

Puddles the Blue Goose

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Subject: Freedom of Information Act Request: Puddles the Blue Goose

Portal

Dear USFWS:

This is a request for records under the Freedom of Information Act. I am requesting records related to FWS's mascot, Puddles the Blue Goose. Specifically, I am requesting records sufficient to answer the following questions:

RECORDS REQUESTED:

(A) All records related to the process of designing the Puddles the Blue Goose mascot (contracts, sketches, etc.)

(B) Records sufficient to answer the following questions:

(1) Whose idea was it to create a FWS mascot in the first place, and why?

(2) Who designed the Puddles mascot, and what was the design process like? (e.g. were there multiple design concepts submitted? Was the design of the character contracted out? (If so, kindly produce the contract).

(3) Were any Puddles-related promotional items or tchotchkes created (e.g trading cards, coloring books)? If so, please produce them.

(4) Were there any life-size Puddles costumes created? If so, please produce records related to the design of the costume (contracts, sketches, etc.) and any guidelines regarding the use of or care for the costume.

(5) Did anyone in Congress ever object to FWS's use of a mascot? I understand that there have been periodic attempts by lawmakers (e.g. former Oklahoma senator Tom Coburn) to rein in agency spending on mascots. If so, please produce all records related to that.

(6) Is FWS still using Puddles as part of its public outreach? If not, why not?

REQUEST FOR FEE WAIVER:

The requested documents will be made available to the general public online for free, and this request is not being made for commercial purposes. I am working on a project examining the history, creation, evolution, and use of mascots across the federal government —because, like many others, I find them fascinating and weirdly delightful. Thus, I respectfully request that any fees related to this request be waived. If you do decide to charge me fees, please notify me in advance if you expect those fees to exceed \$25.

FORM OF PRODUCTION:

I would prefer the request filled electronically, by e-mail attachment if available or CD-ROM if not.

CONCLUSION:

Thank you very much for your cooperation with this request. I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Sincerely,

Nicholas Marritz

Subject: FOIA Request DOI-FWS-2022-004066 Submitted

Portal

This is a request for records under the Freedom of Information Act. I am requesting records related to FWS's mascot, Puddles the Blue Goose. Specifically, I am requesting records sufficient to answer the following questions:

RECORDS REQUESTED:

(A) All records related to the process of designing the Puddles the Blue Goose mascot (contracts, sketches, etc.)

(B) Records sufficient to answer the following questions:

(1) Whose idea was it to create a FWS mascot in the first place, and why?

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(3) Were any Puddles-related promotional items or tchotchkes created (e.g trading cards, coloring books)? If so, please produce them.

(4) Were there any life-size Puddles costumes created? If so, please produce records related to the design of the costume (contracts, sketches, etc.) and any guidelines regarding the use of or care for the costume.

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FORM OF PRODUCTION:

I would prefer the request filled electronically, by e-mail attachment if available or CD-ROM if not.

CONCLUSION:

Thank you very much for your cooperation with this request. I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Sincerely,

Nicholas Marritz

Upload documents directly: <https://www.muckrock.com/>

Subject: FOIA Fee Waiver Disposition Reached for DOI-FWS-2022-004066

Portal

Your request for Fee Waiver for the FOIA request DOI-FWS-2022-004066 has been determined to be not applicable as the request is not billable.

* Fee Waiver Original Justification:

The requested documents will be made available to the general public online for free, and this request is not being made for commercial purposes. I am working on a project examining the history, creation, evolution, and use of mascots across the federal government —because, like many others, I find them fascinating and weirdly delightful. Thus, I respectfully request that any fees related to this request be waived. If you do decide to charge me fees, please notify me in advance if you expect those fees to exceed \$25.

* Fee Waiver Disposition Reason:

N/A

Subject: DOI-FWS-2022-004066 Final Response

Portal

Hi Nicholas Marritz,

Please see the attached 2 files, 1 final response letter, and 1 record found responsive to your FOIA request.

