

COASTAL COMMUNICATORS

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

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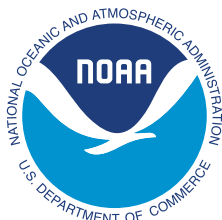
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THE SCARIEST MOMENT
IS ALWAYS JUST
BEFORE YOU START.

– Stephen King

September 2024, Issue 66



COMMUNICATION INSIGHTS

PHOTOGRAPHING YOUR RESTORATION AND CONSERVATION PROJECTS

Many of the grants associated with the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act involve land acquisition and landscape restoration and conservation. Everyone wants photos to illustrate the effort, and even more exciting, to showcase benefits; however, getting these photographs can be tricky. While getting good photos takes some planning and an ability to predict desired outcomes, it can be done with minimal equipment.

Step One: Planning Your Photo Points

This is the hardest step. You need to consider, if things progress as expected, where the greatest visual impact within the project area is anticipated. Also consider your project objectives and make sure these are covered. Explore using a ladder or platform to get a better angle or taking the photo from a hill or more elevated location. Select four to five locations, as these will be your photo points. Once these locations are finalized, place a marker on the ground or record the latitude and longitude (available via the compass feature on smartphones or using a GPS device).

Step Two: Finding the Angles

From your designated area of interest, take some test shots to make sure the desired location is fully covered. If not, this is the time to move your photo point. Record the direction (e.g., 251 degrees west—available on smartphones and GPS). Also record 30 and 60 degrees to either side (e.g., if you are facing 12 o'clock, record the 10, 11, 1, and 2 o'clock positions).

Step Three: Photo Set Up

In landscape photography, lighting is everything. To ensure the best photos, try to shoot in the early morning or late afternoon. You want the sun behind you, which also may factor into your timing. The best weather to photograph is slightly overcast. Turn off your flash. Remove any trash or debris from the scene.

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Step Four: Take the Photos

Set your camera to maximum resolution and use a wide (landscape) angle. Maximize depth of field in your setting (smaller aperture or landscape setting).

Place a tripod at eye level at your photo point.

While taking the photo, make sure the horizon is straight, the subject covers at least two-thirds of the frame (don't make it all sky), and the frame is a little wider than needed to account for cropping.

Take multiple pictures at multiple angles. Review photos to ensure they cover your needs. Repeat for all photo points. Make sure to record dates, angles, locations, and time of day for each photo point.

Step Five: Follow Up

Return to your photo points at a predetermined interval; ideally, go at the same time of day and time of the year. Try to use the same device (phone/camera) and settings as the previous session. Name your photos by location, date, and angle.

Endnotes

Before and after photos are one of the best ways to quickly demonstrate the long-term effectiveness of these projects to diverse audiences. By following these steps, you will have a great tool for documenting the efforts and the importance of the project.

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This before (top) and after (bottom) wetland restoration example from Ford County, Illinois, showcases the power of a compelling set of photographs. Source: *Outdoor Illinois Journal*. Photo credit: jason_bleich@fws.gov.

COMMUNICATION PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

Featured products: Open Space Institute's Black River Initiative Video

Source: youtube.com/watch?v=lO-96VfZ_yE

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

What it is: A visually stunning video produced by the Open Space Initiative about a multi-partner project, aided by NOAA through Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding, that will permanently protect thousands of acres along South Carolina's Black River. The community-led initiative spans multiple counties and created South Carolina's first state park in almost 20 years. For the historically underserved communities served by this initiative, the effort is boosting the local economies, providing recreational opportunities, and protecting communities from flooding.

Why I like it: In just under four minutes, the video tells viewers about the aforementioned benefits of this initiative, but more importantly, it *shows* them why this initiative is so meaningful to the communities benefiting from it. The captivating visuals give a true sense of place—this is unmistakably coastal South Carolina—while offering evidence of the many ways its residents are connected to this place. And by showcasing the natural beauty of this landscape, viewers can't help but want to see it protected and enjoyed. This is further enhanced by brief interviews with community members, including the vice chief of the Waccamaw Indian People and representatives from local government and businesses. The video is an excellent example of how a communication product can bring a story to life and build an instant connection between the audience and the message.

(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 – HISTORICAL HURRICANE TRACKS

It's September, which means we're smack-dab in the middle of peak hurricane season. So while the kids return to school, coastal communicators can take this opportunity to educate their audiences, using one of the Office for Coastal Management's most popular tools as a source. Search for historical storms by date, name, or location, and easily customize findings—including storm details and technical reports—based on your needs. You can then print or share your results, which makes the tool a great way to provide your audience with concrete, easy-to-read information on past hurricanes, shedding light on potential future storms. Find it here: coast.noaa.gov/hurricanes/#map=4/32/-80.

UPCOMING SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

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

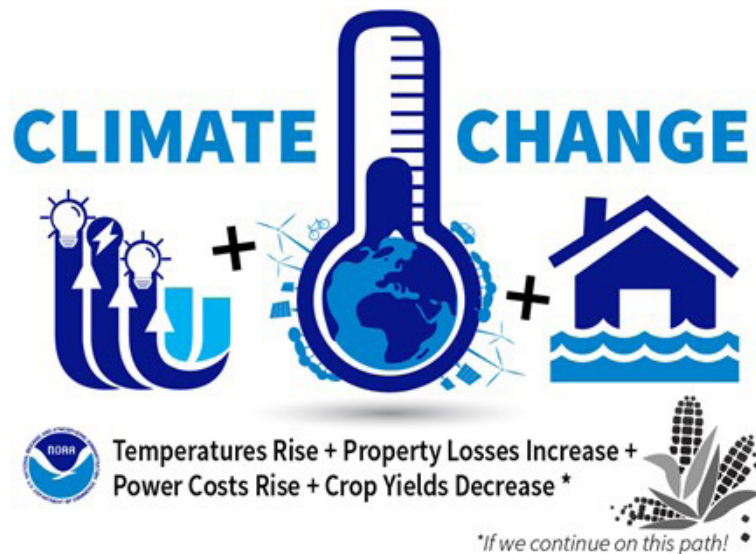
- September 2 to 6: Massachusetts
- September 9 to 13: Marine debris
- September 21 to 28: National Estuaries Week
- September 23 to 27: New Hampshire
- September 30 to October 4: Maine

CLIMATE RESILIENCE REGIONAL CHALLENGE IMPACT STORIES

In July, NOAA announced the 19 projects granted funding under the Climate Resilience Regional Challenge—a one-time competitive grant program providing a \$575-million investment in transformational regional projects in coastal areas. In addition to being listed on [our website](#), all the funded projects are included in our [impact story database](#). Simply select the “Climate Resilience Regional Challenge” tab under the “Program” filter to view all 19 projects, or further refine your search by selecting a specific state under the “Location” tab.

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



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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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