



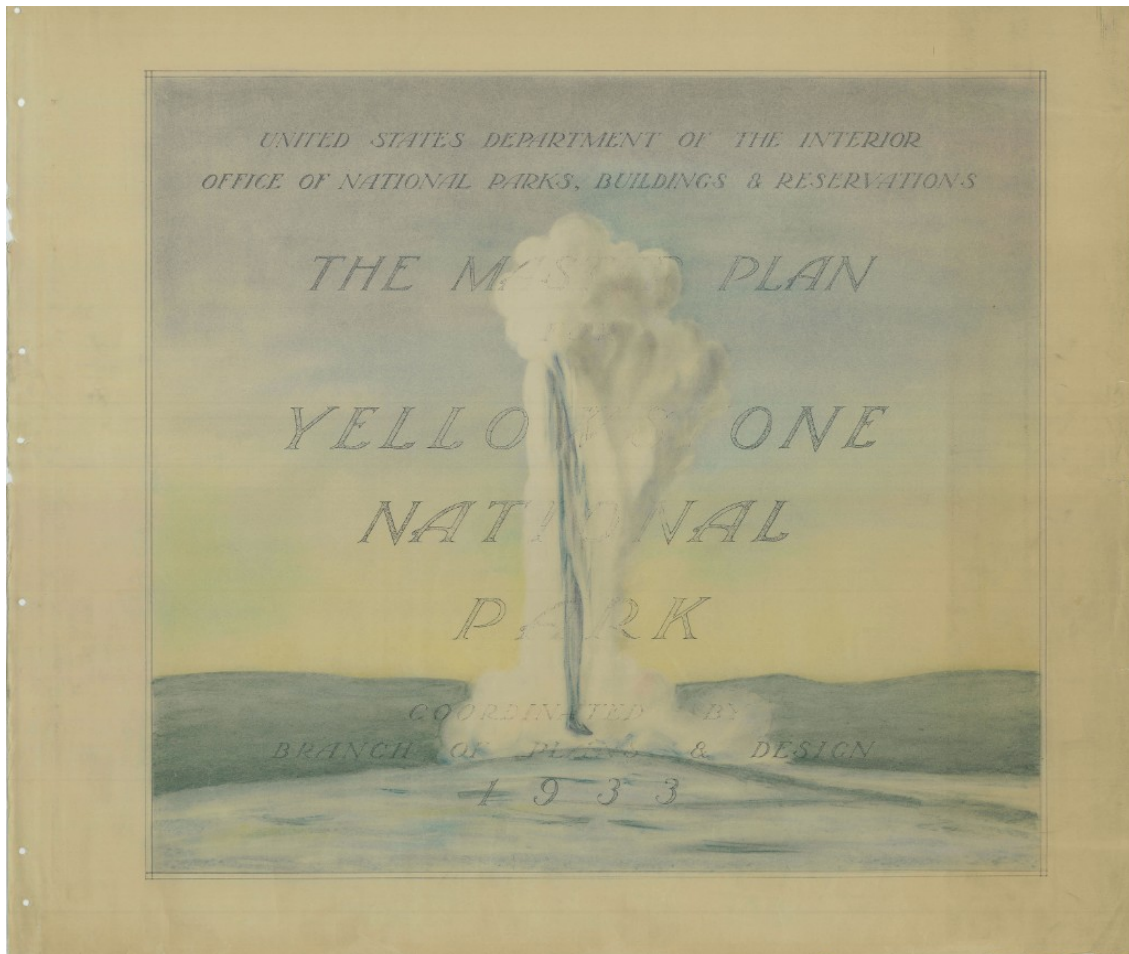
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Planning for America's Best Idea: Master Plans for National Parks

On August 25, 1916, Woodrow Wilson signed into law the Organics Act, creating the National Park Service (NPS), a new federal bureau responsible for protecting the existing 35 national parks and monuments.



