

Communication guidance when conducting land management activities on department lands

The department initiates and conducts a wide range of land management activities within DNR properties, and many of these are visible to public land users. To ensure that the public and partners are informed and aware of these activities and have an opportunity to provide input, three decision making considerations should be evaluated when planning the management activity and determining the appropriate outreach levels

1. **Type, Scale and Intensity of the management activity;**
2. **Level of public use; and**
3. **Expected level for public and/or partner interest.**

With help from the criteria below and within the visual matrix, property managers can use these considerations to determine the appropriate level of public outreach needed for specific land management activities in advance.

A tool to guide communication decisions will help assure that the department has a clear process in place to engage the public appropriately based on the type, scale, intensity and public use and interest related to the activity. This process should supplement other specific public outreach activity guidance (for example prescribed burn handbook guidance).

Decision making criteria to help determine public outreach needs and tools include:

1. **Type, Scale and Intensity of land disturbance** → refers to the type of land management activity, size, and intensity of the land disturbing activity.
 - Examples of high level land management activities may include large prescribed burns, large clear-cut timber sale, major invasive species removal, new/major facility improvements, new or significant parking lot construction, major road construction, new water control structure, and drawdowns/flowages
 - Examples of low level land disturbance activities may include boundary posting, maintenance projects (grading, roofing, etc.), mowing, small scale burns, small, un-even age timber sales, minor facility improvements, tree planting.
2. **Level of public use** → refers to the number and type of visitors and visitors' expectations for use, including the timing of the land disturbing activity.
 - Examples of high levels of public use may include areas visited by a significant number of users including, intensive recreation areas, popular destination points, recreational trails and highly visible areas.

3. **Potential for public interest and acceptance**→ consider current and past involvement and interest from local units of government, visitors, user groups, neighbors, etc. Examples of high interest may include active friends groups, user groups, local and statewide business connected to the activity (eg trail system) Local Units of Governments, including roads and impacts on residents. Adjacency to nearest private residency/neighborhood should also be considered

When levels have been determined for each criteria, the decision matrix will help determine which communication tools may be appropriate. First, calculate your “total” using the scaled rating for expected type, scale and intensity of land management, level of public use, and potential for public and/or partner interest. Next, determine which communication tools may be appropriate and most effective based on the section of the table at the bottom of the page your total fits within.

While a “low” score (3-5) will likely only warrant tools found in the “low” column (or no communications at all), a “high” score (8+) means that any and/or all tools in each category may be appropriate. This list of tools is flexible to provide managers a range of options for selecting and implementing the most appropriate tool or tools based on local knowledge. In many cases, for “low” activities, existing annual outreach tools may be sufficient and no additional outreach is needed.

- **Examples**→ annual stakeholder meetings, Interim Forest Management Plans

In addition, some land disturbing activities are outlined in Master Plans and other planning efforts, which are developed with significant public involvement. Outreach tools may be useful and important when implementing actions specified in master plans. For example, the specific implementation details of a previously planned trail head including the construction timeline, site design, etc. may be of interest to users, but the planned action, e.g. a trail head, was already determined in the master planning process, with significant public involvement.

Many of these tools include mechanisms for the public to provide feedback, whether through contacting the listed spokesperson on a release or through other means.

For activities that receive a “HIGH” classification in terms of land disturbance, consult with your direct supervisor and the Office of Communications before any material is released or external contact is initiated.

Communication Tools

Options for public outreach and communication tools - some activities may generally be accepted and require no additional outreach tools other than existing annual outreach.

	↑	Targeted Audience	Wide Audience
LOW	↑ ↓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct Outreach to Neighbors • Annual Property Meeting • Gov Delivery • Property Newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Media Post • Talking Points • Statewide News Release • FAQ Document
MEDIUM		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends Group Coordination • Regional News Release • Public Meeting • 21-Day Public Comment Period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webpage Edits/Webpage Creation • Print Materials (brochure, etc.) • Communication Plan • Coordinate with Local Government
HIGH		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manual Code • EIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureau Director Involvement

Media Contacts

The [DNR Office of Communications](#) has established procedures for DNR staff to follow when interacting with the media – these can be viewed as a [graphic](#) or [text document](#). Procedures differ between routine and non-routine media requests.

Routine requests generally involve clarifying existing rules, reporting on outdoor recreational conditions, and confirming basic information about events. Avoid speculation and conjecture; report the facts, not opinions. After responding to a routine request, you should file a media contact report including:

- reporter name;
- media outlet;
- question;
- answer;
- follow-up (if appropriate); and
- when the item will be printed or aired.

Non-routine requests may include breaking news, policy changes, political, legal, personnel or budget issues, major environmental issues or requests from major news outlets. These types of requests should be handled in conjunction with the OC by following these steps:

- take the reporter’s information;

- thank the reporter and let him/her know that someone will respond to the request; and
- contact [communications staff](#) regarding how best to proceed.

If a [spokesperson](#) has been established for a topic, it is not routine and media inquiries should be directed to that person or the Office of Communications. For additional information regarding department communications and media relations, please refer to the [manual code or protocol](#).



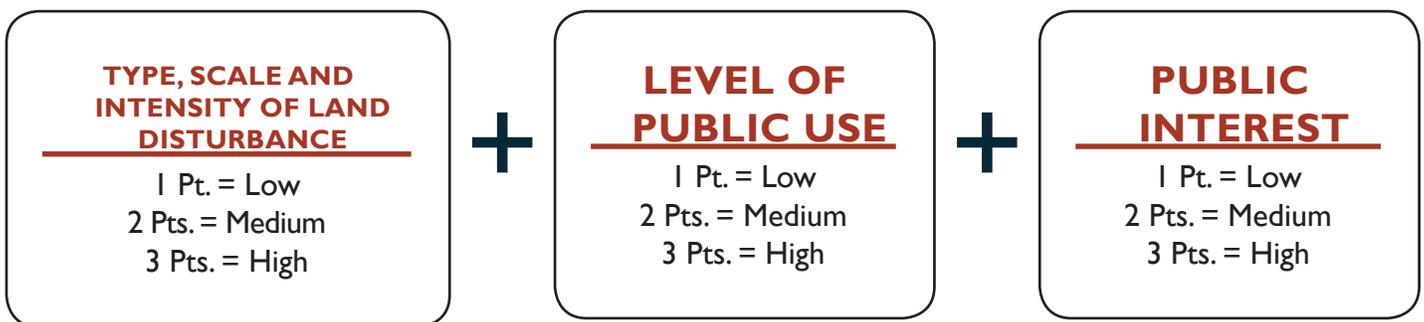
Public Communication Tools for Land Management

Finding your best communication tool for land disturbance issues

For land disturbance activities on DNR managed lands, a number of resources are available to assist in making sure the public and our partners are informed and aware. A series of criteria will help decide which communications tools and resources may be most appropriate, based on three factors.

Use the matrix as a guide, it will not cover every situation!

SCORE EACH FACTOR



USE SCORE TO SELECT COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS

Note:
Some land disturbance activities will not need any outreach efforts.

		Low (3–5 Pts.)	Medium (6–7 Pts.) Includes all of Low	High (8–9 Pts.) Includes all of Low & Medium
Targeted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GovDelivery • Property Newsletter • Direct outreach to neighbors • Master Plan • Annual property meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional News Release • Friends Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Meeting • 21 Day Public comment period • Ch. 30 Manual Code • EIS 	
Wide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Media • Talking Points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print Materials • State-wide News Release • FAQ • Webpage Edits / New page 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications plan • Coordinate with Local Government • Bureau Director Involvement 	

While this scale will assist with public and partner outreach, for assistance with all communications activities please work with Office of Communications staff and refer to the department's communications protocol.

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