



This document gives some brief technical guidelines for selecting or preparing digital image files for use by Harpers Ferry Center's Publications Group for print production of park brochures.

Image Guidelines **File Preparation**

In general it is best to simply send us what you have, and as it is. We will scale, sharpen, apply a color profile, and make other adjustments as needed to fit the specific use. Often these specifics have not been determined at the time images are requested.

The Preferred Color Type is RGB (Adobe RGB 1998)

CMYK files are no longer preferred for print, so please do not convert RGB files to CMYK or grayscale, even if they are monochrome (black and white, sepia, etc.) images. If the file is in sRGB or ProPhoto color space for example, that is okay. We will do the conversion to aRGB. If they are already CMYK or grayscale, that is okay too. We will accept files of these other color types.

The Preferred Resolution is 400ppi

Because resolution is size dependent, resolution is always stated at the final use size. But since you probably do not know the final use size, just send the largest uncompressed file you have. We will do the scaling and other conversions as necessary to tailor it to the specific use.

The Preferred File Type is Camera Raw, TIFF, or PSD

We try to avoid JPG files because JPG is a lossy type of file compression. When a file is saved as JPG, file size reduction largely comes from disposing of information. The more highly compressed, the more information is thrown away. You might not see problems in the original JPG file depending on how compressed it is, how critical you are, and often if you have something to compare it to. But any adjustments we might make to the file will be starting at a deficit. And since image editing is itself destructive it will get worse. Typical problems resulting from this are visible tone breaks in skies, flesh tones, water; loss of subtlety and the illusion of 3D space; file compression artifacts (noise); and oversharpening giving an electric or uneasy look to the image. Resaving a JPG file as a TIFF or PSD file does not bring back the information that was thrown away when it was compressed.

However it is clear that often JPG files are all that is available, and we have to make do with them. But we have a strong preference for camera raw, TIFF, or PSD files not resaved from JPG. This will have a direct impact on the quality of the brochure we are able to produce for you.

GIF files are not useable; PNG files might be useable.

The Preferred Bitrate is 16 bits per Channel

If your file is 16 bit TIFF or PSD, great—send it like that. If not, don't worry about it. 16 bits per channel gives us much more information to work with, but it is really only useful if we are doing a good bit of editing. As with JPG (always 8 bit or less) it does no good converting an 8 bit file to 16 bits. This inflates the file size but doesn't add any useable information.