

Style Guide

North Fork ^{of the} Gunnison River System



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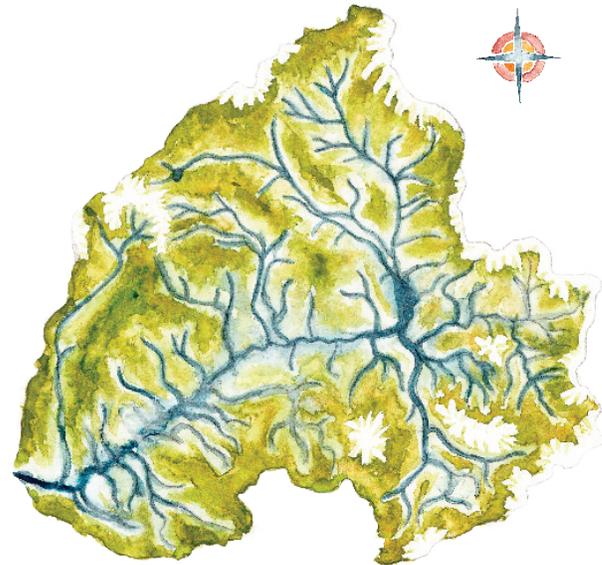
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Overview & Purpose

The purpose of this style guide is to set a standard set of design principles for river signs along the North Fork Gunnison River and beyond to maintain continuity and cohesion from every river access point. Area visitors and users who are able to recognize familiar style as they move locations feel secure and informed with an informative guide in the signs.

Early in this process, The Western Slope Conservation Center convened meetings to get community input on these signs. Collaborators determined that setting a style and precedent for future sign projects along the North Fork, the main stem of the Gunnison, to Delta and beyond would create continuity among communities tied together by our river system.



Watercolor map of the North Fork of the Gunnison Watershed



Early photo of three enjoying the river. North Fork Historic Society.

The committee also determined other critical themes are stewardship and engagement in a river sign system. Elements to engage and inspire stewardship are therefore been incorporated throughout signs designed for the Paonia River Park and detailed in this style guide.

This document contains easy-to-use style information to maintain the identity of the North Fork of the Gunnison River system over time, for any person who may be designing signs in the future.

This guide is meant to allow for development and adaptation of river system signs while establishing an overall framework. It is meant to define a common system of elements that work together, reinforce values and promote successful interpretation of educational and design elements.

Materials

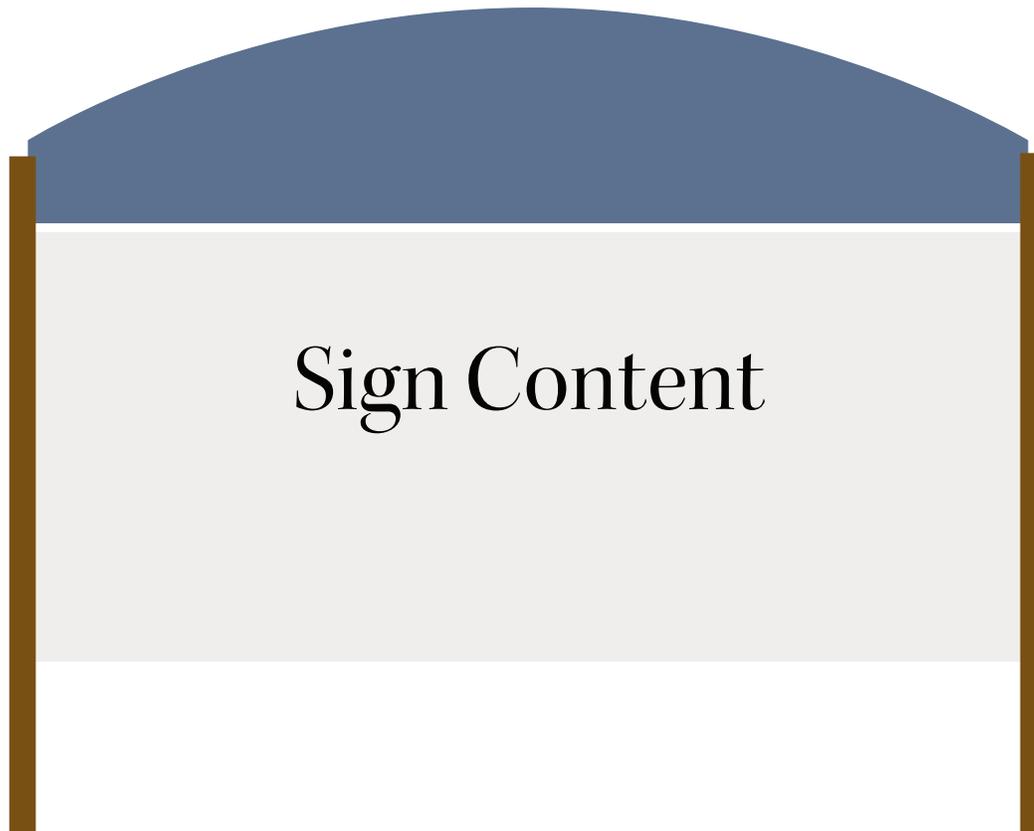
Most signs are framed by 'worn metal' hardware to convey the red rusted look. These materials echo the existing arches and sculptures in the Paonia River Park. All signs will be mounted in the ground.