Yellowstone National Park Master Plan cover sheet, 1933

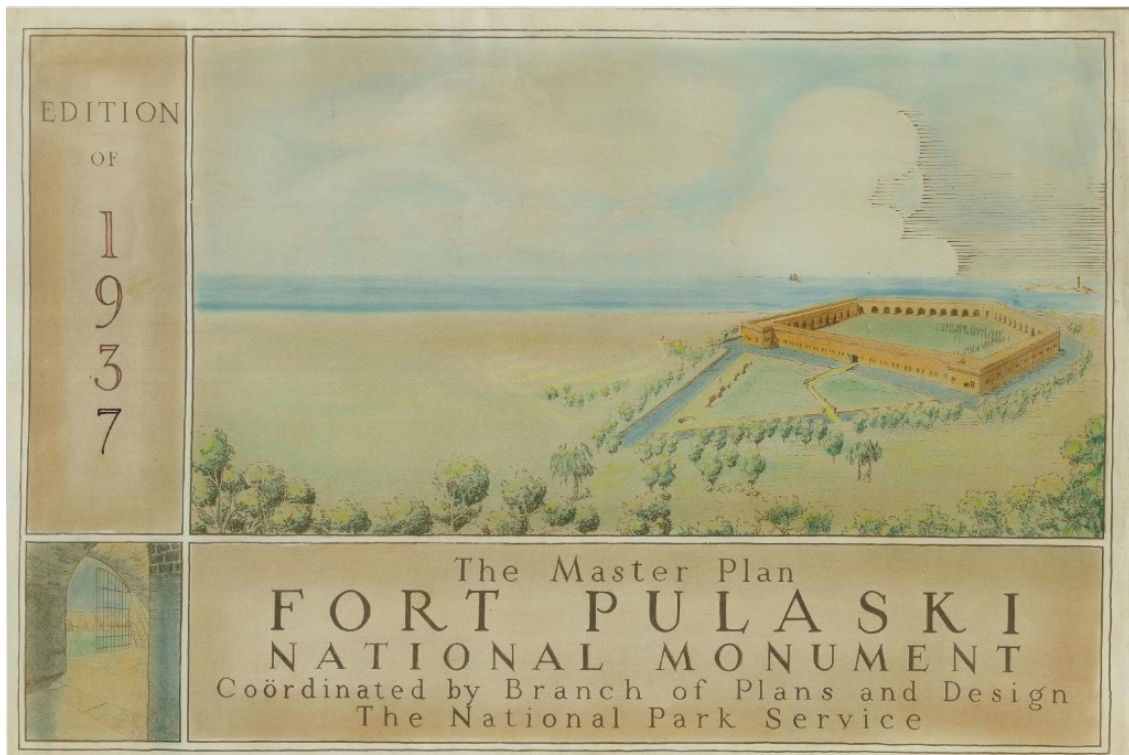
During the 1930s, a series of acts and executives orders expanded the reach of the National Park Service and planning began to develop many national park areas. The NPS's Branch of Plans and Design began creating master plans that showed proposed developments of areas of the parks. These master plans included both a textual descriptive statement and a set of maps and drawings showing the proposed developments.



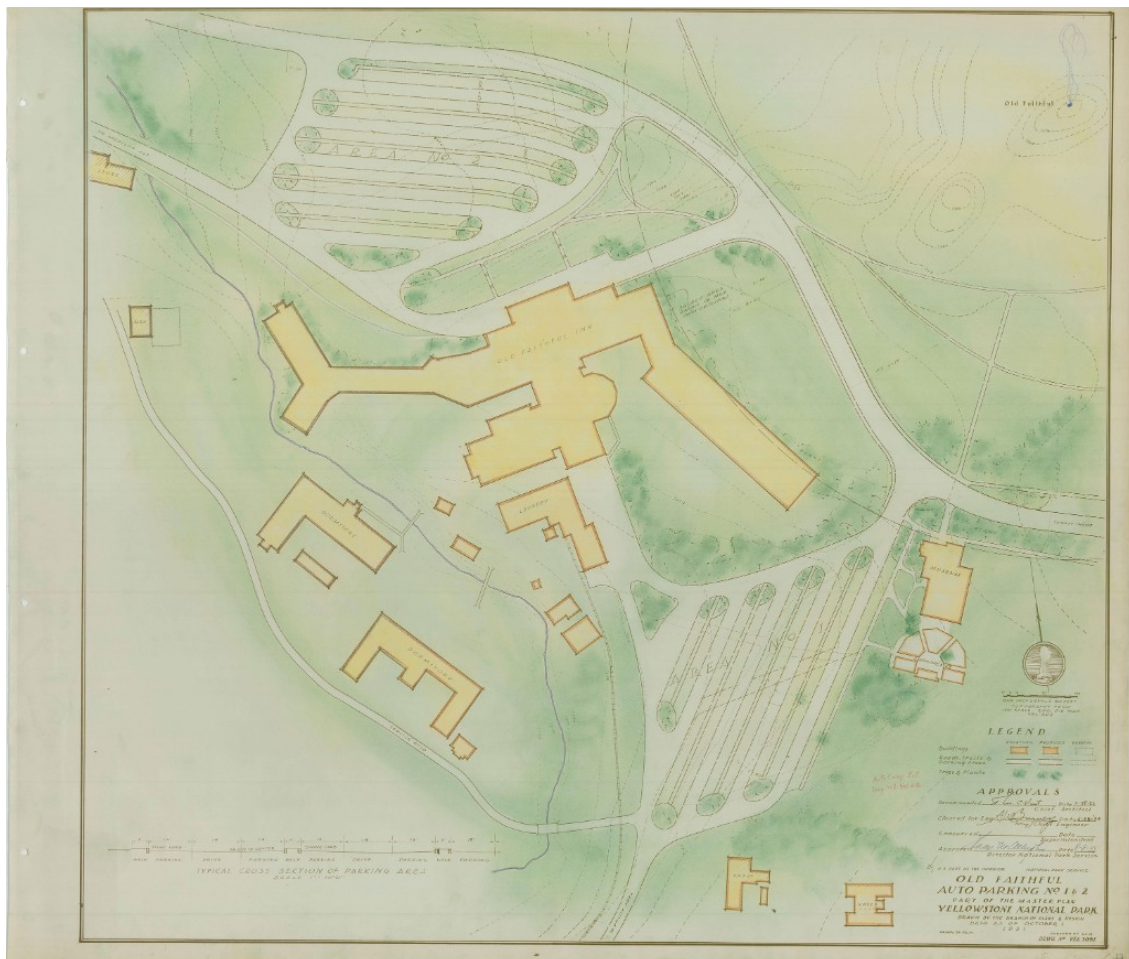
Dinosaur National Monument Master Plan cover sheet, 1940

