



# HFC *on* MEDIA

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Issue 10



*Theresa Shockey (foreground), Brandon Bies, and Trudy Kelley hang 35mm negatives to dry at Gulf Islands National Seashore using clothesline and paper clips. The trio were members of the National Capital Region's Museum Emergency Response Team (MERT) sent to the Gulf Coast in the wake of Hurricane Katrina (see page 6).*

## From the Director

It is again my pleasure to welcome you to this edition of **HFC onMEDIA**! It has been a wild summer and early fall, and I know many of you have been dealing with—or been dealt a blow by—the recent hurricanes. Harpers Ferry Center has dispatched individuals and teams to help with artifact recovery, to train people in working with water-damaged objects, and to help with damage assessments for recovery work. Our sympathy and best wishes go out to all of our colleagues, families, and friends who have suffered and are suffering still. HFC is ready to assist in any way that we can to help your parks and facilities return to the business of serving visitors and protecting resources. Let us know if and how we can be of assistance to you.

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# New Exhibits for Arches

*HFC works closely with park staff and contractors to help deliver the goods*

When the 18,000-square-foot visitor center at Arches National Park was dedicated on September 17, 2005, several Harpers Ferry Center staff members wore broad smiles and breathed gratified sighs of relief. HFC staff, park staff, and a handful of key contractors had expended a tremendous amount of work and effort to complete the new visitor center exhibits on time and within budget. Even more gratifying was the speed with which the project was completed – with funds obligated and a contract awarded just 12 months prior.

## Planning the New Visitor Center

Harpers Ferry Center's involvement in this project actually goes back a few years. In June 2001, HFC's Sam Vaughn (Associate Manager for Interpretive Planning) and Eric Epstein (Senior AV Production Specialist) participated on a planning team with park staff, members of the Southeast Utah Group, and Denver Service Center to advise the architects of the new Arches National Park visitor center on building design, space planning, theater design, and other aspects of the planned structure.

The architectural firm of VCBO of Salt Lake City, Utah designed the building in conjunction with exhibit designer EDX of Seattle, Washington. Cooperation and communication between the two resulted in a building designed for the exhibits, unusual in exhibit planning. The old visitor center building was incorporated into the new one, saving bricks, waste disposal, and new materials. Desert landscaping surrounds the building, which blends nicely with the surrounding terrain.



*New visitor center exhibits debut at Arches National Park. (Photo by Eric Epstein)*

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## The Visitor Center Exhibits

The park subsequently contracted with Cindy Nielsen to serve as COTR (Contracting Officer's Technical Representative) for exhibit planning and design. The park wanted a comprehensive scope of work for all elements of the new visitor center exhibits, including several planned audiovisual components, but pulling together all the details for this document proved to be a daunting task. Nielsen, who has performed interpretive planning and other media-related work for Harpers Ferry Center in the past, asked HFC for assistance in helping to draft and review the appropriate language for the scope of work.

In stepped HFC exhibit specialist Joyce Morris. Morris, with considerable assistance from Cynthia Coffelt (Exhibits Technical Assistance Program Manager), helped Nielsen pull together the proper contract clauses, technical specifications, and related information critical for this comprehensive scope of work. Morris, in turn, sought advice and assistance from two HFC audiovisual specialists: Eric Epstein and Michele Hartley (Audiovisual Producer). Epstein was already familiar with the architectural plans for the new visitor center and theater, but was now asked, along with Hartley, to help draft



*Spectacular view from inside the visitor center.  
(Photo by Eric Epstein)*

and review the technical specifications for all the audiovisual components of the visitor center exhibits. These were comprised of several multimedia kiosks including touch-screen programs and a high definition geologic animation. Typically, Harpers Ferry Center recommends that parks write separate scopes of work for exhibits and for audiovisual programs, but the park insisted on having a single contractor—and consequently a single point of contact—for the entire project.

