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Wood County Park District Receives Interpretive Project Grant from the National Association for Interpretation - Region 4

The National Association for Interpretation (NAI) Region 4 recently announced its Interpretive Project Grant Award Winners and is pleased to report Wood County Park District is among the 2015 recipients.

The Interpretive Project Grants (IPG) program is designed to provide a source of funding for small projects by Association members within the Great Lakes region including Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Ontario. Projects may include exhibitry, signage, programs, or other ideas that enhance visitors' interpretive experience. Applications are submitted annually, and reviewed by the IPG Committee consisting of members of NAI Region 4 who guide the grant process and make recommendations to the Region 4 Board of Directors.

Wood County Park District's *Interpretive Signage project* will provide new opportunities for guests to learn even more during their experience at the Parks and Nature Preserves. According to Program Coordinator and grant applicant Jim Witter, "we plan to design beautiful signs with textual and visual information about local flora, fauna, and habitats specific to each park's ecosystem. The design will attract attention and the information provided will enable guests to form a deeper appreciation of nature." Planned components include graphics and QR codes linking to audio files for a multi-sensory experience. The audio files will incorporate nature acoustics with MP3 files that will play on any device.

IPG funds from NAI Region 4 will add financial support for the project, assisting with printing a dozen new outdoor signage panels to be installed throughout the parks at W.W. Knight Nature Preserve, Otsego Park, Black Swamp Nature Preserve, Cedar Creeks Preserve, J.C. Reuthinger Memorial Preserve, Rudolph Savanna, Fuller Preserve, Cricket Frog Cove Preserve, Bradner Preserve, Beave Creek Preserve, and Sawyer Nature Preserve.

"It is always interesting and enlightening for the Committee to see all of the wonderful projects underway in Region 4 - we have very passionate and creative members in our region," said Jennifer McDowell, Chair of the Interpretive Project Grants Committee. "Congratulations to Wood County Park District for their work to enhance the guest experience through interpretive signage that uses more interactive technologies. Encouraging guests to use devices to become immersed visually and audibly with the specific wildlife found at each park will further help promote the Park District's messages of conservation, education and recreation."

Applicants receiving funding this year along with Wood County's *Interpretive Signage Project* include The Kensington Metroparks Farm Center's *The Farm Center Kids' Corner: Day in the Life of Today's Farm Kid* project (MI) and Sturgeon for Tomorrow, Black Lake Chapter's *Great Lakes Ecological Stewardship: Lake Sturgeon in the Classroom* (MI).

The National Association for Interpretation (NAI) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit professional organization dedicated to advancing the profession of heritage interpretation, currently serving about 5,000 members in the United States, Canada, and over thirty other nations. Individual members include those who work at parks, museums, nature centers, zoos, botanical gardens, aquariums, historical and cultural sites, commercial tour companies, and theme parks. Commercial and institutional members include those who provide services to the heritage interpretation industry.

The Association is divided into ten geographical regions to help members network with others near them through professional development opportunities, workshops, and periodical newsletters. Region 4 – the Great Lakes Region - includes Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Ontario.

NAI's Mission is to inspire leadership and excellence to advance heritage interpretation as a profession.
