



# Creating Accessible PDF Files

## Overview

This document deals with creating accessible pdfs from simple, non-interactive documents or documents that only contain hyperlinks. It does not address how to create accessible pdf forms.

To the greatest extent possible, use Word, or whatever program you are creating the original file in, to make the document accessible. For example, use headings and styles, format your tables properly, and add alt text to your images in Word before converting the document to a pdf. It is easier to do these things *before* you convert to a pdf than to try and fix them afterwards.

The one exception to this is if you are using the NPS Message Project (“black band”) formatting. Don’t worry about the fact that the Word accessibility checker is telling you that the objects in the black band are not inline.

IMPORTANT: There are several ways to convert a document to a pdf. Make sure you create the pdf using the Export command.	If starting from Microsoft Office, select File -> Export -> Create Adobe PDF
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**The following steps require Acrobat Pro.** If you don’t have Acrobat Pro installed on your computer, you won’t be able to manipulate the pdf.

Make the pdf accessible.	Select Tools -> Action Wizard -> Make Accessible -> Start. Follow the prompts.
<a href="#">Review the report from the Accessibility Checker.</a>	Places where there are problems will be in <b>Bold</b> . Click the + sign to the left of the element to open it up and see what your issues are.
Items with a red X failed the accessibility check and need to be fixed.	Right click on the item. Select “Fix”, “Skip Rule”, or “Explain”. For tag errors in the black band, see “Making the black band screen-reader friendly” below.
Items with a blue question mark may be fine, but need a human to verify.	Right click to select “Pass”, “Skip Rule”, or “Explain”, or see below for how to fix common issues.

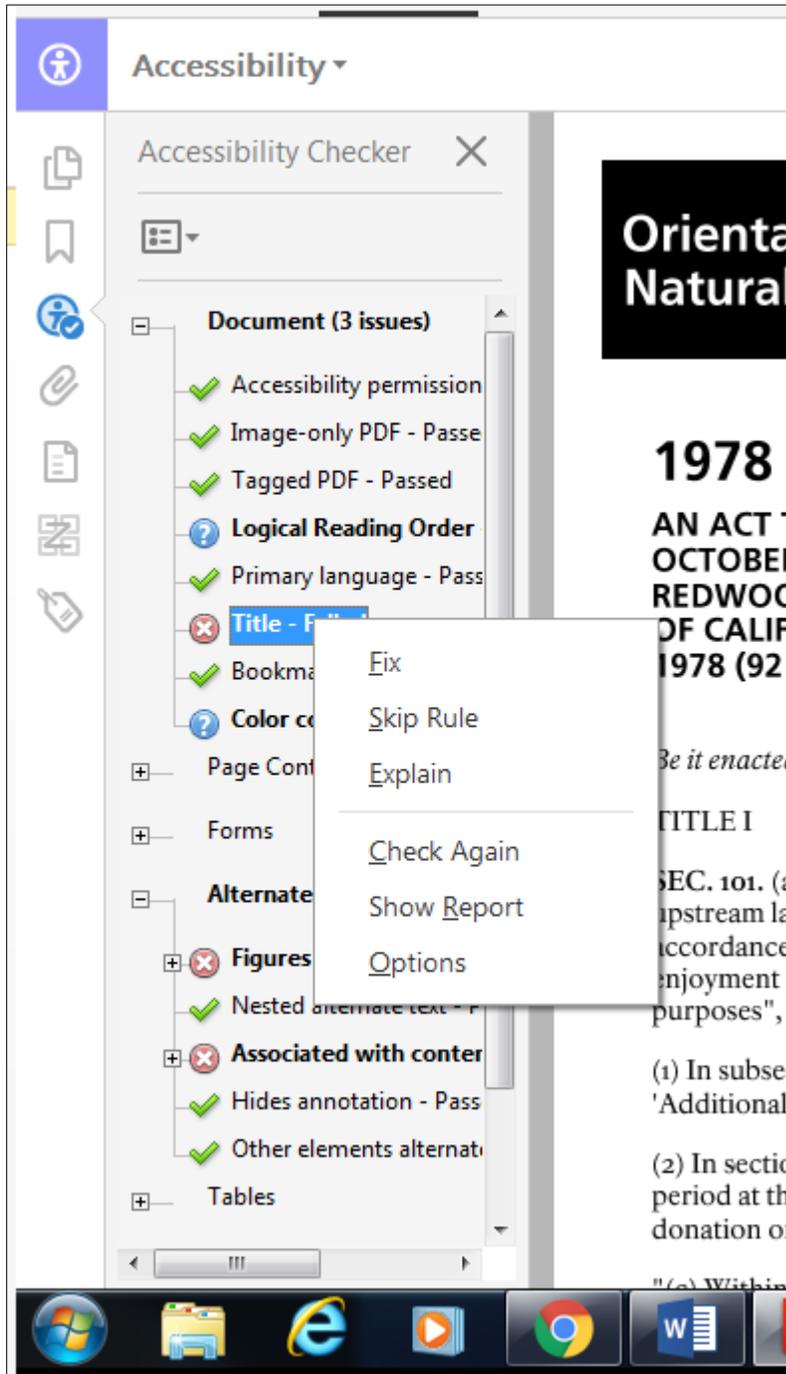
Common accessibility problems and how to fix them:

<a href="#">Making the black band</a>	From the Accessibility toolbar, open the Reading Order panel. Using
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<p><a href="#">screen-reader friendly</a></p>	<p>the select arrow, draw a box around the black band, then select Background on the Reading Order panel. The screen reader will now ignore everything in the black band. If you want the screen reader to pick up the site name or other text in the black band, go in a second time and draw a box around the text, then select Text on the Reading Order panel.</p>
<p><a href="#">Logical Reading Order – Needs manual check</a></p>	<p>From the Accessibility Checker panel, select Reading Order -&gt; Page content order -&gt; Show Order Panel. If something is not in the correct order, you can drag and drop it into the correct sequence using the Order panel on the left.</p>
<p><a href="#">Color Contrast – Needs manual check</a></p>	<p>If you just have black text on a white page, you can right-click and select Pass. If you have something more complicated, you can select Edit -&gt; Preferences -&gt; Accessibility and make the appropriate choice from Document Color Options.</p>

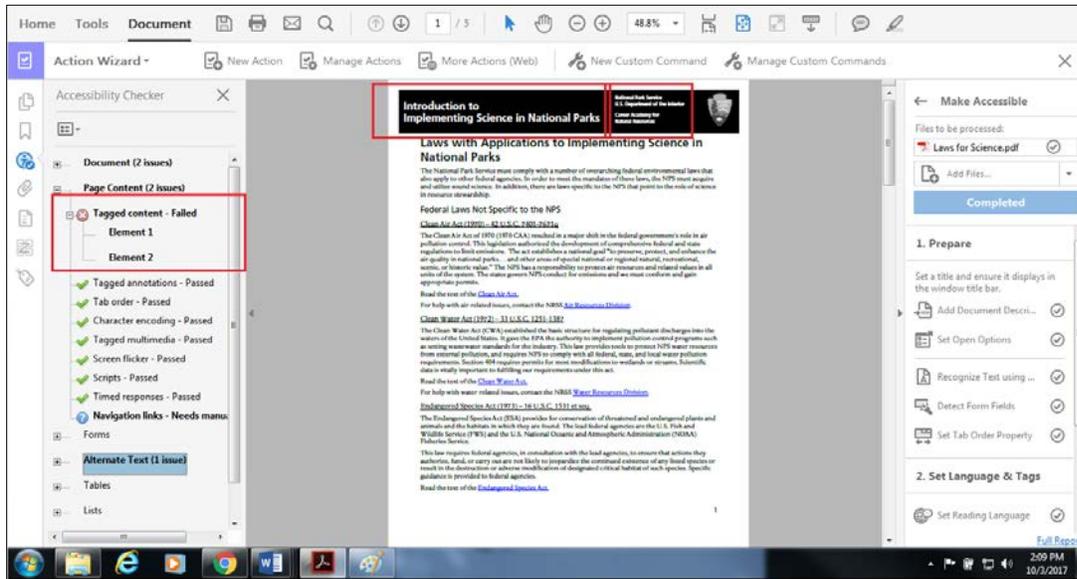
## Review the Report from the Accessibility Checker

In this example, "Document" has been expanded by clicking on the + to reveal the elements that passed and the three elements with issues. "Logical Reading Order" and "Color contrast" may be fine, but need to be checked manually. "Title" has an error and needs to be fixed. Right click, and select Fix.

