

Development of Effective Communication Materials

NRCA Accessory Worksheet

[NRCA Program staff are available to discuss worksheet items with parks and Pls by phone; based on their input, the program provides specific recommendations or examples they can consider for use in their study.]

NRCA projects typically result in a journal article, science report or other technical products describing natural resource conditions within parks, and are intended primarily for use by park staff or others involved in park management. However, sometimes a report isn't the best way to share information with other important audiences, or there are other stakeholders outside the park that should be informed of the project results. This worksheet provides a simplified step-by-step process to assist with effectively communicating the results of an assessment.

Step 1: List your goals

What do you want to see happen as a result of communicating to others the results of your condition assessment? Use the SMART goal checklist:

Specific

Measureable

Actionable

Relevant

Time-bound

E.g., Within 6 months of completing the assessment, begin/continue discussions with land owners along the northern park boundary regarding status and trends for invasive plants within the park and across the broader landscape.

Goals: _____

Step 2: Determine your audience

The more specific you can be about your audiences, the better tailored and more effective your messages and products. Questions to get started:

- Who needs to know the results of the condition assessment?
- Who else benefits from the conclusion(s) in the condition assessment?
- Will the assessment affect specific groups like visitors, volunteers, particular divisions, neighbors, partners, etc.?
- Who will play a role in improving this resource condition if necessary?
- Is there a potential for controversy with this project? If so, who will raise objections?
- Will there likely be any media coverage?

Primary Target Audience:

Step 3: Craft Key Messages

The key messages you decide on will guide the rest of your strategy. Limit to 2-3 messages.

Principles for writing your key message:

- Understand your audience’s current awareness, knowledge, and attitudes toward the issue.
- Keep your messages consistent. Make sure everyone is communicating the same message.
- Avoid jargon and acronyms – both technical and park service jargon.
- Use plain language, and keep the message concise.
- Acknowledge data gaps or issues requiring further study where appropriate.
- For large or complicated projects, highlight completion as a park accomplishment.
- Keep the main message short, with one memorable sentence that takes 10-15 seconds to say.
- Make the message specific for the target audience.
- Messages often include a call to action.

Key Messages:

Step 4: Decide on appropriate products, tactics, and channels.

Now that you’ve done the legwork of figuring out **your goals, who** you’re talking to, and **what** you want to tell them, it’s time to decide on **how** you will reach them. For example:

Audience (examples)	Possible Tactics/ Products
Park staff	Condition report
Park visitors	Wayside exhibit, visitor center poster, brochure, rack card
Neighbors	Website article, letter, meeting, resource brief
Online visitors	Website article, social media posts, storymap
Teachers/students visiting online	Website article, Junior Ranger materials available from park webpage
NPS Management	Resource brief, website article, meeting

Product(s):

Step 5: Create Materials

This is a good time to assign tasks and create a timeline. Having this project management will ensure contributors know what they are responsible for and when it is due.

For additional guidance or ideas, contact the NRCA team.

Task	Staff Assigned	Due Date	Comments	Date Completed
Take photos of project				

Step 6: Evaluation

Look at the goals you listed - this will likely set up how you will evaluate the results of your communication product. Evaluation may take a quantitative form (page views, link clicks, time spent on page, number of comments, meeting attendance, etc.) or consider some qualitative methods to evaluate the product (case study, analyzing the tone of received comments, etc.).

Evaluation Plan:
