HARPERS FERRY CENTER FOR MEDIA SERVICES

Learn more about what we do and how we can help with your media needs at
WWW.NPS.GOV/HFC

The newly constructed Harpers Ferry Center opened its doors in March 1970.

WHAT IS HFC?

At the Harpers Ferry Center for Media Services (HFC), we are committed to enhancing the visitor experience in national parks through the use of relevant, compelling media. By offering products and services that reach across disciplines, we help parks shape visitors' experiences from the moment they choose to visit.

For more than 50 years, HFC has delivered high-quality interpretive products and services that meet visitors' needs. These products:

- **Are designed by leading experts**
- **Feature innovative solutions to ensure engaging and meaningful visitor experiences**
- **Align with the NPS brand and vision**
- **Integrate accessibility from the very beginning**
- **Offer scalable solutions that work within your budget and other constraints**

HFC

We stand ready to help you get your work done. As you embark on projects, we will work with you to discover the stories that resonate with visitors and then select the best solution to connect their interests and needs with core resources and messages. We will support you throughout the process.

Let's get started.

HFC

MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES

MISSION: We are passionate about working with parks and programs to create memorable, meaningful, and accessible experiences while preserving our nation's natural and cultural heritage.

VISION: Inspiring visitors to experience parks.

CORE VALUES: Our core values guide everything we do, all day, every day. They shape how we work with you, our collaborators in parks, partner organizations, and businesses, and with each other. Our commitment to these values helps ensure that products meet your needs and the needs of park visitors.

Accessibility: We are committed to providing accessible, inclusive experiences to all visitors.

Accountability: We deliver results, practice transparency, and strive to exceed expectations.

Advocacy: We work on behalf of park visitors.

Collaboration: We embrace the collaborative nature of our work and facilitate projects with NPS staff, partners, contractors, and stakeholders.

Creativity: We believe new ideas and insights are essential to our success.

Customer Service: We offer world-class guidance and expertise to meet the needs of our customers.

Respect: We value diverse skills, interests, and perspectives.

Teamwork: We succeed by fostering teams that value a culture of trust and the contributions of all.

CORE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

The six core products and services of HFC stretch across disciplines. They leverage staff skills and expertise in diverse technical, creative, and business fields.

Consultation and Technical Assistance: We provide subject matter expertise, technical support, training and education, graphic research and acquisition, and quality assurance. HFC staff can help troubleshoot AV systems in parks, review your sign designs, offer advice on copyright and use rights for images, answer questions about accessibility for exhibits and digital media, and so much more.

Planning: Planning is the foundation for every successful project. The planning process—where we work with you to identify audiences, needs, and possible solutions—is just as important as the final plan. We provide planning services for media, signs, waysides, historic furnishings, integrated pest management, and collections management.

Guidelines and Standards: We know that sometimes you just want to do the work yourself. Our guidelines and standards are intended to help you create exceptional products. We deliver NPS brand and graphic support; 504 and 508 accessibility support; a variety of templates, guidelines, and standards; and quality assurance. These guidelines and standards are based on—and often even establish—industry standards, best practices, and emerging trends and technology.

Project Management: Experienced HFC staff offer the level of support you need to complete your projects, both small and large. We provide a full suite of project management services including cost estimating, budget and schedule tracking, contract management, and contracting officer's representative (COR) services. Whether you need an accurate, comprehensive cost estimate to help you secure funding, assistance writing a contract for a new project, or someone to serve as a COR for your project, our knowledgeable staff are here to help.

Media Services: We provide creative services for exhibits, waysides, signs, films and videos, publications, cartography, and mobile applications. We also provide historic furnishings, audio description, and braille services. We conduct research and development for new and emerging media, materials, and methodologies. In addition to providing contract services, we offer in-house planning and design by skilled, award-winning staff.

Museum Conservation and Collection Services: We provide object treatments, on-site assessments, exhibit guidance, emergency response and recovery services, and training. We maintain and provide access to the physical objects and digital archives of the HFC Commissioned Art and NPS History collections.

HOW WE DO IT

Interdisciplinary teams bring together staff with the skills and expertise needed for each project.

AV, Exhibits, Waysides, Apps, and Signs

identify need ▶ estimate cost ▶ secure funding ▶ select/ prioritize ▶ plan/ design ▶ produce/ fabricate ▶

Interpretive Planning

gather data ▶ assess condition ▶ engage stake-holders ▶ estimate cost ▶ receive funding ▶ produce/ approve plan ▶

