



COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY



SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Title: Parker River 'Pink House' Environmental Assessment

HQ DTS DCN (Communications Materials): *[HQ Insert or N/A]*

Associated Federal Register or other related DTS DCN: *[HQ//Program/Region Insert or N/A]*

Announcement Overview *(What is the action triggering this communications strategy?)*

On Wednesday, November 1, Parker River National Wildlife Refuge will release a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for 30-day public comment proposing a building demolition, site restoration, and construction of a small gravel parking lot and public viewing area of adjacent salt marshes. The property, known as "The Pink House," is a local landmark that has fallen into disrepair and currently presents an environmental and public safety hazard.

Estimated Target Date? Why has it been selected? Is it flexible?

November 1 is the target date and it was selected to (1) not overlap with another ongoing EA public comment period (through Oct 28) for the station's habitat management plan, and (2) provide adequate time for a 30-day public comment process so the final draft may be completed and the selected alternative implemented in a timely fashion this winter (before highest probability of mid/late-winter snow storms).

Communications Lead and POCs *(Identify programs/regions/partners involved):*

Matt Hillman, Parker River NWR

Keith Shannon, OC

SECTION II: OBJECTIVE, AUDIENCE(S) AND STRATEGY

COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVE: *(What is the desired outcome of this communications effort?)*

Ensure target audiences are aware that every reasonable effort was made to preserve and exchange The Pink House property prior to making this determination in effort to limit negative public response and petition the public for comment to assess their response to the ecological, operational, and safety needs for the building's removal.

TARGET AUDIENCE(S) *(Briefly describe the audience(s) you are trying to reach with key messages. Please generally describe which audiences will support or oppose this action).*

- Local residents, refuge visitors – likely to receive mixed reactions and The Pink House is a local landmark but the new recreational opportunities (opening this area for public use and wildlife observation for the first time) may also excite many
- Local congressional delegation – many are aware of the multiple efforts over the years to exchange the property and are understanding of the situation
- Locally elected officials (Town of Newbury, City of Newburyport, MA state senators and Representatives).
- Support The Pink House – local non-profit dedicated to saving The Pink House have been active in the process and will be very disappointed with the proposed action

STRATEGY AND TACTICS *(Briefly describe the overall communications strategy and tactics including traditional media outreach, embargoed interviews, digital media, Tribal outreach, stakeholder outreach, congressional outreach, employee communications) that will be used to reach targeted audiences with key messages.)*

Prior notice will be given via email on 10/30 to the Congressional delegation (Markey, Warren, Moulton) and during a meeting on October 31 at 12:30p with the delegation and the non-profit Support the Pink House group. Outreach will include a news bulletin shared with local media and the announcement will be posted on the refuge's website and shared to the station's Facebook page.

The news bulletin will explain the rationale for the proposed alternative. Briefly, that (1) no viable exchange property has been located despite 7 years of effort, (2) allowing the house to continue to deteriorate poses public safety and environmental hazards, as it sits adjacent to sensitive salt marsh habitat, and (3) continued costs for refuge staff maintenance and law enforcement patrol of the property detract from our core mission and are not in the public's best interest to continue.

COMMUNICATION PRODUCTS *(Please list all communications tools/products that will be used to support the strategy and tactics and who is responsible for producing them, such as news release, social media posts, FAQs, if-asked statement/talking points, blog, feature story, infographic, intranet post/Leadership Update, etc.)*

News bulletin – OC with Refuge (Matt Hillman)

Web alert – refuge (Ella Weber)

Social media posting – refuge (MaryKate Sylvia)

FAQ – refuge (Matt Hillman, Ella Weber)

SECTION III: MESSAGING

KEY MESSAGES *(These should be the top three concepts readers should take away, including a description of the action, an explanation of why this action matters and why they should care, not a list of facts, which should be placed in the appendix).*

