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IMPROVING NYUNGWE NATIONAL PARK TOURISM STAFF INTERPRETIVE SKILLS AND ASSESSING THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

FINAL REPORT



NOVEMBER 2012

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FINAL REPORT

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Nyungwe National Park

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Cover photo: Hikers on Izumo trail with NNP park guide

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ABBREVIATIONS

CIG	Certified Interpretive Guide
CIH	Certified Interpretive Host
CIP	Certified Interpretive Planner
CIT	Certified Interpretive Trainer
DAI	Development Alternatives Incorporated
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
NAI	National Association for Interpretation
NNP	Nyungwe National Park
RDB	Rwanda Development Board
SSENNP	Strengthening Sustainable Ecotourism in and around Nyungwe National Park
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USNPS	United States National Park Service
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society

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- Rwanda Development Board (RDB) – Louis Rugerinyange, Ildephonse Kambogo
- Nyungwe National Park (NNP) Guides – Ange, Isaiah, Claude, Kravel, Bosco, Nacisse, Hope, Gilbert, Christophe, Alpha and others
- Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) – Dr. Michel Masozera, Claudine Tuyishime
- About 70 park visitors/tourists encountered at NNP, Top Hill View Lodge, Forest Lodge, Gisakura Guesthouse, Volcanoes National Park from Rwanda, United States, United Kingdom, Australia, The Netherlands, Somalia, Cuba, Uganda
- Women’s Cooperative - Moses Bigirabagabo, Christiana Ntaudakeba
- Friends of Nyungwe – Kitabi Cultural Village – Ricky Masumbuku

I. SUMMARY: ASSESSMENT OF VISITOR EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING PLAN FOR NYUNGWE NATIONAL PARK

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The Project Objectives were to undertake an assessment of Nyungwe National Park (NNP) guide and other “public” staff interpretive training needs; and prepare a detailed training plan including recommendations on the most appropriate interpretive certification and training programs for use at Nyungwe.

The following description of the tasks to be performed is taken from the Contract between Lisa Brochu and Tim Merriman of Heartfelt Associates and Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI) and is as follows:

- Conduct a thorough literature review of all project and other documentation to determine/assess audiences/market segmentation at Nyungwe and appropriateness of guided activities for those audiences;
- Conduct an onsite assessment of selected trails, viewscapes and physical amenities and related guide/public skills that impact the overall guest experience;
- Facilitate discussion with key stakeholders/partners to determine “interpretive” management needs and available resources;
- Evaluate existing guiding approaches and personnel skill levels at Nyungwe;
- Evaluate personnel skill levels of NNP staff that have public contact but do not deliver interpretive programs to the public;
- Based on the above, design and provide 2 to 4 hours of sample interpretive training for up to 12 individuals (serves as focus group);
- Facilitate discussion with focus group about usefulness of sample training;
- Develop an interpretive training plan/program for NNP including the most appropriate options for implementation of guide training; and
- Provide general observations and recommendations to improve overall guest experience based on visitor experience design principles.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) -funded Strengthening Sustainable Ecotourism in and around Nyungwe National Park (SSENNP), or “Nyungwe Nziza,” work by DAI included the development of a training plan for park guides to enhance the overall visitor experience.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The following work was performed under the technical oversight of Jim Seyler, Nyungwe Nziza’s Chief of Party, in close collaboration with Boaz Tumwesigye, Ecotourism Team Leader, and Ildephonse Kambogo, NNP’s Tourism Warden.

METHODOLOGY

From October 5 to 10, 2012, we conducted an assessment of interpretive guides and the visitor experience at Nyungwe National Park. Although we had hoped to register for activities without the guides’ knowledge of our specific roles, it became clear that word had spread and many guides were aware of our assessment task to varying extents. However, we continued to behave as ordinary tourists in the hopes of getting an unaffected understanding of performances by guides and feel that we were able to do so.

Our activities were scheduled by guides at Kitabi Reception Center on our first day in the park and although the schedule changed periodically to accommodate meeting schedules with Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and NNP staff, we were able to participate in a representative variety of guided walks including Rukungu Trail, Igishigishigi Trail (Canopy Walk), Isumo Trail (to the waterfall), Karamba Birding Trail, Colobus tracking from Uwinka, and Chimpanzee Tracking at Cyamudongo Forest. We also visited the Kitabi Cultural Village and Kitabi Women’s Handicraft Cooperative to get a sense of the tourism involvement of surrounding communities.

To assess the overall visitor experience we stayed at both Top Hill View Hotel (the bulk of the visit) and Forest Lodge (one night) and spent an evening social period with a meal at the Gisakura Guesthouse. We quietly observed and actively chatted with tourists visiting the park daily during each of the activities, while waiting for activities to begin, and at our evening venues to better understand their interests and motivations in visiting Nyungwe. These informal conversations and observations included the impressions of approximately 70 guests from The Netherlands, Germany, United Kingdom, Australia, Somalia (Sri Lankan national), nonnative residents of Rwanda, and the United States.

During the course of our site visit, we had meetings with Louis Rugerinyange, the Chief Warden of Nyungwe; Michel Masozera, WCS Country Director; and Ildephonse Kambogo, Tourism Warden, who supervises the 21 guides, 32 trackers and 3 sales staff in the park. Additionally, we

had extensive conversations with hotel staff and managers when they were available to assess how they interact with park guests.

II. PROJECT REPORT

ELEMENT ONE: CREATING VISITOR EXPERIENCES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The Management Plan for NNP suggests the purpose of the park is “to ensure conservation of NNP’s globally significant biodiversity and regionally vital ecosystem functions and to promote NNP as an activity-based tourism destination.” According to Dr. Sam Ham at University of Idaho, social science research indicates that effective thematic interpretation can be used to influence visitor attitudes and behavior (Journal of Interpretation Research, 2009) that affect their relationship to natural and cultural heritage resources. Replicated studies indicate that people are more likely to become environmental stewards and advocates for national forests, parks and cultural sites if they understand them in both emotional and intellectual contexts. Information alone does little, but well-planned thematic experiences bring people to an understanding that invites their greater support as advocates for forests and parks. That is precisely the purpose of interpretation as defined by the National Association for Interpretation as “a mission-based communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the meanings inherent in the resource.”

One of Dr. Ham’s studies included work with the Swedish boat ecotour company, Lindblad Expeditions. His research showed exponential growth (400%) in donations to conservation in the Galapagos Islands among Lindblad’s customers when guides used thematic messages crafted with an understanding of what interests and motivates their audiences. It makes the point that “one size fits all” programs likely do not work well, but messages that speak to the needs of management (conservation of the resource) and the interests of the audience (experience with the resource at a level they understand and appreciate) can help visitors become partners in accomplishing the mission of the organization. Thoughtful interpretive planning can provide a thematic framework to enable guides and others develop messages that matter and embed them in holistic experiences that create both emotional and intellectual context for the visitor.

During a recent study of visitor contacts at Yellowstone National Park, we noted that we met or saw 37 workers, but only three worked for National Park Service. The Yellowstone experience is as much in the hands of volunteers and concession workers as in the hands of United States National Park Service (USNPS) employees. One bad experience with someone who works in or near the park, if unrecovered, can have the guest labeling the entire trip as unworthy of further time or effort. Since people tend to share their bad experiences with their friends more often than their good ones, attention to every detail of what the guest considers the park experience matters. Consequently, concessionaires at Yellowstone National Park provide all of their staff with appropriate interpretive training in support of the USNPS mission and are charged with supporting the park’s interpretive messages in their operations as well. At the same time, USNPS provides the same training to their own staff so that everyone understands the mission and message of the park based on a strong interpretive plan with clear strategies for interacting with visitors. In this way, the USNPS ensures that the operation is seamless in the eyes of the visitor and that the quality of the experience is the best it can be, regardless of whether the visitor is encountering an employee of the concessionaire or USNPS.

While there are not yet concessionaires at Nyungwe National Park, the visitor or guest cannot distinguish between the many players in their overall experience. Drivers, security staff, receptionists, sales people, hotel workers, food servers, park guides and local people all contribute to the holistic experience and ideally each understands they have a vital role in helping the guest feel well cared for with basic needs, a sense of belonging and value, and supported in having the best possible experience resulting in the visitor taking home and sharing memorable moments, souvenirs and stories.

Great visitor experiences rarely just happen. They require thoughtful planning and appropriate training of all staff in their various roles in providing for guests and some overall understanding of how their specific tasks and responses support a quality guest experience. Interpretive training has a key value in preparing all staff that speaks to the guest in any manner to share the same central message about the park. Every conversation is a chance to help connect a guest to the site, destination and experience. Dazzling natural history experiences like chimpanzee or gorilla watching are sometimes so compelling to visitors that they may overlook a rude worker or lack of advance organizers in the experience, if they see the target animal up close. Providers of more subtle natural and cultural history experiences must work even harder to get it all right and avoid the negative reviews that might deter future visitors.

We evaluate a visitor experience (Brochu, 2003) as a holistic venture to a tourism destination or facility. It is important to understand how a guest learns about a place, plans a visit, books a reservation, arrives, enjoys the experience, exits the area and reacts in some way to what happened.

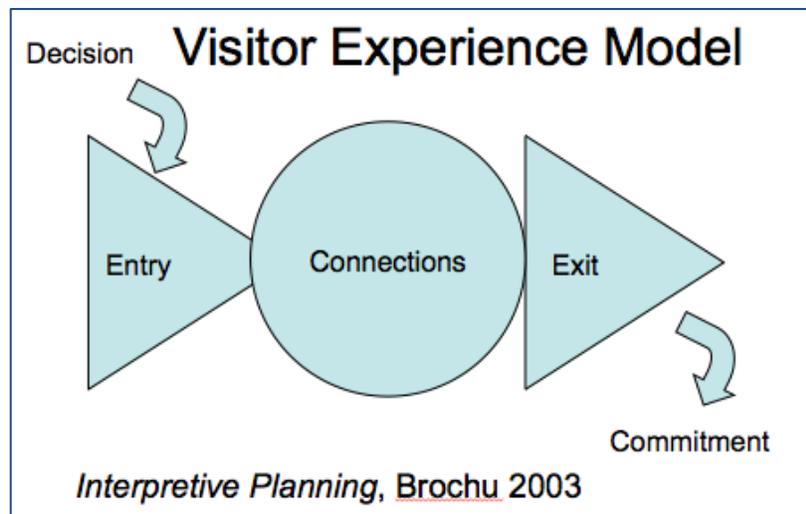


Figure 1: Visitor Experience Model

These steps are characterized as follows:

Decision – Though word-of-mouth knowledge of a destination has been and will always be important, the decision to visit a new site or destination often begins in a variety of different ways using an array of media. Even if a friend tells you of a great experience, you likely check it on the Internet or look for a marketing brochure to fill in background. Sites like [Tripadvisor.com](https://www.tripadvisor.com) add the voice of other guests to the mix so you can actually look at the 1 to 5 Bubble rating given by guests with 5.0 being the best and read the specific comments. Even a strong recommendation “to visit” by a friend can be defeated by several reviews that cast serious doubt on the safety or value of the experience.

Entry – All aspects of the entry to a site or destination are important. Traffic flow, visual beauty, advance organizers such as signs and distance markers, symbolic statuary, landscape and availability of restroom and food amenities can enhance or serve as a letdown to an arriving guest. In some cases, they will lengthen or shorten the duration of a stay based on these “advance organizers.” They serve as signs to the guest of what is yet to happen.

Connections – This phase of a visit is often the reason a guest visits, but cannot be the only well developed part of the experience. When done well this gives the visitor reasons to tell others about the destination, plan a return visit, schedule a longer stay, make a donation and possibly even get involved as a volunteer. It is the vital center of an experience but not the only piece that matters.

Exit – People leave a site that has done the first steps well with an open mind to what they do next. Often this part of the experience includes a gift shop or concessions that provide thoughtful souvenirs or food and beverages for the journey homeward. It can be a great place to cross-market other regional experiences or even schedule a return visit if handled properly.

Commitment – If the Connections Phase of the experience was successful, the attitudes and beliefs of the guest may have shifted. They may be open to making a donation, becoming a volunteer or writing a review on [Tripadvisor.com](https://www.tripadvisor.com) about their experience. Carefully crafted objectives in an interpretive plan identify exactly what commitment you seek from the guest experience and this is where you measure it in comparison to the indicators in the plan.

This report will undertake an assessment of the overall visitor experience at Nyungwe National Park and make recommendations for improving that experience through a variety of means, including the provision of a training plan to improve performance of park guides and other staff.

ELEMENT TWO: ASSESSMENT OF VISITOR EXPERIENCE AT NYUNGWE NATIONAL PARK

In looking at the overall visitor experience, we used two different assessment tools. First, we applied the Visitor Experience Model described in “Interpretive Planning: The 5-M Model for Successful Planning Projects” (Brochu, 2003) that describes five different phases in the visitor experience. Second, we applied National Association for Interpretation’s Standards and Best Practices for Interpretive Methods to benchmark NNP against other sites (Appendix B). A general description of our findings using both methods follows. Field notes related to identifying specific strengths and weaknesses of individual activities can be found in Appendix C.

Decision Points (ways in which people make the decision to visit NNP and choose activities)

NNP clearly suffers from a lack of marketing and promotion. We concur with the findings in the Tourism Market Profiles for Nyungwe National Park report compiled by SW Associates in 2010 related to the need for more strategic promotion of NNP as a destination among tour operators. We also found the suggestion of strengthening promotions related specifically to birders as a target market segment intriguing, but believe that some infrastructure improvements such as those suggested in Diane Gayer’s Report on Sustainable Ecolodge Development may be necessary to attract a significant birder population. The addition of mid-range lodging in proximity to prime birding locations (such as Karamba and Kamiranzovu Swamp) is strongly suggested if NNP is to become known as a premiere birding location.

In reviewing Internet activity and publications related to NNP’s product offerings, we found a decided lack of information that is helpful to tourists who might be planning a visit. The current website, nyungwepark.com, offers good information as far as it goes, but needs strengthening in providing details that help travelers make the decision to visit. Logistical needs in particular are not well addressed in any publication or website we found. Consequently, many visitors are surprised at the lack of basic services (toilets, water, food service, intrapark transportation) when they arrive at the park.

Although the sales staff we observed provided good information when asked, they were not proactive about helping people determine what to do based on their abilities or interests. The “advance organizers” provided by the park (especially park brochures and a handout entitled “Tourist Attractions in Nyungwe National Park”) do not provide the sort of logistical information required for a successful visit. The publication, “A Trail Guide for Rwanda’s Nyungwe National Park,” offers excellent descriptions of what might be seen along the park’s various trails and provides an indicator of the level of difficulty of each trail; however, we found the description of level of difficulty somewhat arbitrary. We recommend creating a more descriptive advance organizer tool (see Appendix D for examples) that can be distributed to guests on arrival at the park to help them make better informed decisions about how to use their time in the park, as well as being posted on the website, distributed in hotels in major cities in Rwanda, and provided to tour operators. Any information provided must be realistic in its portrayal of NNP as an emerging destination so that visitors do not expect the same amenities found in other more

developed tourism locations. A look at TripAdvisor.com, currently one of the top ways in which tourists determine where to visit, offers 17 reviews. These reviews are quite revealing in what people enjoy and what they caution other travelers about, and are often the basis for decision-making on the part of visitors. On the positive side, the spectacular scenery, quality of the guides, and the unique opportunity for seeing chimpanzees all ranked fairly high in review comments. On the negative side, the high cost of activities and lack of infrastructure continue to be problematic and no doubt discourage many tourists from coming, as mentioned in the “Optimization of Activities Fees for Improved Visitor Satisfaction in Nyungwe National Park.”

We concur with the findings of this report and recommend a revised fee structure that encourages visitation and repeat visitation, but if the fees are not to change, then it is even more important that the advance organizer materials explain the high activity tariffs so that visitors feel they are contributing to the conservation of the area and aid to local communities. Cultural activities surrounding the park may provide additional draw for the park, so cross-promotion of activities is recommended. This happens to some extent on the nyungwepark.com website, but should be strengthened by guides, and by sales staff for other written materials,

Entry Phase (entrances into NNP, intrapark transportation to activities, orientation/briefings, and check-in procedures)

As suggested in Diane Gayer’s “Sustainable Ecolodge Development” report, park entry features in gateway communities could be more dramatic at east and west entry points for a better demarcation of the park boundary. The reception areas at Gisakura and Kitabi are not comfortable or user friendly, with visitors left wondering where to go after they exit their vehicles. The buildings appear to be administrative units rather than opportunities for public interface. The lack of clear directional signage creates an awkward situation, where visitors are forced to ask anyone who happens to be standing around for guidance. Park guides wear uniforms with no distinguishing marks other than the initials of the agency, which are not widely understood by foreign visitors, and so are not recognized by visitors as someone who might be of help. Unfortunately, park guides and sales staff do not tend to be proactive with offers of assistance, often talking amongst themselves in Kinyarwanda and ignoring visitors until interrupted with a specific question. Visitors who are not comfortable interrupting or unsure of whether the park guides are military personnel may well leave without any interaction, frustrated with the encounter. We recommend additional training in initial public contact for park guides and sales staff as well as the creation of specific public areas that are clearly designed for that purpose, such as that found at Uwinka, along with improved directional signage at all three reception centers.

The lack of a transportation system within the park to allow visitors who have taken public transportation from major cities to get from one area to another is a common area of concern noted in many of the reports that have been completed to date. We concur that the establishment of an intrapark shuttle system that picks up from all area hotels in gateway communities and operates on a regular schedule with stops at all reception centers and trailheads along the main road (including Cyamudongo) will be critical to the future success of the park as a tourism destination. The increase in traffic and carbon emissions from the multiple vehicles currently needed to transport visitors are serious concerns for the environmentally-conscious traveler and

the lack of a vehicle for some travelers may mean the difference between being able to experience some of the park's more unique features or not. We understand that this issue is being reviewed, but would strongly recommend that a reliable, low-cost (or included in the cost of participating in an activity) transportation system be implemented at the earliest possible date.

We found that the quality of orientation and briefing activities by guides varied somewhat from guide to guide but all included information that should have been provided when the activity was booked, not left until it was too late to do anything about it. For example, at the trailhead, a guide might suggest we should bring water and a raincoat, but by then, it is too late for the visitor to return to their lodging and get the appropriate gear. We observed some sales staff reminding visitors of the need for such items when they booked the activity, but not emphasizing the need or suggesting what would or would not be available at the trailhead (restrooms, food services, etc.). Again, a clearer advance organizer is recommended (Appendix D). For example, when a guest books an activity on the park's website, RDB needs to ensure that travelers have all they need on arrival and do not have expectations that cannot be met. There is no place to purchase raingear in the park or hotels, and a guest who arrives without it in the rainy season is simply going to be wet and miserable on his or her hike. We recommend offering simple items like this for purchase at the reception centers and reminding guests that they are needed while they still have time to purchase them. Alternatively, a small supply of inexpensive lightweight rain ponchos could be kept on hand with some taken along in the guide's pack in case a guest forgets to bring it along, much like the hiking sticks that are thoughtfully provided. Additional training in what should be included in an orientation briefing is recommended to ensure that guests' basic needs are met.

We noted that visitors often asked hotel staff about activities in the park. While some hotel staff were very helpful when they were sure of the right answer, many more did not seem to know very much about the activities provided in the park or what would be required in terms of equipment or supplies. Specifically, they were unable or reluctant to answer what must be the constant question of "are there any trails that do not require a park guide?" Additional training of hotel staff is recommended to help them better anticipate and facilitate the needs of park guests.

Connections Phase (personal services such as guided hikes and ancillary activities in surrounding communities, and nonpersonal services such as visitor center exhibits and signs)

Generally, the one consistent lack among all personal and non-personal services that we observed was that of a central theme or message. All interpretive services provided a plethora of information and facts, with strong repetition of some of the more interesting ones (the number of species overall, the number of endemic species, the size of the park, etc.); however, research tells us that people forget facts soon after the experience (sometimes even during the experience). On the other hand, they remember themes or messages, especially if they have made both an intellectual and emotional connection with the resource. Although many of the activities and interpretive exhibits in the park are quite good as far as they go, the lack of a central theme or message that drives the interpretive efforts at the park means that visitors are not likely to understand why this park and its resources are critically important or remember

much about their experience here, both important ideas for building a constituency of support and advocacy for NNP.

Several new opportunities for development of ecolodges, activities, interpretive signs, and other park amenities have been suggested in various reports. While many of them seem appropriate, completion of an interpretive master plan would ensure that all current and proposed development supports an identified central theme and helps to communicate that message to park visitors holistically. Such a plan, if followed, could ensure that funds are appropriately spent on tourism activities and enhancements and possibly save the park from expending resources on infrastructure or activities that do little to support the overall message and visitor experience. The interpretive plan could also identify specific subthemes for each of the trails to ensure that the guides are emphasizing the unique qualities and messages associated with each one so that a guest might be prompted to do more of the activities. Current pricing and the delivery of facts by the guides does not provide enough distinction between trails for visitors to differentiate between experiences and want to do more than one or two.

We were impressed with the level of natural history knowledge and the ability to speak several languages exhibited by the guides in general. Their level of comfort in engaging visitors in conversation varied greatly between individuals, but could be increased significantly with further training to help them understand why this type of communication is an important strategy for connecting people to the resources in the park. With the lack of a transportation system, we picked up our guides at the appropriate reception center and then rode to the trailhead with the guide in the vehicle, yet the guides did not choose to initiate a conversation with us until we had reached the trailhead and they began their orientation. This was a missed opportunity to begin the connections phase on the way to the trailhead, establish a better understanding of the audience, and begin to build a relationship between the guest and the park resources.

The lack of a central message tailored to the activity and the audience meant that each activity became a recitation of facts about two or three species of plants and animals that was repeated on every activity. All guides made an attempt to answer questions that were asked, but did not actively ask questions of their audience, which would have enabled them to make the information they shared more relevant and interesting. We used a simple assessment tool based loosely on the National Association for Interpretation Certified Interpretive Guide rubric to determine their current skill level (in a general sense) and compared it to the experience at Volcanoes National Park, which has been involved in ecotourism activities for a significantly longer period (Appendix E) and has much stronger decision and entry phases. We recommend additional training in interpretation philosophy and techniques to help guides maximize their efforts (see training plan in Section II, Element 3 of this report).

