

Climate Science Center

Communication Guidelines



Big Thompson River Valley, Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado. Photo courtesy of Alan Cressler.

Introduction

This document outlines the National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center’s (NCCWSC) minimum requirements for communications products developed by the Department of the Interior (DOI) Climate Science Centers (CSCs) for projects or initiatives that were funded by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

Compliance with these guidelines is mandatory for all CSC consortia members and will be included as part of each CSC’s annual review. All of the guidelines below are prescriptive unless they are specifically identified as optional and/or best practices.

There are two objectives of the Communication Guidelines: First, to ensure that the USGS and DOI are appropriately credited for financial support. Second, to maintain a level of consistency in communications across the CSCs, presenting ourselves as an integrated and unified national CSC network. At the same time, the CSCs are encouraged to develop their own identities that represent and showcase their regional differences and specialties.

The top three things for CSCs to keep in mind when crafting their communications are:

1. Include the **USGS and DOI logos**
2. When reporting on research, **acknowledge the role of USGS in supporting/funding the work**
3. **Provide science, not policy recommendations.** Report the reasons for the research, results, and how the findings might be used practically, but do not make statements that recommend one management or policy course of action over another.

Updates to the Communication Guidelines will be reviewed and released (if major changes result) on an annual basis.

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Logos

CSC Logo

Each CSC is encouraged to maintain a logo that reflects its unique identity.

CSC Name

Spell out the complete, unabbreviated name of the CSC (e.g., Pacific Islands Climate Science Center). Acronyms are jargon, so using the full name of the CSC will make the logo broadly accessible and help build brand awareness.

Color

While not required, CSCs are encouraged to develop at least two color versions of their logo: one that is suitable for use on white or light-colored backgrounds and another that is appropriate for black or dark-colored backgrounds.

USGS Logo

The USGS logo must be included on all websites and communications products related to CSC projects or initiatives funded by USGS.

Color

The USGS logo may only appear in black, white, or USGS green. *USGS green is RGB 0, 111, 65; Pantone 348; CMYK: 100, 0, 79, 27; HEX: 006F41.*

- The identifier can appear in green or black when placed against white or light-colored backgrounds.
- The identifier can appear in white when placed against black or dark-colored backgrounds.

Placement

The USGS logo can be placed anywhere on the product **except** the top left corner. The USGS logo should take precedence over the DOI logo if there are space constraints on a product.

Spacing

To ensure that the USGS logo is sufficiently prominent at any size, there should always be a clear area surrounding it. The clear area should be equal to one-fourth (1/4) the height of the USGS logo and extend on all sides. *Note that “clear” does not mean “empty”; there can be a colored background or photo sitting behind the logo.*

Do not:

- Distort the proportions of the logo. (Note that it is ok to resize the logo as long as the proportions remain the same.)
- Change the color of the logo, beyond what is described above.
- Add to, remove content from, or otherwise modify the logo.
- Place the logo in the top left corner of the product.



DOI Logo

The DOI logo must be included on all websites and communications products related to CSC projects or initiatives funded by USGS (i.e., in every instance where the USGS logo is used.).

Spacing

Ensure that appropriate clear area surrounds the logo, so that it is sufficiently prominent at any size.

Availability

The DOI logo can be downloaded from bit.ly/2ccNYAm

Do not:

- Distort the proportions of the logo. (Note that it is ok to resize the logo as long as the proportions remain the same.)
- Change the color of the logo, beyond what is described above.
- Add to, remove content from, or otherwise modify the logo.



Standard Phrases

CSC Mission Statement

The CSC mission statement must appear on the “About” page of the CSC website and may optionally be used in press releases or other communications products. *Note that an updated version of the mission statement below is expected in 2017.*

The NCCWSC and CSCs work with natural and cultural resource managers to gather the scientific information and build the tools needed to help fish, wildlife and ecosystems adapt to the impacts of climate change.

CSC Tagline

The CSC tagline may optionally be used on websites or in other communications products.

Your neighborhood. Real answers. Climate science for wildlife & people.

