

Climate Adaptation Science Center

Communication Guidelines



Introduction

This document outlines the National Climate Adaptation Science Center’s (NCASC) minimum requirements for communications products developed by the Climate Adaptation Science Centers (CASCs) for projects or initiatives that were funded by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

Compliance with these guidelines is mandatory for all CASC consortia members and will be included as part of each CASC’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 is appropriately credited for financial support. Second, to maintain a level of consistency in communications across the CASCs, presenting ourselves as an integrated and unified CASC network. At the same time, the CASCs are encouraged to develop their own identities that represent and showcase their regional differences and specialties.

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

- 1. Include the **USGS logo**
- 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

CASC Logo

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

CASC Name

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

Color

While not required, CASCs 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 CASC 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.

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.

Availability

The USGS logo can be downloaded from bit.ly/2xADDcl



DOI Logo

The DOI logo no longer needs to be included on CASC communications products. Only the USGS logo should be used.



Standard Phrases

CASC Mission Statement

The CASC mission statement must appear on the “About” page of the CASC 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 2018.*

Mission: Delivering science to help fish, wildlife, water, land, and people adapt to a changing climate.

Funding Acknowledgement

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

- When acknowledging funding, use the full (no abbreviations), official name of the CASC: The U.S. Geological Survey [insert CASC region] Climate Adaptation Science Center.
- Indicate that the CASC is managed by the USGS National Climate Adaptation Science Center.

Example: This work was supported by the U.S. Geological Survey Northeast Climate Adaptation Science Center, which is managed by the USGS National Climate Adaptation 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 CASC region] Climate Adaptation 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 U.S. Geological Survey [insert CASC region] Climate Adaptation Science Center, which is managed by the USGS National Climate Adaptation Science Center” OR “This research was funded by the U.S. Geological Survey National Climate Adaptation Science Center.”
 - ◇ **Graduate Student Fellows** should use the following statement of acknowledgement: “This research was funded by a U.S. Geological Survey [insert CASC region] Climate Adaptation Science Center graduate fellowship awarded to [Name].”
- For other communication products – such as videos, handouts, and bookmarks – including the USGS logo is sufficient acknowledgement of funding support.

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. CASCs are encouraged to use images, wherever possible, in their communications products.

Images for USGS Products

When CASCs send images to be used by USGS in official USGS products (e.g., NCASC website, Climate Adaptation Insights, 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.
 - ◇ CASC staff, funded scientists, and students must complete this form for images they created **unless** (a) they are federal employees (see above) or (b) blanket permission has been granted in the funding agreement with USGS (applies to all agreements established in 2017 and later).
 - ◇ 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.
 - ◆ USGS employees can find additional details about purchasing clothing here: communities.usgs.gov/blogs/vis/clothing-and-gifts/official-wear-clothing/
 - ◇ 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 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 <https://bit.ly/2Jgb1ZB>. When complete, upload the image files (and their accompanying forms) to the CASC’s respective folder at <https://bit.ly/2LYSfrm>.

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 CASC.

All CASC websites must incorporate the following minimum components:

- **USGS Logos.** The USGS logo should be displayed on the home page.
- **About Section.** All CASC websites must include an About section. This portion of the website should:
 - ◊ Include the CASC mission statement
 - ◊ Describe the relationship of the CASC to its host and consortium members, the CASC network, USGS and NCASC (including the network map would provide a helpful visual).
 - ◊ Include links to the NCASC (<https://www.usgs.gov/casc>) website
- **Science/Research Section.** All CASC websites must include a Science or Research section.
 - ◊ This portion of the website must include basic information about the CASC’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 CASC may optionally provide individual project information on their websites, but this must:
 - ◆ Link to the corresponding NCASC project page
 - ◆ Match any overlapping information on the NCASC project page (e.g., title, dates). It is the CASC’s responsibility to maintain these entries for consistency with the NCASC website.
- **Plan for Maintenance.** CASC staff must have a plan/processes in place for supporting the website through regular content updates and maintenance.

