

# Collaborative Stewardship Starter & Builder Kit

## ***Example: Internal Collaborative Communication Processes & Agreements***

The following internal communications protocol was generously shared for the purposes of this toolkit.

### COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

#### **Purpose**

The Communications Committee contributes to the successful operation of the partnership by developing and delivering communications materials, engaging external audiences through a wide range of activities including media engagement, and providing support to Leadership Team and Steering Committee when communications needs arise.

#### **Membership and Meetings**

The Communications Committee is comprised of one management level communications staff member from [agency partner] with at least 1 additional staff member identified at the discretion of [agency partners] dependent on expertise and agency capacity, and one management level staff member at [NGO backbone organization].

Additional communications support from the partners will be sought by communications committee members as needed based on project and product. The partnership Coordinator acts as a conduit to the Leadership Team and Steering Committee by communicating decisions, interests, deadlines, and any other key points of information across groups. The partnership Manager sits as a non-voting member on the committee, however, has the discretion to pause Communications Committee activities and elevate decisions to Leadership Team and Steering Committee if determined that higher level oversight is necessary.

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## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Communications Committee connects external audiences with the work of the partnership. Their responsibilities include:

- development and delivery of communications products
- curation of partnership materials
- oversight of partnership-related social media posts at their respective organizations
- media engagement and identification of public relations opportunities
- regular updating of online information regarding
- crafting and updating of partnership key messaging

## **Decision-Making Authority**

The Communications Committee works closely with the Steering Committee to ensure accuracy of information, stay in alignment with budget constraints, and flag any communications opportunities or obstacles.

The Communications Committee takes strategic direction from the Leadership Team, who drives communications priorities, philosophy, and strategy. The Leadership Team is the primary decision-making body for high level project communications.

The Communications Committee has decision making authority over day-to-day production and delivery of communications products and materials within the agreed upon expectations, review, and approval matrix approved each year by Steering Committee and Leadership Team in the annual communications plan.

Every effort will be made to reach unanimous consensus for decisions; however, if unanimous consensus cannot be reached, the decision can be put to a majority vote.

## **Expectations**

- The Leadership Team is to be made aware of communications efforts through frequent updates.
- In general, Leadership Team does not need to review/approve partnership communications projects as they have delegated authority to the Communications Committee. Key exceptions are identified below. The Communications Committee will determine who needs to be involved in substantive review and when based on the table below.

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- The Leadership Team will help inform the Communications Committee of project direction, milestones and stories that could be featured in communications materials.

### ***Agreement***

- The Partnership Manager through the Communications Committee will engage staff expertise on materials as needed.
- The Partnership Manager will keep the Leadership Team apprised of communications efforts via ongoing “offline” conversations and periodic updates at meetings. Manager will flag potential controversial issues to Leadership to determine if it is necessary to elevate to a higher level.
- The Partnership Manager, in collaboration with the [NGO backbone organization’s] Public Relations Manager, will include the Leadership Team in the review process for joint project announcement materials. The Leadership Team will manage the circulation of print-ready press releases to appropriate state and federal agency representatives that can greenlight the materials for distribution.

## **STEERING COMMITTEE**

### ***Expectations***

- The Steering Committee will review more permanent or longer shelf-life communications materials such as articles, videos, print materials, etc. for accuracy of information before sending to Leadership Team for final review and approval.
- The Steering Committee does not need to be consulted on every sign, social media post, or more temporary/short-term communications materials.
- The Steering Committee does not need to be involved with developing the content as they trust that Interpretive and other communications staff are the experts; they will review materials for accuracy once the content has been drafted and before it is finalized.
- Depending on what they are reviewing, Steering Committee expects ample time to do so—potentially weeks if it is long or more involved like a brochure, or less if the content is relatively short. The Communications Committee, with support from the Partnership Manager as a liaison between the Steering Committee and Communications Committee, will develop review timelines by project based on the table below.

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- There will be adaptability applied to setting deadlines and the Communications Committee and Steering Committee will use its discretion to set appropriate timelines.

### ***Agreements***

- The Steering Committee will help provide support to the Communications Committee in the form of securing/granting appropriate permissions (ex. to film or host a media tour, etc.), reviewing, and approving content, as needed.
- The Steering Committee will be engaged in review of the content.
- Review and timing expectations for different kinds of materials are documented all in one place (see table below).
- There will be a set time limit for review (see below), after which silence is considered approval.

## **COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

### ***Expectations***

- The Communications Committee is empowered to develop educational, interpretive, and communications materials that advance Redwoods Rising storytelling and raise awareness for the restoration work.
- The Communication Committee will develop an annual budget request in Jan/Feb to align with [NGO backbone organization's] budget cycle for review and approval by Steering Committee. Budget will reflect anticipated expenses for comms projects for the year to be approved by Steering Committee, streamlining the budgeting process and reducing the number of one-off funding requests.

### ***Agreements***

- The Communications Committee will create timely, informative, and engaging content about Redwoods Rising.
- If and when reviews and approvals are requested by the Communications Committee, feedback is expected within the set deadlines. If the Communications Committee does not receive feedback within the set deadlines, the Communications Committee will assume approval and move forward with project.
- Communications Committee will utilize approved messaging documents and language when producing social media, temporary, products, web content.

