



HFC Editorial Style Guide

January 2007

The purpose of the *HFC Editorial Style Guide* provided by Harpers Ferry Center is to create a standard for writing and editing in our interpretive media and to define policy regarding recurring questions about grammar and editorial style. Questions commonly encountered are addressed here, with emphasis on terms and phrases specific to National Park System areas.

Answers to style questions not addressed here can be found in standard style reference books, specifically: *Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition* (www.chicagomanualofstyle.org), *United States Government Printing Office Style Manual, 2000*, *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk and E. B. White, and *The Associated Press Stylebook, 39th Edition, 2004*. For general writing guidance see William Zinsser's *On Writing Well*.

For decisions about spelling, hyphenation, and compound words, we recommend *The American Heritage Dictionary of The English Language, Third Edition*.

References often disagree—that is why style guides exist—and questions of style must be decided with the public foremost in mind. This is the audience for whom National Park Service public media are produced, not scholars, historians, scientists, or bureaucrats. It is important that the editorial style used throughout your publication, exhibit, web page, podcast, audiovisual production, or other media be consistent.

New entries are added to this guide about twice a year. If you have comments or suggested revisions, send an e-mail to <HFC Editorial Style Guide>. Your comments and questions are always welcome.

- ***a* or *an* when used before *h*** Use *a* before a pronounced *h*; use *an* before a silent *h*.

a historic moment	an honor
a hysterical patient	an heir
a hoary marmot	an honest mistake

- **abandoned** Avoid when writing about American Indian dwellings.

The ancestral Puebloan people left their homes about 800 years ago.

- **access** Avoid as a verb for “reach” or “get to” (word is too similar to accessible).

You can get to the park from the south via I-95.

- **accessible** It means that facilities can be used by persons with disabilities. *see* disabled; *see* hearing impaired.

- **acronym** Precisely defined, an acronym refers to a single, pronounceable word formed from the initial letters of a series of words from a name, title, or long term. North Atlantic Treaty Organization—NATO. Acquired immune deficiency syndrome—AIDS. *see* initialism; *see* NPS (when to use an article).

- **act of Congress** *see* dates.

Adding these properties will require an act of Congress.

but The Wilderness Act was signed into law in September 1964.

- **A.D.** Avoid. *see* dates.

- **addresses** Spell out street, road, and avenue in running text; may abbreviate in a stacked address (each item on a separate line). For clarity, whenever possible, place address (and phone number) at end of paragraph. Write NW, SW, NE, SE *see* state name abbreviations.

1234 Cypress St.

The White House is on Pennsylvania Avenue.

16th Street NW

- **administrative statement format** This may be shortened if necessary.

[Bryce Canyon] is one of over 380 parks in the National Park System. The National Park Service cares for these special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage. To learn more about national parks and National Park Service programs in America’s communities visit www.nps.gov.

- **African American** (or black) No hyphen.

African Americans traveled north on the Underground Railroad.

the African American soldier

- **a.m.** *see* time of day.

- **America** A world-wide synonym for the United States of America; use American to describe the people.

- **American Indian** Use specific tribal name(s) whenever possible, accurate, and appropriate. Use singular noun, i.e. Navajo, Lakota, Tlingit. Or use American Indian. Avoid using Native American (it is ambiguous and least desirable of alternatives); *but* some tribes prefer Native American—use the preference of area groups.

The Navajo entered Canyon de Chelly about 300 years ago.

- **American Revolution affiliations** Do not capitalize patriot, loyalist, regulars, or tory (except in quoted material); *but* Whig and Tory as members of political parties; Continental Army troops; Provincial regiments. (Experts disagree about capitalization of Revolutionary War terms.)
- **Anasazi** Avoid, but clarify at first mention; *see* ancestral Puebloan people; *but* use the preference of specific groups.
 - These ancestral Puebloan people, often called Anasazi, used ladders made of ponderosa pine to reach the canyon’s ledges.
- **ancestral Puebloan people** Predecessors of today’s Pueblo and Hopi Indians; try to avoid Anasazi except at first mention.
- **archeology** *not* archaeology.
- **arms (small)** Firearms that can be carried in the hand, like muskets, pistols, rifles, carbines, and shotguns. *see* artillery.
- **artillery** Large-caliber weapons, like cannon, howitzers, and missile launchers, usually supported on a carriage and operated by crews. *see* arms (small).
 - The Napoleon 12-pounder [not 12-pound] cannon was the most popular smooth-bore artillery piece in the Union and Confederate armies.
- **ATV** All-terrain vehicle; spell out at first mention with ATV in parenthesis.
- **audiovisual**
- **backcountry**
- **bald cypress**
- **B.C.** Avoid. *see* B.C.E./C.E., *see* dates.
- **B.C.E./C.E.** B.C.E. (before common era) replaces B.C., and C.E. (common era) replaces A.D. Clarify at first mention. This format is preferred over B.C. and A.D.
 - At Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site the earliest known people date from 11,000 to 6,000 B.C.E. (Before Common Era).
- **biological soil crust** This is now the preferred term for what was formerly called cryptobiotic. *see* www.soilcrust.org
 - The biological soil crust at Arches National Park is alive, but it won’t bite you.
- **biosphere reserve (wording)** “(Park name), part of a major ecosystem that protects the diversity of life, was named a biosphere reserve in (date).”
- **bison** Commonly called buffalo. If writing bison, clarify at first mention.
 - Bison, commonly called buffalo, graze on this prairie.
- **black** *see* African American.
- **boat launch** Preferred over boat ramp (ramps are paved—boat launches include paved and unpaved entrances). Be consistent with park signage.

