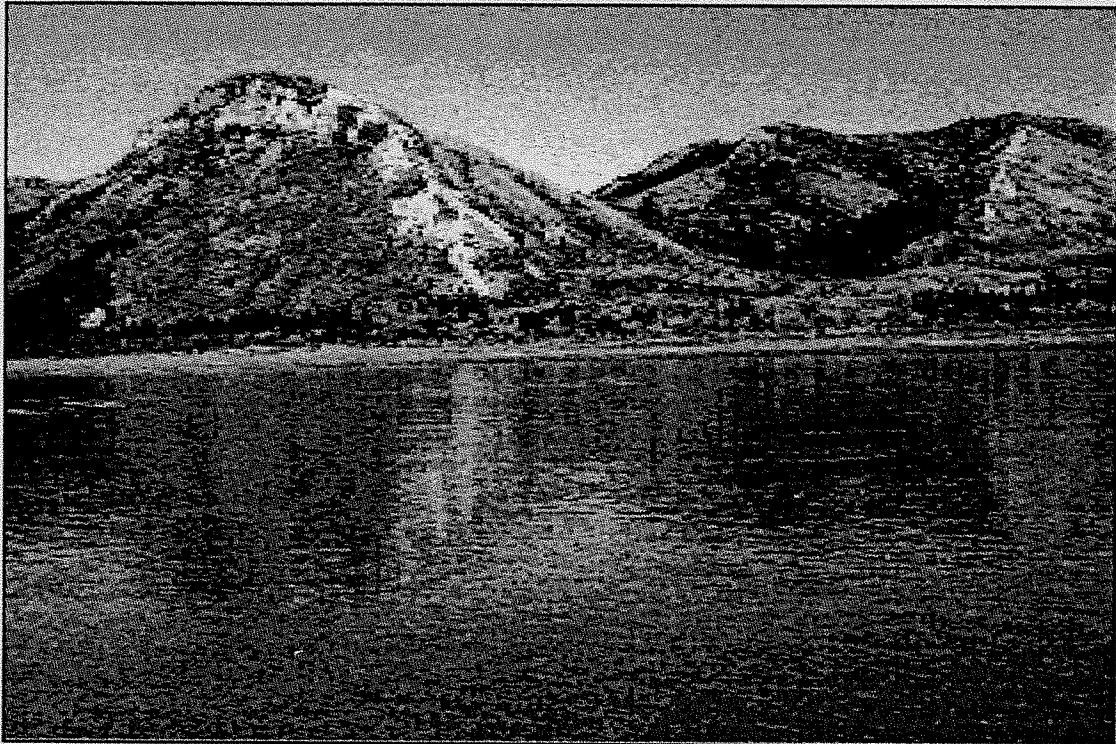
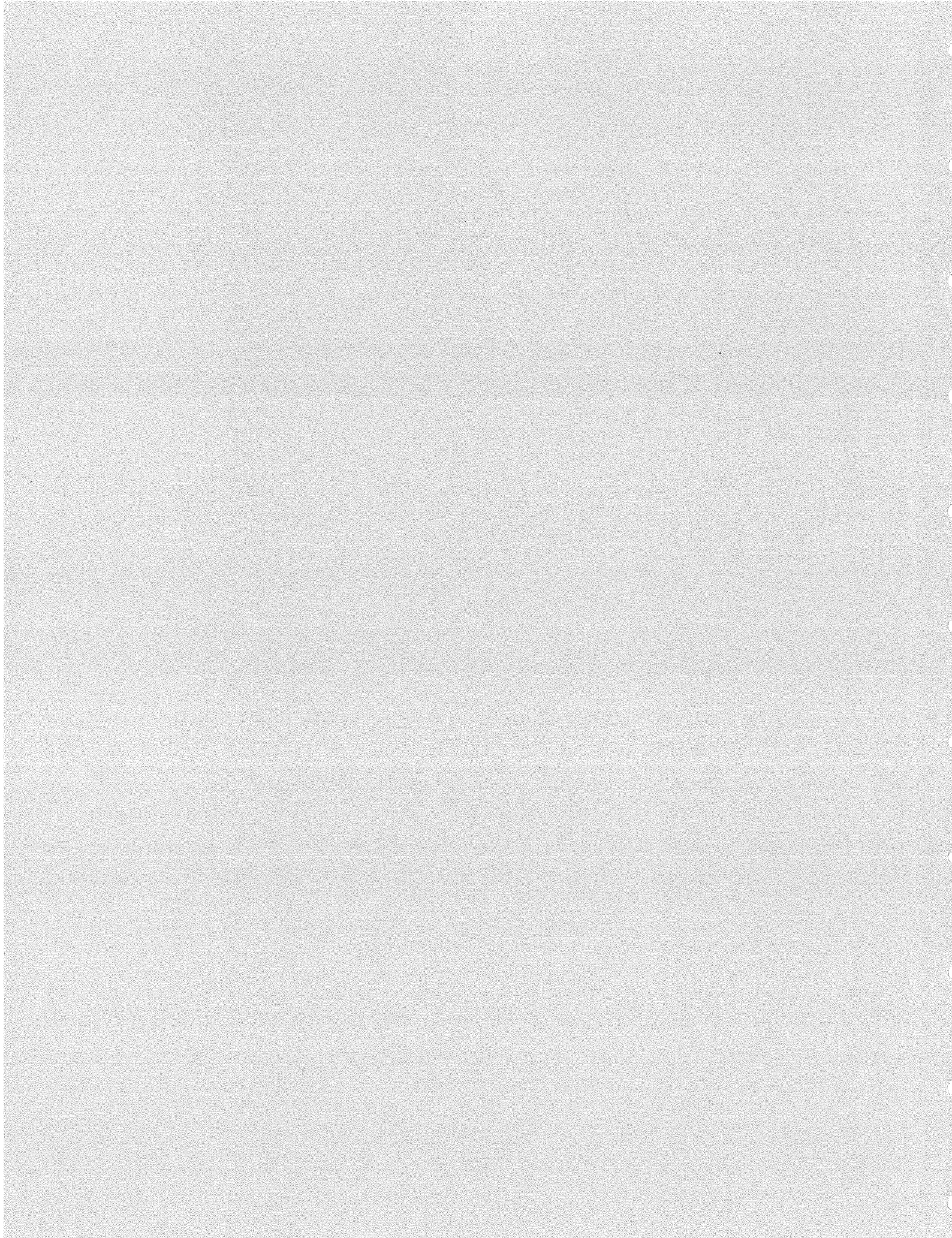


LONG-RANGE INTERPRETIVE PLAN

YUKON-CHARLEY RIVERS NATIONAL PRESERVE

MAY 2001





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prepared by

**Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve

**Harpers Ferry Center
Interpretive Planning**

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLAN

This Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve is a component of the preserve's Comprehensive Interpretive Plan (CIP), as outlined in the National Park Service Interpretive Guidelines (NPS-6). Using the preserve's mission, purpose, and resource significance statements, plus the primary interpretive themes and visitor experience goals, this plan articulates a vision for the unit's interpretive future, and recommends the media and programs best suited for meeting visitor needs, achieving management goals, and telling the key stories. Most of these foundation elements come directly from, or are based on, similar statements in the preserve's Strategic Plan.

This document is the preserve's first interpretive plan. As an implementation-level plan, it follows the precepts set in the March 1985 General Management Plan (GMP) and the July 1994 Eagle Development Concept Plan (DCP). Since the establishment of the park, visitation has grown, and the potential for further increases exists. The time is right to assess existing interpretive, educational, and information/orientation media and programs, and make recommendations for the future. The time also is right to strengthen existing partnerships in interpretation and consider the establishment of new ones.

This plan is not an end in itself, but rather, it establishes the overall framework for the next phases of the process-program planning, and media planning, design, and production over the next 10+ years. Further, as stated in NPS-6, the preserve also needs to develop an Annual Interpretive Plan and an Interpretive Database to complete the CIP package.

BACKGROUND

Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve was established on December 2, 1980 by Section 102 (10) (a) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) (94 Stat. 2371; USC 3101; Public Law 96-487). As the name implies, the preserve encompasses two nationally significant rivers. The preserve contains a portion of the upper Yukon River valley, an area rich in historic, biotic, and geologic features, and the entire 1.1 million acre Charley River drainage, a complete watershed essentially undisturbed by humans.

In establishing the preserve, Congress recognized subsistence activities as important and appropriate uses of healthy fish and wildlife populations and vegetation within the boundary. Here, the National Park Service (NPS) considers subsistence harvests to be a natural component of ecosystem processes.

The preserve extends westward from the Canadian-U.S. border into interior Alaska, encompassing approximately 2,527,000 acres, of which about 2,137,000 acres are federal land. Most of the private land within the preserve's

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boundary is owned by Doyon, Ltd., the regional native corporation. Dozens of small private parcels are scattered along the rivers as a result of placer mining claims, homestead entry, and native allotment applications. Hungwitchin Village Corporation, the State of Alaska, and the Bureau of Land Management manage large tracts of adjacent lands.

Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve lies within a climatic division of Alaska known as the interior basin. The mountain ranges far to the south and west tend to block the moderating influences of oceanic air masses, resulting in extremely low temperatures and frequent low level stagnating temperature inversions in the winter, and high temperatures and low precipitation in the summer. Annual precipitation in the area varies, but is generally less than 12 inches in the lower elevations, with half occurring in the winter as dry snow.

The area is readily accessible during the summer months by boat, foot, and air. The seasonal 161-mile long Taylor Highway terminates in Eagle, a community of about 200 people, eleven river miles south of the preserve boundary. The Steese Highway terminates 161 road miles east of Fairbanks at Circle, a community of about 80 people, 14 miles north of the preserve boundary. Dawson City, Yukon Territory, the heart of the 1898 Klondike Gold Rush, lies approximately 155 river miles upstream of the preserve. Access during the winter can be attained by dogsled, ski equipped aircraft, snowshoes, or skiing.