Thanks,

John



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Puddles, the Blue Goose
Ordering Information and Costume Care Guidelines

Ordering Information
Puddles, the Blue Goose costume can be ordered from:
Mail & Custom Design & Sewing Shop
10000 Highway 100
Burlington, Vermont 05408
802-253-1000

Ordering Information
Puddles, the Blue Goose costume can be ordered from:
Mail & Custom Design & Sewing Shop
10000 Highway 100
Burlington, Vermont 05408
802-253-1000

Costume Care Guidelines
Puddles, the Blue Goose costume is made of high quality materials and is designed to be durable. Please follow the following guidelines to ensure the longevity of the costume:
1. Storage: Store the costume in a cool, dry place. Do not store in a plastic bag. Use a breathable fabric bag.
2. Cleaning: Spot clean only. Do not machine wash or dry clean.
3. Repairs: If the costume is damaged, please contact the Mail & Custom Design & Sewing Shop for repairs.
4. Use: The costume is designed for use as a mascot. Please do not use for any other purpose.
5. Care: Please follow the following guidelines to ensure the longevity of the costume:
1. Storage: Store the costume in a cool, dry place. Do not store in a plastic bag. Use a breathable fabric bag.
2. Cleaning: Spot clean only. Do not machine wash or dry clean.
3. Repairs: If the costume is damaged, please contact the Mail & Custom Design & Sewing Shop for repairs.
4. Use: The costume is designed for use as a mascot. Please do not use for any other purpose.
5. Care: Please follow the following guidelines to ensure the longevity of the costume:

Ordering Puddles
Puddles, the Blue Goose costume can be ordered from:
Mail & Custom Design & Sewing Shop
10000 Highway 100
Burlington, Vermont 05408
802-253-1000



United States Department of the Interior
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington D.C. 20240

November 1, 2022

Nicholas Marritz
MuckRock News (MRF)
Burlington, VT
Burlington, VT 05408

FOIA REQUEST
DOI-FWS-2022-004066

Dear Mr. Marritz,

This is in response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request regarding:

I am requesting records related to FWS's mascot, Puddles the Blue Goose. Specifically, I am requesting records sufficient to answer the following questions:

RECORDS REQUESTED:

(A) All records related to the process of designing the Puddles the Blue Goose mascot (contracts, sketches, etc.)

(B) Records sufficient to answer the following questions:

(1) Where was the idea for FWS's mascot first conceived, and why?

(2) Who designed the Puddles mascot, and what was the design process like? (e.g. were there multiple design concepts submitted? Was the design of the costume submitted and/or finalized by the contractor?)

(3) Were any Puddles-related promotional items or merchandise created (e.g. trading cards, coloring books)? If so, please produce them.

(4) Were there any life-size Puddles costumes created? If so, please produce records related to the design of the costume (contracts, sketches, etc.) and any guidelines regarding the use of or care for the costume.

Subject: RE: Freedom of Information Act Request #DOI-FWS-2022-004066

Email

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION APPEAL

Dear U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

I am appealing FWS's response to my FOIA request DOI-FWS-2022-004066, which I submitted on 3 June 2022. I am appealing the response in its entirety: the scope of the search, the records produced, and all other aspects of the response.

BACKGROUND

I am creating a public records project about federal agency mascots. My FOIA request sought records relating to FWS's mascot, Puddles the Blue Goose. The request sought 7 categories of records:

(A) All records related to the process of designing the Puddles the Blue Goose mascot (contracts, sketches, etc.)

(B) Records sufficient to answer the following questions:

(1) Whose idea was it to create a FWS mascot in the first place, and why?

(2) Who designed the Puddles mascot, and what was the design process like? (e.g. were there multiple design concepts submitted? Was the design of the character contracted out? (If so, kindly produce the contract).

(3) Were any Puddles-related promotional items or tchotchkes created (e.g trading cards, coloring books)? If so, please produce them.

(4) Were there any life-size Puddles costumes created? If so, please produce records related to the design of the costume (contracts, sketches, etc.) and any guidelines regarding the use of or care for the costume.

(5) Did anyone in Congress ever object to FWS's use of a mascot? I understand that there have been periodic attempts by lawmakers (e.g. former Oklahoma senator Tom Coburn) to rein in agency spending on mascots. If so, please produce all records related to that.

(6) Is FWS still using Puddles as part of its public outreach? If not, why not?

FWS responded: "We are releasing 1 record to you that is responsive to your FOIA request. FOIA requests do not answer questions and can only respond with records. Items B, 1-6 are considered questions and may be found with in the record." The record produced was a document with guidelines for using the life-sized Puddles costume. I greatly appreciate FWS's producing this record, as it is partially responsive to Item B(4). However, for the reasons below, FWS's response and record production were incomplete.

GROUND FOR APPEAL

ITEM A: This request sought all records related to the process of designing and creating the Puddles mascot. FWS produced no records in response to Item A. FWS response gave no reason for the failure to produce responsive records. Please search for and produce all records responsive to this item.