The Cartographic Branch holds most of the National Park Service Master Plans within a series called [Master Plans of Parks and Monuments, 1931 – 1941 \(NAID 591991\)](#). They are part of Record Group (RG) 79, Records of the National Park Service. The plan sets date from 1931 until 1941.

Master Plan sets typically consist of a decorative cover, an index, and various plans relating to the existing and proposed developments within a park. The covers are often very artistic, featuring drawings and photographs that are often hand colored.



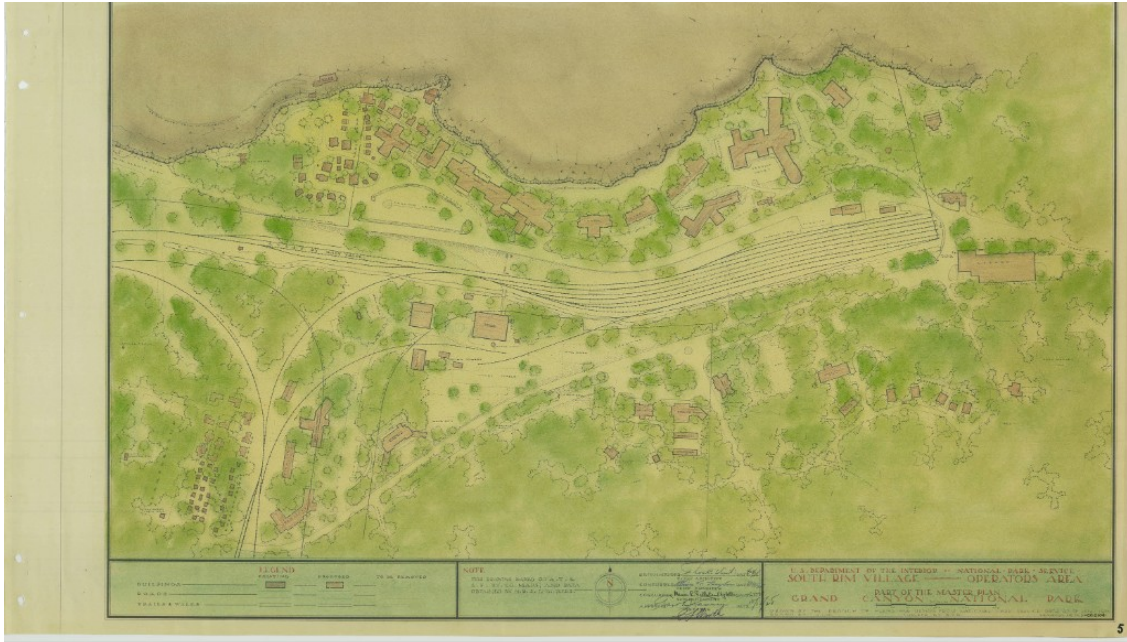
Fort Pulaski National Monument Master Plan cover sheet, 1937



Plan for the parking area and visitor facilities near Old Faithful at Yellowstone National Park.