- **ca.** Avoid writing “ca.” or “circa” in general text for publications, exhibits, and websites—rewrite or use “about” instead; *but* use abbreviation ca. in credit lines.

The pearlware bowl found at Ninety Six National Historic Site dates to about 1810.
F. Gabriel painting ca. 1850. CEDAR RIVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

- **cactus, cacti**

- **campstove**

- **Canada goose** *not* Canadian goose.

- **cannon** Cannon can be both singular and plural (same word, no s). Cannons is correct but used less often. Be consistent; use local preference; *see* artillery.

Many of the fort’s 18-, 24-, and 36-pounder cannon were the type used on ships.

- **capital, capitol** Spelled with an *a*—the city where a seat of government is located; do not capitalize. Spelled with an *o*—the building where the business of government takes place. Capitalize when referring to the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., and when referring to state capitols.

Annapolis is the capital of Maryland.
The Virginia Capitol is in Richmond.

- **capitalization** Avoid unnecessary capitals. Animal and plant names are lower case, unless they contain a proper name. Nouns are capitalized if part of a formal name, lowercase if they stand alone. If a term is plural following more than one proper name, it is lowercase (style guides differ; NPS style is to use fewer capitals). For Spanish words *see Chicago Manual of Style, 15th ed.*

sea otter	Kentucky warbler
Douglas fir	great blue heron
New York City	<i>but</i> the city of New York
Acadia National Park	<i>but</i> the park’s policy
Wisconsin Ice Age	<i>but</i> during the ice age
Ranger Baker	<i>but</i> Ask a ranger.
Superintendent Levy	<i>but</i> The superintendent is here.
Apache Visitor Center	<i>but</i> at the visitor center
U.S. government	federal government
water from the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers	
emigrants on the California and Oregon trails	

- **captions** Captions or labels forming clauses (complete sentences) or phrases (incomplete sentences) end with a period.

Major Ferguson addresses his troops before the battle.
Colonel Shelby, three hours before the battle.

- **century** The 16th-century fort. The 16th century refers to the 1500s and requires mental translation for many people. Try to use actual dates instead of century.

Ho for California! Since the mid-1800s the West had held out the promise of gold and boundless opportunity.
much clearer than Since the mid-19th century the West had held out the

- **chronology or timeline format** Begin with initial cap and end with period—even if entry is a sentence fragment. Write in present tense.

1882 Born January 30, Hyde Park, New York.
1883 Organizes black student school strike, the first such response in the United States to unequal treatment.

- **circa** Avoid. *see ca.*

- **Civil War** Confederates—members of the Confederate army. Federals—members of the Union army. The North—use sparingly in referring to the United States government during the Civil War, use Union or Federal government. The South—use sparingly in referring to the 11 states that seceded; use Confederate States of America (formal name) or the Confederacy. Yankee—do not use as a synonym for Union soldiers; avoid except in quoted material. Unionist—do not use as a synonym for Union soldiers; avoid except in quoted material. Rebel—do not use as a synonym for Confederate; avoid except in quoted material. *See federal and Confederate States of America.*
 The 54th Massachusetts Infantry was the most famous of the Union’s black regiments.

- **colon** Use to introduce a series of items that are closely related to the subject; the colon is followed by one space.
 Make bread with these ingredients: flour, water, salt, sugar, and yeast.

- **commander in chief** No hyphens. Capitalize only if in a formal title.

- **commas** In a series of three or more items, separate the items with commas. Use a comma before a conjunction that joins two independent clauses (and, but, or, as). Unless needed for clarity, omit comma after short introductory phrases.
 Our dessert choices are pie, cake, and ice cream.
 Adam lost the keys to the car, and the family is helping him search every cranny.
 In this valley glaciers carved a U-shaped swath into the bedrock.

- **compass directions** Lowercase; capitalize only specific geographic regions, but try to limit capitals. *see east, north, south, west, geographic regions.*

- **concessioner**

- **Confederate** *see Civil War.*

- **Confederate States of America, C.S.A.** Use C.S.A. sparingly to avoid ambiguity; it refers to the Confederate States of America—and to the Confederate States Army.

- **convince that** *but persuade to.*

- **cougar** mountain lion; panther; puma.

- **credit lines and copyright symbol usage** © *Note: copyright usage.* Copyright usage has precise, legal regulations. Always verify with source of the image about use of the copyright symbol ©.
 For more information check the Library of Congress, U.S. Copyright Office website: www.copyright.gov

Format—credit line. Name of photographer, artist, or creator should be in all caps and small type size (4 to 5 pt, depending on the media). Place credit so it is not mistaken as a caption or interpretive text.

1) GIVE CREDIT—name of creator of image and use the copyright symbol ©.
–Professional photographer, artist, or creator of image (someone who is paid by NPS only for the use of image—and original creator retains all property and all rights).

©JANE DOE [credit next to photo]

–Stock house manages the image provided by photographer, artist, or creator of image (stock house is paid by NPS only for the use of image—and stock house, as agent, retains property and rights). Often stock house is listed first and photographer second; sometimes only stock house is credited—credit according to request.

©IMAGES FOR YOU/JACK DOE

–Amateur photographer, artist, or creator of image (someone who donates use of the image to NPS but retains all property rights)—this includes park volunteers, professionals who are often called “friends of the park,” and NPS employees who created the image/product on their own time, with their own equipment, and with their own money (no reimbursement or other payment).

©JACK DOE [for his stone wall illustration]

2) GIVE CREDIT—NPS and person’s name and USE the copyright symbol ©.
–Photo or illustration is owned by NPS but photographer, artist, or creator retains copyright (requested in writing, approved, and granted).

