Woodend Sanctuary

Visitor Interpretive Experience Plan

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Cover photo courtesy of Mary Bucy

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Introduction

The Project

The purpose of this project is to develop a Visitor Interpretive Experience Plan, which, in tandem with the Strategic Plan and Woodend 50-Year Master Plan, will guide development of visitor experiences that contain a significant amount of interpretation.

This Visitor Interpretive Experience Plan (VIEP) focuses on identifying and conceptualizing the network of orientation, wayfinding and interpretive opportunities to create and facilitate visitor *interpretive* experiences associated with Woodend Sanctuary, which are visitor experiences with a significant interpretive component. All visitor interpretive experiences associated with the Sanctuary do not have to occur on the site itself. For example, people viewing the Virtual Tour on the web site will be having an interpretive experience.

The Continuums Used to Develop the Plan

Developing the VIEP for Woodend Sanctuary is based on moving people along two continuums – the Continuum of Active Involvement in Conservation and the Continuum of Experiences in Natural Habitats, which moves from an urban environment where a built environment dominates to a natural environment where Natural Habitats dominates.

Continuum of Active Involvement in Conservation

One of the desired outcomes is for visitors to experience nature in ways that make them more aware of and comfortable with (less afraid of) Natural Habitats and inspires them to become active stewards of natural resources. Consequently, the interpretive opportunities should be designed to move people along a continuum of simply valuing nature as part of their quality of life (an attitude), to being an active steward.

Continuum of Experiences in Natural Habitats

Ultimately, the desire is for visitors to have interpretive experiences that lead to a never-ending string of experiences in natural areas, helping to establish being in natural habitats as a valued part of a visitor's lifestyle. Not all visitors will venture all the way along the continuum of experiences, but they should always have the opportunity to go further. That goal dictates the following:
- …Every interpretive experience should include marketing additional interpretive experiences;
- …Woodend Sanctuary should function both as a destination and as a *portal* to other similar areas that provide experiences in natural habitats with a high degree of ecological functionality.

The Information Network Approach

In today's world people have a very limited amount of time and virtually unlimited options for spending it, which makes time a highly valued currency. Interpretive opportunities are commodities, with the cost measured primarily in time and attention. To compete successfully for a visitor's attention requires offering information that the target audience considers to be a worthwhile benefit for the cost involved. That is why the number of people reading interpretive panels increases with the use of visuals (higher promise of benefit at lower cost), reduced text (reduced perception of and actual 'cost' in terms of time and effort), and application of a myriad of other factors that contribute to the perception of a good benefit-to-cost ratio.

In general, people prefer to commit in a progression of small increments of time when making choices on engaging and staying engaged in interpretive opportunities (if I like the heading I will read the text; if I like this sign I will read the next one; if I like this exhibit I will look at the next one; and so on). A commitment at the beginning of an interpretive experience to stay engaged throughout, such as to read *all* the signs, is rare. We have all experienced this when reading books. We choose them based on an expectation that we will find a benefit we seek (entertainment, mental stimulation, etc.) at a particular 'cost' related to time and difficulty. If the book does not provide the desired and expected return on the investment of time and attention, we often quit.
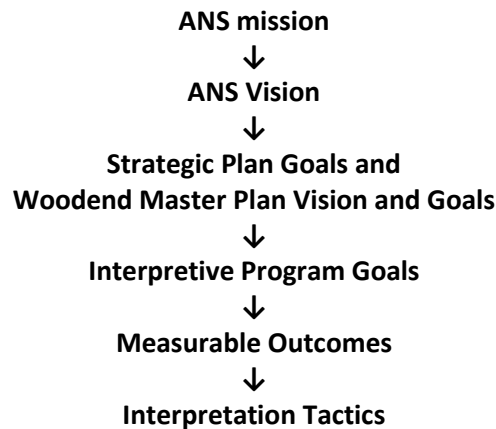
Applying the incremental approach to interpretation results in a series of opportunities arranged in a network, beginning with ones that are highly visible, attract attention and do not require a significant amount of time and effort, and then moving to opportunities that provide more detail. A book is a good example of an information network approach. The story that the author wants people to engage in is contained in the chapters, but to motivate people to start reading the book designers use a cover to attract attention so people see and pick up the book, a back cover to entice them to open the book, excerpts and other information on flyleaves to motivate them to start reading chapter one, and so on. Books are designed this way because it matches the process people use to choose to engage and stay engaged.

This is the approach being used to develop the Interpretive Network for Woodend Sanctuary. For visitors, highly visible, low effort and interesting tactics, such as interpretive panels in or adjacent to areas already frequented by visitors (so additional cost in time to access the panel is minimized) will attract attention and quickly introduce people to key concepts, hopefully piquing their interest so they are more amenable to spending time with other opportunities that provide more detail. Successive levels of information providing more detail and requiring more time and effort, such as interpretive trails, will build off the panels.

ANS VIEP Goal Hierarchy

VIEP Goal Hierarchy Structure

The VIEP takes its direction (**Interpretive Program Goals**) from the **Strategic Goals** for Woodend and the recently completed **Woodend 2065 Master Plan**, which reflect how ANS intends to achieve their overall Mission and Vision. The **Interpretive Program Objectives** reflect impacts on the behavior, knowledge and/or attitude of the target audiences which, if achieved, reflect progress toward achieving the **Interpretive Program Goals**. Interpretation tactics, which are the interpretive opportunities to develop as tools for communicating key messages, will be determined near the end of the planning process. All of those elements have been captured in the hierarchical structure depicted below.

ANS mission
↓
ANS Vision
↓
Strategic Plan Goals and
Woodend Master Plan Vision and Goals
↓
Interpretive Program Goals
↓
Measurable Outcomes
↓
Interpretation Tactics

The structure of the Goal Hierarchy reflects several significant points. First, everything stems from the mission. Second, the statements at each level, whether goals, missions or vision, are derived from the statements of the level above. Determining each set of statements requires asking the question, "how can this [goal, outcome, mission] help achieve the next level up?" For example, the specific Interpretive Program Goals for Woodend were determined by asking, "How can an Interpretive Program help achieve the ANS Strategic Goals for Woodend, and the vision established in the Master Plan?" The connection between all levels provides the planner with tools for identifying each level of goals, and for defending those goals. Finally, the structure clearly shows the link between the purposes for which Woodend is managed and the recommended actions associated with developing visitor interpretive experiences.

ANS Mission

The following is the mission of ANS:

*The Audubon Naturalist Society inspires residents of the greater Washington DC region to appreciate, understand, and **protect** their natural environment through outdoor experiences, education, and **advocacy.***

The words 'protect' and 'advocacy' reflect a focus on causing impact on behaviors of target audiences.

ANS Vision

The following is the vision of ANS:

*The Audubon Naturalist Society seeks to create a larger and more diverse community of people who treasure the natural world and **work** to preserve it.*

In this case, the word 'work' reflects the focus on causing impact on behaviors of target audiences.

ANS Vision for Woodend (established in the Master Plan)

The following is the vision of the ANS for Woodend. Note that it is only for Woodend Sanctuary, and therefore does not cover everything that ANS is doing to motivate others to help conserve natural resources.

> *Historic Woodend Nature Sanctuary is Washington's oasis of sustainable, healthy, natural habitats – welcoming and inspiring all people to enjoy, learn about and protect our shared environment.*

In this case, healthy natural habitats are defined as ones that experience a high degree of ecological functionality, ideally with humans being a part of the natural habitat. By necessity, this will mean inclusion of many natural plants to support the complex food webs.

ANS Strategic Goals

The ***Strategic Plan: Calendar Year 2018-2020*** identified goals in the following areas:
- Conservation program (CP);
- Adult Education Program (AEP);
- Childhood and Youth Education Program (CYEP);
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI);
- Development, and Engagement (MDE); and,
- Marketing and Communications MC)'

The list of goals in each of these categories can be found in the Appendices.

Interpretive Program Goals and Objectives

It's not enough to simply value nature; residents in the DC metro area need to take actions to help restore and protect nature, and/or to support the efforts of ANS. Motivating people to take action of this kind generally requires that the target audience cares about whatever they are restoring or protecting, or caring about the organization trying to restore and/or protect those valued resources (ANS), to the point that the personal benefit they derive from their actions is worth the time and effort they expend. Interpretation can help that effort by creating strong positive emotional, intellectual and physical connections with nature. It can also help facilitate visitation of residents from the DC metro areas to Woodend by stirring curiosity and interest. It is important to recognize that the goal of causing impact on behaviors is not likely to be attained by simply changing knowledge and attitudes. It also requires identifying barriers to the desired behaviors and minimizing or eliminating those barriers.

It is also important to understand that typically it is not the interpretive opportunities by themselves that are going to attract visitors, rather it is experiences. Interpretive opportunities can increase the attraction power by adding value to those experiences, but are likely to be ignored if they compete with those experiences. In sum, interpretation can be an effective tool for forging strong emotional and intellectual bonds between the natural world and people, but it needs to be meshed with experiences that visitors desire at Woodend to be effective.

Deriving Interpretive Program Goals

Interpretive Program Goals were identified by asking the question, "How will an Interpretive Program help achieve Strategic Goals that aren't actions to be taken on the part of ANS?" For example, Conservation Goal #2 is to ". . . model conservation stewardship by restoring Woodend." Achieving that goal doesn't require anything on the part of the visitor, but instead, action on the part of ANS. In contrast, an Interpretive Program can help Conservation Goal #1, which is to ". . . conserve Special Places in the DC Region" by motivating residents of that area to take actions that help achieve that goal.

The interpretive goals that were derived from that approach appear in column 1 of the following table, with the remaining columns identifying the associated Strategic Goals that will benefit from the Interpretive Program, and the Measurable Objectives that are expected. A listing of all Strategic Goals can be found in Appendix C. The acronyms used in the table identify the following Strategic Goals:

CONS: Conservation Goal
AED: Adult Education Goal
YED: Youth Education Goal
DEI: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Goal
MDE: Membership, Development and Engagement Goal
M&C: Marketing and Communications Goal

Note: *This table originally had a column for interpretive tactics. Those will be determined as part of this planning process and will be included in future submittals.*

ANS Visitor Interpretive Experience Plan Goals

Interpretive Plan Goal	Strategic Plan Connection	Measurable Outcomes
1. Increase awareness by residents of the DC metro area of attractions of Woodend Nature Sanctuary (including habitats, demonstration sites, programs, historical sites and the Naturalist Shop) in order to increase visitation.	**CONS1** Conserve special natural places in the DC region including Woodend Nature Sanctuary **AED2** Increase outreach to new and diverse adult audiences who will enjoy, learn about and protect nature **M&C1** Bring our mission work to the attention of more people of diverse backgrounds	a. Increase in number of first-time visitors to Woodend b. Increase in number of return visitors to Woodend
2. Improve the sense of welcome and the quality of visitor experiences at Woodend as defined by the target audiences.	**YED1** Create, use, and share the highest standards for early childhood nature-based education **YED2** Provide a Play Space in the Woods at Woodend **DEI3** Open pathways and reduce barriers to engage new partners, people and communities in the work of ANS	a. Increase in number of non-English speakers who visit Woodend b. Increase in the amount of time visitors spend at Woodend.
3. Increase the degree to which Woodend visitors value and engage with nature that is native to the DC region.	**CONS2** Model conservation stewardship by restoring Woodend **AED1** Expand adult education to help more people become environmentally literate champions of habitats and wildlife.	a. Increase in number of people who volunteer at Woodend. b. Increase in number of people trained to become citizen scientists c. Increase in sales of items related to stewardship activities
4. Inspire Woodend visitors to engage in stewardship and conservation behaviors in their daily lives.	**CONS4** Expand the cadre of residents who are effective advocates for conservation **AED2** Increase outreach to new and diverse adult audiences who will enjoy, learn about and protect nature	a. Increase in number of people who sign up for ANS action alerts b. Increase in number of people who attend stewardship classes. c. Increase in number of people who voluntarily receive take-home stewardship and conservation materials.

| 5. Increase visitor engagement in activities that support ANS. | **CONS5** Increase effectiveness of ANS citizen scientists by communicating their results broadly
DEI1 Model diversity, equity and inclusion as best practices
DEI4 Retain new stakeholders as active participants in the ANS community
M&C4 Support growth of membership and donor rolls
MDE Engage supporters and raise funds for the restoration of Woodend | a. Increase number of new ANS members
b. Increase in number of ANS members from communities we do not traditionally serve
c. Increase in financial contributions to ANS
d. Increase in number of program participants in all ANS programs |

Theme (Messaging) Hierarchy

Introduction

Interpretive themes (messages) and topics are not the same. A topic is a subject, such as "children's health," or "nature play." A theme is a *statement* or *message* about the subject, such as "nature play is important to a child's development." Themes are the core of the stories that are told in the interpretive opportunities; stories are selected in order to communicate themes. Consequently, themes are determined before selecting and developing the interpretive tactics.

The elements in a theme hierarchy include:

Themes (Messages)
These are the key ideas or concepts to be communicated.

> **Sub-themes**
> These are concepts that support a theme.
>
> > **Supporting Stories**
> > These are the stories that communicate a sub-theme or theme.

Themes are derived by determining the concepts a visitor needs to understand in order for them to respond in a way that helps achieve the goals and objectives established for the interpretive program.

Overview of Theme Hierarchy

Achieving the desired outcomes (actions by visitors) requires that people value the resource, understand the threats to the resource, be motivated to take action, understand what they can do to help conserve the resource, and feel empowered that they can make a difference by taking individual action. Achieving those desired outcomes depends on more than just interpretive opportunities. Help will be needed from classes put on by ANS, the Environmental Education Program and other strategies that focus on education. Interpretation is not focused on education, although that is the end game. Interpretation is focused on inspiring people to become educated; to learn more about particular topics. It is difficult to educate people using chance encounters with interpretive opportunities, but you can stimulate their brains and motivate them to take classes, attend programs, get involved in Environmental Education opportunities, etc. where they can get educated.

