

OSU College Forests Interpretive Plan

Draft 1/8/2014

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I. Introduction

Background

The definition of interpretation reads: “A communication process that forges intellectual and emotional connections between the interests of the visitor and the meanings inherent in the resource” (National Association for Interpretation). This is a goal for which the OSU College Forests strive, in an effort to serve as the natural link between research, teaching, management, and the community.

The OSU College Forests currently has a variety of interpretive products, including maps, brochures, interpretive signs and directional signs. They were created over multiple years, by different people with different goals and styles. This planning process was undertaken to come up with guidance to assist the Forest in producing high quality products, consistent in messages and appearance. In addition to providing a valuable service to the users of the Forest, this serves to “brand” the College Forests and improve the impression we make on the users.

This plan is intended to serve as a roadmap for future development of interpretive, informational, and educational products by providing consistent tools and messages to apply appropriately in development of future projects. This plan provides a conceptual framework, but is not intended to provide a program of work for future developments.

This plan identifies:

- Interpretive themes and subthemes; allowing cohesive delivery of priority messages
- Design elements in a ‘style guide’ for consistent application in College Forests interpretive products
- Identification of target audiences and potential delivery/media

Purpose and Need

Access to a wide local audience: Access to Forest visitors means access to local residents and school children in a venue ideal to learning about the forest environment. Interpretation on the College Forests has the potential to meet many of our goals, as well as to establish support for College Forests, College of Forestry and OSU with local residents.

Opportunities to engage the community: Neighboring landowners, public land managers, non-profit organizations, local businesses and other Colleges within OSU are just a few of the entities who may be interested in collaborating on interpretive projects to meet multiple goals. High quality interpretation would serve to further integrate the College Forests into the fabric of the community.

Limitless potential for development of interpretive program: Many proposals for interpretive projects are currently in development or in the planning phases by College Forests staff. As this document shows, there is no shortage of stories to tell or creative ways to tell them to existing and new audiences.

Interpretive and design themes – essential for effective communication: Without established interpretive and design themes, the messaging communicated through interpretive efforts will be disconnected and fragmented. Themes help clearly tie disparate messages back to the goals of the Forests and assure products are professional in appearance.

Competitiveness for grants would be improved: Having an interpretive plan in place improves competitiveness for grants. Granting agencies look to a plan to assure that the proposed work is part of a larger effort and will produce a high quality product.

Planning Process

Interpretive Planning Workshop: An initial four-hour interpretive planning workshop was held on March 1st, 2013 at the OSU College of Forestry Richardson Hall. Participants of this workshop included the core team who generated the ideas displayed in this document.

Style Guide Development: Concurrently, graphic design students from the College of Business worked to produce the Style Guide located in the last chapter of this document. This guide identifies consistent colors, textures, font types and sizes, photography and illustration styles to use in developing future products.

Core Team: A small core team of individuals participated in an initial workshop to identify draft themes, subthemes, messages, audiences and media. This group will continue to serve as primary editors and contributors to the plan through the revision process. The composition of this group includes College of Forestry faculty, College Forests staff, College of Business graphic design students, and OSU Extension.

Extended Team: A larger extended team of interested individuals will have an opportunity to review and contribute to the content of this Interpretive Plan. This extended team will include other interested College of Forestry personnel, as well as representatives from groups within the greater Corvallis community.

Focus Groups: A companion research project will be utilizing focus groups of visitors to articulate visitor interests in the future of recreation use on the College Forests in the spring of 2013. These focus groups will be utilized for this project to identify what recreationists are interested in learning during their time on the Forest.

Next Steps: This draft Interpretive Plan and Style Guide will be reviewed by the core and extended planning team for feedback and further development. Feedback will be integrated as appropriate to support the main goals of the project.

II. Goals and Anticipated Outcomes

Goals of Interpretation on the College Forests

- Enhance understanding and investment of visitors to promote the mission of the College Forests and the College of Forestry
- Improve transparency regarding activities on the College Forests
- Engage youth and other non-traditional Forest users
- Encourage visitors to take positive actions to minimize impacts and follow the rules
- Improve relationships with community members by providing information visitors want
- Promote the goals of the College Forests through the use of interpretation. From the 2005 McDonald Dunn Forest Plan:
 1. Diverse opportunities for learning
 2. Optimize net revenue
 3. Sustain ecosystem services
 4. Protect cultural heritage sites
 5. Provide quality recreation opportunities
 6. Enhance relationships with neighbors
 7. Demonstrate commitment to continuous improvement

Anticipated Outcomes of Interpretive Planning

- The College Forests have a unique and identifiable identity
- Future interpretive projects are professional in appearance messages are delivered effectively
- Avenues for developing additional interpretive programs and projects are clearly identified for future exploration
- Grants to fund interpretive developments are more easily obtained

