## Evaluation Brief EB14 March 26, 2008 == DRAFT ==

## Off-site Testing of Main Trail Waysides: 6ma, 70ma, 270ma

**Overview**: The *Trail of Time* team is in the process of developing three interpretive wayside panels: Young Canyon Old Rocks 6ma; Uplift & Erosion 70ma; and Horizontal Layers 270ma.

The purpose of this test was to identify any red flags with the preliminary designs and, based on the findings, make recommendations for the design of the prototype waysides that will be tested in a few weeks on-site at Grand Canyon.

During the test sessions a talk-aloud protocol was used where the three preliminary wayside panels were shown to respondents who shared out loud what they were thinking. Additional probing/clarification was conducted as appropriate. Respondents included a wide range of individuals and groups including children, adults, individuals with college and some graduate degrees and some without, people who had been to the Grand Canyon and some who hadn't.



6ma



70**m**a





## **Results & Discussion**:

In this section I will briefly describe general areas where respondents had particular difficulty rather than going through each panel in detail. More discussion about specifics will take place during the next evaluation team meeting.

• The WHERE IN THE CANYON graphic on the righthand side of each wayside panel created problems for most respondents. Many were not able to figure out what *where in the canyon* meant and often interpreted it to be a *You Are Here* map, i.e. pointing out where in the canyon they were standing. Another respondent said: "Where is **what**? Where is the river?" When respondents got to the Horizontal Layers wayside panel, it finally made sense to them and then they appreciated it, but the 6ma and 70ma waysides created problems. Our assumption is that visitors walking west to east will find this part of the panels helpful, but visitors starting at Grandeur Point will become frustrated and confused.

• Visitors tended to read and appreciate the content in the paragraphs on the panels, but they found it wordy and confusing in many places.

• Pronunciation guides were very helpful. As one respondent put it: "I love having the pronunciation." And another: "Being able to say it in your head is very important. If you can't, it goes right out." However, many respondents were still not able to successfully say the words, so the pronunciations should continue to be tested/refined. No need for "pronounced" in 270ma.

• Wayside Integration Strip (WIS, i.e. the common timeline strip across the bottom) tended to confuse rather than clarify. I will share specifics during the next evaluation team meeting.

## **Recommendations**:

• Revise the *Where in the Canyon* graphic and continue testing/revising until visitors are able to grasp it quickly regardless the direction from which they approach.

• Rework all text paragraphs. Keep the action verb when possible, but only where it seems appropriate; don't force it where it isn't. Use more conversational language and reduce jargon.

• Continue testing/refining the pronunciation guide. Remove the word pronounced in 270ma.

• Simplify the WIS strip so that it isn't trying to do too many things at once.