



FULL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

FOR HIGH-PROFILE OR CONTROVERSIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS



SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **Plan title:** Outreach Plan for the Publication of the Final Environmental Impact Statement on the Farallon Islands NWR's Invasive House Mouse Eradication Project.

2. **DTS number**

3. **What is the action triggering this communications plan?** *(Please explain in no more than three sentences. Additional background information may be included in the appendix)*

Release of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Farallon Islands NWR Invasive House Mouse Eradication Project, which will propose a preferred action alternative, a short-term, limited aerial delivery of the rodenticide brodifacoum on the islands to eradicate invasive house mice for the restoration of the ecosystem and conservation of native species.

4. **What is the proposed date for this action? Why has it been selected? Is it flexible?**

Mar. 15, 2019, the publication date of the FEIS in the Federal Register (not flexible due to new DOI procedures for streamlining NEPA).

5. **Which office is leading this communications effort and which other programs, regions or groups are involved?**

San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex is leading the communications effort. USFWS Region 8 leadership, External Affairs, Migratory Birds and Ecological Services will also be involved as necessary. Point Blue Conservation Science, the Service's research and stewardship partner on the refuge since 1969, will play a supporting role.

SECTION II: GOALS

6. What is our ultimate goal here beyond simply informing people of this action?

We want support from key decision-makers among elected officials, relevant agencies and the conservation community for the Service's preferred action alternative for eradication of invasive house mice as the best available option for the restoration of the ecosystem and conservation of native species. Where there is less than full support, or even opposition, we want it understood that the Service has been transparent and thorough in its multi-year assessment, incorporating the best available science and state of the knowledge on best management practices for rodent eradication on islands, and that all reasonable options, some proposed in the public review process, have been fully considered.

7. What story do we want to tell?

The Farallon Islands NWR hosts a unique ecosystem with one of the world's most important seabird nesting sites, home to a variety of seals and sea lions, endemic species, and a unique plant community. It hosts the largest seabird nesting colony in the United States outside of Alaska, including a majority of the world's population of the rare ashly storm-petrel. But due to the presence of invasive house mice introduced in the 19th century, its ecosystem is out of balance. To restore the ecosystem, the mice must be completely eradicated. Rodenticide is the only currently proven method for 100% eradication, as demonstrated in restorations of other infested island habitats (such as Anacapa Island in Channel Islands National Park, CA) where ecosystems have bounced back dramatically and wildlife is now thriving.

SECTION III: ASSESSING STAKEHOLDER INTEREST AND POSITION

- 8. External audiences** *(Only list media if there are issue-specific outlets that merit targeting. General “media” and “the public” should not be used)*

Relevant elected officials, interested conservation organizations, and government agencies with jurisdiction or approval authority.

- 9. Internal audiences**

Director, USFWS Pacific Southwest Region; National Wildlife Refuge System; Migratory Birds; Principal Deputy Director, USFWS; DOI Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance; Acting Secretary, Department of the Interior.

- 10. Which groups or individuals may publicly oppose this action? What are their primary concerns?**

Wildcare, a Marin County (CA) based wildlife rehabilitation and advocacy NGO that opposes the use of pesticides and rodenticides generally, and has come out against the proposed use of rodenticide on Farallon NWR, maintaining that it poses too much risk for wildlife on the islands.

Maggie Sergio, formerly of Wildcare, now an independent writer and activist, who circulated an online petition against the proposed use of rodenticide at Farallon NWR and has written critically about the Farallon project and other island rodent eradications in the Huffington Post.

Members of the Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC), particularly Richard Charter, (Senior Fellow and Director of Coastal Coordination for The Ocean Foundation), who have raised concerns about the project to the SAC. Mr. Charter submitted a lengthy comment letter questioning the findings of the RDEIS.

Sonce deVries, former USFWS Acting National Pesticide Use Proposal Coordinator, who openly voiced her concerns about the project and submitted a FOIA request along with Maggie Sergio for documents following the release of the RDEIS.

11. What stakeholder groups or third-party validators might be leveraged for a statement, quote or other supportive action?

American Bird Conservancy, California Audubon, National Audubon Society, Island Conservation, The Nature Conservancy, Point Blue Conservation Science, Ellie Cohen (former CEO, Point Blue Conservation Science).