III. OSU College Forests Themes and Storylines

Theme 1: OSU College Forests serve as community fabric by interweaving people with each other and with nature. (People)

Subtheme A: *College Forests provide benefits to our local community.*

Storylines:

- Why should I care about the College Forests?
- Connection to public health; including childhood health issues, health benefits of recreating in trees
- Social cohesion is strengthened by accessible green spaces and connecting a community of users
- Property values are increased by proximity to College Forests
- College Forests are a place to come and recreate close to Corvallis

Sub-theme B: *Different people interact with the Forest in different ways.*

Storylines:

- Forest means different things to different people
- Social-emotional response to forest management activities
- Role of humans in ecosystems vary – separate or a part of nature?
- Cultural competence
- How do my actions impact the forest?
- Safety: how to be safe, don't be afraid, poison oak, animals, awareness of surroundings, be prepared, what to do in an emergency

Sub-theme C: *The College Forests offer opportunities for YOU to enjoy!*

Storylines:

- Available to anyone who wishes to use it (within reason)
- A great place to go with friends
- Forests inspire
- Forests are fun to play in
- A walk in the forest is stress-relieving
- A place for shared family experiences
- Key plants and wildlife you might find while there
- The College Forests are an oasis away from your city or town
- The College Forests are a great place to go to experience wildlife and observe nature
- Exploring the College Forests is a great way to be active for very little money
- The College Forests provide recreation for families with children of all ages

Subtheme D: *The College Forests are used for many types of recreation activities.*

Storylines:

- Opportunities for recreation and current uses of the College Forests

- Organized events on the College Forests
- Why do we manage for recreation – the community connection
- Recreation management – what we manage, why we manage
- The “why” associated with rules and regulations
- The “why” associated with trail management activities
- How recreation management is funded

Potential locations include: trailheads, campus, town, highest use areas, Arboretum, office, and with partners.

Theme 2: College Forests are working forests, carefully managed to protect resources and produce revenue.

Storylines:

- What is active forest management?
- Forest plan and themes
- Harvesting techniques
- Regeneration cycle
- Early seral forests and the role of forest management
- Cultural resources; monitoring before activities
- Water and watersheds
- Habitats for wildlife
- Community / forest connections
- College Forests provide revenue to support research, teaching, recreation on the forests, and more
- If done right, logging can be beneficial to the forest

Potential locations include: McDonald Forest (what to expect with future management), active work sites, research sites, forest management sites (all seral stages), Intensive Management Trail, Saddle back, and New Growth Trail.

Theme 3: This land has a long history, rich with human connections.

Sub-theme A: *People experience a connection with these lands long that started long before settlement by homesteaders.*

Storylines:

- Pre-settlement story
 - Tribal maps of Coast Range and Willamette Valley
 - Luckiamute Kalapuya culture and economy
 - Archeology
- Cultural landscapes, working forests, ethnobotany

- Camas, camas ovens, camps
- Oak savannah – fire management for acorns, travel and wildlife
- Baskets and hazel
- Other tribal uses for plants
- Tribal names for plants and places
- The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
 - History
 - Current activities

Sub-theme B: *From early settlement to the present day – The OSU College Forests.*

Storylines:

- Broad history
 - Land uses over time
 - Land acquisitions and purpose: McDonald, Dunn, Elizabeth Starker Cameron Demonstration and others
- Forest management as a function of time: silviculture and harvest plans
- Past use of forest can still be seen
 - Kalapuya use
 - 1851 vegetation
 - Homesteads; heritage pears and orchards throughout Forest: Jackson Creek, Soap Creek
 - Early years of logging on forest; oral history and Koeller Crew
 - Sawmills
 - Old buildings
 - Cultural sites
 - Camp Adair
- History of the Peavy Arboretum
 - Civilian Conservation Corps
 - Cronemiller Lake
 - Sign shop
 - Pull-up bar
 - State nursery
- Historical figures: Peavy, Dunn, Cameron and more
- History of recreation use: evolution of our trail system and other uses

Potential locations include: Peavy Arboretum, Cameron Tract, Soap Creek, Oak woodlands, Sulphur Springs, Jackson Creek, Oak Creek, and Vineyard Mountain.

Theme 4: The OSU College Forests have a diverse mission to support teaching, research, education and community.

Sub-theme A: *College Forests are a center of research for forestry and natural resources.*

Storylines:

- Current research

- Past research
- Room for innovation
- Place based education; connecting youth to research
- Tree genetics research: controversy and history of vandalism
- College of Forestry using up to date research techniques in management activities
- Promote/support research projects and new ways of thinking about forestry (ex: variable retention harvesting)
- What are all those poles doing there anyway?