Funding Acknowledgement

Funding acknowledgement must be spelled out in all scientific publications and press releases **where research funding was provided by USGS.**

- For other communication products – such as videos, handouts, and bookmarks – including the USGS and DOI logos is sufficient acknowledgement of funding support.
- When acknowledging funding, use the full (no abbreviations), official name of the CSC: The Department of the Interior [insert CSC region] Climate Science Center.
- Indicate that the CSC is managed by the USGS National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center.

Example: This work was supported by The Department of the Interior Northeast Climate Science Center, which is managed by the USGS National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center.

- In scientific publications (or manuscripts intended for publication), use the specific wording below to acknowledge funding:
 - ◇ **Non-federal PIs** should include the following statements (usually in the acknowledgements section): “The project described in this publication was supported by Grant or Cooperative Agreement No. [add number, and include appropriate designation of award] from the United States Geological Survey. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the [insert CSC region Climate Science Center or the National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center] or the USGS. This manuscript is submitted for publication with the understanding that the United States Government is authorized to reproduce and distribute reprints for Governmental purposes.”
 - ◇ **Federal PIs** should use the following statement of acknowledgement: “This research was funded by the Department of the Interior [insert CSC region] Climate Science Center, which is managed by the USGS National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center” OR “This research was funded by the U.S. Geological Survey National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center.”
 - ◇ **Graduate Student Fellows** should use the following statement of acknowledgement: “This research was funded by a Department of the Interior [insert CSC region] Climate Science Center graduate fellowship awarded to [Name].”

Images

Images are an important means for promoting and communicating about our work. A good photo, video, or infographic can entice people to read more and/or share with their friends. CSCs are encouraged to use images, wherever possible, in their communications products.

Images for USGS Products

When CSCs send images to be used by USGS in official USGS products (e.g., NCCWSC website, BioClimate, USGS social media accounts), it is important that they comply with necessary permissions. To share photos, videos, and other images with USGS for use in USGS communication products, the following documentation is required:

- **Copyright Dedication form** signed by the image's creator. This form transfers the image into the public domain, where it can be used by USGS.
 - ◇ This form **is not** required for images that are already in the public domain. Note that all images created by federal employees while on duty or while using government equipment are considered to be in the public domain.
 - ◇ CSC staff are required to complete this form for images they created **unless** (a) they are federal employees and took the photos, etc. while working or (b) blanket permission has been granted in the funding agreement with USGS.
 - ◇ USGS will credit the image's creator whenever the image is used in a product.
- **Photo Release form(s)** signed by individuals who are identifiable in the image.
 - ◇ For individuals under 18 years of age, this form must be signed by a parent or guardian.
 - ◇ This form **is not** required for USGS employees appearing in the image (even if identifiable).
 - ◆ USGS employees are encouraged to wear USGS-branded clothing when in the field, so the USGS logo appears in any images. Government credit cards can be used for the purchase (if the apparel will be used for government work). Clothing is "owned" by USGS and remains with the agency if the employee leaves his/her position.
 - ◆ The official wear shop for clothing purchases is the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services: <http://bit.ly/2fEkdr9>. If purchasing clothing by quantity, shop at USGS Lands End: <http://bit.ly/2gya6sf>
 - ◇ This form **is not** required for images that were captured in a public location (e.g., sidewalk).
 - ◇ This form **is** required for images that were captured during a meeting, conference, or other event, **unless** (a) there was signage present at the event letting people know that photos/video were being taken or (b) event registration forms noted that photos/video would be taken.

Example text for event sign: This public event is being recorded and may result in print, video or other such products in which a visitor's image may be captured. Those who attend this Open House acknowledge this possibility and, by attending, willingly consent to appearing in any resulting print, video or other such products.

- **Photo Information form** that clearly identifies the “who, what, and where” of the image’s contents. This documentation helps ensure that the image is appropriately used, captioned, and credited.

The forms described above can be downloaded from bit.ly/2ccNYAm. When complete, upload the image files (and their accompanying forms) to the CSC’s respective folder at <http://bit.ly/2cVw3S3>

Note that if sending videos to USGS for official USGS use, they must be 508 compliant (e.g., include captions and/or be accompanied by a transcript).