Publications

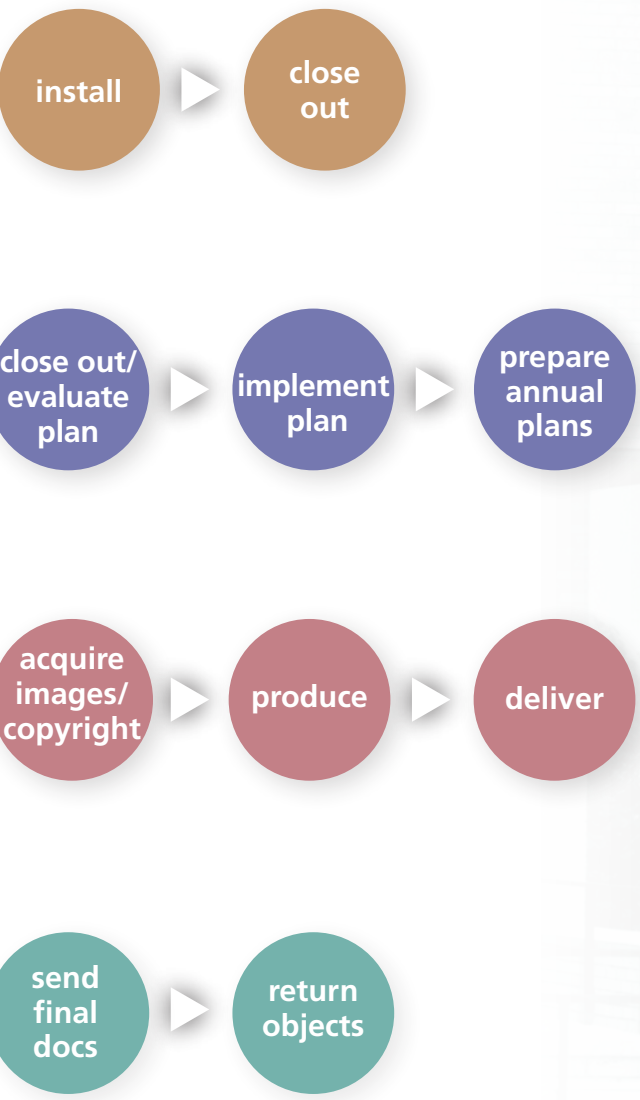
identify need ▶ answer question-naire ▶ select/ prioritize ▶ visit park ▶ prepare project brief ▶ review layout ▶

Museum Conservation

identify need ▶ gather data ▶ estimate cost ▶ secure funding ▶ plan visit/ object delivery ▶ complete work ▶

You are an essential part of these teams, as you know the subject matter better than anyone.

While each project is unique, the processes we follow fall into a few general categories. See **Getting Started** for links to more information about these products and services and their associated processes.



HFC's location on a hillside overlooking the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers inspires creativity.

BENEFITS OF WORKING WITH US

With so many options for creating meaningful visitor experiences, why should you work with HFC?

HFC staff have strong technical skills and expertise in planning, design, equipment, and NPS and industry standards. When you work with us, you're getting a team of people that understand the project from beginning to end. We're there to support your needs, from setting standards to developing specifications to translating schematics through design, fabrication, and installation.

HFC provides business management expertise in addition to design expertise. We have the experience needed for developing, processing, and managing contracts for technical and specialized media projects.

HFC assumes responsibility for projects. We provide project management and COR services so you have more time to focus on the work that matters—delivering a memorable experience to park visitors. We work to keep your project on schedule and on budget through an established system of checks and balances.

HFC offers quality assurance to ensure projects meet national standards. Our quality assurance process creates confidence that your project meets a variety of NPS and industry standards at every stage of development.

GETTING STARTED

What do you want to do? How do you do it?

So you've identified visitor needs that can be addressed by media services. Where do you start?

Read over the descriptions of what we do in the following pages and look at the INTERPRETIVE MEDIA SELECTION GUIDANCE for advantages and limitations of each type.

If you think one or more of these may address your needs, check out the online resources and examples.

Contact us! Send an email using the appropriate email address (found in sections below), and one of our professional staff will respond.

We look forward to working with you!

IMAGE AT TOP
Media products like these wayside exhibits at Kenai Fjords National Park are designed to include accessibility features.

IMAGE BELOW
Braille can be incorporated into tactile exhibits, park brochures, and other publications.

ACCESSIBILITY

Visitors with disabilities are entitled to the same information and park experience as everyone else.

To assist with this, we maintain the NPS Accessibility Guidelines, which offer accessible design and presentation solutions for interpretive media. We provide technical assistance regarding accessibility for audiovisual products, tactile maps, indoor and outdoor exhibits, and braille and large-print brochures. We produce audio description for videos, apps, exhibits, publications, and waysides and install assistive listening systems in visitor center theaters and exhibits.

accessibility@nps.gov
go.nps.gov/hfc-accessibility

HFC

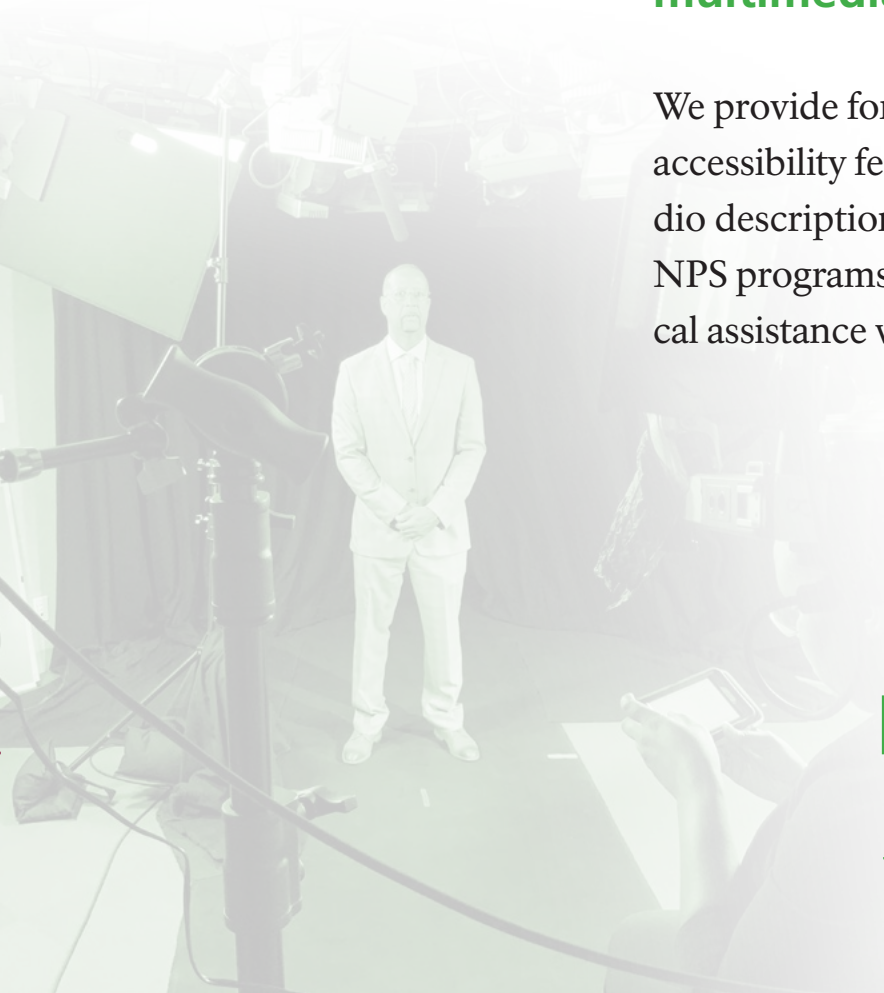
IMAGE AT TOP
Actors are filmed on site for use in Colonial National Historical Park's welcome film.

