TFS SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE
Building Engagement, Conversation, and Reputation

Creating Opportunities

Social media offers the opportunity to share our message and interact with the public. Though one benefit of social media is its instantaneous nature, we have the responsibility to **protect and maintain the credibility, reputation and leadership of TFS at all times.**

Setting Goals

Each of our social media channels should serve to:

EDUCATE
How do we serve Texans and why?

COMMUNICATE
How can we engage the public and our partners?

BUILD TRUST
How can we humanize our agency and build trust?

Quick Tip 1: Mistakes Happen

Proofread every post or tweet at least twice. Some users are quick to point out mistakes and misspellings.

When someone does catch an error, correct or delete your post if necessary. Hold your own comments.

Fostering Conversation

While we share a great deal of information about our mission, we also need to support our partners, share their accomplishments, and listen to the public. **Our social media channels should function like a dinner party, not a soap box** (Hootsuite). We want to foster and join conversations by:

- Using hashtags
- Tagging other organizations
- Retweeting, sharing, and liking valuable content from similar accounts
- Responding to private messages from followers when possible

POSTING STRATEGIES

Post with Purpose

In Every Post, Include Something BLUE

- **Hashtags** allow you to join or create conversations on social media, especially Twitter. Wondering about hashtags on Facebook? Try it! Research shows that using **one** hashtag in Facebook posts makes them easier to search, but don't go crazy and pack in hashtags. **Use one hashtag in Facebook posts and one to two in tweets.**

- **Handles** allow you to mention other users and invite them to join your conversation, congratulate them, or share valuable information.

- **Links** allow you to create a **call to action.** Show your audience where they can learn more about the subject of your post. That way, you don't have to bog down their feed with long posts. Use bit.ly or ow.ly to shorten long links.
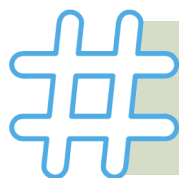
Quick Tip #2: Posting Frequency
Post on Facebook once per day or twice if you have another timely topic. Tweet five to six times per day, if possible. Retweets count.

When to Post

- Our analytics show that:

    On **Facebook**, the best time to post is between 12 – 4 p.m. and 6 – 9 p.m.

    On **Twitter**, the best time to post between 1 – 4 p.m. and 6 – 9 p.m.

- Check out your account's analytics page to determine the best times to post to reach your audience. Find more information about analytics on page 7.

Post Length

- **Facebook:** Keep your posts simple and informative. Our posts typically contain three sentences including an introduction to the subject, information and link to the subject's website.

- **Twitter:** Around 100 characters is the best length for a Tweet. Research shows that tweets containing less than 100 characters draw higher engagement numbers. The maximum length possible for a tweet is 280 characters.
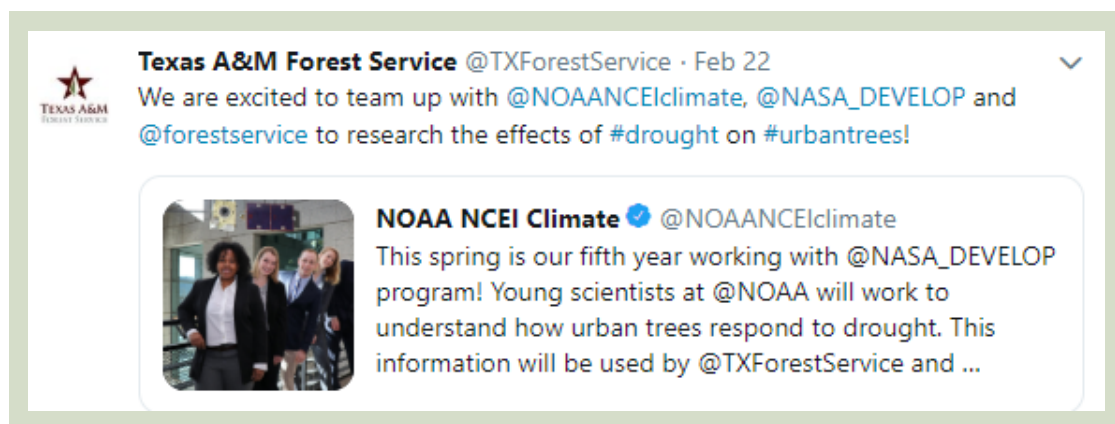
Texas A&M Forest Service @TXForestService · Feb 23
Do you have special plans to celebrate Smokey Bear's 75th Birthday? Visit bit.ly/2Nj53tG to add your local event to the national @smokey_bear 75th event map! #TeamSmokey #OnlyYou

75TH YEAR PREVENTING WILDFIRES

9   35

CREATE COMPELLING POSTS
Increase Engagement

Writing Tips

- **Imagery —** Include photos. If links are used, images will typically populate for your post. Choose the most relevant option. If unavailable, use a photo with your posts to create visual interest. Always ensure the photos you utilize feature proper attire, protocol, etc.