ITEMS B1-6: I am well aware that FOIA requests cannot compel agencies to answer questions. However, my request did not ask the Service to answer questions; it asked FWS to produce records. The reason I phrased the request as seeking "records sufficient to answer [x]" is to give FWS context for the records I am seeking, and to help to guide the scope of its search. In my experience, agencies generally appreciate this guidance because it helps the agency to avoid searching for and processing large volumes of records that the requestor is not actually interested in. However, if FWS would prefer that I reword the requests to remove the "records sufficient" language, I am amenable to doing that. Here is a revised request:

1. Please produce all records related to the conception, creation, and design of the Puddles the Blue Goose mascot. Please include any contracts or design concepts (e.g. sketches) in your production, as well as any records related to FWS's decision to create a mascot in the first place.

2. Please produce all Puddles-related promotional items, educational items, or tchotchkes, past or present, that took the form of records, such as trading cards, posters, or books (including but not limited to coloring books, activity books, or comic books).

3. Please produce all records related to the conception, creation, design, and use of any life-size Puddles costume. Responsive records would include contracts for the design or production of such a costume; design proposals or sketches; correspondence with the designer or manufacturer; and any guidelines related to the use of or care for the costume.

4. Please produce all correspondence related to Puddles (or to mascots in general) sent to or from any member of Congress, their office, or their staff. Oklahoma Senator Tom Coburn may have sent some responsive correspondence around 2007.

5. Please produce all records related to any decision by FWS to stop using Puddles as part of its public outreach.

Please let me know if this approach is acceptable to you, and please feel free to contact me about any aspect of this appeal. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Most sincerely,

Nicholas Marritz

Notes are visible to you and other editors of this request.

Contact information overridden:

email

FOIA.Appeals@sol.doi.gov

Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] RE: Freedom of Information Act Request #DOI-FWS-2022-004066

Email

Mr. Marritz: Thank you for your December 10, 2022, e-mail message to the Department of the Interior’s Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”) Appeals Office (“Department”) seeking to file a FOIA appeal (“appeal”) regarding a FOIA request to the Fish and Wildlife Service (“FWS”). Unfortunately, the Department cannot accept an appeal for processing from you at this time, as you did not submit copies of all correspondence between you and the FWS regarding the FOIA request (which the Department’s FOIA regulations (“regulations”) require you to submit in order to file an appeal). See 43 C.F.R. § 2.59 (copy attached). For example, you did not provide the Department with a copy of the FWS’s response to the FOIA request that you are seeking to challenge through an appeal.

So, if you remain interested in filing an appeal, the Department must receive a copy of all correspondence between you and the FWS related to the FOIA request (including a copy of the FWS’s response letter) no later than 90 workdays from the date of the bureau’s final response, which is the time frame specified in the regulations for requesters to file appeals challenging the type of issue(s) that you raise in your e-mail message. See 43 C.F.R. § 2.57(a)-2.58(a) (copy attached). If the Department does not receive all of this documentation from you within the 90-workday time frame, it will not consider your December 10, 2022, e-mail message for processing as an appeal.

You may e-mail a copy of the FOIA request (and any other correspondence with the bureau that you did not previously submit) to this e-mail address (FOIA.Appeals@sol.doi.gov<mailto:FOIA.Appeals@sol.doi.gov>). You may also send this correspondence here via facsimile or in hard copy format through the mail or by courier. The fax number for the FOIA Appeals Office is (202) 208-6677 and its mailing address is as follows:

Department of the Interior
FOIA & Privacy Act Appeals Office
1849 C Street, N.W. - Mail Stop 6556
Washington, D.C. 20240

The Department will not take any further appellate action on this matter if it does not receive the above materials from you within the 90-workday time frame referenced above.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please e-mail them to the FOIA Appeals Office. Thank you.

--

Darrell R. Strayhorn
FOIA & Privacy Act Appeals Officer
Department of the Interior

This e-mail (including attachments) is intended for the use of the individual or entity to which it is addressed. It may contain information that is privileged, confidential, or otherwise protected by applicable law. If you are not the intended recipient or the employee or agent responsible for delivery of this e-mail to the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, distribution, copying, or use of this e-mail or its contents is strictly prohibited. If you received this e-mail in error, please notify the sender immediately and destroy all copies.





