

COASTAL COMMUNICATORS

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

In This Issue

COMMUNICATION INSIGHTS

Fast Facts: The What, Why, and How

COMMUNICATION PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

National Park Foundation/
Paramount+ Partnership

FROM US TO YOU

Outreach Tool Spotlight –
Economics Data for Territories

Upcoming Social Media Campaigns

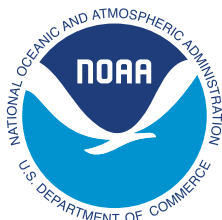
Year-One Snapshot

Fast Facts – Climate Change

AND BY THE WAY, EVERYTHING IN
LIFE IS WRITABLE ABOUT IF YOU
HAVE THE OUTGOING GUTS TO
DO IT, AND THE IMAGINATION TO
IMPROVISE. THE WORST ENEMY TO
CREATIVITY IS SELF-DOUBT.

– Sylvia Plath

May 2024, Issue 64



COMMUNICATION INSIGHTS

FAST FACTS: THE WHAT, WHY, AND HOW

If you've spent any time on the Office for Coastal Management's website, you might have come across our [fast facts](#). And if you haven't spent much time on our website, but have read this newsletter more than once, you've definitely come across them. Put simply, our office's fast facts are just that: a collection of webpages, each focused on a specific topic related to coastal management, comprising short facts about said topic. Each page includes between five and 10 facts—most involving a numerical statistic—and a link to a source for all facts.

Our fast fact pages are used by the media, NOAA staff and leaders, and even members of Congress. We often use them ourselves, meaning as an added bonus, they fulfill one of our favorite aspects of a good communications product: make once, use often.

All this is to say that no matter what your program does exactly, how big or how small it is, or where in the coastal country you call home, you can probably benefit from having fast facts of your own. As the keeper of the facts (i.e., the person who has to make sure they're up-to-date and respond to any and all related inquiries, among other things), I am here to offer my guidance and help you fill your webpages (and/or other outreach materials) with facts that are fast; what you call them is up to you.

The What

As previously mentioned, these pages list short facts and figures pertaining to their respective topics. The [Economics and Demographics](#) page, for instance, contains the most up-to-date information on coastal populations, wages, and gross domestic product. The [Hurricane Costs](#) page, not surprisingly, lists the latest statistics related to hurricanes and other weather disasters, as reported by NOAA.

Which leads me to another important facet of these pages: the sources. This aspect is just as important as the facts themselves. People need to be able to directly link to the information source, and you need to remember where you found the information in the first place. Inevitably, questions come up about certain facts, and having a front-and-center source eliminates last-minute scrambling. It also means that you know exactly where to go when you need to update your facts. It's best to use as few sources as possible—which, among

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

other things, helps you avoid having conflicting facts—and to be sure that source is reputable. For the two aforementioned pages, I only used NOAA as the source, albeit different NOAA offices and data sources (for the Economics and Demographics page, my source is the Office for Coastal Management’s Economics National Ocean Watch [ENOW] team; they have their own trusted data sources).

The final aspect of our pages is the graphics, which contain a synopsis of the stats and can be copy and pasted for users’ needs. They serve as visually fun, even-faster-facts on the pages.

The Why

Speeches, presentations, handouts, press releases, articles, impact stories—these are some of the myriad marketing and outreach materials we (and I’m including you readers in the collective “we”) produce or guide production of. Having ready-to-go facts on economics, climate change impacts, coral reef benefits, hazard mitigation, and more means having some of the most important aspects of these products at the ready. Having them public facing means anyone outside of your organization can benefit from them, too. We’ve seen our facts used in many national publications, including *The New York Times* and *CNN.com*, and in a congressional hearing. In short, they help an organization tell the story of what they do and why, showcasing that organization’s work and expertise in the process, while also helping others tell their own stories.

Bonus: they help direct traffic to your website. If someone searches for hurricane-related facts and comes upon our Hurricane Facts fast fact page, they often stay on the site and visit related pages—or even unrelated pages.