There are a number of opportunities for ancillary activities around the park (for example, the tea plantation tour, cultural program at Forest Lodge, and Kitabi cultural program), but many more opportunities are no doubt being missed. The only one that we saw (Kitabi cultural village) was quite good. That experience could be slightly improved with the addition of offering appropriate sales items created by local people that would reflect the program (baskets, woven mats,

beadwork, anklet bells, shields, drums). Visitors who have enjoyed the experience would be anxious to purchase a souvenir to recall the visit at a later time.

Exit Phase (includes concluding statements after activities, sales, and journey to next destination)

Most activities in which we participated ended with a short concluding statement by the guide and an appreciative thank you to the guests for coming to NNP. The activities seemed to be over after the walk ended which made it a bit awkward to get back in the vehicle with the guide who remained silent until arriving back at the reception center. Again, this was a missed opportunity to make a powerful and lasting connection with the visitor using some follow-up questions and comments. Not one guide suggested that we participate in another park activity or see about participating in any of the ancillary activities offered in the nearby communities. Cross-promotion of other activities is an important piece of keeping people engaged in the park longer and we would recommend this become a regular part of the exit experience.

The lack of appropriate and relevant sales items offered at the end of an activity may be a significant disappointment to many visitors. Aside from offering basic food and drink options at each reception center, providing locally made items that would recall the trail experiences would extend the thematic experience and remind visitors of Nyungwe long after they return home. However, it is important that any such sales items be locally produced, to encourage the local economy and to reflect the experience itself, rather than be poorly made or inappropriate items from abroad. Although there are some items offered for sale at the reception centers currently, the selection is small and visitors are not encouraged to buy them. The previous reception center at Uwinka that now stands empty would make an excellent centrally located café and sales shop, as has been suggested in some of the other reports that have been created.

Commitment Phase (includes any actions expected from visitors to demonstrate connection to park resources)

Although this is perhaps the most important phase of the visitor experience from the standpoint of determining whether or not a connection to the park and its resources has been made, we were unable to find any evidence of specific visitor behavior objectives or attempts to influence visitor behavior in any way other than “increasing visitation.” All current interpretive services, whether personal or non-personal, indicate that the park is being conserved and recognize that “your visit is a great support in conservation of NNP” but do not solicit any additional support in any way. That support might manifest in many ways: donations beyond the activity fees, volunteering to participate in projects, purchases of sales items related to the park experience, repeat visits, positive reviews on TripAdvisor.com, posts on Facebook, letters to conservation organizations or governmental agencies, and a variety of other potential measurable factors that would indicate the level of commitment on the part of the visitor. We recommend that the suggested interpretive master plan include a logic model of measurable objectives related to the visitor experience that would explain the relationship of specific planned outputs (media, tours,

publications, etc.) to outcomes (visitor behavior) and impacts (benefits to the resource or Rwanda Development Board).

Table 1: Brief Summary of Visitor Experience Analysis

Phase	Strengths	Weaknesses	Recommendations
Decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NNP shows up as #2 attraction on TripAdvisor.com for Butare area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not enough information provided to satisfy basic needs anywhere • high fees cause many visitors to limit their experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide advance organizers in as many places as possible • rethink pricing strategy to encourage more visitors and higher level of activities in the park to encourage longer stays • monitor social media for review comments
Entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two park entrances and three reception/sales opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reception centers and sales not user-friendly • standardized orientation briefing fails to consider specific audience needs • no internal transportation system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • redesign reception centers and sales areas to include clear directional signage and appropriate facilities for public use • focus on Uwinka as centrally located sales and café • consider internal transportation system • CIG training to bring guides to higher level of audience understanding
Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • excellent level of natural history training and desire of guides to be the best they can be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of a central theme to relate to and help visitors make emotional connections to the park resources • guides do not always seem accessible to visitors • lecture style only practiced by guides does not help create emotional connections for visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create interpretive master plan with central theme statement • provide nametags for guides to encourage interaction with visitors • CIG training to bring guides to higher level of use of appropriate communication techniques
Exit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • guides show their appreciation of visitors and thank them for coming to NNP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no cross-promotion of other activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CIG training to bring guides to higher level of understanding of overall visitor experience • cross-promote other activities • provide appropriate souvenirs for purchase or as part of fee
Commitment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no established objectives for change in visitor behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • logic model in interpretive master plan • ask for support based on logic model

ELEMENT THREE: TRAINING PLAN

Challenges for NNP Park Guides and Sales Staff

Based on our observations and discussions during the site visit, we noted specific challenges faced by NNP guides, NNP sales staff, and staff at local hotels and attractions that include:

- *Lack of training in an interpretive approach to communication.* This can be remedied by providing such training to enable a more effective way to improve the overall visitor experience.
- *Visitors, who are often frustrated by high fees, lack of basic services in park, requirement to hike with guides, and challenging physical terrain that makes it hard to see animals.* Frustration with any portion of the overall experience creates a mental and emotional barrier that staff may have trouble overcoming, leaving visitors with a less than satisfactory memory of NNP. Some of these issues may be resolved by addressing the source of frustration (such as providing more basic services, creating reasonable expectations through better advance organizers, revising fee schedule, providing one or two safe trails that could be hiked without a guide, offering a free repeat tour if target animals such as chimpanzees are not seen, etc.).
- *Global market base with multiple languages and cultural competencies needed.* Guides tend to speak at least four languages with English and French being the most commonly used with foreign tourists; however, on occasion, language or unfamiliarity with cultural customs becomes a problem. Additional training in cultural competency and encouragement to broaden the ability to speak other languages would assist with this challenge.
- *Seasonal use issues, with not enough staff for high season and underutilization of existing staff in shoulder.* Offering an option of one or two trails that could be hiked without a guide might help relieve overburdened staff during high season. More sales staff is needed, especially during high season. Low seasons should be used for additional professional development (training and evaluation), including field studies such as chimp tracking and habituation, and other assignments such as trail maintenance, informal duty at reception centers, accident response (similar to the park ranger role in USNPS). Interpretive planning might reveal other opportunities for developing additional market segments during shoulder and low seasons that would help encourage more even annual use throughout the year.
- *Lack of formal evaluation procedures.* Current performance evaluation of guides and sales staff within NNP is handled on an “as-needed” basis to correct deficiencies should managers become aware of a problem. Establishing a regular evaluation (semi-annual) process with specific tools to initiate appropriate coaching discussions provides a basis for constant professional development and performance improvement in a positive and productive environment. Guides need to be told what they are doing well in addition to

noting areas that could use improvement with specific guidance on expectations for and assistance in achieving that improvement.

- *Lack of central message for the park.* Without guidance on the primary message of the park, guides are left to craft their own messages or simply deliver facts, which have been proven by social science research to be ineffective in creating a quality visitor experience.

Potential Training Alternatives

Our site visit included the opportunity to share approximately four hours of National Association for Interpretation’s (NAI) Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) curriculum (Appendix F with a focus group of 12 individuals to determine whether this curriculum would be the most appropriate training for NNP. We conducted the training activity on our last day after assessing the skill level of approximately one-third of the guide and sales staff, along with hotel and restaurant staff at all three lodging facilities in Gisakura. We also considered alternative options to NAI’s CIG program and have provided the following analysis of all the options that seem reasonable for training interpretive staff (in no particular order).

Table 2: Comparison of training program alternatives

Program	Cost	Strengths	Weaknesses	Comments
NAI CIG Curriculum covers philosophy and techniques of personal interpretation for guides to improve interpersonal communication skills with visitors in a four-day class.	Instructor travel, expenses, and labor (can be negotiated with instructors); approximately \$200 USD per person certification application fee and workshop materials. Estimated cost to train up to 30 guides - \$20,000 (approximate labor, travel, per diem, and above certification application fees and workshop materials)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • successful applicants earn internationally recognized certification credential • instruction techniques and material can be customized for NNP with instructors’ prior knowledge of NNP needs • cost includes one year membership in NAI as benefit to those current nonmembers applying for certification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can only be taught by NAI Certified Interpretive Trainers sanctioned to teach CIG course and certify guides. NAI staff is not permitted to teach CIG courses (staff trains trainers only). • no guarantee of certification – all required components of the program must be met satisfactorily before certification is conferred 	In use in several countries as a training standard. The authors of this report originated the program and are Certified Interpretive Trainers qualified to teach the course. Due to the amount of personal coaching that is likely to be required, two instructors will be needed. Park management has asked that no more than one-half of the guides be trained at one time, requiring a minimum of two four-day classes. Park staff has asked that the

Program	Cost	Strengths	Weaknesses	Comments
				course content be spread over five days to ensure adequate time for full comprehension of new material.
<p>NAI – CIHost</p> <p>Curriculum includes customer service and informal interpretation training designed for those who have public contact but do not lead tours (such as hotel and sales staff).</p>	<p>Instructor travel, expenses, and labor (can be negotiated with instructors); \$200 USD per person certification application fee and workshop materials.</p> <p>Estimated cost to train 20 sales and hotel staff - \$5000 (based on approximate labor, and, per diem cost if Host course is offered in same travel frame as CIG courses)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • only curriculum of its kind blending mission-based customer service and informal interpretation to get staff to work towards the mission of the park with every action and conversation • very empowering for sales and hotel staff who often do not receive any training other than manual skills • fairly easy course to understand and excel in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can only be taught by NAI Certified Interpretive Trainers sanctioned to teach CIHost course and certify guides. NAI staff is not permitted to teach CIHost courses (staff trains trainers only). • no guarantee of certification – all required components of the program must be met satisfactorily before certification is conferred 	<p>In use in several countries as a training standard. The authors of this report originated the program and are Certified Interpretive Trainers qualified to teach the course.</p>
<p>NPS – Eppley Institute On-Line Studies</p> <p>Currently offers nine short courses related to interpretation, including interpretive talks and informal visitor contacts.</p>	<p>Varies from free to \$59 USD for each course</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • available to anyone with access to internet • offers basic (self study) and advanced (coached) certificates for most courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developed for USNPS and material is heavily oriented for that agency alone • course material requires significant amounts of reading in an extremely academic format; no in-person interaction with instructor or performance requirements • each user must purchase the course separately (bulk purchases available) • using a coach for the advanced option requires a negotiated fee to be paid to the Registered Coach (not many coaches are available to 	<p>A reasonable alternative for those with no other option, but offers limited coaching. The authors of this report are Registered Coaches for those who wish to attempt the advanced version of the courses.</p>

Program	Cost	Strengths	Weaknesses	Comments
			<p>non-USNPS employees)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not offer internationally recognized certification credential (only certificate of completion) 	
<p>Custom Course Development</p> <p>Contractual development of training materials customized for NNP or alternative, all Rwanda National Parks to create a training standard consistent to all parks with the potential to create an in-country certification program for Rwanda National Parks and associated partners.</p>	<p>Approximately \$40,000 USD to include development of training workbook and video tools, along with trainers manual, and a workshop to train trainers of NNP's choice so that they can use the materials to train staff at NNP and other Rwandan parks.</p> <p>An additional \$15,000 would be needed to establish the framework for an in-country certification program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completely customized material • offers the flexibility provided by having trainers within your own staff • offers option of being the leader in providing an in-country certification program for guides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • upfront costs for creation of materials and training trainers • continuing operational costs for maintaining certification program • does not offer internationally recognized certification credential 	<p>The authors of this report created NAI's certification program and in 2010, developed a set of training tools for Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in 2010 for use in Malaysia, Bhutan, Mongolia, Indonesia and other Asian tourism settings. The JICA products were used for training only, not certification.</p>

Focus Group Results

The twelve individuals who participated in the focus group included nine park guides, one partner representative from WCS, one hotel representative from Top Hill View Hotel, and the NNP Tourism Warden. For the purposes of determining suitability of the NAI CIG curriculum, we focused our interpretation training on elements of the course that seemed to be most immediately needed:

- definition and principles of interpretation
- the importance of tangibles and intangibles in creating connections
- using social marketing to influence attitudes and behaviors
- addressing basic needs (Maslow's Hierarchy)
- understanding audience motivations
- traits of a theme
- questioning strategies

Because of the limited time available, we shared only a small portion of the course material on each of the topics, using a variety of techniques that included lecture, demonstrations, and activities that engaged the participants.

