

MAKING A VIDEO

INTRODUCTION

This guide is for making videos using the National Conservation Training Center's video production facility. It also provides guidance for video productions by contractors. The section on submitting Form DI-551 and getting appropriate approvals applies to all video production – both by NCTC and by contractors.

WHAT APPROVALS ARE REQUIRED FOR MAKING A VIDEO?

Contact Your Regional Office

Your Regional Office External Affairs Office must be consulted before you make a video but you may want to call NCTC to get some basic information about the video production process and cost before you consult with your Regional Office. NCTC will guide you through the initial planning and cost estimates so that you can create a realistic proposal for your supervisor or for approvals at the Regional Office.

Get DI-551 Approval (For a DI-551 form go to <http://www.fws.gov/forms/> or <https://intranet.fws.gov/>). Videos that are shown to the public require approval from Regional External Affairs Office, Washington External Affairs and The Department of Interior using Form DI-551. Call NCTC for technical guidance, assistance with creating a Production Plan and obtaining a cost estimate.

Exceptions to the DI-551 and Production Plan

1. Videos that are to be seen only by FWS employees such as training videos.
2. Video clips that are to be used only once such as video clips that supports a one-time speech.
3. Video clips or stock footage (B-roll) for the TV media.

Exhibits

Videos that will be a part of a FWS exhibit require DI-551 approval for the video in addition to the DI-552 for the exhibit.

HOW DO I GET DI-551 APPROVAL?

The Production Plan

The Production Plan identifies the video's objective, audience, message, content and creative approach. It also provides basic information such as the program length, distribution, viewing conditions and evaluation methods. (For a Production Plan example go to <https://intranet.fws.gov/Region9/bav/policyandguidelines.htm> "Production Plan Example.")

Cost Estimate

NCTC will work with you to take all factors including the amount of travel required, availability of stock footage and the complexity of the production into account when creating a cost estimate.

Complete DI-551

Most of the information needed for completing the DI-551 is in the Production Plan and Cost Estimate. Put completed DI-551, the Production Plan and Cost Estimate together and you will have a good package to submit for approval. Note: You do not have to be using NCTC facilities to get help with your Production Plan and Cost Estimate. An example of the Production Plan is attached.

NCTC Customer Service Form

If you decide to use NCTC to produce your video you will need to complete a Customer Service Form. You should complete this form and fax back to NCTC for processing as soon as possible. Once processed, your project will be assigned a production number as well as a video producer. By completing the form, you are not obligated for anything even if you decide not to have a video produced but it does help you in getting your project into our database. The process doesn't take very long and in most cases can be done within a few hours.

Below is a step-by-step process for the customer service form;

1. Customer completes form and faxes to NCTC
2. NCTC staff receives form and assigned a production number for tracking.
3. A video producer is assigned project
4. The producer calls customer to discuss project.
5. Producer determines if NCTC can help with project and supplies additional information for the "Production Plan".

THE PRODUCTION PLAN EXAMPLE

The Video Production Plan below can be used as a general guide. Follow the example, or contact Dave Cooper at NCTC (304 876 7662, david_cooper@fws.gov) and NCTC will help you create a Plan that works for you.

VIDEO PRODUCTION PLAN (EXAMPLE)

WORKING TITLE: Just a few descriptive words, a more creative title can come later.

EXAMPLE: "Gulf of Mexico for Students" was the Working Title. Later, it was changed to "Making Waves" and sub-titled " Why Care About the Gulf of Mexico."

POINT OF CONTACT (POC): The decisions that go into making a video are often very subjective. Therefore, only two people are involved in the final decision-making, the POC and the Producer. The POC may need organizational input and approval but, in the

end, the POC will be the “one-voice” that communicates with the Producer. The POC and the Producer will work as a team to incorporate the best of many ideas into a final product. Be sure the POC has the authority to approve content, scripts, budget, and other production issues.

EXAMPLE: Larry Goldman, FWS Daphne Field Office, Address.... PhoneFax....e-mail....

OBJECTIVE: Why do you need it? What will it accomplish?

EXAMPLE: The video will be used as an outreach tool to promote the conservation, protection and enhancement of Gulf of Mexico Ecosystem.....

MESSAGE: It's best to hold the message down to about three main points or less.

EXAMPLE: The videos will show and tell the students about the benefits people derive from the Gulf, the threats to the Gulf ecosystem, and the things that people can do to save the Gulf.

AUDIENCE: Who is the target audience? What age, group, organization, etc?

EXAMPLE: The primary audience will be teenage high school students that live in the Gulf Coastal states. The Video can also be used for general audiences.

LENGTH: Most informational videos are about 10 minutes, rarely more than 15 minutes.

EXAMPLE: 10 minutes running time.

VIEWING CONDITIONS: Will it be aired on commercial TV, used in classrooms, on a large screen, in a Refuge visitor center, on the Internet, or in an information kiosk? This information is essential to determining the kind of video format that best suits your needs.

EXAMPLE: This video will be shown in school classrooms on videotapes, in NWR visitor center auditoriums on large screens and segments may be released to Educational TV.)

EVALUATION: How will you determine if the video's message reached the viewer?

Example: A focus group of people consisting of people unfamiliar with the FWS mission will be formed to evaluate the video.

DISTRIBUTION: How many copies, what format, who will get them and who will deliver them? We can help you with this one. We have contractors that can handle the shipping. All you need is a mailing list.

EXAMPLE: 500 copies will be made on VHS videotape format and distributed according to a mailing list supplied by Larry Goldman.

DISTRIBUTION FOLLOW-UP: How will you know if your target audience saw the video?

EXAMPLE: Ten recipients of the video will be called to see how much the video was used and how effective it was.

TREATMENT OR APPROACH: How do you want to go about telling this story? This is a creative decision that you may want to discuss in detail with the video producer.

EXAMPLE: Making Waves will be produced in the documentary style. It will feature

teenaged students that live along the Gulf Coast. Students will tell why the Gulf is an essential part of their lives. The program will use interviews with students that are involved with various educational....

CONTENT SUGGESTIONS:

It's like a shopping list of key facts, events, ideas or production elements that may be a part of the video. The list helps fix on what you want and what it will take to get it done. You may want to brainstorm with others and talk to a potential producer to get more ideas.

EXAMPLE:

- *Much of our drinking water comes from the 33 major rivers that flow into the Gulf.*
- *The Gulf Coast has a vast variety of habitats.*
- *Show FWS employees working with students to save the Gulf.*
- *Include aerial shots of the Gulf, especially the beautiful beaches.*
- *Show lots of people having fun on beaches and in the water.*
- *Use stock video shots of wildlife from the NCTC Video Library.*
- *Videotape students participating in beach clean-up in May of next year. Call Ding Darling NWR for details.*

Your list can be as long as you like. The more details, the better.

FUNDING: Where will the money come from? Is it a partnership?

EXAMPLE: Funding will be \$10,000 from the Environmental Protection Agency, \$5,000 from the Corps of Engineers, and \$10,000 from FWS Daphne Field Office.

BUDGET:

A cost estimate can be obtained by talking to a video producer (contractor, NCTC or others) The person making your estimate will need a production plan or statement of work before they can determine the cost.

POC:

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