

Sandstone Visitor & Orientation Center New River Gorge National River

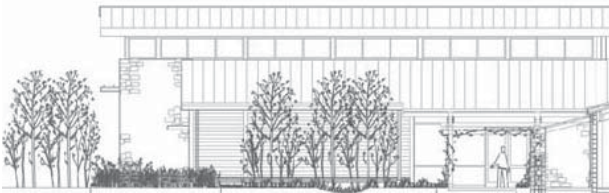
Location: Glen Jean, West Virginia
Client: National Park Service
Size: 13 acres
Cost: \$14 Million with \$2 Million for Sitework
Status: Construction completed Summer 2003



Successional grasslands on the site prior to construction



Site restoration includes planting of native species like the Sumac grove shown above.

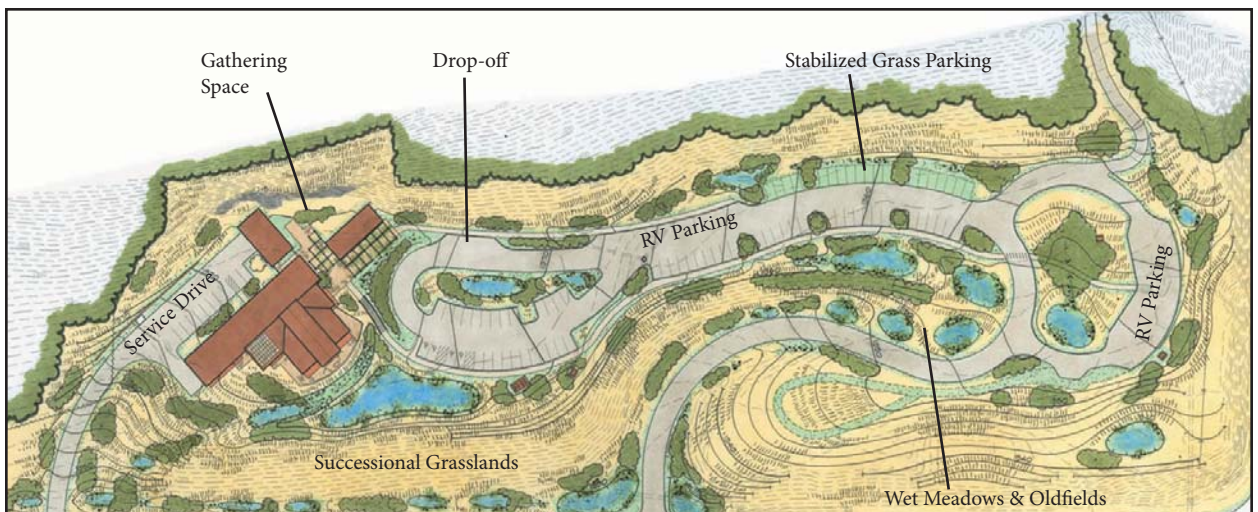


Section/Elevation of landscape at building entrance arbor

The 13-acre site is situated at the southern end of the New River Gorge National River Park. The Park is a 50-mile, 62,000-acre national river corridor. One of the oldest rivers in North America, the New River has cut a spectacular gorge into the sandstone geology of the Appalachian mountains. The Center will be a key to future park development in the southern section of the Park. The project included the development of a new Orientation Center, designed by Susan Maxman & Partners, with sitework for outdoor environmental education exhibit areas, restored native landscapes, vehicular circulation and parking, along with pedestrian paths, terraces and overlooks.

The site, an old quarry and landfill, was reclaimed by establishing successional grasslands that will merge with the surrounding hillside forests. The landscape demonstrates sustainable design initiatives that include vegetated swales to cleanse and retain stormwater and native grasslands that are successionally managed as meadows, oldfields and young woodlands. As in the most successful National Parks of the early 1900's, visitors to the site are immersed in the local landscape. Moving from parking to visitor's center, rangers engage visitors in lessons of the natural world and the positive environmental changes that can be made by all.

Viridian worked closely with the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the USDA, to develop a long-term landscape management plan for the new landscapes and exhibits. This project is in the process of becoming LEED certified.



Site plan showing successional grasslands on old landfill site with wet meadows and plantings to treat stormwater runoff.

Sandstone Visitor & Orientation Center New River Gorge National River



Restoration of successional grasslands on the site, with wetland swales for the cleansing and retention of stormwater from parking, roads and building.



Paths through successional grasslands, from parking areas to Visitors Center, with rain garden at building entry area.



Sandstone was used in the exposed aggregate walks, along with sandstone pavers at the entry trellis, with sandstone gravel at interpretive area along rock cliffs.