PARK MISSION

The National Park Service preserves and interprets the natural and cultural resources of the preserve, allowing for appropriate human uses, while ensuring that future generations have similar opportunities for use and enjoyment. We preserve a significant segment of the upper Yukon River drainage in Alaska and protect the wild and undeveloped character of the Charley River basin as well as the natural and historic values associated with them.

The NPS preserves natural ecological processes, diverse flora and fauna, and geological and other features for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

The NPS is committed to protecting the continued opportunity for traditional subsistence activities as a priority consumptive use, and non-subsistence uses while maintaining healthy fish and wildlife populations. We recognize subsistence harvest as a natural component of ecosystem processes.

The NPS strives to provide excellent service and to inspire the public to join us as partners in the perpetuation of preserve resources for the emotional, spiritual, cultural, and scientific benefits derived by current and future generations.



PARK PURPOSE

Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve was established to protect, conserve, and interpret the natural and cultural resources of the area, while allowing for appropriate human uses in a manner that provides for similar opportunities for future use and enjoyment.

The preserve was created to maintain the environmental integrity of the entire wild Charley River basin in a natural state, to preserve an intact subarctic ecosystem, including its healthy flora and fauna, and geologic and natural features for public benefit and scientific study.

The NPS protects and interprets the historic sites and events along the Yukon River corridor associated with the Klondike Gold Rush.

RESOURCE SIGNIFICANCE

This 2.5 million acre preserve encompasses:

- A globally significant assemblage of diverse geological and paleontological resources that are unusually complete and provide at least a 600 million-year record stretching back to the close of the Precambrian era.
- A portion of the North American plate, which has escaped deformation from geologic forces, remains as an incredibly intact geological and paleontological record. Some of the oldest known microfossils in existence have been found in this area.
- The entire 1.1 million acre Charley River watershed, protected in its undeveloped natural condition.
- Habitat for the highest density nesting population of American Peregrine Falcons in North America.
- Portions of the Han and Kutchin Athapaskan traditional homelands.
- Sites preserving evidence of historical activities and events of regional significance associated with the gold rush, exemplified by various historic structures and equipment including bucket dredges, mail trails, trapper's cabins, boats, roadhouses, water ditches, and machinery.
- Large areas that represent an unglaciated refuge for endemic floral and faunal communities.

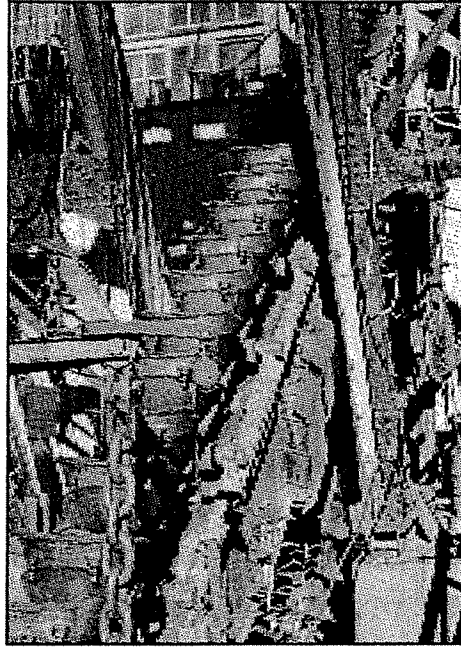
PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEMES

Primary interpretive themes are those ideas/concepts about Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve that ideally, every visitor should understand. These themes, which are based on the preserve's mission, purpose, and resource significance, provide the foundation for all interpretive media and programs in the preserve. The themes do not include everything that may be interpreted, but they do address those ideas that are critical to understanding and appreciating the preserve's importance. All interpretive efforts (through both media and personal services) should relate to one or more of the themes, and each theme should be addressed by some part of the overall interpretive program.

The following theme statements will provide the basis for interpretation at Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. Some of the primary themes are followed by key supporting statements.

- Geologic features in the preserve illustrate an almost complete 760 million-year record from the Precambrian to the Cenozoic era.
- Outcrops within the preserve reveal a nearly continuous record of the floral and fauna history of east-central Alaska, including the oldest flatworm fossils in the world.
- The preserve lies on the eastern edge of a belt of many small tectonic plate fragments (called blocks) crushed between the North American plate and the Pacific plate.
- Movement along the Tintina Fault, one of the great fault systems in western North America, revealed the gold deposits that ignited the famous Klondike Gold Rush.
- The Klondike Gold Rush and continued gold mining has brought great changes to the land and its people.
- The Charley River, a complete watershed protected within the preserve, is half the size of Yellowstone National Park and virtually untouched by modern human activities.
- The Yukon River continues to be a corridor of transportation just as it has been from ancient times.
- Many current residents of the area still practice the customary subsistence lifestyle of their ancestors.
- The Yukon River and its tributaries within the preserve provide habitat for the highest density breeding population of peregrine falcons in North America and habitat for many other species of wildlife.
- An unglaciated area of North America, this interior region of Alaska preserves remnants of Arctic steppe communities, and may also protect evidence of some of North America's earliest human inhabitants.

- The Athapaskan people have lived in the Yukon-Charley area for many centuries, and evidence of their ancestors date back many thousands of years.



VISITOR EXPERIENCE GOALS

The following is a list of visitor experience goals that the implementation of this long-range interpretive plan will help to achieve. Gaining an understanding and appreciation of the interpretive themes from the previous section should be regarded as cognitive visitor experience goals. These goal statements describe future conditions that would exist, rather than identifying specific actions to achieve them.

Visitors to Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve will have opportunities to:

- Have a safe and satisfying visit by ensuring that all visitors will have universal access to all facilities and programs and that opportunities exist where they can:
 - Get accurate information about the preserve.
 - Gain an awareness of minimal impact values and practices in using and visiting preserve resources.
 - Understand various wilderness and other management zones throughout the Preserve and appropriate activities within these zones.
 - Receive information on hunting and trapping opportunities in the Preserve and on management and conservation effort.
 - Know where public and private lands are located within the Preserve.
 - Safely navigate the rivers.
 - Realize that they will be observing elements of a subsistence lifestyle while they are in the preserve.
 - Be aware of safety issues regarding bears, fires, boating, winter travel, etc.
 - Plan their own “discovery” experience, realizing that there are few developments and no formal trails.
 - Understand regulations regarding collecting, and appropriate activities within the preserve.
 - Find the public use cabins.
- Make connections between park resources and their meanings, which may occur when visitors:
 - Feel they are welcomed and have access to materials, programs, and facilities appropriate to various interests and abilities.
 - Find opportunities for quiet and solitude.
 - See wildlife.
 - Experience the rich human history.

- Realize that subsistence lifestyles are still practiced today much like they were historically.
- Experience a variety of interpretive and educational programs, geared to a variety of groups and interests.
- Understand that the NPS manages the preserve for healthy fish and wildlife resources and natural ecosystem processes essential to a subsistence life style.
- Appreciate the fact that the Yukon is still a living river.



EXISTING VISITOR EXPERIENCE

The following is a summary description of the visitor experiences and conditions as they existed at the onset of this long-range interpretive planning process. This section provides a baseline to help justify many of the plan's proposed actions.

Information about Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve is available through a variety of sources. Interagency visitor centers, other NPS units, state and private entities distribute basic information. The park also handles many mail and telephone requests. In addition, the preserve has a web site which not only carries information about visiting, but also offers a variety of interpretive materials regarding cultural and natural resources and issues.

Visitors access the preserve by water and by air. The gateway communities of Eagle and Circle are the closest river access points; however, many visitors travel much longer stretches of the Yukon River, and their stay in the preserve is only part of their journey. Rustic landing strips offer air access to the Charley River (2) and the Coal Creek area (1), although no preserve information is provided at these landing sites.

A small visitor center is located in the town of Eagle. The preserve only has one subject-to-furlough position assigned to interpretation. The Bureau of Land Management assists in staffing the center one day a week; however, there are times when there is no one available to staff the facility. There are no interpretive facilities or media at Circle.

The visitor center contains an information desk, a limited display of free and sales publications, and a series of temporary-style exhibit panels which address some of the primary themes. A separate small room is used to show a variety of video programs, including a nine-minute video which needs updating. An informational wayside exhibit with a bulletin case is located outside the building.

The official park folder is useful for general information and trip planning, but more detailed maps and guides are necessary for visiting the preserve. Privately produced publications meet some of this need and even contain interpretive materials; however, some information is misleading, contradictory, and potentially threatening to preserve resources.

Within the preserve, visitors can camp or stay in one of the public use cabins. The public use cabins at Nation Bluff and at the mouths of the Kandik River and Coal Creek are shown in the park folder. Several of these cabins are historic, and represent significant periods in Alaska history. The river guidebooks (mentioned above) give brief descriptions of the history of these cabins and the people who built and lived in them, but no in-depth interpretation is offered. Some park-produced literature and copies of historic photographs are found inside some of the cabins. Unless a visitor has a copy of one of the guidebooks, most of the cabins would be difficult or impossible to find.

The Coal Creek area contains some of the most prominent cultural resources within the preserve. The restored Slaven's Roadhouse is very visible from the river and is open to the public. A nearby public use cabin also is open to the public; however, it is difficult to find, and people are often confused about which one they should use. Some park-produced literature and historic photos are mounted on the inside walls of the roadhouse. Occasionally, volunteers are stationed at the roadhouse during the peak visitor season. Slaven's also is used as a rest stop during the annual Yukon Quest Sled Dog Race.

