

# COASTAL COMMUNICATORS

A newsletter for the nation's coastal management and research reserve programs.

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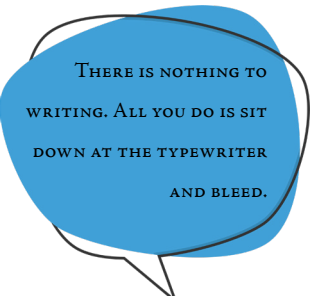
Delivering a Powerful Presentation

### COMMUNICATOR OF THE MONTH

Renee Wilson  
Rookery Bay National Estuarine  
Research Reserve, Florida

### FROM US TO YOU

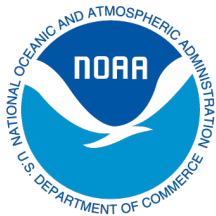
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THERE IS NOTHING TO  
WRITING. ALL YOU DO IS SIT  
DOWN AT THE TYPEWRITER  
AND BLEED.

– Ernest Hemingway

April 2019, Issue 7



## COMMUNICATION INSIGHTS

### DELIVERING A POWERFUL PRESENTATION

Delivering a presentation before a large audience can be an exciting and important career experience. If presenting is in your future, following this one simple piece of advice can help capture, and keep, the audience's attention:

You—not your slides—must give the presentation.

That statement may seem blindingly obvious—yet in practice, many go against it. Maybe by facing away from the audience, reading sentences straight off the slides. Or by cramming text and intricate charts onto one slide, frustrating people in the back who can't make out a thing. Or by stumbling over words once at the podium, realizing too late that polishing the talk should have been the top priority.

While slides often do strengthen presentations, they are never meant to take center stage. At most, they are an able assistant, flashing well-chosen phrases and sharp visuals to highlight the message that you, and only you, came to deliver.

The following skills, practiced often, will raise your speaking profile and draw the audience's attention to you and your organization.

### REHEARSE, REHEARSE, REHEARSE

Go over the presentation repeatedly to hone the delivery and message within the time limit. One great way to practice is with a small, trusted group where members can point out speaking strengths as well as a few bad habits that undercut effectiveness.

Consider joining a local Toastmasters group for this sort of friendly feedback. Or, a week before the big conference, gather several coworkers to take turns presenting, then offering praise and pointers. Even if your pre-presentation "audience" consists of a household mirror and a stopwatch, you can still identify and polish the rough parts.

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## USE THESE PRESENTATION TIPS

- Introduce yourself and briefly outline three to five major points to be covered.
- Provide context or facts that show why the topic and message are important.
- Speak clearly, expressively, and at the appropriate volume.
- Engage with listeners through gestures and friendly eye contact on both sides of the room.
- When needed, take quick “reminder” glances at the presentation or “notes” section on your laptop screen—do not swivel around to linger on the screen behind you.
- Leave time if needed for questions and comments.
- Conclude by summarizing the main points and providing a contact email address.

## FINALLY, BREATHE

Before beginning to speak, or when flustered by a sudden case of nerves or amnesia, take a deep and relaxing breath. The audience can wait a few seconds while you gather your thoughts. You’ve got this, and good luck!

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## SLIDE SUCCESS

- Stick to one font style (such as Calibri) and keep font size to a 24-point minimum, for visibility—this might mean spreading a complex point across several slides.
- Make text phrases brief and easy to understand—the speaker fills in the rest.
- Text-only slides are perfectly fine.
- If visuals are important, check whether your organization has access to high-quality, informative options.
- Skip the cartoons, fuzzy or dark images, decoration-only screenshots, and gaudy effects.
- Get permission before using any visuals from outside organizations.
- Establish a visual brand for the organization by limiting slide and text colors to just two or three high-contrast hues.
- Place your logo (bottom-right or bottom-left) in every slide possible—it’s good public relations.



# COMMUNICATOR OF THE MONTH

**Name:** Renee Wilson

**Title:** Regional Communications Coordinator

**Organization:** Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Naples, Florida

**Organizational Structure:** We have a relatively large staff of about 35 people. We have four staff members in education, two in visitor services, and in communications, one full-time (me) and one part-time. We also have staff in research, stewardship, the training program, facilities, and administration. We are managed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and work very closely with them, especially on communications products.

