

COASTAL COMMUNICATORS

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

In This Issue

COMMUNICATION INSIGHTS

Social Media: The Cost of Doing Business

COMMUNICATOR OF THE MONTH

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FROM US TO YOU

Outreach Tool Spotlight –
Storm Surge Fast Draw
Upcoming Social Media Campaigns
Fast Facts – Weather Disasters

THIS REPORT, BY ITS VERY
LENGTH, DEFENDS ITSELF
AGAINST BEING READ.

– Winston Churchill

May 2019, Issue 8



COMMUNICATION INSIGHTS

SOCIAL MEDIA: THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS

Let's start by setting the record straight: social media is not free. Yes, you can open a Twitter account, start a Facebook page, and build an Instagram profile for free. But keeping each page up and active—and making them great—will cost you time, effort, and energy.

These days, having a presence on Twitter and Facebook—and for many people, Instagram as well—is just the cost of doing business. Your audience expects to be able to interact and find information using these sites.

Here, we'll go over some basics for each of the three major sites, along with some general pointers, and look at how to make social media work best for you, without costing you your sanity, too.

TWITTER

- Timely updates – Good for quick messages and fast-changing news. From sudden closures to hurricanes, get information out right away. Twitter is the site most people go to for this type of information.
- 280 characters – Yes, more than 140 characters, and no, you don't always have to use them all. Less is more.
- Include a photo – It helps your post stand out, while also giving you a place to add more information or drive your point home. Photos are also weighted higher in Twitter's algorithm, so they often result in increased engagement.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

FACEBOOK

- Longer-lived posts – Good for success stories or long-term changes, like beach closures or a new public access point.
- No character limit – But less is still more.
- Preview your post – Make sure everything in the preview makes sense. Sometimes Facebook has glitches that do strange things. If the preview photo or text is wrong, you can click “upload photo” to choose your own and override the preview.

INSTAGRAM

- Plan ahead – You might think you have plenty of photos, and posting will be a piece of cake! However, having high-quality images consistently can be more difficult than you’d expect. Think about what you want to share and the message you want to get across ahead of time.
- Go behind the scenes – Give your organization a face (or five!). Show off your hard working staff and allow your audience to get to know them. People care more when they get to know the personalities behind the pictures.
- No links – You can display one link in your profile, but links in posted text aren’t hyperlinked. Make this work for you by regularly changing your profile link to highlight major campaigns and using the photo caption to direct people to it. For example: “All week, we’re highlighting #endangeredspecies. Follow the link in our bio to learn more about how we’re protecting them.”

GENERAL

- Don’t connect sites – It might seem tempting to post once and have it go to all of your social media accounts—but DON’T! Each site has different requirements, so even if you’re sharing similar content, tailor it before posting.
- Vary your post times – You might be open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., but that doesn’t mean your audience is most active then. Play around with different times, both during and outside of business hours, to determine levels of engagement.
- Interact with others – The whole point of social media is engagement. Share good content, “like” posts, comment, and respond. Follow partners, members of your community, and similar accounts. Be an active social media participant, not a passive onlooker.

At the end of the day, don’t be afraid to mimic other accounts and borrow ideas. Check out other coastal programs or research reserve profiles, and find what you like or what seems to be working. Just keep in mind, not all audiences are created equal, so it will take some trial and error to find what’s right for you. Finally, have fun with it, and your audience will too!

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COMMUNICATOR OF THE MONTH

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Organizational Structure: The Ohio Office of Coastal Management is a unit of the Department of Natural Resources, and it administers the Ohio Coastal Management Program and Old Woman Creek National Estuarine Research Reserve. Both programs are state-federal partnership programs authorized by the Coastal Zone Management Act. The coastal management program provides financial assistance, technical assistance, and education, while also administering a number of regulatory programs.

Outreach Approach: Outreach is handled by a team. One specific person is not assigned to do it; instead, a number of individuals in the office provide outreach according to their expertise and interests.

Job Duties: My primary duties focus on conducting federal consistency reviews of projects in Ohio's designated coastal area, as well as serving as a section manager within the Office of Coastal Management. With recent staff turnover, I have taken on more of the office outreach tasks, including work on the website and social media, as well as the state fair. I have also become much more involved with the Ohio Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program, and I hope to see that program finally receive full federal approval.

Social Media: I have taken on an active role with the coastal management program's Facebook page, which had been relatively dormant for some time. It has been my experience that posts with videos in them receive exponentially more views than those with still photos or only text. Our office sits on the shore of Sandusky Bay, and a video of high water inundating our parking lot reached about 15,000 people. That came as a huge surprise, since most posts only reach a few hundred people.

Most Fun, Most Challenging: The best part of the job is the variety of approaches and tasks we are involved with in protecting Ohio's coastal resources. It's a team approach, both within the office and with other agencies, local governments, nonprofits, and academia. The most challenging part of the job is finding the time to do everything we want to do.

Work Mantra: In more than 16 years with the coastal management program, I have learned to stay flexible—not only in terms of outreach, but with all aspects of the job. Relying on one person to perform a specific function of the program will not keep the spirit of innovation alive, no matter how creative that person may be. Different voices and diverse perspectives are the key to moving forward.

Wish for the Future: Our future efforts will include additional collaboration with the Old Woman Creek Research Reserve on nature-based shorelines, science-to-management education, and technical assistance tailored to the needs of property owners, consultants, and other stakeholders.

FROM US TO YOU

OUTREACH TOOL SPOTLIGHT – STORM SURGE FAST DRAW

Clocking in at one minute and 27 seconds, this video serves as a quick and creative way to spread the message about storm surge—what it is, how it happens, and why it matters. Use it on your website, in presentations, and on social media. Find it here: coast.noaa.gov/gallery/videos/stormsurgefastdraw/video.html.

UPCOMING SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

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

- ♦ **All month:** Use [#CoastalManagement](#) to share successes from your program.
- ♦ **May 5 to 11:** Use [#HurricanePrep](#) to share stories of storm preparation, planning, and protection.

- ♦ **May 6 to 17:** Use [#WaterQuality](#) to celebrate the planet's most important resource.

DIGITAL COAST TRAINING VIDEOS

You probably know that there are many tools available on the Digital Coast, covering a range of topics, from water quality to coastal hazards. But what if your audience doesn't know how to use them? Point them to this series of instructional videos, where they can learn how to use the Sea Level Rise Viewer, understand the National Hurricane Center's Storm Surge Potential Map, and more. Access it here: coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training/?filter=Videos%20and%20Webinars.

FAST FACTS: WEATHER DISASTERS



Source: NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information

Weather Disasters (1980-2018)

Drought	26
Flooding	29
Freeze	9
Severe Storm	103
Tropical Cyclone	42
Wildfire	16
Winter Storm	16

Average Cost (billions)

Drought	\$9.4
Flooding	\$4.3
Freeze	\$3.3
Severe Storm	\$2.2
Tropical Cyclone	\$21.9
Wildfire	\$4.9
Winter Storm	\$3

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/weather-disasters. If you have an idea for a new group of fast facts or illustrations, please let us know.

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