Following the training, we asked each participant to write down a few things that they thought were most important from the training. Some of their comments on what was most important included:

- "Identifying the difference between a topic and a theme."
- "How to involve tourists in a conversation."
- "Engaging guests so that they will know nature very well."
- "Use the right theme at the right place."
- "Give prior information before the trail begins so guests can enjoy the experience."
- "Categorizing guests (according to motivation) helps us serve them well."
- "Making wildlife a symbol helps people understand the need to conserve it."
- "Knowing the hierarchy of needs helps us serve clients better."
- "Engaging in chitchat helps us connect with the visitor and connect them to the resource."

We also asked their opinion on the style and overall content of the training. They unanimously requested that the training go on for several days as they felt it had extreme value and applicability for their jobs. They appreciated the mix of training techniques used and preferred the variety of lecture, activities and demonstrations to a more academic lecture style only. It was suggested by several of the participants that since most of the material contains completely new ways of looking at things that the training (which is normally done over a four-day period) be spread over five or more days to ensure time for adequate comprehension and coaching.

We explained the requirements for certification by NAI (Appendix F) and asked whether they would be willing to commit to completing all requirements successfully in order to receive the

certification. Each of them said they felt the certification was important and they looked forward to achieving it.

Conclusion

Although we did not ask specifically about any of the other alternatives we considered, the results from the focus group lead us to believe that at least initially, the NAI CIG program for guides and the NAI Certified Interpretive Host (CIH) program for support staff is a good fit and adequately serves the need for training in interpretive communication methods for the purpose of enhancing the visitor experience in support of the mission of NNP.

Recommendations

In accordance with DAI's work plan objectives for 2012 which call for the development of a training plan (Appendix G) for park guides and other tourism related staff and delivery of training, and based on our assessment of the current skills and training needs for tourism activities in and around NNP, we recommend the following actions.

Table 3: Action Plan

Action to be Taken	Not Later Than	By Whom
Contract for CIG/CIHost instructors.	December 15, 2012	DAI
Conduct two five-day CIG courses for up to a total of 30 park guides and private guides or partners and one two-day CIHost course for up to 20 sales staff, area hotel staff, and community partners.	February 10, 2013	DAI contractor (must be NAI Certified Interpretive Trainer sanctioned to teach both courses)
Identify two or three high potential CIG graduates for training as Certified Interpretive Trainers (CIT) to continue training of new staff, partners, and perhaps staff at other parks. Attaining CIT status may take up to a year and starts with attendance at a CIT course in the United States offered by NAI.	February 10, 2013	CIG Instructors
Complete interpretive master plan to guide future development of interpretive media and programs.	March 2014	DAI, WCS, or other partner contractor (should be NAI Certified Interpretive Planner (CIP))
Use CIG evaluation tools (performance rubric and Interpretive Opportunity logbooks) as basis for semi-annual evaluation of guide performance and offer coaching sessions as appropriate.	Ongoing (every six months) beginning in October 2013	Tourism Warden and/or CITs on staff
Prepare and maintain training plan documentation for each guide (see Appendix F)	Ongoing beginning not later than October 2013	Tourism Warden and/or CITs on staff
Annual review of Standards and Best Practices	Ongoing beginning not later than October 2013	Tourism Warden or Park Warden
Secure funding and instructors and schedule additional training as needed according to training plan	Low season (one or more training topics annually)	Tourism Warden

Action to be Taken	Not Later Than	By Whom
Implementation of other recommendations in this plan related to improvement of visitor experience	As permitted by funding and management processes	Park Warden and/or Tourism Warden with assistance from DAI and other partners

III. CONTRACT DELIVERABLES

The following deliverables were required by the contract and have been provided as follows:

- 2 to 4 hours of sample interpretive training for up to 12 individuals was provided at Nyungwe National Park as described in Section II, Element 3 of this report;
- A Power Point presentation summarizing findings, conclusions and recommendations of the consultancy was delivered to representatives from DAI, USAID, RDB, and NNP on Wednesday, October 17, 2012 at the DAI office in Kigali; and
- A 2-3 hour workshop in Kigali to present summary findings, conclusions and recommendations to RDB, Nyungwe Nziza and other stakeholders was part of the above presentation.

This consultancy report on the above tasks includes a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations for future activities related to this scope of work.

IV. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: REFERENCES

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APPENDIX B: STANDARDS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR INTERPRETIVE METHODS

STANDARDS AND PRACTICES FOR

Interpretive Methods

These standards and best practices provide one tool with which to assess interpretive methods being used at Nyungwe National Park and in surrounding communities. Practices which are clearly in place have been highlighted in yellow, with other comments provided as appropriate for each standard.

National Association for Interpretation

The National Association for Interpretation is a nonprofit professional organization with the mission of inspiring leadership and excellence to advance heritage interpretation as a profession. In 2008, the organization had over 5200 members in over 25 countries. It provides a variety of programs, products and services to the profession including regional, national, and international conferences; publications; certification of individuals; training; and supports facilitation of collaborative efforts such as the Definitions Project and development of Standards and Practices.

Interpretation is a mission-based communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the meanings inherent in the resource.



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Project Background

The collective membership of NAI represents a multitude of agencies and organizations, including government agencies at all levels, private not-for-profit organizations, commercial enterprises, and academic institutions. With this diversity, it is understandably difficult to provide standards of practice for the entire profession; however, it is a frequently requested item from the NAI office as interpretive organizations strive to improve their operations and provide justification for the important work of their staff and volunteers.

In 2007, the NAI Board of Directors mapped a strategic plan for the profession that included a strategic vision that the interpretive profession will have a foundation of universally accepted standards. To that end, a focus group of individuals representing the diversity within NAI's membership was assembled and contributed to this documentation of preferred practices for interpretive methods.

This document is not intended to serve as the ultimate authority on establishing preferred practices; however, it captures the essence of a variety of benchmarks that can be used by any interpretive organization to determine areas in which they excel or might improve in their provision of interpretive products, programs, and services. Certainly, it would be appropriate for specific organizations to develop standards for the interpretive methods they employ (for example, living history practitioners could develop standards specifically for living history programs). Since NAI serves the greater profession rather than any one agency or type of organization, this more generalized approach can be considered an umbrella of standards and practices suitable for the interpretive profession overall.

It is anticipated that this document will undergo periodic revision to remain responsive to constantly changing economic, ecological and social environments.

Comments or suggestions for revision may be forwarded to: NAI Best Practices, PO Box 2246, Fort Collins CO 80522 or naiprograms@aol.com.

Terminology

For the purposes of this document, **interpretive methods** are considered any personal or nonpersonal media employed by an **interpretive organization** to connect an audience emotionally and intellectually to a resource. Examples might be any type of program, product, or service: presentations, special events, exhibits, signs, publications, websites, sales items, or electronic broadcasts. An interpretive organization is considered an agency or organization that manages a site or company that employs methods of interpretation in their daily business. Examples might be national parks, county parks, community nature centers, zoos, aquariums, botanical gardens, theme parks, tour companies, cruise lines, or museums.

Due to the variety of organizations that might be using this document, it is assumed that the user will substitute appropriate terminology for the organization in question. For example, a museum or zoo's **resource** might be its collection, while a park's resource might be the significant natural features of the landscape. A **site** might be a building, a boat, or a land base of several hundred or thousand acres.

Terminology used is consistent with the Definitions Project, www.definitionsproject.com.

How to Use this Document

The Standards and Practices are divided into eleven benchmarks that appear to be important components in the development and delivery of interpretive products, programs, and services. Each of these benchmarks is then divided into three levels of achievement. Good practices suggest the minimum level of achievement for basic operations. Better practices generally include "good" practices but advance the achievement to preferred operations. Best practices generally include both "good" and "better" practices and add a level of achievement that may or may not be achievable given an organization's financial, physical or managerial realities. In other words, the "best" practices suggested here are what an organization in a perfect world might hope to achieve if it has all the operational resources it requires.

An organization can use the suggested practices in any category to evaluate its own performance. Choosing to use these standards to provide benchmarks for success may enable an organization to become better positioned to attract support and serve its audiences by connecting them emotionally and intellectually to the resource, leading to fulfillment of the organization's stated mission.

It is hoped that this document will stimulate critical thinking and planning strategies that may improve the overall performance of an individual organization and the profession as a whole. It can be used as a stimulus for planning strategic initiatives once an honest self-assessment takes place and is discussed amongst staff, management, governance and stakeholders.

AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT

Good Practice

Address the needs and interests of specific target audiences.

Guided tours in park fall short of good practice because guides do not attempt to find out anything about their audience members' interests.

Better Practice

Address the needs and interests of specific target audiences.

Involve target audiences in the planning and design process.

Best Practice

Address the needs and interests of specific target audiences.

Involve target audiences in the planning and design process.

Help people engage with the resource both mentally and physically through a variety of techniques including but not limited to:

- Questioning
- Role-playing
- Sensory experience
- Challenges
- Games
- Participation
- Props

Nonpersonal media at visitor center and community program at Kitabi showed some elements of best practice.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Good Practice

Opinions of local stakeholders are represented in selected interpretive methods through focus groups or collaborative planning.

Better Practice

Opinions of local stakeholders are represented in selected interpretive methods through focus groups or collaborative planning.

Best Practice

Opinions of local stakeholders are represented in selected interpretive methods through focus groups or collaborative planning.

Interpretive methods are based on a constructivist model that utilizes what people already know and what is relevant to them to provide a beginning point for concept, theme, emotional, spiritual, and inspirational connections.

Interpretive methods are based on a constructivist model that utilizes what people already know and what is relevant to them to provide a beginning point for concept, theme, emotional, spiritual, and inspirational connections.

A civic cooperative group including economic, environmental and social stakeholders meet regularly to discuss common challenges and collaborative opportunities.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Good Practice

Staff training includes a segment on cultural competencies.

Staff and volunteers understand that personal and professional values may be different from those of site users, site neighbors, under-served groups and/or nontraditional groups.

Better Practice

Staff training includes a segment on cultural competencies.

Staff and volunteers understand that personal and professional values may be different from those of site users, site neighbors, under-served groups and/or nontraditional groups.

Best Practice

Staff training includes a segment on cultural competencies.

Staff and volunteers understand that personal and professional values may be different from those of site users, site neighbors, under-served groups and/or nontraditional groups.