The How

In the above scenario, a person seeking information on hurricanes searches for “hurricane damages” or “costs from hurricanes,” or something similar, and finds our page in the top two search engine results. That’s because we use the right keywords and keep the page very

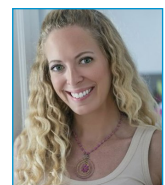
focused and on-topic. If we were to include information beyond the scope of hurricane and weather disaster costs, we would lose those high search engine rankings.

So where do you begin? Pick a topic to start with, make sure it’s focused, and be sure it’s something you’re familiar with, for which you can easily find and use minimal trusted sources. Then, using the source(s), start listing out all of the related facts you can find. When you begin, they don’t all have to be perfect; add them to the list now, and eliminate later. Once you have a solid collection of facts for that topic, choose the best, most pertinent and useful ones and get rid of the rest. It’s quality over quantity, and if you realize that something is interesting but not totally relevant, lose it. That said, you’ll need at least four or five. Once you’ve created your first fast fact topic, you can add more. Here too, you’re looking for quality over quantity. We currently have 18 fast facts, having started with about half that. We might add a few more if we decide there’s another topic worth covering; we’re probably never going to add dozens more.

Finally, remember to update your fast facts. If there are a few people on your team who handle communications, choose one person to be responsible for them, or one per topic. You don’t need a bunch of people losing track of what was updated and when.

If you have questions about this process or ever need some advice, please feel free to reach out to me. Side note: because of this article and my emphasis on the importance of updating fast facts, inevitably, someone’s going to find facts on our pages in need of updating. So I welcome communication about that, as well. Just please be gentle—after all, we have 18 fast fact pages! Which brings me to the final lesson here: no one’s perfect. Just strive to do your best with the facts, and your audience will appreciate your effort.

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COMMUNICATION PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

Featured products: National Park Foundation/
Paramount+ Partnership

Source: Paramount+ Streaming Service
(website: [paramountplus.com/shows/the-national-parks/?ftag=ppm-18-10bjj9c](https://www.paramountplus.com/shows/the-national-parks/?ftag=ppm-18-10bjj9c) and YouTube channel: youtube.com/@paramountplus)

Submitted by: Pamela Jacobs,
Lynker for NOAA's Office for
Coastal Management

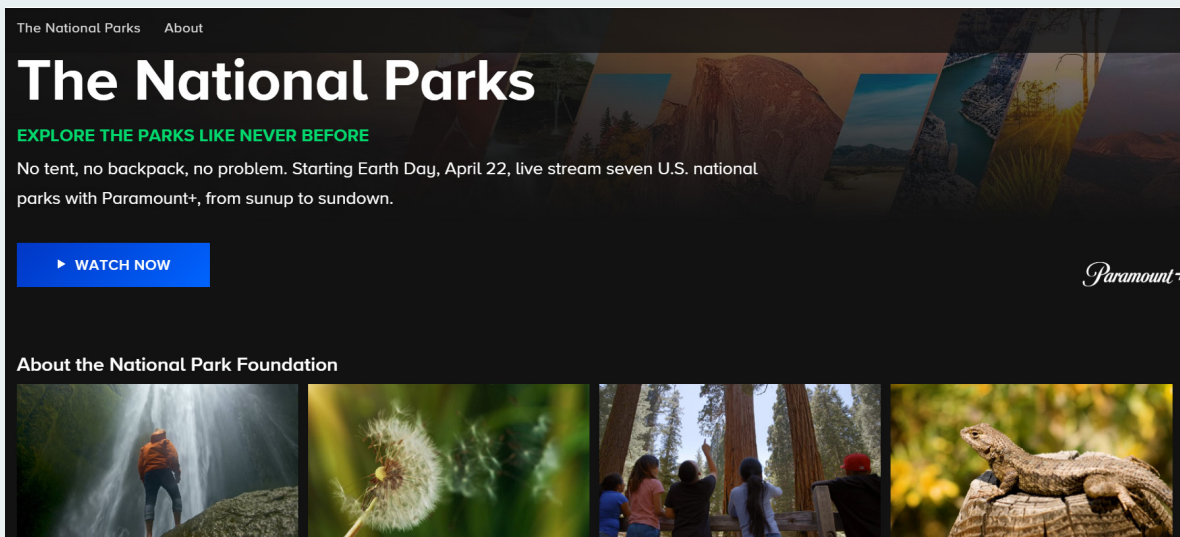
What it is: A first-of-its-kind partnership between the National Park Foundation and the streaming service Paramount+ that officially launched on Earth Day. Each day that week, Paramount+ live streamed from a different national park, from sunrise to sunset, all using solar-powered cameras (streamed through the above links and the Paramount+ video service). Post-Earth Week, on-demand national park content will be available to view throughout the year, and through the partnership, Paramount+ will provide funding to the National Park Foundation.

