

**Forest Service Manual
National Headquarters - Washington Office
Washington, DC**

**Forest Service Manual 1600 – Information Services
Chapter 1640 - Multimedia Information**

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Superseded Directive: 1640, Amendment 1600-2006-4, August 1, 2006

Approved by: Victoria Christiansen, Interim Chief

Date approved: August 15, 2018

Responsible Staff:

Posting Instructions: Amendments are numbered consecutively by title and calendar year. Post by document; remove the entire document and replace it with this amendment. Retain this transmittal as the first page(s) of this document. The last amendment to this title was 1600-2018-1 to FSM 1630.

Explanation of changes: Following is an explanation of the changes throughout the directive by section.

1640: Changes the title of the chapter from “Audiovisual Information” to “Multimedia Information”.

1640.1: Revises to include USDA authority.

1640.12: Adds section to clarify copyright law and usage of imagery documented within the Forest Service.

1640.13: Adds section to comprehensively explain Equal Opportunity Policy and its relative use in video productions.

1640.14: Adds section to provide a reference to use of the Forest Service insignia.

1640.15: Adds section to include missing Privacy Act authority under Public Law 93-579, 88 Stat.1896.

1640.2: Updates Objective statement to reflect new media guidance.

1640.3: Updates Policy to include photo and video strategic goals, purpose, and dissemination.

1640.41a: Changes caption from “Chief” to “Washington Office Communication Director” and set forth direction.

1640.41b: Changes caption from “Washington Office Director, Office of Communication” to “National Multimedia Manager, Office of Communication” and set forth direction.

1640.41c: Removes code and caption.

1640.42a: Revises language and responsibilities of Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director and Institute Director.

1640.42b: Changes caption from “Audiovisual Coordinators for Field Units” to “Public Affairs Officers/Multimedia Managers for Field Units” and set forth direction.

1640.5: Removes caption and direction and recodes to section 1643.

1641: Changes caption from “Audiovisual Productions” to “Video Productions” and set forth direction.

1641.1: Changes caption from “Captioning and Audio Description of Audiovisual Productions” to “Multimedia/Video Productions with Cooperative Agreements” and set forth direction.

1641.11: Removes obsolete direction, which referenced out of date equipment, processes and procedures.

1641.12: Removes code and caption, “Video Productions and Multimedia Presentations” and incorporates direction into FSM 1641.

1641.2: Adds new code and caption for “Forest Service Support to Nongovernmental Multimedia Productions, Advertising, and Promotions” to consolidate video and filming requirements within
FSM 1640.

1641.3: Recodes the direction on “Productions and Equipment for Visitor Centers” previously set forth in section 1641.13 with no further changes.

1641.4: Adds new code and caption for “Disclaimer - Commercial Endorsement” for clarification of logo and commercial use.

1641.14: Removes obsolete direction “Video Conferences” from handbook.

1642: Adds new code and caption to enhances “Photography” with new Forest Service photo standards.

1643: Recodes to this section for better usability, direction formerly coded at section 1640.5.

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1640.1 - Authority

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Departmental Regulations (DR) 1490-002, 1480-001, 1495-001, 1497-001. These departmental regulations provide policies and procedures for photography, video, graphic design, and multimedia activities for all agencies in the USDA. The purpose is to ensure that the communications products of the USDA are produced in the most efficient and cost-effective manner while providing the public with accurate and timely visual and audio information.

1640.12 - Copyright

The Copyright Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-553; 90 Stat. 2541; 17 U.S.C. Chapters 1-13) sets forth the subject matter and media that are covered by copyright and describes the scope and limitations of exclusive rights. Materials produced by Federal employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain and cannot be copyrighted; therefore, anyone may reproduce Federal Government approved imagery without permission.

All Forest Service photos and video are public domain. Public Domain refers to creative multimedia materials that are owned by the public, not an individual author or artist. Anyone can use a public domain work without obtaining permission, but no one can ever own it.

Photos and videos produced on government time and/or based on work-related access to photo opportunities and published externally by Forest Service employees regardless of their job series are in the public domain and cannot be copyrighted; therefore, anyone may reproduce Federal Government multimedia products without permission of the photographer or producer.

If a Forest Service employee captures a photo or video with a personal camera during an official travel trip, a lunch break, or on a back-country hike after hours, the photo or video is considered a Forest Service product and must be treated as such if published externally on social media, a website, in print or any platform. Although the photo or video may have been produced when the employee was not actively engaged in their primary job, the employee is “at work” and would not be in that location unless in the course of their job with the Forest Service.

1640.13 - Equal Opportunity Policy, Public Notification, and Section 508 Compliance

USDA Departmental Regulation 4300-3 (DR-4300-3), Equal Opportunity Public Notification Policy, establishes policy for ensuring positive and continuing notification of USDA equal opportunity policy to the public and USDA employees. See DR-4300-3 for the complete wording and required use of the nondiscrimination statement on video productions produced by USDA and its agencies for public information, public education, or public distribution. In addition to the complete and extensive nondiscrimination statement provided in DR-4300-3, USDA Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights has approved the following abbreviated statement for use on video productions produced by USDA.

USDA agencies may use “USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.”

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1998, requires Federal agencies to provide disabled employees and members of the public access to information that is comparable to access available to others.

1640.14 - Forest Service Insignia

The Forest Service insignia (Forest Service shield) is reserved for the official use of the Forest Service. Such use will be primarily for identification purposes (36 CFR Part 264).

1640.15 - Privacy

Privacy Act of 1974 ([Public Law 93–579](#), 88 Stat. 1896, enacted December 31, 1974, [5 U.S.C. § 552a](#)) establishes a Code of Fair Information Practice that governs the collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of personally identifiable information about individuals that is maintained in systems of records by federal agencies.

1640.2 - Objective

To provide guidance and standards for multimedia, photography, video, audio, and graphic design that communicates Forest Service programs, policies, and messages to external and internal audiences in the most efficient and cost-effective manner, while utilizing clear and plain text and visuals.

1640.3 - Policy

1. All multimedia products created and disseminated by the Forest Service should communicate one or more of the strategic goals and priorities of the Forest Service and the USDA. It should also have a clearly defined purpose and specific demographic identified to ensure need and efficient use of multimedia products.
2. To attain widest dissemination possible, multimedia products should be used to convey Forest Service information, priorities, and messages using a combination of photography, video, audio, graphic design, and/or exhibit techniques for a targeted demographic audience.
3. To ensure maximum use and reach of imagery while providing accurate context, Forest Service photographs must contain captions or descriptions that answer who, what, when, where, and why and include the byline of the photographer.
4. All video productions, including b-roll or raw unedited video clips, published externally in the public domain must be coordinated and approved by the appropriate level public affairs authority.

5. The National Multimedia Manager must approve all national-level Forest Service video productions before publishing onto official Forest Service approved video platforms. Although most videos are externally available to mainstream audiences by their presence on a website, all videos do not have national appeal or reach.
6. All completed video productions must comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794 (d). Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that all Federal agencies are to make their electronic and information technology services and content accessible to people with disabilities.
7. B-roll or raw unedited video clips shared externally on social media, or other digital platforms, do not require USDA and Forest Service insignias along with nondiscrimination statement, but must contain a video description and will need to be approved by appropriate level Public Affairs Officer (PAO).
8. Nondiscrimination or equal opportunity statements must be included in Forest Service video productions.
9. Copyrighted materials may not be used unless all rights are acquired or express permission of specified use is given by the copyright holder to the Forest Service. If permission is granted with specified use, it must be included within the multimedia or video production credits.
10. Video and photography archives must be maintained at the appropriate public affairs level based on where they were secured/released.

1640.4 - Responsibility

1640.41 - Washington Office

1640.41a - Washington Office Communication Director

It is the responsibility of the Communication Director, or their designee, to:

1. Oversee the management, coordination, and control of multimedia products produced by the Forest Service Headquarters, Washington Office.
2. Provide agency direction for efficient management of all multimedia products within Federal and USDA requirements.
3. Designate the National Multimedia Manager.
4. Approve applicable multimedia standards and guidance to best represent Forest Service communication goals.

5. Ensure the most efficient and cost effective production and use of multimedia products while utilizing clear and plain text.

1640.41b - National Multimedia Manager, Office of Communication

It is the responsibility of the National Multimedia Manager to:

1. Provide general oversight, leadership, and coordination of multimedia activities within the Forest Service.
2. Coordinate, evaluate, and approve national-level video productions such as public service announcements, motion pictures, television, and multimedia productions on National Forest System lands in accordance with FSM 2725.51, Special Uses Management.
3. Provide policy, standards, and guidance on Forest Service use of photography, video, audio, and exhibits.
4. Enforce guidance on establishing and maintaining a historical and current Forest Service photography and video library to meet strategic communication needs of the Forest Service.
5. Act as the national headquarters multimedia liaison to: interagency organizations; USDA; Forest Service Regions, Stations, Area, Institute, and partners on national video or multimedia productions.
6. Establish, review and ensure the quality and effectiveness of national multimedia products and their effects on targeted agency demographic audiences.
7. Approve national-level multimedia productions to ensure coordination of productions with the USDA Office of Communications.
8. Maintain Forest Service national multimedia archive of photography and video which will be available for both internal Forest Service employees and external public personnel.
9. Send copies of Forest Service photography and video to the National Archives and Records Administration.

1640.42 - Field Units

1640.42a - Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, and Institute Director

It is the responsibility of Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, and Institute Director to:

1. Ensure photography and multimedia productions are produced in a cost-effective manner and comply with Federal, USDA, and Forest Service requirements in the management of multimedia programs, productions, and products.
2. Obtain pre-production approval for national multimedia productions from the Washington Office, Director of Communication, or their designee.
3. Approve regional multimedia productions that are strictly local in subject matter and anticipated public interest, as well as elevate multimedia productions for approval, to the National Multimedia Manager, Office of Communication, Washington Office that qualify for national-level exposure.
4. Appoint a Multimedia Manager for the region or unit to assist in carrying out these responsibilities.

1640.42b - Public Affairs Officers/Multimedia Managers for field units

It is the responsibility of the regional and unit Public Affairs Officers/Multimedia Managers (PAO) to:

1. Enforce Forest Service multimedia production guidelines, standards and policies.
2. Establish and maintain a multimedia, photography and video library to provide timely and historical multimedia products which communicate Forest Service messages, policies and programs within the region and units.
3. Direct and produce photographic and video representations of Forest Service regional and unit events, messages, and policies.

1641 - Video Productions

Forest Service video productions and b-roll are integral to communicating Forest Service messages, themes, priorities, issues, news and information to external and internal audiences.

Forest Service programs planning to produce multimedia productions for national exposure must coordinate with the Washington Office National Multimedia Manager to ensure alignment with national Forest Service criteria, standards, and guidelines.

Forest Service video standards for public submission:

1. Video Resolution Quality: Minimum acceptable video quality, HD 1080p recorded at a minimum 192 bit audio.
2. USDA Compliance: Must use the USDA and Forest Service insignias and nondiscrimination statement, except in the case of b-roll or raw unedited video clips shared externally on social media, or other social digital platforms. The USDA insignia must be larger or the same size as the Forest Service insignia. If side by side, USDA insignia should be located to the left of the Forest Service insignia; if stacked, USDA insignia should be above the Forest Service insignia.
3. Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, Compliance: All video productions must include the following elements:
 - a. Timed closed captions.

(1) The captioning provision applies only to video and multimedia presentations that contain speech or audio information necessary for the comprehension of the content. A video that is not narrated would not be required to be captioned since it does not contain speech (Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards--Preamble), however, it may need to be audio described.
 - b. Appropriate use of USDA and Forest Service Insignia.
 - c. Nondiscrimination statement: "USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender."
4. Music: All music rights must be cleared prior to distribution and source of music must be provided.
5. Permission: Video producers are responsible for clearing rights to all footage used in their productions. No copyrighted material may be used without written permission. The Forest Service will own the rights to the footage unless alternative agreements or contracts have been granted by Public Affair Officer/Multimedia Manager representatives at appropriate levels from the Forest, Regional, to National level. If alternative agreements were made, a disclaimer of agreement should be addressed in the credits of the video production. Forest Service employees and other adults not central to the scene depicted in a video do not require video release forms. If minors (children under the age of 18) appear in a video, the video producer must obtain a signed minor consent release form from the minor's parents or guardians. Anyone used as an actor or actress in the video must also have a signed consent release form. Forest Service members do not require a consent release form.

6. Filename: Forest Service multimedia products or videos must be saved with a uniform filename. All videos must contain the following file-naming convention for ease of tracking and online searching: Year, Month, Day-FS (Forest Service) Name of Videographer's initials- Number Sequence. Examples: 20170321-FS-Wildflowers-CMR-001, 20161221-FS-NicaraguaAnimals-JTR-002

The Forest Service owns all rights to the video footage and must have documented permission such as consent and release forms, unless specific agreements and grants direct otherwise to use in Forest Service approved video productions.

For time-sensitive posting to social media platforms, video b-roll or raw unedited video clips shared externally on social media or other social digital platforms do not require USDA and Forest Service insignias along with nondiscrimination statement, but must contain a video description and will need to be approved by appropriate level PAO. Appropriate level means if video is captured at forest level, video will need forest level PAO to approve external use. If video is recorded for regional use, it must be approved by the regional PAO, and so forth and should have documented approval of such prior to forwarding onward to the Washington Office of Communication. If used on digital platforms that require Section 508 Law compliance, it must contain closed captions.

1641.1 - Multimedia/Video Productions with Cooperative Agreements

Multimedia productions between the Forest Service and a partner require specific approval and contracting procedures, depending upon the determination of ownership of the production. Determination of ownership is based on the parties' contributions to the production. The Office of Communication's National Multimedia Manager, or their designee, must confirm and review national level multimedia/video production partnerships and agreements related to potential videos prior to engaging in the production. If a multimedia production is determined to be owned by the partner, production can be endorsed by Forest Service while the partner owns the rights to production. If it is determined that production is owned by the Forest Service, then the product becomes public domain.

Use Grants, Cooperative Agreements, and other Agreements Handbook (FSH 1509.11) chapter 70, Partnership Agreements, section 72.41, paragraph 14 to help clarify and document roles and responsibilities among both Federal and non-Federal cooperators and grantees when publishing will be accomplished within the Federal Government.

Productions Owned by the Federal Government. When the Forest Service and/or other Federal agencies contribute at least 50 percent of the total costs, including in-kind contributions, to develop a video production, it is owned by the Forest Service (Federal Government). Forest Service video productions that are strictly regional in nature are permitted without USDA approval. Video productions that are determined to be owned by the cooperator are not subject to USDA approvals and the government-wide audiovisual contracting system. Obtain a copy of the

cooperator's video production and retain the right to duplicate the video for government purposes. Use government procurement procedures to duplicate the video for Forest Service purposes. Video productions that are determined to be owned by the Forest Service are subject to Forest Service approvals.

Productions Owned by Cooperators. Video productions that are determined to be owned by the cooperator are not subject to Forest Service approvals and the government-wide multimedia/video contracting system. Obtain a copy of the cooperator's video production and retain the right to duplicate the video for government purposes.

Cooperators Copyrights with Joint Forest Service Ventures. Agreements involving multimedia/video productions may permit the cooperator to copyright material they created, but not text, photographs, or materials created by Forest Service employees on government time and/or composed on government equipment. In all cases, reserve the right to reproduce the work and authorize others to use it for government purposes.

1641.2 - Forest Service Support to Nongovernmental Multimedia Productions, Advertising, and Promotions

In providing support and assistance to nongovernmental productions or programs, other than those dealing with spot news events refer to FSM 1654.1, and comply with the following:

1. When the production subject matter is of local interest only and will be shown only within the local area, units are authorized to assist nongovernmental multimedia representatives without prior approval of the Washington Office Communication Director.
2. When requests for assistance involve multimedia projects of national or regional interest, units must obtain appropriate advance approval of the Washington Office Communication Director, or their designee, prior to making any commitments or giving opinions on the agency's response to such requests.
3. PAO receiving requests for support for other than local interest multimedia projects from private individuals, production companies, State or city film boards, shall forward requests with recommendations to the Washington Office Communication Director, or they may refer the requestor directly to the Communication Director or their designee if needed.

4. It is Forest Service policy to assist entertainment-oriented projects when cooperation will benefit the Forest Service or when assistance is in the national interest. The production must meet the following criteria:

- a. The subject matter (script) must be authentic in its portrayal of actual persons, places, Forest Service operations, and historical events. If fictional, it must be a plausible portrayal.
- b. It is of informational value and will assist in the public's understanding of the Forest Service.
- c. It cannot appear to condone or endorse activities by private citizens or organizations that are contrary to U.S. Government policy.

5. The Public Affairs Officer or other authorized officer must inform the requester of the process and fees involved in applying for a special use authorization, which may be required for the production, and the process for requesting fee waivers (FSM 2700, & FSH 2709.11). Obtain the following information and advise the requester that additional information may be required in the special use application process:

- a. A letter describing the specific motion picture, television production, multimedia product or online production, stating the story/project objectives.
- b. A detailed list of requirements.
- c. A commitment that the production company will be responsible for reimbursing the Forest Service for any additional expenses incurred as a result of assisting the production, for example, returning the land to its pre-production condition.
- d. Agreement to comply with established Forest Service safety standards.
- e. A statement certifying that Forest Service materials and personnel services to be used in the production are not available through commercial or private enterprises.
- f. Agreement to restore all government property and facilities to their original condition comparable with when they were made available.

6. The official activities of Forest Service personnel assisting in any nongovernmental multimedia production, except the program officer, must be within the scope of their normal duties.

1641.3 - Productions and Equipment for Visitor Centers

Ensure that multimedia productions for visitor centers and other public facilities are open captioned and audio described.

Visitor centers should make use of auxiliary devices, such as headphones that provide an audio description for the visually impaired and electronic "signage" for persons with hearing disabilities, as well as assistive listening devices and/or systems for hard of hearing people. This technology should be used in theaters and multimedia exhibits.

1641.4 - Disclaimer - Commercial Endorsement

Do not include names or company logos of specific commercial enterprises or brand names of commercial products in multimedia or video productions, except when it is necessary to include (DR 1490.002). Include a disclaimer statement such as: Reference herein to any specific commercial products, process, or service by trade name, trademark, manufacturer, or otherwise, does not constitute or imply Forest Service's endorsement, recommendation, or favoring of said commercial entity.

1642 - Photography

Forest Service photography is key in visually illustrating and communicating agency ideas, news, and information for timely delivery of Forest Service messages, policies and programs and for historical national record.

Forest Service photography requirements for external publishing include:

Approval at the lowest appropriate levels of PAO.

Image resolution: Must be a minimum of 300 dpi (dots per inch) at 10 inches or 3000 pixels of longest width or length for mainstream use. If image is captured on a low resolution camera, use the highest resolution setting available.

Filename: Forest Service images must be saved with a uniform filename. Use yearmonthday-FS (Forest Service)-First name of Forest (if not in forest use state or county name)-photographer's initials-number sequence.

Examples: 20161221-FS-Angeles-LSC-001, 20131203-FS-Montana-CMR-002.

Caption: Each image must have caption information that describes the context within the image to include "who, what, where, and when." If person(s) in a photograph is identifiable, the photo should have the person's full name unless more than five identifiable people are in the photograph.

Byline: Each image must have the photographer's name or byline. If the photographer is a Forest Service employee the byline should reflect this, for example, (Forest Service photo by Dominic Cumberland). If the photographer is not a Forest Service employee but the image is either donated, released, or legally licensed for use by Forest Service, the byline should use a courtesy caption, such as (Courtesy photo by John Smith) or

(Courtesy photo by istockphotos.com/Andrew Jordan) or (USDA photo by Lance Cheung).

Permissions: Photo releases are not required from adults. However, all people that are identifiable within a photograph should have their full name in the caption unless more than five people are identifiable in a photograph. If a minor (person under the age of 18) is captured in a Forest Service photograph, a signed minor photo release form must be completed by their parent or guardian for public use.

Image Alteration: Credibility of Forest Service imagery is key in communicating accurate and timely depictions of Forest Service events and messages. Inaccurate visual representations can erode the Forest Service's ability to communicate to public audiences. Photographic techniques common to traditional darkrooms and digital imaging stations such as cropping, dodging, burning, color balancing, spotting, and contrast adjustment that are used to achieve the accurate recording of an event, scene, or object are permitted. If other means of image alteration are used, the image must be labeled as a "photo illustration" within the byline. For example: John Smith, wildland firefighter, explains how prescribed fires support forests. (Forest Service photo by Jack Gonzalez, Photo Illustration)

Purchased and Licensed Photography Use: Imagery purchased from commercial sources must include rights for use in the public domain. For imagery purchased for uses other than in the public domain, negotiate for rights based on the intended use. In both instances, contracts stating use of imagery must be established.

National Archival: Washington Office Staffs, Regions, Stations, the Area, and the Institute should send selected high-quality images for retention to the National Forest Service repository, Washington Office, Office of Communication for historical record archival.

1643 - Definitions

Appropriate Level. Video that is captured at the forest level, said video will need forest level PAO to approve external use. If video is recorded for regional use, it must be approved by regional PAO, and so forth.

B-roll. Raw, unedited video clips or supplemental video footage used in video productions.

Forest Service video bumper. The slide within a video with USDA and Forest Service insignia and non-discrimination statement. It is usually shown at the end of a video near the credits.

Graphic Design. The art of visual communication using various methods to combine images and words to create a visual representation of ideas and messages to best convey information to an audience.

Multimedia. The combination of audio, video, graphics, and/or animation using various methods to convey information to an audience.

National-Level Production. Video or multimedia production where subject matter is intended for multiregional or national audiences.

Photo Captions. A description of the context of a photograph that answers the “who, what, when, and where” in the image.

Public Domain. Refers to creative multimedia materials that are not protected by intellectual property laws such as copyright, trademark, or patent laws. The public owns these works, not an individual author or artist. Anyone can use a public domain work without obtaining permission, but no one can ever own it.

Regional or Local Production. Video or multimedia production where subject matter is intended for a localized audience within regional or smaller boundaries.

Video Captions. The audio portion of a multimedia production appearing as words on the screen or on a suitable area below the screen, to provide persons with hearing disabilities access to audio information in the production.

a. Closed Captions. Captions or the transcript of words spoken within a video that can be viewed when upon selection of closed caption setting in a monitor, website, TV and other viewing devices.

b. Open Captions. The audio portion of a multimedia production appearing as words on the screen set as a permanent part of a multimedia production. Open captions are always visible.

Video Production. A video where the process of using combinations and reductions of the video are edited in pre-production, live, or post production. A multimedia production can be identical to a multimedia production.