Printed surface will be high pressure laminate. Other durable surfaces for future signs could include InterLOC or fiberglass.

Interpretive signs will be at a low-profile angle to invite viewers to read and then look above and beyond the signs.

Informational signs will be upright (vertical).

All new signs will have a full arch using the angle diagrammed below to soften edges and bring an organic, inviting aesthetic to the signs.



Font

Aa

Source Sans Pro Semi-bold will be used for headings and subheadings. The clean style and lines make these headings easy to read.

Aa

Source Sans Pro will be used for subheadings.

Aa

Kepler Std is the font used for content. Studies show that serif fonts carry more 'authority' and are trusted by readers. In addition, the serif extensions on these fonts allow the eye to easily transition from one word to the next.

All fonts can be downloaded from the Adobe Typekit at typekit.com.

Color



Main Color

Pantone 7684 Uncoated, C=70,
M=52, Y=28, K=5

Dark: C=81, M=68, Y=47, K=38

Light: C=44, M=24, Y=0, K=0



Main Color

Pantone 397 Uncoated, C=39,

M=22, Y=100, K=1

Dark: C=56, M=42, Y=100, K=25

Light: C=33, M=16, Y=0, K=0



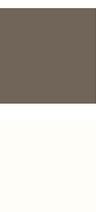
Accent Color

Pantone 131 Uncoated, C=23,

M=53, Y=96, K=1

Dark: C=23, M=53, Y=96, K=47

Light: C=0, M=23, Y=52, K=0



Neutral Color

C=0, M=8, Y=17, K=43

Dark: C=52, M=51, Y=61, K=23

Light: C=0, M=2, Y=12, K=0 (23%
transparency)

These colors were chosen for the following reasons:

BLUE represents the water of the North Fork of the Gunnison River. It instills a sense of calm, cleanliness, trust and dependability.

GREEN embodies riparian vegetation and health, as well as eco-friendly values, nature, and tranquility.

RUST represents an echo of the metallic finishes of the park area signs and structures, as well as joy, adventure, playfulness and warmth. This color will be used as an accent color.

SILT offers a neutral hue, symbolizes the color of rocks and sediment and is earthy and comforting. It conveys the feeling of family, reliability, and friendship. This color will be used as a neutral background.

Images

Images and diagrams are made from watercolor illustrations. This includes cross sections of stream beds, wetlands, geological illustrations and infographics. In addition, water color accents to maps in the form of vegetation or a compass rose is also incorporated where possible.

One watermark of a roughly sketched relevant subject is used per sign. This provides texture and background on neutrally-colored blocks of the signs.

Examples:



Food for All

Mayflies (from the order Ephemeroptera) are an amazing member of river communities. They eat algae as larva and are food for fish, birds, and other riparian organisms.

The Hatch

Most fly fishermen will tell you that the best time to fish is during the emergence of hundreds or even millions of river bugs from their larval stage, also known as a 'hatch'. During this time, fish gorge themselves and can easily be fooled into taking bait that looks just like emerging insects.

Indicators

Mayflies are highly sensitive to pollution and changes in water quality. When conditions are below their standards, their numbers and diversity decline or drop off all together. For this reason, scientists have learned to watch for these river bugs to determine if it is a clean and healthy system. If they are not present, there may be a problem with water quality.

Photography

Photos and images are be 'timeless'. In other words, they don't go out of style. Historical photos are used to pique curiosity and capture attention.