An unmaintained trail leads to a large gold dredge about a mile from the roadhouse. In addition, the Coal Creek Camp buildings are located further upstream, not far from the landing strip. A wayside exhibit interprets the dredge, but other than brief descriptions in the river guidebooks, there is no interpretive media at the camp. Currently, the camp has been used as a summer base of operations. Also, the park makes the camp available to cooperating groups for environmental education camps.

Visitors to the Charley River experience total Alaskan wilderness. Visitors need to be well prepared in advance for this experience, and to realize that they will be completely on their own. Conversely, the visitor experience on the Yukon River places greater emphasis on the cultural resources, and visitors can expect to encounter more people and motorized vessels. Some visitors do not understand the differences in the experiences on the two rivers, and sometimes are ill prepared for the total wilderness of the Charley River, or surprised to find non-wilderness elements on the Yukon River.

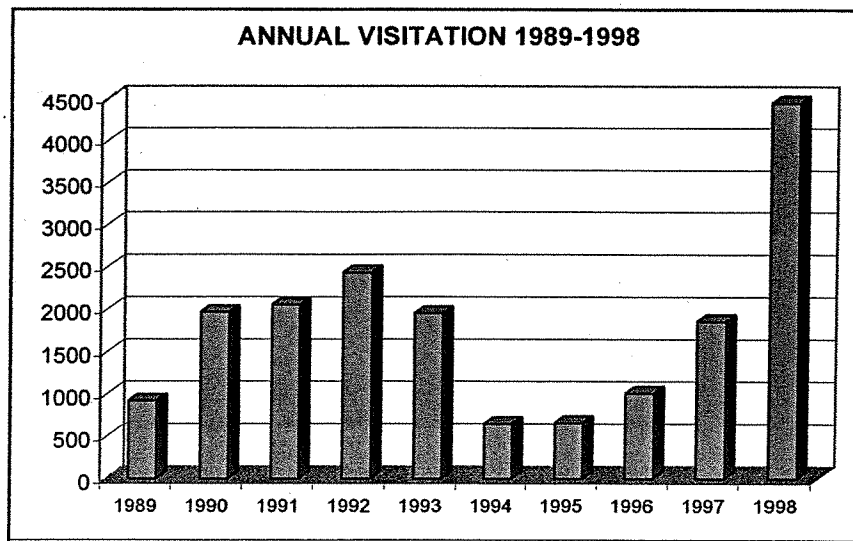
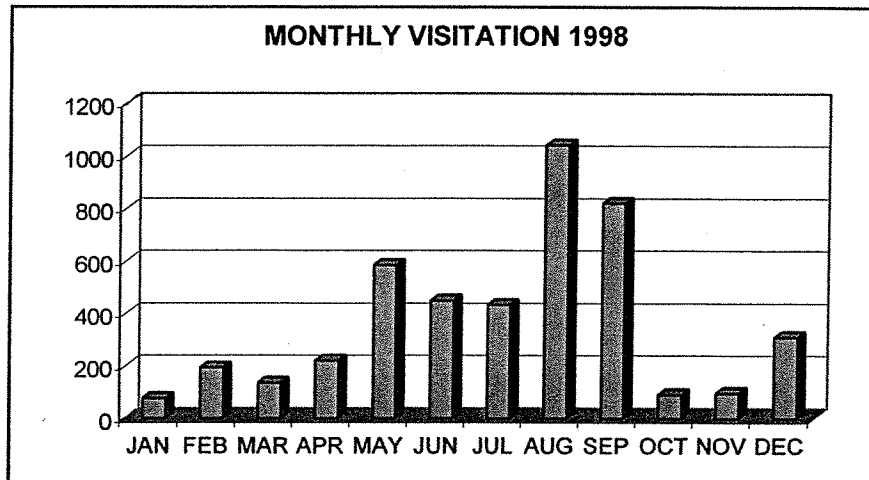


VISITATION AND VISITOR USE PATTERNS

The following information regarding park visitors and visitor use patterns is derived from discussions with park staff and data maintained by the NPS Socio-Economic Services Division (WASO) in Denver. Except for the WASO data, there have been no formal visitor use studies for the preserve.

For most months of the year, more visitors enter the Eagle Visitor Center than physically enter the preserve. This may be attributed to Alaska cruise ship visitors on special tours from Eagle to Dawson. The Eagle Historical Society offers guided tours of the town to the cruise ship visitors, often with the assistance of the NPS interpreter. While the tours do not include the NPS visitor center on the circuit, these visitors are invited to stop in after the tours.

The following charts illustrate monthly visitation for calendar year 1998, and total annual visitation for a ten-year period (1989-1998):

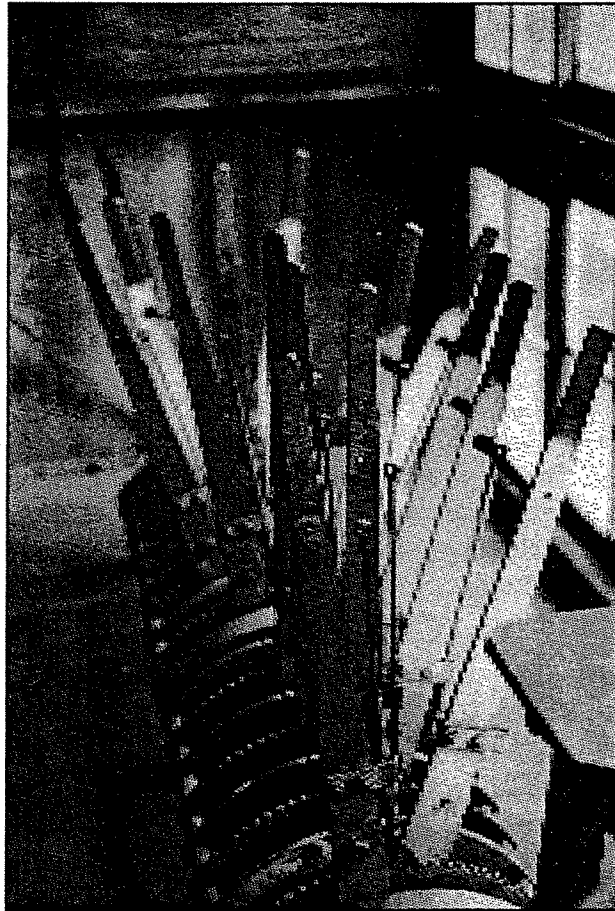


Visitation increases in February when a segment of the 1,000-mile Yukon Quest dog sled race passes through the preserve. Significant increases in visitation also occur in August and September coinciding with hunters using the area during hunting seasons for caribou, moose, and bear.

In the summer, groups of high school age Earth Quest students use Coal Creek Camp as their operations base.

In the summer, Slavens Roadhouse is periodically staffed with volunteers, when funding allows, who make numerous contacts with preserve visitors, including people who have just ended their trek on the Charley River.

Other offsite contacts include special programs to area residents and school groups.



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The following is a description of program and media recommendations designed to further define, support, and implement the mission, goals, themes, and objectives of the interpretive program for Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. The discussion of each program or media proposal identifies its purpose, special considerations, and sometimes suggests means of presentation. It is important to remember that the latter are only suggestions, and should not in any way limit the creativity that is essential during the media or program design processes. On the other hand, most proposals will be specific enough to define parameters in which these creative energies can flow.

INFORMATION AND ORIENTATION

Pre-Arrival

General trip planning information regarding the preserve will continue to be provided through traditional means by answering regular mail and telephone requests. All mailed materials and other informational literature should include the preserve's web address, and some items should include the web addresses of closely related sites and other NPS areas.

Basic information, including addresses, phone numbers, etc., for trip planning would continue to be available from the preserve's web page. Other on-line information would include descriptions of visitor services, special events, interpretive activities, and information regarding education programs.

In light of the newly written interpretive themes, the web site would be updated to introduce these themes, while continuing to highlight significant resources and critical issues. This material would be valuable to prospective visitors, and even to those who may never have an opportunity to visit the preserve. The web site (along with appropriate links) also would reach and meet curriculum-based needs of the large number of home schooled students in Alaska.

On a regional scale, preserve information would be available at Alaska and interagency tourism offices, other NPS areas, major tourist attractions, and in prominent regional tourism literature. Preserve information also would be available in Dawson City, Yukon Territories, Canada, at the airport in Fairbanks, and at the air taxis which serve Eagle, Circle, and the landing strips inside the boundary. When feasible, the staff would continue to assist in providing accurate and timely information and technical assistance to those involved in the preparation of tourism literature which mentions the preserve.

If the proposed riverboat tours from Eagle to Circle continues to develop, preserve staff will seek to work in partnership with these enterprises in providing advance information to prospective customers/visitors. Although the Holland America Cruise Ship Company tours do not physically enter the preserve, the NPS staff will work with the tour providers when possible to ensure that some

mention of the preserve and its significance is included in interpretive/informational talks and literature.

On-Arrival

The visitor center in Eagle will continue to provide information and orientation services for preserve visitors. This plan proposes that the office and workspaces in the building be relocated, and that the public use space be expanded as discussed in the Eagle Development Concept Plan. The staffed information desk will continue to be equipped with a telephone, space for storing maps, folders, and other free literature, and a cash drawer for handling cooperating association sales. The basic and most important folders/brochures would be on display so that visitors will know of their availability. Also, better signing is needed to direct people to the visitor center.

Detailed maps and river guidebooks are critical to a safe and enjoyable journey on the rivers. The preserve staff (perhaps with the assistance of the cooperating association) will attempt to work more closely with authors and publishers of these publications to ensure that the information about the preserve is accurate and appropriate. If important issues cannot be resolved, the cooperating association would be encouraged to publish and market a guidebook that does meet the preserve's needs.

A number of new informational wayside exhibits are proposed throughout the preserve. These should be uniform in design, and most would include a bulletin case for changeable information. One option is to use the current exhibit outside the Eagle Visitor Center at a prototype, or perhaps utilize one of the standard Harpers Ferry Center designs. In any event, one informational wayside exhibit would continue to be located outside the Eagle Visitor Center. It would be important especially to people who arrive after hours when the visitor center is closed.

