

# COASTAL COMMUNICATORS

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

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Patrician Price


Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve, Florida

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EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION  
IS 20% WHAT YOU KNOW AND  
80% HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT  
WHAT YOU KNOW.

– Jim Rohn

August 2019, Issue 11



## COMMUNICATION INSIGHTS

# ORGANIZING AN OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

As a communications specialist serving multiple project teams, I often find myself coordinating large outreach efforts, whether it's a major tool release or an annual event. After many years in this position, I've learned that my brain functions best in organized outreach campaigns, so much so that our outreach team has structured our yearly calendar into monthly campaigns. I like this approach as it shows us what the upcoming year holds, and helps us divide our outreach love equally among our office's various departments.

Campaigns can be large or small, depending on the goals, and can help you reach audiences on a variety of platforms. For our ongoing monthly campaigns, we usually keep the content focused on social media and our newsletters. For the larger campaigns, we stretch a little further. For the purpose of this article, I'll cover one of the larger campaigns, National Estuaries Week, which takes place September 14 to 21 this year, as an example.

## GOALS AND AUDIENCE

I know we talk a lot about goals and target audiences, but it's important. What's the purpose of the campaign, and who are you trying to reach? For National Estuaries Week, our audience includes a large section of the public, educators, planners, local officials, and coastal managers. For this campaign, our three goals (in partnership with other organizations) are

- + Creating broad public awareness and support for our nation's estuaries and coasts;
- + Encouraging active engagement and participation through volunteer and education events; and
- + Communicating the value and importance of estuaries and coasts.

In the end we want folks to appreciate, and therefore protect, these vital estuarine resources.

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## PRODUCTS AND ACTIVITIES

Next, list all of the activities that can help your organization reach the goals and specific audiences.

- Develop an e-card, printed postcard, or flyer to send to your benefactors and others, either by email list or snail mail. Include dates for participatory activities such as celebrations and coastal cleanup events. Post the printed products in popular local establishments such as libraries, community boards, and more.
- Write blogs or articles for your local media. Include information about why estuaries are important, why people should care, something interesting and unique about your estuary, and the date of your event.
- Post on social media to reach a wide range of audiences with minimal time and effort. Be sure to use hashtags that resonate and that people follow.
- Hold a photo contest! This is a great way to invite people to your estuary or coast and get them involved, which in turn fosters a sense of ownership.

We can help create some of these outreach products, and so can the National Estuarine Research Reserve Association. Look for emails from us in the coming weeks.

By now you might have figured out that my article serves two purposes: to help you think about your own campaigns, and to shamelessly plug National Estuaries Week. Even if you aren't part of the research reserve system, estuaries are part of the coast and of all of our lives. So jump on the campaign bandwagon and help get people involved!

Jodie Sprayberry  
Senior Communications Specialist  
CSS on contract with the  
NOAA Office for Coastal Management  
[Jodie.Sprayberry@noaa.gov](mailto:Jodie.Sprayberry@noaa.gov)



## COMMUNICATOR OF THE MONTH

Name: *Patrician Price*

Title: *Regional Communications Coordinator*

Organization: *Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve, Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida*

Organizational Structure: *There are a total of 29 staff working at the reserve. Most of them are in the Ponte Vedra Beach office, with two reserve staff and Northeast Florida Aquatic Preserves staff based at the Marineland field office—the original GTM [Guana Tolomato Matanzas] facility. In addition, we have seven summer interns who are assisting with summer camp, research, administration, and*

*resource management projects.*

*We are also fortunate to have a wonderful group of volunteers.*

*Without them, we would not be able to achieve so many*

*projects! Moreover, our reserve oversees Florida's East Coast Aquatic Preserve Program (Northeast Florida Aquatic Preserves, Indian River Lagoon Aquatic Preserves, Tomoka Marsh Aquatic Preserve, and Wekiva-Middle St. Johns Aquatic Preserves). The reserve is managed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection. I work very closely with them on communication items.*



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# COMMUNICATOR OF THE MONTH (CONTINUED)

**Outreach Approach:** Most of our outreach is facilitated through education and our volunteers. The environmental educators organize our ongoing events, such as beach walks, guided cultural hikes, family seining, lectures, and community outreach events. We also have the support of Friends of the GTM Reserve. They recently hosted a family day that was very well received. Communication works with all departments to coordinate electronic and printed promotion for these events.

**Job Duties:** Besides working closely with staff to inform and educate the public about the important research, education, and stewardship programs, I work with the aquatic preserves on preliminary steps for PowerPoint presentations and media inquiries. GTM has become a “go-to” resource for the media on oysters and mangroves, for example. Indian River Lagoon Aquatic Preserves is the local source for the Leave No Trace campaign. There are many exciting stories to tell about the research and educational programs at GTM, for which I am currently developing press releases. I also take travel bloggers on tours of the reserve or work with local TV stations or newspapers. Just the other day, a news segment was filmed on our seining program. We are also working on a 20th anniversary event. Every month, I write a blog on the Department of Environmental Protection’s website that features the reserve and each aquatic preserve.

