

Service Facebook Management Plan – Updated August 2013

Introduction

Facebook is the world's most widely used social networking site. It offers many ways for individuals and organizations to establish a presence and to interact with other Facebook users. The three methods referred to in this management plan are Profiles, Groups, and Pages.

Facebook Profiles represent individuals. They allow Facebook members to share personal information, photos, links, and other content about their activities and their relationships to other individuals and Groups. Before an individual can interact on Facebook, he or she must set up a personal profile on the site. Once a profile has been set up, a Facebook member can create Groups or Pages.

Facebook Groups represent communities inside Facebook. Groups enable members to come together around specific localities, interests, issues, or ideas. The creator of a Group is its default administrator, and the Group links back to the profile of that person.

Pages are effectively profiles for organizations or public entities such as businesses, celebrities, or bands. Unlike Groups, Facebook Pages do not link to the profile of an individual. The Service currently has more than 230 Facebook pages that represent our Headquarters, Regions, Refuges and Hatcheries.

Because Facebook evolved from blogging, this Facebook management plan is informed by the Service blog policy issued in April, 2009, which can be found online at <http://www.fws.gov/policy/115fw9.html>.

1.1 Why do we need a management plan?

Participation in Facebook, as in most third party sites, presents several challenges related to our limited control over our allotted space or the actions of others at the site. For instance, third party sites may regularly display advertisements; other site users may attempt to appear to be us; or we may be unable to make all content accessible to people with disabilities. To face these challenges, we must exercise diligence and oversight to ensure that we meet our legal and regulatory obligations, establish and protect our "official" identity, and provide content that meets the needs and expectations of Facebook users.

GSA has negotiated, and the Department of the Interior has signed, a "terms of service" agreement with Facebook tailored to the needs of the federal government. As a federal agency, we are legally required to rely on this special agreement when creating any Facebook accounts. The ease with which new Pages, Groups, and applications on Facebook.com can be created

outside of the agreement makes it especially important that the Service actively and carefully manages its Facebook presence. Facebook periodically scans its accounts and can at any time shut down accounts that are not properly registered with the site.

Strategic Coordination

This management plan and approach was developed to unify our messages; reach a larger, diverse audience; contribute to new partnerships; increase awareness of, and build support for, national, regional, and local offices, programs and activities; and generate interest in Service initiatives and mission. By coordinating our development, use, and management of official Service Pages, we can continue to maximize the efficacy of the Service presence on Facebook.

The Service accomplishes this coordination in a variety of ways. Social Media practitioners are encouraged to join the New Media Managers USFWS Group on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/usfwsnewmediamanagers/>). They are also encouraged to join the New Media Working Group listserv. Each of these tasks can be accomplished by contacting the National Social Media Coordinator.

Privacy and Security

In order for a Service employee to manage a Service Facebook page, that employee must be a Facebook member. Facebook prohibits members from maintaining multiple profiles, which means that employees typically use their personal profiles to connect to and administer Service Facebook pages. This does not give the public or other Service Facebook page administrators access to an employee's personal profile. The identity of page administrators is not disclosed to the public.

Facebook operates on its own servers. We cannot guarantee that Facebook offers the same security and policy safeguards as sites hosted at fws.gov. The fact that other Facebook members contribute content to the site adds an additional element of risk. By establishing a Servicewide management plan we can work together to mitigate these risks.

1.2 How will the Service use Facebook?

Facebook Pages

The Service will use Pages as its primary tool for interacting through Facebook. The Service will maintain as many Pages as needed to meet its communications goals, provided those Pages are properly managed and properly integrated into the whole of the Service social media strategy. Service Facebook Pages can focus on events, issues, or facilities. The content for all Pages will be closely and continuously coordinated in order to maintain the sense of a single U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and yet serve the distinct audiences associated with each region, issue, or facility. A network of well-coordinated Service Pages can be an effective communications tool

and can serve to introduce niche audiences to the broad spectrum of Service offerings.

Management and Administration

2.1 How will Facebook Pages be managed?

All Service Pages will be administered through the personal profiles of the employee(s) assigned to maintaining them. Pages are required to have at least three total administrators: a primary content manager, a backup content manager (the Regional Social Media Coordinator), and a support administrator (the National Web Manager in the Branch of Audio-Visual, Web and Social Media in HQ).

All Social Media practitioners who wish to establish a new Facebook Page should follow the guidelines outlined on the [Service Social Media Hub](#). Practitioners should complete the Facebook Management Form and send it to their [Regional Social Media Coordinator](#) for approval. The Regional Social Media Coordinator is responsible for coordinating with the National Social Media Coordinator, who will actually create each new Page to ensure proper branding and documentation for analytics purposes. Once the new Page is created and documented, it is up to the Social Media practitioner to maintain and create content for the Facebook Page.

Content Management

3.1 Are there common elements that should be a part of every official Service page?

The Service has developed a standard format for Facebook page identifying icons. This format allows each page to distinguish itself while also being readily identifiable as a part of the Service. In addition to this standard format icon, all Service Facebook pages will include two standard elements – a “Find Us” tab and a “Comment Policy” tab – in order to achieve a consistent presentation to the public and ensure we are meeting all policy requirements.

The Comment Policy tab must be displayed as one of the four Facebook tabs that a user automatically sees when he or she first visits the page. The comment policy states our expectation that those leaving comments on Service Facebook pages behave in a civil manner and alerts them that we will remove comments that fail to meet this standard. This comment policy is drawn from the Service blog policy, which is part of the Service manual and can be found online at <http://www.fws.gov/policy/115fw9.html>. [The blog policy also governs our behavior as content providers on Facebook. All Service Facebook administrators should familiarize themselves with the Service blog policy.](#)

3.2 What other legal, regulatory, or policy issues must we address?

Social media should never be used as a way of avoiding our legal responsibilities. Service

content posted on Facebook or any third party site must meet the requirements of the [Service and Department of Interior \(DOI\) Web standards](#).

Federal records provide evidence of the “organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the government.” In most cases, individual Facebook posts don’t meet this standard, either because they repeat information already preserved elsewhere, or they do not document official actions or policy. This may not always be the case, and Facebook managers must consider their records preservation responsibilities, particularly when posting information that had not previously been disseminated.

3.3 Facebook Applications

Facebook offers a growing library of Facebook-created and third party applications and widgets that can enhance the usefulness of Service Facebook Pages. To ensure the IT security of the Service’s social media accounts and the accounts of individuals who follow us on these sites, Facebook administrators should contact the Branch of Audio-Visual, Web and Social Media and their Regional Social Media Manager (if applicable) before adding a third party application to an official service Page.

Implementing this Plan

In order to use Facebook most effectively, we must:

- meet the needs of our many audiences, large and small, with accurate, timely, and engaging information;
- satisfy all of our legal and regulatory obligations; and
- promote consistency and unity in our presentation

To meet these objectives we will continue to grow our presence strategically and at a measured pace. We will also use the SproutSocial analytics tool, combined with analytics available via Facebook itself, in order to better understand the needs of our audiences.