## Awarding a Contract

With fiscal year 2004 drawing to a close, and with funding that had to be obligated before October 1, Nielsen, Arches park staff, and HFC staff raced the clock to complete the scope of work, advertise the contract, review the proposals, and award a contract. The HFC contracting office was particularly instrumental in this accelerated process. Contract specialists Kim Strite and Beverly Rinaldi-Alt worked tirelessly to complete and award a contract for the visitor center exhibits on time. Through some remarkable teamwork, perseverance, and cooperation, a contract for \$700,000 was awarded to Southern Custom Exhibits of Anniston, Alabama on September 20, 2004.

The selection of Southern Custom Exhibits was fortuitous. In the midst of this flurry of year-end activity, Nielsen accepted a position as superintendent of Great Basin National Park. With Nielsen no longer able to serve as COTR for the project, the park asked Harpers Ferry Center to step in. Consequently, HFC's Justin Radford was named Project Manager, Sherry Sturman was named Project Management Assistant, and Joyce Morris became COTR. Because Southern Custom is a National Park Service IDIQ (Indefinite Delivery - Indefinite Quantity) contractor who has worked with HFC on several previous NPS projects, Morris was able to quickly step in and work di-

## Bravo For Brown v. Board of Education NHS

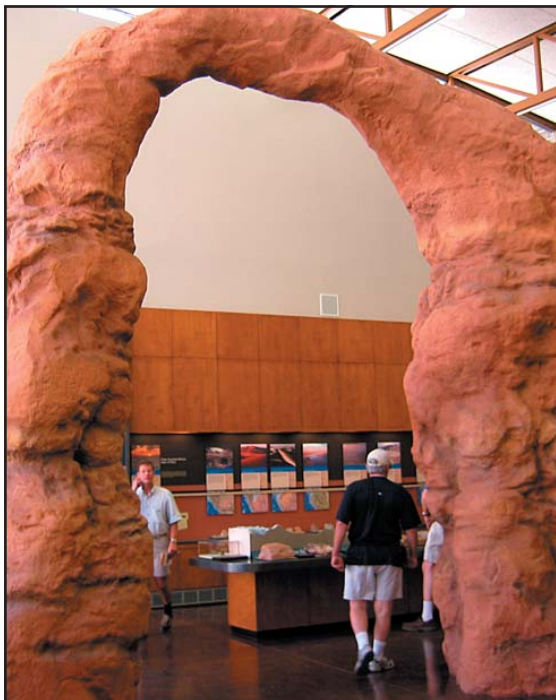
Interpretive media developed for Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site has been recognized with several awards this year. The National Association for Interpretation (NAI) has announced that the park is a finalist in the Media Competition for the interior exhibit category. The award, which will be presented at this year's National Interpreters Workshop (NIW) in Mobile, Alabama, recognizes excellence in the field of interpretive media. Earlier this year the park film, *Race and the American Creed*, received a Gold Medal at the New York International Film Festival.

The park also received the prestigious Board of Advisors Honor Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, one of 22 award winners honored in 2005, and the only individual National Park Service site to be honored. The National Preservation Honor Awards recognized Brown v. Board of Education NHS for the restoration and rehabilitation of Monroe School.

After several years of restoration, Brown v. Board of Education NHS opened to the public on May 17, 2004, along with the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court landmark decision that ended legally sanctioned segregation in public schools.

Hillmann & Carr, Inc., a National Park Service IDIQ contractor, was the prime contractor for this design/build project. Exhibit design was performed by Haley Sharpe Associates, exhibit fabrication was completed by Art Guild, and multimedia programs were developed by Blair Dubiller and Associates. Harpers Ferry Center managed over \$2 million in media production, and produced a new park brochure in time for the 50th anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court decision for which the park is named.





rectly with people she was already familiar with. Diane Allen, the park's Chief of Interpretation, also played a critical role as a subject matter expert, providing an abundance of material and information.