NPS/©LOUIS S. GLANZMAN [for British troops occupy Boston]

3) GIVE CREDIT—NPS and person’s name. DO NOT use copyright symbol ©.
–Photo or illustration is commissioned by NPS, and NPS owns the finished product (photo, illustration) unconditionally with no restrictions.

NPS/L. KENNETH TOWNSEND [for Saint Gaudens illustration]

–NPS hires a professional to photograph or draw objects owned by NPS; (professional may be credited if requested)

NPS/JANE DOE

4) CREDIT NPS ONLY (do not credit name of creator). DO NOT use copyright symbol ©.

–Photo, illustration, artifact is owned by the park or is part of NPS collection—this includes photo, illustration, other image or product created by park employees while on duty.

NPS [for sketch of muskrat by park employee]
NPS COLLECTION

5) CREDIT INSTITUTIONS. DO NOT use copyright symbol ©.

–Historic photos, illustrations, images from museums, institutions, libraries, and more. *Note:* If artist or photographer is of historical importance, try to use the name in the caption—not in the credit.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION [photo credit, gold nugget]
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS [photo credit, wagon train]

Edward Curtis photographed these Navajo riding east into Canyon de Chelly in 1904. NATIONAL ARCHIVES [caption and credit for photograph]

6) CREDIT PERSON (owner of image/product). DO NOT use copyright symbol ©.

–Historic photo, illustration, image, artifact is privately owned but was not created or produced by the owner (person donates use of image to NPS, or is paid, but retains ownership and property rights).

COURTESY/JANE DOE [for use of historic postcards]
COURTESY/JACK DOE [for photo of Navajo chief blanket]

• **cross-country**

• **cryptobiotic crust** *see* biological soil crust.

• **dashes**

1) Em dash — Longer than en dash or hyphen, often called simply “the dash;” used to indicate a sudden change in thought or to add emphasis. There is no space before or after the em dash.

Kings Mountain—named for an early settler and not for King George III—is a rocky spur of the Blue Ridge. (em dash)

2) En dash – half the length of an em dash and longer than a hyphen; used in a combination of figures, capital letters, or figures and capital letters. *see* hyphens. There is no space before or after the en dash.

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1924–2005

KOMO–TV

note: Do not use en dash for the word “to” if “from” precedes the expression; do not use en dash for “and” if “between” precedes it.

The visitor center is closed from October 15 to April 1.

not The visitor center is closed from October 15–April 1.

You may rent canoes between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m.

not You may rent canoes between 9 a.m.–2 p.m.

• **dates** Write in this order: month, day, and year. Use a comma before and after the year in sentences with full dates. No comma if using only month and year in a sentence. Do not use an apostrophe to indicate plural dates.

On December 7, 1941, Japanese bombers struck Pearl Harbor.

Five companies garrisoned Fort Sumter in June 1863.

1900s

not 1900’s

1950s and 1960s

not 1950s and 60s (informally, ‘50s and ‘60s)

spirit of ‘76

B.C.E./C.E. is now preferred format. Avoid A.D./B.C.

• **day use** If a noun; day-use if used as an adjective.

• **degree** *see* temperature.

• **Depression** For the Great Depression during the 1930s.

• **directions to reader in text and in captions** Set off in parentheses and italicize entire item, including parentheses.

The coat of the American black bear can be black, brown, or auburn (*left*).

The core of L’Enfant’s 1791 plan is the triangle created by the Capitol,

the White House, and the Mall (*see map above*).

• **disabled** Avoid writing “handicapped” or the “disabled”—put the person before the disability; write “persons with disabilities.” *see* hearing impaired.

The Longstocking Trail is accessible for persons with disabilities.

The park has audio, video, and large-print tours available for persons with disabilities.

The Pelican Trail is wheelchair-accessible.

• **discover (territory)** Avoid; use explore, chart, venture, scout, etc.

• **discoverers** Avoid in reference to lands already populated; rewrite in a way that includes multiple points of view. *see* explorers.

• **Douglas fir**

• **Earth, earth** Earth is our planet; earth is soil or dirt.

- **east, eastern** Lowercase compass directions; minimize use of capital letters except for specific regions (or popular place names); Eastern Shore of Maryland; East Coast; the East is east.
- **elk** Commonly used name for wapiti (a large North American deer).
- **ellipsis** The omission of a word, phrase, line, paragraph, or more from a quoted passage is indicated by ellipsis dots (also called points). Avoid using an ellipsis at the beginning or end of a quotation unless necessary for context. Ellipsis dots must always appear together on the same line.

The rules for ellipses take up several pages in the *Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition*. Check this reference to be sure of correct usage.

1) Three spaced dots. Use three dots to indicate deleted material within the same sentence.

“If a stop cannot be put to these massacres, the country will be depopulated . . . as neither Whig nor Tory can live.” Nathanael Greene, 1780

2) Four spaced dots. Four dots indicate the omission of (a) the last part of a sentence, (b) the first part of the next sentence, (c) a whole sentence or (d) a whole paragraph. If sentence ends with question mark or exclamation mark, use it and three dots. When four dots are used, the first dot is usually a true period (no space between it and the preceding word). Here is a condensation of President Nixon’s resignation announcement using three dots and four dots:

“In all the decisions I have made in my public life, I . . . tried to do what was best for the nation. . . . I have never been a quitter. . . . But as President, I must put the interest of America first. . . . Therefore, I shall resign the presidency effective at noon tomorrow.” *Richard Nixon, August 8, 1974*

- **e-mail addresses** Do not use capital letters unless address is case sensitive.
mobydick@ocean.edu
- **em dash, en dash** see dashes; see hyphens.
- **en route**
- **ensure, insure** Ensure means to make certain; insure means to provide for insurance.
Careful planning can help ensure an enjoyable cross-country hike.
The policy insures his life.
- **Euro-American/European American** Avoid; be specific when possible, accurate, and appropriate.
Sir Francis Drake, English mariner
Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, Portuguese explorer
French missionaries and settlers from the East Coast
- **explorers** Use to refer to people venturing into territory unknown to them. Bear in mind that the territory may already be populated. Avoid “discoverers” unless that is truly the case. Consider others’ points of view. In certain cases, the term “travelers” may be appropriate. see discoverers.
- **farther, further** Farther refers to physical distance, further to an extension of time or quantity.
Lydia walked farther than Mark along Cumberland Island’s shore.
Thomas will look further into the disappearance of the laptop.

- **federal** federal government, federal law, federal property, federal funds, *but* Federal soldier, Federal forces, Federal fort, and Federal government when writing about the Civil War.

Use a capital letter for the architectural style and for corporate or governmental bodies that use the word as part of their formal names: Federal Express, the Federal Trade Commission.

- **Federalist** Federalist Party; Federalist Papers.
- **fewer, less** Fewer refers to number and individual items, less refers to quantity and bulk.
Fewer birds came to the feeder because Yuriko put out less food.
- **firepit**
- **firewood**
- **first-come, first-served**
- **flash flood**
- **foreign words** Do not italicize foreign words and phrases that are familiar to most readers. *see Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition.*
You can buy tortillas and guacamole at the concession stand.

A translation following a foreign word is enclosed in parentheses.

The word she wanted was *pêcher* (to sin) not *pêcher* (to fish).

- **Forest Service** The Forest Service was established in 1905 and is an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The initialisms (*see* acronyms) USDA-FS and USFS; are controversial because of their historic usage. It is best to coordinate with signage in the park. It is important to distinguish the federal agency from state forest agencies. In our media the federal agency is generally referred to as the Forest Service. In text try to use specific names or titles of forest service areas.

Campgrounds are in Mount Baker National Forest.

The visitor center in Escalante, Utah, houses National Park Service, Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management offices.

- **four-wheel drive vs. 4-wheel drive** Use four-wheel drive *not* 4-wheel drive. (Abr. 4WD).
- **fractions** In text spell out if amounts are less than one, if standing alone, or if followed by “of a” or “of an”—use a hyphen between the words. Use fractions in unit modifiers (even if amount is less than one). Try to stack numbers in the fraction $\frac{3}{8}$ *not* 5/8.
In March three-fourths of the lake is open to anglers. *not* In March $\frac{3}{4}$ of the lake is open to anglers.
The beetle is three-quarters of an inch long.
The steep $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile hike takes about one hour round-trip. *but* The steep trail is one-half of a mile long.

- **fresh water** If used as a noun; one word, if an adjective.
- **frontcountry** Avoid if possible; it is bureaucratic jargon.

- **genus, species** *see* scientific names.
- **geographic names** For text issued by federal agencies, the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) determines the federally recognized place names and spellings of geographic features in the United States and its territories.

For general information: Geographic Names Information System (GNIS)
<http://geonames.usgs.gov>

For specific information: To find federally recognized names
<http://geonames.usgs.gov/domestic/index.html>

1) Federally recognized names—as a U.S. government agency, we are mandated to use federally recognized place names as listed in the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS).

2) Variant name—these often include historic, locally used names, and misspellings; if using a variant name, show the federally recognized name first and the variant name second; the variant name must be clearly distinguished as a variant (for example, put the variant name in parenthesis or different type size or type face).

3) Historic names —historic place names can be used in a historic context; watch out for names that use ’s (apostrophe and s) and names that may be one or two words.

Sierra Nevada *not* Sierra Nevada Mountains
 The Narrows *not* Verrazano Narrows (the water channel) *but*
 Verrazano-Narrows Bridge crosses The Narrows.
 At 20,320 feet Mount McKinley is the highest mountain in North America.
 The Battle of Wilson’s Creek took place along Wilsons Creek.
 The courthouse in the village of Appomattox Court House was built in 1846.

- **geographic regions** Minimize use of capital letters except for specific regions (or popular place names).

northern California, southern Appalachians; the Bay Area; the Upper Peninsula;
 Pacific Northwest; West Coast; East Coast; Midwest.

- ***Giardia lamblia*** The organism; may be abbreviated *G. lamblia*.

- **giardiasis** The illness caused by the *Giardia lamblia* organism.

- **Gila monster**

- **guide dogs** “Service animals” is currently the preferred designation for guide dogs or signal dogs.

Except for visitors needing service animals, pets are not allowed in the campground.

- **guided hikes** *see* self-guiding trail.

- **gulls** members of a large family of seabirds; correctly called gulls but often referred to as seagulls.

- **Harpers Ferry Center** *not* the Harpers Ferry Center (no article).

- **Hawaiian words** Do not add ’s (apostrophe and s) to Hawaiian words to form possessives. You must use Hawaiian fonts to spell Hawaiian words with macrons over vowels (ā, ē, ī, ō, ū) and glottal stops (‘) in certain cases. These

appear in several official park names and brochures.

The island of Pele not Pele's island.

The visitor center for the USS *Arizona* Memorial is a 45-minute drive from Waikiki.

The trail will lead you past the Kaloko-Honokōhau and 'Aimakapā fishponds and the 'A'ōpio fishtrap.

• **hearing impaired** Or hearing loss, hard of hearing.

The film about George Washington Carver is captioned. Audio guides and neck loops are available for persons with hearing loss.

• **highcountry**

• **highways** Use official designation (as noted on maps); list official designation first and local name second in parentheses.

