



Information on Bilingual Interpretive Signs

One of Forests in Region 6 was looking for information on developing bilingual interpretive signs and asked if I could help track down information. I wanted to share the results of my inquiries. The two main sources I spoke to were Blanca Ruiz, Interpretive Specialist on the Caribbean NF, and Alison Manley of Parks Canada.

At El Portal Tropical Forest Center, the signs are bilingual with Spanish first, on top or on the left, and English second, on the bottom or on the right. They also use different colors for each language to make it easier for readers to focus on their preferred language. They try to make the translations as accurate as possible. This doesn't always mean they are literal translations or word-for-word. It means the text in each language tries to communicate the same thought and the message content is the same.

Along with all other government agencies in Canada, Parks Canada is required by law to provide EQUAL services to both English and French-speaking visitors. This means each language must have equal prominence on any sign or publication. For interpretive signs, this usually results in side by side text. However, it varies from region to region with language goes on the left. In Quebec it might be French while in Alberta it might be English. All titles, subheads, and text must be of the same size, type, etc. Sometimes if the text is short they can do a top/bottom layout rather than side to side. They usually only do one sign with both languages and the texts share the graphics. All captions and photo credits are listed in both languages. They are fortunate to have a special government branch in Canada that handles all their translations so they don't have to worry about it. They use a combination of word-for-word and content translation, again with the focus on conveying the same meaning. With publications, they may put text side by side, front to back, or even do separate (but equal) pieces, depending on the subject, the audience and its size, etc.

Both Blanca and Alison agreed on several points:

1) There is a perceptual difference between having all text components equal between languages and having one language more predominant than the other. We are not required by law to have them be equal, but how we choose to handle these

text decisions does send a message to the readers.

2) Good translation is critical....and it is going to take more time on a bilingual sign to get it right. Bilingual visitors are going to be looking carefully at both texts and will let you know immediately if the meanings or translations diverge. Plan to add more time to the review process to make sure you get it right!

3) Since bilingual text doubles or more the amount of text you have, you will need to keep your signs SHORT! Also, don't assume that the text lengths will be the same. Alison mentioned that the French text is almost always longer than

the English, and in looking at the samples Blanca sent, the Spanish appears to take more space as well. This poses considerations for your designer.

4) Keep in mind that graphics like maps also need to be bilingual. Alison said some of their palace names are officially bilibgual, the same in both languages.

However, many others are not and they end up putting both names next to each feature on the map.

5) Alison cautioned that just because you get the translation perfect, doesn't mean things won't happen at the designers or printers. Even if you provide exact text on a disc, some will retype it and make mistakes then. Also, if they

try to covert from one computer format to another, they may lose accents and other important symbols. So plan to spend more time reviewing text even after it has gone to the designer and or printer.

Thanks to Blanca and Alision for sharing their insights. Let me know if you have any other questions. Bonnie

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Is This The Rain Forest?

You are standing at the foot of the rain forest. As you travel up this 3,500' (almost 1,000 m) mountain, watch how the forest changes.

It may rain every day totaling as much as 200 inches (500 cm) a year in the upper elevations. That is enough water to fill 100 million swimming pools! At this elevation only 70 inches (150 cms) of rain falls each year.

El Yunque is a safe place. Here you can walk through a forest with more than 1,000 species of plants and animals yet there are no poisonous snakes or dangerous animals.

Maga, official flower



Montezuma speciosissima



dwarf forest



¿Es Éste El Bosque Pluvial?

Usted está al pie del bosque pluvial. A medida que suba por la montaña de 3,500 pies (casi mil metros), observe cómo cambia el bosque.

En las elevaciones más altas puede llover todos los días, llegando a un máximo de 200 pulgadas (500 centímetros) al año, suficiente agua para llenar 100 millones de piscinas. A esta altura, sólo caen 70 pulgadas (150 centímetros) de lluvia al año.

El Yunque es un lugar seguro. Puede caminar por un bosque con más de 1,000 especies de plantas y animales, pero no hay culebras venenosas ni animales peligrosos.



Caribbean
National Forest

Are You Hungry?

The tree in front of you is a Breadfruit. The fruit is a good source of carbohydrates and vitamins and tastes much like a potato.

A pantry of foods such as bananas, passion fruit, nuts and spices including ginger, cinnamon and allspice come from rain forests.

Many medicines such as cortisone and quinine come from plants found only in tropical rain forests.

Breadfruit



Panapén

¿Tiene Hambre?

El árbol frente a usted es un árbol de pana; la fruta es una buena fuente de carbohidratos y vitaminas y sabe similar a la papa.

Los bosques pluviales contienen una cornucopia de alimentos como guineos, parcha, nueces y especias como gengibre, canela y malagueta.

Muchas medicinas, como la cortisona y la quinina, vienen de las plantas en los bosques tropicales.



Caribbean
National Forest

Birds Eye View

From this walkway you can hear the chattering of tropical birds or watch them darting from tree to tree. Many of these birds are found only in Puerto Rico. Enjoy the enchantment of the Caribbean National Forest.



The Puerto Rican Tody, Bananaquit, Puerto Rican Flycatcher, Puerto Rican Tanager and the Puerto Rican Woodpecker are featured from left to right.



San Pedrito, Reinita comun, Jui de Puerto Rico, Llorosa de Puerto Rico y el Carpintero de Puerto Rico are featured from left to right.

Entre Los Pájaros

Desde esta vereda puede escuchar la algarabía de los pájaros tropicales o verlos aletear entre árbol y árbol. Muchos de ellos solo se encuentran en Puerto Rico. Disfrute del encanto del Bosque Nacional del Caribe.



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