CDFW fulfills its mission by engaging the public, creating connections to the environment, and providing safe experiences with wildlife!



# Interpretation vs Information

# Ham's Definition of Interpretation

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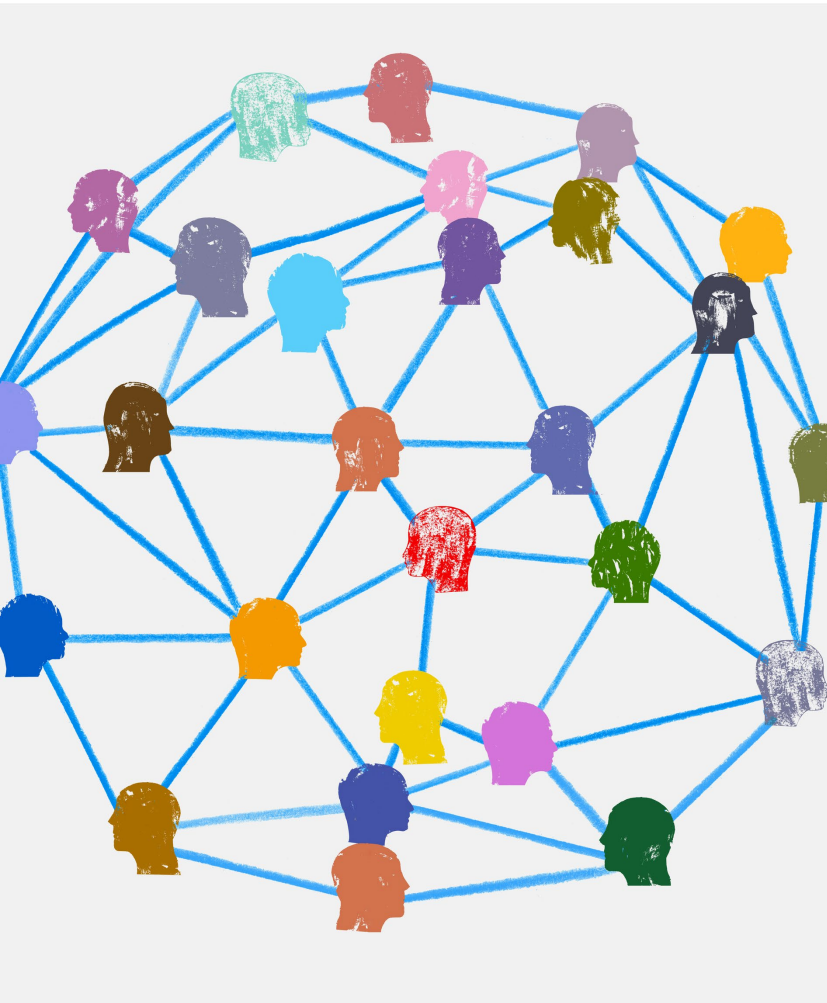


“Interpretation is an approach to communication... it involves translating the technical language of a natural science or related field into terms and ideas that people who aren't scientists can readily understand.”

**Dr. Sam Ham**

# NAI's Definition of Interpretation

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“Interpretation is a communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the meanings inherent in the resource.”

**National Association  
for Interpretation**



# Tilden's Definition of Interpretation



“An educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information.”

**Freeman Tilden**

# The Purpose of Interpretation

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Interpretation connects a **TANGIBLE** place or item with an **INTANGIBLE** feeling or universal value.

Effective interpretation is **THEMATIC** and connects audience to the resource. We'll go over this in future training.

# Tilden's 6 Principles of Interpretation

1. Relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor.
2. Go beyond information and reveal the deeper meaning and significance of the subject.
3. Interpretation is an art that combines many arts.
4. Develop a theme or a central idea that unifies the interpretation.
5. Do not dilute information for younger audiences, but address them with specific techniques.
6. Interpretation should aim to provoke rather than instruct.





# Interpretation vs Education

**Education:** focuses on memorization of repeatable facts.

**Interpretation:** focuses on connecting the public to a resource emotionally.





# Defining Interpretation

- Fosters curiosity and encourages further learning
- Creates personal connections and is action and goal-oriented

Sam Ham coined the acronym **R.O.T.E.**

- **R**elevant
- **O**rganized
- **T**hematic
- **E**njoyable



# State Parks Distinction: Interpretation vs Education

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“It is important to distinguish the purpose and value of interpretation from that of education. Education and interpretation share many common elements and their differences are not black and white; rather the differences are a matter of degree of importance of those common elements. Typically, education places a higher degree of importance on information than interpretation does. Interpretation typically places a higher degree of importance on inspiring and provoking the audience, than education does. While interpretation contains information and education attempts to inspire, it is the degree to which each strives for these goals that differentiates the two. Although most interpretive services strive to impart knowledge to visitors, this is not their overall purpose.”  
(DOM, pg. 10-11)



# Facilitating an Experience and Inspiring Curiosity



- The most interesting and/or longest part of the program should be experience-based.
- Tell conservation success stories that are emotional and will foster a sense of responsibility to the resource.
- Show Don't Tell – take opportunities to perform demonstrations vs giving detailed explanations.