Interpretive methods balance and facilitate a dialogue between multiple points of view.

An annual inventory is taken of staff and volunteer language/cultural capabilities to be used as a resource when needed.

Supervisors receive feedback and monitoring of performance and identify features of their own professional style that might impede or enhance their own practice of cultural competence.

Interpretive methods balance and facilitate a dialogue between multiple points of view.

An annual inventory is taken of staff and volunteer language/cultural capabilities to be used as a resource when needed.

Supervisors receive feedback and monitoring of performance and identify features of their own professional style that might impede or enhance their own practice of cultural competence.

All signage, brochures and websites include language and culturally sensitive options for major market segments from other cultures.

Staff and volunteers develop specialized knowledge and understanding about the history, traditions, values, family systems, communication styles, and cultural expressions of the client groups they serve, including previously underserved groups.

ETHICS

Good Practice

Staff and volunteers affirm and abide by a code of ethics regarding delivery of interpretation.

Better Practice

Staff and volunteers affirm and abide by a code of ethics regarding delivery of interpretation.

Best Practice

Staff and volunteers affirm and abide by a code of ethics regarding delivery of interpretation.

Interpretation delivers multiple perspectives in a culturally compassionate way.

Interpretation delivers multiple perspectives in a culturally compassionate way.

Information presented is accurate and sources are credited.

EVALUATION

Good Practice

The organization clearly defines interpretive standards and regularly evaluates staff programs.

No formal evaluation program or standards currently in place.

Better Practice

The organization clearly defines interpretive standards and regularly evaluates staff programs.

Standardized evaluation of interpretive program or product effectiveness is completed through a variety of sources including input from visitors, peers or outside sources, and self-assessment.

Best Practice

The organization clearly defines interpretive standards and regularly evaluates staff programs.

Standardized evaluation of interpretive program or product effectiveness is completed through a variety of sources including input from visitors, peers or outside sources, and self-assessment.

Results of evaluations are incorporated into new or revised programs, products, and services.

Results of evaluations are reported to management and used as a tool to support interpretation efforts in the annual budget.

Results of evaluations are shared with and used in all of the organization's planning and management.

INTERPRETIVE PRINCIPLES

Good Practice

Interpretive methods are organized, enjoyable and appropriate for the audience.

Park tours and Uwinka facilities lack advance organizers which decreases enjoyment and audience appropriateness.

Better Practice

Interpretive methods are organized, enjoyable and appropriate for the audience.

Interpretive methods support the mission of the organization and are delivered with passion and enthusiasm.

Exhibits at Uwinka lack passion but do support the mission of the organization with provided information.

Best Practice

Interpretive methods are organized, enjoyable and appropriate for the audience.

Interpretive methods support the mission of the organization and are delivered with passion and enthusiasm.

Interpretive methods are highly relevant to the audience and actively engage the audience with the resource.

Interpretive methods facilitate a connection between the interests of the visitor and the meanings of the resource, thereby providing spiritual uplift and encouraging resource stewardship.

Very little effort is being made to actively enlist visitors as stewards of the resource in park tours, visitor center exhibits, printed materials, and community programs.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

Good Practice

The interpretive program reflects positively on the organization: staff acts professionally and nonpersonal media is well-maintained.

Measurable objectives exist for every interpretive product and service that align with the mission of the organization and measure declarative knowledge and behavioral change.

Management ensures that staff understand the significant resources and messages that the interpretive program should be addressing.

Objectives appear to measure outputs only (what the organization will do) and not the effects or outcomes of the outputs other than increasing attendance. However, the messages about the importance of the park in terms of being a water source and biodiversity cache are being communicated.

Better Practice

The interpretive program reflects positively on the organization: staff acts professionally and nonpersonal media is well-maintained.

Measurable objectives exist for every interpretive product and service that align with the mission of the organization and measure declarative knowledge and behavioral change.

Management ensures that staff understand the significant resources and messages that the interpretive program should be addressing.

Management is proud of their interpretive program and strives to make it the best it can be.

Management and interpretive staff work together on updating objectives annually.

Interpretive methods align with interpretive plan logic model objectives.

Management prepares orientation materials for the staff that identifies significant resources to be interpreted.

There is no comprehensive interpretive master plan, but management clearly attempts to provide adequate training for staff to understand and communicate critical messages.

Best Practice

The interpretive program reflects positively on the organization: staff acts professionally and nonpersonal media is well-maintained.

Measurable objectives exist for every interpretive product and service that align with the mission of the organization and measure declarative knowledge and behavioral change.

Management ensures that staff understand the significant resources and messages that the interpretive program should be addressing.

Management is proud of their interpretive program and strives to make it the best it can be.

Management and interpretive staff work together on updating objectives annually.

Interpretive methods align with interpretive plan logic model objectives.

Management prepares orientation materials for the staff that identifies significant resources to be interpreted.

Interpretation has an integral role in management of the site and resources.

Management routinely looks for opportunity to involve interpretive staff in explaining resource issues and working with the community for solutions.

Successful achievement of management objectives are shared through professional networks with colleagues.

Staff and management meet annually to discuss messages and visitor reactions so that sensitivity is developed between staff, management and visitor regarding the impact of messages.

OPERATIONAL COMMITMENT

Good Practice

Interpretive methods are supported by the annual operations budget.

Better Practice

Interpretive methods are supported by the annual operations budget.

Best Practice

Interpretive methods are supported by the annual operations budget.

Interpretive programming is aligned with specific operational objectives in annual plan of work or business plan.

Interpretive programming is aligned with specific operational objectives in annual plan of work or business plan.

Maintenance issues are resolved immediately.

Maintenance issues are resolved immediately.

Interpretive staff and other operational staff assist each other as needed and are cross-trained to each other's jobs as appropriate.

TERMINOLOGY

Good Practice

Terminology is agreed upon amongst staff.

Better Practice

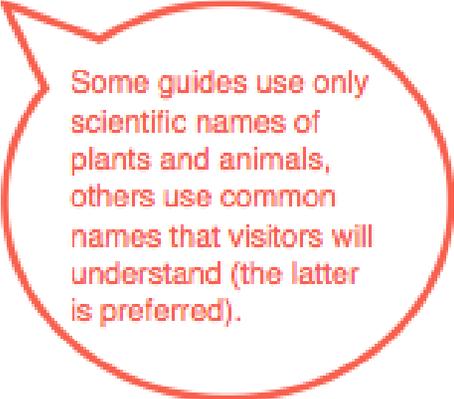
Terminology is agreed upon amongst staff and used consistently from year to year.

Best Practice

Terminology is agreed upon amongst staff and used consistently from year to year.

Employees are proficient in use of professional terminology.

Terminology is consistent with the Definitions Project.



Some guides use only scientific names of plants and animals, others use common names that visitors will understand (the latter is preferred).

THEME

Good Practice

The site has an identifiable central idea that ties the content of various interpretive methods together in a coherent way.

Each program or product has a theme related to the site's central theme.

Better Practice

The site has an identifiable central idea that ties the content of various interpretive methods together in a coherent way.

Each program or product has a theme related to the site's central theme.

Best Practice

The site has an identifiable central idea that ties the content of various interpretive methods together in a coherent way.

Each program or product has a theme related to the site's central theme.

Themes are stated in a single sentence.

Thematic interpretive methods are part of a larger interpretive plan aligned with organizational objectives.

Themes are stated in a single sentence.

Thematic interpretive methods are part of a larger interpretive plan aligned with organizational objectives.

A central theme is not clearly or consistently stated or communicated to visitors. We assume it could be something like "If we protect the forest, the forest will provide for us" but this is not carried through programs, tours, exhibits, or written materials consistently.

A site's central theme expresses what it is about the topic that supports the site significance, what is relevant to the audience and what management hopes to convey to the audience.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Good Practice

All staff are trained to deliver complete experiences in accordance with the interpretive plan.

Lack of advance organizers and the addressing of basic needs seriously impede the quality of the overall visitor experience. No comprehensive interpretive plan is evident against which to evaluate.

Better Practice

All staff are trained to deliver complete experiences in accordance with the interpretive plan.

Individual interpretive methods are part of a larger planned visitor experience.

The quality of the visitor experience is evaluated on a regular basis.

Individual interpretive methods appear to be random - a variety of experiences that do not necessarily support each other and a central theme, making it difficult to evaluate a holistic visitor experience.

Best Practice

All staff are trained to deliver complete experiences in accordance with the interpretive plan.

Individual interpretive methods are part of a larger planned visitor experience.

The quality of the visitor experience is evaluated on a regular basis.

Staff meet regularly to determine and implement ways to improve the quality of visitor experiences based upon evaluation data.

Visitor experience issues are integrated into every aspect of park management (facility maintenance, construction projects, public relations, staffing, programming, etc.).

APPENDIX C: FIELD NOTES ON SPECIFIC STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES

Tim Merriman and Lisa Brochu of Heartfelt Associates made a site visit to Nyungwe Forest National Park from October 4 to 14, 2012, to assess the effectiveness of interpretive guides and evaluate the overall visitor experience. The following notes are field notes made as activities were undertaken.

Walk to Kitabi Cultural Program

Strengths

- Friendly and personable
- Walked us to the village explaining what would happen there
- Looked professional and engaged
- Offered to take photos of us with our camera when in the community
- Did show interest in our enjoyment of the visit

Weaknesses

- No nametag or use of our names
- Did not ask questions to ascertain our interest in cultural programs
- Did not ask tie the program to the park, but relied on the guide at Kitabi
- Did not provide much information during registration process

Kitabi Cultural Community experience

Strengths:

- Very nice reception and approach to collecting fees, explaining the role of the cooperative and value of the park in support of communities through revenue sharing
- Incredible program with diverse components that give a real sense of the cultural history of the community.
- Very enthusiastic participation by community members
- Seized opportunities to photograph guests in interactive involvement.
- Thanked guests and encouraged them to tell friends.

Weaknesses:

- Context of the King's Palace is lacking – historical period, did a King come from Kitabi, how does the wedding relate to the King's Palace visit?
- Great need for the cultural crafts at the end of the program to sell to tourists.
- Perhaps a more gentle way of involving guests without pushing them into the role as king and queen mother.

Guide at Kitabi Cultural Village

Strengths

- Excellent explanations of what would happen and how we might get involved.
- Very passionate about the community and collaborative efforts
- Very knowledgeable and readily answered questions
- Nicely sequenced experience with high quality performances
- Very thoughtful about getting us in a place to take great photos and see everything
- Followed through to get our comments at the end
- Engaged us in the dance and through putting on the King's trappings
- Did ask who we are and our interests in such programs
- Very nice social exchange with beverages after the program
- Encouraged us to share their story with others who might come to visit
- Told us of the craft cooperative nearby

Weaknesses

- No name tag or use of our names
- Did not use questioning to further engage us
- No crafts available at program to buy – we would have bought souvenirs

Nyungwe Reception Services

Strengths

- Three locations – east, west and middle
- Well-kept attractive facilities
- Uniformed staff to meet and greet visitors
- Good restrooms when located, Uwinka the best

Weaknesses

- Signage is not clear about where to report to get tour reservations
- Trail guided activities are not well explained and pricing is high for this kind of activity.
- Guides do not have nametags that say – Nyungwe Guide, Isaiah – this helps establish a conversation relationship with guests, which benefit the park and guide.
- Activities scheduled at reception seem to change without notice to visitors and that creates confusion
- Restrooms are not marked
- No gift sales at Uwinka; limited sales at Kitabi and Gisakura
- No real food concessions except at Gisakura Guesthouse, very limited canteen at Uwinka (down the hill, unmarked and hard to find even if you know it is there)

Rukungu Trail

Strengths

- Speaks English well and listens well when questioned.
- Friendly and personable
- Conveys conservation mission of Nyungwe passionately
- Excellent wildlife spotting skills and great birding awareness
- Introduced himself and the organization professionally
- Looks professional and in uniform
- Good story about the choking vine and elephant relationship
- Took time to stop and watch monkeys and birds
- Some trail signs along the way, this trail could be self-guided it seems
- The drum tree story makes that stick as does the information about the choking vine.

Weaknesses

- Over emphasizes scientific names
- Does not use guest's names
- No discernible theme
- No nametag
- Does not check in on our need for rest, stops as he needs it.
- Wide ranging topics and facts disconnected.
- Did not ask questions to determine our interests or engage understanding
- No emphasis on drinking water while hiking• This hike is of moderate interest as is and needs a thematic focus to give it an identity and value in the Nyungwe programming.
- The source of the Nile watershed has potential with the catchment and trickling spring streams, but has to be emphasized with supportive information about the swamp feeding the springs
- The stops to look at plants with scientific names only is more annoying than enlightening. The names are too complicated to learn them,
- Reminding folks to drink water to avoid dehydrating is a need on any hike at this elevation and humidity but this is not happening.
- I might be very disappointed in paying a fee for this hike as done.

Izumo Trail

Strengths

- Speaks English well and listens well.
- Asked some questions to better understand our interests
- Gave a good general theme at start and end
- Checked in with us regarding ability on the trail and need for rest
- Gave warning of slick spots
- Excellent monkey spotting skills, less so with birds
- Assisted us with steps and slick spots when appropriate

- Offered his rain gear to guests lacking that when needed
- Assisted us in taking photos when asked
- Great overall attitude
- Gave us time at the waterfall to just be there, enjoy it without interpretive information

Weaknesses

- No name tag and did not learn our names and use them
- Did not use questions to deepen our understanding and engagement
- Shared many facts without relevance to his theme
- Uniform shirt was half-unbuttoned when he became hot
- Rambled in closing statement and eventually got to his theme without noting how tired we were and unable to focus.
- Exaggerated his experience when asked (revealed later after training) for he has been there 10 months but said 18 months. Did not imagine he would see us again.

Izumo – Waterfall Trail Overall Experience Notes

- This has potential as a good thematic walk with the waterfall fed by the swamp creating story opportunities of great interest that work together well.
- There is a geological story here that is not being told at all. That is an additional content training opportunity. The Albertine Rift is mentioned without greater explanation – a potential major storyline.
- The big trees here are magnificent, but scientific names do not convey a sense of the place as well as stories about the use of the wood by local people, wildlife, etc.
- These trails are extremely well maintained for the rugged terrain but it is important to help people understand the terrain before the hike. We were offered walking sticks without explanation. Suggesting that the hike will be safer if you have a stick would compel hikers to use it and be less likely to fall. I would insist that each take one after having the experience of slipping many times.
- The lack of signage is wonderful and should be kept that way as long as self-guiding is not allowed. The presence of signs is an intrusion and unneeded on trails when you have a guide. The place for interpretive signs is at trailheads where people gather and are waiting (Uwinka overlook, Reception Centers) and on self-guided trails.
- The waterfall is beautiful but might not justify such a long, difficult hike for many people. The mountain monkeys along the way, huge trees, and subtle beauty of the place make it an interesting hike. The skill of the guide will make this a better experience along with a clearer adherence to a thematic message.
- The potential for rain makes it essential to protect guests from their own bad judgment. Three of the five in our party lacked rain gear and were drenched in a downpour on the way back. Inexpensive ponchos carried by the guide could have given them much needed protection. The guide had suggested they get rain gear before leaving so they took full responsibility for the lack of it.

Canopy Walk and Colobus Monkey Tracking (two separate experiences)

Strengths

- Unique experience above canopy on manmade structure
- I felt safe and well taken care of generally
- He helped us by taking photos for us so we could be in the photo
- Colobus watching was great and we were allowed ample time to enjoy them and take photos
- Offered some common names of plants/trees.

Weaknesses

- Did not have a thematic storyline that made the canopy walk work as a tour, just the novelty of being up in the air.
- He identified orchids and trees with scientific names and terminology like epiphytes without getting into deeper meanings. I could not hear him much of the time.
- Canopy - Short experience and no interpretation was done on the trail down or back
- Canopy - If there was an introduction we missed it and closure at end was very little.
- Our colobus experience was on the road, may have been atypical, but most visitors paying for this experience would not be happy that they had paid for something they might have seen from the road.
- Did not learn anything about colobus relationship to park ecology or the species itself. Viewing only.

Karamba Birdwalk

Strengths:

- Easy trail out and back so focus is on looking for birds
- Great openings to see soaring birds, some forest
- Claude is good at bird identification

Weaknesses

- Did not pull out field guide often to show us what we saw so quickly
- Gave names but not much on how the bird behaves, what it eats, role in the forest
- Shared a little of mining history but not enough to understand that this once had 5,000 miners after gold and tremendous impact on the forest
- Does not make eye contact and sometimes talks to the air where guest cannot hear
- Moves on too quickly at times when guest is taking photos
- Going up the hill at the end should be an option the guest chooses with a rest bench provided at the bottom of the hill. Unnecessary climb for a vista that added little to the experience.
- Could take more breaks, encourage drinking water.

Topview Hill Lodge Visitor Experience

Strengths:

- Spectacular views of the region and Lake Kivu
- Interesting folk art in the rooms around the fireplace
- Very comfortable cottages with fireplaces and great views from the patio
- Friendly staff that show genuine interest in guests, especially Tito, Batista and Innocence
- Reasonable rates at mid-price range
- Excellent food and beverage services
- Able to use their Internet phone if you want access on a laptop
- Takes VISA when they can get it to work.

Weaknesses:

- Terrible road access and signage to get to the hotel
- Steep stairs for seniors to navigate to dining areas
- Website does not explain they take VISA and have Internet
- Staff are very friendly, could use some host training
- No noticeable laundry service/an opportunity for local people to earn funds
- Interpreting local food at meals would be a wonderful opportunity but will require some training for staff.
- Would be great opportunity for local artisans to show their work and offer for sale in lobby area. As is, no chance to purchase the folk art seen in rooms or other souvenir items.

Nyungwe Forest Lodge

Strengths

- Beautiful architecture, landscape architecture and decorative materials
- Very nice hot towel/juice reception on arrival
- Very good food and beverages
- Exceptional resort rooms, porches and bathrooms
- Nice pool
- Good gift shop
- Staff is pleasant and well dressed
- Laundry service in rooms
- Takes credit cards
- Has wifi, but works only for websites, not email
- Lots of bird life around the tea fields, some monkey life

Weaknesses

- No sign of activities orientation
- Reception desk often has no one at it.
- Woodstoves in rooms but no fires in cold weather
- Noisy heater/air conditioners in rooms
- Steps in rooms are tough on older guests
- Staff seems more trained than naturally attentive

- No request for feedback on departure
- No conversations between guests and staff – hosts seem reluctant
- wifi does not process email for unknown reasons, just web browsing
- Sign warning you to not take the amenities in the room, after paying \$440 for room it seems chintzy

Infrastructural considerations at Nyungwe:

- Transportation is a problem for backpackers, day visitors without cars and anyone who cannot afford a driver and 4-wheel drive vehicle. The bus schedule is not posted or frequent enough to work well for hikers/backpackers.
- The guest lodge is unmarked, but has reasonably priced good food but lacks signs to tell you where to find the dining area or check-in.
- The road to Hilltop Lodge is a rutted, slippery clay path and impassable for vehicles without 4-wheel drive.
- Guides lack a good place to stay other than the Guesthouse. There is no guide professional association here as in Kenya.
- Advance organizers are missing everywhere from signage to brochures in hotels to easy registration for guided activities.
- The pricing structure of everything is a bit off compared to other tourism markets. People have trouble understanding the high costs of some tours, reasonable costs of others and incredibly low costs for handmade basketry and local crafts.
- Craft and local tea/coffee gift shops should be everywhere but are not common. The communities would benefit more from these being provided everywhere possible, but especially when leaving a great tour or program at reception areas, Kitabi community, etc.
- Food snack amenities are lacking in key areas and concession opportunities are being missed.
- This park could sure use more low and mid-level housing/food services. The idea that the park will be a high-end destination misses the market. Movie stars and wealthy folks may come to the Forest Lodge, but they likely make less use of the guide services than mid-range users who do not find many of the support services.

Guide Needs

Audience

- Need to understand nuanced approaches to programming techniques for each unique audience and guest.
- How to assess audience motivations and preferences, psychographic approach
- Name tags, job description evident, use of clients names
- How to use questioning and start conversations.
- How to use informal interpretation, guides and guards see people waiting at reception areas and do little to let them know the options.

Appropriate techniques

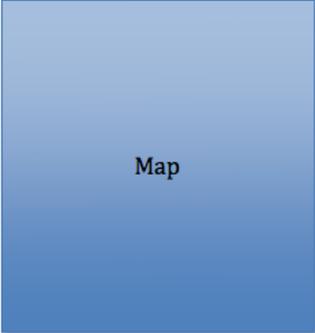
- Briefings are Spartan and do not serve well as advance organizers.
- Handouts at reception for specific trips would be helpful in allowing people to dress properly and bring the right items.
- Learn about thematic interpretation and why it helps people retain information and make a connection. (stick tight example)
- Tilden's principles are not taught and would help in understanding the guides roles and responsibilities
- Brain Rules idea of making meaning every ten minutes.
- Use of questioning
- Use of eye contact and cultural competencies

Resource considerations

- Help guests with relevance/meaning making of information – this tree provides drums
- Do not use scientific names unless you know the guest has that background or if you do use it turn the Latin terms into meaningful descriptions – the big-seeded tree
- Don't miss the geological story that goes with the trail – explain the Albertine rift instead of just using it as a location description – what is it?
- Explain the reasoning behind rules – use the authority of the resource

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE ADVANCE ORGANIZER

The following makeover of the existing trail handout with trails listed is recommended to give visitors better advance information needed to make decisions about which activity to do. It is incomplete, but gives an idea of the type of information needed. We recommend creating one for each category of visitor (foreign, resident, etc.) to avoid putting price comparisons in front of visitors. A small card such as the one illustrated below should be developed for each of the trails and activities.

<p>Nyungwe National Park Igishigishigi Trail – 1.5 hours</p>  <p>The Canopy Walk – 2.4 km Guided tour above the treetops \$??/person – reserve at Uwinka</p>	<p>Nyungwe National Park Igishigishigi Trail Easy Hike – 1.5 hours 2.4 kilometers/1.5 miles</p>  <p>Map</p> <p>Meet at Uwinka Reception, Register and pay \$?? Fee – guide provides a walking stick– Bring your water, raincoat, camera</p>
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Mini Cards may be used to create a display with a card for each trail providing a photo and basic information on the front and details and map on the back. Place displays at Reception Centres, local hotels, the National Museum in Huye and anywhere tourists might stop for information. These fit in a shirt pocket and remind visitors of the trails they find interesting – a supplement to the one page handout.

