



## Video Submission Guidelines

The following are basic guidelines for the preparation and submission of videos for display on the SWS website and the SWS YouTube channel. All material should be presented in a balanced, unbiased manner, avoiding unsubstantiated claims or policy recommendations. There is no required structure for your video, but strive to “tell a story” with your material.

Appropriate topics include:

- Research summaries  
*Research summaries should be based on previously published (peer-reviewed) data (include the citation with the data or in the end credits).*
- Important wetland sites or issues
- New methodologies
- SWS activities

**Please read the following instructions carefully before embarking on your video project.**

1. Your video should have a clear message that can be summarized in a sentence or two. For example: “We developed a new index to assess vulnerability of coastal areas to sea-level rise. This video summarizes the how the index was developed and provides examples of how it can be used.”
2. The video should be no longer than three to four minutes in length. With careful planning and editing, you can convey a lot of information within this time limit.
3. Provide sufficient background information about your topic so that a non-specialist can understand your video. Often, this can be accomplished with a single sentence. For example: “Mangroves are flood- and salt-tolerant trees and shrubs that are found along tropical and sub-tropical coastlines. We studied how these intertidal forests respond to sea-level rise.”
4. Avoid jargon and acronyms; define essential technical terms verbally or use a text title.
5. Make your video visually appealing. It should not consist solely of “talking heads”. Instead, include field or laboratory footage, photographs, maps, diagrams, and animations wherever possible.
6. Use a tripod to stabilize your camera during filming; avoid excessive zooming and panning.
7. All persons appearing in the video should be identified in the end credits. Persons speaking on camera should be identified by a text title (name and affiliation) on first



appearance. Everyone appearing in the video should provide written permission for the use of their image and voice by signing the [Video Consent form](#). If filming in a public place, it is not necessary to identify or get permission from people appearing in the background. In addition, filmmakers should sign the [Video Release Form](#).

8. Ensure that any text titles are readable within the timeframe provided, and a consistent font such as Arial is used throughout.
9. When editing your video, use either no transitions between video clips or use simple “dissolve” transitions. Avoid distracting “special effects”.
10. Ensure that the audio quality is good and the soundtrack is free of extraneous noises. Use a lapel microphone or place your camera’s microphone close to the speaker. For voiceovers (narration added during editing), you can improve the quality of the audio by using a headset (or ear-buds) or other external microphone.
11. Music soundtracks, including so-called “royalty-free music”, unfortunately cannot be used in any video submitted to SWS. Music often has many rights holders, and permissions are difficult to verify.
12. All other media (footage, photos, logos, animations, graphs, etc.) used in the video must be original (i.e., created by the author/filmmaker), in the public domain, or licensed from the copyright holder. For example, do not use figures from copyrighted journal articles or images downloaded from the Internet without permission. **A list of all media sources and relevant permissions (in writing) should be submitted in a separate document along with the video. List each media item in the video and indicate its origin (include the link for any media downloaded from the Internet).**
13. Data or data summaries can be included if published previously in a peer-reviewed outlet and accompanied by an appropriate citation. Avoid use of unpublished data.
14. The video should adhere to SWS policies on the environment and ethics (animal rights). People appearing in the video should adhere to appropriate safety procedures (field and laboratory).
15. If you work for a Federal agency (e.g., USGS, NPS, FWS, NOAA), you may need special permission and/or internal review of your video. Contact your communications office for guidance **before** embarking on your video project.
16. Export your video after editing to an appropriate codec (see below). Review the exported file in a media viewer (e.g., Quicktime, Windows Media Player) to ensure it plays properly.



17. For review purposes, you will have to upload your video to YouTube. You will need a YouTube or a Google Account to do this. Use YouTube's settings to make the video "unlisted" (during the review process). Follow [YouTube's upload encoding settings](#):
- Multiple formats are acceptable (.mov, .mpeg4, .mp4)
  - Audio codec: AAC-LC; sample rate 96 or 48 khz
  - Video codec: H.264, mp4
  - Frame rate: generally same as recorded (e.g., 24, 30, 60 fps)
  - Bitrate: see chart for best option
  - Resolution: 1080p or 720p (high definition) is preferred
  - Aspect ratio: 16:9 is preferred
18. Your video will be peer-reviewed prior to acceptance for publication. To submit your video for review, send an email to the New Media Team at [info@sws.org](mailto:info@sws.org) with your submission form, release form and consent form(s)

Your video will be initially screened to determine if it meets the basic criteria listed above. Changes may be required, which the author/filmmaker must address before the video can be accepted. Once accepted, the video will be shared on SWS YouTube channel.

### **Some Free Resources:**

AAAS Communicating Science: <https://www.aaas.org/page/communicating-engage>

16 Mistakes to Avoid When Making Your First Science Video:  
<https://www.slideshare.net/thescientistvideographer/16mistakes>

Video-Making Tutorials (Filming, Editing, Publishing):  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/sciencevideography>