Publicity Toolkit

May 2018
Overview
This publicity toolkit contains materials and information to use when communicating about your membership in the HOL network, your HOL partners, and your HOL programs to the media and the public. Guidelines for using social media, HOL and NEEF logos, and for writing a press release are included.

Suggested Talking Points
Whether you are seeking support from an administrator, conducting an in-service workshop with peers, presenting at a conference, crafting content for a newsletter or speaking with the media, the following talking points are recommended.

- Hands on the Land (HOL) is a nation-wide network of field classrooms connecting K-12 students, teachers, families, and volunteers to their public lands and waterways.

- HOL partnerships provide hands-on education programs in natural and cultural settings that have been developed in collaboration with local schools and nonprofit community groups.

- HOL programs are designed to cultivate 21st century skills, support established school curriculum, align with local standards of learning, and address agency resource management objectives.

- Established in 1999, over 245 field sites and their partners are now registered with the HOL network.

- HOL is a program of Partners in Resource Education (PRE), an alliance of federal agencies and a nonprofit foundation dedicated to enhancing learning on public lands and waterways. The agencies include: Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, NOAA National Marine Sanctuaries, US Fish & Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, US Environmental Protection Agency, and the US Department of Education. NEEF, the National Environmental Education Foundation coordinates this public-private partnership program.

- More information can be found on the network’s website: www.handsontheland.org
Guidelines for Social Media Use

On any social media platform when posting about HOL or NEEF:

- **Do not** respond negatively to a comment or user from your personal account or on the NEEF or HOL accounts. If you see any negative posts about HOL or NEEF on any social media, please contact LMcQueen@NEEFusa.org with a link to the post.
- **Do not** post personal beliefs, advocacy-based calls for action or partisan opinions. Such messages will be removed. Repeat offenders will be blocked.

**Facebook**

With over 1 billion users in its network, the Facebook platform reaches more people than every other social media network combined. Facebook has become a very visual and experiential platform, offering users a mix of the things other social network offers, all in one place. Best practices:

- Feel free to share any positive posts or news stories about your HOL experience.
- If you would like to share a story that has already been posted on the HOL or NEEF Facebook pages, click on the post and choose the “Share” option, then write your own message to go along with the share.
- To credit HOL or NEEF as the information source in a story on your Facebook page, include “@HOL” or “@NEEF” to tag the respective Facebook page in your post.
- Post regularly on Facebook. Most users say they prefer to post once or twice a day. However, up to 3 posts per day is acceptable on this platform.
- Include hashtags in your posts. Hashtags are now supported on Facebook and using them is an easy way to categorize your post with others.

**Twitter**

With over 500 million accounts, Twitter is a mainstream news source used for sharing resources and conversation. Best practices:

- Share something NEEF has already tweeted. Retweet the message by clicking “retweet” on the tweet or clicking “reply” and adding RT in front of the tweet. Always credit the source of your tweets and news by retweeting or using the source’s Twitter handle.
- Interact more than you share on Twitter. To build followers on Twitter, engagement in conversation is essential.
- Respond to tweets if users are asking questions or for help. Direct them to the @NEEFusa Twitter handle or NEEF support team if necessary.
- Include at least one relevant hashtag per tweet to increase visibility. When relevant, you can use up to four.
- Post regularly on Twitter – there is no golden rule for how many times you should tweet per day on Twitter, but 5-9 is a standard number.

**Google+**

With about 350 million accounts, Google+ is still an active social network. While it is not as active as Facebook or Twitter, it is still important to post here for search engine optimization. Best practices:

- Click the “Share” button on a post from NEEF, if you want to post it on your profile as well.
- 1-2 posts per day is acceptable for Google+ and it’s acceptable to duplicate Facebook posts.
- Hashtags are supported on Google+ and can help increase post visibility.
- Feel free to share any positive posts or news stories HOL or NEEF may be in.
HOL and NEEF Brand Identity Guidelines

HOL members are expected to adhere to the following stylistic guidelines when using the HOL and NEEF logos in their communications. Reversed versions of the logos are available upon request.

**Alterations are prohibited!**
The logos should be used exactly as they appear. The type contained in the logo has been carefully proportioned and spaced to create a sound design. Do not rearrange the elements or change the proportions of the logo.

**Horizontal HOL Program Logo**
The Program Logo design has been carefully considered and designed so as to maintain integrity and consistency with the Primary NEEF logo design. Colors are not to be altered.

**Vertical HOL Program Logo**
The Program Logo design has been carefully considered and designed so as to maintain integrity and consistency with the Secondary NEEF logo design. Colors are not to be altered.

