



THE CENTER

The Center

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NATURE CENTER DIRECTORS AND ADMINISTRATORS SECTION

FALL 2009

Dear Naomi,

2009 Interpreter's Roadshow November 16 & 17, 2009

The Interpreter's Road Show was designed to allow front line interpreters and managers at all levels to network, receive a behind-the-scenes tour of interpretive facilities in the host conference region and discuss issues facing those operating a nature or visitor center.

During this year's Road Show, we will visit the Roaring Brook Nature Center, Stowe Center, Dinosaur State Park, The New Haven Museum, Solomon Goffe House and Westmoor Park. This professional development opportunity includes time to go behind the scenes at each of these locations and talk with staff to learn how they manage volunteers, programs, building and facility development, master planning, funding development, exhibits and much more.

Information at www.interpnet.com/workshop.

Join us on Google Groups

You have to be invited to join the group by me as the administrator of the group page.

Group home page: <http://groups.google.com/group/ncda-section>. Choose 'Sign in and apply for membership'.

You can also contact me at n.thompson@stonemountainpark.org. I can invite you to join the group.

We have already had some discussions and exhibit pieces are posted for

In This Issue

[2009 Interpreter's Roadshow](#)

[Join us on Google Groups](#)

[Skill Bank](#)

[Turning an Adventure into a Fundraiser](#)

[Certified Interpretive Manager Grants](#)

[Hobbs State Park](#)

[Section Officers](#)

[The Center deadlines](#)

Section Officers

Travis Williams Director

Outdoor Discovery Center
A-4214 56th Street
Holland, MI 49423
616-393-9453
travis@outdoordiscovery.org

Amy Roell Deputy Director

Hamilton County Park District
4760 Highbridge Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45238
513-521-7275
aroell@greatparks.org

sharing.

Skill Bank

Would you be willing to be a resource for our Skill Bank? This is an effort to make it easier for NCDA section members to get specific help from specific NCDA members.

Please send a short biography (2 paragraphs), your contact information, and what skills you are willing to share (technology, management, budget) to Travis Williams, NCDA Director, travis@outdoordiscovery.org.

Turning an Adventure into a Fundraiser (aka Fishing for Fun and Funds)

Travis Williams, Executive Director
Outdoor Discovery Center
Holland, Michigan

If someone told you that you could go fishing for sailfish in Guatemala and make \$10,000 for your organization, would you do it? I did and it not only was a great fundraiser, but a great friendraiser! Creative ideas can open countless doors of opportunity.

In the spring of 2005 I learned about a special place in Guatemala where people come from all over the world to go fishing. Given the uniqueness of this adventure I began to think about how I could turn it into a fundraiser. In June of 2006, I developed a packet of information about the trip and placed a price tag of \$5,000 on the experience. The actual cost of the trip was about \$3,500 per person. I scheduled the trip for February because that is a great time for people in the upper Midwest to head south to warm weather. I ended up with 7 people that first year but it still was a great trip.

My group fished for three days. The boats are big, loaded with all of the latest technology and equipment, and the people running the boats are amazing fishermen. Catching 20 to 30 sailfish a day made the experience even more amazing. Once hooked the fish frequently jump out of the water. It did not matter who had the fishing pole, screams of excitement and a rush of adrenaline was present.

Each fish caught was tagged, recorded and released. Special circle hooks designed with big game fishing and conservation in mind help make the experience a success. The hooks are designed to slide to the corner of the fish's mouth when the hook is set.

As you think about raising money for your organization, think about selling an experience like fishing in Guatemala. Every one of my Trip participants has become close friends to my organization. For the Outdoor Discovery Center this trip made a lot of sense. We were founded by a conservation group that supported and promoted hunting, fishing, wildlife management and habitat development. The concept of experiencing some of the world's greatest sport fishing while supporting

Jon Brown Treasurer

Arkansas State Parks
2428 Marina Road
Russellville, AR 72802
479-880-1710
jon.brown@arkansas.gov

Randy Smith Secretary

Sandy Creek Nature Center
390 Forest Heights Dr.
Athens, GA 30606
706-613-3615 x233
RandySmith@co.clarke.ga.us

Naomi Thompson Website/Newsletter Editor

Stone Mountain Memorial
Association
PO Box 689
Stone Mountain, GA 30086
770-498-5619
n.thompson@stonemountainpark.org

The Center deadlines

Winter: December 1
Spring: March 1
Summer: July 1
Fall: September 1

Did you know?

