

Some ideas and musings on the use of
the Creative Arts in National Park Areas
(by area type and art form)

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Natural Areas:

The visual arts:

1. Art gallery display on natural themes (i.e., wildlife, plants, environmental issues, geology). Changing themes over period of one month or less using both local artists and park personnel or local school art department.
2. Show of arts and crafts of employees for employees and community. Can include both traditional and modern crafts (i.e., cabinet making, metal work) and writing.
3. Poetry trail - a trail designed to involve the visitor's feelings and creativity, either signed or with a leaflet where stops are treated in poetry and some stops ask visitor to exercise creativity through poetry. (One suggestion is blank sign with plastic surface and grease pencil.)
4. Workshops or walking workshops using surroundings as inspiration for artist's expression (i.e., sketching, writing, sculpture, collage, etc.).
5. Photo walk in which the participants have a polaroid camera (as well as own) and create a display for showing at some location. Visitor participates in preparation of exhibit.
6. Visitor's exhibit area, contributions by visitors in the arts displayed through contribution. Contributions are related to experience in the Park.
7. Theme related material object art workshop. Using either natural objects or waste materials to create display or take home items related to a specific natural concept like an ecologic or geologic concept. Both a learning and are artists expression exercise.
8. Artist-interpreter - a visual or literary arts interpreter at fixed site doing her or his thing and relating the artists' perception and interpretation of the surroundings (i.e., landscape painter at an overlook).

9. Block printing - with natural or formed objects for display or take home, wood and rock surfaces or any surface that can be the printing surface, also rubbings of such surfaces for display at visitor exhibit or for take home. (Don't need to risk knives and supply bandaids .

Music:

1. Building instruments from found waste products as take home display, also learning about value of waste materials in recycling.
2. Occupational folk music to relate the story of human use of the resources and traditional attitudes to them (i.e., lumbering, mining, hunting songs).
3. Musical performances, background music composed from the inspiration of natural settings or processes (including original music newly composed).
4. A music trail - signs or stops with pieces of music that musicians might do by carrying their instruments along, or emphasis on natural sounds and sounds made on natural objects (hollow log, 2 rocks, etc.) which do not significantly damage the resource. Audio stops that interpret through taped music. Loan of simple instruments like flutes or simple strings (mouth bow) ocharina etc. to allow people to express feelings through sound.
5. Using wildlife calls which imitate animals (either the instruments or voice as musical sound in a wildlife talk or walk, even combining these sounds with musical sounds.
6. NPS employees chorale group to do environmental songs, either traveling group or area group doing both park and community performances.
7. Sounds with or without music that can be used as background to programs or as a source of programs to sensitize people to sound. Using such things as stethoscope to listen to a tree or other amplification devices to pick up sounds not usually heard by the human ear.

Dance:

1. Dances by professional, school or community dance groups choreographed to represent natural processes, environmental concepts or classical fantasy and folklore tied to man-nature theme.

2. Local history and lore related to park setting put in dance format.
3. Environmental education programs in which participants dramatize processes in ecology or man-environment relationships through creation and presentation of dance.
4. Dance as physical fitness for employees and others in workshop programs. Dance exercise and development of local dance troupe with one objective being physical fitness.
5. Social dancing as a warm-up like campfire singing to get audience in receptive mood for program.
6. Dance interpretation of motion in nature in program or walk where visitors may or may not participate, using the body to exemplify natural motion.

Drama:

1. Eco-drama, dramatic presentation depicting the ecological relationships (done in environmental education).
2. Drama coaching and training for interpreters to apply elements of drama in their programs.
3. Park theatre group made up of employees and families or ties to community theatre. Can do original theme related plays or do traditional drama related to man-nature or natural themes.
4. Vignettes or brief dramatic presentations as part of evening programs to install a lasting interest in concept or ideas.
5. Campfire tales drama (story telling) with dramatic elements, costume etc. The amount of theatrics can vary depending on resources and skills.
6. Drama in a natural setting, using the resource as the backdrop for dramatic presentations.

Historic and Archeologic Areas:

Visual Arts:

1. Those things related to natural areas with historic or cultural archeologic theme.
2. Historic recitations, readings, from primary sources, journals, diaries, and letters. In case of non-personal stuff audio tapes which use local dialects and language of ethnic group and time period.

3. Quotes as signing on trails and in historic structures from people involved in events and as life at historic or archeological site with no detailed explanation, simply a cameo of the time and events.
4. Rubbings from various historic objects of a study nature that will not deface the resource, can include, walls, floors, trademarks, makers labels etc. Supply materials least potentially damaging to the resource. Take home item.
5. Architectural sketch walls. Sketching of key characteristics of period or ethnic architecture or tools of the area focusing attention on artifacts and architecture with interpretation.
6. Verbal description sketching of person where no visual image available. Give contemporary verbal descriptions of character, personality, acts of importance etc. Have visitors sketch their image and talk about why they see the person that way.
7. Instruction sheets on demonstrated crafts so people can take home something to try themselves with resource needs and techniques (spinning, pottery, smithery, etc.).
8. Historic arts and crafts fair with persons showing arts and crafts of period and or cultural or ethnic group with careful selection of authentically reproduced items.
9. Employee display of historic crafts and arts relating to park theme on weekly or bi-weekly basis. (include families)
10. Workshops on historic arts and crafts techniques for visitors and employees (to reinforce interest of employee in the historic or cultural perspectives in park story).
11. Historic photo displays from photo files - for example, then and now photos of park area in changing exhibit.
12. The community or visitor made quilt. Series of patches started by visitors and submitted to be pieced as a quilt for display relating to community life and sense of it from such social gatherings.

