

Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Long Range Interpretive Plan



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Introduction

What is a Long Range Interpretive Plan?

A Long Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) provides a 5-10 year vision for a park's interpretive program.

A facilitator skilled in interpretive planning works with park staff, partners, and outside consultants to prepare a plan that is consistent with other current planning documents.

Part 1 of the LRIP establishes criteria against which existing and proposed personal services and media can be measured. It identifies themes, audiences, and desired experiences. Within the context of Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) requirements, it lists results-oriented strategic goals and poses management questions that interpretation might address.

Part 2 describes the mix of services and facilities that are necessary to achieve management objectives and interpretive mission. It identifies promising partnerships and includes an implementation plan that plots a course of action, assigning responsibilities and offering a schedule of activity.

When appropriate, Appendices provide more detailed discussions of specific topics.

The completed LRIP forms a critical part of the more inclusive Comprehensive Interpretive Plan (CIP).

Detailed explanations of both the LRIP and CIP are found in NPS-6, Chapter III, the National Park Service's Interpretation and Visitor Services Guidelines.

Part 1

Background for the Interpretive Program



Park Purpose, Significance, Mission

Purpose

Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site (NHS) was created to...

- Interpret the significant role played by the Allegheny Portage Railroad and Pennsylvania Mainline Canal in American history.
- Use surviving canal and railroad resources to illustrate that role.
- Preserve those cultural resources associated with the railroad that are located within the park's boundaries.
- Enter into cooperative agreements to preserve and interpret railroad and canal resources not within park boundaries.

A statement of purpose emerges from legislative language and existing planning documents. It states the reasons a park was estab-

Significance

Allegheny Portage Railroad NHS is considered nationally significant because...

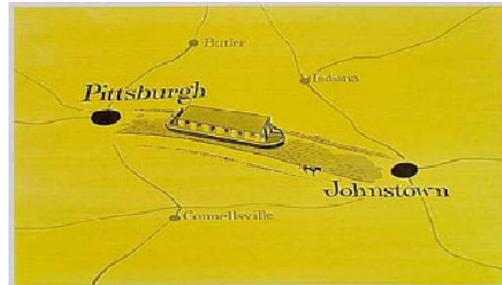
- The railroad was “one of the great engineering wonders of its day” (U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, 1963). The railroad was the first to apply emerging technologies (including steam and locomotive power, containerized cargoes, wire rope, business practices, and tunnel construction) to the problem of surmounting the Allegheny Mountains.
- The Pennsylvania Mainline Canal, including the Allegheny Portage Railroad, was an early (and perhaps the first) intermodal transportation system.
- The Allegheny Portage Railroad and Pennsylvania Mainline Canal shaped patterns of regional economic and social development, and helped sustain Pennsylvania's economic well being for over 20 years.
- Construction of the railroad, combined with the Pennsylvania Mainline Canal, exemplified the competitive spirit among several eastern cities (New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore) and states (New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland) for commercial access to the Ohio River Valley.



Significance statements explain why the park and its resources are important. They provide historical and national context.

Mission Statement

It is the mission of the National Park Service to preserve and maintain the natural and cultural resources of Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site and to interpret those same resources to the visiting public and the scientific and scholarly community.



Interpretation in Existing Planning Documents

Public Law 88-546, approved on August 31, 1964, authorized Allegheny Portage Railroad NHS. The law specified that the site could include up to 950 acres of land and portions of the “Pennsylvania Canal, the Lemon House, the summit of the Allegheny Portage Railroad, the Skew Arch Bridge, incline planes numbered 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 and the levels between them, the Portage Railroad tunnel, and such other land and historic features as may be necessary to illustrate the significant role of the Allegheny Portage Railroad and the Pennsylvania Canal in the Nation’s history.”

To preserve and interpret “the remaining portions of the Allegheny Portage route not included within the national historic site,” the law also authorized cooperative agreements “with the State of Pennsylvania, political sub-divisions thereof, corporations, associations, or individuals.” It specifically mentioned erection and maintenance of “tablets or markers” as appropriate goals for these agreements.

The House committee report that accompanied this law elaborated on the history of the railroad calling it “one of the great engineering wonders of its day.” This report regretted the fact that it was not possible to include the entire railroad route within the site, but explained that those remnants that were included would “serve to remind those who stop to enjoy [them] of the part the Allegheny Portage Railroad played in the competition between Pennsylvania and its neighboring States to develop a route to the west, of its important role in the development of the trans-Appalachian region, and of its significance as a New World engineering achievement.”

When the Department of the Interior assessed the proposed national historic site in a report to the House committee, it not only summarized the scope of the combined canal and railroad but also mentioned the “many famous men” who traveled west over the canal/railroad. It pointed out that surviving railroad resources “present the best preserved and most dramatic view of the railroad route. Therefore, the challenge and accomplishment of the railroad can best be understood and interpreted through protection and use of these planes and levels.”

Congress approved a site boundary change in 1978 and authorized additional funds to rehabilitate the Lemon House for “visitor and administrative use” in 1986, and Staple Bend Tunnel in 1999. The 2001 boundary changes will help facilitate the development of a recreational trail from the park’s historic summit area to the foot of Incline #10.

Park Legislation & Legislative Intent

A variety of planning documents provide guidance to park managers. A brief summary of what each says about interpretation can be instructive.



The General Management Plan (GMP)

The General Management Plan for Allegheny Portage Railroad NHS received regional approval in 1980. At that time, planners drafted the following management goals related to interpretation. However, the GMP will be updated when funds become available.

Interpretation and Visitor Services



To interpret the significance of the Allegheny Portage Railroad and the Pennsylvania Canal in the nation's economic, social, and technological history and to foster an awareness of their relationship to contemporary American society.

To promote environmental conservation and public awareness of the value of land use planning through interpretation of historic land use changes and activities, such as mining and logging, that have left their mark on the park's landscapes.

To provide limited opportunities for recreational activities that are compatible with preservation and interpretation of the park's historic resources.

Cultural Resource Management

To identify, evaluate, protect, maintain, and interpret the park's cultural resources, to preserve the original fabric and workmanship, and where necessary, to stabilize and rehabilitate them in a manner consistent with legislative mandates and National Park Service policies.

To preserve and maintain the cultural resources and the setting of the Allegheny Portage Railroad to approximate conditions during the 1834-57 period.

To identify, preserve, and maintain a segment of the Pennsylvania Canal and its historic setting to approximate conditions of the 1826-90 period.

To preserve and maintain the Blairsville section of the Pennsylvania Canal and its historic setting to approximate conditions of the 1826-65 period.

To preserve and maintain the Staple Bend Tunnel to approximate the setting and conditions during the 1832-60 period.

Visitor Transportation and Fee Collection

When needed, to develop visitor transportation systems and fees appropriate to the need and resources available so as to foster optimum resource use and interpretation.

To implement an auto tour between Hollidaysburg and Johnstown to interpret to the visitor the story of the railroad.



Cooperation

To help ensure through cooperation with other agencies, organizations, and groups that (1) work, community, and regional interests are fully considered in planning for community zoning; pollution abatement; transportation systems; recreational development; cultural resources identification, preservation, and interpretation; reduction of mine subsidence; elimination of landscape scars caused by mining and logging operations; and other matters of mutual concern; and that (2) regional land use and the plans and programs of other agencies and interests are compatible to the greatest possible degree with long-term perpetuation of park values.

To cooperate with the Johnstown Flood Museum Association and the historical societies of Blair, Cambria, Indiana, and Westmoreland counties in providing information about the railroad, canal, and associated cultural resources to visitors, and in developing programs for preservation and interpretation to achieve complementary and balanced public programs and mutual support to further historic preservation.

To develop a cooperative relationship with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to protect, preserve, maintain, and interpret the remains of the Pennsylvania Canal near Blairsville.



In order to achieve these goals the GMP recommended that...