# Curiosity Leads to Conservation

- Create a sense of “wanting more” in the visitor. This encourages visitors to educate themselves further about conservation efforts and seek out ways to get involved.
- Consciously omitting a few facts, allows more time for visitors to interact with docents and ask questions.





# How Docents Support CDFW's Mission

Our goal as Interpreters, or Docents, is to support the mission of the agency, by inspiring the public to help protect natural resources for the use and enjoyment of future generations.



# Putting Together Your Tour: Interpretive Techniques

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# What is Thematic Interpretation?

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## Thematic Interpretation

- Fosters curiosity
- Makes connections
- Creates community

# Interpretation Connects the Heart, Mind, and Spirit

“The heart of our movement is a thing of the spirit, although the material we deal with is land.”

– Newton B. Drury,  
pg. 10, CDPR,  
[Dept. Operations Manual](#)

...By linking physical things to universally held values.





# Tangibles vs Intangibles

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Tangibles help connect the audience to a topic, something literal, understandable, and familiar.

Intangibles are something emotional, representational, significant, personally relate to in unique way.

**When we use intangibles, we provide an opportunity for the audience to connect in their own personal way.**

# Activity: Identifying Intangibles

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Which of the following are intangibles?

1. River Otters
2. Sense of Wonder
3. Building Community
4. Hope
5. Geological Formations
6. Creating Connections
7. Restoration Projects



# Activity: Identifying Intangibles (Answer)

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Which of the following are intangibles?

1. River Otters
2. Sense of Wonder
3. Building Community
4. Hope
5. Geological Formations
6. Creating Connections
7. Restoration Projects

# Activity: Connecting to Intangibles

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Which of the following is a topic that links to an intangible?

1. Whales of the North Coast
2. The Grey Whale Migration spreads hope along the North Coast

# Activity: Connecting to Intangibles (Answer)



Which of the following is a topic that links to an intangible?

1. Whales of the North Coast
2. The Grey Whale Migration spreads hope along the North Coast



# A Theme Ties an Idea Together

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- Helps build your program
- Guides the supporting information you choose to talk about
- Keeps content relevant, concise, and effective
- Enforces take home message/end goal
- Answers “so what?”
- Anchors program, it returns to the theme to reinforce concepts
- Draws in a relevant audience

# Mind Mapping Tool

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- 1) Generally, my presentation is about\_\_\_\_,
- 2) Specifically, I want to tell my audience to know about\_\_\_\_,
- 3) After hearing my presentation, I want my audience to understand that\_\_\_\_\_.

**Remember:**

Thematic Interpretation fosters curiosity, makes connections, and creates community.





# How to Build a Program From a Theme

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## **Introduction (5 mins)**

Welcome the audience. Tell them what you will cover, the plan for the evening and explain facilities/bathroom situation. Introduce the theme of the program and why the audience should care about it.