Music:

1. Theme related music (of period, ethnic or occupational group) as background for programs, also as programs in evening. Learning about the people through their music.
2. Display of instruments used by people during historic time represented. Workshops on elements of playing these instruments for visitors and employees.

3. Sheet music in folders and publications representing the story of the park and its themes.
4. Employee chorale singing the group songs of the period (religious music, social music, occupational music).
5. Resident musician (seasonal) who can perform the music representational of the period on the appropriate instrument or instruments.
6. Folders, mimeo sheets on instruments and playing styles associated with historic theme. Sale of jew's harps, mouth bows, inexpensive instruments people used or construction manuals for simple instruments.
7. Leading song at evening programs characteristic of the park theme.
8. Collecting and using, even publishing collection of songs about famous personage represented, (i.e. General Sheridan's Reel, songs about presidents, heros, etc.). Interpreting these persons through the music about them.

Dance:

1. Interpretive dance of events, folklife represented by the park story.
2. Workshops on Folk Dance or social dance of place and period.
3. Dance group, local, park, professional that does a re-creation of dances of period, people, etc.

Drama:

1. Re-creation of famous person, costume, make-up and do a characterization, one person, possibilities very great. Person in modern setting wandering about talking to visitors, or simply appearing in a room, historic setting and fading out.
2. Ghost's - audio and special effects in room (chair rocking) signs of movement, voices without visible character.
3. Full fledged drama representing an event of significance to the area.
4. The window to the past. A motion picture screen behind screen projection on window with sights and sounds of the period as visitor views through a time machine.

5. Multi hat one person drama. With simple props like hats relate a story with characters identified by change of hats. (Take a good dramatist to do but leaves visitors imagination to flesh out drama.)
6. Re-creation of legendary characters (Bridger tales in Yellowstone), Mike Fink, Paul Bunyon, Daniel Boone, in their legendary personality representing the lore we build around our heros (and villains).
7. The historic character speaks to the visitor. A program where the visitor speaks to the character, asks questions about him and his life. (actor needs to research historic person indepth.)
8. Living in the period day or week. When all persons in park who can wear period dress and work to create period atmosphere.
9. The Wardrobe experience - a wardrobe of costumes, hats, whatever where visitor selects costume on a tour or in a program and acts out how he or she would be in that time as a member of that culture, or choosing by volunteers a cast of characters to recreate a scene from the past time.

Recreation areas:

Visual Arts:

1. Art show, exhibits on activities like boating, canoeing, swimming, fishing, etc.
2. Sand sculpture, art and craft objects from found materials (shells of seashore, driftwood, printing of these objects like block printing. Fish printing of fisherman's catch or kids catches to take home.
3. Waste and litter art for recycling from debris of recreational use.
4. Action photo exhibits of recreation activities by visitors and/or employees.
5. Poetry related to experience in recreation use of the place, on boating, fishing, etc....
6. Workshops and demonstrations of traditional craft skills associated with recreational pursuit, fishing techniques of other cultures, net making, knot tying and how these have become arts and crafts from utility skills.
7. Model building involving evolution of boats or other artifacts that are part of modern recreation gear.

Music:

1. Musicians which go to where people are, by boat, to campgrounds to beaches and give concerts.
2. Campfire sings or sing-a-longs and bring your instruments, share music program at recreation sites.
3. Original songs on safety, swimming, boating, etc. to get across safety messages.
4. Games, water games, beach games that have a music involvement (1 and 20 sing with game) or childrens song games.

Dance:

1. Water ballet workshops or performances at beaches.
2. Dances held on beaches or piers for youth, for older folks, social dancing events.
3. Swimming lessons in relation to movement, swimming as a dance.
4. Life guards that don't just sit but play music or lead singing or other activities.

Drama:

1. Dramatization of culture groups that occupied area and how they used the resource. Old sailors, river men, heroes and villains either as program or appearing at visitor concentrations (a canoe suddenly appearing with voyageurs getting out singing and discussing their trip.)
2. Fisherman sitting and talking about the lore of the sea, fish stories relating the folkways of the commerce of fish and whales with music.
3. Safety vignette with actors depicting good and/or bad safety practices.

Urban and Cultural Parks:

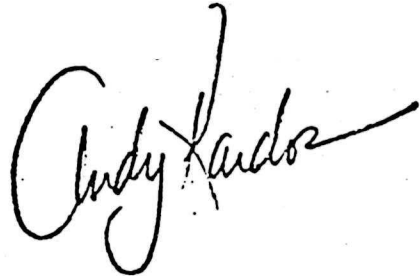
These units have enormous resources of the cultural community in the city and large population concentrations to draw from. Since their mandate is recreation and exposure to arts and culture they have many more options including legitimate theatre, craft courses, music concerts and festivals, dance performances, the entire gamut of arts and crafts experience is open to them.

Individual units may be more restricted in theme and can use some of the ideas where appropriate listed for other types of areas.

The urban parks must respond to community needs. Programs that develop a sense of community, neighborhoods are highly valuable in re-structuring urban values. Ethnic considerations are strong and all ethnic groups need be represented.

Events might be tailored around rebuilding urban values that give a city its vitality. The theme seems to be rebuild a sense of community, a pride in place.

Note: I hope the contributors will not mind my fleshing out the suggestions a bit and my apologies to those from urban areas for being less specific, but suggestions were absent and the statement I made is in my own mind a reasonable one. This is only a beginning, a scratch into the possibilities, we only hope it generates ideas and actions in some way.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Andy Kardos". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the page.