- **Jargon —** Avoid using terms and acronyms the public won't understand. This includes "TFS." Instead use "Texas A&M Forest Service."

- **Sharing and Retweeting —** When sharing or retweeting a post, ensure that the subject matter is relevant to our audience and provides reliable resources/information. Include a brief summary about the post so that readers can easily determine if they would like to click the link.

> **Texas A&M Forest Service** @TXForestService · Feb 22
> We are excited to team up with @NOAANCEIclimate, @NASA_DEVELOP and @forestservice to research the effects of #drought on #urbantrees!
>
> > **NOAA NCEI Climate** ✔ @NOAANCEIclimate
> > This spring is our fifth year working with @NASA_DEVELOP program! Young scientists at @NOAA will work to understand how urban trees respond to drought. This information will be used by @TXForestService and ...

So, what should I post about?

- Post about projects your office is working on.

- Highlight community members who make a difference.

- Offer tips: How can homeowners protect their home or land from fire? How can they prevent the spread of oak wilt?

- Fun facts: Twitter users especially love tips and fun facts. Use #DYK for "Did you know?" posts and #SpeciesSpotlight when highlighting specific trees or animals.

- Share important insights and updates citizens need to be aware of: fires, pest outbreaks, oak wilt news, etc.

- Post about industry news when appropriate and retweet relevant posts.

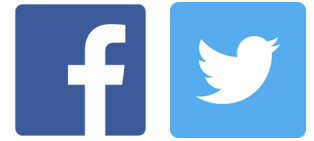- Tie into national campaigns, like #TeamSmokey when relevant.

Quick Tip #3: Include a Call to Action

Posts should ask readers to complete an action, like "Visit this site to learn more" or "Register for this workshop today at this link."

POSTING MEDIA
How to Use Media Effectively

Posting Photos

- Since photos tend to perform best on Facebook, focus on gathering high-resolution photos for spotlight features.

- Text-on-photo infographics are very sharable because the highlight is already on the photo.

- People tend to look at a photo before text, so if the photo tells them exactly who they're looking at, they may be more likely to read more, especially if the subject is looking at the text.

- Take a look at the heat maps that show where the eye is most drawn below. Find more information on heat maps at: http://bit.ly/2GWkpUw
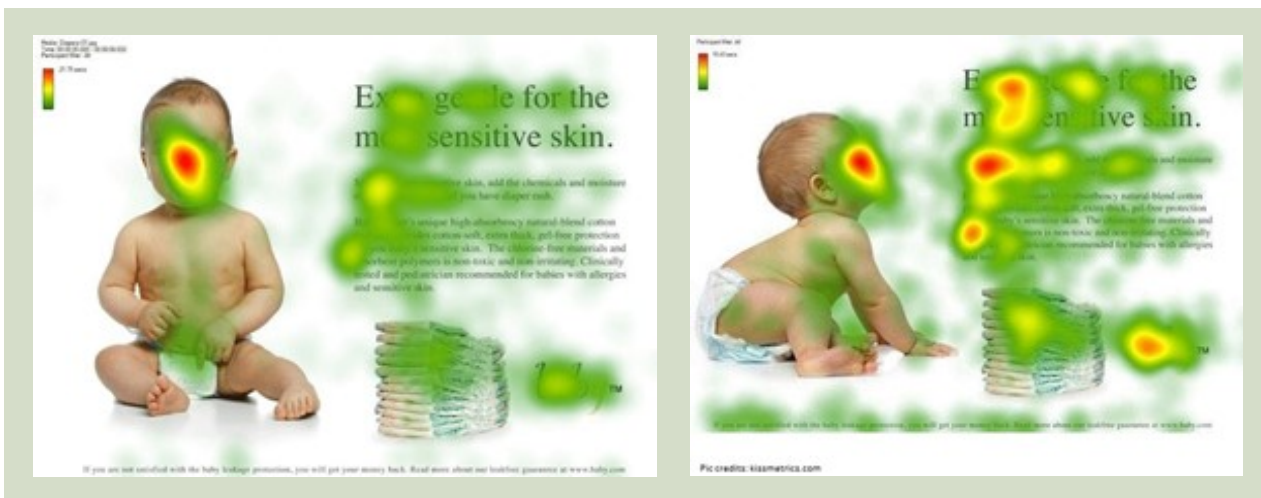
Posting Videos