Images for Non-USGS Products

Images used in university or other non-USGS communication products (e.g., university website) should comply with the university or institution’s rules and standards for communication.

Websites

Host universities are required to support or provide a website for their CSC.

All CSC websites must incorporate the following minimum components:

- **USGS and DOI Logos.** The USGS and DOI logos should be displayed on the home page.
- **About Section.** All CSC websites must include an About section. This portion of the website should:
 - ◊ Include the CSC mission statement
 - ◊ Describe the relationship of the CSC to its host and consortium members, the CSC network, USGS, NCCWSC, and DOI
 - ◊ Include links to the NCCWSC (<https://nccwsc.usgs.gov/>) and DOI (<https://www.doi.gov/>) websites
- **Science/Research Section.** All CSC websites must include a Science or Research section.
 - ◊ This portion of the website must include basic information about the CSC’s science plan/agenda and how these priorities were selected. Be sure to mention the role of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee in this process.
 - ◊ The CSC may optionally provide individual project information on their websites, but this must:
 - ◆ Link to the corresponding NCCWSC project page.
 - ◆ Match any overlapping information on the NCCWSC project page (e.g., title, dates). It is the CSC’s responsibility to maintain these entries for consistency with the NCCWSC website.
- **Plan for Maintenance.** CSC staff must have a plan/processes in place for supporting the website through regular content updates and maintenance.

While not required, CSCs are strongly encouraged to adopt the following best practices for their websites:

- Attach dates to news items and announcements. This makes it easier for items from the website to be used in USGS reports, etc.
- Include a page or section that provides contact information for the CSC.
- Include a page or section that provides information on CSC-affiliated fellows and other education/training efforts being undertaken by the CSC.

Example About section:

The Department of the Interior South Central Climate Science Center (SC CSC) is part of a federal network of eight Climate Science Centers (CSCs) managed by the U.S. Geological Survey National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center (NCCWSC). The NCCWSC and CSCs work with natural and cultural resource managers to gather the scientific information and build the tools needed to help fish, wildlife and ecosystems adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The CSCs and NCCWSC focus on the generation of data, decision-support tools, and other products that are practical and relevant to managers' climate change monitoring and adaptation work.

The work of the SC CSC is accomplished through a collaborative partnership among USGS scientists, resource management agencies, and a consortium of academic institutions from across the region. The SC CSC is hosted by and physically housed at the University of Oklahoma (OU), where space is provided for university, tribal, and federal employees. The academic consortium also includes six additional member institutions: Texas Tech University (TTU), Louisiana State University (LSU), the Chickasaw Nation (CN), the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO), Oklahoma State University (OSU), and NOAA's Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Lab (GFDL). The consortium has broad expertise in the physical, biological, natural, and social sciences to address impacts of climate change on land, water, fish and wildlife, ocean, coastal, and cultural resources.

[Visit the National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center website >>](#)

[Visit the U.S. Department of the Interior website >>](#)

Review of Communication Products

In some cases, the production of CSC communication products will require participation of and/or review from NCCWSC communications staff.

The intent of NCCWSC participation/review is to maintain overall consistency across major CSC products and to ensure compliance with any mandatory review protocols. Looping in NCCWSC communications staff has the added benefit of helping NCCWSC know about and thus promote the work that is being done at the CSC through additional channels. NCCWSC serves as the liaison with the USGS and DOI Office of Communications.

The type of communication product will determine whether NCCWSC staff involvement is necessary:

- **Media, Scientific Publications (and Related Products), OFRs, USGS-Produced Factsheets**
 - ◇ Product must conform to the Fundamental Science Practices (<http://go.usa.gov/xKytw>) and IPDS reporting requirements (<http://go.usa.gov/xKyuk>) (if product has a USGS author).
 - ◇ Let Emily Fort, NCCWSC Communications Manager (efort@usgs.gov) know early in the process that a product is in the works, so that NCCWSC can coordinate additional communication efforts (e.g., web announcement, social media, BioClimate newsletter). If the publication is high profile, notice should be given at least one month in advance of publication. For all other publications, notice should be given at least two weeks in advance.
 - ◇ CSC staff should submit a Highlight on the publication to NCCWSC prior to its release.
- **CSC Major Communication Products not Captured by USGS Publications Process (e.g., magazines, non-USGS-produced factsheets, videos about the CSC or major initiatives)**
 - ◇ NCCWSC communications staff should review the product prior to publication. Contact Emily Fort, NCCWSC Communications Manager (efort@usgs.gov) at least two weeks in advance of publication.
 - ◇ Note that the USGS Office of Communications needs to approve writing done by USGS staff for newspaper articles, blog posts, and other non-journal publications. Route these through NCCWSC communications staff for review.
- **“Ephemeral Items” (e.g., social media posts, workshop materials)**
 - ◇ No need for NCCWSC review or approval. NCCWSC communications staff are happy to provide input on the product if desired.
 - ◇ CSC staff are encouraged to let NCCWSC know about the product if it is of general interest and might be a good candidate for promotion via social media and/or the BioClimate newsletter.

Highlights

CSCs should submit weekly “highlights” to NCCWSC to alert USGS and DOI of upcoming high-profile, sensitive, or controversial events, issues, or activities.

- Highlights are collected by NCCWSC each week and submitted to the USGS Office of Communications and Publishing (OCAP). OCAP compiles the highlights of interest and submits them to USGS and DOI leadership.
- Highlights are internal and are not shared with the public.
- Please report only **future events** that involve high-profile, sensitive, or controversial issues. This includes:
 - ◊ All congressional interactions
 - ◊ News releases and media interviews
 - ◊ The start of a new study
 - ◊ Future meetings
 - ◊ Future presentations with key findings on high-profile issues
 - ◊ Future activities involving foreign countries
 - ◊ Major awards to be presented
 - ◊ Future action in response to a crisis or emergency
- Highlights **do not** need to be submitted on routine meetings or conference presentations that lack significant findings; past events or products that are already posted online; or local outreach efforts.

Template for Submission

Complete the following template when submitting highlights to NCCWSC. Examples can be found on the next page:

Title: [Simplified]

- **What:** [What will happen]
- **Date Entered:** [Date you submitted the item]
- **Estimated Date:** [Date of the event or product. Estimates or TBD are acceptable. Only report future items.]
- **Where:** [Location of the study or event]
- **Background:** [Extra information, such as why the research was done or why it’s important]
- **Partners/Stakeholders:** [Collaborators or funders]
- **Hill Interest:** [Yes/No/Maybe & Describe]
- **High-Profile/Controversial:** [Yes/No/Maybe & Describe]
- **Journal/Outlet (if applicable):** [USGS or Name of Journal]
- **Publication Status (if applicable):** [Unpublished/Embargoed/Published]
- **POC:** [Communications, Scientist, or Center Lead]

Example 1:

USGS Study--Metals Required for U.S. Wind and Solar Energy under Clean Power Plan Scenarios

- **What:** Article assesses U.S. demand for 11 metals needed to produce solar and wind electric power under various CPP scenarios. The CPP may require 13-43% more metals by 2040. Tellurium and dysprosium requirements appear to be of most concern.
- **Date Entered:** August 17.
- **Estimated Release Date:** Release anticipated in 2 to 4 weeks.
- **Where:** U.S.
- **Background:** The CPP will likely require the U.S. to rely more on wind and solar to generate electricity. Wind turbines and solar panels require several minor metals produced mainly as byproducts of more common metals. Scenario analysis of 11 such metals is the focus of this study.
- **Partners/Stakeholders:** Department of Energy, National Science and Technology Council, Industry.
- **Hill Interest:** Potential. The CPP has been incorporated into the Energy Information Administration (DOE) energy projections in the 2016 Annual Energy Outlook. CPP is controversial and is being challenged in court in an attempt to block implementation.
- **High-Profile/Controversial:** This is a fact based evaluation of material required under various CPP scenarios. While CPP is a high profile, controversial issue, this study should not be controversial.
- **Journal/Outlet:** *Applied Energy*.
- **Publication Status:** In press. Bureau approved manuscript has been accepted for publication by the journal.
- **POC:** Nedal Nassar, USGS National Minerals Information Center.