While not required, CASCs 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 CASC.
- Include a page or section that provides information on CASC-affiliated fellows and other education/training efforts being undertaken by the CASC.

Example About section:

The South Central Climate Adaptation Science Center (SC CASC) is part of a federal network of eight Climate Adaptation Science Centers (CASCs) managed by the U.S. Geological Survey National Climate Adaptation Science Center (NCASC). The CASCs deliver science to help fish, wildlife, water, land, and people adapt to a changing climate.

The work of the SC CASC is accomplished through a collaborative partnership among USGS scientists, resource management agencies, and a consortium of academic institutions from across the region. The SC CASC 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 Adaptation Science Center website >>](#)

Review of Communication Products

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

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

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

- **Media, Scientific Publications (and Related Products), OFRs, USGS-Produced Factsheets**
 - ◇ Product must conform to the Fundamental Science Practices (go.usa.gov/xKytw) and IPDS reporting requirements (<https://go.usa.gov/xQG6d>) (if the product has a USGS author).
 - ◇ Let Emily Fort, NCASC Communications Manager (efort@usgs.gov), know early in the process that a product is in the works, so that NCASC can coordinate additional communication efforts (e.g., web announcement, social media, Climate Adaptation Insights 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.
 - ◇ CASC staff should submit a Highlight on the publication to NCASC prior to its release.
- **CASC Major Communication Products Not Captured by USGS Publications Process (e.g., magazines, non-USGS-produced factsheets, videos about the CASC or major initiatives)**
 - ◇ NCASC communications staff should review the product prior to publication. Contact Emily Fort, NCASC 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 NCASC communications staff for review.
- **“Ephemeral Items” (e.g., social media posts, workshop materials)**
 - ◇ No need for NCASC review or approval. NCASC communications staff are happy to provide input on the product if desired.
 - ◇ CASC staff are encouraged to let NCASC know about the product if it is of general interest and might be a good candidate for promotion via social media and/or the Climate Adaptation Insights newsletter.

Highlights

CASCs should submit weekly “Highlights” to NCASC to alert USGS and DOI of upcoming high-profile, sensitive, or controversial events, issues, or activities.

- Highlights are collected by NCASC each week and submitted to USGS and DOI leadership. They are internal to the USGS and DOI and are not shared with the public.
- Please report only **future events (2-4 weeks ahead)** that involve high-profile, sensitive, or controversial issues. This includes:
 - ◊ Upcoming publications of note that address priority issues, may be high visibility, or are significant to the advancement of science and informing key policy areas.
 - ◊ All congressional interactions
 - ◊ News releases and media interviews
 - ◊ Future meetings with key external stakeholders and regarding DOI priority issues
 - ◊ 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 NCASC

- **Title:**
- **Summary:**
- **Publication Outlet:** [USGS or Name of Journal]
- **Anticipated Publication Date:**
- **IPDS Number (if a pub includes a USGS author)**
- **Published:** [Yes/No]
- **Event Date (if highlight is about a specific event):** [1-2 sentences explaining the what, why, and who of the event. Hyperlinks to additional information can be included].

Example:

- **Title:** When is resistance futile? Resisting, accepting, or directing ecosystem transformation
- **Summary:** National and Southwest Climate Adaptation Science Center, NOROCK, Alaska Coop Unit, and New York Coop Unit USGS researchers and co-authors present a framework that encompasses three high-level strategies for fish and wildlife managers dealing with ecosystems susceptible to transformation. Specifically, managers can resist change to maintain existing ecosystem processes, accept transformation when it is not feasible to resist change or when changes are deemed socially acceptable, or direct change to a future ecosystem configuration that would create desirable outcomes.
- **Publication Outlet:** Fisheries
- **Anticipated Publication Date:** 8/15/20
- **IPDS#:** IP-106816
- **Published:** No

Social Media

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

All CASC-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.** 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 in the post.

In addition, CASCs 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 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 (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 Alaska Climate Adaptation Science Center, managed by the @USGeologicalSurvey, 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. 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

Miscellaneous

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