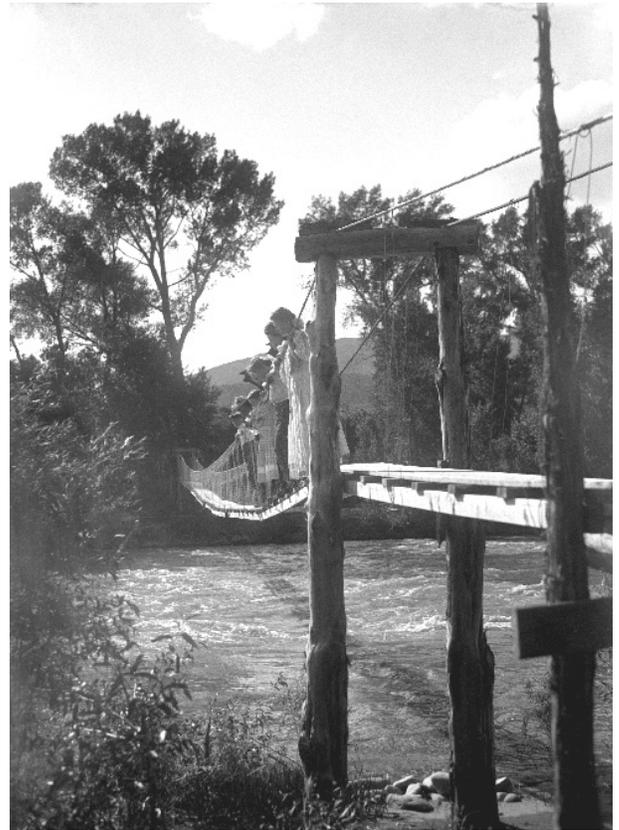
Photos always have the river (or a reference to river water) and people in them to convey the connection between people and our river system.

Resolution is 300 dots per inch (dpi) or higher in order to print to a large format.

Historical photos maintain the integrity of the original photograph, but are 'cleaned' of scratches, discoloration, or other time-worn attributes. The contrast and clarity of the photos are adjusted in order to see details from far away.



Before Touch-up



After Touch-up

Layout

Signs are three sizes:

- 24" w x 36" h x 0.9" thick vertical panels as a set of three
- 36" w x 24" h x 1/2" thick, pedestal mount at a 30-degree angle for ease of viewing at all heights.
- 36" w x 24" h x 1/2" thick, upright

ADA Compliance

The law does not consider interpretive signs to be essential; therefore, ADA regulations do not apply. However, the National Park Service recognizes 30" to 34" above standing grade to be wheelchair friendly for low profile interpretive exhibits. Therefore, these signs have been installed at a height of approximately 34" above grade, suitable for handicapped and young park visitors.

Sign Arc

River signs are arched on top to provide an organic shape element and to match the arch at the park's entrance.

Sample arc information:

- Radius is 4.66713 feet
- Length is 3.09824 feet;
- Width is 36.5 inches,
- Height is 3.0569 inches
- Apothem 4.41239 feet
- Angle Subtended by arc 38.03539 degrees)
- Area of the upper most part of the arc is 0.51945 ft²

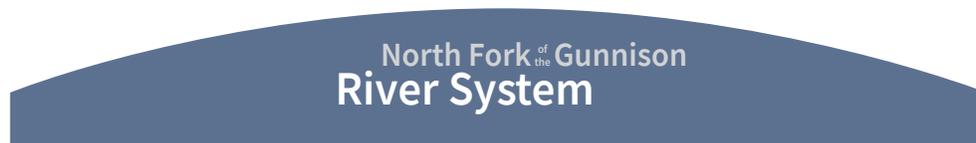
*The arc described above has another 1.9143 inches of height below the arc.



When signs are adjacent to one another, one arch spans all signs.

Sign titles are two-toned on two lines, offset slightly and located in a central position.

Examples:



Single Sign



Three signs

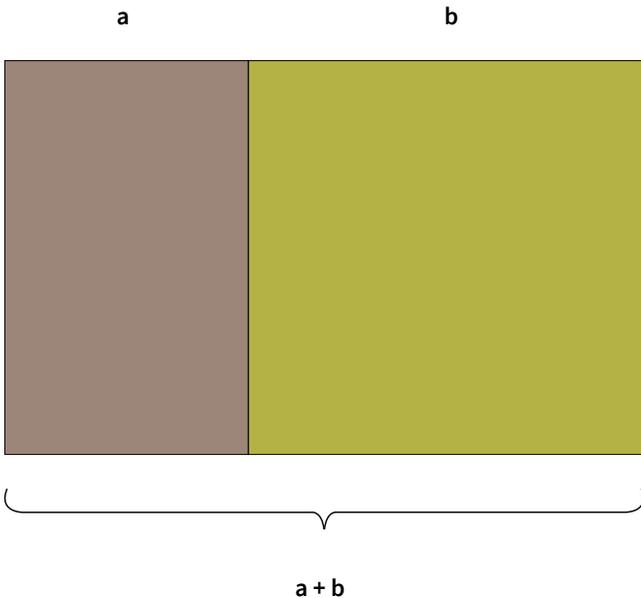
Layout (continued)