## **Introduce a Subtheme (10 mins)**

- Topic: Conservation History
- Theme: The Sandhill Crane Conservation Struggle

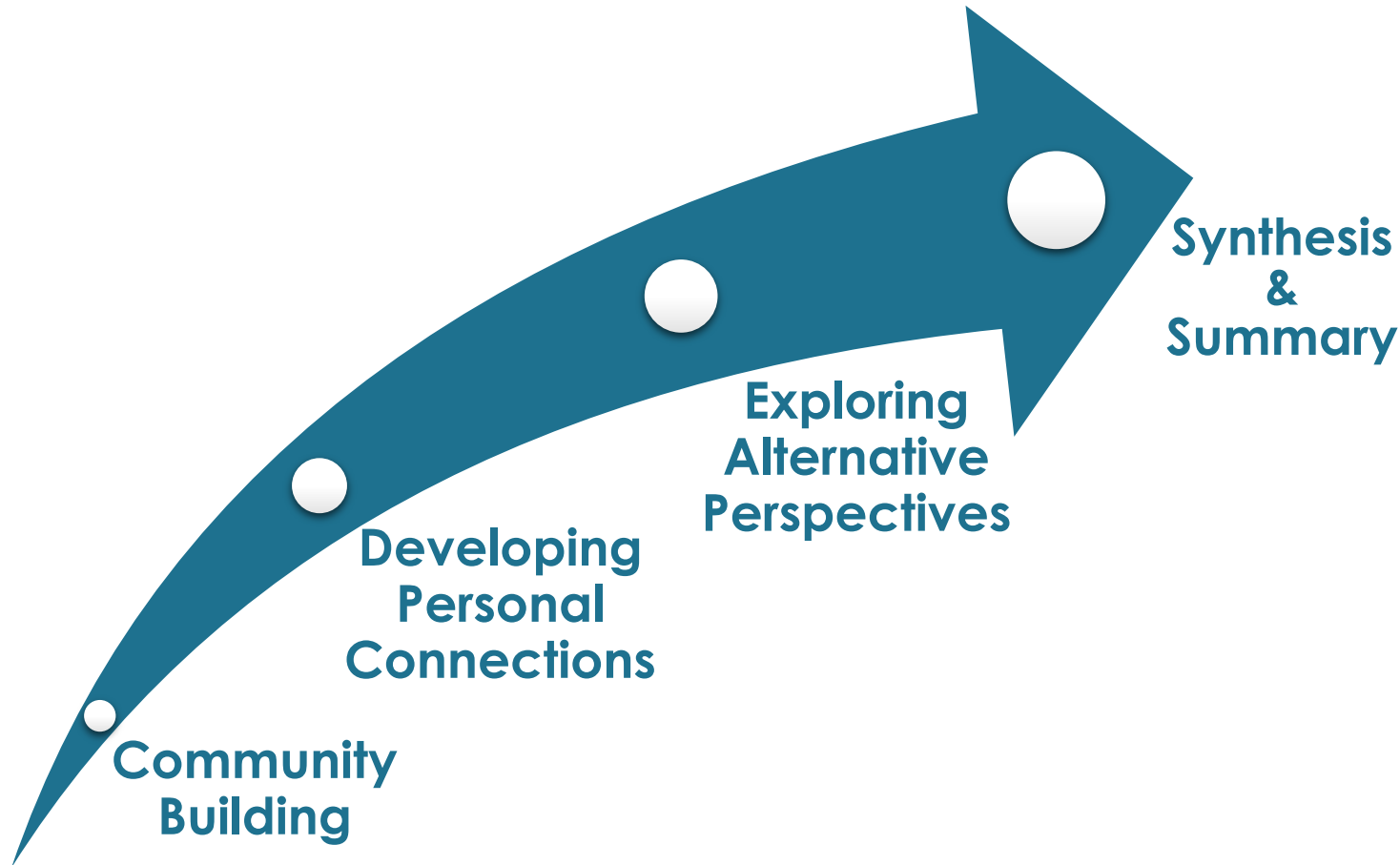
## **Introduce a Subtheme (10 mins)**

- Topic: Ecology and Basic Identification
- Theme: Sandhill Crane Looks and Likeabilities

## **Conclusion (5 mins)**

Restate your theme (take-away message.) Share how they can make a positive impact in conservation. Tell the audience about the viewing portion of the program.

# The Arc of Dialogue: Facilitating Meaningful Conversations



Scaffold questions to facilitate dialogue:

## **Phase 1**

Invite participants to share

## **Phase 2**

Share our own experiences

## **Phase 3**

Explore beyond ourselves

## **Phase 4**

Invite participants to reflect



# Best Practices for Audience Engagement

- The 5 senses: play sound clips, stimulating visuals, acknowledge scents and smells, use props to pass around
- Use call and response or fun attention getters
- Ask the audience open ended questions
- Do brainstorm sessions
- Prepare props, visual aids, skits...





# Things Not to Say (An Incomplete List)

Avoid saying:

- “I forgot.”
- “I can’t remember.”
- “I don’t know.”
- “I left my prop somewhere else.”





# Preparing Your Own Program

Thematic Interpretation fosters curiosity, makes connections, and creates community.

## **Remember:**

You will be partnered with an experienced Docent. Keep these things in mind when you assist your lead Docent and begin to build your own programs.



# Activity: Interpretation vs Education

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- Discuss how interpretation differs from education.
- Which one is focused on memorization of repeatable facts?
- Which one is focused on connecting the public to a resource emotionally?



# Activity: Think, Pair, Share

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- What inspired you to become a Docent here?
- Share any prior educational, recreational, or interpretive experience you have that may have guided you towards becoming a Docent.

**THANK YOU!**