The following are key points to remember when reviewing and adding to the theme hierarchy:

1. Themes (messages) are tools for the communicator, *not* the headers for exhibits. Think of a theme as what you want people to be saying in their head after an interpretive experience at Woodend.

2. Most entities that manage natural resources are trying to accomplish the same general goal – connect people with nature in a way that motivates them to take action. Consequently, they tend to use the same general themes (messages). For example, communicating the theme that 'nature is important to your (my) quality of life' is a necessary first step in the quest to cause impact on visitor behavior because if people don't value nature, they aren't likely to engage in stewardship of our natural resources. Although the same basic set of themes may be the same, the stories changes from site to site due to differences in flora, fauna and local history.

3. With all audiences, but particularly with urban audiences, it cannot be assumed that they are cognizant of basic biological concepts. For example, many urban dwellers in the United States probably don't understand that wildlife depends on habitat for survival. If people do not understand that concept, they don't understand that managing wildlife is all about managing habitat, and if they don't understand that concept, they won't understand many of the actions ANS is going to take to develop the variety of habitats at Woodend. As another example, many people probably don't understand that everything in an ecosystem (or a watershed) is linked. If they don't understand that concept, it is hard for them to understand that what they do in their yards and urban area ultimately affects other parts of the ecosystem and they won't understand why they should change their behaviors. Consequently, those basic biologic concepts should be a part of the theme hierarchy.

4. It is important *not* to assume that people care about Natural Habitats to the point that they would actively engage in conservation. That does not mean that they don't value or care about nature at all; just that you can't assume they care *enough* about Natural Habitats to become active stewards. Many likely believe that by planting exotic species they are contributing to a healthy ecosystem because those species, in their mind, are 'nature.'

5. Motivating people to engage in conservation involves communicating some version of the following sequence of themes:
   - **Value theme:** This resource is important to my quality of life. (People don't typically spend time and energy protecting something that offers no value in their life.)
   - **Endangered theme:** This resource is endangered (and therefore, my quality of life is in danger).
   - **Effort theme:** We (in this case ANS) are doing everything we can to help conserve this resource, but we need your help. (People generally aren't as motivated to help someone who isn't already working hard to accomplish a goal.)
   - **Concerted effort theme:** A lot of people are already engaging in actions to help. (People like to be a part of the majority. Consequently, if a lot of people are doing something they are more likely to also engage in that behavior.)
   - **Empowerment Theme:** You can make a positive impact. (The seemingly overwhelming problem of saving the environment makes some people simply give up. Also, many people in positions of influence support the 'Doomsday' stance, so it must be countered.)

   Communicating those themes puts you in position to issue a **Call to Action** and get a response. The Call to Action takes the form of "here's what you can do . . ."

6. Although people only remember 1-3 overarching concepts a few weeks after reading information, the theme hierarchy has more than 3 major themes because different people will respond to different messages.

7. Supporting stories may appear under more than one sub-theme because they can be used to communicate multiple concepts.

8. As noted in the introduction, interpretation is focused on sparking an interest in the natural world so visitors want to know more, at which point education can take over.

Themes, Sub-Themes and Examples of Supporting Stories

The following is an edited version of your most recent proposal for alternative themes. I kept it in the format (including colors) that you used so you could see where I suggest changes. I did not flesh this out completely because of the need to establish the themes and sub-themes before spending a lot of time identifying supporting stories.

Interpretive Theme 1: Nature helps each of us thrive

1-1 Nature can be inspirational
- Rich sensory experiences inspire the imagination
- Being in nature can be rejuvenating
- Seasonal changes provide new sensory experiences and insight into evolutionary survival strategies
- Time in nature can provide opportunities for artistic expression
- Time in nature can be enjoyed at a variety of experience levels

1-2 There are health benefits of spending time in nature
- Time in nature reduces stress
- Being active in nature helps keep us fit
- Time in nature helps children develop social and emotional skills
- Playing in nature builds confidence in children by providing opportunities for risk-taking
- Playing in nature helps children develop gross and fine motor skills

Interpretive Theme 2: Nature helps our neighborhoods thrive

2-1 We are all part of a connected ecosystem
- Plants and animals have co-evolved to form intricate food webs
- Many native species of wildlife depend upon specific native plants and habitat conditions for survival

2-2 Nature provides ecosystem services that support healthy communities
- Food: Pollinators are critical to crops we rely on for food
- Air: Trees provide us with clean air
- Water: Forests and wetlands mitigate flooding and provide clean water
- Climate Change: Trees provide climate change resilience

2-3 People and nature impact each other
- Woodend was influenced by human decisions including those of Native Americans, colonial settlers and their indentured and enslaved labor forces, the Wells family, the urban community surrounding it, and ANS itself.
- Woodend habitats are dominated by non-native species due to human impacts
- The Woodend forest lacks young trees due to overabundant deer caused by human extirpation of predators
- Clean Drinking Stream has been degraded by urban stormwater runoff
- Degraded ecosystems negatively impact human health and enjoyment of nature

Interpretive Theme 3: We can help nature thrive

3-1 ANS is conserving and creating wildlife habitat at Woodend and you can help
- Volunteers are Woodend habitat stewards and citizen scientists
- ANS chooses native plants for wildlife benefits
- Forestry practices at Woodend aim to ensure a healthy and diverse forest for the future
- ANS manages invasive plants to create space for native plants and wildlife habitat
- Exclusion of overabundant deer allows for restoration of native plant communities
- Stream restoration at Woodend will create habitat and slow down pollution caused by urbanization

3-2 You can do things in your neighborhood and at home to help nature thrive
- Garden with native plants—in the backyard, at your church or school, or even on your windowsill or balcony
- Provide habitat features that wildlife need (water, bushes for cover)
- Plant trees for habitat, shade and stormwater uptake
- Replace lawns and turf with deep-rooted, native plants
- Use compost not chemical fertilizer to reduce stream pollution
- Refuse – Reduce – Reuse – Recycle: Reduce your consumption of energy and materials and be more efficient with those you do use
- Consider permeable surfaces for stormwater management

3-3 You can raise your voice for nature
- Advocate to protect and preserve green, open space
- Promote Land-use planning that supports nature in every neighborhood
- Share with your neighbors and elected officials how important it is to conserve of trees and forests
- Join with ANS and your local watershed organization to push for stream protection and better stormwater management

3-4: You can make a difference
- In the early years of ANS, members helped pass the Migratory Bird Treaty Act
- In the early years of ANS, members protected the C&O Canal Park from becoming a road, and preserved Dyke Marsh
- In recent years members have protected the pristine Ten Mile Creek from development and won important legislation to protect forests and regulate stormwater.

Information and Interpretive Opportunities

Introduction

The flow of information in the information network to support any visitor experience reflects the typical sequence of information desired by visitors, which starts with trip planning, moves to orientation and wayfinding, and continues – ideally – through interpretation. For example, people typically initially want information on what to take, what the site offers in terms of visitor opportunities, what to be prepared for and other information that helps them plan a trip. They then need wayfinding information to get to the site. After arrival, first-time visitors will need site-specific orientation and wayfinding information to locate the restrooms and plan their visit. Most will want to obtain a map of the area and get answers to basic trip planning questions such as, "What is there to do around here?" "Where can I see wildlife?" and, "Is it safe?"

Stages of Visitor Interpretive Experiences

Typical visitor experiences include the following continuum of stages:

Choosing to Engage

The first challenge is to motivate visitors to engage with information about Woodend. One role of the off-site information network is to market experiences at the site so potential visitors are aware of the Sanctuary, that it welcomes visitors (some people may have the impression that people are not particularly welcome since it is a nature sanctuary – this is an issue with wildlife refuges), and that it offers a lot of intriguing opportunities. Because people vary in terms of where they look for information on what to do, this part of the network has to have multiple tactics to ensure that it reaches as many members of target markets as possible.

Note: *This plan will not deal with the marketing of Woodend per ANS.*

Pre-Visit Experience

Whether they follow up on the Internet, call Woodend directly, or acquire information in some other way, people interested in visiting the site need information to plan their trip (Trip Planning Information).

Travel Experience

For those traveling on their own, wayfinding information is needed. Although most people will use GPS, some still prefer other methods, such as a map. Even with stand-alone tactics like a map or GPS, tactics that reinforce wayfinding, such as directional signage at key locations, is an advantage.

Those traveling by means of bus or other public transit will simply need to know where to get off (this will come into play if and when proposed Purple Line Metro Rail stops are developed. However, attention must be paid if the target audiences includes people who cannot afford public transportation. That barrier can be addressed by reduced or no cost for bus passes (perhaps on specific days and/or times).

Arrival Experience

Typically, arriving visitors want to know where the restrooms are, where to get a map and other information to explore a site. These are 'needs,' while interpretation is an option. Ideally, when they finish with this stage of their experience, visitors will be aware of the location of the restrooms (even if they don't use them on arrival), aware of sources of information regarding upcoming programs and events, aware that a person is available to answer questions, aware that the mansion has a Nature Store, have a plan for their visit, and know how to begin the experience they desire.

Primary Experience

Visitors then engage in the experience that attracted them to Woodend. Regardless of the experience / opportunity that attracted visitors, they should all be exposed to the interpretive network. In other words, all experiences should offer an interpretive component that motivates visitors to want to engage more fully in the interpretive network. The interpretive network begins with thematic overview and then guides people intellectually and physically through the site, all the while establishing emotional and intellectual connections critical to motivating the visitors to take action, not only to support ANS and Woodend, but to support conservation of natural and cultural resources in general. The challenge at this time is where to offer thematic overview and what media to use to communicate the information given the lack of an indoor space for such a function. This is not likely to be an issue when the new Education Building, which is near most of the visitor parking, is completed because it will have a Visitor Center.

Departure Experience

After engaging in the Primary Experience, visitors must prepare to leave, which typically involves another trip to the restrooms and, hopefully, a visit to the Nature Store. When the Master Plan has been implemented, most of the parking will be near the intersection of the road through Woodend and Jones Mill Road, and the Naturalist Shop will be located in the Education building, which presumably is where a visitor will be able to use *restrooms. This is the part of the experience when they are most receptive to information on upcoming programs, events and other reasons for a repeat visit. This is also a good time to offer information about the Friends Group and what it does.

It may be of value to add 'stopping at restrooms' to the sequences of visitor experiences beginning on page 92 of the Master Plan. It is a critical part of virtually any visitor's experience so it should show up on descriptions of those experiences to ensure that it is considered.

Return Travel Experience

To return to their home, visitors need orientation and wayfinding to guide them back to major thoroughfares, the bus stop, or wherever they are headed. (Again, although most people are likely to use GPS, at least for the foreseeable future there will be those who want a map and directions. The day I was late on one day of the previous work session is because my smart phone, with my GPS, shut down, and most of the people working at the hotel did not know how to guide me to Woodend.)

Post Trip Experience

Unless visitors have requested information from ANS, such as notices of upcoming programs and events sent via email, they don't have a need for continued contact. However, it is in the best interests of ANS to have a communication channel so they can continue to market experiences and opportunities. This can be done using email and/or social media.

Tactics by Stage of Visitor Experience

Choosing to Engage

Overview

Most visitor experiences are likely to begin off-site, typically within the context of a potential visitor's existing lifestyle, and not usually with a visit to the ANS website. Potential visitors must first become aware of Woodend and that it has opportunities in which they might be interested to motivate them to visit the website. That necessitates inserting marketing elements of the network into places already frequented by the target audiences, whether physically or digitally. This will vary by target audience. For example, reaching seniors may involve putting information at retirement communities, community centers, doctor's offices, health centers and other locations frequented by this audience. Reaching families may mean using radio and TV, reaching children in schools (who will take information to their families), and putting an exhibit in a community center, mall and similar places frequented by this audience.

Regardless of the tactic used, all should be trying to make people aware of Woodend Sanctuary, that it is open to the public, that it offers visitor opportunities, that it welcomes visitors, and where a potential visitor can get additional information.

Note: *The tactics for catching attention are not included in this plan per the request of ANS.*

Pre-Visit Experience

Overview

After learning that Woodend exists and has visitor opportunities, the visitor's next need is trip planning information. Many people will look for more information on the Internet. For those without access to the Internet, the telephone is usually an option. Regardless of the source, potential visitors should be able to easily find out all they need to know to plan a trip, such as hours of operation, what to bring, how to get to the Sanctuary, how long a visit might take, etc. A website can have additional information that markets experiences at Woodend while also communicating key messages, such as the In-Depth Video Tour of the site. Note that the In-Depth Video Tour may be the primary experience for visitors who are unable to access the actual site due to physical infirmity or other issues. For those who don't have access to the Internet, it will be important that they have access to the same information on the telephone, which requires training people who answer the telephone.

Tactics to Help People Plan a Visit

The primary tactic supporting the Pre-Visit Experience is the Woodend Sanctuary and ANS website. Although this tactic exists, it may need modifications as this plan is implemented. As a supplement to the website, the in-depth Video Tour of Woodend and Rust can help visitors plan a visit by giving them a better feel for the terrain, good times to visit, and other information. If designed will, the Video Tour can

also serve as a Virtual Tour of Woodend and Rust for those people who are not able to actually visit either site.

Woodend Sanctuary and ANS website

Note: This site already exists. It is included simply because it is part of the Information Network necessary to support visitor interpretive experiences.

Objectives
Ideally, when people finish interacting with the information on this website prior to a visit, they will:
- Be motivated to visit Woodend Sanctuary;
- Have the information necessary to plan a visit, which should include interpretive opportunities, programs, information on seasonal variation, information on best times to visit, what to bring, etc.;
- Be aware of upcoming projects in which they could be involved;
- Be aware of upcoming events.

