

Charter

The Sagebrush Communications Team

Purpose: The Sagebrush Communications Team (SCT) is responsible for leading service efforts, both externally and internally, in communicating the importance of the sagebrush ecosystem and the importance of the Service's work to conserve it.

Goal: Successful communication about the sagebrush ecosystem will require an unprecedented level of active participation from a diverse set of public and private partners. The SCT will share information among partners and collaborators, drawing in and engaging new partners, and informing key stakeholders and decision makers about progress and future needs.

Audience: Multiple audiences will be informed by the communications team including internal audiences including key leaders such as the Director and Regional Director, agency employees within Ecological Services as well as cross-programmatic coordinator. Federal agencies, State, Tribes and non-governmental agencies are key communicative area for this team. Congressional members and staff, particularly in the 11 Western states of the sage grouse range, are another important audience for this team.

Roles and Responsibilities of Team Members

Core Communication Team members will consist of one representative from the External Affairs program in R6, R1 and R8. Region 6's rep will be the team lead and is responsible for team coordination including scheduling meetings, organizing assignments, identifying immediate and significant issues and progress updates to leadership. The Core team will rely on Congressional and Legislative Affairs experts from the three regions and Headquarters. Field public affairs officers and visitor services specialist will be informed through their regional Core team member. All Core team members are responsible for updating their External Affairs, Ecological Services, and Refuge leadership on progress. When appropriate, executive level leadership will be briefed by Core team members.

Key Duties for Core Team Members:

- Work with partners to develop and implement an external sagebrush ecosystem vision and communications strategy
- Develop and internal sagebrush ecosystem communications strategy for sharing information within DOI and the Service about program vision, goals and accomplishments
- Respond to medial inquiries on sagebrush ecosystem issues (R6 rep will be the lead media contact of sagebrush ecosystem press requests)
- Respond to congressional inquiries on sagebrush ecosystem issues
- Provide support to regional External Affairs and Field Team on local sagebrush communications needs.

The Core team members should have the following expertise: Developing internal communications strategies, working with partners, responding to media inquiries, responding to congressional inquiries, writing press releases and working digital media platforms.

Time requirements: The Core Team lead will dedicate 75% of their time to the Sagebrush Communications Team.

Team member selection: Each region has a dedicated Public Affairs Officer for the Core team. Selected members outside of the Core team may be recommended by the SCT or managers.

Experts may be sought for their knowledge in a particular topic including congressional and legislative affairs and may be utilized at any time during the process when that expertise is lacking from the Core Team. Experts may be internal or external to the Service. Experts are not responsible for drafting communication strategies. Experts may provide information through written correspondence or documents, meetings, phone conversations, or webinar presentations.

Expert selection: Recommendations for experts on particular topics will be solicited as needed.

Reviewers

Time requirements: Reviewers will have 2 weeks for their review.

Reviewer selection: Reviewers will consist of appropriate internal and external parties.

Oversight managers Sagebrush Leadership Team

Products for which the Core Communications Team is responsible

- Schedule & weekly calls (Core Team Lead)
- Develop and Implement external sagebrush ecosystem vision
- Develop and Implement Communications strategy for sagebrush ecosystem
- Write press releases on sagebrush ecosystem announcements and science from the agency
- Support congressional communications through tours, briefing statements and fact sheets
- Update the Sage Grouse Webpage to reflect the Sagebrush Ecosystem Vision

Related guidance

- Greater Sage-Grouse Campaign Communications Strategy (2015)
- Sagebrush Ecosystem Communications Forum (August 2016)
- Sagebrush Ecosystem Curriculum Project (ongoing)