

MEMO

To: Laura Julier
From: Kathleen Conley
Date: November 28, 2011
Re: Article manuscript by Tom Funke

Overview

The purpose of this memo is to detail and describe the proposed changes I have made to the submitted manuscript about the Brockway Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary and the Oren Krumm Trail. I have enclosed a marked copy of the original manuscript with this memo, as well as a clean copy of the revised document that implements these suggested changes. I used the 16th edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* as the style guide for this piece, in conjunction with your organization's personalized style sheet. It is my hope that my revisions to this document reflect the tone of *Jack Pine Warbler* and the mission of Michigan Audubon.

Organization Changes

I have numbered the paragraphs in the original document in order to simplify my explanation of proposed organization changes. I reordered and grouped some of the relevant paragraphs in this document to improve the logical connection and transition between ideas. The main changes in organization that I made include:

- moving paragraph 4 to the end of the document and combining it with paragraph 10, to create one paragraph that describes what can be seen at Brockway during this particular time of year; and
- moving paragraph 11 closer to the beginning of the document after paragraph 3.

The first change was made to emphasize why readers should visit, connecting the end of the piece with the introduction. This ends the document with a focus on subject matter that is at the heart of what your organization represents. The second change was made to present a chronological order to the planned trip that readers might take.

Language Revisions and Additions

Most of the article uses a relaxed yet professional tone that addresses the reader. This seems to be suitable to your publication, so in a few places I modified the text to address the reader in a similar fashion. I've rewritten other portions of the document to tighten the prose, but in most cases I was able to retain the language of the original.

Revisions or Additions to the Text Due to Changes in Organization

Once I reordered the paragraphs, some of these sections required an additional introduction to enhance the transition between ideas. This occurred primarily in two locations:

- Paragraph 11, which has become the new paragraph 4, now begins with, "The Oren Krumm Trail provides access to some of the natural wonders the Keweenaw Peninsula has to offer visitors."

- Paragraph 10 has been rewritten to capture the essence of the two smaller original paragraphs (paragraph 10 and paragraph 4) that have now been combined: “An ideal time to visit and explore Brockway is in the late spring. You’ll get the chance to see migrating warblers and other common residents, including winter wrens, ruffed grouse, and least chipmunks. May is a particularly great month for hawk watching, as the hawks find their way north and use the Keweenaw Peninsula as a launch point to Canada. At this time of year, flowers are diverse and abundant, including such varieties as the twinflower, the orchid, and the rare wild lilac, the last of which is only found in Keweenaw County.”

The first of these additions is meant to serve as a general introduction, while the second is a more extensive rewrite to eliminate ambiguity. These instances of ambiguity included:

- a reference to “the hawks” as “they”; and
- the list of flower types followed by the phrase, “which is only found in Keweenaw County,” although this non-restrictive adjective clause only applies to the wild lilac.

Other changes that appear in this rewrite include:

- the addition of the introductory sentence, “An ideal time to visit and explore Brockway is in the late spring,” to introduce the content of the new paragraph;
- references to the different animal species in a consistent plural form;
- references to the different flower types in a similar fashion (use of definite article “the”); and
- a direct address of the reader to replicate the style present in the rest of the article.

Sentence-Level Revisions

I also did my best to emulate the voice of the author in the following sentence-length revisions I made:

- The first two paragraphs were combined into one sentence to group the similar ideas as a list. The original manuscript addresses the reader directly in the first sentence but then distances itself from the audience in the second. The revised sentence prevents this change in tone.
- The first sentence of the original paragraph 5 may be confusing to readers because “lollipop” is a noun, but it is being used as an adjective. I would suggest changing this to “lollipop-shaped” to be more explicit. The phrase “begins heavily vegetated” also poses a problem, because “heavily vegetated” (an adjective) is being used as an adverb. To correct these issues, I have rewritten this sentence as follows: “As you walk through the stem of this lollipop-shaped trail, you’ll notice that it is initially obscured by heavy vegetation and is thick with grasses and ferns.” I have retained virtually all of the original diction and directly addressed the reader as was done previously.
- The last three sentences of paragraph 6 were combined into one sentence. Each of these sentences is very short, and because the ideas are all related, combining them into one sentence would prevent a disruption of the piece’s rhythm: “A forest fire ripped through this area ninety years ago, and the charcoal that you may see on the ground is a sign of this event that lingers today.”
- The phrase at the beginning of paragraph 7, “Heading west at 0.3 miles,” is a dangling modifier; this phrase should modify the reader rather than “thin forest.” This first sentence

was rewritten to correct this issue: “Three-tenths of a mile into your journey, you’ll head west and come to a thin forest at the top of the ridge with loose footing underneath.”

- The phrase between quotation marks in paragraph 9 is being used as an adjective to modify “feel,” but some readers may not understand this usage, and it also creates a higher degree of informality. If these effects are undesirable, I would suggest adding a rewritten version of this idea to the previous sentence. The change from “stem trail” to “stem portion of the trail” may further erase ambiguity: “Traversing through an area where trees were blown down during a storm, you’ll be reunited with the stem portion of the trail and you’ll recognize your surroundings from earlier in your hike.”

A Further Note

The phrases “0.3 miles” and “0.4 miles” were used in the author’s description of certain points of the trail. I modified these phrases to read “three-tenths of a mile” and “four-tenths of a mile.” Spelling out these figures will most likely promote rather than harm the reader’s understanding (a fraction of a mile that is still presented as plural is awkward). Because this text is non-technical, and your style guide dictates that numbers smaller than 10 be spelled out, these changes are appropriate.

There are a few periods throughout the document that are followed by two spaces rather than one. These cases have been noted on the marked copy.

Queries for the Author

Q1: I believe that the phrase “in a clockwise motion” is used to emphasize that an individual would veer left at this point in the trail, which has already been stated. Does this make the “clockwise” detail redundant, or is it still necessary to explain?

Q2: The phrase “greenish tint” is vague and a bit confusing, and readers may not know what this means. Can this be rephrased?

Q3: This sentence currently implies that three-tenths of a mile into the journey, a person will head west and reach a thin forest. Is this correct, or do you mean to say that a person would head west for another three-tenths of a mile before reaching the forest?

Conclusion

The most necessary change to this document is a reorganization of the material to increase the logical transition between the different types of content that are described. Certain sentences in these affected areas and in others may need to be rewritten to enhance the author’s intended meaning and to eliminate ambiguity. Overall, the tone and style of this piece is consistent with that of this publication as a whole and that of the organization that publishes it.

As a small additional suggestion, it may be helpful to readers if a map of this trail is included, if space permits. The description of the shape, direction, and distances of the trail are clearly explained, but a map might further enhance this information in a visual way that would be useful if readers decide to hike this trail.

If any further assistance is needed, I can be contacted at kathleenrconley@gmail.com.