

INTERPRETIVE DESIGN

and the dance of experience

A Special Workshop with Steve Van Matre, June 22-23, 2012

McKeever Environmental Learning Center, Sandy Lake, Pennsylvania

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 interpreters 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: The McKeever Center is folded into a natural wooded setting 75 miles north of Pittsburgh near Sandy Lake in Mercer County. The center is administered by Slippery Rock University on behalf of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. Nestled among 205 forested acres are ten buildings that include lodging for 150 overnight guests, auditorium, dining hall, office/classroom building and retreat center. Over four miles of hiking trails take visitors through hardwood forests, meadows and hemlock ravines. One trail connects the center with nearby Goddard State Park and Lake Wilhelm.

Cost: \$225/person - includes workshop, Friday night lodging (dormitory style) and four meals.

Questions: On the logistics of this workshop, contact the McKeever Center at 724-376-1000, info@mckeeper.org or www.mckeeper.org. To purchase a copy of the book: www.interpretivedesign.net

Interpretive Design Workshop Registration

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Registration fee of \$225.00 should be made payable to McKeever Center/SRU and mailed to:

McKeever Environmental Learning Center
55 McKeever Ln
Sandy Lake PA 16145

Registration must be received by: June 13. Call 724-376-1000 to pay by credit card.
Further information will be sent to you after you register.