

ATTACHMENT J - NPS CREATING WEB FEATURES -January 20, 2010

Creating Web Feature

The NPS uses a Content Management System (CMS) to manage and present information on NPS.gov. A standard set of design templates are provided via this system for entering information into the website, thus largely eliminating the need for costly design work. Instead, web authors are able to focus on producing quality content for their visitors.

The fundamental building blocks of a quality website in the CMS are good web writing and professional-looking imagery. Once these basic needs are fulfilled, web authors may want to enrich their sites by adding other more interactive types of content such as:

- video (including streaming)
- audio (including streaming)
- virtual reality panoramas
- flash
- webcams (including streaming)
- podcasts
- mapping files

The CMS can accommodate all of these media types, and examples of their usage are available on several park sites including:

- Grand Canyon NP streaming video
(<http://www.nps.gov/grca/photosmultimedia/rangerminute.htm>)
- Glacier NP panoramic images
(<http://www.nps.gov/glac/photosmultimedia/panoramas.htm>)
- Acadia NP audiocasts
(<http://www.nps.gov/acad/photosmultimedia/hawkwatchaudiocast.htm>)

While the CMS can accommodate almost all file types needed to create a website, there are instances when using a unique look and feel and/or combination of content types may enhance a presentation, improve its interpretive quality and/or better engage the desired audience. For example, younger audiences often enjoy content that is colorfully designed and interactive. While it is possible to accommodate to create such content in the CMS, sometimes the more engaging choice is to create a separate web feature not contained in a CMS template.

A web feature is defined as a collection of web pages that address a specific subject or theme and require a unique look and feel to interpret and enhance its content. As a rule, all basic content such as trip planning/orientation information, descriptions of operations and management documents should be placed in the CMS. However, either the CMS or a separate web feature could be used for content that enhances the basic site.

Examples:

- The description of a hike is contained in the CMS, but an interactive hike could be a separate web feature (ex.,
(<http://www.nps.gov/glac/photosmultimedia/ehikes.htm>)).

-The basic description of a park's fossil collections and collection/study processes is contained in the CMS, but an interactive tour of the collection and paleontology lab could be a separate web feature (ex., <http://www.nps.gov/features/joda/>).

-Trip planning information for visiting a historic home is in the CMS, but a virtual tour of the home could be a separate web feature (ex., <http://www.nps.gov/features/clba/feat0001/flash.html>).

Requirements for Creating a Web Feature

The CMS is a cost-effective and efficient solution for presenting information and should be the first choice considered for a project. Please keep the following requirements in mind if considering a web feature.

Web Features Must:

- Enhance content already contained in the CMS
- Demonstrate exceptional understanding and interpretation of a topic
- Engage users
- Demonstrate a mastery of professional design and usability standards
- Incorporate a design that is strongly influenced by the feature's content and is complimentary to the design and aesthetics of NPS.gov.

Technical Requirements:

- Incorporates elements of the NPS Graphic Identity
- Displays the feature name on the opening page
- Maximum page width of 980 pixels (designed for a 1024 pixel wide screen resolution)
- Complies with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act
- Complies with security requirements of NPS.gov servers

Before starting work on a new web feature project, please contact the NPS.gov Web Manager to discuss the project plan and the above requirements. The Enterprise Web Management Team is responsible for the NPS.gov web servers and their security, and the NPS.gov Web Manager must review any web development and approve access to the servers for any work outside the CMS.

In addition, the NPS.gov Web Manager must review existing web features created before the CMS was implemented.