Description and Concept
This is one of the first places many potential visitors will go to get more information. The site probably works well for people looking for a place to have a wedding, special event or corporate function. It is likely less effective for others unless they know that the site contains information that would be useful in planning a visit. The key to an effective website is the navigation system. A visitor should be able to go to the home page and quickly pick out the tab that will lead to the desired information. That is not currently the case for most of the target audiences. A second key is to have all basic information for a visit in the same place so the potential visitor doesn't have to search other places on the site. Unfortunately, all the necessary information regarding a visit to Woodend is not in one place on the website. The information provided also lacks some detail (such as the difficulty of trails).

Potential visitors should be able to print off the basic map/brochure of the site and possibly the Trail Guide.

In-depth Video Tour of Woodend and Rust

Objectives
In addition to basic awareness of the two sites and what they offer in terms of visitor opportunities, after interacting with this opportunity, visitors will:
- Be motivated to visit one or both sites;
- Be motivated to contribute in some way to Woodend Sanctuary / ANS;
- Feel empowered that he/she can make a positive contribution.

Key Messages
All the key messages should be woven into the video.

Description and Concept

The purpose of this tactic is not to supplant a visit to the site, but rather to pique interest and increase motivation to visit. This is also an important tactic for people unable to visit. For those people this is the Primary Experience. Consequently, it should contain the key messages and strive to accomplish the same goals – create a positive emotional connection to nature in general and Woodend specifically.

One possible approach is to use a series of short programs focused on different areas/features of the to communicate the key stories and messages. The short segments avoid requiring the visitor to commit a long chunk of time to watching the entire video in one sitting. Although anyone can use the In-Depth Video Tour, it is especially useful for people who cannot come to Woodend or Rust, and for 'armchair travelers.' The intent of the video is not to tour the sites, but rather to use such a tour to communicate the key messages. It can and should have historical information intertwined, but with the intent of answering likely visitor questions in such a way as to inspire viewers to visit.

Travel Experience

Overview

This is the part of the experience between when the visitor leaves home and when he or she arrives in the parking area. The key information needed during this part of the experience is wayfinding information. Although many visitors will likely use GPS on cell phones, many will still rely on directional signage.

Tactics to Help People Find Woodend Sanctuary

This consists of a combination of signage, maps and ensuring that the GPS takes them to the right location.

Off-site Directional Signage

Note: ANS is already planning upgrades directly in front of Woodend. This strategy has been included to ensure that upgrading directional signage on access highways and roads is a part of the plan.

Locations

As needed.

Description

The design of these signs will be controlled by the formats adopted by the entity with jurisdiction on the roadways that are in need of directional signage to Woodend.

Arrival Experience

Overview

The arrival experience involves first impressions, parking, accessing the restrooms, obtaining a map and any other orientation/wayfinding information for the Sanctuary, and conducting site-specific visit planning.

Aside from making visitors feel welcome, one of the initial goals for this part of the Arrival Experience is to move people arriving by vehicle to the correct parking area and facilitate the transition from vehicular travelers to confident pedestrians, which requires travelers knowing where they are going when they exit their vehicles. The next goal is to move them quickly and safely, with little mental effort on their part, from where they park to the location where they can meet their needs (restrooms, drinking water, place to get a map, etc.). At least some of the visitors arriving and parking in the upper parking areas will need toilets, which at this point are only available in the mansion, so completing the Arrival Experience will require a visit to the mansion.

When the toilets in the area near the Jones Creek Road are installed, many visitors will take care of these needs there, but for those parking in the upper parking areas, a trip to the mansion is still required to use the toilet.

Visitor confusion regarding entering the building is not just due to lack of signage; none of the potential entryways looks like a primary entrance. To address that issue, while at the same time making the primary entry through the Nature Store, I recommend creating a Welcome Plaza where the handicapped parking spaces are currently located, and making that the main entry to the building (which would be through the store). Handicapped entry would still be where it currently exists. If the plaza is developed, visitors approaching the north entry will know where they should go. As for people parking west of the building, I recommend creating an obvious pathway that accesses the Welcome Plaza, along with directional signage that makes visitors aware of the main entry and the handicapped entry.

Note: The nature store may have to reduce merchandise displayed in the space in order to avoid making the entry seem claustrophobic and that the entry is through a 'back door.' In addition, a staffed Welcome Desk should be located in a place easily visible to entering visitors, but far enough from the entry to avoid congestion at that point.

Note: It is important for visitors exiting the restroom in the mansion to immediately know which way to exit. Do not assume that they will know their way back from the restrooms.

Note: Arriving visitors do not usually spend much time on interpretation during the Arrival Experience. Typically, they are on their way to the restrooms, have not really "arrived" yet and do not have the information necessary to orient themselves and plan their visit.

Changes to layout and infrastructure

The following actions will support a good Arrival Experience:

- Create an all-weather pathway of permeable material from the existing path on the north side of the mansion to the south end of the crosswalk connecting to the north parking area. Visitors crossing at the crosswalk from the parking area currently end up on the lawn rather than on a pathway. Also create a node near the crosswalk on the south side of the road that encompasses a connection to a pathway for visitors to access the shop and a connection to a pathway for visitors to access the hemlock grove.
- Move the handicap spaces to the lot on the west side of the building and/or to the parking across the road to free up this area to be developed as the primary entry to the building.
- Create a safe pedestrian route connecting the handicapped entry on the north side of the mansion to the main entry on the west side of the building. This can be accomplished by moving the parking bumpers back enough on the north and west side of the mansion to allow safe passage. You could also put in planters to demarcate the visitor pathway. Note that this also serves as a safe passage to the Nature Store.
- Create an accessible, safe pathway around the entire mansion, with directional signage as needed, so visitors coming for weddings and other functions do not have to enter through the shop, but can find their way to their desired destination on this pathway.
- Create Staging Areas (all-weather surface with benches, preferably in the shade) on the east and west side of the parking area north of the mansion and one on the west side of the parking area on the west side of the building. These are places where parents can ask their children to wait while they get what they need out of their vehicles. They help prevent children waiting in the parking lot, or trying to cross the parking lot without their parents. They also serve as a meeting place if members of a group choose to do different activities. Note that the new parking area near the Jones Mill Road entrance should also have a staging area.
- Create walkway(s) along the south side of the entry road linking the mansion with the nature play space, with associated crosswalks to reach areas on the north side of the road.
- Remove the orientation kiosk currently located on the north side of the access road across from the Blair Garden. It encourages visitors to cross the road in a location without good sight lines.
- Install a portable toilet adjacent to the upper parking area across the road from the mansion. That way, everyone arriving via the Jones Mill Road entry is likely to see it, so even if they park in the lot closest to the building, they will know where the toilet is located.

Tactics to Help People Begin Their On-Site Experience

Site Orientation Panel

Locations

A version of this panel should be located at key places throughout the site where people are beginning their on-site experience as a pedestrian, such as at parking lots and the entry trails, or when they have options, such as at a fork in a trail. It shows where a visitor is in relation to everything else on the Sanctuary. This doesn't mean that a panel can be designed and mass produced. All will have a different

'you are here' marker, and all should be oriented the direction the visitor is facing (in other words, up is where the visitor is looking, not necessarily north). Consequently, the exact location of each panel needs to be determined.

The ideal location for Site Orientation Panels associated with parking lots is along the route of the desired pathway for visitors so they do not have to backtrack, or at nodes that are clearly starting places for an experience (indicated perhaps by thematic overview panels and site orientation panels, and by a trailhead to the trail system). For example, in the upper parking lot across from the mansion, where nodes are to be developed on the east and west side of the parking area as staging areas for families and other groups of visitors, the signs would be in those nodes. If restrooms are installed associated with this parking area you may only need one node adjacent to the restrooms. If you develop two nodes (which is still a good idea simply for families to have their children wait, trails should originate from those nodes – to a forest trail from the node on the west side of the parking area, and to a trail accessing the house and points east from the node on the east side of the parking area. The value is ensuring that people in vehicles know where to go after exiting their vehicles, and quickly transforming them from a vehicular traveler to a pedestrian who is confident of where to go next. For this to happen the signs must be clearly visible from the parking areas. In all cases, Site Orientation Panel should not be located too close to the road for aesthetic reasons.

Key locations (as the site currently exists – this will have to be re-evaluated when the new parking area goes in near the Jones Mill Road entrance):
- On the east and west sides of the parking area north of the mansion.
- Near the trail from Rock Creek park as it enters the grounds. (A Rock Creek Orientation panel should be located in the same area, but visible to those approaching from the Sanctuary.
- Near the trail entry at the west boundary.
- Near the west entry to the building (for people parking in the lot on the west side of the building.
- At a node associated with the nature scape playground and picnic area on the south side of the entry road across from the meadow restoration project.

Objectives
After viewing the panel visitors will:
- Be inspired, informed, and eager to explore Woodend;
- Know where they are in relation to other locations at the site;
- Know where to go next to continue their experience;
- Be aware of key interpretive/recreational opportunities on-site;
- Feel comfortable in their ability to navigate the site;
- Be aware of the opportunities that are fully accessible.

Description and Concept

The following are key aspects of the design and placement of the Site Orientation Panels that will increase their effectiveness:

1. Limit information to that which helps with its function, and avoid putting symbols and information that does not help, especially on maps. Adding unnecessary information clutters the sign and increases the difficulty in getting the desired information, which usually focuses on answering the questions, "Where am I?" "What is there to do here?" and, "How do I get where I want to go?" At a minimum the Site Orientation Panel should contain the following:
   - Simple map of the site including roads, parking areas, trails, structures and key features
   - Mileages and times for walking the trails
   - A "You Are Here"
   - Visuals of key interpretive and recreational opportunities tied to location with information on which are fully accessible
   - North arrow
   - Legend scale i.e., 1 inch = 100yds

2. Orient the panel in the direction that the visitor is facing when looking at the sign instead of north. People expect information at the top of a map to be in front of them. This requires determining location and orientation for panels prior to design and fabrication., and creating signs that are all different, but contain the same information.

3. Viewing the same map on a panel as is used in an associated brochure helps visitors move back and forth between the two, so consider using the same map for both.

4. Use a 3-dimensional look to the map to help visitors recognize features. This is not always possible, especially if you are trying to match maps used elsewhere, but studies show it is significantly easier for many people to use a map with 3-dimensional orientation rather than a flat map.

One possible concept is to use a stylized illustration of the site from an oblique aerial perspective as the major orientation element and as a backdrop for all the basic orientation information. Arrange images of visitors engaged in opportunities such as walking a trail, viewing exhibits, discovering signs of wildlife, attending events, and reading outdoor interpretive panels, around the perimeter of the map, with a graphic element (line) connecting the image to the appropriate location on the map.

Woodend Sanctuary Map/Brochure

Note: A map currently exists showing the trails and facilities, but eventually a more detailed map/brochure will need to be developed, especially after changes to the trail system.

Objectives
After interacting with this opportunity visitors will:
- Have had most if not all of their orientation and wayfinding questions answered, especially, "What is there to do here?" and "Where can I see wildlife?"
- Be excited about exploring Woodend;
- Feel comfortable in their ability to find their way around the site;
- Have all the information they need for planning and having their desired experience;
- Be aware that ANS offers programs and stages events at Woodend, and that they can get a schedule in the visitor center or sign up to get notices on-line.

Description and Concept
This is a simple map of the site with images of interesting features, images of people enjoying themselves, site-specific orientation and wayfinding information so visitors can find their way around on-site, trails with length and degree of difficulty along with time required, and other information that helps facilitate a visit. The primary purposes are to provide basic orientation and wayfinding to and within the site and to market experiences within Woodend (this is the publication that is likely to be passed from friend to friend).

One possible design approach is to create a 3-D illustration of the site from an oblique aerial perspective to use as a backdrop for the rest of the information. This allows people to be able to identify where they are based on features they can see rather than having to use a flat map, which many people cannot do. In addition, a 'menu' of experiences based on time required should be included, along with suggestion about what a visitor should do if they have limited time.

Exterior Directional Signage

Note: Two large on-site exterior directional signage were recently installed. The reference in the document is to ensure that future readers understand that the directional signage that you have installed is a part of the recommended information network and to note other locations where Directional Signage might be needed in the future. The additional Directional Signage is likely to take the form of small panels, or simply a cluster of directional arrows, perhaps organized on a pole, with the name of the location on the arrow.

Locations
The Exterior Directional Signage combines with the information kiosks to move visitors to a place to park, and then around the site without any confusion on their part as to which way to go. The map will help, but the basic orientation system should be developed under the assumption that some visitors will not have the brochure.

With that in mind, Directional Signage should be located at key decision points (intersections) potentially encountered by visitors trying to reach the mansion or other specific locations at Woodend to start their on-site experience, whether by vehicle, bicycle or on foot. Decision points are locations where the visitor has more than one option for direction to go, such as at trail intersections. The goal is to keep people moving to their desired destination without having to slow down.

Some decision points exist now, and should be considered for Directional Signage if they don't have any. In addition, as Woodend changes in terms of new trails and parking, the Directional Signage (and Orientation Kiosks) will need to be changed as well. If the store does become the main entrance to the mansion, with a Welcome Plaza in front, associated Directional Signage will be needed on the west side of the building. The sign needs to be prominent enough and located in such a way that it will be clearly visible to those parking in the overflow parking area, those parking in the lot adjacent to the building, and pedestrians and bicyclists accessing the site from Bierly Road.

Objectives
After encountering directional signage visitors will
- Be able to quickly make a choice as to direction to go with confidence.

Description and Concept
These are simple directional signs for people in vehicles so they know where to go (and where not to go). Since you already have on-site directional signage, you should use that basic template for other directional signs. The information should be limited to direction, and possibly distance if needed.

Note: The on-site directional signage has already been upgraded. The reference in the document is to ensure that future readers understand that the directional signage that you have installed is a part of the recommended information network.