IMAGE BELOW
A professional film studio at HFC features state-of-the-art equipment.

AUDIO VISUAL ARTS

HFC staff and contractors plan, design, and produce programs in a variety of formats, including ultra-high-definition video, audio programs, and interactive multimedia.

We provide foreign language versions as well as accessibility features such as captioning and audio description. We also maintain an archive of NPS programs and footage and provide technical assistance with audiovisual systems in parks.

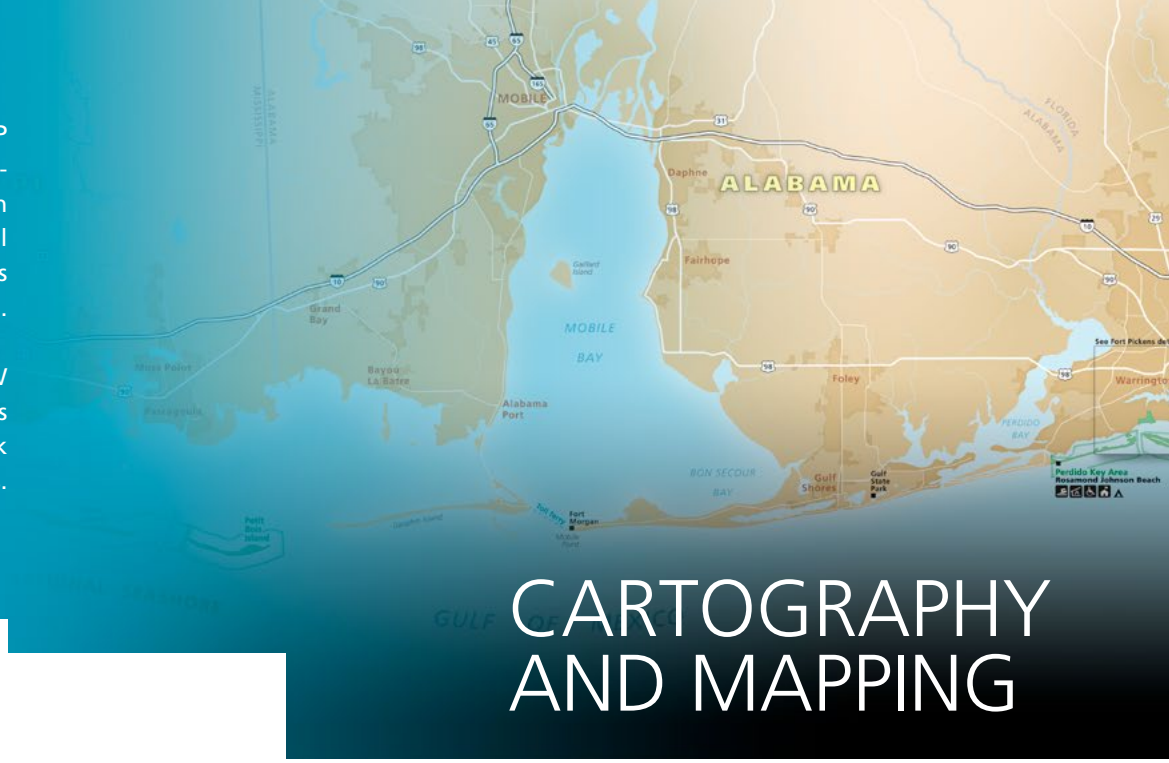


nps_hfc_av@nps.gov
go.nps.gov/hfc-av

HFC

IMAGE AT TOP
Cartographers create detailed maps of parks such as Gulf Islands National Seashore, for publications and other media.

IMAGE BELOW
Cartographic diagrams share details of park landscapes.



CARTOGRAPHY AND MAPPING

Maps present information about a park in a visual way.

Our cartographers create custom park brochure maps, landscape panoramas, cartographic diagrams, mobile maps, and 3D site maps. To help you create your own maps, we maintain a library of public domain map symbols, elements, and patterns used on NPS maps.

hfc_cartography@nps.gov
go.nps.gov/hfc-maps

HFC

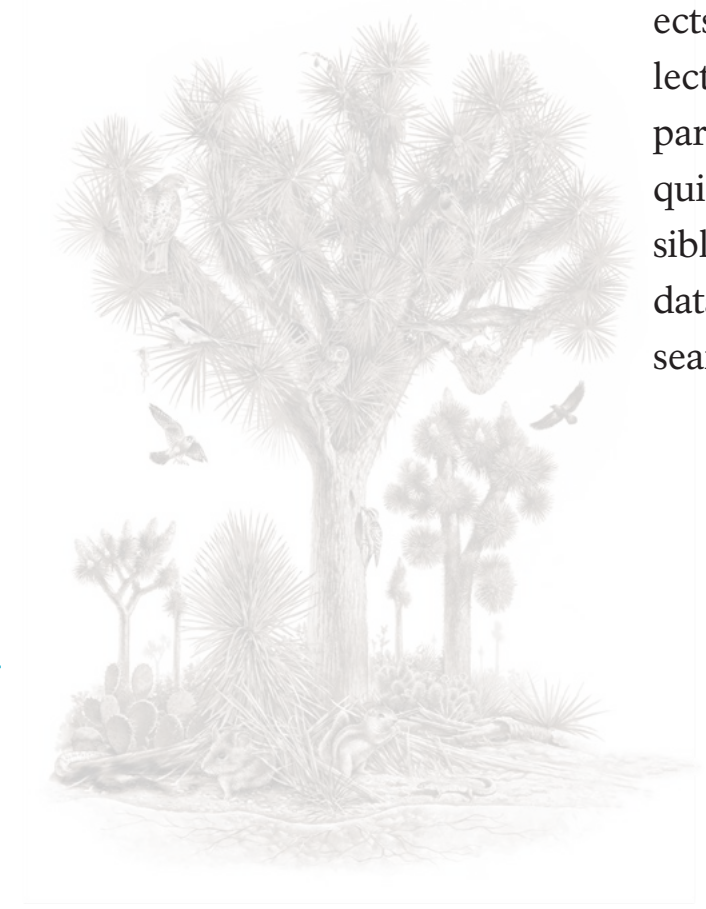
IMAGE AT TOP
Ice-age fauna artwork by Beth Zaiken was commissioned for the Waco Mammoth National Monument brochure.

IMAGE BELOW
Desert scene in Joshua Tree NP illustrated by Bob Hynes.

COMMISSIONED ART COLLECTION

When included in interpretive media, artwork helps visitors envision and understand stories in parks.

The Commissioned Art Collection contains more than 11,000 pieces of art purchased or produced by HFC for interpretive media projects. We maintain the physical and digital collection, give access to digital products, and help parks stay within the artwork's contractual requirements. Most of the art collection is accessible to NPS staff through an online, searchable database. The art collection is available for research by appointment.



hfc_commissioned_art@nps.gov
go.nps.gov/hfc-art

HFC

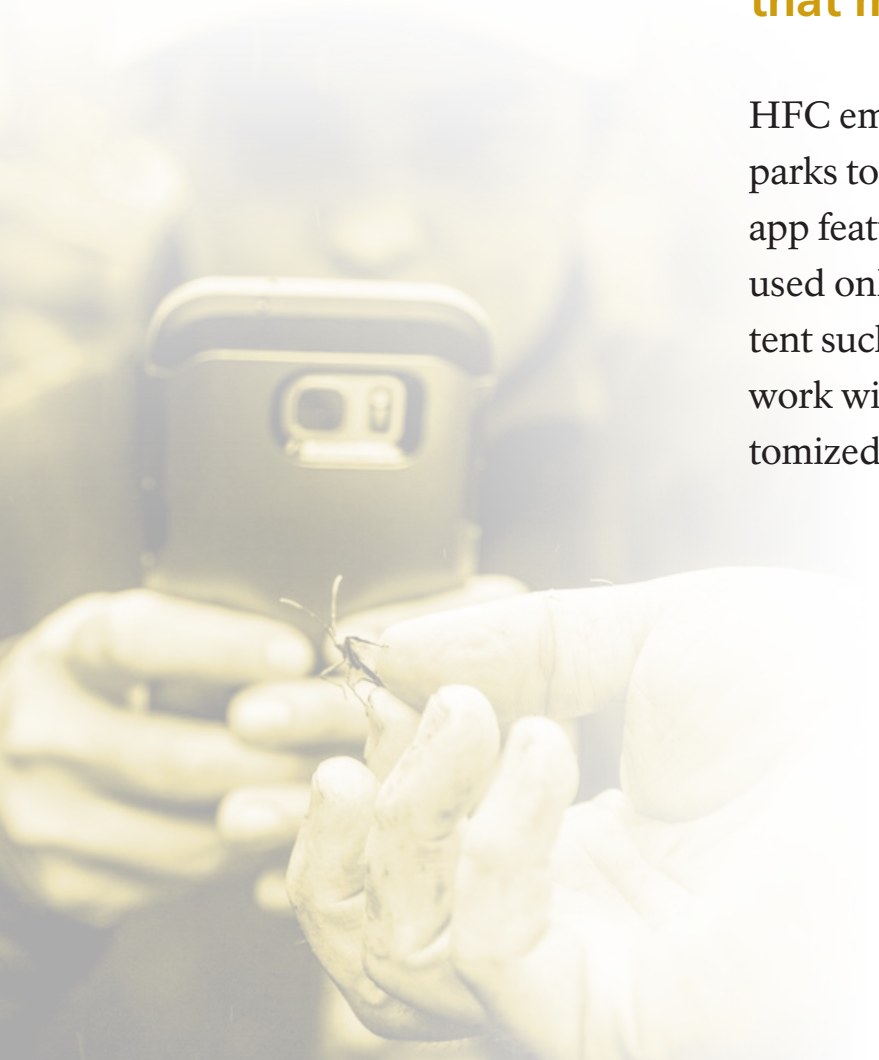
IMAGE AT TOP
Apps enhance visitors' on-the-ground experience in parks.

