



## Press Release

November 19, 2015

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### Ira Bletz Receives National Award

**Ira Bletz**, Supervising Naturalist 4 with the East Bay Regional Park District in Fremont CA, is the recipient of the National Association for Interpretation (NAI) **Master Interpretive Manager Award** for 2015. The award was presented at NAI's national workshop on November 13<sup>th</sup> in Virginia Beach, VA. The workshop provided participants with professional skills, ideas, and networking opportunities with others in the fields of environmental, cultural, historical, and recreational resources interpretation. This year's workshop focused on the theme of "Tidewater, where stories ebb and flow".

The Master Interpretive Manager Award is presented to an NAI member who has worked for a minimum of 5 years in the profession and whose current duties are at least 60% supervisory or administrative. Recipients demonstrate a mastery of interpretive techniques, site and staff management and a respected ability to pass these skills to others. The awards committee looks for a well-rounded and talented recipient for this award. There are two recipients for this year's award

Ira Bletz's career is the culmination of dedication to public service and excellence in interpretation. Ira has invested over 30 years at East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) including 25+ years as the Supervisor of Ardenwood Historic Farm. Prior to his work at EBRPD, Ira worked in interpretation for city agencies, the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service. He is also well known for many interpretive fundraising programs at both at Regional and National workshops which have been well-received by hundreds of interpreters. As NAI looks towards the future, for ways to expand interpretation into new areas and reach new audiences, Ira Bletz stands as an example of an Interpretive Manager who is already leading staff and docents forward. He brings a fresh, new approach that is inclusive and engaging. His enthusiasm and passion are infectious. Recognized for the excellence of his contribution to the EBRPD, Ira has been the recipient of an unprecedented 10 Certificates of Achievement and Professional Merit for Interpretive Program Management in Safety and Staff Training, Interpretive Planning, and Innovation in Interpretive Programming. You can see impact of his commitment by the public response to the programs he manages.

The National Association for Interpretation (NAI) is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) professional association for those involved in the interpretation of natural and cultural heritage resources in settings such as parks, zoos, museums, nature centers, aquaria, botanical gardens, and historical sites. For more than 50 years, NAI and its parent organizations have encouraged networking, training, and collaboration among members and partners in support of our mission: inspiring leadership and excellence to advance

heritage interpretation as a profession. NAI's growing network of members includes volunteers, docents, interpreters, naturalists, historians, rangers, park guards, guides, tour operators, program directors, consultants, academicians, planners, suppliers, and institutions. NAI has 5,000 members in over 30 countries with three international affiliate organizations: NAI-Greece, NAI-Korea, and NAI-China. For more information about the November workshop or the organization, contact NAI Executive Director, Margo Carlock in Ft. Collins, Colorado. (1-888-900-8283) or visit our website: [www.interpnet.org](http://www.interpnet.org).

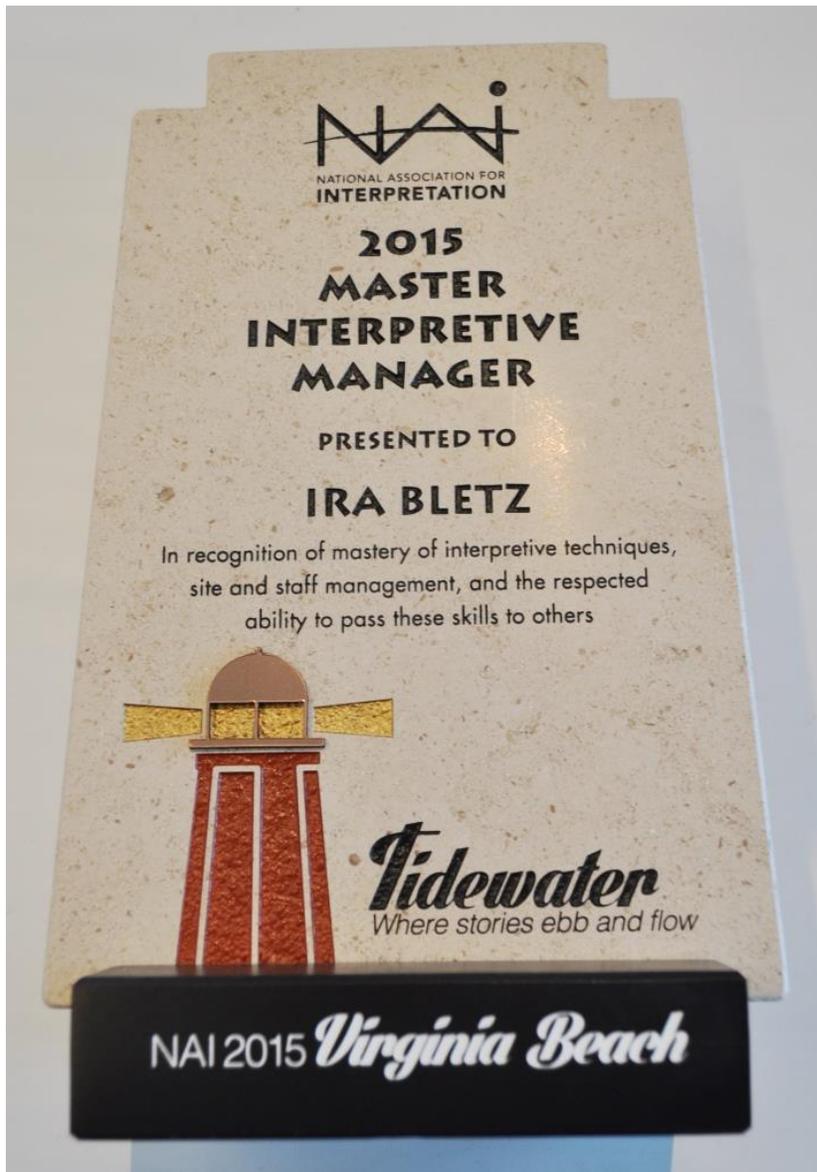
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### Photos

Ira Bletz accepting his 2015 Master Interpretive Manager Award.  
2015 Master Interpretive Manager Award for Ira Bletz.



Caption: Ira Bletz (left) accepting his 2015 NAI Master Interpretive Manager Award from NAI President Amy Lethbridge (right) in Virginia Beach, VA on November 13, 2015.  
Photo by John Miller, NAI.



Caption: 2015 Master Interpretive Manager Award for Ira Bletz. Photo by John Miller, NAI.

If you have any questions about this award or need electronic copies of the press release or photos please contact me.

Sincerely,

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