Interior Welcome and Directional Signage

Locations
At the intersections of hallways and entryways to rooms. As with the Exterior Directional Signage, the goal is to keep people moving to their desired destination without having to slow down.

Objectives
After encountering directional signage visitors will
- Be able to quickly make a choice as to direction to go with confidence.

Description and Concept
These are simple directional signs so visitors know where to go (and where not to go). Since you already have on-site directional signage, you should use that basic template for other directional signs. The information should be limited to direction.

Perhaps the most important tactic for the current situation is to create a Welcome Plaza that clearly identifies the entry through the shop as the primary entry point. The obvious Welcome Plaza, if

developed, along with corresponding directional signage directing visitors to the Welcome Plaza as the place to enter the building, will reduce the need for directional signage inside the mansion. However, some visitors will still enter through the north and west entry doors, so it is important to ensure that they feel welcome and are in the right place to access the restrooms and orientation information. Upon entering, they need to quickly identify directional signage to the restrooms and possibly to a location to get orientation information. They also need directional signage that helps them exit the building.

Information Desk

Location
In what is now the Nature Store, ideally in a location where it is within the visitor's field of vision as they enter the building.

Objectives
After interacting with this opportunity visitors will:
- Have had most if not all of their orientation and wayfinding questions answered, especially, "What is there to do here?" and "Where can I see wildlife?"
- Be excited about exploring Woodend;
- Feel comfortable in their ability to find their way around the site;
- Have all the information they need for planning and having their desired experience;
- Be aware that ANS offers programs and stages events at Woodend, and that they can get a schedule in or sign up to get notices on-line.
- Know how to download and use any phone Applications;

Description and Concept
The Information Desk provides the opportunity to gather information from and ask questions of the staff. It is a critical part of the experience, in part because some people prefer to get information personally, and in part because it sends the message that ANS thinks that serving the public is important enough to dedicate staff to that function. Information available at the Information Desk includes:
- Site Map/Brochure;
- Area map highlighting sites in the surrounding area with opportunities to explore nature;
- Information on upcoming and regular events and programs;
- All publications associated with Woodend and partner sites;
- An optional sign-in book that can be used to market events and programs (if people leave their email addresses), and used in any type of 'achievement' opportunity that involves getting credit for visiting Woodend more than once.

Self-Serve Orientation Area

Note: *Given the limited space available, and the fact that the Nature Store must function as the primary entry, this is likely to be at least in the same location as the Information Desk, if not built into the Information Desk.*

The Self-Serve Orientation Area allows visitors to get all the orientation and wayfinding information they need without having to go to the Information Desk. Availability of the information eases pressure on the Information Desk when the facility is crowded and serves visitors who prefer to gather information this way rather than engage in personal contact. Key information needs include answers to basic questions (Where are the restrooms? What is there to do here? etc.), and orientation and wayfinding information facilitating a visit to other parts of Woodend.

Location
In the entry area space, ideally within a visitor's field of vision.

Objectives
After interacting with the opportunities in this area visitors will:
- Have had most if not all of their orientation and wayfinding questions answered, especially, "What is there to do here?" and "Where can I see wildlife?"
- Be excited about exploring Woodend;
- Feel comfortable in their ability to find their way around the site;
- Have all the information they need for their desired experience.
- Are aware that ANS offers programs and stages events (and have a copy of the event and program schedule).

Description and Concept
To function effectively, visitors entering the facility must be able to quickly identify the type of information offered at this station. One possibility is to use a large title and visual element, such as "What is there to do here?" accompanied by a collage of people engaging in a variety of activities at Woodend. All the same information as is available at the Information Desk would be available at this station.

Primary Experience

Overview

The Arrival Experience ends and the Primary Experience begins when visitors have taken care of basic needs and feel comfortable finding their way around the Sanctuary. In the current experience, that transition probably takes place in the mansion or just outside for first time visitors.

In addition to the characteristics of your target audiences, recommendations for the basic interpretive network are based on the following key factors and criteria:

- Interpretive signs are a 'one-and-done' opportunity. In other words, once a visitor has read the sign, it is no longer of value to that visitor. At sites with predominantly first-time visitors, such as National Parks, interpretive signs make sense. For places that focus on return visitors, interpretive signs are not as cost-effective.
- Interior space in the mansion for interpretive opportunities is only available on a part-time basis, and those times are not fixed. However, visitors have a lot of interest in the house, so it would be a good idea to take advantage of that interest. The information most appropriate for the interior would be that which would answer visitor's questions, such as how the family used particular rooms. In addition, orientation information is needed at the transition between the store and the building proper since that will be the main entry.
- One of the key goals underlying the experiences at Woodend Sanctuary is to connect visitors to nature in positive ways. Consequently, most of the interpretive tactics recommended for the on-site experience are not visually intrusive, which allows a more complete focus on a natural scene. These tactics include a trail map/brochure, an interactive site map usable on smart phones and iPads, and similar tactics.
- Exploration of the site can begin in many different locations, but ideally, most will begin their experience at one of the following locations:
    - The pedestrian access from Jones Mill Rd. (across from Rock Creek Park)
    - The pedestrian access from Brierly Rd.
    - Parking area north of the mansion
    - The parking area below Teale Center (to be constructed)
- Non-fixed interpretive opportunities lessen the visual intrusion into the visitor experience, makes the interpretive network more flexible, and reduces maintenance costs.
- Personal interpretation (guided trips, presentations, etc.) are considered an optional part of the experience. In other words, the basic interpretive network will function without guided tours, talks and other personal tactics. That is not to say that such tactics are not valuable or effective. The point is to ensure that an unaccompanied visitor can have a high-quality interpretive experience on-site when staff and volunteers are not available.
- The site does not contain key natural features – the type that are considered 'don't miss' features (these are the type of features that are the cornerstone of experiences in National Parks). This does not mean that the features on-site are not intriguing or interesting, just that they aren't unusual so people are not naturally drawn to specific features.
- Younger people are typically more familiar with and like to use modern technology. A higher percentage of older people are not as comfortable with new technology and prefer 'old' media, such as publications and signage. Consequently, basic interpretive information needs to be offered using a variety of tactics. (Although I would prefer visitors to 'disconnect' from technology so they could focus on nature, that does not work for some audiences. My hope, in

such cases, is to make them interested enough in the natural world that they begin to explore without the use of modern technology.)

- It is important to send visitors away feeling empowered to make a difference in conserving and restoring natural resources, and having information on easily doable actions they can take.
- The underlying approach when using interpretive tactics, as noted previously, is to focus on inspiring visitors to learn more without trying to educate them. Attempts to educate in this type of experience typically fail because they don't usually fit well within a leisure experience. In the case of Woodend, the goal is to increase interest in the natural world so visitors would then attend a class or program that was designed to educate.
- The flow of interpretive opportunities begins with Thematic Overview and proceeds to detail. Consequently, visitors have to have access to Thematic Overview at the point in the continuum of their experience where they are moving from the Arrival Experience to the Primary Experience. A typical approach in sites similar to the Sanctuary is to use a cluster of low-angled interpretive panels, located at the major locations where people begin their experience as a pedestrian, to provide thematic overview, and then use interpretive panels, a trail map/brochure or information that can be obtained using a smart phone or iPad to provide the detail along the route. The advantage to signs at the beginning is that they are hard to miss, and they can let people know how to access interpretive information from that point on if it is not going to be by signage.

Tactics to Help Visitors Enjoy Their Primary On-Site Experience

The following array of tactics contains at least one option that can be classified as 'new media' and ones that can be classified as 'traditional media.' This is intentional due to the wide array of target audiences. As a general rule, elderly people tend to prefer tactics they grew up using while younger generations, who have grown up with computers, tend to prefer tactics that are more technologically advanced.

Interpretive information can be offered using a variety of media, but the array of tactics should have at least one option that relies on new media, such as smart phones and iPads, and at least one option that is 'old school,' such as a trail guide publication with interpretive information. An Interpretive Guide, that contains all orientation, wayfinding and basic interpretive information should be developed as the basic tactic that can be used my most visitors. For families with children, the Sense-ational Discovery Guide should be designed for children, but in such a way that their parents can help them.

Thematic Overview Panel Cluster

Locations

The Thematic Overview panels should be located at the two primary pedestrian access points – the trailhead that begins at the Nature Playspace and the trailhead at Bierly Road – and also in the Welcome Plaza. The one associated with the Playspace will serve pedestrians and bicyclists entering from Jones Mill Road and people parking in the new parking area that will be constructed across from the Playspace. The one at Bierly Road will serve pedestrians and bicyclists accessing the Sanctuary from that direction. The one at the Welcome Plaza will serve everyone parking near the mansion. Note that a Site Orientation Panel should be located near Thematic Overview Panel Clusters.

Objectives
After engaging with this interpretive opportunity, visitors will:
- Be intrigued by the concept of connections and excited to explore the Sanctuary and discover connections;
- Know that they are connected to the system also, and be interested in knowing more about how they are connected;
- Want to know more about nature providing 'ecosystem services' because it is something they hadn't thought about in those terms;
- Want to see what ANS is doing on the site, and be curious at least regarding what they might be able to do to help.

Themes
Although all themes (messages) seem like they should be included in Thematic Overview, the focus should be on themes that help the visitor understand and connect with the environment they will experience. With that in mind, Theme 1 and its associated sub-themes seem as if they would be more appropriate in marketing experiences at Woodend. Also, most of the sub-themes associated with Theme 3 seem to be ones that visitors might be more receptive to after they have had a great experience at the Sanctuary. In other words, they seem as if they might be better suited to be a part of the Departure Experience.

The following themes and sub-themes are most suited for the Thematic Overview Panel Clusters:

Interpretive Theme 2: Nature helps our neighborhoods thrive
- Sub-theme 2-1: We are all part of a connected ecosystem
- Sub-theme 2-2: Nature provides ecosystem services that support healthy communities
- Sub-theme 2-3: People and nature impact each other

Interpretive Theme 3: We can help nature thrive
- Sub-theme 3-1: ANS is conserving and creating wildlife habitat at Woodend and you can help

Description and Concept
In general, interpretive signs work better when they use visuals or other sensory information that a visitor can experience while reading the panel. With that in mind, we recommend a different set of interpretive panels in each of the panel clusters, each using visuals in the visitor's field of vision to support the themes. For example, to support Sub-theme 1, stories highlighting the connections a visitor can see from where they are reading the panels should be used. As another example, Sub-theme 2-3 can be 'seen' more obviously from the Thematic Overview Panel Cluster at the Welcome Plaza. As a final example, the stories used to communicate Sub-Theme 3-1 should be ones that are visible in the viewscape.

Woodend Sanctuary Interpretive Guide

Objectives

After using this tactic, visitors will:

- Have visited all the areas of the Sanctuary they wanted to visit on that trip, without any worry about orientation and wayfinding;
- Based on their experience, be motivated to come back and experience additional interpretive opportunities;
- Be able to name at least 8 birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles and/or insects that call Woodend Sanctuary home;
- Be excited about planting native flora in their yards (if they have them) in hopes of attracting native birds and other wildlife;

Themes

All major themes could be covered in this tactic, but emphasis should be on:

Interpretive Theme 2: Nature helps our neighborhoods thrive

- Sub-theme 2-1: We are all part of a connected ecosystem
- Sub-theme 2-2: Nature provides ecosystem services that support healthy communities
- Sub-theme 2-3: People and nature impact each other

Interpretive Theme 3: We can help nature thrive

- Sub-theme 3-1: ANS is conserving and creating wildlife habitat at Woodend and you can help
- Sub-theme 3-2: You can do things in your neighborhood and at home to help nature thrive
- Sub-theme 3-3: You can raise your voice for nature

Description and Concept

This is a publication, keyed to locations and features, that provides all the orientation, wayfinding and interpretive information necessary for visitors to explore the Sanctuary and learn on their own. It is essentially the physical version of the Interactive Map that can be used on smart phones, iPads and similar information delivery tactics. The guide should include suggested routes, with trail difficulty, length, and time required for each. It should also include a menu of suggestions based on amount of time a visitor has available, such as, "Here is what you should do If you have an hour; here is what you should do if you have two hours, etc."

Sense-ational Discovery Guide

Objectives
After using this tactic:
- Children will be motivated to become 'Detectives of the Landscape' (this could be a badge or certificate);
- Visitors will be interested in checking out the Specialty Gardens (if they contain the same type of interpretive information);
- Visitors will be interested in planting native vegetation to attract some of the birds and wildlife they have 'discovered' at Woodend Sanctuary.

Themes
All major themes could be covered in this tactic, but the emphasis should be on the basic biological concept that wildlife depends on habitat, so whenever something is identified for a visitor to discover, accompanying information should focus on why the plant or species of wildlife can be found here, with the answer having to do with some aspect of the habitat they need. This should feed into the following:

> Sub-theme 2-1: We are all part of a connected ecosystem

Description and Concept
This tactic focuses on helping children connect with the natural environment by making them 'Detectives of the Landscape.' Clues addressing all senses help the user 'discover' evidence of wildlife such as woodpecker holes and animal tracks, identify common plants and species of birds and wildlife, and understand the forces that shaped and continue to shape Woodend Sanctuary and the flora and fauna that live here.

The actual tactic can be physical or digital. Physical versions can be anything easily carried and used as an identification guide and check-off list, such as a small booklet or set of cards with pictures on a ring. The digital version would be for use on digital devices, such as an iPad or smart phone, but the concept would be the same. Experiences should involve all senses, such as smelling bark, hearing a bird call, identifying a tree by the feel of the bark, etc.