Why I like it: In a previous *Coastal Communicators* issue, we featured the National Park Service's Instagram account as the product of the month, because frankly, they've really mastered social media.

With this partnership, the National Park Foundation (the official nonprofit partner of the National Park Service), the national park family has demonstrated a mastery of multimedia marketing, as well. The initiative delivers highly appealing content straight to users—bringing national parks right into viewers' homes—and because the content will continue to change and evolve, these viewers will continue to tune in. It also uses something pretty much every American enjoys—television—to deliver its message to the masses.

And that's not to mention the positive optics for Paramount+. As the first and only streaming service to partner with the National Park Foundation and by launching the initiative on Earth Day, the company positioned itself as a champion of the environment, while potentially expanding its viewership in the process. Anyone in coastal management knows that our work is strengthened through partnerships, and we can always learn from the giants in the industry: two innovative minds are often better than one.

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



FROM US TO YOU

OUTREACH TOOL SPOTLIGHT – ECONOMICS DATA FOR TERRITORIES

The Economics: National Ocean Watch (ENOW) database on the Digital Coast helps users better understand the contributions and importance of the marine economy, and it helps communicators better share this information with their audiences. For the first time, data for the U.S. territories are available on the ENOW Explorer tool, meaning more statistics about coastal communities' economies at our fingertips and available for download. Find the tool—and explore the territories—here: coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/enow.html.

UPCOMING SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

Follow us on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, and tag along with these themes:

- May 6 to 10: Asian American and Pacific Islander Month kickoff

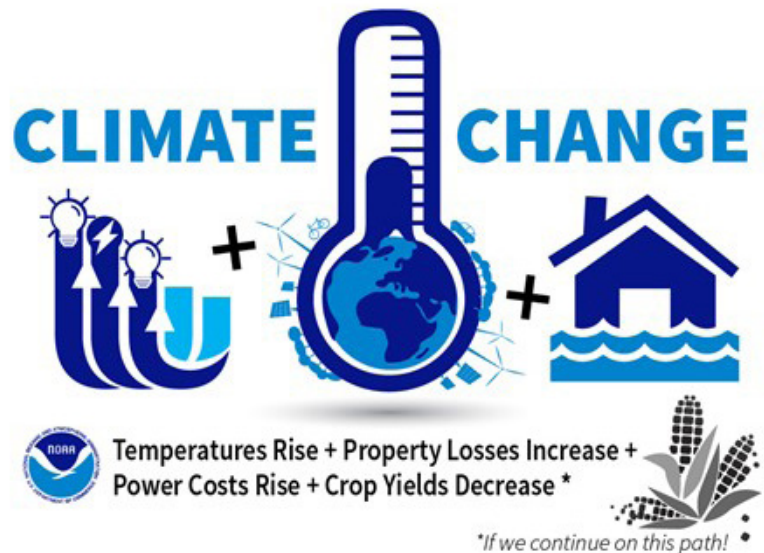
- May 13 to 17: Florida (East Coast)
- May 20 to 24: Georgia
- May 27 to 31: South Carolina

BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW YEAR-ONE SNAPSHOT

As most of you know, the second-year roster of coastal zone management and research reserve projects funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law was just announced, which means it's a good time to look back at the achievements of the first year. These include six land acquisition projects that closed, over 5,200 acres of habitat that were conserved, and dozens of projects that supported engagement with tribal and underserved communities. These accomplishments, and more, are summarized in a handout we created, which you are welcome to share with your audience. Find and download it here: coast.noaa.gov/data/coasthome/funding/_pdf/bil-snapshot.pdf.

FAST FACTS – CLIMATE CHANGE

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/climate-change.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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