HFPA Blog
Formatting and Submission Process

Blog mission statement:

The purpose of the Harpers Ferry Park Association Blog is to create a virtual experience where visitors can stay connected to the beauty of Harpers Ferry, learn more about its history and resources, be informed of upcoming park or association programs, and ignite a desire to visit our unique town.

Guidelines:

Posts on the HFPA Blog are to be helpful, educational, interesting, and most importantly, promote the association's mission. Blogs are meant to be conversational. Who are you writing for? Who is your intended audience? Please read this article for current Need-to-Know Blogging Statistics.

Topics can include, but are not limited to:
- Suggested hikes or activities
- Promoting a park or association program
- Short history piece on an event or figure from Harpers Ferry's past
- Share an in-park experience you've had or recap a program
- Member spotlight (interview someone with personal connections to an event or figure from Harpers Ferry past)
- Book reviews

Our goal is to publish well-written, engaging, mission-focused articles, and are not intended to be judged on clicks or "likes." Building a blog audience takes time, and it is built by producing quality work.

The Process:

1. Pitch your idea
   a. Complete this simple form if you have an idea for a blog. This will help us keep all ideas in one place, and provide a format to invite guest bloggers.

b. Pitches will be reviewed at monthly blog meetings. If approved, it will be added to the content calendar and writers will be notified of a timeline for deadlines, editing, and publication.

c. If you have an idea for a time-sensitive blog, please email the executive director directly at cbaldau@hfpawv.org.

d. If you pitch it, it does not mean you need to write it! We have many talented writers here and welcome all ideas.

2. Write your blog

a. Unless you pitched an idea only, all writers are responsible for their own work. Do **NOT** take on a task that you can't write or research, or are not passionate about doing. **DO** ask for help or advice if you are stuck. We are happy to help flush out ideas or "beta read" your work. Do **NOT** expect others to finish or write your article. Fact: If you don't care about writing your blog, no one will care to read it.

[Good advice from this Wordstream.com post:](#)

How to Write a Blog Post in Five Easy Steps [Summary]:

1. Step 1: Plan your blog post by choosing a topic, creating an outline, conducting research, and checking facts.
2. Step 2: Craft a headline that is both informative and will capture readers' attention.
3. Step 3: Write your post, either writing a draft in a single session or gradually working on parts of it.
4. Step 4: Use images to enhance your post, improve its flow, add humor, and explain complex topics.
5. Step 5: Edit your blog post. Make sure to avoid repetition, read your post aloud to check its flow, have someone else read it and provide feedback, keep sentences and paragraphs short, don't be a perfectionist, don't be afraid to cut out text or adapt your writing last minute.

Read the [entire article](#) for more detail.

b. Follow the requirements below when formatting your blog.

3. Submit your blog

a. Email your correctly formatted blog to cbaldau@hfpawv.org by your given deadline. The email can include a link to a Google Doc or a Word document attachment. We will not accept any other format.

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Requirements.

Word count:
- 800 (min) – Please don't limit your blog post based on this number. The average blog post is 1,100 words. It should take five to seven minutes (no longer than ten) to read a blog.

Links:
- Link to other content whenever relevant. Every link included must add value for readers.

Citations
- Add links to your original sources in your document.
- If the original sources is not a URL, add the citation within your paragraph
  - Ex: . Because, in the words of Private Andrew Cook, 27th Virginia Infantry in 1861, "Harpers Ferry is one of the most romantic places I ever saw, it looks like nature carved it out for some great tragedy." *(The Harpers Ferry Anthology: Civil War Stories by Park Rangers and Volunteers, p. 45)*

Formatting:
- Arial 11 pt. font, single-spaced, no indent, with space between paragraphs.
- We adhere to the one space after the period philosophy, not two.
- Use headers and sub-headers to break up your post.
- Avoid big blocks of text.
- Keep paragraphs short. No longer than 4 lines.
- When writing headlines be specific and indicate a benefit to the reader. Read "How to Write a Headlines" if you need pointers.
- Use bullet or numbered lists where appropriate.
- End the post with a question or a call to action for comments. The more specific, the better.

Images:

Use images to break up text, make the blog post scannable and to engage readers.
- Include one header image.
- All post images must be at least 710px wide.
- NO STOCK PHOTOS (unless absolutely necessary, which should be hardly ever in our beautiful park).
- If using a free, public image such as from the Library of Congress or National Park Service, include the proper credit and a link to the site where you found it. Read this document on how to find free, public images.
- Include images that illustrate "how to" do something or images that support data.
- Children may not be photographed without parent approval.
- Name the image as follows: your first initial +last name_year+month+date_number.jpg

- ○ Example: cbaldau_200330_01.jpg
- Include captions (with image credit) in your Word or Google document and suggested insertion points. Also include the name of your image file.
  - ○ Example: *Historian William Barker has been portraying Thomas Jefferson in Harpers Ferry for over 25 years. In 2019 he spoke to a crowd near Jefferson Rock--the iconic landmark named for the president's 1783 visit. (NPS Photo/Waters)* [cbaldau_200330_02.jpg]
- Sometimes a caption is not needed, such as when an image can speak for itself. In those instances just include the image credit.
  - ○ Example: *(Image courtesy Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Online Catalog)*
- Include properly named images with your submission as attachments or links to shared files.
- HFPA staff can upload directly to HFPA>Blog Posts>Blog Photos.

Author bio:

- Author bio should be 50 words max.
- Bio should be written in third person.
- Optional: Include your headshot (350×350).

What Happens Next

Editing

We may edit your post or bounce it back to you for revisions. We may edit anchor text and links that are not relevant to your post. Sometimes scheduling may change but we will let you know ahead of time.

Exclusivity

We ask that your article not be published elsewhere previously, or simultaneously. If you'd like to republish a guest post that ran on another site, please wait at least 2 weeks to do so. Update it to make it current and link to the original post.

Deadline

Your article must be submitted on the agreed upon date. Don't worry, we'll coordinate a date together. A typical timeline:

- Tuesday of Week 1 - "Blog Committee/Editors" meet to review pitches, approve ideas, assign publishing date. (Publishing dates will be the first Friday of the month, unless we have enough content to publish more frequently.)
- Weeks 1 - 2 - Author writes blogs
- Friday of week 2 - Blog submission due to editor
- Friday of week 3 - Revisions due back to writer

- Thursday of week 4 - final draft due to editor
- Friday of week 4 - final post due to blog site manager

Commenting

Please be available the day your article publishes and the following days to respond to comments.

Promoting

The blog will be promoted via monthly e-newsletters and throughout our social networks. We ask that you share it more than once on your own social media networks over multiple days. The time frame and scheduling is up to you.

Some blog examples:

https://www.nationalparks.org/connect/blog/every-park-has-connection-women

https://www.visitestespark.com/blog/

https://www.colonialwilliamsburg.org/learn/blog/

https://www.mountvernon.org/blog/