A Policy for the Use of Social Media for Johnstown Flood National Memorial

I. Purpose:

Social media will be used as a platform for informal interpretation and to share facts, park information, new and vibrant photos of park activities, historic images, short videos of park activities, and, where applicable, information about park planning initiatives. This will also serve as a tool by which the park can receive feedback from the public.
This document will guide the day to day use of social media in WEPA and will meet the established NPS social media guidelines available here.
http://share.inside.nps.gov/sites/Web/Pages/socialmedia.aspx.

II. Goals:

The overall goal of using social media, like the overall goal of every park interpretive initiative, will be to create stronger connections between visitors and the WEPA parks. Social media will help virtual visitors engage with staff and park resources, even if they cannot physically set foot in the park. Other goals include:

- Create a platform to share important secondary park themes with visitors
- Share emerging research (i.e. UGRR)
- Share historic photos and photos of archive items
- Provide a platform to share natural resource information
- Share information about on-going activities (construction of FLNI VC)
- Connect our visitors to other NPS sites

III. Audience:

- Current park visitors
- Local citizens
- People who are interested in the park, but who cannot visit the physical park location.
- Partner/community organizations – i.e. Friends Groups, JAHA etc
- Other NPS units
- Museums, historic groups and other affinity groups (Smithsonian, 9/11 Memorial, Ft. Ligonier)
- Anyone interested in the stories and resources of the WEPA parks
- Members of the general public with an interest in history or the NPS

III. Implementation:

- Per WASO guidance, park websites are top priority in terms of digital media. Before parks engage in social media, park websites should be evaluated to ensure they meet current NPS guidelines and provide virtual visitors with opportunities for dynamic interpretive engagement and information.

Engagement in social media (both the number of social media sites a park is using and the number of posts) will be determined by the individual park's capacity to produce engaging, meaningful content. Each park will create a social media team to distribute work load, ensure regular posts and to ensure a variety of voices and perspectives are shared with the public.

ALPO/ JOFL Social Media Team – Megan O'Malley, Doug Bosley, Nathan Koozer and Mindy Kuzminsky

•Members of the social media team will be designated by the Chief of Interpretation.

• Social media use will be limited to sites the NPS currently has agreements with; Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr.

• Parks will adhere to graphic identity guidelines established by WASO for each social media site.

IV. Guidelines for Social Media Posting

• Posts will be well researched and accurate and will always strive to engage visitors and will employ a variety of techniques (links, new photos, historic photos, quotes etc...) Team will strive to post both information and interpretive content. Interpretive posts will follow guidance of DO #6.

• When appropriate, staff from other divisions or management will author posts. If deemed appropriate by park management, volunteers and seasonals may join social media team.

• The Chief of Interpretation will have final authority in the creating and editing of posts created by Social Media Team.

• Social Media Team will be well versed in technical use of social media sites (hashtags, posting photos, creating links etc…)

• Social Media Team will respond to questions and comments sent via social media in a timely manner

• Responding to comments/questions will take priority over new posts.

• Per NPS guidelines information or photos that are posted will also be posted on parks' website.

• All members of the Social Media Team will be familiar with Policy Memorandum 11-2 outlining NPS Social Media Policies

• Posts will be initialed by the author.

IV: Evaluation:

We will evaluate our social media use on continual basis using statistics provided by the sites we use. Facebook provides extensive information or "insights" about who our followers are and how they react to and interact with our posts (by comments, "likeing" or "sharing"). Facebook also provides a "virality" feature that tracks how many friends of our followers see our posts. Twitter provides fewer analytics but we will track "retweets", replies and the rate we gain new followers to gauge our success. YouTube and Flickr provide opportunities for "shares", "likes" and comments and teams will use these to evaluate effectiveness of posts. Techniques employed in posts will be modified based on feedback and analytics.

The Social Media Team will communicate with NPS and regional social media specialists to stay up to date on policies and best practices. Members of WEPA Social Media Team should consider following Facebook page, #diginterp, to stay current with latest trends, best practices and to network with other NPS social media users.

Appendix I:
Rules of Engagement:

These are the official guidelines for social media at WEPA. All staff who participate in social media on behalf of the WEPA parks will be trained to understand and follow these guidelines.

- Participation. Anyone using social media as an official representative of the park is covered by these guidelines.

- Frequency. Frequency of engagement should be frequent enough to keep fans/visitors/audience engaged with relevant content but not overwhelmed.

- Decision trees. Administrators will use the "Initiation" and "Response" decision tree flowcharts to assess appropriate submissions and actions. (see attached)

- Ask. When in doubt about anything consult supervisor. If you're about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, don't shrug it off and hit 'send.' Take the time to review the decision tree flowcharts and try to figure out what's bothering you, then fix it. Ultimately, the decision about what you publish is yours—as is the responsibility. Ask when in doubt.

- Did you screw up? If you make a mistake, admit it right away. Notify your supervisor and other administrators. Be upfront and be quick with the decided correction.