Explorer's Kit or Backpack

ANS already offers many options/types of Explorer's backpacks. Now that goals, objectives and themes have been established for the interpretive network, the contents of each backpack should be reviewed to determine if additional items should be included or some items eliminated. The following are thoughts based on a review of the lists of contents in each backpack:
- All of the backpacks appear to focus on exploration and discovery at the Sanctuary. Ideally, we want children to carry information away and apply it outside of the Sanctuary. ANS may already have one, but consider an Explorer's Backpack for the 'neighborhood,' (which in this case would be rather large). The contents could be generalized to include keys on plants, birds, wildlife, etc. instead of being specific to one focal point. This particular backpack could also include a guide to other places in the neighborhood, similar to Woodend, where children can continue their exploration into the different habitats that can be found, and what uses those habitats.

- I was not sure which, if any, of the items are ones that children can take home, with the exception of pages on which they have written. I did note the 'Help Save Our Pollinators' activity booklet, but was not sure if that focused on activities on site, or if it was a guide for children to do things in their own yards. If it is only on site, one should be developed for off-site activities accompanied by seeds that could be planted in someone's yard. Ideally, the result would be plants that attracted pollinators and a reminder of Woodend. Maintaining such a connection pays dividends in terms of social selling. Along those same lines, I have seen other Explorer's backpacks that include a simple camera with 12 exposures so the users can take pictures of their favorite features. In one such place, children could submit their favorite one and it would be put on display.
- Consider an environmentally-friendly water bottle, with your name on it, that the child could take home. Not only is it a reminder of Woodend, it supports the concept of being environmentally conscious, and is another tool that can be used in social selling. As a side note, there are studies that show that behavior change does not always begin with attitude change. Behavior change can result from a behavior-attitude- behavior sequence in which people interpret what they are doing as being indicative of who they are. For example, people could engage in recycling and assume, because they had done so, that they are conservationists, which could lead to an expansion of stewardship behaviors.

Interactive Map and Guide

Objectives
After using this tactic, visitors will:
- Have visited all the areas of the Sanctuary they wanted to visit on that trip, without any worry about orientation and wayfinding;
- Based on their experience, be motivated to come back and experience additional interpretive opportunities;
- Be able to name at least 5 native birds and 3 native mammals that call Woodend Sanctuary home;
- Be excited about planting native flora in their yards (if they have them) in hopes of attracting native birds and other wildlife;

Themes
All major themes could be covered in this tactic, but emphasis should be on:

Interpretive Theme 2: Nature helps our neighborhoods thrive
- Sub-theme 2-1: We are all part of a connected ecosystem
- Sub-theme 2-2: Nature provides ecosystem services that support healthy communities
- Sub-theme 2-3: People and nature impact each other

Interpretive Theme 3: We can help nature thrive
- Sub-theme 3-1: ANS is conserving and creating wildlife habitat at Woodend and you can help
- Sub-theme 3-2: You can do things in your neighborhood and at home to help nature thrive
- Sub-theme 3-3: You can raise your voice for nature

Description and Concept
This tactic, requiring a smart phone, iPad or similar device, involves accessing information on the device based on physical location in the Sanctuary. The information could be presented as text (not recommended), or in audio or audio-visual format. It could also be in visual format with captions if sound is considered an issue in some of the locations. The site location to access information can be identified by a simple numbered post, can be identified as a hotspot on the map, be triggered by a beacon, or accessed in other ways. The actual information would focus on telling stories to communicate one or more of the key messages. For example, specific trees and shrubs could be identified along the route as 'hotspots,' so when a visitor approached that point, something on the map would indicate that the person is at a point where information is available. Upon clicking on the hotspot, an image of the tree or shrub would come up along with images of all species of birds and wildlife that use that particular species of vegetation in some way. A person could then click on the species to find out how it was using that plant. The point in that case would be to convey the concept of the relationship between birds and wildlife and habitat. The information on any site should include suggestions for other locations in the Sanctuary to find complementary information. It could also be designed to include suggestions for locations to visit off-site.

One of the significant advantages of this tactic, aside from the fact it is likely to appeal to the younger generation, is that it can be changed relatively easily so it never grows old.

Specialty Gardens with Interpretation

Location
Woodend already has an established area for Specialty Gardens, but specific gardens could be located in other locations where visitors congregate, such in the nature play area. Interpretive information associated with the gardens could be incorporated into the interpretive guide for families using the play area.

Objectives
After taking part in the associated interpretive opportunity, visitors will:
- Be motivated to plant a garden similar to one of the Demonstration Garden;
- Feel empowered to make a difference regarding conservation of natural resources;
- Know that pollinator and butterfly populations are endangered due to loss of habitat;
- Know that loss of pollinators can have a negative effect on their quality of life;
- Feel a connection (intellectual and/or emotional) to at least one of the gardens;
- Know that nature has and continues to enhance the quality of life for many people (ideally for the visitor also).

Key Themes
The actual themes will depend on the type of garden. For example, some gardens focus on habitat for species like pollinators or butterflies while others focus on cultural use of plants. As a whole, the walk through the gardens with the interpretive opportunities could communicate any of the themes and sub-themes. The following seem to be the most appropriate themes to convey in that setting:

Interpretive Theme 1: Nature helps each of us thrive
- Sub-theme 1-2: There are health benefits of spending time in nature

Interpretive Theme 2: Nature helps our neighborhoods thrive
- Sub-theme 2-1: We are all part of a connected ecosystem

Interpretive Theme 3: We can help nature thrive
- Sub-theme 3-1: ANS is conserving and creating wildlife habitat at Woodend and you can help
- Sub-theme 3-2: You can do things in your neighborhood and at home to help nature thrive

Description and Concept
The purpose of the Demonstration Gardens is to show visitors examples of what they can plant in their yards. Associated interpretive information would focus on the value of the plants in the gardens, such as for wildlife habitat, sources of traditional medicines, sources of spice and foods, sources of dyes and materials used in cultural practices, and other uses. In addition, visitors can obtain a guide that provides instructions on planting these specific gardens and other native habitat in their yards. The Nature Store should carry instructions on building any of the gardens, and perhaps sell or give away seeds.

The tactics for conveying the information should include the Interactive Map Interpretive Guide. It could also be offered as a separate tactic in brochure and/or digital form. Although those tactics are more difficult to update or modify information than a digital tactic, at least one should be offered for visitors who do not want to use technology. This is essentially a collection of gardens in the same location. Although the gardens would be different, all should follow basic guidelines, such as only including native plant species, be ones that visitors can plant in their yards relatively easily, and contain interpretive information that helps communicate the key messages.

Possible gardens include the following:

- **Pollinator Garden:** The associated interpretive information would focus especially on pollinators that are responsible for common foods in the area, and the potential crisis if those pollinators are eliminated due to loss of habitat. One possible approach for the version on the smart phone or iPad is to use a game where participants must match pollinators to plants they depend on along their migration route, while at the same time trying to manage human impacts to preserve necessary habitat along those migration route. Note that this game must include the barriers that migrating pollinators face, with a potential outcome of not reaching their destination, or reaching it in reduced numbers. The impact must connect to availability of food and/or other products humans value.

- **Butterfly Garden:** As with the other gardens, the interpretive information would focus on the need for native habitat to support native wildlife, including microfauna.

- **Native Plant Garden:** The interpretation associated with this garden focuses on the advantages of using plants adapted to this location, such as the fact that they typically require less water, and that they will likely attract birds. A variety of native plant gardens could be included, perhaps varying due to the types of birds that might be attracted to the garden. This helps support the concept of wildlife depending on habitat. This could have a tactic with the title "Who do you want to invite home?" The choices would be native birds. Information on what plants to use to attract specific birds would be included.

- **Garden for Nature Play Space:** Given the focus of the interpretive opportunities associated with the play space, a garden could be planted in this area that was a combination of the pollinator, songbird, and native plant garden with the intent of using them as features to be included in the interpretation. In other words, the interpretive tactic for the parents would include questions, answers and hints focusing on the relationships between plants and wildlife.

Other possible gardens include:
- Scent Garden
- Songbird garden
- Wetland/water garden
- Xeriscape garden—water wise

Note: Woodend currently has a native plant garden, a children's garden and a rain garden complex. Interpretive tactics need to be developed for those gardens that reflect the messaging.

Nature Playspace Family Interpretive Adventure

Objectives
The objectives are similar to those for the Sense-ational Guide, but the strategy has the additional advantage of facilitating interaction between adults and children more so than the Sense-ational Guide.

After using this tactic:
- Children will be motivated to become 'Detectives of the Landscape' (this could be a badge or certificate);
- Visitors will be interested in checking out the Specialty Gardens (if they contain the same type of interpretive information);
- Visitors will be interested in planting native vegetation to attract some of the birds and wildlife they have 'discovered' at Woodend Sanctuary.
- Families will be more comfortably with and excited by opportunities where they can all be involved in the same opportunity at the same time.

Themes
All major themes could be covered in this tactic, but the emphasis should be on the basic biological concept that wildlife depends on habitat, so the interpretive questions for the parents and the answers should focus not only on identifying the feature, but also on why that associated species of wildlife is at Woodend Sanctuary. As with the Sense-ational Discovery Guide, the information should support the following:

Sub-theme 2-1: We are all part of a connected ecosystem

Description and Concept
This is an opportunity for parents to interact with their children. The basic idea is to include features in the play space that allow parents to ask questions of their children. The answers relate to the natural history of the area. For example, the space could include a hollowed-out log for children to climb through. Questions from the parents would focus on wildlife that uses hollow logs as protected runways. Another possibility is a hollowed-out log mounted vertically with a variety of woodpecker holes made by different woodpeckers that live in the area. The questions would focus on the fact that woodpeckers make holes of different sizes, shapes and patterns, which means you can identify what woodpecker uses the surrounding area based on the holes. This can also be a part of the Sense-ational Discovery Guide. The actual tactic for delivering the information can be digital, a publication, or both.

Personal Interpretation Opportunities

This includes guided walks, presentations, demonstrations and other tactics that involve using a person to deliver the information. Because ANS already offers an array of personal interpretation opportunities, I will not suggest additional ones. However, I do suggest that the content be reviewed and modified if necessary so the messaging is consistent in all offerings.

Departure Experience

For many visitors, this includes another stop at the restrooms and, ideally, a stop at the Nature Store. Hopefully the interpretive opportunities that visitors engaged with during their experience will have made them aware of the store and will have motivated them to purchase items such as seeds, guides to planting specialty gardens, etc. Visitors should also get a free handout entitled, "Who do you want to invite home?" The handout would include images of birds and what needs to be planted for that bird to be attracted to the visitor's house. This helps reinforce the concept of wildlife depending on habitat and also serves to provide more motivation to take action, and a relatively simple way to do so. Specifically, it supports the following sub-themes:

Interpretive Theme 3: We can help nature thrive
3-2 You can do things in your neighborhood and at home to help nature thrive

3-4: You can make a difference

Note: When space allows, consider developing this into an exhibit were a visitor can listen to bird calls while seeing a particular bird before making a decision on what they want to attract to their yard.

The following tactics could be effective during the Departure Experience. Both would likely function best in an indoor space, so there may not be room for them given the current set of parameters. However, they should seriously be considered when the new visitor center is built.

The Woodend Hall of Fame (Working Title)

Explanation
In reviewing the themes and when and where they could be communicated effectively, it seemed as if the following sub-themes under Theme 3 were not covered:

3-2 You can do things in your neighborhood and at home to help nature thrive

3-3 You can raise your voice for nature

3-4: You can make a difference

All will probably be most effective *after* a person's visit to Woodend where, ideally, the desired to get involved strengthens to the point of willingness to take action, so an interpretive opportunity along the pathway of a typical Departure Experience could be effective.

Location
Currently, only the mansion offers indoor space for an exhibit, yet the building is not open to visitors all of the time the Sanctuary is open. Consequently, the option exists to try to create a changeable space outdoors, or accept that an exhibit indoors will not be as effective, and wait until you have a new Visitor Center. If it is to be located in the mansion, it should be in a location that is along the pathway between the Nature Store and the restroom, perhaps on the west wall of the Musician's Alcove.

Objectives
After engaging in this interpretive opportunity, visitors will:
- Be motivated to engage in an action that helps preserve / restore nature;
- Believe that they can make a difference by their actions.

Description and Concept
As envisioned at this time, this is a 2-part exhibit, with the first part highlighting past efforts by individuals or groups within the area who made a difference by taking action. This part remains essentially the same, or is updated only periodically. The second part focuses on more recent efforts by people in the neighborhood who have taken action, whether by planting a pollinator garden, taking part in a work party, or simply upping the level of their recycling efforts. The idea is to clearly communicate that people all across demographic levels, income levels, education levels, cultural groups, etc. tried and succeeded in making a difference through actions so individuals will not 'give up' because of the enormity of the problems we face, and the lack of belief that we can do anything about it.

How are You Connected?

Objectives

After engaging with this opportunity, visitors will:

- Be able to list at least 5 ways in which they are connected to nature (these can be positive or negative in the sense that people can see themselves as part of the problem in protecting nature);
- Be more aware of connections to nature.

Themes

Interpretive Theme 2: Nature helps our neighborhoods thrive

2-1 We are all part of a connected ecosystem

2-2 Nature provides ecosystem services that support healthy communities

2-3 People and nature impact each other

Description and Concept

This could be a relatively simple exhibit where children can write on 4" x 6" cards how they are connected, or their favorite 'connection' with nature. The cards can then be hung up for others to read (and perhaps draw inspiration from). The hanging system could be something as simple as a cord strung across the space in front of the exhibit with binder clips used to post responses. The responses would have to be reviewed before hanging up, and they should change on a regular basis. To facilitate writing a response, the exhibit would need an angled surface low enough for children to write on, and a place to store cards and pencils.

Return Travel Experience

All that is needed here is to provide signage to get visitors back to the main roads and headed in the right direction.

Post-Visit Experience

This depends on whether a communication link was established during the visit. If so, the Post-Visit Experience would include getting notices regarding events, classes and other opportunities that might interest the visitor. In addition, the web site should include links to more in-depth information, so that if visitors are motivated to learn more, the opportunity is at their fingertips.

