



NEWS RELEASE

Sequoia National Forest and the Giant Sequoia National Monument
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Op-Ed – *Monumental Outlook Over the Horizon*

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Interpretive Planning on the Sequoia

The public plays a vital role in helping to shape the future of the Sequoia's interpretive operations by identifying an interest and passion for unique and special places. In 2008, the Sequoia completed a comprehensive Interpretive Plan which defines the forest program for the next few years. It includes goals, objectives, themes, topics, and important storylines for twelve recreation settings, provides an action plan, media recommendations, design guidelines for interpretive efforts, and tools to help forest interpreters.

Throughout 2007, employee polls were developed and workshops for the development of this Interpretive Plan. Together, forest staff, partners, and media specialists worked toward a goal to promote the Sequoia's resource values through specially planned visitor experiences and excellence in interpretation.

Good visitor planning is customized to meet an individual forest's needs and situations. This plan establishes a foundation to base our decisions for years, and provides guidance to forest staff. It also helps identify the programs' audiences, and what mix of media and personal services to use. The interpretive plan is not a recipe; rather it is a guide to effective, goal-driven planning. While it considers past interpretive programs, it is primarily a forward-looking document that concentrates on actions needed to create or sustain a vigorous and effective interpretive program.

The Sequoia's Interpretive Plan has four components: 1) the Interpretive Strategy; 2) Forest Program and Recommendations; 3) Recreation Settings: Inventory, Products, and Services; and 4) an ongoing compilation of information, reports, bibliographies, plans, and inventories. This process defined realistic strategies and actions that work toward achievement of the interpretive goals that connect with new audiences, provide compelling media and personal services reflecting diverse points of view, and work with strong partners with mutual goals to guide interest, appreciation, and support for the forest.

Throughout the forest you will see the *signs* of progress!

- **Wayfinding** - We have begun to develop a focused sign program for the *visitor experience* at our offices. Each ranger district requires a well-planned arrival experience, with strategically-located forest signs and kiosks. These signs follow service-wide identity and messaging standards. It should be clear to visitors that they are in the Sequoia National Forest and Giant Sequoia National Monument.

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- **Entrance points** - All around Lake Isabella you will see many changes to the kiosks and entrance areas to many campgrounds, picnic sites, and lakeshore access points. Ongoing efforts continue to expand the Sequoia's "brand."
- **Interpretation** - The newly formed partnership with the Giant Sequoia National Monument Association conducts weekly docent interpretive walks at Trail of 100 Giants. They provide site specific interpretation and context within the broader story of the forest. During the 4th of July weekend over 3,500 people visited the trail. An interpretive naturalist program with Student Conservation Association students occur at Hume Lake, Princess, Stony Creek and Big Meadows campgrounds, Buck Rock Lookout, and local resorts and organization camps.
- **Website** - Using the tools of social media, the Sequoia website began a total revamp of how we use the World Wide Web to communicate with current and potential recreation visitors through website information, press releases, articles and publications. A complete redesign of the recreation experience includes many new pages to book your campground, book a rafting trip, or visit the Giant Sequoia National Monument at six outstanding giant sequoia groves. Each step in this website innovation and presentation reflects our culture of timely, accurate and accessible information.
- **Interpreting Our Cultural Heritage** – Archaeological and cultural resources are an irreplaceable part of America's heritage. Currently the untold story of the Buffalo Soldiers, a success story, is being researched, developed and shared through many venues to benefit natural and cultural resource conservation.

Come participate on the Sequoia National Forest, or virtually on our website! Bring your families and others to listen, learn, and share in the *telling* of the Sequoia National Forest interpretive programs!

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