

COASTAL COMMUNICATORS

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

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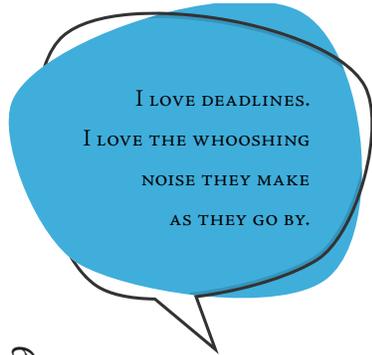
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– Douglas Adams

March 2021, Issue 29



COMMUNICATION INSIGHTS

PREPPING FOR THAT BIG ANNOUNCEMENT

I work for a large organization, and as such, headquarters understandably creates many policies and requirements that apply to the entire organization. Equally understandable is the eye-roll reflex I sometimes experience when I have to comply with something that doesn't seem quite right for my situation, particularly when this requirement is new.

But for all of my mostly silent moaning and groaning, there's one approach our parent company instituted that I find particularly helpful: rollout plans.

A rollout plan is an organized approach for making a big announcement. Rollout plans are used when new marine economy numbers become available, when groundbreaking research results are published, when new grant money is available or awarded, or when a court case has been decided. If it is news that people outside of our organization are likely to be interested in, a rollout plan is in order.

A rollout plan documents a series of coordinated steps that stay the same regardless of the subject matter. The effort began as a systematic approach for briefing leadership, and this is still the case. A wonderful side benefit, however, is the step-by-step approach the rollout plan provides to help keep a multifaceted team organized. It's a great way to hone your message, determine "who's on first" for what task, and solidify the order in which activities take place.

The people involved include the rollout plan coordinator and representatives from the various content teams. The rollout plan coordinator is very important, because participants may interpret the content requirements differently. The coordinator keeps everything on time and true to the process. This person also takes out the jargon to ensure that the content is appropriately polished and understandable to all.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

There are numerous components of the rollout plan. In this article we hit the highlights.

Title – Awarding Dollars; Releasing Data; Permitting Such and Such.

Action – This line is directed at leadership. Perhaps you are asking them to speak at an event, or you want to use this document to prepare them for a media interview.

Date – The timing of the event or announcement.

Messages (three max) – This is my favorite. Here you list the main messages you are trying to convey when communicating about this topic. Don't be tempted to put background information here or tell a story—that comes next.

Background – REALLY BRIEF explanation of the effort, maybe some context. Usually no more than a paragraph long.

Audiences – Who should we communicate with? Who should we expect questions from? Audiences could include our organization's leadership, partners, congressional members and staff, federal partners, media, private sector community, etc.

Rollout Team – Content team; rollout coordinator; PR person; legislative affairs, etc. Include contact information.

Spokespeople – Who will answer questions when the media, community leaders, and elected officials have questions? Who will speak at briefings?

Plan Schedule – What will happen when, and who is in charge? Here you note when the content will be ready, and what the next steps are. Include dates. Many of these details are spelled out below and include writing press releases, notifying partners, making website changes or announcements, posting on social media, notifying staff, etc.

Materials Needed – Numerous written materials may be needed. These should be created, finalized, and inserted into the rollout plan. Potential materials include anticipated Q&A; draft emails to various constituents; contact lists; draft notification to staff; press release; social media announcements; website changes; newsletter articles; press or congressional briefings; webinar schedules; and reports.

Under “materials needed,” I find the anticipated Q&A really helpful. Think of it like this: if you were presenting this topic to the media, or your boss, what are the likely questions, and what are your likely answers? It is so easy to gloss over this kind of thing, thinking “I've got that.” But if you know it so well, then it shouldn't be too hard to put it on paper. Doing so helps you collect and simplify your thoughts, and ensures that all team members are conveying the same honed messages.

I do love this process, but I am admittedly an organization nerd (you should see my closets at home). But it does work, I promise. Perhaps it might be appropriate for your organization, too.

Drop me a line if you'd like to see a blank (or completed!) rollout plan. As always, please let us know when you have a communication-related topic you'd like to see in this newsletter.

Donna McCaskill
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COMMUNICATION PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

Featured product: Infographic that covers project proposal guidance ([lacoast.gov/ocmc/MailContent.aspx?ID=10202](https://acoast.gov/ocmc/MailContent.aspx?ID=10202))

Source: Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act, a partnership-based project in Louisiana

Submitted by: Donna McCaskill, Director, Communications Team, NOAA Office for Coastal Management

Background: Citizens can submit funding proposals for this program, but Kacie Wright, the program's outreach and media specialist, didn't feel the process was very clear. To address this, Kacie wanted an outreach product that wasn't overwhelming and could provide easy-to-understand instructions, as well as link the reader to the right people and information during the different phases of the proposal process. The goal was to spur additional coastal restoration projects by increasing the number of project submissions from the public.

Why I like it: Within our coastal resource management community, I haven't seen many infographics focused on a process, and yet an infographic provides an effective way of melding content, approach, and audience—really perfect for this purpose.

This project's audience, Joe and Jane Public, aren't likely to be familiar with the process associated with these grants, and might be confused and possibly intimidated by the application. The infographic uses numbered steps, simple text, and pleasing colors and cartoon characters scattered throughout—an approach that is inviting and should give the audience an "I can do this" feel.

A big added bonus: Kacie made this infographic using a free software program—Piktochart. Her office also uses this software to create its monthly newsletter.

CWPPRA How To

Everything You Need To Know To Submit A Project To Be Considered For CWPPRA Funding

1. Local Support

- Gaining local support is a key first step in the development of successful projects!
- We suggest you reach out to local groups prior to the Regional Planning Team Meeting (RPT) for assistance.