Sub-theme B: *The College Forests is a place where the College of Forestry community comes together.*

Storylines:

- Community teaching on the forest; how elementary, middle school, high school, and other youth education programs use the College Forests
- Use of Forest by College of Forestry Students:
 - SAF
 - OSU Logging Sports team; events and arena
 - Forestry Club
- History and use of Forestry Club Cabin
- How agricultural lands are used and managed by the College of Agriculture
- The College Forests can help students feel more connected to their “temporary” community and its history

Sub-theme C: *College Forests are a living example used to connect students with natural processes and the fundamentals of forestry.*

Storylines:

- Use for teaching within many colleges in OSU
- Teaching fundamentals of forestry

Potential Locations include: Student Learning Center (SLC), central student areas, Peavy Courtyard, other colleges and departments, potential students, active work sites, Forestry Club Cabin, Cronemiller Lake, partners, research sites, and Oak Creek.

Theme 5: The future of our society is intimately linked with the health of the forest ecosystems that sustain us; it is our responsibility to keep them healthy. (Ecosystems/Future)

Sub-theme A: *Forests are society’s life support system.*

Storylines:

- Air quality: lichens and the role of trees
- Forests and fire

- Soil characteristics, landslides; geologic history
- Carbon sequestration
- Watersheds, stream health, fish and riparian areas
- Economic impacts of invasive species and other threats
- Public health

Subtheme B: *Future forests face many challenges.*

Storylines:

- Invasive species
- Climate change
- Fire exclusion
- Air pollution
- Urban growth
- Youth as future policy makers

Sub-theme C: *College Forests are contributing to tomorrow's healthy forests.*

Storylines:

- College Forests showcase cutting edge research and management
- Restoration: oaks, meadows, engagement
- Protection of northern spotted owls
- Creation of snags for wildlife
- Sensitive species in the area
- Cool creatures that live there: research and conservation (red tree voles, spotted owls, purple martins, etc)
- Tree and plant identification in the Arboretum

Potential locations include: Oak Creek, Forest Discovery Trail, Old Growth Trail, and locations of visible examples of fire, invasive species, landslides, cool plants, impact sites, and oak woodlands.

IV. Existing and Potential Audiences and Media

Audiences

OSU Community

- Researchers
- Students: potential, current, and international
- OSU employees
- Volunteers

Potential Users

- People with little access to transportation
- Under-served groups
- Non-traditional users
- Tourists
- Youth
- Technology users
- Senior citizens
- People with disabilities
- Non-users
- Veterans
- Families
- Tribal members

Current Users

- Recreation users: Mountain bikers, equestrians, dog walkers, hikers, trail runners, birders, geocachers, hunters, etc
- Most common demographic: white, middle class, baby boomers
- Special interest groups: birders, hunters, horses, mountain bikers, history, native plants
- Adjacent landowners/neighbors
- Casual forest product gatherers

Potential Partners

- School district
- Corvallis Parks
- Local businesses
- Fitness clubs/organizations
- Samaritan or other health organizations
- INTO program
- Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde

Potential Media

Key Characteristics:

- Changing/rotating content
- Accessible for people with disabilities
- Analogue and digital options for learning
- Use of ambassadors for efforts: existing users, older youth, etc.
- Multi-lingual communication options

Printed Materials/Resources

- Brochures
- Printed maps (with more information –links to signage, self guided tours, more educational info)
- Almanac of cool stuff on Forests
- Photo archiving / photo points of forest management activities

On-Forest Interpretation

Passive

- Audio tour
- Tree ID posts
- Visitors' center
- Temporary/mobile signs
- Interpretive signs
- Self-learning
- QR codes; with URL and simple signs

Interactive

- Apps that can be downloaded ahead of time (ex: tours)
- Interactive screens
- "Zoo keys"
- Student-led hikes
- Photo adventures; Kids with Cameras
- Older youth as ambassadors
- Visitor to visitor
- Working cultural landscape

Sponsored Events

- Treasure hunts
- Community classes
- Teacher workshops
- Forest management demonstrations for community members
- Family weekend activities
- Outdoor schools
- Campfire activities
- Community field trips/learning events

- Cultural classes and demonstrations

Remote and Digital Interpretation

Online Formats

- College Forests Website
- Smart phone applications
- Social media
 - Blog
 - Instagram
 - Facebook
- GPS

Online Resources

- 360 degree photo tours
- Virtual tours
- Audio files
- Video files
- On-line maps and way-finding resources

Outreach and Promotion

Publications

- Oregon Field Guide
- Article in magazine
- John Conner
- Grant McOmie (Portland CBS / NBC)
- Newspaper column
- Newsletter – all encompassing

Sponsored events

- Social events (with alcohol served)
- Art show; photos, paintings, drawings
- Movies in the park
- Science event
- Music in the park
- International events
- Logo design contest

Outreach

- Posters
- Booth at local events
- Local club/group meetings presentations
- Television commercial – Comcast
- Public television/radio
- Personal service announcements (PSAs)

V. Design Guidelines

See attached file: CF Style Guide_v3.pdf

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