**Horizontal Primary NEEF Logo**
The Primary Logo is the first choice whenever possible. The design has been carefully considered and should be used unaltered.

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**Vertical Secondary NEEF Logo**
The Secondary Logo is designed to be consistent with the elements of the Primary Logo and should be used unaltered.

**Clear Space Requirements**
The logo should be surrounded by at least the minimum amount of clear space shown in the above examples. To maintain its visual integrity, it should not be crowded by other elements such as text, titles, photographs, or other symbols or logos. Adequate clear space around the logo creates desired emphasis and will enhance its appearance.

**Examples of Prohibited Logo Usage**
Do not distort the logo. Do not use the logo at an angle. Do not add a containing shape around the logo. Do not change the logo colors. Do not use the logo as a pattern. Do not add graphic elements to the logo. Do not place the logo upon a distracting background. Do not use the customized logo typeface or the mark alone or for any purpose outside of the logo. Do not substitute the typeface in the logo.
Press Release Guidelines

Use a press release to solicit media coverage for a major event or accomplishment. Examples include: joining the HOL network, receiving a grant to fund HOL programming, launching a new HOL program, achieving HOL program milestones, announcing a fundraising event or a new local sponsor for your HOL program.

Follow these eight steps to craft an Associated Press formatted release.

1. Write the words "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE" at the top, left-hand side of your press release. Use bold font and uppercase lettering. If your press release should not be published until a specific date, change the wording to "HOLD FOR RELEASE UNTIL [DATE]." Again, use bold font and uppercase.

2. Write your headline. Take your time on this. Identify what you want the public to know and make sure the headline communicates that clearly. Capitalize the first letter of each substantial word (not conjunctions or articles).
   - Keep it short. No more than 1 phrase or sentence.
   - Make it memorable and eye-catching.
   - Refrain from using exclamation points.

3. Write your sub-headline (optional). Do not repeat information already identified in your headline. Instead, expand on it. It can be longer than your headline and should express a complete thought.

4. Identify the location and date of the story. Underneath the headline/sub-headline, list your city and state. Follow that with today's date, including month, day, and year.

5. Write the text of the press release. Understand that you are not writing the news story itself, but providing engaging information about the event or promotion so that a journalist or editor will write a story about it.
   - Put all important details in the first paragraph, including where, when, who, what, and why.
   - Use short paragraphs of 2 to 4 sentences each.
   - Write in third person. Do not use words like "I," "me," or "you." Refer to yourself by name.
   - Incorporate quotes. This human element makes it much more likely to be accepted by a newspaper for publication.
   - Try to keep your press release around 400 or 500 words.

6. List organization and contact information. This allows the news reporter to follow up with you should they have any additional questions or want to expand the press release into a bigger news story.
   - Provide basic information about your organization.
   - Follow this with personal contact information: your name, title, phone number, mobile phone number, email address, web address, and physical address.

7. Write "END" at the bottom of the last page of the press release. This lets readers know that this is the end of your press release.

8. Place "###" underneath "END." These symbols appear at the bottom of most press releases. You could also choose to place the word count of your press release here instead.

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Example press release for announcing membership in the HOL network.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Anytown School has its Hands on the Land: Green STEM Program Launches at National Wildlife Refuge

Anytown, USA
September 7, 2018

Over the summer Anytown teachers partnered with NWR staff to develop a new green STEM education program for local middle and high school students. “Everyone involved is really excited,” said Principal Margarita Aguilar.

Next week students will begin planning a citizen science project with help from refuge staff. Over the winter months participants in the project will collect data related to a local conservation issue in an effort to assist scientists. Project data will be shared with US Fish & Wildlife biologists using Hands on the Land (HOL) Environmental Monitoring Project tools and database. Project findings will be presented at the school’s annual science fair in the spring.

“Students will develop critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and leadership skills while completing the project,” shared science teacher, Tyree Rhodes. Refuge manager, Howard Okamoto, hopes “some of the students will pursue careers in natural resource management.” In addition to applying science process and STEM skills, students will also be developing 21st Century Skills as outlined by the US Department of Education (https://y4y.ed.gov).

The partnership between the school and the refuge is just one of many across the nation that has joined the Hands on the Land (HOL) network. HOL programs provide place-based, NGSS-aligned, hands-on learning conducted on public lands and waterways for K-12 populations. Seed funding for the new program comes from a $5K mini grant from NEEF, the National Environmental Education Foundation (www.neefusa.org).


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