- The Summit Unit continue to receive the most emphasis.
- The Lemon House and a segment of the railroad right-of-way be restored “to their original appearance.”
- The Skew Arch Bridge be rehabilitated.
- A trail with visitor facilities be built from the Lemon House to the village of Foot of Ten “so that visitors can hike the original route of the railroad.”
- An expanded trail system, picnic area, and environmental study area be built at Incline 10.
- A representative segment of the canal be found and preserved.
- The segment of the canal operated by the Army Corps of Engineers in Blairsville be interpreted cooperatively.
- Cooperative agreements with Hollidaysburg and Johnstown allow for interpretation of canal basins.
- Information stations be set up on an informal basis in cooperation with federal, state, and private groups to aid visitors.
- A marked, self-guided interpretive tour route follow the route of the railroad.
- On- and off-site programs be offered to schools.
- Programs of “community and regional interest” be offered at the Lemon House, including demonstrations, work reconstructions, household arts, and styles of dress.

The Interpretive Plan

An Interpretive Plan completed in 1993, identified four primary themes (see Appendix 1) and recommended modest changes to the park’s interpretive program including...

- Two additional wayside exhibits at the intersection of Old Gallitzin Road & the portage trace and at the Skew Arch Bridge.
- Implementation of an approved Furnishings Plan for the Lemon House.
- A family of trail guide publications.
- A publication that “interprets the cultural and technological themes of the park” and links the railroad to other regional resources and stories.
- Continued use of staff for fixed station assignments, roving interpretation, and expanded use of costumed interpretation inside the restored Lemon House.
- Technical assistance to help communities along the railroad route develop brochures, way-sides, and personal services.
- An interpretive trail to Staple Bend Tunnel.
- A fully developed teacher’s guide and curriculum-based educational program.
- Additional events for the amphitheater.

“The Road Ahead: A Strategy for Achieving Excellence in Interpretation & Education”

—Discover the Untold Stories, i.e., interpretive and educational programs are inclusive and present diverse perspectives and multiple points of view where appropriate and are related to park themes.

—Open New Doors to Learning, i.e., school systems, academic institutions, organizations, diverse visitors and life-long learners recognize and use parks to enhance learning.

—Invest in Children, i.e., every park will have a curriculum-based education program so that children have quality educational “park experience” during their elementary and high school years.

—Develop America’s Best Workforce, i.e., the profile of our workforce reflects the rich diversity of the United States population. All employees demonstrate the necessary competencies and approach their responsibilities with the highest degree of professionalism and innovation in order to provide outstanding customer service, to maintain subject matter credibility, and to be accountable in all aspects of the operation.

—Make Connections, i.e., every park will connect its story to the entire National Park System and will seek opportunities to link themes and build bridges with parks and partners locally, nationally, globally.

—Get Wired to the World, i.e., every park capitalizes on new and emerging technologies in order to enhance resource protection, improve customer service, and educate all audiences.

Released in 1997 by the Northeast Region of the National Park Service, “The Road Ahead” identified six goals designed to improve the quality of both interpretative and educational programming. Each park in the region should...



Mission Goals

As required by the 1993 Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), the NPS developed, and each park has adopted, a series of measurable mission goals. The broad servicewide goals listed below will be accompanied by park-specific goals prepared each year and described in an Annual Performance Plan.

Preserve Park Resources

Natural and cultural resources and associated values are protected, restored and maintained in good condition and managed within their broader ecosystem and cultural context.

The National Park Service contributes to knowledge about the natural and cultural resources and associated values; management decisions about resources and visitors are based on adequate scholarly and scientific information.

Provide for the Public Enjoyment & Visitor Experience of Parks

Visitors safely enjoy and are satisfied with the availability, accessibility, diversity, and quality of park facilities and appropriate recreational opportunities.

Park visitors and the general public understand and appreciate the preservation of parks and their resources for this and future generations.

Park visitors understand and appreciate the significance of the park they are visiting.

Strengthen and Preserve Partners

Natural and cultural resources are conserved through formal partnership programs.

Workshop participants also suggested the need to increase stewardship among park neighbors and increase local understanding of the role that the NPS plays in area resource management.

Ensure Organizational Effectiveness

Park employees represent a culturally diverse workforce and are valued and appropriately recognized for their contributions. Safe work practices and related conduct meet standards. Employee skills are maintained and enhanced.

Workshop Goals

In August of 2000 a workshop was conducted at the Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site with the purpose of developing this document. Many local historians, tourist promotion professionals, and park enthusiasts were invited to attend, the list of active participants is on page 47. After study of park documents and operating procedures the participants wanted to be certain this plan addressed the following issues in addition to the ‘traditional’ programming done while formulating a Long Range Interpretive Plan.

—Help increase visitation including repeat visitation. It should help build constituents for the park and park preservation and help develop local pride and stewardship.

—Help the general public and local residents become more familiar with and knowledgeable of the park and encourage interest among diverse populations.

—Support natural and cultural preservation efforts and programs at the site and across the region.

—Reduce litter and vandalism, encourage safety, and discourage inappropriate use by snowmobiles and other off-road vehicles.

Workshop participants also identified several additional goals that interpretation should address. Interpretation should...

Issues Related to Interpretation

Depending upon program design, interpretation can affect the basic nature of a visitor's experience and even more practically can provide solutions to real life management problems. When completed, the LRIP process will provide answers to the following unresolved issues identified by staff and workshop participants.

Identity



How does the park fit into regional marketing and promotion efforts?

How can the park establish an identity that goes beyond just the Lemon House?

Are existing road signs adequate?

Program Administration

Is there a need to adjust staffing levels and assignments to accomplish the site's interpretive mission?

What levels of funding are likely in the future? From what sources?

Are fees appropriate for some interpretive programs? Would they help establish or sustain some interpretive programs?

Program Effectiveness



Are there ways to encourage repeat visitation?

Are there ways to integrate additional canal/railroad resources into the park's program? Are there more effective ways to tell the whole canal system story? How will the Staple Bend Tunnel be integrated into park programming?

Do visitors need convenient access to more surviving canal/railroad features?

Are there "untold" stories that need to be integrated into interpretive programming?

Is there an adequate mix of interpretive media, techniques, and styles of learning?

Are school programs efficient and effective?

Is there a continued role for costumed interpretation? How can it be linked to themes, goals, and experiences?

Is there a role for changing exhibits?

Is the current balance of roving vs. scheduled interpretive programming appropriate?

Partners & Neighbors

What role should the park play in regional heritage tourism efforts?

What sorts of cooperative activity with other area sites are appropriate and possible? What sorts of links with other canal sites and towns are desirable and feasible?

What role will the park play in interpreting railroad/canal features outside park boundaries?
How can partners help to tell the broader canal/railroad story?

Can partners deliver more off-site educational programs?

What roles are there in interpretation for the Friends group, for other partners? Are there new opportunities for new support organizations?

Interpretation of Cultural Resources

What additional research is needed to support interpretation?

Are there ways to use the park's collection more effectively?

Interpretation of Natural Resources

How can interpretation help with natural resource management issues: invasive non-native plants; air quality; water quality; mine drainage; and natural resource stewardship.

Recreation

Should there be interpretive programming designed specifically for the many visitors who come to the park primarily for recreation?

How can interpretation help direct recreation to appropriate places and help with preservation of historic resources?



Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are a park's most important stories. They capture the essence of the park's resources. They represent core messages that every visitor should have the opportunity to hear.

While interpretation of any site could touch upon many stories, focused themes increase effectiveness. By offering multiple points of view and by providing opportunities for the visitor to connect emotionally and/or intellectually with the meanings of the resource, themes encourage visitors to see themselves in a park's story and discover personal relevance.

In order to develop themes for the Allegheny Portage Railroad, workshop participants first listed questions that visitors ask about the site. Then they reviewed existing theme statements and identified what they felt visitors should know. The juncture of these different and equally important perspectives resulted in the following interpretive theme statements.

I. The Context

The Allegheny Portage Railroad linked transportation's past with its future.

The railroad represents another step in the evolution of transportation. Although short-lived, it provided a firm foundation of innovation and practical creativity upon which newer, even faster transportation systems depended.

