

INTERPRETATION 101

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Overview: The coastal environment is perhaps Florida's most valuable natural resource. People love Florida's coastal environment. Our task is to spark interest in this environment, open their eyes to its beauty, and provide them with information. The art of doing this is described as interpretation. There is no one correct method of interpretation, which is why it is considered an "art" instead of a science.

Components of Interpretation

Interpretation is communication in ways that are:

- Educational
- Entertaining
- Related to the topic
- Provocative
- Motivational
- Understandable

Goals of Interpretation

Three major goals to consider are:

- Inspire and heighten awareness
- Foster proper use of natural areas, facilitate appreciation
- Enhance image of organization, promote support and encourage active participation

Know Your Audience

Be flexible:

- Speak to your audience's level of knowledge
- Recognize special needs
- Be prepared for surprises

Visitors like:

- Enthusiasm
- Humor
- To be involved
- Information made understandable

Develop Your Style

There is no single style!

- Be yourself
- Try different approaches
- Learn from your mistakes
- Have fun
- Involve the audience

Remember to be patient with yourself, build on your successes, and learn from your mistakes.

Presentation Tips

Be the leader:

- Position yourself strategically
- Command attention with your voice
- Connect with your audience
- Interact with your audience
- Use the power of the moment

Interpretation is about passion and sharing that passion with your public. If you are excited, they will be excited, too.

Final Thoughts

- Be professional
- Be patient
- Be kind

Remember, our goal is about helping people get closer to nature, to open eyes, and to reconnect them to the environment. If we have done our job, people will leave informed, entertained, and with a new way of looking at things.