I-75 (Alligator Alley)

Nebr. 7 *not* State Route 7 *not* NE 7

U.S. 1 *not* U.S. Highway 1

but 39063 U.S. Highway 95 (park address)

• **holidays** Use actual dates not traditional names *but* Thanksgiving.

The park is closed Thanksgiving, December 25, and January 1.

• **hyphens** Generally use a hyphen between two or more words combined to form a modifier preceding the word modified, *except* when the first word ends in *ly*. *see* dashes.

rust-resistant alloy

The long-awaited bridge replaced a series of ferry crossings.

The backed-up water behind Hoover Dam forms a 110-mile-long lake.

but a federally funded project

When two or more hyphenated compounds have a common basic element, the hyphens are all retained.

4- to 5-ton trucks

8-, 10-, and 16-foot boards

moss- and ivy-covered walls, *not* moss and ivy-covered walls

In Lake Mead you may catch largemouth bass at 5- to 20-foot depths.

• **ice age** *but* Wisconsin Ice Age; Ice Age Reserve.

• **icefield**

• **Indian** *see* American Indian.

• **initialism** An abbreviation formed from the initials of a name, title, or long term that is read as a series of letters. ATM, BBC, FDR, DOI, NPS.

see acronym; *see* NPS (when to use an article).

• **initials** Franklin D. Roosevelt; FDR and JFK (no periods and no spaces); *but* W.E.B. Du Bois, P.D. James (periods, no spaces between initials), P.O. Box (space between O. and Box only).

W.E.B. Du Bois cofounded the NAACP and supported the rights of black Americans.

• **insure** *see* ensure.

• **Internet address** Do not use capital letters unless address is case sensitive; *see* website.

www.google.com

• **italics** *see* foreign words, quotations (display and headline type examples); measurements (English and metric differences); ships, and more.

- **Joshua tree** *but* Joshua Tree National Park.
- **lifejacket** *see* PFD, personal flotation device.
- **lifesaving station** One word unless proper name or local signage requires otherwise.
By the 1890s lifesaving stations were located every 3.5 miles along the New Jersey coast.
The Old Harbor Life-Saving Station at Cape Cod was built in 1897–98.
- **livestock** *but* pack animals.
- **loyalist** *see* American Revolution affiliations.
- **map symbols and terminology** Be precise when choosing terminology for map symbols; be aware of subtle differences—gas station (sells gas only; may sell snacks) and service station (sells gas and does repairs, may sell snacks).

For up-to-date symbols that you can use on your maps: www.nps.gov/hfc/carto/map-symbols.htm

- **measurements on maps** Measurement labels are abbreviated; no period is used after the abbreviation; there is no space between numeral and symbol (set name of feature in italics; measurements in roman).

Mount Rainier
14411ft
4392m

- **measurements in text** Measurements are given in English measure; units of measurement are spelled out, not abbreviated.

The trout weighed three pounds.

1) In text with specific measurements or when measurements are unit modifiers, the English measure is first, followed by the abbreviated metric equivalent in parentheses. Set metric in lowercase roman, use one space between the figure and the metric unit. Periods are not used with the metric abbreviation. Abbreviated symbol is always singular.

At 20,320 feet (6,194 m) Mount McKinley is North America's highest peak.

2) Metric is used in text only if circumstances call for it—such circumstances might include parks with a high number of international visitors, scientific usage, or a specific request by a park.

- **media** This plural noun takes a plural verb.
Media, like brochures, maps, wayside exhibits, and films, are produced for park visitors at Harpers Ferry Center.
There are no interpretive media at Rainy Day Visitor Center, but plans for site bulletins and wayside exhibits are underway.
- **metric** *see* measurements.
- **Mexican War** *see* U.S.-Mexican War.

- **military ranks** Abbreviate rank if used with complete name; spell out rank if used with last name only; in subsequent references, may use last name without rank (if specifically requested by a park, rank can be spelled out when

first used with complete name).

Gen. Robert E. Lee

General Lee

Lee advanced

Do not use the term “Brevet” in connection with any rank unless there is a reason for it and the term can be explained. Otherwise it will only create confusion.

Military Officers—ranks and equivalents

Army	Navy
[5 Stars] General of the Army	Fleet Admiral
[4 Stars] Gen. (General)	Adm. (Admiral)
[3 Stars] Lt. Gen. (Lieutenant)	Vice Adm.
[2 Stars] Maj. Gen. (Major)	Rear Adm. [upper]
[1 Star] Brig. Gen. (Brigadier)	Rear Adm. [lower]
	Com. (Commodore)
Col. (Colonel)	Capt. (Captain)
Lt. Col.	Cmdr. (Commander)
Maj.	Lt. Cmdr.
Capt.	Lt.
1st Lt. (First Lieutenant)	Lt. jg (Junior Grade)
2nd Lt.	Ens. (Ensign)

- **mission statement** The mission of the Department of the Interior is to protect and provide access to our nation’s natural and cultural heritage and honor our trust responsibilities to tribes. The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

- **money** \$35 million; \$35,000,000.

- **More Information format** Stack information on separate lines for easier reading.