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Tours, Trails and Tracking at a Glance –

Find the best-guided hikes and forest adventure to enrich your stay in Nyungwe National Park.

Trails from Kitabi Reception – Restrooms (W.C.) at the Reception Centre only – all prices include Guide (required) and loan of hiking stick

Trail Names	Distance km/mi.	Trail Time	Easy to Difficult	Main Features	Bring water, raincoat and . .	Price/ person	Camping	Food
Rukungu	3.0k/2 m.	2hr. 30 m	Easy	Forest Canopy		??		??
Mwumba	4.0k/2.5 m.	4 hr.	Moderate	Trail to the Tea Factory	Snacks	??		??
Ngabwe	4.6k/3 m.	4 hr.	Moderate	Good view	Snacks	??	Yes – at top only	??
Rutovu	7.0k/4.4 m.	6 hr.	Moderate	Varied viewpoints	Snacks, tissue	??		??

Uwinka Reception Centre – Restrooms (W.C.) at the Reception Centre only – all prices include Guide (required) and loan of hiking stick

Trail Names	Distance- km/mi.	Trail Time	Easy to Difficult	Main features	Bring water, raincoat and . .	Price/ person	Camping	Food
Bugufi	2.0k/	1 hr. 30 m.	Easy	Great views, monkeys, birds			Uwinka only	Uwinka Canteen
Igishigishigi	2.4k/	1 hr. 30 m.	Easy	Above canopy vista, orchids, birds, monkeys			Uwinka only	Uwinka Canteen
Irebero	3.5k/	3 hr.	Moderate	Great views, strangler fig, birds, monkeys			Uwinka only	Uwinka Canteen
Umugote	3.6k/	3 hr.	Moderate	Monkeys, birds, big trees			Uwinka only	Uwinka Canteen

Trail Names	Distance- km/mi.	Trail Time	Easy to Difficult	Main features	Bring water, raincoat and . .	Price/ person	Camping	Food
Mount Bigugu	6.6k/	6 hr.	Difficult		Snacks, tissue		Uwinka only	Uwinka Canteen
Umuyove	5.6k/	4 hr.	Moderate		snacks		Uwinka and summit	Uwinka Canteen
Kamiranzovu Swamp	5.9k/	3 hr. 30	Moderate		snacks		Uwinka only	Uwinka Canteen
Rukuzi	9.1k/	5 hr.	Difficult	Viewpoint to the village	snacks, tissue		??	Uwinka Canteen
Imbaraga	9.8k/	6 hr.	Difficult	4 Waterfalls	Water, raincoat, lunch, snacks, tissue		??	Uwinka Canteen
Uwinka via swamp	10.5k/	8 hr.			lunch, snacks, tissue			Uwinka Canteen
Congo Nile divide	42.2k/	3 days and nights	Difficult	A spur to source of the Nile	meals, snacks, tissue		Camps at ?k, ?k, ?k	Uwinka Canteen
Angola black & white colobus tracking							No	Uwinka Canteen
Gray-cheeked mangabey track							No	Uwinka Canteen
Chimpanzees track at Uwinka Mayebe Group				Up to 50 chimps in area, but number seen will vary			No	Uwinka Canteen

Gisakura Reception Centre – Restrooms (W.C.) at the Reception Centre only – all prices include Guide (required) and loan of hiking stick

Trail Names	Distance	Trail time	Easy to Difficult	Main Features	Bring water, raincoat and	Price/ person	Camping	Food
Karamba Birding	2.0k/	3 hr.	Easy	Excellent birding, diverse habitats, old gold camp	Field glasses, snacks	??	No	No
Isumo	10.4k/	4 hr.	Moderate	Beautiful stream valley – waterfall at end of the trail	Field glasses, snacks	??	No	No
Angola black & white colobus tracking	1 to 3k/.7 to 2m.	1 to 3 hrs.	Easy to moderate	Close views of up to 400 Angola black & white colobus monkeys	Field glasses, camera	??	No	No
Chimp Tracking at Cyamudongo – must be age 15 or older	4 to 10 k/6.7 m.	3 to 5 hr.	Difficult	Departs from Gisakura at 5 AM – 1 hr. drive to forest – guide and trackers assist you in search for chimps	Snacks, field glasses, camera	??	No	No

All hikes:

- Check starting time with reception center.
- Take along water – 200 ml or 10 oz. for every 2 hours of hiking – you dehydrate faster at elevations above 1,600 meters (5,750 feet)
- Carry a raincoat – especially important from October through April
- Wear comfortable hiking boots or shoes; no open toed shoes
- Bring cameras and field glasses, if available
- You must provide your own transportation to all trailheads. Public buses generally run from ?? am to ?? pm on the main road and stop at trailheads only if necessary.

Other considerations:

- Chimp tracking at Cyamudongo requires advance registration at reception center in Gisakura. Meets at 5:00 am at Gisakura Reception, then drive an hour on roads requiring 4-wheel drive vehicle and driver that you provide.

- Contact our main office for reservations and to ask questions. Email: reservation@rwandatourism.com
kambogoi@yahoo.fr / +25 0788436763
- Easy hikes – less than 3 hours with moderate changes in grade
 - Moderate hikes – frequent changes in elevation, rougher walking surface and longer distances
 - Difficult hikes – major changes in elevation, rough walking surface, at times climbing up or down over obstacles, long distances

APPENDIX E: ASSESSMENT OF GUIDE SKILLS AND NEEDS

Guide Skills and Needs Assessment at Nyungwe National Park (highlighted areas show level of attainment)

Area of Interest	Needs Significant Work	Good effort, shows potential	Professional Level Performance	Other Comments
Introduction of Self, Agency, and Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Did not introduce self, agency, or park	<input type="checkbox"/> Introduced self and welcomed visitors, but not until tour began	<input type="checkbox"/> Welcomed visitors even before program began and introduced self without initiation by visitor	<i>Could use something to identify park guides – nametags, pins, “guide” on jacket or shirt, etc.</i>
Addressed Basic Needs	<input type="checkbox"/> Did little or nothing to address safety, security, physiological needs	<input type="checkbox"/> Mentioned time or length of trail, occasionally asked if everyone was alright, but did little else	<input type="checkbox"/> Was conscious of audience needs and thoroughly addressed concerns up front, ensured that needs were met all along the way	<i>Could use more facilities (rest benches, composting toilets, directional signage to assist guides in providing for basic needs)</i>
Message	<input type="checkbox"/> Had no discernible theme – mostly disjointed facts	<input type="checkbox"/> Theme was apparent at beginning or end but not supported throughout the tour	<input type="checkbox"/> Strong theme linking tangibles to intangibles evident throughout tour	<i>Could develop different subtheme for each trail to avoid a lot of overlap for repeat visitors or those who do more than one trail in a single visit, all consistent with the main theme of forest protection</i>
Provoked Further Thought or Action	<input type="checkbox"/> Visitors left with information only, no specific message or provocation	<input type="checkbox"/> Information given supports further thought or action if visitors take initiative on their own to think or do	<input type="checkbox"/> Clear indicators of success by asking for specific thought or action	<i>Could offer related sales items at trail beginning and end consistent with trail messaging</i>
Knowledge of Audience	<input type="checkbox"/> Made no attempt to actively converse with visitors	<input type="checkbox"/> Engaged in conversation if prompted by visitor	<input type="checkbox"/> Asked questions and used answers to make information relevant to individual interests	<i>Could rewrite job description and hire based on desire to interact with people</i>
Engagement with Audience	<input type="checkbox"/> Completely disengaged from audience	<input type="checkbox"/> Talked with enthusiasm, maintained eye contact, and was clearly heard	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully engaged with audience; aware of audience reactions and able to adjust as needed; strong, confident delivery	<i>Could encourage visitor interaction and discourage guides and other staff from talking with each other in front of guests</i>
Knowledge of Resource	<input type="checkbox"/> Seemed unsure of resource information in most cases or repeatedly ignored questions rather than answer them	<input type="checkbox"/> Possessed some specialized knowledge, but lacked the ability to answer more general questions	<input type="checkbox"/> Possessed general knowledge of all resources and able to answer most questions thoroughly	<i>Could assign each guide an area to study and train others in on a regular ongoing basis to continue professional development for all</i>
Use of appropriate techniques	<input type="checkbox"/> Lecture style only	<input type="checkbox"/> Used some questions, but no other techniques to address audience learning styles	<input type="checkbox"/> Used a variety of techniques including questioning, showing pictures, listening activities, etc.	<i>Could use CIG training for ideas</i>

Guide Skills and Needs Assessment at Volcanoes National Park (for comparison to NNP)

Area of Interest	Needs Significant Work	Good effort, shows potential	Professional Level Performance	Other Comments
Introduction of Self, Agency, and Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Did not introduce self, agency, or park	<input type="checkbox"/> Introduced self and welcomed visitors, but not until tour began	<input type="checkbox"/> Welcomed visitors even before program began and introduced self without initiation by visitor	<i>Could use something to identify park guides – nametags, pins, “guide” on jacket or shirt, etc.</i>
Addressed Basic Needs	<input type="checkbox"/> Did little or nothing to address safety, security, physiological needs	<input type="checkbox"/> Mentioned time or length of trail, occasionally asked if everyone was alright, but did little else	<input type="checkbox"/> Was conscious of audience needs and thoroughly addressed concerns up front, ensured needs met all along the way	<i>Clear directional signage at entry with adequate toilets and free refreshments</i>
Message	<input type="checkbox"/> Had no discernible theme – mostly disjointed facts	<input type="checkbox"/> Theme was apparent at beginning or end but not supported throughout the tour	<input type="checkbox"/> Strong theme linking tangibles to intangibles evident throughout tour	<i>Gorilla experience is so good that anything else could be wrong and it would not matter. Still, a theme with a strong conservation message would help ensure that visitors understand their help is needed to maintain or grow the gorilla population.</i>
Provoked Further Thought or Action	<input type="checkbox"/> Visitors left with information only, no specific message or provocation	<input type="checkbox"/> Information given supports further thought or action if visitors take initiative on their own to think or do	<input type="checkbox"/> Clear indicators of success by asking for specific thought or action	<i>Related sales items at center next door provided, but no direction given. Certificate to commemorate experience, but no explanation of high fee or what other things visitors could do to support the conservation effort.</i>
Knowledge of Audience	<input type="checkbox"/> Made no attempt to actively converse with visitors	<input type="checkbox"/> Engaged in conversation if prompted by visitor	<input type="checkbox"/> Asked questions and used answers to make information relevant to individual interests	<i>Could rewrite job description and hire based on desire to interact with people</i>
Engagement with Audience	<input type="checkbox"/> Completely disengaged from audience	<input type="checkbox"/> Talked with enthusiasm, maintained eye contact, and was clearly heard	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully engaged with audience; aware of audience reactions and able to adjust as needed; strong, confident delivery	<i>Seemed interested in audience members, although this may have been more of a safety issue than anything else.</i>
Knowledge of Resource	<input type="checkbox"/> Seemed unsure of resource information in most cases or repeatedly ignored questions rather than answer them	<input type="checkbox"/> Possessed some specialized knowledge, but lacked the ability to answer more general questions	<input type="checkbox"/> Possessed general knowledge of all resources and able to answer most questions thoroughly	<i>Clearly expert in the gorilla family groups</i>
Use of appropriate techniques	<input type="checkbox"/> Lecture style only	<input type="checkbox"/> Used some questions, but no other techniques to address audience learning styles	<input type="checkbox"/> Used a variety of techniques including questioning, showing pictures, listening activities, etc.	<i>Could use CIG training for additional ideas</i>

APPENDIX F: DESCRIPTION OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR INTERPRETATION (NAI) CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

NAI's certification program includes four peer-reviewed professional categories (requires four-year college degree or four years field experience to be eligible to apply) and two training categories (requires only that participants be at least 16 years old).