Other informational waysides are proposed for the Coal Creek landing strip and at Slaven's Roadhouse. These exhibits will focus primarily on site orientation, and reinforce safety measures, and applicable rules and regulations. Ideally, most people will already have received adequate information to prepare for a safe and enjoyable visit.

The informational wayside exhibit near Slaven's will orient visitors to the roadhouse, the public use cabin, and inform people about the trail to the dredge and to Coal Creek Camp. The exhibit would probably include a map of the Coal Creek area and identify the key resources. Photographs of the dredge and the mining camp would help give a feel for the place, and perhaps motivate visitors to go see them. In summer, an employee or volunteer stationed at the roadhouse would be available to address specific information requests and schedule interpretive activities. This may be especially important if the riverboat tours are initiated.

The preserve has plans to develop a camping area near the Coal Creek landing strip and has opened a mining camp cabin for public use. If any of this is

implemented, the informational wayside exhibit in this area (along with the wayside near Slaven's Roadhouse) will need to address any regulations regarding use of the campground and/or the mining camp buildings. This exhibit also would identify the area's key resources and encourage people to visit them.

Two informational wayside exhibits are proposed outside the preserve boundary. One would be located at the Eagle campground, the other in the community of Circle (perhaps at the campground). Preserve staff would work in partnership with appropriate individuals and authorities to secure support, and to develop content, design elements, and perhaps share maintenance and upkeep.

Preserve staff would work with the town of Eagle to find ways to better identify the visitor center. Many visitors, not just those on the cruise ship company tours, arrive in Eagle and never find the visitor center. One option may be the development of signs that would direct people to the facility.

Some means of identifying the locations of the public use cabins and/or historic sites along the Yukon River needs to be developed. Signs along the river would be intrusive, but perhaps some subtle man-made feature made of natural materials would help identify the locations. These, along with information on maps and river guidebooks, would make it somewhat easier for people to find these sites. Due to potential loss from flooding and ice, the identifying features will need to be moveable or easily rebuilt.

INTERPRETATION

Eagle/Circle

As stated in the previous section, this plan proposes expanding the public use space in the current visitor center. By moving the office and workroom to another location, more room will be available for interpretive media. More space is necessary to adequately introduce the key park stories. More space also will be needed if other efforts are successful in attracting more visitors from the cruise ship company tours, general visitors to Eagle, and people taking the proposed riverboat tours. If the riverboat tours are instituted, the visitor center in Eagle will be an excellent place to begin.

Currently, the building devotes about 430 sq. ft. of space for public use. This includes approximately 130 sq. ft. for a small audiovisual room. By moving the office and library/workroom, an additional 252 sq. ft. of public space would be created. This would provide sufficient area for developing theme-related exhibits, perhaps enlarging the audiovisual room, and providing informational services and publication displays. In the longer term the Preserve will continue to seek funding to develop a visitor center in an existing building at the center of the historic district of Eagle as detailed in the Eagle Development Concept Plan.

A new audiovisual program (in video format) on the preserve is recommended. This presentation would address the preserve's mission and help convey elements of the primary interpretive themes. The program also could highlight the preserve in winter, something that few visitors get to experience.

New exhibits, in concert with the audiovisual program, publications, wayside program, and staff, would introduce each of the primary interpretive themes. Objects from the preserve's museum collection, perhaps including some items from the Coal Creek dredge and camp, would highlight some themes and entice visitors to visit the actual sites. Geologic and paleontological items, such as fossil specimens, might be one way of allowing visitors to view these resources up close without directing people to some of the more sensitive sites.

It may be desirable to consider a design that would integrate some sales publications into the exhibits. The design would need to allow for items to be rotated or removed as appropriate. This could increase sales, point visitors toward more information, and in a subtle way let people know that there is much more to the stories.

Preserve staff would consult and work closely with Alaskan Native Han people of the area to determine what elements of their cultures should be interpreted and how best to present them. Direct involvement by the Han people would be encouraged, and the potential for scheduling various types of theme-related cultural demonstrations would be explored.

In addition to permanent displays, a series of portable exhibits would be developed. These would be especially useful in interpreting similar stories at multiple sites. They also could interpret seasonal theme elements and be used for offsite programs and special events.

Staff, and perhaps a sign outside the visitor center, would direct visitors to the nearby view of Eagle Bluff. A wayside exhibit would interpret the peregrine falcon aeries on the bluffs, and relate the preserve's role in protecting a large percentage of Alaska's peregrine population. This viewpoint also offers a good place for formal and informal interpretive talks about the river and the peregrine falcons.

The visitor center provides a central location in Eagle for presenting special interpretive talks, including illustrated slide programs, films, and videos. Programs in the summer would target visitors in the campground and at nearby bed-and-breakfasts, and topics would emphasize the primary themes of the preserve. In winter, community outreach programs would address primarily local residents, and might cover a broader range of NPS and other topics, such as minimum impact camping.

Preserve staff also would continue to assist with the guided walking tours of Eagle. This effort not only helps solidify a positive NPS identity in the community, but also presents a NPS image to many visitors who may not actually enter the preserve.

For the near term, no interpretive facility or media is proposed for the community of Circle, except for an informational wayside exhibit kiosk at or near the campground. However, since more visitors are entering the preserve from Circle, NPS staff will explore the potential of eventually creating a greater interpretive presence there. The NPS has been in contact with the Circle Tribal Council and cooperative opportunities may arise for a joint visitor center, if

funding allows. Further visitor increases from Circle may result from the proposed riverboat tours.

Slaven's Roadhouse/Coal Creek

Slaven's Roadhouse is the most frequently visited facility inside the preserve. Also, the building would likely become a primary stop on the riverboat tours, if instituted. It, therefore, offers perhaps the best place to provide interpretive services inside the NPS boundary. This plan recommends that the first floor of the building be devoted primarily to interpretive exhibits. The displays would give a brief introduction to each of the primary interpretive themes, but the greatest emphasis would be placed on those that are specific to roadhouses, transportation on the river, and the Coal Creek area. Since the building is used in the winter as a rest stop along the route of the Yukon Quest Sled Dog Race, its winter use also would be interpreted.

Since the building is always open (even when no staff is present) most of the exhibits would consist of text/graphic panels. To support some of the exhibits, some large and non-sensitive objects may be suitable for display. The best design solutions may involve a collaboration of indoor and outdoor exhibit technologies.

Exhibits on the gold mining theme should motivate people to hike up to the dredge and to Coal Creek Camp. However, sufficient information would be provided so that people, unable or unwilling to make the hike, can appreciate the significance of gold mining in this watershed.

No interpretive functions are proposed for the second floor of Slaven's. It is recommended that during the summer a preserve employee and/or volunteer be stationed here. This will be especially important if the riverboat regularly brings groups of visitors to the site. As an interpreter, this person can make informal contacts and lead guided walks to the dredge and the camp. Further management decisions would need to be made as to whether it would be better for this employee/volunteer to live at the roadhouse or at Coal Creek Camp.

Except for the informational wayside exhibit, mentioned earlier, no other outdoor exhibits are proposed at Slaven's Roadhouse. Additional outdoor displays are unnecessary, and would intrude on the historic character of the site.

A free, preserve-produced site bulletin publication is recommended for the Coal Creek area. Supplies would be available at the roadhouse, Coal Creek Camp, the Eagle Visitor Center, and on the riverboat. This bulletin would serve as a self-guiding tour leaflet for the dredge and the Coal Creek mining camp, but it also would be useful for people who do not take the hike.

The wayside exhibit that interprets the dredge functions well and could remain. However, the staff should consider replacing it eventually with one designed to match other wayside exhibits in the preserve. An inventory of the many artifacts on the dredge needs to be made. Although theft has been minimal, if activities such as the riverboat tours start bringing more people to the site, the

threat of greater losses (especially of small items) will likely increase. It would be a shame to lose the feeling that the miners just left everything behind, but the eventual removal of some sensitive items may be necessary.

The self-guiding tour site bulletin would interpret the dredge to greater depth than the wayside exhibit. The bulletin might include a drawing of the dredge, showing the various spaces and features. Descriptions keyed to the drawing would help people better understand how this apparatus worked. Interpretive descriptions of the dredge also should help visitors gain an appreciation of the impact it had on the Coal Creek drainage.

This plan recommends establishing an interpretive presence and enticing people to visit the Coal Creek mining camp. As noted earlier, information at Eagle, Circle, Slaven's Roadhouse, and at the proposed campground near the Coal Creek landing strip would make people aware of this resource and encourage folks to visit. Preserve staff also is considering opening one or more of the bunkhouse cabins for public use.

Since the mess hall is generally open during the summer, it offers the best place for interpretive media. Although the building still needs to function as a kitchen/dining area and as a central meeting space for preserve staff, there is room for some interpretive displays. A series of text/graphic wall panels (perhaps combining wayside and exhibit technologies) are proposed that, utilizing the many historic photographs, would portray aspects in life at the camp. Panel design will need to compliment the historic character of the building. The existing photo albums would be upgraded and replaced with duplicate images. The original photos would be stored in the museum collection.

The self-guiding tour site bulletin would include a map of the camp that identifies many of the key structures. Both the mining office and the assay office contain much of their original furnishings. Both buildings have the potential to be restored as furnished exhibits, and preserve staff would consult with a historic furnishings specialist to further explore this potential. If furnished, either or both of the buildings would need to be look-in exhibits, perhaps with a free standing text panel inside that interprets the space. The option would exist to open the buildings for guided tours or when staff is present onsite.

Coal Creek Camp would continue to serve as the base of operations for environmental education summer camp programs. Opportunities for expanding this program and using the camp for other educational and even elder hostel programs also would be explored.