For More Information
Cabrillo National Monument
1800 Cabrillo Memorial Dr.
San Diego, CA 92106-3601
TTY/619-224-4140; 619-557-5450
www.nps.gov/cabr

- **more than** *see over.*

- **mountain lion** *see cougar.*

- **mountaintop**

- **nation** *but the Nation’s Capital.*

- **National Park Service** *not* “the Park Service” (to avoid confusing with state parks).
 - **national park, national parks, national monuments** Lowercase unless part of a proper name. *see* capitalization.
 - Many national parks charge entrance fees.
 - Congaree National Park is in South Carolina.
 - Cabrillo and Lava Beds national monuments are in California.
 - **National Park System**
 - **national seashore** *but* Fire Island National Seashore.
 - **Native American** Avoid unless requested by specific groups. *see* American Indian.
 - **north, northern** Lowercase compass directions; minimize use of capital letters except for specific regions (or popular place names).
 - Acadia is northeast of Boston.
 - California’s North Coast.
 - **NPS** When do I use an article? Initialisms like NPS are read as a series of letters. Typically if NPS is a noun there *is* an article. If NPS is used as an adjective there is *no* article. *see* acronym; *see* initialism.
 - The Friends Foundation funds programs that are beyond the financial capacity of the NPS. (noun)
 - Acquiring new acreage is in accordance with applicable law and NPS policy. (adj.)
 - **North (the)** *see* Civil War.
 - **numbers** Spell out numbers one through nine; use figures for 10 or greater; if a series of numbers appears in a sentence, use above guidelines. Spell out a numeral at the beginning of a sentence (regardless of amount), or rewrite.
 - Yesterday two mules slid off Bright Angel trail.
 - The three hikers passed by eight overlooks and 15 waterfalls.
 - Forty-five species of birds are found in the park.
- Use commas within numbers greater than 999 (but not within dates) *see* dates.
- More than 1,000 bats live in Black Hole Cave.
 - Northern Plains Indians lived along the Upper Missouri River for over 9,000 years.
 - The smallpox epidemic of 1837 killed thousands of Northern Plains Indians.
- Note: use judgment and be consistent throughout the media.* Style guides disagree; some spell numbers one through nine and use figures for 10 and greater; others spell numbers one through ninety-nine and use figures for 100 and greater—all have exceptions.
- **one-way** If used as an adjective; one way if noun; *never* write 1-way. *see* round-trip.
 - Cedar River Gorge is a one-way loop road that winds through old-growth forest.
 - There is more than one way to reach the campground.

- **over** This may be used as an equivalent of more than. Traditionally “over” referred to spatial relationships and “more than” referred to quantity and numerals. Today, “over” is preferred but “more than” may be used as necessary if it aids clarity.

Over 1,100 men died in the battle.

We encountered winds of over 50 miles per hour as we flew over Snoqualmie Pass.

Trailers over 30 feet long are prohibited on Corkscrew Pass.

More than 800 brown pelicans flew over Anacapa Island.

- **pack animals** *but* livestock.

- **panther** *see* cougar.

- **park** *but* Olympic National Park.

- **park area in more than one state** List states in alphabetical order separated by a space, forward slash, and a space.

Blue Ridge Parkway North Carolina / Virginia

Cumberland Gap National Historical Park Kentucky / Tennessee / Virginia

Yellowstone National Park Idaho / Montana / Wyoming

- **parklands**

- **patriot** *see* American Revolution affiliations.

- **people/persons** Traditionally, *persons* was used for small groups (three persons), and *people* with large groups (hundreds of people). Today, most writers use *people* even for small groups.

Three people signed up for lunch-time Spanish classes at Saguaro National Park.

- **percent** Spell out “percent” in text (one space between numeral and spelled-out form); use % symbol in scientific writing and in tables (no space between numeral and symbol).

The director issued a Servicewide announcement that all NPS employees will receive a 50-percent raise.

2006 Hantavirus Report

Deer mice population on Minnie Island	1,000
Population captured and tested for hantavirus	850
Cultures resulting in positive testing	60%

- **PFD** Personal flotation device; spell out at first mention with PFD in parenthesis.

Always wear a personal flotation device (PFD) when boating on Lake Roosevelt.

- **poisonous** *see* snakes.

- **possessive** If a singular noun, add ’s (apostrophe and s) whatever the final consonant. *see Elements of Style*, Strunk and White, rule 1. *see also Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition*, possessives: general rule, exceptions, and options. Avoid awkward usage; be consistent throughout the project. *see ships, see Hawaiian words.*

the cat’s tail

but Grant Kohrs’ longhorns roamed the open range.

- 1) If a plural noun ends in s, add only an apostrophe.

The visitors’ entrance is on the left. Cannon fire set the officers’ quarters ablaze.

2) Plural nouns not ending in s, add 's (apostrophe and s).

women's rights
alumni's feelings

• **p.m.** *see* time of day.

• **President, president** Capitalize president only as a formal title before one or more names: President Reagan, Presidents Ford and Carter. Lowercase in all other uses.

President Clinton visited Harpers Ferry NHP on Earth Day, April 1998.
Lincoln was president during the Civil War.
She is running for president of the United States.

• **presidency**

Roosevelt assumed the presidency at a time of great social ferment.

• **presidential**

but Rosa Gonzales received the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

• **prickly pear cactus**

• **pronghorn** Pronghorn not a true antelope; clarify at first mention with "often called antelope."

• **quotations** Display or headline type: set quotation in italics with no quotation marks (author credit in roman type).

A curious ensemble of wonderful features. John Wesley Powell, 1869

1) Capitalize first word: if quotation is a complete sentence or introduced with a colon or comma; or dialog; also lines of poetry.

Chief Joseph said, "From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever."

2) Do not capitalize first word: if quotation is fragmentary and placed in running text (without comma or colon).

Chief Joseph said he would "fight no more forever."

• **quotation marks** Place period and comma within quotation marks. The dash, semicolon, and question mark go within if they apply to the quoted material; they go outside if they apply to the whole sentence.

Gayle asked, "What shall we do?"
Bill shouted, "The meadow is on fire!"

Common expressions and slang. If colloquial expressions or slang are well-known to readers, it is not necessary to enclose them in quotation marks. But, expressions or words that are unfamiliar should be in quotation marks so people don't take them literally.