**Social Media:** It is my responsibility to plan social media. I work with the Department of Environmental Protection to ensure that we get stories out to the public about what’s happening with our turtle nesting, for example, or one of our research, education, or stewardship programs. We have had several successful social media posts, which always, of course, include either an animal or a turtle. One was simply a turtle nesting tip reminding people to fill in a hole if one is dug on the beach. We mentioned how a turtle fell in, but luckily got out. The posted photo was of the hole with turtle tracks leading to the ocean.

**Most Fun, Most Challenging:** One of the best parts is the scenery. How many places can you work where you have a breathtaking view when you walk out the back door? We have the Guana River, and occasionally I see dolphins swimming in it. And the Atlantic Ocean and beach are across the road. Nature is all around! My biggest challenge is rebranding the reserve. Although we have been a national estuarine research reserve for 20 years and are not a state park, many locals refer to us as “Guana State Park.” Through continuously branding as GTM, many media outlets have finally begun to refer to us as “GTM Research Reserve.” It’s a slow process.

**Work Mantra:** A few years ago, we launched a media campaign for National Estuaries Week that brought over 400 attendees to the reserve for our National Estuaries Day event. One of the highlights was creating Facebook live for each day of that week. We took the viewing audience on a tour of our Visitor Center, a boat trip with researchers, a visit with some of our resident reptiles, and a “Day in the Life of a Ranger.” In the reptile story, people could ask questions and we answered. We also received National Estuaries Week proclamations from all the surrounding cities. The visitors event included fun workshops like a living shorelines tour, family seining, kid-friendly native cooking, and basic beekeeping. A lesson I learned early on about events: always be ready with “plan B.” My mantra: no matter what, keep smiling!

**Wish for the Future:** Although our reserve has been a part of this community for the past 20 years, I continuously hear, “This is an incredible place! I didn’t even know it was here!” The goal is to have that comment become, “I love coming to the reserve because it’s an incredible place where my family and I connect with nature and all its habitats, building lifelong memories!” I hope those families will become champions of the reserve, protecting our coastal ecosystem for years to come.

## FROM US TO YOU

### OUTREACH TOOL SPOTLIGHT – TSUNAMI AWARE

When you need to provide evacuation information and spread tsunami awareness, you want the information to be easy to access and understand, and just as easy to share with your audience. This mobile-friendly online information service provides interactive maps with evacuation zones, allowing communicators in Guam and Hawaii to get critical information to the public in the months, weeks, and even days leading up to an emergency. Find it here: [coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/tsunamimap](http://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/tsunamimap).

### UPCOMING SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

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

- August 12 to 16: Use #GulfofMexico to celebrate this region's infinite natural wonders.

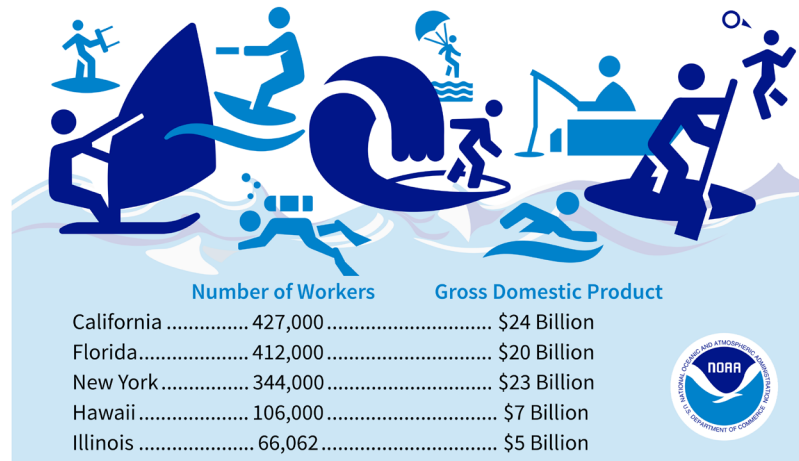
- All month: Use #BackToSchool for estuary education, Digital Coast Academy, and other learning products and tools.
- All month: Use #EstuariesWeek to encourage your followers to participate in our photo contest. Send your photos in, too ([ocm.nerrs.PhotoContest@noaa.gov](mailto:ocm.nerrs.PhotoContest@noaa.gov))!

### TOURISM AND RECREATION DATA

Anyone working in coastal management can attest to the ways tourism and recreation affects our coasts, especially at the height of summer. If you need hard and fast data on the impacts for a campaign, speech, article, or other project, use this extensive inventory of national and select state-level data on the topic. Find it here: [coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training/recreation-and-tourism.html](http://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training/recreation-and-tourism.html).

## FAST FACTS: TOURISM AND RECREATION

### Ocean Tourism and Recreation The Top Five Contributors



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/tourism-and-recreation.html](http://coast.noaa.gov/states/fast-facts/tourism-and-recreation.html). If you have an idea for a new group of fast facts or illustrations, please let us know.

*Coastal Communicators* is published by the NOAA Office for Coastal Management.

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Editor: *Pamela Jacobs* | Communications Director: *Donna McCaskill* | Graphic Designer: *Daniella Fishburne*

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