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Subject: RE: Freedom of Information Act Request #DOI-FWS-2022-004066

Email

Dear Mr. Strayhorn:

Thank you for your message. All of my correspondence with FWS regarding this FOIA request is attached. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Marritz



United States Department of the Interior
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, DC 20240



November 1, 2022

Nicholas Marritz
BlackRock, Texas (BPT)
Hempstead, Ark
Benton, MA 02015
USFWS4066102@requests.mackbrook.com
REF: DOI-FWS-2022-004066

Dear Mr. Marritz,

This is in response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request regarding:
I am requesting records related to FWS's mascot, Puddles the Blue Goose. Specifically, I am requesting records sufficient to answer the following questions:
RECORD REQUESTED:
(A) All records related to the process of designing the Puddles the Blue Goose mascot (contracts, sketches, etc.)
(B) Records sufficient to answer the following questions:
(1) Where else was it to create a FWS mascot in the first place, and why?
(2) Who designed the Puddles mascot, and what was the design process like? (e.g., were there multiple design concepts submitted? Was the design of the character contracted out? If so, kindly produce the contract).
(3) Were any Puddles-related promotional items or merchandise created (e.g. trading cards, coloring books)? If so, please produce them.
(4) Were there any life-size Puddles costumes created? If so, please produce records related to the design of the costume (contracts, sketches, etc.) and any guidelines regarding the use of or care for the costume.
(5) Did anyone in Congress ever object to FWS's use of a mascot? I understand that there have been previous attempts by lawmakers (e.g. former Oklahoma senator Tom Coburn) to vote in against spending on mascots. If so, please produce all records related to that.
(6) Is FWS still using Puddles as part of the public outreach? If not, why not?
REQUEST FOR PRODUCTION:
The requested documents will be made available to the general public online for free, and this request is not being made for commercial purposes. I am working on a project examining the history, creation, evolution, and use of mascots across the federal government. However, like many others, I find them fascinating and weirdly delightful. Thus, I respectfully request that any fees related to this request be waived. If you do decide to charge me fees, please notify me in advance if you expect those fees to exceed \$60.
FOUNDER OF PRODUCTIONS:

Notes are visible to you and other editors of this request.

Contact information overridden:

email

FOIA.APPEALS@sol.doi.gov

Subject: RE: Freedom of Information Act Request #DOI-FWS-2022-004066

Email

To Whom It May Concern:

I wanted to follow up on the following Freedom of Information Act request, copied below, and originally submitted on June 3, 2022. Please let me know when I can expect to receive a response. You had assigned it reference number #DOI-FWS-2022-004066.

Thanks for your help, and let me know if further clarification is needed.

Subject: RE: Freedom of Information Act Request #DOI-FWS-2022-004066

Email

Dear Ms. Strayhorn: I wanted to check on the status of my FOIA appeal filed on December 10, 2022. The request number is DOI-

FWS-2022-004066. Could you please update me?

Many thanks,

Nicholas Marritz

Subject: RE: Freedom of Information Act Request #DOI-FWS-2022-004066

Email

Dear FWS:

I received your message today saying that my FOIAonline user account will soon be deactivated due to inactivity. However, I have been diligently following up about the status of my FOIA request and appeal over the last few months, including as recently as 3 weeks ago. Moreover, FOIAonline itself is going to be permanently decommissioned for all users at the end of September. Please confirm that the message I received today is not going to affect the processing of my request.

Most sincerely,

Nicholas Marritz

Notes are visible to you and other editors of this request.

Contact information overridden:

email

fwhq_foia@fws.gov

Subject: RE: Freedom of Information Act Request #DOI-FWS-2022-004066

Mail

Dear FWS:

I received another message today saying that my FOIAonline user account will soon be deactivated due to inactivity. Again, I have been following up about the status of my FOIA request and appeal diligently. Moreover, FOIAonline itself is going to be permanently decommissioned for all users at the end of September. Please confirm that the message I received today is not going to affect the processing of my request.

Most sincerely,

Nicholas Marritz

Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: Freedom of Information Act Request #DOI-FWS-2022-004066

Email

Hello Mr. Marritz,

The decommissioning of FOIAOnline should not affect the processing of your request. Please contact Darrell Strayhorn on the status of your appeal.

United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Headquarters Freedom of Information Act Office
MS: IRTM
5275 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, VA 22041

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Many thanks,

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Contact information overridden:

email

FOIA.APPEALS@sol.doi.gov

Subject: FOIAonline Account Has Been Deactivated Due To Inactivity

Email

Your FOIAonline user account for requests@muckrock.com has been deactivated due to inactivity.

Automatic follow ups are disabled.

[Enable](#)

Send a follow up to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Attachments

Processing dropped files...

[Cancel](#)