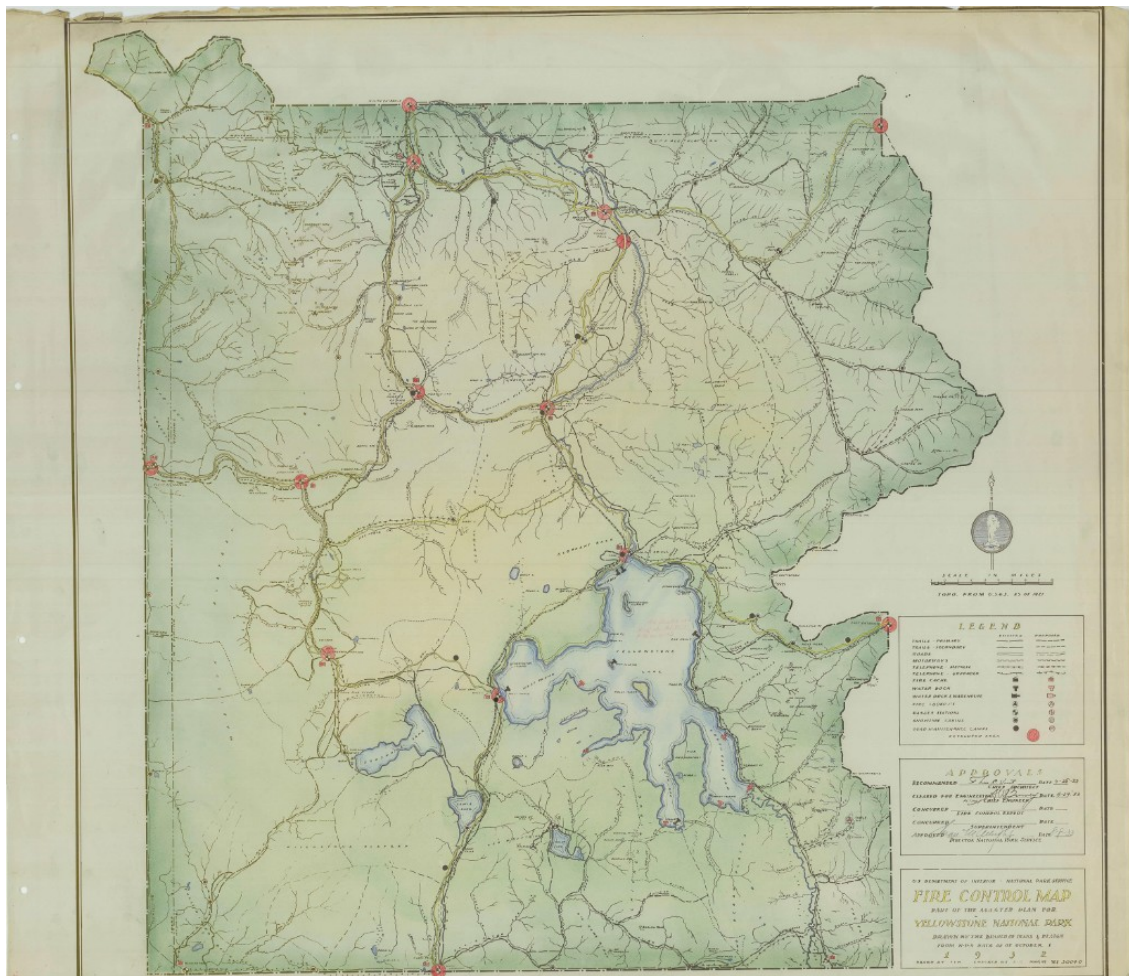
Old Faithful is depicted in the upper right corner

While the covers are often the visual highlight of the plans, the sets of plans also contain valuable information about the development of our national parks, including both existing developments and proposed roads, trails, and facilities.

