

Focus Group Guide – State Agencies

Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program
Strategic Communications Plan
DJ Case & Associates

(Welcome participants as they enter the room. Hand them the worksheet and ask them to fill out the front page.)

Thank you all for being here. I'm Phil Seng, I work at DJ Case and Associates. We work with state and federal fish and wildlife agencies and nonprofits all over the country on conservation-related research and communications.

For this project, we're working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs to discover how the Service can keep people in your agencies better informed about their activities and accomplishments.

Two quick things you should know:

1. I want to assure you that we are not here to persuade you of anything or convince you to participate in any program. We just want your honest opinions.
2. We are recording this session. That's simply for note-taking purposes. No one outside of the team assigned to this research process will be able to link a specific individual with a specific quote or response.

We'll start the focus group in a moment, but before we get started, I need to read you a couple of statements.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: We are collecting this information subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501) to seek comments from state agency partners to achieve greater awareness and understanding of WSFR and to validate messages and strategies in the WSFR communication plan. Your response is voluntary and we will not share your response publicly. We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB Control Number. OMB has reviewed and approved this focus group and assigned OMB Control Number 1090-0011.

Estimated Burden Statement: We estimate it will take 90 minutes to participate in this focus group, including time to read instructions and gather information. You may submit comments on any aspect of this information collection to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 5275 Leesburg Pike, MS: AMAD-ARM-PPM, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803, or via email at Info_Coll@fws.gov.

Introductions

Tonight, we will be discussing a variety of topics and asking you questions about them. For some of our questions we will go around the table and ask every one of you to answer. Other times, we will just ask for general comments. I apologize in advance if I have to cut anyone off or move past a topic before you've had a chance to fully discuss it, but we have a lot of ground to cover in a short amount of time.

Before we get started, does anyone have any questions?

To start, let's do quick introductions. Please tell us your name, agency, and position.

That's great, thanks.

State Agency Communication Efforts, Objectives, and Priorities

Goal: Determine participant's communication efforts and the communication role they see for the Service.

Let's begin by discussing your agency's current communication efforts.

Before we get started, let's take a moment to think about who your agency communicates with - think about your main audiences like hunters, anglers and the general public as well as other stakeholders, especially those that you communicate with as a part of your position. Now that you've got that image in your mind, let's talk through the following questions with those different types of people in mind.

1) "Communication topics" worksheet is a list of some topics that might be important for your agency to communicate about, please check important topics. If there any other topics you think we should add to this list, please do so.

1A) Now let's go around and hear your agency's top communication priorities and why.

1B) Are there any topics on that list that aren't that important? Please cross it out on the list and share it with the group.

2) Communicators only: Explain how you typically work with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service communicators. Describe your relationship.

(Prompt if needed: How often are you in contact with each other? What do you discuss/talk about?)

3) How can U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service support your efforts to communicate your agency's accomplishments? (Prompted if needed: You can refer back to your worksheet.)

3A) Describe other ways U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service could help you communicate about initiatives that cross state boundaries?

3B) What about multi-state grant projects?

4) What are the barriers, if any, that prevent you from working with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on communication efforts on WSFR-funded projects and accomplishments?

5) When you communicate about a Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration-funded project, how likely are you to mention the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program or grant?

5A) What are some reasons why you *wouldn't* mention Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program or grants in a story about a Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration funded project?

5B) What are the key points you try to hit when communicating about the WSFR program? (Prompt "I noticed the partnership between state agencies, industry and USFWS wasn't mentioned much. Can you explain why this isn't a key point for talking about the program?")

5C) The Service is working to communicate this partnership better. How could U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service help you communicate about the partnership better?

6) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service communicates Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration-funded accomplishments in brochures, website, and press releases, etc. What do you like about the content in these communications? Feel free to provide a specific example.

6A) What do you dislike about the content? Any examples you'd like to discuss/share?

6B) What about terms or descriptions that you may like or dislike?

General Only: Agency awareness of and communication about WSFR

Goal: Determine what the participants know and feel about the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs.

General Only Transition: Now let's shift gears to focus on your co-workers awareness of the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program.

7) **General Only:** Explain how your agency trains staff about the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program.

8) **General only:** Across your organization, how well understood are Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration-funded projects' contributions to conservation and recreation efforts?

(Prompt: Do most people?
Some people?
A few people?)

8A) If it's not broadly understood, in what roles or departments is it understood?

8B) Who *needs to* understand the WSFR partnership? (Prompt if needed: Does everyone in your agency need to know this? Why or why not)

8C) Do your agency colleagues understand manufacturers' contribution to agency funding? (Prompt: If so, is this viewed as simply a funding process or a partnership? Why?)

8D) Who *needs to* understand manufacturers' contribution to agency funding? (Prompt if needed: Does everyone need to know this? Why or why not)

9) Manufacturers' excise taxes are central to the state/federal/industry partnership. How does your agency communicate with industry about Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration-funded projects?

(Follow up: What are some of the reasons your agency doesn't work with industry?)

Wrap up

10) After our discussion today, have your thoughts about the role of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in communicating WSFR-funded projects and accomplishments changed?

11) Those are all the questions I have for you. Any final thoughts, or additional things you'd like to add?

Thank you, I know you are busy, and we appreciate your taking the time to chat with us tonight.

Focus Group Worksheet

Welcome to the focus group. Please take a moment to think about all the ways you communicate in your role. Who do you spend your most time communicating with? How do you communicate with them? Your responses will help us understand your communication needs and how we might be able to assist you better. Please fill out this front page now.

Communication products by role

What is your job title?

In your role, how do you communicate your agency's accomplishments?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Press releases | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter or brochure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Presentations (e.g. Power Point) | <input type="checkbox"/> Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Magazines | <input type="checkbox"/> Interpersonal communication/Individual contact and communications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Websites | <input type="checkbox"/> Videos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poster sessions | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

What could the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provide to help you better communicate your agency's accomplishments?

- slogans, taglines and/or logos for programs
- boilerplate descriptions of WSFR program/grants

- articles
- metrics
- facts
- tables, charts
- infographics
- photos and illustrations
- Other: _____

Communication Topics

This is a list of topics that might be important for your agency to communicate about.

Check the box next to any topics that are important to your agency. If there are any other topics we should add to this list, please write them on the blank lines.

- Healthy fish and wildlife populations
- Species recovery
- Access to recreational opportunities
- Infrastructure
- R3 (Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation of outdoor recreationists)?State Wildlife Action Plan
- _____
- _____
- _____

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