- The Pink House was constructed in 1925 and was acquired by the Service in 2011 to protect the surrounding salt marsh and for possible staff housing, but the deteriorated condition and presence of contaminants such as asbestos led staff to propose demolition of the structure. In response, a grass roots group – Support The Pink House, Inc. (STPH) – was formed to advocate for its preservation. The refuge worked with STPH, congressional staff, partners, and local landowners for seven years seeking a land exchange in an effort to preserve the Pink House. The Pink House was deemed ineligible for listing under the National Register of Historic Places.
- The Proposed Alternative calls for demolition of The Pink House, previously a private residence, which occupies a footprint of approximately 2,000 square feet. The proposed action would include demolition, site restoration, and construction of a small gravel parking lot and a public viewing area into the adjacent salt marshes.
- The proposed action better aligns with the long-term mission and purpose of the refuge by increasing public access, improving wildlife habitat, increasing public safety and saving taxpayer funds. Additionally, the Pink House is surrounded by an area that is already prone to flooding, and recent sea level rise projections indicate that this area will flood with much greater frequency and intensity (i.e., once per month or more) as soon as 2030.
- The EA also proposes opening the property to the public for wildlife observation and interpretation for the first time ever if the house is removed. An accessible observation platform would be constructed, providing an elevated position where all visitors can appreciate the natural beauty and learn about the ecology of the Great Marsh.

(Please included if-asked only messaging if appropriate)

SECTION IV: IMPLEMENTATION

TIMELINE/TICK TOCK *(If not known, put TBD or the number of days/hours before/after the announcement, include internal employee communications)*

Times are EST

PRIOR TO ANNOUNCEMENT

DATE	TIME	TACTIC/ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	AUDIENCE	DELIVERY METHOD (Phone/Email)
10/27		Draft news bulletin	OC/Refuge		
10/30		Draft FAQ	Hillman	All	
10/31	12:30	Notify congressional delegation and STPH	Hillman	STPH	Virtual meeting/email
Announcement Day					
11/1	8:30 AM	Post draft EA to fws.gov	Refuge	All	Web
11/1	8:45 AM	Post FAQ to fws.gov	Refuge	All	Web
11/1	9 AM	Post bulletin to fws.gov	Refuge	All	Web
11/1	9:30 AM	News bulletin dissemination	Refuge	Local media	email
Post Announcement					

SECTION V: CONTACT LISTS

VIP Contact List for FWS HQ/DOI Leadership (If appropriate.)

[Congressional – See attached Excel spreadsheet](#)

[Tribal- See attached Excel spreadsheet](#)

[Stakeholder/NGO's - See attached Excel spreadsheet](#)

Stakeholder name	Contact Info (email/phone)	Organization	Contacted by	Method of Contact

Section VI: DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS – SOCIAL, WEB and DIGITAL MEDIA

(If Appropriate/If none planned, please indicate)

Local/regional account(s):

Recommended hashtag(s) - *Optional*:

Photo(s):

Link(s):

Social media message(s) - *Optional*:

National account(s):

Recommended hashtag(s) - *Optional*:

Photo(s):

Link(s):

Social media message(s) - *Optional*:

Section VII: INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

(If Appropriate. If none planned, please indicate.)

Region/Program Intranet News Post/News Post/Page:

Leadership Update from Director/Directorate Member – Byline and Date:

WILD Weekly Item – Date:

Live Event/Broadcast/Open House – Date:

Section VIII: PRIMARY POINTS OF CONTACT

Media Coordinators *(For national-level plans, list at least one person from HQ Public Affairs and other from region/program if appropriate. For regional-level plans, only regional coordinators are required. Enter name, email and phone.)*

Keith Shannon, keith_shannon@fws.gov

Congressional Coordinators *(For national-level plans, list at least one person from HQ CLA and other from region/program if appropriate. For regional-level plans, only regional coordinators are required. Enter name, email and phone.)*

Jennifer Joseph, jennifer_joseph@fws.gov

Social Media Coordinators *(For national-level plans, list one person from the HQ Social Media team and other from region/program if appropriate. For regional-level plans, only regional coordinators are required. Enter name, email and phone.)*

Ella Weber, ella_weber@fws.gov

Tribal Coordinators *(This can be the Native American liaison, species lead or project leader.)*

Subject Matter Experts Available for Interview *(Must be approved by HQ Public Affairs for an HQ-led announcement or by Regional Public Affairs for regional-led announcement. Enter name, email and phone.)*

Additional Technical Experts for Reference *(Enter name, email and phone)*

Are there any non-FWS points of contact for this announcement? *(Enter name, organization, role, email and phone)*

SECTION VIII: REVIEW AND SURNAME

Date Created/Created By:

Keith Shannon, 10/12/2023

Date and Name Last Edited/Surnamed

Matt H 10.17.23 10:00

***DO NOT PUT OTHER MATERIALS SUCH AS FAQs, NEWS RELEASES, TALKING
POINTS OR GENERAL BACKGROUND IN THIS DOCUMENT. KEEP THOSE AS
SEPARATE DOCUMENTS.***