Visitor Questions Addressed...

- How did the canal/railroad change transportation? How did people and goods travel before and after the railroad?
- How long did the trip across Pennsylvania take before, during, and after the canal/railroad?
- What else was going on in the U.S. and the World?
- What happened to the canal/railroad? Why did it go out of business?
- What were the innovations that set the stage for more change or predicted the future of travel?
- Why should I care about the Allegheny Portage Railroad?
- Where else can I go to learn more about transportation history?

2. The Need

The East needed the West.

In the first half of the 19th century, because they depended on commercial links with interior America for their continued prosperity, several prominent eastern cities and states sponsored significant transportation projects. Included in these projects were the Pennsylvania Mainline Canal and Allegheny Portage Railroad. They helped Pennsylvania maintain its competitive edge in the mid-19th century American economy.

Visitor Questions Addressed...

- Why was the canal/railroad so important? What need(s) did it serve?
- When was it built? Completed?
- Who supported construction and why?
- What route did the canal/railroad follow? What did it connect?
- Who used the system? What cargoes did it carry? Who were its passengers? Anybody famous?

3. The Solution

Innovation and hard work conquered geography.

When geography blocked the way, canal and railroad engineers found innovative ways to apply emerging technologies to several existing modes of transportation. Workers, often toiling in hostile conditions, then constructed and operated the canal/railroad system up and over the mountains of the Allegheny Front.

Visitor Questions Addressed...

- What was the problem?
- Why was this particular route chosen?
- Why wasn't it all railroad? Why the mix of modes?
- What new ideas were used on the canal/railroad?
- Who designed the system? How did the design change over the years?
- Who built and ran the system? What was it like to work on the system?
- How did the inclines work? Were they dangerous?
- How much did it cost to build? Where did the money come from?

4. The Impact

Rapidly changing transportation technology made the world a different place.

The railroad and canal changed people's lives in many ways. These new forms of transportation triggered regional growth and prosperity, spawning towns and businesses all along their route. With new growth, different forms of industry developed which demanded more and more workers. By reducing travel time and cost, they made it easier for people to travel and permitted new products into many households thus changing their lifestyles.

Visitor Questions Addressed...

- What physical impact did the canal/railroad have along its route?
- How did the canal/railroad change life for those who used it or lived along it? What was life like along the route?
- Who gained and who lost because of the canal/railroad?
- How did the canal/railroad change travel? What was it like to ride the system? How long did it take?
- How did the new products carried by the system change life?
- How did the system affect immigration? How did immigrants change life along the route? How did the demographics along the route change?
- How did women participate in the canal/railroad industry and its communities?
- Did it affect families (children move away)?
- Did the system achieve what it promised? What did it achieve?

5. NPS Management

Without active management of the park, visitor use and enjoyment of the park would decline through the deterioration of natural and cultural resources and visitor facilities.

The National Park Service manages Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site to preserve and protect resources and provide opportunities for visitors to enjoy the park. The park's resources, however, are not static. Cultural resources, such as the historic culverts, buildings, sleepers, etc. are prone to deterioration by effects of weathering, vandalism, vegetation, and nearby land use changes. Natural resources, such as the forests, water, and wildlife also are prone to human and environmental impacts. Changes and losses to park resources can impact the visitor's use and enjoyment of the park.

In order to manage the resources so that current and future visitors can appreciate the story of the Allegheny Portage Railroad, the park must understand and mitigate threats. To do this, the park must inventory and monitor park resources, determine threats, and develop and implement management plans to reduce or mitigate threats. Park management develops long-term goals and policies to provide sustainable use of park resources. Visitor use facilities are designed and maintained to help visitors appreciate the park.

Desired Visitor Experiences

Based on responses during the planning workshop, interpretive programming should...

—Welcome visitors with user-friendly orientation to both the canal/railroad story and the park's facilities. There should be no confusion about how to see the site.

—Encourage visitors to see and do more related to canal/railroad/local history and facilitate future exploration of the region.

—Offer different types of experiences, including recreation. Offer variety to entice repeat visitation. Include some experiences that are fun. Offer a mix of interpretive media. Provide experiences for different audiences, learning styles, ages, etc.

—Offer an on-site educational experience that is curriculum- and standards-based. Involve teachers and students in curriculum design.

—Link the natural environment into the human history of the railroad. Connect the nature of the environment to the challenge of surmounting the mountains.

—Help visitors understand the difficulty of travel and commerce in the canal/railroad era. Help visitors grasp the scope of canal system.

—Provide at least one opportunity for personal contact with an NPS interpreter.

—Use the visitors' senses to immerse them in various aspects the railroad era. Create settings that evoke the time period. Offer activities that represent life along the railroad.

—Help visitors turn back the technological clock to an era without many inventions now taken for granted.

—Help visitors turn back the social clock to an era when race, gender, and class were viewed differently but many personal aspirations and motivations remained the same.

—Help visitors connect the park's themes to similar stories in their own town/city.

In addition to the stories communicated during the visit and the issues addressed by interpretation, it is important to think about the nature of the visit itself. What will visitors do? What hands-on experiences will help them grasp the importance of the railroad? How will visitors feel, what impressions will emerge, and what can we do to provide a visit that is both enjoyable AND meaningful?

Visitor Profile

Annual visitation in 1999 reached 112,000, an apparently stable level reached following the higher visitation that accompanied the introduction of new facilities in the early 1990s.

Existing

A survey of visitors to southwestern Pennsylvania conducted in 1992 revealed the following about visitors to Allegheny Portage Railroad NHS...

—Seventy-four per cent of the site's visitors arrived in family groups, however only 32% included children 16 and under.

—Sixty-seven percent of all visitors were seeing the site for the first time.

—Fifty-seven per cent lived outside the region (Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fayette, Fulton, Huntingdon, Indiana, Somerset, and Westmoreland counties).

—Forty-six per cent estimated that they spent less than one hour at the site; only 10% spent over three hours.

—While on site, 77% watched the film. Only 14% took a tour and nearly as many (13%) had a picnic.

A 1995 survey conducted by Penn State University revealed the following...

—Twenty-five percent of all visitors were between the ages of 0-20, 20% were between the ages of 21-40, 31% were between the ages of 41-60, and 24% were over 60.

—Median household income was between \$40,000 and \$59,999.

—The education level of nonresident (outside the 9-county area) visitors was higher than that of residents (75% of nonresidents had some college vs. only 56% of residents).

—The size of resident groups tended to be larger; resident visitation was a family affair.

—Two-thirds of all resident visitors had visited the site previously compared to only one-tenth of nonresident visitors.

The Statement for Interpretation, prepared in 1991, estimated that...

—Forty percent of all visitors arrived in summer, 24% arrived in both spring and fall, while the remaining 12% arrived in winter.

—Few visitors (less than 1%) do not speak English.

—Perhaps only one out of every 100 visitors is a person of color or a resident of a country other than the United States.

—A substantial number (63% in 1999) of visitors come to the park for recreation.

Potential

Workshop participants felt that the LRIP should explore new ways to increase visitation among the following groups...

—Local residents

—All grades of school groups (both on- and off-site use) & home school students

—Bus groups

—Visitors outside the typical national park user profile (white, well-educated, middle/upper class)

—Travelers on major regional highways

—Workshop participants also recommend that the LRIP explore ways to encourage those who currently use the site for recreation to visit the historic resources and interpretive programs as well.

In addition, the following groups might be attracted in smaller numbers...

—Seniors

—Rail, canal, and technology interest groups

—Service and civic clubs and organizations

—Scout groups

—Nature and outdoor groups

Planning also should ask whether the park wants to encourage other specific groups to visit in larger numbers and, if so, develop programming that will accomplish new visitation goals even while continuing to appeal to those already coming to the site.



Part 2

Proposals



Interpretive Program Description

Organization

Interpretation at Allegheny Portage Railroad (ALPO) will occur in a variety of venues. At times it will be linked to specific physical spaces—the Lemon House, for example, or along the park’s trail system. Other interpretation, however, is not as dependent upon location. Increasingly visitors will use the Internet and the park’s website for information. Materials are sent to visitors in response to telephone and mail inquiries. Educational programming can occur in a number of places, both on- and off-site.