- When sharing videos on Facebook, always upload the video file directly to Facebook. Facebook prioritizes these videos above those linked from YouTube.

- If your video is too big for either Facebook or Twitter, use a video compressor, which can be found online or in the Microsoft app store.

- Facebook recommends videos be 1280 x 720 pixels. The max file size is 1 GB.

- Twitter recommends:
Landscape recommended dimensions: 320 x 180 (256K bitrate), 640 x 360 (768K bitrate) and 1280 x 720 (2048K bitrate). Portrait recommended dimensions: 240 x 240 (256K bitrate), 480 x 480 (768K bitrate) and 640 x 640 (1024K bitrate). The max file size is 512 MB.

- Visit Sprout Social's guide for more information on video sizing for different platforms.

TWITTER TIPS
How to Reach a Broader Audience

Using Hashtags

Hashtags make your tweets easier to find and help you join or create **conversations**.

- **Brand and campaign hashtags:** Brand and campaign specific hashtags are those created by businesses to market brands and promotions. These hashtags connect campaign tweets with a searchable hashtag.

  #HealthyTreesHealthyLives   #SmokeyBearRoadShow   #OnlyYou

- **Trending hashtags:** A hashtag topic that has become very popular on a specific day or during the week. You can find these topics on the "Trends for you" window. When you use a trending hashtag, more people are likely to see your post.

  #ThursdayThoughts   #FridayFeeling   #ReadAcrossAmericaDay

- **Content and Location hashtags:** Hashtags that help you loop in to existing conversations based on topic or location.

  #etx   #atx   #ctx   #wildfire   #forestry   #rxfire   #txfire   #preparedness
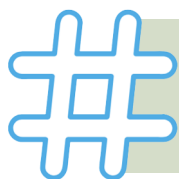
Quick Tip #4: Jump on Trends with Care
When you use trending hashtags, your Tweet is likely to be seen by more people, so be sure that the hashtag is appropriate to use and related to forestry, fire, or TFS in someway.

Joining the Right Conversations

Trying a new hashtag? Do quick search to make sure you're joining the right conversation:

#rx

BeMedSavvy @BeMedSavvy · 11m
When it comes to helping members find safe, affordable **#Rx** prescriptions, @DowlingAM explains "It's all about improving health outcomes while reducing costs. Reducing costs does not mean sacrificing quality." Read how @BeMedSavvy helps accomplish this @BCBSAssociation @SeanKarbs
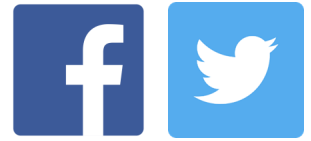
#rxfire