Bands of trappers explored the network of rivers west of the Mississippi for hundreds of miles in search of "soft gold"—the pelts of fur-bearing animals.

• **rain forest**

• **ranger** *but* Ranger Baker.

• **rebel** *see* Civil War.

• **red-tailed hawk**

- **Representative** A civil or military title preceding a full name may be abbreviated. Preceding a surname only, the title is spelled out. *see* initials, military ranks, surnames, and titles.
 - Representative Pinkerton began his first term in 1909.
 - Rep. Grant Pinkerton encouraged President Taft to sign the Arizona Statehood Act in 1912, making it the 48th state.

- **Revolutionary War** *see* American Revolution affiliations.

- **rivers** Columbia River *but* Columbia and Snake rivers.

- **round-trip** Hyphenated, both as an adjective and as a noun.

- **ruin** Avoid unless included in proper name; use dwelling, site, structure. *see* abandoned.
 - Ancestral Puebloan people built these dwellings more than 1,000 years ago.
 - The 2.5-mile trail to White House Ruin is on the canyon’s South Rim Drive.

- **RV** Abbr. for recreational vehicle.
 - Recreational vehicle (RV) parking is available at Deerlodge campground.

- **salt water** If used as a noun; saltwater, if an adjective.

- **scientific names** Latin names of plants and animals (genus and species) are set in italic type. Always capitalize genus names, but never capitalize species names even if they are in a capitalized title. Divisions higher than genus (phylum, class, order, family) are set in roman type and are capitalized.
 - In late spring Atlantic horseshoe crabs, *Limulus polyphemus*, climb ashore in Delaware Bay, where females deposit eggs.

- **seagulls** *see* gulls.

- **sea life, sea star** *but* seabird, seaside, starfish.

- **self-guiding trail** *not* self-guided; avoid writing simply “nature” (most trails are nature trails in some way) or “interpretive” trail (visitors may expect a ranger-led tour).

- **Senator** A civil, legislative, or military title preceding a full name may be abbreviated. Preceding a surname only, the title is spelled out. *see* initials, military ranks, surnames, and titles.
 - Senator Truman began his second term in early 1941.
 - Sen. John Quincy Adams supported Thomas Jefferson in the Louisiana Purchase.

- **sexist language** Not appropriate. Rewrite gracefully to avoid awkwardness; avoid “he/she.”

work force	<i>not</i> manpower
surname	<i>not</i> maiden name
founders	<i>not</i> founding fathers

- **she** A female; use “it” *not* “she” for a country, ship, or nature.
 - Portugal raised its flag for the last time over Macao in December 1999.

- **Shenandoah Valley** *but* the valley.

- **ships, aircraft, trains, spacecraft, vehicles** Names of ships, aircraft, spacecraft, and artificial satellites are set in italics. Abbreviations before the

name, if used, are set in roman. Do not use periods in the abbreviation preceding a ship name. When forming the possessive, the “s” is set in roman.

Note about ships: Use “it” not “she.”

A ship is a seaworthy vessel too large to dock unassisted, *but* write ferryboat and gunboat.

USS *Arizona* or *Arizona* *Challenger’s* crew

Spirit of St. Louis *Missouri’s* turret

Sputnik motivated the United States to take action.

1) If the name occurs in text that is already set in italics, such as some quotations and captions, then the name is set in roman.

Sputnik motivated the United States to action.

The greatest loss was on board USS Arizona.

2) Designations of class or make, names of trains, and space programs are capitalized but not set in italics.

Chrysler Imperial Project Mercury Boeing 747

the train they call the City of New Orleans

3) Generic terms for vessels, aircraft are neither capitalized nor italicized.

submarine space shuttle

- **shuttle bus** *not* shuttlebus. Be consistent with local signage.
- **slack water** If used as a noun; slackwater, if an adjective.
- **small game**
- **snakes** Poisonous or venomous? Herpetologists may prefer venomous, but the words are interchangeable in everyday usage. Poisonous is perhaps the more easily understood term.
Poisonous snakes live in the canyon. Watch where you put your hands and feet.
- **spaces—one or two in text composition** On a typewriter use two spaces after a period. On a computer (or for typesetting) use one space after a period; *see Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition.*
- **Spanish language, accents, special characters, punctuation**
Many Spanish words include accented vowels and the ñ with a tilde. The spelling is wrong without these marks. Questions and exclamations require inverted leading punctuation marks.
see Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition and other sources.
en los años de 1760 el Río Bravo
¿Dónde está el parque nacional, por favor?
¡Toma un galón de agua por persona por día!
- **Spanish language, capitals** Capitalize only the first word in titles (books, exhibits). Forms of address (Mr., Dr. etc.) before names are lowercase.
see Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition and other sources.
El desierto chihuahuense (The Chihuahuan Desert)
Golondrinas puebleras (Cave Swallows)
el señor Tomás López el doctor Garcia

- **Spanish language, compound names** If a Spanish name contains “de”, which means “of” or “from,” it must be lowercase. Avoid dividing compound names of persons and places at the end of lines. *see* Spanish language, word division. *see Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition* and other sources.

Hidalgo de Parral
 San Antonio de Béxar
 don Juan Ponce de León
 Hernando de Soto but De Soto National Memorial (park name)

- **Spanish language, word division** Divide Spanish words after a vowel or group of vowels; do not divide two or more adjacent vowels. A single vowel may not stand alone at the end of a line. Spanish *ch*, *ll*, and *rr* are considered single characters—do not divide. Avoid dividing proper names. Compound place names are considered one word—do not divide.

see Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition and other sources.

bue-no mu-*jer*
 ene-ro *not* e-nero uni-dad *not* u-nidad
 San Diego Cabrillo

- **Spanish, Spaniard** Either is correct if referring to people. Spanish is used commonly today; Spaniard is more formal. Avoid using “the Spanish” as a collective noun if you mean “the Spanish governor” or “the Spanish colonists.”

- **south, southern** Lowercase compass directions; minimize use of capital letters except for specific regions; southern Appalachians.

- **South (the)** *see* Civil War.

- **Star-Spangled Banner** The national anthem of the United States.

The lyrics were written in 1814 by Francis Scott Key after witnessing the bombardment of Fort McHenry in Baltimore, Maryland, by British ships during the War of 1812.

- **state** state government, state regulations.

- **state name abbreviations**

1) in addresses only Use U.S. Postal Service two-letter abbreviations only with full addresses with ZIP codes.

AZ ME WA

2) in brochure and exhibit text Use these state abbreviations (if not addresses):

Ala.	Ariz.	Ark.	Calif.	Colo.	Conn.	D.C.	Del.	Fla.
Ga.	Ill.	Ind.	Kans.	Ky.	La.	Mass.	Md.	Mich.
Minn.	Miss.	Mo.	Mont.	N.C.	N.Dak.	Nebr.	Nev.	N.H.
N.J.	N.Mex.	N.Y.	Okla.	Ore.	Pa.	P.R.	R.I.	S.C.
S.Dak.	Tenn.	Tex.	Va.	V.I.	Vt.	Wash.	Wis.	W.Va.
Wyo.								

Seven states are not abbreviated:

Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, and Utah.

3) in handbooks Write out full names for all states (except in addresses).

- **streets** Maple Street; but Cypress and Larch streets.

- **subject/word agreement** “Everyone (singular) will get their (plural) chance to see the cave,” is becoming more accepted to avoid gender-specific language—but try to rewrite!

Every visitor will get a chance. *or*
 All visitors will have a chance.

- **sun**
- **superintendent** *but* Superintendent Benally.
- **surnames** Avoid Mr. and Mrs.; use full name (including initials), first and last names together, or last name alone. *see* titles.
 - Maggie L. Walker organized the first black student school strike in the U.S. (*not* Maggie organized).
 - Carl and Lillian Sandburg lived in North Carolina.
 - Greene slipped away before dawn on June 20, 1781.
 - but* Dr. King [Martin Luther King Jr.]
- **telephone numbers** 123-456-7890 is preferred style (hyphens), but (123) 456-7890 is acceptable (be consistent within the project).
- **temperature** 32°F or 20–32°F in winter (en dash; no space after degree symbol).
 - Expect temperatures in the 80s and 90s°F in summer.
- **timberline** Avoid, use tree line.
- **time of day** 8 a.m., 2 p.m.; spell out noon and midnight.
 - At 4:30 a.m. a mortar shell from Fort Johnson arched across the sky.
 - President Lincoln arrived at noon, and the meeting began.
 - She took the midnight train to Georgia.
- **titles** A civil, legislative, or military title preceding a full name may be abbreviated. Preceding a surname only, the title is spelled out. *see* initials, surnames.
 - Pres. George Washington proclaimed the first National Day of Thanksgiving in October 1789.
 - President Lincoln invited Frederick Douglass to the White House in 1863.
- **Tory** *see* American Revolution affiliations.
- **trailhead**
- **TTY** Text telephone; this is a more inclusive term than TDD. Number precedes regular voice number, “Call TTY/301-123-4567; 301-123-8910.” If number is the same, Call TTY/voice 301-412-1212.
- **turn of the century** Ambiguous; avoid unless meaning is absolutely clear.
- **underground** *but* Underground Railroad.
- **Union** *see* Civil War.
- **unique** Avoid; use only if truly one of a kind.
- **United States, U.S.** United States, a noun (spell out). U.S. an adjective (no space).
 - Lyndon B. Johnson was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1948.
 - The United States is part of the North American continent.
- **U.S. government**
- **U.S.-Mexican War (1846–1848)**

- **venomous** *see* snakes.
- **visitor center** *but* Mount Rainier Visitor Center.
- **wapiti** *see* elk.
- **website** the Web, World Wide Web, and Internet.
- **west, western** Lowercase compass directions; minimize use of capital letters except for specific regions (or popular place names); the Pacific Northwest; the West is west; West Coast.
- **western red cedar**
- **wetland** *not* wet land.
- **wheelchair** *see* disabled.
- **Whig** *see* American Revolution affiliations.
- **whites/white settlers** Avoid as a sweeping statement about non-Indian people. Non-Indians, whether resident or passing through territories, were of varied ethnic origins. Consider using a verb followed by a preposition (such as “settled in” or “settled on”). Avoid writing—“French missionaries settled the Mississippi valley.”—because it implies, incorrectly, that the areas were uninhabited before that time. *see* Euro-American; *see* explorers.
- **white-tailed deer** *not* whitetailed or whitetail deer.
- **wildfire**
- **wildlife**
- **word division** *see* *Word Division, 1987, Supplement to United States Government Printing Office Style Manual* and *The American Heritage Dictionary of The English Language, Third Edition*.
1) Divide according to natural pronunciation so that the part of the word left at end of line suggests the whole word.
capac-ity *not* capa-city serv-ice *but* Robert Ser-vice
- **world heritage site** “(Park name) is listed as a world heritage site, the principal international recognition for natural and cultural areas of global significance.”
- **Yankee** *see* Civil War.
- **year-round**
- **ZIP code** In addresses use ZIP + 4 when possible; contact parks, local post offices, or the Internet.