Session Descriptions

2025 Joint Extension & Communicators Meeting

ROUND ONE – Presentation and discussion

1. Short Video Use and Production (presentation and discussion)

Presenter: Brian Yurastis, NH Sea Grant

Session Goal:
> Provide social media managers and content creators with tools and strategies of video design, production, and marketing to help them efficiently produce short videos that maximize views and engagement across platforms.

What Participants Will Gain:
> Technical skills in short-form video production. Insights into social media strategy and platform-specific tactics. Best practices for video content creation. Communication skills for digital storytelling

Planned Activities:
> We'll begin by reviewing two short videos that are successful at engaging audiences. Then discuss what participants think makes a short video successful. We'll have presentations on (1) Why short videos are strategic for reaching broader audiences. (2) Tools and techniques to streamline video creation (including what software to use). (3) Platform-specific video production tips. (4) Repurposing other content (e.g., podcasts or blog posts) into videos. (5) We'll end with everyone working in an open discussion format to develop a plan to produce a short video relevant to/for their role at Sea Grant

How Participants Can Prepare:
> Bring an idea for a 1-minute video that you'd like to create for your current role or program.

2. Measuring More than Reach: Evaluating a Sea Grant Impact Film (presentation and discussion)

Presenter: Eleanor M. Jaffee, Insights Evaluation LLC

Session Goal:
> Demonstrate how to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of communications products using a real-world Sea Grant example: "Women on the Water" a film produced by NHSG.

What Participants Will Gain:
> An understanding of how to design evaluations for communications products. Insight into logic model creation and application. Tools to assess reach, impact, and effectiveness

Planned Activities:

The session begins with a presentation on the evaluation design process and lessons learned for NHSG's "Women on the Water" film. A Q&A session follows.
Then, participants will engage in a logic-model activity to apply what they've learned to their own communications or outreach projects.

How Participants Can Prepare:
No preparation is necessary, but bring any ideas, questions, or projects you'd like to think through.

3. Strategic Storytelling (Part 2): Bringing The Story to Public Speaking - Master Class (presentation and discussion)

Presenters: Genevieve Aichele and CJ Lewis, NH Theatre Project

Session Goal:
Develop and practice public speaking skills that draw from effective storytelling craft to strengthen impact.

What Participants Will Gain:
Confidence and comfort with public speaking. Enhanced personal public speaking style and communication skills. Practice speaking publicly in an encouraging environment. Strategic presentation skills to enhance impact.

Planned Activities:
Participants will learn and practice technical presenting skills with guidance in an encouraging setting. Session will include presenting a memorized 3 minute speech or story on a topic of one's choice, preferably connected to Sea Grant work.

How Participants Can Prepare:
Bring some ideas about a story or presentation related to your work that you'd like to be able to share more effectively and impactfully.

4. Incorporating Theories of Change into Product and Program Planning (presentation and discussion)

Session description TBD.

ROUND TWO – Peer to peer

5. Joint Extension–Communications Project Showcase (peer to peer)

Facilitators: Darren Okimoto and Cindy Knapman, HI Sea Grant

Session Goal:
    Highlight the power of collaboration by showcasing joint communications and extension projects across the Sea Grant network.

What Participants Will Gain:
    Awareness of successful cross-functional projects. Inspiration and models for collaborative programming. Insight into how different teams contribute unique skills to shared goals

Planned Activities:
    A panel of invited presenters will share examples of joint projects, followed by open discussion. Audience questions and comments are encouraged to spark dialogue and ideas.

How Participants Can Prepare:
    Bring curiosity, your experiences, and your questions.

6. Attracting New Audiences (peer to peer)

Facilitators: Brian Yurastis, NH Sea Grant and Alyson Eberhardt, NH Sea Grant

Session Goal:
    Share communications and engagement strategies that can help Sea Grant professionals reach new audience segments, increase audience engagement, and strengthen program impact. Learn and share ideas on how to attract more participants to public events, increase social media following, and make programs more findable in online searches, and engage program participants that have not typically participated.

What Participants Will Gain:
    Communications and extension tools to build in-person and online audience engagement including (1) Understanding of Search Engine Optimization (SEO). (2) Best practices for advertising events. (3) Email marketing strategies. (4) Strategic social media, (5) Principles and practices for engaging new extension program partners and participants.

Planned Activities:
    We'll start with a group discussion on current strategies to reach new audiences and discuss what works well and where people find challenges. We'll have a short presentation on how a community member might engage with Sea Grant and how to ensure that Sea Grant is capturing this new audience member at each point of contact (e.g., web search, social media, in-person event/fieldwork, email marketing). We'll discuss methods for working with participants who affect or are affected by coastal issues, but who have not traditionally been at the table. We'll close with a hands-on brainstorming session to (5-min) identify 1–2 strategies participants can implement in their own work.

How Participants Can Prepare:

Bring examples of promotional materials, outreach strategies, engagement methods, engagement products, and principles that you've incorporated for a recent event, workshop, or program.

7. Uh-oh: Things That Didn't Go as Planned (peer to peer)

Facilitator: Jen McCann, RI Sea Grant

Session Goal:
Use real-world setbacks as learning opportunities to build resilience, innovation, and stronger collaborations in Sea Grant work.

What Participants Will Gain:
Strategies for navigating and learning from failure. Confidence in approaching uncertainty and setbacks. A supportive space for shared storytelling and peer learning

Planned Activities:
We'll begin with short, real-life "uh-oh" stories followed by practical lessons learned. Participants will then break into small groups to reflect and share their own experiences. The session will blend honest conversation, humor, and problem-solving.

How Participants Can Prepare:
Come with a short story of a time something didn't go as planned, and bring an open, curious mindset.

8. A.I. in Sea Grant Work: Applications, Ethics, and Adaptation (peer to peer)

Facilitator: Chris Petrone, DE Sea Grant

Session Goal:
Advance awareness and understanding of how artificial intelligence can be responsibly integrated into Sea Grant extension and communication work

What Participants Will Gain:
Awareness of current A.I. applications within Sea Grant for routine work and special initiatives. Insight into ethical considerations and best practices. Confidence to use AI for Sea Grant work. Connections with peers through the Sea Grant AI Community of Practice

Planned Activities:
The session begins with a 20-minute overview covering AI uses, challenges, and ethical issues in Sea Grant. We'll follow with an interactive discussion where participants share experiences and define goals for the Sea Grant AI Community of Practice.

How Participants Can Prepare:
Come with a working knowledge of A.I. and how it might apply to your work. Be ready to share your own experiences or questions.

PLENARY – Day 2

Strategic Storytelling: Using Theatre Techniques for Impact

Presenter: Genevieve Aichele and CJ Lewis, NH Theatre Project

Session Goal:
    Help participants connect authentically with audiences through storytelling, improvisation, and theatrical tools to enhance science communication.

What Participants Will Gain:
    Practical storytelling techniques. Strategies to transform scientific information into engaging narratives. Experience with improvisation and audience engagement.

Planned Activities:
    We'll begin with a brief presentation on storytelling principles. We'll then have interactive exercises using improvisational and theatrical tools to help participants shape and refine stories about their work.

How Participants Can Prepare:
    Bring an idea for a work-related story you'd like to tell more effectively.