Southern Custom sub-contracted with the Somerset Group of Madison, Ala.—another NPS IDIQ contractor—for the production or adaptation of most of the audiovisual components for the visitor center exhibits. “Desert Life” was created by Bill and Sandy Hood of Grand Junction, Colorado, to identify many of the species of plants and animals found in the park. Doug Travers, a dedicated and intrepid arch-hunter from San Antonio, Texas provided the database for “Hunting Arches,” which allows visitors to search for arches by name, location, size, discoverer’s name, and more. Trip planners were created to help visitors plan their time at the park. Finally, a “Tool Shed” was created to feature ten NPS employees, the tools they use in their jobs, and short interviews with each person. Arches National Park even sent a staff member to Alabama to help the Somerset Group design and develop the featured geology animation program.

Throughout the multimedia production process, the park's staff worked closely with Somerset to provide resources and materials. Both the park and Harpers Ferry Center reviewed and commented on all deliverables, and HFC's Michele Hartley and Eric Epstein, acting as technical advisors, traveled to Alabama for a final review of these multimedia programs.

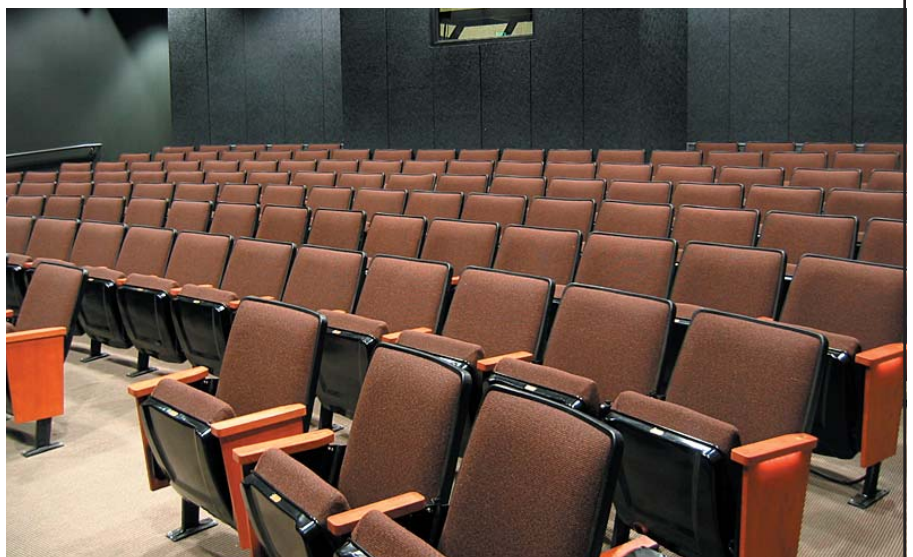
### Completing the Theater

Another fortuitous result of the contract award was that Southern Custom's bid for the exhibit fabrication was \$150,000 under the government estimate. This

*Above left: A massive “arch” stands above several visitor center exhibits.*

*Above right: The “Tool Shed” is one of several interactive programs developed for the Arches National Park visitor center.*

*Below: The new park theater features state-of-the-art high definition video, a digital surround sound system, with an LED caption board and Audio Description capability. (Photos by Eric Epstein)*



freed up money to acquire all the necessary audiovisual equipment to outfit the new visitor center theater – equipment that had not been included in the visitor center exhibits contract. Epstein, who had furnished the original specifications for the theater design to the architects, now stepped in as COTR and wrote a scope of work for the theater’s state-of-the-art high definition video, digital surround sound system, with an LED caption board and Audio Description capability. Epstein evaluated three proposals, and HFC contract specialist Beverly-Rinaldi-Alt awarded a contract to CEAVCO AudioVisual of Denver, Colorado.

With no money for an interpretive film, Discovery Communications—a National Park Foundation Proud Partner of America’s National Parks—stepped up and donated a short video titled *Arches and Canyonlands - Secrets of Red Rock*. The video, produced in record time, is a mixture of standard definition live video and high definition animation. Epstein, using a Los Angeles based post-production facility, had the video encoded for playback on the theater’s state-of-the-art system. It plays automatically every half hour in the 140-seat theater. Park staff also have manual control of the theater for special presentations of other programs on DVD, VHS or computer through a hand-held touch screen remote.

### Staying on Top of the Project

Between the Arches National Park visitor center exhibits contract award on September 20, 2004 and the visitor center dedication on September 17, 2005, Joyce Morris and Cynthia Coffelt made several trips to monitor and inspect progress on the project. They traveled twice to Southern Custom Exhibits in Anniston, Alabama to monitor progress on the fabrication of the exhibits and interactive programs. They made one site inspection

trip to Arches National Park to monitor progress on visitor center construction and to ensure that lighting and electrical work was consistent with the exhibit plan. And in September 2005 they arrived at the park with the contractor and three truckloads of exhibits for the final installation. Altogether, Morris, Coffelt, and staff from Southern Custom Exhibits spent three weeks installing exhibits and multimedia components including computers, touch-screens, and a 50-inch diagonal high definition plasma screen for the geologic animation.

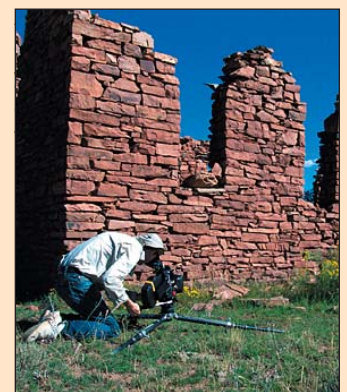
The new exhibits interpret the natural and cultural history of the park. In the outdoor plaza, bronze sculptures created by Matthew Palmer Studios include a bighorn ram, ewe and lamb, two ravens and two lizards. Indoors are several tall faux rock fins, a pothole with critters, hands-on rock samples of the different formations found in the park, a depositional environment model with rock samples, and several interactive computer programs. During the visitor center dedication ceremony on September 17, staff from Southern Custom Exhibits and HFC’s Eric Epstein worked behind the scenes to ensure that any last-minute details or problems with the exhibits, multimedia programs or theater equipment could be quickly resolved.

Taking a moment to reflect on the year-long process, exhibit specialist Joyce Morris gives credit to a lot of people for the success of the Arches National Park visitor center exhibits. “The park was a tremendous partner throughout the process,” says Morris, “and our long-time working relationships with Southern Custom Exhibits and the Somerset Group were invaluable. Plus, without the technical expertise I was able to tap into here at HFC, I would have struggled with a lot of the small details.” It’s obvious that her broad smile is well-deserved.

### Remembered Earth Screened at Sondrio Film Festival

*Remembered Earth - New Mexico’s High Desert* is one of ten finalists in the 19th Annual Sondrio International Film Festival on Parks and Protected Areas – and the only film selected from the United States. The half-hour High Definition film was produced by Harpers Ferry Center for a multi-agency visitor center managed jointly by El Malpais National Monument, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Forest Service. The film was produced and directed by John Grabowska and photographed by Steve Ruth.

Sondrio Festival is an international documentary film festival on parks that takes place each year in October in Sondrio, Italy. For 18 years film-makers and park managers have been coming here from all over the world to enjoy the hospitality and friendship that the event is famed for. The festival shows the best of recently produced documentaries on the specific theme of protected areas, underlining the need to continue their protection by involving the general public, especially young people, who are invited to reflect on themes such as the environment and sustainable development.



Photographer Steve Ruth films on-site in northern New Mexico. (Photo by John Grabowska)



# Storm Stories

*HFC staff assist with Hurricane Katrina recovery*

**As Theresa Shockey rummaged through debris scattered across the floor of the Davis Bayou Visitor Center in Gulf Islands National Seashore, she couldn't believe the stench of the mold and decay that permeated the place. The visitor center, located in Ocean Springs, Miss., had taken a direct hit from Hurricane Katrina, which had roared ashore on the morning of August 29 with sustained winds of 140 mph.**

Shockey, an assistant conservator at Harpers Ferry Center, was one of six HFC staff members who traveled to the Gulf Coast to assist with hurricane recovery operations. Sylvia Frye, Karen Matson, Sheila Payaqui, Nancy Purinton, and Kathy Tustanowski-Marsh also spent a considerable amount of time assisting parks, park personnel, state and local agencies, communities, and partner organizations in the aftermath of the storm.

## **NCR Museum Emergency Response Team**

Shockey was tapped as a member of the National Capital Region's Museum Emer-

gency Response Team (MERT). MERT was formed by Pam West, director of the NPS Museum Resource Center, in the aftermath of another storm—Hurricane Isabel—which severely damaged museum collections at Cape Lookout National Seashore and Colonial National Historical Park in 2003. The team is comprised of archeologists, preservationists, historians, curators, and conservators who are trained to quickly respond to natural disasters like hurricanes and floods involving damage to cultural resources. West works hard to ensure that saving cultural resources is an important component of all disaster recovery plans, and

## **Wet Collection Recovery Training**

Park sites, of course, were not the only cultural institutions who needed help in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Harpers Ferry Center has relationships with conservators and preservation groups across the country. One of these groups is the Regional Alliance for Preservation (RAP), which is an umbrella group for several conservation and preservation organizations. It was one of RAP's members, SOLINET (Southeastern Library Network), who put out a plea for help.

Tina Mason, the preservation officer at SOLINET, was taking calls from libraries across the Gulf Coast whose collections had been destroyed or badly damaged by the storm. Harpers Ferry Center agreed to partner with SOLINET to put on a training session on "Wet Collection Recovery." HFC conservator Nancy Purinton and assistant conservator Sheila Payaqui quickly created a training curriculum and class handouts that focused on post-hurricane safety, building re-entry, personal protection gear, emergency contracting, and sources of funding for storm recovery. The two conservators also shared their expertise in the recovery of paper collections and objects such as metals, textiles, and wood.

HFC and SOLINET, with the assistance of Kathleen Jenkins, museum curator at Natchez NHP, offered the class at the Historic Natchez Foundation in Natchez, Miss. Advertised on very short notice in local papers, on television, and by radio, the class drew 60 people from both institutions and businesses. A second class was offered in partnership with the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, drawing another 60 people mainly from businesses, institutions, libraries, and colleges. In the Gulf Coast region, some two dozen public libraries were lost or badly damaged by the hurricane.



*Brandon Bies (left) and Theresa Shockey carefully remove wet paper-based materials from flat file drawers at Gulf Islands National Seashore. The objects were air-dried outside on absorbent materials.*

was in constant communication with the NPS Incident Management Team (IMT) dispatched to New Orleans to oversee storm recovery operations.

### Artifact Triage at Gulf Islands National Seashore

Shockey served as team leader for the MERT members sent to Gulf Islands National Seashore. Other team members included Trudy Kelley (Supervisory Curator, National Capital Region), Brandon Bies (Archeologist, George Washington Memorial Parkway), and Gloria Swift (Curator, Ford's Theatre NHS). Roxanne Sellers, collateral duty curator at Gulf Islands National Seashore, also provided invaluable assistance. This group set up headquarters in the park's fire cache garage in Pensacola, Florida, where truckloads of archival documents, photographs, glassware, ceramics, textiles, and other items salvaged from the park's collections at Davis Bayou were delivered.

Shockey's team performed triage—rinsing, cleaning, drying, and packing items for transfer to the Southeast Archeological Center (SEAC) in Tallahassee, Florida and to Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve near Jacksonville. Paper-based objects that were in more critical shape were placed in freezers and sent off-site for freeze-drying. A few objects were also sent for treatment to the conservation labs at Harpers Ferry Center.

Several days into the operation, Shockey and her team were finally able to travel to the Davis Bayou Visitor Center to re-check the building for items missed during the initial recovery operation. It was during this visit that Shockey faced firsthand the extent of destruction wrought by Katrina, and the stench of the mold and mildew left behind. The team also made a startling discovery—the park's herbarium collection of historical plants, thought lost in the storm, was found

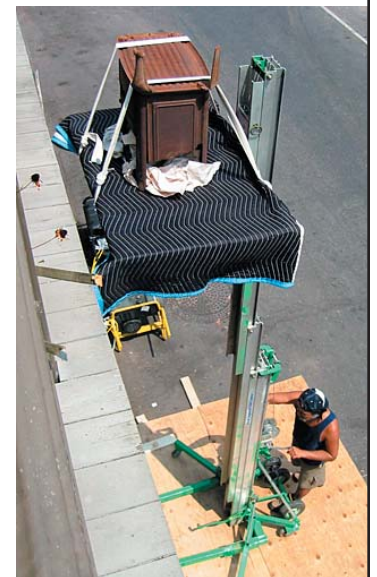


near the building's front door. The team also assisted the University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast Research Lab in Ocean Springs, Miss. with the salvage of their own herbarium collection of 5,000 plant specimens.

### Moving Collections from Jean Lafitte NHP

Karen Matson, a museum specialist at Harpers Ferry Center, is also a MERT member. Matson joined a second team dispatched to New Orleans that included Pam West, Tyra Walker (Site Manager, National Capital Region), Malcolm Wiloughby (Facility Manager, Clara Barton NHS), and Mary Troy (Curator, Arlington House). This team faced very different challenges from the Gulf Islands National Seashore team.

Matson's team was tasked with moving historic objects out of the collections storage room in the Jean Lafitte NHP visitor center on Decatur Street. Here water damage was not a problem, as the collections were located on the second floor above the visitor center. However, concerns with looting, mold, and mildew prompted the move, and the Historic Natchez Foundation in Natchez, Miss. agreed to store the collections.



*Top: Debris is scattered across the floor of the Davis Bayou Visitor Center in Ocean Springs, Miss. The park's herbarium collection, thought lost in the storm, was found near the building's front door. (Photo by Theresa Shockey)*

*Above: an ARTEX contractor lowers an object from the second floor storage room at the Jean Lafitte NHP visitor center on Decatur Street using a hand-crank device. (Photo by Karen Matson)*



These collections included farm implements of various shapes and sizes, Mardi Gras outfits, bottles, kitchenware, flags, and other historic objects. But the move was complicated by several factors: no housing was available in New Orleans, so the team had to commute over two hours each way from Lafayette, La. every day through several checkpoints with a Special Events Team (SET) escort.

With no electricity and with temperatures hovering between 95-100 degrees, the team struggled to haul items through hot, humid corridors and down dark stairways. A thermometer in the collections storage room recorded temperatures as high as 120 degrees!

Fortunately, the team was able to contract with ARTEX for a truck and four-person moving team. ARTEX even furnished a generator for lighting inside the storage room. Kathy Lang, museum curator at Jean Lafitte NHP, also spent three days helping the team, even though the first floor of her home was flooded.

### Documenting the Recovery

HFC museum specialist Sylvia Frye serves as a “documentarian” for MERT. In addition to artifact recovery, Sylvia photographs the team’s recovery efforts and archives various types of materials produced by the team to document each event. She has also interviewed individual members, produced meeting notes, and helped present and coordinate team training. When the NPS Incident Management Team (IMT) went into action on the Gulf Coast, they too needed a documentarian, and tapped Frye for the position of “Documentation Unit Leader.”