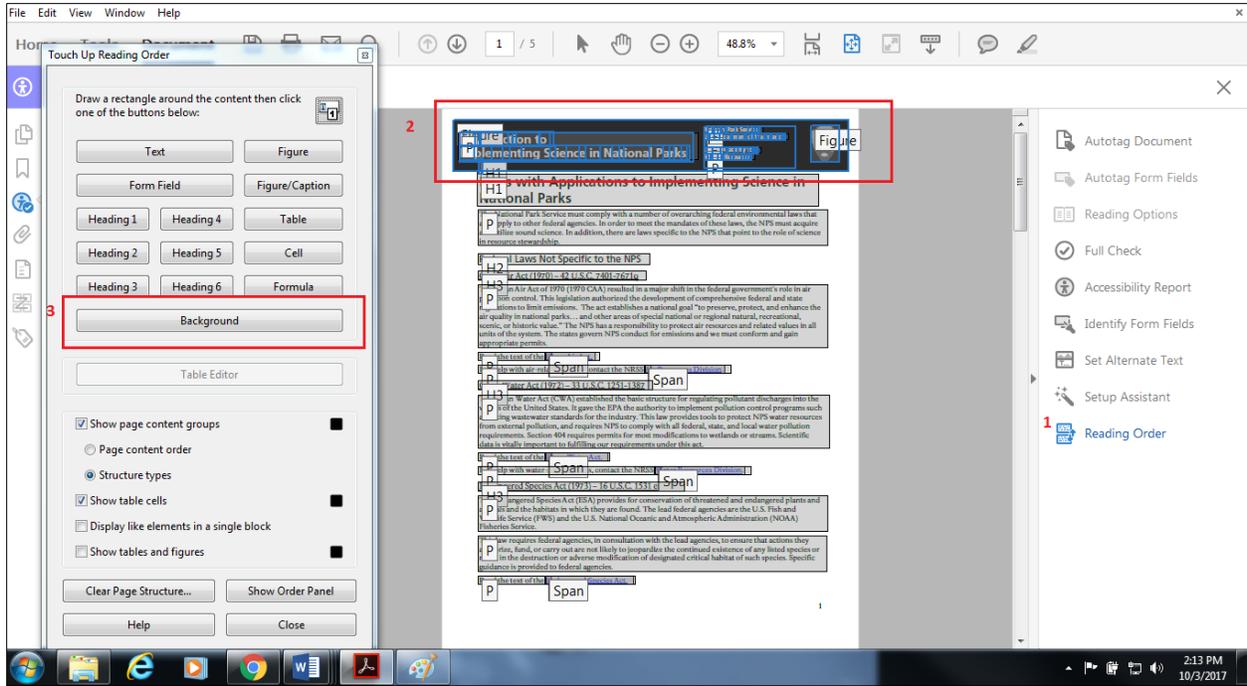


## Making the Black Band Screen-reader Friendly

When you first convert a document with a black band, you will likely get a tagged content failure from the Accessibility Checker. In the screen shot below, it thinks the two areas of text in the black band are not tagged properly. Retagging the black band will make this error go away.