SECTION IV: KEY MESSAGES

12. What are our topline, big picture messages? *(These should be top concepts that readers should take away, not a list of facts. List no more than three!)*

The removal of invasive house mice will allow the ecosystem of the globally important Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge to recover from past human impacts, restoring a more natural state that will also build resilience to the impacts of climate change.

A controlled, short-term, limited use of the rodenticide brodifacoum by skilled experts, using best management practices from successful eradications world-wide, will pose minimal risk to native wildlife, the marine environment, and other non-target resources.

13. What secondary messages are there?

The selection by the Service of a preferred action alternative for mouse eradication on Farallon Islands NWR, a short-term, limited use of the rodenticide brodifacoum, was carefully considered over several years, subject to rigorous review by outside experts and agencies, and included extensive public review and input.

Extensive research and field tests have been conducted on the islands, accompanied by lab testing and modeling by the Service and its partners, to ensure minimal risk to native wildlife and other non-target resources from the eradication.

A final Record of Decision is expected in June, 2019. If the preferred alternative is selected, the Service would seek funding for implementation. Implementation is not likely to be carried out before fall, 2020 at the earliest.

SECTION V: IMPLEMENTATION

14. What is the overarching plan for reaching specified audiences with our key messages?

The overarching plan is for a multi-pronged, strategically proactive outreach campaign targeting key decision-makers on the heels of publication of the Final EIS.

KEY TACTICS:

Prior to publication of the FEIS:

Internal briefing for Acting Secretary, Dept. of the Interior

Development of Internal FAQs for spokespersons & subject matter experts at SF Bay NWRC and Point Blue

Upon publication of the FEIS:

Letter to key elected officials and relevant agencies advising them of the Service's decision and offering phone or in-person briefings at their request.

Press release from SF Bay NWRC for Bay Area media outlets.

Project website (restorethefarallons.org) administered by Point Blue, with background information and public FAQs, will go live. Farallon Islands NWR website will also link to project website and FEIS.

Service and Point Blue subject matter experts will be available for media interviews.

Email to the EIS mailing list announcing publication.

After publication of the FEIS:

Media interviews, as requested.

Informal outreach to conservation organizations (particularly those that signed a support letter for the project website at the Draft EIS stage).

If necessary (i.e., if media coverage of FEIS is negative or inaccurate, a media tour of the islands for select Bay Area outlets, (e.g., KQED, SF Chronicle).

Guest op-ed by a supportive conservation organization pitched to Bay Area newspaper, (e.g., American Bird Conservancy, CA Audubon), as necessary.

Optional briefings for select Bay Area elected officials and/or their staffs (e.g., all Bay Area U.S. reps, SF Supervisors, SF Mayor), as requested.

If desired, a tour of Farallon Islands NWR for key elected officials (e.g., relevant U.S. Reps., SF Mayor, CA Coastal Commission staff).

Meeting with staff of CA Coastal Commission in advance of May, 2019 Commission hearing on the project.

Social media posts by the Service (SF Bay NWRC, RO and HQ) and Point Blue—responsive, as appropriate, depending on tenor of public conversation & media about the proposed action.

15. How will internal audiences be informed and engaged?

Briefing for the Regional Director, USFWS Pacific Southwest Region, by the San Francisco Bay NWRC;

Briefing for the Principal Deputy Director, USFWS, and the Acting Secretary, Dept. of the Interior, by the Regional Director, USFWS Pacific Southwest Region.

16. Which communications tools are needed to support these strategies and tactics?

Tool	Responsible	Due Date
Letter to elected officials and agencies informing them of FEIS and offering briefings on request.	SF Bay NWRC (Morkill, Barr, McChesney, Cordell)	3-11-19
Press release upon publication of FEIS	Doug Cordell (USFWS)	3-11-19
FAQs (Internal & External)	Cordell, McChesney, Morkill, Barr (USFWS)	3-11-19
Project Website (restorethefarallones.org)	Zach Warnow (PB); Doug Cordell (FWS)	3-11-19
Farallon Islands NWR website links to FEIS and Project Website	Melisa Amato, Doug Cordell, FWS	3-15-19
Briefing materials (for internal and external briefings)	Gerry McChesney, (USFWS)	As needed.

