

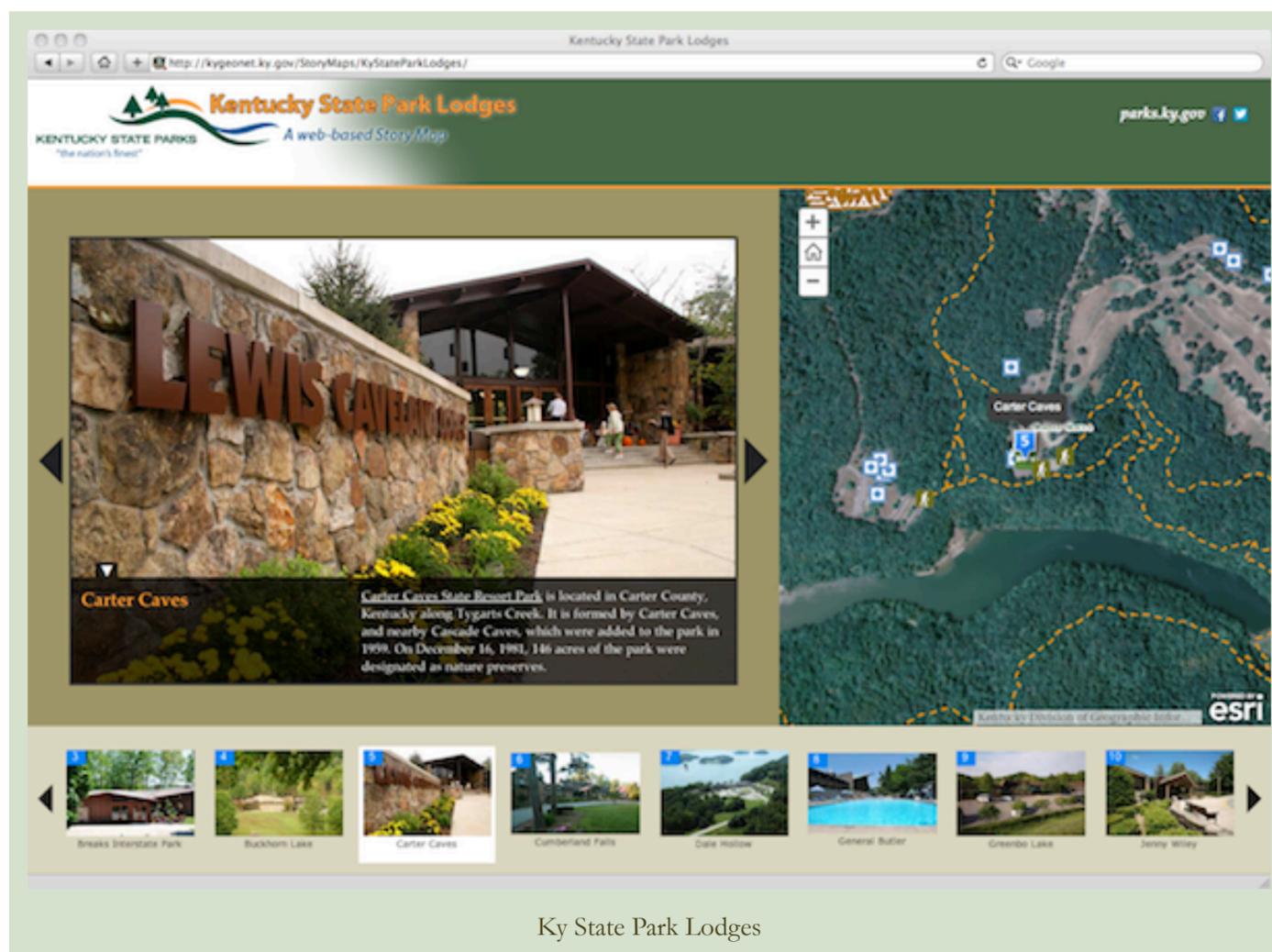
Customizing your Story Map

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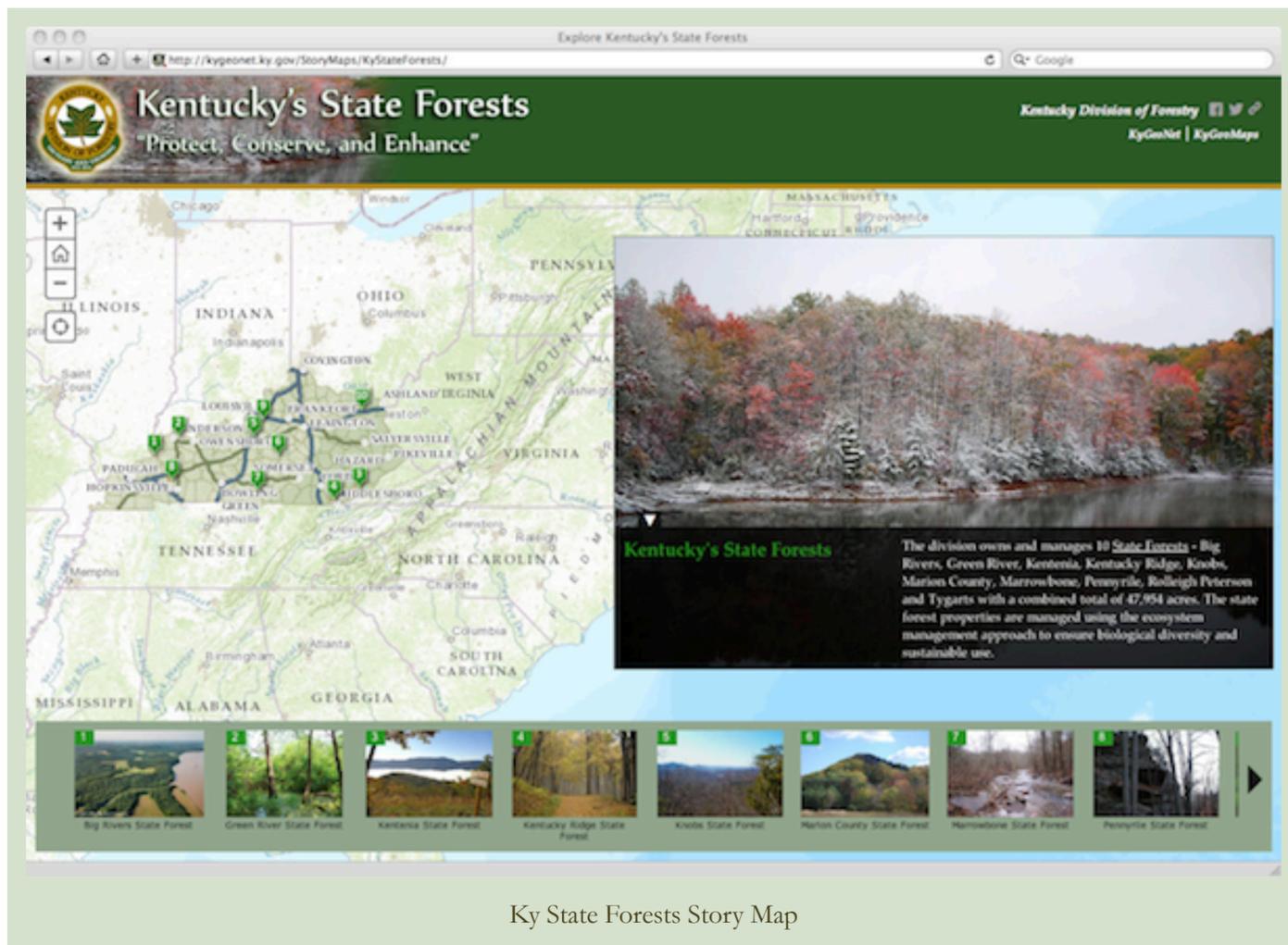
The idea of using a map to tell a story is nothing new at all. Maps have always been the perfect tool for explaining “where” something exists (or occurred) and how that relates to other “events” that are part of a story or message being delivered. Well, the GIS gurus at [Esri](#) have come up with some nifty “templates” that make it easy to build an interactive “[Story Map](#)” using your own data. So, if you have a story to tell, all you need is some simple point data, photos or videos, a little narrative text, and a login to [ArcGIS.com](#). Individuals, bloggers, students, etc, can use ArcGIS.com for free: look for the option to create a “Public Account” at the bottom of the [ArcGIS.com Sign-In page](#).

