

INTERPRETIVE DESIGN

and the dance of experience

A Special Workshop with Steve Van Matre, Jan 18-19, 2013

Reid Park Zoo, Tucson, Arizona

Interpretation is the craft of enriching the experience of leisure visitors in places established for the public good. Such places are the jewels of our societies, set aside because they represent the natural and cultural treasures we want to celebrate today and share with others tomorrow. As a result, they are mission-driven places which also need to justify and garner support for what they are protecting. An interpreter translates the natural and cultural language of such places for its visitors, while immersing them in the essence of its purpose.

Interpretive designers create the leisure journeys that interpreters implement. Just as we have designers today for the buildings, signs, grounds, exhibits, and other components of our mission-driven public places, we need “interpretive designers” who focus on the most important component, the actual experience of the visitors who come. This is a new profession which works with the whole experience that other designers only facilitate in part. Interpretive designers create the interrelated experiential vehicles of interpretive service.

Interpretive Design is for all those who assist visitors in getting to know their public jewels — leisure sites from Aquaria to Zoos — and who aim to enrich those visitors’ experiences in meaningful and memorable ways. From this workshop, you will take home:

- 👣 Why interpretation is neither art, science, nor communication
- 👣 Three essential elements of the Language of Place
- 🌀 Practical exercises for extracting essence (the alchemy of interpretive design)
- 👣 Tools for mapping the forces, features, and facets that make up any place
- 👣 15 Developmental Steps for structuring the dance of experience
- 🌀 Key Password Questions interpretive designers use daily
- 👣 How to develop an Interpretive Matrix for the outcomes of any site



Steve Van Matre is the international chair of The Institute for Earth Education, a worldwide nonprofit volunteer organization. He has been one of the world's leading nature educators ever since the 1970 release of his pioneering work, *Acclimatization*, which led to a dozen other landmark publications in the field, including *Sunship Earth*, *The Earth Speaks*, *Earthkeepers*, and *Earth Education...A New Beginning*. At various points in his career, he has been a youth leader, school teacher, camp director, educational consultant, university professor, public speaker, workshop trainer, and interpretive designer. For ten years he was the chief designer for an interpretive design and planning firm with an international clientele. Professor Van Matre has led sessions for nature educators, interpreters, and teachers for over 40 years on six continents. This is one of the first North American workshops based on his new book, *Interpretive Design...and the Dance of Experience*.

If you are familiar with Steve Van Matre's work in nature education, wait until you see what he has to say about natural and cultural interpretation. He lays out an entirely new professional structure that challenges much of what visitors experience at interpretive sites all over the world. This is a fresh way of looking at one of the most rewarding careers of the 21st century: caring for and sharing the world's treasures. If you are an interpreter, ranger, guide, docent, tour leader, informal educator, or a designer for leisure sites with a mission, you cannot afford to miss this important new perspective on your work. This ground-breaking workshop will change what you do.

Logistics: This workshop will run from 8:15 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. each day. Lunch and snacks will be provided. Special room rates for out-of-town participants are available at the Double Tree and the Randolph Park Hotel. Both are within walking distance of the workshop site.

Location: The Reid Park Zoo was founded in 1965 and is part of the City of Tucson's Randolph Park complex. The 24-acre campus houses hundreds of animals in naturalistic exhibits from South America, Asia, and Africa. Hosting over 580,000 visitors each year, this hidden jewel is located in central Tucson near 22nd Street and Alvernon Way. The Reid Park Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

Cost: \$95/person includes 2 lunches, snacks and beverages

Questions: Contact Mike Mayer at mmayer1@email.arizona.edu or call 520-822-6002 for workshop and lodging questions. To purchase a copy of the Interpretive Design book before the workshop contact www.interpretivedesign.net

This workshop is co-sponsored by the Reid Park Zoo, University of Arizona College of Education, Cooper Center for Environmental Learning, and the Sonoran Desert Branch of The Institute for Earth Education.