Public Use Cabins

A number of the public use cabins along the Yukon River are historic structures which relate to significant periods of Alaska's heritage. The river guidebooks convey some of this significance, and some photos and typed information sheets are mounted on the walls inside some of the cabins.

This plan recommends the development of professionally designed text/graphic panels to be placed inside each of these historic cabins. The design would be compatible with the historic character of the buildings. No wayside exhibits are proposed outside these structures, as they would tend to compromise the visitor experience and the historic integrity of the site. Placement of these text/graphic panels will need to be carefully evaluated. They should be accessible to all visitors, but to see them, people just passing by should feel they are not intruding on those who are staying at the cabins.

These subtle exhibits also would help in providing a NPS identity at key points along the river.

Education Programs

Preserve staff will continue to conduct community outreach at schools within a 200-mile radius of Eagle, and consider adding Dawson City to its list, even though it lies across the Canadian border. Since it is important to maintain a positive NPS image with regional communities, some of the programs will continue to focus on introducing the National Park Service, the National Park System, the preserve, and the resources and values that are protected and made available to the public. In this regard, the development of a set of portable displays about the preserve is proposed to circulate to area schools and other off-site locations. These displays would highlight preserve themes, resources, and resource management issues and activities.

Beyond this, the preserve would initiate the development of curriculum-based educational programs for targeted age groups. Teachers need to be an integral part of the program development, and each program should be field-tested with students. The primary interpretive themes, along with grade-level curriculum guidelines, would serve as the foundation for program development.

Since the preserve has a limited staff to devote to school programs, teachers and parents will need to be relied upon to conduct specific activities. In this regard, preserve staff could conduct or assist in conducting workshops to train teachers in conducting these activities with their students in the classroom or in the preserve.

In this regard, an education kit could be developed to present aspects of the history and natural history of the preserve. This kit would be designed to be used by teachers and students without a park interpreter present, although an interpreter could facilitate its use. The kit could be circulated to area schools. In addition or as an alternative, a traveling trunk could be developed.

Specific program development also needs to consider the fact that many students in Alaska are home-schooled. The option of packaging programs for home-schooled children should be explored. Likewise, the Internet offers a way to reach beyond preserve boundaries to a much larger audience. Educational programs designed for computer access can help students of all ages (including many who may never have the opportunity to visit) learn about preserve themes and resources.

Partnerships

The implementation of elements of this long-range interpretive plan will depend on the continuation of existing partnerships and the establishment of new ones. Most of these cooperative efforts have been discussed in other sections of this plan, but are consolidated here to illustrate the importance of these relationships.

Partnerships are successful when all parties contribute to and gain something from the alliance, when all parties are involved in defining the goals and responsibilities of each participant, and when there is a continuous liaison among all members.

For interpretation, these special arrangements might include coordinated efforts in providing information, orientation, education, training, special programs, and other personal services activities.

An obvious and continuing partnership exists with the Alaska Natural History Association, the preserve's cooperating association. With the prospects of increased visitation in the future, the NPS and the association staff need to prepare a scope of sales statement. The scope of sales statement would assess existing publications with regard to target age groups, price, and relation to the primary interpretive themes. The scope of sales statement would identify publication needs. The need has already been expressed for better coordination with producers of the river guides and maps, and/or perhaps the development of a guide through the association. A self-guiding publication (possibly in a site bulletin format) also has been proposed. In addition, at least one general publication about the preserve is necessary.

A number of partnership activities have been proposed with various entities in the community of Eagle. These include exploring ways to better direct visitors to the visitor center, getting preserve information and interpretation to visitors on the cruise ship company tours, and developing an informational wayside exhibit in the campground.

Similar partnerships are needed in the village of Circle to explore the development of an informational wayside exhibit at the campground. Also, preserve staff have begun discussions with local residents and town officials regarding the long-term possibility of establishing some type of visitor contact facility in Circle.

On-going contacts with the Han in Circle and Eagle will be necessary for the implementation of some recommendations in this plan. Tribal members will play a critical role in determining what cultural aspects should be interpreted and how best to present them. As stated earlier, the potential for scheduling various cultural demonstrations throughout the year also would be explored.

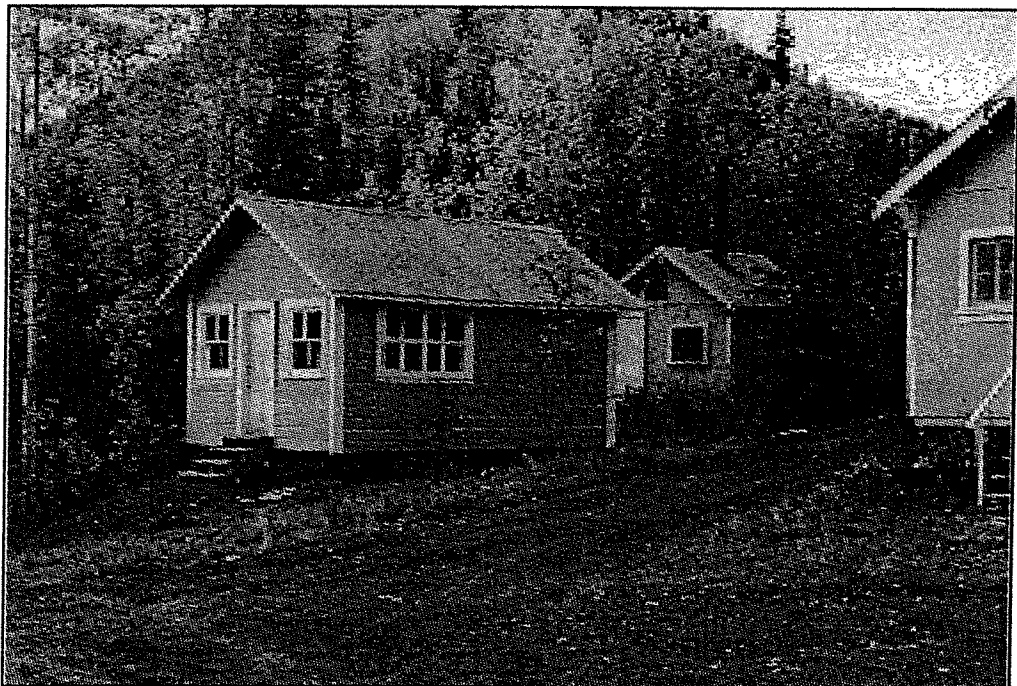
Many individuals and families associated with the cultural history of the preserve are still living and have first hand information that should be recorded. Current and former residents, miners, Native Alaskans, mail carriers, trappers,

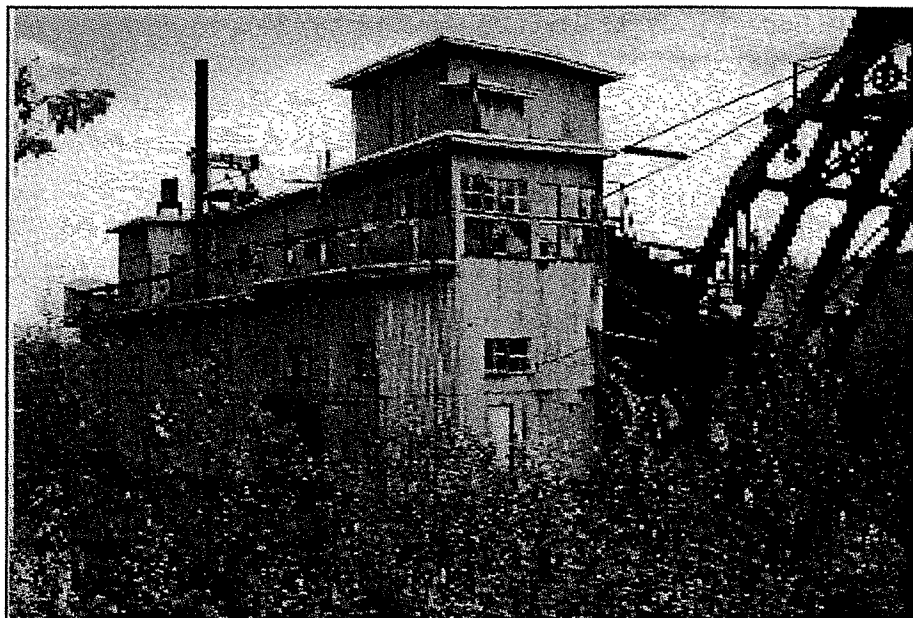
etc., all have important stories to tell. Preserve management staff should investigate the possibility of utilizing area colleges/universities, qualified NPS employees, or others trained in conducting interviews to compile oral histories related to life in the preserve.

It also will be crucial for preserve staff to maintain a strong partnership with the developers of the proposed riverboat tours. If successful, these ventures have the potential to greatly increase visitation into the preserve, and especially to the Slavin's Roadhouse and other cultural resources in the Coal Creek area. Partnership topics to explore include information/orientation, use of the Eagle visitor center, on-board interpretation, and interpretive staff presence at Slaven's/Coal Creek.

The previous section discussed the need to become stronger partners with area schools. The development of curriculum-based programs and activities require teacher participation, as do programs for elder hostels and elements of the environmental education program. The development of teacher/educator training programs also will benefit from joint planning efforts.

Preserve staff, possibly in cooperation with the regional office, would explore the potential of developing one or more training programs for regional tourism providers that utilize preserve resources. The various partners are encouraged to initiate and participate in cooperative efforts aimed at sharing resource and visitor information, interpretive/educational strategies, and the results of relevant research projects. Some training activities could be offered locally, or perhaps at Coal Creek Camp. The latter might be an extra incentive to attract prospective participants, including the private airlines that bring visitors to the preserve. Other training materials could be provided over the Internet, or via mail (including e-mail).