IMAGE BELOW
Digital media can be an important educational tool.

DIGITAL MEDIA

Mobile apps and other forms of digital media can enhance visitors' experiences by helping them plan their trips and discover the stories that make our parks special.

HFC embraced mobile apps early, working with parks to create custom mobile apps. The NPS app features park-specific content that can be used online and offline as well as national content such as news and alerts. HFC staff will work with parks to plan, design and deliver customized digital content on mobile devices.



apps@nps.gov
go.nps.gov/hfc-apps

HFC

IMAGE AT TOP
Indoor exhibits such as these at Jefferson National Expansion Memorial are designed to meet visitor needs and fit the space.

IMAGE BELOW
Objects are an important part of indoor exhibits.

INDOOR EXHIBITS

Indoor exhibits help orient visitors, increase understanding of park stories, and facilitate connections to park resources.

Exhibit development is primarily accomplished by contracting with professional design firms. HFC staff manage exhibit planning and design and fabrication contracts. For some projects, HFC staff can provide exhibit planning and design services directly to parks.

hfc_exhibits@nps.gov
go.nps.gov/hfc-exhibits

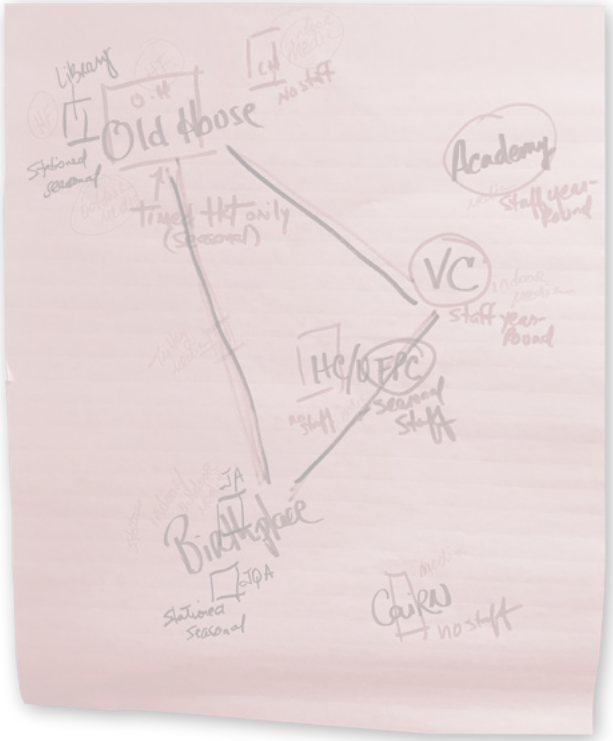
HFC

IMAGE AT TOP
Park staff plan the visitor experience for President's Park.

IMAGE BELOW
Planning is a process.

INTERPRETIVE PLANNING

Interpretive planning is a strategic process that defines the overall interpretation and education goals of a park.



Effective interpretive planning defines visitor experiences, recommends ways to facilitate those experiences, and ensures their accessibility. Interpretive planning is intentionally flexible, interdisciplinary, and responsive to park needs. Parks may work with HFC or a regional office or independently contract interpretive planning services.

hfc_ip@nps.gov
go.nps.gov/hfc-ip

HFC

IMAGE AT TOP
Object treatments, such as cleaning animal models, may be performed in the lab.

IMAGE BELOW
Conservators also preserve on-site objects, such as the torch on the Statue of Liberty.

MUSEUM CONSERVATION

HFC has the largest conservation service in the NPS, covering specialties such as textiles, paper, wooden artifacts, metals, and decorative arts, ethnographic, and natural history objects.