Appendix A: Input on Outcomes

The following information was obtained by asking the internal planning team to fill in the blanks in the sentence below. The input is organized by target audience.

As a result of experiencing Woodend Sanctuary and/or its interpretive opportunities, (target audience) ___ will/will not___ (do what? _____ . The result will be _____ .

Audience	Do what?	Result (Impact)
Young children (pre-school)	Play (feel invited and safe to explore)	Kids can be confident in nature
Preschool families	Stay involved	Return for camp and other programs
Families	Play in nature	Return to play in nature
Parents of young children	Play / explore with their children	Take kids outside more often
Teachers	Understand that children retain knowledge when learning outside	Take children outside of schools to learn
Teachers	Actively participate in teaching here	Take students on more field trips
Schoolchildren	Feel safe and curious	Tell their parents to take them back
Students on field trips	Explore nature – hands on	Want to come back – camps, etc. Feel more comfortable in nature
School kids	Feel wonder	Seek more nature experiences
School program parents	Visit Woodend again	Pay for additional programs
NHFS students	Become a volunteer at ANS	NHFS students
Wedding guests	Learn about our programs	Come back / participate in our programs
Wedding visitors	Return to site; renew complimentary membership	
Wedding guests	Be curious about site	Come back
Wedding guests	Learn that there are interesting things to see at Woodend	Return to Woodend

Wedding participants	Visit Woodend again	Pay for additional programs
Wedding guest	Value outdoor experience	Return to Woodend
Birthday parties	Register for related programs	
Birthday Party	Be curious about family programs	
Birthday party families	Feel like they have partied for a good cause	Donate or return to shop
Birthday party guest	Value outdoor experience	Return to Woodend
Unaccompanied visitors	Tell friends about site [in positive terms]	
Unaccompanied adults	Enjoy trails / feel inspired to participate in programs	
Unaccompanied visitors	Take an action home	Advocacy
Unaccompanied adults	Learn about value of nature to self	Take a second action (return, sign up for programs, steward, advocate
Neighbors	Visit / care about ANS – want to be	
Neighbors	Note restoration activity	Advocate for restoration of Rock Creek
Shop customers	Be curious about site	Come back
Shop customers	Become members and sign up for field trips	
Adults at programs	Feel empowered to make change	Donate, volunteer, stewardship action, advocacy action
Adult program participants	Stay involved / become a raving fan – spread the word	
Camp students	Be excited / inquisitive	Bring parents back
Camp parent	Visit Woodend outside of summer	Pay for additional programs
Camp parent	Install rain garden at home	Filter rain garden
Homeowners	Plant natives	Strengthen food webs
Homeowners	Disconnect downspouts	Reduce storm water

All visitors	Visit shop at some point – make purchase at some point; come back for more	
Visiting scientists and colleagues who come for conferences	Get further involved with ANS programs	Larger community of collaborators
Nature nerds	Note restoration	Volunteer at Woodend donate to restoration, lead restoration of other areas
Latinex	Visit Woodend	Participate in programs
Speakers of other languages	Feel welcome; safe	Return to Woodend
People with disabilities	Feel welcome; safe	Return to Woodend

Appendix B: Input on Themes (Messages)

The following information was obtained by asking the internal planning team to fill in the blanks in the sentence below. The input is organized by general topic.

After learning about _____(topic)_____, *I want people to know that* _____(message)_____ .

After experiencing the Sanctuary **(topic)** *I want people to know that* _____ (message) _____ .

Category	Subject/Topic	
Health: Child's Development	Nature play	Playing in nature is essential for children's healthy development
	Summer camps / various topics, afterschool clubs, etc.	Kids grow better outside – its's fun and healthy to unplug.
	Summer camps	Immersing your child in nature is good for his/her health.
	Nature play	Time in nature is essential to healthy development
	Nature Play	Nature play helps kids group up healthy
	Pre-school parents (dropping off and picking up kid)	I am being a good parent by giving my children tine in nature – I feel welcome to come here another time
Health in general	Field trip participants – teachers and adults on trails	It is healthy to get out in nature.
	Gardens	Plants are healthy for people and wildlife.
	Nature play	Nature play can re-boot your brain

You can help in simple easy ways	Rain gardens	There are simple things I can do at home to keep a healthy watershed
	Native plants	It is easy and healthy to grow native plants (lower maintenance)
	Mansion visitors	Recycling / reducing waste / conserving energy, etc. is easy and doable.
	Mansion	You can be a good steward of the environment at home – energy efficiency, water conservation
	Composting	Reducing solid waste can be good for gardens
	Bird feeders	Positively support the health of native birds
	Rain Garden	They [can] do something similar at home
Clean Water	Rain gardens	Creative landscaping can increase the health of our streams and the Chesapeake Bay.
	Forest	Mature trees are important for keeping our water clean
	Stream	Urban development hurts water quality – stream restoration helps it
	Pond	Natural water sources support all kinds of wildlife
Habitat	Deer management	We can create healthy habitats by managing wildlife impacts.
	Forest restoration	Woods in urban areas can provide important refuges for wildlife
	Neighbors	Managing wildlife is key to a healthy habitat
	Meadows	Native plants form the basis of food webs and determine what biodiversity can be supported.
	Meadow	Native flowers support all kinds of wildlife, creating climate resilience
ANS	Conference goers	ANS is the place to be for leadership / forward thinking on healthy urban habitat in DC area
	ANS	More than just birds
Woodend as a destination	Wedding guests	ANS / Woodend is a welcoming place that I want to visit again – there is lots to do / learn
	Neighbors	You can visit Woodend and walk our trails for free
Miscellaneous	Wedding participants	Nature and people can coexist
	Restoration areas	Humans can/must help our habits to be restored

Appendix C: ANS Strategic Plan Goals

The following are from the Strategic Plan Calendar Year 2018-2022. They are referred to in the Interpretive Goals.

Conservation Program Goals

1. Conserve special natural places in the DC region including our region's stream valley corridors—the last remaining wild places in the region—as well as Woodend Nature Sanctuary, and Rust Nature Sanctuary;

2. Model conservation stewardship by restoring Woodend Nature Sanctuary to inspire residents to steward local landscapes that provide habitats for native species, and to improve climate resilience and water quality;

3. Advocate for effective implementation of local and regional policies that support biodiversity, assure healthy native habitats for wildlife and healthy neighborhoods for people, and protect and restore stream valley corridors;

4. Expand the cadre of residents who are effective advocates for conservation, and continue to partner with other organizations to increase our impact; and

5. Increase the effectiveness of ANS's citizen scientists by communicating their results broadly to residents and decision makers in the DC region.

Adult Education Program

1. Expand our adult education program to help more people become environmentally literate champions of native habitats and wildlife in the DC metro region;
2. Increase outreach to new and diverse adult audiences who will enjoy, learn about, and be inspired to protect nature; and
3. Offer adult programming in new venues, both geographical and digital, to reach adult learners from across the Washington, DC region.

Childhood and Youth Education Program

1. Create, use, and share the highest standards for early childhood nature-based education;
2. Provide a Play Space in the Woods at Woodend Sanctuary to welcome children, families, and teachers to connect with nature in a fun and inviting place;
3. Offer new opportunities for children of all backgrounds to experience ANS out-of-school educational programs; and
4. Expand ANS's status as a valued partner for systemic environmental education in public school systems in the DC region.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
1. Model diversity, equity, and inclusion as best practices for the region's environmental community;
2. Equip the organization to make progress every year toward diversity, equity, and inclusion goals;
3. Open pathways and reduce barriers to engage new partners, people, and communities in the environmental education and advocacy work of ANS; and
4. Retain new stakeholders as active participants in the ANS community.

Membership, Development, and Engagement
1. Create and maintain a new engagement model to identify and grow the number of people who actively support ANS over the long term;
2. Integrate our internal information systems to more fully engage with our current and future supporters ANS; and
3. Engage supporters and raise funds for the restoration of Woodend Nature Sanctuary.

Marketing and Communications
1. Bring our mission work to the attention of more people of diverse backgrounds;
2. Bring our mission work to the attention of more environmental and community partners;
3. Support ANS program directors in meeting strategic program and revenue goals;
4. Support growth of membership and donor rolls; and
5. Educate ANS stakeholders about marketing and communications tactics.

Appendix D: Target Audience Profiles

Introduction

Information - including interpretation - is a commodity; people have to buy it with their time, a highly valued personal resource, along with attention and cognitive effort. They also incur opportunity cost; in other words, if they spend time reading a sign or walking an interpretive trail, they can't spend that time doing anything else. Since different people "buy" different interpretive experiences, it is important to identify the key target audiences, and then build profiles of those different visitor groups to determine the type of interpretive experiences they are *willing* to "buy" with their time, and the level at which the information must be presented so they are *able* to process given their knowledge and background. Ideally, the audiences you want to reach are ones that will help achieve your goals, even if those audiences are not currently or never will be actual visitors to the site.

In general, experiences that visitors are willing to buy can generally be described as ones that:
- Meet their **needs**;
- Meet their **expectations**;
- Are within their **limitations** of time, money, energy, and other such personal resources;
- Are **opportunities** that compete successfully with other options for spending time, usually through association with interests that were the primary reason for visiting.

Needs include such basic amenities as food, shelter, and restrooms. The key information-related need is orientation and wayfinding. Interpretation is an option. Consequently, orientation and wayfinding must be addressed at the beginning of and throughout the visitor experience.

Expectations are more variable because they are created by previous experience, what people hear and what they read.

Limitations are factors that prevent someone from engaging in an experience or interpretive opportunity, such as not knowing the language in which it is presented, and factors that tend to offset the reward for engaging in an experience and can therefore cause a potential user to bypass an opportunity. For example, visitors are often on vacation and do not want to 'work'—either physically or mentally—at their recreation unless the personal benefit is worth the time and effort required. Limitations can be related to physical ability, language, education level and other characteristics.

Opportunities that can compete for a person's time typically relate to a visitor's interests. Although those interests can exist prior to arrival, they can also be generated by what they see or hear on a guided tour, or by features they encounter. On-site features are of key importance because they represent one of the best opportunities to capture the interest of a visitor and begin the communication process.

Key Target Audiences

The focus of the audience analysis in Visitor Interpretive Experience Planning is to first determine the target audiences and then analyze those audiences to determine what type of *experiences* are currently attracting visitors to the site, and what *experiences* would attract target audiences that are not currently coming. Once that is accomplished, interpretive opportunities can be identified that add value to those experiences, as the target audience defines value, and that they are willing to engage with and able to understand.

Woodend is focused on serving people who live in the DC metro area, and for this plan, people who are not scared of natural landscapes to the point that they would not consider visiting Woodend. Although people in that category are an important target audience in the quest to conserve and restore natural resources, ANS is focusing on solidifying their base of support first before embarking on strategies to reach those other audiences.

To solidify that base, ANS is targeting the following audiences for the visitor interpretive experiences in this plan:
- Families with children from the DC Metro Area;
- Teachers and students
- Adults (includes rental guests – wedding and conference attendees – neighbors, amateur nature lovers, and all other adult visitors without children).

The biggest area of concern at this time is serving unaccompanied visitors.

Note: *Children on school field trips are a key audience for ANS at Woodend, but the information developed for those groups falls under Environmental Education rather than Interpretation.*

Note: *It is assumed that people with disabilities (vision, brain-based, hearing and mobility), will be present in every one of the target audiences, thus requiring a Universal Design approach to design.*

Audience Characteristics

Regardless of the target audience, it must be assumed that all preferred learning styles* will be represented. It also must be assumed that children and the elderly will be a part of any audience. Consequently, the following characteristics must be considered when choosing and developing visitor interpretive experiences.

Note: Although research has resulted in come aspects of the concept of learning styles begin debunked, people do have learning opportunities that they prefer.

All Visitors

The following characteristics and limitations apply to almost every situation and every member of a target audience.

Characteristic: All visitors will expect anyone associated with the site to answer basic questions regarding basic cultural and natural history, including the history of the mansion.

> **Implication:** All on-site staff need to be able to answer basic questions and direct visitors to on-site locations where they can obtain additional information.

Characteristic: Visitors will expect information to similar interpretive and recreational opportunities in the surrounding area, in other words, opportunities that offer experiences in nature. This will be especially true after effectively communicating that playing in nature is important for children.

> **Implication:** Staff should be prepared to answer such questions, particularly regarding sites telling a part of the same story and/or offering the same types of experiences.

Characteristic: A significant percentage of visitors can be reached using social media such as Twitter, Blogs and Facebook, and a significant percentage of visitors are comfortable with and prefer using new technologies, such as vodcasts, podcasts and GPS-based tour programs that can be used on smart phones and iPads.

> **Implication:** New media should be used as part of the information delivery network when appropriate to the audience and situation.

Characteristic: Many visitors will plan part of their trip, including general itinerary, prior to arriving. Many will use the INTERNET to access information in order to plan.

> **Implication:** Marketing, trip planning and orientation and wayfinding information should be available on the INTERNET.

Characteristic: People tend to visit in groups, typically family or friends. Families and other similar groups have a variety of educational levels within the group.

> **Implications:** This characteristic has several implications:
> - Interpretive opportunities such as signs and exhibits should be designed to accommodate at least small groups.
> - The interpretive program must offer opportunities that are understandable to audiences with limited expertise and knowledge.
> - To the extent possible, interpretive exhibits should have multiple 'entry' points corresponding to different levels of knowledge and ability.

Characteristic: Visitors will have varying limitations in terms of energy, time, and interests.

> **Implications:** This characteristic has several implications:
> - To the extent possible, the interpretive program should offer opportunities to "skim," "browse," or "gorge" the information to accommodate preferences and to accommodate visitors on a tight schedule.
> - The interpretive program should provide an 'opportunity menu' that lists time required for each activity and suggested itineraries based on time available. For example, it should suggest an itinerary for the visitor that has a half-hour, 2 hours and a half-day.
> - Frequent and well-placed opportunities to sit and rest in the shade will enhance the experience for many people.
> - To the extent possible, the interpretive program should present information in a way that is rewarding, within a visitor's limits imposed by a 'leisure' activity, and message (theme) driven to eliminate unnecessary effort.

Characteristic: People visiting an unfamiliar area are focused initially on meeting needs, including the need to feel confident in their ability to navigate the unfamiliar environment.

> **Implication:** It is important for the orientation and wayfinding network to be designed to make all visitors comfortable and confident in their ability to find their way around. This will help alleviate concern on the part of any visitor regarding their ability to find their way around in the site, and back to wherever they need to go. Such a concern is common among people navigating an unfamiliar environment.

Characteristic: Any given group of people is likely to have one or more preferred learning styles within the group. The suggested number of different learning styles depends on the model. The most common model has 3 - visual, auditory and kinesthetic; others have more. Regardless, within any given audience you will have those who are more likely to engage with experiences involving social interaction, others who are more likely to engage in experiences offering the opportunity for 'hands-on,' and those who want to 'see' what you are trying to communicate.

Implications: Since audiences are voluntary participants, offering information in the preferred learning style of the participant is more likely to be successful; if they are uncomfortable it is likely they will choose not to engage. Since all learning styles are likely to be represented in any one group, optional learning environments should be created. For example:

- **Hands-on.** An environment where visitors can work ideas and concepts out for themselves.

- **Observation:** An environment where visitors can collect, analyze and reflect on information to come up with a concept. Information can be presented in a myriad of forms, such as images, sounds, text, scents, and textures. It can also be presented in person, although interaction should not be forced.

- **Social:** An environment that offers opportunities to ask questions of and interact with staff / volunteers. Most people visit in groups within which social interaction in relation to the information being presented will occur. Opportunities for groups to discuss ideas will appeal to this type of learner. This is especially important for families.

Families (in the DC Metro Area)

Characteristic: Families are made up individuals of many ages.

Implications: There is a need for a variety of interpretive tactics to address numerous learning styles and education levels. Experiences need to be within close proximity to amenities.

Characteristic: Families often have strict time limits based on the needs of various members
.

Implication: Experiences need to be at convenient times and flexible in order to adapt to family needs.

Characteristic: Families have a need for a sense of safety and security.

Implications: Facilities need to be well-maintained, accessible, and secure. Guidelines for safety need to be well-communicated for experiences.

Characteristic: Family experiences are social.

Implications: Experiences need to engage the family as a whole, with parents facilitating activities for their children. Experiences need to engage all members of the family as individuals.

Characteristic: An array of limitations in regards to processing information are likely to be evident in a family group.

> **Implication:** The interpretive program should provide opportunities that allow all members of a family or group to be involved at the same time and place, despite having different educational or experiential backgrounds. This can be accomplished by providing several opportunities in one location, each catering to a different educational level, or a single tactic that is designed in such a way that everyone in the group has an intellectual entry point into that exhibit.

Characteristic: Aside from summer camps and wedding guests, most unaccompanied visitors, including families, visit in the fall and spring when the weather is pleasant in Washington D.C.

> **Implication:** Parts of the interpretive network should be able to be easily changed to take advantage of seasonal changes in audiences.

Characteristic: Visitors may not speak English, or may speak English as a second language.

> **Implication:** There is a need for graphic and/or bilingual resources to help these visitors understand signage, communicate with staff, and to access interpretive programs.

Note: There is a high turnover in residents, thus a continuous marketing effort is needed to make sure residents know about Woodend and what it offers. Real estate agents and schools are two potential pathways to reaching new residents. The school approach is only effective if the new resident has children of school age. Real estate agents will be a better pathway for empty-nesters moving into the area.

Children

Reaching children is not about dumbing down the information presented. It is about offering experiences in nature that help build emotional, physical and intellectual connections to the extent possible, and laying groundwork for understanding key concepts when they are older. Key characteristics include ones relating to their physical limitations and assets, and one relating to mental limitations.

Characteristics – Physical: Children are short. They also often have an abundance of energy.

> **Implications:** Viewing opportunities and material addressed to children needs to be at a comfortable height. In addition, interpretation-related opportunities that involve expending energy should be identified and developed.

Characteristics – Mental: Children are a challenge because they have limitations regarding learning the same way as adults. Whereas adults can learn by processing incoming verbal information based on past experience and existing knowledge, children up to around the age of 8 do not have a vast storehouse of existing experiences and knowledge. Consequently, they are primarily focused on acquiring information

firsthand. Since they have not completely mastered the symbol system we call "language," they use their primary information-gathering tools – their senses – to explore their environment.

> **Implications:** Opportunities to touch, smell, taste, see and hear are critical to an effective experience for children. This is an important point because we often focus on the need for activities to be interactive, and believe we have accomplished our goal if they can push buttons. Although the opportunity to interact in such a way increases the attraction power of an opportunity, if it is not an opportunity to discover information using senses, it is not nearly as effective for children in terms of gathering and processing information.

People with disabilities

The ADA is a civil rights law ensuring that the 20% of the U.S. population with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in all areas of public life. Using a Universal Design Approach, which focuses on creating experiences that can be enjoyed by all parts of the target audience, including people with disabilities, involves integrating multiple delivery tactics that involve multiple senses within the same interpretive opportunity. The result is an overall array of experiences with opportunities for everyone.

A Universal Design Approach also benefits our aging population because it is physical change, such as deteriorating eyesight, hearing and mobility that are the core of the issues that older adults have with interpretive and recreational experiences, not their age. Therefore, a separate category for 'older adults' is not needed. The following are specific characteristics and implications based on specific disabilities.

Disability: People who use wheelchairs and other mobility devices

Note: Surfaces that provide easy access for wheelchair users also generally work for people who use other mobility devices such as a walker or cane.

Characteristic: Visitors who use manual wheelchairs, power wheelchairs and scooters sit at varying heights but are lower to the ground than a standing adult, making it harder to see objects and read text mounted at a height intended for someone standing.

Implication: Take into account the average sightline for adults who are shorter in stature or use wheelchairs as well as standing adults. Use where the sightlines overlap for mounting heights. A good set of guidelines can be found at: https://www.si.edu/Accessibility/SGAED#page_21.

Characteristic: Visitors who use wheelchairs or scooters need maneuvering clearance.

> **Implication:** This has to be taken into account with all infrastructure – parking areas (accessible spaces), width of walkways, hallways, wheelchair locations integrated into the seating plan for a public program, etc.

Characteristic: Design exhibit interactives so they are within reach range of people who use wheelchairs as well as standing adults. The following is a link to Chapter 3: Building Blocks of the ADA Standards. The chapter focuses on information related to physical access. https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/buildings-and-sites/about-the-ada-standards/ada-standards/chapter-3-building-blocks#308%20Reach%20Ranges

> **Implication:** Exhibits with text need to have it located at the right height and angle to be easily read from a wheelchair. All interpretive opportunities, including outdoor signage, needs to be designed for knee and toe clearance, thus allowing the person to get closer to text and other features of an exhibit. Pushbuttons and other devices that activate parts of the exhibit have to be within reach of someone sitting in a wheelchair.

Characteristic: Provide an accessible route from the exterior of a building, through the entrance and to all program spaces.

> **Implication:** All areas of newly designed and newly constructed buildings and facilities and altered portions of existing buildings and facilities need to meet federal accessibility requirements.

Characteristic: Manually operating a wheelchair is physically challenging for some visitors depending upon the topography and surface they are navigating. Some people may need to move more slowly or tire more easily.

> **Implication:** Program pace (in terms of speed when moving) must be slowed down. Plans should be made for additional time between program stops, and program routes may need to be shortened.

Characteristic: Visitors who use wheelchairs are just like able bodied visitors. Be inclusive in your program design and treat everyone in the same manner.

> **Implication:** All elements of the Interpretive Program should be designed using a Universal Design Approach. That approach seeks to ensure that everyone can be involved in an interpretive opportunity at the same time and place.

Disability: People who are blind or have low vision

Characteristic: Difficulty seeing clearly or at all.

> **Implication:** Key information should be offered in an audio format, ideally with supporting tactile elements (which will also appeal to other audiences). To facilitate reading by those who are experiencing some loss of vision, fonts should be easily readable with font size large enough to achieve a high degree of probability that people with low vision will be able to read the text. Also use universal symbols when appropriate.

Characteristic: People with vision loss need mobility and orientation information to successfully navigate unfamiliar terrain.

> **Implication:** An accessible route is equally accessible to people with mobility and vision disabilities. There must be at least 2030 mm (80 in.) of clear head room along the circulation route. Obstacles to be avoided include overhanging branches. Color contrast on the edge of a path can be useful.

Disability: People who are Deaf or have hearing loss

Characteristic: There is a range of hearing loss, from slight to profound. People who are Deaf, especially in the Washington Metropolitan Area, often identify with the culture and language (American Sign Language) of their community.

> **Implication:** Effective communication can be achieved through written materials, an accessible website, hiring a sign language interpreter for a program on request, and assistive listening equipment.

Adults (not accompanied by children)

Note: Although the decision was made to collapse the audiences into 3 groups, that doesn't change the fact that adults will come to Woodend for different reasons, some of which are likely to capture most if not all of their attention, such as wedding guests. On the other hand, amateur nature lovers are coming because of nature. With that in mind, characteristics and associated implications included in this section are organized by sub-groups.

Neighbors

Note: At one time conflict occurred with some neighbors in relation to the installation of a deer fence. Since that time ANS has instituted monthly neighborhood meetings, resulting in a better relationship with those neighbors.

Characteristic: Since they live close to the site, neighbors, as well as those within a short walking distance, have a higher potential for repeat visits than people who live some distance away.

> **Implication:** A changing variety of interpretive activities and programming is needed to keep them coming back to engage in the Interpretive Program.

Characteristic: Local residents may feel a connection to the site as part of their community.

> **Implication:** Residents of the area may feel a greater pull to become a volunteer or join the Friends groups.

Characteristic: People living close to a site such as this often prefer more in-depth material if about the area, and/or can handle more in-depth material because of familiarity with an area and local issues. They are often interested in local issues because of direct impact on their lifestyle.

> **Implication:** Opportunities to obtain material that is more in-depth, such as purchasing publications, should be available.

> **Implication:** Serving neighbors and those who live within a short walking distance effectively may require programs specifically designed for this audience or a segment of this audience, and scheduled at times they can attend.

Wedding Guests

Characteristic: People attending a wedding will typically be focused on the event, which includes mingling with people before and after the service.

> **Implication:** They may be a hard audience to reach with interpretive opportunities during the wedding. However, they do have the potential to return, so providing engaging interpretive information that does not take a long time in terms of engagement, located within or adjacent to areas frequented by wedding guests, could attract people from this audience to return.

Conference Attendees

Characteristic: This group of people is likely to have some time available on-site for engaging in interpretive opportunities, although that time may not be very long. It will likely be during breaks and at the lunch hour.

> **Implications:** Interpretive tactics located near the house that don't require much time are the most likely to be effective. This could include a short interpretive walking loop.

Characteristic: This group is likely to be meeting in specific spaces within the house.

> **Implication:** Interpretive opportunities on the walls of those spaces, and along travel corridors, could be an effective tactic for reaching this group.

Appendix E: Parameters

Introduction

Parameters are those conditions under which visitor experiences and the associated Interpretive Program must be developed, such as monetary constraints, and under which it must function, such as climate. They are also called 'givens,' 'circumstances' and 'constraints.' Identifying parameters ensures selection and development of experiences and interpretive and wayfinding tactics and infrastructure that are effective and realistic, not idealistic.

The following section contains key parameters identified through review of planning documents previously developed for the site and by participants in the work sessions. In reviewing the parameters, it is important to remember that they represent what _is_, not what should be or what is desired. It is also important to remember that people not engaged in the planning process will read this document, which is why it is important to note what you are already doing to deal with parameters and why.

Key Parameters

Budget

B-1: Annual budget for developing interpretive opportunities is likely to be around $75,000 per year, which is not sufficient to implement everything recommended in the plan at the same time. The plan needs to be structured so it can be implemented using a phased approach, with each phase costing around $75,000. In addition, the first experiences developed should be highly visible with a high probability of quick return on investment* to maintain momentum.

*_Return on investment is not restricted to money, for example it could take the form of increased visibility, leading to visitation by people who have not visited previously._

Staffing

S-1: ANS has a limited number of staff and volunteers trained to provide interpretive services. Although personal interpretive services should be offered whenever possible, the visitor interpretive experiences must be designed to function with no or limited number of staff to ensure a viable interpretive experience even when no staff are available. This will help address the need to provide a quality experience for unaccompanied visitors.

Note: _Although ANS has more than 500 volunteers, but most work in other areas, such as gardening, citizen science, and youth education programs._

S-2: Docent tours are not likely to be available during weddings and summer camp. Another reason the interpretive network has to function effectively using non-personal interpretive opportunities.

Environmental Conditions

E-1: Weather can be harsh in the winter. This has several implications:
- Outdoor signs and structures must be constructed of materials resistant to the weather conditions (ice, freezing, damp).
- Since no dedicated interior space is available for interpretive opportunities, programs, presentations, talks and other non-fixed opportunities that can be scheduled for inside the house will be important for serving visitors on a regular basis.

E-2: Inclement weather can occur any time of the year, especially fall, winter and spring. If ANS wants to sustain visitation all year, the type and extent of opportunities inside or in sheltered areas need to provide enough motivation for people to visit during those time periods.

E-3: High humidity can be an issue during the summer. Anything that can make being in the outdoors more comfortable, such as misters (typically curved pieces of tube that emit a fine spray of water), would likely increase use of outdoor areas during such times.

Physical Infrastructure and Layout

PI-1: As currently laid out, it is not obvious to new visitors that a Nature Store is located on the site. In addition, the store is not adjacent to a major thoroughfare either within or outside the mansion. Very specific wayfinding signage is likely to be needed.