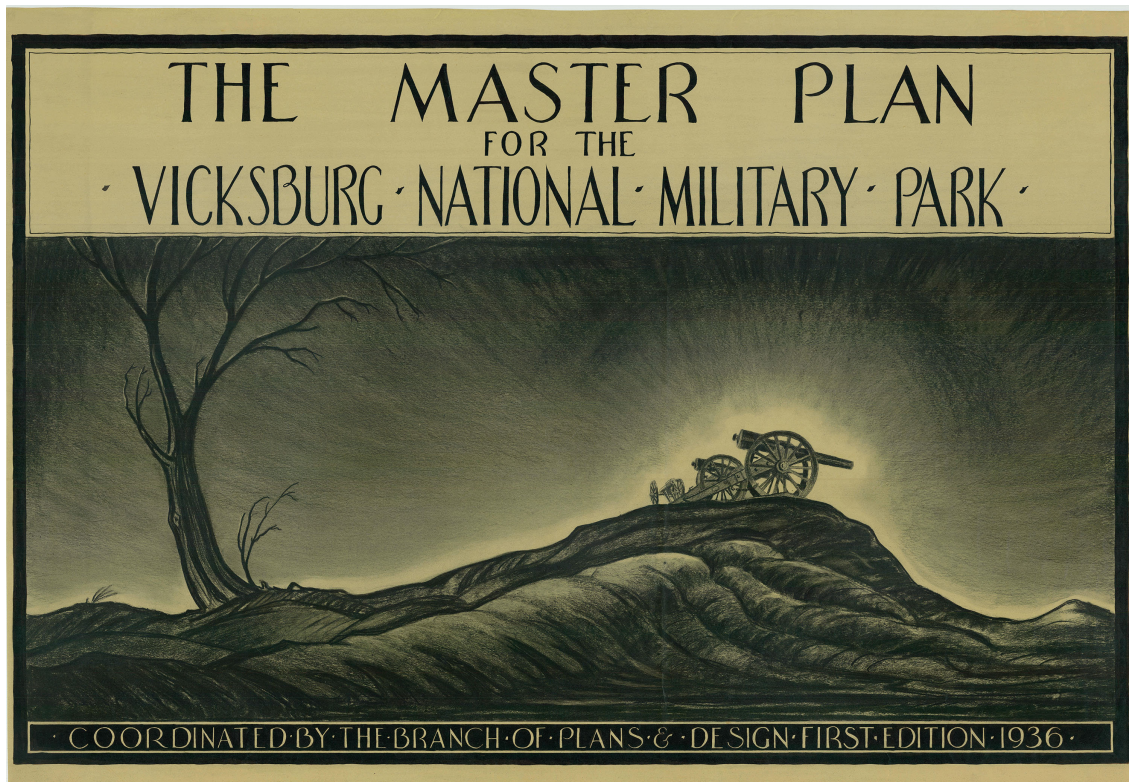


Plan for the South Rim Village area of Grand Canyon National Park, including an employee housing area and services such as a hospital and post office. Visitor facilities are also shown, including a campground and other lodging choices

Master plan sets also include items relating to the physical landscape, including maps showing land cover and vegetation, reforestation efforts, fire control plans, as well as topographic or landform maps. Plans for cultural or historical parks also often include photos of historic structures or maps showing troop positions and earthworks on battlefields.



Fire Control Map for Yellowstone National Park



Vicksburg National Military Park Master Plan cover sheet, 1936

You can view and download these National Park Service Master Plans in the [National Archives Catalog](#).

This post was excerpted from a blog post on the [Unwritten Record](#) by Brandi Oswald, archivist in the Cartographic Branch. Read Brandi's [full post](#) to see more examples and learn more about these records. And watch as Brandi shares these incredible master plans in this [video](#)!



Citizen Archivist Road Trip Update!

We are putting the pedal to the metal on our Citizen Archivist Road Trip! We've reached the halfway point on our Road Trip as we depart San Francisco today and head up to Seattle, Washington tomorrow. Since we began our virtual road trip, **more than 3,000 pages** of records have been enhanced from National Archives field offices across the country. That's amazing!



Thank you to all of our Citizen Archivists who have joined us so far, and there is still much more to come! Visit our [Missions](#) page tomorrow as we bring you records from the National Archives at Seattle, WA. You can help us tag and transcribe records from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Chinese Exclusion Act Files, genealogical records, and much more!

Get Started Tagging and Transcribing!

Facial Hair Fridays

From mustaches to beards, from chops to sideburns, we're celebrating the many styles of facial hair found within the records of the National Archives! Browse some of our favorite historic [facial hair photos in the Catalog](#).



What is your favorite historic style? Have you found inspiration for a new look of your own? Tag your favorites in the Catalog using the [FacialHairFriday](#) tag.

And be sure to follow along on our [Prologue blog](#) for the Facial Hair Friday series!

Questions or comments? Email us at catalog@nara.gov.



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