2. Consistency with Coastal Master Plan

- Work with representatives of the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority prior to the RPT meeting to develop projects that are consistent with the State's 2017 Master Plan.
- Please read the Master Plan on coastal.la.gov to assist in the development of projects that are consistent.

If you have any questions or would like guidance on the development of projects that are consistent, please contact Kent Bollfrass with CPRA (kent.bollfrass@la.gov).

3. Regional Planning Team (RPT) Meetings

- Projects can only be submitted at RPT Meetings in January or February of each year. RPT Meetings are based upon the hydrologic basin where the project is located.
- Region 1: Pontchartrain Basin

4. Coastwide and Demonstration Projects

- Legitimate coastwide project applications will be accepted separate from the 8 basins at any of the RPT meetings.
- Demonstration Projects contain new technology that can be transferred to other areas of the coastal zone.
- Nominations for Coastwide and Demonstration projects will be held after the basin nominations at the end of each RPT Meeting.

Coastwide and Demonstration Projects can be presented at any or all RPT meeting but will only be nominated once. It is recommended that presentations for coastwide and demonstration projects include how the project meets the guidelines for the category in which the project is being proposed. The Demonstration Project guidelines are found in Appendix E and the Coastwide Project Guidelines are found in Appendix F in the CWPPRA Standard Operating Procedures.

5. RPT Meeting Presentation Requirements

- Proposals must be less than five minutes.
- All powerpoint presentations five slides max.
- Projected construction costs, including contingency, must be presented in \$5M range (\$0-5M, \$5-10M, \$10-15M, etc).
- It is recommended that a project and vicinity map be included in your proposal.
- Project Nominations Forms and/or Project Factsheets must be submitted before 8am the day of the meeting to Alice Kerl (alice.p.kerl@usace.army.mil). Though it is recommended that you submit project nomination by January 25th to secure a spot on the agenda.
- Presentations must be emailed to Alice.P.Kerl@usace.army.mil no later than 3:00 p.m. the day before the RPT meeting.

(Please note: this is not an endorsement of the designer, website, or any proprietary tools, but simply this writer's opinion on a good communication product.)

FROM US TO YOU

OUTREACH TOOL SPOTLIGHT – RISK COMMUNICATION MENTAL SHORTCUTS

Have you ever felt that, while communicating an important issue to people, they're reacting based on their own past experiences, or focusing on only one aspect of the conversation? It's because people often use mental shortcuts when talking about risk, and these can feel like a major hindrance to the communicator. This brief self-guided tutorial helps you recognize when and why people use mental shortcuts, and offers tips for handling them effectively. Find it here: coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training/mental-shortcuts.html.

UPCOMING SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

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

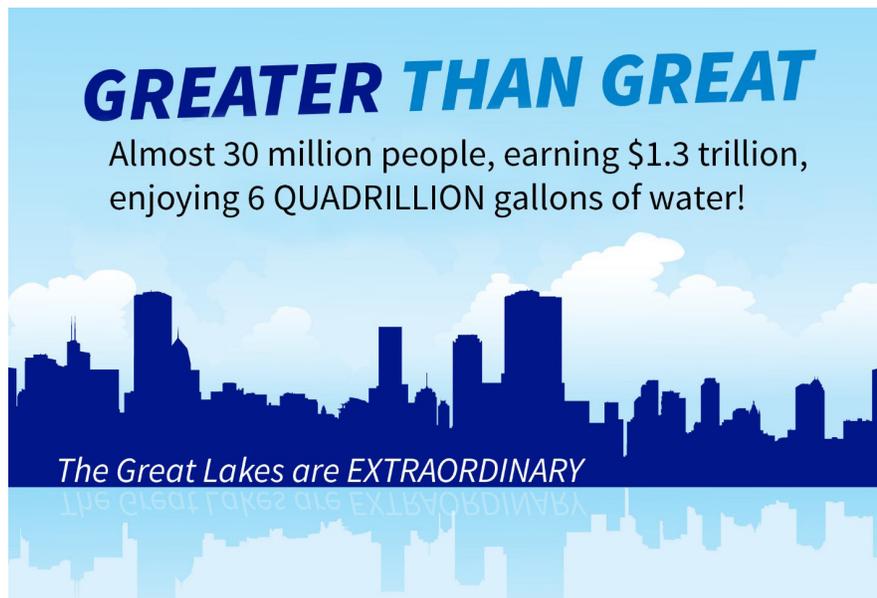
- March 1 to 5: Use [#GreatLakes](#) or [#GreatLakesWeek](#) to share regional products and resources.

- March 15 to 19: Use [#RiskComm](#) to offer stories of, and resources related to, risk communication.
- All month: Use [#HurricanePrep](#) to share tips to prepare for hurricane season.
- All month: Use [#SeagrassAwareness](#) to spotlight these ecosystem all-stars.

GREAT LAKES WATER LEVEL DASHBOARD

If you're celebrating Great Lakes Week this month—or communicating about the region anytime!—you might be planning to discuss past, present, or future water levels. Use this tool from NOAA Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory to find and share historical water level observations (over 150 years' worth), current and archived forecasts, water temperatures, and more. Nothing adds to a story like hard-and-fast facts. Launch it here: coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/glwld.html.

FAST FACTS – GREAT LAKES



This is one of the many graphics and facts available for your use in presentations and handouts. Grab this one at coast.noaa.gov/states/fast-facts/great-lakes.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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Send questions or suggestions to coastal.info@noaa.gov.

View past issues at coast.noaa.gov/gallery/newsletter.html.

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