

Communications/Marketing Operating Plan FY22 Synopsis

COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES

Messaging

- Develop new branding/messaging around My Canal concept and roll into collateral and website
- Rebrand Canal Discoveries/Plan Your Visit/C&O Canal Explorer into one

Print

- Produce and mail 3 print newsletters
- Update Trust brochure with new branding language
- Produce and sell 2023 Annual Calendar
- Maintain inventory of magnets and stickers

Digital

- Update website with new branding language
- Continue social media
- Send 12 monthly email newsletters
- Create and share blog content

Mobile App

- Promote app to Park users – marketing campaign
- Submit MHAA final grant report for mobile app project

Media Relations

- Work with reporters and tourism on coverage of Trust initiatives

Paid Advertising

- Maintain relationships/memberships with CVBs

Merchandise

- Produce and sell 2023 Annual Calendar
- Sell trip-planning books
- Sell magnets and stickers
- Support merchandise partnership with Route 1 Apparel

Photo Database

- Tag photos in SmugMug
- Build online photo submission form
- Improve diversity representation in photo catalog (particularly Canal Quarters).

DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

- Design/print/mail spring appeal
- Design/print/mail year-end appeal
- Support Giving Days
- Support Giving Tuesday
- Support in-house mailings
- Support donor events
- Create bench plaques, keep website up-to-date
- Support Canal Classrooms fundraising
- Support towpath resurfacing fundraising
- Create general fundraising brochure
- Create Patowmack Society brochure

- Create WODS materials as needed

PROGRAM SUPPORT

Canal Quarters

- Continue promotion and media outreach
- Place CQ advertising
- Explore whether to develop dedicated CQ website

Canal Community Days

- Design and print Canal Community Days collateral
- Work with media to promote event
- Assist with events

Towpath Resurfacing

- Support TAP advocacy campaign

PARK AFTER DARK

- Support Park After Dark
- Oversee silent auction (Ellen/Tymber)
- Develop PAD collateral

DATA MANAGEMENT

- Enter all gifts, print and send acknowledgement letters
- Assist with implementation of Pathways grant

PERSONNEL

- Recruit new members to the Communications Advisory Committee

Goal	Key Move	Tactic	Q1 Oct- Dec	Q2 Jan- Mar	Q3 Apr- Jun	Q4 Jul- Sep	Personnel	Status/Notes
GOAL: PRESERVE, PROTECT, RESTORE								
Preserve, protect, and restore the C&O Canal and its historic infrastructure through innovative programs and advocacy.	Preserve and maintain seven historic lockhouses through our award-winning Canal Quarters interpretive program							
	Expand the Canal Quarters program by opening a seventh lockhouse and laying the groundwork for the addition of more lockhouses to the program							
	Preserve and maintain Park structures through community volunteer support							
		Hold logo contest	x	x			DoMC	
		Update website for Canal Community Days, work on web form for volunteers		x			Tymber	
		Design and print Canal Community Days sponsor materials, banners, signs, collateral, and tshirts		x			DoMC	
		Work with media on CCD coverage		x			DoMC	
		Place CCD on community calendars		x			Tymber	
	Advocate for government funding to improve the infrastructure of the canal allowing it to hold water for its first 22 miles							
	Respond to urgent Park needs due to natural disasters	Support efforts via web, email, social, print, signage	x	x	x	x	DoMC/Tymber	as needed
Improve the surface of the towpath for a safer, more accessible trail	Raise fund annually to support trail improvements for the 80 miles of towpath in most need of rehabilitation	Support towpath resurfacing efforts via web, email, social, print, signage	x	x	x	x	DoMC/Tymber	
	Advocate for government funding for towpath surface improvements	Support advocacy campaign via web, email, social, print, signage	x	x	x	x	DoMC/Tymber	
GOAL: ENHANCE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE								
Improve the access, aesthetics, and usability of high visitor use areas of the Park.	Implement projects that address historic structures, campgrounds, trail maintenance, trash and invasive plant removal, and Park beautification							
	Place donor-sponsored benches in the Park for the comfort of visitors	Develop and print bench plaques as requested	x	x	x	x	DoMC	
		Keep bench website up to date	x	x	x	x	Ellen	
	Improve the accessibility of the Canal Quarters lockhouses							
Help visitors plan their trips and navigate the Park.	Brand trip-planning tools under one umbrella and promote these tools to visitors	Combine Canal Discoveries, Discover Your Canal blog, PYV, Canal Explorer mobile app, Canal Towns content.	x	x	x	x	DoMC	
		Post Canal Towns itineraries Ashley wrote	x				Tymber	MHAA grant
		Promote mobile app to result in sales income		x	x	x	DoMC, Tymber	

	Develop a volunteer Canal Ambassador Corps to extend the ability to the Trust to provide visitor services and to more frequently engage with constituents both in the Park and beyond its boundaries	Support Canal Ambassador initiative with print, digital materials as needed							Possible project for VISTA?
Provide visitors with unique, high-quality, interpretive experiences in historic lockhouses via the Canal Quarters program	Enhance the visitor experience of the Canal Quarters program by more fully developing volunteer opportunities, interpretation, and program evaluation								
	Promote the Canal Quarters program	Advertising from CQ reserves	x	x	x	x	DoMC	Money from CQ fees	
		Explore concept of a dedicated CQ website	x	x	x	x	DoMC		
Enhance C&O Canal visitor experiences within the communities that border the Park.	Work with the surrounding communities and partner organizations, such as Canal Towns Partnership, Convention and Visitor Bureaus and Heritage Areas, to promote economic growth and heritage tourism opportunities through Park visitation, promotional opportunities, and events.	Work with Office of Tourism, local DMOs, and Heritage Areas	x	x	x	x	DoMC		
GOAL: BUILD A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT AND STEWARDSHIP									
Grow philanthropy, volunteerism, and advocacy among Park users and stakeholders by building a broad and inclusive C&O Canal community, dedicated to working with the C&O Canal Trust to preserve the Park	Through donor-centric communications and outreach, foster a sense of individual and collective responsibility for the Park that results in increased giving, volunteerism and other support.	Foster a sense of personal responsibility among Park users by promoting the concept of "My Canal" and by meeting people "where they are."	x	x	x	x	DoMC		
	Increase the Trust's physical presence throughout the Park to raise funds and bring the Trust's mission to visitors "Where they are"	Support Canal Giving Days with collateral				x	DoMC, Tymber		
	Host community-building events that bring together different Park constituencies.	Create/print collateral for Park After Dark				x	DoMC	Not getting coms work done during PAD season	
		Manage silent auction				x	DoMC		
	Partner with the National Park Service, other friends groups and canal communities to celebrate the Park's 50th anniversary in 2021								
	Promote co-branded community engagement opportunities in the Park	Promotional support					DoMC, Tymber		
	Build relationships with Park partners by capitalizing on mission overlap.								
	Coordinate efforts with national advocacy groups								
Engage the next generation of Park stewards	Provide vital financial support for Canal Classrooms	Support fundraising for Canal Classrooms	x	x	x	x	DoMC, Tymber		
	Engage youth volunteers								
	Provide employment opportunities for youth and young professionals								
	Engage young professionals as volunteers, donors, and advocates								

Convene and lead groups of stakeholders, including gateway canal towns, neighboring communities, states and municipalities, local businesses, and other partners, in support of initiatives for the C&O Canal National Historical Park	Meet with local community leaders to discuss the needs of the Park, and build strong relationships with government and elected officials for the benefit of the Trust and the Park							
	Create a framework for the Canal Towns Partnership to support the Park through advocacy, volunteerism, and financial contributions							
	Enable the business community to support the Park through volunteer service projects and financial support of Park stewardship projects	Support corporate sponsorship opportunities with collateral (PAD, CP, other)	x	x	x	x	DoMC	
Extend outreach and programming to diverse populations so that Park visitation and stewardship resemble the communities that surround it	Engage diverse audiences in inspiring programs	Support diversity initiatives via communications	x	x	x	x	DoMC	
	Diversify Canal Trust volunteer force							
GOAL: ACHIEVE OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE								
Deepen the partnership between the C&O Canal Trust and the C&O Canal National Historical Park through regular and open communication, co-sponsored programs, and a team-based approach to program management and problem solving	Expand the synergies between the Trust and the Park							
	Integrate efforts through the co-location of Park and Trust offices							
	Work creatively with Park leadership to implement NPS Director's Order 21 governing donations and philanthropic partnerships							
Enhance and maintain the fiscal stability of the Trust through the attainment and maintenance of sufficient operating reserves and the growth of achievable operating budgets	Build cash reserves sufficient to fund the equivalent of three months of operating expenses							
	Set attainable annual budgets that incorporate growth and appropriately reflect the philanthropic capacity of our donor base.							
	Improve positive cash flow to accommodate seasonal and programmatic revenue and expense fluctuations							
	Establish a framework to manage investments for short- and long-term cash holdings, including endowment funds							
Increase development revenue sufficient to meet organizational growth objective.	Project revenue for budgets based upon philanthropic potential							
	Secure and steward a growing major donor base committed to the missions of the Park and the Trust	Acknowledge all gifts with letter; data entry into eTap	x	x	x	x	Tymber	

	Produce effective fundraising events that engage current and potential donors through the efficient use of resources	Assist with PAD - see above	x	x	x	x	DoMC, Tymber	
	Create a framework to establish, manage, and promote endowments							
	Increase the membership in our legacy-giving program							
	Balance fundraising resources between funding Trust operations and Park priorities to sufficiently meet annual needs							
	Target fundraising communications to varied constituent groups	Create/mail Spring Appeal		x	x		DoMC	
		Create/mail Year-End appeal	x				DoMC	
		Support Giving Tuesday	x				DoMC, Tymber	
		Create/mail Fundraising brochure					DoMC	
		Create/mail Patowmack Society brochure					DoMC	
		Assist with miscellaneous small appeals	x	x	x	x	DoMC	
		Assist with WODS mailings	x	x	x	x	DoMC	
	Advocate for government funding of Trust programs and operations							
	Grow event and program sponsorships in terms of numbers, revenue, and geographic reach							
Increase communications impact through branding and the use of engaging content targeted to varied constituent groups	Amplify organizational branding to encourage a sense of individual responsibility for the Park and a belief that helping the Trust through volunteerism, philanthropy, and advocacy support is the most effective and trustworthy way to preserve the Park	Develop new messaging in line with strategic plan	x	x			DoMC, Committee	
	Adapt materials and website content to incorporate branding strategies	Implement new language on website		x	x		DoMC	
		Redesign, reprint Trust brochure with new language		x	x		DoMC	
	Create engaging content for print, digital, video, and mobile platforms	Write, design, mail 3 print newsletters (Quarterly)	x	x	x	x	DoMC	
		Write, design, send 12 email newsletters	x	x	x	x	DoMC, Tymber	
		Keep compelling posts updated on social media	x	x	x	x	DoMC, Tymber	
		Write and post new blog content	x	x	x	x	DoMC, Tymber, freelance writers	
	Track marketing and fundraising communications efforts for effectiveness and adjust as needed	Track and report on marketing strategies, web traffic, social media, sales, donations, etc.	x	x	x	x	DoMC	
	Increase engagement with media and opinion leaders to enhance coverage of Trust programs	Maintain current level of engagement	x	x	x	x	DoMC	
	Increase leverage of free and low-cost advertising, publicity, earned revenue opportunities	Develop 2023 Annual calendar for sale in visitor centers and online	x	x	x	x	DoMC	
		Continue to sell magnets/stickers in visitor centers and online	x	x	x	x	DoMC, Tymber	
		Continue partnership with Route 1 apparel	x	x	x	x	DoMC	

		Stock and sell towpath trip planning books	x	x	x	x	DoMC, Tymber	
	Improve photo management and tracking	Tag photos in SmugMug	x	x	x	x	Tymber	
		Build online photo submission form		x	x		DoMC	
		Improve diversity representation in photo collection	x	x	x	x	DoMC, Tymber	
Structure the Board and staff to achieve maximum organizational potential	Strengthen the Board through focused recruitment and effective Board committees							
	Review Board Policies to ensure that they reflect nonprofit best practices							
	Devise and implement human resource policies to meet regulations and nonprofit best practices							
	Create a desirable workplace for current and future employees							
	Grow and align Trust staff resources to effectively address priorities							
Improve business practices to enhance efficiency	Review and adjust policies, procedures, and processes							
	Upgrade technology to enhance staff efficiency							