SUMMARIES

SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Provisions will be made to accommodate the needs of special populations who will visit Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. Special populations are identified as those with sight, hearing, learning, and mobility impairments; visitors who do not speak English; and the elderly and young children.

Accommodations will be made for access to the sites, as well as to most of the interpretive media. Guidelines and regulations are available to assist staff and media/facility designers. Generally, these accommodations will benefit all visitors.

Public Law 90-480, the Architectural Barriers Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 establish standards for physical access. Any new facilities constructed, as a matter of course, will be designed for accessibility for physically disabled visitors and employees.

All new interpretive media will conform to National Park Service, June 1999 Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for Interpretive Media (see Appendix).

Staffing and Training

Staffing

The preserve has only one subject-to-furlough interpretive position. A Bureau of Land Management employee supplements the staffing of the Eagle Visitor Center one day per week. This is an insufficient staffing level, especially during the peak season. The prospects of increased tourism will strain the existing staff even further.

At a minimum, the subject-to-furlough position should be converted to full-time. It also is recommended that a seasonal interpretive position be established during the summer. If a paid summer employee is infeasible, then the options for utilizing volunteers, SCA students, or a cooperating association employee should be explored. Yet another option would be to extend the BLM employee's workdays during the summer.

In summer, interpretive staff also will be needed at the Slaven's Roadhouse/Coal Creek area. This will be especially important when the riverboat tours are initiated. Initially, one seasonal employee will probably be sufficient. The work schedule for this person would coincide with the riverboat arrival schedule. Additional staff, perhaps utilizing volunteers or SCA students, would be needed if the riverboat tours operate seven days a week. Expansion of the outreach and education programs also may require additional staff.

Educational and interpretive staffing support will continue to expand and first focus on providing appropriate levels of visitor services in the field at preserve

facilities. Supervision of the educational and interpretive staff will continue to be provided by the Chief of Operations at the preserve. Funding will be sought to employ an educational specialist that will be shared with the Preserve and Gates of the Arctic National Park. The specialist will assist preserve staff in developing new national and regional education programs. These new programs will include developing regional science and educational programs and satellite Learning Centers what will include Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve.

Training

In addition to on-going training in interpretive skills and broadening the knowledge base of the resources, preserve interpreters and others who deal with the visiting public need to keep abreast of current research, technologies, programs, and activities. By working across agency and division lines, and by including elements of the private sector, effective and efficient ways to alert and/or involve the appropriate people in new and on-going projects can be initiated.

The preserve, with the assistance of the Alaska Support Office Education and Interpretation Team, would continue to explore opportunities to offer interpretive skills and resource training to preserve and non-NPS folks who engage in interpretive activities.

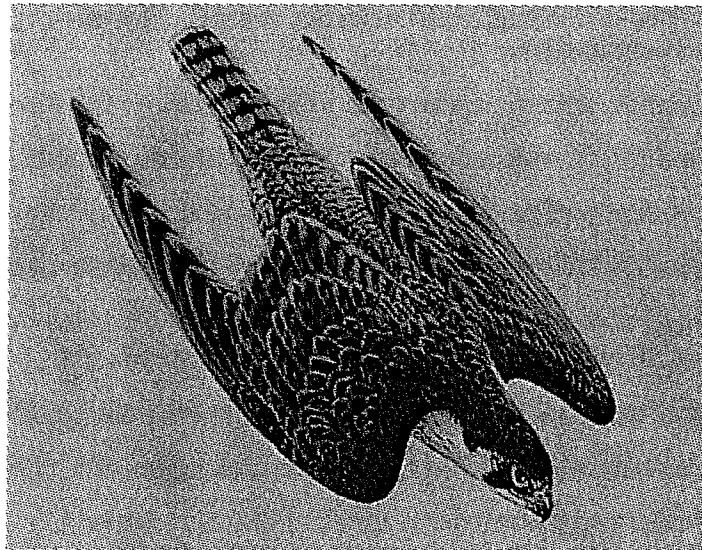
Summary of Interpretive Media and Program Proposals

The following is a summary list of new interpretive media, programs, and/or facilities at Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. While the list does identify new or redesigned structures and media, it does not include things like mechanical systems, security systems, restrooms, work spaces, parking lots, etc. These items, plus all new/redesigned structures and furnishings (e.g., seating, information/sales desks, and sales displays) should be included in the Denver Service Center, Regional Office, cooperating association, or contractor plans and specifications.

- Information/Orientation waysides exhibit at Coal Creek landing strip.
- Information/Orientation wayside exhibit outside the Eagle Visitor Center.
- Information/Orientation wayside exhibit at the Eagle campground.
- Information/Orientation wayside exhibit at the Circle campground.
- Enlarge public use space at the Eagle Visitor Center by moving the interpretive office and library/workroom to another location.
- New informational and interpretive exhibits for the Eagle Visitor Center.
- New audiovisual (video) program about the preserve.
- Interpretive wayside exhibit for Eagle Bluffs viewpoint.
- Information/orientation wayside exhibit near Slaven's Roadhouse.
- Informational and interpretive exhibits for the first floor of Slaven's Roadhouse.

SUMMARIES

- New interpretive wayside exhibit at the Coal Creek dredge (redesigned to conform with other wayside exhibits in the preserve).
- Interpretive exhibits and new photo albums for the mess hall at Coal Creek Camp.
- Historic Furnishing Study and Plan for the office and assay office at Coal Creek Camp.
- Self-guiding tour publication for Slaven's/Coal Creek area.
- Portable exhibits for use in schools and other offsite facilities.
- Educational kit/trunk for use in schools.
- Curriculum-based educational programs and activities.
- Teacher training program(s).
- Interpretive exhibit panels for the historic public use cabins along the Yukon River.
- Publication needs evaluation (including materials for the proposed river-boat tours).
- Interpretive training programs for preserve staff and partners.
- Oral History interviews with local Han people, current and former residents, miners, etc.
- Updated web site to reflect interpretive themes and incorporate education programs.



PLANNING TEAM AND CONSULTANTS

Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve

David Mills, Superintendent

Kevin Fox, Chief of Operations

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Alaska Support Office

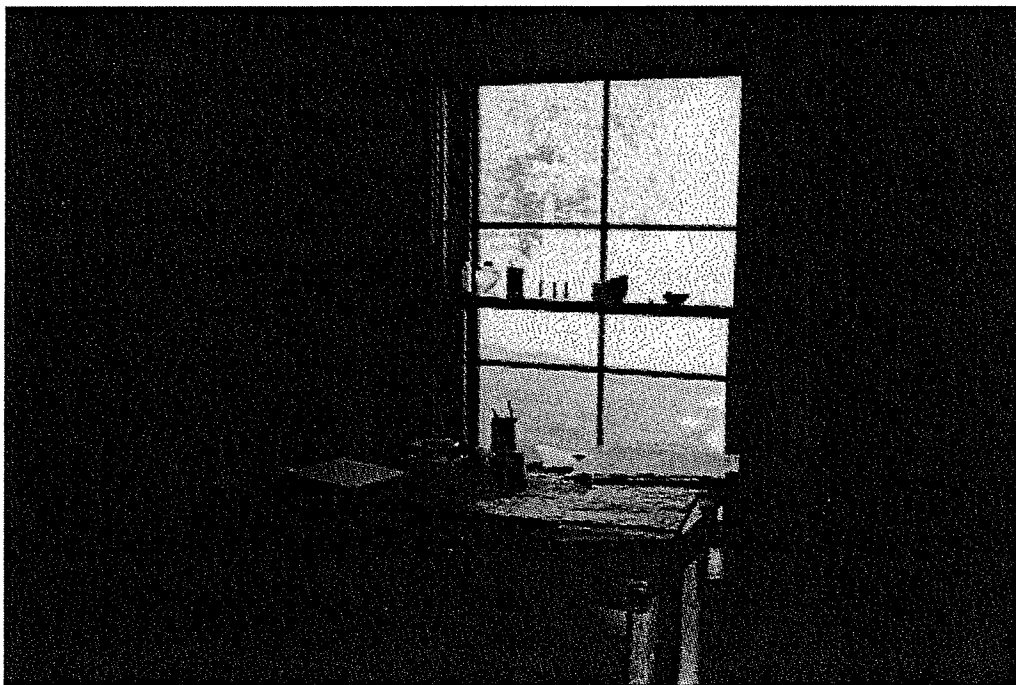
Diane Jung, Team Manager, Education and Interpretation

Harpers Ferry Center

Terry Lindsay, Wayside Exhibit Planner

Ben Miller, Exhibit Planner

Paul Lee, Interpretive Planner



APPENDIX

Special Populations: Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for Interpretive Media

National Park Service
Harpers Ferry Center

June 1999

Prepared by
Harpers Ferry Center
Accessibility Task Force

Contents
Statement of Purpose
Audiovisual Programs
Exhibits
Historic Furnishings
Publications
Wayside Exhibits

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This document is a guide for promoting full access to interpretive media to ensure that people with physical and mental disabilities have access to the same information necessary for safe and meaningful visits to National Parks. Just as the needs and abilities of individuals cannot be reduced to simple statements, it is impossible to construct guidelines for interpretive media that can apply to every situation in the National Park System.

These guidelines define a high level of programmatic access which can be met in most situations. They articulate key areas of concern and note generally accepted solutions. Due to the diversity of park resources and the variety of interpretive situations, flexibility and versatility are important.

Each interpretive medium contributes to the total park program. All media have inherent strengths and weaknesses, and it is our intent to capitalize on their strengths and provide alternatives where they are deficient. It should also be understood that any interpretive medium is just one component of the overall park experience. In some instances, especially with regard to learning disabilities, personal services, that is one-on-one interaction, may be the most appropriate and versatile interpretive approach.