A satisfactory site visit, however, will follow a certain logical progression. The interpretive proposals suggested in this LRIP will work best, although not exclusively, if visitors receive information before they arrive, leave their vehicles in the parking lot, walk to and visit the visitor center, walk to the Engine House and Lemon House, and finally see other railroad- and canal-related sites. That sequence of visitation provides a structure for organizing this section of the LRIP, supplemented by proposals related to two additional types of less site-specific interpretive opportunities—educational programming and special events.

For easy reference, look for bullets to find each proposal. Each bulleted item also is listed in the Implementation Plan toward the end of this document.

The text that accompanies the proposals will attempt to summarize the nature of each idea and, when there is a strong connection, will refer the reader to Part I for justification.



Proposals

Proposals designed to communicate to audiences off-site should be linked to the groups targeted in the “Visitor Profile” in Part I. They also will “help the general public and local residents become more familiar with and knowledgeable of the park” (see “Workshop Goals”).

Pre-arrival & Off-site Orientation

Internet

The Internet is an increasingly useful tool for communicating with certain off-site audiences. The “Road Ahead” goals listed in “Interpretation is Planning Documents” specifically mention the need to “get wired” by using emerging technologies.

ALPO already has focused attention on discovering effective uses of the Internet for interpretation. In the future, the park also will...

- Initiate a regular review of their website to keep it accurate and state-of-the-art.
- Further refine the purpose of the website, focusing on specific audiences (see “Visitor Profile” above). Specifically, the park will work with schools and teachers to make better use of the Internet for educational programming. More generally, the park will make sure that the website efficiently directs each type of user to the information needed.
- Provide adequate time for staff training (both for current staff to learn new Internet skills and for additional staff to learn basic website manipulation) and for site maintenance.
- Encourage website links with other parks and organizations.

Mail & Promotion

Many audiences will continue to learn about the park via more traditional channels. Promotion of the park is one key to increasing repeat visitation (see “Workshop Goals”).

- The park will maintain membership in Tourist Promotion Agencies (TPAs) and play an active role in area tourism planning.
- Working with local TPAs, staff will promote the park to traveling groups (bus and tour companies). Given limited time, staff will select and attend area conferences or special events that might attract targeted audiences.
- Staff will work closely with other area and theme-related sites to share promotional materials.
- The superintendent will identify a position responsible for coordinating public relations for ALPO.

- Staff will prepare public service announcements about the park or special events .
- Staff will design, produce, and distribute “Evening on the Summit” posters each year promoting special events.
- Staff will participate in planning for proposed regional visitor centers (Altoona Discovery Center and Hollidaysburg Canal Basin Park).
- Staff will review all materials currently mailed to visitors and make revisions based on this LRIP. New materials will reflect the themes described in Part 1, will be directed toward targeted visitor groups (see mailing list proposal that follows), and will help ensure that visitors have the desired experiences that reinforce park stories.
- Staff will maintain up-to-date mailing lists with media outlets, professional and service organizations (local groups as well as theme-related groups), schools/colleges/universities, etc.
- Staff will explore other outreach methodologies (perhaps educational outreach and radio/TV time), seeking ways to increase awareness of the park and park programming.



Phone System

- Basic, repetitive information will be provided via recorded message while more complicated inquiries will be directed to staff who will be trained to respond effectively.
- If possible, this new system will provide a TDD option for the hearing impaired. If this is not possible, a TDD will be installed at the park.

A new phone system will provide efficient access to park information.

Travelers Information Station (TIS)

- The existing TIS message will be updated whenever information changes.
- The problem with transmitter range and sign placement on the approach from the east (motorists can't hear the message if they tune-in when they see the sign) will be corrected by upgrading the transmitter or moving the sign.
- Staff will experiment with a holiday message that encourages travelers to take a safety rest break at the park.

As visitors approach the park, a recorded message is transmitted via car radio.

Off-site Signs

- To assist visitors who are not familiar with the park, staff will study the need for an additional or movable “Allegheny Portage Railroad NHS” sign at the Gallitzin exit heading west.

Arrival



Every park must consider the non-verbal messages communicated to visitors as they enter the site. Is there a sense of arrival, a feeling that this is a special place of national significance? Can visitors easily find their way to facilities or will they become confused and immediately dissatisfied? Do they, from the first moments of their visit, begin to understand who and what is the focus of the park’s preservation and interpretive efforts?

In general, the arrival experience at ALPO, the entry road and parking lot, reflects careful planning and attention to detail. Signs were custom designed and include a railroad logo.

Experience, however, suggests the need for a few modifications...

Entrance & Entry Road



- Park staff will review the signs along the entry road that provide entrance fee information and will update information as necessary. Do they make it clear what fees are charged and how to pay?
- For local and recreational users, an international sign for hikers will be added to the sign that currently marks the entrance to the picnic area.
- A wayside will be added in the picnic area for recreational users, as part of the park’s overall wayside exhibit plan.

Visitor Center

*Since some visitors are confused about how to enter the visitor center, park staff will experiment with a portable sign that clearly points toward the entrance doors. If this experiment is successful, a permanent sign will be acquired.

*The film currently shown in the visitor center does several things well and will be retained. It places the railroad and canal into context, discusses the continuum of transportation history represented by the park, and, via the narrator, begins to build a human connection between the visitor and the park's stories.

*The interior of the visitor center does not function well. Information and sales are positioned awkwardly, far from the entrance. The exhibits themselves have no hierarchy of message, follow no logical pattern, and present a fragmented story. Even interesting exhibit elements and artifacts are unsupported by effective interpretation.

In order to remedy these deficiencies...

-Four functions critical to any visitor center (welcoming, orientation, fee collection, and sales) will be moved closer to the entrance door.

-The exhibits will be redesigned to communicate the themes and experience described in Part I. In fact, these themes will be the organizing principle behind exhibit redesign. Before they leave, visitors will be able to place the railroad into context (both as an element of the Pennsylvania Mainline Canal and as an evolutionary milestone in rail technology and transportation history), explain the reasons for construction and the problems faced and overcome by engineers, and have some sense of the impact that the railroad and canal had on people's lives.

-Desired experiences will play an important role in selecting interpretive media. Clear, efficient orientation is critical. Personal contact is important. Media variety will appeal to a range of visitors with different learning styles but some exhibits will offer activities that immerse visitors in the story. These activities will help to turn back the technological clock, offering visitors a 19th century rather than contemporary view of the railroad and its accomplishments.

Although engineering and technology are important, interpretation can't stop there. The railroad and canal must be humanized. Beginning inside the visitor center, at this early moment in the park experience, planners must make a special effort to introduce visitors to the people of the railroad and canal. The approach begun by the film (use of a railroad character to tell the story) will be continued throughout the visitor center. Travelers, workers, politicians and state officials, merchants, etc., perhaps three-dimensional figures placed in mini-settings, can provide interesting human perspectives on the railroad and, more importantly, its impact on their lives.

The visitor center continues the attention to detail begun at the park entrance. Building materials as well as architectural elements incorporated into the structure, particularly the use of arches, reflect construction along the railroad.



Based upon observations of the current exhibits, planners involved in the redesign should seriously consider the following elements...



*A map showing the entire Pennsylvania Mainline Canal.

*A three-dimensional exhibit (perhaps incorporated with the map?) that illustrates the problems (geography) faced by railroad engineers, workers, and travelers.

*Models that represent the unusual variety of equipment used on the railroad over the years. Many of the existing models are artifacts themselves, each with its own history. If better interpreted and linked to themes, they will more effective. This also is true of the working model of the incline that currently sits in the middle of the visitor center. It not only is entertaining, it shows supporting structures that no longer exists and illustrates how trains were counter-balanced for the ride up and down the inclines. Finally, the working models that demonstrate the physics of railroading illustrate how interactivity reinforces interpretation.



The visitor center exhibits also must focus on today's travelers. Via a combination of interpretive media—artifacts, visually interesting graphics or audio visuals, and site bulletins or publications—they will encourage exploration of other railroad and canal sites (see “The Road Ahead” and “Desired Visitor Experiences”).

In order to encourage repeat visitation, the visitor center needs space for changing exhibits. Park staff will produce some exhibits for this space, but also will locate and use traveling exhibits or exhibits produced by park partners. A schedule will be developed for each year and staff time (or money) will be set aside for research and production. To reach the intended audiences, publicity must be handled thoughtfully.

Finally, the appearance of the interior space needs reexamination. The gray walls feel oppressive in an often cloudy environment. The high ceiling is inefficient from both heating/cooling and lighting perspectives.

Boardwalk

- The park will consider adding a wayside exhibit, near the top of the boardwalk, that invites visitors to pay close attention to the natural environment and look for evidence of natural resources used in construction (timber and rock).

Because other waysides are recommended for other locations (see below), the park will prepare a new wayside plan or amend the plan that exists. Unfortunately, that same environment creates unsafe conditions between November and March. Boards become slippery and dangerous.

- Staff will investigate ways to reduce these dangers and allow the boardwalk to remain open longer.

When the boardwalk is closed, visitors walk to the Summit Level via the old Gallitzin Road. Now surfaced with asphalt and bordered on one side by an open field, this alternative bypasses the woods for a completely different experience. Although unintended, many visitors return to the parking via this road even when the boardwalk is open.

- Since this route is used so often, staff will investigate changing the road surface to reflect its historic appearance.

- The park will consider two additional wayside exhibits, one that calls attention to the natural environment and interprets the challenges that it posed and another that interprets the road itself and the traffic that it carried.

- Finally, park staff will assess the landscaping along the road. Are there changes that could be made to reduce modern intrusions and recall the 19th century without introducing inaccurate or inappropriate features to the setting?

When it is open, the boardwalk provides an important transition between the modern visitor center and the historic setting along the Summit Level. The rocky, wooded environment along the walk reminds visitors of the terrain through which the railroad passed and makes the link between nature and history (see “Desired Experiences”).



Summit Level Landscape

- An additional wayside exhibit between the Engine House and the Lemon House is needed to explain the full Summit Level setting—other structures, road, etc.—and help visitors understand the full range of activity that occurred on site.

Engine House



The Engine House exhibit shelter provides a valuable interpretive setting for interpretation of how the inclines and stationary steam engines worked. Visitors can see the foundations of the engine house. A recreated model of the steam engine helps complete the historic setting in visitor's minds.

However, the effectiveness of the current exhibits can be increased. The static steam engine is disappointing. Visitors want to see how it worked, how the wheels turned, which parts moved.

Since the model itself cannot be animated, audio visuals will substitute. One possible solution involves a video program activated by visitors. When they touch the screen, they receive an explanation of the function of engine element that they selected and watch as it operates. In order to humanize this segment of the visit, the video could be introduced by another historic character, perhaps a steam engineer, similar to the approach used in the visitor center film. The addition of a video program is possible because a conditioned exhibit space already exists in the building.



The panels, now on the railing, that introduce machinery parts will remain, providing an alternative media for those who avoid electronic media.

The other exhibits inside the Engine House will be retained.

- As proposed in Desired Visitor Experiences above, a visit to the park should be sensory. The noise of steam engines, of cars being hauled up the mountain, of locomotives, of car couplings being loosened and attached, etc. need to be added. A hint of oil, representing the industrial nature of the site, will add scent to the air.

While visitors can see the tracks on the incline and while the full-size model illustrates the scale of the steam engine, they currently can only imagine the size of a canal boat being hauled up the mountain.

- A 1:1 scale model, positioned on the level outside the Engine House, would create a memorable impression.

The Lemon House

Since the interpretive staff have offices on the second floor of the house, they are available to greet all visitors. Workshop participants felt that personal contact was important and should be retained. However, other proposals will improve interpretation of the house...

- Ranger programs will focus on people. They will interpret three groups—travelers (what was it like to travel on the railroad?), railroad entrepreneurs (who made a living off the railroad?), and workers (who built and maintained the railroad and where did they eat and sleep?).

These people stories are an ideal way to introduce the diversity of occupation as well as socio-economic and ethnic background that the railroad and canal encouraged. A variety of people programs will encourage both first time and repeat visits.

- An audio tape will provide a musical background to the parlor. The tape can be started by the staff or triggered by a sensor as visitors enter the room.

- Park staff will work with partners and volunteers to offer quarterly events in the house. The dining space holds approximately 40 and will be used for music or entertainment (simulated traveling entertainment, political debates, etc.). perhaps combined with light food service. If offered, the food will be catered.

An interpretive fee will be collected to cover costs.

- Park staff will explore the types of reproduction items that are available and make those that are appropriate available for visitors and school groups to handle while in the house.

The Lemon House currently functions well as a combination of three refurnished rooms, supplemented with informal talks by rangers, and an additional room with wall exhibit panels. The primary stories are travel along the railroad and the impact of the railroad.



Links to Other Sites and Communities

Other complementary planning efforts (Pennsylvania Mainline Canal Greenway, regional trails, community planning particularly Hollidaysburg, and state heritage park development) are underway and the park needs to keep connected. In addition, park staff will take the initiative in several areas...

*The park needs to investigate the types of information available to the public on the history of the Pennsylvania Mainline Canal. If there are deficiencies, the park will work with other partners to develop strategies to correct those deficiencies and enhance interpretation of the Mainline Canal. This would include the Internet.

*The park, with partner participation and cooperation, will continue to offer 2-3 bus tours of railroad/canal resources in the region each year.

*Park staff will maintain a speaker's bureau and continue to deliver talks to community groups.

*Park staff will develop a list of off-site festivals and special events (like Railfest) that they will attend each year and will develop and maintain appropriate traveling exhibits.

*The park will facilitate community requests for interpretive technical assistance (training, media planning and development, educational programming, etc.) from the NPS.

*The park will cooperate and support partner efforts to get park and railroad/canal-related trails on state maps.

*The park will work with partners to develop a trail between Summit Level and Foot of Ten. This trail will offer trailheads and wayside exhibits that focus on both the railroad story and changing land use patterns visible along the trail.

*The park will continue to plan and offer a limited number of heritage "hikes" on Sundays in the summer. These programs link railroad and canal features via hiking, biking, and bus tours.

*The park will make contacts with bus operators and work through the motor coach committee of the local TPA to arrange for rangers to provide step-on talks to buses traveling through the area. However limited the contact, make these bus groups feel special.

*The park will look into the possibility of providing interpretive programs for the Amtrak trains that run between the cities of Johnstown and Altoona. If the train schedule between these two cities permits interpretive programming, the park will work with the Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum and the Johnstown Area Heritage Association. If programs were to resume, the park would recruit and train a large cadre of volunteers to provide the interpretation on the trains.



Trails

The park's trail system was created several years ago. There are questions about how these trails fit into current park needs for recreation and interpretation as well as how they link into regional trails in planning or under consideration. Is there a need for more interpretation along park trails? Should there be more interpretation of natural resources or resource issues? Etc. (See "Issues" above).



- The best way to address these trail issues is to prepare a comprehensive Trail Plan.

This plan would define needs and compare them to existing trails. If needs remain unmet, new trails will be considered. If existing trails no longer meet a need, they will be discontinued. When a trail network has been determined, all sign needs (directional, informational, and interpretive) will be summarized and, if necessary, a Sign Plan prepared.

Recreational Use & Interpretation

Like many other national parks, ALPO is used by local residents primarily for recreation. Recognizing that it is not uncommon for recreational visitors to appreciate the history and natural beauty of an area, the park will offer these visitors appropriate, low-key interpretation.

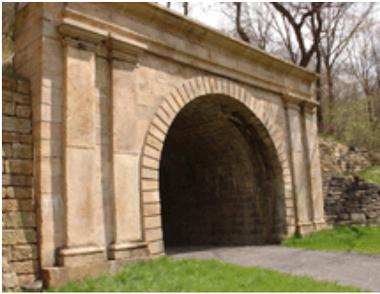
-During the summer season, rangers will offer scheduled, theme-related programs in the picnic area, perhaps in period clothing.

-The park will look at ways to increase its interpretive programs and activities in the picnic area. Possible programs for the picnic area could be special events for summer holidays (Memorial Day, July 4th, and/or Labor Day). Also new interpretive programs (historic, cultural, or natural) could be developed to start in the picnic area



-The Trail Plan referred to above will make recommendations on the need for additional signs along trails used for recreation.

Staple Bend Tunnel



The Staple Bend Tunnel unit of the park opened in July of 2001.

-From Memorial Day through October, the park will experiment with duty stationing a park employee at the trail/tunnel. This employee will have multiple responsibilities, sometimes performing maintenance tasks, sometimes interpreting, and always watching for resource management, law enforcement, and safety problems.

-The park also will experiment with costumed worker demonstrations along the trail.

Skew Arch Bridge



Currently it is difficult to reach the Skew Arch Bridge at the base of Incline 6. It sits in the middle of a busy divided highway.

-To help alleviate the problem of crossing the highway, the pedestrian crossing will be moved to a location with better sight lines. Additional highway signs at the crossing and signs facing traffic coming up the mountain may be added for pedestrian safety.

-The Skew Arch Bridge wayside exhibit will be updated by the proposed wayside exhibit plan.

Special Events

Special events are an effective way to encourage local and regional visitation (see “Visitor Profile”). They offer a different type of park experience and thus appeal to different audiences. Components of these events also can help to provide memorable experiences (see “Desired Visitor Experiences”).

As mentioned above, the Allegheny Portage Railroad park staff will continue to participate in a limited number of off-site special festivals. In addition, staff will...

- Investigate creation of a circulating exhibit about the park or railroad/canal that can be loaned to partners who will be participating in off-site events.

- Continue to plan and offer theme-related performances and speakers in the amphitheater near the visitor center on Saturday nights in the summer (“Evening on the Summit”). Many of these programs are popular with local residents and some attract hundreds of attendees.

- Investigate new programs including drama, street theater, and staged historical debates.

- Contact underrepresented groups and discuss adding new programs that would appeal to their constituents.

- Investigate interest by other groups in using the amphitheater for appropriate events.



Costumed Interpretation

Costumed interpretation can provide memorable experiences and is particularly effective in humanizing a story. For those reasons it must be carefully planned and delivered. Existing or expanded use of period clothing will depend upon research that ensures accuracy. Staff appearance must reflect period demeanor and custom. Cost must be “reasonable.” As with all interpretive media, costumed interpretation must directly support the park’s themes.

- The current use of costumed interpretation at ALPO is being evaluated. The intent is to make these contacts more participatory by including hands-on activities for visitors and to offer visitors encounters with a variety of railroad-related historical characters. Examples under discussion include surveying, political discussions, traveling shows or peddlers, and temperance rallies



Other Personal Services

In order to supplement the services provided by paid staff...

- More volunteers, particularly more college students, more retired teachers, and other retirees need to be recruited.
- A list of projects that can be completed by interested groups will be developed and maintained.

Sales



Eastern National is the park's cooperating association. The sales area is located adjacent to the visitor center desk.

-As indicated above (see "Visitor Center") the sales area needs to be relocated.

-The range of items sold by Eastern National in the visitor center needs to be adjusted to focus more on canals and less on railroads. Selected railroad titles will be phased out as they are sold.

-Possible new items include:

A canal boat model,
toys,

A canal horn,

Mid-19th century reproduction

A commemorative coin (sold in the past but not available now).

Patches and pins with a canal-related image

Site specific T-shirts and sweatshirts with a related image and interpretive connection.

A picture book (a la "Story Behind the Scenery") that includes the entire Pennsylvania Main-line Canal.

Education Programs

Both the goals (see “Interpretation in Planning Documents”) and the audiences (see “Visitor Profile”) identified by the park as priorities heighten the importance of curriculum- and standards-based educational programming. To that end the park will...

- Set up a teacher advisory group to help the park maintain and promote existing lessons and develop new programs.
- Coordinate with the Allegheny Ridge curriculum already developed.
- Concentrate available staff and resources on programs for grades 3-4 and 7-8 offered on-site.
- Investigate charging a fee for school programs.
- Work with partners to fund school trips to the park.
- Develop a group of trained resource volunteers to conduct off-site programs.
- Investigate the feasibility of initiating a summer history camp for children.
- Make contracts with area elder hostel planners and investigate integrating the park into existing programming or creating new programs.
- Focus temporary exhibits or summer summit programs on untold stories including women and minorities.



Interpretation of Resource Management Activities

-Since resource management issues are often seasonal or temporary in nature, the park will use bulletin boards to highlight those issues that directly relate to visitors or the experience that visitors will have in the park.

-As park programs are developed, particularly ranger activities, resource management issues will be mainstreamed where appropriate.



Research to Support Interpretation

In order to develop the interpretive programming recommended in this LRIP, additional research is needed in the following areas:

- Jean Moore Lemon—all facets of her life, education, role in tavern operation, etc.
- Lemon Family Employees—who they were and what they did, etc.
- Social History of Workers on the Mainline Canal—where and how they lived, their education and religion, their job skills, what they did after working on the canal, etc.
- Surviving Structures Related to the Portage Railroad—where they are located, original and current use, condition, etc.
- Irish Immigration of the 1830s—demographics like age, marital status (and family size), religion, education, and wealth as well as means (and cost) of transit to America and Pennsylvania. What happened to them?
- Staple Bend Tunnel—surrounding structures and origin of the name.
- Period Clothing (of workers, travelers, and tavern owners and employees)
- Medical Care in the Area (1830-50)—how did residents and workers find medical care, what kinds of care were available, how were injured workers treated, did the Lemon family provide an medical care, etc.?
- Locomotives and Canal Boats—what types of equipment were used on the Pennsylvania Mainline Canal and the Allegheny Portage Railroad?

Curatorial Needs

- In order to develop temporary exhibits, the interpretive staff need access to the collection and collection documentation.

Staffing

With new areas of the park opening to park visitors (Staple Bend Tunnel and a recreational trail from the top of Incline 6 through Incline 10), additional staff will be needed to maintain, protect, and provide interpretive programming. The number of new positions needed to help the park meet its responsibilities will depend on the number of days and hours that these sites will be staffed.

- At a minimum, four new seasonal interpretive positions, two seasonal visitor protection positions, and at least two new maintenance positions will be needed to fully cover the operations of these sites plus existing programs.

Action Plan

The proposals listed are described more fully in Part 2 of this plan. Each is a bulleted item. They are listed in the order in which they appear in the narrative. General headings are included for ease of reference.

Proposals	Responsible	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06
Internet						
Iniate Regular Review of Website	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Refine/Focus Website	<i>Public Affairs</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Maintain Website	<i>Public Affairs</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Mail And Promotion						
Maintain Membership in TPAs	<i>Public Affairs</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Promote Park to Targeted Groups	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Share Promotional Materials	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Prepare PSAs	<i>Public Affairs</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Produce "Evening on the Summit" Promotional Poster	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Review Mailing Materials	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Maintain Mailing Lists	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Explore Other Outreach Methods	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Produce Summer Schedule of Interpretive Programs	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X

Proposals	Responsible	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06
Telephones						
Record Repetitive Information	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Provide TDD option	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Traveler Information System						
Update TIS Message	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Correct Location of Transmitter and Signage	<i>Maintenance</i>	X				
Experiment with Holiday Message	<i>Interpretation</i>	X				
Off-Site Signs						
Study Additional Sign Needs	<i>Asst. Super.</i>			X		
Entrance						
Review Entry Road Signs	<i>Interpretation</i>		X			
Add Hiker Symbol to Picnic Signs	<i>Maintenance</i>		X			

Proposals	Responsible	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06
Visitor Center						
Rearrange VC Functions	<i>Maint/Interp/ Eastern Nat'l</i>		X			
Redesign Exhibits	<i>Interpretation</i>			X		
Encourage Visitor Exploration	<i>Interpretation</i>			X		
Plan Changing Exhibits	<i>Interpretation</i>				X	
Re-examine Interior Appearance	<i>Asst. Super.</i>		X			
Boardwalk						
Consider New Waysides	<i>Interpretation</i>		X			
Reduce Unsafe Conditions	<i>Maintenance</i>		X			
Investigate Changes to Road Surface	<i>Cult. Res. Mgt.</i>			X		
Assess Landscaping	<i>Cult. Res. Mgt.</i>		X			
Redesign Wayside at Incline 6	<i>Interpretation</i>		X			
Engine House						
Add Sensory Experiences	<i>Interpretation</i>				X	
Add 1:1 Boat Model	<i>Interpretation</i>					X

Proposals	Responsible	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06
Landscape						
Add Wayside	<i>Interpretation</i>		X			
Lemon House						
Focus Ranger Programs	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Add Audio to Parlor	<i>Interpretation</i>			X		
Offer Quarterly Events	<i>Interpretation</i>			X		
Add Touchable Items	<i>Interpretation</i>			X		
Review Upkeep of Lemon House	<i>Interp/Maint/ Cult/Curator</i>		X			
Links						
Help Develop Canal Brochure	<i>Interpretation</i>					X
Continue Bus Tours	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Maintain Speakers Bureau	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Attend Festivals, etc.	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Facilitate Technical Assistance	<i>Interpretation</i>		X			
Offer Heritage Hikes	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Provide Step-On Talks	<i>Interpretation</i>				X	
Explore Interpretation on Trains	<i>Interpretation</i>					X

Proposals	Responsible	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06
Trails						
Prepare Trail Plan	<i>Maint/Interp/ Res Mgt</i>			X		
Recreation						
Offer Programs in Picnic Area	<i>Interpretation</i>		X			
Recommend Signs	<i>Maint/Interp/ Res Mgt</i>			X		
Staple Bend Tunnel						
Experiment with On-site Staffing	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Experiment with Costumed Interp	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Skew Arch Bridge						
Move Pedestrian Crossing	<i>Contractor</i>			X		
Update Wayside	<i>Interpretation</i>		X			
Special Events						
Investigate Traveling Exhibit	<i>Interpretation</i>		X			
Continue Theme-related Events	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X

Proposals	Responsible	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06
Amphitheater						
Investigate Use by Others	<i>Interpretation</i>	X				
Costumed Interpretation						
Evaluate Use of Costumes	<i>Interpretation</i>	X				
Other Personal Services						
Recuit Volunteers	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Develop List of Projects	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Sales						
Relocate Sales in VC	<i>Maint/Interp/ Eastern Nat'l</i>		X			
Adjust Focus of Sales Inventory	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Consider New Items	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X

Proposals	Responsible	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06
Educational Programs						
Develop Education Plan	<i>Ed. Specialist</i>	X				
Set up Advisory Group	<i>Ed Specialist</i>	X				
Concentrate on 3-4 and 7-8 grades	<i>Ed Specialist</i>		X			
Investigate Fee for Programs	<i>Ed Specialist</i>			X		
Find Partners to Fund Trips	<i>Ed Specialist</i>		X			
Develop Volunteers for Off-sites	<i>Ed Specialist</i>				X	
Investigate Summer History Camp	<i>Ed Specialist</i>					X
Contact Elder Hostels	<i>Ed Specialist</i>		X			
Focus on Untold Stories	<i>Interp/ Ed Specialist</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Other Programs: scouts, new grade	<i>Ed Specialist</i>		X	X	X	X
Interpretation of Resource Mgt						
Use Bulletin Boards	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Mainstream Issues	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X

Proposals	Responsible	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06
Research Projects						
Jean Moore Lemon	<i>Interpretation</i>					
Lemon Employees	<i>(based on plan)</i>					
Social History of Workers	<i>(based on plan)</i>					
Surviving Canal Structures	<i>(based on plan)</i>					
Irish Immigration	<i>(based on plan)</i>					
Staple Bend Tunnel Structures	<i>(based on plan)</i>					
Period Clothing	<i>(based on plan)</i>					
Medical Care	<i>(based on plan)</i>					
Locomotives and Canal Boats	<i>(based on plan)</i>					
Prepare a Research Plan	<i>Cult. Res. Spec. /Interpretation</i>	X				
Curatorial						
Provide Staff Access to Collection	<i>Curator/Interp</i>	X				
Staffing						
Iniate Requests for Positions	<i>Interpretation</i>	X	X	X	X	X

Participants

Workshop Participants

Jennifer Barefoot, President, Rails to Trails of Central Pennsylvania, Inc.

Peter Barton, Executive Director, Altoona Railroader's Memorial Museum & Horseshoe Curve
National Historic Landmark

John F. Coleman, Professor Emeritus, St. Francis College

Rich Cook, Protection Ranger, National Park Service

Randy Davis, Park Ranger, National Park Service

Dick Dretsch, Architect, Philadelphia Support Office, National Park Service

Lawren Dunn, Curator, National Park Service

Brian Eick, Natural Resource Management Specialist, National Park Service

Diane Garcia, Park Ranger, National Park Service

Dan Ingram, Curator, Johnstown Area Heritage Association

Anna Leopold, Volunteer, Allegheny Mountain Heritage Committee

Lou Leopold, Volunteer & Chair, Allegheny Mountain Heritage Committee

John McManness, Park Ranger, National Park Service

Deirdre Moloney, Assistant Professor of History, Saint Francis College

Keith Newlin, Chief, Maintenance, National Park Service

Peggy Pings, Outdoor Recreation Planner, National Park Service

Bruce Reed, Chief, A, P & R, National Park Service

Rich Robinson, Maintenance Supervisor, National Park Service

Terry Roth, Park Ranger, National Park Service

Nancy Smith, Cultural Resource Management Specialist, National Park Service
Jane Sheffield, Executive Director, Allegheny Ridge Corporation

John Stith, Manager, Canal Basin Project, Borough of Hollidaysburg

Chuck Smith, Chief, Interpretation & Education, National Park Service

Nancy Smith, Cultural Resource Manager, National Park Service

John Turner, Greenways Consultant, Allegheny Ridge Corporation

Greg Zaborowski, Education Specialist, National Park Service

Paula Zitzler, Research Manager, Allegheny Heritage Development Corps

Ron Thomson, Facilitator/Writer

Appendix 1

Themes from the Interpretive Plan

The Pennsylvania Mainline Canal and Allegheny Portage Railroad were critical transportation links between the populated eastern seaboard and the developing west.

The geography of the Allegheny Front challenged engineers to find an innovative solution to link the canals of the mainline system.

The Allegheny Portage Railroad represents one aspect of a regional and national transportation continuum, beginning with early roads and evolving with canal systems, the railroad and Horse-shoe Curve, and modern conveyances.

Growth of the region and development of industry was fostered by access and transportation. A local social and economic structure developed in association with the Allegheny Portage Railroad. Many towns and businesses developed to supply and service the railroad and its passengers.

Appendix 2

Existing Resources, Facilities & Programs

The following summary of budget and staffing is adapted from the 1998 Annual Interpretive Program Report, Form 10-769.

Budget

The park's interpretive budget (ONPS) is \$427,227 or 25% of the total park budget.

The park received \$2,000 to support volunteers.

The cooperating association (Eastern National) donated \$2,943.

Total funds for interpretation in FY98 = \$432,170

Staffing

25.5% of the park's total FTE was devoted to interpretation.

The park had 6 permanent positions for interpretation totaling 5.5 FTE.

Six temporary positions for interpretation totaled 1.25 FTE.

Forty-five volunteers donated an additional .78 FTE

Facilities and Programs

The following summary of existing facilities and programs is adapted from an Interpretive Plan prepared in 1993.

Visitor Center

The Summit Level Visitor Center opened in 1992. It contains a staffed information desk, exhibits, 60-seat auditorium, rest rooms, sales, small office, and storage. A 20-minute film is shown in the auditorium.

Hours: Daily, except winter Federal Holidays, from 9 am to 5 pm

Amphitheater

This outdoor amphitheater seats 200 and has full facilities for live presentations, performances, lectures, slide shows, and films.

Engine House #6/ Exhibit Shelter

This exhibit shelter concentrates on the technology that made the railroad possible. It contains a full-scale model of a stationary steam engine, hands-on exhibits, and waysides explaining the exposed foundations of the engine house.

Lemon House

The interior of the Lemon House contains exhibits on the Pennsylvania Mainline Canal, the Allegheny Portage Railroad, and entrepreneurs like the Lemons as well as rooms refurnished to represent similar facilities along the canal/railroad.

Summit Level

Wayside exhibits and reconstructed portions of track help visitors understand the appearance of inclines and levels.

Staple Bend Tunnel

Staple Bend Tunnel opened in July of 2001. A visitor parking lot is available at the trailhead to the tunnel. Visitor can either walk or ride a bike back the two miles to the tunnel. Wayside exhibits are stationed along the two mile historic trace back to the tunnel. Park interpretive staff are on duty along the trace and tunnel during the summer months and on weekends at other times of the year.

Publications

The site has a unigrid folder. Site bulletins are prepared as needed. One book, in print for over 40 years without revision, provides the only comprehensive history of the railroad.

Personal Services

In addition to staff in the Visitor Center, interpreters offer both formal tours and informal talks. Currently, interpretive programs include the “Evening on the Summit” programs (Saturday evenings during the summer months). Heritage Hikes are offered on Sundays during the summer and early fall months. These hikes and tours provide the public with opportunities to explore other areas of the portage railroad that they might not normally see. Also, staff offer costume tours of the Lemon House and costume craft demonstrations of worker skills in building and maintaining the railroad. Other interpretive programs help visitors understand what the lifestyles of the period were like and the importance of the portage railroad.

Special Events and Programs

The parks special events are the “Evening on the Summit” programs offered in the summer, see above.

Traveler’s Information Station (TIS)

A TIS message is available for visitors who approach the park via Route 22.

Partnerships

In 1999, the park was involved with the Railfest sponsored by the Altoona Railroader’s Memorial Museum and Cresson Heritage Days. The park is working closely with the Hollidaysburg Canal Basin Project in the development of their interpretive story and how it relates to the portage railroad. Park staff also are involved with the local visitor bureaus, trail planners, heritage groups, and local universities and colleges (offering internship and volunteer experience).

Educational programs

The park’s education specialist is in the process of forming a teachers advisory group and curriculum-based educational programs.

Appendix 3

Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for Interpretive Media

All new interpretive programming will be developed according to the “Guidelines for Interpretive Media” finalized in June 1996 by the Accessibility Task Force at the NPS’s Harpers Ferry Center.

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 both 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 motion pictures, sound/slide programs, video programs, and oral history 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 will be made available. Park management will decide on the most appropriate operational approach for the particular site.

Guidelines Affecting Mobility Impaired Visitors

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 Visually Impaired Visitors

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



Guidelines Affecting Hearing Impaired Visitors

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 Learning Impaired Visitors

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 Mobility Impaired Visitors



1. Exhibit space will be free of physical barriers or a method of alternate accommodation shall be provided.
2. All pathways, aisles, and clearances will meet standards set forth in UFAS 4.3. Generally a minimum width of 36” will be provided.
3. Ramps will be as gradual as possible and will not exceed a slope of 1” rise in 12” run, and otherwise conform with UFAS 4.8.
4. Important artifacts, labels, and graphics, will be placed at a comfortable viewing level relative to their size. Important text will be viewable to all visitors. Display cases will allow short or seated people to view the contents and the labels. Video monitors associated with exhibits will be positioned to be comfortably viewed by all visitors.
5. Lighting will be designed to reduce glare or reflections, especially when viewed from a wheelchair.
6. Ground and floor surfaces near the exhibit area will be stable, level, firm, and slip-resistant. (UFAS 4.5).
7. Operating controls or objects to be handled by visitors will be located in an area between 9” and 48” from the ground and no more than 24” deep. (UFAS 4.3)
8. Horizontal exhibits (e.g. terrain model) will be located at a comfortable viewing height.
9. Information desks and sales counters will be designed for use by visitors and employees using wheelchairs, and will include a section with a desk height no greater than 32 to 34 inches, with at least a 30 inch clearance underneath. The width should be a minimum of 32 inches vertical, with additional space provided for cash registers or other equipment, as applicable.
10. Accessibility information about the specific park should be available at the information desk and the international symbol of access will be displayed where access information is disseminated.
11. Railings and barriers will be positioned in such a way as to provide unobstructed viewing by persons in wheelchairs.

Guidelines Affecting Visually Impaired Visitors

1. Exhibit typography will be selected with readability and legibility in mind.
2. Characters and symbols shall contrast with their backgrounds, either light characters on a dark background or dark characters on a light background. (UFAS 4.30.3)
3. Tactile and participatory elements will be included where possible.
4. Audio description will be provided where applicable.
5. Signage will be provided to indicate accessible rest rooms, telephones, and rest rooms elevators. (UFAS 4.30)



Guidelines Affecting Hearing Impaired Visitors

1. Information presented via audio formats will be duplicated in a visual medium, either in the exhibit copy or by printed material.
2. Amplification systems and volume controls will be incorporated to make programs accessible to the hard of hearing.
3. Written text of all audio narrations will be provided.
4. All narrated AV programs will be captioned.
5. Allowance for Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TDD) will be included into information desk designs.



Guidelines Affecting Learning Impaired Visitors

1. Exhibits will avoid unnecessarily complex and confusing topics.
2. Graphic elements will be developed to communicate non-verbally.
3. Unfamiliar expressions and technical terms will be avoided and pronunciation aids will be provided where appropriate.
4. To the extent possible, information will be provided in a manner suitable to a diversity of abilities and interests.
5. Where possible, exhibits will be multi-sensory. Techniques to maximize the number of senses utilized in an exhibit will be encouraged.
6. Exhibit design will be cognizant of directional handicaps and will utilize color and other creative approaches to facilitate comprehension of maps.

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 Mobility Impaired Visitors

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 with 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 the physically impaired.



Guidelines Affecting Visually Impaired Visitors

1. Exhibit typefaces will be selected for readability and legibility, and conform with 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 Hearing Impaired Visitors

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 Learning Impaired

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 the disabled, 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 the disabled and to describe barriers which are present in the park. These bulletins should be in reasonably large type, 18 points or larger.

Guidelines Affecting Mobility Impaired Visitors



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 the disabled.

Guidelines Affecting Visually Impaired Visitors

1. Publications will be designed with the largest type size appropriate for the format.
2. Special publications designed for use by the visually impaired should be printed in 18 point type.
3. The information contained in the park folder should also be available on audio cassette. Handbooks, accessibility guides, and other publications should be similarly recorded where possible.



Guidelines Affecting Hearing Impaired Visitors

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



Guidelines Affecting Learning Impaired Visitors

1. The park site bulletin should list any special services available to this group.

Wayside Exhibits

Wayside exhibits, which include outdoor interpretive exhibits and signs, orientation shelter exhibits, trailhead exhibits, and bulletin boards, offer special advantages to disabled visitors. 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 Mobility Impaired Visitors

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 an accessibility advisory.
4. Wayside exhibits sites will have level, hard surfaced exhibit pads.
5. Exhibit sites will offer clear, unrestricted views of park features described in exhibits.
4. Text will be concise and free of long paragraphs and wordy language.



Guidelines Affecting Visually Impaired Visitors

1. Exhibit type will be as legible and readable as possible.
2. Panel colors will be selected to reduce eye strain 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 Hearing Impaired Visitors

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 Learning Impaired Visitors

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.