

Interpretation Projects: Submission Guidelines

SANTA FE TRAIL ASSOCIATION



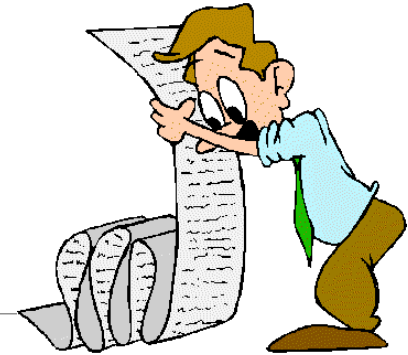
Objectives



- To establish the process for "applying" for interpretation projects that require National Park Service resources
- Provide NPS with priority of projects for SFTA so that they can plan for resources. SFTA must compete with the other Trails for NPS resources. SFTA projects must provide information so that NPS can:
 - ✓ Determine what needs to be done,
 - ✓ Who has the time to do it
 - ✓ Who will fund the project
 - ✓ Who will install signage and other required hardware
 - ✓ Ensure landowner permissions are in place
- To provide guidance and resource information for interpretation projects for Chapters where NPS support is not required.



Application Process



Wayside Project Request Form

- Planning document for wayside projects.
- Helps focus your content and identify missing elements.
- Information is required and necessary to request any assistance for a project.
- Email completed form to info@santafetrail.org

Application Process

Site name:

Your name and contact information:

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Site physical location (include address of site and GPS coordinates)



Application Process

- What is the status of the site? Is it in danger of destruction? Please explain.
- What Santa Fe Trail evidence is at this site? Is there a trail connection that is visible at the site location?
- What historical events happened at this site related to the Santa Fe Trail?
- What historical figures or nationalities were involved?



Application Process

- List the pictures you have historical or current that you have to tell your story. (what types of images are available, are they high resolution, are there any copyright issues?)
- What do you want to tell people about this site?
- What are the connection to the SFT that people can make from your story?
- Audience – who will be viewing this site?



Application Process

Theme

- What significant events happened at this site that make it important?
- What people were involved?
- What are the connections to the Trail that people could make to your story?

Summary story (one paragraph)

- What do you want to tell people about this site?



Application Process

Audience – who will be viewing this site?



Application Process

- Who owns or controls the site - landowner or county or state entity
- Name of Owner, Address, Phone Number, email :
- Has approval for the project from the owner been received? (Please note that project cannot proceed without approval.)



Application Process

- Attach landowner or right-of-way approval.**
- Funding: Do you have funds available for the project?
- If so, how much and are there spending deadlines?
- If funds are not available for the project, how do you propose to fund it?



Evaluation of Project

- Once a completed project application is received by SFTA, it is forwarded to the Interpretation Committee for review and prioritization
- The application will be reviewed by the committee, based on the information provided. Consideration will also be given for the following situations:
 - ✓ Willing landowner
 - ✓ Site is in danger
 - ✓ No other marking is present
 - ✓ Site is on the Rediscovery Tour List
 - ✓ Trail evidence is present
 - ✓ Funding is available



Evaluation of Project

- The Interpretation Committee will make recommendations to SFTA and NPS on the priority of the project to be worked on.
- The NPS will only work on projects from the prioritized list.
- So the best and fastest way to obtain NPS assistance is to prepare the Wayside Project Request Form for your project and submit it to SFTA.



Chapter Developed Projects

- Projects that will be entirely completed by the Chapter and **do not require National Park Service assistance** are not required to go through the application process.
- It is still beneficial to use the application form to ensure that the project requirements are met.
- Landowner or Right-of-Way approval forms are still required and should be submitted to SFTA for legal purposes.
- Waysides should align with the general SFTA format.
Approval is required for use of NPS logo.



Chapter Developed Projects

Chapters can contract with firms who specialize in graphic design and panel and frame fabrication. The following firms have been utilized successfully:

- **Pannier Graphics**
 - Graphic Design
 - Panel and Frame Fabrication
 - <http://panniergraphics.com/>
- **Flint Hills Design**
 - Specialize in design and fabrication of custom museum exhibits.
 - <https://flinthillsdesign.com/>
- **Tidewater Graphics and Signs**
 - 645 Church Street, Norfolk VA 23510
 - Phone: 757-622-7446



Recommended Guidelines for Interpretive Signs

Interpretive Planning

The National Park Service has published an excellent source of information entitled *Wayside Exhibits: A Guide to Developing Outdoor Interpretive Exhibits*. It can be found at the following site:

<https://www.nps.gov/hfc/products/waysides/>

The information on the following slides was taken from this guide.