Society of American Foresters @foresters · Jan 25
Don't miss this great op-ed: "Dedicated professional forest managers & savvy landowners are carrying the torch of prescribed fire management into the 21st century with a passion for stewardship & a thirst for knowledge." **#RxFire** #GoodFire @SEFireScience
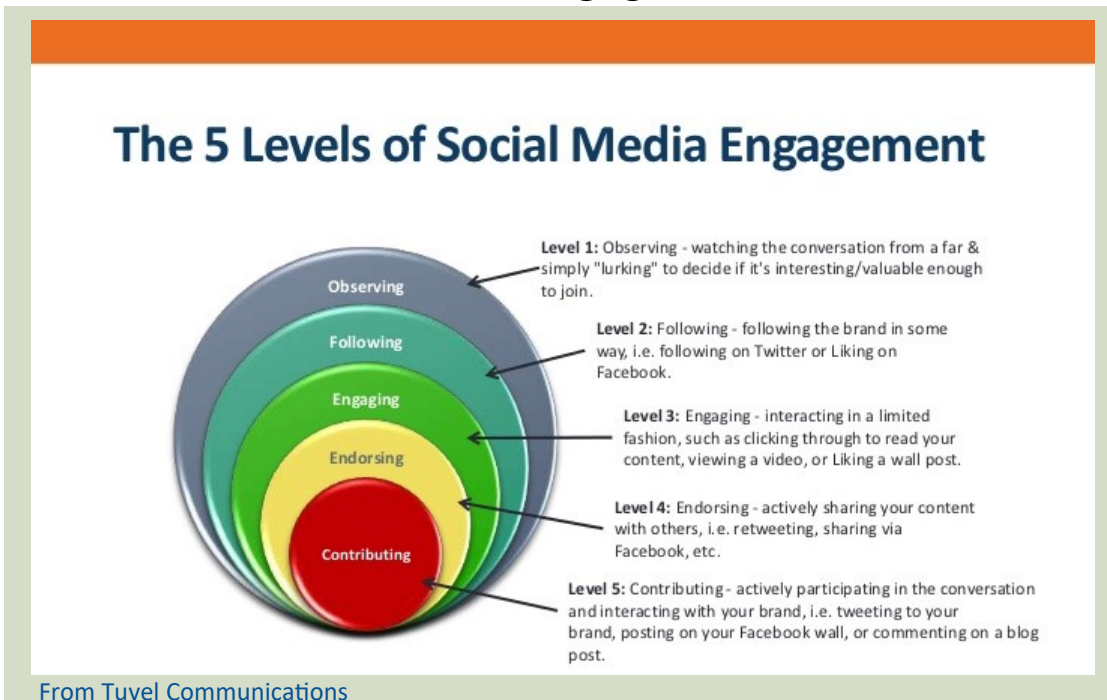
MEASURING ENGAGEMENT
Why does engagement matter?

The 5 Levels of Social Media Engagement

From Tuvel Communications

Why do we need a higher level of engagement on social media?

Social media can help TFS:

- Tell the story of Texas A&M Forest Service. Share research, achievements, and updates.

- Share breaking news and incident updates with a broad audience.

- Educate the public on topics related to forestry and wildfire prevention by leading visitors to valuable TFS content – apps, information, etc. – that will help us spread our mission and goals.

- Attract skilled professionals to the agency and lead job seekers to new TFS career site.

- Stand as a leader in the community and make sure that the agency is accessible.

A Note on the New Facebook Algorithm

In January 2018, Facebook introduced a new algorithm in response to complaints that business posts crowded out posts from family and friends in users' news feeds. Facebook will now prioritize "meaningful" interactions on Facebook. Active interactions include, sharing, commenting, "reacting" to posts, and sharing links over Messenger. They will be prioritized over more passive interactions like "likes" and click-throughs. **Posts with high engagement rates are more likely to be prioritized in followers' news feeds.** Paying to boost posts can help you increase reach and engagement.

USING ANALYTICS
Listen to Your Followers
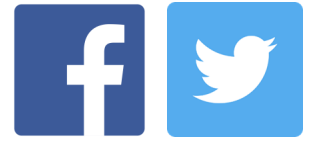
Terms

- **Impressions:** The number of times your tweet is displayed.
- **Engagement:** The sum of interactions received for the tweets published in the selected timeframe: **retweets, shares, replies and likes.**