- What would you want to know? Think of yourself away from the WEPA parks for an extended period of time. Post information that keeps the visitor engaged in the happenings of the two sites. Write about things people will value. Social communication should help our customers, partners, and co-workers. It should be thought-provoking and

build a sense of community with information without creating controversy or an otherwise unintended consequence.

- Write what you know. Ensure you write and post about what you know, not just a tip and definitely NOT something that could be a rumor or start a rumor. Seek confirmation from the appropriate person(s) before proceeding. Don't post anything that would otherwise be announced by park management, a park partner or elsewhere within the park or NPS organization. Check with the superintendent first on any potential media topics as well as any information that might be exempt from public disclosure under the Privacy Act and the Freedom of Information Act.

- It's a conversation. Talk to readers like you would talk to visitors in the field. Consensus in the NPS suggests that the most effective tone is a balance between professional personal. Be professional and helpful – customer service matters! Don't be afraid to bring in your own personality. On two-way social networking sites, consider content that's open-ended and invites response. Encourage comments. Also, try to avoid jargon and acronyms too specific to WEPA or the NPS that the public won't understand. Again, consult the decision trees for guidance.

- Add value through connections and education. Social communication should add value to WEPA and the NPS. If it helps you, coworkers, our partners, and the public to connect and reconnect with our sites or another NPS site; if it helps to educate; or if it contributes directly or indirectly to the mission of the NPS, it adds value.

- Adhere to the principles of the Ethics Guide for Department of the Interior Employees. Administrators need to be particularly careful of inadvertently making endorsements or political statements. NPS social media posts do not allow either endorsements or political commentary and should, therefore, be avoided. The complete ethics guide is available at: http://www.doi.gov/ethics/docs/eg02unbooked.pdf.

- Perception is reality. In online social networks, the lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred. By posting information as the official voice of WEPA, you are creating perceptions about the park, its partners and the NPS by our shareholders, stakeholders, neighbors, customers, elected officials , the news media and the general public—and perceptions about you by your colleagues and managers. Do everyone proud.

- Create some excitement. Share with the world the exciting things at our sites and in the NPS. Encourage visitation, encourage new discoveries, encourage people to become involved, and encourage stewardship and engagement.

- Never criticize policies and administrations. Our job is to educate and facilitate a connection between the resource and the public, not to publically criticize the NPS, DOI, WEPA or other parks, entities, and personnel on issues we personally do not agree with.

- Colorful language. As Government employees, we sign an appointment affidavit that governs our official conduct and we're in the spotlight more than other organizations. Please do not post any material that is questionable in any manner (i.e. obscene, defamatory, profane, libelous, threatening, harassing, abusive, hateful or embarrassing to another person or entity, etc.). The NPS prides itself in customer service and professionalism by all employees; we must set the proper example.

- Keep division chief in the loop. Let him/her know how things are going and respect their input and feedback. It is a privilege to do this, keep it that way and don't ruin it for us.

- Pictures and videos. Successful social media makes use of pictures and videos. Apply the same standards you use with text, to any photo or video. Respect copyright and fair-use laws, and credit the appropriate photographer and/or videographer. Always gain permission first.

- Protect yourself and others. Be mindful that what you write will be available for a long time. Protect your privacy and other's too. Do not cite visitors, employees, or partners without approval. Never refer to a specific visitor in any identifiable way. Respect copyright and fair-use laws. Under age children may not be displayed in photos or video footage.

- Length. Short and sweet works.

- Monitoring Posts – Members of social media team will actively monitor comments left by public on social media sites to ensure they are not offensive or profane. Comments of this nature are rare on NPS sites, but clearly offensive or profane comments should be removed if possible. Team members should carefully weigh benefit vs. risk of deleting posts that are controversial or inaccurate. Currently most NPS units allow followers, rather than park staff, to correct or clarify controversial comments in order to encourage an open dialogue.

- Stay current and stay connected. NPS best practices related to social media are a work in progress and social media team members need to be aware of changing trends. Team members should consult regional or WASO social media coordinators with questions or issues. Team members should be active members of the NPS community of social media users through participation in forums like #diginterp on Facebook.

Social Media Strategy

ALPO/JOFL

As of January 1, 2013, the ALPO/JOFL social media team maintains active Facebook and Twitter accounts for each park. The social media team will post between four and ten times per week to maintain engagement with social media audience. Posts will be a blend of new and old – current conditions, activities and behind the scenes information and interpretation will be mixed

with interpretation of historic resources and, whenever possible, images. Social media posts will strive to link virtual visitors to historic events and individuals related to the parks and regularly create posts.

As capacity permits, the social media team will create an ALPO/JOFL presence on Flickr. In the future, if we have the capacity to produce high quality videos the parks will explore developing YouTube channels or use the NPS YouTube channel to showcase the park.

Approved by Superintendent _____ Date 4-17-13