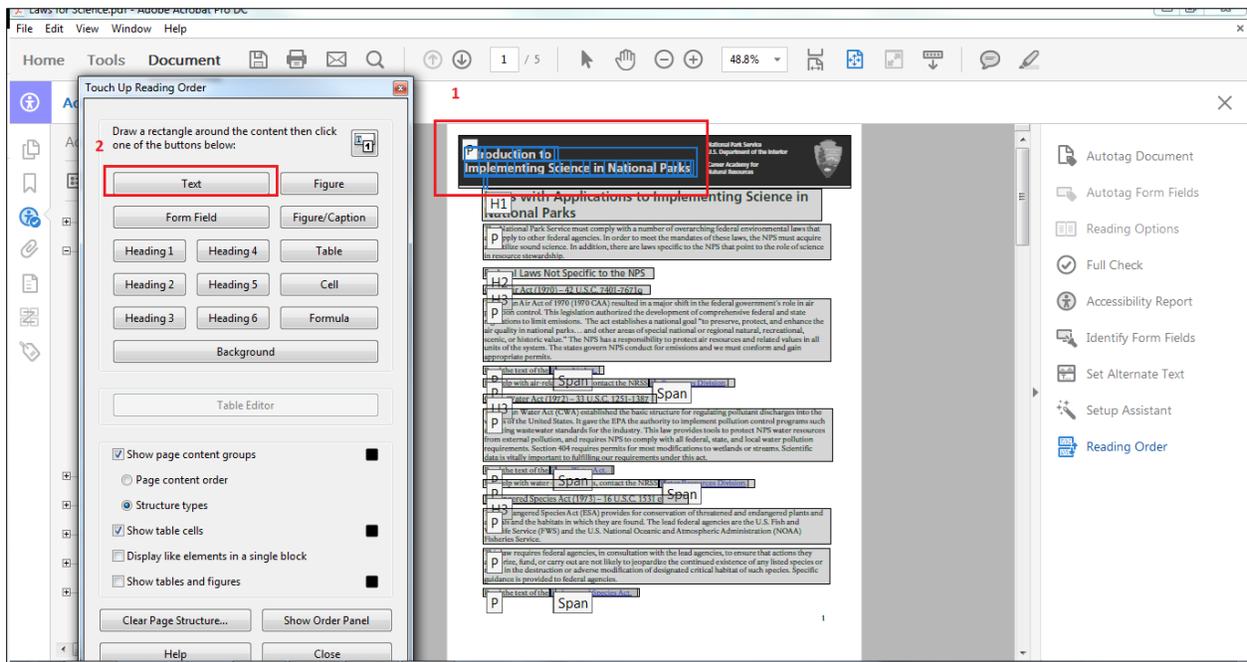


1. From the Accessibility tool bar, select Reading Order.
2. Select the whole black band area, being careful not to select any of the text below the band.
3. On the Reading Order panel, select the Background tag. The screen reader will now ignore the black band and everything in it.



If you do want the screen reader to read the text in the black band,

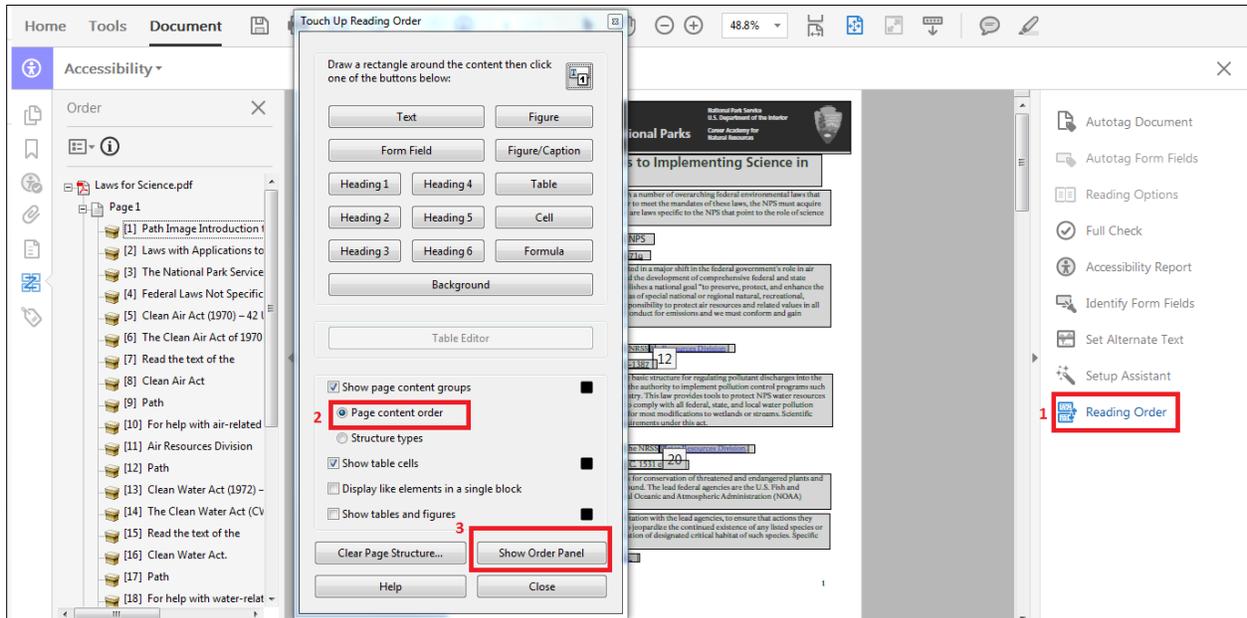
1. Select the text
2. Select Text from the Reading Order panel.