Recommended Guidelines for Interpretive Signs

Interpretive Planning

- Develop the best type of visitor interpretation for your site
- Analyze your audience and determine what groups you want to reach
- Develop the theme for your interpretation strategy
- What do you want visitors to see, do or learn about your site?
- And don't forget:
 - How are you going to fund this project?



Site Specific Interpretation

An effective wayside exhibit enhances a direct and meaningful connection between visitors and the landscape. The wayside audience is outside experiencing a place first-hand.

A wayside must attract and focus attention on the site, not on the wayside.

If the first wayside they encounter is disappointing visitors may not stop at others.



Site Specific Interpretation

What Tangible assets does your site have?

- A tangible asset has qualities you can see, touch, taste, hear or smell



What Intangible assets does your site have?

- Intangible assets are abstract – ideas, feelings, relationships, values and beliefs



Connecting your site's tangible resources to its intangible meaning makes the site's resources more personally relevant and valuable to the visitors.



Rules of Thumb for Waysides



Every detail does not have to be on your wayside!

- Visitors will take just 3 seconds to look at the design and title
- Limit your text to no more than 150 words. Even less may be required depending on the size of you sign and the graphics used.
- Studies have shown that visitors view waysides for only 30–40 seconds.



Rules of Thumb for Waysides



- Write the first sentence so the audience will want to know more.
- Focus on the physical feature first.
- Use concise language.
- Use active, not passive language.
- Use common language; avoid jargon.
- Do not use adjectives that tell visitors what to think. Answer the question, “So what?”



Rules of Thumb for Waysides



Use Quotations

- First-person quotes spoken at, or about, a specific site, add credibility and power to the story.
- Quotes are presented differently than narrative text. They represent a different voice.

Use Compelling Graphics or Pictures

- The main image should tell the story.

What Makes a Good Wayside Opportunity?



Four key factors lead to successful wayside exhibits:

- A significant landscape feature with a well-documented story;
- At least one compelling, site-specific, reproducible-quality graphic that illuminates the story;
- A safe, accessible place for visitors;
- Routine maintenance of the site and the sign.

There are many media options for reaching park visitors. If the right conditions do not exist for wayside exhibit experiences, consider another medium.



Significant Landscape Feature

- What intangible meanings are associated with this specific terrain?
- What is the unique significance of this place and why should someone care?

Within the first **three-second** glance at a wayside, visitors should see a connection to the landscape. Some landscapes have obvious features, such as Ralph's Ruts. More subtle landscapes require graphics that direct viewers' attention to things less obvious.



Site Specific Graphics

- Finding or developing compelling, site-specific graphics that tell the story is key to a successful wayside exhibit.
- Historic images placed on the landscape where the original photographer stood make a powerful and immediate connection for visitors.
- When photos are lacking, illustrations can tell the story.



Visitor Access and Safety



- Place wayside exhibits in the “front-country” (not wilderness areas) along pathways, trails, and vehicle pull-outs.
- Consider landscape plans and the space needed to give visitors a comfortable, safe, and accessible area to gather without disrupting the flow of foot-traffic or spilling into automobile or bike traffic.
- Standard waysides provide little benefit to visitors with visual impairments. Plan to make the information available through alternative methods like audio programs.



Regular Maintenance

- Most waysides are designed to be permanent.
- Panel materials last 2–25 years averaging about 5 years before replacement is necessary.
- At a minimum, waysides require cleaning twice a year and regular inspections for vandalism or weathering.
- Vista clearing and trail maintenance may also be needed to keep the view open and the site safe.
- If waysides have tactile elements or Braille, they need more frequent inspections and cleaning.



When NOT To Use a Wayside

There are situations where creating a wayside may still not be a good idea.

- **Intrusion on the Landscape** - Waysides impact the landscape. In natural areas they are an artificial intrusion. In historic areas they are a modern intrusion. Using too many waysides creates clutter and overwhelms visitors.
- **Sensitive Sites** - Waysides call attention to themselves and to the places they interpret. Using waysides to direct attention to sensitive areas (e.g., archaeological remains or nesting sites) may not be a good idea. Digging holes to install a wayside or hard-surfacing a trail may not be advisable in some areas.
- **Complex Stories** - Waysides do not tell complex or dynamic stories well. Activities that cover vast expanses of terrain well beyond the view, and complex human interactions may best be addressed by other media.



Thank You!

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