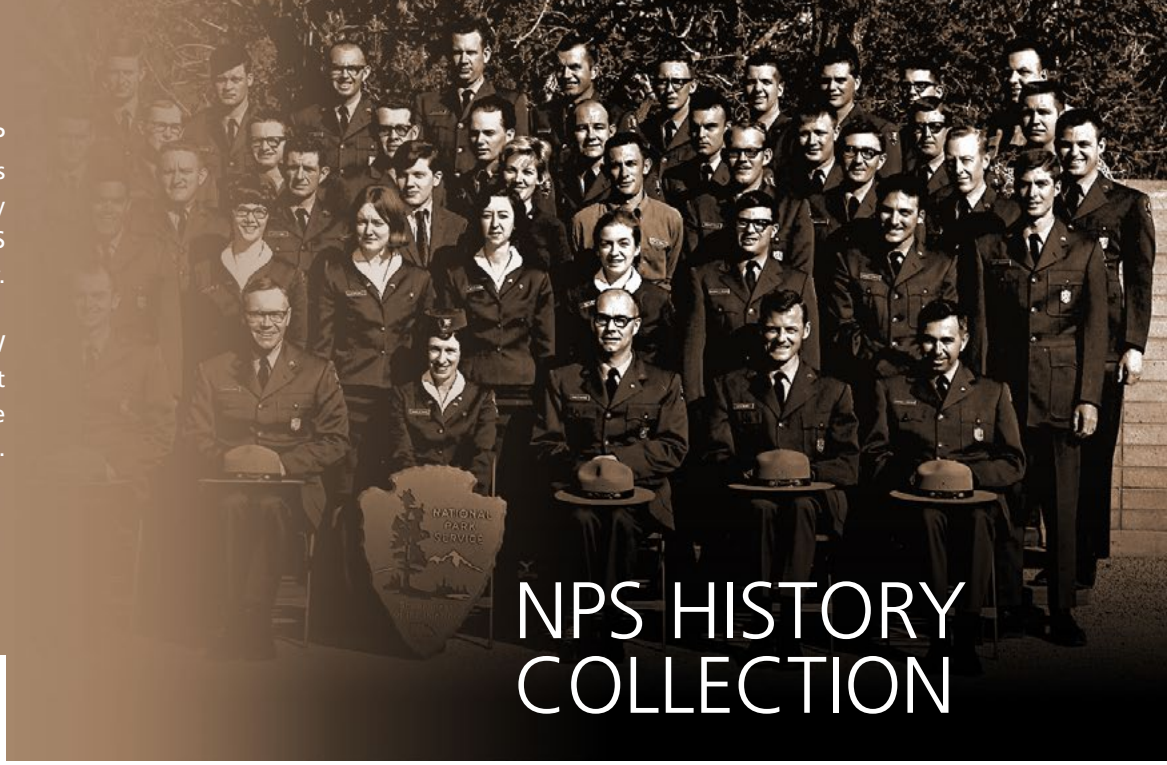
Our conservators provide professional conservation services for NPS museum collections. These services include object treatments, on-site assessments of collections, exhibit and preservation planning, emergency response, and training.

hfc_conservation@nps.gov
go.nps.gov/hfc-conservation

HFC

IMAGE AT TOP
This photo of park rangers in the 1960s is one of many photos that capture NPS history.

IMAGE BELOW
The iconic ranger hat features prominently in the NPS Uniform Collection.



NPS HISTORY COLLECTION

The NPS History Collection preserves the stories of the history, culture, management, resources, challenges, and successes of the NPS.

It comprises more than 5 million documents and objects, from early conservation movements and efforts to establish a National Park System to ongoing work protecting and sharing the diverse resources of our national parks. Over 400,000 photographic images provide visual evidence of how NPS management and park uses change over time. More than 1,100 interviews with NPS staff and others capture the history, adventure, humor, tragedy, and camaraderie of working for the NPS. The iconic ranger image is showcased by objects in the NPS Uniform Collection, reflecting public perceptions of the NPS and detailing how roles in the NPS evolve. The history collection is available for research by appointment.

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go.nps.gov/hfc-collections

HFC

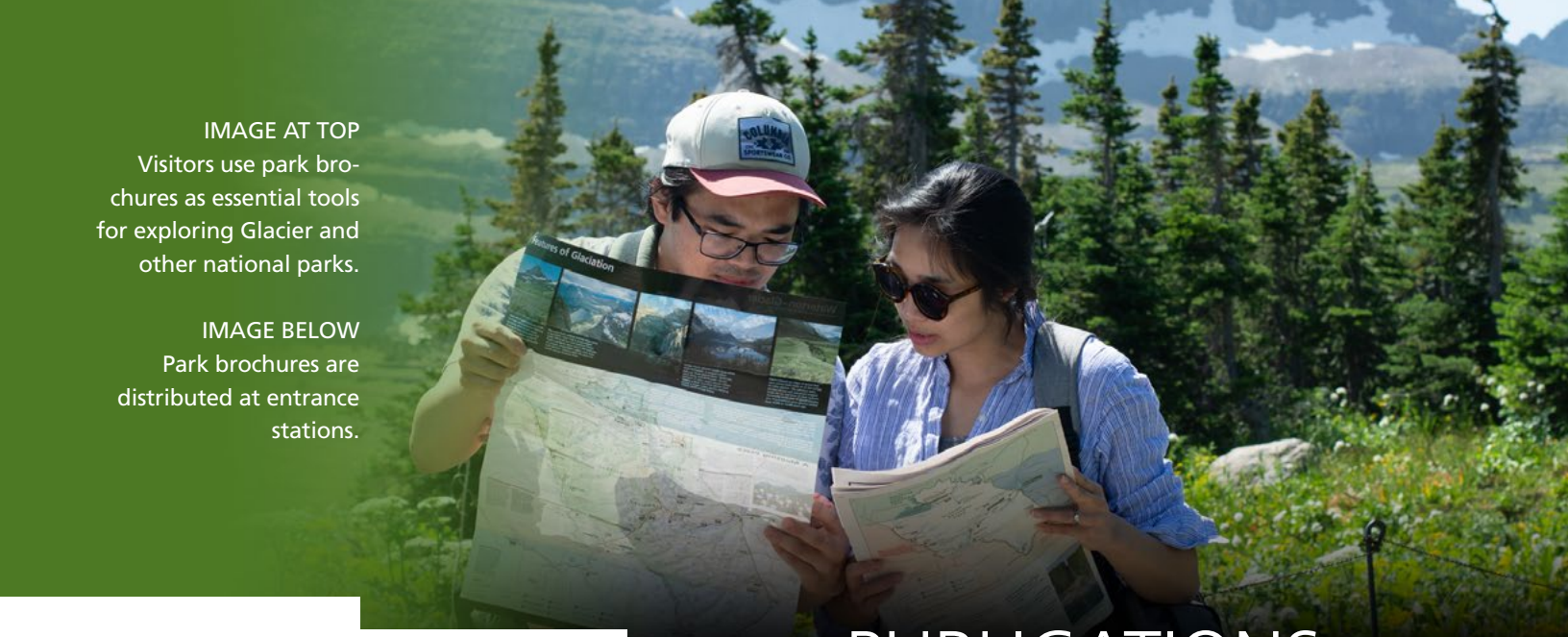


IMAGE AT TOP
Visitors use park brochures as essential tools for exploring Glacier and other national parks.