Here in the Bluegrass State, we are very lucky to have an abundance of thematic data layers that are appropriate for this type of “Storytelling” so the staff at [DGI](#) began working to pull together the resources that are necessary to create an effective Story Map. The decision was made to create Feature Services on our ArcGIS Server instance but we could have just as easily uploaded shapefiles or CSVs to ArcGIS.com.

The first Story Map to get completed was the one that highlights the [Lodges at Kentucky’s State Parks](#). We were able to collaborate with the marketing and GIS Staff over at State Parks to make this happen. They supplied some outstanding photos and reviewed their GIS data to make sure everything was in order. A web map was created on ArcGIS.com using the data, the photos were placed on a web server, and the “[Map Tour](#)” Story Map template was downloaded from Esri. Wiring up the template to our data was a breeze but our app had the same look and feel of all the other Story Maps out there. We needed to do something to make our’s unique and engaging.



Well here's the ticket . . . check out this [blog post](#). If you understand CSS, can leverage the developer tools in your browser, and know your way around Photoshop then you are in luck. You can easily “brand” your Story Map using those techniques. Below is an outline of the steps I used to customize the [Kentucky State Forest Story Map](#).



Ky State Forests Story Map

I started off by visiting the web page for the [Kentucky Division of Forestry](#) where I grabbed their new logo. The colors used in their logo ended up being the basis of the site's color scheme. Adobe Photoshop was utilized to get the hex values of the colors. With those values at-hand, I got started on touching up the underlying HTML using [Dashcode](#) on the Mac.



Ky Division of Forestry Logo

As noted in Allen Carol's blog post, I employed the “inspect element” feature in my browser to identify some of the styles that were driving the Story Map template. Starting at the top, I first changed the background color of the header to match the green color in their logo and then worked up a nice graphic for the header using a beautiful photo provided by the Division of Forestry. Additionally, I chose to add my title and subtitle as a part of my graphic and did not utilize the configuration option, but rather, left those values empty.



The height of the graphic was 115 pixels so the height of the header was also defined accordingly. Take a look at the code shown below to see how background value color, header graphic, and height of the header were defined within a single style tag.

```
<style>
#headerDesktop {background: #305c27 url(images/background_header_image.png) no-repeat !important; height: 115px;}
</style>
```

Another stylized feature I've added to some of our Story Maps is 6 pixel border between the header and the body of the map. In this case, I added the style directly within the header div and used the gold color in their logo. This really makes it stand out!

```
<div id="header" style="border-bottom-style:solid; border-bottom-width: 6px; border-bottom-color: #b28e14;">
```

All of the links on the right hand side of the header can be styled too. In this instance, I changed the font color to white so it would be easy to read on the green background and picked a font that looked good with the text I used in the header graphic. Once again, I've inserted a style tag with the values needed to achieve the desired appearance.

```
<style>
.social .msLink a {font-family: "Palatino Linotype", "Book Antiqua", Palatino, serif;
font-style:italic;
font-size:14px;
color: #FFFFFF;}
</style>
```

We chose to use the standard green markers for this "Forestry" related story map. I did a quick screen capture of the app and then grabbed the hex value of the marker color. This color was then utilized for the name in the picture panel. Also, the font family was set to match the font used for the links in the header. Consistency in type styles makes for a polished looking app!

```
<style>
#picturePanel .name {font-family:"Palatino Linotype", "Book Antiqua", Palatino, serif; font-weight: 600; color: #33971e;}
#picturePanel .description {font-family:"Palatino Linotype", "Book Antiqua", Palatino, serif; font-weight: 400; font-size: 14px;}
#picturePanel .description a {font-family:"Palatino Linotype", "Book Antiqua", Palatino, serif; font-weight: 400; font-size:
14px;}
</style>
```

Moving on down, the footer is the next component to be given a little facelift. All I did here was chose a nice green color that complemented the color scheme.

```
<style>
#footer {background: #94a98f !important;}
</style>
```

So, with very little coding, I was able to take a “stock” Story Map application and give it a unique look and feel that sets it apart from others. The same approach that is outlined above was employed to customize Kentucky’s other [Story Maps](#). Take a look at these and you’ll note that a color scheme was derived from an entity’s logo or the colors on their website. Taking the time to customize a site will ensure that it stands out from the growing crowd!

See you on the trail!

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