**Outreach Approach:** At Rookery Bay, we define “outreach” as public programs and awareness-building events. One of our educators is tasked with responding to and tracking requests for outreach programs and assigning the appropriate staff member or volunteer. The communications department oversees the production, coordination, and dissemination of printed or electronic communications products.

**Job Duties:** Much of my time is spent telling stories about our work, either through our website and social media or through in-reach to senior management, onsite signs, and exhibits—and lately, helping others on staff ensure their PowerPoint presentations are formatted according to the Department of Environmental Protection’s branding guidelines and are approved for the public to see.

**Social Media:** I am responsible for our social media efforts. One of the biggest challenges here is that social media sites are often considered a threat to our network, and access to these sites is largely blocked for most staff members. While I have permission to access them, I sometimes need to disconnect from the network to do so, or to make video uploads go faster.

**Most Fun, Most Challenging:**

I really love working at Rookery Bay. Our location is beautiful, and I love that I can literally walk out my door and potentially see a manatee in the creek, an osprey or eagle flying overhead, or a bobcat—or even a rattlesnake—on our grounds. I enjoy photographing nature, and love the fact that I can share something cool about the natural world to inspire people to want to learn or do more to keep it healthy. A challenge for me is getting the word out about who we are and what we do to the thousands of people who live here and visit the area. Getting them to come to the Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center is an important part of increasing awareness of this amazing resource, which is here for everyone to explore, enjoy, and help protect. There is a lot of competition for things to do in the area, and our location is a little bit out of the way.



**Work Mantra:** One of my most exciting endeavors over the past year has been working with Live Oak Production Group on their full-length feature film, “Southwest Florida’s Mangrove Coast.” It highlights the history and management of Rookery Bay Research Reserve, and will air on Florida PBS stations—and potentially beyond—on Earth Day (April 22, 2019). This will be a huge step in raising awareness of the reserve on a large scale, and the work we do to help the community understand why this protected area exists, how it benefits the local economy, why mangroves are so important, and more.

**Wish for the Future:** Since starting to work here as a research translator in 2000, my goal has always been to raise awareness of the value of estuaries and the work we do to help protect them. Ultimately, I hope more people learn to appreciate these natural resources and engage with us to help protect them, either as volunteers, as members of our friends group, or just by being better stewards of our environment in their everyday activities.

## FROM US TO YOU

### OUTREACH TOOL SPOTLIGHT – RAIN GARDEN APP

April showers bring May flowers—and they also bring opportunities for rain gardens to work their magic. This smartphone app helps users determine the size, placement, management, and maintenance of multiple rain gardens, making it that much easier to spread the word about natural infrastructure options. Find it here: [coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/rain-garden](http://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/rain-garden).

### GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE EFFECTIVENESS DATABASE

The Digital Coast has a wealth of literature on this topic, but that doesn't mean you have time to sort through it all. Use this online database to search records from a wide range of sources—covering

the numerous benefits of the 32 different types of natural infrastructure—and filter it all based on your exact communication needs. Find it here: [coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training/gi-database](http://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training/gi-database).

### UPCOMING SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#), and tag along with these campaigns.

- All month: Use #GreenInfrastructure to share your natural infrastructure solutions
- All month: Use #CoastalManagement for photo contest details (we want your photos!)
- April 22: Use #EarthDay to celebrate this beautiful planet, and all the ways to protect it
- April 22 to 26: Use #WestCoast to highlight all the best of the coastal west

### FAST FACTS: NATURAL INFRASTRUCTURE



## Natural Infrastructure



**Wetlands and reefs  
and mangroves...oh my!**



**Billions in savings (\$23 billion/year),  
services (water quality and storm protection),  
and value (37% higher property value).**

This is one of the many graphics and fast facts available for your use in presentations and handouts. Grab this one at [coast.noaa.gov/states/fast-facts/natural-infrastructure](http://coast.noaa.gov/states/fast-facts/natural-infrastructure). If you have an idea for a new group of fast facts or illustrations, please let us know.

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Send questions or suggestions to [coastal.info@noaa.gov](mailto:coastal.info@noaa.gov).

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*Improving communication skills, one newsletter at a time.*