IMAGE BELOW
Park brochures are distributed at entrance stations.

PUBLICATIONS

Park brochures (aka "Unigrids") convey NPS identity, parks' national significance, critical safety and stewardship information, and a sense of relevance for diverse audiences.

Historic photos take visitors back in time, and original illustrations take them far beyond what they can see with the naked eye. Custom-designed maps emphasize significant features and include the places visitors want to go. We work with parks to create new brochures and reprint existing brochures to keep parks stocked with current editions.

hfc_publications@nps.gov
go.nps.gov/hfc-pubs

HFC

IMAGE AT TOP
A sign identifies the visitor center at Wright Brothers National Memorial.

IMAGE BELOW
HFC staff provide on-site assistance for sign plans.

SIGNS

Well-placed signs improve the visitor experience.

Every proposed sign should have a purpose, a reason for being there; comprehensive sign plans can help avoid clutter. Our standards for identity, motorist guidance, and visitor information system signs help maintain consistency throughout the National Park System. We can create a master sign plan for your park, draw up or review designs for small (micro-purchase) projects, and contract for larger projects. We can also develop cost estimates and scopes of work and guide you through your options for obtaining signs.

hfc_signs@nps.gov
go.nps.gov/hfc-signs

HFC

IMAGE AT TOP
The most notable example of NPS graphic design is the NPS Arrowhead.

IMAGE BELOW
Detail of NPS Arrowhead

VISUAL IDENTITY AND BRAND MANAGEMENT

The NPS brand includes graphic standards that guide the design of a broad range of NPS communication media.

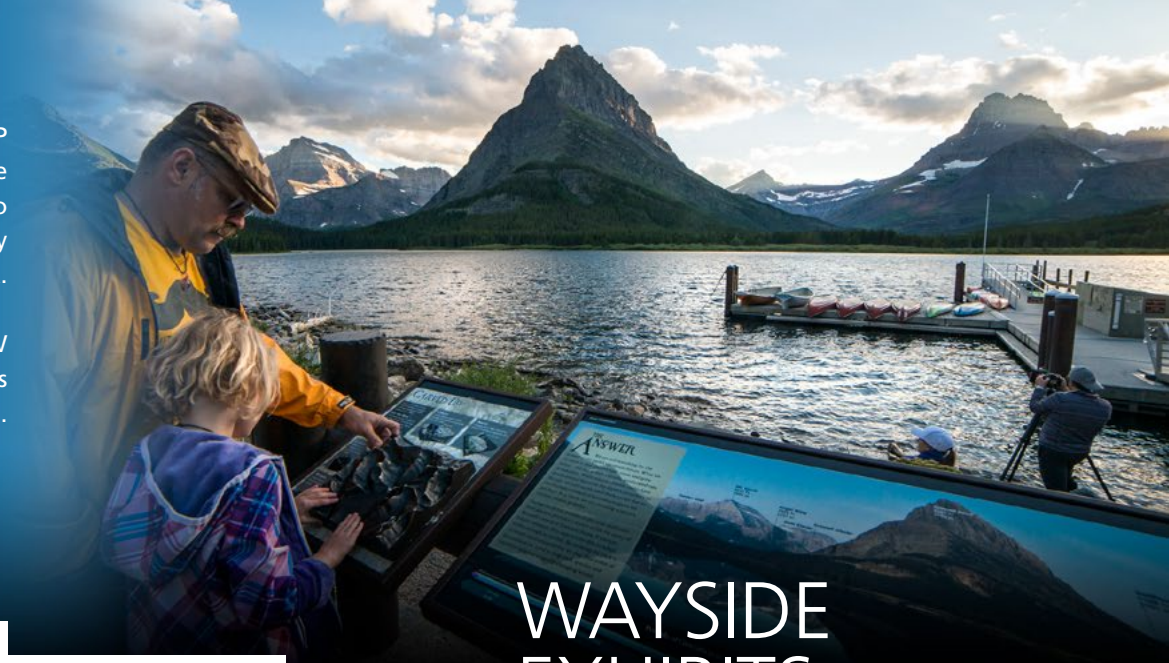
Guidelines and templates for the NPS Arrowhead, standard typefaces, business cards, and publications help us achieve more consistent design in our visual communications. The HFC Editorial Style Guide, along with a Spanish-language style guide, can answer your questions about terms and phrases specific to the NPS.

brand@nps.gov
go.nps.gov/hfc-branding

HFC

IMAGE AT TOP
Visitors use a tactile element on a wayside to explore the topography at Glacier National Park.

