

Facebook for IBA Caretakers

This brief guide was compiled by Nature Canada (Monica Tanaka) and BC Nature (Krista Englund) to help IBA Caretakers understand and use Facebook for the purposes of communication related to Important Bird Areas.

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Why Use Facebook?

Facebook is not just for individuals. Facebook is used by businesses, public figures, organizations and even causes as a way to keep people informed and connected. In 2012, the IBA Canada Committee joined Facebook. Facebook is a simple and effective way to connect with other members of the IBA Caretaker Network, as well as the general public.

Using Facebook for IBA Purposes

There are several ways Caretakers can use Facebook for purposes related to the IBA program:

1. If you do not use Facebook, simply check out the IBA Canada Facebook page from time to time
2. If you use Facebook, like the IBA Canada Facebook page to stay connected with the IBA program across Canada
3. Post updates about your IBA on the IBA Canada Facebook page and comment on other posts
4. If you are really keen, you could set up a Facebook page for your IBA or for your organization

Facebook for Individuals vs. IBAs

Facebook pages for organizations and causes like IBA Canada or non-profit organizations like Nature Canada or BC Nature are different from pages for individuals, but share some similarities.

Similarities

Facebook pages for both individuals and organizations or causes use the 'timeline.' This means that posts are organized chronologically. Simply scroll down to see older posts. *Note: Facebook Timeline is relatively new for pages. As of March 30, 2012, all Facebook pages were converted to Timeline.

Differences

A Facebook page set up for an individual is designed to share information about that person – their birthday, their relationship status, where they work and live, what they are up to, etc. After a person sets up a Facebook page, they invite other people to be their 'friends.' Once someone is their friend, that individual is given privilege to view everything they post to their Facebook page (unless they adjust their privacy settings). When they post an update or photo to their timeline, their friends receive a notification about their posting in their news feed (unless they adjust their privacy/notification settings).

Facebook pages for organizations or causes are slightly different. Instead of personal information, the Facebook page contains basic information about the organization or cause. Instead of inviting people to be 'friends', people are invited to 'like' the page. Everyone who has liked an organization's page will receive notifications in their newsfeed when a new post is made to the organization's page.

Making Posts and Comments on Facebook

There are three general things you can do on an organization's Facebook page:

- make posts (text, web links, photos or videos)
- make comments on other posts
- like other people's posts and comments

Anyone can view an organizations' Facebook page, but people need to be signed in to make a post, comment or 'like' posts and comments.

It's important to note that once someone has 'liked' a page, they will likely stay up to date on the group's activity via their news feed. They won't necessarily have to come back to your Facebook page to stay up to date on your posts – or to comment on your posts – they can do that from their own news feed. This is one of the key strengths of a Facebook page – you can keep people up to date without them having to leave the comfort of their own Facebook page!

Make a Good Facebook Posting

You can share much more than just words on Facebook. You can share photos, ask a question and post links via your page's timeline.

To post a link, simply add the URL to the status box. I would recommend writing a few sentences that will catch a reader's eye to accompany the link.

To share a photo, type your text in the text box, click on 'Photo', add your photo and then post to your timeline.

To ask a question, click on 'Ask a question' and it will take you through the steps of creating a question for your Facebook fans.

Try mixing it up – post a text update one day, and a photo the next.

Has your Post has Engaged People?

An easy way to gage how much your post has resonated with your fans is by counting the number of times people have liked or shared your post. Likes appear as a number beside a thumbs up icon, and shares appear as a number beside a post it note icon.

What is a 'share'? When a fan shares your post, they re-post it to their timeline. This means that their friends (who may not be IBA Canada fans) will see that their friend Alex thinks they should know about IBA Canada's newest Caretaker, Jane.

The more likes and shares your post receives, the more your message is propagating through your fans' Facebook network.

Facebook Resources

For more background information on how to use Facebook and Facebook pages, please check out the links below.

HOW TO: Set Up a Winning Facebook Fan Page

<http://mashable.com/2009/09/22/facebook-pages-guide/>

A little dated, but still offers some good advice.

A Visual Guide to Facebook's Timeline for Pages

<http://www.allfacebook.com/facebook-timeline-map-2012-03>

Timeline for Facebook Pages: The Complete Guide

<http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/timeline-facebook-pages-guide/>

Great video tutorials on the most important features of timeline for Facebook pages.