The layout of the rest of each sign is based on the 'Golden Ratio' (or Golden Mean or Golden Section), also known as the divine proportion. This makes design predictable and pleasing to the eye.

Two quantities are in the golden ratio if their ratio is the same as the ratio of their sum to the larger of the two quantities. The figure below illustrates the geometric relationship. Expressed algebraically, for quantities a and b with $a > b > 0$,

$$\frac{a + b}{a} = \frac{a}{b} \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \varphi,$$

where the Greek letter phi (φ) represents the golden ratio.



Phi's value is:

$$\varphi = \frac{1 + \sqrt{5}}{2} = 1.6180339887 \dots \text{PMS A001622}$$

The Golden Ratio yields pleasing, harmonious proportions that have been used in architecture, painting and sculpture for centuries.

This basic form can be turned vertically or flipped horizontally.



Icons

Icons are used to convey rules, map points, and other concepts that are imperative to communicate. Both icons and text will be used in these cases.

Icons used are simple and black and white.

Icon Key:



Stay on path



Hazard



No lifeguard on duty



Leash your pet



Irrigation diversion



No camping



Use the bike rack



Private property



Don't drive on trails



Parking



Be courteous



No glass



Leave no trace



Be aware of river conditions



No alcohol



Fishing



Wear a life jacket



No hunting



Pack out trash



Boating safety gear



No campfires



Park is open during daylight hours



Leave space between boats



Point of interest



Avoid anglers



Camping



Boat launch

Tone and Text

The tone of all copy is light and ‘edutaining’. It is written to a 7th grade educational level for ease of understanding and vocabulary.

An engaging element is the “Try This” on the bottom of each of the signs. This suggestion allows viewers to directly participate in a river-related activity that they may not have otherwise. These comments are also ways for parents and educators to engage kids (see sample below).

The ‘Oxford Comma’ (the final comma before the word ‘and’ in a list of things) is used in these signs. Additionally, wherever possible the word ‘and’ is used instead of ‘or’ and ‘but’.

The ‘&’ is not used.

Text content, or ‘copy’, is written in the active voice. Whenever possible, copy refers directly to the place the sign viewer is standing. This is done using local landmarks for reference or by retracing the steps the viewer used to arrive at the location they are standing.

Example:

Right now you are standing in an area that has been formed by combination of uplift, erosion, flood, drought, glaciation, thriving plant, and animal communities, and even an inland ocean. This long process unraveled to reveal just the right combination of rocks, plants, and animals you see before you today.



Try This: Find more information about wildlife, early people, and geology on signs throughout the park.

Rules & Etiquette

Much time and thought was put into deciding which rules to include, how to phrase them, and what symbol to include with each.

Rules were discussed at several meetings (both by the Town of Paonia and at River Park committee meetings hosted by the Conservation Center). Parties were in agreement that rules needed to be clear, succinct and not use an overly commanding tone.

Sign readers and park visitors should feel a sense of ownership and are invited to help care for the park. To that end, most rules are posed as 'Please Do...' to keep a positive, informative tone. There were a few 'Please Don't'... when things like camping and hunting need to be conveyed as activities that are not permitted.

Likewise, boating etiquette was researched and is couched as simple requests that will keep everyone safe and happy on the river. These are framed in a similar positive style.

Example:

Fishing and Boating Etiquette



Respect Private Property

Know what stretches of river are surrounded by private property and, per Colorado law, stay in your boat as you float through them.



Courtesy

Keep your crew and those around you smiling by extending courtesy throughout your boating experience.

Final Thoughts

When visitors encounter the interpretive signs along the North Fork of the Gunnison River, they are experiencing a unique set of information that will guide, inform, entertain, and cultivate care and ownership of the area.

Future sign designers for this system are encouraged to engage and inspire stewardship sign elements detailed in this style guide.

Contact Information



This document can be found at:
TheConservationCenter.org

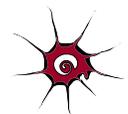
Contact the Western Slope Conservation Center for more information at:

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