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## **INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS AGREEMENTS**

### **OVERALL EXPECTATIONS AND AGREEMENTS**

#### **LEADERSHIP TEAM**

##### **Expectations**

- The Leadership Team is to be made aware of communications efforts through frequent updates.
- In general, Leadership Team does not need to review/approve partnership communications projects as they have delegated authority to the Communications Committee. Key exceptions are identified below. The Communications will determine who needs to be involved in substantive review and when based on the table below.
- The Leadership Team will help inform the Communications Committee of project direction, milestones and stories that could be featured in communications materials.

##### **Agreement**

- The Partnership Manager will engage staff expertise on materials as needed through the Communications Committee.
- The Partnership Manager will keep the Leadership Team apprised of communications efforts via ongoing “offline” conversations and periodic updates at meetings. Manager will flag potential controversial issues to Leadership to determine if it is necessary to elevate to a higher level.
- The Partnership Manager, in collaboration with the [NGO backbone organization’s] Public Relations Manager, will include the Leadership Team in the review process for joint project announcement materials. The Leadership Team will manage the circulation of print-ready press releases to appropriate state and federal agency representatives that can greenlight the materials for distribution.

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## **STEERING COMMITTEE**

### **Expectations**

- The Steering Committee will review more permanent or longer shelf-life communications materials such as articles, videos, print materials, etc. for accuracy of information before sending to Leadership Team for final review and approval.
- The Steering Committee does not need to be consulted on every sign, social media post, or more temporary/short-term communications materials.
- The Steering Committee does not need to be involved with developing the content as they trust that Interpretive and other communications staff are the experts; they will review materials for accuracy once the content has been drafted and before it is finalized.
- Depending on what they are reviewing, Steering Committee expects ample time to do so—potentially weeks if it is long or more involved like a brochure, or less if the content is relatively short. The Communications Committee, with support from the Partnership Manager as a liaison between the Steering Committee and Communications Committee, will develop review timelines by project based on the table below.
- There will be adaptability applied to setting deadlines and the Communications Committee and Steering Committee will use its discretion to set appropriate timelines.

### **Agreements**

- The Steering Committee will help provide support to the Communications Committee in the form of securing/granting appropriate permissions (ex. to film or host a media tour, etc.), reviewing, and approving content, as needed.
- The Steering Committee will be engaged in review of the content.
- Review and timing expectations for different kinds of materials are documented all in one place (see table below).
- There will be a set time limit for review (see below), after which silence is considered approval.

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## **COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

### **Expectations**

- The Communications Committee is empowered to develop educational, interpretive, and communications materials that advance the partnership's storytelling and raise awareness for the restoration work.
- The Communication Committee will develop an annual budget request in Jan/Feb to align with the [NGO backbone organization's] budget cycle for review and approval by Steering Committee. Budget will reflect anticipated expenses for comms projects for the year to be approved by Steering Committee, streamlining the budgeting process and reducing the number of one-off funding requests.

### **Agreements**

- The Communications Committee will create timely, informative, and engaging content about the partnership.
- If and when reviews and approvals are requested by the Communications Committee, feedback is expected within the set deadlines. If the committee does not receive feedback within the set deadlines, they will assume approval and move forward with project.
- The Communications Committee will utilize approved messaging documents and language when producing social media, temporary, products, web content.

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	Steering Committee Expectations		Leadership Team Expectations	
Communication Type	Review or Approval?	Review Timeline	Review or Approval?	Review Timeline
<b>Digital</b>				
Social media posts	No		No	
Temporary signs	No		No	
Web content	No		No	
Email newsletters	No		No	
Periodic partnership email bulletins sent to all staff at the [NGO backbone organization and agency partners]	Yes - One review at 90% completion	Three days	No	
Photos	No	One week?	No	
Video	Informed at beginning of process. Steering Committee members will aid in onsite permissions, approvals, and support as needed.	One week for review of outline and one week at 90% when possible	Informed at beginning of the process.  One review of talking points/outline before filming  One review at 90% completion during post-production	One week for review of outline and one week at 90%

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	One review of talking points/outline before filming			
	One review at 90% completion during post-production			
Live digital interpretive programs	No		No	
Recorded and posted digital interpretive products (e.g., apps, other digital products that have a longer lifespan)	Yes	90% - one week	Yes	90% - one week
<b>Print (or Print and Digital)</b>				
Permanent signs (waysides, kiosks)	Yes -	90% - one week	No* Agency leadership will review as part of normal park signage process	
Agency publications (newspaper etc.)	Yes - One review at 90% completion	Three days	Yes - One review at 90% completion	three days

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Backbone organization publications magazine, annual report, fundraising materials, etc.)	Partial – a select subset of the committee will be empowered to review and approve content (those most directly involved in the project to be featured).  For featured stories, the comms committee will receive a final copy of the article.			
Brochure, posters, or similar kinds of long shelf-life print materials	Yes - concept planning 90%	90% - one week	yes	90% - one week
Project information update 1-pager	No		No	
<b>Earned Media &amp; Public Relations</b>				
Joint Press Releases	Yes – A heads up at the beginning of the process.	100% - pre-distribution; only egregious errors to be flagged.	Yes	100% - pre-distribution; only egregious errors to be flagged.
Media/Press	NA – separate protocol for this			

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