The training categories of Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) and Certified Interpretive Host (CIH) have been designed as workshop-based training programs to be delivered by Certified Interpretive Trainers (CIT) (one of the four professional categories).

The requirements to achieve a CIG credential include:

- attendance at a 32-hour workshop (approximately four days) that uses NAI's CIG training curriculum and workbook
- successful completion of an open-book literature review
- successful completion of a program or tour outline
- successful completion of a 10-minute thematic program or tour

The requirements to achieve a CIHost credential include:

- attendance at a 16-hour workshop (approximately two days) that uses NAI's CIH training curriculum and workbook
- successful completion of an open-book literature review (short version)
- successful completion of a video exam (participants are shown a stem and three possible responses in a video scenario and asked to select the most appropriate response).

Each of these programs can be customized to accommodate the specific needs of the workshop participants. The workshops do not cover resource content but instead focus on communication skills that can be applied to the participants' situations.

Certified Interpretive Trainers must have satisfactorily completed the peer-reviewed professional level certification and attended the appropriate CIT workshops taught by NAI staff in order to teach the CIG and CIH workshops or to place an order for workshop materials. Once the CIT credential has been attained and the CIT has been sanctioned to teach CIG and CIH, he or she may set up workshops and confer the appropriate credential.

Fees for the program generally include:

Certified Interpretive Guide (per participant)

- \$220 instructor fee (required, but can be negotiated under certain circumstances*)
- \$80 certification application fee (NAI members - \$135 for nonmembers); optional
- \$50 membership fee (if purchased at time of certification, usually \$69); optional
- \$10 workbook (required)
- \$12 textbook (optional)

*Instructors can negotiate a different fee to accommodate local economies or specific client needs and available budget.

Certified Interpretive Host (per participant)

- \$110 instructor fee (required, but can be negotiated under certain circumstances*)
- \$80 certification application fee (NAI members - \$135 for nonmembers); optional
- \$50 membership fee (if purchased at time of certification, usually \$69); optional
- \$10 workbook (required)
- \$12 textbook (optional)

*Instructors can negotiate a different fee to accommodate local economies or specific client needs

Certified Interpretive Trainer (per person)

- \$125 certification application fee (NAI members - \$200 for nonmembers)
- \$500 registration for CIT workshop, plus travel, lodging, meals

This initial workshop qualifies the CIT to teach CIG workshops. To teach the Host workshop also, an additional 2-day workshop is required at a cost of \$200, plus travel, lodging, and meals

Additional information related to NAI's certification program may be found at www.interpnet.com/certification.

Trainer Specifications for the Nyungwe CIG/CIHost courses:

Two trainers are required to teach the CIG and CIH courses in field settings. Through alternating presentations they maintain a high level of activities to keep the material interesting. Many of the specific curriculum activities are highly interactive and require one trainer to be preparing materials while the other presents. On the third day of training the focus is on coaching each individual guide in preparation of a strong thematic outline with appropriate techniques. In a class of 15 participants both trainers are busy coaching each individual to help him prepare. This is the most critical component in successful completion of the required 10-minute thematic presentation.

Though the CIG course is usually 32 hours of training, it was recommended by the guides that it be extended a day to five days. That would be prudent to allow more of the activities to be outside on a Nyungwe trail and to give more process time for each guide to understand these new concepts. Again the two trainers spend time separately with individual guides coaching them as they work on small group activities insuring that everyone understands what they are doing and why they are doing it.

In the CIHost course many of the training components are facilitated role-plays, which require participants to use the techniques they learn in real situations. Having two trainers permits the division of the group into two groups of ten to make the activities more effective by giving each person a chance to try on the role. With one trainer many of the activities will become academic exercises that may have little value if they cannot demonstrate they can apply what they have learned.

APPENDIX G: SAMPLE TRAINING PLAN

The following suggestions are made for coursework that might be useful for guides (new guides at Guide I Level, those with some experience at Guide II level, and those with several years experience at Guide III level) and hosts. Additional courses could be added as necessary. In some cases, guides may have already completed much of this coursework through their formal education prior to employment, but these courses should form the basis for any professional guide's base of knowledge. Objectives for each course suggested follow the sample documentation pages.

Nyungwe National Park Training Plan for Guides – Coursework Completed

Name _____ Year Hired _____

Guide I Level	Date Completed	Comments
Certified Interpretive Guide		
Introduction to Birds		
Ecosystems of Rwanda		
Basic First Aid		
Wildlife Watching Ethics		
Introduction to Insects		
Introduction to Mammals		
Introduction to Reptiles		
Tracks and Signs		
Introduction to Rwanda History and Cultures		
Introduction to Plants		
Introduction to Geology		
Introduction to Park Rules		
Shadowing Ranger III Level		
Other		

Guide II Level Date Completed Comments

Birding Techniques		
Leading Chimpanzee Hikes		
Introduction to Weather		
Advanced First Aid		
Cultural Competency		
Additional Language		
Introduction to Park Management		
Leave No Trace		
Ethnobotany		
Coaching Ranger I Level		
Other		

Guide III Level Date Completed Comments

Birding by Sound		
Advanced Botany		
Wildlife Photography		
Advanced Primatology		
Guiding with VIPs		
Additional Language		
Coaching Ranger II Level		
Other		

Nyungwe National Park Training Plan for Sales/Hosts – Coursework Completed

Name _____ Year Hired _____

Courses	Date Completed	Comments
CIH (Basic Customer Service and Informal Interpretation)		
Introduction to Trails		
Sales and Cross promotion		
Basic First Aid		
Introduction to Rwanda History and Cultures		
Introduction to Park Rules		
Cultural Competency		
Additional Language		
Other		

Objectives for Listed Coursework – participants should be able to:

Additional Languages

- competency in speaking an additional language (including added fluency in English)

Advanced Botany

- understand relationships of common plants species in NNP to animals and ecosystems
- explain complex relationships clearly to visitors using analogies and simple language

Advanced First Aid (Emergency Medical Technician certification)

- Emergency life-saving techniques
- Certification possible

Advanced Primatology

- identify primates from around the world
- discuss similarities and differences of African primates compared with other primates
- discuss relationships, current status, and conservation steps to protect NNP primates with visitors

Basic First Aid

- perform simple first aid procedures in the field

Birding by Sound

- identify common bird species by sound alone
- help visitors correctly identify bird species by sound

Birding Techniques

- use binoculars and teach visitors how to use them most effectively
- use bird book and teach visitors how to use books and other tools to identify birds
- understand when and how to use bird calls effectively to see birds

Certified Interpretive Guide

- understand philosophy and research background that supports interpretation
- practice techniques of interpretation to enhance guided tours
- engage in quality customer service
- use authority of the resource to resolve conflicts with visitors

Certified Interpretive Host

- identify the ways in which every conversation with guests can become interpretive opportunities
- understand how job description supports the mission of the employing organization and NNP
- identify the NNP central theme
- achieve satisfactory guest comments

Coaching Ranger I

- use specific, provisional and positive comments to encourage Guides at first level in developing skills
- mentor first level Guides in coursework and fieldwork

Coaching Ranger II

- understand and respect the abilities of second level guides
- use specific, provisional and positive comments to encourage Guides at second level in developing skills
- mentor second level Guides in coursework and fieldwork

Cultural Competency

- identify the major cultural groups (countries) who visit NNP
- discuss and demonstrate appropriate cultural greetings and mannerisms for talking with each identified culture
- help visitors understand what makes Rwandan culture unique and what makes it similar to theirs

Ecosystems of Rwanda

- identify specific ecosystems throughout the country
- understand and describe the importance of ecosystems of NNP

Ethnobotany

- identify the cultural uses of plants commonly found in NNP
- demonstrate to visitors how plants have been used historically or currently
- discuss the importance of agriculture to current Rwandan economy

Guiding with VIPs

- understand the ethics of communication and protection of privacy with political VIPs
- understand the ethics of communication and protection of privacy with other VIPs

Introduction to Birds

- identify typically seen bird species of NNP
- describe general structure and function of bird physiology
- identify families of birds by shape and size and help visitors do the same

Introduction to Geology

- identify geological history and significance of Albertine Rift
- identify specific types of rock and soil seen in NNP
- differentiate NNP's geology from other areas of East Africa

Introduction to Insects

- identify typically seen insects in NNP
- calm fears of visitors related to insects and insect bites

Introduction to Mammals

- identify typically seen mammals in NNP (and those not so easily seen)
- understand relationships of mammals (current and extinct) to forests of NNP

Introduction to Park Management

- be familiar with management policies and the reasons for them
- identify strategic objectives for park management (using NNP as a model)
- prepare for advancement to management positions if desired

Introduction to Park Rules

- gain full understanding of park rules and reasons for them
- explain park rules to visitors using authority of the resource techniques
- gain compliance with park rules from visitors

Introduction to Plants

- identify common plant species found in NNP by scientific name and English translation of local common name

Introduction to Reptiles

- identify typically seen reptiles in NNP
- calm fears of visitors related to reptiles that may or may not be in the park

Introduction to Rwanda History and Cultures

- identify major events in Rwanda History that visitors may ask about
- appropriately and sensitively address visitor questions about history and culture
- cross-promote cultural activities in and around NNP with accuracy

Introduction to Trails

- identify all current trail and activity opportunities
- provide information to guests when asked about specific activities

Introduction to Weather

- identify weather signs
- help visitors interpret weather signs
- identify the impacts of seasonal weather on NNP and surrounding area
- recognize dangerous weather conditions and advise visitors of such

Leading Chimpanzee Hikes

- assess visitor capability for physical requirements of hike
- engage visitors when chimpanzees are not evident
- encourage ethical viewing behavior
- relate information and true stories about chimpanzees using interpretive approach
- discuss differences in behavior of wild chimpanzees and those in captivity

Leave No Trace

- be exposed to the importance of the Leave No Trace ethic.
- describe the seven Leave No Trace principles.
- describe how the seven Leave No Trace principles are adapted to the outdoor work environment.
- discuss how the seven Leave No Trace principles can be adapted to search and rescue activities.

Sales and Cross promotion

- identify opportunities for cross-promoting activities in and around NNP
- be familiar with those opportunities
- encourage sales related to NNP

Tracks and Signs

- identify tracks, rubbings, scat, sounds, eating and bedding areas
- interpret the story left behind by the animal to help visitors “see” what happened

Wildlife Watching Ethics

- practice and communicate ethical wildlife watching techniques
- use the authority of the resource techniques to mitigate depreciative behavior