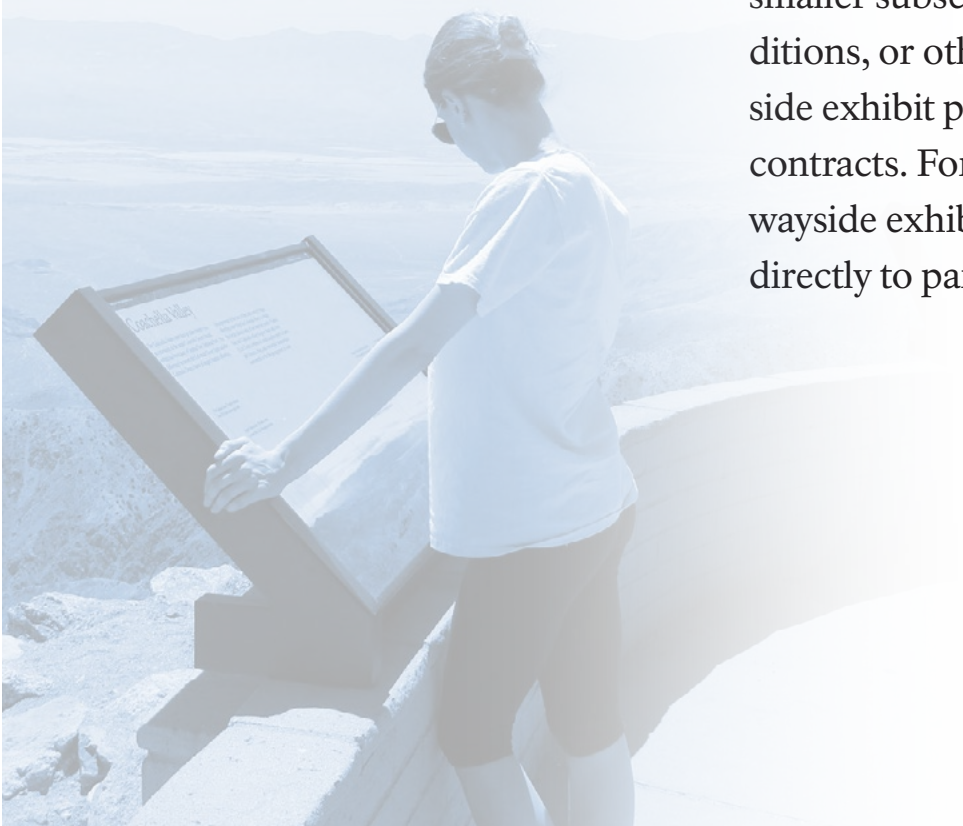
IMAGE BELOW
Waysides orient visitors to what they are seeing.



WAYSIDE EXHIBITS

Effective wayside exhibits enhance a direct and meaningful connection between visitors and the landscape they are experiencing.

Wayside exhibit projects ideally begin with park-wide planning to identify all desired waysides. At that point, exhibit projects may be split into smaller subsets based on funding, seasonal conditions, or other factors. HFC staff manage wayside exhibit planning and design, and fabrication contracts. For some projects, we can provide wayside exhibit planning and design services directly to parks.



hfc_waysides@nps.gov
go.nps.gov/hfc-waysides

HFC

DOING BUSINESS WITH US

Projects are accomplished through contracts, both Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) and competitive, or by in-house creative services staff. HFC manages planning, design, and fabrication IDIQ contracts for waysides and exhibits and design-build IDIQ contracts for audiovisual presentation systems. We have in-house conservators to assist parks with their conservation needs. Each year, approximately 200 new contracting actions totaling more than $10 million are processed through HFC. At any given time, HFC is managing active media and conservation projects valued at more than $75 million.

No matter which route you take, there are a number of administrative tasks necessary to get your project done. Once you start a project with us, we will work with you to complete those tasks—contracting, budget, invoicing, travel, and more. We have specialists on staff to manage the administrative side of your project, and our project managers will work with you to coordinate what needs done and when.

HFC

HFC

THINKING AHEAD

Tips for a successful project

Before you embark on any media project, taking the time to answer a few questions can set you up on the right track. Here are a few things to think about:

- Who is your audience?
- What do they need?
- When do they need it?
- What issues are you trying to solve?
- What's your message?
- What's the condition of your existing media?
- What are your priorities?
- Do you have funding?
- Do you have staff to dedicate to the project?
- Do they have the necessary skills and knowledge?
- Do they have enough time to meet project milestones?
- Will HFC staff serve as the COR?
- Who needs to review products?

HFC

ENSURING SUCCESS

There's no getting around it—media projects can be complicated with lots of moving parts. Depending on the scale, some may take years to complete. HFC's processes are intended to keep projects moving forward and, ultimately, to deliver quality results on time and on budget. But...we need your help.

Here are some actions you can take to help a project succeed:

Get management support early in the planning process.

Talk to us before you submit the project request. We can walk through your needs and what you're trying to accomplish, provide feedback on the appropriate interpretive media to use, and make sure all necessary information is included. (See interpretive media selection for advantages and limitations of different types of media.)

When you request a cost estimate, share your project proposal so we understand the context and give you an accurate estimate.

Communicate with us as you secure funding. Let us know when you think you'll have funding so your project is in the queue by the time funding is available.

Collaborate with park staff in other divisions, including resource management, facilities, and visitor and resource protection so potential issues are identified early and everyone is on the same page.

Think about existing projects in your park and how you can leverage the work already being done, such as updating your park brochure based on research from a new exhibit project.

Dedicate a project champion and point of contact on the park staff to distill information, gather and consolidate comments, and serve as the liaison with HFC staff.