In the final analysis, interpretive design is subjective, and dependent on aesthetic considerations as well as the particular characteristics and resources available for a specific program. Success or failure should be evaluated by examining all interpretive offerings of a park. Due to the unique characteristics of each situation, parks should be evaluated on a case by case basis. Nonetheless, the goal is to fully comply with NPS policy:

"...To provide the highest level of accessibility possible and feasible for persons with visual, hearing, mobility, and mental impairments, consistent with the obligation to conserve park resources and preserve the quality of the park experience for everyone."

NPS Special Directive 83-3, Accessibility for Disabled Persons

AUDIOVISUAL PROGRAMS

Audiovisual programs include video programs, and audio and interactive programs. As a matter of policy, all audiovisual programs produced by the Harpers Ferry Center will include some method of captioning. The Approach used will vary according to the conditions of the installation area and the media format used, and will be selected in consultation with the parks and regions.

The captioning method will be identified as early as possible in the planning process and will be presented in an integrated setting where possible. To the extent possible, visitors will be offered a choice in viewing captioned or uncaptioned versions, but in situations where a choice is not possible or feasible, a captioned version of all programs will be made available. Park management will decide on the most appropriate operational approach for the particular site.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Mobility Impairments

1. The theater, auditorium, or viewing area should be accessible and free of architectural barriers, or alternative accommodations will be provided. UFAS 4.1.
2. Wheelchair locations will be provided according to ratios outlined in UFAS 4.1.2(18a).
3. Viewing heights and angles will be favorable for those in designated wheelchair locations.
4. In designing video or interactive components, control mechanisms will be placed in accessible location, usually between 9" and 48" from the ground and no more than 24" deep.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Visual Impairments

Simultaneous audio description will be considered for installations where the equipment can be properly installed and maintained.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Hearing Impairments

1. All audiovisual programs will be produced with appropriate captions.
2. Copies of scripts will be provided to the parks as a standard procedure.
3. Audio amplification and listening systems will be provided in accordance with UFAS 4.1.2(18b).

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Learning Impairments

1. Unnecessarily complex and confusing concepts will be avoided.
2. Graphic elements will be chosen to communicate without reliance on the verbal component.
3. Narration will be concise and free of unnecessary jargon and technical information.

EXHIBITS

Numerous factors affect the design of exhibits, reflecting the unique circumstances of the specific space and the nature of the materials to be interpreted. It is clear that thoughtful, sensitive design can go a long way in producing exhibits that can be enjoyed by a broad range of people. Yet, due to the diversity of situations encountered, it is impossible to articulate guidelines that can be applied universally.

In some situations, the exhibit designer has little or no control over the space. Often exhibits are placed in areas ill suited for that purpose, they may incorporate large or unyielding specimens, may incorporate sensitive artifacts which require special environmental controls, and room decor or architectural features may dictate certain solutions. All in all, exhibit design is an art which defies simple description. However, one central concern is to communicate the message to the largest audience possible. Every reasonable effort will be made to eliminate any factors limiting communication through physical modification or by providing an alternate means of communication.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Mobility Impairments

Note: The Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) is the standard followed by the National Park Service and is therefore the basis for the accessibility standards for exhibits, where applicable.

1. Height/position of labels: Body copy on vertical exhibit walls should be placed at between 36" and 60" from the floor.
2. Artifact Cases:
 - a. Maximum height of floor of artifact case display area shall be no higher than 30" from the floor of the room. This includes vitrines that are recessed into an exhibit wall.
 - b. Artifact labels should be placed so as to be visible to a person within a 43" to 51" eye level. This includes mounting labels within the case at an angle to maximize its visibility to all viewers.
3. Touchable Exhibits: Touchable exhibits positioned horizontally should be placed no higher than 30" from the floor. Also, if the exhibit is approachable only on one side, it should be no deeper than 31".
4. Railings/barriers: Railings around any horizontal model or exhibit element shall have a maximum height of 36" from the floor.
5. Information desks: Information desks and sales counters shall include a section made to accommodate both a visitor in a wheelchair and an employee in a wheelchair working on the other side. A section of the desk/counter shall have the following dimensions:
 - a. Height from the floor to the top: 28 to 34 inches. (ADAAG 4.32.4)
 - b. Minimum knee clearance space: 27" high, 30" wide and 19" deep of

clearance underneath the desk is the minimum space required under ADAAG 4.32.3, but a space 30" high, 36" wide and 24" deep is recommended.

c. Width of top surface of section: at least 36 inches. Additional space must be provided for any equipment such as a cash register.

d. Area underneath desk: Since both sides of the desk may have to accommodate a wheelchair, this area should be open all the way through to the other side. In addition, there should be no sharp or abrasive surfaces underneath the desk. The floor space behind the counter shall be free of obstructions.

6. Circulation Space:

a. Passageways through exhibits shall be at least 36" wide.

b. If an exhibit passageway reaches a dead-end, an area 60" by 78" should be provided at the end for turning around.

c. Objects projecting from walls with their leading edges between 27" and 80" above the floor shall protrude no more than 4" in passageways or aisles. Objects projecting from walls with their leading edges at or below 27" above the floor can protrude any amount.

d. Freestanding objects mounted on posts or pylons may overhang a maximum of 12" from 27" to 80" above the floor. (ADAAG 4.4.1)

e. Protruding objects shall not reduce the clear width of an accessible route to less than the minimum required amount. (ADAAG 4.4.1)

f. Passageways or other circulation spaces shall have a minimum clear head room of 80". For example, signage hanging from the ceiling must have at least 80" from the floor to the bottom edge of the sign. (ADAAG 4.4.2)

7. Floors:

a. Floors and ramps shall be stable, level, firm and slip-resistant.

b. Changes in level between 1/4" and 1/2" shall be beveled with a slope no greater than 1:2. Changes in level greater than 1/2" shall be accomplished by means of a ramp that complies with ADAAG 4.7 or 4.8. (ADAAG 4.5.2)

c. Carpet in exhibit areas shall comply with ADAAG 4.5.3 for pile height, texture, pad thickness, and trim.

8. Seating - Interactive Stations/Work Areas: The minimum knee space underneath a work desk is 27" high, 30" wide and 19" deep, with a clear floor space of at least 30" by 30" in front. The top of the desk or work surface shall be between 28" and 34" from the floor. (ADAAG 4.32, Fig.45)

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Visual Impairments

1. Tactile models and other touchable exhibit items should be used whenever

possible. Examples of touchable exhibit elements include relief maps, scale models, raised images of simple graphics, reproduction objects, and replaceable objects (such as natural history or geological specimens, cultural history items, etc.).

2. Typography - Readability of exhibit labels by visitors with various degrees of visual impairment shall be maximized by using the following guidelines:
 - a. Type size - No type in the exhibit shall be smaller than 24 point.
 - b. Typeface - The most readable typefaces should be used whenever possible, particularly for body copy. They are: Times Roman, Palatino, Century, Helvetica and Universe.
 - c. Styles, Spacing - Text set in both caps and lower case is easier to read than all caps. Choose letter spacing and word spacing for maximum readability. Avoid too much italic type.
 - d. Line Length - Limit the line length for body copy to no more than 45 to 50 characters per line.
 - e. Amount of Text - Each unit of body copy should have a maximum of 45-60 words.
 - f. Margins - Flush left, ragged right margins are easiest to read.
3. Color:
 - a. Type/Background Contrast - Percentage of contrast between the type and the background should be a minimum of 70% .
 - b. Red/Green - Do not use red on green or green on red as the type/background color combination.
 - c. Do not place body copy on top of graphic images that impair readability.
4. Samples: During the design process, it is recommended that samples be made for review of all size, typeface and color combinations for labels in that exhibit.
5. Exhibit Lighting:
 - a. All labels shall receive sufficient, even light for good readability. Exhibit text in areas where light levels have been reduced for conservation purposes should have a minimum of 10 footcandles of illumination.
 - b. Harsh reflections and glare should be avoided.
 - c. The lighting system shall be flexible enough to allow adjustments on-site.
 - d. Transitions between the floor and walls, columns or other structures should be made clearly visible. Finishes for vertical surfaces should contrast clearly with the floor finish. Floor circulation routes should have a minimum of 10 footcandles of illumination.

6. Signage: When permanent building signage is required as a part of an exhibit project, the ADAAG guidelines shall be consulted. Signs, which designate permanent rooms and spaces, shall comply with ADAAG 4.30.1, 4.30.4, 4.30.5, and 4.30.6. Other signs, which provide direction to or information about functional spaces of the building, shall comply with ADAAG 4.30.1, 4.30.2, 4.30.3, and 4.30.5. Note: When the International Symbol of Accessibility (wheelchair symbol) is used, the word "Handicapped" shall not be used beneath the symbol. Instead, use the word "Accessible".

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Hearing Impairments

1. Information presented via audio formats will be duplicated in a visual medium, such as in the exhibit label copy or by captioning. All video programs incorporated into the exhibit, which contain audio, shall be open captioned.
2. Amplification systems and volume controls should be incorporated with audio equipment used individually by the visitor, such as audio handsets.
3. Information desks shall allow for Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TDD) equipment.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Learning Impairments

1. The exhibits will present the main interpretive themes on a variety of levels of complexity, so people with varying abilities and interests can understand them.
2. The exhibits should avoid unnecessarily complex and confusing topics, technical terms, and unfamiliar expressions. Pronunciation aids should be provided where appropriate.
3. Graphic elements shall be used to communicate non-verbally.
4. The exhibits shall be a multi-sensory experience. Techniques to maximize the number of senses used in the exhibits should be encouraged.
5. Exhibit design shall use color and other creative approaches to facilitate comprehension of maps by visitors with directional impairments.

HISTORIC FURNISHINGS

Historically refurnished rooms offer the public a unique interpretive experience by placing visitors within historic spaces. Surrounded by historic artifacts visitors can feel the spaces "come alive" and relate more directly to the historic events or personalities commemorated by the park.