Monitoring Engagement

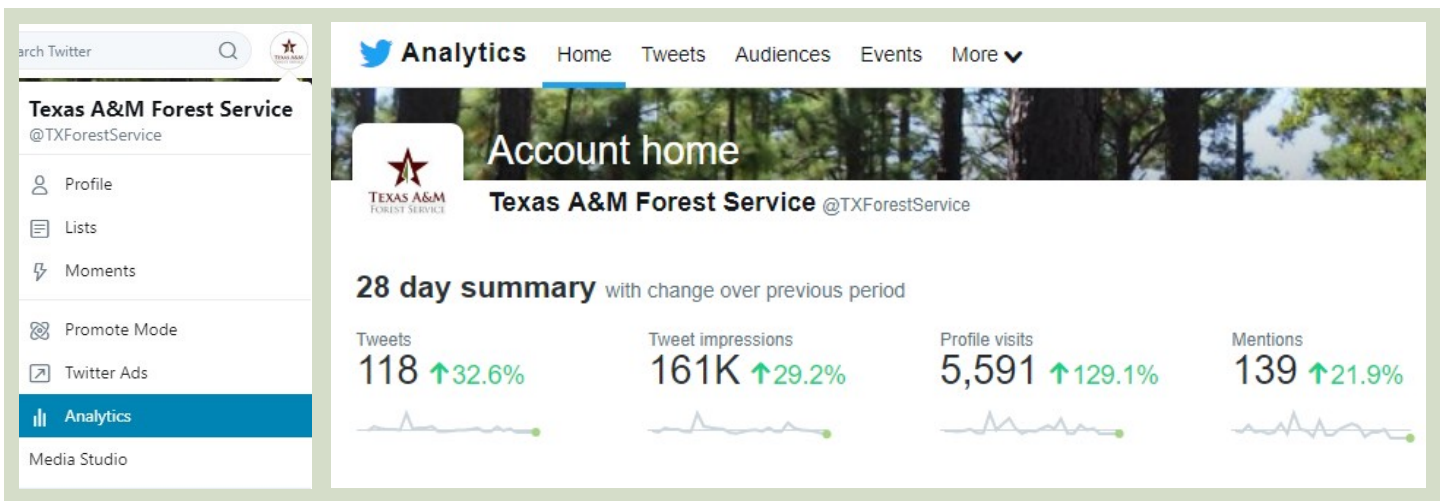Each month, take a moment to review analytics on your page.

- Which posts generated the most impressions and engagement?
- In the highest performing posts, what handles and hashtags did you use?
- What subjects were your followers most interested in?

Your Tweet activity

Your Tweets earned **1,654 impressions** over the last **24 hours**

10AM   10AM

View your top Tweets

TWITTER: How to Reach your Analytics Page

Click your profile icon in the top right corner. On the dropdown list, click analytics. You have to enable analytics on your account.

- The analytics **"Home"** page will show you month-by-month highlights, including your Top Tweet, Top Mention, Top Follower, and Top Media Tweet (tweet that contains image or video).
- The "**Tweets"** page will show you Impressions, Engagement, and Engagement rate for each tweet.
- The **"Audience"** page will break down your audience's interests, demographics, lifestyle, and consumer behavior.

Search Twitter

Texas A&M Forest Service
@TXForestService

- Profile
- Lists
- Moments
- Promote Mode
- Twitter Ads
- Analytics
- Media Studio

Analytics   Home   Tweets   Audiences   Events   More ⌄

Account home

Texas A&M Forest Service @TXForestService

28 day summary with change over previous period

Tweets	Tweet impressions	Profile visits	Mentions
118 ↑32.6%	161K ↑29.2%	5,591 ↑129.1%	139 ↑21.9%

USING ANALYTICS
Listen to Your Followers

FACEBOOK: How to Reach Your Analytics Page

Go to your page and at the subheadings under the blue top bar, click insights.

From this page, you'll have access to several kinds of analytics, like actions on page, page views, page previews, page likes, post reach, and more.

An important term to understand is:

- **Post Reach:** The number of people who had any posts from your Page enter their screen. This number is an estimate.
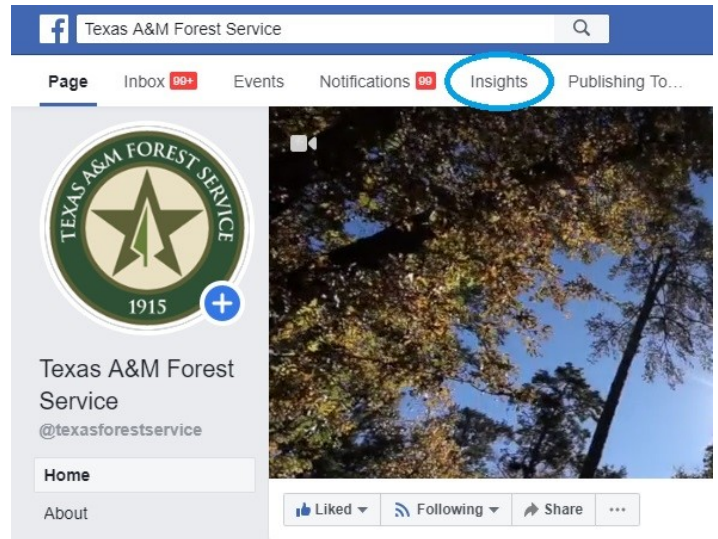
Use the "Posts" section to see when your followers are online: