

COASTAL COMMUNICATORS

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

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THE MOST VALUABLE OF
ALL TALENTS [IS] THAT OF
NEVER USING TWO WORDS
WHERE ONE WILL DO.

– Thomas Jefferson

September 2021, Issue 35



COMMUNICATION INSIGHTS

THE BEST OUTREACH: WHEN OTHERS DO IT FOR YOU

You've just finished developing a product. Whether it's a tool, newsletter, or a flier to advertise an event, it's now time to jump into outreach mode. Develop your outreach plan, listing all the ways you are going to get the word out—emails, social media, newsletters, presentations, word of mouth. You know what works best for your audience.

But have you thought about working through your partners? The best outreach is when others do it for you! I know what you're thinking: "So I'm going to sit back and let others handle my work?" Far from it, actually. It takes some thought and effort to reach out to others and ask for help. Maybe now you're thinking, "I just don't have that kind of time to reach out to people individually." While it might be a little bit of work up front, asking others to help spread the word will expand your reach exponentially and pay off in the long run. Chances are if they are interested in your product or information, their audience is, too, and they will be eager to help.

This doesn't have to be overwhelming. To help organize your thoughts, you can incorporate this step as part of your outreach plan. After a while, it will become second nature. Have a subheading where you can list partners who might be interested in amplifying your message or product. Check partners off the list as you go—then you have the list ready for next time. Below are some best practices I've used with some of my teams.

Add Content to Newsletters

We have several partners who have weekly, biweekly, monthly, or quarterly newsletters. If it makes sense for their brand and the content of their newsletter, we will reach out to these partners asking them if they will include the announcement in their newsletter. Make it easy for them. Provide the content in a format consistent with their advertisements. Supply the title, link, and short description so they don't have to do the heavy lifting.

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Send to List Servers

Within NOAA, I receive regular communication from several offices via list servers. Depending on the nature of the list server, you could send your message out to the other members, or maybe you need to contact the administrator of the email list and ask if they can send the message for you. If your message is intriguing enough, others will forward it. But why not just take it an additional step? Add “Please share broadly,” or “Please share with interested parties,” to help encourage those who might not have that mindset.

Share on Social Media

The networks on social media are infinite and have the potential to reach around the world. If you have a post you want to spread far and wide, give it a little nudge. Have a list of partners or accounts whose audiences will be interested in or benefit from your post, and reach out to them. If it’s someone I haven’t touched base with in a while, I will email them ahead of time and ask if they would help spread the word through social media.

If they respond and say “yes,” then I will follow up after I post the content on social media with a “thank you” and the direct link to the Tweet and Facebook post to make it easier for them to share. You might also add that you would return the favor in the future.

Don’t be afraid to think outside the box a little. Consider the audience for what you are advertising. Who outside of your usual suspects would be interested? You might want to have a brainstorming session with your coworkers or close partners.

And, of course, an extra bonus is when people share your content without you asking. Because, as I stated before: the best outreach is when others do it for you!

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COMMUNICATION PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

Featured product: CIRCA’s *‘Resilience’ Roundup*, a newsletter from the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation

Source: circa.uconn.edu

Submitted by: Donna McCaskill, Communication Manager for NOAA’s Office for Coastal Management

What it is: A monthly e-newsletter featuring local, state, and national newsclips on resilience and adaptation, as well as resources, events, and funding announcements.

Why I like it: I became aware of this newsletter because Jamie Carter, a remote sensing specialist for our office, sent it to staff with this note: “There’s a little something for everyone in this latest newsletter from CIRCA, from FUNWAVE modeling to state policy updates to economic implications associated with coastal retreat.”

BINGO! This organization just scored a big win. Jamie represents the target audience, and not only did he open the newsletter, but he read it and liked it so much that he sent it to his colleagues. Can’t ask for much more than that.

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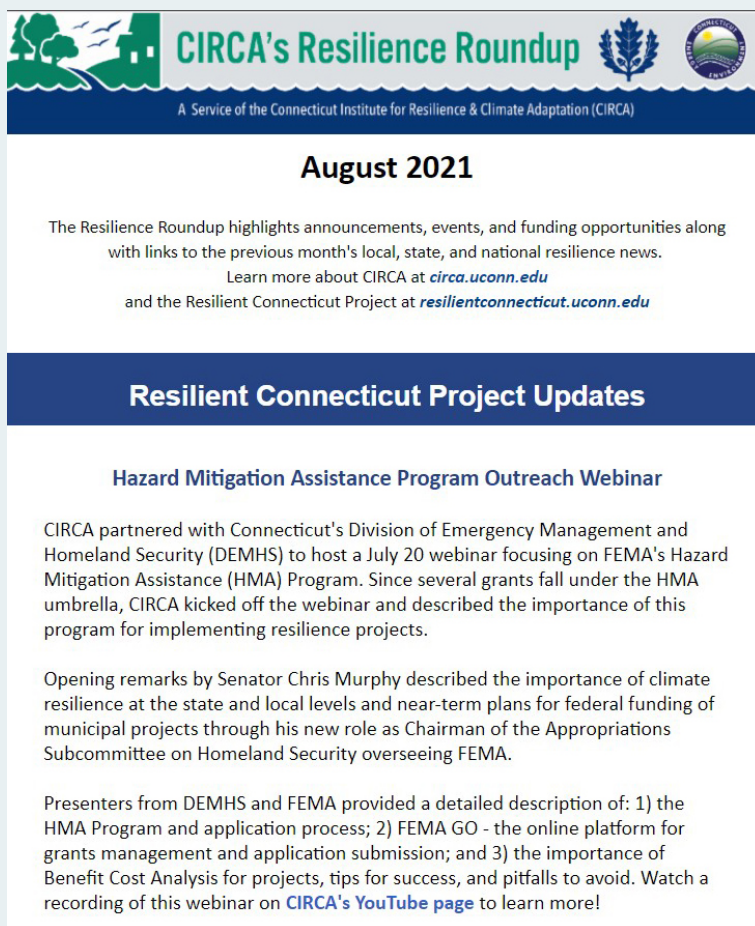
COMMUNICATION PRODUCT OF THE MONTH (CONTINUED)

Now this is a very plain newsletter. The design isn't fancy, nor are the headlines overly clever. But it works, and the reason it works is because it is from a well-respected organization and is targeted to a specific audience. The editor is thinking of that audience when choosing the type of information to include, the order and length of the articles, the sub-heads, and the overall design and delivery mechanism.

Two lessons are illustrated here: 1) The more interested your target audience, the more information and detail you can provide. If the content is clearly and professionally articulated, this peer-to-peer audience will be more forgiving when it comes to stylistic choices. 2) Let your product be what it is. I see many overly designed documents, particularly technical reports and annual reports. I get it—people have

worked hard on something and want it to look really good. But too many graphics and too flashy a design can impede the reader and cause confusion.

I hear you already—"but we want to appeal to a *hybrid* audience." Anytime you use this word to describe an outreach or written product, a huge red flag should go up, and you should consider yourself shot in the foot. For a peer-to-peer technical report, make it as easy as possible for that document to be read and used by that audience. (Here's another thought: something too slick can sometimes make this audience distrust the content.) If there is a sales component of the document for another audience, consider making a companion handout or a really kick-butt executive summary.



(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 – HOW TO WRITE A STRATEGIC PLAN

We've talked a lot about the importance of defining goals for your communications—it's where the road begins for reaching your target, whatever that target might be (outreach for an upcoming event, a social media campaign, anything). A strategic plan is an organization's way of creating a roadmap for its goals on a grand scale. No matter the scope of your goals, knowing how to write one can help you take your communication project to completion. This self-guided training shows you how. Find it here: coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training/write-strategic-plan.html.

UPCOMING SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

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

- September 18 to 25: Use #EstuariesWeek for updates on this annual celebration.

- All month: Use #MarineDebris to raise awareness of the issue and highlight ways to address it.

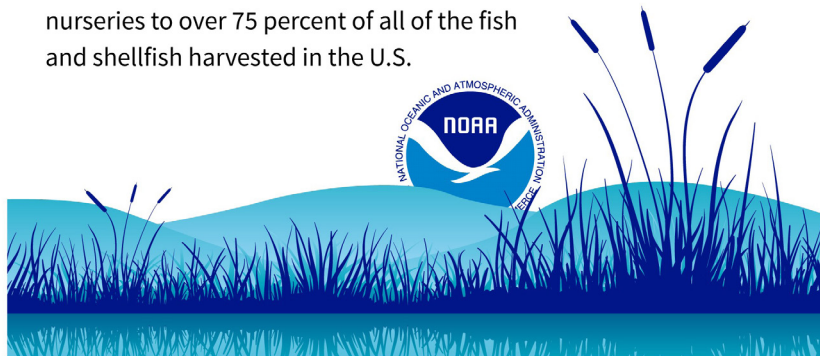
NEIGHBORHOODS AT RISK TOOL

If you're reading this newsletter, you already know about the effects climate change is having—and will continue to have—on communities. But you might also have seen how difficult it is to communicate these facts to the community at large. This new web-based tool on the Digital Coast helps visualize climate and socioeconomic risks at the neighborhood scale, offers projections based on emissions scenarios, and allows users to download their findings. It's an easy way to share the facts with your audience. Find it here: coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/neighborhoods-risk.html.

FAST FACTS – RESEARCH RESERVES

ESTUARIES: Where Humans & Nature Thrive

29 research reserves covering 1.3 million acres in 24 U.S. states and territories. Estuaries are nurseries to over 75 percent of all of the fish and shellfish harvested in the U.S.



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

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To subscribe to this newsletter, visit coast.noaa.gov/contactform.

Send questions or suggestions to coastal.info@noaa.gov.

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

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