Accessibility is problematical in many NPS furnished sites because of the very nature of historic architecture. Buildings were erected with a functional point of view that is many times at odds with our modern views of accessibility.

The approach used to convey the experience of historically furnished spaces will vary from site to site. The goals, however, will remain the same, to give the public as rich an interpretive experience as possible given the nature of the structure.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Mobility Impairments

1. The exhibit space should be free of architectural barriers or a method of alternate accommodation should be provided, such as slide programs, videotaped tours, visual aids, dioramas, etc.
2. All pathways, aisles, and clearances shall (when possible) meet standards set forth in UFAS 4.3 to provide adequate clearance for wheelchair routes.
3. Ramps shall be as gradual as possible and not exceed a 1" rise in 12" run, and conform to UFAS 4.8.
4. Railings and room barriers will be constructed in such a way as to provide unobstructed viewing by persons in wheelchairs.
5. In the planning and design process, furnishing inaccessible areas, such as upper floors of historic buildings, will be discouraged unless essential for interpretation.
6. Lighting will be designed to reduce glare or reflections when viewed from a wheelchair.
7. Alternative methods of interpretation, such as audiovisual programs, audio description, photo albums, and personal services will be used in areas which present difficulty for visitors with physical impairments.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Visual Impairments

1. Exhibit typefaces will be selected for readability and legibility, and conform to good industry practice.
2. Audio description will be used to describe furnished rooms, where appropriate.
3. Windows will be treated with film to provide balanced light levels and minimize glare.
4. Where appropriate, visitor-controlled rheostat-type lighting will be provided to augment general room lighting.
5. Where appropriate and when proper clearance has been approved, surplus artifacts or reproductions will be utilized as "hands-on" tactile interpretive devices.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Hearing Impairments

1. Information about room interiors will be presented in a visual medium such as exhibit copy, text, pamphlets, etc.
2. Captions will be provided for all AV programs relating to historic furnishings.

Guidelines Affecting the Visitors with Learning Impairments

1. Where appropriate, hands-on participatory elements geared to the level of visitor capabilities will be used.

2. Living history activities and demonstrations, which utilize the physical space as a method of providing multi-sensory experiences, will be encouraged.

PUBLICATIONS

A variety of publications are offered to visitors, ranging from park folders, which provide an overview and orientation to a park, to more comprehensive handbooks. Each park folder should give a brief description of services available to visitors with disabilities, list significant barriers, and note the existence of TDD phone numbers, if available.

In addition, informal site bulletins are often produced to provide more specialized information about a specific site or topic. It is recommended that each park produce an easily updatable "Accessibility Site Bulletin" which could include detailed information about the specific programs, services, and opportunities available for visitors with disabilities and to describe barriers which are present in the park. A template for this site bulletin will be on the Division of Publications website for parks to create with ease, a consistent look throughout the park service. These bulletins should be in large type, 16 points minimum and follow the large-print criteria below.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Mobility Impairments

1. Park folders, site bulletins, and sales literature will be distributed from accessible locations and heights.
2. Park folders and Accessibility Site Bulletins should endeavor to carry information on the accessibility of buildings, trails, and programs by visitors with disabilities.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Visual Impairments

1. Publications for the general public:
 - a. Text
 - (1) Size: the largest type size appropriate for the format.
(preferred main body of text should be 10pt)
 - (2) Leading should be at least 20% greater than the font size used.
 - (3) Proportional letterspacing
 - (4) Main body of text set in caps and lower case.
 - (5) Margins are flush left and ragged right
 - (6) Little or no hyphenation is used at ends of lines.
 - (7) Ink coverage is dense
 - (8) Underlining does not connect with the letters being underlined.
 - (9) Contrast of typeface and illustrations to background is high (70% contrast is recommended)

- (10) Photographs have a wide range of gray scale variation.
- (11) Line drawings or floor plans are clear and bold, with limited detail and minimum 8 pt type.
- (12) No extreme extended or compressed typefaces are used for main text.
- (13) Reversal type should be minimum of 11 point medium or bold sans serif type.
- b. The paper:
 - (1) Surface preferred is a matte finish. Dull-coated stock is acceptable.
 - (2) Has sufficient weight to avoid "show-through" on pages printed on both sides.
- 2. Large-print version publications:
 - a. Text
 - (1) Size: minimum 16 point type.
 - (2) Leading is 16 on 20pt.
 - (3) Proportional letterspacing
 - (4) Main body of text set in caps and lower case.
 - (5) Margins are flush left and ragged right.
 - (6) Little or no hyphenation is used at ends of lines.
 - (7) Ink coverage is dense.
 - (8) Underlining does not connect with the letters being underlined.
 - (9) Contrast of typeface and illustrations to background is high (70% contrast is recommended)
 - (10) Photographs have a wide range of gray scale variation.
 - (11) Line drawings or floor plans are clear and bold, with limited detail and minimum 14 pt type.
 - (12) No extreme extended or compressed typefaces are used for main text.
 - (13) Sans-serif or simple-serif typeface
 - (14) No oblique or italic typefaces
 - (15) Maximum of 50 characters (average) per line.
 - (16) No type is printed over other designs.
 - (17) Document has a flexible binding, preferably one that allows the publication to lie flat.
 - (18) Gutter margins are a minimum of 22mm; outside margin smaller

but not less than 13mm.

b. Paper:

(1) Surface is off-white or natural with matte finish.

(2) Has sufficient weight to avoid "show-through" on pages printed on both sides.

3. Maps:

a. The less clutter the map, the more visitors that can use it.

b. The ultimate is one map that is large-print and tactile.

c. Raised line/tactile maps are something that could be developed in future, using our present digital files and a thermaform machine. Lines are distinguished by lineweight, color and height. Areas are distinguished by color, height, and texture.

d. The digital maps are on an accessible web site.

e. Same paper guides as above.

f. Contrast of typeface background is high. (70% contrast is recommended)

g. Proportional letterspacing

h. Labels set in caps and lower case

i. Map notes are flush left and ragged right.

j. Little or no hyphenation is used as ends of lines.

k. No extreme extended or compressed typefaces are used for main text.

l. Sans-serif or simple-serif typeface.

4. The text contained in the park folder should also be available on audiocassette, CD and accessible web site. Handbooks, accessibility guides, and other publications should be similarly recorded where possible.

5. The official park publication is available in a word processing format. This could be translated into Braille as needed.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Hearing Impairments

Park site bulletins will note the availability of such special services as sign language interpretation and captioned programs.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Learning Impairments

1. The park site bulletin should list any special services available to these visitors.

2. Publications:

a. Use language that appropriately describes persons with disabilities.

- b. Topics will be specific and of general interest. Unnecessary complexity will be avoided.
- c. Whenever possible, easy to understand graphics will be used to convey ideas, rather than text alone.
- d. Unfamiliar expressions, technical terms, and jargon will be avoided. Pronunciation aids and definitions will be provided where needed.
- e. Text will be concise and free of long paragraphs and wordy language.

WAYSIDE EXHIBITS

Wayside exhibits, which include outdoor interpretive exhibits and signs, orientation shelter exhibits, trailhead exhibits, and bulletin boards, offer special advantages to visitors with disabilities. The liberal use of photographs, artwork, diagrams, and maps, combined with highly readable type, make wayside exhibits an excellent medium for visitors with hearing and learning impairments. For visitors with sight impairments, waysides offer large type and high legibility.

Although a limited number of NPS wayside exhibits will always be inaccessible to visitors with mobility impairments, the great majority are placed at accessible pullouts, viewpoints, parking areas, and trailheads.

The NPS accessibility guidelines for wayside exhibits help insure a standard of quality that will be appreciated by all visitors. Nearly everyone benefits from high quality graphics, readable type, comfortable base designs, accessible locations, hard-surfaced exhibit pads, and well-landscaped exhibit sites.

While waysides are valuable on-site "interpreters," it should be remembered that the park resources themselves are the primary things visitors come to experience. Good waysides focus attention on the features they interpret, and not on themselves. A wayside exhibit is only one of the many interpretive tools which visitors can use to enhance their appreciation of a park.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Mobility Impairments

1. Wayside exhibits will be installed at accessible locations whenever possible.
2. Wayside exhibits will be installed at heights and angles favorable for viewing by most visitors including those in wheelchairs. For standard NPS low-profile units the recommended height is 30 inches from the bottom edge of the exhibit panel to the finished grade; for vertical exhibits the height of 6-28 inches.
3. Trailhead exhibits will include information on trail conditions which affect accessibility.
4. Wayside exhibit sites will have level, hard surfaced exhibit pads.
5. Exhibit sites will offer clear, unrestricted views of park features described in exhibits.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Visual Impairments

1. Exhibit type will be as legible and readable as possible.
2. Panel colors will be selected to reduce eyestrain and glare, and to provide excellent readability under field conditions. White should not be used as a background color.
3. Selected wayside exhibits may incorporate audio stations or tactile elements such as models, texture blocks, and relief maps.
4. For all major features interpreted by wayside exhibits, the park should offer non-visual interpretation covering the same subject matter. Examples include cassette tape tours, radio messages, and ranger talks.
5. Appropriate tactile cues should be provided to help visually impaired visitors locate exhibits.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Hearing Impairments

1. Wayside exhibits will communicate visually, and will rely heavily on graphics to interpret park resources.
2. Essential information included in audio station messages will be duplicated in written form, either as part of the exhibit text or with printed material.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Learning Impairments

1. Topics for wayside exhibits will be specific and of general interest. Unnecessary complexity will be avoided.
2. Whenever possible, easy to understand graphics will be used to convey ideas, rather than text alone.
3. Unfamiliar expressions, technical terms, and jargon will be avoided. Pronunciation aids and definitions will be provided where needed.
4. Text will be concise and free of long paragraphs and wordy language.