Press kits (if media tour is deemed necessary)	Doug Cordell (USFWS)	As needed.
Social media posts (responsive, as appropriate)	Doug Cordell (FWS), Zach Warnow (Pt. Blue)	As needed.
Letter to the public for distribution to the EIS mailing list.	McChesney, Cordell, Morkill, Barr (FWS)	3-11-19

17. Implementation timeline *(If not known, put TBD or the number of days/hours before/after the announcement)*

Date and Time	Tactic	Responsible
All times are in the Pacific (ET -3) time zone		
Day before FR publication	Send letter to members of Congress, local elected officials informing them of FEIS and offering briefings on request.	SF Bay NWRC, R8 CLA
Day of FR publication	Distribute press release announcing publication of FEIS	SF Bay NWRC
Day of FR publication	Launch of project website (restorethefarallones.org) by USFWS' project partner, Point Blue Conservation Science	Point Blue Conservation Science
Day of FR publication	Post link to FEIS on project website and Farallon Islands NWR website	SF Bay NWRC, Point Blue Conservation Science
Day of FR publication	Send letter to the public for distribution to SF Bay NWRC's EIS mailing list.	SF Bay NWRC

18. Key Congressional Members

Member	DC Staff Email	District Staff Contact	Contacted by
Sen. Feinstein	Alexis_Segal@feinstein.senate.gov	emily_condon@feinstein.senate.gov	D. Cordell (Dist)
Sen. Harris	Monica_Pham@harris.senate.gov	sydney_lewis@harris.senate.gov	D. Cordell (Dist.)
Rep. Huffman (CA-02)	logan.ferree@mail.house.gov	jenny.callaway@mail.house.gov	D. Cordell (Dist.)
Rep. Speier (CA-14)	molly.fishman@mail.house.gov	katrina.rill@mail.house.gov	D. Cordell (Dist)

SECTION VI: SOCIAL MEDIA PLAN

19. How will social media be used to help in messaging to target audiences and achieve communications goals?

Social media posts by the Service to Facebook and Twitter (SF Bay NWRC, RO and HQ, as relevant) and by Point Blue Conservation Science (USFWS' partner in the project): responsive, as appropriate, depending on tenor of public conversation & media about the proposed action.

SECTION VII: PRIMARY POINTS OF CONTACT

20. Media coordinator

Doug Cordell, Public Affairs Specialist, SF Bay NWRC (USFWS), doug_cordell@fws.gov; 510-774-4080

21. Congressional coordinators

Doug Cordell, Public Affairs Specialist, SF Bay NWRC, doug_cordell@fws.gov; 510-774-4080

Meghan Snow, Congressional Affairs Specialist Pacific Southwest Region,
meghan_snow@fws.gov, (916) 978-4445, Cell: (916) 539-7494

22. Subject matter experts available for interview

Gerry McChesney, Mgr., Farallon Islands NWR, Gerry_mcchesney@fws.gov, 510-792-0222, ext. 222, Cell: 510-435-9151

Anne Morkill, Mgr., SF Bay NWRC, anne_morkill@fws.gov, 510-792-0222, ext. 123, Cell: 510-377-9450

22. Are there any non-FWS points of contact for this action?

Pete Warzybok, Point Blue Conservation Science, pwaryzbok@pointblue.org, 707-781-2555, ext. 344

Zach Warnow, Communications Director, Point Blue Conservation Science,
zarnow@pointblue.org, 707-781-2555 ext. 396

SECTION VIII: DOCUMENT INFO

23. Created by

Date created

Doug Cordell, Public Affairs Specialist, SF Bay NWRC, USFWS	2-10-19
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24. Edited by

Date edited

Anne Morkill, Mgr., SF Bay NWRC, USFWS	2-20-19
Chris Barr, Deputy Mgr., SF Bay NWRC, USFWS	2-20-19

Gerry McChesney, Mgr., Farallon Islands NWR, USFWS	2-20-19
Meghan Snow, Congressional Affairs Specialist, Pacific Southwest Region, USFWS	2-23-19