PI-2: The main building is at the highest elevation point on site. This creates some challenges in terms of accessibility, especially when the primary parking is moved to the locations near the Jones Mill Road entry.

PI-3: No interior space is available for fixed interpretive opportunities other than ones on interior walls of the mansion. This simply means that outdoor interpretive opportunities will be more likely to be effective during the summer and parts of the fall and spring. If a desire exists to provide interpretive opportunities year-round, ANS will have to rely more heavily on presentations and programs indoors during the winter months.

PL-4: The site is being developed so major parking will be located just off of Jones Mill Road, near the Nature Based Playground and Educational Hub. This will necessitate having thematic overview near those locations.

PL-5: Parking is currently relatively limited, and will continue to be so when the Master Plan has been fully implemented. In a sense this may be a good situation in regards to carrying capacity of the site. Regardless, holding power should not be increased significantly beyond what it will be when the Master Plan is fully implemented. In other words, it might not be a good idea to add amenities that might

increase the length of stay, such as picnic tables and a place that sells food, both of which can extend the visit of a group.

PL-6: The mansion is used for office space, gift store space and meeting and event space. Consequently, it is not available for fixed interpretive opportunities other than ones that can be put on walls.

PL-7: The site has limited interior spaces that could be used for interpretive opportunities, including the Great Hall, the Library, the Shop and the Teale Center. Unless availability can be counted on at specific times, interpretive opportunities in these areas are limited to scheduled presentations and programs.

PL-8: Tours of the house are offered on a sporadic basis.

PL-9: Currently the only restrooms available to the public are in the mansion. This has both positive and negative implications. On the one hand, visitors have the opportunity to go in the house, which creates a good opportunity to market programs, house tours and other public events that take place in the mansion. It also takes visitors near the Nature Store. On the other hand, the location is an issue for people out on the trails or other locations downhill and some distance from the mansion.

Note: 2 portable restrooms will be installed at the nature play space.

Location and Access

LA-1: Woodend is within walking distance of two proposed Purple Line Metro Rail stops. This will make it easier for pedestrians to get to Woodend, which would increase visitation without increasing the number of vehicles trying to park on-site.

Policy and Legal Issues

PL-1: The Mansion is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation. This restricts what can be done with the building.

PL-2: Projects have to go through the Historic Preservation Commission and the Board of Appeals because ANS has a special use permit to operate in a residential area.

Safety

S-1: Currently, the primary parking area for the mansion separated from the building by the access road. This is potentially a safety issue.

S-2: Access to the section of the site across Jones Mill Road, and therefore to Rock Creek Park, requires crossing a street that at present has no cautions to motorists. This is a safety issue that has been addressed in the Master Plan, but until modifications are made to the crossing, this will continue to be a safety issue. With that in mind it might not be a good idea to develop interpretive opportunities in that section of the site as they would likely increase the pedestrians trying to cross the road.

S-3: The roadway through Woodend is currently used by many visitors for walking between parts of the site as it is often the most direct route. This is also a safety hazard that is mitigated to some extent by the reduced speed limit along the roadway.

Note: This will not be an issue when the primary pedestrian circulation route called for in the Master Plan is put in.

Other

O-1: Currently conflicts between users of Woodend sometimes occur, most notably when a wedding or event is taking place. This has been addressed in the Master Plan by separating functions of the site into 3 distinct areas. However, it is a situation that will continue to be an issue until the Master Plan is implemented. Consequently, it may be desirable not to locate additional interpretive opportunities in the area around the mansion to avoid attracting visitors to that location when an event is underway.

O-2: The existing signs in the mansion need to be replaced.

O-3: An interpretive opportunity could be added to the library.

Appendix F: Potential Interpretive Stories

Introduction

The Visitor Interpretive Experience Planning process includes selecting themes (messages) that will, if understood by the visitor, have the potential to cause a change in knowledge that potentially leads to an impact on behavior that is consistent with ANS goals. Stories are the vehicles for communicating the themes. People generally become more interested in a story when they can *see* something related to it, and they are more likely to believe what they see than what they only hear or read. Therefore, the more an interpretive opportunity connects with and uses actual artifacts, specimens, features and other sensory stimuli in conveying information, the more effective the opportunity will be. With that in mind, the inventory of potential stories within the context of Visitor Interpretive Experience Planning begins with identifying sensory stimuli as a means of determining what stories can be told most effectively.

Key Features and Potential Stories

The following is an inventory of key features that could be used to tell stories, and the possible stories they can be used to tell.

Note: Every feature on the site has a story – it is there for a reason, whether that reason is rooted in natural history, or in human activities. For example, every plant can be used to tell of some link between habitat and biological organisms, but the list would be quite long and would not return the value for the time it cost. The approach I use is to identify features and other sensory stimuli that I believe can be connected to key messages, and also stimuli that – because of prominence – need to be included. The mansion falls in that category. I consider this to be a preliminary list with the expectation that additional features and stories will be identified as we move through the process.

Mansion and associated grounds
Although the focus of the interpretive effort is likely to be on natural history, the mansion is a compelling feature that elicits questions by visitors, and it was designed by a famous architect, so the answers to those questions must be available in some form.

Note: It is important to start visitors where they are willing and able to start a communication process and then take them where you want them to go. When a visitor asks a question, it means that if you answer the question, that person will engage in communicating with you. That is why it is of value to identify typical visitor questions, because they are potential starting points for a dialogue with visitors.

Note: It may be that the key story associated with the mansion is not the building and grounds, but of the Wells family who owned it, and of Mrs. Wells, who bequeathed it to ANS upon her death. That story helps get across the idea that everyone can have a positive impact on conserving natural resources.

The array of habitats that will be present when the Master Plan is fully implemented
Although each habitat has its own story to tell, the combination in such a small space creates a great opportunity to focus on the relationship of wildlife, plants and all biological organisms to habitat, and on

the concept that everything in an ecosystem (or watershed) is linked. Also, if these habitats are healthy and attract wildlife it will help get across the idea that nature and humans can coexist.

'Green Features'
This includes such features as the pervious materials used to help rainwater soak in instead of running off, the rain garden, and the use of native plants. These features will be especially important to interpret for a couple of reasons. First, it helps your ability to communicate effectively on conservation of natural resources because you are 'walking the talk.' Second, many of the features can be adapted and used at a visitor's home.

The process of restoration and the issue of invasives
The particulars of the story will change depending on what habitat is being restored, but the importance of native plants for a healthy watershed and the issues with invasives can be told repeatedly using different species.

Making the site a net zero for storm water
Although this is just one of the green features, I called it out because I believe it might resonate with visitors more than some of the other features. This is also an opportunity to communicate the idea that engaging in important conservation measures is easy. It is also an opportunity to focus on watersheds with the message that everything in a watershed is linked, so causing impact at one point is likely to cause impacts to other areas and/or parts of the ecosystem.

Champion trees
People are interested in what is the biggest, smallest, tallest, oldest, etc. Consequently, these trees create opportunities to attract interest and start a communication process.

The stream
Although this is one of the habitats that can be interpreted, the water also creates the opportunity to talk about the fact that at the time the property was purchased by Chester Wells in 1916, it was in a Clean Drinking Water Land Grant area, which means that people were thinking about conservation of such resources more than a century ago.

The deer fence and cattle grate
The management of the deer population could appear to be an inconsistency on the part of ANS because the deer were removed in order to restore the native vegetation, but the deer are native to this ecosystem, and ANS is a conservation-oriented entity.

Blair Native Plant Garden
Because plants were chosen for value to wildlife, seasonal interest, and ornamental features, they are likely to be plants of most interest to a lot of visitors when considering planting native plants in their yards. The plants associated with wildlife can be used to help convey the connection between wildlife and habitat.

Definitions

Understanding the following terms will be useful in understanding this document:
- Visitor Interpretive Experience Plan
- Visitors
- Stepping Stones of Engagement
- Natural Habitats

Visitor Interpretive Experience Plans

Up until very recently, an 'Interpretive Plan' was the document that was typically produced to guide development of an Interpretive Program, which includes all the exhibits, interpretive panels, publications and similar interpretive opportunities for a site or facility. While such plans can identify opportunities that communicate desired messages to target audiences, they often fail because they do not take into consideration the experiential context in which they must function.

Most good interpretive planning models used today reflect the need to take target audience, goals and objectives, constraints, opportunities, and themes into account when selecting information delivery tactics and content. However, they still treat the array of tactics – the Interpretive Program as a whole – as the focal point of the plan. Although any interpretive planning effort should result in identifying the array of interpretive opportunities to develop, the approach should be to first identify the ideal *visitor experiences* (ones that by their nature would benefit from effective interpretive opportunities) from the perspective of those developing the interpretive program, and then use those experiences to determine what interpretive and other information to offer in each stage of the visitor experience. Such experiences also have to be ones that target audience are willing to buy with their time, which requires knowing your target audiences beyond basic demographic information. Using the visitor experience approach ensures that you develop a plan, labeled a 'Visitor Interpretive Experience Plan, for a complete information network that begins with reaching your target audiences where they are – physically, emotionally and intellectually – and taking them where you want them to go by using a linked combination of trip planning information, orientation, wayfinding and interpretive opportunities. It also ensures that you identify barriers to the desired experiences, such as facilities that aren't fully accessible, so you can address those barriers within the context of developing your interpretive program.

In sum, people today buy *experiences*. Consequently, the desired product to guide development of an interpretive program is a Visitor Interpretive *Experience* Plan (VIEP), which uses desired audience experiences as the frameworks for determining the interpretive, outreach, orientation, wayfinding, and trip planning information to develop and actions to take to facilitate experiences that will attract, hold and communicate effectively with target audiences, whether on or off-site.

Visitors

One overall goal of the network of interpretive opportunities developed for this information network focuses on conserving natural resources is and forging/strengthening a positive emotional/intellectual connection between a member of a target audience and nature. Although a visit to Woodend Sanctuary might be the most effective vehicle for creating such connections, it is not the only one given the array

of information delivery tactics currently available. In other words, people don't have to physically step foot on the site to be termed a 'visitor.' The term 'visitor' in this document is applied to anyone visiting the site or spending time with opportunities available on the website, such as a virtual tour. This is an important distinction for a small site like Woodend, which has a limited carrying capacity for human use if the natural resources are to be conserved.

Stepping Stones of Engagement

This is a term the USFWS uses to describe their philosophy for developing Urban Wildlife Refuges, and one that I find quite useful in developing interpretive networks at other sites focused on developing active advocates for conserving and restoring nature. The implication of a 'progression' is apt in that the ideal outcome is for all members of target audiences to become fully engaged in conserving natural resources, a goal that requires a progressive series of commitments, each a step beyond the other. However, the term is a misnomer in that it implies a linear pathway of steps with a specific starting and ending point, which by inference, involves a visit to a natural area.

In reality, Stepping Stones of Engagement includes an *array* of opportunities that constitute potential starting points to a journey that involves a strong connection with nature that manifests itself in active stewardship of resources. By necessity, these 'starting stepping stones' are located in places – physical or digital – that the target audience already frequents, which are unlikely to be at Woodend (this is for attracting people comfortable with nature who have never been to Woodend). Ideally, the first stepping stone should be something that is already a comfortable and valued part of everyday life. Most people have some existing relationship with nature, such as having house plants, or a backyard garden. Those existing relationships should be the starting place for stepping stones of engagement, which requires that *their* nature be considered valid. The discussion won't proceed very far if it begins with an intimation that only the nearby nature that someone wants to conserve constitutes real nature. The approach of starting where the audience is currently located reflects the need to meet people where they are, while also reflecting a key principal in this process, which is to minimize the effort required and barriers that have to be surmounted for a person to begin engaging with nature and/or conservation. Each stepping stone provides an experience with nature in some way. As a whole, the 'starting stepping stones' offer potential visitors an array of opportunities to experience nature so everyone has an opportunity to interact with and experience nature in a way that they consider 'safe' and within his or her comfort zone. For some it may be a virtual experience on the Internet. For others it might be visiting a local park within their community, and for others it would be Woodend Sanctuary. For the sake of this plan, the focus is on stepping stones that will work for people who already care about and are comfortable in nature.

Each stepping stone not only provides an opportunity to experience nature at a specific level, but also seeks to move a visitor along the journey to becoming fully engaged in conserving natural resources. Consequently, all 'starting stepping stones' are linked to a myriad of potential 'follow-up stepping stones,' and from those to other Stepping Stones of Engagement in what is hoped to be an endless journey of engagement and associated commitment to conservation that takes the form of actions.

The keys to an effective array of Stepping Stones of Engagement include the following:

1. Validate whatever relationship the target audience currently has with nature that they consider a part of their quality of life. This could range from a completely natural environment to house plants, a backyard garden, bird feeder, a neighborhood park, and other examples of nature that is managed in some way.
2. Provide easily accessible ''next stepping stones' in locations already frequented by the target audiences, which in this case are within their community, with the ultimate goal of deepening their connection to nature.
3. Ensure that each stepping stone offers high benefit to the target audience for the cost of time, attention and other personal resources as defined by the target market. This is especially important for the starting stepping stones.
4. Ensure that the 'distance' between stepping stones is such that a person can take 'baby steps' of commitment to conservation.
5. Ensure that each stepping stone markets potential next stepping stones.

Natural Habitats

Everyone has a connection with nature since they breathe air, drink water and eat food, all of which are linked to our natural world. Most people already have a relationship and value this type of nature in some way, but the nature they value may be non-native house plants or non-native vegetation in their yards. To avoid distinguishing 'good' nature from 'bad' nature, which may not work well, the term 'Natural Habitats, is used to differentiate native flora and fauna from other 'nature.' Natural habitats are places that support a diverse community of wildlife and provide ecosystem services. They can be as small as a strip of land along a sidewalk or as large as a national park.