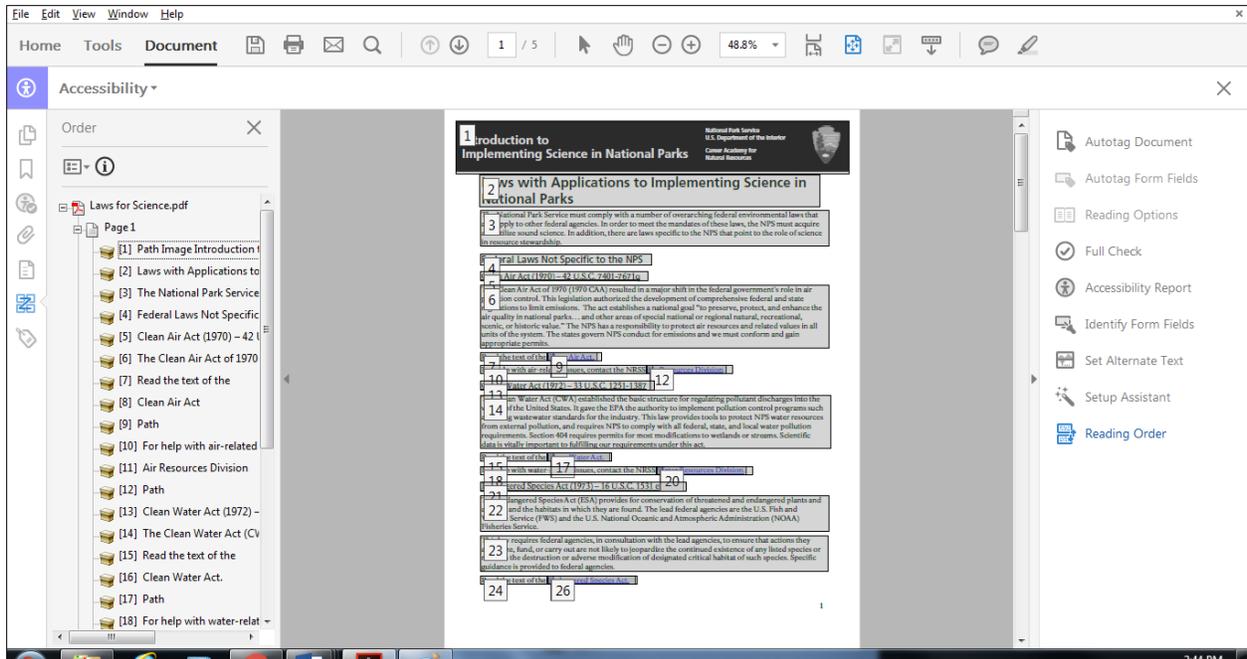
## Checking the Reading Order

1. Open the Order panel by selecting “Reading Order” from the Accessibility Checker panel (1), then “Page Order Content” (2), “Show Order Panel”(3) from the Touch Up Reading Order panel.

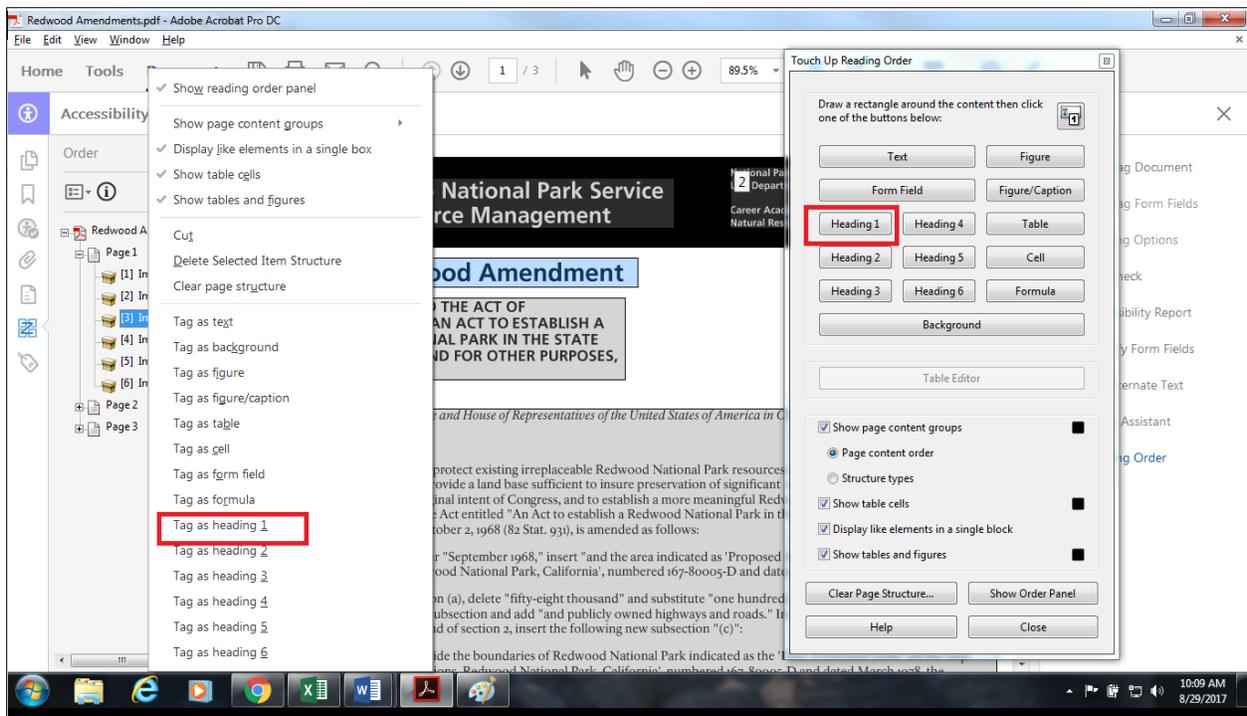
If the Touch Up Reading Order panel is in your way, you can close it after this step.



