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*"Rummaging in the government's attic"*

Description of document: US Geological Survey (USGS) Emails regarding the @realDonaldTrump Twitter handle 2020

Requested date: 06-December-2020

Release date: 23-February-2021

Posted date: 26-April-2021

Source of document: FOIA Request  
Judy Cearley, information Specialist  
US Geological Survey  
345 Middlefield Road  
Mail Stop 955  
Menlo Park, CA 94025-3591  
Fax: 650-329-5097  
Email: [jccarley@usgs.gov](mailto:jccarley@usgs.gov)

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## United States Department of the Interior

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

12201 Sunrise Valley Drive  
Reston, Virginia 20192-0002

In Reply Refer To:  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Attention: Ms. Judy Cearley  
345 Middlefield Road  
MS 955, Room M2214  
Menlo Park, California 94025

February 23, 2021

Re: U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Tracking #  
DOI-USGS-2021-001054 – Response

This letter is our response to your FOIA request dated December 6, 2020, in which you requested the following information:

On October 21, 2020, Adam Feder man tweeted a screenshot of an email that contained the subject line "USGS Tweet of @realDonaldTrump handle." This is a request under the Freedom of Information Act for a copy of this email and any and all replies and forwards.

Also, I request a copy of the guidance, including memos and emails, from the Department of Interior's Office of Communications that directed USGS to "use the @realDonaldTrump twitter handle."

On November 13, 2020, the USGS FOIA office received an identical FOIA request from Mr. Ethan Schwartz, and assigned it control number DOI-USGS-2021-000756. We have enclosed one portable document format (PDF) electronic file, consisting of 85 pages, previously released to Mr. Ethan Schwartz. These records are being released to you in part. We reasonably foresee that disclosure would harm an interest protected by one or more of the nine exemptions to the FOIA's general rule of disclosure; therefore, portions of the records are protected from release by FOIA Exemption (b)(5) ("Exemption 5"), and Exemption (b)(6) ("Exemption 6") [5 U.S.C. § 552](#). The exempted information will not be released and has been redacted from the enclosed records.

### Exemption 5

Exemption 5 allows an agency to withhold "inter-agency or intra-agency memorandums or letters which would not be available by law to a party... in litigation with the agency." [5 U.S.C. § 552\(b\)\(5\)](#). Exemption 5 therefore incorporates the privileges that protect materials from discovery in litigation, including the deliberative process, attorney work-product, attorney-client, and commercial information

privileges. We are withholding records in part under Exemption 5 because they qualify to be withheld both because they meet the Exemption 5 threshold of being inter-agency or intra-agency under the following privilege:

### *Deliberative Process Privilege*

The deliberative process privilege protects the decision-making process of government agencies and encourages the frank exchange of ideas on legal or policy matters by ensuring agencies are not forced to operate in a fish bowl. A number of policy purposes have been attributed to the deliberative process privilege, such as: (1) assuring that subordinates will feel free to provide the decisionmaker with their uninhibited opinions and recommendations; (2) protecting against premature disclosure of proposed policies; and (3) protecting against confusing the issues and misleading the public.

The deliberative process privilege protects materials that are both predecisional and deliberative. The privilege covers records that reflect the give-and-take of the consultative process and may include recommendations, draft documents, proposals, suggestions, and other subjective documents which reflect the personal opinions of the writer rather than the policy of the agency.

The materials that have been withheld under the deliberative process privilege of Exemption 5 are both predecisional and deliberative. They do not contain or represent formal or informal agency policies or decisions. They are the result of frank and open discussions among employees of the Department of the Interior. Their contents have been held confidential by all parties and public dissemination of the information would have a chilling effect on the deliberative processes; expose the department's decision-making process in such a way as to discourage candid discussion within the department, could cause confusion to the public, and thereby undermine its ability to perform its mandated functions.

The deliberative process privilege does not apply to records created 25 years or more before the date on which the records were requested.

### Exemption 6

Exemption 6 allows an agency to withhold "personnel and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy."—[5 U.S.C. § 552\(b\)\(6\)](#).

The phrase "similar files" covers any agency records containing information about a particular individual that can be identified as applying to that individual. To determine whether releasing records containing information about a particular individual would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, we are required to balance the privacy interest that would be affected by disclosure against any public interest in the information.

Under the FOIA, the only relevant public interest to consider under the exemption is the extent to which the information sought would shed light on agency's performance of its statutory duties or otherwise let citizens "know what their government is up to." The burden is on the requester to establish that disclosure would serve the public interest. When the privacy interest at stake and the public interest in disclosure have been determined, the two competing interests must be weighed against one another to determine which is the greater result of disclosure: the harm to personal privacy or the benefit to the public. The purposes for which the request for information is made do not impact this balancing test, as a release of information requested under the FOIA constitutes a release to the general public.

The information that has been withheld under Exemption 6 consists of personal email addresses and personal leave information. We have determined that the individuals to whom this information pertains



have a substantial privacy interest in withholding it. Additionally, you have not provided information that explains a relevant public interest under the FOIA in the disclosure of this personal information and we have determined that the disclosure of this information would shed little or no light on the performance of the agency's statutory duties. Because the harm to personal privacy is greater than whatever public interest may be served by disclosure, release of the information would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of the privacy of these individuals and we are withholding the information under Exemption 6.

Ms. Judy Cearley, Government Information Specialist, is responsible for this partial denial. M.E. Lurie, Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Department of the Interior, in the Office of the Solicitor was consulted.

We classified you as an "other-use" category requester. There is no billable fee for the processing of this request.

You may appeal this response to the Department of the Interior's FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer. If you choose to appeal, the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer must receive your FOIA appeal **no later than 90 workdays** from the date of this letter. Appeals arriving or delivered after 5 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, will be deemed received on the next workday.

**Your appeal must be made in writing.** You may submit your appeal and accompanying materials to the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer by mail, courier service, fax, or email. All communications concerning your appeal should be clearly marked with the words: "FREEDOM OF INFORMATION APPEAL." You must include an explanation of why you believe the USGS's response is in error. You must also include with your appeal copies of all correspondence between you and USGS concerning your FOIA request, including your original FOIA request and USGS's response. Failure to include with your appeal all correspondence between you and USGS will result in the Department's rejection of your appeal, unless the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer determines (in the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer's sole discretion) that good cause exists to accept the defective appeal.

Please include your name and daytime telephone number (or the name and telephone number of an appropriate contact), email address and fax number (if available) in case the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer needs additional information or clarification of your appeal.

*DOI FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Office Contact Information*

Department of the Interior  
Office of the Solicitor  
1849 C Street, Northwest  
MS-6556 MIB  
Washington, DC 20240  
Telephone: (202) 208-5339  
Fax: (202) 208-6677  
Email: [FOIA.Appeals@sol.doi.gov](mailto:FOIA.Appeals@sol.doi.gov)

The 2007 FOIA amendments created the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) to offer mediation services to resolve disputes between FOIA requesters and Federal agencies as a non-exclusive alternative to litigation. Using OGIS services does not affect your right to pursue litigation. You may contact OGIS in any of the following ways:

Office of Government Information Services  
National Archives and Records Administration  
8601 Adelphi Road – OGIS



College Park, Maryland 20740-6001  
Telephone: (202) 741-5770  
Fax: (202) 741-5769  
Toll-free: 1-877-684-6448  
E-mail: [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov)  
Web: <https://www.archives.gov/ogis>

Please note that using OGIS services does not affect the timing of filing an appeal with the Department's FOIA & Privacy Act Appeals Officer. Contact information for the Department's FOIA Public Liaison, who you may also seek dispute resolution services from, is available at <https://www.doi.gov/foia/foiacenters>.

This completes our response to your request. If you have any questions about our response to your request, you may contact me by phone at (650) 329-4035, or by email at [foia@usgs.gov](mailto:foia@usgs.gov).

Sincerely,

**JUDY  
CEARLEY**

Digitally signed by  
JUDY CEARLEY  
Date: 2021.02.23  
12:40:46 -08'00'

Judy Cearley  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Government Information Specialist

Enclosure:  
21-756 - Corrected - Responsive Records\_Redacted.pdf (85 pages)

**From:** Baumgartner, Nancy H  
**To:** Swartz, Christopher J  
**Cc:** Gottry, Heather C; Garcia, Monica L; Schasberger, Paula I  
**Subject:** Emails received by USGS Ethics Team re: USGS tweet dated Oct 16, 2020  
**Date:** Monday, October 19, 2020 1:40:46 PM

Hi Chris -

Pasted below are six emails that have been received in USGS Ethics Team mailbox regarding a USGS tweet dated October 16, 2020. <https://twitter.com/USGS/status/1317148492410871813>

I would appreciate guidance on how to respond to these emails. Several allege a Hatch Act violation.

I am cc'ing Heather, Monica and Paula for their awareness.

Thanks,

Nancy

=====  
Nancy H. Baumgartner  
Deputy Ethics Counselor / U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)  
Departmental Ethics Office / Office of the Solicitor  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Room 5B318 / USGS National Center  
Office: (703) 648-7474  
Cell: (703) 424-8993  
[nancy.baumgartner@sol.doi.gov](mailto:nancy.baumgartner@sol.doi.gov)

Visit us online at: [www.usgs.gov/ethics](http://www.usgs.gov/ethics)  
Main line: (703) 648-7439  
Main mailbox: [ethicsofficeUSGS@sol.doi.gov](mailto:ethicsofficeUSGS@sol.doi.gov)

Integrity is our mission.

=====  
**Email #1**

**From:** Judy Zachariasen <judyzach@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 18, 2020 2:08 PM  
**To:** Office USGS, SOL-Ethics <EthicsOfficeUSGS@sol.doi.gov>; United States Senate <senator@feinstein.senate.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] USGS violation of the Hatch Act.

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

USGS -

It was recently brought to my attention that USGS, a government agency paid for by taxes of ALL Americans, used its official Twitter account to provide partisan political support to one candidate for president by ascribing to him credit for funding for invasive species research, funding that is actually provided by Congress, NOT by this administration, and certainly not by candidate Donald Trump.

I would also point out that using the apparatus of government to support a political candidate is a violation of the Hatch Act. The tweet should be removed immediately, a retraction and apology posted, and whoever is responsible for the post should face disciplinary action.

This is unconscionable, and it violates the integrity of the USGS, an agency that has provided great service and value to Americans and which employs many excellent scientists, several of whom I have the opportunity to work with. I am, to a person, shocked and disgusted by this ethical transgression.

Judith Zachariasen  
10624 Manchester Dr  
Truckee, CA 96161

=====

## Email #2

**From:** Ellen Brundige (b) (6) @gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 18, 2020 1:49 AM  
**To:** Office USGS, SOL-Ethics <EthicsOfficeUSGS@sol.doi.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Hatch Act violation by USGS

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

First Trump makes the NHC lie about hurricane tracks to match his sharpie map, then he forces the CDC to play down coronavirus not for scientific reasons but because he worries about his election chances, and now our beloved USGS is being pressured by this corrupt administration to violate the Hatch Act and give Trump free political ads 2 weeks before the election!

Here's the offending shill:

<https://twitter.com/usgs/status/1317148492410871813?s=21>

Please don't break the law and advertise for him. It's depressing seeing even our best institutions violating their codes of ethics in a way they never have before for this crook.

Ellen Brundige

=====

## Email # 3

**From:** Sarah Carmichael (b) (6) @gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 17, 2020 8:38 PM  
**To:** Office USGS, SOL-Ethics <EthicsOfficeUSGS@sol.doi.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] USGS Hatch Act violation

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Hello,  
I was disturbed to see the USGS - an organization I esteem and value (and whose scientists I frequently collaborate with) - has recently violated the Hatch Act in a tweet about invasive species.

<https://twitter.com/USGS/status/1317148492410871813>

As it links to a current political candidate's personal Twitter handle, this does not seem to be in compliance with ethics rules.

As a state employee, I am not allowed to campaign or even voice support for one candidate over another using any work account or in the course of my work duties (this is why I am emailing you from my personal email account, outside of work hours).

I expected better from this organization, which has remained non-partisan and apolitical throughout many administrations, and whose valuable work is now suspect because it is unclear if they are operating under political interference.

Federal agencies must be held to the same standards that they have always been held to, and that state (and lower level federal employees) continue to adhere to. This tweet was unacceptable.



Thank you for your attention to this matter,  
Dr. Sarah Carmichael

Geologist  
336 385 4380  
Ashe County, NC

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#### Email # 4

**From:**Jason R. Patton <quakejay@gmail.com>  
**Sent:**Saturday, October 17, 2020 6:40 PM  
**To:**Office USGS, SOL-Ethics <EthicsOfficeUSGS@sol.doi.gov>  
**Subject:**[EXTERNAL] Potential Hatch Act violation

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Someone must have hijacked the usgs twitter acct. There is a tweet that is promoting Trump's personal twitter acct. This detracts from the credibility of the usgs. How can we trust the usgs anymore? Especially given the misinformation in this tweet?

<https://twitter.com/USGS/status/1317148492410871813?s=19>

Please delete the tweet, pursue legal action against those that are responsible, and prepare a public retraction (hopefully in a press release submitted to AP, Reuters, etc.).

I work with dozens of scientists at the usgs on a regular basis and this tweet is an attack on their reputation.

I look forward to a suite of positive responses to my request.

Regards,  
Jason R Patton, Ph.D.

sent from my intraterrestrial communication device.

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#### Email # 5

**From:**Rachel Gabor <rsgabor@gmail.com>  
**Sent:**Saturday, October 17, 2020 1:09 PM  
**To:**Office USGS, SOL-Ethics <EthicsOfficeUSGS@sol.doi.gov>  
**Subject:**[EXTERNAL] Fwd: Partisan activity in official USGS twitter account

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Hi -

I'm writing because I am concerned about some partisan political activity on the USGS main verified twitter account.

This tweet, linked and screen-captured below, seems to be supporting a specific Presidential candidate during a political election. While I am sending this from my personal email as a private US citizen, in my job I work with many USGS scientists who take both their jobs and their obligation to the Hatch Act very seriously. It is incredibly disappointing to see the visible presence of such a great, non-partisan, scientific agency engage in partisan politics during an election season. I ask the DOI/USGS ethics office to take a serious look at this and ensure it doesn't happen in the future. The trust and safety of Americans is dependent on all of us knowing agencies like the USGS act in a non-partisan fashion and perform and report science without a political agenda. Tweets like this greatly erode that trust.

thank you  
-Rachel Gabor, Voter in OH-15

<https://twitter.com/USGS/status/1317148492410871813>

=====

**Email # 6**

**From:**Jill A. Marshall <jillm@uark.edu>  
**Sent:**Saturday, October 17, 2020 12:58 PM  
**To:**Office USGS, SOL-Ethics <EthicsOfficeUSGS@sol.doi.gov>  
**Subject:**[EXTERNAL] Hatch Act violation

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Dear Ethics office

I believe a recent tweet coming from the USGS official account violates the Hatch Act.  
This is a political ad referencing a personal, not the official White House Account.

As a scientist and US citizen, I am appalled to see a purportedly non-partisan federal science agency engage in acts that reduces trust in the agency.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Jill A. Marshall

<https://twitter.com/USGS/status/1317148492410871813?s=20>

USGS on Twitter

"The @realDonaldTrump administration has made significant investments in science and technology to help state and local

[twitter.com](https://twitter.com/USGS/status/1317148492410871813?s=20)

Jill A. Marshall  
Assistant Professor | University of Arkansas  
Office 116 Gearhart Hall  
Phone +1 (479) 575-2420 | Skype jill.a.marshall  
web: [jillamarshall.com/](http://jillamarshall.com/)

=====

**From:** de la Vega, Scott A  
**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail)  
**Cc:** Schasberger, Paula I; Gottry, Heather C  
**Subject:** Re: Social Media and the Hatch Act  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 30, 2020 10:57:59 AM

Gavin -

The DOI and Executive Branch have been dealing with this issue quite a bit over the past few years and the Departmental Ethics Office will be able to advise you on the correct answer based on the U.S. Office of Special Counsel's (that is the Federal agency charged with advising and enforcing the Hatch Act) recommendations. Thank you for conscientiously identifying the issue and reaching out for advice.

Scott

Scott A. de la Vega  
Associate Solicitor for General Law  
Office of the Solicitor  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
(O) (202) 208-3038  
(C) (202) 740-0359  
scott.delavega@sol.doi.gov

**From:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 30, 2020 10:47 AM  
**To:** de la Vega, Scott A <scott.delavega@sol.doi.gov>; Schasberger, Paula I <paula.schasberger@sol.doi.gov>; Gottry, Heather C <heather.gottry@sol.doi.gov>  
**Subject:** Social Media and the Hatch Act

Good morning folks,

We have been asked by the Department to use the @RealDonaldTrump handle in a social media post. I am very wary of Hatch Act issues and so want to check with you how we should approach this. Advice please.

Kind regards,

G



Gavin G. Shire  
Acting Associate Director  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Cell: 703-346-9123  
[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)

**From:** de la Vega, Scott A  
**To:** Goodwin, Nicholas R; Shire, Gavin (Detail)  
**Subject:** Re: NPM NVEWs OpEd is published  
**Date:** Thursday, October 1, 2020 9:20:18 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)

Nick and Gavin -

Apologies, I sent this for review when received yesterday, however, we have been without our usual intellectual property expertise for a couple of months now and IP issues are taking a little longer to process. We are on it and I will have an attorney on my team provide an answer for you within the hour. Of course, if we have written permission or a written "no objection" from the media outlet to post then the issue is moot.

Scott

Scott A. de la Vega  
Associate Solicitor for General Law  
Office of the Solicitor  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
(O) (202) 208-3038  
(C) (202) 740-0359  
[scott.delavega@sol.doi.gov](mailto:scott.delavega@sol.doi.gov)

**From:** Goodwin, Nicholas R <[nicholas\\_goodwin@ios.doi.gov](mailto:nicholas_goodwin@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 1, 2020 8:46 AM  
**To:** de la Vega, Scott A <[scott.delavega@sol.doi.gov](mailto:scott.delavega@sol.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: NPM NVEWs OpEd is published

Scott,

I just tried you on your mobile phone. Could you give me a call about this please? Appreciate your attention to this.

Thanks!

Nicholas Goodwin  
Office of the Secretary  
Department of the Interior

(202) 412-2249

**From:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 1, 2020 8:44 AM  
**To:** Goodwin, Nicholas R <nicholas\_goodwin@ios.doi.gov>  
**Cc:** Reilly, James F <jfreilly@usgs.gov>; Nichols, Ryan C <ryan\_nichols@ios.doi.gov>; Benemelis, Isabel M <isabel\_benemelis@ios.doi.gov>; Eisenman, Theresa M <theresa\_eisenman@ios.doi.gov>; Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: NPM NVEWs OpEd is published

I have reminded General Law this morning and asked them to get back to me as soon as they can. Hopefully, that will be before noon. But if not, we will post as soon after as we can.

G

Gavin G. Shire  
Acting Associate Director  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Cell: 703-346-9123  
[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)

**From:** Goodwin, Nicholas R <nicholas\_goodwin@ios.doi.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 30, 2020 9:11 PM  
**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Reilly, James F <jfreilly@usgs.gov>; Nichols, Ryan C <ryan\_nichols@ios.doi.gov>; Benemelis, Isabel M <isabel\_benemelis@ios.doi.gov>; Eisenman, Theresa M <theresa\_eisenman@ios.doi.gov>; Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: NPM NVEWs OpEd is published

Gavin—

Closing the loop on this. In speaking with Heather today, she mentioned that you received their guidance supporting my previous statements.

OCO works very closely with the DEO and General Law, and we will continue to do so to ensure the Department's communications are compliant.

Did Scott get back to you on the copyright concerns? Dr. Reilly's op ed still needs to be posted in full to USGS' website. Here's an example of one of the Secretary's op eds posted on DOI News that you can use as a template: <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/icymi-actually-funding-land-and-water-conservation-fund>

This needs be done by 12pm tomorrow.



Thanks,

Nicholas Goodwin  
Office of the Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
(202) 412-2249

**From:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 30, 2020 10:59 AM  
**To:** Goodwin, Nicholas R <[nicholas\\_goodwin@ios.doi.gov](mailto:nicholas_goodwin@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Cc:** Reilly, James F <[jfreilly@usgs.gov](mailto:jfreilly@usgs.gov)>; Nichols, Ryan C <[ryan\\_nichols@ios.doi.gov](mailto:ryan_nichols@ios.doi.gov)>; Benemelis, Isabel M <[isabel\\_benemelis@ios.doi.gov](mailto:isabel_benemelis@ios.doi.gov)>; Eisenman, Theresa M <[theresa\\_eisenman@ios.doi.gov](mailto:theresa_eisenman@ios.doi.gov)>; Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: NPM NVEWs OpEd is published

My understanding was that things are different in the 90-day window prior to an election. I have a request in to General Law and Ethics and waiting for their advice.

G

Gavin G. Shire  
Acting Associate Director  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Cell: 703-346-9123  
[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)

**From:** Goodwin, Nicholas R <[nicholas\\_goodwin@ios.doi.gov](mailto:nicholas_goodwin@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 30, 2020 10:52 AM  
**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Reilly, James F <[jfreilly@usgs.gov](mailto:jfreilly@usgs.gov)>; Nichols, Ryan C <[ryan\\_nichols@ios.doi.gov](mailto:ryan_nichols@ios.doi.gov)>; Benemelis, Isabel M <[isabel\\_benemelis@ios.doi.gov](mailto:isabel_benemelis@ios.doi.gov)>; Eisenman, Theresa M <[theresa\\_eisenman@ios.doi.gov](mailto:theresa_eisenman@ios.doi.gov)>; Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: NPM NVEWs OpEd is published

Feel free to check with General Law on copyright, but this has always been allowed. The language in the op ed was already cleared through general law and ethics. Both offices have repeatedly stated to Bureau communicators – and we have reiterated – that use of the handle is permissible with their clearance, which as I previously mentioned the language was already cleared. You already know this.

Nicholas Goodwin  
Office of the Secretary

Department of the Interior  
(202) 412-2249

**From:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 30, 2020 10:22 AM  
**To:** Goodwin, Nicholas R <[nicholas\\_goodwin@ios.doi.gov](mailto:nicholas_goodwin@ios.doi.gov)>; Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Reilly, James F <[jfreilly@usgs.gov](mailto:jfreilly@usgs.gov)>; Nichols, Ryan C <[ryan\\_nichols@ios.doi.gov](mailto:ryan_nichols@ios.doi.gov)>; Benemelis, Isabel M <[isabel\\_benemelis@ios.doi.gov](mailto:isabel_benemelis@ios.doi.gov)>; Eisenman, Theresa M <[theresa\\_eisenman@ios.doi.gov](mailto:theresa_eisenman@ios.doi.gov)>; Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: NPM NVEWs OpEd is published

My understanding was for copyright reasons, we could not post proprietary content from papers, even if authored by us. I can check with General Law on that.

We have also been careful, and warned by OCL, given the election season, of potential Hatch Act issues. I would want to check with Ethics before using the @RealDonaldTrump handle.

G

Gavin G. Shire  
Acting Associate Director  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Cell: 703-346-9123  
[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)

**From:** Goodwin, Nicholas R <[nicholas\\_goodwin@ios.doi.gov](mailto:nicholas_goodwin@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 30, 2020 9:29 AM  
**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Reilly, James F <[jfreilly@usgs.gov](mailto:jfreilly@usgs.gov)>; Nichols, Ryan C <[ryan\\_nichols@ios.doi.gov](mailto:ryan_nichols@ios.doi.gov)>; Benemelis, Isabel M <[isabel\\_benemelis@ios.doi.gov](mailto:isabel_benemelis@ios.doi.gov)>; Eisenman, Theresa M <[theresa\\_eisenman@ios.doi.gov](mailto:theresa_eisenman@ios.doi.gov)>; Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: NPM NVEWs OpEd is published

Gavin,

In the future, you should pull a newsworthy line from the USGS Director's op ed to make the tweet more engaging instead of simply stating "in case you missed it." This is an inadequate post. In comparison to other tweets that USGS puts out, it's clear that the effort was lacking. Mentioning that the President (and using his official @realDonaldTrump handle) signed this legislation into law authorizing USGS to establish the National Volcano Early Warning System to better protect communities would have been a good option as illustrated by the Director.

You should also post the full op ed on USGS's website instead simply hyperlinking it within the release that you created. That should be remedied today on the USGS website.

Thanks,

Nicholas Goodwin  
Office of the Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
(202) 412-2249

**From:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 29, 2020 7:08 PM  
**To:** Eisenman, Theresa M <[theresa\\_eisenman@ios.doi.gov](mailto:theresa_eisenman@ios.doi.gov)>; Nichols, Ryan C <[ryan\\_nichols@ios.doi.gov](mailto:ryan_nichols@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Cc:** Benemelis, Isabel M <[isabel\\_benemelis@ios.doi.gov](mailto:isabel_benemelis@ios.doi.gov)>; Reilly, James F <[jfreilly@usgs.gov](mailto:jfreilly@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: NPM NVEWs OpEd is published

Release is live here: <https://www.usgs.gov/news/icyimi-bulletin-new-volcano-monitors-increase-safety>

The Tweet will post at 4:20pm PST.

G

Gavin G. Shire  
Acting Associate Director, Communications and Publishing  
US Geological Survey  
Cell: 703-346-9123

**From:** Eisenman, Theresa M <[theresa\\_eisenman@ios.doi.gov](mailto:theresa_eisenman@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 29, 2020 6:00:10 PM  
**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>; Nichols, Ryan C <[ryan\\_nichols@ios.doi.gov](mailto:ryan_nichols@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Cc:** Benemelis, Isabel M <[isabel\\_benemelis@ios.doi.gov](mailto:isabel_benemelis@ios.doi.gov)>; Reilly, James F <[jfreilly@usgs.gov](mailto:jfreilly@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: NPM NVEWs OpEd is published

Gavin, checking status ... please advise

**From:** Goodwin, Nicholas R <[nicholas\\_goodwin@ios.doi.gov](mailto:nicholas_goodwin@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 29, 2020 3:04 PM  
**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>; Nichols, Ryan C <[ryan\\_nichols@ios.doi.gov](mailto:ryan_nichols@ios.doi.gov)>; Hamilton, Hannah M <[hhamilton@usgs.gov](mailto:hhamilton@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Clark, Jeffrey B <[jeffrey\\_clark@ios.doi.gov](mailto:jeffrey_clark@ios.doi.gov)>; Swanson, Conner D <[conner\\_swanson@ios.doi.gov](mailto:conner_swanson@ios.doi.gov)>; Goldey, Benjamin H <[benjamin\\_goldey@ios.doi.gov](mailto:benjamin_goldey@ios.doi.gov)>; Benemelis, Isabel M <[isabel\\_benemelis@ios.doi.gov](mailto:isabel_benemelis@ios.doi.gov)>; Reilly, James F <[jfreilly@usgs.gov](mailto:jfreilly@usgs.gov)>; Eisenman, Theresa M



<[theresa\\_eisenman@ios.doi.gov](mailto:theresa_eisenman@ios.doi.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: NPM NVEWs OpEd is published

Gavin,

Did USGS tweet out the Director's op ed and send an ICYMI news release to its distribution list (at least those states that have volcanoes or are near volcanoes)? Please do so today. We'll amplify.

Here's an example of what we have done in the past for these:

<https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/icymi-actually-funding-land-and-water-conservation-fund>

Send us the release when it goes out, link to where it is posted on USGS newsroom and the link to tweet.

Thanks,

Nicholas Goodwin  
Office of the Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
(202) 412-2249

**From:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>

**Sent:** Monday, September 28, 2020 4:07 PM

**To:** Benemelis, Isabel M <[isabel\\_benemelis@ios.doi.gov](mailto:isabel_benemelis@ios.doi.gov)>; Nichols, Ryan C  
<[ryan\\_nichols@ios.doi.gov](mailto:ryan_nichols@ios.doi.gov)>

**Subject:** FW: NPM NVEWs OpEd is published

Gavin G. Shire  
Acting Associate Director  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Cell: 703-346-9123  
[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)

**From:** McClymont, Ryan J <[rmcclymont@usgs.gov](mailto:rmcclymont@usgs.gov)>

**Sent:** Monday, September 28, 2020 11:58 AM

**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>

**Cc:** Puckett, Catherine E <[cpuckett@usgs.gov](mailto:cpuckett@usgs.gov)>; Hamilton, Hannah M <[hhamilton@usgs.gov](mailto:hhamilton@usgs.gov)>

**Subject:** NPM NVEWs OpEd is published

Hi Gavin,

The director's OpEd was published in the Daily News, Longview, WA on Thursday.

[https://tdn.com/opinion/columnists/community-voices-new-volcano-monitors-increase-safety/article\\_4f84006c-4368-57b3-8a86-f8c50e7429d6.html](https://tdn.com/opinion/columnists/community-voices-new-volcano-monitors-increase-safety/article_4f84006c-4368-57b3-8a86-f8c50e7429d6.html)

Thanks,

Ryan

**Ryan McClymont**

Public Affairs Specialist

Office of Communications - Western States

U.S. Geological Survey

Portland, Oregon

[rmcclymont@usgs.gov](mailto:rmcclymont@usgs.gov)

Phone: (503) 583-7944



**From:** Garcia, Diane F.  
**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail)  
**Cc:** Laubsen, Paul C; Horvath, Scott R.  
**Subject:** Last Friday's Tweet using the @realDonaldTrump  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 3:28:00 PM  
**Attachments:** image001.png  
image002.png  
image004.png  
image005.png  
image006.png

Good Tuesday Gavin,

I'm sure you have been dealing with this enough to last a lifetime. In case you haven't heard and seen enough of the pushback/comments I have included examples from USGS main SM and for further reference the comments from the Director's SLC Tribune OpEd.

As Science Information Services (SIS) is still seeing pushback/comments on the main Twitter account, can you provide us with guidance on a response? Or perhaps should we continue to (b) (5) - DPP ?

Also, Friday's Tweet felt more like a demand than a request and the way I understand it there was no time for USGS to evaluate the request??? I'd like to humbly suggest that (b) (5) - DPP

(b) (5) - DPP

Friday 10/16 comments (This is a sample. Not all comments Social Media received are here)

Monday 10/19 comments

Tuesday 10/20 comments (As of 9 AM PT)

Comments section from the Director's Salt Lake City Tribune OpEd

In advance thank you for more of your time on this subject  
Diane Garcia  
Science Information Services  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
U.S. Geological Survey  
345 Middlefield Rd MS-532  
Menlo Park CA 94025  
(650) 329-4382  
888-ASK-USGS

Contact the USGS on WebChat and "Like" us on Facebook!  
Follow @USGS on Twitter, and check our YouTube page.



Q ...

8 mins ago



 In reply to USGS and 1 more

8 mins ago



 In reply to USGS and 1 more

9 mins ago

Show Conversation

"The Trump administration has made significant investments in science and technology to help state and local partners more effectively manage invasive species and diseases."

Sorry Jim, many of these initiatives started with the Obama administration. But you can take credit for continuing to fund these programs.



88  
slpa1 18 hours ago

WELL SAID

I'm willing to bet Trump doesn't know anything about this. Nor does anyone in the White House. Nor do they care.

Beyond that, however, it sounds like a great program



41  
aqueduct 17 hours ago

WELL SAID

"After James Reilly was appointed by President Trump to lead the U.S. Geological Survey he then instructed his office to abandon the traditional practice of using climate models that stretch to the end of the century and instead to only use climate models projecting the impact of climate change through 2040."

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James\\_F.\\_Reilly](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_F._Reilly)





**Lewis 'Horticultural Lad' Bartlett** @BeesAndBaking

2 days ago

@USGS @realDonaldTrump Not only as a disease ecologist can I say this is NON SENSE but isn't this blithely illegal and a partisan abuse of federal agency assets? Or has all my mandatory training as a state-employed scientist been for naught since Trump does whatever he wants without repercussions.

🔄 8 ❤️ 76 📷

🔄 unicomfantasy5 retweeted



**Garry Hayes** @geotripper  
2 days ago

@USGS @realDonaldTrump Using official government accounts to promote a political candidate. Violation of the Hatch Act. For years the USGS managed to do science and not politics. It was one of the trusted ones like NASA and the CDC. Not anymore. Shameful.

🔄 7 ❤️ 71 📷

🔄 unicomfantasy5 retweeted



**Dr. Erin Larson** @emlarson  
2 days ago

@USGS @realDonaldTrump A federal agency campaigning for a political candidate not only violates the Hatch Act but undermines public trust in government scientists. Do better @USGS.

🔄 25 ❤️ 131 📷

💬 In reply to USGS and 1 more



**Ben Melosh** @rolltheturbines  
3 hours ago

Ummmm.... looks like someone forgot to take their DOI Learn training seriously.

[← Back to Mentions](#)



**USGS**  @USGS

3d

The [@realDonaldTrump](#) administration has made significant investments in science and technology to help state and local partners more effectively manage invasive species and diseases. [ow.ly/y2Hw50BUBfs](https://ow.ly/y2Hw50BUBfs)

 210  58  141 



**Ian McKenzie**

@SignoreMcKenzie

Replying to [@USGS](#) [@realDonaldTrump](#)

Someone take the phone away from Grandpa, he's breaking the law again.

4:28pm · 19 Oct 2020 · Twitter for iPhone



Reply to [@SignoreMcKenzie](#) [@USGS](#)



**From:** Gonzales-Schreiner, Roseann C  
**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail)  
**Cc:** Reilly, James F; Lodge, Cynthia L  
**Subject:** Re: Twitter  
**Date:** Monday, October 19, 2020 11:14:22 AM

Hi Gavin:

It makes sense to talk to ethics to be sure they will support the decision. Thanks for the info.

Roseann

Roseann Gonzales  
Regional Director, USGS  
Upper Colorado Basin (IR7)  
rgonzales-schreiner@usgs.gov  
303-236-9202

**From:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 19, 2020 9:05 AM  
**To:** Reilly, James F <jfreilly@usgs.gov>; Lodge, Cynthia L <clodge@usgs.gov>; Gonzales-Schreiner, Roseann C <rgonzales-schreiner@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Twitter

Jim, Cindy and Rosann,

When we were asked a few weeks ago to tweet out the NVEWS op-ed and to include the @realDonaldTrump Twitter handle, I queried the legitimacy of doing so under the Hatch Act. I was given a clear and unambiguous ruling by the Office of the Solicitor that this was not a violation. Bureau leads have subsequently been told in clear terms by OCO that we should use this handle when requested.

Last week, we were asked by OCO to tweet out the eDNA op-ed, again, including the @realDonaldTrump handle. In light of the previous SOL ruling, I duly did this, though with significant reservations: the President started using this handle in 2009, long before he was elected, and has clearly used it for partisan purposes ever since. We are now in the midst of an election campaign (b) (5)

(b) (5) - DPP

The backlash from this tweet has been significant from both public and staff. At issue here is not whether the use of the handle violates the Hatch Act. It is whether the public *perceives* it is a

violation. The appearance of wrongdoing is as damaging as actual wrongdoing, even if we are technically within the law. We are supposed to be neutral in our science and the optics created by use of this handle casts doubt on that neutrality. I have requested a call with Ethics so we may discuss this openly and arrive at a sound decision.

In the meantime, I have asked my staff to provide an analysis of creating a @USGSDirector Twitter account, such as we have at FWS. As a political appointee, the Director has a little more leeway when it comes to the Hatch Act (though only a little). I will report back to you on their response.

Kind regards,

G

Gavin G. Shire  
Acting Associate Director  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Cell: 703-346-9123  
[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)

**From:** Goodwin, Nicholas R  
**To:** Mckey, Hillary R; Turner, Matthew T; Bitsui, Marian K; Nagle, Drew G; Krause, Amy L; Mentasti, Chris; Robinson, Blossom; Berumen, Krista L; Cossel, Benjamin M; D'agostino, Michael J; Joshua, Tanya H; Fontenot, Monique S; O'Brien, Cheryl R; Sharpe, Alyse N; Jones, Leslie W; Lendrum, Eric C; Estes, Michael D; Huggler, Matthew; Armstrong, Karen R; Boutwell, Stephen D; Day, Sandy E; Giaccardo, Genevieve I; Gillette, Connie S; Hamilton, Hannah M; Holmes, Christopher; Johnson, Treci C; Krauss, Jeff; Moriarty, Tracey B; Osborne, Karen L; Parramore, Laury; Shire, Gavin (Detail); Tollefson, Christopher J; Wainman, Barbara W; Winston, Beverly S; Roulett, Stephanie A; Friar, Linda C; Soeth, Peter D; Nagle, Drew G; Mentasti, Chris; Conrad, David F; Kupper, Kathy; Manning, Robert; Armstrong, Karen; Anzelmo-Sarles, Jenny; Marshall, Karla K  
**Cc:** OS\_OCO; Gottry, Heather C; de la Vega, Scott A  
**Subject:** Ethics and General Law Reminder re. the Department's Communications and Social Media Policy  
**Date:** Friday, October 9, 2020 2:00:47 PM  
**Attachments:** image001.png  
image002.png  
image003.png  
image004.png

All—

Thank you for your continued professionalism and work ethic. We truly have an incredibly talented team at Interior. Given the proximity to the upcoming election, there have been a couple of questions regarding communication practices and social media policy, specifically regarding what is permissible and ethical for distribution in reference to President Trump. As you know and Heather Gottry, Director of the Departmental Ethics Office, and Scott de la Vega, Associate Solicitor for General Law, (CC'd) would both be the first to attest, the Office of Communications works very closely with the Departmental Ethics Office, General Law and the rest of the Solicitor's Office on all media engagements, press inquiries, social media posts and other means of communication as appropriate. We do this to ensure the Department and Bureau's operations are in complete compliance with our statutory and regulatory obligations. Secretarial and Departmental communications are regularly reviewed by these offices and are **always** able to be amplified by the Bureaus via social media, press releases, etc. when germane to your Bureau's operations and functions.

We are all working in service to the American people as a part of President Trump's Administration. In reiterating guidance that the Departmental Ethics Office, General Law and our Solicitor's Office have already provided on multiple occasions, it is absolutely permissible for the Department and Bureaus to highlight official Presidential actions that impact our Department and Bureaus in our communications. You all have done a good job of highlighting Executive Orders, enacted legislation, Presidential Memorandums and Proclamations and other such actions in press releases when we act on these directives. This will continue. The same is to be said of our posts on social media, which include the ability to reference President Trump by name and to use President Trump's Twitter handle "@realDonaldTrump" in tweets. Here is guidance from the Departmental Ethics Office that is consistent with the Office of the Special Counsel specific to the use of President Trump's official Twitter account:

"President Trump has been using the Twitter handle '@realDonaldTrump' for official purposes since the beginning of his Administration, and the Office of the Special Counsel recognizes that it can be used and retweeted from official government accounts if the content is **official, has a nexus to the mission of the agency, and most importantly, does not contain partisan political activity.**"

As we work together in highlighting pertinent, government actions, we will only make requests to have the Bureaus amplify Department-level content when the aforementioned criteria is met and ethics approval is received, negating the need to conduct a separate, Bureau-level review following

our request. If you have questions regarding this guidance in drafting Bureau-level information that mentions the President, you can always reach out to the Departmental Ethics Office and General Law.

Additionally, the Departmental Ethics Office has distributed this social media quick guide in the past that I think is a helpful resource and can be found online:

<https://osc.gov/Documents/Hatch%20Act/Social%20Media%20Quick%20Guide.pdf>.

Any questions about this or our communication policies in general, please let me know.

Thank you and enjoy the holiday weekend,

Nicholas Goodwin  
Communications Director  
Office of the Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
(202) 412-2249



**From:** Goodwin, Nicholas R  
**To:** Hines, Vic; Shire, Gavin (Detail)  
**Cc:** Jones, Leslie W  
**Subject:** RE: Salt Lake City Tribute: Jim Reilly: Trump administration uses "eDNA" to combat invasive species  
**Date:** Friday, October 16, 2020 11:52:36 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)

Adding Gavin. Best rule of thumb is getting consent from SLT to avoid possible copyright issues in sending the ICYMI. So, if that wasn't received initially, please reach out now to get that. Otherwise, there are no issues in doing this.

More explicitly, the tweet from @USGS should say this from the op ed:

“The @realDonaldTrump administration has made significant investments in science and technology to help state and local partners more effectively manage invasive species and diseases.  
[insert link from op ed]”

Questions – please let me know and post the tweet before 1pm, so we can retweet.

Thanks,

Nicholas Goodwin  
Office of the Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
(202) 412-2249

**From:** Hines, Vic <vhines@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 16, 2020 11:39 AM  
**To:** Goodwin, Nicholas R <nicholas\_goodwin@ios.doi.gov>  
**Cc:** Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Salt Lake City Tribute: Jim Reilly: Trump administration uses "eDNA" to combat invasive species

Gavin -- so, Nick's note makes it sound like he wants a news release Monday duplicating the op-ed. Know you looked into this with the Ethics office/lawyers, but may have misunderstood what they shared. Are we permitted to post and/or push the op-ed out as an "ICYMI" release?  
Vic



Vic Hines  
Acting USGS Public Affairs Officer  
Chief of Communications, Eastern States  
U.S. Geological Survey  
(813) 855-3125

**From:** Goodwin, Nicholas R <[nicholas\\_goodwin@ios.doi.gov](mailto:nicholas_goodwin@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 16, 2020 11:11 AM  
**To:** Hines, Vic <[vhines@usgs.gov](mailto:vhines@usgs.gov)>; Petty, Timothy R <[timothy\\_petty@ios.doi.gov](mailto:timothy_petty@ios.doi.gov)>; Bettencourt, Aubrey J <[aubrey\\_bettencourt@ios.doi.gov](mailto:aubrey_bettencourt@ios.doi.gov)>; Eisenman, Theresa M <[theresa\\_eisenman@ios.doi.gov](mailto:theresa_eisenman@ios.doi.gov)>; Benemelis, Isabel M <[isabel\\_benemelis@ios.doi.gov](mailto:isabel_benemelis@ios.doi.gov)>; Clark, Jeffrey B <[jeffrey\\_clark@ios.doi.gov](mailto:jeffrey_clark@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Cc:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>; Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>; Goldey, Benjamin H <[benjamin\\_goldey@ios.doi.gov](mailto:benjamin_goldey@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Salt Lake City Tribute: Jim Reilly: Trump administration uses "eDNA" to combat invasive species

Great work! Ready an ICYMI release of the op ed to go out on Monday and flag your social media promotion of the piece today for Ben Goldey (added), so we can amplify.

Thanks,

Nicholas Goodwin  
Office of the Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
(202) 412-2249

**From:** Hines, Vic <[vhines@usgs.gov](mailto:vhines@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 16, 2020 10:55 AM  
**To:** Petty, Timothy R <[timothy\\_petty@ios.doi.gov](mailto:timothy_petty@ios.doi.gov)>; Bettencourt, Aubrey J <[aubrey\\_bettencourt@ios.doi.gov](mailto:aubrey_bettencourt@ios.doi.gov)>; Goodwin, Nicholas R <[nicholas\\_goodwin@ios.doi.gov](mailto:nicholas_goodwin@ios.doi.gov)>; Eisenman, Theresa M <[theresa\\_eisenman@ios.doi.gov](mailto:theresa_eisenman@ios.doi.gov)>; Benemelis, Isabel M <[isabel\\_benemelis@ios.doi.gov](mailto:isabel_benemelis@ios.doi.gov)>; Clark, Jeffrey B <[jeffrey\\_clark@ios.doi.gov](mailto:jeffrey_clark@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Cc:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>; Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Salt Lake City Tribute: Jim Reilly: Trump administration uses "eDNA" to combat invasive species

FYI - Director Reilly's eDNA op-ed ran this morning; see link below. Vic

<https://www.sltrib.com/opinion/commentary/2020/10/15/jim-reilly-trump/>

Jim Reilly: Trump

## administration uses “eDNA” to combat invasive species

Invasive zebra and quagga mussels are an immediate threat to Western states. With no controls, they spread rapidly, foul boats and equipment, clog water intake, and increase costs to hydropower operations and municipal water utilities.

[www.sltrib.com](http://www.sltrib.com)

Vic Hines  
Acting USGS Public Affairs Officer  
Chief of Communications, Eastern States  
U.S. Geological Survey  
(813) 855-3125

**From:** Goodwin, Nicholas R  
**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail); Gottry, Heather C; Garcia, Monica L; Schasberger, Paula I; de la Vega, Scott A  
**Cc:** Baumgartner, Nancy H; Jones, Leslie W; Eisenman, Theresa M  
**Subject:** RE: USGS Tweets and the Hatch Act  
**Date:** Monday, October 19, 2020 1:37:54 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)

Gavin,

Thank you for your message. As you know – and I have stressed numerous times to all bureau communicators – ethical compliance is priority number one in our communication. You rightly point out that our ethics legal experts approved the post, which highlighted a factual statement made by USGS Director Reilly in a published editorial.

I'm happy to schedule a call with you if need be to discuss this further.

Nicholas Goodwin  
Office of the Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
(202) 412-2249

**From:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 19, 2020 1:02 PM  
**To:** Gottry, Heather C <heather.gottry@sol.doi.gov>; Garcia, Monica L <monica.garcia@sol.doi.gov>; Schasberger, Paula I <paula.schasberger@sol.doi.gov>; de la Vega, Scott A <scott.delavega@sol.doi.gov>; Goodwin, Nicholas R <nicholas\_goodwin@ios.doi.gov>  
**Cc:** Baumgartner, Nancy H <nancy.baumgartner@sol.doi.gov>; Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** USGS Tweets and the Hatch Act

You may remember, a few weeks ago, USGS was asked to tweet about the publication of an op-ed authored by Director Reilly and to include the @realDonaldTrump Twitter handle. At the time I queried the legitimacy of doing so under the Hatch Act and in response, I was given a clear and unambiguous ruling by Ethics that this was not a violation. Bureau leads have subsequently been told in clear terms that we should use this handle when requested.

Consequently, last week, when we were asked to tweet about another op-ed, also authored by our Director, and again asked to include the @realDonaldTrump handle, I duly did so (though with significant reservations).

The backlash from this tweet has been significant from both public and staff. At issue here is not whether the use of the handle violates the Hatch Act. It is whether people *perceive* it is a violation. The USGS bills itself as neutral in its science and the optics created by use of this handle has cast doubt on that neutrality.

You have all been very helpful in the past in dealing with these sorts of issues and I would like to talk this through. (Nick, we should be ready for media inquiries on this issue and this conversation can help frame our response.)

Could you please provide me with your availability over the next two days. After hours is fine by me if you are willing.

Kind regards,

G

Gavin G. Shire  
Acting Associate Director  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Cell: 703-346-9123  
[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)

**From:** Gottry, Heather C  
**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail)  
**Cc:** de la Vega, Scott A; Schasberger, Paula I; Garcia, Monica L  
**Subject:** RE: Social Media and the Hatch Act  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 30, 2020 12:08:37 PM

Gavin – Hello! The DEO is happy to review specific tweets to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Hatch Act. Can you please send us the text of tweet(s) in question?

As quick background, the Office of Special Counsel (OSC) has provided informal guidance on retweeting the @realDonaldTrump Twitter handle. The President has used @realDonaldTrump for official purposes since the beginning of his Administration and OSC has not declared that it is a violation of the Hatch Act for Federal agencies to use it or retweet it using official resources as long as the content of the tweet does not constitute partisan political activity. Also, the President and Vice President are not subject to the Hatch Act unlike all other Federal employees, which complicates the discussion about official use of @realDonaldTrump. Additionally, because the President has been using @realDonaldTrump for official business, the White House is required to maintain the tweets as official records. Bottom line the use of @realDonaldTrump in DOI social media requires careful review and it can be used and retweeted from official government accounts if the content is official, has a nexus to the mission of the agency, and most importantly, does not contain partisan political activity.

I hope this additional context is helpful. Please do not hesitate to reach out if it would be helpful to discuss further. Many thanks.

- Heather

**From:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 30, 2020 10:48 AM  
**To:** de la Vega, Scott A <scott.delavega@sol.doi.gov>; Schasberger, Paula I <paula.schasberger@sol.doi.gov>; Gottry, Heather C <heather.gottry@sol.doi.gov>  
**Subject:** Social Media and the Hatch Act

Good morning folks,

We have been asked by the Department to use the @realDonaldTrump handle in a social media post. I am very wary of Hatch Act issues and so want to check with you how we should approach this. Advice please.

Kind regards,

G

Gavin G. Shire  
Acting Associate Director  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Cell: 703-346-9123  
[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)



**From:** [Hines, Vic](#)  
**To:** [Goodwin, Nicholas R](#); [Shire, Gavin \(Detail\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Jones, Leslie W](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Salt Lake City Tribute: Jim Reilly: Trump administration uses "eDNA" to combat invasive species  
**Date:** Friday, October 16, 2020 11:57:17 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)

Great; we'll get with newspaper now to ask for permission.

Thanks,

Vic

Vic Hines  
Acting USGS Public Affairs Officer  
Chief of Communications, Eastern States  
U.S. Geological Survey  
(813) 855-3125

**From:** Goodwin, Nicholas R <nicholas\_goodwin@ios.doi.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 16, 2020 11:52 AM  
**To:** Hines, Vic <vhines@usgs.gov>; Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Salt Lake City Tribute: Jim Reilly: Trump administration uses "eDNA" to combat invasive species

Adding Gavin. Best rule of thumb is getting consent from SLT to avoid possible copyright issues in sending the ICYMI. So, if that wasn't received initially, please reach out now to get that. Otherwise, there are no issues in doing this.

More explicitly, the tweet from @USGS should say this from the op ed:

“The @realDonaldTrump administration has made significant investments in science and technology to help state and local partners more effectively manage invasive species and diseases. [insert link from op ed]”

Questions – please let me know and post the tweet before 1pm, so we can retweet.

Thanks,

**From:** [Hines, Vic](#)  
**To:** [Shire, Gavin \(Detail\)](#); [Goodwin, Nicholas R](#)  
**Cc:** [Jones, Leslie W](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Salt Lake City Tribute: Jim Reilly: Trump administration uses "eDNA" to combat invasive species  
**Date:** Friday, October 16, 2020 1:03:50 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)

Already done and we have their permission. Will work to post Monday.

Vic

Vic Hines  
Acting USGS Public Affairs Officer  
Chief of Communications, Eastern States  
U.S. Geological Survey  
(813) 855-3125

**From:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 16, 2020 1:02 PM  
**To:** Goodwin, Nicholas R <[nicholas\\_goodwin@ios.doi.gov](mailto:nicholas_goodwin@ios.doi.gov)>; Hines, Vic <[vhines@usgs.gov](mailto:vhines@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Salt Lake City Tribute: Jim Reilly: Trump administration uses "eDNA" to combat invasive species

Vic,

Please check the SLT op-ed page to see if they have a policy on reprinting of published pieces (many do). If not, we'll need to contact them to ask permission to reprint.

G

Gavin G. Shire  
Acting Associate Director  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Cell: 703-346-9123  
[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)

**From:** Goodwin, Nicholas R <[nicholas\\_goodwin@ios.doi.gov](mailto:nicholas_goodwin@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 16, 2020 11:53 AM  
**To:** Hines, Vic <[vhines@usgs.gov](mailto:vhines@usgs.gov)>; Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Salt Lake City Tribute: Jim Reilly: Trump administration uses "eDNA" to combat invasive species

**From:** Hines, Vic  
**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail); Demas, Alex P  
**Subject:** Tweet on eDNA op-ed  
**Date:** Friday, October 16, 2020 12:07:35 PM

Alex -- can you load this into Hootsuite? We've been asked to push it out before 1 p.m.

Gavin -- my understanding from the email sent last week is this is in compliance with the guidance sent last week on the Ethics review; please let us know if that's not the case.

Thanks,

Vic

“The @realDonaldTrump administration has made significant investments in science and technology to help state and local partners more effectively manage invasive species and diseases. [insert link from op ed]”

<https://www.sltrib.com/opinion/commentary/2020/10/15/jim-reilly-trump/>

Vic Hines  
Acting USGS Public Affairs Officer  
Chief of Communications, Eastern States  
U.S. Geological Survey  
(813) 855-3125

**From:** Hines, Vic  
**To:** Horvath, Scott R  
**Cc:** Shire, Gavin (Detail); Jones, Leslie W  
**Subject:** Question on Twitter subscribers  
**Date:** Saturday, October 17, 2020 9:29:41 AM

Hi Scott,

We were asked to send out a tweet by 1 p.m. Friday highlighting the eDNA op-ed that was published in the Salt Lake Tribune that morning, using "The @realDonaldTrump administration" in the post. I've glanced at a few of the responses, with the majority of those I've looked at being negative. Several included comments people were going to "unfollow" us.

When you're back in the office next week, would you mind taking a look to see if there was any meaningful drop in subscribers? Not sure what we'd do with this information, but it would be interesting to know.

Thanks,

Vic

ps -- just saw your note come in on this same topic; not surprised people are complaining. Lots of negative comments on Twitter....

Vic Hines  
Acting USGS Public Affairs Officer  
Chief of Communications, Eastern States  
U.S. Geological Survey  
(813) 855-3125

**From:** Hines, Vic  
**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail)  
**Subject:** Fw: SIS response to Twitter post  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 4:14:06 PM

FYI that you sent this from your FWS account, so you might not see replies. Vic

**From:** Hines, Vic <vhines@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 4:11 PM  
**To:** Shire, Gavin G <gavin\_shire@fws.gov>; Puckett, Catherine E <cpuckett@usgs.gov>; Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>; Laustsen, Paul C <plaustsen@usgs.gov>; Ozman, David <dozman@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Onizuk, Jeffrey M <jonizuk@usgs.gov>; Hickey, Darlene S <dhipkey@usgs.gov>; Curtis, Stacy <scurtis@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: SIS response to Twitter post

I think it's a good change. Vic

**From:** Shire, Gavin G <gavin\_shire@fws.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 4:10 PM  
**To:** Puckett, Catherine E <cpuckett@usgs.gov>; Hines, Vic <vhines@usgs.gov>; Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>; Laustsen, Paul C <plaustsen@usgs.gov>; Ozman, David <dozman@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Onizuk, Jeffrey M <jonizuk@usgs.gov>; Hickey, Darlene S <dhipkey@usgs.gov>; Curtis, Stacy <scurtis@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: SIS response to Twitter post

I think I have found a way to address Vic's concern (b) (5) - DPP

The USGS sought Department of the Interior legal and Ethics approval before using the Twitter handle and received the green light to do so, when requested, in conjunction with factually correct information that does not specifically endorse the President for office. @realDonaldTrump has been judged to be the President's official twitter handle used for all his official business. If you have any additional questions you can email our Ethics department at xxxx.

By putting (b) (5) - DPP  
It implies that (b) (5) - DPP.

G

Gavin G. Shire  
Acting Associate Director  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Cell: 703-346-9123

[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)

**From:** Shire, Gavin (Detail)

**Sent:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 2:28 PM

**To:** Puckett, Catherine E <[cpuckett@usgs.gov](mailto:cpuckett@usgs.gov)>; Hines, Vic <[vhines@usgs.gov](mailto:vhines@usgs.gov)>; Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>; Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>; Laustsen, Paul C <[plaustsen@usgs.gov](mailto:plaustsen@usgs.gov)>; Ozman, David <[dozman@usgs.gov](mailto:dozman@usgs.gov)>

**Cc:** Onizuk, Jeffrey M <[jonizuk@usgs.gov](mailto:jonizuk@usgs.gov)>; Hickey, Darlene S <[dhickey@usgs.gov](mailto:dhickey@usgs.gov)>; Curtis, Stacy <[scurtis@usgs.gov](mailto:scurtis@usgs.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: SIS response to Twitter post

I think [REDACTED] (b) (5) - DPP [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] . It will (b) (5) - DPP [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] . The facts around this are  
already coming out and will be apparent in responses to any FOIA or official requests, but I think [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

G

Gavin G. Shire  
Acting Associate Director  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Cell: 703-346-9123  
[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)

**From:** Puckett, Catherine E <[cpuckett@usgs.gov](mailto:cpuckett@usgs.gov)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 2:06 PM

**To:** Hines, Vic <[vhines@usgs.gov](mailto:vhines@usgs.gov)>; Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>; Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>; Laustsen, Paul C <[plaustsen@usgs.gov](mailto:plaustsen@usgs.gov)>; Ozman, David <[dozman@usgs.gov](mailto:dozman@usgs.gov)>

**Cc:** Onizuk, Jeffrey M <[jonizuk@usgs.gov](mailto:jonizuk@usgs.gov)>; Hickey, Darlene S <[dhickey@usgs.gov](mailto:dhickey@usgs.gov)>; Curtis, Stacy <[scurtis@usgs.gov](mailto:scurtis@usgs.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: SIS response to Twitter post

i like what Vic suggests if ethics agrees

Catherine Puckett  
USGS Western States Communications Chief  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
[cpuckett@usgs.gov](mailto:cpuckett@usgs.gov)  
(o) 352-377-2469, (c) 352-278-0165

**From:** Hines, Vic <[vhines@usgs.gov](mailto:vhines@usgs.gov)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 1:56 PM



**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>; Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>; Laustsen, Paul C <[plaustsen@usgs.gov](mailto:plaustsen@usgs.gov)>; Puckett, Catherine E <[cpuckett@usgs.gov](mailto:cpuckett@usgs.gov)>; Ozman, David <[dozman@usgs.gov](mailto:dozman@usgs.gov)>

**Cc:** Onizuk, Jeffrey M <[jonizuk@usgs.gov](mailto:jonizuk@usgs.gov)>; Hickey, Darlene S <[dhickey@usgs.gov](mailto:dhickey@usgs.gov)>; Curtis, Stacy <[scurtis@usgs.gov](mailto:scurtis@usgs.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: SIS response to Twitter post

It would be nice if we could (b) (5) - DPP  
(b) (5) - DPP. Maybe (b) (5) - DPP.  
Obviously we also need to let Ethics know this is how we're responding. Vic

When asked to do a tweet using the "@realDonaldTrump" twitter handle,

(b) (5) - DPP  
(b) (5) - DPP  
(b) (5) - DPP  
(b) (5) - DPP  
(b) (5) - DPP.

**From:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 1:41 PM

**To:** Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>; Hines, Vic <[vhines@usgs.gov](mailto:vhines@usgs.gov)>; Laustsen, Paul C <[plaustsen@usgs.gov](mailto:plaustsen@usgs.gov)>; Puckett, Catherine E <[cpuckett@usgs.gov](mailto:cpuckett@usgs.gov)>; Ozman, David <[dozman@usgs.gov](mailto:dozman@usgs.gov)>

**Cc:** Onizuk, Jeffrey M <[jonizuk@usgs.gov](mailto:jonizuk@usgs.gov)>; Hickey, Darlene S <[dhickey@usgs.gov](mailto:dhickey@usgs.gov)>; Curtis, Stacy <[scurtis@usgs.gov](mailto:scurtis@usgs.gov)>

**Subject:** SIS response to Twitter post

I gather the eDNA tweet is resulting in calls to the SIS and they are asking for help in responding.

I suggest that the response be that:

(b) (5) - DPP  
(b) (5) - DPP  
(b) (5) - DPP  
(b) (5) - DPP  
(b) (5) - DPP.

Thoughts?

G

Gavin G. Shire

Acting Associate Director  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Cell: 703-346-9123  
[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)

**From:** Horvath, Scott R  
**To:** Jones, Leslie W; GS-DO-OCAP-COLT  
**Subject:** Re: Ethics and General Law Reminder re. the Department's Communications and Social Media Policy  
**Date:** Friday, October 9, 2020 3:21:14 PM  
**Attachments:** image001.png  
image002.png  
image003.png  
image004.png

Wow.

As an unbiased science organization, I (b) (5) - DPP

We've been on social media through 3 Administrations (Bush, Obama, and Trump) and throughout the last 13 years that we've been in the social world, we've worked very hard to remain apolitical regardless of the party in office.. (b) (5) - DPP

. In the very limited instance that we've tagged anyone (in my recent memory we tagged VP Pence account during the Ridgecrest event)...that's even been a gray area for us.

Who at USGS is going to be responsible for verifying that when DOI, or higher, tells us to retweet something from a political that it has passed the measurements of:

**official**  
**has a nexus to the mission of the agency**  
**does not contain partisan political activity**

**From:** Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 9, 2020 2:18 PM  
**To:** GS-DO-OCAP-COLT <gs-do-ocap-colt@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Horvath, Scott R <shorvath@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Fw: Ethics and General Law Reminder re. the Department's Communications and Social Media Policy

**From:** Goodwin, Nicholas R <nicholas\_goodwin@ios.doi.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 9, 2020 2:00 PM  
**To:** Mckey, Hillary R <hillary.mckey@boem.gov>; Turner, Matthew T <Matthew\_Turner@nps.gov>; Bitsui, Marian K <marian.bitsui@bia.gov>; Nagle, Drew G <dnagle@usbr.gov>; Krause, Amy L <amy\_krause@ios.doi.gov>; Mentasti, Chris <Chris.Mentasti@onrr.gov>; Robinson, Blossom <Blossom.Robinson@boem.gov>; Berumen, Krista L <kberumen@blm.gov>; Cossel, Benjamin M

**From:** Horvath, Scott R  
**To:** Hines, Vic  
**Cc:** Shire, Gavin (Detail); Jones, Leslie W  
**Subject:** Re: Question on Twitter subscribers  
**Date:** Saturday, October 17, 2020 1:28:53 PM

I can get follower information next week. But I'm not concerned about what impact this is having on our follower counts. If you just go onto Twitter and do a search for USGS you will see the intense amount of heat, animosity, and calls for Hatch Act violations, and how many people are extremely t'd-off that we posted that. I don't (b) (5) - DPP  
As the only unbiased science arm of DOI (b) (5) - DPP

. We've always done that before. (b) (5) - DPP

e're not a political organization and science cannot be political.

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

**From:** Hines, Vic <vhines@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 17, 2020 9:29:08 AM  
**To:** Horvath, Scott R <shorvath@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>; Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Question on Twitter subscribers

Hi Scott,

We were asked to send out a tweet by 1 p.m. Friday highlighting the eDNA op-ed that was published in the Salt Lake Tribute that morning, using "The @realDonaldTrump administration" in the post. I've glanced at a few of the responses, with the majority of those I've looked at being negative. Several included comments people were going to "unfollow" us.

When you're back in the office next week, would you mind taking a look to see if there was any meaningful drop in subscribers? Not sure what we'd do with this information, but it would be interesting to know.

Thanks,

Vic

ps -- just saw your note come in on this same topic; not surprised people are complaining. Lots of negative comments on Twitter....

Vic Hines  
Acting USGS Public Affairs Officer  
Chief of Communications, Eastern States  
U.S. Geological Survey

**From:** Horvath, Scott R  
**To:** Laustsen, Paul C; Shire, Gavin (Detail)  
**Cc:** Jones, Leslie W; Puckett, Catherine E; Demas, Alex P  
**Subject:** Re: USGS tweet appears inappropriate  
**Date:** Saturday, October 17, 2020 8:50:27 AM

All, this what I get for trying to take a day off, huh? Missing all of this?

All of the comments can be found on that link to the tweet: <https://twitter.com/USGS/status/1317148492410871813> and they're still going. The other tweet has also been like this.

I'm saying this now, and have said it other ways...I am (b) (5) - DPP  
(b) (5) - DPP. (b) (5) - DPP  
(b) (5) - DPP We have NEVER done this in the past (b) (5) - DPP.  
We pride ourselves on the unbiased work we do, remaining outside of the political world. Our science might be politicized but that doesn't mean we need to take part in that. This is happening because of that email from DOI ethics and solicitors office telling us, in no uncertain terms, that we have no need to seek ethics approval for tweets that the Secretary shares so when we're told to share it...share it.

It's clear all of this is being conveyed to all the bureaus as a last second push to prop up efforts being done by the administration less than 3 weeks from an election. (b) (5) - DPP  
(b) (5) - DPP.

This is EXACTLY what I said would happen through my other emails. (b) (5) - DPP  
(b) (5) - DPP  
(b) (5) - DPP  
(b) (5) - DPP  
(b) (5) - DPP  
(b) (5) - DPP

In the past, when anything like these messages have been told to be pushed out via social, they have typically ended up in news releases, for example. Then Public Affairs would ensure that we're providing the unbiased information, the science that's related, etc. Less than a handful of times we posted something that mentioned "x" administration, but the messaging has no been political. (b) (5) - DPP  
(b) (5) - DPP  
(b) (5) - DPP

This is going to continue. (b) (5) - DPP  
(b) (5) - DPP.

**From:** Laustsen, Paul C <plaustsen@usgs.gov>



**Sent:** Saturday, October 17, 2020 12:35 AM

**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>

**Cc:** Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>; Puckett, Catherine E <cpuckett@usgs.gov>; Horvath, Scott R <shorvath@usgs.gov>; Demas, Alex P <apdemas@usgs.gov>

**Subject:** Re: USGS tweet appears inappropriate

I haven't received any public comments personally, but I suspect SIS, and others may have.

There is certainly some discourse occurring on the tweet itself. If you need me to compile examples, tone analysis, I'd be happy to do so.

<https://twitter.com/usgs/status/1317148492410871813?s=21>

Paul C. Laustsen  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Office of Communications  
plaustsen@usgs.gov  
650-847-8522

Sent from Apple device. Beware — speech to text may have been used and can distort message; use your imagination in a positive way!

**From:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>

**Sent:** Friday, October 16, 2020 8:28:01 PM

**To:** Laustsen, Paul C <plaustsen@usgs.gov>

**Cc:** Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>; Puckett, Catherine E <cpuckett@usgs.gov>; Horvath, Scott R <shorvath@usgs.gov>; Demas, Alex P <apdemas@usgs.gov>

**Subject:** Re: USGS tweet appears inappropriate

Thanks, Paul. Can't say I am surprised. Have we received similar well-reasoned feedback from the public?

G

Gavin G. Shire  
Acting Associate Director, Communications and Publishing  
US Geological Survey  
Cell: 703-346-9123

**From:** Laustsen, Paul C <plaustsen@usgs.gov>

**Sent:** Friday, October 16, 2020 9:28:26 PM

**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>

**Cc:** Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>; Puckett, Catherine E <cpuckett@usgs.gov>; Horvath, Scott R <shorvath@usgs.gov>; Demas, Alex P <apdemas@usgs.gov>

**Subject:** Fwd: USGS tweet appears inappropriate

I've been getting a lot of this today in various communication forms, but this is one of the most articulate.

I'm sure you are getting this from other places as well, but just thought you should know.

Paul C. Laustsen  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Office of Communications  
plaustsen@usgs.gov  
650-847-8522

Sent from Apple device. Beware — speech to text may have been used and can distort message; use your imagination in a positive way!

**From:** East, Amy <aeast@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 16, 2020 18:21  
**To:** Laustsen, Paul C; Horvath, Scott R  
**Cc:** Gelfenbaum, Guy R  
**Subject:** USGS tweet appears inappropriate

Dear Paul and Scott,

I wasn't sure whom to write about this, but thought you might know or be able to pass this concern along to the appropriate person.

I am concerned about a Tweet that appeared on the official USGS account today, which appears to represent partisan political activity on behalf of our federal agency.

The Tweet, published at 10:00 a.m. today, reads, "The

[@realDonaldTrump](#)

administration has made significant investments in science and technology to help state and local partners more effectively manage invasive species and diseases."

and it contains a link to a story in the Salt Lake Tribune about invasive species. By tweeting at the personal account of Donald Trump, the message points toward one political candidate for elected office rather than the official account of the president of the United States, which would be @POTUS. The message appears to imply that one political candidate for office "has done good things", and was interpreted by some as an "advertisement" for this candidate. Whether this was intentional or not, as the public clearly noticed, the message appears to be politically affiliated propaganda rather than an objective statement about science, and thus appears to be problematic regarding the Hatch Act and inappropriate for an apolitical federal agency. The 90+ public responses to the tweet indicate that it was received by many people that way, whether or not that was the intention.

As a long-time employee of the USGS this appearance of partisanship concerns me greatly. No matter what our personal political inclinations may be, the message we employees hear consistently is that we cannot favor, or appear to favor, one political 'lean' as part of our official duties.

Best regards,  
Amy East

Dr. Amy E. East  
Research Geologist  
U.S. Geological Survey, Pacific Coastal and Marine Science Center  
2885 Mission St., Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Editor-in-Chief  
Journal of Geophysical Research: Earth Surface

831-460-7533 (office)  
831-421-2458 (cell)

[aeast@usgs.gov](mailto:aeast@usgs.gov)

<https://www.usgs.gov/staff-profiles/amy-east>

**From:** Horvath, Scott R  
**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail); Hines, Vic  
**Cc:** Jones, Leslie W  
**Subject:** Re: Question on Twitter subscribers  
**Date:** Monday, October 19, 2020 9:04:16 AM  
**Attachments:** Outlook-xvbgd3kx.png  
Outlook-et2smir.png  
Outlook-cidhpvgg.png

My last email on this. I'm exhausted and overwhelmed from the activity and feedback from this single tweet and previous retweet.

While I understand what was stated by DOI, (b) (5) - DPP

The OSC's own Hatch Act Guide (which DOI shared with us in their original email prior to sending tweets for retweet/posting) states in #4:

4. Use a social media account **designated for official purposes** to **post** or **share** messages **directed at the success or failure** of a political party, candidate in a partisan race, or partisan political group

(b) (5) - DPP

In addition, [Survey Manual Chapter 500.25 - Scientific Integrity](#), which sole purpose states, "The USGS will not tolerate loss of integrity in the performance, use, or communication of scientific activities and their results." (b) (5) - DPP

(b) (5) - DPP

(b) (5) - DPP

(b) (5) - DPP the tweet which was put out has had extremely [negative comments](#) and [negative quote tweets](#). In addition, you can see our negative sentiment has dropped dramatically since that tweet went out (-188.5% lower than the previous week) with the top 3 negative sentiment drivers being "hatch", "realdonaldtrump" and "science". (b) (5) - DPP

(b) (5) - DPP

I have received multiple negative feedbacks from employees as well (few below) which indicates the concern for this.

I believe the USGS Ethics Office should weigh-in on this.

### Recommended Solution Moving Forward

We all recognize that we have to remain unbiased. Our job as a bureau is to gather data, analyze it, and communicate that data for the Department and taxpayers. DOI and other agencies and organizations have the responsibility of interpreting that data however they prefer and we should remain neutral. We give the data, they use it.

Moving forward, my **strong recommendation** (b) (5) - DPP

(b) (5) - DPP

## Data and Messages

### Messages from employees:

Hi Scott. I want to thank you for taking the initiative to escalate this concern regarding the realdonaldtrump tweets. It is very clear that as long as the content remains up it is doing great damage to our credibility and integrity. It seems to me an important immediate goal should simply be the removal of the offending tweet, because as long as it stands our perception by the public and our colleagues is severely compromised. I'm not sure whether that is an outcome we expect from the process underway or the complaints you have lodged, but I just want to express my strong opinion that this requires a corrective remedy rather than just a complaint/evaluation. Barring deletion, this seems to require some sort of corrective message that underscores our impartiality and policies on scientific integrity. It seems from the teams chat that we are generally in agreement about how problematic these are, and so I just want to lend my support in remedying this appropriately. That said, (b) (6) and have said my piece so will probably bow out of this whole thing. But I could not abide this without expressing the grave concern I have about it. Reach out if needed

### Another one:

I just noticed that this tweet from the main USGS account is receiving a lot of negative attention for the use of the president's personal (not official) Twitter account when mentioning the administration. <https://twitter.com/USGS/status/1317148492410871813> It might have been more appropriate to use @POTUS or @WhiteHouse to avoid being seen as promoting partisan interests, since those are the official accounts.

### Another:

These recent tweets promoting by name the partisan candidate for a political office literally in the middle of an election are deeply disturbing and have already fundamentally unseated our credibility among the scientific community and the public both domestically and globally, as evidenced by the overwhelming multitude of negative responses. While the ethics office is one ultimate filter on what can and cannot be done, we also have our own responsibility to maintain integrity and credibility, and these tweets fall far below that



bar.

**From:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 17, 2020 1:48 PM  
**To:** Horvath, Scott R <shorvath@usgs.gov>; Hines, Vic <vhines@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Question on Twitter subscribers

While (b) (5) - DPP. We have been told explicitly that the use of @realDonaldTrump does not violate the Hatch Act and there is no FSP, manual chapter or standing, agreed upon SOP that (b) (5) - DPP. That doesn't stop people being legitimately upset because of the appearance of bias. I am hopeful, however, that the backlash against this tweet will enable such a protocol to be developed and implemented, but we may have to wait for a month or two if leadership does not want to go down that route at this time.

Best,

G

Gavin G. Shire  
Acting Associate Director  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Cell: 703-346-9123  
[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)

**From:** Horvath, Scott R <shorvath@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 17, 2020 1:29 PM  
**To:** Hines, Vic <vhines@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>; Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Question on Twitter subscribers

I can get follower information next week. But I'm not concerned about what impact this is having on our follower counts. If you just go onto Twitter and do a search for USGS you will see the intense amount of heat, animosity, and calls for Hatch Act violations, and how many people are extremely t'd-off that we posted that. I don't (b) (6). As the only unbiased science arm of DOI (b) (6). We've always done that before. (b) (6). We're not a political organization and science cannot be political.

Get Outlook for iOS

**From:** Hines, Vic <vhines@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 17, 2020 9:29:08 AM  
**To:** Horvath, Scott R <shorvath@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>; Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Question on Twitter subscribers

Hi Scott,  
We were asked to send out a tweet by 1 p.m. Friday highlighting the eDNA op-ed that was published in the Salt Lake Tribune that morning, using "The @realDonaldTrump administration" in the post. I've glanced at a few of the responses, with the majority of those I've looked at being negative. Several included comments people were going to "unfollow" us.

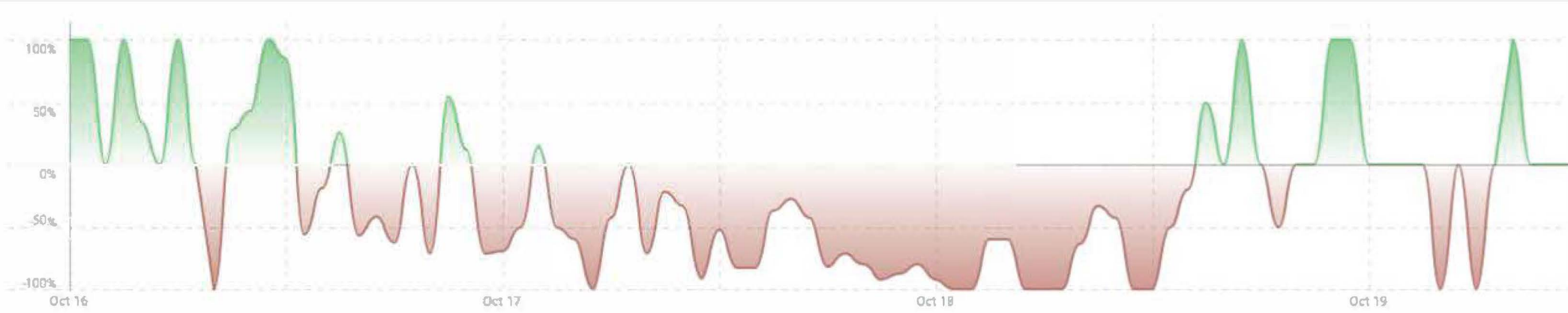
When you're back in the office next week, would you mind taking a look to see if there was any meaningful drop in subscribers? Not sure what we'd do with this information, but it would be interesting to know.

Thanks,  
Vic

ps -- just saw your note come in on this same topic; not surprised people are complaining. Lots of negative comments on Twitter....

Vic Hines  
Acting USGS Public Affairs Officer  
Chief of Communications, Eastern States  
U.S. Geological Survey  
(813) 855-3125

NET SENTIMENT OVER TIME



## SENTIMENT

5.3%

😊 POSITIVE

11.6%

😞 NEGATIVE

## NET SENTIMENT

-37.4%

↘ 188.5%

Compared to the previous period



**From:** Horvath, Scott R  
**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail)  
**Subject:** Fw: USGS Tweet of @realDonaldTrump handle  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 2:22:47 PM

Do you mind if I share the meat of this email to our GS - Social Media Teams channel internally to our social media content managers?

**From:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 19, 2020 10:26 AM  
**To:** Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>; Hines, Vic <vhines@usgs.gov>; Plumlee, Geoffrey S <gplumlee@usgs.gov>; Robinson, Craig R <crrobinson@usgs.gov>; Woods, Tim <twoods@usgs.gov>; Horvath, Scott R <shorvath@usgs.gov>; Ozman, David <dozman@usgs.gov>; Puckett, Catherine E <cpuckett@usgs.gov>; Laustsen, Paul C <plaustsen@usgs.gov>; Curtis, Stacy <scurtis@usgs.gov>; Hickey, Darlene S <dhickey@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** USGS Tweet of @realDonaldTrump handle

As you all know, late last week, we were asked by the Department's Office of Communications (OCO) to tweet about an op-ed that was authored by Director Reilly and published in a third-party media outlet. We were specifically told to use the @realDonaldTrump twitter handle (the link being mention of the Trump Administration in the headline and body of the op-ed). This was the second time we were told to use this handle. The first time, I queried the legality of doing so under the Hatch Act and was given a clear and unambiguous ruling by the Office of the Solicitor. Bureau leads have subsequently been told in clear terms by OCO that we should use this handle when requested.

Not surprisingly, the tweet last week resulted in a significant backlash from both public and staff. At issue here is not whether the use of the handle violates the Hatch Act (and while we have been told it does not, I personally disagree with that ruling: the President started using this handle in 2009, long before he was elected, and has clearly used it for partisan purposes ever since. We are now in the midst of an election campaign). It is whether the public *perceives* it is a violation. The appearance of wrongdoing is as damaging as actual wrongdoing, even if we are technically within the law. We are supposed to be neutral in our science and the optics created by use of this handle casts doubt on that neutrality. I am hopeful that the backlash in regards to this tweet is sufficient to spark a new dialog that may result in alternative direction from the legal and communications officials in the Department. I have requested a joint call with both groups so we may discuss this openly and arrive at a sound decision.

In the meantime, thank you for the information you have provided on the Twitter response, response from staff, and your own personal thoughts on this matter. Regards,

G

Gavin G. Shire  
Acting Associate Director  
Office of Communications and Publishing



**From:** Jones, Leslie W  
**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail)  
**Cc:** Laustsen, Paul C; Horvath, Scott R; Hines, Vic  
**Subject:** Re: Last Friday's Tweet using the @realDonaldTrump  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 5:39:52 PM  
**Attachments:** Outlook-new7503n.png  
Outlook-hsaghu07.png  
Outlook-Th3v2dp.png  
Outlook-3laustsen.png  
Outlook-t35seku.png

This may go too far, but:

(b) (5) - DPP

Though most of the respondents likely intuitively understand where the request is coming from, some may not. Also, some may think it's a request that is coming from our Director when it's not.

**From:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 4:11 PM  
**To:** Garcia, Diane F <dgarcia@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Laustsen, Paul C <plaustsen@usgs.gov>; Horvath, Scott R <shorvath@usgs.gov>; Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>; Hines, Vic <vhines@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Last Friday's Tweet using the @realDonaldTrump

Hi Diane,

Yes, this has been a fun one!

I think the message we provide to those who call is (b) (5) - DPP . @realDonaldTrump has been judged to be the President's official twitter handle used for all his official business. If you have any additional questions you can email our Ethics department at xxxx.

I don't think we (b) (5) - DPP but I'm interested in hearing alternative viewpoints.

+ Leslie and Vic

G

Gavin G. Shire  
Acting Associate Director  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
U.S. Geological Survey  
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[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)

**From:** Garcia, Diane F <dgarcia@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 3:28 PM  
**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Laustsen, Paul C <plaustsen@usgs.gov>; Horvath, Scott R <shorvath@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Last Friday's Tweet using the @realDonaldTrump

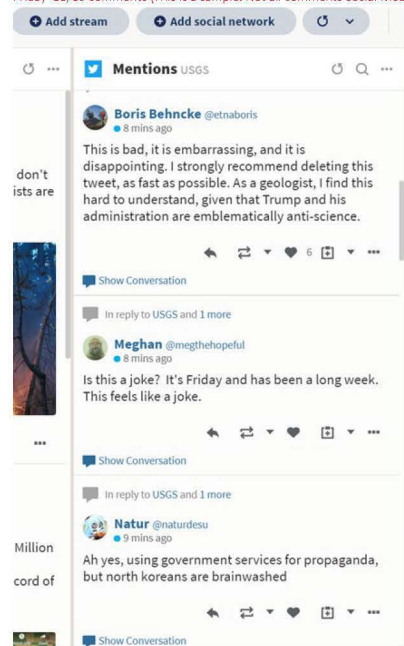
Good Tuesday Gavin,

I'm sure you have been dealing with this enough to last a lifetime. In case you haven't heard and seen enough of the pushback/comments I have included examples from USGS main SM and for further reference the comments from the Director's SLIC Tribune OpEd.

As Science Information Services (SIS) is still seeing pushback/comments on the main Twitter account, can you provide us with guidance on a response? Or perhaps should we continue to (b) (5) - DPP

Also, Friday's Tweet felt more like a demand than a request and the way I understand it there was no time for USGS to evaluate the request??? I'd like to humbly suggest that (b) (5) - DPP

Friday 10/16 comments (This is a sample. Not all comments Social Media received are here)



**From:** [Laustsen, Paul C](#)  
**To:** [Shire, Gavin \(Detail\)](#)  
**Subject:** FW: USGS Tweet of @realDonaldTrump handle  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 11:20:00 AM

---

Gavin,

Sent this out to the western science leadership and outreach folks.

Paul  
650-847-8522

---

**From:** "Laustsen, Paul C" <plaustsen@usgs.gov>  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 8:11 AM  
**To:** Aimee Devaris <adevaris@usgs.gov>, Jill Rolland <jrolland@usgs.gov>, Mark Sogge <mark\_sogge@usgs.gov>, "Blasch, Kyle W" <kblasch@usgs.gov>, Timothy Merrick <tmerrick@usgs.gov>, "Crammond, James D" <crammond@usgs.gov>, "Barton, Cynthia" <cbarton@usgs.gov>, Joseph Jones <jljones@usgs.gov>, Stephen Anthony <santhony@usgs.gov>, Jill Nishimura <jnishi@usgs.gov>, Gordon Tribble <gtribble@usgs.gov>, Karen Courtot <kcourtot@usgs.gov>, "skemp@usgs.gov" <skemp@usgs.gov>, Debra Becker <dabecker@usgs.gov>, "Phillips, Sue" <sue\_phillips@usgs.gov>, Rachel Reagan <rreagan@usgs.gov>, Thomas Murray <tmurray@usgs.gov>, Carolyn Driedger <driedger@usgs.gov>, Liz Westby <lwestby@usgs.gov>, Jessica Ball <jlball@usgs.gov>, Doug Given <doug@usgs.gov>, Bob Degroot <rdegroot@usgs.gov>, Stephen Hickman <hickman@usgs.gov>, Susan Garcia <garcia@usgs.gov>, "Garcia, Diane F" <dgarcia@usgs.gov>, "Gelfenbaum, Guy R" <ggelfenbaum@usgs.gov>, "Golden, Nadine" <ngolden@usgs.gov>, "Benjamin, Susan P" <sbenjamin@usgs.gov>, Jeff Peters <jpeters@usgs.gov>, "Reichard, Eric G" <egreich@usgs.gov>, Sally House <shouse@usgs.gov>, Harry Ackley <hackley@usgs.gov>, "Williams, Colin F" <colin@usgs.gov>, "Leenhouts, James M" <leenhout@usgs.gov>, Christian Zimmerman <czimmerman@usgs.gov>, Yvette Gillies <ygillies@usgs.gov>, "Miles, A. Keith" <keith\_miles@usgs.gov>, "Weill, Alexandra (Allie) M" <aweill@usgs.gov>, Jena Huntington <jmhunt@usgs.gov>, "Lytle, David E" <dlytle@usgs.gov>, "Janney, Eric" <ecjanney@usgs.gov>, "Frankforter, Jill D" <jdfrankf@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Catherine Puckett <cpuckett@usgs.gov>, Steven Sobieszczek <ssobie@usgs.gov>, Ryan McClymont <rmcclymont@usgs.gov>, "Garcia, Diane F" <dgarcia@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: USGS Tweet of @realDonaldTrump handle

Regional Directors, Center Directors, Outreach Team,

I have heard from many of you, and agree with most of the sentiments, regarding the [USGS tweet](#) that went out last Friday.

Please see the email below that Gavin Shire, acting Associate Director for OCAP, put out yesterday.

Please note there is also some discussion of this topic on the USGS Social Media [MS Teams site](#) where USGS Social Media lead Scott Horvath, and others, weigh in. If and when more information is available, we will share.

Paul – Acting Western OCAP Chief  
650-847-8522

---

**From:** "Shire, Gavin (Detail)" <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>

**Date:** Monday, October 19, 2020 at 7:26 AM

**To:** Leslie Jones <ljones@usgs.gov>, "Hines, Vic" <vhines@usgs.gov>, "Plumlee, Geoffrey S" <gplumlee@usgs.gov>, "Robinson, Craig R" <crrobinson@usgs.gov>, "Woods, Tim" <twoods@usgs.gov>, Scott Horvath <shorvath@usgs.gov>, "Ozman, David" <dozman@usgs.gov>, Catherine Puckett <cpuckett@usgs.gov>, "Laustsen, Paul C" <plaustsen@usgs.gov>, "Curtis, Stacy" <scurtis@usgs.gov>, "Hickey, Darlene S" <dhipkey@usgs.gov>

**Subject:** USGS Tweet of @realDonaldTrump handle

As you all know, late last week, we were asked by the Department's Office of Communications (OCO) to tweet about an op-ed that was authored by Director Reilly and published in a third-party media outlet. We were specifically told to use the @realDonaldTrump twitter handle (the link being mention of the Trump Administration in the headline and body of the op-ed). This was the second time we were told to use this handle. The first time, I queried the legality of doing so under the Hatch Act and was given a clear and unambiguous ruling by the Office of the Solicitor. Bureau leads have subsequently been told in clear terms by OCO that we should use this handle when requested.

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In the meantime, thank you for the information you have provided on the Twitter response, response from staff, and your own personal thoughts on this matter. Regards,

G

Gavin G. Shire

**From:** Laustsen, Paul C  
**To:** Jones, Leslie W; Shire, Gavin (Detail)  
**Cc:** Horvath, Scott R; Hines, Vic  
**Subject:** Re: Last Friday's Tweet using the @realDonaldTrump  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 6:40:44 PM  
**Attachments:** image001.png  
image002.png  
image003.png  
image004.png  
image005.png

If that went to far, I may be jumping out of the plane without a parachute on this one.

(b) (5) - DPP

Paul  
650-847-8522

**From:** Leslie Jones <ljones@usgs.gov>  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 2:33 PM  
**To:** "Shire, Gavin (Detail)" <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** "Laustsen, Paul C" <plaustsen@usgs.gov>, Scott Horvath <shorvath@usgs.gov>, "Hines, Vic" <vhines@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Last Friday's Tweet using the @realDonaldTrump

This may go too far, but:

(b) (5) - DPP

Though most of the respondents likely intuitively understand where the request is coming from, some may not. Also, some may think it's a request that is coming from our Director when it's not.

**From:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 4:11 PM  
**To:** Garcia, Diane F <dgarcia@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Laustsen, Paul C <plaustsen@usgs.gov>; Horvath, Scott R <shorvath@usgs.gov>; Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>; Hines, Vic <vhines@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Last Friday's Tweet using the @realDonaldTrump

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+ Leslie and Vic

G

Gavin G. Shire  
Acting Associate Director  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Cell: 703-346-9123  
[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)

**From:** Garcia, Diane F <dgarcia@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 3:28 PM  
**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Laustsen, Paul C <plaustsen@usgs.gov>; Horvath, Scott R <shorvath@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Last Friday's Tweet using the @realDonaldTrump

Good Tuesday Gavin,

I'm sure you have been dealing with this enough to last a lifetime. In case you haven't heard and seen enough of the pushback/comments I have included examples from USGS main SM and for further reference the comments from the Director's SLC Tribune OpEd.

As Science Information Services (SIS) is still seeing pushback/comments on the main Twitter account, can you provide us with guidance on a response? Or perhaps should we continue to (b) (5) - DPP?

Also, Friday's Tweet felt more like a demand than a request and the way I understand it there was no time for USGS to evaluate the request??? I'd like to humbly suggest that (b) (5) - DPP

Friday 10/16 comments (This is a sample. Not all comments Social Media received are here)



**From:** [Reilly, James F](#)  
**To:** [Goodwin, Nicholas R](#); [Shire, Gavin \(Detail\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Nichols, Ryan C](#); [Benemelis, Isabel M](#); [Eisenman, Theresa M](#); [Jones, Leslie W](#)  
**Subject:** RE: NPM NVEWs OpEd is published  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 30, 2020 9:24:43 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)

---

Gavin,

I will clear my schedule to make sure we meet the noon delivery. I'll be available starting at 0700 tomorrow.

JR

---

**From:** Goodwin, Nicholas R <[nicholas\\_goodwin@ios.doi.gov](mailto:nicholas_goodwin@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 30, 2020 9:11 PM  
**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Reilly, James F <[jfreilly@usgs.gov](mailto:jfreilly@usgs.gov)>; Nichols, Ryan C <[ryan\\_nichols@ios.doi.gov](mailto:ryan_nichols@ios.doi.gov)>; Benemelis, Isabel M <[isabel\\_benemelis@ios.doi.gov](mailto:isabel_benemelis@ios.doi.gov)>; Eisenman, Theresa M <[theresa\\_eisenman@ios.doi.gov](mailto:theresa_eisenman@ios.doi.gov)>; Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: NPM NVEWs OpEd is published

Gavin—

Closing the loop on this. In speaking with Heather today, she mentioned that you received their guidance supporting my previous statements.

OCO works very closely with the DEO and General Law, and we will continue to do so to ensure the Department's communications are compliant.

Did Scott get back to you on the copyright concerns? Dr. Reilly's op ed still needs to be posted in full to USGS' website. Here's an example of one of the Secretary's op eds posted on DOI News that you can use as a template: <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/icymi-actually-funding-land-and-water-conservation-fund>

This needs be done by 12pm tomorrow.

Thanks,

Nicholas Goodwin  
Office of the Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
(202) 412-2249



---

**From:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 30, 2020 10:59 AM  
**To:** Goodwin, Nicholas R <[nicholas\\_goodwin@ios.doi.gov](mailto:nicholas_goodwin@ios.doi.gov)>

**From:** [Sobieszczyk, Steven in Teams](#)  
**To:** [Shire, Gavin \(Detail\)](#)  
**Subject:** Steven sent a message  
**Date:** Friday, October 16, 2020 11:34:40 PM  
**Attachments:** [ATT00002.png](#)  
[ATT00003.png](#)  
[ATT00004.png](#)  
[ATT00005.png](#)  
[ATT00006.png](#)  
[ATT00007.png](#)  
[ATT00008.png](#)

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Hi,

Your teammates are trying to reach you in [Microsoft Teams](#).

**Steven sent a message in chat**

Usgs is getting eviscerated on Twitter for posting @realdonaldtrump.  
This is truly sad and a bad call. But that's...

[Reply in Teams](#)

**Install Microsoft Teams now**



iOS



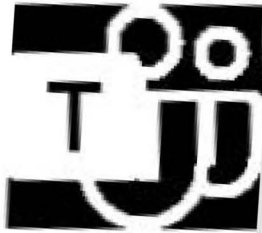
Android

This email was sent from an unmonitored mailbox. Update your email preferences in Teams. [Profile picture](#) > [Settings](#) > [Notifications](#).

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Read our [privacy policy](#)







iOS



Android



**From:** [Shire, Gavin \(Detail\)](#)  
**To:** [Reilly, James F](#)  
**Subject:** RE: NPM NVEWs OpEd is published  
**Date:** Thursday, October 1, 2020 8:44:00 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)

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I'd like to talk about the social media side of this. The whole thing, in fact.

G

Gavin G. Shire  
Acting Associate Director  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Cell: 703-346-9123  
[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)

---

**From:** Reilly, James F <jfreilly@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 30, 2020 9:25 PM  
**To:** Goodwin, Nicholas R <nicholas\_goodwin@ios.doi.gov>; Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>  
**Cc:** Nichols, Ryan C <ryan\_nichols@ios.doi.gov>; Benemelis, Isabel M <isabel\_benemelis@ios.doi.gov>; Eisenman, Theresa M <theresa\_eisenman@ios.doi.gov>; Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: NPM NVEWs OpEd is published

Gavin,  
I will clear my schedule to make sure we meet the noon delivery. I'll be available starting at 0700 tomorrow.  
JR

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**From:** Goodwin, Nicholas R <[nicholas\\_goodwin@ios.doi.gov](mailto:nicholas_goodwin@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 30, 2020 9:11 PM  
**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Reilly, James F <[jfreilly@usgs.gov](mailto:jfreilly@usgs.gov)>; Nichols, Ryan C <[ryan\\_nichols@ios.doi.gov](mailto:ryan_nichols@ios.doi.gov)>; Benemelis, Isabel M <[isabel\\_benemelis@ios.doi.gov](mailto:isabel_benemelis@ios.doi.gov)>; Eisenman, Theresa M <[theresa\\_eisenman@ios.doi.gov](mailto:theresa_eisenman@ios.doi.gov)>; Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: NPM NVEWs OpEd is published

Gavin—

Closing the loop on this. In speaking with Heather today, she mentioned that you received their guidance supporting my previous statements.

**From:** [Shire, Gavin \(Detail\)](#)  
**To:** [Hines, Vic](#)  
**Subject:** RE: SIS response to Twitter post  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 4:17:00 PM

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Damn it! I hate it when that happens. Shouldn't do with replies, but sometimes it switches and I don't see.

Thanks for letting me know

G

Gavin G. Shire  
Acting Associate Director  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Cell: 703-346-9123  
[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)

---

**From:** Hines, Vic <[vhines@usgs.gov](mailto:vhines@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 4:14 PM  
**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Fw: SIS response to Twitter post

FYI that you sent this from your FWS account, so you might not see replies. Vic

---

**From:** Hines, Vic <[vhines@usgs.gov](mailto:vhines@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 4:11 PM  
**To:** Shire, Gavin G <[gavin\\_shire@fws.gov](mailto:gavin_shire@fws.gov)>; Puckett, Catherine E <[cpuckett@usgs.gov](mailto:cpuckett@usgs.gov)>; Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>; Laustsen, Paul C <[plaustsen@usgs.gov](mailto:plaustsen@usgs.gov)>; Ozman, David <[dozman@usgs.gov](mailto:dozman@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Onizuk, Jeffrey M <[jonizuk@usgs.gov](mailto:jonizuk@usgs.gov)>; Hickey, Darlene S <[dhickey@usgs.gov](mailto:dhickey@usgs.gov)>; Curtis, Stacy <[scurtis@usgs.gov](mailto:scurtis@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: SIS response to Twitter post

I think it's a good change. Vic

---

**From:** Shire, Gavin G <[gavin\\_shire@fws.gov](mailto:gavin_shire@fws.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 4:10 PM  
**To:** Puckett, Catherine E <[cpuckett@usgs.gov](mailto:cpuckett@usgs.gov)>; Hines, Vic <[vhines@usgs.gov](mailto:vhines@usgs.gov)>; Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>; Laustsen, Paul C <[plaustsen@usgs.gov](mailto:plaustsen@usgs.gov)>; Ozman, David <[dozman@usgs.gov](mailto:dozman@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Onizuk, Jeffrey M <[jonizuk@usgs.gov](mailto:jonizuk@usgs.gov)>; Hickey, Darlene S <[dhickey@usgs.gov](mailto:dhickey@usgs.gov)>; Curtis, Stacy <[scurtis@usgs.gov](mailto:scurtis@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: SIS response to Twitter post

**From:** [Shire, Gavin \(Detail\)](#)  
**To:** [Hines, Vic](#); [Goodwin, Nicholas R](#)  
**Cc:** [Jones, Leslie W](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Salt Lake City Tribute: Jim Reilly: Trump administration uses "eDNA" to combat invasive species  
**Date:** Friday, October 16, 2020 1:04:00 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)

---

Fast work! Thank you

G

Gavin G. Shire  
Acting Associate Director  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Cell: 703-346-9123  
[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)

---

**From:** Hines, Vic <[vhines@usgs.gov](mailto:vhines@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 16, 2020 1:04 PM  
**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>; Goodwin, Nicholas R <[nicholas\\_goodwin@ios.doi.gov](mailto:nicholas_goodwin@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Cc:** Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: Salt Lake City Tribute: Jim Reilly: Trump administration uses "eDNA" to combat invasive species

Already done and we have their permission. Will work to post Monday.  
Vic

Vic Hines  
Acting USGS Public Affairs Officer  
Chief of Communications, Eastern States  
U.S. Geological Survey  
(813) 855-3125

---

**From:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 16, 2020 1:02 PM  
**To:** Goodwin, Nicholas R <[nicholas\\_goodwin@ios.doi.gov](mailto:nicholas_goodwin@ios.doi.gov)>; Hines, Vic <[vhines@usgs.gov](mailto:vhines@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Salt Lake City Tribute: Jim Reilly: Trump administration uses "eDNA" to combat invasive species

Vic,

**From:** [Shire, Gavin \(Detail\)](#)  
**To:** [Gottry, Heather C](#)  
**Cc:** [de la Vega, Scott A](#); [Schasberger, Paula I](#); [Garcia, Monica L](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Social Media and the Hatch Act  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 30, 2020 12:27:00 PM  
**Attachments:** [Community Voices](#) [New volcano monitors increase safety](#) [Columnists](#) [tdn.pdf](#)

---

Thank you Heather. I don't have a tweet to share as we have not crafted one. We tweeted without using it and were rebuked by the Department's Office of Communications for not doing so, so I wanted to check in principle if it was allowable (particularly given the admonition by OCL to be particularly careful in the 90-day window before an election). The tweet was in reference to an op-ed authored by our Director (attached) in which he references a bill signed into law by the President (the text of the op-ed was reviewed by Ethics). OCO wanted us to reference that in the tweet and use the @RDT handle.

Regards,

G

Gavin G. Shire  
Acting Associate Director  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
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Cell: 703-346-9123  
[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)

---

**From:** Gottry, Heather C <[heather.gottry@sol.doi.gov](mailto:heather.gottry@sol.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 30, 2020 12:09 PM  
**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** de la Vega, Scott A <[scott.delavega@sol.doi.gov](mailto:scott.delavega@sol.doi.gov)>; Schasberger, Paula I <[paula.schasberger@sol.doi.gov](mailto:paula.schasberger@sol.doi.gov)>; Garcia, Monica L <[monica.garcia@sol.doi.gov](mailto:monica.garcia@sol.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Social Media and the Hatch Act

Gavin – Hello! The DEO is happy to review specific tweets to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Hatch Act. Can you please send us the text of tweet(s) in question?

As quick background, the Office of Special Counsel (OSC) has provided informal guidance on retweeting the @realDonaldTrump Twitter handle. The President has used @realDonaldTrump for official purposes since the beginning of his Administration and OSC has not declared that it is a violation of the Hatch Act for Federal agencies to use it or retweet it using official resources as long as the content of the tweet does not constitute partisan political activity. Also, the President and Vice President are not subject to the Hatch Act unlike all other Federal employees, which complicates the discussion about official use of @realDonaldTrump. Additionally, because the President has been using @realDonaldTrump for official business, the White House is required to maintain the tweets as official records. Bottom line the use of @realDonaldTrump in DOI social media requires careful review and it can be used and retweeted from official government accounts if the content is official, has a nexus to the mission of the agency, and most importantly, does not contain partisan political activity.

I hope this additional context is helpful. Please do not hesitate to reach out if it would be helpful to discuss further. Many thanks.



[https://tdn.com/opinion/columnists/community-voices-new-volcano-monitors-increase-safety/article\\_4f84006c-4368-57b3-8a86-f8c50e7429d6.html](https://tdn.com/opinion/columnists/community-voices-new-volcano-monitors-increase-safety/article_4f84006c-4368-57b3-8a86-f8c50e7429d6.html)

COMMUNITY VOICES

## Community Voices: New volcano monitors increase safety

Jim Reilly  
Sep 24, 2020

SALE! Subscribe for \$1/mo.

**F**orty years ago this past May, Mount St. Helens erupted, tragically claiming 57 lives and resulting in more than \$1 billion in damages. As a nation, we were not prepared for this eruption, and it highlighted the critical need to reduce volcano hazard effects by enhancing our awareness, response and resilience to the more than 160 active volcanos in the United States.

Progress has been made since 1980 as our scientific knowledge about volcanoes has increased and technological innovations have improved. We are leading in the development of a coordinated and unified system to monitor, warn and safeguard people from volcanic activity dangers, a real threat across Washington State.

President Trump signed legislation, co-sponsored by senators Lisa Murkowski and Maria Cantwell, authorizing USGS to establish the **National Volcano Early Warning System**, a national-scale plan to ensure that volcanoes are monitored at levels commensurate to their threats. The goal of the NVEWS is to ensure that the most hazardous volcanoes will be properly monitored well in advance of the onset of activity, making it possible for scientists to improve the timeliness and accuracy of hazard forecasts and for citizens to take proper and timely action to reduce risk.



Fundamental to NVEWS is risk assessment. The USGS has updated the **National Volcanic Threat Assessment**, which categorized 161 volcanoes in 14 U.S. states and territories. Eighteen are identified as a “very high threat,” and 39 are recognized as a “high threat.” Most of the very high threat volcanoes are along the west coast in Washington, Oregon, and California with another five in Alaska and two in Hawaii. For Washington, Glacier Peak, Mount Baker, Mount Rainier and Mount St. Helens are listed as very high threat with Mount Adams being listed as high threat. Identifying volcanic threat potential helps to prioritize monitoring locations, develop federal, state, local and academic partnerships, expedite monitoring installations and identify future scientific and technological needs.

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Once NVEWS monitoring stations are deployed and networked, real-time information is provided to scientists, decision makers and public safety officials to make more accurately informed and earlier lifesaving decisions. Fortunately, volcanoes exhibit multiple indications of unrest that can, if detected early, warn of potential eruptions. Monitoring and successfully interpreting these indications allow USGS to release timely, accurate volcanic hazard forecasts to emergency managers and the public to help minimize loss of life and economic disruption. Accurate forecasting also provides land and emergency management agencies as well as aviation authorities enough time to issue warnings and prepare effective responses to an impending eruption.

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When NVEWS is fully implemented, all hazardous U.S. volcanoes, including Mount St. Helens, will be monitored at levels consistent with the threat they pose to communities, infrastructure and aviation.

To measure threat indications, NVEWS will integrate existing systems and incorporate emerging technologies, such as modern seismometers; ground-based as well as airborne and satellite-based instruments for measuring deformation; acoustic sensors for detecting explosions; and real-time gas-measuring equipment. With advances in artificial intelligence, even greater warning times will be possible.

These enhancements to NVEWS are essential for more accurate real-time measurements that let volcanologists reliably assess the timing and location of eruption hazards.

*Jim Reilly, a former NASA astronaut, serves as director of the U.S. Geological Survey, the nation's largest water, Earth and biological science, and civilian mapping agency.*

Dan Newhouse is a Republican member of Congress from Yakima, representing Washington's Fourth District.

### Lend your voice

Do you have a perspective or thoughtful reflection on a local or regional issue, event or trend, or do you want to share the story of your local nonprofit or agency with your fellow readers of The Daily News? We are creating an opportunity for you to do this in "Community Voices," a new feature to be published periodically in this space on our opinion page. We are creating a place where the wide range of opinions, perspectives and expertise in our region are welcome, in the belief that thoughtful public discussion leads to positive solutions, and that many organizations in our communities have important messages for all of us. "Voices" columns must be respectful and must meet our editorial standards. These "Voices" columns will be longer — they must be 650 —700 words in length. They may be trimmed for length; they will not be published if they are shorter than 650 words. As is the case with our letters, the writer(s) must be willing to

have their names published, and they need to provide our editors with email and telephone contact information. The submissions will be edited for spelling and grammar, and all submissions must be sent via email. Publication of any "Voices" submission is up to the discretion of The Daily News. Send "Voices" submissions to Editor Barry Holtzclaw at [bholtzclaw@tdn.com](mailto:bholtzclaw@tdn.com).

 0 comments

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### Ghumman: America's real problem is 'ethical fading'

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---

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---

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---

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Sep 24, 2020

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**From:** [Shire, Gavin \(Detail\)](#)  
**To:** [Hines, Vic](#); [Demas, Alex P](#)  
**Cc:** [Jones, Leslie W](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Tweet on eDNA op-ed  
**Date:** Friday, October 16, 2020 1:00:00 PM

---

Correct. Despite the issues it raises, ethics and general law have told the following:

“President Trump has been using the Twitter handle ‘@realDonaldTrump’ for official purposes since the beginning of his Administration, and the Office of the Special Counsel recognizes that it can be used and retweeted from official government accounts if the content is **official, has a nexus to the mission of the agency, and most importantly, does not contain partisan political activity.**”

Given that, unless and until USGS has an official policy that absolves us of this requirement (which we are not likely to get in current circumstances), we need to oblige the Department’s requests to retweet.

G

Gavin G. Shire  
Acting Associate Director  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Cell: 703-346-9123  
[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)

---

**From:** Hines, Vic <vhines@usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 16, 2020 12:08 PM  
**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>; Demas, Alex P <apdemas@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** Tweet on eDNA op-ed

Alex -- can you load this into Hootsuite? We've been asked to push it out before 1 p.m.

Gavin -- my understanding from the email sent last week is this is in compliance with the guidance sent last week on the Ethics review; please let us know if that's not the case.  
Thanks,  
Vic

“The @realDonaldTrump administration has made significant investments in science and technology to help state and local partners more effectively manage invasive species and diseases.



**From:** [Shire, Gavin \(Detail\)](#)  
**To:** [Horvath, Scott R](#)  
**Subject:** RE: USGS Tweet of @realDonaldTrump handle  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 2:28:00 PM

---

I do not. Thank you for asking. It has already been widely shared internally.

G

Gavin G. Shire  
Acting Associate Director  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Cell: 703-346-9123  
[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)

---

**From:** Horvath, Scott R <[shorvath@usgs.gov](mailto:shorvath@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 2:23 PM  
**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Fw: USGS Tweet of @realDonaldTrump handle

Do you mind if I share the meat of this email to our GS - Social Media Teams channel internally to our social media content managers?

---

**From:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 19, 2020 10:26 AM  
**To:** Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>; Hines, Vic <[vhines@usgs.gov](mailto:vhines@usgs.gov)>; Plumlee, Geoffrey S <[gplumlee@usgs.gov](mailto:gplumlee@usgs.gov)>; Robinson, Craig R <[crrobinson@usgs.gov](mailto:crrobinson@usgs.gov)>; Woods, Tim <[twoods@usgs.gov](mailto:twoods@usgs.gov)>; Horvath, Scott R <[shorvath@usgs.gov](mailto:shorvath@usgs.gov)>; Ozman, David <[dozman@usgs.gov](mailto:dozman@usgs.gov)>; Puckett, Catherine E <[cpuckett@usgs.gov](mailto:cpuckett@usgs.gov)>; Laustsen, Paul C <[plaustsen@usgs.gov](mailto:plaustsen@usgs.gov)>; Curtis, Stacy <[scurtis@usgs.gov](mailto:scurtis@usgs.gov)>; Hickey, Darlene S <[dhickey@usgs.gov](mailto:dhickey@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** USGS Tweet of @realDonaldTrump handle

As you all know, late last week, we were asked by the Department's Office of Communications (OCO) to tweet about an op-ed that was authored by Director Reilly and published in a third-party media outlet. We were specifically told to use the @realDonaldTrump twitter handle (the link being mention of the Trump Administration in the headline and body of the op-ed). This was the second time we were told to use this handle. The first time, I queried the legality of doing so under the Hatch Act and was given a clear and unambiguous ruling by the Office of the Solicitor. Bureau leads have subsequently been told in clear terms by OCO that we should use this handle when requested.

Not surprisingly, the tweet last week resulted in a significant backlash from both public and staff. At issue here is not whether the use of the handle violates the Hatch Act (and while we have been told it does not, I personally disagree with that ruling: the President started using this handle in 2009, long before he was elected, and has clearly used it for partisan purposes ever since. We are now in

**From:** [Shire, Gavin \(Detail\)](#)  
**To:** [Laustsen, Paul C](#); [Jones, Leslie W](#)  
**Cc:** [Horvath, Scott R](#); [Hines, Vic](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Last Friday's Tweet using the @realDonaldTrump  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 7:01:44 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)

You got a parachute?

Thanks, all, for the input. I am comfortable with Leslie's addition. It keeps to theoretical use.

G

Gavin G. Shire  
Acting Associate Director, Communications and Publishing  
US Geological Survey  
Cell: 703-346-9123

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**From:** Laustsen, Paul C <[plaustsen@usgs.gov](mailto:plaustsen@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 6:40 PM  
**To:** Jones, Leslie W; Shire, Gavin (Detail)  
**Cc:** Horvath, Scott R; Hines, Vic  
**Subject:** Re: Last Friday's Tweet using the @realDonaldTrump

If that went to far, I may be jumping out of the plane without a parachute on this one.

(b) (5) - DPP

Paul  
650-847-8522

---

**From:** Leslie Jones <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 2:33 PM  
**To:** "Shire, Gavin (Detail)" <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** "Laustsen, Paul C" <[plaustsen@usgs.gov](mailto:plaustsen@usgs.gov)>, Scott Horvath <[shorvath@usgs.gov](mailto:shorvath@usgs.gov)>, "Hines, Vic" <[vhines@usgs.gov](mailto:vhines@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: Last Friday's Tweet using the @realDonaldTrump

This may go too far, but:

(b) (5) - DPP

Though most of the respondents likely intuitively understand where the request is coming from, some may not. Also, some may think it's a request that is coming from our Director when it's not.

---

**From:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 4:11 PM  
**To:** Garcia, Diane F <[dgarcia@usgs.gov](mailto:dgarcia@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Laustsen, Paul C <[plaustsen@usgs.gov](mailto:plaustsen@usgs.gov)>; Horvath, Scott R <[shorvath@usgs.gov](mailto:shorvath@usgs.gov)>; Jones, Leslie W <[ljones@usgs.gov](mailto:ljones@usgs.gov)>; Hines, Vic <[vhines@usgs.gov](mailto:vhines@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Last Friday's Tweet using the @realDonaldTrump

Hi Diane,

Yes, this has been a fun one!

I think the message we provide to those who call is (b) (5) - DPP @realDonaldTrump has been judged to be the President's official twitter handle used for all his official business. If you have any additional questions you can email our Ethics department at xxxx.

I don't think we (b) (5) - DPP, but I'm interested in hearing alternative viewpoints.

+ Leslie and Vic

G

Gavin G. Shire  
Acting Associate Director  
Office of Communications and Publishing  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Cell: 703-346-9123  
[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)

---

**From:** Garcia, Diane F <[dgarcia@usgs.gov](mailto:dgarcia@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020 3:28 PM  
**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Laustsen, Paul C <[plaustsen@usgs.gov](mailto:plaustsen@usgs.gov)>; Horvath, Scott R <[shorvath@usgs.gov](mailto:shorvath@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Last Friday's Tweet using the @realDonaldTrump

Good Tuesday Gavin,

I'm sure you have been dealing with this enough to last a lifetime. In case you haven't heard and seen enough of the pushback/comments I have included examples from USGS main SM and for further reference the comments from the Director's SLC Tribune OpEd.

As Science Information Services (SIS) is still seeing pushback/comments on the main Twitter account, can you provide us with guidance on a response? Or perhaps should we (b) (5) - DPP }?

Also, Friday's Tweet felt more like a demand than a request and the way I understand it there was no time for USGS to evaluate the request??? I'd like to humbly suggest that (b) (5) - DPP

Friday 10/16 comments (This is a sample. Not all comments Social Media received are here)

**Re: WIRED Writer and tweet with email**

Horvath, Scott R <shorvath@usgs.gov>

Wed 10/21/2020 2:22 PM

To: Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>; Hines, Vic <vhines@usgs.gov>; Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>

Well, I don't think so, at least I hope not. But to clarify...he's a freelance writer it looks like and writes for Wired, Politico, etc.

---

**From:** Horvath, Scott R <shorvath@usgs.gov>

**Sent:** Wednesday, October 21, 2020 2:14 PM

**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>; Hines, Vic <vhines@usgs.gov>; Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>

**Subject:** Re: WIRED Writer and tweet with email

Something to point out as well is someone did a twitter search for handle usage across various bureaus including USGS:

**Aaron Weiss** @aweiss · 2h

Replying to @adamfederman

Noted: The @Interior account never tagged Trump in a tweet until this year. Then there was 1 in February, 1 in March, 1 in May, and 17 tweets starting in August.

We're watching @SecBernhardt and @DOIJorjani order repeated violations of the Hatch Act across DOI.



1



4



12

**Aaron Weiss** @aweiss · 2h

Similarly, @NatlParkService never tagged Trump until this August, then suddenly 3 tags in 4 days.

[twitter.com/search?q=from%...](https://twitter.com/search?q=from%...)

1



3

**Aaron Weiss** @aweiss · 2h

The @BLMNational account has been a vocal Trump supporter under @Sagebrush\_Rebel, tagging and praising him 28 times this year, having never tagged him before 2020.

[twitter.com/search?q=from%...](https://twitter.com/search?q=from%...)

1



3

**Aaron Weiss** @aweiss · 2h

In case it wasn't already obvious, the @usfws account makes it clear that there was a "Dear Leader" order from the top to praise Trump when he flip-flopped on funding #LWCF and signed the Great American Outdoors Act. 8 tags in 2 days.

[twitter.com/search?q=from%...](https://twitter.com/search?q=from%...)

1



1

**Aaron Weiss** @aweiss · 2h

All of this makes the @USGS tweet even more of an outlier. The agency managed to withstand the orders to praise Trump until last week. Bernhardt's corruption of Interior is complete.

[twitter.com/search?q=from%...](https://twitter.com/search?q=from%...)

1



**From:** Horvath, Scott R

**Sent:** Wednesday, October 21, 2020 2:12 PM

**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>; Hines, Vic <vhines@usgs.gov>; Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>

**Subject:** WIRED Writer and tweet with email

Twitter thread <https://twitter.com/adamfederman/status/1318902411222786048>

-----  
**Scott Horvath**

Bureau Social Media Lead / WWW Product Manager

571-296-1157 (soliciting = block)

shorvath@usgs.gov (soliciting = junk)

*More than 15 emails, I'm not doing my job. Less than 5, I'm not busy enough. That's why I'm a 10.*



**RE: WIRED Writer and tweet with email**

Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>

Wed 10/21/2020 2:14 PM

To: Horvath, Scott R <shorvath@usgs.gov>; Hines, Vic <vhines@usgs.gov>; Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>

It's been nice working with you all

Gavin G. Shire

Acting Associate Director

Office of Communications and Publishing

U.S. Geological Survey

Cell: 703-346-9123

[gshire.detail@usgs.gov](mailto:gshire.detail@usgs.gov)

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**From:** Horvath, Scott R <shorvath@usgs.gov>

**Sent:** Wednesday, October 21, 2020 2:12 PM

**To:** Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>; Hines, Vic <vhines@usgs.gov>; Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>

**Subject:** WIRED Writer and tweet with email

Twitter thread <https://twitter.com/adamfederman/status/1318902411222786048>

-----  
**Scott Horvath**

Bureau Social Media Lead / WWW Product Manager

571-296-1157 (soliciting = block)

[shorvath@usgs.gov](mailto:shorvath@usgs.gov) (soliciting = junk)

*More than 15 emails, I'm not doing my job. Less than 5, I'm not busy enough. That's why I'm a 10.*

**Re: USGS tweet**

Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>

Mon 10/19/2020 12:24 PM

To: Weltzin, Jake <jweltzin@usgs.gov>

Yes, there is a lot of conversation going on about it over the weekend and today. I can chat at 2 or 2:30 ET today...

---

**From:** Weltzin, Jake <jweltzin@usgs.gov>

**Sent:** Monday, October 19, 2020 12:21 PM

**To:** Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>

**Subject:** Fw: USGS tweet

Hmm. This tweet was getting a fair amount of negative feedback on Twitter. Could we discuss just between us if you get a chance? j

Jake F. Weltzin, he/him/his  
Senior Science Advisor, Acting  
Ecosystems Mission Area  
US Geological Survey  
2150 Centre Ave, Bldg C  
Fort Collins, CO 80526  
Office: 970-226-9239  
Mobile: 703-485-5138  
E-mail: [jweltzin@usgs.gov](mailto:jweltzin@usgs.gov)

---

**From:** Weltzin, Jake <jweltzin@usgs.gov>

**Sent:** Sunday, October 18, 2020 8:51 AM

**To:** Weltzin, Jake <jweltzin@usgs.gov>

**Subject:** USGS tweet

Jake F. Weltzin, he/him/his  
Senior Science Advisor, Acting  
Ecosystems Mission Area  
US Geological Survey  
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Fort Collins, CO 80526  
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E-mail: [jweltzin@usgs.gov](mailto:jweltzin@usgs.gov)

**Fwd: [EXTERNAL] Partisan activity in official USGS twitter account**

-DO-OCAP-SocialMedia, GS <socialmedia@usgs.gov>

Sat 10/17/2020 9:25 AM

To: Shire, Gavin (Detail) <gshire.detail@usgs.gov>; Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>; Hines, Vic <vhines@usgs.gov>

As I predicted. You know my stance in this.

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**From:** Rachel Gabor <rsgabor@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Saturday, October 17, 2020 9:19:40 AM

**To:** -DO-OCAP-SocialMedia, GS <socialmedia@usgs.gov>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Partisan activity in official USGS twitter account

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Hi -

I'm writing because I am concerned about some partisan political activity on the USGS main verified twitter account.

This tweet, linked and screen-captured below, seems clearly designed to support a specific Presidential candidate during a political election. While I am sending this from my personal email as a private US citizen, in my job I work with many USGS scientists who take both their jobs and their obligation to the Hatch Act very seriously. It is incredibly disappointing to see such a great, non-partisan, scientific agency engage in partisan politics during an election season. I ask the DOI/USGS social media team to take a serious look at this and ensure it doesn't happen in the future. The trust and safety of Americans is dependent on all of us knowing agencies like the USGS act in a non-partisan fashion and perform and report science without a political agenda. Tweets like this greatly erode that trust.

thank you

-Rachel Gabor, Voter in OH-15

<https://twitter.com/USGS/status/1317148492410871813>



The [@realDonaldTrump](#) administration has made significant investments in science and technology to help state and local partners more effectively manage invasive species and diseases.



Jim Reilly: Trump administration uses "eDNA" to combat invasive species  
Invasive zebra and quagga mussels are an immediate threat to Western states.  
With no controls, they spread rapidly, foul boats and equipment, clog water ...  
[sltrib.com](#)

1:00 PM · Oct 16, 2020 · Hootsuite Inc.