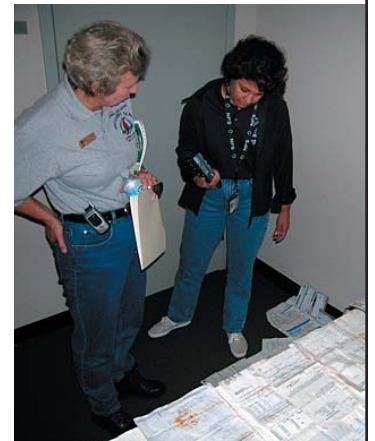
Frye was dispatched to the Incident Command Post at Thibodaux, La., about one hour west of New Orleans. Following National Archives standards for Incident Records Management, she began to ar-



chive all records of communication, daily activities, and project status for the IMT. She also took before and after photos of damage and recovery operations caused by hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Jean Lafitte NHP also asked Frye to assess and retrieve any remaining artifacts, office files, living history items, and exhibit panels from their Chalmette Battlefield unit. With the assistance of park ranger C.J. Longanecker, cultural anthropologist Allison Pena, volunteers from the Thibodaux Fire Dept., and park maintenance, Sylvia and her team of law enforcement rangers spent several hours recovering anything salvageable from the visitor center and superintendent’s lodge.

Frye’s work exposed her to the devastation in Louisiana at a very personal level. Her most emotionally difficult task was rescuing family papers and personal effects belonging to the father of an NPS employee who had died in his home when the levees failed in New Orleans’ 9th Ward. For two weeks Frye sorted through hundreds of papers and small objects, laying each out to dry while putting up with the horrible stench of mold, mildew, and decay.



*Top (left to right): Karen Matson, Kathy Lang, Malcolm Willoughby, Tyra Walker, and Mary Troy pack artifacts in the storage room at Jean Lafitte NHP.*

*Above: Sylvia Frye shows NPS Director Fran Mainella hundreds of papers and small objects salvaged from the hurricane zone. The Director was very complimentary of the team and their hard work under very difficult conditions.*



During her three weeks with the national team, Frye not only learned how incident management works at the command level, but also the importance of emergency preparedness. Says Frye, “The death and destruction suffered by the people of New Orleans was heart-breaking and beyond description. This experience was an eye opener—it helped many of us appreciate what we have and at the same time realize what we don’t need.”

### Providing Employee Assistance

For the first time in a National Park Service disaster recovery operation, an “Employee Assistance Branch” was formed to assist the NPS Incident Management Team (IMT). Kathy Tustanowski-Marsh, HFC Associate Manager for Business Management, was tapped for duty on this team and departed for the Gulf Coast on September 6. Says Tustanowski-Marsh, “Our employees really comprise the heart and soul of the National Park Service, and finding ways to help them through this disaster became a critical part of the recovery operation.”

Tustanowski-Marsh reported to the Prairie Acadian Cultural Center—a unit of Jean Lafitte NHP—in Eunice, La. There she and a half-dozen other team members set up an office, ironed out major communication problems, and began the arduous task of accounting for park employees, reuniting employee families, locating suitable housing for displaced families, processing financial aid documents, securing transportation, providing PEER support through the Critical Incident Stress Management program, and dealing with people’s pressing health care needs.



The team worked with NPS employees, employee families, and employees of partners at Gulf Islands Natl. Seashore, Jean Lafitte NHP, and New Orleans Jazz NHP. When Hurricane Rita struck the Gulf Coast on Sept. 24, they expanded their work to include Big Thicket National Park & Preserve, Cane River Creole NHP, and Everglades National Park.

According to Tustanowski-Marsh, one of the team’s most valuable contributions to the recovery effort beyond direct assistance to affected employees was creation of an “Employee Assistance Tool Kit.” The kit, prepared at the request of the IMT Incident Commander, is a how-to notebook on setting up and carrying out the programs and policies of an Employee Assistance Branch.

Tustanowski-Marsh emphasizes that many of the cultural, natural, and human resources will take years to recover. The actions of the IMT—and of the HFC employees who helped with the recovery operations—were just the beginning.