2. You will see numbers next to each element of your document, indicating the order in which they will be read by a screen reader. If an object is out of order, you can select it from the Order panel on the left and drag and drop it into the correct sequence.

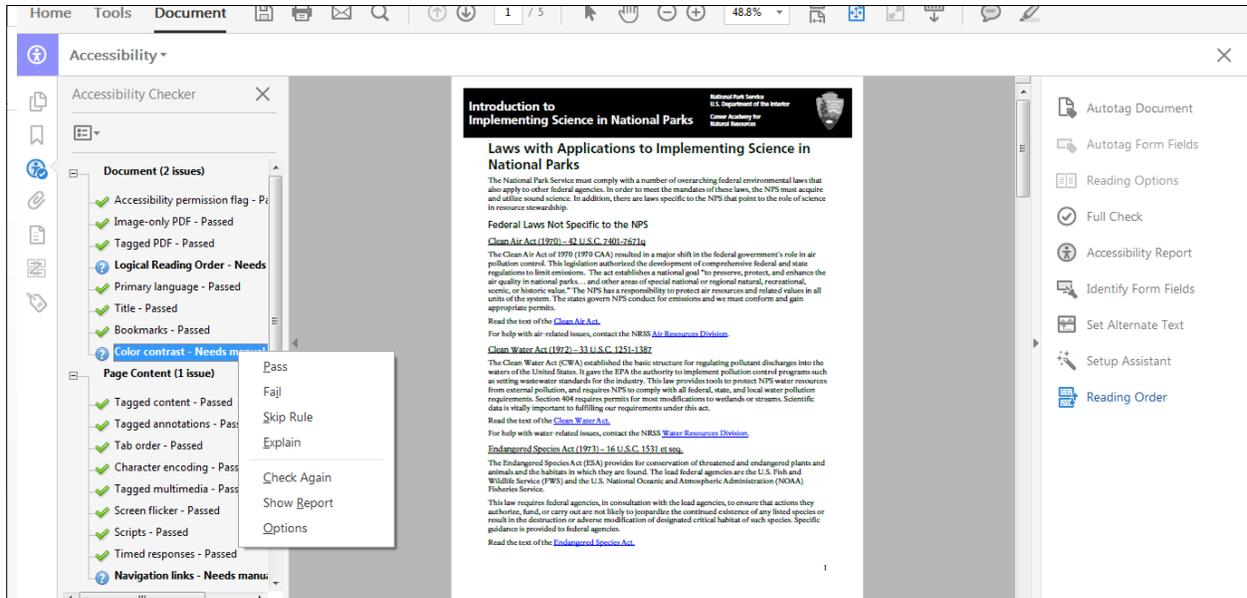


- If you for some reason didn't do it in the original document, you can also use this step to tag your headings properly. Right clicking on the element in the Order Panel and select the appropriate tag from the box that opens up, or left click on the item and select the correct tag from the Touch Up Reading Order pop-up.



## Color Contrast – Needs Manual Check

1. If you just have a black and white document, you can right click on Color Contrast in the Accessibility Report and just select “Pass”.



2. If you don't have black text on a white background and/or you want to make sure you have accessible contrast, select Edit -> Preferences -> Accessibility, and make the appropriate choice from the Document Color Options.