Example 2:

USGS Paleoecologic Data in Biscayne Bay as Part of Everglades Restoration

- **What:** Determining Past Salinity in Biscayne Bay to Restore the Everglades
- **Date Entered:** August 17.
- **Estimated Release Date:** Begins this fall
- **Where:** Biscayne Bay, Biscayne National Park, Florida
- **Background:** The Southern Coastal Systems Sub-Team is one of four regional multi-agency groups coordinating science for the Comprehensive Everglades Ecosystem Restoration. A key SCS responsibility is to set targets and measures to restore Florida's southern estuaries. To set salinity targets for Biscayne Bay, USGS scientists will re-examine sediment cores it collected from 1996 -- 2003 using new methods. If the existing cores do not provide sufficient information, the USGS will collect additional cores in spring of 2017.
- **Partners/Stakeholders:** Biscayne National Park, USACE, USFWS, DOI, South Florida Water Management District, Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission, NOAA, and Audubon.
- **Hill Interest:** Maybe, depends on findings or need to collect new cores
- **High-Profile/Controversial:** Everglades Ecosystem Restoration is of broad interest throughout South Florida and beyond.
- **Journal/Outlet:**
- **Publication Status:**
- **POC:** Lynn Wingard, USGS Eastern Geology and Paleoclimate Science Center

Social Media

Tools like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are a great way to connect with a broad public audience and promote CSC work. The use of social media by CSCs is optional, but encouraged where time and resources permit. CSC staff can use existing social media accounts for another institution (e.g., the university host) to report on CSC work, provided that the posts attribute the work to the CSC.

All CSC-related social media posts must comply with the following guidelines:

- **Avoid advocacy.** Present the science – reporting the reasons for the research, results, and how the findings might be used practically – but do not make statements that recommend one management or policy course of action over another, or give the perception of doing so.
- **Tag USGS and DOI.** If space permits (i.e., there is no hard character limit) and the work referenced in the social media post was funded by the USGS, tag the USGS and DOI accounts in the post.

In addition, CSCs are strongly encouraged to adopt the following best practices in their social media posts:

- **Be conversational & jargon-free.** Use plain language to get across your message, writing in a at about a middle-school reading level. When in doubt, explain or replace “science-y” terms. Keep things brief.
- **Use images.** Wherever possible, include images in social media posts. Be sure that you have appropriate permission to reuse images and give credit where due. On posts without a hard character limit, it is good practice to accompany images with a caption describing what is pictured.
- **Post semi-frequently.** Social media requires a regular presence to maintain interest and followers. For each social media channel that you use, post at least 1-2 times per week (and preferably, 1-2 times per day) on topics that are timely (e.g., related to new publications, upcoming or recent holidays, etc.).

Example (Facebook):

The interior part of Alaska receives the same amount of annual precipitation as Tucson, Arizona, but its landscape is far from desert-like – picture vast spruce forests punctuated by streams and fields of wildflowers. This abundance is made possible by the ways in which water is stored on the landscape (often in solid form). For example, snowpack from the winter slowly melts over the spring and summer to continually rehydrate the soil. As climate change brings about warmer temperatures and less snowfall, scientists at the @USInterior Alaska Climate Science Center, managed by the USGS, warn that drought has the potential to seriously disrupt vegetation, wildlife habitat and migration, and the traditional hunting and gathering activities of native people...not to mention increasing the frequency and extent of wildfires. Learn more: <http://go.usa.gov/cmnPh>. Photo: Alaska panorama. Credit: Shawn Carter, USGS

Example (Twitter):

Alaska is warming 2x fast from #ClimateChange as the rest of the US. Hello, #drought & fire bit.ly/1QeFcvB

Miscellaneous

- CSC names should be abbreviated with a space between the region and “CSC,” e.g., PI CSC, SW CSC.
- Note that official USGS communications products must comply with USGS Visual Identity guidelines. Please contact NCCWSC (nccwsc@usgs.gov) if you have questions or would like more information on these guidelines.