

Interesting Facts & Anecdotes

from your District Operations and Member Services Committee

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Did you know?....

This month's issue is presented by the NACD Communications Committee and highlights some simple ways to bolster your communications and help share your message with the public.

NACD is developing a [Communications Section in our eLibrary](#) that will include resources on:

- Getting Started: Guidance on Understanding Your Audience and How to Reach Them
- Developing a Plan of Action: How to Craft Your Communications Strategy
- Branding Your Message: Who Are You?
- Packaging Your Message: How to Produce Clear, Concise and Attractive Communications Materials
- Delivering Your Message: Best Practices for Getting the Word Out
- Pitching Your Message: Reaching Out to Print and Broadcast Media
- Advocacy: Telling Your Story

These resources are still in development, but you will find some examples already available in the Communications section of the [eLibrary](#).

Some tips and tricks for your Communications toolkit

Two primary ways NACD communicates with our members is through our quarterly magazine, The Resource and our weekly email newsletter the eResource. While these are great vehicles for reaching our membership and people already engaged with NACD's work, they represent just one part of an overall Communications strategy.

More traditional communications like magazines and newsletters are a great way to keep your constituents informed about the overall work of your organization, but should augment a robust day-to-day communications strategy utilizing social media to keep them constantly engaged and build new relationships with people who might not traditionally be exposed to your organization or work.

A great way to increase your visibility is through social media like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and more. Here are some things to keep in mind when making the most out of your social media marketing.

Think about what you're posting and when you should post it. Social media is all about what's happening right now. It's important to stay up-to-date on relevant news, events and projects and posting timely information for your members. It is also important to be selective in your content so that you keep your audience engaged with relevant information and stories, but also don't overwhelm them with too much unnecessary information. Remember, social media is about creating and sustaining a conversation with your followers. If you drop the ball, they will too.

It's essential to take note and monitor your audience engagement with your posts and alter your communications according to what most interests your followers. Facebook provides great analytics and updates to help you track audience interactions. Facebook can also tell you when your audience is most likely to be reading your posts so you can take advantage of their habits. You can do this very simply by going to your page settings, clicking on "View Insights," selecting "Posts" and then clicking on "When your Fans are Online."

When it comes to Twitter, being concise is essential. With a limitation of merely 140 characters, it is critical to get your message across as simply as possible while still providing the necessary information. This is most often accomplished by linking to external pages that have more detailed information. However, sometimes these links can be very long and take up too much room. A simple solution for this problem is to use a free link shortener like [bitly](#) or [ow.ly](#). These sites will allow you to copy and paste any url and they will automatically generate a shortened link.

According to "Social Times" the best way to maximize your tweets is to post throughout the week at 12 PM, 5 PM, and 6 PM. These times generally deliver the highest click-through rates.

Another important consideration when posting to Twitter is creating unique hashtags (i.e. #LoveYourSoil). Unique hashtags allow your followers to more easily identify messages with specific themes or content. They also function as beacons for users to find and follow other users who post about and represent similar interests. Twitter's best practices section suggests using two or fewer hashtags in any one tweet.

Need another vehicle for reaching your target audience, but want to provide more detailed information in an engaging way? Consider creating a blog. A blog is a great way to provide more in-depth articles and information in a light-hearted and more casual way. Blogs allow you to share complex issues in a conversational tone that both helps your constituents digest the content better and creates a more conversational dynamic.

NACD has a blog that was launched in February of this year. The blog is linked to from our homepage and features NACD staff members and guest bloggers that contribute to a wide variety of blog topics including: Soil Health, Federal Lawmaking, Urban and Community Conservation, Conservation Education and Stewardship, Climate Change, Forestry and more. Check out the NACD blog by [clicking here](#). If you have any ideas for blogs you'd like to see on the NACD blog or would like to contribute as a guest blogger, contact Mary Price at mary-price@nacdnet.org.

Remember that the more engaged you are on social media, and the more you interact with your members on a daily basis, the more likely they will keep in touch with you and develop a deeper, more meaningful relationship.