



Improve Hearing Accessibility
5 National Park Service Locations
Deadline for public comments
August 31, 2020
11:59 pm Mountain Time



Comment NOW! There is power in numbers. Make your voice count.

Dear Hearing Loss Advocate:

Currently, the [Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park – Seattle](#) is seeking public comment on its plan to improve accessibility in 5 locations, see below for links.

How Can I Help?

We're so glad you asked! We need you to take two easy actions:

1. **Comment NOW!** —it will take less than 2 minutes. [Click here](#) and then click on the **comment now** button. To make this even easier, we have included ideas below.
 - a. Express your unique perspective, needs, challenges, and experiences.
 - You might describe your last visit to one of the 5 locations
 - Your hope to visit with increased hearing access
 - What you've experienced at other national parks with good hearing access
 - Your experiences using a hearing loop at other National Parks, see list below.
 - b. Describe your support and suggestions for the plan. Please see below for details.
 - **What do you support** in the plan; reinforces the recommendations.
 - What **changes or additions** you recommend - and why?
 - c. Please do not speak on behalf of an HLAA chapter or the national organization. However, you can list your HLAA membership.
2. **Spread the Word!** —forward this email to friends, family, colleagues, and local access leaders.
 - a. Add a personal note expressing why supporting this public comment campaign is essential to you and ask the folks receiving it to please add their comment in support of hearing loops, which helps people with hearing loss.
 - b. For other interested parties such as businesses and other advocacy organizations ask that they include the name and purpose of their organization in their comment.

To familiarize yourself with the locations, the websites are included below:

1. Klondike Gold Rush Visitor Center and Museum [Website](#)

2. Trail to Treasure walking tour/route through the Pioneer Square neighborhood website [Website](#)
3. Outdoor Recreation Information Center in the REI Seattle flagship store [Website](#)
4. Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial [Website](#)
5. Trails & Rails program aboard the Amtrak Coast Starlight train between Seattle and Portland [Website](#)

Klondike Plan—Brief Synopsis for People with Hearing Loss

[Klondike Website](#) has a 92-page plan, including information about the planning process, photographs, 69 specific recommendations, and resources.

Recommendations already included in the plan

1. Assistive Listening Systems (FM)—increase staff training, develop checkout procedures, information about their availability through flyers, and on the park’s website.
2. Provide open captioning on videos and indicate its availability on the park’s website.

Missing in the plan

1. Hearing Loops
 - a. Counter hearing loops at all information desks, service counters, and retail counters
 - b. Hearing loops in theaters and auditoriums
- a. Hearing loop on Amtrak train
2. More emphasis on neckloops
 - a. FM systems, include specific training on neckloops and telecoils
 - b. Audio program devices, neckloops should be provided
3. Add resources for hearing loops in Appendix E
4. Other suggestions you have after reading the plan or based on your experiences and knowledge.

Hearing Loop Key Messages

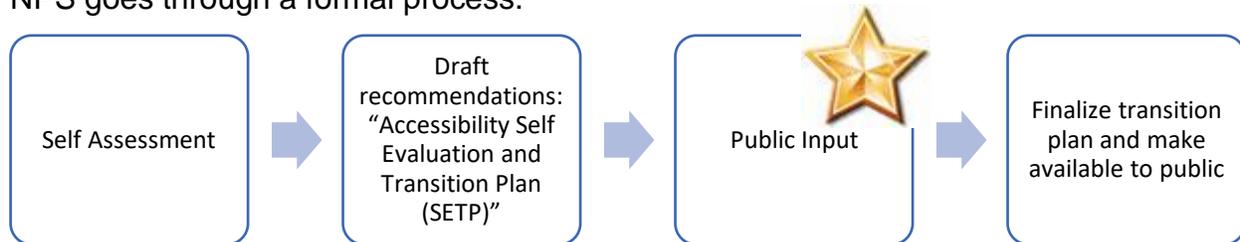
- For millions of Americans with hearing loss, hearing aids – because they do not restore hearing to normal – are not enough in many public environments. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) therefore mandates “where audible communication is integral to the use of the space, an assistive listening system (ALS) shall be provided.” Without these systems, people with hearing loss miss announcements, directions, information, and even vital safety details.
- Hearing Loops broadcast audio wirelessly to telecoils in hearing aids and cochlear implants and thus provide seamless, easy, and universal hearing access by delivering clear, pure sound from a public address system without the need for additional equipment.
- Only hearing loops provide the best listening experience for the user. They are strongly preferred over infra-red (IR), radio frequency (RF), or frequency modulation (FM) systems, which require the user to borrow a headset or neckloop equipped receiver.
- Loops require less checkout equipment, which means less work for staff to charge, sanitize, repair, provide assistance, and maintain them. The pandemic has amplified these issues.

- FM units require that someone with hearing loss “out” themselves, which some people are not comfortable doing.
- Loops are the best ADA-compliant, Assistive Listening System for ticket booths, information desks, and cashiers.

About Accessibility in the National Parks

The National Park Service (NPS) is strongly committed to making facilities, programs, services, and employment accessible for visitors and employees with disabilities. This commitment began long before the ADA was passed in 1990.

To improve accessibility for all visitors and to guide changes to the way existing services, activities, and programs are provided throughout the park, periodically, the NPS goes through a formal process.



The National Park System encompasses 419 national park sites spanning more than 84 million acres in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and US territories. Sites include parks, historic sites, monuments, lakeshores, etc.

Hearing loops are currently installed at the following National Park Service locations:

- AK Denali National Park
- CO Colorado National Monument
- GA Jimmy Carter National Historic Site
- HI Pearl Harbor National Memorial
- NY Statue of Liberty National Monument
- PA Independence National Historical Park
- VA Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts
- WY Grand Teton National Park
- WY Yellowstone National Park



Hearing Loop at Colorado National Monument

We can't do this without your help!



The GITHL Team

For questions or ideas, please email GITHLinfo@hearingloss.org



Follow our campaign's progress on the [Get in the Hearing Loop Facebook page.](#)