Past issues of The Center and highlights from past Interpreter's Roadshows can be found at the NCDA website
www.interpnet.com/about_nai/regions_sections.shtm

The Center is published quarterly by the Nature Center Directors and Administrators section of the National Association for Interpretation (NAI). The NAI mission is to inspire leadership and

a nonprofit organization proved to be a great combination of opportunity, experience and fundraising.

Guatemalan outfitters realize that the fishing visitors are a wonderful source of income and therefore provide great customer service. Not only do you get to fish, but you get to interact with the local culture. It may be a passive form of interpretation, but none-the-less it is interpretation. This trip provided a significant level of interaction with the local Guatemalan communities, world class sport fishing with a species conservation emphasis and a variety of natural history experiences sprinkled in all throughout.

Even if you are not be able to go to Guatemala fishing, the concept is one that can be applied to many other unique experiences. Just keep these things in mind:

1. The experience should be unique and memorable
2. Know your audience and make sure the season, the timing and the opportunity align with the interests of the potential participants
3. Make sure you make money. Many people are looking to do something that is unique and impactful, and they are willing to pay for it. Don't be afraid to put a price on something that not only covers costs but makes money.
4. Try to connect the experience to your mission. You will get a greater level of buy in if participants can see how and why you are offering up an experience.
5. Finally, make sure you are keeping your eye on the long term relationship and not just the short term experience. If people are willing to pay for something unique they likely will have an interest in more than just that one experience!

For more information on the Guatemala Trip contact Travis Williams at the Outdoor Discovery Center 616-393-9453.

Certified Interpretive Manager Grants

Would you like to become an NAI Certified Interpretive Manager? NCD Section members are invited to apply for a grant that will pay for the cost of one certification packet(value \$125), per individual in the CIM category. This year, the NCD Section will offer two grants. Recipients will be chosen based on financial need, NAI involvement, and/or the desire to become certified.

Visit www.naissections.org/NCD/ for an application and details.

Hobbs State Park

Article from information send by
Steve Chyrchel, Interpretive Naturalist
Hobbs State Park - Conservation Area

The newest Arkansas State Park System visitors Center opened on June

excellence to advance natural and cultural interpretation as a profession. Visit: www.interpnet.com for more information.



2009. Hobbs State Park opened its visitor center after a wait of 30 years. Two legislators pushed the state to buy the property in 1979. Local bankers and the Nature Conservancy helped with the purchase.

Artifacts and interactive panels tell the story of the area. From Native Americans to the small saw mill community of Wan Winkle to the entrepreneur, Roscoe Hobb, to the present day Hobbs State Park.

Interactive exhibits display the area's ecology and geology. The area's natural history is on fantastic display. The supportive Friends of Hobbs State Park paid for injured or ill animals to be prepared by a taxidermist. Stuffed native animals are all over the exhibit.

A cave, molded from an actual cave in the area gives visitors a realistic understanding of the types of caves found all over northwest Arkansas. This type of cave is found within Hobbs State Park. The narrow openings and possible disturbance of endangered species means visitors are not allowed to explore them.

The visitor center will encourage continued interest by installing new and changing exhibits. A wall of windows with binoculars invites visitors to watch animals that come to the manmade pond.

The building itself is an educational exhibit on environmentally friendly construction. The construction used local materials, the buildings atmosphere is maintained by a geothermal heating and cooling system. A careful choice of the building colors will reduce heat gain.

At the opening ceremony, the Park Superintendent, Mark Clippinger, said the visitor center opening was "a dream come true".

NCDA Mission: To provide leadership and inspire excellence in nature center administration