*Top: Temporary employee housing at Gulf Islands National Seashore in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. (Photo by Kathy Tustanowski-Marsh)*

*Above: Members of the Employee Assistance Branch. Left to right (front row): Kathy Tustanowski-Marsh, Cathy Tavares (Joshua Tree National Park); (back row): Ricky Pearce (Gettysburg National Military Park), Elizabeth Maki (Grand Teton National Park), and Betsy Rossini (Isle Royale National Park).*

*One thing I will never take for granted is the whole NPS family thing! I appreciate all the IC folks who gave up their cozy offices and warm beds to come down and give us a hand. They were awesome—escorting us to our homes, helping to arrange FEMA trailers, and starting the park back on the rebuilding process.*

*—Aly Baltrus, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park & Preserve*

# Identity for Parks

## *How to Use the National Sign Standards While Respecting the Character of Local Settings*

**Park entrance signs are perhaps the most important of all park signs. They welcome visitors as they arrive, marking the beginning of a unique park experience.**

Entrance signs also help remind visitors that the place they are entering is part of a system of parks cared for by the National Park Service. In other words, entrance signs must reflect the nature of the park while at the same time connecting that park to the larger organization.

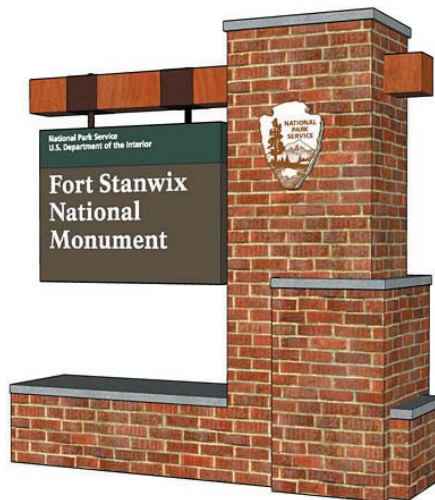
To achieve these somewhat contradictory goals, NPS sign standards tightly prescribe the design of entrance sign panels, but allow considerable latitude in the



*Made from local stone, this sign base has been extended to accommodate a special logo during the park's centennial year.*

design and material of the structures that hold them. In this way, each sign can be “localized” enough to appear appropriate to its setting, but similar enough to entrance signs at other parks to reinforce the perception of a single organization.

The three examples shown here illustrate how signs can express the identity of the National Park Service in ways that reflect local styles and materials. The signs are



*This sign for Fort Stanwix National Monument is constructed from brick similar to that used in the local area. The NPS Arrowhead logo, shown here in one color, could also appear in full color.*

designed for different types of parks: a natural area in northeastern Wyoming, a Revolutionary War fort in upstate New York, and a recreation area on Long Island, New York.



*Rather than the name of the park, this sign for Fire Island National Seashore uses a place name as its primary text in a design that reflects the site's seaside location. The park, agency, and department are also identified.*

### New Employees

#### Brian Sprague

Brian Sprague comes to Harpers Ferry Center from the NPS regional Office in Anchorage, Alaska where he had been for two years. Five years prior to that he was with the Department of Interior, Office of Surface Mining in Ashland, Kentucky. During the previous 11 years Brian was with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Anchorage, Alaska including overseas assignments in Germany (1997-98) and in Operation Desert Storm/Shield in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait (1991). Before entering Federal Government service he was a carpenter for 15 years – the first five years in the housing construction industry with his father and 10 years in the commercial construction industry.

Brian was born in Ohio, grew up in Australia (Mum's an Aussie) and California, and lived and traveled in many countries and states. He's a military and foreign wars veteran, having served in Vietnam in 1969-70.

Brian has a sister and brother, and is the father of two daughters, step-father of one daughter and three sons, and the grandfather of four with two more on the way. He has been married for the last 13+ years to the “Love of My Life, Soul Mate and Best Friend”, Jaye, a patient warm hearted teacher of children with learning disabilities.

